

# ALUMINI SACRED NEWS



August 2023 • Vol. 42 • No. 2

James Thering '89, Alumni Director Earl Hartman '66, Assistant Director
Paulette Andres '64 Green, Newsletter Chairperson

### Parade 4:00 p.m. through **Downtown** Mt. Pleasant **Football** Game 7:00 p.m. at Community Memorial Stadium FRIDAY. **SEPT. 22, 2023** SHA vs. Vestaburg Hall of Fame **Queen's Court & Other Honors** Halftime of football game Alumni & Friends Reception 8:00 p.m. at the Sacred Heart Parish Center

# Three to enter SHA Athletic Hall of Fame

Three former Irish athletes will be added to the Sacred Heart Athletic Hall of Fame during Homecoming ceremonies on September 22, 2023, bringing the total



JEFF GEPFORD



JAMIE CARTER KAUFFOLD



LISA ZITZELSBERGER ROEBKE

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number of honorees to 121. The Hall began in 1980 as a means to honor former athletes for their contributions to the history and tradition of Sacred Heart athletics. To be eligible, an athlete must be at least 15 years out of high school. Nomination forms are available on the school web site at www.sha.net.

This year's inductees are Jeff Gepford '79, Jamie Carter '95 Kauffold, and Lisa Zitzelsberger '99 Roebke.

Jeff earned seven varsity letters in football, baseball and track. He was All State and MVP in baseball his senior year while leading the team in RBIs. He also hit a school rec-ord .591 as a junior. As a football lineman he helped the team set rushing records and advance to the state semifi-nals in 1978. Jeff lives in Mt Pleasant with his wife Mariska and three children. He retired from UPS after 34 years and was inducted into the UPS Circle of Honor in 2011. Jeff has assisted the Sacred Heart softball program for seven years as a junior varsity coach and varsity assistant coach.

Jamie earned 10 letters in basketball, volleyball, track, and softball. In basketball she was MVP and leading scorer in the 1994 season, graduating among the Top 10 all-time scorers. Jamie was also Most Improved Player in volleyball, and a member of the state semi-final softball team. Jamie lives in Yorkville, Illinois, with her husband Tim and three sons. She is a writer and editor for various publications.

Lisa earned seven varsity letters in track, basketball and cross country. She was MVP and All State in cross country and three times named MVP and All State in track. She was a three-time Regional 800-meter champion, finishing second in the state in 1999. Lisa lives in Rockford with her husband Bryce and three daughters. She is co-owner of Third Nature Brewing Company with her brothers, Chad '02 and Troy Zitzelsberger '05.

Alumnus of the Year **Wendy McConnell '91 Endres** and Grand Marshall Damon Brown will also be honored during Homecoming 2023 festivities.

# 2015 grad joins SHA teaching staff

Sacred Heart Academy is pleased to announce Jessica MacDonald '15 (Keith '85) will fill the open 1st grade elementary teaching position when the 2023-24 school year kicks off Au-

gust 21.



JESSICA MACDONALD

After her SHA graduation, Jessica attended Central Michigan University, earning a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education. She

started her teaching career at St. Joseph Catholic School in St. Johns. She taught 4th grade English and Language Arts, and in the afternoons, would teach the 5th and 6th graders. Jessica said her first year of teaching was the now-infamous year of COVID. "After that year, I switched to teaching 2nd grade," she said. "I also became a certified ski instructor."

Recently Jessica decided to pursue her masters degree, which brings her back to CMU, and back "home" to Sacred Heart. "I am excited about getting to know all my students and the staff at SHA," Jessica said. "While there is a feeling of familiarity, I know this year will be full of new and exciting experiences. I look forward to finding my rhythm working at Sacred Heart, and helping my students be the best they can be."

"We are excited to have Jessica at SHA," says Julie George, Assistant Principal/Elementary. "She brings great energy to the 1st grade and her team teacher is another alum, Danielle Radawski '88 Zeien."

# Damon Brown is honored; a new "Doerr" opens for girls b-ball

Players from 15 seasons of Lady Irish basketball were on hand to surprise Damon Brown at what he thought was his final season team banquet at the end of April.

The players and alumni gathered gave Damon accolades for his many celebrated accomplishments as a basketball coach, and thanked him for his mentoring and advice, plus the skills and lessons he taught each of them.

An overwhelmed Damon said he enjoyed every minute of his coaching time at Sacred Heart. He thanked his fellow coaches and then the players, saying "I hope you learned as much from me as I learned from you. Thank you for allowing me to play a small part in your life. her basketball coach (and

Know that each of you have a father) Damon Brown with special place in my heart." a gift at his surprise appre-



Angel Brown '23 awards her basketball coach (and father) Damon Brown with a gift at his surprise appreciation party.

**ANDREW DOERR** 

The Lady Irish will be led next season by head coach Andrew Doerr, who has been coaching the JV girls team for many years. Coach Doerr is a secondary math teacher at Sacred Heart Academy and also the former girls and boys golf coach. He and his wife Alexa (Holtgreive '09) are members of Sacred Heart Parish. They have a baby boy, Luca, who will be one year old in September.

Coach Doerr says he takes pride in being part of the Damon Brown era, and looks forward to continuing the

strong tradition of success in the Lady Irish basketball program.

BELOW: Alumni players coached by Damon Brown show off some of the hardware earned by the teams during his 15-season coaching tenure. Coach Brown led the Lady Irish to 10 Conference Championships, 11 District Championships, 7 Regional Championships, 4 State Final Four appearances, and 1 State Championship.



#### Welcome, Class of 2023





# 29 graduates join the SHA Alumni Association



The SHA Class of 2023 is pictured at their May graduation.

FRONT ROW, from left: Reise Haskin, Lily Deja (Jason '92), Ainslee Humphreys, Angel Brown, Catherine Courtright (Benjamin '91, grandfather Jerry '66), Eliza Pieratt (Sarah Groves '95 Pieratt & Scott Pieratt '96, grandmother Kay Scully '70 Pieratt, great-great grandmother Anna O'Hara 1915 Scully), Olivia Ervin (Lisa Hauck '89 Williams, Marty Ervin '89, grandparents Diane Scully McConnell '68 and Kathy Anton '63 Ervin & Ron Ervin '63, and great-great grandmother Anna O'Hara 1915 Scully), Alexys Zeien (Danielle Radawski '88 Zeien), Rachel Olivieri, Anna Plum, Olivia Middleton, Peyton Goffnett (grandfather Dave Goffnett '66), Mea Mitchell, Rose Kothra, and Gretchen Wilson.

<u>BACK ROW</u>, from left: Jacob Pickens, Jesse Jones, Dennis Egan, Bryce French (grandfather Marty Naumes '66), Dylan Montross, Josiah Howell, Sam Powell, Daniel Kostrzewa (Michael '68), Evan Hixson, David Hunter (John '97), Roman Addison, Lillian Laney (grandmother Cathie McCann '74 Cluley, great grandfather Tom McCann '53, great-great grandparents Eleanor Marthey 1913 McCann & Al McCann 1911), and Keira Chapman. Missing from the photo: Hilary Kohtz.



# ACADEMY NEWS

Lisa Roach, Admissions Director

# A good fit at Sacred Heart

Over the past two years I have had opportunities I never dreamed of to grow in my faith while creating meaningful relationships with so many wonderful peers, students and parents; many of whom also happen to be Sacred Heart Academy alumni. To me, SHA is a family, and I am so thankful to have been graciously welcomed.

#### **Enrollment Update**

While our enrollment has grown 20 percent over the last two school years, this year we hold steady in our enrollment numbers with 478 students ready to begin on Monday, August 21, 2023. In May, we graduated 29 amazing young adults, and this fall we welcome 42 new students from Kinder-Prep through the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Simple math would lead you to believe that our numbers should have increased to 491, but that doesn't take into consideration the 13 students who left due to a family move, to pursue athletics, for special education support, or activities which SHA does not offer (wrestling, boys soccer, dance, etc.). Essentially, SHA was not a good fit for them.

What is a good fit? A good fit is when a student and their family embody the ideals, morals, and values of our community. A good fit means we can provide an academic program which best suits the needs of a student. A good fit means we can offer the sport or program of interest to a student which allows them to achieve their full potential. A good fit means there is mutual respect between the student, their family, and

our dedicated teachers and administrators.

So, while we realized a 2.7 percent loss in returning student numbers, we rest assured our remaining students are a good fit. As Father Loren reminds us, "Sometimes you have to get smaller to grow bigger." Ensuring a good fit for students and their families is a big part of my job, and when we can offer what a student needs, it is a definitely a good fit.

#### **The Butterfly Project**

To celebrate the milestone of moving from the elementary school to the secondary school, 6th grade students are honored at a promotion ceremony, following the weekly all-school Mass. This year, students had the option to recite a poem or share a significant experience from the school year. Over half of the 6th graders shared something from the month-long unit on the Holocaust which impacted them so greatly they felt called to share about it at their promotion ceremony.

In her transition from teaching 4th to 6th grade this year, Mrs. Julie O'Brien introduced lessons on the Holocaust with a goal to develop empathy within our students. The lessons of her unit, which included "The Butterfly Project" books, projects, reports, and a trip to the Holocaust Museum in Farmington Hills, Michigan, received great recognition from the news, and more importantly, our students. Mission accomplished, Mrs. O'Brien!

BELOW: The Class of 2029 is pictured with the butterfly designed by Reid Hacker and painted by each of the students as a gift to the school. It hangs on display in the sixth grade stairway.





# FROM THE PRINCIPAL



Mary Kay Yonker, Principal

## The value of a Catholic school

The Class of 2023 had 29 graduates and surpassed 4,000 Sacred Heart Academy alumni in May, reaching 4,019 alums! This is a tremendous point of pride for our school. When the doors opened in 1889, the Dominican sisters could never have envisioned the changes the next 133 years would bring, or the success of our alumni.

Alums have told us over the years that attending a Catholic school was important to their parents, and having their children attend a Catholic school was even more important to them. The students who attended in the '50s and '60s remember the deep connection to the church: How the priests were in the school every day, and how they wrote "J M J" at the top of every assignment they turned in, reminding them of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph at all times. They attended Mass daily and while they do not recall reciting a school mission, they knew right from wrong, they knew the consequences of their actions, and many of them say it was an early version of today's mantra "What Would Jesus Do?"

In the '80s Sacred Heart students were introduced to community service as part of their religion class electives. As part of a daily class, sophomores, juniors and seniors would spend time at local nursing homes visiting those who were lonely and shut-off from the world. There were also once-a-year trips to inner-city Detroit to work at a weekend soup kitchen which, alumni tell me, is something they still vividly remember in detail.

Alums in the '90s and 2000s remember Father Don Henkes' religion classes and riding the bus with him. Later alums remember going on field trips to east side Saginaw, visiting The Mustard Seed shelter, the soup kitchen, and helping with house projects, as well as visiting the cathedral and basilica in Grand Rapids, and the cloistered convent in Ada.

I spoke with **Connie Veit '81 McCann** recently. It was just after her mother, **Kay Theisen '55 Veit** died. Connie shared the following alumni story:

"My mom loved SHA. She was a Theisen, and as far as SHA research shows, the Theisens have the longest run-ning legacy at Sacred Heart Academy. Starting with 1920, there are very few years all the way to 2006 there wasn't a Theisen in a graduating class, even if their last name wasn't Theisen because a Theisen gal had married. My mom loved

going to school with all of her Fox and Theisen cousins, and her parents, aunts, and uncles were proud to have them all in school at the same time, with the boys playing sports to-gether and almost everyone in the Glee Club and Sodality (student ministry) together.

"My mom worked outside the home at a time when other moms didn't, just to afford our tuition. I remember for years the tuition was \$625 for me and my three sisters to attend. I carried the tuition payment to school every Friday and when I was very young, I have memories of it being pinned to my jumper so I wouldn't lose it. My father supported her deci-sion 100 percent, even though it made the Veit Family budg-et very tight. I also remember complaining about our par-ents saying "no" when I asked for material things, not realiz-ing at the time the gift I was getting every day at school."

Connie explained that when Emerson Theisen (Megan Spence '03 & Andy Theisen Jr '02, grandparents Julie Flannery '78 & Andy Theisen Sr '78, great grandfather Bob Theisen '50, great-great grandfather Gerald Theisen '26) graduates in 2027, she represents the fifth generation of Theisen graduates. SHA hasn't seen an unbroken chain that long in any other family line because whole generations have not been able or were not available to attend Sacred Heart.

There are Sacred Heart Academy alumni all over the country and even around the world. One sentiment remains the same—that a student who graduates from Sacred Heart Academy is prepared for their next role, whether it is the university, a trade school, the military, the work force, or any other of the many choices students have after high school, with God at the center of their life.

We are very blessed to have the only Pre-K-12 Catholic school in the Diocese of Saginaw supported by one parish, and to be one of only three remaining in Michigan. We would not be here without the very generous support of Sacred Heart Parish, the Sacred Heart Academy Foundation, and the many friends and volunteers of Sacred Heart Acade-my who have given generously. The 4,019 alumni have so much for which to be grateful!

I wonder what the next 133 years will bring.

## **Class Notes**

1945—Bette Hackett Peterson died April 27, 2023, in Ventura, CA, where she had been living with her daughter. Bette was the daughter of William and Margaret Logan 1902 Hackett. After graduation from SHA, she went on to earn a teaching degree and later a master's degree in Business Education from Central Michigan University. She began her teaching career right out of college, teaching in several different schools throughout Michigan before retiring from Saginaw Township schools. Bette was the youngest of her family with all eight of her siblings graduating from SHA: Lyle Hackett '28, Vera Mae Robbins '28, Cyril Hackett '33, Marguerite Seelinger '36, Helen Trussell '39 and Eloise Hackett '41.

1949—Dick McConnell died at his home in Kalamazoo on June 6, 2023. He was born in 1931 in Beal City and grew up on the family farm in Vernon Township, north of Rosebush. After graduation from SHA, he attended the University of Notre Dame on a Naval ROTC scholarship, then served as a First Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps. He graduated from the University of Michigan Medical School in 1960. Dr. McConnell worked at Kalamazoo Radiology from 1964 until his retirement in 1996. He married Helen Marian Byrne at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral in Detroit on October 26, 1963. She preceded him in death by three days. Dick was the last of 12 siblings and of 53 McConnell cousins in his generation. His 11 siblings also attended Sacred Heart at some point in their education: Marjorie Orr, Monica Kelly, Isabel Kerley, Frank, Florence Agnes McConnell, Paul '33, Virginia Cotter '34, Cathryn Higgins '37, Justin, Joan Maxbauer '40, and Florence Kraft '45.

**1951—Nancy McDonald Riggle** died April 14, 2023, at home in Mt. Pleasant with her family by her side. Nancy attended Central Michigan University and held many employment positions in local government. She worked for the City of Mt. Pleasant, Union Township, and retired from Isabella County in 1994. She

married Ervin Riggle in 1972 and was a lifelong resident of Mt. Pleasant. Nancy enjoyed volunteering at Central Michigan Community Hospital. She also liked to travel. Most of all, she loved being surrounded by her four daughters and their families. Nancy's father, **Joseph McDonald**, graduated from SHA in 1928. Her mother, **Dorothy Banks Kreager** graduated in 1931, and her sister was also a graduate, **Betty Roest '52**.

1955—Mary Catherine "Kay" Theisen Veit died June 4, 2023, at her home in Mt. Pleasant. Kay was a life-long member of Sacred Heart Parish and worked as a bookkeeper her entire adult life. Following retirement, she worked in the church office and enjoyed volunteering at the local hospital and as part of the funeral luncheon team. Kay was married to Stan Veit for 65 years. He died 35 days after she did. They were proud to provide a Catholic education for their daughters: Christine Veit -James '77, Kathy King '80, Connie McCann '81, and Kelly Veit '83. Kay's father Gerald Theisen graduated from SHA in 1926, as did her siblings: James '49, Robert '50, Nancy Roethlisberger '56, Barbara Little '57, Barney '60, and Margaret Kirkey '62.

**1958**—**REUNION NEWS**—The Class of 1958 is planning a 65<sup>th</sup> reunion gathering at the Homecoming Alumni & Friends gathering on September 22. If we haven't yet connected with you, please contact **Elaine Hackett Salisbury** (616-485-7358 or

#### desalisb@comcast.net).

**1965**—The Class of 1965 missed their 55th reunion because of COVID, so members planned a quick catch-up at The Pixie Restaurant in mid-May. For those not able to make it, the group will be scheduling another get-together in the future. **See picture below.** 

**1968**—*REUNION NEWS*—The Class of 1968 will celebrate their 55<sup>th</sup> Reunion on Saturday, September 23, 2023, at the Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort. For more information contact Mike Kostrzewa at mikekostrzewa@mckostrzewa.com.

THE CLASS OF 1965 MEETS AT THE PIXIE—Front row, sitting from left: Bill Swetz, Gary Rondy, Dick Beltinck, Frank Hackett, Helen Bayer Chase, and Janet Campbell Cappo. Back row, standing from left: Sue Lobsinger Keiser, Janice Walker Klosowski, Connie Schupbach Sedell, Toni Forton Raymond, Carol Wezensky Hackett, Barb Kowallic Kunik, Sharon Campbell Hartman, Jeanie McEvoy Perkins, Barb Collins Forro, Claudia Schafer Joslin, Sharon McNerney Leosh, Marcia Powell, Ginny Neyer Withey, and Bev Peltier Murray.



1973—REUNION NEWS—The Class of 1973 is planning a 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion in conjunction with Homecoming on September 22 & 23. Invitations were sent and RSVPs are now due. For information, please contact one of the reunion committee members: Jerry Thering (jerrythering@yahoo.com or 517-214-2949), Gary Henry (989-824-1719), Pattie McCann Baderschneider (pjmbader2015@gmail.com or 989-854-2165) or Kim Sheppard Allan (michflies@aol.com or 248-931-9527).

1976—Patrick Johnson died June 25 at Culver Meadow Senior Living Center in Traverse City after a brief fight with cancer. Pat enjoyed his days at SHA, where he was part of successful football and track relay teams. He graduated from Mid Michigan College with an associate degree in carpentry and worked as a specialist in drywall until his passion for dogs led him to open Lakeside Kennels near Lake Isabella, which he operated for nearly 20 years. His love for and work with dogs included years of dog training, dog club competitions, and winning AKC awards. Pat was an avid outdoorsman who loved hunting and fishing with friends. His mother, Betty Powell Johnson, graduated from SHA in 1943, and his siblings are all graduates as well: brothers Tim '70, Bill '71, and John '74, and sisters Anne Smith '68, Jane Milan '82, and Kathleen Johnson '83.

**2003**—*REUNION NEWS*—The class of 2003 will celebrate a 20<sup>th</sup> reunion in conjunction with SHA's 2023 Homecoming. Class members can enjoy the parade, football game, and the Alumni & Friends reception on Friday, September 22. Contact **Lindsay Olinger Campbell** at <u>linds.campbell85@gmail.com</u> for updated reunion news.

**2006**—**Dr. Christina Ball Downer** and her husband, Dr. Craig Downer, have welcomed their fourth child to the world. Caleb Thomas made his appearance May 18, 2023, much to the delight of big sisters Maddie, 5, Emelia, 4, and Eliza, 1. Christina is a physician with McLaren Central Michigan. The family resides in Mt. Pleasant.

**2008—Billy Hilliard** married Alecia Zack on August 5, 2023 at The Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament in Detroit. The newlyweds reside in Southfield. Billy is a sales representative for Orascoptic.

**2009**—**Elizabeth Ebright** married Derrick Finn April 22, 2023, in Coupland, Texas. The couple welcomed a son into the world July 28, naming him Casin Wayne Finn. The happy family lives just outside of Austin, Texas, where Liz is a Civil Field Engineer and Document Control Specialist for Riot Platforms.

**2010**—**Alison Thering Trybe** and her husband Scott welcomed daughter Brooklyn Kathleen on May 8, 2023. The new baby was welcomed at home by big sister Vivian, who is two years old. The family resides in Chesterfield Township, where Alison is a professional nanny. Brooklyn's grandfather is **Bob Thering '76**; great grandfather is **Russell Thering '38**.

# **Class Notes**

**2015—Riley Terwilliger Fletcher** and her husband Nick welcomed their first child, a son named Thomas Kyle, on April 7, 2023. Riley works with her husband at his State Farm Insurance Agency in Bay City. The family resides in Essexville, Michigan.

#### Please! Send your news to alumni@sha.net

#### Sr. Josine dies at 91

Sr. Josine was born Mary Agnes Schafer on March 19, 1932, in Weidman, Michigan.

Mary Agnes attended St. Philomena School in Beal City, where the Grand Rapids Dominicans were her teachers. From the first time she met the Sisters she wanted to be like them. After graduating from Marywood Academy, Mary Agnes entered the congregation as a postulant, June 17, 1951. At reception, she was given the name Sister Josine of Our Lady of Sorrows, which she kept for the rest of her life.

Her profession included the assignment to teach 3rd and 4th grades at St. Anthony School, Grand Rapids. Next, she taught the elementary grades at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Chesaning; St. Joseph, Wright; St. Mary, Lake Leelanau; St. Mary, Gaylord; and St. Mary, Charlevoix. In both Lake Leelanau and Charlevoix, Sr. Josine served as principal. Her last 30 years as a teacher were at Sacred Heart Academy in Mt. Pleasant, where she became something of a legend for her steadfast kindness and quiet ways.



**SR. JOSINE SCHAFER** 

Entered eternal life on July 31, 2023 at the age of 91 after 71 years of religious life

Sister Josine earned a BA from Aquinas College in 1964, a certificate in Theology from the Aquinas College Institute of Theology, Saginaw in 1967 and an MA in School Administration from Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant in 1974.

Quiet and unassuming, Sr. Josine was an efficient and well-loved 2nd grade teacher. "I enjoyed my teaching of the little ones. Working with the slow learner is as much of a challenge as working with the genius." She was an excellent teacher, with unlimited patience. She liked to try new things. When her young students were responsible for planning the school liturgy, she taught them to recite the first reading from memory. The class left their seats, walked to the front of the church, stood on the steps, and recited their piece, returning to their seats quietly. Years later, those same students recalled the event with pride.

In 2002, Sisters Josine, Josephine Mary Birchmeier, and Thaddeus Kowalinski were honorary hosts at a Gala where Sacred Heart Academy honored the hundreds of Dominican Sisters who had served there for 113 years. At that time, Sr. Josine said she never did anything special, "just got up, went to work and tried to do what I could."



#### ALUMNI SACRED NEWS

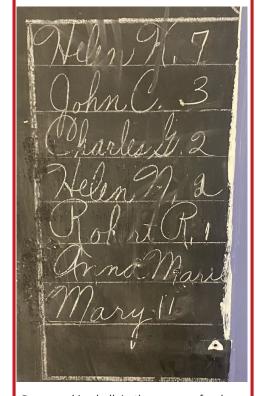
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#### Alumni News For:





## Found!



Preserved in chalk in the corner of a classroom chalkboard, this list was found underneath a bulletin board in the 1906 (original) section of the Academy this summer. School employees estimate the list is from the early 1900s. Reach out to alumni@sha.net if you have any clues!

### 100 Years of Top Performances

#### Athletic records available online

Sacred Heart celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> year of football during all home games last fall. Although information is sketchy about those early years, all available football data reported over the past century has been recorded in digital files and is available for review on www.academy.sha.net/athletics/athletic-records under the Football Season and Game Summaries section.

All the information presented on the athletic records site is the result of years of research beginning in 1965 with efforts to establish basketball records from old scorebooks stored in the gym office at school. In the decades that followed, basketball research expanded and other sports have been researched through season summary statistic

sheets, scorebooks, and newspapers. In fact, anywhere available data could be found!

Some information is likely lost forever, and the site will always be considered "under construction" with the hope that a news report in some newspaper back room or a scrap book will turn up to fill in more of the blanks. Even though information may be missing, the records listed on the site can certainly be considered "Top Performances".

Check the site to see where you—or a sibling, parent, grandparent, or great grandparent—might show up in SHA athletic history.

As you review, please feel free to submit any corrections you may have to <a href="mailto:alumni@sha.net">alumni@sha.net</a> for review and verification.

Special thanks to Earl Hartman '66 for all his efforts!