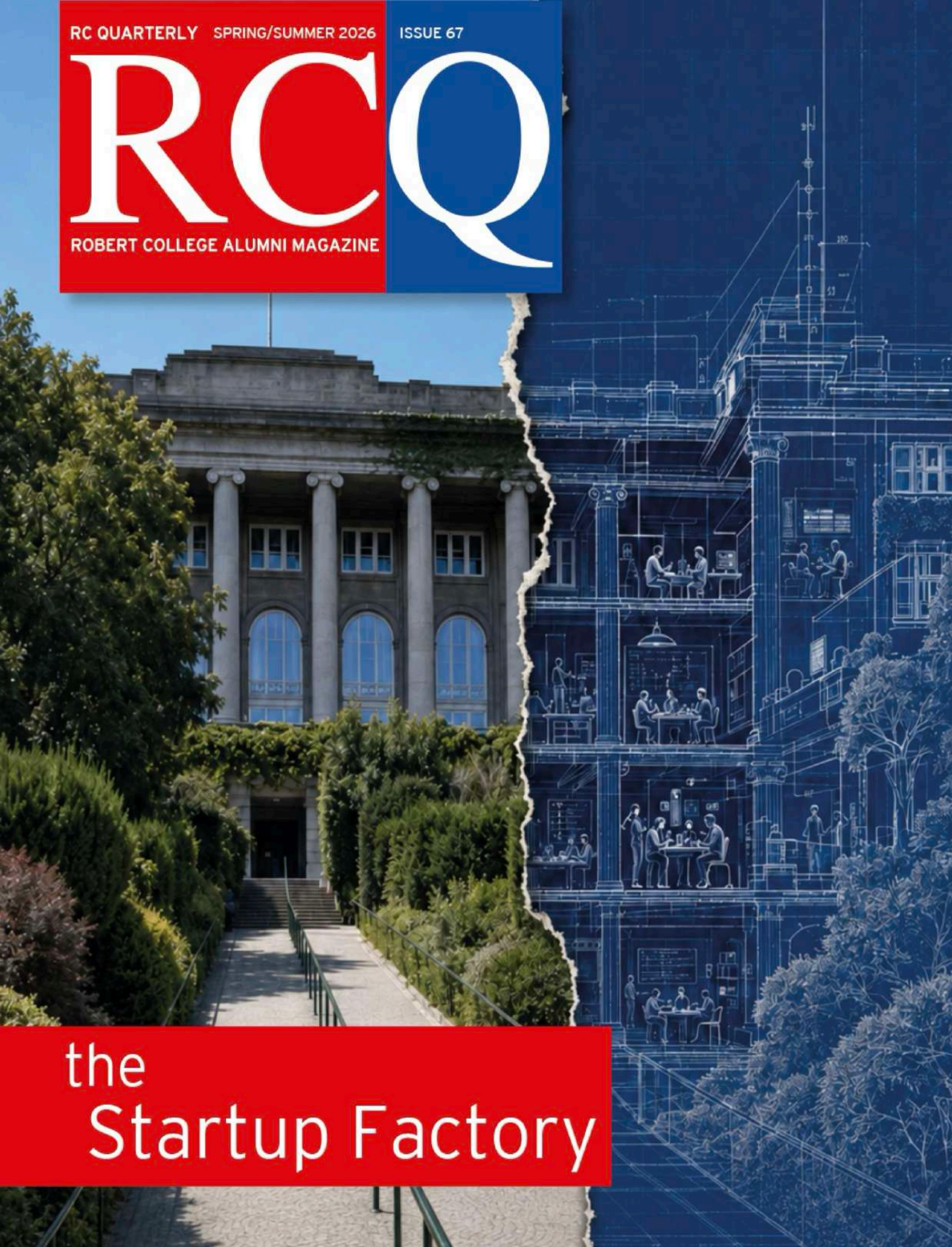
RC QUARTERLY SPRING/SUMMER 2026 ISSUE 67

RCQ

ROBERT COLLEGE ALUMNI MAGAZINE



the Startup Factory

STABLEX
Akbank Kuruluşu

Bitcoin ve Kripto Varlık Yatırımlarınız İçin Doğru Adres: Stablex.

ROBERT KOLEJ MEZUNLARINA ÖZEL

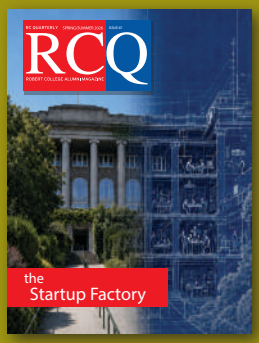
Robert kodu ile Stablex'e üye olun, yıl sonuna kadar kripto varlık alım-satım işlemlerinde komisyonsuz işlem fırsatını kaçırmayın.

App Store'dan İndirin

İNDİRİN Google Play

Son kayıt tarihi 31.10.2026
Kampanya detayları için kare kodu okutun.

This issue explores how Robert College's culture of curiosity, creativity, and collaboration has inspired generations of entrepreneurs to turn bold ideas into meaningful ventures.



RCQ
ROBERT COLLEGE ALUMNI MAGAZINE

Alumni Journal published periodically by the RC Institutional Advancement Office for 10,000 members of the RC community: graduates, students, faculty, administration, parents, and friends.

What is it about Robert College that breeds groundbreaking entrepreneurs decade after decade? In this issue, RCQ shines a spotlight on this question. As technology advances, entrepreneurs keep getting younger – which is why the evolution of RC's entire educational experience, from classes to co-curriculars, is so fascinating to explore.

In this issue...

This issue is also packed with inspiring news from the global RC community. From writing novels to combating sea pollution, the scope of our community's impact never ceases to amaze.

Your feedback is vital to keeping RCQ relevant, current, and inspiring. Please keep sharing your comments and updates. Your contributions make a difference.

Reach out to us at rcq@robcol.k12.tr.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue!

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Your feedback on the RCQ matters! Did you enjoy this issue? Write us at: rcq@robcol.k12.tr

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ReConnecting Our Community, Strengthening Our Future

This year at Robert College was defined by a powerful and meaningful theme: ReConnecting. In a world that continues to grow more complex, fast-paced, and challenging, the importance of community and meaningful relationships has never been greater. Throughout the year, students, faculty, alumni, parents, and friends of the College came together to celebrate the bonds that unite us and to reaffirm the enduring spirit of the RC community.

One of the most inspiring aspects of this year was the opportunity to engage with alumni across the globe. From gatherings in San Francisco, San Diego, Boston, New York, and London to events here in İstanbul, alumni reconnected not only with one another but also with the institution that helped shape their lives. These encounters demonstrated that while our graduates may be dispersed across continents and professions, they remain connected by a shared experience and a common commitment to Robert College.

The year was also marked by special moments that brought our community together and created lasting memories. Homecoming once again served as a joyful celebration of RC traditions and friendships spanning generations. The RC Olympics showcased school spirit, teamwork, and healthy competition, while numerous other events throughout the year strengthened ties among students, alumni, faculty, and families. These occasions reminded us that the true strength of Robert College lies not only in its academic excellence but also in the relationships that endure long after graduation.
The resilience of the RC community was evident throughout the year. Challenges, whether local or global, have tested institutions and individuals alike. Yet time and again, our community demonstrated its



Whitman Shepard, Head of School

ability to adapt, support one another, and emerge stronger. This resilience is one of Robert College's defining characteristics and continues to serve as a source of inspiration for future generations.

That spirit of commitment and generosity was reflected in a remarkable milestone for the Scholarship Fund. Thanks to the extraordinary support of alumni, parents, and friends, this became a record-breaking year of giving. Their generosity ensures that talented students from diverse backgrounds will continue to have access to the transformative educational opportunities that define Robert College. Such support is a powerful expression of faith in the institution's mission and in the potential of future generations.

The year also brought many achievements worth celebrating. Robert College successfully completed the NYSAIS accreditation process, reaffirming its commitment to excellence and continuous improvement. Students achieved outstanding university admissions results, earning places at some of the world's most respected institutions. Academic accomplishments included notable successes in TÜBİTAK competitions and the Balkan Mathematical Olympiad, reflecting the intellectual curiosity and dedication of our students.

Beyond the classroom, RC students excelled in athletics and the arts. Teams and individuals achieved impressive results in Girls Flag Football, Basketball, and Chess, demonstrating discipline, teamwork, and perseverance. In the arts, students continued to inspire audiences through their creativity and talent. The Orchestra delivered memorable performances, while the RC Singers achieved international recognition by bringing home a Gold Medal, a fitting testament to the excellence and passion that characterize the performing arts at Robert College.

Underlying all these accomplishments is an important idea: stewardship. Each generation of Robert College students, faculty, alumni, and supporters inherits something valuable from those who came before. Our responsibility is not merely to preserve that legacy but to strengthen it, enrich it, and pass it on to those who follow. This commitment to stewardship ensures that Robert College remains a vibrant and dynamic institution while staying true to its enduring values.

As we look ahead, we do so with confidence and optimism. The future will undoubtedly bring new opportunities and challenges, but Robert College is well prepared to meet them. Grounded in its values, strengthened by its traditions, and sustained by the relationships that connect generations of students and alumni, the school continues to move forward with purpose. The spirit of ReConnecting has reminded us that our greatest strength lies in one another—and that together, we will continue to build a future worthy of the remarkable legacy we share.

ReConnecting, Engaging, Building

The theme of ReConnecting resonated throughout the Robert College family this year. Across continents and generations, alumni, parents, students, faculty, and friends renewed relationships, forged new ones, and strengthened the bonds that make RC such a remarkable institution.

As the Institutional Advancement Team, we have the privilege of nurturing these relationships every day. Through alumni engagement, communications, fundraising, and new initiatives, we help create opportunities for future generations to benefit from a Robert College education.

This year, we saw inspiring examples of the commitment that defines our alumni and friends. Homecoming and gatherings across the United States and Europe brought people together once again. Donors continued to invest in the future of the school – some making transformational commitments, while many others contributed through gifts of every size. Volunteers generously shared their time, ideas, and expertise. Together, these contributions reaffirm



M. Yıldız Günay, Director of Institutional Advancement

what has always distinguished Robert College: enduring relationships rooted in a shared belief in the value and impact of an RC education.

Looking ahead, we are excited to launch new initiatives that will create even more opportunities for alumni to engage with one another and with the school. Alongside the RC Community Entrepreneurs Bond, featured in this issue, we are excited to introduce the RC Directory, an interactive platform designed to strengthen connections among alumni. We will also develop a new initiative that will bring together artists and art enthusiasts while supporting the school through the arts, offering a meaningful new way to collaborate, share ideas, and give back.

RC has always been enriched by alumni who generously volunteer their time, knowledge, and experience, and I extend my heartfelt thanks to each of them. If you have ever considered becoming more involved, I warmly encourage you to reach out. Whatever your expertise, interests, or stage of life, there are countless ways to contribute. Every new idea, shared skill, and helping hand ensures that RC's legacy of excellence and generosity continues to thrive for generations to come.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the RCQ Editorial Board whose service concluded this year for their dedication and invaluable contributions to this publication. I also extend a warm welcome to our new Editorial Board members, and I look forward to working together as we continue to build a community where every story strengthens our shared legacy and every connection shapes Robert College's future.

Meet the Institutional Advancement Team



Bilge Eren, Burcu Saraçoğlu Berent RC 96, Rana Yeğenağa Tanıl, Yiğit Taluy RC 25, Zeynep Torkak, Melisa Korkmaz RC 03, Tülay Ayangil, M. Yıldız Günay

Behind every event, publication, giving campaign, and alumni gathering is RC's Institutional Advancement (IA) team, working to strengthen connections across the RC community and support the school's mission.

Under the leadership of Director of Institutional Advancement M. Yıldız Günay, the IA Office works closely with alumni, parents, and friends of the school in Türkiye and around the world.

The Alumni Relations and Fundraising team, coordinated by Burcu Saraçoğlu Berent RC 96, cultivates relationships with alumni and helps build engagement through events, initiatives, and annual giving efforts.

Donor Relations Coordinator Melisa Korkmaz RC 03 manages relationships with donors and secures support for major gifts as well as major projects while developing strategic initiatives and new giving opportunities.

Head of Communications Rana Tanıl and her team oversee the school's institutional communications. The team runs school-wide events, social media channels, websites, RC Quarterly, media relations, publications, and other projects that connect the RC community with the life of the school. Digital Communications Manager Bilge Eren manages the school's growing digital presence and online engagement efforts.

Supporting the office's daily operations are Office Assistant Tülay Ayangil and Archivist Zeynep Torkak, who oversees the Robert College Archives and the preservation of the school's 160-year history. The team is also joined by interns, young RC graduates who contribute to ongoing projects.

Together, the IA team helps strengthen the bonds that connect Robert College's past, present, and future.

A Community That Lasts a Lifetime

A year of new ideas, growing traditions, and global connections. From Virtual Everesting and RC Community Entrepreneurs Bond (RCCEB) to alumni events around the world and the transformation of RCQ, these are some of the initiatives that helped shape another memorable year for the RC community.



Ali İhsan İzbul RC 95, Consul General in Düsseldorf, welcomed Robert College alumni from across Europe to the Residence of the Consul General of the Republic of Türkiye for a gathering initiated by the Institutional Advancement Team

Robert College has always been more than a school. For generations of alumni, it has been a source of lifelong friendships, shared experiences, professional connections, and a sense of belonging that extends far beyond graduation.

Keeping those connections strong requires opportunities to reconnect, engage, participate, and contribute. Throughout the past year, members of the Robert College community came together on campus, around the world, and online through initiatives designed to strengthen the ties that unite generations of alumni.

Homecoming once again welcomed alumni back to campus for reunions, celebrations, family activities, the Dave Phillips Memorial Game, and milestone class anniversaries. Throughout the year, alumni also gathered at events in San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, New York, London, Boston, Seattle, and Düsseldorf, demonstrating that the Robert College community continues to thrive across generations and across the globe. The campus itself remained an important gathering place, welcoming alumni back for lectures, performances, award ceremonies, athletic events, and special celebrations that offered opportunities to reconnect with classmates, meet fellow graduates, and remain engaged in the life of the school.

One of the year's most exciting developments was the continued evolution of the Robert College Olympics and Everesting. Following the successful revival of the event by alumni volunteers last year, this year's edition expanded beyond campus in an entirely new way. Alumni from around the world formed virtual Everesting teams and climbed together from their own cities, transforming a one-day campus event into a truly global Robert College experience. What began as an ambitious idea demonstrated the power of technology to bring together a community separated by geography but united by shared purpose. As this tradition continues to grow, we look forward to welcoming even more virtual participants from around the world in the years ahead.

The entrepreneurial spirit of the RC community also inspired the creation of the Robert College Community Entrepreneurs Bond (RCCEB). First introduced during the West Coast alumni trip by Hüseyin Tığlı RA 71, the initiative quickly gained momentum, bringing together entrepreneurs from different generations to foster collaboration, mentorship, and new opportunities. The enthusiasm surrounding RCCEB also inspired this year's RCQ cover theme, RC: A Start-Up Factory.

Staying connected also depends on meaningful communication. Throughout the year, alumni received newsletters, event invitations, and community updates highlighting life on campus and opportunities



Homecoming is where old memories are celebrated and new ones are made—for every generation of the RC family



The Dave Phillips Memorial Game brought together alumni from every generation that knew him

to reconnect. This year also marked an exciting milestone for Robert College Quarterly. Building on its long history as the school's flagship alumni publication, RCQ has evolved into a dynamic digital platform where stories from campus and across the alumni community can be shared more frequently, more interactively, and with a much broader reach. Together with the school's social media channels, the new digital RCQ is helping create a more connected and engaged community throughout the year.

Understanding our community is just as important as connecting it. This year's Alumni Research provided valuable insight into alumni perspectives, helping guide future engagement efforts while reaffirming the importance of listening to the voices of our community.

The Institutional Advancement Team also contributed to major institutional initiatives throughout the year, including communications surrounding the NYSAIS accreditation process and the Autumn Teachers Conference, while continuing to work closely with alumni volunteers, class agents, donors, faculty, staff, and students to strengthen relationships across every part of the Robert College community.

At its heart, every gathering, publication, event, network, and initiative described here serves the same purpose: helping members of the RC community remain connected to a place that continues to shape their lives long after graduation. None of these initiatives would be possible without the enthusiasm and generosity of our alumni, volunteers, class agents, event hosts, speakers, donors, faculty, staff, students, and friends. Their time, expertise, ideas, and support transform projects into lasting traditions and ensure that Robert College remains not only a school with a remarkable history, but a vibrant community whose greatest strength has always been its people.



Soli Ozel RC 76 talk series continued throughout the year, drawing enthusiastic participation from alumni

RC Olympics: Climbing Higher Together

What began as the revival of a beloved tradition has quickly become one of Robert College's signature community events. From friendly competition and lifelong friendships to the debut of Virtual Everesting, RC Olympics 2026 brought generations of the RC family together, on campus and around the world.

The ringing of the Robert College bell by Head of School Whitman Shepard officially opened RC Olympics 2026, setting the stage for a day of competition, camaraderie, and community. Before long, Mr. Shepard traded the podium for the table tennis court, joining the tournament himself and proving that RC Olympics is about participation as much as competition.

More than 800 alumni, students, faculty, staff, parents, families, and friends gathered on campus for the second edition of **RC Olympics – Everest and Beyond,** transforming Robert College into a vibrant celebration of sport, friendship, and giving back. Building on the success of its inaugural year, RC Olympics returned larger than ever, welcoming nearly twice as many participants and firmly establishing itself as one of the Robert College community's newest traditions.

A Campus Alive with Community

Throughout the day, basketball, football, volleyball, and table tennis tournaments filled the courts with friendly competition, while yoga sessions, walking activities, children's games, music, and food created a festive atmosphere enjoyed by all generations.

Some alumni returned to campus for the first time in decades. Others reunited with classmates they had not seen for years, while many met fellow alumni for the very first time. Students competed alongside graduates, faculty cheered from the sidelines, families explored the campus together, and volunteers worked tirelessly behind the scenes. Everywhere you looked, the day was filled with laughter, encouragement, and the unmistakable feeling of belonging that defines the Robert College community.



Everesting Briefing by Kieran Pearson and the excited RC Everesters

Beyond the competitions themselves, RC Olympics has become much more than a sporting event. It is an opportunity for the entire RC family to reconnect, celebrate, and create new memories together.

Everesting Reaches New Heights

One of the day's defining experiences was once again **Everesting,** the endurance challenge that is rapidly becoming an RC legacy.

Originally conceived by **Ahmet Uysal RC 90,** the challenge invites teams to repeatedly climb the campus hill in pursuit of ambitious elevation goals, relying on teamwork, perseverance, and encouragement rather than individual achievement alone.

This year, ten teams embraced the challenge with extraordinary determination. Every ascent became a shared accomplishment as teammates encouraged one another to keep climbing. At the end of the day, **İstanbul Ruck Squad** emerged as Everesting Champion, but every participant embodied the spirit that has made the challenge one of RC Olympics' most beloved traditions.

From the RC Hill to the World

Just when it seemed Everesting could not grow any further, it did.

An exciting innovation of RC Olympics 2026 was the launch of **Virtual Everesting,** a brilliant initiative developed by **Ahmet Uysal RC 90** and



Virtual Everesters, Ozan Başeğmez RC 90, Müfit Ferman RC 89, Seçil Tablı Watson RC 89



RC 89ers white team

Ozan Başeğmez RC 90 that enabled alumni to participate from anywhere in the world.

The first virtual team, **RC 90 World**, led the way, bringing together classmates climbing from **San Francisco, Florida, Basel, Madrid, Riyadh, Baku**, and **İstanbul.** Inspired by the success of the initiative, **two additional teams from the Class of RC 89,** driven by the enthusiasm and leadership of **Zümrüt Alp Yalman RC 89**, also joined the challenge.

Rather than climbing together on campus, participants selected routes in their own cities, completed their ascents individually, and contributed every climb toward their team's collective goal. Although separated by thousands of kilometres, they shared the same determination, the same teamwork, and the same Robert College spirit.

The inaugural **Virtual Everesting Championship** was won by **RC 90 World**, while every virtual participant received a commemorative certificate recognizing them as pioneers of what promises to become one of RC Olympics' defining traditions.

Virtual Everesting demonstrated something remarkable: wherever Robert College alumni may live, they remain part of one community. We hope alumni groups around the world are already planning—and training—for next year's challenge.

Competition, Camaraderie, and Giving Back

The excitement extended across every competition. Basketball, football, volleyball, and table tennis all attracted record participation, with alumni and students competing side by side in a spirit of sportsmanship and friendly rivalry.

Table tennis champion **Aykut Cem Safoğlu RC 89** claimed victory after defeating a highly competitive field that included Head of School Whitman Shepard himself. **RC 22** celebrated championships in both basketball and football, while students impressed across several competitions, particularly on the football field.

Yet perhaps the most meaningful achievement of the day extended beyond medals and trophies.

Every registration, sponsorship, and donation supported the Robert College Scholarship Fund, and together our community raised **$60,000**, helping ensure that talented students will continue to benefit from a Robert College education for generations to come.

Already Looking Ahead

An event of this scale is only possible through collaboration. We extend our heartfelt thanks to our alumni volunteers, organizing committee, sponsors, faculty, staff, students, families, and every member of the RC community who participated, cheered on the athletes, joined us virtually from around the world, or contributed in any way to bringing RC Olympics to life.

We are especially grateful to our alumni sponsors and contributors, whose generosity supported both the event and the Robert College Scholarship Fund, helping us raise **$60,000** to provide life-changing educational opportunities for future generations of Robert College students. As the campus gradually grew quiet once again, one thing had become



Whitman Shepard, Ahmet Uysal RC 90, Yıldız Günay

unmistakably clear. RC Olympics is no longer simply a sporting event. It has become one of the defining annual celebrations of the Robert College community—a tradition that brings generations together, strengthens lifelong friendships, supports future students, and now reaches far beyond the Robert College campus.

From one hill in Arnavutköy to cities across the globe, the Robert College community climbed higher together. And this is only the beginning.

We look forward to welcoming you back to campus for RC Olympics 2027 on Sunday, May 30, 2027. Save the date!



Istanbul Ruck Squad

The Rise of Girls' Flag Football at Robert College

The RC Girls' Flag Football Team won the 2026 Turkish High School Championship.

Winning the 2026 Turkish High School Championship in flag football represents more than a successful season for RC. It marks a milestone in the growth of a sport that has expanded rapidly across Türkiye in recent years. Robert College has been part of that growth from the beginning.

Flag football is a non-contact variation of American football. While still relatively new in Türkiye, it has become increasingly popular, particularly among girls and young women globally. The RC Flag Football Club was established more than a decade ago. Founder Yasemin Tekgürler RC 15 recalls that the idea emerged almost by chance after she found out about the game from friends on the boys' team. "There was no major plan behind it," she says. "We were just excited to create a team."



Our Girls Flag Football Team celebrating their championship victory in İzmir.

Building a team meant introducing people to an unfamiliar sport and challenging assumptions about who could play it. "We were constantly explaining the sport and trying to show that women could play it seriously and competitively," Tekgürler remembers. The initiative gradually grew into a lasting program. This year, the first national championship tournament for high school girls' flag football was held in Türkiye, and under the leadership of Coach Jake Becker, the Robert College Girls' Flag Football Team captured the national title.

Tekgürler is delighted: "We wanted more girls to join, we wanted the team to continue after we graduated, and we wanted more women's teams to form," she says. As flag football continues to grow nationwide, this first championship will be remembered as an important moment in the sport's history. For RC, it also stands as the culmination of more than a decade of dedication, community, and belief in a game that few could have imagined would come this far.

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Excellence in Science Award Honors A Legacy of Inspiration

A sister's tribute is a source of motivation.



Prof. Dr. Özge Karadağ RC 97 and Çiğdem Yazıcıoğlu with this year's award recipient Ece RC 27

The Prof. Seyhan Nurettin Eğe ACG 49 Excellence in Science Award for Girls was presented in April 2026, recognizing Ece RC 27 for her outstanding dedication to the sciences. Established in 2010 by Güneş Eğe Akter ACG 52, the award honors the memory of her sister, Prof. Seyhan Nurettin Eğe ACG 49, an accomplished scientist and educator whose passion for science inspired generations of students.

Each year, the award recognizes a Lise 11 female student selected by the Science Department for her commitment, curiosity, and achievement in the sciences. Beyond celebrating academic excellence, the award seeks to encourage young women to pursue their interests in science and to imagine the possibilities that lie ahead.

This year's ceremony featured a keynote address by Prof. Dr. Özge Karadağ RC 97, Chair of the Department of Public Health at Bahçeşehir University Faculty of Medicine. Speaking to students, faculty, and guests, she reflected on the importance of scientific inquiry, perseverance, and the role of women in advancing knowledge and improving lives.

The 2026 ceremony was the second since the passing of Güneş Eğe Akter in January 2025. Through her vision and generosity, she created a lasting tribute to her sister, opening doors for future generations of young scientists at Robert College. Among those attending this year's ceremony was Çiğdem Yazıcıoğlu, a former member of the Institutional Advancement team who played an important role in the establishment of the award, making the occasion a meaningful reflection on the people whose dedication helped bring this enduring legacy to life.

Today, the award stands as a powerful example of how one family's commitment can continue to inspire students year after year. By recognizing and encouraging talented young women such as Ece, the legacy of Seyhan Eğe and Güneş Eğe Akter continues to shape the future of science, one student at a time.

Opening Doors Through Art

The Özlem Akçakuş RC 97 Art Scholarship continues to nurture the next generation of Robert College artists.

For nearly two decades, the Özlem Akçakuş RC 97 Art Scholarship has encouraged Robert College students to explore the world through art. Established in 2006 by Özlem Akçakuş's family and classmates to honor her love for the arts, the scholarship has enabled talented young artists to attend internationally renowned summer programs, broadening their creative horizons and inspiring new directions in their artistic journeys.

This year's scholarship recipients, Ayliz Çıldır and Zeynep Su Bayam, continued that tradition. Their work was on display in the Gould Corridor, offering the RC community a glimpse into two distinct artistic voices shaped by curiosity, experimentation, and creative exploration. Both students



Ayliz Çıldır RC 26 and Zeynep Su Bayam RC 26

were accepted to the Summer Program at the School of Visual Arts in New York, one of the world's leading art and design schools. Ayliz Çıldır, an illustrator, explored storytelling through interactive illustrations that invited viewers to engage with her work. Zeynep Su Bayam, a book artist, approached narrative through an inventive artist's book that highlighted the expressive possibilities of form and material.

Reflecting on the scholarship's impact, RC Art Department Head Alex Downs emphasized its role in encouraging students to broaden their artistic perspectives. The work of both students, he noted, exemplified the richness and diversity that emerge from exploring different facets of artistic practice.

Since its establishment, the Özlem Akçakuş RC 97 Art Scholarship has continued to open doors for young artists, creating opportunities for creative exploration, personal growth, and new experiences. The Gould Corridor exhibition served as a reminder that its greatest impact lies not only in the journeys it makes possible, but also in the artists those journeys help shape.

Demirkan Aşetey RC 76 Art Competition Celebrates Student Creativity

The works display a remarkable range of talent.

Established more than two decades ago by the Class of 76 in memory of their classmate Demirkan Aşetey, the **Demirkan Aşetey RC 76 Art Competition** continues to provide Robert College students with an opportunity to share their creativity and explore new forms of artistic expression.

The works exhibited this year reflected the remarkable range of talent within the RC community. Beyond their technical skill, the pieces revealed the curiosity, thoughtfulness, and originality that characterize the RC education. Through a variety of mediums and approaches, students engaged with ideas, emotions, and perspectives in ways that invited reflection and conversation.

Adding special meaning to this year's competition was the participation of a distinguished jury consisting of Maria Sezer, Gül Ilgaz, and Nancy Atakan – beloved former RC arts teachers and accomplished artists who have inspired generations of students. Drawing on decades of experience as both teachers and practitioners, they generously shared their expertise, offering thoughtful feedback and artistic perspective that enriched the experience for all participants.



Whitman Shepard, Maria Sezer, Gül Ilgaz, Nancy Atakan

The competition remains a meaningful tribute to Demirkan Aşetey while fostering a culture of creativity on campus. It also reflects the lasting impact of alumni support, which helps create opportunities for students to discover, develop, and share their talents. Continuing this tradition, Enigül Sönmez RC 76 attended the award ceremony, underscoring the enduring connection between alumni and the students whose creativity the competition celebrates today.

This year Berra Karaer RC 27, Defne Su Baysal RC 27, Mervan Uyan RC 28, Kaan Ayyıldız RC 27, Ece Akbaş RC 26, İrem Aktuğ RC 26, Zeynep Su Bayam RC 26 and Cemre Deren Kangallı RC 26 were recognized for the creativity, originality, and artistic vision reflected in their work. Through initiatives such as this, generations of RC students are encouraged to embrace the world with imagination, confidence, and a spirit of inquiry.

New Award Celebrates Excellence in English Literature

The award is a celebration of the power of reading and writing.



Academic Dean Maura Kelly, Arda RC 27, Head of the English Language and Literature Angela Shockley

In June 2026, Robert College marked the first presentation of the Excellence in English Literature Award, established through the generosity of Ralph Kanza RA 64 to recognize outstanding achievement in a field that has held special meaning throughout his life.

As a student at Robert College, Ralph Kanza developed a deep appreciation for literature and was profoundly influenced by his English teachers. While his career followed a different course, his passion for literature remained with him throughout the years and now finds expression in an award designed to encourage future generations of students.

Established in 2026, the Excellence in English Literature Award reflects Ralph Kanza's desire to encourage students who share that same passion and to recognize their accomplishments. By supporting and celebrating literary achievement, the award honors not only academic excellence but also the power of reading, writing, and critical thinking to shape young minds.

The first recipient of the award was Arda RC 27, whose achievement marks the beginning of what is hoped will become a lasting Robert College tradition. As the award begins its journey, it also stands as a meaningful example of how alumni can create opportunities that connect their own experiences as students with the aspirations of future generations. Through initiatives such as this, the values and passions nurtured at Robert College continue to find new expressions, enriching the educational experience of students for years to come.

A Deep-Rooted Publishing Tradition: Robert College History Journal Turns 23

The History Journal is prepared by the students of the History Club.



Robert College has always placed great importance on publishing activities to support students' language development and free expression. Throughout the school's history, many figures who went on to shape the worlds of literature, art, and media—such as Bülent Ecevit, Betül Mardin, and Haldun Dormen—began their journey in these school publications. Prepared by the students of the History Club and published annually, the Robert College History Journal stands as one of the most significant links in this deep-rooted tradition.

With every stage from design to typesetting handled entirely by students, the journal's advisory role was passed from longtime faculty member Candan Basat to History Teacher Önder Kaya starting with the seventh issue. While dedicating its covers to various historical cities of Turkey in its early editions, the publication adopted a thematic cover approach from the seventh issue onward.

Adhering strictly to academic writing standards, citation, and scientific bibliography, the journal prepares students for their future university lives. Indeed, many alumni stand out with their academic achievements, such as Tutku Bektaş, who wrote her first articles here, and Mehmet Tatoğlu, whose essays have been featured in prestigious national history journals.

Featuring interviews with prominent historians like İlber Ortaylı and Emrah Safa Gürkan, and funded entirely by the school, this unique publication has also been accessible digitally through the Robert College website in recent years.

Building Bridges for Professional Growth

Haldun Tashman RA 62 and Feramarz Attar RA 62 initiate a collaboration with Arizona State University.

This spring, Robert College took an important step toward expanding professional learning opportunities for faculty through a new collaboration with Arizona State University (ASU), made possible through the initiative and support of Haldun Tashman RA 62 and Feramarz Attar RA 62.

An entrepreneur and founder of the Turkish Philanthropy Funds, Haldun Tashman first reached out to RC in 2025. Recognizing that outstanding teaching is central to student success, he sought to connect the school with leading institutions and experts who could contribute to the professional growth of educators.

Earlier this year, Tashman introduced Head of School Whitman Shepard and members of the Academic Office to Dr. Gina Wilt of Arizona State University. Dr. Wilt serves as Director of Professional Learning and Clinical Associate Professor at the Mary Lou Fulton College for Teaching and Learning Innovation, one of the leading teacher education institutions in the United States.

Dr. Wilt visited the campus in May 2026 where she led informational sessions on advanced degree and certification opportunities at ASU, and facilitated focus groups examining RC's Teacher Growth System and broader professional development practices."Professional growth is one of the most important investments a school can make," said Maura Kelly, Dean of Faculty. "Dr. Wilt's visit gave us an opportunity to reflect on our current practices, learn from a respected leader in the field, and begin imagining new possibilities for collaboration that will benefit both our faculty and our students."

The partnership reflects a shared commitment to educational excellence and represents the kind of connection that can open new pathways for collaboration, innovation, and growth across the RC community.

Harmony Beyond Borders

RC Singers returned from Spain with a gold medal.

When RC Singers took the stage at the CANTAQUERA – Festival Coral Internacional in Antequera, Spain, they represented far more than themselves. They carried with them months of dedication, countless hours of rehearsal, and the support of an entire Robert College community.

Founded in 2012, RC Singers has become an integral part of campus life while representing Robert College at festivals and competitions across Europe. This year's invitation to perform in Spain offered another opportunity to share that tradition on an international stage.

The journey was made possible through the generosity of alumni and friends. During Giving Tuesday, the RC community came together to help fund the ensemble's participation, ensuring that these talented students could travel to Spain and perform alongside ensembles from around the world.

The result was a proud moment for everyone who supported them. RC Singers returned home with a Gold Medal, earning recognition not only for technical excellence, but also for musical interpretation, stage presence, and the remarkable unity that defines the ensemble.



RC Singers, Cantaquera

The success in Spain crowned a year of memorable performances. Earlier in the school year, RC Singers opened the Autumn Teachers' Conference with a repertoire spanning cultures and musical traditions. Despite a demanding academic schedule and limited rehearsal time, they delivered a performance of exceptional artistry, bringing the audience to its feet with their spirited finale, Suda Balık. Behind every performance lies a shared commitment - to music, to one another, and to representing RC with excellence. The ensemble's accomplishments reflect not only the talent and dedication of its students, but also the encouragement of a community that believes in the transformative power of the arts.

As RC Singers continues to perform on campus and around the world, each performance becomes more than a musical achievement. It celebrates collaboration, creativity, and the enduring support that enables young musicians to grow, perform, and proudly represent Robert College wherever their music takes them.

A Tradition Takes the Stage

The RC Orchestra Concert featured a diverse repertoire.



The RC Orchestra boasts many members.

For twenty-five years, the Robert College Orchestra Concert has been one of the school's most anticipated artistic traditions, bringing together students, families, alumni, faculty, staff, and friends for evenings that celebrate music, creativity, and the joy of live performance.

This year's milestone concert series filled Suna Kıraç Hall over three unforgettable performances, marking a quarter century of a tradition that has become an enduring part of campus life.As always, the program reflected the remarkable versatility of RC's young musicians. From the timeless rock anthem Stairway to Heaven and No Doubt's Don't Speak to Amy Winehouse's Back to Black, and a selection of jazz classics, the repertoire crossed genres, generations, and cultures. Each performance showcased not only technical excellence, but also the confidence, musicianship, and stage presence that have become hallmarks of the RC Orchestra.

The concerts once again brought generations of the Robert College family together. Alumni returned to campus, former orchestra members reunited with friends and teachers, and families filled the hall to celebrate the students whose commitment and countless hours of rehearsal made each performance possible.

As the final applause echoed through Suna Kıraç Hall, it celebrated not only another memorable concert, but also twenty-five years of music, friendship, and shared memories. It was a fitting tribute to a tradition that continues to inspire new generations of Robert College musicians.

Acceptances Received by RC 26 as of June 2026

Country / University Name	Total
BELGIUM	**3**
KU Leuven	3
CANADA	**51**
McGill University	4
McMaster University	1
Queen's University	1
The University of British Columbia, Vancouver	9
UBC Sciences Po Dual Degree Program	1
University of Toronto	24
University of Toronto Mississauga	4
University of Toronto Scarborough	6
University of Waterloo	1
FINLAND	**2**
Aalto University	2
FRANCE	**6**
École Polytechnique	2
EDHEC Business School	1
ESCP Europe Business School	1
ESSEC Business School, Cergy-Pontoise	1
Sciences Po - UC Berkeley Dual Degree	1
GERMANY	**1**
Karlsruhe Institute of Technology	1
HONG KONG SAR	**6**
City University of Hong Kong	1
Hong Kong Baptist University	1
Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	1
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (Poly U)	2
The University of Hong Kong	1
IRELAND	**2**
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland	1
Trinity College Dublin - The University of Dublin	1
ITALY	**28**
Bio-Medical Campus University of Rome	1
Bocconi University	14
Humanitas University	2
Instituto Europeo di Design, Milan	1
Luiss University	2
Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti Milano	1
Politecnico di Torino	1
Sapienza Universita di Roma	3
University of Bologna	2
Vita-Salute San Raffaele University	1
NETHERLANDS	**119**
Delft University of Technology (TU Delft)	16
Eindhoven University of Technology	28
Erasmus University College	2
Erasmus University Rotterdam	13
Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Groningen	1
Leiden University	2
Radboud University	4
Tilburg University	3
University College Groningen	1
University of Amsterdam	22
University of Groningen	6
University of Twente	8
Utrecht University	9
Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam	3
Wageningen University & Research	1
SPAIN	**2**
Esade Ramon Llull University	1
IE University	1
SWEDEN	**1**
Stockholm School of Economics	1
SWITZERLAND	**1**
Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne	1
UNITED KINGDOM	**417**
Architectural Association School of Architecture	1
Arts University Bournemouth	1
City St George's, University of London	3
Durham University	6
Falmouth University	1
Goldsmiths, University of London	2
Guildhall School of Music and Drama	1
Imperial College London	38
King's College London	58
Kingston University London	1
London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art	1
London School of Economics and Political Science	6
Loughborough University	1
Manchester Metropolitan University	1
Nottingham Trent University	1
Queen Mary University of London	9
Royal Holloway, University of London	1
The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama	1
The University of Edinburgh	34
The University of Southampton	1
University College London	83
University of Bath	11
University of Birmingham	1
University of Brighton	1
University of Bristol	17
University of Cambridge	7
University of Exeter	1
University of Glasgow	1
University of Leeds	2
University of Manchester	63
University of Nottingham	1
University of Oxford	10
University of Reading	1
University of Sheffield	4
University of St Andrews	3
University of the Arts London	3
University of Warwick	38
University of Westminster	1
University of York	1
UNITED STATES	**355**
Babson College	2
Barnard College	1
Berklee College of Music	1
Boston University	14
Bowdoin College	1
Brown University	2
Carnegie Mellon University	1
Case Western Reserve University	3
Chapman University	1
Claremont McKenna College	1
Colgate University	1
Colorado State University	1
Columbia University	2
Cornell University	3
Dartmouth College	2
Drexel University	12
Duke University	4
Emory University	3
Florida International University	1
Fordham University	5
Franklin & Marshall College	2
Georgia Institute of Technology	8
Hamilton College	1
Harvard University	1
Indiana University Bloomington	1
Johns Hopkins University	3
Lafayette College	1
Loyola Marymount University	1
Maryland Institute College of Art	1
Michigan State University	11
New York University	12
North Carolina State University	1
Northeastern University	12
Northwestern University	5
Oberlin College of Arts and Sciences	2
Olin College of Engineering	1
Pennsylvania State University, University Park	11
Pepperdine University	2
Pratt Institute	2
Purdue University	22
Quinnipiac University	1
Reed College	1
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	2
Rice University	1
Rochester Institute of Technology	3
Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology	3
Rutgers University - New Brunswick	2
School of the Art Institute of Chicago	3
School of Visual Arts	2
Stanford University	2
Stevens Institute of Technology	1
Stony Brook University	1
Texas A&M University	1
The New School	1
Trinity College	2
Tufts University	2
Tulane University	1
Union College - New York	2
University of California, Berkeley	6
University of California, Davis	8
University of California, Irvine	7
University of California, Los Angeles	9
University of California, Merced	2
University of California, Riverside	1
University of California, San Diego	19
University of California, Santa Barbara	6
University of California, Santa Cruz	5
University of Chicago	1
University of Florida	1
University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign	22
University of Maryland	2
University of Massachusetts, Amherst	4
University of Miami	4
University of Michigan Ann Arbor	10
University of Minnesota Twin Cities	3
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	7
University of Oregon	1
University of Pennsylvania	5
University of Pittsburgh	1
University of Rochester	2
University of San Francisco	2
University of Southern California	7
University of Virginia	4
University of Washington	8
University of Wisconsin, Madison	2
Vanderbilt University	2
Virginia Tech	2
Washington and Lee University	1
Williams College	2
Worcester Polytechnic Institute	4
Yale University	3


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Beyond the Classroom:
Community Involvement at Robert College

This year's emphasis was on peer learning and collaboration.

For nearly two decades, the Community Involvement Program (CIP) has been an integral part of the Robert College experience, encouraging students to connect classroom learning with real-world engagement in the broader community. Since 2006, RC students have been required to complete at least 1 community involvement project before graduation. Yet for many, CIP becomes far more than a graduation requirement – it becomes an opportunity to develop leadership skills, build lasting relationships, and gain a deeper understanding of the world around them.

During the 2025-2026 academic year, RC students continued this tradition through 36 projects, contributing almost 20,000 hours of service and collaborating with communities across Türkiye. From educational initiatives and environmental projects to arts programs and community partnerships, students demonstrated creativity, commitment, and sense of responsibility that have long defined CIP.

This year, CIP continued to expand opportunities for students to engage with peers and communities beyond the RC campus. During the first semester break, students led seven projects in areas including debate, economics, science, and sports. An additional six projects focusing on economics, science, and robotics were carried out during the semester break, bringing together students from different regions of Türkiye.



Lions Lego WeDo 2.0 Project - RC Campus



Little Economists Project - Artvin/Hopa

A particular emphasis this year was placed on peer learning and collaboration. Through partnerships with schools and civil society organizations across the country, students worked alongside their peers to exchange ideas, learn from one another, and develop solutions to shared challenges. These experiences not only supported academic and personal growth but also encouraged cultural exchange, solidarity, and a deeper appreciation of different perspectives.

One example was the Atölye 4.0 project, conducted in partnership with Antalya Göynük Science High School. Bringing together 63 students, including 19 from Robert College, the project encouraged participants to think, design, and create collaboratively in STEM fields while developing creativity, problem-solving skills, and socially beneficial project ideas. Equally important was the opportunity to establish lasting connections between students from different schools and backgrounds.

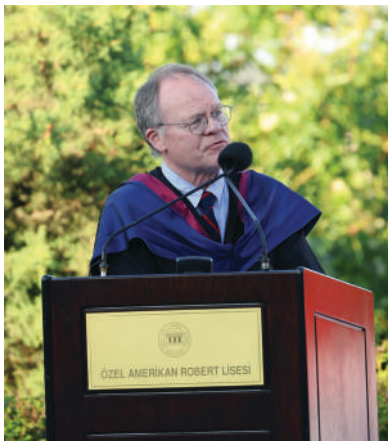
Similarly, the Young Scientists project brought RC students together with students from Malatya Science High School to explore scientific approaches to real-world challenges. Working in teams, participants researched issues they cared about, discussed possible solutions, and developed projects together. Through experiences such as these, students not only strengthened their analytical and research skills but also discovered the value of collaboration, dialogue, and shared learning.

The spirit of community involvement will continue throughout the summer as RC students lead projects in five cities across Türkiye. From

Class of 2026:
The Next Chapter Begins

June 26 marked the graduation of 199 students, bringing to a close five years of academic achievement, personal growth, and shared experiences. Joined by families, faculty, trustees, alumni, and distinguished guests, the Class of 2026 gathered on the Konak Terrace for the school's 159th Commencement Exercises, a ceremony that recognized not only individual accomplishments but also the values that define a Robert College education.





Whitman Shepard


Faculty assemble for the RC 26 procession



İpek Gürdamar Üstündağ RC 82

The ceremony was honored by the participation of Beşiktaş District Governor Oğuzhan Bingöl, whose remarks underscored the importance of education, responsibility, and public service. He was joined by Turkish Director Nilhan Çetinyamaç, and Head of School Whitman Shepard, whose addresses reflected on the resilience, curiosity, and sense of purpose that had shaped the graduating class throughout their years at Robert College.

This year's keynote address was delivered by İpek Gürdamar Üstündağ RC 82, Chair of the Board of Şenpiliç and a long-standing supporter of Robert College. Speaking more than four decades after her own graduation, she encouraged students to carry three guiding principles into the future: justice, courage, and kindness. Reflecting on the lasting influence of her own Robert College education, she reminded graduates that success is measured not only by achievement but by character, and encouraged them to remain connected to the school while supporting future generations, just as those before them had done.

One of the defining moments of every commencement is the presentation of student awards, recognizing excellence in academics, the arts, athletics, leadership, service, and community life. It is always uplifting to have alumni and trustees back on campus to present these awards, reinforcing the enduring bond between generations of Robert College graduates. This year's ceremony also introduced several newly established named awards, including the Baruh Family Social Sciences Award, the Hüseyin Tığlı Award, and the Yırcalı Family Community Involvement Program Award, reflecting the generosity of alumni families and their continued investment in student excellence.

As graduates turned their tassels, sang the Robert College School Song, and tossed their caps into the air, they officially joined generations of Robert College alumni around the world. Their years as students had come to a close, but their lifelong connection to Robert College was just beginning.



Demil Family's Gift to the Future



Cemil Ahmet Demil RA 68

When Cemil Ahmet Demil RA 68 and his wife, Maggie, decided to include Robert College in their estate plans, they were thinking not only about the future, but also about the past—about the people whose love, encouragement, and sacrifices shaped the life they have built together.

The couple chose to establish the Dr. Cevat Demil Family Scholarship Fund, named in memory of Cemil's parents, Dr. Cevat and Nevvare Demil. Through this scholarship fund, their names will continue to support generations of Robert College students long into the future.

Born in İstanbul, Cemil attended the English High School for Boys before transferring to Robert Academy, graduating in 1968. He continued his studies in Civil Engineering at Robert College and went on to build a distinguished career as a structural engineer in both Türkiye and the United States, eventually founding his own engineering firm in California before retiring in 2025. Looking back, he credits Robert College with providing an education that shaped both his personal and professional life.

"I have always had very fond memories of my years in Robert Academy and Robert College," he says. "The education I received greatly helped me succeed in life."

For Cemil and Maggie, establishing the scholarship fund became a natural way to express that gratitude while honoring the memory of Cemil's parents. They wanted their family's story to live on by creating opportunities for young people whose lives, like Cemil's many years ago, could be transformed through education.

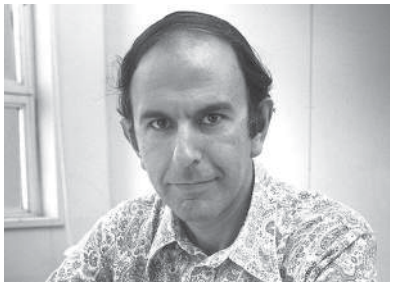
By honoring his parents through education, Cemil and Maggie have ensured that their family's story will continue to inspire future generations of Robert College students for years to come.

A Life of Science, A Gift of Gratitude: Korkut Bardakçı RC ENG 57

Robert College has received a significant bequest from the Professor Korkut and Ruth Bardakçı Living Trust, one that will benefit generations of students to come. It is a gift that reflects not only extraordinary generosity, but also a lifelong connection to Robert College, shaped by gratitude, intellectual discipline, and a deep sense of belonging.

Bardakçı, who passed away on March 16, 2024, in Oakland, California, was a distinguished physicist whose life and work exemplified the values Robert College seeks to instill.

After graduating from RC, he earned his PhD from the University of Rochester in 1962, pursued postdoctoral appointments at the University of Minnesota and the Institute for Advanced Study, and joined the UC Berkeley Physics Department in 1966. Over the course of his career, he became a Sloan and Guggenheim Fellow, held visiting fellowships at



Korkut Bardakçı RC ENG 57

Cambridge, and published more than 80 influential works in quantum chromodynamics and string theory.

Yet beyond his international standing, those who knew him remember a man of quiet wit, deep curiosity, and an unmistakable RC spirit. His yearbook captured these qualities perfectly, recalling him deep in thought, half-murmuring to himself: "Azizim bu öyle basit değil... Hele şu demaraj bobinindeki gerilim düşünümünü hesaplayayım da..." ("My dear, it is not as simple as that... Let me first calculate the voltage drop in that starter coil.") Indeed, the habits of mind he carried throughout his life - precision, curiosity, and humility - were already visible during his years at RC.

For all his international recognition, RC remained central to who Bardakçı was. Together with his beloved wife, Ruth Bardakçı, who passed away six years before him, he made a decision that spoke volumes about loyalty and gratitude. In 2001, they designated Robert College as a beneficiary of their estate, ultimately leaving one-third of it to the school that had shaped his earliest intellectual foundations.

This bequest cannot be separated from the life that preceded it: a life of depth, intellectual rigor, and integrity, for which RC was a formative force.

Korkut Bardakçı RC ENG 57's legacy lives on where it began: at Robert College. It will be remembered with respect, affection, and enduring pride.

A Legacy That Lives On
The Elizabeth Dodge Huntington Clarke Society

For many alumni, Robert College represents far more than an education. It is a place where lifelong friendships began, values were shaped, and opportunities were created that continued to influence their lives for decades.

Some members of our community choose to extend that impact even further by including Robert College in their estate planning. A legacy gift is a deeply personal decision—one that reflects a commitment to future generations and helps ensure that talented students continue to benefit from a Robert College education for years to come.

To honor this extraordinary commitment, Robert College established The Elizabeth Dodge Huntington Clarke Society. The Society recognizes individuals who have chosen to include the school in their wills or estate plans, celebrating their lasting investment in the future of Robert College.

The Society honors the memory of Elizabeth Dodge Huntington Clarke (1884–1976), whose devotion to Robert College culminated in the largest bequest the school had received at the time. Her remarkable generosity helped secure the future of the institution and continues to inspire others who believe in the transformative power of education.



Legacy gifts may take many forms, including charitable bequests, trusts, retirement plans, securities, real estate, business interests, insurance policies, or other planned giving arrangements. Every donor's circumstances and wishes are unique, but each gift reflects a shared belief in creating opportunities for future generations.

Those who make this commitment become part of the Elizabeth Dodge Huntington Clarke Society—a community of individuals whose generosity will continue to shape the lives of Robert College students for years to come.

If you would like to learn more about legacy giving or the Elizabeth Dodge Huntington Clarke Society, the Institutional Advancement Team would be pleased to provide general information and answer your questions. As with any estate planning decision, we encourage you to consult your legal, financial, or tax advisor.

The most meaningful legacies are those that continue creating opportunities long after we are gone. Through the Elizabeth Dodge Huntington Clarke Society, Robert College is honored to recognize those whose vision and generosity will inspire generations yet to come.



To learn how you can leave a bequest to Robert College, contact
Burcu Berent RC 96,
RC Advancement Coordinator at
bberent@robcol.k12.tr
+90 212 359 2575

Renewing a Legacy:
Feyyaz Berker Hall Begins a New Chapter

Some buildings become landmarks because of their architecture. Others become part of a school's identity because of what happens inside them.

For generations of Robert College students, Feyyaz Berker Hall has been where curiosity turned into discovery. Since the early 1990s, its laboratories and classrooms have introduced thousands of students to biology, chemistry, and physics, inspiring many to pursue careers in science, medicine, engineering, and research. Named after Feyyaz Berker RC ENG 46—one of Türkiye's most distinguished engineers, industrialists, and philanthropists—the building reflects his belief that education and scientific inquiry are essential to the country's future.

Today, that legacy enters a new chapter.

Thanks to the generosity of Meltem Berker and Şebnem Berker, Feyyaz Berker Hall is undergoing a comprehensive renovation that will transform it into a contemporary center for science education. Their gift fully funds the renewal, carrying forward not only their father's name, but also his lifelong commitment to creating opportunities for young people to learn, question, and innovate.



Şebnem and Meltem Berker with members of the Senior Leadership Team, faculty, and students

The project is further strengthened by the support of Hüseyin Tığlı RA 71, whose contribution will establish a new Innovation Lab, creating additional opportunities for interdisciplinary learning and experimentation.

The renewed Feyyaz Berker Hall has been envisioned as a next-generation learning environment where flexible laboratories, collaborative spaces, sustainable design, and advanced scientific equipment will support innovative teaching and learning. It reflects Robert College's continued commitment to providing an educational environment that matches the ambition of its students.

Perhaps the most meaningful aspect of this project is its continuity. Throughout his life, Feyyaz Berker supported Robert College through scholarships, the Berker Fellowship, academic initiatives, and programs that encouraged intellectual curiosity, debate, and scientific thinking.

Now, through the generosity of his daughters, that vision continues to evolve.

Yırcalı Family Reinforces a Tradition of Service

Long before students receive their diplomas, many leave a different kind of mark on Robert College through their involvement in the Community Involvement Program (CIP).

For decades, the CIP Award has recognized students whose dedication to community engagement reflects some of the school's most deeply held values: initiative, collaboration, respect, and a desire to create lasting, meaningful impact. It honors those who understand that leadership is measured not only by personal achievement, but also by service to others.

This year, that longstanding tradition entered a new chapter.

Following a naming gift by Rona Yırcalı RA 64 and his son Sırrı Yırcalı RC 93, the award will be presented as The Yırcalı Family CIP Award, linking the Yırcalı family name with one of Robert College's most enduring student traditions.


Sırrı Yırcalı RC 93 and Rona Yırcalı RA 64

Presented in honor of two generations of the Yırcalı family, the award recognizes students who have made exceptional contributions to the Community Involvement Program through participatory, proactive, sustainable, productive, respectful, and collaborative projects.

By naming this award, the Yırcalı family has reinforced a tradition that has shaped generations of Robert College students. Their support ensures that one of the school's enduring recognitions will continue to honor those who dedicate themselves to serving others.

Each year, as recipients take the stage, the award will recognize more than outstanding contributions to the Community Involvement Program. It will also serve as a reminder that some of the most meaningful achievements are measured not only by individual success, but by the positive impact we make together.

Hüseyin Tığlı RA 71 Gives Back to Strengthen the RC Community

Some gifts support a single project. Others shape the future of an institution.

Through one of the most significant philanthropic commitments in Robert College's recent history, Hüseyin Tığlı RA 71 is helping shape nearly every aspect of school life. His comprehensive support package includes the Solar Farm Project; the creation of an innovation center in the renewed Feyyaz Berker Hall; the founding of the RC Community Entrepreneurs Bond (RCCEB); the newly established Hüseyin Tığlı Award, recognizing students who exemplify Robert College's Core Values; expanded scholarship support; and initiatives that strengthen alumni engagement.

The breadth of this commitment reflects a relationship with Robert College that has come full circle.
Born in Eğirdir, Isparta, Hüseyin Tığlı earned a full scholarship to Robert Academy after placing second in the entrance examination. The



Hüseyin Tığlı RA 71

opportunity transformed his life, opening the door to bachelor's and master's degrees in Chemical Engineering from Columbia University, an MBA from Harvard Business School, and a distinguished international career as a business leader, entrepreneur, investor, and mentor.

For many years, Robert College remained a cherished memory rather than an active part of his life. That changed when he returned to campus and rediscovered the institution through conversations with students, faculty, and school leadership. What began as a reunion soon became a renewed commitment to helping future generations benefit from the same life-changing opportunities he had once received.

His contribution extends well beyond philanthropy. He hosted Robert College's first alumni gathering in San Diego, helping reconnect graduates on the U.S. West Coast, and played an instrumental role in conversations that inspired the creation of the Robert College Community Entrepreneurs Bond (RCCEB). Whether through leadership, mentorship, or generosity, he continues to strengthen the Robert College community.

There is a fitting symmetry to his story. A scholarship once changed the course of one student's life. Today, his extraordinary commitment is creating opportunities for countless others, ensuring that future generations of Robert College students can begin journeys of their own.

The Baruh Family Naming Gift Supports Intellectual Curiosity



Jak Baruh RC 72

The social sciences encourage students to ask thoughtful questions, consider different perspectives, and better understand the people, societies, and ideas that shape our world. At Robert College, these qualities have long been central to a liberal arts education. This year, one of the school's graduation awards entered a new chapter. Following a naming gift by the Baruh family, it will be known as The Baruh Family Social Sciences Award. Named for Robert College alumni Alber Baruh RC 48 and his son Jak Baruh RC 72, it continues a long tradition of recognizing excellence in the field.

The award is presented each year to one female and one male graduating student who, in the opinion of the Social Sciences Department, merit special recognition for their interest and proficiency in the discipline. It celebrates students whose curiosity, intellectual engagement, and commitment to learning have distinguished them throughout their years at Robert College.
The naming of the award reflects the Baruh family's enduring relationship with Robert College. In addition to supporting students through annual scholarships and a Centennial Scholarship, the family has chosen to associate its name with an award that recognizes the habits of mind fostered through the study of the social sciences.

As future recipients take the stage, the award will continue to honor not only academic excellence, but also the curiosity, thoughtful inquiry, and openness to different perspectives that have long been hallmarks of a Robert College education.

From Vision to Reality:
The Solar Farm Begins Production



Three years ago, when Robert College adopted its 2023–2028 Strategic Plan, one of its goals was both ambitious and practical: to explore how the school could reduce its environmental footprint while strengthening its financial sustainability. Today, that vision is producing electricity.

In spring 2026, the Robert College Solar Farm in Manisa officially became operational. Fully funded through designated donations from members of the RC community and friends of the school, the project is expected to generate approximately 1.9 million kilowatt-hours of electricity annually – enough to meet Robert College's entire electricity needs.

As concerns about climate change and responsible resource management became increasingly urgent, Robert College began exploring ways to align its operations with the values it seeks to instill in its students. The Solar Farm Project became one of the most tangible expressions of that effort.

The initiative reflected another important priority identified in the Strategic Plan: resource optimization. By offsetting a substantial portion of the school's energy costs, the solar farm is expected to generate significant long-term savings. Those resources can then be directed toward RC's educational priorities, helping strengthen scholarships and support future students.

The road from concept to completion required the efforts of many individuals over several years. Former Head of School Adam Oliver played an important role in advancing the initiative. Trustee Osman Nalbantoğlu RC 91, members of the Robert College Foundation and the solar company's board, including Gonca Gürsoy Artunkal RC 85 and Ayşe Demirel Atakan RC 99, provided leadership throughout the process. The project also benefited from the guidance and support of Hüseyin Tığlı RA 71, Ümran Üngün RC 70, Korkut Öztürkmen RC 91, and many others who helped move the initiative forward.

Equally important was the generosity of the donors who believed in the project. Alumni, trustees, parents, and friends of the school came together to create a source of clean energy that would serve RC for decades to come. Their support enabled the project to move forward without requiring internal capital allocation from the school.

For students, the significance of the project extends beyond the electricity it generates. It offers a visible example of how long-term thinking can be translated into action. Just as previous generations invested in scholarships, facilities, and programs that continue to benefit students today, the solar farm represents an investment whose impact will be felt by future students, many of whom have not yet arrived on campus.

The solar farm is expected to operate for approximately twenty-five years. It stands as an example of what can happen when a community comes together around a shared goal. What began as an idea in a strategic plan



has become a working source of renewable energy – one that will support Robert College, its students, and its legacy for years to come.

Solar Farm Project Leaders

Osman Nalbantoğlu RC 91, TR
Eczacıbaşı Family
Bülent Eczacıbaşı
Oya Eczacıbaşı, TE
Emre Eczacıbaşı RC 02
Esra Eczacıbaşı Coşkun RC 07, TR
Hüsnü Özyeğin RA 63
İpek Gürdamar Üstündağ RC 82
Hüseyin Tığlı RA 71

SUPPORTERS

Gonca Gürsoy Artunkal RC 85, TR
Seda Binbaşgil RC 79 and
Hakan Binbaşgil RC 79, TR
Mark Butler, TE
Catherine Cuthell and David Cuthell, TE
Erol Hakanoğlu RC 74, TR, Board Chair
Patricia Hayot, TE
Prof. Gülru Necipoğlu Kafadar RC 75 and
Prof. Cemal Kafadar RC 73, TR
Başak Ötüş Koraltürk RC 06, TR and
Alpay Koraltürk RC 04
Kaan Okurer RC 92
Adam Oliver, Former Head of School
Can Özbal RC 88
Prof. Çağan Şekercioğlu RC 93, TR

From Award Recipients to Community Leaders

How RCAAA's next generation is strengthening the Robert College community across North America.

Founded in 1959, the Robert College Alumni Association in America (RCAAA) has pursued a simple mission: helping alumni stay connected, to one another, to Robert College, and to the generations that follow.

In an effort to support intergenerational continuity, in 1993, RCAAA initiated the **Welcome to USA (WtUSA) Awards Program,** providing financial assistance to graduating Robert College seniors pursuing higher education in the United States. Over the past three decades, the program has supported approximately 130 students, many of whom have returned as mentors, volunteers, chapter leaders, and Board members. Their journeys reflect the very spirit of RCAAA, a community where one generation welcomes the next.



Arzu Çalış RC 83, President of the RCAAA, presents Welcome to USA Awards to ten graduating Robert College seniors, at the Commencement Ceremony, marking the beginning of their journey into the North American RC alumni community.

Recipients Stay Connected



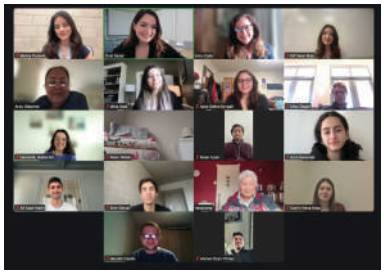
Students, recent graduates, and established alumni gathered at Pera Mediterranean Brasserie in New York City, where friendships, mentoring relationships, and professional connections continue to grow across generations.

One of the greatest successes of the WtUSA program is watching yesterday's recipients become today's leaders.This year's Meet Young Alumni Dinner in New York City welcomed students, recent graduates, and young professionals for an evening of conversation, friendship, and mentoring. Organized by Övül Sezer RC 06 and RCAAA Treasurer, Rabia İdil Demirelli RC 17, the event was generously hosted by Burak Karaçam RC 92 at Pera Mediterranean Brasserie.

Evenings like these help build professional and personal relationships that sustain the Robert College community for years to come.

A Welcome That Lasts a Lifetime

Receiving a WtUSA Award ends up being more than the start of university life abroad. It also marks the beginning of lifelong membership in the Robert College community across North America. Each spring, recipients from many graduating classes reconnect during the Annual WtUSA Community Reunion, sharing experiences, offering advice, and welcoming newer award recipients into an expanding network of friendship and support.



Former WtUSA recipient and RCAAA Secretary General, Övül Sezer RC 06 leads the annual virtual gathering, bringing together alumni from many graduating classes and strengthening the ever-growing WtUSA community.

Supporting Alumni Beyond Graduation

RCAAA's commitment does not end once students arrive in North America. Throughout the year, alumni celebrate academic achievements, artistic performances, career milestones, and life's important moments.This spring, RCAAA celebrated Doğa Bozkurt RC 22 upon her graduation from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. Today, Doğa is building a promising career in the renewable energy sector as a Strategy and Business Development Associate.

The community also applauded Tuana Tantur RC 24 following her dance performance in Awakenings at Georgetown University and welcomed Vedat Tütüncü RC 24 who is studying Physics at the University of Chicago. Together, these milestones reflect friendships and mentoring relationships that extend well beyond graduation.







RCAAA members celebrate alumni achievements throughout their academic journeys, from university graduations and artistic performances to the beginning of professional careers.

A Community Across North America

Wherever Robert College alumni settle, RCAAA strives to ensure they immediately find a welcoming community. Across North America, regional chapters create opportunities for alumni of every generation to reconnect through informal gatherings, shared experiences, and lasting friendships.

Keeping the Connection Alive

RCAAA's role extends beyond connecting alumni with one another. It also helps strengthen the enduring relationship between Robert College and its graduates.

Each spring, alumni across North America gather for RCAAA's Annual Fireside Chat with the Head of School. The virtual conversation offers first-hand updates on life at Robert College while creating meaningful dialogue between school leadership and alumni.The conversation continues in the opposite direction as well.

Each year, a member of the RCAAA Board makes an effort to return to the Robert College campus to introduce students to RCAAA - the Welcome to USA Awards Program, mentoring opportunities, and the lifelong support available through the alumni community.

Together, these virtual and in-person conversations create a continuous exchange between Robert College and its alumni, ensuring that every generation remains connected to both the College and one another.

Closing

Wherever Robert College graduates begin their next chapter, RCAAA is there to support them in North America and beyond. As students become alumni, alumni become mentors, and mentors become leaders, the cycle of connection continues, strengthening the Robert College community across North America for generations to come.



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Remembering Prof. Osman Nur Yalman RC 50



Members of the Robert College community gathered at Bizimtepe on June 5 to honor the memory of Prof. Osman Nur Yalman, one of the College's most distinguished alumni and a globally respected social anthropologist.

Family members, friends, alumni, and colleagues came together to celebrate a life dedicated to scholarship, intellectual curiosity, and the pursuit of understanding across cultures and societies. Throughout his remarkable academic career, Prof. Yalman made significant contributions to the field of social anthropology and left a lasting impact through his teaching and research at Harvard University.

Speakers at the memorial reflected on his intellectual legacy, his commitment to education, and his service to institutions including Koç University, where he served as the Chair of the Board of Trustees, and Robert College, where he was an Emeritus Trustee. The gathering provided an opportunity for the community to share memories and pay tribute to a scholar whose life embodied the values of inquiry, excellence, and global citizenship.

Prof. Yalman's legacy continues to inspire future generations of students, scholars, and alumni. He will be remembered with deep respect, gratitude, and affection.

RKMD Continues Health and Well-Being Conversations at Bizimtepe

The Robert College Alumni Association (RKMD) continues to bring alumni and community members together through a series of thought-provoking conversations focused on health, well-being, and personal development.

On April 2, RKMD hosted a well-attended discussion titled Brain Longevity at Bizimtepe. Led by Prof. Dr. Özlem Güngör Tunçer and moderated by Op. Dr. Mert Tanal RC 09, the event explored the foundations of maintaining a healthy and resilient mind throughout life.

Participants had the opportunity to engage in discussions on mental resilience, focus and performance, and achieving a sustainable work–life balance. The interactive session encouraged attendees to reflect on the habits and practices that support long-term cognitive health, while also offering new perspectives and practical insights for everyday life.

Building on the strong interest generated by the Brain Longevity event, RKMD is continuing the conversation with a new program addressing one of today's most pressing challenges for families: childhood in the digital age.



On May 11, child and adolescent mental health specialist Berna Aygün led a talk titled From the Pleasure Principle to Reality: Childhood and Violence in Digital Spaces. Moderated by Op. Dr. Mert Tanal RC 09, the session examined how digital environments shape children's perceptions of reality, the impact of exposure to violence, and the importance of healthy communication and boundary-setting in an increasingly connected world.

As children grow up surrounded by screens, social media, and digital content, questions about psychological well-being and healthy development have become more relevant than ever. The event aimed to provide parents and caregivers with valuable insights and practical guidance from an expert perspective.

Through initiatives such as these, RKMD continues to create opportunities for lifelong learning, meaningful dialogue, and community engagement. The association plans to expand its series of health-related conversations in the coming months, offering alumni and friends new opportunities to learn, connect, and grow together.

RKMD's Traditional Mother's Day Brunch Was an Occasion of Love



RKMD's traditional Mother's Day Brunch brought alumni families together for a joyful and memorable gathering at Bizimtepe on May 10.

Guests enjoyed a delightful Sunday morning featuring Bizimtepe's renowned cuisine, live music, and the warm atmosphere that has made the event a cherished tradition within the Robert College community. Mothers, families, and friends came together to celebrate the occasion, sharing meaningful moments and creating new memories.

The event offered an opportunity to honor the mothers who play such an important role in our lives while strengthening the connections that unite the RC community across generations. Laughter, conversation, and music filled the venue throughout the day, making it a fitting tribute to the spirit of Mother's Day.



RKMD extends its gratitude to all who joined the celebration and helped make this year's Mother's Day Brunch another successful and heartwarming gathering.

RC Physicians Gather for the Second Annual Alumni Dinner

On Friday, June 5, more than 120 Robert College alumni physicians representing graduating classes from 1970 to 2024 gathered at Bizim Tepe for the second annual RC Doctors Gathering.

The dinner offered a unique opportunity for physicians at every stage of their careers to reconnect with old friends, meet fellow graduates, and exchange professional experiences. Throughout the evening, conversations reflected both the diversity of the medical profession and the enduring connections formed through a shared Robert College education.

The gathering welcomed alumni from a wide range of medical specialties and generations, creating an atmosphere that encouraged mentorship, networking, and dialogue. From recent graduates beginning their medical careers to experienced practitioners with decades of service, attendees celebrated the strength and continuity of the Robert College community.

Following the success of last year's inaugural event, the RC Doctors Gathering is now on its way to becoming a cherished annual tradition. The event aims to provide a regular forum where alumni physicians can strengthen professional relationships while renewing the friendships that connect generations of Robert College graduates.

The Robert College Alumni Association thanks all participants for contributing to another memorable evening and looks forward to continuing this growing tradition in the years to come.



Spring Vibes Brings Alumni Together at Bizimtepe





RKMD's annual Spring Vibes Party once again brought the Robert College community together for an evening of friendship, music, and celebration at Bizimtepe.

Held on the evening of May 7, the event welcomed alumni from different generations who gathered to celebrate the arrival of spring with music, dancing, and laughter. Throughout the night, guests enjoyed lively conversations and the unique sense of community that continues to define the Robert College alumni network.

The atmosphere reflected the enduring bonds formed on campus and carried forward through the years. As the sun set over Bizimtepe, alumni shared storiesand moments of nostalgia, creating a warm and vibrant evening for all who attended.

Spring Vibes once again demonstrated the strength of the RC spirit and the importance of coming together as a community. RKMD extends its thanks to everyone who joined the celebration and looks forward to welcoming alumni back to future gatherings throughout the year.

World Cup Mornings at Bizim Tepe

There is something special about getting together to watch a major sporting event. When that event is the FIFA World Cup and the team on the field is Türkiye, the experience becomes even more meaningful.

Throughout the opening matches of the tournament, Robert College alumni, family members, and friends came together at Bizim Tepe to share the excitement of supporting the National Team. Despite the early kickoff times, the atmosphere was lively from the very beginning. Alumni arrived with coffee in hand, greeted old friends, met new ones, and settled in to cheer for the Crescent-Stars together.

As the matches unfolded on the big screen, conversations, anticipation, and collective reactions filled the garden. Complimentary breakfast offerings and refreshments added to the welcoming atmosphere, transforming the morning into more than just a viewing event.



Sport has a unique ability to bring people together across generations, professions, and backgrounds. At Bizim Tepe, World Cup mornings became a reminder of that power. Alumni who may not have seen each other for months—or even years—found themselves sharing the same table, the same excitement, and the same hopes for the National Team.

While the result on the pitch is always important, the true victory was the opportunity to gather as a community and experience the tournament together. The World Cup will continue, and so will the memories created during these early-morning gatherings.

We thank everyone who joined us and helped make these events so enjoyable.

A Summer of Discovery at Bizim Kamp 2026



*advertorial

Every year, Robert College Alumni Association offers a special summer program, designed for children ages 4–8.

More than just a summer camp, Bizim Kamp offers children an opportunity to explore, learn, and grow through experiences that support their physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development. Through engaging activities and collaborative play, participants build confidence, creativity, empathy, responsibility, and respect for others and the environment—all while having fun. This year's theme, "Discovering Professions," introduced children to a variety of careers through hands-on activities, games, and imaginative learning experiences. Throughout the summer, young campers stepped into different roles, explore new interests, and develop a deeper understanding of the world around them.

Designed to complement experiences gained at school, Bizim Kamp encourages curiosity, teamwork, and personal growth in a safe and nurturing environment. Guided by experienced educators and surrounded by their peers, children enjoy an enriching daily program filled with movement, creativity, exploration, and friendship.

For many families, Bizim Kamp has become a cherished summer tradition—one that creates lasting memories while helping children develop important life skills.

RKMD invites alumni families and friends to join this unique summer experience. For more information, please contact Bizimtepe at +90 212 287 00 78 or visit the registration link available through RKMD channels.







ReConnecting at Homecoming

For one autumn day each year, Robert College becomes more than a campus: it becomes home once again.

Homecoming welcomed more than five hundred alumni back to Gould Hall Steps, with graduates returning from across Türkiye and around the world to reconnect with classmates, teachers, and the place where so many lifelong friendships began. This year's theme, ReConnect, resonated throughout the day, reminding everyone that while years may pass, the bonds formed at Robert College remain remarkably strong.

The campus was alive with activity from morning until evening. The Class of RC 75 celebrated its Golden Reunion, marking 50 years since graduation, while current and former Student Council members came together to celebrate the SC's 100th anniversary. Berker Fellows reunited to reconnect and look ahead, members of the Class of RC 20 received the time capsules they had created as Prep students, and families enjoyed children's activities and live music by Grup Mercimek in the Forum.

One of the day's most anticipated traditions, the Dave Phillips Memorial Basketball Game, once again brought alumni back onto the court. Nearly 60 players took part, cheered on by classmates, families, and friends, in a celebration of camaraderie that honored the enduring legacy of Coach Dave Phillips. Later, during the









Assembly, Head of School Whitman Shepard introduced a moving AI-generated tribute created by Cenk Gümüşcüoğlu RC 97, bringing cherished photographs of Coach Phillips to life and creating one of the day's most memorable moments.

The Assembly also looked toward the future. Alumni were introduced to the newly launched digital RCQ, recognized the contributions of the RCQ Editorial Board, celebrated the Student Council's centennial and the Berker Fellows, and heard reflections from Whitman Shepard on Robert College's reputation, resilience, and the importance of remaining connected to one another and to the school.

Behind every Homecoming tradition stands an extraordinary community effort. Faculty, staff, students, alumni volunteers, the Student Council, and countless members of the Robert College community worked together to welcome hundreds of alumni back to campus and ensure that every detail reflected the warmth and spirit of RC.

As the day drew to a close, one thing was clear. Homecoming is much more than an annual reunion. It is a celebration of a community that continues to grow stronger with every generation and a reminder that no matter where life leads, Robert College will always be a place to come home to.



ReConnecting Across the United States

For decades, Robert College has maintained close ties with its alumni across the United States. This year, however, the tradition took an exciting new direction. For the first time, the annual U.S. trip expanded to the West Coast, creating new opportunities to ReConnect with graduates, strengthen friendships, and celebrate the enduring spirit of the RC community.

Accompanied by Board Chair Erol Hakanoğlu RC 74 and Head of School Whitman Shepard, the team traveled from San Francisco to Los Angeles, San Diego, and New York City, where alumni of different generations came together to share memories, exchange ideas, and renew lifelong connections.

Each gathering reflected the generosity that has long defined



the RC community. The tour began at Dalida Mediterranean in San Francisco, where award-winning chef Sayat Özyılmaz RC 04 welcomed nearly one hundred alumni for an evening of friendship. It continued with a luncheon graciously hosted by Ergün Kırlıkovalı RA 70 at his home in San Juan Capistrano, followed by a dinner hosted by Hüseyin Tığlı RA 71 in San Diego. The journey concluded with the traditional AlumNight at the Penn Club in New York City, where approximately 150 alumni gathered for one of the largest RC events in recent years.

While every gathering had its own unique character, they all shared the same unmistakable RC spirit. Alumni who had not seen one another in years reconnected with old friends, welcomed recent graduates into their local networks, and reaffirmed the lifelong bonds that continue to unite the Robert College family across continents.

Wherever Robert College alumni may call home, the spirit of RC continues to bring them together. This year's coast-to-coast journey was a reminder that while our community spans thousands of miles, it remains remarkably close-knit.

Two Cities, One RC Community

Among this year's international alumni gatherings, visits to London and Boston stood out as memorable opportunities to reconnect with graduates across generations. Though separated by an ocean, the two cities shared the same unmistakable RC spirit: friendships renewed, memories shared, and a lifelong connection to Robert College that continues to unite alumni around the world.

The annual London AlumNight welcomed more than 200 graduates, from the Class of RC 67 to RC 25, at Beaufort House, sponsored by Fırat İşbecer RC 98. The evening once again brought together alumni at different stages of life, continuing one of Robert College's longest-standing international traditions.

The visit also included a series of one-on-one meetings with alumni, creating opportunities for new conversations and engagements. A special highlight was the warm hospitality extended by Koray Ertaş, Ambassador of Türkiye in London. For many alumni, particularly those from earlier generations, spending time once again with Head of School Whitman Shepard and his wife, Bengü Shepard, rekindled memories of campus life and reinforced the continuity that remains at the heart of the RC experience.

In Boston, nearly 70 alumni and friends gathered at the Harvard Faculty Club despite a major winter storm forecast. The evening was honored by the presence of Diğdem Buner, Consul General of Türkiye in Boston, whose attendance added a special dimension to the gathering. Board Chair Erol Hakanoğlu RC 74, Trustee Prof. Cemal Kafadar RC 73, Head of School Whitman Shepard, and Academic Dean Maura Kelly spent the evening reconnecting with alumni, many of whom share long-standing academic and personal ties to the



city. As in London, conversations flowed naturally, from memories of RC to reflections on the years since graduation and hopes for the future.

Whether in London or Boston, the message was the same: while alumni may build their lives around the world, the friendships and values forged at Robert College continue to bring them back together, wherever they may be.

Seattle: From Reunion to Routine



What began as a casual alumni gathering has quickly grown into a new Robert College tradition in Seattle.

In March, 17 alumni spanning six decades, from the Class of 1961 to the Class of 2021, gathered at Koza Cafe for an afternoon of conversation, shared memories, and Turkish hospitality. Over tea, lahmacun, and künefe, old friendships were renewed, new connections were formed, and laughter flowed as easily as the conversation.

Before the afternoon came to an end, someone suggested meeting again, not for another lunch, but for a walk around Seattle's scenic Green Lake. The idea took off immediately.

Just one week later, the group's first Sunday walk brought alumni back together, transforming a one-time reunion into what is now a regular tradition centered on friendship, wellbeing, and community. The group is already looking ahead to future activities.



The Seattle gathering is a reminder that alumni events don't always end when everyone goes home. Sometimes, they become the beginning of something new.

RC 90: Thirty-Five Years Later, Still Home



For the Class of RC 90, their last reunion was more than a celebration of 35 years since graduation. It was the reunion they never had. After the pandemic forced the cancellation of their 30th reunion, more than 80 classmates finally came together from across Türkiye and around the world, including Australia, the United States, Europe, the United Kingdom, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia, to celebrate friendships that have stood the test of time.

The evening quickly proved what so many alumni know to be true: no matter how many years pass or how many miles separate them, returning to an RC gathering feels like coming home. Stories were shared, memories revisited, and the music of their school years once again filled the room as classmates laughed and celebrated together.

The reunion also reflected something that has come to define the Class of RC 90. Over the years, its members have become dedicated volunteers, mentors, fundraisers, and active supporters of Robert College, generously giving back to the school and to one another. The class recognized the commitment of its longtime class agents, organizing committee, and many volunteers whose dedication has helped keep the RC 90 spirit alive for more than three decades.

Thirty-five years after graduation, the message was simple: while life may lead alumni in different directions, the friendships formed at Robert College continue to bring them home.

Sami Kariyo RC 77 Supports the Biodiversity of the Seas

A gigantic 'ghost net' was recently extracted from the Marmara Sea.



Sami Kariyo RC 77

A gigantic 'ghost net' was recently extracted from the Marmara Sea.

The Deniz Yaşamını Koruma Derneği (DYKD, Marine Life Conservation Society) joined forces with the Kariyo & Ababay Vakfı (KAV, Kariyo & Ababay Foundation) in the shared goal of protecting the sea's ecosystem. One of their recent works garnered a lot of attention in media.

DYKD, in association with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, launched a mobile app called Mavi Atlas (Blue Atlas) in 2025. Citizens can upload information about the species, depth, and location of marine life, and therefore can contribute to the mapping of biodiversity in Türkiye. Citizens can also report problems, such as 'ghost nets.'

Ghost nets refer to a situation where defunct fishing gear—including nets, lines, longlines, and pots that have been accidentally lost, swept away by storms, or intentionally discarded by fishermen—remains on the sea floor and continues to trap and kill marine life indefinitely.

The first such report of ghost nets came from Heybeliada, and the second came from near Marmara Island in the Marmara Sea. The net was astoundingly huge; it could cover the Çamlıca Tower completely.

An initial exploration study with divers and underwater cameras revealed that the nets were trapped in rocky areas and crevices. It was observed that while the nets were tightly wrapped around rocks in some sections, in others, they drifted along the seabed with the current, turning into a virtually invisible trap. Many marine animals that were still alive were rescued and released back into their habitats.

Meticulous work of this scale is only made possible by the dedication of patrons who champion these causes—individuals like Sami Kariyo.

Four RC Alumni Named Among 100 Female Founders in Türkiye by Fast Company

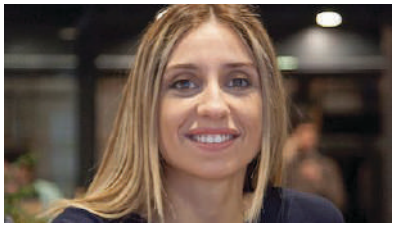
The alumni recognized are from different decades.



Yonca Ulusoy RC 93

For the seventh consecutive year, Fast Company has announced its list of Türkiye's top 100 female business leaders, recognizing founders and majority stakeholders. This year's prestigious cohort features four Robert College alumni.

Yonca Ulusoy RC 93, currently the CEO of Letgo, is featured as the former managing partner of Otonet. Joining her is Rina Onur Şirinoğlu RC 04, co-founder of Spyke Games. The retail and manufacturing sector is represented by industry pioneer Ayşen Keskin Zamanpur RC 76, founder of Silk & Cashmere/Fabeks, while tech innovator Aytül Erdal Erçil RC 75, founder of the AI-driven retail solutions firm Vispera, rounds out the impressive RC presence.



Rina Onur Şirinoğlu RC 04



Aytül Erdal Erçil RC 75

Tiyatrokare Receives the First Haldun Dormen Award

Haldun Dormen RC 49 was one of the earliest supporters of Nedim Saban RC 86

TiyatroKare, founded by Nedim Saban RC 86, won the inaugural Haldun Dormen Award in the 27th Yapı Kredi Afife Theater Awards. Established this year to honor the late doyen of Turkish theater, Haldun Dormen RC 49, the award was presented to Tiyatrokare for its staging of D.L. Coburn's *Konken Partisi* (The Gin Game). Saban interpreted the play through the lens of post-COVID loneliness, particularly among the aging population, while injecting a sense of hope: "The play takes place in a nursing home. In the 1980s, such institutions were seen as places of abandonment. I wanted to take a different approach and show them as a positive aspect of modern life. I take my theater students to these homes on World Theater Day to visit former artists. Especially after COVID, the management told us these visits were more effective than medicine."



Nedim Saban RC 86

Saban and his theater company have received numerous awards over the years, but this one, given in Dormen's name for the best comedy of the year, has a particularly significant place in Saban's heart: "After I graduated from NYU, Haldun Abi invited me over. He wanted to try new things, so I proposed an angry play by Joe Orton about sexual liberation. It became an instant success but also drew major backlash. Haldun Abi, known for saying "you can do it, darling," this time said "you couldn't do it darling." However, he continued to support me when I founded Tiyatrokare. I always sought his advice on scripts, asking if a play would be a hit. He would laugh and say, 'If I knew that, I'd be a billionaire.' I always looked up to him, not only for his successes but also because of his ability to laugh off his failures. Very few people Türkiye can self-criticize like that. His courage, intelligence and realism have always been my roadmap. This award propels me to continue my 34-year-long journey with Tiyatrokare. I am also intimidated a little by the prospect of doing better, but even if I don't, I have learned to laugh it off. Which is as important as the award itself.

Mert Turna RC 23 and Oğuzhan Karaca RC 23 Secures Pre-Seed Funding for Their Startup

Derya disrupts the logistic industry.



Oğuzhan Karaca RC 23 and Mert Turna RC 23

US-based startup Derya founded by Mert Turna RC 23 and Oğuzhan Karaca RC 23, has secured $1.1 million in pre-seed funding. The investment round included Y Combinator, Turkish venture capital pioneer 212, and Ubicloud co-founder Umur Çubukçu RC 97. Derya is also part of the Y Combinator startup accelerator program.

Derya provides an end-to-end AI infrastructure designed to automate freight forwarding and logistics. By replacing slow, manual processes with an automated engine, it manages documentation, carrier qualification, shipment tracking, and compliance. The funding will scale its operations, logistics financing, and data processing capacity.

Turna and Karaca taught themselves coding and started earning money in ninth grade by building websites and later creating many projects together. They say that they were always interested in machinery and traveling, a natural link to logistics technologies:

"We are first and foremost problem solvers. We are especially drawn to legacy industries such as logistics, where the problems are not obvious from the outside because the work is so operationally complicated. Freight is fragmented, cyclical, and difficult for any single incumbent to fully own. That creates room for new companies to enter if they combine cyclical financial stress of asset heavy competitors with a technological advantage."

Turna and Karaca believe RC was helpful in making them both very analytical yet deeply in touch with the social aspects of work: "Debate, friendships, and the school's international environment gave us a broader creativity that has been immensely helpful in finding opportunities and building startups, as well as working on more abstract disruptive strategies within our industry.

Robert College:
The Startup Factory

The entrepreneurial drive within the Robert College community has deep roots. Long before alumni were launching Türkiye's leading modern enterprises, that inventive spirit was evident on campus, where the school operated its own self-sustaining farm and sold surplus produce to neighboring areas. Today, RC's legacy of innovation continues to shape the nation's business landscape through younger generations, who are leveraging emerging technologies and artificial intelligence.





Creative in Residence, James Edwards, guest lectures to LP students

The Rise of the Teen Entrepreneur

Around the globe, youth entrepreneurship has undergone a profound paradigm shift, evolving from a career track for the business-minded into a vital survival skill in a highly volatile, AI-driven world. The traditional path of waiting until adulthood to start a business has shifted. Today, "teen entrepreneurship"—defined as young people aged 13 to 19 launching, managing, and scaling business ventures—is a thriving economic movement.

Several factors have made this shift prevalent today:

- **Democratic Access to Technology:** The barrier to entry has plummeted. With a smartphone and an internet connection, a teenager has access to virtually the same global infrastructure as a Fortune 500 company.

- **No-Code and AI Tools:** Building a website or an app used to require years of specialized software engineering. Now, intuitive no-code platforms and artificial intelligence design tools allow rapid prototyping in hours rather than months.

- **The Power of Social Media:** Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube serve as free, built-in marketing machines. Gen Z individuals are digital natives who instinctively understand algorithm-driven growth and peer-to-peer marketing, allowing them to build hyper-engaged audiences organically.

Ultimately, this trend means a fundamental rewiring of the future workforce. These young founders are building digital literacy, financial independence, and a high risk tolerance early in life. By decoupling professional success from traditional corporate timelines and university degrees, teen entrepreneurs are proving that agility, community-building, and technological fluency matter far more in the modern economy than age or experience.

Education needs to respond to these changes. Across OECD countries, embedding entrepreneurship education at the high school level is widely viewed as critical for long-term economic growth, as it has the power to overcome socio-economic barriers and fight unemployment, particularly among young people. Indeed, the Turkish Ministry of Education (MEB) created an elective to introduce entrepreneurship to high school students in 2025.

Parallel to these dynamics, RC student interest in entrepreneurship has risen markedly over the years. Students increasingly recognize the need to develop entrepreneurial skills to accomplish the kind of changes they want to make in the world, and RC proactively supports them along the way.

However, for an institution like Robert College, integrating entrepreneurship into education is less about teaching students how to launch startups and more about fostering a resilient, problem-solving mindset. By embedding these concepts into campus life—through clubs, events, and classroom innovation—RC provides a vital incubator where academic excellence meets real-world execution. It empowers young minds to look at modern ambiguities not with anxiety, but as opportunities to build, pivot, and lead.

Students entering RC now have opportunities to develop entrepreneurial skills inside the classroom, in their co-curricular activities, and (coming soon!) in RC's first innovation center. Opening in the renewed Feyyaz Berker Hall, the Innovation Center will provide a collaborative space for creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurial thinking. Designed with input from students and faculty, it is made possible through the generosity of Hüseyin Tığlı RA 71.

From Class to Club: How RC Students Cultivate the Entrepreneurial Spirit

"The work happening at RC is testament to how the school embraces innovation."

JT Rehill, the Head of Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship at RC, explains exactly how this entrepreneurial mindset takes root and thrives within the school.

Inside the classroom, is where the most significant progress has been made in the past couple of years.



Leslie Armstrong, TE with students





Student speakers at Social Entrepreneurship Festival

Across OECD nations, introducing entrepreneurship education in high schools is widely considered vital for sustained economic growth, offering a powerful way to break down socio-economic barriers and combat youth unemployment. Reflecting this trend, the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MEB) introduced a new elective course last year to teach entrepreneurship to high school students, and so far more than 200 of our own students have completed it. Next year, we are introducing a brand new Advanced Placement (AP) course from the College Board: AP Business with Personal Finance. This course will impart core university-level business concepts and require that all enrolled students create a business plan for their own enterprise over the course of the year.

RC currently has more than 140 clubs and initiatives, some of them providing the kinds of experiences students will use to forge their own innovative paths in the future. These include newer clubs working on AI, quantum computing, and biodesign; and long-established clubs like Makers, Robotics, the Business Society, and Destination Imagination (DI). Three clubs, however, stand out as uniquely focused on fostering entrepreneurial skills and abilities: the Startup Factory, Junior Achievers (JARC), and the Social Entrepreneurship Club.

The Startup Factory initiative has completed its second year, with three student enterprises securing mentorships from venture capitalists in support of their newly minted ventures. The club attracted more than 100 students to its ranks at the start of the year and we expect this momentum to continue. In true incubator style, JARC recruits a limited number of students each year with half devoting themselves to idea generation and product development, while the other half learn essential business skills through planning, organizing, marketing, and managing a series of annual events.

The Social Entrepreneurship Club dates back more than a decade and has supported students in creating their own social enterprises, from mushroom farming to educational publishing celebrating women entrepreneurs. One notable success has been in supporting local producers of social and environmentally responsible products in a weekly popup store in the Commons. The proceeds from the Sustainable Goods Marketplace go directly to supporting student projects. Next year, the SEC students will be teaching robotics to their peers in Kenya and developing solutions to other social challenges in Peru and elsewhere in the world.



Social Entrepreneurship Club students during SE Festival workshop

As the Head of Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship at RC, I'm excited to be part of the amazing things our students are doing and helping them prepare for the world they will graduate into. It's still rare for a high school anywhere in the world to invest so much in entrepreneurship education, and the work happening at RC is testament to how this school embraces innovation and works to support students in ways that can help them make a positive difference in the world."

The Startup Factory- Where Ideas Find Their Wings

The Startup Factory is a club that was founded by Mert Kaan Atan RC 25 and Emir Çelet RC 25. It meets twice monthly. The goal of the club is to offer RC students the opportunity to apply their knowledge to important problems through creative means. Throughout the year, the club organizes workshops, speaker events, and panel discussions that connect students with founders, investors, and other leaders from the Turkish startup ecosystem. These events allow students to learn from experienced entrepreneurs, receive feedback on their ideas, and gain exposure to the startup world.

RCQ asked Emre Açar RC 27, a member of the club, about how entrepreneurship is part of students' conversations and future plans: "RC students know that founding profitable startups can be one of the most sustainable ways to address major challenges like climate change. By combining their passion with technology, they want to lead the way in solving the problems they care about most. Current advancements in technology make it possible for almost anyone, even with limited resources,

to embark on this journey more easily. This presents a great opportunity for those who want to lead change. RC students have started to believe more in their own ideas and in themselves, which has led to growing interest among them."

The Flagship event of the club is Bobcat's Den, where students pitch their ventures to a panel of judges.

First of Its Kind: RC Bobcat's Den

Robert College has taken student entrepreneurship to the next level with **RC Bobcat's Den,** a pioneering initiative where alumni invest real money or offer mentorship to student startups. Formed by Class of 2025 members Mert Kaan Atan and Emir Çelet, this project represents a historic first for high school education in Türkiye.

The program operates in two stages: a pre-elimination phase and a final pitch competition. During the finals, student-led ventures compete for real financial backing from a panel of investors, and experienced entrepreneurs from RC community. More than just a contest, Bobcat's Den fosters intergenerational community bonds by offering students invaluable professional mentorship from alumni. The initiative successfully debuted on April 16, 2025, where six student teams pitched their ideas to alumni investors Selin Dilmener Göral RC 03, Burcu Göbülük RC 00, Fırat İşbecer RC 98, and Ersan Öztürk RC 94. Jury member Selin Dilmener Göral was so impressed with the presentations that she said she felt more hopeful than ever about the future.

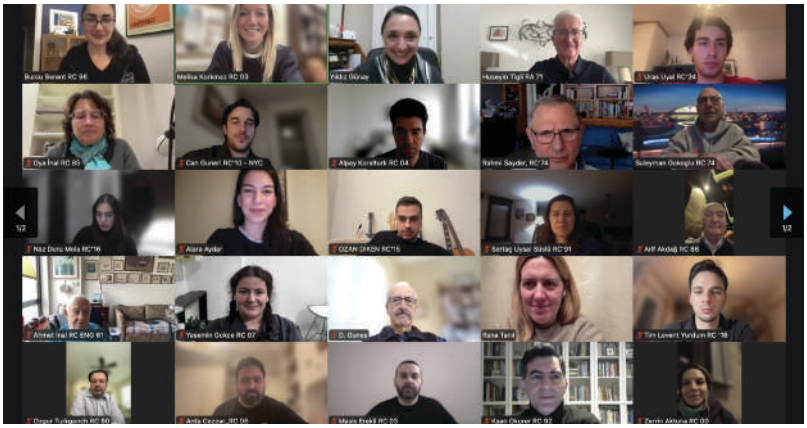


Bobcat's Den jury panel, Ersan Öztürk RC 94, Selin Dilmener RC 03, Fırat İşbecer RC 98, Burcu Göbülük RC 00 together with students

The First Winner of Bobcat's Den Emre Ersin RC 26 Created an AI Receptionist

"Bobcat's Den creates a powerful incentive to move from thinking to doing."

As the owner of the winning idea Emre Ersin RC 26 received a grant at the inaugural Bobcat's Den for Sonexa, an AI-powered voice receptionist for dental clinics: "The idea came from observing how much time front-desk staff spend handling repetitive tasks such as scheduling appointments, sending reminders, and answering common patient questions. Sonexa automates these interactions with a conversational voice AI application that can manage calls from start to finish.



An early virtual gathering of the RCCEB community as the initiative was taking shape

Winning at Bobcat's Den was one of the first forms of external validation for the project. More importantly, it gave me the confidence and motivation to move beyond the idea stage and begin working directly with dental clinics to test and refine the solution.

RC has an incredible pool of talented and ambitious students. However, many students with great ideas never take the first step toward turning them into reality. Bobcat's Den creates a powerful incentive to move from thinking to doing.

The competition encourages students to engage in the challenging but essential aspects of entrepreneurship: speaking with potential customers, building something tangible, testing assumptions, and presenting their ideas under pressure. Even for students who do not ultimately pursue their projects, the experience teaches valuable skills in problem-solving, communication, and execution.

After graduation, I will be attending Imperial College London to study Medicine. I plan to continue exploring entrepreneurship and innovation. My long-term goal is to launch a biotechnology startup. Through my experiences with Startup Factory and Sonexa, I discovered that I am deeply interested in building solutions that combine scientific advancement with entrepreneurship."

Hüseyin Tığlı RA 71 Leads the Creation of an RC Entrepreneurship Community



While RC alumni have supported each other's business ventures for decades, Hüseyin Tığlı RA 71 is leading the way in transforming this organic spirit into a structured, sustainable network. His brainchild, the RC Community Entrepreneurs Bond (RCCEB), devises a unique way for founders to give back to their alma mater.

Tığlı's inspiration struck after re-connecting with the campus following what he calls a long period of "being off the grid." Deeply impressed by the curiosity and warmth of the current student body, he began reflecting on his own enduring friendships from his days at Robert Academy fifty years ago. Visualizing the massive potential of the global RC network, he wondered if the community was making the ultimate impact it could.

Shortly thereafter, Tığlı encountered a program at Harvard Business School called "The Entrepreneurs Promise," which encouraged alumni to pledge a portion of their business exit proceeds to the school. "I thought the idea was interesting but limited," Tığlı recalls. "Could there be a more comprehensive way for the RC community to support innovation and entrepreneurship in a vibrant ecosystem, while also supporting our school? That question was the origin of The Bond—a community of RC entrepreneurs, investors, executives, and friends, all passionate about further strengthening RC for years to come."

The RC Community Entrepreneurs Bond is still in its formation stages, but already received significant interest, with many alumni contributing ideas and volunteering their time to put solid structures in place. It seems indeed there was genuine longing for tighter, meaningful and impactful connections.

True to its startup nature, Tığlı prefers to keep the metrics simple for now: "If we could help one more startup to achieve success and if that could fund one more scholarship, I will be happy that our efforts have been worthwhile. Personally, there was no way for me to attend Robert College or pursue graduate studies without the full scholarship I received, so it is my absolute pleasure to give back."

Like an agile startup, the RCCEB plans to experiment, iterate, and improve by embracing the "fail fast" methodology: "Jump in, try things, shorten trial cycles, fail, fail, then improve...". Tığlı underlines that innovation is already happening even in the formative stages of RCCEB: "One of our members, Eray Erdoğan RC 11, is inspired by the idea of *serendipity engineering* – the practice of intentionally structuring onboarding processes to increase the probability of meaningful, impactful connections. I relate to this concept of serendipity engineering on an experiential level. I met many wonderful members of the RC community during the formative stages of this initiative, mostly by chance. Would it not be wonderful, if we could achieve more impactful connections, intentionally?"

RCCEB Connectors Group: Engineering Serendipity

The RCCEB created an important subset, the Connectors Group. In a nutshell, the Connectors Group exists to build and maintain the platform(s) and processes for efficient communication among RCCEB community members. This mission involves both a solid communications infrastructure for information and matching as well as the personal connections that make those matches impactful. RCQ asked key members of the group about their involvement and work to date:

What has your entrepreneurship journey been like? Why did you join the RCCEB Connectors Group?

Eray Erdoğan RC 11 is the founder of Reflect Studio, a B-Corp certified merchandise and lifestyle brand:

"I co-founded Reflect Studio (reflectstudio.com) with two other RC graduates, and I now serve on the board, while I plan the next chapter of my career. My interest in entrepreneurship goes back to university, where I founded Koc University's entrepreneurship club. I have been involved in a number of ventures since then, including in the education space. The longest-running of these is Reflect Studio. Now that Reflect has matured, I am at an inflection point. I am planning my next venture, which will center on enabling other entrepreneurs. Therefore, joining the Connectors Group came at exactly the right moment.

What excites me most is engineering serendipity. Every introduction we facilitate has the potential to change a trajectory. A chance meeting becomes a mentorship. A casual introduction becomes a funding round. My role is to help build the matching layer that



turns the RC network into something more than a directory: a system where the right people find each other at the right time, by design rather than by luck."

Kaan Hotan RC 23 currently angel invests into early stage startups and supports exceptional founders from day zero. He is also in the process of setting up a VC fund, to continue his focus on early-stage investing:

"I have been on a scholarship throughout my time at Robert College, and I have always wanted to find a meaningful way to give back. The Connectors Group is the best path I have found to do that. As an investor, the group I most enjoy backing is RC graduates and friends of RC, so this role aligns directly with where I already focus my attention."

Sinan Gölhan, RC Friend, son of Oya İnal RC 85, is the founder and CEO of GelTech Labs, a robotics and AI driven, automated laboratory that accelerates R&D and quality-control testing for soft biomaterials:

"I grew up observing close family members fighting cancer. This observation motivated me to pursue research in advanced biomaterials for drug delivery. As a scientist I felt like a robot repeating the same protocols day in, day out. I dropped out and started a lab robotics company to speed up discovery. Robert College runs three generations deep in my family, so when a trusted contact introduced me to the RCCEB community, it felt like a natural fit."

Yasemin Gökçe RC 07 is building technical marketing company, komutai.com in Istanbul, after a fifteen-year career in software engineering and data science, most recently as a quantitative data researcher at Citadel in the United States:

"I am at an early stage of my own entrepreneurship journey, and joining the Connectors Group came at a fortunate moment. With recent advances in AI, I realized that the data processing and context-rich decision making capabilities that I helped build at Citadel can now be made available to many more companies. This led me to start Komutai, where I help companies adapt their marketing to target their newest and largest "demographic" AI Agents.

Having returned to Istanbul from the United States, I was looking to reconnect with the Robert College community, and this opportunity aligned with that wish. Contributing my technical skills and working with the other Connectors has been very rewarding."

What is the Serendipity File? What sort of stories have you gathered so far?

"The Serendipity File is built as new members join the Bond. Each entry comes out of a roughly half-hour conversation between the prospective member and the Connectors Group. The conversation covers three areas: the person's background, what they are seeking, and what they feel they can contribute. We capture that information in a structured brief with consistent fields for sector, geography, what someone is looking for, what they can offer, and the counterpart types and timing that matter, so that

when a future need arises we can search the library directly.

The briefs already cover a wide range of profiles. They include late-stage



PhD candidates preparing to spin biotech work out of US research labs, and a semi-retired industrialist running hydrogen and composites R&D, who is open to hosting young engineers in his factory. There is a recently retired federal-agency scientist now coaching SBIR (Small Business Innovation Research) proposals, serial founders between ventures, and first-time solo founders looking for co-founders or their first enterprise customers. We have senior corporate operators exploring a founder path, boutique business owners looking for steadier trusted demand, wealth and family-office partners developing product-side theses, retired senior operators offering board and advisory time, and deep-tech consultants who still want to mentor and teach. We also have students looking for their first meaningful technical roles, and content-side professionals exploring personal media projects alongside their corporate work.

Roles cluster around three broad arcs: members in active build mode, members in selective-contribution mode after a long career, and members early in their trajectory looking for high-quality exposure.

This level of granularity is difficult to surface from a CV or a LinkedIn page. The private member website has not yet launched, and the Serendipity File is being built as the backbone for structured matching once it does. Even working only from our private network and these conversations so far, we have already been able to connect members and seed



Hüseyin Tığlı RA 71, Director of IA Yıldız Günay, Donor Relations Coordinator Melisa Korkmaz RC 03, Head of Communications Rana Tanıl, Head of Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship JT Rehill with Startup Factory Club students

collaborations. With higher-resolution capture in place, and the supporting infrastructure currently being set up, we expect that to grow substantially."

How did Robert College contribute to your individual stories?

Eray Erdoğan RC 11: The friendships I built at Robert College continued well past graduation, and I co-founded my company with my RC friends. As I plan my next steps, I am again consulting with many RC graduates. I would like to pay it forward by drawing on the entrepreneurship community in Türkiye, which I know well, to support RC founders.

Kaan Hotan: Throughout my early career, Robert College graduates have been the people who made things possible. They mentored me, and taught me entrepreneurship, as this is an apprenticeship business. My life has always revolved around Robert College both personally and professionally.

Sinan Gölhan: My great-grandfather graduated in 1921 and my mother graduated in 1985. RCCEB has been my way of connecting with the Robert College community and continuing my family legacy at RC. GelTech Labs is currently fundraising, and I have received meaningful support from the RC community in that process.

Yasemin Gökçe: Robert College was the most pivotal institution in my life. Despite almost twenty years having passed since graduation, I still vividly remember the labs, the books, and the feeling that I had "found my tribe." Unfortunately, during my years in Chicago, I drifted away, but I've been very fortunate to be received back with open arms when I took steps to reconnect. RCCEB has given me a way to plug into the larger RC community as well, and I am so pleased to be interacting with the members and contributing to our collective.

From Brick-and-Mortar to AI: The Future is Exciting

RC boasts many alumni who have contributed to the Turkish economy through foundational businesses. For instance, after graduating from Robert College in 1932, Nejat Eczacıbaşı revolutionized Türkiye's healthcare and industrial sectors. Classmates at Robert College who later pursued engineering in the US, Feyyaz Berker RC ENG 46 and Nihat Gökyiğit RC ENG 46, paired up to found an engineering consulting firm in 1956 that grew into Tekfen Construction, which went on to complete major projects, including pipelines, highways, and oil refineries. İbrahim Bodur RC 50 set up Türkiye's first ceramic tile factory in Çanakkale in 1957. He is widely recognized as one of the pioneers of regional industrialization in Türkiye. Hüsnü Özyeğin RA 63 had a significant impact on Turkish banking through Finansbank and later built an immense footprint in retail and real estate through Fiba Group. İbrahim Betil RA 64 founded Bankekspres and later launched the NGO Toplum Gönüllüleri Vakfı (Community Volunteers Foundation).

With such legacy, RC's entrepreneurial energy compounds each year, as the school continues to support students with key knowledge, skills, experiential platforms, and community members who are potential investors or collaborators. Thanks to the advent of AI, many stories coming out of RC now have an AI twist. For example, Kaan Karakeben RC 08 founded Cruvo, an AI-powered executive search service based in London. After more than five years leading the machine learning team at Beamery, a major HR-tech unicorn, he left in 2025 to build an agentic AI workflow that produces curated candidate shortlists for executive search firms. Orkun Duman RC 15 co-founded Cytara, an AI-native software company building tools for GxP review and other regulated pharmaceutical workflow bottlenecks. He studied Computer Science at UC Berkeley and spent six years at Google, working across Fuchsia, Search, Discover, and generative AI products before starting his own company.

It is impossible to encapsulate every milestone in a history this rich. But the true power of Robert College's entrepreneurial tapestry lies not just in where it has been, but where it is going. Armed with a legacy of visionary builders and social changemakers, the RC community faces the future with bold curiosity, knowing that the greatest chapters are yet to be written.



Social Entrepreneurship Club Students in Leadership Development Workshop

Photo Credit: Special thanks to JT Rehill, Head of Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship, for providing all student photographs featured in this cover story.

Roksan Kaspi RC 02 Goes Beyond the Hype: Why The Future of AI is Human

With the strong footprint of AI on current business and entrepreneurial dynamics, RCQ reached out to Roksan Hayırel Kaspi RC 02, the consulting director of the Türkiye Yapay Zeka İnsiyatifi (Türkiye Artificial Intelligence Initiative) for her take on the future.

Which changes are truly transformative, and which are merely hype in AI?
For decades, software was something people used to perform tasks. Now we're entering a world where intelligent systems can actually participate in those tasks alongside us as teammates. The hype comes when people assume that using AI tools will automatically transform their business. Technology alone doesn't create transformation. The biggest challenges are almost never technical. They are about leadership, culture, processes, governance, and people's willingness to change. The companies that understand this are the ones creating real value from AI.

What emerging technology excites you most today, and why?
Without question, agentic AI. These systems can reason, plan, use tools, interact with other systems, and execute tasks with increasing autonomy. For the first time, we're seeing software begin to resemble a digital colleague rather than just a tool. The combination of agentic AI, robotics, and real-time enterprise data will fundamentally change how organizations operate over the next decade. The conversation is gradually shifting to "How do we collaborate with intelligent systems?" That's a profound change that will impact



Roksan Hayırel Kaspi RC 02

everything from business models to organization structures.

If you were starting your career today, what skills would you focus on developing first?
I would focus on the soft skills, on becoming excellent at the things that are uniquely human, like communication, critical thinking, creativity, leadership, emotional intelligence, and the ability to work with people. These will become even more valuable as AI becomes more capable. At the same time, I would make sure to become AI fluent. Not necessarily by becoming a data scientist or an AI engineer, but by understanding how these systems work, where they add value, where they fail, and how to use them effectively.

But most importantly, I would still develop expertise in a specific domain that really interests me. Whether that's healthcare, finance, education, communications, or manufacturing, it does not matter. Deep knowledge is still critical. AI is an amplifier. The people who will create the most value are those who combine domain expertise with AI capabilities.

What distinguishes organizations that successfully adopt AI from those that struggle?
The successful ones start with a business problem, not with a technology.The organizations that struggle are often fascinated by the latest tools and models. The organizations that succeed are focused on outcomes. They ask how AI can improve customer experiences, make employees more productive, reduce costs, or create entirely new business opportunities.

Another common characteristic is leadership. The best AI transformations are driven from the top. They have clear sponsorship, and ownership, and a willingness to rethink how work is done. Technology is important, but leadership is usually the deciding factor.

Reimagining the Horizon: Conversations with RC Entrepreneurs

Over the decades, countless RC alumni have shaped the business world through their entrepreneurial drive. Taking the curiosity, critical thinking, and initiative fostered on campus, they continue to explore new frontiers. In this issue, RCQ connects with members of this ever-growing community to look behind the scenes of their ventures, uncovering the lessons they learned through successes and failures.

Hüseyin Tığlı RA 71 Transformed From an Accidental Entrepreneur to an Intentional One

"If I could re-do my career, I would jump into the entrepreneurial world a lot sooner."



Gonca Gürsoy Artunkal RC 85, TR, Hüseyin Tığlı RA 71 and Tricia Tığlı

Hüseyin Tığlı spearheaded the formation of the RC Community Entrepreneurs Bond (RCCEB) and here reflects on his own entrepreneurial journey.

Did you always want to be an entrepreneur?
While at RA, then at the engineering school at Columbia, then at Harvard Business School, I was really a "conventional thinker" –mostly focusing on routine academic success, though cherishing creativity and innovation.

In my early career as an engineer, I found myself in environments that welcomed creativity. For example, I loved applying Monte Carlo simulation to a critical technical design and linear programming to a thorny capacity planning problem. Later on in higher leadership positions, I loved trying unconventional management practices –one such example was allowing two pregnant, then young parents, to "share" the job of VP Manufacturing.

After a long corporate career, I accidentally came across a start-up opportunity. I've been an "intentional entrepreneur" ever since. If I could re-do my career, I would jump into the entrepreneurial world a lot sooner.

How about successes and failures along the way?
In the last 20 plus years, I've founded and/or ran five start-ups, at times more than one at a time. I've had three exits and one complete failure. The fifth one created what I hope will turn out to be valuable IP. I'm currently incubating the sixth.

My failure perhaps offers the best piece of advice to founders. Even a product offering that is both much higher in performance and lower in cost than the competition does not ensure success. We had created biosensors on nano-porous silicon, read by sophisticated photonics. However, we misjudged the length of the sales cycle and therefore our go-to-market strategy and the financing strategy were not aligned with the actual market dynamics. My personal mistake was falling in love with the technology and attempting to enter a market in which I had no experience. And not recruiting deeply critical or highly helpful Board members.

Two tidbits on success (other than routine advice such as "hire the best people," etc.): 1) Allow "crazy ideas" to be tested – they can produce fantastic breakthroughs. In one of my photonic switch ventures, my team was stuck with a high cost/low performance design. They rejected a novel idea by a junior engineer and justified their opposition in numerous ways. I let the junior engineer try it – and this allowance turned out to be the most significant innovation in the entire industry. 2) Do not rely on the opinions of "experts." On another occasion in another venture, another junior engineer wanted to try a different silicon etching method. Her boss, who had done her PhD on this topic, took out papers out of her desk and said: "Here, read these and understand why your idea won't work!" It worked like a charm and was the idea that allowed us to make the product.

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Ergün Kırlıkovalı RA 70 Reflects on Discovery and Risk

"I felt so happy and light-headed when I made my discovery."

Ergün Kırlıkovalı is a polymer scientist, inventor, and entrepreneur specializing in advanced polymer materials and aerospace technologies. He is widely recognized for his contributions to radar-absorbing materials.

How did you decide to become an entrepreneur?
I have always been involved in entrepreneurial endeavors to earn pocket money -- like most kids in my neighborhood. Later, the RC culture of exploration, coupled with the adrenaline of competing to be the best you can be, was instrumental in shaping me. If there is any success, I owe it to my high-achieving RC teachers and schoolmates. The breaking point came in 1985 in the US, when my boss asked me which airplane jet he should buy. I quit my job, called my wife Juliana to tell her to sell our house and follow me.



Within 3 days, our new company was up and running.

What did it feel like when you made your discovery in radar-absorbing materials?
I felt so happy and lightheaded. I remember showing Juliana the five formulations on page 79 of my lab book and saying, "I can guarantee one of them will hit the bull's-eye." And sure enough, 79-4 did!

What are your recommendations to future entrepreneurs?
You need the right idea, appropriate education, reasonable experience, and at least modest resources. We sold our home and invested every penny in our business. If it failed, we would have to start over from scratch. Are you prepared to endure blows like that? If so, go ahead!

What was it like to visit the campus last November?
I tried hard to hide the tears in my eyes. The memories of 60 years ago suddenly came flooding back, overwhelming me with emotion.

Fırat İşbecer RC 98 on Why Entrepreneurs Must Outgrow Their Companies

"I learned by making a lot of mistakes."

Fırat İşbecer is the CEO of Commencis, a technology firm driving AI-powered digital transformation for large enterprises. One of Türkiye's most active angel investors, he also serves on the board of Endeavor Türkiye, which supports founders building high-impact global companies.

How did you decide to become an entrepreneur?
Out of frustration! After completing my master's degree at Sorbonne University, I joined a research institute in Paris. The work was repetitive, slow, and I felt underutilized. So I moved back to Türkiye and joined my brother as a co-founder at Pozitron. Eight years later, we sold the company, creating one of the largest software startup exits in Türkiye.



What were the biggest challenges along the way?
I started young, and many large enterprise clients didn't take me seriously. But my biggest challenge was internal: I had to grow faster than the company. Every year the job changed, and I had to reinvent myself. I learned by making a lot of mistakes. Finance, leadership, and scaling teams did not come naturally.

Do you support or invest in other entrepreneurs?
Very actively. I've invested in nearly 70 startups and worked with more than 100 Turkish founders around the world. I care deeply about the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

If you were starting today, where would you focus?
Robotics, without a doubt, and health tech. Extending healthy human life is one of the most important and exciting challenges we can solve.

How do you reflect on your RC experience?
RC taught me to think globally. It surrounded me with smart, ambitious people and gave me a network of friends that continues to shape my life today.

Saniye Gülser Canıvar-Corat RC 74 Believes Startups Should Value Diversity

"More than 40% of startups have zero women on their boards."

After her graduate studies, Gülser Canıvar-Corat led numerous development projects around the world. From 2004 to 2020, she served as UNESCO's Director of Gender Equality and later founded the NoBias AI? platform.

During your tenure, UNESCO became a recognized leader in promoting gender equality. How did you approach this sometimes controversial subject?

My appointment was the result of an unusual mid-career recruitment. Through my experience in international development, I had learned how to build coalitions, navigate bureaucratic challenges, and discuss gender bias with different audiences.

When I arrived at UNESCO headquarters in 2004, I spent several months consulting representatives of the organization's 195 member states and senior staff before proposing gender equality as a global priority. That groundwork proved essential in securing support. UNESCO remains the only UN organization with gender equality as one of its two global priorities.

What inspired you to found NoBias AI?

I was among the first to recognize how pervasive gender bias was in early algorithms. While researching the digital gender gap in 2017 and 2018, I found that many digital assistants reflected stereotypical views of women. At the time, this was often explained as a consequence of training algorithms on human-generated data.

When large language models emerged, I observed that bias remained embedded in these systems despite advances in training methods. Through NoBias AI?, I advocate a Machine Reasoning approach in which



data loses its primary driver status, to be replaced by neuro-symbolic and logical inference engines and various specialized knowledge bases.

What recommendations do you have for RC entrepreneurs who want to avoid gender bias in their ventures?

Awareness is the first step. Never lose sight of the fact that women make up 51% of humanity. If women are among your target users, involve them in the design process from the beginning.

In Bangladesh, it took me months to convince male engineers working on a flood-prevention project to talk to women about how they cope with seasonal flooding. They were so amazed by how much floods affect women that they reconfigured their system.

What role can boards of directors and advisory boards play?

A crucial one. Even though many countries now have regulations for women's representation on Boards, more than 40% of startups still have no women on their boards. Among smaller AI companies, 62% have all-male boards.

When women and other underrepresented groups are absent from leadership, organizations lose valuable perspectives on ethics, safety, and equity. This is not only a question of representation but also of performance. Research consistently shows that companies with substantial female representation on their boards tend to be more profitable and more resilient.

The idea of the CEO as a lone heroic figure is archaic. Successful companies are built by diverse teams that challenge assumptions and broaden perspectives. My advice to RC entrepreneurs is simple: value diversity.



Gülser Corat during her graduation ceremony, receiving the Halide Edip Adıvar Award

Damla Ilıca RC15 Advises Startups to Get the Basics Right Early

"Seemingly minor structural decisions can create major challenges later."



Damla Ilıca focuses on fund structuring, fund management, and investor relations as a principal at Maxis, a venture capital and private equity-focused portfolio management company within the İşbank Group. She also serves on the board of the RC Alumni Association (RKMD).

What do you and your investors currently look for in startups?
Execution speed and leverage have become dramatically more important. With AI tools and increasingly accessible infrastructure, very small teams can now achieve what once required much larger organizations and capital. Investors are drawn to founders who move quickly, learn fast, and use available tools effectively. Clarity of thinking, adaptability, and strong decision-making stand out.

At the same time, investors are evaluating not only products but also whether a company can grow into a sustainable institution. Governance, communication, and founder self-awareness are therefore critical.

What are the most common mistakes early-stage startups make?
Most focus almost entirely on product development and growth, but seemingly minor structural decisions can create major challenges later. One common issue is cap table discipline. Founders may distribute equity too quickly without considering future fundraising, governance, or employee incentives. Another is operational informality. Teams often rely on verbal agreements, but these can become problematic when institutional investors enter the picture. Clear agreements and decision-making structures matter much earlier than most founders expect.

How has RC influenced you?
RC taught me intellectual curiosity, while its competitive environment made me resilient. As a member of the Debate Club, I was inspired to study law. I also remember the late Mr. Carter, who always reminded us about the finer details of life beyond academics and achievement.

The Founder's Investor: Serra Alkoçlar Alp RC 07 on Navigating Venture Capital

"Great founders have a strong point of view, but they are not rigid."

Serra Alkoçlar Alp is a partner at TIBAS Ventures, the venture capital arm of İşbank.

How did you arrive at venture capital?
I was working at Princeton's endowment, where a significant portion of the portfolio was allocated to leading VC funds. Seeing how top investors evaluated technology, markets, and founders inspired me to become an entrepreneur myself. I built and sold my own company, then joined another startup as Chief Strategy Officer. Before becoming an investor, I spent nearly a decade on the founder and operator side.

At TIBAS Ventures, we assess whether a startup is solving an important problem, whether the market is large enough, whether the product can



scale, and, most importantly, whether the founding team has the ambition, resilience, and execution capability to build something meaningful.

What are the defining qualities of exceptional founders?
Exceptional founders combine clarity of thinking, deep customer understanding, and a strong ability to learn quickly. Being right from day one is less important than learning faster than everyone else. The best founders test, listen, iterate, and make high-quality decisions with limited information. We pay close attention to how founders think and communicate. Great founders have a strong point of view, but they are not rigid.

What are some common mistakes?
Building before validating the customer problem, trying to do too many things at once, hiring too quickly, and confusing activity with real progress.

How do you view RC's influence in this landscape?
RC's greatest strength is its community. The school fosters a culture of support across generations, and I try to give back through mentorship and organizations such as RC Startup Factory.

Şems Polat RC 24 and Mert Kaan Atan RC 25 Co-Found AI Startup

"RC didn't impose limits on what we could do."

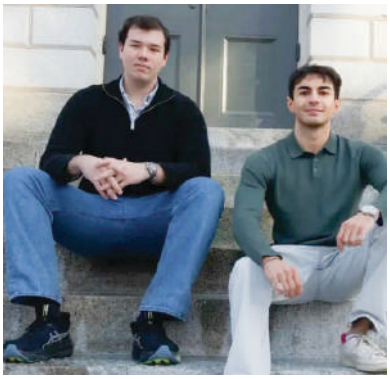
Şems Polat RC 24 and Mert Kaan Atan RC 25 joined forces to launch Luron.ai, which has already received a $1M pre-seed investment.

How did you two get together and found Luron.ai?
Our paths crossed when the RC Business Society, where Şems served as President, invited the Capital Management club, which Mert led, to an event. We quickly realized we shared the same ambition to build something impactful. That alignment led directly to the founding of Luron.ai.

What does Luron.ai do?
Luron.ai builds AI-powered voice agents that handle customer communication end-to-end. Beyond inbound, the platform enables automated outbound workflows for debt collection, bulk campaigns, and lead follow-ups across voice, SMS, chat, and email, optimizing operations that traditionally require large call centers.

How do you plan to develop your business after this investment?
Our focus is on rapid go-to-market execution and product refinement. We are actively serving multiple verticals, including consumer enterprises, automotive, and financial services. We continue improving conversation quality, integrations, and system reliability to scale globally.

How did RC influence your paths?
RC played a defining role in shaping our mindset. Mert was already a serial entrepreneur in high school, co-founding legal AI and language learning startups alongside the RC Startup Factory. Şems pursued national math olympiads and served as Student Council President. RC didn't impose limits—it forced us to operate at a high level under pressure. That mindset became foundational in building Luron.ai.



Mert Kaan Atan RC 25 and Şems Polat RC 24

Levent Özgür RC 97 Holds the Long View in Entrepreneurship

"RC's greatest impact on me was the way our teachers did not simply teach; they listened."

Levent Özgür is the chairman and co-CEO of Atermit, a B2B manufacturer in automotive. He and his brother wanted to create a B2C venture. Thanks to a sports injury and the encouragement of class mate Cenk Gümüşçüoğlu, they now have a brand: Actifoam.

What is the story behind Actifoam?
My brother and I decided to explore diversification opportunities beyond our core business. We were interested in interacting directly with consumers. My RC classmate Cenk Gümüşçüoğlu first planted the idea to create a consumer brand.

At the time, I was training for a race and got injured. The rehabilitation process introduced me to foam rollers, right when we were thinking about potential products based on the EPP foam technology we already used in automotive. Thus Actifoam was born.



Because Actifoam was a small venture, it gave us room to experiment. We worked with Cenk's company Karbonat to develop the brand story. We identified two market opportunities: recovery products and swimming products.

What was the biggest challenge you faced during the early days?
We never wanted to compete on price, aiming instead for high quality at accessible prices. The biggest challenge was resisting the temptation to compromise that positioning for short-term sales. We chose to remain focused on building a brand we could be proud of over the long term.

What is unique about RC that encourages entrepreneurship?
What had the greatest impact on me was how our teachers did not simply teach; they listened. Many alumni share this willingness to keep learning, listen carefully, and unite diverse perspectives. Those qualities are at the heart of entrepreneurship.

Arif Akdağ RC 88 Believes in Empowerment Through Angel Investment

"All successful companies have the 3Fs behind them at the point of inception: friends, family, and fools."

Apart from running Eka Global, Arif Akdağ is one of the first investors to join Galata Business Angels, Türkiye's first angel investment network.

Why did you become an angel investor?
After graduating from college, I joined Arthur Andersen. While conducting corporate financial audits, I caught the entrepreneurship bug. I eventually left the corporate world to found Eka Global in Türkiye.

I had always wanted to invest in young entrepreneurs and that ambition led me to angel investing. An angel investor walks an untrodden path. Creative young minds are essential, but building a strong team with experienced partners, lawyers, and



financial advisors is equally important. While investing in ideas can seem risky, the right support structure can turn an idea into a success story.

All successful companies have the 3Fs behind them at the point of inception: friends, family, and fools. Angel investors are the "fools" who believe in a dream with high potential.

Which sectors or types of entrepreneurs do you focus on?
I want to look back and say I was part of a technology revolution that created real social value. That is why I invest primarily in ventures at the intersection of technology and information systems. I also enjoy supporting founders as a mentor, consultant, analyst, salesperson, or network builder when needed.

Where do you see RC in the entrepreneurial landscape?
Entrepreneurial spirit, leadership, and social responsibility must be nurtured from an early age. RC embodies these values, and angel investors help young people pursue their ambitions and turn their ideas into reality.

Four RC Friends Disrupt the Connectivity Business

Shared values and trust matter more than individual brilliance.



Roamless is a cross-border telecom operator transforming how people stay connected globally, and four RC friends are at its heart: Emre Demirel RC 01 is the CEO, Ali Gazioğlu RC 01 is the COO, Asım Alp RC 99 is the CTO, Selim Aykut RC 01 is the Head of Support.

How did Roamless come about?
Ali and Asım had expertise in building and operating telecommunications networks. Emre had extensive investment experience and a passion for travel. He had long felt the frustration of unreliable mobile connectivity abroad and recognized the rising opportunity in eSIM technology. Selim was focused on business design and customer experience. The four of us attended a crypto conference together—just for fun. That trip sparked serious conversations about building something meaningful. We combined our complementary skills and perspectives, and Roamless was born.

What do you recommend to entrepreneurial RC students?
Solve problems you deeply understand. The best ideas often come from personal frustration or domain expertise, just like Emre's travel pain points combined with Ali and Asım's telco background.

Build a strong, complementary team. Shared values and trust matter more than individual brilliance.

Start before you feel ready. We didn't wait for perfect conditions. We began with conversations and momentum built from there.

Embrace iteration and resilience. Be ready to learn fast, fail forward, and stay obsessed with your customers.

Stay intellectually curious. Critical thinking is a superpower in entrepreneurship.

How does your common RC background help your work?
RC instilled in all of us a habit of questioning everything and a strong framework for rational thinking. Beyond that, our shared background creates deep trust.

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Suat Görgülü RC 97 Helps Entrepreneurs Make Smarter Decisions

"I remain grateful for the sense of possibility RC helped cultivate."

Suat Görgülü embarked on his entrepreneurial journey in 2019, addressing a critical need he identified during his tenure at multinationals such as Procter & Gamble and Nestlé.

What is Finsmart?
Finsmart is an AI-powered Chief Financial Officer (CFO) platform that helps small-to medium- enterprises (SMEs) understand, manage, and improve their financial performance. Our mission is to make high-quality financial reporting, analysis, and CFO-level insights accessible and affordable for growing companies. Today, Finsmart serves businesses across multiple industries, helping founders make better decisions around growth, profitability, cash flow, and capital access. Our ambition is to become a trusted global financial partner for entrepreneurs.

Why was Finsmart Selected for the Mastercard Lighthouse Program?
The Mastercard Lighthouse Program is a leading regional fintech and impact initiative. This recognition reflects the growing demand for better financial tools for SMEs and the potential of AI-driven financial management. The program provided valuable mentorship, visibility, and strategic connections that continue to support our growth.

How did your RC years impact your entrepreneurial journey?
My years at RC had a profound impact. Beyond an excellent education, RC instilled the confidence to believe that we could achieve far more than we imagined. It encouraged us to think independently, challenge assumptions, and pursue ambitious



goals with determination. That mindset—the belief that no challenge is too big if you are willing to learn, adapt, and work hard—has stayed with me throughout my career.

I remain grateful for the education, values, and the sense of possibility that RC helped cultivate. They continue to shape how I lead, innovate, and think about building organizations that can create global impact.

Emre Eczacıbaşı RC 02 Advocates Intrapreneurship

"My time at RC showed me that individual and collective empowerment go hand in hand."

As Coordinator of Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Eczacıbaşı Holding and Eczacıbaşı Group, alongside his active roles across various NGOs, Emre Eczacıbaşı stands as a prominent champion of intrapreneurship in Türkiye.

What is corporate entrepreneurship (intrapreneurship)?
Intrapreneurship is an organizational capability to continuously cultivate future opportunities for meaningful impact. It begins when individuals at all levels identify what they genuinely care about and where they can make a distinctive contribution.

How do you foster intrapreneurship in your own company?
We focus on building conditions where initiatives can continuously emerge,



evolve, and connect. We cultivate a culture where people are trusted and encouraged to take the initiative in defining their contributions.

What were your criteria in your recent investments?
Our approach is shaped by the long-term: Is this connected to the future we want to help build, and can we contribute distinctively?

When we established our corporate venture capital fund, Momentum, we focused on startups likely to disrupt our current sectors, such as healthcare and building products. Since then, we have shifted toward spaces where technology, sustainability, health, and quality of life intersect. These areas are also the focus of our intrapreneurial activity.

How did RC contribute to how you operate in business?
Having a multitude of voices was a core strength at RC. The journey inward was deeply valued, and teachers encouraged us to find our unique voices. In literature classes, personal meaning mattered; I learned to treasure and boldly go after mine, much like an entrepreneur.

Mahmut L. Ünlü RC 85 Believes Entrepreneurship is About Recognizing Opportunities

"Investors back people who continue to make good decisions under challenging conditions."

Mahmut L. Ünlü is the CEO and Chairman of the Board at ÜNLÜ&Co, an investment services and asset management group with a 30-year history.



Were you interested in business and entrepreneurship early on?
The entrepreneurial instinct was there quite early. As a child, I was very interested in comic books. One summer, I went to a gathering where children were selling their comics. I only had enough money to buy a few, but then an idea came to me: I could rent out the comics I owned for a small fraction of their sale price. In a short time, I earned enough to buy more comics and keep the ones I already had. I learned something important: entrepreneurship often begins with noticing an unmet need and finding a practical way to create value.

Was there a teacher or mentor who had a lasting impact on your life?
When I told my father I wanted to leave a corporate career to start my own company, he thought I was making a mistake. I responded that I wanted to build something of my own. As ÜNLÜ&Co celebrates its 30th anniversary, I realize that meaningful mentors are not always the people who agree with you. Sometimes, they are the ones who challenge your assumptions and push you to think more deeply about your decisions.

What advice would you offer to someone building their first company today?
People often think entrepreneurship is about taking risks. I believe it is more about recognizing opportunities. Luck plays a much larger role in life than we sometimes admit, but entrepreneurs are the ones who notice it when it appears and are prepared to act on it. Do not become overly focused on achieving success overnight. Focus instead on surviving, learning, and building trust. The first years are about staying in the game.

What qualities should young entrepreneurs develop before seeking investment?
Entrepreneurs should first focus on developing sound judgment. Money can accelerate a good business, but it rarely fixes a weak one. Young founders should spend more time understanding their clients, building resilient teams, and learning how to make decisions under uncertainty. Ultimately, investors back people who can continue making good decisions when conditions become more challenging.

Do today's entrepreneurs have it easier or harder than your generation did? Why?
In many ways, starting a business is easier today. Access to information, networks, and capital has improved dramatically. Founders can now understand markets, reach potential partners and investors, and test ideas much faster than we could. At the same time, entrepreneurship has become far more competitive. Similar ideas and startups can emerge almost simultaneously in different parts of the world. Competition is no longer only local; it is global from the very beginning.

What is one lesson you learned at RC that turned out to be valuable in business?
At RC, I appreciated subjects that encouraged analytical thinking, but over time I realized that literature and history were equally valuable. Business is ultimately about understanding people, and those subjects help develop perspective and empathy.

Arjin Roni Şimşek RC 16 and Ata Nizamoğlu RC 17 Join Forces in NewFrame

NewFrame is an artificial intelligence system specialized in advertising and content production.



Arjin Roni Şimşek RC 16



Ata Nizamoğlu RC 17

Though they shared the same hallways and had mutual friends at RC, Arjin and Ata really connected through their shared belief that generative artificial intelligence would rebuild the creative sector: "We both felt that we were at a turning point where technology was ceasing to be an 'assistive tool' and becoming a partner capable of thinking; that intuition brought us together."

NewFrame works like a part of brands' creative teams. It is not a traditional production tool; it is designed as a creative partner that learns the brand's language and tone and can think on its behalf. The company now works with over 70 brands, and advertisements produced with NewFrame have been shown in more than 80 countries.

Arjin and Ata feel RC has played a tangible role in their careers: "The most valuable heritage from RC was the reflex of critical thinking and macro perspective: trying to see how a technology, a trend, or an idea will reshape the world in the next ten years. RC taught us not the 'right answer,' but how to ask the 'right question.' NewFrame is actually the product of this reflex; the answer that emerged when we asked what the next ten years of advertising will look like."

Rüzgar İmren RC 27 Makes Waves as a Teen Entrepreneur

His company Atlantic received investment over a 5 million dollar valuation.



Rüzgar İmren taught himself coding at age 13, and, by 14, he was already working as a software engineer at startups, while studying at RC! The experience he garnered along the way gave him his latest startup idea: "I saw firsthand how much time teams lose to coordination chaos, with information scattered across Slack, Jira, email, and dozens of other tools. That frustration became the idea behind Atlantic, the AI agent platform I co-founded with Ege Mustafa Çelik."

They launched their company in the US in March 2026 and by June 2026, they had raised an angel round of investment from Galata Business Angels at a $5 million valuation. İmren says that what drew him to entrepreneurship is simple: "It is the fastest way to turn a problem you personally felt into a solution thousands of people can use. Seeing a real pain point and engineering your way out of it is incredibly rewarding."

İmren emphasizes RC's influence in his path: "The intellectual rigor, the habit of questioning, and the confidence to pursue ambitious ideas all come from this school."

After RC, İmren plans to move to San Francisco and build Atlantic from the heart of the startup world: " My focus is on scaling: growing our customer base in the US market, expanding our team, and developing our Atlas model family. In the long run, I want to build a global AI company and prove that world-class technology can come from founders of any age, no matter where they start."

Ada Olpak RC 30 Wins Gold Medal in Freediving

She broke her own record and became the world champion.

At just 15, Robert College Prep student Ada Olpak became a junior world champion at the 2026 CMAS Freediving World Championship in Novi Sad, Serbia.

Representing Türkiye, Ada competed in four pool disciplines: Dynamic Apnea with a Monofin, Dynamic Apnea with Bi-fins, Dynamic Apnea without Fins, and Static Apnea. Her defining performance came in Static Apnea, where she held her breath for four minutes and 37 seconds, breaking her personal record and claiming the world title. She also completed distances of 113 meters with a monofin and 100.5 meters with bi-fins.



Ada Olpak RC 30

Ada's journey to the podium demanded extraordinary perseverance. Growing up in Edremit as the daughter of two teachers, she began freediving after her family noticed her natural confidence underwater. Following the sudden death of her first coach, the limited availability of trainers meant traveling hundreds of kilometers for practice—sometimes spending five hours on the road for a single hour in the pool.

After entering Robert College, she often attended six a.m. sessions before rushing to class. She qualifies for the national team in April 2026, and was competing for Türkiye just two months later.

"You are all by yourself underwater," Ada says. "If you have belief and passion, there is no limit to what you can do.



The Latest From Cevat Çapan RC 53 is a Rich Literary Miscellany

From theater to poetry, the book casts a wide net.

Cevat Çapan's *Öğrenme Uğraşı (The Pursuit of Learning,* Yapı Kredi Yayınları), reflects his vast knowledge and eclectic interests, the collection brings together Çapan's previously published essays, impromptu speeches put to paper, and prefaces to various books and anthologies. The subject matter is vibrant and wide-ranging, spanning from Homeros to novelist A.S.Byatt, from theater to cinema, and music to poetry.

During his years at RC and beyond, Çapan has surveyed both British/American and Turkish literature over the ages, and his passion for poetry and his ever-deepening knowledge have consistently fueled his own poetry. Çapan has also meticulously translated the works of numerous foreign poets and introduced them to Turkish readers.

Çapan traces his interest in poetry to RC: "I was introduced to poems by William Wordsworth, Robert Browning, and Edgar Allan Poe at RC and, by graduation, was familiar with almost all the great poets of world literature." Indeed, some of his earliest works were published in the school review *İzlerimiz* as well as prominent literary reviews like *Varlık*, and *Yeditepe*."



Hikmet Hükümenoğlu RC 89 Pens Follow-up to His First Crime Novel

Hükümenoğlu plans to complete the series into a trilogy.

Hikmet Hükümenoğlu published *Sonra Gözler Görür (And Then The Eyes See,* İthaki Yayınları) in 2024, and it is now turning into a Netflix series. Fresh on the heels of this success, he published the follow-up novel *Bu Dünyada Yaşamak (Living in This World,* İthaki Yayınları) with the same cast of characters.

Hükümenoğlu says that he was drawn to crime fiction because it allows him to explore the darker side of human psychology in a compact and entertaining form: "The genre also creates space to examine the political and social history of the country naturally through the story, without becoming preachy or didactic."



Hükümenoğlu is also an avid crime fiction reader: "Tana French is probably my favorite contemporary crime writer because of the psychological depth in her novels." The roots of this habit can be traced to his RC years: "The RC library had a treasure trove of Agatha Christie books, and discovering the "Choose Your Own Adventure" series there was a huge breakthrough for me as a young reader because it made reading feel interactive and exciting."

For the fans of this series, there is good news. Hükümenoğlu plans to complete a trilogy: "I plan for it to become a trilogy, although I'm not sure yet when I'll return to it. Right now I'm also working on other projects, but I definitely see more stories in this world and with these characters."

Ayşe Kulin ACG 61 Writes a Literary Biography of Atatürk

Kulin offers a nuanced perspective on leadership and humanity.



Ayşe Kulin's latest work, *Aylardan Kasım, Günlerden Perşembe (The Month is November, the Day is Thursday,* Everest Yayınları), takes a deeply personal approach to Türkiye's founding leader. A piece of biographical fiction, the book attempts to shift the focus away from the well-known public persona of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk to explore his private, inner world. Kulin blends her empathetic prose with historical research to create a multi-faceted portrayal: "I combined the love of Atatürk in my heart with the knowledge I accumulated through reading so many sources about him. I wanted my readers to encounter the inner life of a man who has been a friend, lover, husband, divorcee, and ultimately, a sick and lonely man—not just Atatürk the Good Soldier and Founding Father."

This nuanced perspective on leadership and humanity reflects Kulin's own intellectual foundation. Addressing the RC graduating class in 2012, she had fondly recalled the core values she gained from her alma mater: "We blended the self-confidence of the West with the inner discipline of the East, and we gained insight. A self-confidence that doesn't overwhelm others, an awareness devoid of arrogance!" It is precisely this balanced insight and lack of arrogance that Kulin now brings to her literary portrait of Atatürk, seeing beyond the myth to honor the man.

A New Book on Vasıf Kortun RC 78 Released in English and Turkish

The publications offer a rich history of the institutions shaping contemporary art in Türkiye.

Vasıf Kortun is a defining figure in the contemporary Turkish art world. Among his many achievements are his roles as the founding director and curator of pivotal cultural institutions, including the Istanbul Contemporary Art Project, Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Center, and Salt. *Nerden Geldik Buraya: Vasıf Kortun'u Okumak (How Did We Get Here: Reading Vasıf Kortun)* were published by Salt/Garanti Kültür A.Ş. and Robinson Crusoe 389 and Salt/Garanti Kültür A.Ş. and Archive Books. They are built around an extensive interview conducted by Sezin Romi, Salt's Senior Librarian and Archivist between August 2024 and July 2025. The books serve as both a documentation of institutional history and a multi-layered exploration of Türkiye's cultural milieu. Expanding upon Kortun's 2017 talk, "Questions on Institutions"—delivered as his tenure at Salt came to a close—the publication opens up a vital discussion on the past, present, and future of art spaces. Known for challenging traditional museum norms, creating space for experimental practices, advocating for decolonial perspectives, and championing collaborative, lateral work methods, Kortun's lifelong dedication to the arts receives a timely deep dive in these pages.



More details on the books are available at saltonline.org

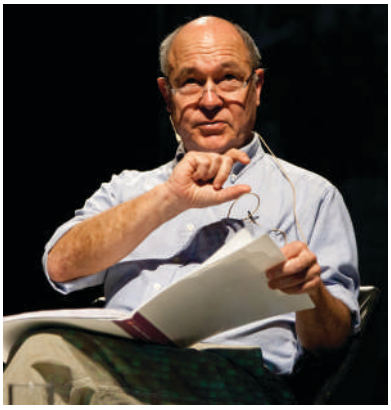
Gündüz Vassaf RA 64 Ponders the Philosophy of Daily Life

Vassaf offers a novel approach to uncertainty.

Psychologist and writer

Gündüz Vassaf has released a new book: *Günlük Yaşam Felsefesi: Şimdiye Övgü (Philosophy of Daily Life: In Praise of the Present,* Tuhaf Yayınları). The work is a book-length interview conducted by Duru Uslu over the course of a year.

In this new volume, Vassaf continues his signature critique of "normalized" ways of living. Elaborating on the book's themes in a recent *Hürriyet* interview with Uygar Taylan, Vassaf encourages readers to embrace the unpredictable: "Following World War II, humanity began living in a strictly ordered manner. Today, however, those traditional senses of belonging no longer work. Some populists still promote the nation-state model of 200 years ago, but uncertainty is the fundamental rule of nature. Life is inherently uncertain. Instead of trying to impose order onto the unknown, we need to learn to enjoy the uncertainty."



Kemal Noyan RA 61 and Efe Murat Balıkçıoğlu RC 06 Intersect in Literary Exhibition

The two alumni share a deep interest in Ezra Pound.



Kemal Noyan RA 61

An exhibition titled

CANTO CXVII was held at Maçka Sanat Galerisi from March 3 to April 11, 2026, honoring the memory of the late poet and translator Can Alkor, who passed away in 2024. The exhibition revolved around the monumental work of Ezra Pound and featured Noyan's visual "images" inspired by the cantos. The tribute connects to Alkor's poetry book titled *Canto CXVII* (Norgunk Yayıncılık), which served as his imagined ending to Pound's unfinished epic.

The exhibition beautifully brought together two generations of Robert College alumni. Efe Murat Balıkçıoğlu RC 06 (who writes under the pen name Efe Murad) is a professor of history and religion at Wellesley College. In 2021, he published *Kantolar (The Cantos,* Yapı Kredi Yayınları), a complete Turkish translation of Ezra Pound's cantos that was eleven years in the making.

Forging an intergenerational friendship with Noyan through their shared interest in Pound's poetry, Balıkçıoğlu contributed to the exhibition through a video piece, an in-gallery talk, and a dedicated essay published in the April–June 2026 issue of Yapı Kredi Yayınları's literary periodical, Kitaplık.



Efe Murat Balıkçıoğlu RC 06

In his displayed artwork, Noyan interprets historical venues like Venice and the Rialto Bridge, not merely as geographical backdrops but as ethical and metaphysical gateways. His grotesque figures vividly display the deformities imposed on the human form by rigid ideologies.

Cem Kozlu RA 65 Makes His Fiction Debut

He questions the narrative about the birth of the Western civilization.

After authoring a number of non-fiction books, Cem Kozlu has finally written his first novel, Sandima Tableti (The Sandima Tablet, Remzi Kitabevi). Kozlu says that he wanted to try his hand at fiction because he hoped to entertain his readers while also exploring some of his ideas about history:

"I write because writing requires reading and research, and those activities satisfy my curiosity. But above all, I write because I enjoy it. I enjoy playing with syllables, words, sentences, paragraphs, and sections. You plan them, move them around, cut things out, and then add others until you feel you have done your best."



To avid young readers in the RC community, Kozlu recommends his book Liderin Takım Çantası (The Toolkit of a Leader, Remzi Kitabevi), which aims to share practical approaches to self-management and leadership with young people, as well as Sandima Tableti, which he describes as entertaining summer reading.

Kozlu remembers his years at RC fondly:

"My writing career started at our newspaper, The Bosphorus. I also acquired my first official title there as president of the Model Airplane Club, which we establish thanks to the encouraging and empowering approach of the late RA principal, Cornelius Bull. The friendships forged over eight memorable years have endured and flourished throughout a lifetime, becoming the most important and lasting legacy of my years at Robert Academy."

Cüneyt Ülsever RA 70 Pens a Thriller

The novel features a serial killer who is also an RC Alumnus.



Journalist, economist, and prolific author Cüneyt Ülsever's latest book B*en Bir Seri Katilim (I am a Serial Killer,* Kırmızı Kedi Yayınları) is a thriller featuring a striking character: a serial killer who is both a mathematical genius and an RC alumnus. When RCQ asked Ülsever why he chose to make the character a graduate of his own alma mater, he jokingly replied, "I chose RC because I know it thoroughly."

Ülsever developed a love of reading and theater at an early age thanks to his highly encouraging mother. He wrote his first story in third grade. However, he chose to study economics, even though he says he would have preferred to study comparative literature.

Ülsever's favorite writers are Yaşar Kemal, Yahya Kemal Beyatlı, and Nazım Hikmet: "I believe Yahya Kemal and Nazım Hikmet are the true masters of the Turkish language. I am in awe of the way they command words."

Ülsever believes there is no formula for becoming a writer and that the first requirement is simply to want it. For members of the RC community who aspire to write, he recommends reading extensively and writing regularly: "It is important to develop discipline and to write every day."

Reflecting on his student years, Ülsever remembers his elective literature class with Mrs. Wilson fondly: "I learned a great deal from her. She often hosted the entire class in her garden and encouraged us to debate ideas. We were taught not to memorize information, but to question it constantly, and to understand that everything can be debated."

Senem Akyollu Başyurt RC 88 Appointed CEO of Aydın Doğan Foundation

Her goal is to drive systemic change.

The Aydın Doğan Foundation invests in education, youth, gender equality, and social development to help build a more equitable society. As its newly appointed CEO, Senem Akyollu Başyurt RC 88 aims to strengthen this mission by positioning the Foundation as an ecosystem builder that brings together civil society, academia, business, and the public sector around shared solutions. For Başyurt, lasting impact requires moving beyond individual projects and pursuing systemic change through collaboration, patience, and evidence-based decision-making.

Over the course of her professional career, Başyurt became increasingly interested in applying her skills to social challenges. This led her to



the NGO sector, where she found a meaningful intersection between strategy and purpose. "The best social impact work," she says, "requires the discipline, strategic thinking, and accountability of the business world, combined with the mission-driven focus of civil society."

For those interested in contributing to the social sector, Başyurt offers three pieces of advice: start before the perfect opportunity appears by volunteering, mentoring, or sharing professional expertise; approach communities with humility and curiosity, listening before proposing solutions; and commit for the long term, recognizing that meaningful social progress takes time.

As a boarding student, Başyurt experienced RC as a community that fostered independence, responsibility, empathy, and lifelong friendships. She sees a direct connection between those experiences and her later commitment to community-building and social impact.

Gülin Yenigün Yücel RC 88 Advocates for Women's Entrepreneurship

She witnesses tangible social impact.

Gülin Yenigün Yücel serves on the Board of KAGİDER (Turkish Women Entrepreneurs Association), an organization dedicated to advancing women's entrepreneurship and strengthening women's economic and social participation.

An active member since 2009, Yücel currently leads KAGİDER's Circular Economy Committee, contributes to EU-level advocacy for women entrepreneurs, and coordinates preparations for COP31. Reflecting on her work, she notes: "I have been involved in international and EU-wide initiatives focused on the development of women entrepreneurs' skills, the Equal Rights in the Workplace Certification program, and youth empowerment projects."



Yücel credits Robert College with shaping her commitment to civic engagement. "RC's strong emphasis on civic responsibility, critical thinking, and social awareness made it natural for me to see social impact as part of my life rather than something separate from my career," she says. Through the school's diverse community, student clubs, and volunteering opportunities, she was introduced to issues such as inequality, gender justice, and environmental sustainability, gaining both the motivation and confidence to engage in NGO work later in life.

What she finds most rewarding is witnessing tangible social impact. According to KAGİDER's Social Return on Investment (SROI) and qualitative impact study covering 2020–2025, every 1 TL invested in the organization's projects generates an average of 4.80 TL in social value. This impact benefits women entrepreneurs through increased skills, income, and confidence, while supporting families, creating jobs, strengthening local economies, and advancing gender equality across society.

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USGD Presents "Forty Years of Remembrance" Award to Nuran Terzioğlu ACG 65



As part of ART SHOW 2026, the International Association of Art Galleries (USGD) presented its newly established "Forty Years of Remembrance" Award (Kırk Yıllık Hatır Ödülü) to prominent gallerist and art manager Nuran Terzioğlu, making her the first-ever recipient of this honor.

Terzioğlu has long been a foundational figure in the development of Türkiye's contemporary art ecosystem, particularly through her gallery Apel. She was selected for the award in recognition of her lifelong dedication to fostering artistic production, her commitment to building enduring relationships with artists, and her significant contributions to elevating the institutional visibility of contemporary art throughout her career.

Latest From Evin İlyasoğlu ACG 66: A Book-Length Interview with Ali Darmar



Music critic, author, and academic Evin İlyasoğlu has added another title to her prolific bibliography of over twenty books. Her latest work, *İki Alem Arasında Ali Darmar (Ali Darmar: Between Two Worlds,* Remzi Kitabevi), is a book-length interview with her long-time friend, the composer and educator Ali Darmar.

The project was initially sparked by Darmar's suggestion that İlyasoğlu write his biography. The collaboration evolved into a dynamic dialogue, with the pair meeting via Zoom for two hours every day. İlyasoğlu credits Darmar's rigorous discipline—the same rigor he demands of his piano students—with ensuring the smooth completion of the book. For readers looking for a unique perspective, the final chapter on parapsychology offers a particularly fascinating window into Darmar's life and world.

RC 76 Ayşen Keskin Zamanpur Honored for Her Contributions to Retail Sector

At the 2026 Retail Days (Perakende Günleri) held at the Haliç Congress Center, Silk & Cashmere founder Ayşen Zamanpur RC 76 was presented with the prestigious 25th Anniversary Honor Award. Celebrating a quarter-century of the retail industry's most prominent gathering, the ceremony recognized legendary pioneers who have previously received Lifetime Achievement awards.

Zamanpur was recognized for her enduring contributions to global fashion, particularly her leadership in sustainable design and the concept of "silent luxury." Upon receiving the honor, Zamanpur shared an inspiring message on resilience, noting that, while navigating professional fields as a woman presents unique challenges, passion and true entrepreneurship transcend gender boundaries. In a touching moment, she dedicated the milestone accolade to her grandchildren.



Tayfun Öneş RC 81 Continues His Career as General Manager of Akçansa

After graduating from RC, Öneş studied at the Faculty of Administrative Sciences at Middle East Technical University. For more than 30 years, he worked in senior management positions across various sectors such as tourism, cement, automotive and finance. In the last eight years of his management career, he served as CEO and Board Member at Mercedes-Benz AG's companies in Romania. After retiring, he founded the ONES ACADEMY where he has shared the experience he gained over the years from companies across different cultures with young people. He has provided corporate training and personalized consulting services, both domestically and internationally.

Tayfun Öneş will continue his career as General Manager of Akçansa, where he was already a Board Member. Akçansa is a leading company in the cement sector.



Oya İnal RC 85 Launches A Olive, a Premium Olive Oil Brand





What started as a passion project turned into a premium olive oil brand for Oya İnal. İnal acquired one olive grove in Ayvalık in 2010 and now has a business harvesting over 9,000 trees.

This success was achieved through the use of smart agriculture, which integrates modern technology to traditional farming to better manage economic volatility and climate change. The brand has a certificate for Organic Olive Oil production and also holds the Ayvalık Coğrafi İşareti (Ayvalık Geographical Indicator).

İnal aims to ensure that the 1,000-year-old monument trees in the groves are handed down to the next generation in even better condition. Leaving the soil richer and the story of Ayvalık stronger is her measure of success. Reflecting on her RC experience, İnal maintains that RC is a breeding ground for independent minds: "What excites me the most about the RC network, especially through platforms like RCCEB, is the incredible cross-generational synergy."

Taner Şekercioğlu RC 86 Explored Constructed Realities in Solo Exhibition

Landscape as a Staged Surface, an exhibition that took place in One Arc Gallery last spring, showcased the decades-long photographic and collage archives of Taner Şekercioğlu. Curated by Filiz Ağdemir, the works charted the artist's conceptual evolution and interdisciplinary methodology. Rather than treating photography as mere documentation, Şekercioğlu reframes the earth as a calculated, manipulated surface. His art traces humanity's shifting connection with nature, capturing a transition from peaceful coexistence to deliberate intervention. Instead of presenting definitive images, these works act as visual notations that document an increasingly detached perspective. Ultimately, the collection highlights the multi-layered foundation that inspired his later work, revolving around three-dimensional wall panels.



Yusuf Pişan RC 88 and Ata Akın RC 88 Explore the Impact of AI in Education



Last May, Yusuf Pişan RC 88, a computer engineering professor at the University of Washington, Bothell, delivered a keynote speech at Acıbadem University, facilitated by Ata Akın RC 88, the university's Dean of the Faculty of Engineering. The address focused on using playful interactions with AI to keep educators up to date and to better support students. Pişan emphasized that teachers cannot evaluate AI-assisted work or coach students effectively without using these tools themselves. "Assign a game with structured reflection, give prompting exercises, and build something small yourself," Pişan recommended. "The most credible voice belongs to someone who has tried the technology, failed, and learned from it."

Akın underlined that because AI can accomplish routine educational tasks in minutes, educators can now concentrate on deeper skills. "AI helps us focus more on critical thinking and moral values," Akın noted. "Students are now asking to be examined orally, even if they prepare written work with AI. In a way, we may be going back to pre-technology methods in education."



Hülya Adak RC 89 Hosts Masterclass at GalataPerform LAB



Founded by Yeşim Özsoy RC 90, GalataPerform is an independent, international theater dedicated to bringing diverse stories and voices together. At its core, it is an interdisciplinary space driven by experimentation. Through its platform, LAB, GalataPerform also organizes online and hybrid workshops, mentorship programs, and creative gatherings that connect leading practitioners from Türkiye and across the globe. These initiatives span a wide spectrum—from theater and cinema to literature, music, design, and new technologies.

On June 13, 2026, LAB hosted a masterclass led by literature professor Hülya Adak RC 89. The session explored the creative journeys of prominent female authors, including Virginia Woolf, Toni Morrison, Margaret Atwood, Jeanette Winterson, and Emine Sevgi Özdamar. By centering on a gender perspective when analyzing contemporary literature, the masterclass used novel excerpts, feminist dramaturgy, and stage adaptations to spark lively analysis and discussion.

Doğan Balamir Nazlıca RC 97 Appointed Chief Revenue Officer of Mozaik



Mozaik, which brings some of the world's leading design brands to Türkiye, has expanded its executive team with the appointment of Doğan Balamir Nazlıca as Chief Revenue Officer (CRO).

In his new role, Nazlıca will oversee the company's sales, marketing, e-commerce, and business development functions under an integrated growth strategy. He will also lead Mozaik's corporate transformation and operational development initiatives. He plans to focus on improving the customer experience and developing sustainable revenue models, while strengthening collaboration across Mozaik's retail, project, corporate sales, and digital channels. Nazlıca earned his degree in International Relations from Istanbul Bilgi University. Over the course of his career in sales, he has held senior positions at companies at various stages of growth. With extensive experience in sales leadership, revenue growth, business development, organizational transformation, and data strategy, Nazlıca is expected to make a significant contribution to Mozaik's growth and transformation in its new chapter.

Cenan Çivi RC 98 Appointed Head of Entrepreneurship and Innovation at Koç University

Cenan Çivi RC 98 has been appointed Head of Entrepreneurship and Innovation at Koç University, as the university strengthens its strategic focus on research-driven entrepreneurship and technology commercialization.



In his new role, Çivi will work to translate Koç University's ambitious innovation vision into tangible impact by bringing together the university's research capabilities with entrepreneurial talent, industry partnerships, and investment resources. The initiative will include new courses, programs, and collaborations designed to help researchers and students transform promising ideas into high-impact ventures. "Our goal is to bring together the incredible research power of Koç University with the entrepreneurial energy and investment resources that can turn innovation into reality," Çivi said.

Zeynep Özler RC 98 Appointed Vice President at Communication Partner

Zeynep Özler recently joined strategic communication consultancy Communication Partner as Vice President. With her experience in corporate communications at companies such as Yıldız Holding, Kale Group, and Turkcell, Özler brings to the new role a perspective shaped by creativity, collaboration, and a belief in the transformative power of communication. Describing herself as someone who finds meaning in both loving life and producing value through ideas, she has often reflected on the power of building stories "from the right place" – where thoughtful strategy, intuition, and clear communication come together. Her approach to communication extends beyond visibility or reputation management. Rather, she views it as an opportunity to create genuine value and contribute, however modestly, to making the world a better place. In her new position, Özler hopes to continue creating, producing, and investing in work that carries meaning.



Sibel Horada Coşkun RC 98 Joins Coast Cleaning Efforts Through Art

Horada's work will draw attention to ecological problems.

The Turkish Friends of LSE, Harvard Club of Turkey, Purdue Alumni Network of Türkiye, Koç Üniversitesi Gönüllüler Farkındalık Grubu, Robert Kolej Mezunlar Derneği, and Çöpüne Sahip Çık Vakfı recently teamed up to promote volunteering and sustainability. The organizations spearheaded a joint coastal cleanup at Sarıyer Kısırkaya Beach to contribute to community welfare and raise awareness about littering. To extend the impact of the event, artist Sibel Horada RC 98 will



select pieces from the collected debris and incorporate them into a special artwork, keeping the ecological issue on viewers' radars.

Horada is widely recognized for work that investigates collective and personal histories through the lens of urban, archaeological, and ecological cultures. She frequently explores memories of erasure, viewing memory not merely as the act of recollection, but as an active process of reproduction and transformation. Her upcoming piece will undoubtedly weave in these signature themes.

Beril Demircioğlu RC 99 Makes Waves with 2BZ Design in Türkiye and Abroad



After obtaining her BFA and BA in Architecture from the Rhode Island School of Design and working in New York City at Gerner Kronick + Valcarcel Architects, Beril Demircioğlu felt the call of home and returned to Türkiye to establish her firm, 2BZ Design, in 2010. Since then, she has completed numerous projects, including those for Bilgili Holding and Borusan Holding.

2BZ Design brings together architecture, interior design, and product design under one roof. The firm's approach places great importance on functionality without becoming monotonous, while incorporating surprising and pleasing elements into its designs. Demircioğlu is particularly excited about her upcoming project in Nairobi, for which she will study the local culture and incorporate local textures into her designs.

Ali Sarılgan RC 15's TrueMeter Wins Cleantech Analytics Platform of the Year

Ali Sarılgan is the co-founder of TrueMeter, an AI platform that automatically lowers utility bills for multi-location restaurants, retailers, and hotel groups. Before TrueMeter, Sarılgan worked at McKinsey, advising utilities and energy investors, then at GameStop managing corporate finance across 4,500 locations where he learned firsthand how broken utility



bill management is at scale. Sarılgan is a Forbes 30 Under 30 honoree and a Stanford graduate. TrueMeter was named the CleanTech Analytics Platform of the Year by Cleantech Breakthrough Awards, which recognizes the world's most innovative companies in the climate, energy, and clean technology industries.

Kutay Koraltürk RC 15's Mobile Gaming Venture Cheers Games Receives Investment

Founded by Kutay Koraltürk, Emre Gercel, Berkay Öztürk and Ertan Ünver, mobile gaming studio Cheer Games has successfully raised $4.5 million in a seed funding round led by Makers Fund. The investment round saw strong participation from notable institutional investors and angel backers. The Istanbul-based gaming startup specializes in creating high-quality, engaging puzzles for global audiences. By securing this backing, Koraltürk and his team plan to speed up product development and hire more global talent to their Barcelona headquarters. This latest financial milestone highlights the growing international confidence in Türkiye's vibrant gaming ecosystem.



Utku Dilaver RC 15 Appointed as Türkiye Commercial Excellence and Innovation Leader at Pfizer

After graduating from RC, Dilaver studied civil engineering at Boğaziçi University. He has held numerous positions at Pfizer since 2019, notably serving as Country Lead in pediatrics, cardiology, and neurology, and most recently as Senior Country Lead and Senior Commercial Manager of vaccines. His achievements in creating sustainable solutions within Pfizer's vaccines portfolio, alongside his contributions to strategic planning that supports wide accessibility to vaccines, paved the way for this latest appointment.



Dolunay Kocabağ RC 17 Makes Acting Debut in New York



Dolunay Kocabağ is an actress, composer, and lyricist. After majoring in psychology and minoring in music at York University, she went on to study acting at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York. Following graduation, she made her off-Broadway debut this May in the play *A Night of Chekhov*. Kocabağ uses the stage name Luna Vintner and has also starred in the film *Murder in the Dark*. Alongside her acting career, she is an active musician currently working on her first EP. Born with a 92% visual impairment, Kocabağ brings her unique perspective and talent to the stage as she continues to build her career in the arts.

Remembering Haldun Dormen RC 49:
A Final Standing Ovation

It is with profound sadness that the Robert College community bids farewell to the legendary Haldun Dormen. An institution unto himself, Dormen's impact on Turkish theatrical history as an actor, director, writer, and mentor is immeasurable.



Dormen transferred to RC from Galatasaray Lisesi in Orta. He very much wanted to be involved in theater. Therefore, he applied to the Theater Club, as soon as he arrived at RC. The president of the club at the time was Refik Erduran RC 47, who went on to become one of the foremost Turkish playwrights. It was Erduran who convinced the members of the club to let the newcomer in, so that "he would see how difficult theater was and learn his lesson."

Soon enough Dormen was on stage with roles such as Olivia in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. His budding directorial instincts were already visible in the production of *Campus Follies*. Dormen recalled: "The boys wore sheets and pretended to be women for the female parts. At that time, we were supervised by Prof. Dean Allen. When angered, he would shout 'Go home,' and freely hand out penalties. It occurred to me that it would be interesting to involve him in the play, so I offered him a part. He accepted on the spot. At one point in the play, as we were dressed up in sheets singing, Prof. Allen would dart onto the stage and shout 'Go home' to dismiss us. We loved the joke, and it made us laugh for some time to come."

After RC, he went onto Yale University to study drama and soon his career took off. He was the first Turkish actor to perform in Türkiye after studying abroad. He founded Cep Tiyatrosu and later Dormen Tiyatrosu, modernizing Turkish theater in groundbreaking ways. He worked in TV and radio broadcasting and as a journalist for Milliyet newspaper. He also taught at the Theater Department of Istanbul University State Conservatory for many years. He was instrumental in establishing the Afife Jale Theater Awards in 1977, and it still constitutes one of the most prestigious awards in Turkish theater. He revived one of the Turkish theater classics, the *Lüküs Hayat (Luxury Life)* operetta in 1984, a production that remarkably remained on stage for over 25 years. In his later years, through his Dormen Academy, he passed the theater bug to new generations. Indeed Dormen never retired and celebrated his 70th year on stage in 2025.

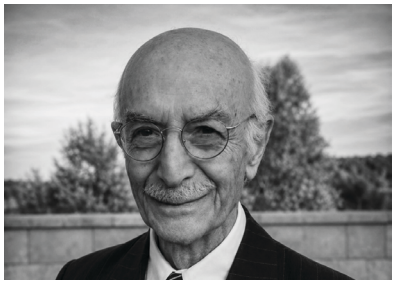
The RC community and his many fans feel his absence but will continue to be inspired by this life truly well-lived.



Nur Yalman RC 50: An Eminent Scholar and Trustee Emeritus of Robert College

Yalman leaves behind a legacy of scholarship, leadership, and service.

Prof. Dr. Nur Yalman RC 50, a distinguished alumnus of Robert College, internationally renowned anthropologist, Trustee Emeritus, and lifelong friend of RC, has passed away. After graduating from Robert College, Prof. Dr. Yalman continued his studies at Cambridge University and went on to build an exceptional academic career. He served on the faculties of the University of Chicago and Harvard University, becoming one of the leading scholars in the fields of social anthropology, kinship, religion, and social change. A respected academic and public intellectual, Prof. Dr. Yalman also made significant contributions to higher education in Türkiye. He served for



many years as a member and Chair of the Board of Trustees of Koç University, was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and was widely regarded as one of Türkiye's most influential social scientists. Prof. Dr. Yalman joined the Robert College Board of Trustees in 1986 and became Trustee Emeritus in 2004. Throughout his years of service, he remained deeply connected to the school, offering thoughtful guidance, wisdom, and steadfast support. His ties to Robert College also extended through his family. His daughters, and his son-in-law are valued graduates and longtime supporters of the school. Together with many members of their extended family, they reflect a deep and enduring connection to the Robert College community. He will be deeply missed by his family, friends, colleagues, former students, and all who had the privilege of knowing him. His legacy of scholarship, leadership, and service will continue to inspire future generations.

Öner Akgerman RA 61: A Titan of Industry and Trustee Emeritus of Robert College

Öner Akgerman balanced business leadership with civic duty and was beloved by family and friends as a true gentleman.

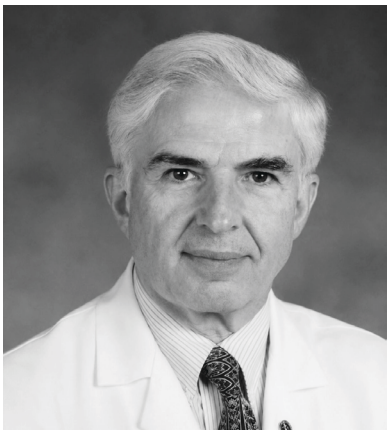
Öner Akgerman RA 61, TE was a valued member of the RC community and a dedicated supporter of the school. Throughout his career, he played an important role in the development of Türkiye's industrial sector. He also served on the RC Board of Trustees beginning in 1987 and became Trustee Emeritus in 2012. During his years of service, Akgerman supported the school wholeheartedly. On behalf of his classmates, Aydın Bilgin RA 61 contributed the following tribute to a life well-lived: "The passing of our beloved classmate, Öner, has deeply shaken us. He was known for his gentlemanly demeanor, reliability, and constant support, both materially and spiritually.

After graduating from Robert College, he began his career at Çimentaş cement factory in İzmir, taking on senior roles and



leading the establishment of companies in ready-mixed concrete, autoclaved aerated concrete blocks and panels, engineered stone slabs, construction, insurance, and tourism. Later, together with his sons Bülent Akgerman RC 88 and Levent Akgerman, he founded the AKG Group of Companies namely AKG Gazbeton, Çimstone, More Aquaculture, Çittur, DEMİ, AKG Trading UK. Öner served as a member of the Aegean Region Chamber of Industry Assembly, held the positions of Vice President and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Turkish Cement Manufacturers Association & Turkish AAC Association. He founded the Çimentaş Education and Health Foundation and served as chairman for many years. In addition to his industrial activities, he made significant contributions to education and health sector. He served on the RC Board of Trustees for 25 years. In the second year of middle school, when our literature teacher Ahmet Aksoy asked the class what "reliance on God" meant, Öner was the only one who knew the answer: "After doing everything you can, leaving the things you can't do to God." Years later, Öner, who always strived to do his best, became not only a prominent figure in Izmir's industry but also a respected name in Türkiye's business world."

Sümer Pek RC 53



Prof. Dr. Sümer Belbez Pek passed away in Ann Arbor, Michigan, on May 24, 2026. Born in Ankara, Türkiye, in 1933, Pek earned his MD and PhD degrees from Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich before relocating to the United States in 1960. He spent much of his distinguished career at the University of Michigan Medical School, where he ultimately became Professor Emeritus. A physician-scientist and endocrinologist, Pek devoted his career to advancing the understanding and treatment of diabetes and endocrine disorders. His research on insulin secretion, pancreatic islet biology, and hormone regulation contributed significantly to the field and was published extensively in leading medical journals. His scientific achievements were recognized with numerous honors, including awards from TÜBİTAK and the Nokta Science Award. Beyond his research, he was a respected educator, mentor, and academic leader whose intellectual rigor, integrity, and dedication to medicine and science earned him the admiration of colleagues and students alike. He also remained deeply connected to the Turkish community, serving as a founding member of the Turkish American Cultural Association of Michigan and maintaining close ties with Türkiye throughout his life. Pek will be remembered for his kindness, humility, scholarship, and enduring contributions to medicine, science, and education. His legacy lives on through the many students, colleagues, patients, and loved ones whose lives he touched.

Salim Erol Uluğ RC ENG 54

The Robert College community mourns the passing of Prof. Dr. Salim Erol Uluğ, who passed away peacefully at his home in Istanbul on February 8, 2026, with his wife of 61 years and one of his daughters by his side.

Born in Ankara, he completed his secondary education at TED Ankara College before graduating from Robert College's Department of Civil Engineering in 1954. He went on to earn his master's degree from Stanford University and his doctorate in Civil and Environmental Engineering from Imperial College London in 1967. Prof. Uluğ began his career in California and, upon returning to Türkiye, contributed to the design and



implementation of reinforced concrete structures. In 1962, he joined the faculty of Middle East Technical University (METU). In 1973, he was entrusted with establishing the Department of Environmental Engineering, serving as its founding head and playing a key role in its development. He also contributed to TÜBİTAK's Environmental Research Group. Following his retirement from METU, he continued teaching and later founded the Civil Engineering Department at Atılım University, where he served as founding head until 2007.

Fluent in English and German, Prof. Uluğ remained active as a consultant, researcher, and mentor, contributing to international projects, supervising numerous theses, and publishing widely. His work was recognized with multiple awards in science and education. He will be remembered for his integrity, quiet strength, and kindness, as well as his devotion to his family.

Tunç Erem RC 58

Prof. Dr. Tunç Erem RC 58, a respected academic, university leader, and longtime contributor to higher education in Türkiye, passed away in 2026. After graduating from RC, Erem pursued studies in business administration and went on to build a distinguished academic career. He specialized in marketing, international trade, and strategic management, publishing extensively and helping shape business education in Türkiye.
Throughout his career, Erem held several leadership positions, including Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences and later Rector of Marmara University. His scholarship, teaching, and administrative leadership earned him the respect of colleagues and students a like. Tunç Erem will be remembered as a dedicated educator, accomplished academic, and valued member of the Robert College community whose contributions left a lasting impact on generations of students.



Teoman Önol RC ENG 59

Teoman Önol passed away leaving behind a legacy of professional accomplishment, community leadership and enduring devotion to family. Önol earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering at RC. He worked both in Türkiye and abroad, building a respected career as a mechanical engineer during a period of rapid industrial and technological development.

In 1970, together with his wife Can Önol, a textile engineer, he founded TİM Mühendislik & Mümessillik Ltd. The company went on to represent internationally recognized suppliers in Türkiye and remains active today under the management of his daughter Mine and son-in-law Alp Fındıkoğlu. Önol maintained a strong commitment to civic and social life. He served as a president of the Istanbul Haliç Rotary Club and held leadership roles within Rotary's Turkish district organization. He was also a longtime member of the council board of Beşiktaş Jimnastik Kulübü. Remembered for his leadership, dedication, and generosity, Önol is survived by his wife Can, his children Mine and Mete Önol, their families, and five grandchildren. His life reflects a generation of Robert College



graduates whose professional success was matched by lasting commitment to community and family.

Tunç Pekcan RC ENG 59



H. Tunç Pekcan RC ENG 59 passed away peacefully on May 30, 2026, at the age of 90. Tunç Pekcan earned his degree in Civil Engineering from Robert College in 1959 and later received a Master's degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. A dedicated engineer, he maintained a lifelong interest in architecture, construction, and the natural environment. Remembered by family and friends for his warmth, gentle sense of humor, and thoughtful character, Tunç was known for his kindness, integrity, and genuine interest in others. He approached life with care and quiet discipline, and his wisdom and sound judgment made him a trusted friend and advisor to many. A dedicated sportsman, he was selected to the Sportsmanship Brotherhood during his years at Robert College, recognizing both his athletic achievement and sportsmanship. Tennis remained a lifelong passion, and he continued playing well into his later years. He was also an enthusiastic follower of sports and a devoted supporter of Fenerbahçe. Beyond his professional and athletic pursuits, he found joy in Turkish poetry, Türk Sanat Musikisi, and the beauty of nature. Above all, he was devoted to his family.

His wife, Leyla Batu Pekcan ACG 61, and his son, Burak Pekcan RC 87, are fellow alumni. Tunç Pekcan will be remembered with affection by his family, friends, classmates, and all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Ferhan Bozoğlu Suda ACG 60

Robert College community mourns the loss of our dear alumna Ferhan, who passed away on January 3. Fondly remembered for her gentle presence and her unmistakable expression—often accompanied by her playful rendering of "Çanakkale," just as she would imitate certain teachers—Ferhan carried within her a quiet observer's spirit. Behind her Michele Morgan–blue eyes was a keen sensitivity to the small, unexpected moments of everyday life, many of which she captured through her camera. These glimpses of shared experience often returned to us in moments of laughter, especially in the company of close friends and classmates.Belonging to a generation for whom school life extended well beyond competition or academic achievement, Ferhan and her classmates built something far more enduring: lifelong friendships. Today, as her peers reflect on lives spanning more than eight decades, it is these bonds that remain among their greatest accomplishments. Ferhan leaves behind her beloved daughter Zeynep and her son Hüseyin, as well as her extended family, including young Ada, whom she embraced with deep affection.



She will be remembered with warmth, gratitude, and a quiet smile by all who had the privilege of knowing her.

Ali Yalman RA 63

Ali Yalman RA 63 passed away, leaving behind a legacy of intellectual curiosity, integrity, and lifelong dedication to education and public service.

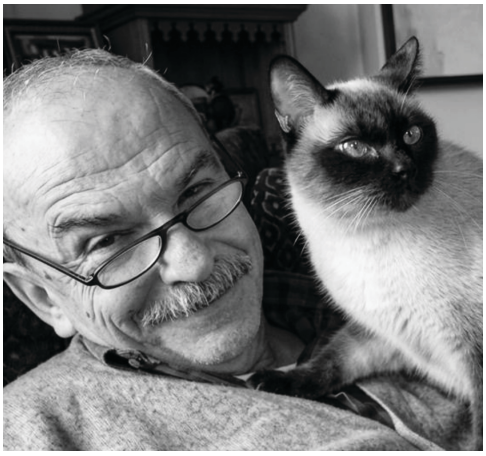
Throughout his career, Yalman served as a Member of the Board of Tatko and as a Council Board Member to Galatasaray Sports Club. He was also the author of several books on mathematics and history, reflecting his passion for learning and his desire to inspire younger generations. A national bridge champion, he was admired



for his analytical mind and strategic thinking. His enduring belief in the power of education led him to become one of the strongest supporters of the Village Schools Change Network (KODA), helping expand educational opportunities across Türkiye.

Yalman was deeply devoted to his family and is survived by his beloved wife, Grasia; his children, Alev, Rıfat, and Sibel; and his cherished grandchildren, Mila, Remi, and Gaia. He will be remembered with gratitude and admiration for a life defined by wisdom, generosity, and service.

Kemal Dülger RA 63



Kemal Dülger passed away unexpectedly on May 31, 2025, and our hearts are truly broken. He was the quintessential Istanbul gentleman--deeply loved by his family and friends, a devoted animal lover, an avid sailor, musician, and passionate reader of sci-fi novels. As our family's mechanic, handyman and engineer, he made us all appreciate just how wonderful it was to have someone who could fix almost anything. Kemal had a rare gift for facing whatever life placed before him with a smile, grace and gentleness. His kindness, humor, and steady presence will be deeply missed and never forgotten. May his memory be a blessing to all that knew and loved him.

Contributed by Feridun Taşman RC YÜK 64,
Ayşe Dülger Taşman ACG 67

Gökçe Bayındır RC YÜK 64

The Robert College community mourns the loss of our esteemed alumnus, Gökçe Bayındır, who passed away in July 2025. Known affectionately among his friends as "Usta," Gökçe was a man of exceptional character and remarkable mechanical aptitude. After completing his middle and high school education at Robert College, he went on to build a distinguished professional career. He spent 29 years within the Koç Group, retiring in 2000 after serving as the President of the Tofaş Group. During the 1980s, he played a defining role in shaping the identity of the Tofaş "Kuş Serisi" (Şahin, Doğan, Kartal), leaving a lasting mark on Turkish automotive history.



Gökçe's legacy extends far beyond his professional accomplishments. In an extraordinary act of lifelong loyalty and compassion, he devoted himself to the care of his Robert College classmate Zafer, who was paralyzed following a traffic accident at the age of 25, overseeing and organizing his care for 57 years. A man of refined sensibilities, Gökçe also restored several historic mansions on Büyükada and, in a final gesture of public-minded generosity, donated his entire collection of antique works to state museums. He is survived by his wife, Tiraje, and his children, Berna and Bars. He passed away in Büyükada, a place he deeply cherished.

"Usta," may you rest in light.

With deepest condolences,
His Robert College classmates

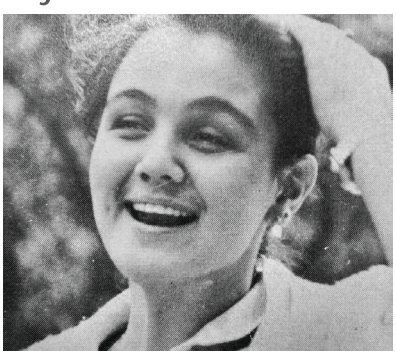
Henri Barki RA 68

Henri Barki RA 68, a distinguished alumnus of Robert Academy and an internationally respected scholar in the field of information systems, passed away in May 2026. After graduating from RA, Barki pursued higher education in Canada and went on to build an exceptional academic career at HEC Montréal. Joining the School's Department of Information Technologies in 1989, he served as Director of Research from 1998 to 2001 and later held the Canada Research Chair in Information Technology Implementation and Management.

Widely recognized as a pioneer in information systems research, Barki made significant contributions to the study of technology implementation and management. His work was published in leading academic journals, and he played an influential role in shaping the field as a researcher, editor, and mentor. Henri Barki will be remembered as a dedicated scholar, respected educator, and generous mentor whose work left a lasting impact on his field and on generations of students and colleagues.



Tijen Okur İnce RC 81

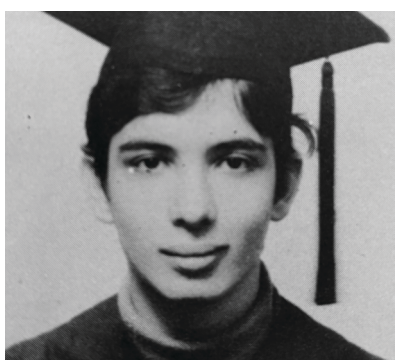


The Robert College community is deeply saddened by the passing of Tijen Okur İnce, RC 81, on 27 May 2025, after a courageous 16-month battle against a relentless illness. After graduating from Boston University with a degree in economics, Tijen built a career in the textile industry. Later, as her daughter İpek began her education, she chose to step away from professional life and devoted herself to volunteer work, focusing on the education of underprivileged children, particularly girls. Through her work with the Beykoz Konakları Foundation, she touched the lives of many young students, helping shape their paths toward brighter futures. Alongside her social contributions, she pursued her artistic interests in painting and sculpture at the Mustafa Horasan Studio, expressing her deep connection to spirituality and Sufism through her work. She further expanded her engagement with art through postgraduate studies in Art Theory at Işık University. She will be remembered as a radiant and uplifting presence within the RC 81 community. Her warmth, her laughter, and her enduring spirit will continue to live on in the memories of all who knew her.

She is survived by her beloved daughter. May she rest in peace.

Fatih Öğüt RC 81

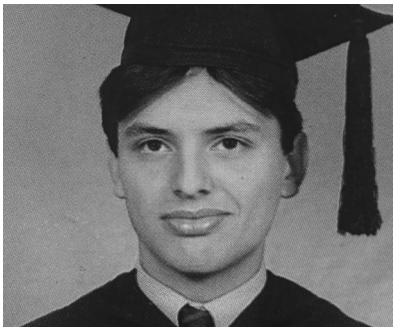
The Robert College community is deeply saddened by the passing of Dr. M. Fatih Öğüt, RC 81, on 12 October 2025, following a courageous battle. A graduate of Saint Joseph Middle School in İzmir, Fatih transferred to Robert College through the Prep program, where he distinguished himself with academic rigor, scientific curiosity, and a lively, warm personality remembered fondly by his peers. Even during his early years, he stood out for his mathematical talent, playful wit, and the unique blend of humor and sincerity he brought to those around him. He went on to become a professor at Ege University Faculty of Medicine, Department of Ear, Nose and Throat Diseases. Combining his deep interest in mathematics, physics, and life sciences, he specialized in Audiology and developed impactful solutions for voice and speech disorders. Long before it was formally recognized as a discipline, his work reflected a pioneering approach to biomedical engineering in the field of ORL. He shared his knowledge generously through more than 170 publications and built meaningful, lasting relationships with his patients throughout his career. He will be remembered as an energetic, warm, and inspiring member of the RC 81 community. His presence will continue to live on in the memories of his classmates and all who knew him.



He is survived by his beloved wife and daughter. May he rest in peace.

Cemal Alpan RC 87

Cemal Alpan passed away in March 2026 at the age of 57, following a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer. A film and commercial director, Cemal approached life with curiosity, optimism, and an eagerness to embrace new experiences. Known for his sharp wit and trademark sense of humor, he had a remarkable ability to make people laugh and bring people together. Whether among friends, around a poker table, or on a film set, his warmth, energy, and generosity left a lasting impression on those around him. Throughout his illness, Cemal faced every challenge



with determination and unwavering optimism. He approached treatment with the same resilience and forward-looking spirit that characterized his life, always believing there was another possibility worth pursuing and another chapter still to come. During this time, he was supported by the extraordinary friendship of his Robert College classmates and lifelong friends. Their companionship, loyalty, and care reflected the deep bonds he had built over the years and provided strength and comfort throughout his journey.Cemal will be remembered for his humor, resilience, generosity, and love of life. He will be deeply missed by his family, friends, classmates, and all whose lives were enriched by knowing him.

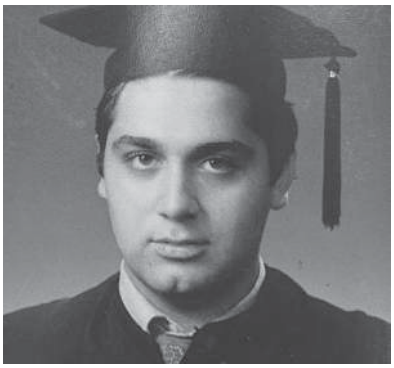
Erden Emanet RC 89

We are deeply saddened to share the passing of Erden Emanet RC 89, who died on July 27, 2025. A beloved friend, classmate, and colleague, Erden will be remembered for his remarkable ability to bring light, laughter, and warmth into every room he entered. Born on February 6, 1970, Erden carried with him throughout his life a generosity of spirit that made people feel instantly at ease. He had an extraordinary gift for finding humor in even the smallest moments—an effortless wit that turned ordinary days into shared memories. Those who knew him often recall that spending just a few minutes with Erden meant leaving with a lighter heart and at least one unforgettable laugh. Beyond his sense of humor, Erden was known for the depth of his kindness. He valued connection, friendship, and sincerity above all else. His compassion extended widely—embracing family, friends, and anyone lucky enough to cross his path. He approached life not with perfectionism, but with presence, empathy, and joy. Erden's absence leaves an immense void, yet his stories, laughter, and love remain with us. Each time we retell a joke he once made, remember a moment he brightened, or feel ourselves smiling at something he would have said, his spirit continues to be part of our lives.We are grateful for the light he shared so generously. Erden will be profoundly missed and forever cherished by all who knew him.



Boğaç Türkoğulları RC 97

It is with deep sadness that we share the passing of our dear classmate and friend, Boğaç Türkoğulları. After Robert College, Boğaç earned his Civil Engineering degree from Boğaziçi University and later joined his family business. He will always be remembered for the energy he brought to life; for his witty and mischievous sense of humor, his constant sense of successfully speeding through social life, school work and sports and his



seemingly lighter take on life. He had a gift for being present, appreciating every moment, every conversation, every setting and making sure those around him felt the same joy and ease. We will cherish the memories we shared. Boğaç's positive energy and friendship will be deeply missed.

Contributed by friends, graduates of RC 97

Adnan Ilık RC 97



With deep sadness, we remember our dear friend, a proud graduate of the Class of 1997, who spent his early years as a boarding student—years that shaped lifelong friendships and lasting memories. After graduating from Robert College, Adnan went on to study Computer Science and Engineering at MIT, later building an exceptional career at Microsoft, Google, and most recently Meta in Seattle. He was widely respected for his remarkable intellect and professional accomplishments, but more importantly for his generosity, honesty, resilience, and steady, reassuring presence in difficult moments; often reminding his colleagues, as one of them recalled, "Don't worry, we'll figure it out."

He passed away in Redmond, Washington, USA, on April 27, 2026. To his friends, he will always remain the earnest and thoughtful companion we knew from his Robert College years and beyond. His spirit lives on in the lives he touched and the memories he leaves behind. He will be deeply missed.

Contributed by friends, graduates of RC 97

Hanzade Özerten Urul RC 98

Our dear friend Hanzade Özerten Urul RC 98 passed away. We are devastated to lose someone so radiant and full of life. During our RC years, Hanzade was the spark at the center of everything – choreographing our "Orta" Maze Day dance, lifting our spirits on the volleyball court, and greeting us each morning with her bright smile, strong voice, and unmistakably rosy cheeks. She carried that same warmth into adulthood as a communicator, writer, painter, and a devoted advocate for nature and animals. Her energy, empathy, and generosity touched everyone around her. As we face this painful goodbye, we will honor her each year on February 27th, her birthday – a fitting tribute to someone who never forgot to celebrate ours. Hanzade Özerten Urul Memorial Forest, set up in the Bursa Eyerce village by her family, will stand as her living legacy.

Zeynep Dirikcan RC 98
Neylan Bağcıoğlu İzgi RC 98
Ayşe Baykut Dallal RC 98
Deniz İlkbaşaran RC 98



Zeki Bağran RC 98



Zeki passed away suddenly on December 21, 2025, nine years after having survived a life-threatening cardiac incident. He joined Robert College immediately after his family returned to Turkey from an expatriate assignment in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, which earned him the nickname "Arap Zeki" among boarding students. A pioneer in RC with his signature hip-hop and rap dance moves, he was also active in team sports. His social skills opened many doors in life. Not long after graduating from the University of British Columbia, he was elected President of the Turkish Canadian Society of Vancouver. Later he returned to Turkey to become a sales leader and then a chief executive officer across Turkey and the Middle East. He built strong, heartfelt connections and left a legacy that goes far beyond business achievements. He will be remembered as a leader who united people, inspired teams, and led with integrity and humanity.He was a devoted father to Demir, loving brother to Özgür and cherished son to Burhan and İnci Bağran.

Contributed by Hakan Ener RC 98 and Özgür Bağran

Christopher Wadsworth



Christopher "Chris" Wadsworth, 85, died peacefully at his home in Lexington, Massachusetts, on November 22 after a long struggle with Parkinson's disease.

A graduate of Phillips Andover Academy and Harvard University, Chris began his career in education at Andover and Harvard. He later served as Head of Nichols School in Buffalo and Belmont Hill School in Massachusetts. Inspired by a sabbatical spent backpacking around the world, he embraced international education and became Head of School at Robert College, serving from 1993 to 2001. He subsequently became the first Executive Director of the International Boys' School Coalition.

Chris and his wife, Lori, shared sixty-two years of marriage and raised two sons, Benjamin and Tim. An avid athlete, outdoorsman, fly fisherman, and musician, he played banjo with the Dixie Diehards.

Remembered for his honesty, kindness, humor, and strength, Chris lived with purpose and generosity. His family, friends, and communities will miss him.

Ayla Kartal



This year, the Turkish Language and Literature Department mourns the loss of retired teachers who each contributed greatly to their school during their years of service. Ayla Kartal is remembered as a devoted educator and a valued member of the department.

During her time at Robert College between 1994 and 2002, Ayla Hoca stood out with her remarkable energy and deep commitment to her work. She was a literature teacher who cared deeply about both her subject and her students, bringing passion and rigor into the classroom. She had a strong enthusiasm for literary discussions, often leading conversations on poets, writers, and literary movements. With her intellectual curiosity and dynamic presence, she played a central role in these exchanges. Her dedication to her profession and her vibrant energy remain an enduring example to colleagues and students alike.

May she rest in peace, and may patience and strength be granted to her family and loved ones.

Nuray Çiloğlu



Nuray Çiloğlu is remembered with deep appreciation for her lasting contributions to generations of students. Nuray Hoca served for 20 years from 1987 to 2007 as a Turkish Language and Literature teacher at Robert College, teaching both middle school and preparatory classes. She was deeply committed to her students and took great care in shaping her classroom environment. Each classroom she taught in became a distinctive space dedicated to language and literature—an experience her students will continue to remember. She consistently took on responsibilities during holidays, commemorations, and school events, fulfilling each role with diligence and care.

After leaving Robert College, she settled in Eski Foça, İzmir, where she continued to lead a rich and fulfilling life. Together with her husband, Altan Bey—a painter and master of illumination—they cultivated a vibrant artistic and literary environment.

She will be remembered with gratitude, respect, and affection. May she rest in peace.

To read the obituaries of all the members of our community we lost over the past year, please visit **www.rcquarterly.com** or scan the QR code.

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