Marian Catholic ALLIMINI ASSOCIATION

FEBRUARY 2024

2020 MARIAN CATHOLIC GRAD TO ASSIST CATHOLIC EDUCATION THROUGH FELLOWSHIP AT UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

For **Thomas Betterly**, the University of Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) is the perfect situation for him to continue his lifelong desire to help others to become enriched by a Catholic education like the one he received at Marian Catholic High School.

The Hazleton resident's ACE Fellowship Award will afford him the opportunity to mentor children in under-resourced Catholic schools while earning a cost-free Master of Education degree at the South Bend (IN) university.

Betterly, a 2020 Marian Catholic graduate, is set to graduate in May with a bachelor's degree in Mathematics – Secondary Education from St. Joseph University, the Jesuit institution in Philadelphia whose mission is one of service and social justice.

A look at Betterly's high school and undergraduate endeavors attests to one of the reasons Notre Dame assumingly accepted him with open arms.

About his Marian days

"My Marian education helped to set the framework for the work I accomplished at



St. Joe's," Betterly said, pointing out his involvement in activities at the Philly campus were similar to those he engaged in at Marian. He said opportunities to "be involved" at Marian Catholic included extracurricular activities such as the school's Rock Music Ministry, Student Council and Campus Ministry, which he said, "I have a passion for."

He added, "I think my work with clubs like the Future Business Leaders of America

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DEAR MARIAN CATHOLIC FAMILY & FRIENDS:

We can hardly believe that we are already half way through the 2023-2024 school year! We recently wrapped up the second academic quarter and, again, we have so much to be grateful for and proud of here at Marian Catholic High School. Our students, athletes, faculty and staff continue to do incredible things worth celebrating every day. Please enjoy this snapshot of the great things happening here over the past few months!

Our **Marian Mentors** students visited St. Jerome's Regional School and Holy Family School. The Marian students spent time with our future Colts & Fillies, teaching Bible lessons, doing crafts, and reading stories.

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2020 MARIAN CATHOLIC GRAD'S FELLOWSHIP AT UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

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or Student Council at Marian taught me many transferable skills, like integrity, responsibility, dedication, the importance of working with others, and the importance of serving a greater good."

A busy young man in Hometown, Betterly traveled with the cross country and track and field teams as a manager, which, he said, "allowed me to learn how to communicate with others."

He volunteered for other duties there that some might consider to be of lesser importance, such as working the scoreboard for football and basketball games. "Those," he said, "instilled in me a desire for service."

His preparation for Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science regional and state meetings "gave me the opportunity to train my mind for scientific thought," Betterly said, while helping to plan programming as a part of the Catholic Schools Week Committee "was an outlet for my collaboration between students and staff."

It's no wonder that Betterly went on to a successful and similar stint at St. Joe's.

From an academic point of view, he said, about looking back at where he started, "The academic rigor at Marian allowed me to flourish in collegiate-level courses. Opportunities to obtain Dual Enrollment and AP credits also made my course load easier once I got to SJU. I can even give credit to all of my math teachers, especially Mrs. Teresa Sheer, for helping me to uncover my passion for mathematics and for education."

Much of the same at SJU

"When contemplating which college I wanted to attend, I was inspired by the Jesuit mission of St. Joe's," Betterly said. "I wanted to work towards being a math teacher, like so many great teachers I had at Marian, as well as focusing on service to others."

"My Marian Catholic education helped to set the framework for the work I accomplished at St. Joe's. Opportunities to be involved at Marian included extracurricular activities such as the school's Rock Music Ministry, Student Council and Campus Ministry, which I have a passion for."

- THOMAS BETTERLY

Despite starting college during the pandemic, he quickly got involved into campus activities, and never looked back.

He sang in the university's Chapel Choir, served Mass, led the first-year Orientation, coordinated retreats for first-year students and upperclassmen through the Department of Campus Ministry, became a Resident Assistant, served on Student Government, and tutored fellow students in their math classes.

In the meantime, he was inducted into three Honor Societies - one for Mathematics, one for Education, and one only sponsored by Jesuit schools.

Betterly said, "While at St. Joe's, I had a number of unforgettable experiences, like a 10-day pilgrimage through Spain and Rome (I even got to see the Pope only about 10 feet away from me!), singing the national anthem and alma mater for our school ceremonies like Commencement and the President's Inauguration ceremony, meeting many inspirational donors and alumni, planning blood drives, and attending a service immersion in Kimball, W.V. over my Spring break."

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Standard Speaker Coach of the Year Coach Stan Dakosty announced his retirement after a long, successful and impactful career as the Head Colts Football Coach. Coach Billy O'Gurek, '01 was announced as the new head Colts football coach.

The Marian Catholic Relief Services & Students Against Destructive Decisions Club sponsored a "Stuff the Truck" event. Students at the school donated over 1,000 non-perishable food items to the Heartwood Day Center in Hazleton.

The Marian Catholic High School **National Honor Society,** Robert F. Kennedy Chapter, inducted 27 new members during a special Mass at the school.

Marian Catholic welcomed back 10 alumni who joined us for our annual **Rock Music Ministry Alumni** Mass.

Colts Football Players Jesse Rodino, '24, James Rodino, '24, and Michael Gelatko, '25, were awarded All State honors for their performance during the 2023 Colts football season. Bruce Hopeck, '24, was chosen as the 2024 Marian Catholic Scholar Athlete for the National Football Foundation – Schuylkill Chapter 25.

Our **Performing Arts Program** put on a wonderful Fall Performance featuring the radio play *Edgar Allan Poe: Afterlife Radio Show* written by Patrick Greene and Jason Pizzarello.

Newly-named "Coaches Court" in the John P. "Jack" Malarkey Gymnasium was dedicated during a Colts basketball game. We were thrilled to welcome past and present Colts & Fillies varsity basketball head coaches and Fillies varsity volleyball head coaches back for the special dedication ceremony honoring their coaching careers and legacies.

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While his schedules were always busy and sometimes hectic, he said, "I am grateful to the school for providing me the opportunities to broaden my horizons and perspectives. I have forged bonds and friendships with many classmates, professors and staff members that have definitely changed the trajectory of my life. SJU's commitment to social justice and service is admirable, and I can only hope that my service as a teacher can help to repay that."

Fellowship is next

This summer, Betterly will begin his fellowship at Notre Dame, taking courses towards his master's degree, and will eventually be assigned duties at an under-resourced Catholic school in an urban setting yet to be determined.

"I owe a lot to Marian Catholic and to St. Joe's. Because of those schools, I have so much to look forward to, most importantly, for me, the opportunity to help make a difference in the lives of children and the community where I will be assigned."

- THOMAS BETTERLY

According to Notre Dame's ACE website, fellows like Betterly and others accepted to that program will help "sustain and strengthen under-resourced Catholic schools through leadership formation, research and professional service to ensure that all children, especially those from low-income families, have the opportunity to experience the gift of an excellent Catholic education."

As Catholic school educators, ACE teachers will "have the opportunity to form and guide their students in their faith lives, which in turn will shape their own," the site says.

Betterly is looking forward to personal spiritual growth that will include retreats, liturgies and prayer services on the ND campus, as well as classes that will help them prepare to serve as a spiritual resource for the students they will mentor.

In addition to the experience of teaching and mentoring, ACE teachers will receive a rigorous and competitive graduate fellowship culminating with a cost-free Master of Education degree from the university; obtain a teaching license in Indiana that has reciprocity with 46 states; earn a stipend of about \$13,200 a year and affordable housing arranged by ACE in the (arch)diocese in which an ACE teacher serves; be eligible for loan deferment; have the support of an academic supervisor, a pastoral administrator and a community with whom the teacher lives; and will have deepened their faith in preparation of being a spiritual leader in their school.

The opportunity is one Betterly cherishes and values, as the cost of a master's degree from the university would otherwise cost in excess of \$62,000, not counting living expenses.

"I owe a lot to Marian and I owe a lot to St. Joe's," he said. "Because of them, I have so much to look forward to, most importantly, for me, the opportunity to help make a difference in the lives of children and the community where I will be assigned."

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In its third season, under the direction of Coach Andrea Feathers, the Marian Swimming Program fielded both a boys and girls team for the first time ever. Both the boys and girls swimming team earned their first team meet win in school history during the month of December.



Senior **Carly Minchhoff, '24,** became the newest Fillies' basketball player to join the 1000-point club during a home game versus Schuylkill Haven in January.

These successes are just a snapshot of the wonderful and exciting things happening at our school. The forward momentum of Marian Catholic and the opportunities the school offers to our students wouldn't be possible without the support and generosity of our family, friends and donors.

Thank you for all the ways you help to make Marian Catholic High School the type of community that allows our students to thrive – spiritually, academically, socially and athletically.

With Gratitude, Dr. Erin Marek, Director of Advancement



COACH DAKOSTY CLOSES DOOR ON 44-YEAR CAREER AT HELM OF COLT GRIDDERS

With the close of the 2023 gridiron season in which his team finished 7-5 and as the District 11 runner-up and silver medal winners, **Stan Dakosty's** tenure as head football coach at Marian High came to an end.

Coach Dakosty tendered his retirement to Head of School Michael Brennan late last year after the season ended, but not without leaving his program on solid footing and once again among the region's top small school programs after a resurrection over the past few years.

Coach returned to the Marian sidelines in 2020, three years after he initially entered retirement from the position. He finished up not only with a rebuilt program, but with an overall record of 326-177-3 in 44 seasons, the win total being the most ever by a coach in District 11 history. He took over as the Colts' boss in 1977 and compiled a 310-152-3 record in 40 seasons before originally retiring after the 2016 season.

To say his career has been legendary is putting it mild, as under his guidance the Colts captured the 1990 PIAA Class A state title with a victory over Farrell; reached the Eastern final three other times (1993, 1998, 2000), won seven District 11 titles (1985, '89, '93, '98, '00, '07, '15), reached the District 11 title game six other times, won four Eastern Conference crowns (1980, <86, '92, '13) and played in 47 playoff games.

Under Dakosty, Marian went 13-0 in 1986, had a 25-game winning streak from 1985-87 and had 36 seasons with a .500 record or better. He was named the 1990 Associated Press Coach of the Year, was the head coach of the Pennsylvania squad in the 1992 Big 33 Game and is a past president of the Pennsylvania Scholastic Football Coaches Association.

BILLY O'GUREK USHERED IN AS MARIAN'S NINTH GRID MENTOR

Billy O'Gurek, a 2001 graduate of Marian and member of the Colts' 1998 and 2000 District 11 Class AA championship teams, was officially ushered in as Marian's ninth head football coach earlier this school year, taking over the helm from Stan Dakosty, who retired after 44 years on the job but not before leading the Colts' resurgence among area grid programs.

O'Gurek, who was Dakosty's assistant and right hand man during the legendary coach's return to the program in 2020, was the recommendation of Dakosty and gained overwhelming support from Head of School Michael Brennan when he was formally introduced on Dec. 11.



Before he was introduced to the news media, O'Gurek was greeted by members of the 2023 Colt team, who gave him a rousing round of applause in the school's gymnasium.

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to lead the program going forward," O'Gurek said at a press conference held in the school cafeteria, adding, "It's pretty special. I told our kids upstairs, this was a wanted position ... wanted because of our kids, the effort they put on the field this season and the potential they've shown. I'm excited about the opportunity and I'm excited about the future of Marian football. I can't wait to get started with the guys."

Brennan said 12 persons applied for the position, but O'Gurek's selection came down to "hiring someone from the Marian family, someone whom the players, students and school community was familiar with," saying that was a key characteristic that separated O'Gurek from the rest of the field.

The principal said, "We've preached for a long time that family, faith and our tradition is so important to us here at Marian.

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BILLY O'GUREK USHERED IN AS MARIAN'S NINTH GRID MENTOR

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Nobody represents what it means to be Marian more than (O'Gurek)."

Brennan said, "Kids are a lot smarter than sometimes we give them credit for. They knew what we were doing Thursday, we knew what they wanted and we also knew what was best for our program. That's somebody who understands the tradition at Marian and is also a great representative of the school. We've had that for 44 years with Coach and we'll have that with Billy."

O'Gurek grew up in Summit Hill, with his next-door neighbor Joe Gillespie, a fullback/linebacker on Marian's 1990 PIAA Class A state championship team, and then went on to play four years under Dakosty as a wide receiver/defensive end. During his playing days for the Colts, he helped Marian win two district titles and reach the Eastern final both of those seasons.

The new head coach said the Colts have 32-33 underclassmen players who will be

back for next season, plus whatever freshmen join the program next fall.

About his successor, Dakosty said, "I feel like a proud football parent today. Billy played for me, we coached together. He's definitely the right guy for the job. He bleeds blue and gold. The reception he got from our players when his name was called was heartwarming."

O'Gurek, meanwhile, said, "I couldn't have asked for a better friend and mentor the past four seasons than Coach Dakosty. He exposed me to anything and everything that could happen in a football program, on and off the field. It was like a four-year master class in football leadership and I will forever be grateful to him for the opportunity. I am excited that he will still be a presence around our football program at our summer youth camp, practices, and games, and I know that whenever I need advice or his opinion he will be close by. I'm also excited that our entire coaching staff from last season will be returning for next vear."



MARIAN HEAD FOOTBALL COACHES:

Joe Rilo - 1954 Wink Gallagher - 1955-64

Jack Malarkey – 1965-69

Joe Leonzi - 1970-71

Joe Bressi - 1972-73

Chuck Rocconi - 1974-76

Stan Dakosty – 1977-2016; 2019-2022

Pat Morgans - 2017-2019

Billy O'Gurek - 2023 - ____

MARIAN NAMES CURRIE NEW VOLLEYBALL COACH



Marian Catholic High School welcomed its new Head Volleyball Coach, **Maria Currie**, earlier this month. She succeeds Maria (Poluka) Serina at the helm of the highly-successful program.

Currie is a 1999 graduate of Marian Catholic and a 2003 graduate of Kutztown University with a BS in Psychology. She is mom to Julius, a senior at Marian and JoElle, a 7th grader at St. Jerome Regional School.

Maria served as an assistant coach with the Marian program for over 20 years, coaching alongside her father, Doc Fallabel, and many other talented alumni who gave back to the program by coaching and bringing home numerous league, district and state championships.

Introduced by Head of School Michael Brennan, Maria said her focus will be "to create and cultivate a positive, goal-oriented program that highlights a culture that nourishes an all-around student athlete."

She added, "I not only focus on creating a team to win, but in shaping young adults in their physical, mental and spiritual health and well-being. I am thrilled to be here and have this opportunity! It was exciting to meet the team and to see some familiar faces. Marian Catholic volleyball has always been a big family on and off the court, and I'm excited to bring the traditions back. We're ready to hit the ground running."



'MR. MARIAN' CELEBRATES 90TH BIRTHDAY WITH COLT GRIDDERS, COACHES

Former Marian Principal **Jack Malarkey**, known to all of us as "Mr.
Marian," celebrated his 90th birthday on Nov. 3.

He was welcomed for a visit in his beloved Colt Country by members of the 2023 Colt football team and Coach Stan Dakosty and his assistants, who presented him a Marian jacket.

Malarkey, who coached the Colts from 1965-69, briefly addressed members of the Colt team.



'68 MARIAN GRADUATE HONORED FOR OVER A HALF CENTURY OF TEACHING IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

St. Jerome Regional School, Hometown, recently honored **Alice (Yacobenas) Miller,** MCHS Class of 1968, for having taught in Catholic schools for 51 years, including the past half century at its school, naming the circular driveway in front of the Hometown school "Alice Miller Circle."

Principal Amy Hannis-Miskar referred to Miller as "a living legend among us," and the "heart and soul" of the school following a Mass celebrating Catholic Schools Week and honoring Miller.

"Mrs. Miller, as we gather here today, we want to express our deepest gratitude for

your 50 years of service at St. Jerome," she said, calling her an inspiration for countless individuals who have known her.

"In celebrating your milestone, we are reminded of the profound difference one person can make in the lives of many," Hannis-Miskar said. "Your legacy is etched in the hearts of those you've taught, and your influence will continue to shape the future of St. Jerome Regional School for generations to come."

We featured Alice in our November edition of the Marian Alumni news. It is available on our website.



Alice Miller, Class of '68, holds a street sign bearing her name. The teacher at St. Jerome Regional School in Hometown was honored for her 50 years of teaching with the dedication of circular driveway in front of the school in her name. Standing from left, are Dr. Michael St. Pierre, superintendent of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Allentown; Miller, and Amy Hannis-Miskar, school principal.

'01 GRADUATE IS LIEUTENANT COLONEL

A 2001 graduate of Marian Catholic High School has attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army. He is **Joshua M. McCullion**, a Summit Hill native.

Lt. Col. McCullion is the commander of Space Forces Korea, responsible for coordination of coalition space operations and integration in support of the ROK-US Combined Forces Command and U.S. Forces Korea.

Lt. Col. McCullion, a 2006 graduate of the University of Pittsburgh with a degree in environmental sciences, has served in various assignments within Air Force Space Command, Air Education and Training Command, and Air Combat Command.

He is a graduate of the USAFWS (328 WPS) and has supported numerous commands, including U.S. Central

Command, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, and U.S. Forces Korea as a Space Weapons Officer and non-kinetics operational planner. He has held numerous squadron-level posts within the space career fields including instructor, flight commander, weapons officer and operations officer positions.

The lieutenant colonel completed the following studies: 2007, Officer Space 100, Vandenberg AFB, CA; 2010, Air and Space Basic Course, Maxwell AFB, AL; 2011, Basic Instructor Course, Vandenberg AFB; and Squadron Officer School; 2013, Squadron Officer School, Maxwell AFB; 2014, U.S. Air Force Weapons School, Nellis AFB, NV; 2015, Air Command and Staff College; 2016, M.S. Computer Network Operations and Leadership, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh; and 2020,



Leader Development Course for Squadron Command, Air University, Maxwell AFB.

He is married to the former Mandi J. Garrett of Freeport, Florida. They have a son, Eagan, and a daughter, Kiera.

YOUR TAX DOLLARS CAN BE DESIGNATED FOR MARIAN

By Dr. Erin Marek, Director of Advancement

As you prepare to sit with your tax professional in the coming weeks, I encourage you to take this information with you to facilitate a discussion on how a gift to Marian Catholic High School could have tax benefits for you or your business! These are incredible opportunities to maximize your giving potential to Marian Catholic while also receiving tax benefits for yourself or your business!

Do you have an IRA and are you over the age of 70?

If you answered "yes" to both of these questions, you are nearing or at the age where you will need to take a yearly Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your IRA. If you decide to gift that RMD to Marian Catholic High School as a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) the amount of that RMD does not count

toward your total taxable income for the year.

Do you live/work in Pennsylvania or own a business based in Pennsylvania and pay a minimum of \$5,000.00 in Pennsylvania State Income Taxes per year?

If you answered "yes" to both of these questions, you would likely be eligible to participate in the Pennsylvania State Tax Credit Program, which allows you the choice to allocate your tax dollars directly to Marian Catholic to use for financial aid scholarships for our students. What a special opportunity to be able to see your tax dollars at work right at Marian by making a difference for our students! With a two-year commitment to the program, you would receive a tax credit for 90% of your gift to Marian made through this program.

The Pennsylvania State Tax
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the choice to allocate your
tax dollars directly to Marian
Catholic to use for financial
aid scholarships for students.
This is a special opportunity
to see your tax dollars at
work at Marian and make a
difference for our students!

Please consult with your tax professional. For more information on any of these programs, please contact Dr. Erin Marek, Director of Advancement at emarek@mariancatholichs.org or 570-467-3335, ext. 115.



'71 GRADS REMEMBER **CLASSMATE**

Members of the Class of 1971, who meet on the first Thursday of each month for lunch and to reunite, attended the funeral of classmate Michael O'Malley recently. They included, front, from left, Susan Evans Baddick, Thomas Solski, Diane Yuskaushas Macchiano. Joanna Camaioni Everett and Maureen Williams Hirochek; second row, Linda Barnisky Ormsby, Sharon Knipper Kracum, Gene Lienhard and Donna McNealis Hisney; and standing, Nancy Sharaka, Petritsch, Ron Blickley, Leo O'Donnell, Carol Ceci Gould, Judy Kupec Jacobs, Maryellen Dalinsky Boyle, Jack Boyle and Michael Maletta.

SAVE THE DATE

2024 Blue & Gold Club **Golf Classic** July 29, 2024!

IN MEMORIAM...

Marian Catholic alumni and friends are asked to keep in their thoughts and prayers the families of the following:

Michael Baddick, 74, Brockton, Class of 1967, Dec. 7, 2023.

Richard Balliet, 43, Lakeland, FL, Class of 1998, Dec. 31, 2023.

Frank Besek, Sunbury, Class of 1969, Jan. 6, 2024.

Robert Bonner, 77, Lake Harmony, Class of 1964, Dec. 17, 2023.

Leonard Brylewski, 87, Mahanoy City, Marian teacher/coach, Jan. 8, 2024.

Brandon R. Cann, 22, of Beaver Meadows, Class of 2019, Oct. 23, 2023.

Jane Engler, Esq., 80, Jim Thorpe, Class of 1961, Dec. 18, 2023.

Nicholas J. Erbe, 25, Tresckow, Class of 2017, Nov. 4, 2023.

Vincent J. Labert, 85, of McAdoo, Marian parent, Jan. 13, 2024.

Mrs. Patricia Ann (Weicker) LaSota, 73, McAdoo, Class of 1968, Dec. 18, 2023.

Michael A. Mazur, 73, Hometown, Class of 1968, Dec. 24, 2023.

Mrs. Sandra (Dunn) McGlinchey, 81, Tamaqua, Marian student, Jan. 30, 2024.

Dr. John H. Nicholson, D.O., 82, of Palmerton, Class of 1959, Jan. 18, 2024.

Michael J. O'Malley III, 70, Rush Township, Tamagua, Class of 1971, Jan. 26, 2024.

Mrs. Clare N. Ritz, 75, Tresckow, Marian parent, Jan. 30, 2024.

Cecilia M. (Sweeney) Scherer, 77, of Mahanoy City, Class of 1964, Nov. 8, 2023.

Sonya Smell, 86, Lansford, Marian parent, Dec. 14, 2023.

Madeline A. Trakes, Mahanoy City, Marian parent, Jan. 24, 2024.

John Teprovich, 70, of McAdoo, Class of 1971, Oct. 22, 2023.

Richele A. Vitek, 56, of Sugarloaf Township, Class of 1985, Aug. 23, 2023.

Anna Marie (Soley) Wester, 76, Lansford/Rochester Hills, MI, Class of 1964, Aug. 13, 2023.

Anne H. Zeplin (McGroarty), 83, Tamaqua, Class of 1958, Dec. 29, 2023.

2023-2024 MARIAN FUND

The 2023-2024 school year is upon us, and so too, is the 2023-2024 Marian Fund efforts. This year the efforts are being co-chaired by Joan Demetriades '69 and Fr. Eugene Ritz '00. The Marian Fund is the lifeline of our school, helping offset the difference in tuition income and the actual cost to educate each student.

Marian Catholic has had an exciting increase in enrollment, with a nearly 14% increase since the previous school year. This growth, while a testament to our recent successes as a school, also brings increased responsibilities and financial demands. Please consider supporting the Marian Fund this year to directly impact the lives of our students by providing them with the tools they need to flourish academically, spiritually and personally.

SHARE YOUR NEWS WITH US

Our alumni are important to us – we want to know how you are doing! Share any important news or updates from our Marian Catholic alumni that occurred throughout the year by emailing us at alumni@mariancatholichs.org.











