

# Marian Catholic ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



NOVEMBER 2023

## ALUMNI CELEBRATE MOST SUCCESSFUL HOMECOMING IN YEARS

Dear Marian Catholic Alumni,

God blessed us with a perfect day to gather together at our Marian Catholic Homecoming. And to cap it off with a Colts' victory truly made it a wonderful day! If you were not able to make it, we missed you and hope you can attend next year!

At my one-year anniversary at Marian Catholic, Homecoming weekend truly was the best way to celebrate! Seeing so many of you having such a great time together absolutely made my day. I cannot wait to do it again for Homecoming 2024!

We are hoping that you had such a nice time that you will join us again next year! If you have any comments to offer as to what we could do next year to make the event even better for your family and friends, or to attract more of our alumni to attend, I welcome that feedback!

If your classmates tell you they did not know about the event, please encourage them to follow Marian Catholic on Facebook and Instagram; and to update their contact information so that they do not miss important events and communication from myself and Mr. Brennan.

Thank you again for being part of what hopefully becomes a special annual tradition at Marian Catholic!

Kindest regards,  
Erin Marek, Director of Advancement



## '68 MARIAN GRAD CELEBRATES 50 PLUS YEARS IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION



When the school bell rang last month at St. Jerome Regional School, Hometown, the opening of the doors for **Alice Miller** marked a special occasion in her life. That's because the new school year is the 50th consecutive one that the popular teacher is embarking upon there, a milestone of great significance but, moreso, to her personally, one that offers her a special feeling.

"I still like what I do," said the former Alice Yacobenas, a Tamaqua native and a daughter of the late Isabelle (Zelonis) Yacobenas, who passed away on July 1 of this year at the age of 104, and the late Joseph Yacobenas. A resident of West Penn Township, Miller graduated from Marian Catholic High School in 1968 and Kutztown University in 1972.

While reporting to her classroom continues to give her great joy after a half century of work, Miller said, "A more driving force is when I have former students tell me what a difference I made in their scholastic lives. Also, having students ask me to write recommendations for them regarding a number of different things is very rewarding."

While her effect on former students is regularly noted, the work Miller does with her current students gives her a special feeling about teaching. And that feeling, she will tell you, has as much to do with where she teaches as much as it does with who teaches.

Miller said, "I love teaching at St. Jerome because we are like a family. The faculty, staff and administration have always worked together to maintain a quality education for all our students. The stability of our faculty has provided an environment with good communication among all of us. I feel we provide a safe, caring environment for all our students that is appreciated by our families."

Like those in her profession, Miller said she gets great satisfaction watching the young boys and girls under her watch mature, but she is even more thrilled with how the students grow spiritually. "Watching my students grow mentally, physically and socially is great, but the best part is seeing them grow spiritually," she said. "Teaching them about their faith and watching them come closer to Jesus is the most rewarding part of Catholic education. Being able to integrate Catholic values throughout the entire day gives me a feeling of deep satisfaction."

That has been the case for her since way back in 1972. She initially taught two grades (5th and 6th) in one classroom at the former Sacred Heart School, Nesquehoning, which closed after just a one-year stint.

Since then, however, St. Jerome has been Miller's home, beginning her tenure there in September, 1973. The school had been located on West Broad Street in Tamaqua until relocating to Meadow Avenue in Hometown. Miller said, "The move was very special. It enabled us to provide a quality Catholic education to many more students."

"Celebrating 100 years since our school was started was a very special year of celebration," she noted.

Through her journey, she taught third grade (eight years), fourth grade (four years) and fifth grade (two years). She spent one year as an eighth grade teacher and for the past 35 years has been the Religion, Pre-Algebra, Language Arts and Science teacher for grades seven and the Algebra 1 and Science teacher for eighth graders.

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— ALICE MILLER

In an era where less people want to teach, that certainly is not the case for Miller. "Teaching is a very rewarding experience, as you see your students grow intellectually, emotionally, physically, socially, and, most importantly teaching in a Catholic school, spiritually," she said.

"Following students through their high school years and watching the achievements they make is awesome! Meeting former students as adults and hearing how they are doing is rewarding, too. Knowing that I have made an impact on their lives is very gratifying."

Miller is the widow of Gary W. Miller and the mother of two Marian graduates, Ann Marie Polinger and Lisa Fuller, who graduated in 1999 and 2007, respectively.





## '87 GRADUATE IS PROMOTED BY PA STATE POLICE

Colonel Christopher Paris of the Pennsylvania State Police recently promoted **Monica Akins** to Troop Administrative Manager at Troop M, Bethlehem.

A native of Carbon County, Akins began her career with the Pennsylvania State Police in 2012 as a Clerk Typist 2 at Troop P, Wyoming. In March of 2013, she transferred to Troop N, Lehigh, where she served as a Clerical Assistant 2 for 10 years.

In May of 2022, she was promoted to Clerical Assistant 3 and transferred to Troop M, Bethlehem. On April 1, 2023, she was promoted to her current position. Akins is a 1987 graduate of Marian High School in Tamaqua.

## 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.

## IN MEMORIAM...

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

**Anna Wislosky Balas:** 104, formerly of Barnesville (Lakeview), passed away on October 2, 2023. The widow of John M. Balas Sr., she was the mother of Marian graduates Barbara, 1971, and Dr. John, 1978.

**Ashley F. Bassler:** 47, Middleport, Aug. 15, 2023. A daughter of Francis and Mary Jane (Kutash) Bassler of Brockton, she graduated in 1993 from Marian Catholic High School.

**Mrs. Patricia A. Black:** 86, of Nesquehoning, passed away on July 8, 2023. She was the widow of Robert Black. She was a member of the first graduating class of Marian Catholic High School in 1955.

**Bernard R. Gurka:** 69, of Mountain Top, passed away on July 12, 2023. He was the husband of Susan (Besitka) Gurka. A son of the late Adolph and Mary Ann (Stebler) Gruka, he was a 1972 graduate of the Marian Catholic High School.

**James D. Klotz:** 84, formerly of Lehigh, passed away on June 18, 2023. He and his wife, Ann Marie (Stein), are the parents of Marian graduates, Stephen D. Klotz, and his spouse, Dorothy, TX, Michael J. Klotz, and his spouse, Nancy, and James C. Klotz, and his spouse, June, and Karen M., and her spouse, Michael Didyoung.

**John William Ward:** 84, Westfield, MA, passed away on Sept. 22. A son of the late John Ward and Elizabeth (Noah) Ward, he grew up in Tamaqua with James and Emily (Ward) Knowles and the Knowles Family. He was a brother to Michael (Cathy) Ward, Jane (Joseph) Hovnanian, Jerry (Lorraine) Knowles, Donald Knowles, Ann Marie (Knowles) Price and the late George, Charles and Paul Ward and the late James Knowles Jr.

## 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@mariancatholics.org](mailto:alumni@mariancatholics.org).



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

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