

# Marian Catholic ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



**FEBRUARY 2021**

## **MARIAN STANDS TO SEE \$100,000 HIKE IN ANNUAL FUND**

"A New Donor Challenge" to Marian Catholic High School and its supporters has been announced by the school, which stands to gain \$100,000 for use in The Marian Fund that assists the school in its annual operations.

Kristine Evina, Director of Advancement at the Hometown school, said the special program will run through June 30, which is the end of the 2020-2021 school year.

"We have been blessed with an anonymous donor who will match up to \$50,000 for all new donations that we receive in the next few months," she said.

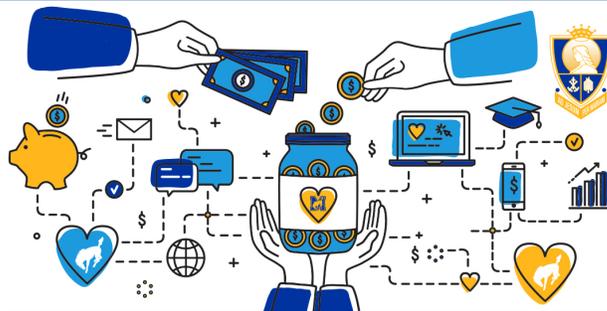
"This is a wonderful opportunity for us to receive a substantial boost in our annual Marian Fund revenue," she said, adding "It is also a chance for new donors to double the impact of their donation to the school."

Evina said the school respects the wishes of the anonymous donor but commented on their gesture, saying, "The donor is deeply committed to Marian Catholic High School and has shown that by their generosity in donating up to \$50,000. Obviously, the donor would want others to show a similar dedication and commitment to Catholic education by making any size donation toward the challenge."

Evina said donations to The Marian Fund come on a daily basis, acknowledging some may have been delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic and the effect it has had on families. "Some members of the Marian family, and especially alumni, have indicated they are just getting around to sending in their donations. We want them to know we appreciate all of them."

The tax-deductible gifts to the Marian Fund will help narrow the gap between tuition revenue and actual cost to educate each student; promote an environment of academic and extracurricular excellence; sustain necessary facility

### **MARIAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL NEW DONOR CHALLENGE!**



**We have been blessed with an anonymous donor who will match**

# **\$50,000**

**FOR ALL NEW DONATIONS TO THE MARIAN FUND!**

management and updates approved by the board of directors; help attract the most qualified and distinguished faculty and staff; and offer state-of-the-art technology for optimal learning.

If you have not taken the time to be among the dedicated donors to Marian, now is the time to do so, and by making a donation, you will be doubling it with the match. To donate, visit the school's website, <http://weblink.donorperfect.com/MarianFund>.

For additional information, contact Evina at [kevina@mariancatholic.org](mailto:kevina@mariancatholic.org) or 570-467-3335, extension 115.

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

By Bill O'Gurek

It was August of 1964, and, according to reports of the Times News, an estimated 8,000 persons watched as the Most Rev. Joseph McShea, D.D., then the Bishop of Allentown, trekked around the exterior and interior of a brand new Marian High School, sprinkling it with holy water and blessing the facility.

The titular head of the Roman Catholic Diocese verbally dedicated the \$1.6-million building to an aggressive upholding of the ideals of parochial education.

When I read that report recently, it verified my belief about the Catholic education we offer here at Marian, because the premise of the dedication then is the very same one that we who promote Catholic education still believe in today, and always will.

To be clear, Bishop McShea reminded the visitors in Hometown, "Catholic education is not in competition or in an 'unwholesome rivalry' with public education, but that the two are 'partners in education,'" a truism, I thought, that often escapes the judgment of some people.

But, more importantly, the bishop spoke about the many sacrifices made by hundreds of people during a campaign launched by the diocese two years prior. That campaign resulted in the construction of Marian, among other Catholic high schools in the five-county diocese, St. Francis de Sales College and an addition to Notre Dame High School in Green Pond.

"This magnificent new building will produce good citizens for our country, loyal members of the church, and, we hope, many priests and sisters to serve the church," the bishop stated.

He cited the "sacrifices that you good people have so generously made in making the school a reality."

Before closing, he assured, "We don't intend to abandon one iota of Catholic education."

And so, the comments then made me think about the generation before us whose families, while not being wealthy, helped shape the future of Catholic education and made Marian what it is today. Monetary donations that helped purchase the school – everything from desks to blackboards to essentials – made that day in August almost 57 years ago a proud day for thousands of people.

Today, the facility stands prominent at 166 Marian Avenue, having been refurbished through the years with major improvements and state-of-the-art renovations that are essential to a quality education in this day and age.

As alumni members, we are thankful for those who preceded us in providing for the 750 students who were enrolled at Marian back then, in the words of Bishop McShea, "everything that a high school possibly needs."

But, more importantly, we encourage those who benefitted from that generosity to help us provide for the next generation what those families provided for us.

I am reminded of these important words in a Marian yearbook from decades ago, "Marian is ready and anxious to point out the way, to instruct, to guide me, to bring me to the brink of adulthood, to send me out to the world well equipped, as I've been told on myriad occasions by our principal ... "knowing how to make a living, and even more important, knowing how to live."

To all Marian alumni, simply, we ask, "Won't you join us?"

*Bill O'Gurek, Class of '73, is chairman of the Marian Alumni Association. Comments and questions are welcomed at [alumni@mariancatholic.org](mailto:alumni@mariancatholic.org).*



### PROMOTED AT CONESTOGA VALLEY

David Dunsavage, a member of the MCHS Class of 2002, has been named the newest assistant principal at Conestoga Valley High School.

"We are proud to welcome Mr. Dunsavage to the CV community," Conestoga Valley Superintendent Dr. Dave Zuilkoski said. "He brings a boundless energy, a focus on relationships, a keen understanding of trauma informed practices, and the ability to make a positive difference in the lives of everyone he meets. We look forward to the seeing the impact he makes with the students and staff of the high school."

After graduating from Marian, David earned a B.S. of Citizenship Education from Elizabethtown College and received his Master of Education degree in Teaching and Curriculum Educational Leadership from Penn State University. He also holds a PA Administrative I PK-12 Principal certificate.

## MOSAIC IS A STEADY REMINDER OF HER PRESENCE



The mosaic of the Blessed Mother, Mary, has been a prominent fixture on the stage on the Jack Malarkey Gymnasium at Marian Catholic High School for over 56 years.

People marvel about the beautiful masterpiece that allows the Blessed Mother to overlook

all events and activities that take place here, reminding visitors to our school of her special presence - Ad Jesum Per Mariam – To Jesus, Through Mary.

In the recent planning for the gymnasium and stage renovations, the subject of the mosaic and its origin was brought to light.

Reports are the mosaic was created by members of the Class of 1965 in year the school opened, under the direction of the Rev. Nicholas P. Troccola, vice principal and resident at St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church, Coaldale, at the time.

Jim Sauka of Nesquehoning, a member of the Class of '66, offered his recollection of the mosaic's origin, noting the artwork is made from pieces of soda, beer, wine and any other kind of bottles broken into pieces to and assembled. It is believed an Art Club headed by Father Troccola oversaw the project.

We'd like to hear your version of the mosaic's origin. Write us at [alumni@mariancatholichs.org](mailto:alumni@mariancatholichs.org). We'd like to share your information with others.

## MARIAN GRAD HAS NOT FORGOTTEN HER ROOTS



Abby Pilla, a 2016 graduate of MCHS, spent the Fall as a Performance Nutrition Chef at the University of South Carolina. She graduated from Johnson & Wales college, Providence, R.I., majoring in culinary nutrition.

In her interesting stint at SC, Abby worked under Kristin

Coggin, Football Nutrition/Director of Performance Nutrition, where her responsibilities included creating and executing cooking demonstrations, live action stations, and daily food prep along with quality control.

She assisted in daily nutrition operations and catering events for football and Olympic sports, as well as preparing NCAA compliant meals for Division I football players and designing pre- and post-workout products for student athletes.

Loyal to her Alma Mater here, Abby has used her experience to help student/athletes in Hometown.

"When I got into college, I still remained connected to some of the coaches at Marian," she said. "When they heard that I was studying culinary nutrition and interested in the sports aspect of that, coach (Stan) Dakosty asked me to write a nutrition manual for the team. So I was able to work on that this summer, and I also made one for the volleyball team.

"So that was a big thing for me that kind of said this is where I'm supposed to be and I'm in the right spot with my career, and giving back to my alma mater means more to me than anything."

Abby is the daughter of Joe and Louise Pilla of Lake Hauto.

## YOU CAN DESIGNATE YOUR TAX DOLLARS TO MARIAN

Have you heard the news?

You can designate your PA state taxes to Marian Catholic!

If you, your friends or your family members own a business in Pennsylvania – or are a Pennsylvania taxpayer – you can help build a brighter future for deserving students at Marian Catholic High School.

This year, over 60% of our students received tuition assistance through the PA tax credit program.

By participating in this amazing program, you can make a Marian Catholic education possible for our students next year and for years to come. PLUS...The Allentown Diocese has made the process simple, quick, and easy! Please hurry, the deadline is mid March.

Please contact Kristine Evina, MCHS Director of Advancement, TODAY at [kevina@mariancatholic.org](mailto:kevina@mariancatholic.org) or call 570-467-3335, ext 115, for more information.

**IN MEMORIAM**

**Margaret M. Bonner:** 98, formerly of Coaldale, died Dec. 25, 2020. Born in Coaldale, she was a daughter of the late Peter and Anna (McGeehan) Bonner. She was the last living member of the Class of 1941 of the former St. Mary's High School, Coaldale, and retired from Marian High School, where she was a member of the clerical staff.

**Mrs. Elaine F. Bove:** 66, Tamaqua, Dec. 29, 2020. Wife of Joseph Bove. Born in Tamaqua, she was a daughter of the late John and Jean (Zapotoczny) Fiderack. Graduated in 1972 from Marian Catholic High School. Mother of Anthony, and his wife, Kelly, of Slatington, and Justin, and his wife, Natasha, of Tamaqua. Sister of Joann Nalesnick of Hometown and Pat Cipko.

**Mrs. Mary M. Gabovitz:** 74, Northampton, Jan. 25, 2021. Wife of James A. Gabovitz. Born in Coaldale, she was a daughter of the late James L. and Dorothy (Oswald) Gallagher. Graduated from Marian Catholic High School. Mother of Joseph, and his wife, Janet Tashner, and Andrew. Predeceased by a brother Donald and a sister, Graceanne Janis.

**Roseann Marie (Laughlin) Heffner,** 63, Orwigsburg, died on Dec. 27, 2020. The wife of Keith A. Heffner, she was a 1975 graduate of Marian Catholic High School.

**Mrs. Irene B. Ligenza:** 90, formerly of Lansford, died in Jan. 25, 2021. She was the widow of Silvester J. Ligenza. She graduated from the former St. Ann's High School, Lansford. She is survived by a son Thaddeus and three daughters, Marian, wife of Mark Karoly, Roseann, wife of Joseph Bevich, and Louise, wife of Joseph Pilla.

**John C. Majez:** 93, Summit Hill, died Jan. 19, 2021. He was the husband of the late Jean (Choppe) Majez. He was an avid Marian High School sports fan, especially football, having attended 30 years of games. Surviving are three daughters, Carol ('73), wife of John Ginster, Valerie, wife of Jack Russotti, and Jackie, wife of Mark Lopata. Jackie is the alumni association's Class of '81 representative.

**Joseph A. Meier:** 68, Weatherly, died on Jan. 8, 2021. The husband of Sherry A. (Miller) Meier, he was a 1970 graduate of Marian Catholic High School.

**Ronald J. Meleski:** 69, McAdoo, died on Dec. 31, 2020. He was a 1969 graduate of Marian Catholic High School.

**Nancy (Boyle) Press,** MCHS Class of '66, passed away on Dec. 17, 2020. She was the wife of Khushrow Press and a daughter of the late Joseph and Mary and the mother of Kersi Press and his spouse, Michael Cirangle, and Joseph Press, and his fiancée Tess Shiras.

**Geraldine L. Scully:** 88, Mahanoy City, died on Jan. 3, 2021. The wife of John D. Scully, among her survivors are a daughter Geraldine, wife of Tom Andregic of Camp Hill, who graduated in 1975 and 1969, respectively, from MCHS.

**Thomas F. Sheehan:** 70, Jim Thorpe, died on Jan. 5, 2021. He was the husband of Anita (Strubinger) Sheehan. Tom coached the Colts' basketball teams for three seasons (1976-79), compiling a record of 52-29.

**Paul A. Stack:** 69, West Hazleton, died on Jan. 20, 2021. He was the companion of Cheryl Sabol and the father of Paul, and his wife, Melissa, and Elizabeth. Paul graduated in 1999 from MCHS and earned a football scholarship to Lafayette College.

***We know our alumni are proud about the education they received at Marian Catholic!***

Join our Alumni Association today for a nominal membership fee of \$10 per year. In an era when Catholic schools are facing continuous challenges that have prompted many to close their doors, our alumni strive to be there for the next generation and for years to come. If each of us can do just a little, together we can do great things for our Alma Mater! Go [www.mariancatholics.org](http://www.mariancatholics.org) and click on "Alumni" and "Join" to become a member today!



[WWW.MARIANCATHOLICS.ORG](http://WWW.MARIANCATHOLICS.ORG)



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