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ROBERT COLLEGE ALUMNI MAGAZINE



the
literature issue



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The scent of wisteria floating through the air while reading a captivating book is a fond memory for many alumni.

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

In this issue



An appreciation of literature constitutes one of the gifts of an RC education, a gift that keeps on giving long after graduation. In this issue, RCQ explores this beloved subject, putting a spotlight on how English and Turkish literature are taught today, the many activities, electives, publications and competitions that nurture budding interests and talents, and also highlighting the İbrahim Bodur Library's myriad contributions to the community.

As ever, this issue is buzzing with news from current RC students, former teachers, and accomplished alumni. From an artistic collaboration with Dior to open water swimming, the news cover an amazing range in content as well as geography!

Your feedback keeps RCQ relevant, current, and inspiring. Please continue sharing your comments and news. Your contributions to RCQ make a difference. Contact us at rcq@robcol.k12.tr

Wishing everyone a wonderful summer, full of good news!

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RC NEWS

- 4 Hellos and Goodbyes at RC
- 5 Yıldız Günay Joins RC as Director of Institutional Advancement
- Soli Özel RC 76 Inspires with Monthly Talks at RC
- 6 Deniz Duru RC 05
- Shares Her Book and Methodology
- A Groundbreaking Investment Event for RC Students
- 7 Returning to RC as a Graduate
- A Dance to Remember: Berkol RC 98 Dance Festival
- 8 Excellence in Science Award for Girls Continues the Legacy of Prof. Seyhan Nurettin Ege ACG 49
- 9 Demirkan Aşetey RC 76 Art Competition Highlights Creativity
- Özlem Akçakuş RC 97 Summer Art Program
- Scholarship Encourages New Artistic Perspectives
- 10 RC Community Gathers for Dorothy İz Documentary in Boston and New York
- 12 RC Spirit Stronger Than Ever at London Alumni Gathering
- 14 RC 25 University Acceptances

GIFTS

- 15 İnal Family Establish Award to Recognize STEM Students
- James Maggart Memorial Endowed Scholarship:
- 16 The Karaçam Family Endowed Scholarship Fund
- John Heaney Endowed Scholarship:
- His Impact Lasts Beyond the Classroom
- 17 The Taşman Family's Commitment to the Future

CIP

- 18 Building Bridges Through Transformative Projects

RKMD

- 20 What's On at Bizim Tepe

RC IN AMERICA

- 22 RCAA Strengthens Alumni Connections Across North America
- 23 Regional Chapter Highlights

RC GLOBAL GROUPS

- 24 RC Alumni Groups Blooming Across the World
- Socializing in Seattle
- Creating Connections in Central Europe

GRADS IN THE NEWS

- 25 Hakan Binbaşgil RC 79 Takes a Leading Role at Sabancı Holding
- Bilgili Group Wins Property Award in the US
- 26 Yasemin Altıntaş RC 04 Among Top Women in Open Water Swimming
- Haldun Dormen RC 49 Celebrates 70th Year on Stage
- 27 Göksel Kortay ACG 55 Celebrates Her 60th Anniversary in Art
- Toygun Yilmazer RC 96 Named Strategic Planner of the Year

COVER STORY

- RC and Literature: An Ever-Lasting Love 28
- Ayşe Kulin ACG 61 Believes in the Sensitivity Literature Nurtures 42
- Cevat Çapan RC 53 Discovered the Power of Poetry Early 43
- Pınar Kür RC YÜK 63 Questions Literature's Role Today 44
- Nazlı Eray ACG 62 Feels Writing Gives Her Freedom 45
- İpek Ongun ACG 61 Pioneered the Young Adult Category in Literature 46
- Ömer Koç RC 80 Finds Literature Therapeutic 47
- Jale Parla ACG 64 Highlights How Literature Invites Us to Contemplate the Human Condition 48
- Maureen Freely ACG 71 Starts by Understanding the Author's Motives
- A Forever Recommendation from Oya Kaynar Başak ACG 55: Shakespeare 49
- Gündüz Vassaf RA 64 Believes We Are All Creators
- Hikmet Hükümenoğlu RC 89 Recommends Reading for Writing 50
- Efe Murat Balıkcıoğlu RC 06 Links Poetry to Self-Expression

ONES TO WATCH 52

ARTS & CULTURE 53

- Hayal Pozantı RC 00 Collaborates With Fashion House Dior 53
- Work of Ömer Uluç RC ENG 53 Featured in Solo Exhibition
- Kenan Şahin RA 60 Shares Business Wisdom for Start-ups in New Books 54
- Dilek Ataman Bağdatlıoğlu RC 76 Offers Corporations a Practical Guide for Sustainability
- Seda Aksoy Evren RC 95 Explores Time Travel in New Book 55
- Zeynep Pekün Ekşiöğlu RC 90 Writes Cookbook With a Novel Focus
- Buğra Giritlioğlu RC 89 Creates an Anthology of Contemporary Turkish Poetry 56
- Sanem Cerit RC 17 Tells the Story of a Young Cancer Patient

AROUND THE WORLD

- Graves, Gatherings, and Gurbetçi Cravings: A Road Trip Through RC History 57

REACHES OUT 59

ESSAY

- Another Home, Another Country: Baldwin in Istanbul 60

REUNIONS 62

ALUMNI NEWS 67

FACULTY & FRIENDS NEWS 71

TRIBUTE

- A Cultural Force: Oya Başak ACG 55 72
- Turkish Theater's Strong Voice: Genco Erkal RC 57 73

OBITUARIES 74

FACULTY AND FRIENDS OBITS 80

Hellos and Goodbyes at RC

As Adam Oliver's tenure as Head of School wraps up, he leaves behind a legacy of student support, academic achievement, and resilience through challenging times. Taking over from him is Whitman Shepard, a familiar face to the RC community with deep roots in the school.



Adam Oliver

Adam Oliver Bids Farewell After Six Years

Head of School Adam Oliver's six-year tenure at RC ends in 2025. Looking back, Oliver is most proud of team accomplishments: "They're all part of the Strategic Plan, co-written across the community. The last two years have seen us set school records for university placements at the world's top 100 colleges, and we're set to go even higher this year. We have revolutionized welfare and personal development support at RC. We've combined disparate elements into one program called GROW, which includes the new 'RC Scholar' student profile, a whole new subject - 'Well-being', and better safeguarding to protect our students. We've also evolved as a global leader in Regenerative Education. In addition, as the many recent alumni know, we shouldn't

forget that thanks to my dog Chloe we are now a dog-friendly school."

Oliver faced challenging external circumstances during his tenure: "The worst of those was the Covid-19 pandemic. Suddenly our decisions were not about how to improve learning but rather how to keep everyone safe from harm. Soon after that we faced the aftermath of the February 2023 earthquake, which devastated communities and claimed the lives of loved ones among our students, teachers and staff. The major economic downturn of the last three years has also presented huge challenges for RC and all our employees."

Oliver's lasting message to the RC community represents the main tenets of his leadership: "Be warm and loving and human in all you do and remember the relationships that really matter."

Whitman Shepard Returns to RC - This Time as Interim Head of School

RCQ asked Whitman Shepard about the journey that brought him back to RC as Interim Head of School:

"I arrived at Robert College in August 1983. My wife, Bengü Shepard, preceded me by two months. I began as a math teacher and became department head and athletic director. Following my MEd degree from Harvard, I was asked to take on the position of Lise Director, a role that I held for seven years. Bengü served the school as registrar, assistant international counselor and Turkish college counselor. After 18 years of service, we left RC in 2001. We continued to work in Türkiye until



Whitman Shepard

2017 when we moved to the States to be closer to our daughter. A surprise phone call in December has resulted in our rejoining the RC community. The congratulations and words of support from RC graduates have confirmed that we are making the right choice. I am eager to use my experience to sustain and enrich the academic and social lives of RC students. The school enjoys an outstanding reputation which must be safeguarded and enhanced. In this regard I welcome the opportunity to collaborate with all members of the community. Upon our return we will reawaken many fond memories of our lives in that special place called Robert College. We are excited to rekindle our relationship with friends and graduates. Furthermore, we are looking forward to making new friends and to getting to know the students who will remain as the focus of the school."

Yıldız Günay Joins RC as Director of Institutional Advancement

In August 2024, Yıldız Günay joined RC, overseeing the fundraising and communication efforts of the school. An alumnus of Üsküdar American Academy for Girls and Boğaziçi University, Günay comes to RC from TEV, Türkiye's largest educational foundation, where she was responsible for managing and fundraising for over 10,000 scholarships, three girls' dormitories, and a boarding high school for underprivileged, high-potential students. She is also a board member at Tüpraş, Türk Traktör, and Ünlü & Co. Günay credits her education and career in engineering and finance for shaping her analytical thinking and result-oriented mindset.

Günay states: "In a world more divided than ever, my top priority is to unite the Robert College community into



Yıldız Günay

a stronger, better-connected whole. We frequently share opportunities for alumni to gather, and news of the school's latest initiatives. We encourage everyone to review and

update their contact details with us to make sure they stay engaged."

Günay has a powerful message to the RC community: "I come from a family of doctors and naval officers, and I was able to attend Üsküdar American Academy for Girls as a boarding student. Getting the same opportunity is fifteen times harder today, even when adjusted for purchasing power. Robert College is a truly exceptional institution with a proud tradition of offering scholarships to 25% of its students. If you, like me, believe in the power of Robert College's educational excellence to shape lives, I invite you to support the next generation. Your every contribution helps preserve this legacy and nurtures our hope for a prosperous future grounded in Atatürk's principles."

Soli Özel RC 76 Inspires with Monthly Talks at RC

Özel underlined the importance of contextualization and analysis.

By Utku Özgür L12



Soli Özel RC 76 and Utku Özgür L12

Writer and academic Soli Özel was a frequent visitor to campus this year, lecturing in classes in addition to giving a series of talks.

In an interview for the RCQ, Özel stated how special it was to return as a teacher and walk the same corridors: "I had two dreams when

I graduated. One was to give the commencement lecture, which I did on the 30th anniversary of my own graduation, and the second was to be able to teach at Robert College. This year I did it and am elated. I'm like, 'Okay, I've accomplished whatever I sought. Now I can retire!' I thank the administration of RC for allowing me to be so happy."

Özel did a series of after school lectures in the Heritage Room and attended comparative government classes. Of the two, he found the Heritage Room talks to be more challenging: "The afternoon sessions were less crowded and attendance was self-selected. Therefore, they were far more demanding and intellectually stimulating."

Özel felt it was important to convey the importance of contextualization and analysis to RC students: "Because I think we are going through an extraordinary time of reconstructing world order and because your generation is going to be living for the next 60 years with whatever is being constructed, I owe it to you as a teacher to give you some elements, which would make it easier for you to understand the dynamics of this new age."

The full transcript of the interview can be seen here:



Deniz Duru RC 05 Shares Her Book and Methodology

| She was impressed by RC students' critical questions.



Deniz Duru RC 05 with RC AP English students

Deniz Duru, an associate professor in media and communication at Lund University, wrote an academic, open access book titled *Conviviality in Burgaz: Living, Loving and Fighting on a Diverse Island of Istanbul* (Palgrave MacMillan). The book builds on 15 years of longitudinal,

ethnographic research combining anthropology, media, migration and diversity studies. Burgaz, an island home to more than twenty ethnic and religious groups from different socio-economic backgrounds, provided an excellent setting to study post-Ottoman conviviality. The book particularly explores the islanders' representation of diversity: how a diverse community of islanders lives together and manages tensions and conflicts.

Duru recently presented the fieldwork methodology she used in the book for an AP English class's field study assignment. Duru found it fantastic to be back at RC: "I was impressed by students' critical questions and

attention to detail, showing active engagement and curiosity. They asked about how to approach and interview people they did not know before, how to build a rapport with them, what kinds of topics to explore for their field study projects and how researchers tackle personal biases while conducting social scientific qualitative research."

Duru recalls her own time at RC fondly: "We were all unique in a diverse environment. We were given the space to find out, and the courage to follow what we would love to do in our lives. This made me realize I had a passion for anthropology and understanding human diversity, and I chose an academic career."

A Groundbreaking Investment Event for RC Students

| Bobcat's Den participants pitch their ideas and get support for their startups.



Judges and participants at the first Bobcat's Den, from L to R: Ersan Öztürk RC 94, Selin Dilmener RC 03, Fırat İşbecer RC 98 Burcu Göbülük RC 00, Mert Kaan Atan L12, Toprak Gündoğdu LP, Emre Ersin L11 and Emir Çelet L12

Entrepreneurial spirit has always thrived at Robert College, but this year it reached a whole other level with RC Bobcat's Den, where RC alumni entrepreneurs invest real money into startups founded by current students. Two members of the Class of 2025, Mert Kaan Atan and Emir Çelet lead this initiative, a first—not only for RC but for Türkiye.

Bobcat's Den unfolds in two stages: an initial pre-elimination round,

followed by the final competition, where the most promising startups pitch their ideas to a panel of seasoned RC alumni investors. These investors offer real financial backing to those student-founded ventures with potential.

Beyond the competition, Bobcat's Den offers students an opportunity to receive mentorship from RC alumni. This mentorship strengthens the bond between different generations of

graduates while equipping students with the knowledge and skills for success.

The first Bobcat's Den took place on April 16, 2025, with Selin Dilmener RC 03, Burcu Göbülük RC 00, Fırat İşbecer RC 98 and Ersan Öztürk RC 94 as investors and six pitching startups.

Selin Dilmener had the following to say after the event: "It was an incredible source of pride for me to see RC students become active participants in the startup ecosystem while still in high school. The presentations were impressive in both content and delivery. The ideas were creative; the participants were so professional and confident that they were no different from those already in the business world! These young people have strengthened our hopes for the future."

Returning to RC as a Graduate

I Alper Koç RC 24 experiences a different side of the school in the IA Office.

A few months after graduating in 2024, Alper Koç returned to campus as an intern in the Institutional Advancement Office. For him, returning to RC as a staff member has been a unique experience: “Being able to return to campus so soon after graduating has been incredibly valuable for me. After spending five years as a boarding student, I thought I knew everything about RC. However, working with the Institutional Advancement Office showed me just how much behind-the-scenes effort goes into running the school. Also, the warm and welcoming environment of the IA Office - what the late Cyrus Carter once called ‘RC’s Fuel Source’ - has made my work even more enjoyable.”



Alper Koç RC 24

Since December, Alper has been supporting the IA office in a variety of ways including contributing to alumni relations, Salesforce integration, campus tours, archive organization, and supporting the team’s fundraising efforts. Outside of office hours, Alper continues his studies at Sabancı University. Music also remains a big part of his life: “I started playing the saxophone in the RC Orchestra and developed my skills. Now, music is still a major part of my university life. I perform at various venues with my own band, Mercimek, playing gigs in different settings.”

A Dance to Remember: Berkol RC 98 Dance Festival

I Berkol Doğan’s legacy is celebrated through the power of dance and community.

The 13th edition of this vibrant and long-standing tradition was held on May 3, 2025, once again transforming the Robert College campus into a stage for talent, creativity, and youthful energy. Organized in collaboration with Robert College and the Robert College Alumni Association (RKMD), the festival is named in honor of Berkol Doğan, a beloved member of the Class of ‘98, and continues to celebrate his legacy through the power of dance and community.

As always this year’s event brought together high school dance teams from across Türkiye, turning the festival into a national showcase of diverse styles and artistic expression. From modern and contemporary performances to hip-hop, traditional, and interpretive routines, each group brought something unique to the stage



– reflecting the cultural richness and innovation of the next generation.

The festival was not only a platform for artistic performance but also a space for building connections among students, educators, and alumni. The supportive and enthusiastic audience created an electric atmosphere, cheering on dancers and celebrating the spirit of collaboration and friendly competition.

As one of the most anticipated events on the school’s cultural calendar, the Berkol RC 98 Dance Festival continues to highlight the importance of the arts in education and community life. It serves as a reminder of how powerful creativity can be in bringing people together – and how the legacy of one individual can inspire joy and movement year after year.

Excellence in Science Award for Girls Continues the Legacy of Prof. Seyhan Nurettin Ege ACG 49

| Lise 11 student Melis Kekeç becomes the latest student honored for her efforts.



Güneş Ege Akter ACG 52 and
Seyhan Nurettin Ege ACG 49

For the first time in its 16-year history, the Prof. Seyhan Nurettin Ege ACG 49 Excellence in Science Award for Girls ceremony was held without its founder, Güneş Ege Akter ACG 52, who passed away in January (see her obituary on p. 74). Whether in person or, in later years, via Zoom, Güneş Hanım was always a presence at the ceremony, celebrating the achievements of young women excelling in science.

This year's award was presented to Melis Kekeç L11, a promising young

scientist who recently became a regional runner-up in the TÜBİTAK competition. The presentation, held at the Flag Ceremony on March 17, 2025, was attended by Melis' proud family, faculty members, and students. Last year's recipient, Tülin Ada Sönmezer L12, was also present to support the new awardee, continuing the tradition of recognizing and encouraging excellence in science.

The keynote speaker for the event was Ayşe Büyüktür RC 97, Associate Director of Health & Social Equity Programs at the Center for Health and Research Transformation. In her address, she highlighted the critical role of women in scientific fields: "The importance of having women in science is not only about equality of opportunity, though that is perhaps the most obvious reason. People tend to pursue questions that interest them and try to solve problems that affect them. If half the population is not represented in a field of study, their questions go unanswered and their problems unaddressed. This has been historically so in the health sciences. Women's health issues were not a part of medical research until more women started entering the field."

She further emphasized the broader impact of diversity in science, adding: "Enabling more women to participate



Melis Kekeç L11 (center) with Science Department
Head Tim Sim (left) and ceremony keynote speaker
Ayşe Büyüktür RC 97 (right)

in the sciences will increase the talent pool, as evidenced by the historically groundbreaking work of people such as Marie Curie, Rosalind Franklin, and Katherine Johnson."

Following the ceremony, Melis joined faculty members and RC administrators in the Feyyaz Berker Hall foyer, where her name was added to the commemorative plaque alongside past recipients, marking her place in the legacy of outstanding young scientists at RC.

İŞIĞIN
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Demirkan Aşetey RC 76

Art Competition Highlights Creativity

The winners used a variety of artistic mediums.



Student artists honored at the Demirkan Aşetey RC 76 Art Competition pose proudly with their teachers, administrators and competition judges

A wonderful collection of artworks adorned the Suna Kırac Foyer for this year's Demirkan Aşetey RC 76 Art Competition, held on February 19, 2025. Established in 2011 by the Class of '76 in memory of their art-enthusiast classmate Demirkan Aşetey, this year's competition once again celebrated the creativity and talent of young RC artists.

The panel of judges—Betina Hobeş, İpek Bingöl RC 06, and Leyla Levi RC 12—engaged in extensive discussions before selecting the standout pieces. “The depth of artistic expression we witnessed was truly inspiring,” remarked Betina Hobeş. “Every year, students surprise us with their originality, and it was an honor to be part of the judging panel.”

The winners showcased a diverse array of artistic mediums, from intricate embroidery and hand-crafted ceramic musical instruments to striking drawings. The selected students - Zeynep Tabak L12, Ada Tambulut L12, Müzeyyen Nazlı Yamanyılmaz L12, Zeynep Su Bayam L11, Onur Canbeyli L12, Ahu Yaren Özden L10, Elif Derin Alper L12 and Defne Duman L12 demonstrated exceptional creativity and craftsmanship, carrying forward the spirit of artistic excellence that this competition fosters.

The Demirkan Aşetey RC 76 Art Competition continues to serve as a meaningful tribute, encouraging RC students to explore and refine their artistic voices while honoring the legacy of a passionate art lover.

Özlem Akçakuş RC 97 Summer Art Program

Scholarship Encourages New Artistic Perspectives

Derin Alper L12 is the latest recipient.



Derin Alper L12 (center) poses in front of her work with RC 97 alumni Bora Tokyay, Barış Bayraktar and Ayşe Büyüktür (on Zoom), during the Özlem Akçakuş RC 97 Summer Art Program Scholarship exhibition opening on November 27, 2024

The Özlem Akçakuş RC 97 Summer Art Program Scholarship has provided art-oriented students with the opportunity

to attend transformative summer workshops around the world since 2006. The experience deeply impacts recipients, broadening their artistic perspectives and shaping their future aspirations.

Works by the 2024 recipient, Derin Alper L12, have been displayed since November in the Gould corridor as part of a mini exhibition. Derin attended RISD online pre-college programs Experiential Drawing and Drawing and Mixed Media: Expressive Ideation. Reflecting on her experience, she shared, “This program helped me find my roots in embroidery. I realized how this traditional craft can be reinterpreted with modern techniques, creating a bridge between past and present.”

Derin's intricate, thought-provoking embroidery pieces incorporate contemporary themes while maintaining the essence of traditional craftsmanship. RC Art Department Head Alex Downs emphasized how the scholarship encourages students to expand their artistic vision, noting that Derin's work exemplifies the power of blending heritage with contemporary expression.

The Özlem Akçakuş RC 97 Summer Art Program Scholarship was established by family and classmates to honor Özlem's passion for art. Over the years, it has continued to inspire young artists at RC, opening new doors for creative exploration and artistic growth.

RC Community Gathers for Dorothy İz Documentary

I Fall events in Boston and New York bring alumni together.

This past fall, Robert College alumni on the East Coast gathered for two memorable events that brought the community together with warmth, pride, and shared stories.

On November 4, over 50 alumni convened in Boston at the Harvard Faculty Club, the city's first RC alumni event in many years. The long-awaited occasion reunited familiar faces and welcomed new ones, as alumni reminisced about their school days and reflected on how RC continues to shape their lives.

Just a few days later, on November 7, more than 120 alumni gathered at the New York Penn Club for a vibrant evening centered around tradition,



connection, and shared legacy. The night featured the New York screening of *Robert College Theater & Dorothy İz: Leaving Their Mark*, a documentary Serra Mansur Soysal RC 83 directed and co-produced with Rezan Benatar RC 73. Previously premiered on campus in March 2024 for World Theater Day, the film captures the lasting impact of beloved theater

teacher Dorothy İz through intimate interviews and archival footage.

Both events featured remarks from Board Chair Erol Hakanoğlu RC 74 and Head of School Adam Oliver, who spoke about the school's enduring mission and evolving future. These gatherings also marked the introduction of Yıldız Günay, Robert College's new Director of Institutional Advancement, to the alumni community.

While Boston reconnected after a long hiatus, New York continued its long-standing tradition, a fall gathering that many alumni now eagerly await each year. Both events were a testament to the strength and spirit of the RC community, no matter the city.

MAGNUM
haz peşindeysen



UTOPIA
KARAMEL & AHUDUDU

HAZZIN ÖTESİNDE

RC Spirit Stronger Than Ever at London Alumni Gathering

I Graduates across the years enjoyed sharing memories.

On January 27, 2025, for the third year in a row, the RC Alumni London Gathering was held at the same venue, the Beaufort House in Chelsea, solidifying its place as a tradition. RC alumni gathered in record numbers, making this the most crowded RC London event to date. With around 120 attendees spanning generations, the evening was filled with warmth, laughter and shared memories.

Head of School Adam Oliver, CFO Ümran Üngün ACG 70 and Director of Institutional Advancement Yıldız Günay extended a heartfelt welcome, highlighting the strength of the RC alumni network and the deep connections that continue to thrive across the globe.

Adding to the night's excitement was a lively RC trivia game, where alumni put their knowledge to the test. The top three winners proudly took home Bob the Bobcat mascots, celebrating their RC spirit. Another highlight of the evening was the unveiling of the personalized RC jacket, which drew much enthusiasm from attendees. As the night came to a close, conversations lingered, and plans for



Head of School Adam Oliver welcomed the alumni and gave an update on the school

future reunions were already being made—ensuring that the RC spirit remains as strong as ever.

This event continues the proud tradition of RC alumni gatherings in both New York and London, where the RC community comes together to celebrate and strengthen bonds. In addition to organizing events

for reconnecting with alumni, the London and New York visits by RC's administration and Institutional Advancement Office provide opportunities to engage with "next levelers" – alumni who are helping to take fundraising efforts to the next stage. The next stop will be the US West Coast; stay tuned for more updates.



Classmates enjoyed catching up and sharing memories

If you want to learn about upcoming events, drop a line to alumni@robcoll.k12.tr and make sure your contact details are up to date at community.robcoll.k12.tr

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RC 25 University Acceptances

The Class of '25 has had an outstanding number of acceptances from some of the top universities around the world. Here are the results as of April 18, 2025. The Turkish results will be available at the end of summer.

Country / University Name	Total	Country / University Name	Total	Country / University Name	Total
BELGIUM	8	University of Edinburgh	28	Pennsylvania State University, University Park	11
KU Leuven	8	University of Exeter	2	Pepperdine University	1
CANADA	34	University of Glasgow	5	Pomona College	4
McGill University	5	University of Leeds	2	Pratt Institute	3
The University of British Columbia, Okanagan	1	University of Manchester	63	Princeton University	1
The University of British Columbia, Vancouver	7	University of Nottingham	5	Purdue University	25
University of Alberta	1	University of Oxford	5	Reed College	1
University of Toronto	20	University of Sheffield	3	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	2
FINLAND	1	University of Southampton	1	Rhode Island School of Design	1
Aalto University	1	University of St Andrews	3	Rice University	3
FRANCE	5	University of Surrey	1	Rollins College	1
École Polytechnique	2	University of Warwick	20	Rutgers University - New Brunswick	5
EDHEC Business School	1	University of York	1	Sarah Lawrence College	2
EM Lyon Business School	1	UNITED STATES	410	School of the Art Institute of Chicago	3
ESCP Business School, Paris	1	Amherst College	1	School of Visual Arts	2
GERMANY	2	Arizona State University	2	Sciences Po - Columbia University	
Bard College Berlin	1	Babson College	2	Dual BA Program	1
Humboldt University of Berlin	1	Bard College	1	Simmons University	1
HONG KONG SAR	6	Barnard College	1	St. John's University	1
Hong Kong Polytechnic University	1	Baylor University	1	Stanford University	1
Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	2	Boston College	1	Stevens Institute of Technology	1
The University of Hong Kong	3	Boston University	16	Stony Brook University	2
IRELAND	2	Bowdoin College	1	Syracuse University	3
Trinity College Dublin - The University of Dublin	2	Brandeis University	2	Texas A&M University	2
ITALY	25	Brown University	1	The New School	2
Bocconi University	12	Bryn Mawr College	2	The Ohio State University	1
Humanitas University	4	California Institute of Technology	2	The University of Texas at Austin	2
Politecnico di Torino	5	California Institute of the Arts	1	Union College - New York	1
University of Trieste	2	Carleton College	2	University of California, Berkeley	5
Vita-Salute San Raffaele University	2	Carnegie Mellon University	3	University of California, Davis	12
MAINLAND CHINA	1	Case Western Reserve University	9	University of California, Irvine	7
New York University Shanghai	1	Claremont McKenna College	2	University of California, Los Angeles	5
THE NETHERLANDS	92	Colgate University	2	University of California, Merced	2
Amsterdam University College	4	College of Wooster	2	University of California, Riverside	2
Delft University of Technology (TU Delft)	9	Columbia University	3	University of California, San Diego	25
Eindhoven University of Technology	30	Cornell University	3	University of California, Santa Barbara	12
Erasmus University College	5	Dartmouth College	1	University of California, Santa Cruz	5
Erasmus University Rotterdam	1	DePauw University	1	University of Chicago	3
Leiden University	3	Drew University	1	University of Florida	2
Tilburg University	1	Drexel University	11	University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign	21
University College Groningen	1	Duke University	4	University of Maryland	1
University of Amsterdam	19	Eckerd College	1	University of Massachusetts, Amherst	4
University of Groningen	3	Emory University	4	University of Miami	1
University of Twente	5	Fordham University	4	University of Michigan Ann Arbor	5
Utrecht University	7	Franklin & Marshall College	1	University of Michigan Flint	1
Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam	4	George Washington University	1	University of Michigan-Dearborn	1
SPAIN	3	Georgetown University	1	University of Minnesota Twin Cities	1
Escuela Superior de Administración y		Georgia Institute of Technology	7	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	9
Dirección de Empresas ESADE	2	Grinnell College	2	University of Notre Dame	1
IE University	1	Harvard University	2	University of Oregon	1
UNITED KINGDOM	297	Haverford College	2	University of Pennsylvania	2
Architectural Association School of Architecture	1	Hofstra University	1	University of Pittsburgh	1
Brunel University	1	Illinois Institute of Technology	1	University of Richmond	1
City University of London	2	Indiana University Bloomington	4	University of Rochester	4
Durham University	7	Johns Hopkins University	5	University of Southern California	4
Imperial College London	17	Kenyon College	1	University of Virginia	6
King's College London	28	Knox College	1	University of Washington	4
Lancaster University	1	Lafayette College	1	University of Wisconsin, Madison	5
Queen Mary University of London	12	Lesley University	1	Vanderbilt University	2
Royal Holloway, University of London	1	Marquette University	1	Villanova University	1
The University of Central Lancashire	1	Maryland Institute College of Art	1	Virginia Tech	2
University College London	65	Michigan State University	13	Washington University in St. Louis	3
University of Bath	5	New York University	8	Wesleyan University	1
University of Birmingham	3	Northeastern University	12	Williams College	1
University of Bristol	12	Northwestern University	4	Worcester Polytechnic Institute	2
University of Cambridge	2	Oberlin College of Arts and Sciences	3	Yale University	2
Total Number of Acceptances					886

Inal Family Establish Award to Recognize STEM Students

The Inal Family, a multigenerational pillar of the Robert College community, has extended their legacy of generosity by establishing the Inal Family Award—an endowed graduation award that will recognize exceptional academic and co-curricular achievement for years to come.

With a gift of \$250,000, the Inal Family created this award to honor a graduating student who demonstrates outstanding accomplishment and plans to pursue a STEM field, ideally in the United States.

Their ties to Robert College span decades. Ahmet Inal RC ENG 61, former president of the Robert College Alumni Association of America (RCAA), and his daughter Oya Inal RC 85,



Ahmet Inal RC ENG 61 and his daughter Oya Inal RC 85

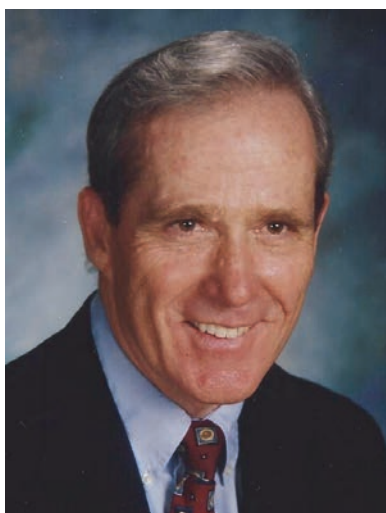
a committed class agent, represent two generations of alumni dedicated to strengthening the RC community. Their father and grandfather, Kenan

İpekçi RC 1921, served as a Trustee, further connecting the family to the school's institutional history.

The Inal Family has long supported Robert College through numerous endowed scholarships, participation in the Centennial Scholars Program, and other generous contributions. Their impact on RC education and campus life has been significant.

The Inal Family Award reflects their continued belief in the power of education and their desire to support the next generations and innovators. The first Inal Family Award will be presented at RC's 158th Commencement Ceremony in June 2025, and will be presented to a new deserving student in perpetuity.

James Maggart Memorial Endowed Scholarship: Honoring a Legacy of Leadership



Former Headmaster and Trustee Jim Maggart

The Maggart Family has established the James Maggart Memorial Endowed Scholarship to honor the remarkable legacy of James Maggart,

whose leadership and dedication helped shape Robert College for over five decades. Created by his spouse Kaye, and children Mike, Stephanie, and Aylin, this scholarship stands as a lasting tribute to his profound impact on the school.

James Maggart played a pivotal role in RC's history, leaving an enduring mark on the institution. Over the course of five decades, he held multiple leadership roles, including serving as Head of School (1977-81) and Chair of the Board of Trustees (2002-2009). In his early years, he was also a math teacher, Lise Director, and varsity basketball coach at ACG, leading the team to a four-time national championship (1970-73).

Maggart was instrumental in guiding RC through transformative milestones,

including the 1971 merger of Robert Academy and the American College for Girls, as well as the transition to a Lise-only school. His leadership continued well beyond his tenure, serving as a Trustee from 1990 and later as Trustee Emeritus in 2016, always offering invaluable guidance.

The Maggart Family's decision to establish this scholarship ensures that his legacy will continue at RC for generations to come. Through this fund, a deserving student will receive a world-class education, embodying the very values that James Maggart championed throughout his life.

If you would like to contribute to James Maggart Memorial Endowed Scholarship Fund, please contact Burcu Berent RC 96 at the RC Institutional Advancement Office (bberent@robcol.k12.tr).

The Karaçam Family Endowed Scholarship Fund



The Karaçam family's deep ties to RC include graduates Burhan Karaçam RC YÜK 72 (left), Selmin Asmaz Karaçam RC YÜK 72, Burak Karaçam RC 92, and Selin Karaçam Paksoy RC 02 (second from right)

The Karaçam family—Burhan Karaçam RC YÜK 72, Selmin Asmaz Karaçam RC YÜK 72, Burak Karaçam RC 92, and Selin Karaçam Paksoy RC 02—have come together across generations to establish an endowed scholarship fund in their family name.

As proud alumni of Robert College, the Karaçams have long upheld the school's values of academic excellence, community, and service. Their decision to support a student's education in perpetuity reflects a deep and lasting commitment to giving back.

The family's connection to RC runs deep. Burhan Karaçam, a pioneer in the Turkish banking sector, has been a source of wisdom and support to the school over many years, returning to campus to share his insights with students and the RC community. Burak Karaçam generously supports RC's efforts in New York, frequently opening the doors of his restaurant, Pera, for alumni gatherings and community events. Selin Karaçam Paksoy, a valued member of the Annual Giving Committee, continues to be a steady presence with her thoughtful contributions and deep understanding of education and school life.

This fund not only honors their legacy at RC but also ensures that future generations benefit from the same transformative education.

John Heaney Endowed Scholarship: His Impact Lasts Beyond the Classroom

John L. Heaney, is a beloved former English teacher who taught at RC from 1979 to 1990. With the vision of leaving an enduring and meaningful impact, Heaney decided to establish the John Heaney Endowed Scholarship Fund., which will provide future generations of students access to an RC education.

"I thought about the possibility of creating something more lasting and permanent. Turkey and RC have had a profound impact on my life," said Heaney. In addition to his own contributions, his family and friends will also support the fund. Their generosity will not only honor his



Former RC English teacher John Heaney

legacy but will also open doors for bright young minds who might not otherwise have the opportunity to experience an RC education.

Further strengthening his commitment, Heaney has also made a bequest for a portion of his estate to be added to the fund, reinforcing his belief in the transformative power of education.

Through this meaningful act, John Heaney ensures that his impact on Robert College extends well beyond the classroom—inspiring and supporting students for generations to come.

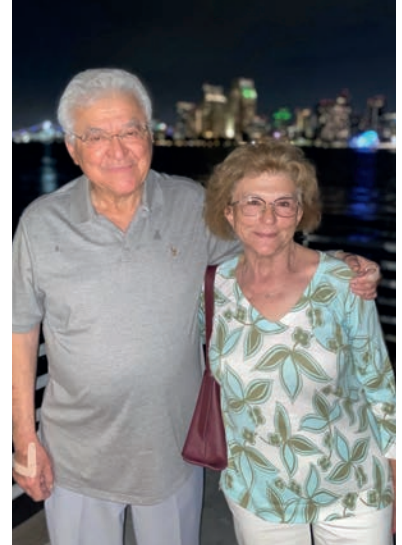
The Taşman Family's Commitment to the Future

Robert College is honored to recognize the generosity of Feridun Taşman RC YÜK 64 and Ayşe Dülger Taşman ACG 67, who have made the meaningful decision to include Robert College in their wills. Their commitment ensures that future generations of students will continue to benefit from the transformative education and values that have defined RC for over a century.

Feridun Taşman RC YÜK 64 and his brother Haldun Taşman RA 62 carry forward a family tradition of excellence and leadership. They are the nephews of Cevat Eyüp Taşman RC 1910, a pioneer of the Turkish petroleum industry, whose contributions shaped one of the

country's most critical sectors. Just as their uncle made an impact on the development of Türkiye's energy resources, Feridun and Ayşe Taşman's generosity will leave a lasting mark on the future of Robert College and its students.

By including Robert College in their estate plans, the Taşmans join a distinguished group of alumni and friends in the Elizabeth Dodge Huntington Clark Society, who have chosen to extend their legacy through philanthropy. Their decision reflects a deep appreciation for the role RC has played in their lives and a commitment to ensuring that talented students—regardless of financial circumstances—can continue to thrive at Robert College.



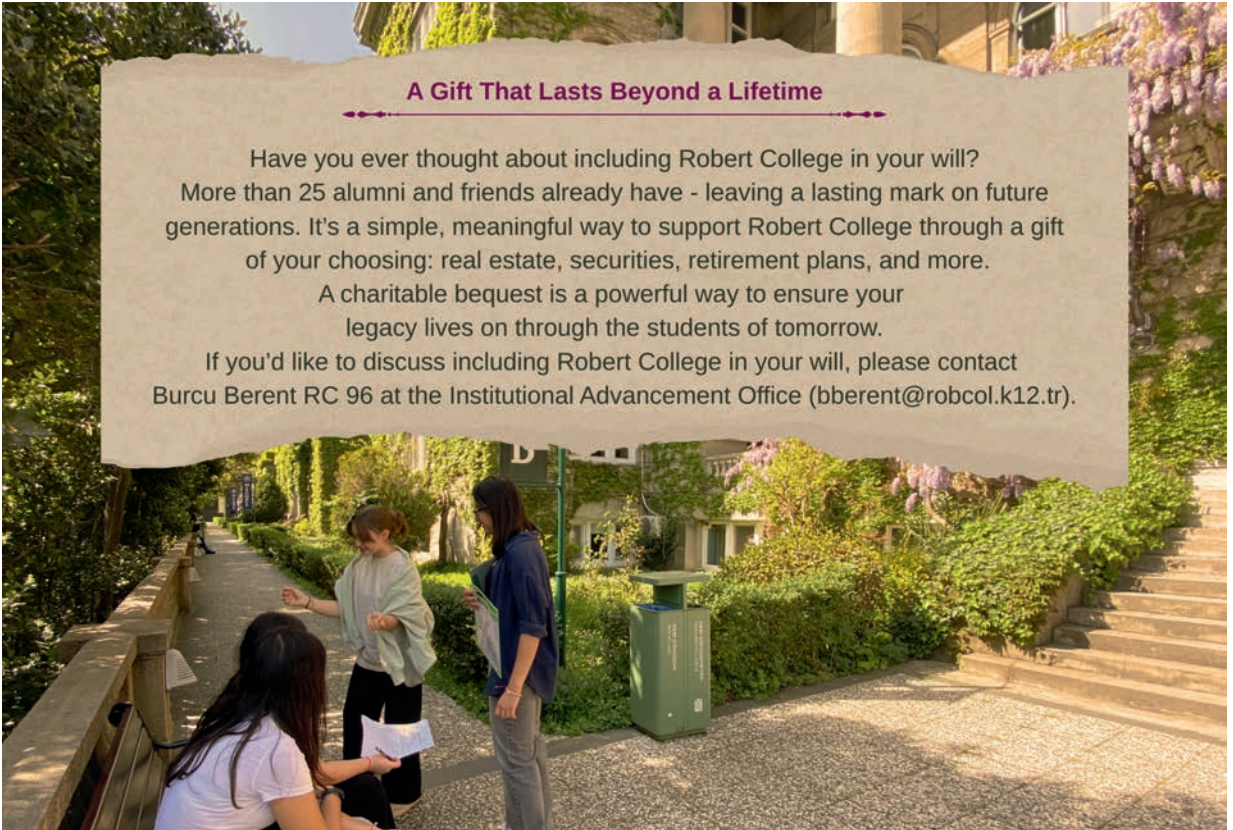
Feridun Taşman RC YÜK 64 and
Ayşe Dülger Taşman ACG 67

A Gift That Lasts Beyond a Lifetime

Have you ever thought about including Robert College in your will?
More than 25 alumni and friends already have - leaving a lasting mark on future generations. It's a simple, meaningful way to support Robert College through a gift of your choosing: real estate, securities, retirement plans, and more.

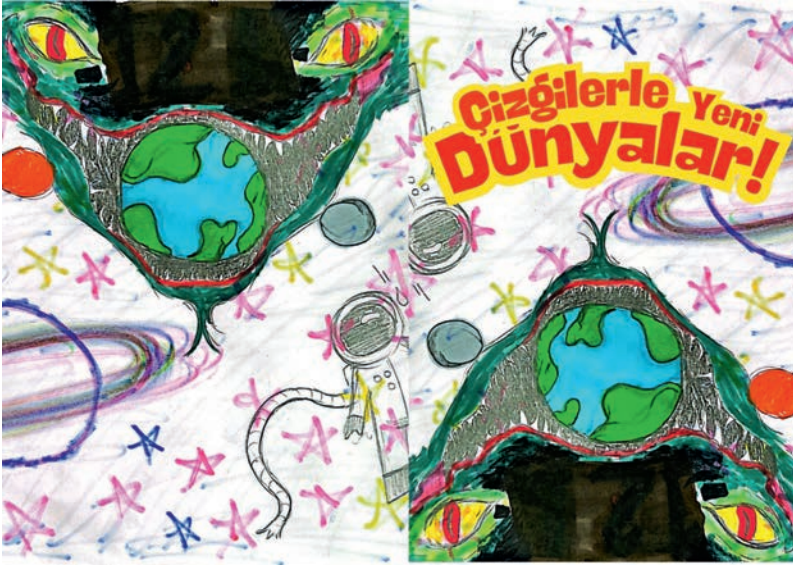
A charitable bequest is a powerful way to ensure your
legacy lives on through the students of tomorrow.

If you'd like to discuss including Robert College in your will, please contact
Burcu Berent RC 96 at the Institutional Advancement Office (bberent@robcol.k12.tr).



Building Bridges Through Transformative Projects

Projects run by the Community Involvement Program (CIP) connect RC students with different communities around Türkiye. Here are highlights of projects from the past year.



One of the outcomes of the week was a graphic novel created by students at Cihadiye Middle School

From Lounge to Library: The Aksu CIP Continues to Grow

As the CIP Office continues to carry out projects over the years, connections deepen and become more meaningful with time. Cihadiye Middle School in Aksu-Antalya exemplified this meaningful connection this year. In 2018, the first CIP project was conducted there, focusing on improving the school library. RC students raised funds, renovated the space, and organized workshops on creative reading and science. At the beginning of this year, a university student contacted the CIP Office, explaining that he had participated in that library project years ago as a middle school student and now wanted to collaborate with RC on a new project through his university club. This January, a one-week CIP project was carried out in collaboration with students and lecturers from Antalya Bilim University. The outcome was a graphic novel booklet created by middle school students with the support of RC students. These

multilayered connections and the fact that children grow up with memories of CIP projects make community service activities even more meaningful for our current students.

A Shared Love of Service

CIP projects sometimes begin with an impromptu chat. One day, music teacher and level dean Koray Demirkapı mentioned the vocational school where his cousin works—Rauf Denktaş Vocational and Technical



RC and RDTMAL students shared experiences and decorated the Pendik school's corridors with murals

Anatolian High School (RDTMAL) in Pendik—and their community-oriented work. The students there use their crafts to improve conditions in their community, specializing in areas such as photography, graphic design, hairdressing, and childcare. RC students were eager to meet these talented students, engage with them, and collaborate on a project to improve their environment. In November 2024, students from both schools came together and transformed a school corridor into a library. They shared their service experiences, created murals on the walls, organized and classified books on the shelves, and registered them in an online cataloging system. Through this collaboration, a strong sense of cooperation and friendship developed between the students of both schools.

Apis mellifera Club CIP

The CIP Office and the Apis mellifera Club collaborated once again this fall. As part of their social responsibility project, club students traveled to Salihli, Manisa, where they met with women beekeepers at the Köprübaşı Hanımeli Cooperative. They organized workshops on making beeswax, propolis, cream, and reusable food wraps. It was an incredible



Apis mellifera Club members worked with women beekeepers in Manisa

opportunity for our young beekeepers to meet experienced women in the field, allowing them to learn from their wisdom while also sharing fresh insights from their own experiences. We are striving to ensure the continuity and sustainability of this project, which aims to provide multifaceted benefits to the environment.

Gaziantep Art Camp – a Collaboration with INARA

In the summer of 2024, partnership with INARA, co-founded by our esteemed alumnus, journalist Arwa Damon RC 94, we launched a meaningful project supporting children affected by war. For a week, our students led an art summer camp in Gaziantep, inspiring boundless creativity and new ways to express emotions.

Another memorable moment of the project was visiting another RC alumnus, Nüket Alevli Ersoy ACG 50, the founder and administrator of Gaziantep College Foundation Private Schools. Our students and advisors had the opportunity to chat with her about our school, RC memories, and her work in education, making it a truly special experience.



The art camp in Gaziantep helped children affected by war express themselves through art

JUNE 2024 – MARCH 2025 RC COMMUNITY SERVICE REPORT

RC STUDENTS INVOLVED

406 RC students worked at community-centered projects broadening their social perspective and boosting their social-emotional learning.



NUMBER OF PROJECTS

The CIP Office facilitated a total of 32 projects, where RC students completed 866 hours of community service. 14 of these projects took place out-of-town of İstanbul, 13 within the city and 3 online projects.

COMMUNITIES REACHED OUT

RC students reached out to approximately 780 people in 12 different cities and numerous dogs at various shelters in İstanbul.



LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

The CIP Office celebrated the 9th year of the Leadership Training Program, where 10th graders learned about the details of social leadership.



What's On at Bizim Tepe

The favorite place to meet for RC alumni, the RC Alumni Association has hosted numerous events and activities to keep the community connected.

Vibing at Bizim Tepe



Winter Vibes '24, held on December 26, 2024, at Bizim Tepe, was a heartwarming and high-spirited celebration that brought Robert

College alumni together to close the year on a festive note. Set against the cozy backdrop of winter, the evening was filled with laughter, music, and

joyful reunions. Alumni reconnected over delicious seasonal treats, warm beverages, dancing by the firepit and vibrant conversations, creating an atmosphere that perfectly captured the essence of community and holiday cheer.

Don't miss out on the Spring and Summer Vibes parties! With longer days and warmer nights ahead, we're already planning more unforgettable moments at Bizim Tepe. These upcoming events promise even more music, mingling, and memories under the sun and stars. Stay tuned for updates, and make sure you are part of the celebration!

GRADLIVE'24 Rocked!

On August 20, 2024, Bizim Tepe came alive with music, energy, and the unmistakable spirit of the Robert College community. Alumni musicians from across generations took to the stage and delivered unforgettable live performances throughout

the evening. From rock to jazz, indie to classic covers, the diverse performances reflected the vibrant musical talent which was cultivated during school years and carried into alumni life.



Enjoy Live Sports at Bizim Tepe



On July 14, our community came together to experience the thrilling Euro 2024 final match between Spain and England. Whether cheering with friends, watching with family, or simply soaking in the electrifying atmosphere, it was a night of unforgettable moments for alumni. We will organize more live stream activities - stay tuned!



Traditional Mother's Day Brunch is Back



On Sunday, May 11, we had the great pleasure of hosting our beloved alumni and the remarkable mothers in our lives at our traditional RKMD Mother's Day Brunch at Bizim Tepe. Surrounded by family, friends, and the lush serenity of Bizim Tepe, guests enjoyed a beautifully prepared brunch featuring a wide array of delicious flavors.

We thank everyone who joined us and helped make this day truly special. Until next year!

Bizim Kamp 2025 is Open for Registration

Bizim Kamp offers children a unique experience that goes beyond traditional classroom learning. Children gain valuable life experiences that contribute to their physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development while having fun in a vibrant and nurturing camp environment.

The program is thoughtfully designed to instill and reinforce essential values such as environmental awareness, empathy, respect for others, sharing, and responsibility. Each day is filled with dynamic and immersive activities that children enjoy alongside their peers and camp counselors. The structured yet playful daily schedule

encourages creativity, movement, curiosity, and collaboration, offering children opportunities to discover new interests and grow in confidence.

This summer, our thematic focus will be on learning about historic figures and events that shaped the world. Through creative workshops, games, and interactive storytelling, children will dive into the stories of the past in a way that's both educational and exciting.

For more information, please visit our website or contact us at (0212) 287 00 78. We'd be delighted to answer your questions and help you plan a meaningful and unforgettable summer for your child.



Bizim Tepe By the Alumni, For the Alumni

The one and only place where all Robert College alumni—without exception—come together, create unforgettable memories, add new moments to their school days, raise their children, always enjoy their time, connect with each other, and wholeheartedly participate in all kinds of cultural activities will once again be *Bizim Tepe* in 2025 (and forever), with the unwavering support of you, our valued members and alumni.

RCAAA Strengthens Alumni Connections Across North America

In a 2021 survey, when asked what they wanted most from their Alumni Association, RC alumni in the US responded simply and clearly: “Help us stay connected—to our Alma Mater, to each other, and to the next generation of young alumni.” RCAAA has taken their feedback to heart, creating and delivering events and services in alignment with alumni needs and priorities.

To maintain alumni ties with Robert College, RCAAA annually in the springtime hosts a virtual Fireside Chat with the RC school head. To support young alumni continuing their higher education in the US, RCAAA offers financial assistance to qualified new graduates with the Welcome to USA (WtUSA) Awards Program.



Long-time supporter of the RCAAA's WtUSA Awards Program, Ahmet İnal RC ENG 61 and the President of the Alumni Association Board, Arzu Çalış RC 83, with the 10 awardees at the 2024 RC Graduation Ceremony



40 supporters and recipients of the WtUSA Awardee Community joined the annual virtual reunion in early October 2024

The RCAAA WtUSA Awards Program, which has benefited over 125 recipients since 1993, now holds an annual virtual reunion for all its recipients and supporters in early October. In 2024, over 40 alumni came together to share stories of their successes and challenges. Breakout sessions offered members of the growing community the opportunity to get to know each other better and stay connected.

Last but not least, to help our alumni community stay connected locally, RCAAA operates five active chapters in Boston, NYC, Philadelphia, D.C. and San Francisco. We also aim to start new chapters in Los Angeles, Chicago, Austin and Florida.

Regional Chapter Highlights

NYC Chapter: Young Alumni Dinner – October 2024

The NYC Chapter continued its tradition of hosting a Young Alumni Dinner, offering a warm welcome to recent RC graduates and fostering connections among young alumni continuing their higher education in the States. Over 20 alumni from college students to young professionals around the area, attended the event at Turkish Kitchen. Everyone had a great time and at the end of the evening, not wanting to leave their friends, the crowd continued to a Turkish disco dance party afterwards.



Recent alumni connected and made new memories during the Young Alumni Dinner

DC Chapter: Honoring RC, the Republic, and Atatürk – November 2024



Alumni shared a memorable evening at the gala dinner

The DC Chapter held its celebration gala dinner, bringing together 40 alumni and friends from the DC, Maryland, and Virginia (DMV) Metroplex and

North Carolina. The event bridged graduates from the 1950s to 2024 in celebration of our shared RC legacy and intergenerational connectivity.

The strong presence of graduates from both Robert College and the American College for Girls (ACG) was notable, highlighting the enduring bond among alumni from these two parts of RC history. The event highlighted younger alumni and students being introduced to their regional RC community.

Held close to November 10, the evening commemorated Atatürk as a world leader and RC's historical role in shaping young leaders enhancing his legacy. Senior members were moved to see how enthusiastically the younger alumni expressed their appreciation of Atatürk and commitment to a thriving modern Turkish Republic. Attendees emphasized the importance of us staying connected and reinforcing our commitment to each other.

Boston Chapter: New Year Kickoff – February 2025

The Boston Chapter started 2025 on a high note with its largest bar night yet! More than 40 alumni gathered at the Liberty Hotel Lobby on February 1, for a lively happy hour, filled with conversation, laughter, and networking. The event set the tone for an exciting year ahead, with more gatherings planned to keep the community engaged.

With an ever-growing alumni network, RCAA continues to create meaningful opportunities for connection, ensuring that the RC spirit thrives across North America.



It was an evening to remember with the largest-ever turnout in Boston

RC Alumni Groups Blooming Across the World

I Seattle and Switzerland groups are the latest additions.

News about US and UK alumni gatherings inspired alumni in other parts of the world to take the initiative and set up their own groups. Yusuf Pişan RC 88 led the charge in Seattle, with Burak Yetişkin RC 02 doing the same in Switzerland.

Socializing in Seattle



Alumni from several decades came together for the first Seattle gathering

Yusuf Pişan, who took the lead in Seattle, explains how the group started and how they're connecting: "I have been reading about the RC Alumni gatherings in New York and Boston for many years and feeling envious for missing out. After one more such news item, I decided that we should

have a Seattle gathering. I only knew two RC alumni in the Seattle area, but created a LinkedIn group and started inviting people anyways. The response was very enthusiastic. Many alumni joined quickly and invited their own connections to join. We now have 39 members in our group.

"Our first gathering was at Stoup Brewery on March 19, with a side order of lahmacuns from a local pizza place. Sixteen alumni, ranging from classes of '88 to '21, came. The conversations were nonstop. We were all excited to meet and wanted to make sure there would be a next event before too long – likely wine tasting in Woodinville.

"We have also established a WhatsApp group since not everybody is on LinkedIn and WhatsApp works better for informal conversations. As the group matures, we will add networking and mentoring activities, but for now we are enjoying getting to know each other." To connect with the Seattle group, contact Yusuf Pişan at yusuf.pisan@gmail.com

Creating Connections in Central Europe



At their first gathering, alumni in Zurich enjoyed a relaxed afternoon of conversation and connection

Burak Yetişkin helped to connect alumni in Zurich. He discusses the need for such a group in the region: "While there are alumni networks in the US and UK, we have fewer connections here in Central Europe. I felt the need to help build what's missing here. Our high school connections run deep. We didn't just

share the thrill of running between buildings in that 5-minute break—we spent our formative years side by side, growing up together. RC isn't just an academic institution; it's a community that shaped us in ways we often don't even realize until we reconnect with fellow alumni.

"Meeting people for the first time but feeling like you already know them isn't something that happens often. But that's exactly what made our first gathering special. The way we organized it was simple. We set up a chat group where alumni received a link to join. One alumnus suggested meeting in Seefeld that same weekend. Despite the short notice, people showed up. A couple

weeks later several of us met again at Zurich's Mühlerama Museum chocolate culture weekend, where Tamer Tamar RC 92 spoke on his photography project about cacao farming.

"Moving forward, it's important to let things evolve naturally. Too few interactions can cause a network to fade, while too many can lead to people losing interest. Another key aspect is welcoming newcomers. Over the last decade, more and more alumni have relocated to Switzerland. This group can both be a practical support system and a way to instantly feel at home in a new place." To connect with the group in Switzerland contact Burak Yetişkin at burak@atelier.io

If you're interested in connecting with other RC alumni in your area, contact Advancement Coordinator Burcu Berent RC 96 at bberent@robcol.k12.tr

Hakan Binbaşgil RC 79 Takes a Leading Role at Sabancı Holding

I Binbaşgil was recently appointed Group President for Banking and Financial Services.



Hakan Binbaşgil RC 79

Hakan Binbaşgil's responsibilities at Sabancı Holding keep expanding, as new opportunities in integrating financial services with banking unfold. Binbaşgil expects traditional banking to radically change: "The core values of

trust and financial responsibility will remain, but the way we deliver services will be different. Tomorrow's banks must anticipate, not react; advise, not just transact. Technology will make it possible to deliver banking services that are real-time, embedded, and personalized yet still deeply human in tone and intent." Integration of banking and financial services unlocks scale, synergy, and intelligence: "When banking, insurance, and investment services come together under a shared vision, we can deliver more seamless, personalized, and value-driven experiences."

Digital banking and AI constitute the heart of the strategy in Sabancı Holding: "AI will allow us to predict customer needs and provide tailored

financial advice, while digital banking will make it easier for people to access services anytime, anywhere. Our GenAI strategy is designed to drive innovation across three core dimensions: enhancing the employee experience, enriching customer journeys, and streamlining internal processes. We want to use technology to make financial services more intuitive and empowering, helping people make better decisions and feel confident about their financial future."

Binbaşgil draws attention to the need for supporting next-generation talent in this transformation: "Our vision is made possible by empowering young professionals and fostering a workplace where curiosity, creativity, and collaboration can thrive."

Bilgili Group Wins Property Award in the US

I The Fifth Miami was named Best Office Architecture.

Serdar Bilgili RC 81 is the chairman of Bilgili Group, a premier real estate development and investment company in Türkiye. Bilgili Group's real estate project The Fifth Miami was selected as Best Office Architecture in the US in 2024 by International Property Awards. The Fifth Miami is the first commercial building in the US designed by the Spanish architect Alberto Campo Baeza and was previously named Best Office Architecture in Florida. Bilgili Group CEO Sinan Temo RC 08 underlines that the project brings together many firsts in terms of design and functionality. The Fifth Miami was designed to LEED certification standards with the aim of creating a sustainable and healthy work environment.



Serdar Bilgili RC 81

Bilgili states that Bilgili Group has been active in the US market since 2018, diligently building a robust international presence: "Miami perfectly reflects our strategic vision

to invest in vibrant, culturally rich metropolitan hubs renowned for their artistic and architectural heritage. The Fifth Miami represents our dedication to creating distinguished, sustainable developments that become iconic landmarks intimately connected to their communities."

Bilgili maintains that Turkish real estate development has increasingly earned global admiration for its exceptional creativity, sophisticated designs, and visionary approach to urban transformation: "We are humbled and privileged to play an instrumental role in shaping Türkiye's distinguished international reputation through our innovative and culturally resonant projects."

Yasemin Altıntaş RC 04 Among Top Women in Open Water Swimming

She started swimming competitively while at RC.

Yasemin Altıntaş was a nominee among 45 women for the Women of the Year Award by the World Open Water Swimming Association. This recognition came after she completed the Triple Crown of Open Water Swimming—an honor currently achieved by only 366 swimmers worldwide. The Triple Crown consists of the English Channel, the Catalina Channel and the 20 Bridges Swim around Manhattan.

Altıntaş always loved the water, especially the sea. She started swimming competitively while at RC, where she also formed and captained the swimming team. Altıntaş says it's hard to separate her RC experience from her experience as a competitive swimmer.



Yasemin Altıntaş RC 04

In 2021, she heard about marathon swims: "Initially, I saw it as a box to tick, but then I realized I loved being in vast, open water." Altıntaş likens the planning for a marathon swim to mapping out every detail of a vacation

you'll take a year from now: "I start by choosing the swim, and each body of water draws me in for a different reason. Once I've made my decision, I break down all the key elements—distance, temperature, conditions, tides, currents, sea life, and more. I assess where I currently stand and what I need to work on to be fully prepared when the time comes. Each swim presents both predictable and unpredictable challenges. The more prepared you are for what you can foresee, the more energy and resilience you have to handle the unexpected."

Altıntaş is grateful for the RC community which gave her lifelong friends and mentors who continue to support her.

Haldun Dormen RC 49 Celebrates 70th Year on Stage

A surprise event at Cemal Reşit Rey marked the occasion.

An institution of his own in Turkish theatrical history, actor, director and writer Haldun Dormen celebrated his 70th year on stage with friends, family, colleagues and fans at a surprise event at Cemal Reşit Rey Concert Hall. Stellar figures like İzzet Günay, Göksel Kortay ACG 55, Suna Keskin, and Erol Evgin attended. Through film, speeches, songs, and dance, everyone voiced admiration for his body of work and his continuing contributions.

Dormen transferred to RC from Galatasaray Lisesi in Orta, already bitten by the theater bug. All he wanted was 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



Haldun Dormen RC 49

was Refik Erduran RC 47, who went on to become one of the foremost playwrights of Turkish theater. 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."

Dormen learned his lesson well and indeed has no intention to retire just yet. In a recent interview with T24 he emphasized that he does not have time for aging or tiring. An article with 10haber stated that Dormen's number one requirement for a career in theater is passion: "Dedication is of utmost importance. No room for desperation. Situations may arise that cause desperation, but as artists we should not give in."

Dormen continues to light the way, particularly through his school Dormen Akademi, where he passes the theater bug onto new generations.

Göksel Kortay ACG 55 Celebrates Her 60th Anniversary in Art

The veteran actress was recognized at numerous events.



Göksel Kortay ACG 55

Sixty years of dedication in art is remarkable, and Göksel Kortay was duly showered with celebrations. The first was at the gala of the play she directed, *İkinin İkisi (Out of Order)* by Ray Cooney. After the closing curtain,

the artistic director of Sahne Tozu Company invited Kortay on stage to celebrate her anniversary.

Antalya Altın Portakal (Golden Orange) Film Festival also honored Kortay, after a screening of the film *Fidan (Sapling)*, of which she is among the cast. Kortay received her plaque from BİROY (Association for Screen Actors) Head Renan Bilek, who said Kortay represents the contemporary Turkish woman through her intellectual depth and elegance.

Kortay was emotional in her acceptance speech: "60 years means a whole lifetime. In this lifetime, there is acting, directing, teaching, emceeing, translating, dubbing

and trade unions." Kortay dedicated the award to all women who tirelessly go after their dreams and who achieve them on their own.

Kortay received the Lifetime Achievement Award from Sadri Alışık Theater and Cinema Awards and was previously presented the Women of the Republic of Türkiye Award from the Bedia Muvahhit Awards in 2023: "It was given for the first time to me. After me, the second one was given to Prof. Oya Başak ACG 55. I'm very proud of it. It symbolizes a woman born into the Republic, who lives by the standards of the Republic and who is a follower of Atatürk - a rich meaning."

Toygun Yilmazer RC 96 Named Strategic Planner of the Year

The awards acknowledged individuals from around the globe.

Campaign Global is a business magazine, covering advertising, media, marketing and commercial creativity that organizes the prestigious Agency of the Year Awards. The awards cover four continents, celebrating companies, leaders and work from numerous countries. The recipients for 2024 were announced in London in a first-ever live ceremony, and advertising agency TBWA's Chief Strategy Officer Toygun Yilmazer received the Golden Award in Strategy Planning.

Many industry awards acknowledge creative excellence, reward effectiveness and celebrate talent, but the particular system of Campaign Global takes into consideration additional criteria, such as new

business performance, thought-leadership, innovation, culture and values in order to arrive at the best all-round performers on the globe. These awards are judged exclusively by senior brand marketers, rather than by agencies.

Yilmazer believes his thinking, writing, speaking, and contribution to various fields, such as artificial intelligence, sustainability and marketing effectiveness contributed to this recognition: "My curiosity and versatility come from the Robert College culture. At RC, we worked on many different areas together, such as art, science, literature, philosophy, music, and cinema, which fostered a multi-faceted approach. I remember



Toygun Yilmazer RC 96

writing a text in my first year of high school where an entire family spoke to each other only in advertising slogans. It seems I had an interest in advertising even back then."



From L to R: students in the RC Library reading room, 1920s; Librarian May Fincancı speaks with students in the Orta Prep Library, 1980s; a student uses the card catalog to search for a book, 1960s

28 cover story

RC and Literature: An Ever-Lasting Love

English and Turkish literature constitute one of the main tenets of an RC education. Literature not only develops analytical and critical thinking, clear, concise, impactful speaking and writing skills, it also offers students a way to discover themselves and make sense of the world. Appreciation of literature and a habit of reading for pleasure are lifelong gifts that keep on giving, gifts that RC students take away with them when they graduate. In this issue, RCQ puts the spotlight on this beloved subject, from the current curricula to literary alumni.



Prep students in the Library, 1931

When remembering RC, it is virtually impossible for an alumnus not to recall a book he read in class and how it fundamentally altered something in him. It can be a classic like Sophocles' *Antigone*, or a story like *Flowers for Algernon*, a poem perhaps, whose opening lines have long been committed to memory (What happens to a dream deferred?) or a book like 1984 or *Animal Farm* that made him question the world. An alumnus may recall how rigorous the literary discussions were and how hard it was to write papers, as she breezes through reports or composes impactful emails and presentations at work. Without a doubt, learning about literature at RC is a life-changing experience.

Depth, Breadth and Interdisciplinary Approach

Over the decades, RC literature classes have covered classics and canonical works, as well as contemporary literature in a spirit of discussion and self-expression. Often the approach has been interdisciplinary for a richer appreciation of literature. The Arts, Science and Literature class, being taught at RC for well over 40 years,

is a prime example. In this class, the visual arts, architecture and cultural history are brought together. A curriculum from 1986 shows that science weighed in about the arches for Roman architecture; vellum and ink production were discussed around medieval manuscripts. Students in this class today continue to study such seminal work as *The Odyssey*, Dante's *Inferno*, *The Song of Roland*, *Don Quixote*, *Moby Dick*, and Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*.

Literary Teachers

A literature education that goes beyond knowledge into appreciation and indeed love is possible only with inspiring teachers. Eminent academic Oya Başak ACG 55 recalls some of them fondly: "I had two magnificent English teachers. Fahir İz was a special professor and chairperson who showed us the incredible variety of 'words, words, words,' as Hamlet says. Dorothy İz taught me some of the most important things one needs to know about world literature. She had unbelievable insight into the texts and amazing capability to tie two different plays with subtle differences between them. She inspired all of us. My teachers led me to light and to a place of feeling, of the camaraderie

between humans. Shakespeare himself says this: 'All men make faults, and even I in this/Authorizing thy trespass with compare.' (Sonnet Nr 35)." RC also often had literature teachers who themselves were writers. Tevfik Fikret, Halide Edip Adıvar, Faruk Nafiz Çamlıbel, Behçet Kemal Çağlar, and Refik Halit Karay are some of the historical literary names who graced the RC halls.

The Library: A Treasure Chest

RC libraries have always augmented literature education. Both ACG and RC libraries started out modestly. Harvard University's donation of 200 volumes in the beginning was a notable addition to the nascent collection. By 1957 though, the Robert College Library had 111,598 books and 214 periodicals, and the ACG Library 27,163 books and 108 periodicals. The library lived on in many iterations through the decades and reached its present form in 1996. Throughout the years, with the newspapers, magazines, and vast English and Turkish collections, a student who started on the path of literary discovery would have been as delighted with the level of access and special environment that RC Libraries provided, as they are today. Indeed, poet and translator Efe Murad RC 06 sums the role of the library and RC librarians on student life perfectly: "As a prep student, I discovered the treasure of books by rebellious poets like Arthur Rimbaud and Allen Ginsberg in the library, which felt like a revelation. This experience ignited my passion for future literary discoveries, and I must acknowledge the generosity of the librarians Ayşe Yüksel ACG 69 and Şiir Tursan ACG 70 for their guidance. It was there that I first began to understand the importance of language—not just as a tool for communication, but as a vessel for exploring and conveying the complexities of human experience."

Today the İbrahim Bodur Library works closely with teachers to support course development and enrichment. It aligns its resources with their curriculum,



Some of the notable authors who taught at RC and ACG include (clockwise from top left) Halide Edip Adıvar ACG 1901, Refik Halit Karay, Tevfik Fikret, Behçet Kemal Çağlar, and Faruk Nafiz Çamlıbel

ensuring students have access to materials that support and enhance their learning. This effort includes curating collections of books, articles, and online resources. The Library staff also teach students essential research skills, provide guidance on effectively using both print and digital resources, and offer instruction on citations, resource evaluation, and academic honesty.

Literary Publications and Competitions Encourage Budding Writers



The chance to practice one's hand at creative writing has always been encouraged at RC. Over the decades, there have been numerous publications such as Çağrı and Objective that featured student writing in different genres like poetry, short story, journalism. The tradition continues and expands. Now there is even a magazine for graphic novels. The literary club Oda (Room) publishes the Oda magazine once a year. Each year the students in the club choose a theme. The 2025 theme is "Transformation." RC Turkish

Literature teacher and club advisor Sengül Özdemir says that the selected work is in line with the theme and can be in any genre, and all RC students are invited to contribute. All work is shared on a drive and club members constructively critique the pieces. Contributors develop their work, based on the feedback. The club demonstrates how writing is a process and how it gets better, as one writes more. Another publication is Martı (Seagull) which features creative writing, like poetry and stories.

The tradition of literary competition is also strong at RC. The Çağrı Poetry Competition of the 1980s often featured stellar literary names heading the jury, such as Sabahattin Kudret Aksal. Currently the Jane Page Competition in English and Martı magazine's story and poetry competition in Turkish, in its 16th year in 2025, garner lively participation. The theme of the 2025 Martı competition is "Discovery." Özlem Kaynar and Özgül Akgül, RC Turkish Literature teachers and club advisors, explain that the need for self-expression drive the students to send their work to the competition: "The participants are evaluated by a jury comprised of literature teachers. The best three are awarded in a special event and get published in the magazine. In order for a writer to find her voice, she has to listen to herself, try to understand different perspectives and evaluate her own work. Martı is not just a publication club, it is also a workshop aiming to discover budding writers."

The Jane Page English Writing Competition started after Maura Kelly won the teaching honor with the same honorific in 2009. Kelly elaborates:

"Knowing that many famous authors like Sylvia Plath won writing competitions early in their careers, even as high school students, I realized this would be an effective

way to encourage RC students to put pen to paper or finger to keyboard. Contests challenge a student to share their writing publicly and to perhaps polish a draft they haven't completed. The prize money remains generous-\$300 per category: short fiction, short script, and poetry. My favorite part of the JPWC is the ceremony where winning entries are read by the student's own English teacher. It is so moving and incredible to see the pride in both the teacher's expression and the honor for the student to have their work read out loud in the Bodur Library each spring.

"Each year we have a significant number of entries for short stories and poetry which evidences student interest. Film and Literature courses, Creative Writing and Modern Drama electives cultivate contributions. Students enjoy the recognition they receive at the ceremony and when published in RC magazines."



Dean of Faculty Maura Kelly, the founder of the Jane Page English Writing Competition, at the ceremony in 2025

Alumni and Teacher Authors Abound

Challenging curricula, superb teachers, the library, the tradition of student publications and competitions - indeed an ideal educational environment for future writers! No wonder so many emerged from RC. Halide Edip Adivar ACG 1901, Halikarnas Balıkcısı (Cevat Şakir Kabaağaçlı) RC 1904, Bülent Ecevit RC 44, Tomris Uyar ACG 61, Pınar Kür RC YÜK 63, Ayşe Kulin ACG 61,

Aslı Erdoğan RC 84, Lale Müldür RC 75, Roni Margulies RC 72, Mina Urgan ACG 35, Gündüz Vassaf RA 64, Nihal Yeğinobalı ACG 45, İpek Ongun ACG 61, Hikmet Hükümenoğlu RC 89, Cem Akaş RC 86 and of course the Nobel Laureate Orhan Pamuk RA 70 are among the prominent literary figures who are also RC graduates. Abdülhak Hamit Tarhan also attended RC, though he did not graduate. Moreover, many RC graduates joined the ranks of academia and contributed to literature in this meaningful way. Berna Moran, Şiar Yalçın RC 43, Memet Fuat RC 44, Özdemir Nutku RC 50, Aziz Çalışlar RA 61, Talat Sait Halman RC 51, Jale Parla ACG 64 are among this choice group. Some, like Cevat Çapan RC 53 and Maureen Freely ACG 71, are writers, academics, and literary translators!

In the literary climate of RC it is no wonder that some teachers ventured into writing as well, particularly non-fiction. Colin Edmonds, who was with RC for 43 years, started out teaching Prep and later became the Computer Science Coordinator. He taught his own book, *The Social Issues in Computing*, which he wrote back in 2008 and published online for free (it is still available here: www.cedmonds.net/dl/sibook.html) History teacher Önder Kaya, philosophy teacher Ezgi Emel Kalyoncu RC 10 and former Turkish Language and Literature teacher Adil izci are also prolific writers.

RC Literature Education Today

The breadth of areas covered in both English and Turkish literature classes, the wide range of literary electives and publications continue to be a source of pride. Members of the RC community elaborate on the state of affairs in language and literature education at

RC, and the picture that emerges is dazzling indeed.

English Department Head Angela Shockley and Assistant English Department Head Ana Shaw Reveal the Ins and Outs of the RC English Program

“Our job as teachers is to get students thinking critically and exploring novels they wouldn’t normally read.”

What are the aims of RC’s English Literature program?

The English Department at Robert College contributes to students’ intellectual development by teaching them a spectrum of essential to more sophisticated, nuanced language and literature skills. Fluency in English is a primary goal. We also aspire to encompass 21st Century Fluencies: creativity, information, media, solution, and collaboration. We put an emphasis on insightful thinking, imaginative and academic writing, collaborative discussion, group work and careful, close reading. A range of literary and non-literary works are used as a springboard to hone our students’ skills. We value thoughtful reading for class-specific needs and for the larger good of exploring the complex human experience with a growth mindset, as well as how to be more self-aware as consumers of information to ensure they are conscious of the nuances. We teach essential elements of effective writing such as grammar and essay structure, but we also emphasize writing as a way of exploring and developing one’s ideas. We ask that students refine and articulate their ideas through authentic production such as debates, academic conversations



Angela Shockley

multi-media text, academic posters and blogs.

How are students exposed to literature in the English Prep program?

The Lise Prep English course is an “Introduction to RC Course.” We support English language development and age-appropriate literature learning opportunities. Students read texts like *American Born Chinese*, a graphic novel, which is deceptively rich in approaches to learning. It contains multiple perspectives with a shifting protagonist. In the exploration of any graphic novel, words are only a small part of the reading experience. Students learn how to read text features, like graphic weight and framing techniques, and how those visual text features help



Ana Shaw

an author convey a message. Students also participate in research. Most recently in Prep English Language class, our students explored an environmental based issue, drawing from knowledge gained in the science class during the first semester. Their topics ranged from addressing the stray cat population on campus to implementing an entirely plant-based lunch in the MKSC. Students, working in groups, created a question as a focus, researched multiple perspectives for answers, and then participated in a debate with other sections. We also explore literature from an experiential and transdisciplinary perspective, introducing them to the most exciting parts of RC as a whole. For example, Lise Prep students are provided with several learning opportunities fulfilling the demands of our bespoke Atatürk Explorer program, supported by the Head of Adventure Educational Learning and the Dean Innovation and Regenerative Education. Activities involve the climbing wall, Augmented Reality activities, and exploring published scientific research. The students are then given structured opportunities to reflect and communicate their learning.

What is a favorite book you teach?

Angela Shockley: Every book I teach to students at any moment is my favorite. What I truly love is when students “get it.” At the moment I’m teaching *Moby Dick* to my Art, Science, and Literature 2 class. *Moby Dick* has an imposing reputation that can intimidate even the strongest of readers. I love taking the students through the text and have them say “this is so relevant” to their lives. I’ve seen the same thing happen with *The Odyssey* and *Macbeth* and countless others.

Ana Shaw: I love teaching literature. It would be *The Outsiders*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Catcher in the Rye* and *Circe*. Authors Jason Reynolds and Nicola Yoon for short stories, or some classics like Roald Dahl.

Which books are the current student favorites?

Murder mysteries, novels by Karen McManus and Kara Thomas, but the perennial favorite is Agatha Christie. Students also love Rick Riordan who uses Greek, Egyptian, and Norse mythology in contemporary settings with young protagonists. The current pattern in young adult literature is very appealing to students. It shows that they can change the world, no matter their age. Small things can make a big difference. If a student is reading, we see it as a win.

Maura Kelly - Dean of Faculty, former English Department Head

“In order to be good at writing, you must be a reader.”



Maura Kelly

Maura Kelly has been with RC for 26 years and illuminates how RC cultivates good reading and writing skills in students, despite the challenges and distractions this century puts up along the way:

“Reading as a habit has declined over the past decade. There are many reports and articles being released with provocative titles like, Rose Horowitz’s

Atlantic piece, ‘The Elite College Students Who Can’t Read Books.’ Jonathan Malesic’s op-ed essay for the NY Times entitled “There’s a Very Good Reason Why College Students Don’t Read,” credits screens, Covid, and AI for the demise of reading. Sadly, as educators, we know the power of reading and its effect on empathy, critical thinking, vocabulary, and writing skills.

“To counteract the decline in reading we start strongly in the LP year to instill a reading habit in our students. Time is scheduled weekly for students to select personal reading choices with the guidance of their teachers and the librarians. There is a section in the south wing of the library dedicated to Literature Circles titles which allows groups of students to read the same book and to discuss their understandings. This focused reading practice continues in L9, and student-choice is strongly encouraged. In the upper-years, courses have several required texts per semester. The Ibrahim Bodur Library inspires us all daily by making our library the heart of the school.

“Finally, a quote from Annie Lamott – her fantastic book on writing, *Bird by Bird* is an incredible testimony to reading:

“Writing and reading decrease our sense of isolation. They deepen and widen and expand our sense of life: They feed the soul. When writers make us shake our heads with the exactness of their prose and their truths, and even make us laugh about ourselves or life, our buoyancy is restored. We are given a shot at dancing with, or at least clapping along with, the absurdity of life, instead of being squashed by it over and over again. It’s like singing on a boat during a terrible storm at sea. You can’t stop the raging storm, but singing can change the hearts and spirits of the people who are together on that ship.”

Books Taught in the RC English Program

The texts selected for the RC English program are chosen to be intellectually engaging, appropriately challenging, and diverse—in genre, form, culture, and content—in order to develop self-reflective, critical, socially-aware, and empathetic students who are knowledgeable about a wide range of aspects of the human experience. The Turkish Ministry of Education chooses texts and allows the schools to use resources that enrich the curriculum. The curriculum balances foundational and contemporary texts that allow students to recognize patterns and build connections, appreciating and evaluating storytelling as art that is crafted for specific effects.

COURSE	FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS	COURSE	FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS
Lise Prep	<i>City of Ember</i> by Jeanne DuPrau <i>Heroes, Gods, and Monsters of the Greek Myths</i> by Bernard Evslin <i>American Born Chinese</i> by Gene Luen Yang	Literature and Technology	<i>Snow Crash</i> by Neal Stephenson <i>The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy</i> by Douglas Adams <i>Never Let Me Go</i> by Kazuo Ishiguro
Lise 9	<i>Night</i> by Elie Wiesel <i>Lord of the Flies</i> by William Golding <i>Circe</i> by Madeline Miller	Modern Drama	<i>A Doll's House</i> by Henrik Ibsen <i>Dutchman</i> by Amiri Baraka <i>The Good Person of Szechwan</i> by Bertolt Brecht <i>Endgame</i> by Samuel Beckett
Lise 10	<i>Fire Next Time</i> by James Baldwin <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> by Margaret Atwood <i>Macbeth</i> by William Shakespeare		
AP English Language and Composition	<i>Behind the Beautiful Forevers</i> by Katherine Boo <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> by Jane Austen <i>You Talkin' to Me? Rhetoric from Aristotle to Trump and Beyond</i> by Sam Leith	Modern Novel	<i>Blood Meridian</i> by Cormac McCarthy <i>The Hours</i> by Michael Cunningham <i>The Bluest Eye</i> by Toni Morrison <i>Tender is the Flesh</i> by Agustina Bazterrica <i>The White Tiger</i> by Aravind Adiga <i>The Memory Police</i> by Yoko Ogawa <i>Anxious People</i> by Fredrick Backman <i>The Nickel Boys</i> by Colson Whitehead
AP English Literature and Composition	<i>Frankenstein</i> by Mary Shelley <i>Song of Solomon</i> by Toni Morrison <i>The Great Gatsby</i> by F. Scott Fitzgerald	Shakespeare	<i>The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works</i> by William Shakespeare (Author), Ann Thompson (Editor), David Scott Kastan (Editor)
Art, Science, and Literature 1 and 2	<i>The Odyssey</i> by Homer <i>The Inferno</i> by Dante <i>The Tempest</i> by William Shakespeare <i>Hamlet</i> by William Shakespeare <i>Moby Dick</i> by Herman Melville	World Literature	<i>Convenience Store Woman</i> by Syaka Murata <i>One Hundred Years of Solitude</i> by Gabriel Garcia Marquez <i>Cyrano de Bergerac</i> by Edmund Rostand <i>The Diary of a Madman, the Government Inspector, and Selected Stories</i> by Nikolai Gogol
Creative Writing	<i>On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft</i> by Stephen King		
Journalism	<i>The Things They Carried</i> by Tim O'Brien		
English for Economics	<i>Common Sense Economics: What Everyone Should Know About Wealth and Prosperity</i> by James D. Gwartney		

Mehmet Uysal - Turkish Language and Literature Department Head

"We want our students to be sensitive to their native language."



Mehmet Uysal

Mehmet Uysal has been with RC for 44 years and has been the Turkish Language and Literature Department Head since 2002. He gives a wealth of information on the Turkish Language and Literature curriculum at RC:

"The Turkish Language and Literature Department aims for our students to learn and use their native language at the highest possible level. We also want our students to become adults who question and discuss issues. Finally, as a multicultural school, we want our students to uphold national and universal values. All the work in our classes supports these intentions. If you ask what our top departmental priority is, I would say it is for our students to use Turkish in the most correct, proper and beautiful way and to be sensitive to their native language.

"Our classes are in line with the Ministry of Education curricula, today and in the past. We adapt to changes brought in by MEB, keeping the RC

learning philosophy and approach intact. Currently, starting with prep, all Turkish Language and Literature classes are obligatory. During Prep, a particular highlight are the workshops that foster student creativity through reading and writing. In 9th grade, genres are explored through themes. In 10th grade, the focus shifts to the relationship between language and history, genres like novels, stories, memoirs, journalism and travel writing are further explored. Eleventh grade looks into the relationship of literature with society, essays, plays, criticism join the genres reviewed. 12th grade is when students

learn about different movements, and they also study 'Nutuk' (Atatürk's 'A Speech').

"Reading and writing well help the students develop intellectual richness and critical thinking. Writing well depends on reading well. We aim for our students to become good literary readers, structural thinkers who articulate their thoughts clearly. We support their learning through good examples. Now that the students arrive at RC during Lise, as opposed to Orta, there is a change in the level of preparedness to becoming Lise students."

Turkish Culture and Literature Symposium Celebrates 20 Years

RC took the lead in the Turkish educational sphere and established the Turkish Culture and Literature Symposium back in 2005. The foundational objective of the Symposium was to gather writers, students, teachers and literature teachers from RC and around Türkiye, highlight a theme and draw the attention of teachers to this theme. The fact that the symposium reached its 20th year in 2025 is a testament to RC's enduring support of literature and

the arts, as well as the hard work of the Turkish Language and Literature Department. Previous years' themes included Novel in Turkish Literature, Literature and Artificial Intelligence, and Fantasy Literature. One of the highlights in the past was the symposium on Orhan Pamuk, where the Nobel Laureate himself attended and put up the plaque on the wall of the classroom, named after him. The theme for the 2025 event is the legacy of the great actor and RC alumnus Genco Erkal RC 57.



Participants at the 2024 Turkish Culture and Literature Symposium explored the theme of Artificial Intelligence, Education and Literature



Literature Every Day: The İbrahim Bodur Library

"The library serves as a hub for literature, inspiration, and exploration."

Head Librarian Cara Keyman and Assistant Head Librarian Atakan Aydın illuminate the ins and outs of the beloved Library- the heart of RC in many ways.

Turkish Books RC Students Study

For RC alumni who want to explore seminal works in Turkish, here is an inspirational list of what RC students read.

Prep

Yetişkinler Ejderhalardan Neden Korkar? (Why Do Adults Fear Dragons?) -

compiled by: İshak Reyna

Palto (The Coat) - Gogol

Büyümenin Türkçe Tarihi (The Turkish History of Growing Up) - compiled by Murathan Mungan

Bütün Şiirleri (Poems) - Orhan Veli

Son Ada (Last Island) - Zülfü Livaneli

10th Grade

Kırmızı Pazartesi (A Chronicle of a Death Foretold) - Gabriel Garcia Marquez

Ağrı Dağı Efsanesi (The Legend of Ararat) - Yaşar Kemal

Puslu Kıtalar Atlası (The Atlas of Misty Continents) - İhsan Oktay Anar

Dede Korkut Hikâyeleri (Stories of Dede Korkut) - Adnan Binyazar

11th Grade

Sessiz Ev (Silent House) - Orhan Pamuk

Yabancı (The Stranger) - Albert Camus

Hikâyeler (Stories) - Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar

9th Grade

Genç Olmak 80 Yazardan 80 Öykü

(Youth: 80 Stories From 80 Writers) -

Nursel Duruel

Kürk Mantolu Madonna (Madonna in a Fur Coat) - Sabahattin Ali

Keşanlı Ali Destanı (Legend of Keşanlı Ali) - Haldun Taner

Gece Uçuşları (Night Flights) - İshak Reyna

12th Grade

Lüzumsuz Adam (A Useless Man) - Sait

Faik Abasıyanık

Korkuyu Beklerken (Awaiting Fear) -

Oğuz Atay

Sersem Koca'nın Kurnaz Karısı (The Cunning Wife of the Foolish Husband) -

Haldun Taner

Aylak Adam (Idle Man) -

Yusuf Atılğan



When it comes to books, RC Librarians are always ready to help! From L to R: Ümit Duran, Begüm İltan, Atakan Aydın, Cara Keyman and Müge Ayma Kelem



The Book Character Costume Day in 2024. For the annual event students and faculty dress up as their favorite literary characters.

What activities does the Library organize to promote reading?

We organize a week-long celebration called Literary Week filled with themed events and activities, collaborating with teachers and students to inspire a love for reading and foster awareness and appreciation of the literary world within the RC community.

A highlight of this week is Book Character Costume Day, where students are invited to dress as a favorite book character. It is a chance for students to show their creativity and for collaboration (group costumes based on a novel or story) while also strengthening connections with the school's curriculum. The group photo, music, popcorn, and voting system further enhance the sense of community, making reading an enjoyable and social experience.

The Book Exchange Table encourages students to share books they no longer need while discovering new ones. This exchange fosters an appreciation for diverse genres and authors. It also promotes a sense of ownership over their reading choices and strengthens peer connections.

Yet another Literary Week event is a trivia game, where students engage with questions based on books they've read. This interactive activity encourages friendly competition while testing students' knowledge

and understanding of various literary works.

This year, we showed *Howl's Moving Castle*, based on a fantasy novel by Diana Wynne Jones. This screening offered students an opportunity to analyze storytelling across different formats. The cozy setting of the library's Grand Hall and the social experience of movie night connected students with literature in an engaging way.

In addition, we have Accelerated Reader for Preps, a structured reading program that helps to motivate our Prep students to read and tracks their progress.

We also curate eye-catching book displays throughout the year to showcase a wide variety of titles, sparking curiosity and interest among readers.



The main book display in the Library changes frequently and highlights books related to a specific theme.

Authors Visits Enhance Literary Appreciation

Every year students are able to meet with authors and learn more about their craft. Authors share their experiences and inspire readers with their stories and creative journeys. Writers who have visited RC in recent years include Orhan Pamuk RA 70, Zülfü Livaneli, Ahmet Ümit, Mario Levi, Hikmet Hükümenoğlu RC 89, Deniz Duru RC 05, Soli Özel RC 76, Matt Dickinson and Rosalind Wiseman.



In 2023, authors Can Öz and Hikmet Hükümenoğlu RC 89 spoke with students

How do you decide which books to purchase?

We have a collection development and selection policy. By collaborating closely with teachers, we identify materials that complement their lesson plans, making the library an essential resource for classroom instruction. We also consider students' interests through recommendation forms,



surveys and conversations. In addition, we provide resources like SAT, AP, and YKS books to support our students.

To maintain high quality, we rely on reviews and lists in trusted well-known journals, magazines, newspapers and websites, and we monitor prestigious book awards. We also stay current with emerging trends in young adult literature. In order to keep our collection accessible 24/7, we've also included eBooks, audiobooks, and online tools.

What's an unusual thing that's happened in the Library?

RC Librarians have been collecting the things that our users have forgotten in our books for many years. From this the *Things You Forgot in Our Books* exhibition was born. Over the years we have found photographs, tickets, money, notes, flowers and many more. One of the residential students found a note in the exhibition that she had written when she was in middle school. It reminded us that books, too, travel and follow their owners!

Some Facts About the İbrahim Bodur Library

The current size of the collection

Print: 43,332 copies; 37,704 titles
Online through Overdrive (includes books, audiobooks and magazines): 1923

Number of visitors to the Library each day

The average number of daily visitors over the last five years is 587.

Top books checked out throughout the year

Due to our intensive reading program in the prep year, the following three young adult books are the most widely read.
The Inheritance Games by Jennifer Lynn Barnes
The Maze Runner by James Dashner
One of Us is Lying by Karen M. McManus

Outside of this Prep level reading

Fiction - *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald
Fiction eBook - *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store* by James McBride
Non-fiction - *Why Nations Fail* by Daron Acemoğlu
Non-fiction eBook - *Atomic Habits* by James Clear
Turkish Fiction - *Kürk Mantolu Madonna* by Sabahattin Ali
Turkish Non-fiction - *Çalınan Dikkat* by Johann Hari

Oldest books

In Latin and Greek from 1587 - *Institutiones Theophilo Antecessore*, Graeco interprete Imper. Iustiniani Institutinum, Libri IIII (*Institutes of Justinian*, a Roman law textbook in four parts, interpreted or commented on by Theophilus (a Byzantine legal scholar)

In Turkish from 1918 - *Binnaz* by Yusuf Ziya Ortaç

In English from 1668 - *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire* by Paul Rycaut

The most checked out book of all time

English – Fiction

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone by J.K. Rowling

English Nonfiction:

A Brief History of Time by Stephen Hawking

Turkish Fiction

Tutunamayanlar (The Disconnected) by Oğuz Atay

Turkish Nonfiction:

Türkiye ve Avrupa'nın Kuşları (Birds of Türkiye and Europe) by Heinzel Hermann



The annual *Things You Forgot in Our Books* exhibition displays a variety of ephemerata

How has digitization impacted readership?

By transforming how readers access, consume, and interact with content, digitization has reshaped reading habits, broadened access, and diversified opportunities for engagement. Unfortunately, though, our attention span and deep reading skills have been negatively affected by the immediate and bite-sized content available on digital devices.

One of the significant advantages of digitization was the ability to expand and adapt our services during challenging times. For example, during the pandemic, we significantly grew our eBook collection. This initiative not only helped bridge the gap created by the physical library closure but also reinforced our commitment to providing equitable access to knowledge and resources.

Do students ask for your recommendations?

Absolutely yes! We enjoy helping them discover books that align with their

interests, while also encouraging them to explore new genres and ideas.

How would you evaluate the interest towards magazines?

Our patrons enjoy the physical magazines, especially in subjects like science, literature, and current

events. The use of digital magazines is increasing. We collaborate with the Turkish Literature Department to raise awareness of literary magazines among students. As part of the prep curriculum, students visit the library, review a literary magazine in groups, and then present their findings in the classroom.

How can alumni use the Library?

Alumni have the option to become library members for a small fee. Once they are members, they can check out up to two books at a time for three weeks. This provides them with continued access to valuable resources and supports their lifelong learning.

Can alumni donate books?

We don't actively seek donations for a number of reasons but primarily because of the age and condition of the books being donated. The donation process for our library begins by asking alumni to provide a list of the books along with information on their physical condition. We then carefully review the list and select titles that are not already in our collection, ensuring they align with our goals of supporting student learning and personal growth.



Students exploring the depths of Dante's *Inferno* in a 1868 print edition in Italian from RC's rare books collection at the Ibrahim Bodur Library for their Arts, Science, and Literature class

RC Librarians Remember the Many Iterations of the RC Library

Ayşe Durukan Yüksel ACG 69 (Librarian from 1980-2013)

As an ACG student I was fascinated by the print and LP collections: being a border, I used to stay in the library till 10:00 pm. "Come take choice of all my library, and so beguile thy sorrow" - Shakespeare - *Titus Andronicus*. The library offered a cultural feast. It was a two-story structure, the upper floor offering the most beautiful scenery of the Bosphorus. It also had a secret door which enabled access to the adjacent assembly hall, so that every Monday when a visitor was to give a speech to the students, the librarians would sneak out to join. James Baldwin's presence was a highlight.

In 1980 I started working as a librarian at the same place, the Gould and the Bingham Hall libraries. The collection had grown; the magazines and LPs were still there. In 1997 the tremendous change came. The card catalog - the wooden cabinet with drawers - was replaced by Follett-Destiny: computers. We spent a lot of time on deciding the right software. The music collection LPs, cassettes, print encyclopedias and dictionaries had to retire. The main purpose, managing the collection and keeping in touch with the community, remained. We invited many writers to exchange views: Haldun Dormen RC 49, Tomris Uyar ACG 61, Hilmi Yavuz, Buket Uzuner and Tuna Kiremitçi are just a few. Kerem Görsev even gave a concert. We held so many different activities to welcome students to the library. We made heart shaped cookies with OKU & READ written on them. The library holds a lot of firsts



RC Librarians in 2009, from L to R: Şiir Tursan ACG 70, Nilüfer Göksan, İffet Özseven ACG 66, Ayşe Durukan Yüksel ACG 69 and John Royce

among which is the first National School Librarians' conference that was held in July 2003.

Şiir Tursan ACG 70 (Librarian from 1988-2015)

My first acquaintance with the RC library begins with Bingham Hall Orta Library on the ACG campus in 1962. Though not particularly technological, it was a very rich library. In 1987, when I started working at the library on the same campus which had become Robert College, record players, records and chips were the only technological devices. Then came IBM computers, but the card catalog was kept for a long time, before books were added to the computer system. In the 1990s digitalization started taking over. Record players and records were replaced by video cassettes, then computer disks. In the early 2000s the card catalog was cancelled with tears from the librarians. After entering around 10,000 books into the computer, all information was

lost due to a technical problem at the Computer Center! We had to start entering books into the system all over again. In the meantime, the Orta Library was merged with Lise library. An alarm system was installed at the entrance of the library, replacing the past honor system. We had to adjust each of the 50,000 books one by one according to the alarm system. Video cassettes were replaced by CDs and DVDs. IBM computers were replaced by laptops. The rustic and cozy library of my time was renovated and became a modern library full of technology. Instead of cataloging each book individually, books are now received with full cataloging information online.

İffet Özseven ACG 66 (Librarian from 1988-2009)

I loved our library as a student, so to have the chance to work there was a privilege for me. It was nice to be able to help students. The collection of books was marvelous. We were getting around 100 periodicals.

Former RC Teachers Recall Favorite Literature Moments

Betsy Göksel (English teacher from 1962-1997)

"It was a joy to have such freedom and such closeness."



Betsy Göksel

Betsy Göksel taught literature for over 35 years at Robert College. When RCQ asked her to choose some favorite moments Göksel said it was virtually impossible because she loved so very many, but here are some highlights nonetheless:

"It was so much fun to teach Graham Greene's *Our Man in Havana* – the setting, the characters, the ironies, the ambiguities, the mature debates it inspired. I also loved teaching Shakespeare at the Orta 3, Lise 1 level—*Julius Caesar*, *Romeo and Juliet* – and having students learn by heart lines from 'The Ancient Mariner.'"

"The plays in Bingham 1 like *I Remember Mama* and *The House of Bernardo Alba* stand out as

literary activities. 'Poetry Day' in collaboration with the Turkish teachers was wonderful, one poem in English, followed by one in Turkish.

"As for classes, my Lise 3 Oral English class of 1987-88 stands out in my memory. It was an elective never taught before, envisioned with some students so that we could have one more year together. I chose books I loved like *The Plague*, *Lucky Jim*, *The Dark Tower*, *Long Day's Journey into Night*. It was a joy to have such freedom and such closeness."

After RC, Göksel reread the classics: "I 'discovered' Jose Saramago before he won the Nobel Prize and love his novels. I have read, loved, and translated all of Defne Suman's novels and think she is a major Turkish writer."

Diane Özbal (English teacher and testing coordinator from 1972-2021)

"I always had non-fiction units in my



Diane Özbal

classes for the math and science-oriented students."

For Diane Özbal, growing up in a family of scientists came in handy at RC:

"I can't live without literature. But I was raised in a family of scientists and engineers. They all read only non-fiction because it was real, logical, full of new ideas and useful scientific knowledge. My own husband (another scientist!) once said to me, 'Why would I want to spend my time reading about fake people and their fake problems?'"

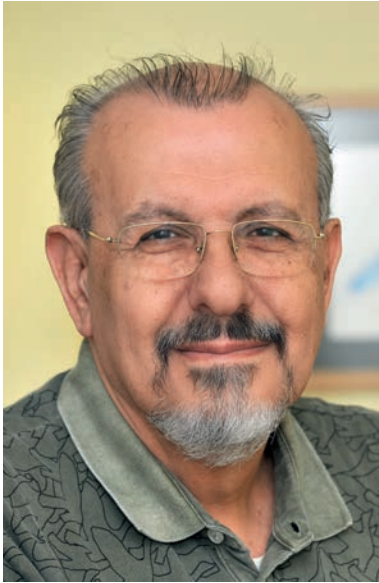
"At RC, I recognized so many students who were just like my wonderful family members. I understood them. That's why I developed several non-fiction units for whatever level I was teaching. I especially loved my Senior elective, English for Technology. It was always full of students, often mostly boys, and especially those who were planning to stay in Türkiye for university. They did not want a literature course because, as they told me, 'Mrs. Özbal, there won't be a single literature question on the university entrance exam.'"

"I had the background to capture the attention of this kind of student. I found articles on engineering and science that they could not help reading. The class had biographies of scientists and engineers and poetry about Einstein and his theories. It had excerpts from science fiction to discuss whether the science fiction writer got the science right or not.

"The English for Technology elective served a certain kind of scientific mind, a mind that I admired and understood, even if I didn't exactly have it myself."

Adil İzci (Turkish language and literature teacher from 1980 - 2010)

"I now lead a life among thousands of books. Books keep coming in waiting to be read."



Adil İzci

Adil İzci taught Turkish literature at RC for thirty years.

"My favorite period to teach has always been the Republic period. However, classes cover a range of writers and poets of course: Yunus Emre, Karacaoğlu, Bâki, Tevfik Fikret, Yahya Kemal Beyatlı, Yakup Kadri, Sait Faik, Necatigil, Orhan Veli, Oktay Akbal, Sabahattin Kudret Aksal. My favorite may be Sait Faik, particularly his sea and island stories. I generally prefer writers who emphasize aesthetics. Writers like Sabahattin

Kudret Aksal, Talât Sait Halman, Hilmi Yavuz also came as guests to our classes and symposiums.

"I now lead a life among thousands of books. Books keep coming in waiting to be read. Even though I am retired, I still sometimes suggest books to the RC faculty. *Unutma Beni* (Forget Me Not) by Aslı Eti Arlı RC 96 holds a special place in my heart next to Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*.

"The residue of my teaching years still guides me in my writing, especially in my stories. Karacaoğlu's lines 'Can alıcı gelmiş canım almaya / Benim can vermeye dermanım mı var?' (The life reaper came to take my life/ Do I have the strength to give it?) found their place in a story I wrote after my mother passed away.

Yıldız Düzköylü (Turkish language and literature teacher from 1993-2011)

"My term paper homework would be translations. It allowed for the students to develop both their English and Turkish."



Yıldız Düzköylü

Yıldız Düzköylü taught Turkish literature and was the founding advisor for Martı magazine. Here are her highlights from that time:

"Among my favorite books to teach were *Sevme Sanatı* (The Art of Loving) by Erich Fromm and *Martı Jonathan Livingston* (Jonathan Livingston Seagull) by Richard Bach. We read all of Sait Faik's stories in tandem with a TV series on TRT (*Havada Bulut; Cloud in the Sky*) based on them.

We founded a club with my students and started publishing Martı magazine. It comprised of pieces on theater, novel, poetry, interviews, caricatures. We also ran story and poetry competitions, discussion panels and debates.

"I recently prepared presentations for two symposiums together with my colleague at RC, Birol Özdemir: 'Writers Who Are Symbols of Their Own Land: Yaşar Kemal – Çukurova / John Steinbeck – Salinas Valley' and 'Teacher Heroes in Literary Life'. These were published in Novel Heroes magazine.

"In my retirement, I read a lot of writers' memoirs. Recently I was really affected by the book *Öğretmenim Morrie'yle Salı Buluşmaları: Hayattaki En Büyük Ders* (Tuesdays With Morrie) by Mitch Albom, about the weekly conversations that a retired sociology teacher had with his former student."

RC Alumni Make Their Mark on Literature

The Turkish literary world sparkles with RC alumni. Writing fiction and non-fiction, teaching and researching in academia, translating valuable works to Turkish and vice versa, RC alumni have contributed to Turkish literature in lasting and significant ways and continue to gather numerous accolades. Here are some of the members of this literary group who answered RCQ's questions for the RC community.

Ayşe Kulin ACG 61 Believes in the Sensitivity Literature Nurtures

“ACG was an ocean for those who had talents.”

Addressing the graduating class in 2012, Ayşe Kulin recalled her gains from ACG fondly: “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!” With these riches, Kulin went on to become one of the most widely read authors in Türkiye today.

What changes does literature instigate?

Literature takes us to places we have not been thus connecting us to all sorts of different cultures, introducing us to all sorts of people all around the world with different lives, habits and expectations. Literature also widens our vision, sensibilities and deepens our feelings. In short, literature widens our horizon making us if not better, definitely more sensitive people.

Why are you often drawn to historical stories?

That is not entirely true. Out of forty books that I have written only six novels might come under that title. *Münir Nurettin, Adı Aylin* (Name: Aylin) and *Füreyâ* are biographies of people whom I had personally known. *Nefes Nefese* (Last Train To Istanbul) is recent past - during the Second World War



Ayşe Kulin ACG 61

when I was born. I cannot consider an era where I am present, as history. My only truly historical novel is *Her Yerde Kan Var* (Blood Everywhere) which questions the mysterious death of Sultan Abdülaziz.

What differentiates fiction from other forms of storytelling?

Fiction supplies writers a large horizon for imagining. We can create different pasts, colorful futures and dystopias like I have done in *Tutsak Güneş* (Captive Sun) and *Yarın Yok* (No Tomorrow). Fiction does not tie writers' hands with the facts of history or actuality like in biographies but lets us free to fly with wings of imagination.

What advice would you give aspiring writers about finding their unique voice?

Every writer is her/his own creator. I do not find myself fit to give advice to my future colleagues because each of us with our different cultural backgrounds have a sound which is unique to us and we must be free to choose our own path. No advice needed for the urge to write, it springs from talent blessed to us yet we must perfect it with reading classics and other's works constantly.

What do you read for inspiration, and who are some authors you admire?

I try to follow young writers works but always go back to nostalgic Russian novels which I never tire from reading, and English literature has always been my favorite.

How did your experience at ACG influence you as a writer?

As an answer to this question let me just give a few names from my school term and say no more: Pınar Kür, Nazlı Eray, Tomris Gedik (Uyar), İpek Ongun, Dikmen Gürün, Mualla Mezhepoğlu, Leyla Batu Pekcan. ACG was an ocean for those who had talents specially for acting or writing. I am one of the lucky fish in that ocean.

Cevat Çapan RC 53 Discovered the Power of Poetry Early

I “My first volume of poetry was published in 1985 when I was 52.”

Cevat Çapan has dedicated his life to poetry and theater, as a writer, translator, and academic.

How did you discover poetry? How did your poetic path shape itself? When we feel like Wordsworth that “The world is too much with us,” with wars, genocides, and other atrocities, we cannot help but ask ourselves:

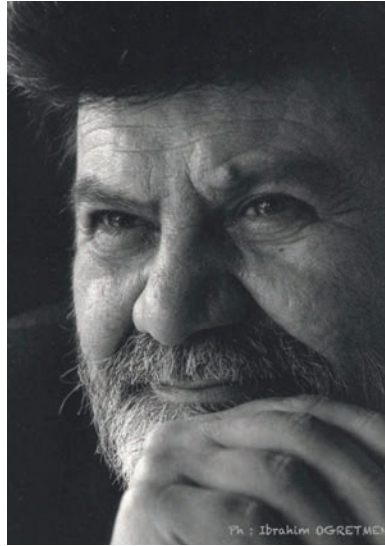
*How with this rage shall beauty
hold a plea
Whose action is no stronger
than a flower?*

This is followed by other questions: “What is the secret of this flower? And how strong is beauty? Do we believe like Keats that

*“Beauty is truth, truth beauty—
that is all
Ye you know on earth, and all ye
need to know”?*

When I read Yeats’ “Easter 1916” which announces that “A terrible beauty is born” because of the Dublin uprising, I discovered the secret and power of poetic beauty.

My style of storytelling was shaped by the folk tales I read at an early age. I was introduced to poems by Wordsworth and Robert Browning at RC and by graduation was familiar with almost all the great poets of world



Cevat Çapan RA 53

literature. During these last years I had already published poems in the school review İzlerimiz and other literary reviews like Varlık. In Cambridge where I was studying English Literature, I was intimidated to publish anything for a long time. After working in the Turkish Section of BBC for a year, I returned to Türkiye and translated poetry rather than publishing my own stuff. My first volume of poetry was published in 1985, when I was 52.

This book was followed by other slim volumes and a selection from these were translated into English by Michael Hulse and myself under the title *Where Are You, Susie Petchek?*

(Arc Publications). My friend from Cambridge, A. S. Byatt wrote in her introduction to this collection that my poems were, “in many ways paradoxical. They sound ancient and traditional, and yet they are recognizably related to modernism. Çapan is a man obsessed by poetry, by literature, who has made his life from it, translating poets and playwrights from many languages, across many languages, and yet his voice is his own and not ‘literary.’”

What guides you in your translations?

I have tried to follow Samuel Johnson’s advice:

“Let observation with extensive view
Survey mankind from China to Peru.”

Collaborating with other translators I published seven volumes of world poetry under the title *Şiir Atlası* as well as other collections of individual poets.

How about your involvement with theater?

I have been passionately interested to see most of the plays produced in Istanbul, Ankara, and if I had the opportunity, in London and Paris. Although I have taught history of drama in several universities and conservatoires, I regret that I have not been more active as a director of plays or a professional drama critic.

Pınar Kür RC YÜK 63 Questions Literature's Role Today

I “I learned how to write by reading Tolstoy.”



Pınar Kür RC YÜK 63

Author and dramatist Pınar Kür has penned such seminal works as *Bir Deli Ağaç* (A Tree Deranged), *Küçük Oyuncu* (Little Player), *Bir Cinayet Romanı* (A Murder Novel) and *Asılacak Kadın* (Woman to be Hanged).

What is the most vital role literature plays in society today?

I don't think literature plays a vital role in today's society. There were times literature was the most important for information, pleasure, everything that made people happy or unhappy. But now because technology is so advanced, practically nobody reads books and I suppose the books they do read don't really touch them. For

me it's vital because I write, but for the reader I don't think it's vital.

How did you start writing detective stories?

I always liked reading detective stories from an early age. I was tried for ruining the youth of Türkiye. I went to court many times. It gave me an idea: “Why don't I write a detective story myself?” They are not the usual type of detective stories - there's a murder, different mysterious things going on - but they are not like the usual books. More like searching for truth in life through searching for the murderer. The form is a detective story, but with another purpose, of how a work of fiction progresses.

How do you develop your characters? Do they ever surprise you as you write?

I develop the form and the characters before I sit down to write the book. Once I plan the text and the characters, I usually try to find faces for my characters from people I know. They do sometimes surprise me or even though I plan the thing, along the way sometimes I get stuck. Usually, I know who is who and what is what before I write the book.

What drew you to translating?

Money! When I graduated from RC I wanted to go to Paris. I needed money. So I started to translate. I tried to work on books I liked, but sometimes I took whatever I got.

What do you read for inspiration, and who are some authors you admire?

I used to say I learned how to write by reading Tolstoy. I have many favorites. My thesis at the Sorbonne was on Pirandello and O'Neill. I also like drama very much. I prefer reading drama.

How did your experience at Robert College shape you as an author?

It didn't really because I didn't spend a lot of time at RC; I came from the US to RC as a transfer student. The school was very good. I liked the school, sitting under the trees and looking at the sea. It was easy for me. If I had done all my education in the US and came back to a Turkish university, I would have had difficulty but because I had been educated outside of Türkiye, it was not difficult to adapt to RC.

Nazlı Eray ACG 62 Feels Writing Gives Her Freedom

I “Writing is pure spirit, a tempest, a tornado, a wail, a volcano erupting.”

Nazlı Eray is one of the most prolific authors in contemporary Turkish fiction.

You use magical realism in your writing. What appeal did this approach have for you?

I have been writing stories in the magical realism style since forever. The very first one was *Monsieur Hristo*, which I wrote when I was 16. It made me famous overnight. I did not know what magical realism was. Indeed, that phrase had not even been coined. No Marquez, no Lord of the Rings, no Harry Potter, no cellphones, no credit cards. The world was small and clean. It was small yet big.

It is as if I look at the world through a crystal prism. I see the world in a unique way which has not changed. I have written about a hundred books, which have been translated all over the world. I was born a writer, and I could not have done anything else. I was an emotional rebel and a vagabond. I went to Ankara one day. Instead of staying for a week, I stayed for 35 years. I was writing all the time, trying to figure out life. Time and death. Dreams and reality. These were my subjects.

What is literature's role in life?

I don't think in terms of literature, I think in terms of life. You need to read to recognize life, to understand it and be aware of it. If you are aware, you live a long life. If not, the train just runs on.

Writing gives me freedom. I set my own rules and build an alternate world. I write for many generations. Children,



Nazlı Eray ACG 62

youth, middle aged, elderly - they all find something in my books.

What is your advice to budding writers and literature enthusiasts?

To believe in themselves. They should write as if they are the first in the world to do so. Against all rules, in whichever way they want. Only then will they feel free. But of course, they need to read a lot; Russian, Japanese and French literature.

Who are your favorite authors and books?

I love Dostoevsky and Gogol. I love Miyazaki films and anime. Dick Bakken and Kazuko Shiraishi; I attended the Iowa Writers' Workshop with them.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez. When he won the Nobel prize, everyone understood what magical realism was. Me - I had been writing in the magical realism style since the 1960s. Jean-Christophe Grangé: I met him in Paris when I accidentally spilled wine on his copy of his latest novel. I don't believe writing can be taught in workshops. You don't learn how to write in workshops, you learn how to edit. Writing is pure spirit, a tempest, a tornado, a wail, a volcano erupting.

How did your experience at ACG contribute to your literary path?

It pointed me in the right direction. I was taught about freedom, and I was a stellar student.

Ipek Ongun ACG 61 Pioneered the Young Adult Category in Literature

I “Not being didactic is crucial.”



Ipek Ongun ACG 61

Ipek Ongun virtually single-handedly created the young adult category in Turkish literature and impacted the sensibilities of many generations through her numerous novels.

How did you decide to write for young adults?

I decided to write for young adults after realizing that there were no books in Türkiye specifically written for them. The year was 1980. There were just two categories; books for adults and books for children - nothing in between. So I told my editor that I wanted to write for teenagers, that it is a very important period in one's life and writing novels which would help them understand their feelings, their ups and downs and what to do about all these would make a big

difference. My editor was convinced but the owners of the publishing house weren't, saying, there were only two categories in the publishing world. My book didn't fit in - period.

If my editor believed in something, she would try her best to realize it. In the end, after two years, publishers decided to put my first teenage book, *Yaş 17 (Age 17)*, in a category that covered all sorts of books like travel and health, with no advertising! I really had no hope. But somehow several young people got hold of my book, and by word of mouth the book was selling, really selling!

The publishers were very much surprised. After that, all opposition stopped.

I wrote a thirteen-book series named *Bir Genç Kızın Gizli Defteri (Secret Diary of a Young Girl)*. Each book of the series dealt with a different critical issue.

How does the feedback you receive from your readers influence your writing?

I receive thousands of letters from my readers. They write about their problems, they share their happiness or things that make them sad. They have questions about life, love, friends, decisions. All these lead me to read and learn about these issues. Before I start writing a new book, I spend a long time on reading about the subject that I am going to write. I read books written by authors who are authorities on the subject. In other words, I do my “homework”. Then I convey all these in a very simple language. Definitely not in a didactic manner! Like two friends talking.

They'll be reading and enjoying but behind all that they will be getting the message that would be useful for them!

What do you like to read?

I love reading about history and biographies. Classics I have read in my younger years.

How did your experience at ACG influence your path as an author?

ACG was a wonderful school. It brings out the best in you. We had music, literature, drama, folklore in addition to all the basic courses. I was a member of a literature club, our president was Ülkü Tamer. Tomris Uyar and Ayşe Kulin were my classmates.

Ömer Koç RC 80 Finds Literature Therapeutic

I “Literature is timeless in its ability to convey universal truths and experiences.”



Ömer Koç RC 80

Chairman of Koç Holding and avid art and book collector Ömer Koç contributes to Turkish intellectual life in all of these capacities. A recent example is the riveting exhibition at Meşher, *The Story Unfolds* in Istanbul, centered around 300 books from the Ömer Koç Collection and summoning different representations of Istanbul over time.

What makes literature timeless and worth preserving?

Good literature is an antidote to the horrors of existence and everyday problems. Just like art, it makes the ride easier. It is extremely therapeutic.

How do you decide which books to add to your collection?

First of all, if it is a title in my area of interest which I do not have, I most definitely try to acquire it. Also, I upgrade constantly. If I happen upon a better copy of a book that I already have (it could be an association and/or presentation copy or in an armorial binding), I add it to the collection with alacrity.

I used to get rid of the inferior copy but for many years now, I am reluctant to part with it and I normally keep it as a reading copy.

Were there any surprising discoveries while preparing for the exhibition?

Once we decided to hold such an exhibition, I started acquiring more and more books set in Istanbul. And yes, there were some unexpected discoveries as a good number of these novels have minor but interesting details.

What message or experience do you hope visitors take away from this showcase?

That the Queen of Cities, the city at the thwarted kiss of two continents is a fabulous city which has fascinated so many diverse writers and literary personalities.

Which literary works have had the greatest influence on you personally and on society as a whole?

As much as I love history, like Disraeli, I think that “A first-rate work of fiction is the greatest stretch of the intellect!” In my youth, I was very

much influenced and seduced by Pierre Loti’s books set in Istanbul. Now he is considered an outmoded author with too flowery a style. But I really think he got Istanbul and understood the Turkish soul which makes him very dear to my heart. Another book which I love is Claude Farrere’s *L’Homme Qui Assassina (The Man Who Murdered)* and Thomas Hope’s *Anastasius, Memoirs of a Greek* is my favorite novel set in the East. It is a psychologically penetrating novel and also extremely funny. Byron is said to have wept twice upon reading it. Once because he had not written *Anastasius*, and again because Hope had.

Jale Parla ACG 64 Highlights How Literature Invites Us to Contemplate the Human Condition

I “Literature is the artistic medium that is closest to philosophy.”

An esteemed comparative literature professor and literary critic, Jale Parla considers herself a historian of literature.

What is the role of literature?

The vital role of literature is to heighten awareness of everything that surrounds the individual. Literature provides one with an experience that no other artistic medium does: It offers the chance to contemplate the human condition, partake in the experiences of other lives, penetrate into the multifarious aspects of experiential reality.

In our digital age of fast appropriation and consumption of facts, events, and relations, reading provides the chance to dwell on other lives; evaluate encounters and experiences



Jale Parla ACG 64

in a broader temporal space that covers the past as well as the present. Literature is the artistic medium that is closest to philosophy, the discipline of methodological investigation

and evaluation that unfortunately no longer gets the attention that it deserves.

Parla recalls her RC years in an interview she gave at Bilgi University:

There were wonderful professors at the RC Comparative Literature Department. They all had their PhDs from Harvard, Yale, Oxford; Hillary Sumner Boyd, David Garwood and Keith M. Greenwood. They did not teach us a methodology of how to compare literature. All they wanted was for us to read literature across borders- which is the main tenet of comparative literature. I only realized that comparative literature was a methodology, indeed a questionable methodology, at Harvard.

Maureen Freely ACG 71 Starts by Understanding the Author's Motives

I “My favorite book to translate was *Dawn* by Sevgi Soysal.”

Novelist, professor, and translator Maureen Freely is well-known for translating Orhan Pamuk's work into English.

How do you stay faithful to the original text in a different language?

It's not so much a question of staying faithful to a text so much as trying to understand what the author is striving to do in that text. My first question is: what are they trying to do here? What literary devices are they using to produce the thoughts, images and responses I am feeling so powerfully? And (most importantly) what can I do to recreate the music of the Turkish in English? Questions around accuracy are of course important, but best left to the next stage.



Maureen Freely ACG 71

What was your favorite book to translate? The most difficult?

My favorite is *Dawn* (Şafak) by Sevgi Soysal. The most difficult was *The Museum of Innocence* (Masumiyet Müzesi) because Orhan Pamuk and

I fell out when I was about half-way through. But never did I lose my faith in the book itself. I think we can both be proud of that translation.

What advice would you give about becoming a literary translator?

Start with a summer school. Another good idea is to enroll in a creative writing program. Much of what you need to know as a translator, you will learn by doing your own writing.

How did your experience at ACG influence you?

I could go on and on about the quality of the education I received there but let me just say that it was by listening to my classmates breaking the “English Only” rule that I began to learn Turkish.

Forever Recommendation from Oya Kaynar Başak ACG 55: Shakespeare

I “Shakespeare is a funny man!”

The RCQ spoke with Başak, an Emeritus Professor of Western Languages and Literature at Boğaziçi University, right before her passing (see p. 72). She underlined how eye-opening literature is.

What is the most vital role literature plays in society?

Literature guides us. It creates new, colorful, and comprehensive situations that have a lot of meaning and interest. It opens people's eyes. Literature is encouraging. It carries our hopes for the future.

How has young people's interest in literature changed over time?

Classic literature used to be central in schools, but now there's more emphasis on diverse and contemporary voices. The rise of short-form content such as TikTok has impacted how young



Oya Kaynar Başak ACG 55

people engage with literature. On the bright side, Shakespeare's works have been adapted into countless movies, and many of them make his stories more accessible and enjoyable for modern audiences. Whether

they stick to the original text or take creative liberties, films such as the Baz Luhrman's *Romeo + Juliet* or Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlet* capture the very essence of Shakespeare. I hope young people still take advantage of movies.

What are the books you would never tire of re-reading?

Hamlet, Hamlet, Hamlet! The work of an incredible genius. The richness of his vocabulary. The vision he presents to us of possibilities. His identification with the characters he creates and their amazing variety and range. It's an unbelievable, unending surprise, and yes, it is fun! That's another thing, Shakespeare is a funny man. He knows he enjoys life, and he makes us enjoy life. To steal from the song, “Amazing Grace,” Shakespeare has amazing grace and power with language.

Gündüz Vassaf RA 64 Believes We Are All Creators

I “The creative process is a liberation from all labels and categories, even ourselves.”

Writer and psychologist Gündüz Vassaf has produced novels, essays and memoirs, alongside his academic work. He is renowned for his thought-provoking perspectives.

What is literature's role in challenging societal structures and encouraging critical thinking?

Rabelais turned social mores of the 16th century upside down; Eric Maria Remarque's *All Quiet On The Western Front* critically challenged the war rhetoric of the nation state and Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* was a harbinger of our ecological consciousness. However, literature on the whole has promoted the opposite of critical thinking as evidenced by fundamental religious texts at one end and the escapist best-selling novels of today's consumerist society.



Gündüz Vassaf RA 64

Your works often bridge literature, psychology, and philosophy. How do they intersect in your creative process?

We're all at our best when we embrace spontaneity that allows our work to be interpreted in many ways. At the end, we're all creators. As children, we sing, dance, draw and tell stories only to lose it all when art becomes segregated from what is said to be real life. The creative process is a liberation from all labels and categories, even ourselves.

What advice would you give to young writers who are trying to find their voice in a rapidly changing world?

Be the change with Nâzım Hikmet's words, “The most beautiful words I wanted to tell you I haven't said yet.”

Hikmet Hükümenoğlu RC 89

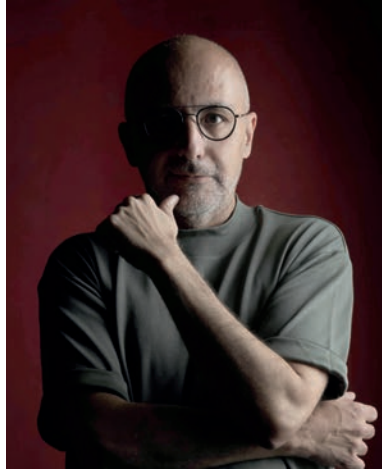
Recommends Reading for Writing

“We value literature because it helps us to understand ourselves and the world we live in.”

A stronghold in contemporary Turkish fiction, Hükümenoğlu recently published his first detective novel *Sonra Gözler Görür* (Afterwards the Eyes See, Can Yayınları). The protagonist in the novel, a detective, is Hükümenoğlu's nod to old media, which he misses: “I am tired of logging into X (or whatever it's called these days) just to stay up to date on the news.” Hükümenoğlu prefers “old school” face-to-face communication with his readers as well.

Why do you think literature continues to be a relevant medium in the age of technology and instant communication?

Because we still enjoy stories, long-form stories that is, not 30 second social media snippets. We enjoy getting lost between the pages of a good book. We value literature because it helps us to understand ourselves and the world we live in.



Hikmet Hükümenoğlu RC 89

How do you manage the balance between writing prolifically and maintaining quality?

Over the years I learned not to get too attached to my own sentences. If I don't find them acceptable they go to the bin. I'm my harshest critic.

What advice would you give aspiring writers about finding their unique voice?

It will sound counterintuitive but I would recommend that they read prolifically, learn to differentiate voices, and practice writing as much as possible.

You also have your own newsletter. How is that a creative outlet for you?

I used to write a blog. However, I don't have the time to maintain that commitment anymore, so I've transitioned to writing a monthly newsletter. I relish the opportunity to vent like a grumpy old man.

Read the RCQ article on Hikmet Hükümenoğlu's novel *Sonra Gözler Görür* here:



Efe Murat Balıkçioğlu RC 06 Links Poetry to Self-Expression

“In a world where algorithms and artificial intelligence can replicate prose and convey information, poetry may become our primary tool for personal expression.”

Efe Murat Balıkçioğlu (nom de plume Efe Murad) is a faculty fellow in Islamic history at NYU, as well as a poet and translator.

Why do you think poetry remains relevant today?

Poetry has always been meant to be spoken aloud, though it's often preserved in writing. In today's world, where attention spans are shrinking and visual distractions are constant, the written word can sometimes seem less relevant. Even novels have become shorter and more concise. As Italo Calvino noted in *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, quickness has become one of the central mantras of the modern



Efe Murat Balıkçioğlu RC 06

age—and this might, in turn, revitalize poetry's role in self-expression.

How was your translation of Ezra Pound received?

The critical reception has been positive. My name gained recognition; the book

sold well. I forged some wonderful friendships along the way such as Kemal Noyan RA 61. In 2020, the director Deniz Tortum RC 08 visited me, and I read aloud to him Pound's “Hell Cantos” (Cantos XIV-XV). Deniz suggested a live reading of the entire book through Instagram. During the reading, certain phrases from the poem went viral on social media.

How did your experience at RC influence your path as a writer?

It was incredibly formative. The academic rigor, combined with the vibrant exchange of ideas, instilled in me a deep passion for learning and a commitment to the power of self-expression.

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Gökçe Güven RC 18 Helps Businesses Increase Customer Loyalty

The Kalder founder shares details about her journey and advice for aspiring entrepreneurs.

When RCQ interviewed Gökçe Güven in 2022 (see RCQ 60, p. 25), it was clear that she was going places with her company Kalder. Kalder helps businesses strengthen their customer relationships through white label rewards programs that tap into a network of brands for partner rewards. In just over two years, Kalder is backed by \$11 million in funding at a \$35 million valuation. Güven was recently recognized for her achievements by making it on Forbes's 30 Under 30 list.

RC truly shaped Güven's journey: "Social Entrepreneurship with Aybike Oğuz was life changing. Inspired by that class and as a soccer player on the RC Bobcats, I co-founded Girls on the Field Academy with Melis Abacıoğlu. I interned at Ashoka Foundation, followed Aybike Oğuz to events like Impact Imcece, and immersed myself in social entrepreneurship. Mr. Carter's business classes taught me the fundamentals. My programming class showed me how technology can build the future. Debate Society honed my storytelling skills—essential for founders. Mr. Hoovler's Modern Novel class taught me to think radically. He'd say, "If you don't present a radical idea, you'll get a 50." That shaped my belief that entrepreneurs must be bold and unconventional, and fiction is the best source of inspiration to go out of the box. Everything I needed to become a founder, I found at RC."

Before Kalder, Güven worked at fintech companies like Robinhood and Celo, where she saw firsthand how rewards and wallet ecosystems operate: "I realized that giants were



turning their rewards programs into fintechs and asked, 'Why can't every brand do this?'" From that question, it took a lot of work to create Kalder's success: "The journey from pre-seed to today has been about staying close to early customers for feedback, iterating ruthlessly, staying true to the problem space and learning from failures."

She has two pieces of advice for budding entrepreneurs in the RC community:

1. Always have a hypothesis—in life, career, or personal goals. Strong hypotheses are valuable because they're either right or wrong. If you're right, double down; if you're wrong, iterate and improve. Don't operate without a hypothesis because then you don't know what you like or not—always have a goal or purpose.

2. Choose your category and join the best companies in that space.

For example, if you want to be in fintech, identify the type of fintech that excites you, join the best Series A or B companies in that space. Work way more than expected, get close to the founders and best team members and get the projects that matter. This exposure will teach you what it takes to build a startup and you will naturally find an unaddressed problem within that space instead of trying to find a problem to solve in a vacuum. I came up with the first ideas of Kalder in Robinhood and took years to build hypotheses. Keep your eyes open to problems and people you are excited about on the way. I keep a list of the best people I want to work with and problems I am excited to solve in my notes app.

Hayal Pozantı RC 00 Collaborates With Fashion House Dior

The contemporary artist designed three unique handbags featuring her signature hieroglyphic elements for the Lady Dior Art Project.

Contemporary artist

Hayal Pozantı continues to garner recognition for her work, and fashion house Dior took notice. For its iconic Lady Dior handbag, Dior has run a program called the Lady Dior Art Project since 2016. Each year a select group of international artists are invited to use the bag as their canvas, and this year Pozantı was one of them.

Known for her conceptual and emotional work, Pozantı designed three bags. One of them is a clutch featuring a nocturnal panorama, and the interior is covered with mirrors, offering a reading of oneself and the world. The other two are inspired by one of Pozantı's passions, trekking. The iconic "D, I, O, R" charms are reinvented in a hieroglyphic alphabet



Photo: Joe Perri

conceived by the artist. Indeed, Pozantı's work often considers and plays with language. One such work is

permanently installed in the New York Public Library (see RCQ 59, p. 16).

After RC, Pozantı studied at Sabancı University and subsequently worked in Türkiye for five years. When she arrived at the Yale School of Art as a graduate student, she had been feeling bombarded by the online world. She weaned herself off the internet and vowed to make something by hand. Pozantı went on to create a visual language of her own called Instant Paradise, with hieroglyphic-like characters which correspond to numbers and letters in the English alphabet. From more abstract shapes, her work has now moved on to encompass color and movement, something she attributes to moving to Vermont and hiking in nature.

Work of Ömer Uluç RC ENG 53 Featured in Solo Exhibition

The exhibition showcases pieces from 50 years of his career.

Fifteen years after he passed away, painter Ömer Uluç's work is celebrated with a solo exhibition at Istanbul Modern - Beyond the Horizon. The exhibition brings together various forms of expression that are key in the artist's practice and features a comprehensive selection of works from the 1960s to 2010.

Uluç's interest in art started during his RC days when he took lessons from painter Nuri İyem. He later studied engineering in the US. The years 1975-77 took Uluç to West Africa where he worked and did research. Between 1978-1980 he served as the art consultant of the Istanbul Atatürk Cultural Center. From 1983

onwards, he lived in Paris but spent a considerable part of each year in Istanbul. He held many exhibitions at numerous galleries and museums across the world. His medium was not just painting and he experimented with a variety of different materials.

In his book of monologues *Heves Kuşu Durmaz Döner (The Bird of Enthusiasm Does Not Stop, It Turns)* Uluç wrote: "Us artists should know alongside Stephen Hawking that, 'We live in a star galaxy that stretches a thousand light years from one end to the other and turns slowly; stars in its spiral arms only rotate around the core of the galaxy once every few hundred million years. Our sun



"Cat and its Fiancé" is one of the works featured in the exhibition

is a medium-sized, yellow star close to the interior edge of one of those spiral arms.' Isn't that a sufficient explanation to make art?"

Kenan Şahin RA 60 Shares Business Wisdom for Start-ups in New Books

Şahin predicts a burst in start-ups thanks to AI.



Entrepreneur, scientist, inventor, academic and philanthropist Kenan Şahin shares the wisdom he has garnered from his entrepreneurial journey with two books: *Lean Startup to Lean Company to Rich Exit* and *Lean*

Startup to Lean Company to Rich Exit: The Guidebook (Forbes Books).

Şahin explains that *Lean Startup to Lean Company to Rich Exit* is the story of his company: “It reports on the twists and turns of taking a startup from ‘me, me, and me’ with \$1,000 capital, to 1,000 staff in 12 offices across six countries. Along the way it gained giant telecom companies as its clients and eventually exited via Lucent/Bell Labs, the largest telecom company at the time, with Bell Labs being the storied R&D center and the envy of the world.”

Having been an academic for nearly two decades, Şahin felt compelled to follow up this book with the equivalent of a textbook, hence the guidebook:

“The far greater motivation for this second book was to alert startups about the hazards of the journey and give them a practical road map that covered almost all aspects of a growing firm: guiding values, culture, marketing, selling, hiring, accounting, branching and legal. I wanted it to come out immediately, anticipating that startups would skyrocket because of the lure of AI, and the new generation of AI that would make startups so much easier to launch.”

The books are complementary. Şahin is now sending the two-volume set to academics who teach entrepreneurship “so the messages can be conveyed through them more effectively to the students who are contemplating entrepreneurship via startups.”

Dilek Ataman Bağdatlıoğlu RC 76 Offers Corporations a Practical Guide for Sustainability

The book demonstrates how companies and banks can adopt environmental, social and governance goals.

Sustainability and ESG consultant Dilek Bağdatlıoğlu has authored a book, *Çevresel, Sosyal ve Yönetişim Hedeflerini Dengelemek; Bankalar ve Şirketler ÇSY ve Sürdürülebilirlik Konusunda Ne Yapabilirler? (Balancing Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Goals; What Can Banks and Companies Do Regarding ESG and Sustainability?; Akıl Fikir Yayınları)*, about the need of working to solve ESG issues in all countries around the world, including Türkiye.

Dr. Bağdatlıoğlu's book is a practical guide to companies; it describes which action is needed on each of the main components of ESG, making it easier for companies and banks to plan, implement and report on these goals,



and aims to help companies and banks to accelerate their ESG efforts. It demonstrates that it is in the interest of companies and banks to have ESG goals and pursue them.

Bağdatlıoğlu believes Turkish companies are progressing in adopting ESG goals, especially among larger corporations, though there is still

some way to go: “A recent survey we conducted found that 335 companies among the largest 500 in Türkiye do not report on ESG. Moreover, the quality of the ESG reports is uneven among those who do report. With growing international pressure, regulatory reforms, and an increasing focus on sustainability among the Turkish public, Turkish firms can close the gap in the coming years, particularly in areas like renewable energy and governance.”

Bağdatlıoğlu remembers RC as a source of inspiration: “RC's education encourages engagement in community affairs and an openness to the latest developments in scientific and social issues. I had actually already been active in the social aspects of ESG for many years.”

Seda Aksoy Evren RC 95

Explores Time Travel in New Book

I The book is her way of saying “thank you” for her childhood.



The author of *Kırmızı Balon Uçuyor* (Red Balloon is Flying, Uçan Fil Yayınları) and *Annem de Çocukmuş* (My Mom Too Was Once a Child, Masalperest Yayınları) has a new book out. Seda Aksoy Evren’s latest, *Zaman Yolcusu Kalmasın* (Last Call For Time Travelers, Masalperest Yayınları), asks if time travel is possible, and, if so, how would the expectations of a child differ from those of an adult.

Aksoy Evren’s own memories inspired the book: “My family and all the childhood memories related to them have always been very precious.

I have a strong belief that these memories can always stay alive with a small remembrance of those special moments. This is the main reason why I have written *Zaman Yolcusu Kalmasın*. A special ‘thank you’ note for the great times.” Indeed, her father was a collector of photograph machines and video cameras, and, thanks to his interest, she still has access to recordings of a lot of happy moments.

Aksoy Evren maintains that writing for children can give a great freedom and opportunity for the people who like to imagine. “The world of picture books makes me happy,” she says.

Zeynep Pekün Ekşioğlu RC 90

Writes Cookbook With a Novel Focus

I The book of recipes highlights Türkiye’s biodiversity.

After nearly two decades in fashion retail, Zeynep Pekün Ekşioğlu has a new passion for cooking. She attended culinary school at the age of 40 and obtained her chef certificate. She soon discovered that she gravitated towards plant-based cuisine. This journey culminated in publishing a book of recipes that she put together over the course of six years under her brand Lokal Plants. The name of the book is *İçi Güzel* (Beautiful on the Inside, Ofset Yapımevi) and it is mostly comprised of drinks: healthy beverages, plant milks, smoothies, mylkshakes, green juices, and soups.



Ekşioğlu elaborates: “My book was shaped by my passion for local and clean produce. Unlike a traditional

cookbook, it focuses not only on recipes, but also on the source of ingredients, the farmers who plant and harvest them, and the value of clean soil. All the ingredients in this book are from Türkiye without exception. My reason for doing so was to show the biodiversity of our fertile land and how it is possible to source clean plants and fruits from small growers. Weaving the stories of these farmers who toil with an undeniable optimism together with my own fascination with plants, I hoped to bring the reader a modern look at what we put on the table, where it comes from and how we all can integrate into nature as a whole, philosophically.”

Buğra Giritlioğlu RC 89 Creates an Anthology of Contemporary Turkish Poetry

| Giritlioğlu dedicates the book to his Prep English teachers and RC 89 classmates.

Writer Buğra Giritlioğlu helps Turkish contemporary poetry reach new audiences with his anthology *The Pulse of Contemporary Turkish - Poems from the New Millennium* (Syracuse University Press). The anthology combines established voices and emerging poets.

Though difficult, he and his co-translator friend Daniel Scher were inspired: “We had early successes, publishing some of our translations in various journals. That only whetted our appetites. We wanted to do more—either by translating additional work by the same poets or expanding our reach to touch more lives. The latter felt more exciting and meant focusing on living poets. I consulted the few

poets I knew, who then recommended their peers. Over time, my list grew from a handful of names to sixty-one poets. Within a few years, I had pored over 167 books and translated 215 poems. Of those, I have selected 172 for this volume.”

Giritlioğlu chose poems that reflect on universal themes like life, death, love, time, and nature: “Poetry is where we seek companionship and answers to ease our existential pain. Translating poetry presents many challenges associated with enjambment, wordplay, rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, and tone, but poems often offer ways to recreate the poet’s intended effect, if not in the same spot, then elsewhere. I hope readers find as much pleasure



in these poems—whether lyrical, experimental, abstract, or concrete—as I have.” Giritlioğlu dedicated the book to the late Chilton Watrous and his beloved Phillip Esposito, as well as his RC 89 classmates.

Sanem Cerit RC 17 Tells the Story of a Young Cancer Patient

| Her first book uses a unique approach to capture Ali’s story.



The joy and energy of a young girl named Ela, despite her struggles, left a lasting impact on Sanem Cerit when she met her at a cancer clinic. The encounter caused Cerit to rethink her plans and priorities.

Several years later, Cerit met Ali, a 17-year old cancer patient, during her onco-psychology internship, and the book *A Pinch of Awareness* was the result of Cerit’s subsequent internship with PhotovoiceWorldwide. Using Photovoice (a visual participatory method), Ali captured his life, perspective and experiences after his diagnosis, during treatment and beyond.

Cerit sees the writing of the book as a long journey that started with the hope of sharing the voice of a cancer patient and highlighting the importance of listening rather than making assumptions about others’ experiences. Using Cerit’s questions as prompts, Ali photographed scenes and

objects that hold meaning for him and recorded the feelings and thoughts they evoke.

Cerit believes *A Pinch of Awareness* conveys a powerful message about giving cancer patients the opportunity to speak their truth behind the diagnosis. It’s a hopeful and engaging story that can help break the stigma around cancer by encouraging clinicians and others to look beyond the diagnosis and truly see the person: “Whether they are patients, families, or clinicians, we want them to be reminded they’re not alone. We also aim to highlight the power of truly listening, seeing beyond assumptions, and recognizing the person behind the diagnosis.”

Graves, Gatherings, and *Gurbetçi* Cravings: A Road Trip Through RC History

Two RC alumni traveled across the US northeast during their winter break in search of landmarks of their alma mater's history and familiar flavors from home.

By Tayfun Gür RC 16 and Miraç Süzgün RC 16



The roadtrip was a great chance to catch up with RC classmates. From L to R: Beril Erdoğan, Can Gübür, Tayfun Gür and their friend Velat.

It's almost been a decade since our cohort of RC 16 has flown from the nest, and the winds of serendipity have already scattered us across several continents. For those of us currently perched on the East Coast of the United States, however, this winter offered a rare occasion to catch up, with a road trip spanning a dozen states and connecting just as many hearts. Figuring we might as well hit three birds with one rented car, and inspired by our beloved teacher Önder Kaya's dedication to documenting history through gravestones, we decided to take this chance to track down the final resting places of the historical personages who shaped Robert College and the American College for Girls. And galvanized further by our stomachs, we also tried to visit authentic Turkish restaurants on

our way to determine the best spots for our fellow *gurbetçi* friends to cure their culinary homesickness. The result was an adventure fusing gastronomic delights and historical reflection, and a pilgrimage that put us on the trail of founders, presidents, and a pioneering educator who changed the course of women's education in Türkiye.

Setting Off: Durham to Baltimore

The natural starting point for our journey was Durham, North Carolina, since our trip was inspired in part by our visits to Turkish restaurants in the region over the years. We got together there mid-December, fittingly finalizing our course over İskender kebab at Chapel Hill's Tallula's. (Please refer to the "Kebab Addendum" in the online version of this article for more information on select restaurants.) On December 17, we set out from Durham towards Baltimore, Maryland, stopping en route at Sultan Kebab in Charlottesville, Virginia, where the hearty portions and the warmth of the owners boosted our spirits for the long journey ahead. We reached Baltimore that evening to stay with our friend Beril Erdoğan RC 16 for several days, exploring the city and Washington, DC, before heading towards NYC.

Onward to New York: Christopher Robert

On December 22, we reached the Big Apple, where we stayed in Brooklyn at our RC 16 friend Şule Kahraman's

house for a few days and enjoyed the bustle of Manhattan in the holiday season with Beril, Can Gübür RC 16 and another friend, Velat. On December 23, we finally ventured into Brooklyn's historic Green-Wood Cemetery to visit the grave of Christopher Robert (1802–1878), the merchant-philanthropist whose generosity made our beloved institution a reality.

Robert had never intended for the college to be named after him, yet Cyrus Hamlin insisted—and so "Robert College" was born. After an hour's search in -15°C, we paid our respects under the wintry sky to the man who, despite many obstacles, championed the idea of an American institution of higher learning on the Bosphorus.



Tayfun Gür RC 16 poses by the grave of Christopher Robert in Green-Wood Cemetery



RC 16 alumni Miraç Süzgün and Tayfun Gür visited Cyrus Hamlin's grave in Lexington, Massachusetts

Boston Bound: Cyrus Hamlin and the Christmas Chill

We departed New York on December 24, arriving in Boston, Massachusetts, that evening and reuniting with two other friends, Deniz Kızıldağ RC 16 and Deniz Keleş RC 16. Two days later we set out for nearby Lexington to visit the grave of Cyrus Hamlin (1811–1900) in Munroe Cemetery. Hamlin was a most fascinating figure: originally a Congregational missionary, he was known for his “jack-of-all-trades” talents—baker, engineer, teacher, and even pharmacist during the Crimean War. He was also a cousin of Hannibal Hamlin, Abraham Lincoln's first Vice President.

When RC opened in 1863, it was Hamlin's effort and energy that sustained it through its challenging early years. Building construction faced delays, funding shortfalls threatened the campus's future, and diplomacy with Ottoman officials proved grueling. Yet Hamlin's persistence laid the foundation for what would become the oldest American college outside the United States.

Visiting Canterbury: Mary Mills Patrick

That same day, we pressed on to Canterbury—a village in rural New Hampshire—to locate the grave of Mary Mills Patrick (1850–1940). She rests in a quiet village cemetery, surrounded by little more than a small church, a general store, and snow-covered pine forests. Witnessing the modesty of her birthplace, one could forget how Patrick made her enduring mark halfway across the world in Istanbul as the president of ACG for over three decades. An intrepid scholar and educator, she oversaw the transformation of ACG from a modest high school into a world-class institution of higher learning for women.

Patrick also championed the cause of educating Ottoman women of all backgrounds, influencing and forging relationships with prominent figures such as Halide Edip Adıvar ACG 1901. After a fire ravaged ACG's old Üsküdar campus, she relentlessly raised funds to help move the college to Arnavutköy, a contribution which would turn out to be decisive for RC's own future. As we cleaned the moss and snow from Patrick's tombstone, surrounded by the tranquil atmosphere of Canterbury, we were reminded that RC might not exist today without her efforts.

The Journey Back: Princeton and Caleb Frank Gates

Early on December 28, we finally started the long journey back south toward Durham—stopping for dinner at Bereket Restaurant in Bridgeport, Connecticut, to reward ourselves with some Iskender kebab—and at Princeton to pay our respects to Caleb Frank Gates (1857–1946). Gates's presidency began in 1903, at an extraordinarily tumultuous juncture for the Ottoman Empire. By

the time he stepped down in 1932, he had guided RC through the Balkan Wars, World War I, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and the early years of the modern Turkish Republic.

Gates originally came to Türkiye in 1881, teaching in Mardin and Harpoot from 1881 to 1902. His knowledge of Turkish culture and history, along with his administrative acumen proved crucial at RC: through diplomacy with both the Young Turks and later republican leaders, Gates preserved the institution's academic mission amid decades of upheaval.

Crossing the Finish Line

After spending the next two days visiting Beril and other friends in Baltimore, we arrived back in Durham at precisely 11:59 pm on December 31. We traveled hundreds of miles to place roses by gravestones and sample kebabs in cozy diners, but in each stop, we also discovered something intangible—an echo of the shared values instilled in us during our student days.

Read the full article:



Tayfun Gür and Miraç Süzgün celebrate the end of their trip

Betigül Onay Özman RC 02

Facilitates Impact at MZN Social Consultancy

Combining her business and non-profit experience, Onay Özman guides organizations on funding and strategy.



Betigül Onay Özman is based in Berlin and recently joined MZN Social Consultancy - an organization dedicated to empowering international non-

governmental organizations (INGOs) by enhancing their effectiveness and sustainability. Although her appointment is fairly recent, she already feels she has been there for a long time: "Contributing to institutions through funding strategies, organizational and market strategy advice brings my business know-how to the NGO world. Designing forward-thinking strategies, identifying funding opportunities, and connecting INGOs with the right donors, I learn a lot and that is one of the reasons why I love my role."

Onay Özman underlines that she has always craved making societal impact. This drive stems from her years at RC, where the discussions in various

courses revolved around this theme. She adds, "RC taught me to always see the bigger picture while not missing the details." She finds this ability crucial in the work she does now. The clients at MZN span the globe from India to Netherlands, which requires the team to be international as well. Working in an international context with people from different parts of the world is something she got used to at RC as well.

Onay Özman believes collaboration sustains societal impact. Alumni seeking to explore opportunities with Betigül and MZN Social Consultancy can connect with her via LinkedIn or email betigulonay@gmail.com

Kemal Alp Taylan RC 04 Provides Hope to Vulnerable Populations

The Syrian War triggered his decision to shift from the business world to an NGO.

Kemal Alp Taylan was working in the private sector but had always been interested in the work that the United Nations and NGOs do in disaster zones. When he witnessed millions taking refuge in Türkiye during the Syrian civil war, he decided that he wanted to do something more meaningful with his life and in 2017 he joined Save the Children to help refugees.

His first task was designing and implementing trainings for refugee and host community youth in the province of Hatay, his family's hometown, to improve their employability and business skills: "My background in the private sector helped me to advance this project by aligning the training

content with the market needs and using my business connections."

Currently, Taylan is part of Save the Children's Global Humanitarian Education Team: "I focus on improving emergency preparedness of our different country teams to optimize our emergency response time to ensure children in crises zones are protected and return to learning soon as possible. Previously, I worked as a coordinator within UN's Cluster (Emergency) Coordination mechanism in contexts including South Sudan, Syria, Ethiopia and Türkiye, among others."

Taylan felt empowered by the spirit of RC in his move to an NGO: "In addition to gaining a strong educational



foundation, my time at RC helped me to be an independent thinker and not to be afraid to try and find out what I really want to do in my life, and once found, pursuing that passion."

Another Home, Another Country: Baldwin in Istanbul

I James Baldwin's decade in Istanbul was shaped by the Robert College community.

By Mıraç Süzgün RC 16



Photo: ©Sedat Pakay | www.sedatpakay.com

When James Baldwin

first arrived in Istanbul in October 1961, he was searching for something he could not seem to find anywhere else: space to breathe and think freely. His journey had already taken him to many places around the world, yet he still felt unmoored, pursued by the racial storms of the United States and haunted by a novel that refused completion. In Istanbul, he hoped for a different rhythm, one that might release him from distraction and disillusionment. Tellingly, Baldwin would remark, years later, that Türkiye saved his life.

Baldwin's arrival to Istanbul came at a low point in his fortunes. By late 1961, he was physically exhausted, emotionally raw, and financially broke. But he had an open invitation from the Turkish actor Engin Cezzar RC 55, who, several years earlier, had appeared in a workshop production of *Giovanni's Room* at the Actors Studio in New York. Baldwin had cast

him as Giovanni, and the two became fast friends.

For nearly a decade, Istanbul provided him with what he needed most: a sanctuary, a dynamic community tied to RC, and the perspective he needed to see both himself and his homeland with new clarity. It offered him a measure of anonymity and peace unavailable in the United States and France, where he was increasingly recognized as a famous author and, more reluctantly, an unofficial spokesman for civil rights. In the close orbit of RC alumni, faculty, and students, he discovered both solace and stimulating conversation. Here, in Türkiye, he was simply "Jimmy."

One of the crucial people who soon entered Baldwin's life during his first Istanbul visit was David Leeming, then a young English instructor at RC who would later become Baldwin's personal assistant and definitive biographer. Baldwin was staying with Cezzar's sister, Mine, and her husband, Cevat Çapan RC 53, while Cezzar was doing his mandatory military service. One evening, the Çapans invited Leeming, along with many other RC friends, to meet "Jimmy." When Leeming arrived, Baldwin was perched on a kitchen stool, scribbling on a yellow notepad. Suddenly, Baldwin stopped and stared at the page. "God," he said, "it's finished." He had just written the final lines of *Another Country* and dated it "Istanbul, Dec. 10, 1961."

Another member of the RC world who would later on become an important figure in Baldwin's life was Sedat

Pakay RA 64, whose camera became a key witness to Baldwin's Istanbul sojourn (see RCQ 63, p. 51). Pakay's short documentary *James Baldwin: From Another Place* offers a rare and striking glimpse into Jimmy's Turkish decade.

Baldwin soon formed bonds with Turkish intellectuals and artists outside RC. Among these were painter Aliye Berger, as well as novelist Yaşar Kemal and his wife, Tilda. Journalist and theater-critic Zeynep Oral also engaged him in thoughtful exchanges on politics, race, art, and love, and later worked as his assistant in 1969 and 1970.

Baldwin's time in Istanbul was further shaped by his friendships with humanities professor Hilary Sumner-Boyd and physicist-historian John Freely. He also met local theater personalities such as Ali Poyrazoğlu, and in 1969 and 1970 joined Sururi and Cezzar's theater endeavors. He crossed paths with African-American



Photo: ©Sedat Pakay | www.sedatpakay.com



Photo: ©Sedat Pakay | www.sedatpakay.com

singer Bertice Reading and novelist-essayist Geoffrey Wolff. Through these relationships, Baldwin found not only intellectual companionship but also a broadening perspective on art, politics, and community.

During his years in the city, Baldwin welcomed visits from his brother, David, and his longtime mentor, Beauford Delaney. He also hosted international figures such as Hollywood icon Marlon Brando and writer Alex Haley in Istanbul.

The city's vibrant spirit and rich cultural life resonated deeply with Baldwin. He moved through its streets with ease, thumbing through old books in the Grand Bazaar, lingering in teahouses, and crossing the Bosphorus by ferry as the sun set behind minarets. On more than one occasion, people mistook him for Brazilian soccer player Pelé—an error that amused Baldwin, while reminding him how freely he could exist here, unburdened by fame or expectation.

Though hostility was not entirely absent in Türkiye, Baldwin found it far less frequent than in many parts of America. Far more often, he encountered curiosity, hospitality, and kindness. Crucially, he could

escape the spotlight that dogged him in the United States. In interviews with local journalists, he steered conversation toward conscience, freedom, and art rather than racial tension—though he never stopped worrying about civil rights battles at home.

During this Turkish decade—consisting of multiple visits between 1961 and 1971—Baldwin completed or refined several of his major works. He believed that recharging in Istanbul was crucial: to keep writing was, in essence, to keep fighting. The city's layered heritage, bridging continents, resonated deeply with Baldwin's sense of being an outsider who belonged to many worlds at once.

By the early 1970s, new projects and urgencies lured Baldwin elsewhere. But each time he left, he carried Istanbul with him. He never claimed to be an expatriate—his heart remained, in part, anchored in Harlem—but he made clear that the city on the Bosphorus had given him a crucial vantage point. Over a decade of sporadic residence, he had found creative renewal, lasting friendships, and an unexpected home. He even considered buying a

house in Istanbul. For RC's extended community, hosting Baldwin meant forging an extraordinary bond that bridged continents as deftly as Istanbul's own bridges span the Bosphorus.

More than fifty years have passed since Baldwin first arrived in Istanbul. Last year, the world celebrated the 100th anniversary of his birth. Yet the traces of Baldwin's presence in Istanbul remain palpable and have become part of the city lore. In photos by Pakay, we see Baldwin with a mischievous grin at a waterfront café, lost in thought under the towering minarets of the city's mosques, or tenderly touching the hand of an infant on the street. In recollections shared by Leeming, Cezzar, Pakay, Oral and many others, we glimpse a writer who arrived weary but left triumphant, buoyed by the kindness and camaraderie he found in a city that was neither entirely Western nor Eastern, but very much its own.

Istanbul gave Baldwin what he needed: a vantage "from another place," a crucial distance from America's turmoil, and the hope and warmth required to keep imagining a more compassionate and just world.



Photo: ©Sedat Pakay | www.sedatpakay.com

Homecoming 2024: A Celebration of Memories, Music and Art

On Sunday, October 20, 2024, the RC community gathered for a wonderful Homecoming filled with music, laughter, and shared memories. The day featured beautiful music, including a piano concert by Aydın Karlıbel RC 76 and mini concerts by RC bands, bringing alumni voices back to the Forum once again. The Class of '74 celebrated their 50th year in style with a special luncheon. A highlight was the *Cellular Memories* exhibition by the late Aslı Yılmaztürk RC 06, curated by İpek Bingöl RC 06. Three works were auctioned, with proceeds going to the RC 06 Scholarship Fund. Auction winner Ronnie Danon RC 74 generously donated his piece to Robert College. Metin Mansur RC 74 and Arif Akdağ RC 88 also took part in the auction.

The Roll Call honored distinguished alumni, including ACG 55 graduates Mihrican Özdemir Havens, Gülsen Ergöröl Göçek, and Ayla Ün Gümüşlügil, as well as Ali Özer Arnas RA 58. Special guest Gülen Akıncılar Zapata ACG 60 joined from Mexico. Following the assembly, alumni enjoyed strolling through campus and catching up with classmates.



The Class of '74 showed their spirit at their 50th year luncheon in the Heritage Room



A Homecoming classic! Renkler, made up of RA 69 grads, pleased the crowd with their renditions of vintage rock tunes.



LET YOUR MILESTONE BE UNFORGETTABLE!

If your class is celebrating a milestone graduation year - any multiple of 5 or 10 - you can plan a **special reunion** on campus. Overnight stays in the residences may be arranged, depending on availability. Want your class name live on campus? Drop us a line for exclusive naming opportunities at reunion@robcol.k12.tr

SAVE THE DATE
HOMEcoming 2025
Sunday, October 26



RC 74 Celebrates Their 50th in Style

The first ever class that was completely co-ed from the time they entered RC, Class of '74 celebrated their 50th in style- with numerous occasions. The class schedules a main gathering in Istanbul in June, a gathering in Philadelphia in October, and a trip to Corfu for those who wanted to share more time on a vacation.

The June gathering was at Moda Deniz Club with 130 guests- 95 graduates and 35 spouses. Head of School Adam Oliver and Erol Hakanoğlu, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees were guests of honor. A painting by Beki Güreli RC 74 was put up for auction and the money raised was donated to the scholarship fund. The painting itself, "Depiction of RC in Spring," is now decorating the office



of the Head of School. The event was broadcast live via internet for those who couldn't attend. Tote bags and graduation rings were the keepsakes from this special night. There was even a Certificate of Achievement prepared for this occasion.

The class also gathered for Homecoming, where they were hosted for a special luncheon, as per RC tradition, and the whole RC community applauded this important milestone during Roll Call.

RC 79 Have a Joyful 45th Reunion



On July 6, 2024, RC 79 had its 45th reunion on campus. It was a joyful gathering, with 62 classmates attending, starting with a cocktail on the steps of Gould Hall. With violins playing in the background, the excited sounds of chatter filled the air. Claudius, Begüm, and Suzan were the stars, initiating the dancing, and we soon joined them.

At around 7:30 pm, a sit-down dinner awaited us on the balcony above the amphitheater. Surrounded by purple and white balloons and flowers, with flickering candlelight, a nice breeze flowed through the tables, carrying warm feelings with it. It was a pleasant surprise that we had the opportunity to address our fellow classmates, passing a microphone

from one person to another so that we could share our feelings, memories, important moments from our lives, and experiences.

At around 9:00 pm, it was time to hit the dance floor! Suzan led a short quiz to see how much we remembered about our friends and school days. This was followed by our dear friend Alev's singing performance.

The following day, a smaller group gathered for brunch on the Plato. With beautiful weather and stunning views of the Bosphorus, we spent an incredible four hours together.

It was one of those unique weekends that will always be remembered. Now, we're looking forward to the 50th Reunion- what an unbelievable milestone! How quickly the years have passed.

Laughter, Tears, and Everything in Between: Class of '84 Celebrates Their 40th Reunion



helped us reminisce. However, the biggest question remains - how Murat Beşkök has never changed in 40 years!

The reunion also featured a live Zoom connection with classmates from across the globe, who couldn't attend in person. Amidst the joy, we also took a moment to honor our late friend Feride, with a memorial book and a donation to Mor Çatı, an organization close to her heart.

Our beloved campus echoed with the sound of friendship, as the Class of 1984 gathered for their 40th reunion with an impressive turnout of 88 people. The reunion kicked off with a heartwarming campus walk and the traditional photoshoot on the steps of Gould Hall and continued on with Vedat's "reenactment" of

his graduation speech, which left everyone in tears - of laughter!

The whole event was masterfully guided by our Master of Ceremonies. From embarrassing school anecdotes to reminders of our mischief, no stone was left unturned! The nostalgic video curated from hundreds of pictures collected from our classmates also

The evening culminated with the serving of the 1984 cake, cut by our favorite couple Tunç and Dijana, who travelled all the way from Sydney for the reunion. As we danced the night away to the 80s tunes, the party drew to a close with promises made not to let another decade slip by without reconnecting.

A World of New Memories for the 35th Year of RC 89

Contributed by Hülya Adak RC 89



RC 89 celebrated its 35th anniversary with unique events and two extraordinary trips. In May 2024, Levent Küçükreisöğlu hosted a four-day reunion, MAD89, in his new home in Madrid. The trip included fascinating tours of the city and museums, as well as culinary adventures, flamenco shows and dancing. Levent's reunion party at his home in Madrid was truly spectacular, attended by 34 classmates, traveling from the USA, various countries in Europe, and Türkiye.

The celebrations continued with a classic: An evening in front of Gould Hall, organized by our class representative Zümrüt Yalman, in July 2024. The evening was well attended and a surprise online get together provided the opportunity for more 89ers to join the group from all over the world.

The last celebration was a unique trip to Gaziantep, Urfa and Mardin, GOBEK89, with Banu Berkok, Batu

Berkok's sister, featuring boat tours on the Euphrates, visits to Halfeti, Göbeklitepe, Karahantepe, Deyrülzafaran Monastery, and Dara.

RC 89 has become renowned for organizing brilliant events and reunions in Türkiye and abroad. Memorable trips include Barcelona, Athens, Bolu, Bodrum, Antalya and Giresun, thanks to the generosity, hospitality and leadership of those who reside in these cities and who took the leadership to organize tours for groups of classmates. With special thanks to those who have taken the initiative to foster friendships, enhance close ties within the cohort, and enable the opportunity to travel and learn together in new and exciting parts of the world.

All for one, one for all! 35 years mean so much more...

Celebrating 30 Years: A Reunion to Remember



This summer marked a special milestone for the Class of 1994 - our 30th reunion. Thirty years of friendships, laughter, and shared memories remind us of the joy of growing up together and the bonds that have only strengthened over time.

Two wonderful gatherings brought us together: one in New York and another in Istanbul. The New York

reunion took place at Soho Pera on July 19, 2024, where the core local group - Mehtap, Selin D., Burcu B., Onur E., Mehmet I., and Şehnaz - was joined by friends who traveled from far away: Başak C. from Canada, Özge from Germany, and Şebnem from Istanbul. The night was filled with lively conversations and laughter, echoing our shared history and cherished memories.

The Istanbul reunion on August 10, 2024, began with a nostalgic walk up the hill to Gould Hall at sunset. While most attendees were from Istanbul, some traveled long distances to be there - Defne E. from Seattle, Özgür A. from Boston, Selin D. from NY, Eda from Washington, Özge from Germany, Moris from Spain, and Esra from England. With music setting the tone, the night transformed into a ball-like celebration. After fine food and drinks in front of Gould Hall, the night on the Plateau made for an unforgettable time of joy and reconnection.

The 30th reunion was a celebration of enduring friendships and the shared journey that has shaped us. Here's to the past we treasure, the present we cherish, and the future we eagerly embrace. May the next 30 years be just as remarkable!

RC 99 Passes the Quarter Century Milestone with a Night to Remember

On July 20, 2024, the Class of '99 reunited for their much anticipated 25th reunion, a day filled with nostalgia, laughter, and non-stop celebration. From the moment old friends stepped onto campus, it felt like time had rewound. Hugs, exclamations, and "Can you believe it's been 25 years?" echoed across familiar halls as classmates reconnected after years apart.

The event kicked off with a campus tour, a walk down memory lane that brought back vivid recollections of classes, activities, teachers and administrators, leading to amazement as the alumni discovered all the new, renovated, state-of-the-art classrooms, meeting rooms, and activity spaces. A group photo in front



of Gould Hall was, of course, a must. From there, the class took a leisurely stroll to Bizim Tepe, where the real festivities began. The evening unfolded with a lively mix of cocktails, dinner and a special RC 99 trivia game

—with plenty of laughter and friendly debates over the answers.

Dinner was just the prelude to the ultimate dance party, where a carefully curated playlist—featuring all the hits from the '90s and early 2000s—kept the dance floor packed until the early hours of the morning. The night's highlight? Watching classmates, once self-proclaimed "too cool to dance," now leading the charge in a full-fledged dance marathon.

With full hearts, sore feet, and memories to last a lifetime, RC 99 closed the night as friends embraced once more, promising not to let another quarter-century pass before the next big get-together.

Biga Names a Street in Honor of Mehmet R. Gürkaynak RC 59



Mehmet R. Gürkaynak was honored by his hometown Biga's Municipality by having the street on which he was born and grew up named after him. Gürkaynak graduated from İstanbul University with a major in psychology and got his PhD in social psychology in the US. After teaching in the US, he returned home to Türkiye and rose up through the ranks of academia. He founded the Gürkaynak Institute for Citizenship. He is also one of the founders of the European Conference

on Peace and Conflict Resolution-ECPCR, a founding member of ODTÜ Development Foundation, and of Umut Vakfı (Hope Foundation). Gürkaynak welcomed this honor as a gift - "a sweeping peak experience which gave me the serenity of having lived a meaningful life." Gürkaynak says: "RC gave me the strength to persist on the goals I have set for myself as well as the stubbornness to abandon those goals even when I was at the pinnacle of my comfort zone."

A Tribute to Bebek: Muallâ Mezhepoğlu ACG 61 Exhibits Unique Photographs

A book and a documentary already under her belt, Muallâ Mezhepoğlu made her debut exhibition in November. The women in Mezhepoğlu's family, her grandmother, mother, and herself, have all been interested in photography, and their collective interest led to the exhibition, *Anılarımızdaki Bebek (Bebek In Our Memories)* in collaboration with Galeri Kambur Bebek: "I have been photographing old Bebek photos, printing them out in their original sizes and painting on them. When there



were 250 of them, I decided to exhibit them. My grandmother's 142-year-old camera and some of her photos joined my work."

Mezhepoğlu has previously shared reminiscences based on the photographs from her family album in a book, *Dün Takvimde Biter- Bir Cumhuriyet Ailesinin Tarihçesi (Yesterday Ends on the Calendar-History of a Family of the Republic, İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları)*.

Roz Kohen ACG 69 Keeps Colorful Records of the Jewish-Turkish Experience



An architectural draftsperson and illustrator by trade, Roz Kohen has been living in the US since 1981. She obtained a master's in library science, worked in academic and public libraries as a reference librarian, cataloger and branch manager for 22 years, and retired in 2018.

Amid this industrious life, she has also been writing and illustrating bilingual short stories and memoirs in Judeo-Spanish (now considered an endangered language) and

English since 2000. Her book *Jewish Istanbul-A Collection of Memoirs and Illustrations* (Libra Yayıncılık) which focuses on the Jewish cultural experience in İstanbul in the 1950s and 1960s has garnered particular interest, and one of her reviews came from her literature teacher at ACG, Betty Kondayan: "The atmosphere of the whole book is one of love, warm family ties, happiness with small things, and face to face communication and connections."

Aylin Küntay RC 84 Honored With Prestigious Appointments

Aylin Küntay, Professor of Psychology at Koç University, has been appointed to Bilim Akademisi (The Science Academy of Türkiye) and the Academy of Europe (Academia Europaea).

The Academy of Europe serves as a distinguished European Academy of Humanities, Letters, and Sciences, comprising individual members dedicated to advancing knowledge and education throughout Europe. Bilim Akademisi aims to promote scientific excellence, scientific freedom and integrity and highlights the members' significant contributions to science.

Küntay is thrilled: "These appointments are decided through nomination and rigorous selection. My research focuses on children's language and communication abilities, bilingualism, and educational use of technologies such as social robots, all core areas in human interaction and human development. I am looking forward to contributing to both academies on questions relating to how children learn to seek and critically evaluate information from different sources including parents, peers, and agents like human-centered AI."



Gül Özseven RC 86 Wins Second Golden Pen Award

Gül Özseven won her second Altın Kalem Ödülü (Golden Pen Award) in Best Poetry in English in 2024, with her latest book, *From the Owl's Nest* (Cinius, 2023). The award is given to individuals found outstanding in their fields, annually, by the Book Culture Art Times online newspaper.

Özseven is currently in the process of publishing a pamphlet with a British poetry publisher in England. The theme



of love and loss which underlined *From the Owl's Nest* also continues in the new pamphlet, although the form is a bit different.

Özseven lives in Istanbul and shares her time between teaching English and being a poet. She received her BA in Sociology from Boğaziçi University in 1992 and her MA in British Cultural Studies in 1993 from Warwick University, England.

Cenk Bayrakdar RC 87 Heads Revo Capital



In 2013 Cenk Bayrakdar teamed up with RC classmate Özcan Tahincioğlu and another colleague to establish the venture capital fund Revo Capital. Since then, Revo Capital has invested in 40 technology startups such as Midas, Getir and Builder.ai. Bayrakdar takes an active role at Revo. "I find hands-on involvement deeply rewarding, as it enables me to witness the transformation of promising ideas into high-impact companies."

Bayrakdar has come to appreciate the "multiplier effect" of the RC

community more with each passing year. "Every connection within the RC network has the potential to grow exponentially. I experienced this when founding Revo Capital, as some of our earliest backing came from fellow alumni. I also witnessed it while struggling with a health issue; classmates and alumni rallied around me, offering both moral and financial support. This camaraderie broadens our possibilities, and we achieve more than we ever could alone."

Can Özbal RC 88 Expands His BioTech Business With New Acquisition

Can Özbal's Momentum Biotechnologies has acquired OmniScouts, solidifying its strong position as a provider of scientific services to biopharmaceutical innovators. Özbal says his career took an unexpected turn: "My aspiration was to be an academic like my father, Hadi Özbal RA 63, sister Rana Özbal-Gerritsen RC 93 and mother Diane Özbal (RC teacher for 50 years). Instead, I became an entrepreneur, founding and selling three biotechnology companies.

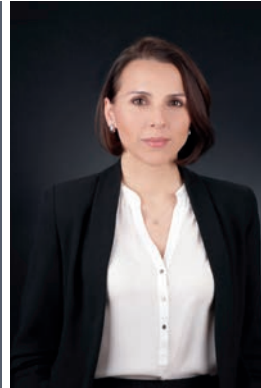


I founded PureHoney Technologies in 2014. It was rebranded as Momentum Biotechnologies where I continue as CEO. With the acquisition of OmniScouts based in Germany we offer our clients the full spectrum of preclinical drug discovery assays from early hit discovery to cell-based proteomics. We have a world class team and work with hundreds of clients" Özbal views RC as the place where he discovered his love of science.

Ersan Öztürk RC 94, Mehmet Yiğit RC 99 and Yasemin Ağrıdır Aktan RC 01 Are Shaping the Future of Sustainable Mobility

Voltify was established in 2023 as a subsidiary of Hedef Filo, a leading fleet solutions company co-founded and co-owned by Ersan Öztürk RC 94. In line with Hedef Filo's vision for the sustainable mobility of the future, Voltify offers flexible, mid-term EV rentals tailored to both individuals and businesses.

With Mehmet Yiğit RC 99 as CEO and Yasemin Ağrıdır Aktan RC 01 as Marketing Director, Voltify's model removes the barriers to the shift to electric mobility by offering comprehensive solutions that include onboarding support and charging infrastructure, complementing vehicle subscription. With a strong mission to



Members of the Voltify team, from L to R: Mehmet Yiğit RC 99, Yasemin Ağrıdır Aktan RC 01 and Ersan Öztürk RC 94

accelerate the transition to electric mobility in Türkiye, and with Angela Benbasa RC 81 also serving on Hedef Filo's board as well as Voltify's,

Voltify stands at the intersection of innovation, sustainability, and leadership shaped by RC alumni.

Yasemin Sıralı RC 97 Selected as a 2025 Eisenhower Global Fellow



The Eisenhower Fellowships honors Eisenhower's contributions as a military leader, statesman, and global figure. Each year the fellowship selects leaders from around the world who are committed to fostering a more peaceful, prosperous, and just society. This year Yasemin Sıralı, the ESG Leader of FIBA Holding, is among them. Last year's Fellow was her classmate, distinguished physicist Prof. Dr. Bilge Demirköç RC 97. During the fellowship Sıralı will focus on climate adaptation

and financing. Her goal is to identify innovative solutions and financing mechanisms that can be adapted to Türkiye. Additionally, this opportunity holds personal significance, as two of the Fellowship's founders were alumni of Swarthmore College, her undergraduate alma mater. Sıralı sees the foundations RC laid as invaluable in her work: "I will always be grateful to our college counselor, Miss Elenor Reid, who led me to Swarthmore College - a perfect fit for me after RC."

Fulya Kardaşlar Taşkın RC 03 Guides Startups with Human Resources and Leadership Practices

Taşkın has spent nearly two decades shaping the people and culture strategies of both large corporations and fast-growing startups. Now she's channeling that experience into a new mission - helping businesses build strong, people-centric workplaces as a Strategic HR Consultant, Startup Advisor, and Fractional CHRO.

Taşkın founded Dextera HR Consultancy to support senior leaders in navigating the complexities of company culture, engagement, and leadership development. She provides flexible, high-impact fractional HR leadership to



startups and scaling businesses. In this capacity, she serves both as a consultant and as a culture coach.

Taşkın is also a Gestalt Coach, bringing a holistic perspective to leadership development. She believes that strong company cultures aren't built overnight - it takes intentionality, deep conversations, and a genuine commitment to people.

To learn more about what Taşkın can offer to businesses, feel free to reach out to her via her LinkedIn page or email: fulya@dexterahrconsultancy.com

Banu Sönmez RC 04 Empowers Growth: From Leadership to Holistic Health

A former director at McKinsey, Banu Sönmez helps professionals enhance leadership capabilities through Lead Forward Academy and supports women navigating hormonal health, gut health, and perimenopause with BBS Health Coaching.

Sönmez states that both her businesses are about empowering people to manage change with confidence: "In health coaching, I focus on perimenopause, an often-overlooked life transition. Many women struggle in silence, impacting not just their well-being but also their confidence and careers. I saw

a gap in real, practical support—beyond generic advice. I created Lead Forward Academy to offer experiential learning that equips leaders to inspire, innovate, and lead with impact."

Sönmez maintains that at RC she learned how to adapt, think independently, and engage with people from all walks of life—qualities that helped her thrive in global corporations and, later, in entrepreneurship.

For more details visit www.bbshealthcoaching.com www.theleadforward.com and @bbshealthcoaching on Instagram.



Tuğçe Aksoy RC 08 Appointed Magnum Global Brand Director



Tuğçe Aksoy started her career at Unilever Türkiye, where she has been working for the last 13 years. Aksoy says she loves working with the ice cream category, "constantly innovating for delicious products that will bring moments of pleasure to people in their mostly mundane or sometimes stressful lives." In her new role for this popular global brand, Aksoy will serve more than 50 countries: "I start my

day with Asia, then Türkiye, continue with Europe and end with talking to the US and Latin America countries. Every day I learn new insights." Aksoy advises young alumni to follow their passion even if it doesn't show a destination: "Follow that compass. Be bold in connecting with people who share your interest. Write your own job description even if it doesn't exist yet. I promise it will pay off."

Nancy Atakan Explores the Power of Memory in Latest Exhibition

Works from the past 25 years have been brought together to create a new context.

Former RC art teacher and university counselor, renowned artist Nancy Atakan has a new exhibition, *Beni Yok Etme (Save Me, Don't Destroy Me)* at İmalat-hane in Bursa, running through April 12, 2025. The bulk of the work in the show comes from several of Atakan's projects dating from the early 2000s to the present and feature a wide range of media, from photography to video, from textile to embroidery. Atakan explains that works have been taken out of one context and placed side by side in a new context like words brought together to create a new story: "In a sense this exhibition itself translates memories and personal history into artistic practice."

Can Küçük, artist/curator of the show, was formerly Atakan's assistant in her collaborative exhibition at SALT Beyoğlu,

Forward March and from then onwards the two worked closely together culminating in this exhibition where they also created two new collaborative artworks.

The title of the show harks back to Atakan's 2010 work highlighting the effects of gentrification: "In 2010 I walked from Nişantaşı to Tophane taking photographs of buildings or local shops threatened by gentrification, after placing my SAVE ME/Don't Destroy Me signs in their windows. Now, İmalat-hane has added photographs of endangered Bursa buildings to the Istanbul series. Of course, I realize that this title can generate numerous speculations or interpretations. I prefer that spectators make their own conclusions after viewing the artwork."

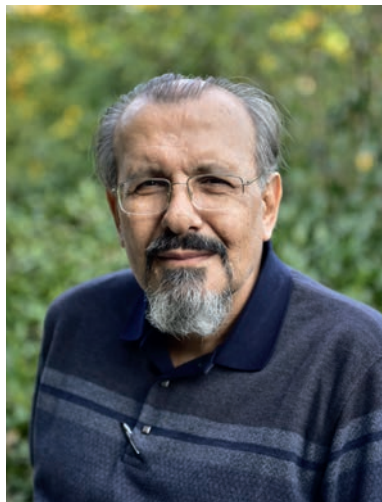


Photo: Kayhan Kaygusuz

Adil İzci Receives Story Book of 2024 Award With *Sisli Gece*

The prolific author says lately he enjoys writing stories.

Former Turkish language and literature teacher Adil İzci has another book out: *Sisli Gece (Foggy Night, Oğlak Yayınları)*. *Sisli Gece* is a sixteen-story collection, İzci's fourth, with illustrations by Gülseren Kayalı. İzci maintains that lately he especially enjoys writing stories: "My subject matters have diversified. I have stories on the island and the sea, as well as stories that demonstrate how we primitively and impolitely use media like Facebook and Instagram. The are stories with a strong emphasis on nature, as well as stories about humankind. The collection has already received the accolade,



the Story Book of 2024 from YAZAK (Writers' Academy). İzci received his award in May, in a ceremony organized by YAZAK.



A Cultural Force: Oya Başak ACG 55

Just as this issue of the RCQ was going to press, the sad news arrived that RC Trustee Emeritus Oya Başak ACG 55 had passed away, on May 24, 2025. A steadfast supporter of RC in every sense, Başak had also contributed to this issue— fittingly, as her life was one devoted to literature and generous service (see the cover story on p. 49 and Genco Erkal's full tribute by scanning the QR code on the opposite page).



Oya Başak's journey in academia began after ACG at Mount Holyoke College, where she both studied and taught. She later earned her doctorate at the University of Minnesota, serving as a teaching assistant in the Humanities. She began teaching at RC Yüksek as early as 1968, in the period between her master's and doctoral studies — making her a witness to two major transformations: the evolution of RC Yüksek into Boğaziçi University and the transition of Robert College into a coeducational high school.

When she returned to Boğaziçi University after obtaining her doctorate, she started teaching Humanities, which soon became a legendary part of the Boğaziçi experience. Her dedication and teaching finesse were lauded; she chaired the English Department

for 22 years and ultimately became a Professor Emeritus of Western Languages and Literature at Boğaziçi University, as well as a member of the Board of Trustees at Boğaziçi University Foundation.

Her connection to RC spanned decades. Başak became a Robert College Trustee in 1971, and a Trustee Emeritus in 2010. During her tenure she helped guide the school through major changes including the early years of the merger, and the closing of the Orta school. She worked with ten headmasters and participated in the selection process for many school administrators.

As a student at ACG, she was involved in theater, even acting on stage alongside Genco Erkal RC 57. This love for theater never faded, and her deep knowledge of Shakespeare became one of her hallmarks. She returned to the stage with fellow alumni actors one more time in 1991 with *The Show Goes On* - the opening performance for the Suna Kıraç Theater. Başak was a leading star, not only because of her performance, but also because she had secured significant funds to help build the new theater.

Indeed, Başak was far more than a scholar. She was a vibrant community leader. She worked to find support for the founding of a girls' dorm. She gave - and encouraged others to give - scholarships and grants. She even supported the launching of a theater company.



A trailblazing, self-effacing woman with an infamous propensity for absentmindedness, she was beloved by all who knew her - her family, friends, colleagues, and students. Her friendships with literati, her interactions with theater people and her boundless enthusiasm for travel shaped a colorful and exemplary life. Başak belongs to a remarkable generation of women, who have a deeply instilled love for Türkiye and a dedication to help the country develop - qualities she demonstrated till the very end.

Oya Başak's life teaches how art and literature can enrich a life and be the guiding light for creating meaning, not only for oneself, but also for one's outer circle, and, therefore, is a lesson on its own.

Turkish Theater's Strong Voice:

Genco Erkal RC 57

Genco Erkal's passing, on July 31, 2024, saddened art lovers in Türkiye. Here, friends and colleagues pay tribute to a life well-lived.



Dikmen Gürün ACG 61: "Merhaba" Genco Erkal

Genco Erkal devoted 65 years to theater. He breathed theater and poured life into our theater. Dostlar Theater, of which he was a founder, is now 55 years old.

Genco Erkal is one of Turkey's "political theater" pioneers. From Bertolt Brecht to especially Nazım Hikmet, he urged in all his plays an essential aspect of life: "Respect for human dignity, respect for human rights."

Through his rational reflections on issues of war and peace, human rights, law and justice, he brought to light the points of concern and questions regarding the system and the society in which he lived.

Nedim Saban RC 86: "Erkal Was a Role Model for Me"

Erkal was a significant role model for me during my youth. In my amateur theater days, he welcomed me into using his theater space, giving me the

chance to hold rehearsals for my street theater performances.

Upon returning from the United States after completing my theater studies, I established my own theater, but for a long time, we only knew each other as acquaintances. However, after Genco Erkal lost his mother, my grandmother, who was a close friend of hers, felt a deep sadness over the loss. This shared experience led to the development of a friendship between us. Until the pandemic, we frequently met to work on my doctoral thesis and a documentary about Robert College. He is terribly missed.

Üstün Ergüder RC 57: "I Was So Impressed by His Acting Prowess"

I was very impressed with his interest and ability in acting. He became a very valuable member of RC Players. RC definitely had a very important

impact on his career in theater. On one occasion he took me to his parents' house in Teşvikiye and I never forget a comment made by his grandmother when Genco was not around: "You are his friend. He is devoted to acting. I am afraid he will become an entertainer. Please persuade him to go to medical school." I did nothing about that as I was very much impressed with his acting prowess.

Nevra Serezli ACG 65: "Genco Was an Extraordinary Teacher."

Stop the World I Want to Get Off (*Durdurun Dünyayı İnecek Var*) was where we first met. Genco was already a name in theater and I was new. It was a huge hit, and we went on tours all around Turkey. Genco was an extraordinary teacher. He was also a very good comedian, but he tended towards the political. *Stop the World* wasn't so political but he adopted it to Turkey and made it so.

We didn't act together again, but I've seen all his plays. Genco was cool, an intellectual, he was always reading. On stage he was a huge actor.

I like the way he thought, his poetry, the way he looked after himself. I heard he wanted to tour up to the last day. That was Genco.

Read the full article:



Erkal was known for his performance of *Diary of a Madman*

Behzat Rızvani RC 49

Behzat Rızvani passed away on September 11, 2024. He nurtured his ties with RC throughout his life, actively communicating with both his friends and his alma mater. This bond fed him with a joy of life and endless motivation. His RC years formed his philosophy of life, prioritizing individual freedom. He was considerate, nonjudgmental and fair-minded, never failing to show respect to all, regardless of their age, standing, or background. He believed that elegance and kindness were

indispensable and was committed to the principle of discipline. His quiet sense of humor and his aptitude for finding good in every occasion was what helped in the longevity of his RC friendships. His gentle and noble personality will be sorely missed by his loving sons Dara and Daver, and his four grandchildren, Mina, Selim, Cem, and Melis, as well as his sisters Firuzan Rızvani Sıtkioğlu ACG 55 and Yüksel Rızvani Kılıçturgay ACG 60.

Contributed by Bilge Yavuz Rızvani RC 85



Sermet Göksel 49

Dr. Sermet Göksel passed away on June 8, 2024, leaving behind a life well-lived and deeply cherished. His journey was one of dedication, wisdom, and passion. After studying at Robert College, he specialized in internal medicine at Istanbul University's Medical School. His pursuit of knowledge took him to London for a year, but his heart remained in his hometown of Gaziantep, where he and his father, Dr. Abdülkadir Göksel, opened a clinic that became a place of healing for many.



Beyond medicine, Dr. Göksel was an avid photographer, capturing life's fleeting moments with the same care he showed his patients.

He was a devoted husband to Tuncay Göksel (ACG 58) and a loving father to Zeynep Göksel, Sabiha Özmen, and Abdülkadir Göksel. His legacy endures through his family and the countless lives he touched with his kindness and dedication.

Güneş Nurettin Ege Akter ACG 52



Dr. Güneş Nurettin Ege Akter, passed away on January 8, 2025, in Toronto. Born in Istanbul, she spent her early years in New York, where her father, Ragıp Nurettin Ege, served as Türkiye's cultural attaché. and her mother, Nezahet Nurettin Ege, introduced American children to Turkish culture through literature. The family returned to Istanbul in 1940 as World War II began.

Dr. Ege studied at Barnard College before earning her medical degree from Harvard, where she was one of only ten women in her class. Specializing in radiation oncology, she joined the Ontario Cancer Institute and Princess

Margaret Hospital in 1967, contributing to advancements in nuclear medicine and lymphoscintigraphy.

Beyond medicine, Dr. Ege was dedicated to preserving her family's history, publishing books based on archival research. She also established the Professor Seyhan N. Ege ACG 49 Excellence in Science Award for Girls at Robert College in memory of her late sister.

She is survived by her husband, Turgut A. Akter, and leaves behind a lasting legacy in medicine, education, and history.

Sevinç Günal Batuk ACG 53

Sevinç Günal Batuk passed away on March 25, 2025. After ACG she studied linguistics at Louvain University in Belgium. In 1956, she married İsmail Hakkı Batuk and lived in Africa and Europe due to her husband's career. These experiences enriched her life with diverse cultures. Sevinç was an independent and free-spirited woman, always open to new ideas and personal growth. Her sharp mind, strong memory, and genuine interest in the world made



her a source of inspiration for those around her. Among her many interests, she enjoyed playing bridge, participating in both local and international tournaments over the years. She was deeply devoted to her family, offering love, wisdom, and guidance to her daughter Zeynep, son-in-law Ömer, and grandchildren Selin and Osman. Sevinç will live on in the memories of all who knew her, as a woman of kindness, engaging conversation, and enduring spirit.

Atilla Toroğlu RC 55

Atilla Toroğlu passed away on July 22, 2024, at the age of 91. He was the son of Hadika and Mithat Toroğlu, who was a hero of the resistance to the French invaders after the end of the first world war, and a popular mayor of Mersin, famous for building the modern cemetery that is shared by members of different faiths lying side by side, a UNESCO site of world heritage. Atilla was a popular person on campus. An

active lover of theater who built the scenes for school dramas during his four years at RC, Atilla excelled in sports and student government, serving as the Student Council president in his senior year. He spent his working life with the Joint US Military Mission for Aid to Turkey (JUSSMAT) in Ankara, and the US Consulate in Adana. Atilla is survived by his wife Bilge, brother Şarman, daughters Füsün and Ayşe and son Mehmet.



Erdoğan Pancaroğlu RC ENG 56



Erdoğan Pancaroğlu passed away on May 27, 2024, in İzmir. Born on October 29, 1934, in Kayseri, he entered Robert College in 1945, graduating as an engineer in 1956. After obtaining his MS from the University of Missouri in 1959, he worked on urban water master plans in Türkiye. His professional journey in environmental health continued with the WHO in Jakarta (1980-88) and the World Bank in Washington, DC (1988-96), leading teams on water supply

projects throughout southeast Asia. He was an amateur guitarist with a fine ear for music and a keen photographer. He relished in travel, the family's Alaçatı house, and had a lively sense of humor and an eye for antiques, pebbles, and birds. Above all, he cherished time with his family and the camaraderie of his RC classmates. He is survived by his wife, Lale, daughters, Şirin and Oya, sons-in-law, Utku and Fahrettin, and grandson, Mengü.

Esen Ziyal Gürel ACG 56

One of the most popular, colorful, best loved classmates, Esen passed away in the summer of 2024. Very intelligent, naughty Esen never pushed herself to be among the studious members of our class. A very giving person and a gifted painter, she never refrained from helping us with our drawings in Biology Lab. Although joyous and witty, she sometimes became moody, and it was difficult to understand what was bothering her. Esen never stopped improving herself. She took French lessons and attended miniature



classes. She was a long-time yoga student working with Müheyya İzer and finally became one of the most competent yoga teachers. Esen is survived by her two daughters Rengin and Alev, her twin sister Sezen Wilson ACG 56, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. We shall miss our dear friend very much. She will live in our hearts.

Contributed by Esin Kantoğlu Küntay ACG 56

Güzide Nur Atabay ACG 56



Nur Atabay passed away in February 2025. Known for her energetic, hard-working nature, as well as her love for nature and sailing, Nur Atabay left an indelible mark on her family and on the pharmaceutical industry with Atabay ilaç - founded by her father, which she co-helmed with her brother Bülent Atabay, and which is currently led by her nieces Zeynep Atabay Taşkent RC 88 and Ayşe Atabay.

In the 1956 Record, her classmates stated that Atabay's philosophy of life

was "love, love, and love again." This philosophy was evident in the way she lived. Atabay was an avid art lover, as well as an environmentalist. She helped restore many public restrooms and instigated the improvement of what is now known as Gezi Park in the 1980s. She was instrumental in launching one of the first corporate sailing races in Türkiye, with the Atabay Cup. She will be deeply missed by her family, friends and colleagues.

Ender Berker ACG 58

Prof. Dr. Ender Berker rejected a full scholarship offer from Bryn Mawr for nursing and studied medicine at Istanbul University. Her father, Ord. Prof. Dr. Osman Cevdet Çubukçu was the founder of physical medicine and rehabilitation in Türkiye. Following in his footsteps, she began residency training in the same clinic. Dedicating her whole life to her students and patients, she lectured to thousands of medical students, and treated countless patients. She was Chief of Department of PM&R, Vice Dean of



the medical school, Chairwoman of the Turkish PM&R Society, and founded the Society for Pain Research. She spoke at thousands of conferences and authored many papers and book chapters. After retiring from the university, she continued to practice in the American Hospital until her death. She was the ultimate example of a real physician, teacher, mother and grandmother. She will be dearly missed by her colleagues, patients, coworkers and family.

*Contributed by her daughter
Nadire Berker RC 83*

Tomur Atagök ACG 59



Tomer Atagök passed away on March 27, 2025. A distinguished painter with 40 solo exhibitions, Atagök was also an influential academic, who founded the Museum Studies graduate program at Yıldız Teknik University where she was the dean from 2004-2006. Atagök also contributed to art and museology through numerous published articles and many research projects.

Throughout her work, Atagök questioned female identity, often utilizing mythological figures and

goddesses. She believed that art is a conversation between the artist and the viewer, reflecting the life, environment and thoughts of the viewer; it is not only aesthetic but social, political and emotional. She told the RCQ in 2019: "I get my inspiration from society and nature. My use of metal for many years was a reason for the viewer to see both the work, herself and himself in the work and try to understand what is happening in the environment she or he is in."

Ahmet Akin Arica RA 60



Ahmet Akin Arica passed away on January 24, 2025. He was a charming and gracious man, devoted to his wife, children and grandchildren. Akin held degrees from Istanbul University School of Law, and Columbia University, which he attended on a Fulbright Scholarship. He was an avid supporter of Robert College and served as president of the Alumni Association in the US in the mid 1980s. He was a brilliant man of great curiosity, and a voracious reader

in many areas - astronomy, history, military history, and Turkish history and culture, among other subjects. He worked in management and finance at B. Altman, MOMA Design Store, and C.A.S.E.S as Chief Finance Officer, in New York City, where he resided after his marriage to Jane in 1968. Together they raised two children, Dr. Koray E. Arica and Beril A. Arica. He was the father-in-law of Audrey G. Lucas, and beloved grandfather of Leo and Oscar.

Ercan Sayarı RC ENG 61

Ercan Sayarı passed away on September 20, 2024, after a brief illness. Ercan was a popular figure on campus: He was on the football and basketball varsity teams, and held several records in track and field. Ercan was well-liked by his classmates for his friendly, cheerful and easy-going personality. After receiving an MS degree in civil engineering at Oklahoma State University, Ercan worked in New York as a civil engineer before returning to Türkiye in 1966.

After his military service, he worked in Istanbul before moving back to the US in 1978, to Middletown, New York, where he lived and worked for the next eight years. Returning to Istanbul, he held a technical managerial position at Nuh Çimento Sanayi. He spent his summers with his family at his home in Bodrum. Ercan is survived by his wife Hülya, his daughter Aslı, his grandson Mert, and younger brother Sabri Sayarı RA 62.



Mehmet Bekir Şasa RA 61

Bekir Şasa passed away on October 23, 2024. We are deeply saddened by his sudden death. After Robert Academy, he continued his education at Robert College, receiving his bachelor's in business administration in 1965. Memories bring tears to our eyes in sorrow realizing our tall and handsome friend is gone forever. He was a dependable, loyal, trustworthy, respectful, considerate friend, a successful businessman, an excellent skier, a very good husband and father.



He was an Istanbul gentleman with impeccable character. Bekir was loved and respected by his family, friends, business associates and all who knew him. He will always be remembered and felt within our heart. May he rest in peace. He is survived by his beloved wife Fatma Bülbün, daughters Aylin and Melike, sons-in-law Lami Bertan and Orçun, granddaughter Melis and brother Aziz.

Contributed by his RC 54-65 Classmates

Ahmet Levendoğlu RA 64



Actor, theater director, author, teacher and translator, Ahmet Levendoğlu passed away on April 6, 2025. His was a life devoted to theater. He was born into an artistic family; his grandfather was the writer Agah Sırrı Levend, and his father was the director and stage designer Tank Levendoğlu. Ahmet Levendoğlu appeared frequently on stage while at Robert Academy, performing in plays such as Franz Kafka's *Duruşma* (*The Trial*). He was also on the board of the

Drama Club. After graduating from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in England, he returned to Türkiye and took to the stage at Ankara Devlet Tiyatrosu. He founded Tiyatro Stüdyosu in the 1990s. He had impeccable command of both Turkish and English, and he contributed many plays to the Turkish stage with his translations. Friends and colleagues remember him as a man of principles, who helped arm actors with self-confidence.

Eser Esengin Sayir ACG 68

Eser Esengin Sayir passed away on July 4, 2024. After graduating from ACG, she studied graphic design at the Istanbul State Academy of Fine Arts. In those years, she went to many volunteer work camps in Europe and built friendships from different countries.

She had significant achievements in graphic design, including her participation in the national contest in 1967 for the Olympics stamps; and worked in various advertising agencies, among them Cenajans.

In the early 1980s, she worked as administrative assistant in the Biomedical Engineering Institute at Boğazici University.

Eser is survived by her daughter Beril (RC 01) and her husband Mustafa. She was passionate about arts, culture and travel; her daughter feels blessed to have inherited these. She will be fondly remembered for her kind and caring personality, intellect and humor, and will remain deepest in our hearts. May she rest in peace.



Jale Şehbenderler ACG 70



My beloved, dark curly haired, mischievous, clever high school friend. With her coal black eyes and silver accessories, she was always well dressed and groomed. She was never indifferent to social problems. I always remember Jale with her warm personality, keen interest in high politics and active involvement that extended to the years beyond university. She isolated herself after Covid. I missed seeing her after every phone conversation we had and now I miss her presence in this world.

Contributed by Akile Gürsoy Şatıroğlu

Jale viewed time as life's most precious luxury and lived accordingly. She was fashionably late to gatherings and took her time with everything- simple tasks could take weeks, and complex ones years. But in her deliberate pace lay wisdom, as she truly understood life's essence: savoring every moment. May we all learn from her example and use our time as well as she did.

Contributed by Dara Hızveren

Dina Kohen ACG 71

A remarkable woman of courage, strength, and compassion, Dina passed away on August 30 in Rotterdam, Holland, surrounded by her loving family. She was a beloved friend whose legacy is forever etched in the hearts of those who knew her.

In 1971 she moved to Germany. After learning German, she studied math and literature at the University of Berlin. She organized projects for students with difficulties adapting to society, earning numerous awards. In 1995, she moved to Holland, learned Dutch, and supported students with learning



disabilities while also giving language courses to seniors. Her efforts brought hope to many and sparked change in the lives of those she touched.

In 2022 Dina learned that she had terminal lung cancer. She wrote a book about her incredible life and meticulously prepared for her funeral as if she were organizing a big party. Dina is survived by her daughter Iris, grandchildren Misha and Robin and brothers Danis and Leon.

Contributed by Lale Kohen ACG 71

Fatma Acıkaraoğlu ACG 71

Fatma Acıkaraoğlu passed away on June 6, 2024, following a serious illness. She was born in Buldan as the eldest child of her family. After graduating from ACG, she went on to Boğaziçi University and graduated with a bachelor's degree in business administration. She unfortunately encountered a serious health problem early on which she struggled with for the rest of her life. Our dear Fatma was a special person with a very kind heart and never-ending warmth and understanding for all her



friends. Although her illness prevented her from leading and enjoying a joyful life, she never lost her belief in life and did her best to keep in close touch with all her ACG and BU classmates. She will be missed dearly by all her friends and remembered with "Kocaman öptüm". Farewell Fatma... You will forever live in our hearts. Our dear friend is survived by her only son Burak.

Contributed by Sevinç Bozok Uşar ACG 71 & Dilek Özmen Gündoğ ACG 71

Galya Natüs Aytaç ACG 71

Galya Natüs Aytaç passed away at the age of 72 on February 19, 2025, in London. She was surrounded by her dear husband Osman, her loving son Kerim, and her close friends as they bid her goodbye at home. Galya was born in Istanbul as an only child to Elda and Garih Natüs. Galya and her husband Osman made London their home in 1979, with their son Kerim who was born the same year. She studied at art schools in London and ran a successful antique dealership for many years.

Galya had a wonderful sense of aesthetics and an eye for all things beautiful, original and extraordinary. She was creative and had a most refined sense of style. We are lucky to have shared many great memories with her. She will stay as a very dear friend in the depth of our hearts.

Contributed by Vicky Habif, Nüket Ulagay, Mattie İlel, Ferhan Cook and Atiye Gökmen on behalf of her ACG 1971 classmates



Leyla Doğan RC 73

There are people who have mastered the art of navigating through life with extraordinary grace, poise, patience and resilience. Leyla fit that description exceptionally well. Her calm, kind demeanor was enough to make everyone feel listened to, cared for and celebrated. Her eyes shone with a special twinkle that emanated indomitable joie de vivre, great whimsy and deep intelligence. A multi-



talented woman, Leyla completed a degree in graphic arts and design at Leeds Polytechnic and started her professional career in the United Kingdom before returning to Istanbul to work in the wellness industry. She leaves behind her loving nieces and a multitude of friends who will always cherish her and carry her in their hearts. She was a genuine gift to the lives of many.

Mehmet Armatlı RC 73



Mehmet passed away after a long illness which he fought with

indomitable courage and grace. Upon graduating from RC, he attended Boğaziçi University where he received a BSc degree in chemical engineering. He then went on to complete an MA degree in business administration at İstanbul University. His professional career included various positions at Chrysler, Goodyear, Brisa, NCR, AT&T, and Akkök Holding. His most recent job was as director of strategic planning and human resources at Sinpaş. He was an extremely warm, gentle soul

with exceptional intellectual curiosity, a brilliant scientific mind, a unique sense of humor and a profound sense of ethics. We all cherished his friendship and kind demeanor. Mehmet is survived by his wife and son. He will be deeply missed.

Contributed by his classmates Ahmet Palazoğlu, Betül Algül, Fatih Erdoğan, Gürol Irzık, Hale Bolak, Ufuk Serdaroğlu and Ümit Sivrioğlu

Eric Widmer, Trustee Emeritus

Former member of the RC Board, Eric Widmer died on January 18, 2025, in Simsbury, Connecticut. He had a special connection to RC, as the great-grandson of Cyrus Hamlin, and like his ancestor, dedicated his life to education.

Widmer was born on the American University of Beirut campus, where his parents were on the faculty. With German forces threatening the Middle East, his mother brought him to the US (his father remained, to fight with the Free French). Widmer attended Deerfield Academy, Williams College, and Harvard University, where he received a PhD in Chinese History. His first book, with Harvard University Press, was a study of early Russian-Chinese diplomatic relations. In 1969,



he came to Brown University, where he was Assistant Professor of Chinese History, then Dean of Student Life, then Dean of Admissions. In 1994, he returned to Deerfield as its 54th headmaster. Naturally, he responded when a Deerfield graduate, King Abdullah of Jordan, asked for advice

to start a progressive boarding school in Jordan. Their friendly consultation turned into a consuming passion, and when King Abdullah asked Widmer to become the founding headmaster of King's Academy, he accepted. In a sense, it was a chance to return home, to the region of his birth. King's Academy was an immediate success, and continues to thrive nearly two decades later. Eric Widmer is survived by his wife, Meera Viswanathan (the head of the Ethel Walker School), by his first wife, Ellen Widmer (the Mayling Soong Professor of Chinese Studies at Wellesley College), by his sons, Ted (also a board member), Matt, and by his grandson Freddy.

*Contributed by his son,
RC Trustee Edward Widmer*

Cemâl Barutçu



I was sad to learn about the death of our dear colleague Cemâl Barutçu, the technical manager of RC Visual and Audio Center from 1981-2006. Cemâl and I had a bond born from working together at the college for many years. I met Cemâl in 1981. He was the assistant of Aydın Ungan, one of RC's legendary teachers, at the Visual and Audio Center, a kind of technical memory of the school. Cemal worked at RC for many years fulfilling an important duty of finding, recording and providing materials that greatly supported teachers and learning

processes. Those who knew him will appreciate his efforts. As someone who contributed to RC for so many years with his unique and colorful personality, I am, as one of the RC community members who knew him well, very sad. I share my condolences with his dear wife, his son and the entire Robert College community. May he rest in light.

*Contributed by Mehmet Uysal, Head
of the Turkish Language and Literature
Department*

Birol Özdemir

We lost our former Turkish Language and Literature teacher Birol Özdemir, on March 6, 2025. Birol worked at RC from 2002 until his retirement in 2021. He published his first book, *Haymatlos*, during this period. Birol always guided students who were interested in writing. He constantly read, examined, and had strong relationships with the world of art and literature. Inviting poets and writers to our school, he gave our students many opportunities that supported their extra-curricular education. He helped establish the Turkish Language and Literature Department Culture and Literature

Symposium. He internalized lifelong learning and always set an example for his fellow teachers. He had a happy life with his wife, our department teacher Sengül Özdemir, and their sweet twins Selin and Pelin. After retiring, he devoted his time to his children and family. My dear Birol Hoca, you left this world leaving "a pleasant sound in the dome". We will always remember you with love, friendship and gratitude. Rest in peace, my dear brother.

*Contributed by Mehmet Uysal, Head
of the Turkish Language and Literature
Department*



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