

Gettysburg College News Release
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Howell native awarded inaugural fellowship at historic Stratford Hall

Howell High School alumna Caitlin Connelly will spend her summer as the inaugural Reber Fellow at Stratford Hall, the historic home of the Lee family in Stratford, Virginia.

A rising senior at Gettysburg College, Connelly was awarded the competitive fellowship through the College's Civil War Institute, which places students in internship positions at various historic sites and national parks each summer.

In her role at Stratford Hall, she will work with the Lee Family Digital Archives, which aims to become the most comprehensive collection of online documents concerning the Lee family of Virginia—which boasts two signers of the Declaration of Independence, as well as the Civil War Confederate General Robert E. Lee.

Prior to this fellowship, Connelly has served as a research intern at the Historic Village of Allaire in Farmingdale, New Jersey and the secretary of the Gettysburg College Classics Club, and was inducted into Phi Alpha Theta, the national history honors society, for her academic distinction. In 2016-17, she will be editor-in-chief of the *Gettysburg Historical Journal*.

"I feel truly honored to be the inaugural recipient of this fellowship," Connelly said. "This summer I am looking forward to learning more about Robert E. Lee and his family who lived here at Stratford Hall.

"I am also looking forward to gaining a better understanding of the time periods that Stratford Hall is associated with, including the Revolutionary War period, the Civil War, and the 20th century when there was an effort to reclaim the house and lands to create the historic site."

After her graduation from Gettysburg College, Connelly hopes to continue her education in graduate school and ultimately work in museums or historic sites.

The fellowship she has received was created in memory of Gettysburg College alumnus and friend Paul C. Reber, a leading member of the U.S. public history community. Before his passing last summer, Reber served as the executive director of Stratford Hall for nearly ten years and is largely credited with many of the restorative efforts that have increased the site's annual visitation numbers and national visibility.

As reported in the *Washington Post*, Reber spearheaded a massive restoration of Stratford Hall's historic properties, led a multi-million dollar fundraising campaign, and reversed the downward trend of visitors to the site. In fact, in his first year of leadership alone, he is credited with increasing visitation to the site by 9 percent. Prior to coming to Stratford Hall, Reber served as President of Old Salem Inc. in Winston-Salem, NC; Executive Director of Decatur House, a National Trust Historic Site in Washington, D.C.; Director of Development at Mount Vernon; and Director of the White House Endowment Fund.

"We are very grateful to be able to continue our relationship with Gettysburg College in honor of Paul's memory," said Carter Refo, Executive Director of Stratford Hall. "This program will have a lasting impact on both the student and Stratford Hall. For someone like Paul who loved history, this is a most fitting tribute."

Founded in 1832, Gettysburg College is a highly selective four-year residential college of liberal arts and sciences with a strong academic tradition. Alumni include Rhodes Scholars, a Nobel laureate, and other distinguished scholars. The college enrolls 2,700 undergraduate students and is located on a 200-acre campus adjacent to the Gettysburg National Military Park in Pennsylvania.