

A
DESTINATION
FOR CIVIC
ENGAGEMENT



Lasting solutions to bridging divisions in society require leadership, critical thinking, dialogue, collaboration, advocacy, the engagement of many voices, and coalition building. For more than 175 years, Grinnell College has been a place where these modes of engagement are practiced, shared, and generated to advance the common good.

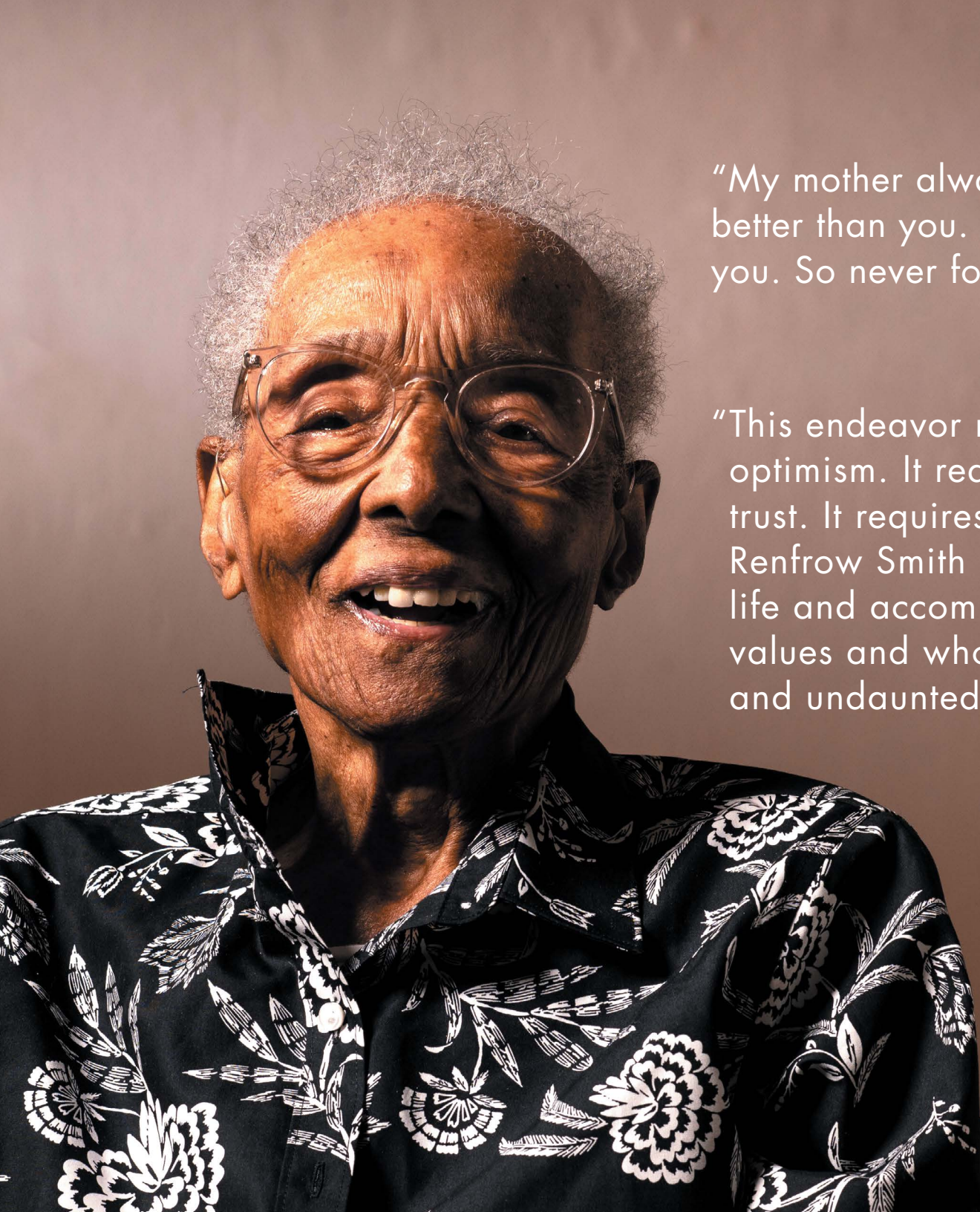


A CATALYST FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE



WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US AS A CIVIC
INNOVATION PARTNER.

Grinnell is a place where challenges become opportunities, as we work individually and collectively for the common good. Your gift to Renfrow Hall promises to create these opportunities and foster critical innovation that will shape the future of our nation and society. At Grinnell, we find that together we are greater, more powerful, and more impactful as educators, citizens, scholars, and leaders. This holds true especially as we look to you for your help to assure the possibilities of Renfrow Hall are fully realized.



"My mother always said, 'There's no one better than you. You are unique and you are you. So never forget how important you are.'"

Edith Renfrow Smith

"This endeavor requires determination and optimism. It requires a commitment to civic trust. It requires a bit of risk taking. Edith Renfrow Smith '37 is a Grinnellian whose life and accomplishments embody these values and who has served as a positive and undaunted inspiration to others."

President Anne F. Harris

Mrs. Edith Renfrow Smith '37

A TRUE GRINNELLIAN: EDITH RENFROW SMITH

Born in 1914, Edith Renfrow Smith grew up in one of the oldest Black families in the town of Grinnell. The fifth of six children, she attended the local public schools.

The Renfrow family held education, community, and equality in the highest regard.

Drawing on these family values, Renfrow Smith worked her way through school, participated in a range of intramural sports, and majored in psychology with minors in economics and sociology. In June 1937, she became the first Black woman to graduate from Grinnell College.

After graduation, Renfrow Smith moved to Chicago. She married Henry T. Smith and raised two daughters — Edith Virginia and Alice Frances. There, she quickly became a pillar of her community. In 1954, she began her career as a public school elementary teacher. Upon retiring in 1976 as a deeply loved and respected teacher, Renfrow Smith began a 40-year second career as volunteer at Goodwill and the Art Institute of Chicago. In recognition of service to others, she was inducted into the Chicago Senior Citizens Hall of Fame in 2009. In 2019, Grinnell College awarded Renfrow Smith an honorary doctorate to a standing ovation from the graduates and all assembled.

BELONGING AND CONNECTION

The Civic Innovation Pavilion within the public-facing part of Renfrow Hall will welcome the community as a gateway that addresses and promises to strengthen the partnership between town and institution, both in terms of the physical environment and the intangible hallmarks of a greater community.

The project will encourage pedestrian traffic between the campus and downtown, and strengthen social and economic vitality. Through Renfrow Hall and the Civic Innovation Pavilion, the College also seeks to inspire a level of civic trust between the College and town through shared spaces, shared projects, intergenerational collaboration, and by fostering student engagement with the broader



Site with relation to Grinnell College's campus.

Grinnell community where they will spend four years. These initiatives will be conceived and implemented with community input.

Indoor green spaces enhance student well-being through year-around connection to the natural.



SHARED GOALS AND COMMON GROUND

Renfrow Hall and the Civic Innovation Pavilion present an extraordinary new model for 21st century education, living, and growing. The architecture is designed as a mixed-use destination that links the town and the College together in shared experiences. Through this project, Grinnell – both the town and the College – will become a national voice for civic engagement and college-community collaboration in a rural setting.

As a place where students both live and learn and where the College welcomes the broader Grinnell community, as well as communities of interest formed around pressing societal issues, this unique facility will become a destination

for experienced and aspiring coalition-builders. From the intersection of the College's campus and the city of Grinnell's downtown, Grinnellians will have a platform from which to drive greater recognition of programs, policies, and practices that incorporate diverse voices and viewpoints to further the common good.

The facility will also provide common ground for Grinnell College's Social Innovator in Residence program. Here, students will have the chance to engage with inspiring leaders who are making an enduring difference in the world, fostering interdisciplinary creativity, and promoting civic engagement and social change.

The design of Renfrow Hall's common areas includes a two-story living wall.



"Grinnell is a global institution in a rural setting with a national voice."

Grinnell College Strategic Plan



A rendering of the flexible living space that will be part of each apartment.

A PLACE STRIVING FOR COLLECTIVE EQUITY

Located in America's heartland, Grinnell College is uniquely positioned to pursue collective equity through civic engagement. A hallmark of a vibrant democracy, these debates, dialogues, discussions, and actions include the global perspective of a truly international community. Different experiences of civic engagement and democratic institutions and how they shape and sustain societies contribute to a deeply meaningful dialogue in the pursuit of a more just and equitable world.

Through the Grinnell College National Poll, the College's faculty and students already work together to probe the civic engagement mindset

of American voters to uncover new insights about shifting attitudes toward candidates, policies, and the health of democracy. Grinnell's location "in the middle of everywhere" has become an exceptional launchpad for ideas and insight with direct implications for society and policy.

Now, by preparing students for life after Grinnell by joining independent living with civic engagement, the College will provide an exceptional experience for new generations of leaders learning the principles of civic trust and engagement, enhanced by the coalitions and partnerships among students, the broader Grinnell community, and beyond.

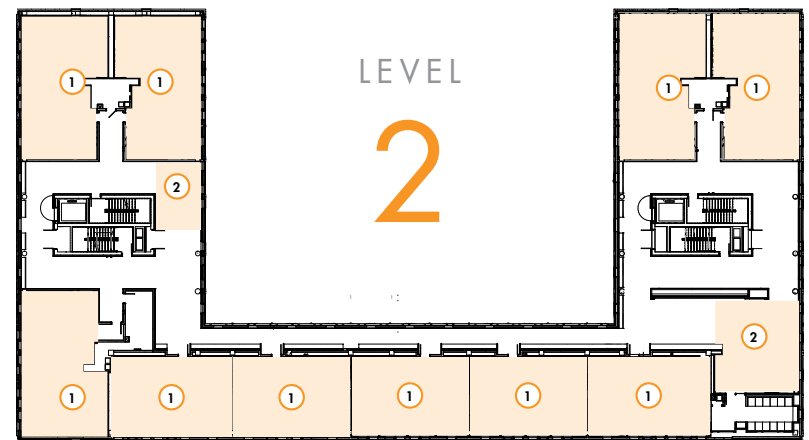
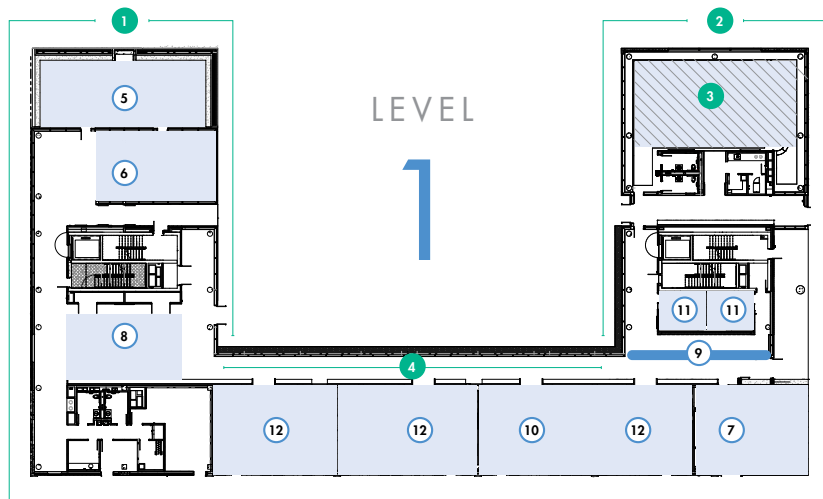
WILL YOU JOIN US IN THE GREATER WORK TO RENFROW HALL NAMING

Foundations

- ① North Tower \$5 million
- ② South Tower \$5 million
- ③ Civic Innovation Pavilion \$3 million **RESERVED**
- ④ West Loggia \$2 million

Level 1

- ⑤ Porch \$500 thousand
- ⑥ North Garden Lounge \$500 thousand
- ⑦ South Garden Lounge \$500 thousand
- ⑧ Large Student Lounge \$750 thousand
- ⑨ Living wall (2 stories) \$500 thousand
- ⑩ Social Innovator in Residence Apartment \$250 thousand
- ⑪ 2 Offices \$50 thousand each
- ⑫ 3 Apartments \$100 thousand each



BE DONE?

OPPORTUNITIES

Level 2

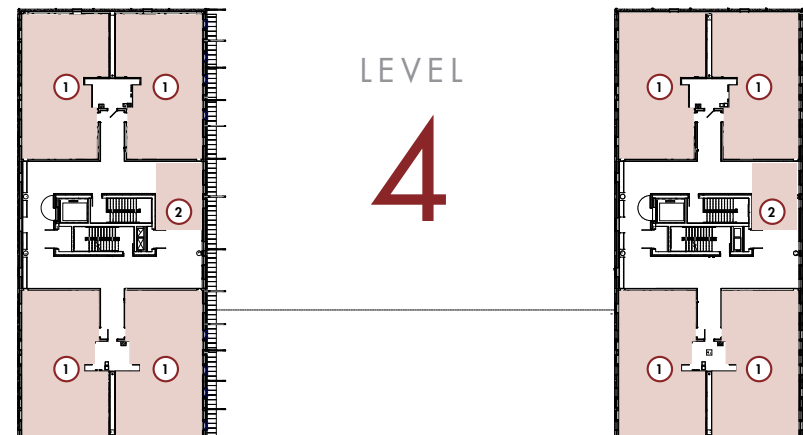
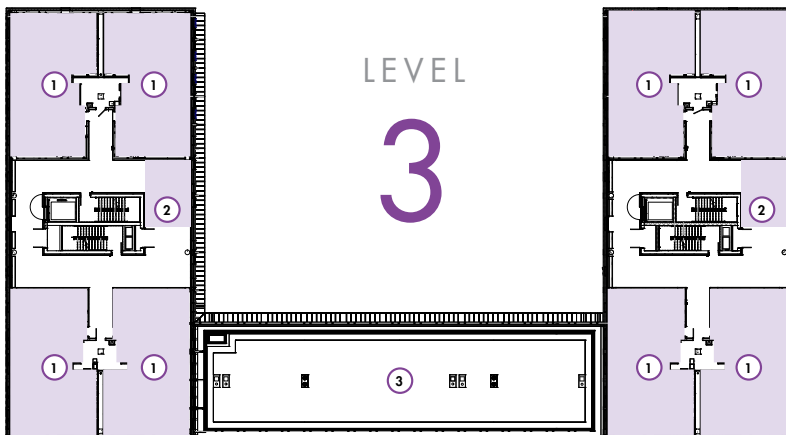
- ① 10 Apartments \$100 thousand each
- ② 2 Student Lounges \$250 thousand each

Level 3

- ① 8 Apartments \$100 thousand each
- ② 2 Student Lounges \$250 thousand each
- ③ Green Roof \$100 thousand

Level 4

- ① 8 Apartments \$100 thousand each
- ② 2 Student Lounges \$250 thousand each



A GREATER STORY YET TO BE TOLD



LEFT: Edith Renfrow's senior portrait, taken before her graduation from Grinnell High School in 1932. **RIGHT:** Portrait of Edith Renfrow taken in 1937 when she worked at the YWCA in Chicago, Illinois.


Edith Renfrow Smith's remarkable story will be shared with residents and visitors alike through a permanent display at Renfrow Hall. We invite you to honor one of Grinnell's most beloved alums by ensuring that current and future generations of Grinnellians, community members, and visitors know her name, have an understanding of her values, and perpetuate them through their own contribution to the world.

With your gift to this extraordinary project, you can honor Mrs. Renfrow Smith's legacy, your own Grinnell experience, or your own honoree, as well as the College's commitment to serving the common good.

TODAY GRINNELL, TOMORROW THE WORLD

The design expresses an outward invitation to the community. The Civic Innovation Pavilion provides space for gathering, working, collaborating, and socializing for both the Grinnell and the campus communities. Renfrow Hall reflects broad input from students over the past decade, providing the public, semi-public, and private residential zones that students say are important to them. In addition to a welcoming entry zone, Renfrow Hall includes more than 76,000 square feet for student residences and common space for community building, activities, study, socializing, and relaxation, with separation between public and residential spaces. The project will enable events and activities on different scales, and reconfigurable furniture will provide maximum flexibility for community, residence life, and programming. Renfrow Hall will provide living space for 109 students in 28 apartments, with options for shared and single rooms that students have requested.

Gifts from alumni and donors like you are necessary to realize the full and expansive impact of the Renfrow Hall at Grinnell and far beyond. You can be a catalyst for more and better civic engagement, coalition-building, and the experiences that transform Grinnellians' participation in a vibrant and equitable democracy.



For more information about how you can support civic engagement at Grinnell, contact:

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