Alumna Profile: Victoria Paterson ’89
From Allens Creek to Broadway

By Anne Pinkney ’16, Dartmouth College ’20

While she was at Allendale Columbia, Victoria Paterson ’89 never could have imagined that she would end up on Broadway. Victoria transferred to AC in eighth grade and attended for five years, during which time she thought she would become a lawyer. After Allendale Columbia, she attended the Catholic University of America for two years before transferring to the University of Rochester, where she earned a degree in philosophy with a music minor. After graduating from college, she, with the support of her husband, decided to pursue her passion: playing the violin.

After playing in the Vermont Symphony Orchestra and teaching the violin in the area, Victoria decided to continue pursuing music and attended Indiana University for her master’s degree. Soon after, she and her husband moved to New York City, where she found work on Broadway after completing a national tour of Beauty and the Beast.

Victoria has played at Chelsea Clinton’s wedding, Jennifer Lopez’s baby shower, and for many of the front-running political figures of our time: Michelle Obama, Joe Biden, and Donald Trump (when he was a reality TV host on Celebrity Apprentice). She has had an incredibly successful career on Broadway, serving as the Concertmaster at The Addams Family, as the Chair at West Side Story, and now currently as Violin I at Sunset Boulevard, starring Glenn Close, with the largest on-stage orchestra in Broadway history. Even with her remarkable career and busy schedule, Victoria also graciously played at our most recent AC Alumni event at the Cornell Club last fall!
She looks back fondly on her years at Allendale Columbia, where she ran track and cross-country and was heavily involved in theatre. One of her favorite AC traditions was Strawberry Breakfast. Victoria, with the support of Mrs. Van Meter-Cline, had the idea of involving student performers to play the sword dance music. She took the initiative and transposed the music for the Breakfast during her sophomore year and was the first person to play it live at the Breakfast, where she reprised her role annually.

But most of all, Paterson remembers the faculty. “Mr. Foster was my history teacher, my track coach, my cross-country coach, and my drama teacher,” she said. “The theatre department was a really important part of my Allendale Columbia experience. Mr. Foster let us do our own thing; I wrote and produced two plays and was really involved with the performances; it was a great part of my high school career!” She describes AC as having an intense sense of familiarity; a place where she made meaningful relationships with faculty members as well as with her classmates.

Victoria credits her multidisciplinary education that she received from Allendale Columbia as a tangible launching point for her career in music. “A well-rounded education prevented me from getting burnt out, mainly because I wasn’t overly pressured into music as a young person,” she said. “Even though there wasn’t a string program at AC, I earned a strong, well-rounded education that has sustained me as a violinist well beyond graduation.”

Victoria is currently Violin I at Sunset Boulevard and performs everywhere from Carnegie Hall, Birdland, and Madison Square Garden, to Late Night with Seth Meyers, to The Today Show. She is the founder of the Lumiere String Quartet, which performs all over New York City and her albums report top-selling classical sales at Amazon and iTunes. Her favorite outreach work is performing for Music That Heals at hospitals all around New York City. Paterson studied at the Eastman School of Music and Indiana University. She resides in New York City with award-winning composer and husband, Robert Paterson, and their beautiful boy, Dylan.