

CORNELIA PARSONS THORNBURGH
Trinity Class of 1980
Doctor of Humane Letters

Through your service as a longtime guardian and stalwart supporter of Trinity College, you have helped guide the institution into the future. You expertly kept the college moving forward through your 17 years as a dedicated member of the Board of Trustees—seven of those years as chair—and continue to do so today, earning the admiration of all in the college community.

About a decade after joining Trinity’s board in 2004, you served as chair of the Presidential Search Committee that brought the first female president to the college in 2014. That same year, you became the first female chair of the board. It is in this role that you served as an ex officio member of all committees and subcommittees of the board.

Through your strategic and humanitarian counsel, alongside your philanthropy, you have made enormous contributions to the college and, in general, to higher education that have paved a path for others to emulate. In addition to your board membership, you have devotedly served the college as a founder of the newly created Marjorie Butcher Circle, a leadership philanthropy group of alumnae; as co-chair of the Charter Committee for Building Community; as a tri-chair of the college’s capital campaign to raise \$350 million; and as a member of the Board of Fellows. You also were one of the creators of and now serve as a member of the Founders Council of the Women’s Leadership Council, and you are a member of the Elms Society.

In 2010, you were the first alumna to be awarded The Eigenbrodt Cup, one of the greatest honors that can be bestowed upon a graduate, given in recognition of your prominence and your unusual and significant service to Trinity. In 2013, in celebration of your cumulative lifetime giving, you and your husband, Richard E. Thornburgh, were included on Trinity’s Wall of Honor, which recognizes those whose philanthropy has had a profound impact at the college. In 2020, you were named one of Trinity’s 50 for the Next 50, which—in celebration of 50 years of coeducation at the college—honored 50 women who will have a lasting impact on the next 50 years at Trinity.

Your Bantam spirit is as much alive today as it was when you graduated from the college in 1980, earning a B.A. in political science, followed by an M.B.A. from Columbia University. Your professional work history includes serving as chair of the Advisory Board at New York-based Eachwin Capital, as a vice president at advertising agency J. Walter Thompson, and as a financial analyst at The First Boston Corporation.

Your dedication to serving others goes far beyond the college. You are a former chair of the board for Convent of the Sacred Heart, a pre-K–12 independent school for girls in New York City. There you co-chaired a \$75 million campaign that supported the construction of a second campus in Manhattan that houses a 50,000-square-foot athletic facility. You also are the current board chair, as well as former board secretary and former advancement committee head, of The Lord’s Place, an organization committed to breaking the cycle of homelessness in Southeastern Florida; you focus your efforts there on that agency’s first-ever \$20 million capital campaign and the creation of a 25,000-square-foot programming center in West Palm Beach. You also lend your expertise to the Town of Palm Beach United Way Allocations Committee. In the past, you served as a trustee of the American Ballet Theatre and the Zurich International School.

In recognition of your tremendous philanthropy and achievements in service to the college and other deserving organizations, I have the honor of presenting you, Cornelia Parsons Thornburgh, known to Bantams as “Cornie,” for the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*.