

## **2009**

### **Tim Arens '65**

A radio operator and corporal in the US Army in South Vietnam, Arens died a hero October 1, 1968, when the helicopter he was riding in was shot down during a rescue mission. He earned a Bronze Star for Valor and Purple Heart for combat injuries. Awarded posthumously.

### **Patt (Giffin) Birling, '66**

Birling and her husband, Dave, were foster parents to 62 children within a 12-year period. She was director of religious education at two parishes for 25 years. In 1994, Bishop Robert Banks commissioned her as religious education leader of the Diocese of Green Bay. Calling God her "pilot in life", Patt was a champion of religious education and spent her life, resources, and energy helping people in need with little regard for her own personal wealth. Many knew her only as their "guardian angel". Awarded posthumously.

### **Robert "Rocky" Bleier '64**

An outstanding student athlete at Xavier and later as a star football player on Notre Dame's 1966 national championship football team, Bleier also fought and saved lives in the Vietnam War. He sustained a severe foot injury in 1969 that caused most people to expect him to never play football again. He was awarded the Bronze Star for heroic actions and Purple Heart for his combat injuries. After recovering from his injuries, he went on to play professional football and help the Pittsburgh Steelers win four Super Bowls. He co-wrote a book, **Fighting Back: The Rocky Bleier Story**, that chronicled his life.

### **Dr. Thomas Hooyman '74**

Hooyman earned a doctorate degree in moral theology from St. Louis University and worked as an associate professor and vice president at Regis University in Denver. He was a well-known clinical and medical ethicist and a Catholic theologian, consultant and educator. A national speaker and radio talk show host, he was promoted to head the Ethics Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee to the Director of the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta shortly before his death in 2008. Always looking out for the disadvantaged, he was planning a project to get a book in the hands of every child in Ethiopia, just days before he died. A library in Ethiopia has been built and named in his memory. Awarded posthumously.

## **2010**

### **Dr. Timothy Brown '63**

Tim Brown and his wife Sue are the proud parents of three sons and four grandchildren. He earned his Doctor of Dental Surgery from Marquette University School of Dentistry in 1969. After serving in the US

Army Dental Corps for three years, he founded “Brown Family Dentistry” where he is still practicing...38 years and counting. Brown has volunteered on dental missions to Haiti and St. Lucia and has been a longtime volunteer for the national “Give Kids a Smile” program and the WDA Donated Dental Service program.

Brown is co-founder and first president of the Tri-County Community Dental Clinic, a volunteer dental clinic in Appleton which has provided over \$9 million dollars in donated dental services on over 40,000 patient visits since the doors opened in October of 2003. Over 80 local dentists now volunteer and the clinic serves as a preceptor location for Marquette University Dental students and Fox Valley Technical College dental hygiene and assistant students. Brown has received many awards in recognition of his leadership and involvement with the clinic.

### **Michael Gregorius ‘66**

A motor vehicle operator and Lance Corporal in Service Company, Headquarters Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division in the US Marine Corps, Gregorius began his tour of duty on August 7, 1968 in Quang Nam, South Vietnam. He died on August 12, 1968 in the line of duty as a result of hostile ground fire along with two fellow Marines.

In his youth, Michael was involved in Little League, Babe Ruth League and was a member of the American Legion baseball team. He was a member of the Xavier football team and played the tuba and bass fiddle in the St. Joseph School band, the Xavier band, and the Xavier jazz band.

Michael was the president of the St. Joseph Parish Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) and a counselor at Christ Child Society Camp. He assisted Fr. Timon in the building of the Cavern Coffeehouse and worked with under-privileged residents in the area by fixing toys and delivering Christmas trees, food, fuel oil, and gifts. Awarded posthumously.

### **Maureen Riopelle ‘90**

Riopelle earned a bachelor’s degree in mass communication/marketing from St. Norbert college and began her career in medical and pharmaceutical sales. She later entered the academic publishing field which led to the start-up of her own publishing consulting company in 2003. “Riopelle Marketing”. She received numerous awards and was recognized for her work.

Riopelle is the founder and president of the Mary Maguire Foundation (MMF) established in memory of her mother, a 12-year leukemia survivor, which she began while undergoing treatment from breast cancer. MMF conducts free retreats called “From Surviving to Thriving”. Despite suffering a debilitating spinal cord injury and stroke in 2009, Riopelle continues to assist women survivors on their journey with cancer. She has been presented with a number of awards for her efforts in this field and for being a breast cancer survivor who is making a difference in the lives of others.

**2011**

## **Mark Collar '71**

Mark and his wife Mary (Wuerch) of 35 years, reside in Cincinnati, Ohio. They are the proud parents of three children, Ryan, J.D., and Caralyn. Mark graduated salutatorian of his Xavier class in 1971 and earned seven varsity letters in football, basketball, track, and golf. He was named all-conference in football and was captain of the team his senior year and he was also all-conference in basketball and captain his senior year.

Collar graduated magna cum laude from Northern Illinois University in the College of Business where he attended on a full football scholarship and received two varsity letters as a wide receiver.

Collar spent most of his career at Proctor & Gamble, one of the world's largest and most successful companies. He joined P&G in 1975 as a sales representative calling on grocery stores in Chicago. This is where he earned his "street smarts" MBA which served him well over the years. He moved up in responsibility in the sales and then advertising organizations and became a General Manager in 1987. He led teams that developed and acquired most of the brands that became the \$5 billion Health and Personal Care Division and eventually became its President and an officer of the P&G company, the position he held when he retired in 2005.

Collar's interests have now taken him into venture capital and economic development where he is a partner at Triathlon, a \$100 million firm and is Chairman of Ohio's Third Frontier Advisory Board which sets the direction for the multiple-billion dollar investments the state is making in technology-driven economic development. He also serves on several boards of directors including a large growing regional bank, and a successful biomedical company.

But his passion for the Catholic Church and young people, with a boost from the Holy Spirit, led him to an association with FOCUS, the Fellowship of Catholic University Students, which simply put is a leadership development organization which seeks to launch college students into lifelong Catholic mission, winning them over to Jesus and his Church, building them in the Catholic Faith, and sending them out to serve others. "The goal of FOCUS is to have reached and formed the equivalent of four young adults for every parish in the U.S. by the end of the decade, with the expectation young Catholics will work with (or become) pastors across the country to invigorate parish life" Mark's passion is all about servant leadership at work and his personal life as well.

## **Toni (Salm) Dillon MD '94**

Toni is the daughter of Dick and Peg Salm and has three siblings. During her years at Xavier, Toni was an exceptional student and received many awards and much recognition for her outstanding achievements. She was extremely involved in clubs, sports and music and earned numerous related honors.

Toni was also a participant in the Dominican Republic mission trip, the Wisconsin Teen Leadership Program and was selected to attend the Youth Seminar with Pope John Paul II in Denver, Colorado during her junior year.

Outside of school, Toni was a member of the Children's Ballet Theater for 12 years and she taught ballet at the local YMCA. She was also a pianist for St. John Church in Little Chute for six years and served as a representative on the parish Pastoral Youth Board. Toni also found time to serve as a St. Elizabeth Hospital volunteer.

During her senior year, Toni was unanimously selected as one of the Post-Crescent Academic All Stars plus she earned many other awards and scholarships – including the Herb Kohl Scholarship and the Harris Leadership Award, an honor presented by the National Beta Club and given to only 50 select students in the United States.

Toni attended Marquette University where she graduated cum laude in three years with a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences. She was also a member of the university band and a pianist at Gesu Catholic Church. Toni's remarkable accomplishments were again recognized in college when she received the Marquette University Leadership Award and The Outstanding Contributor to Spiritual Growth and Development Award.

Toni received a Doctor of Medicine degree from the Medical College of Wisconsin in 2001. She completed her Anesthesiology Residency in 2005, followed by a Pediatric Anesthesiology Fellowship in 2006. Throughout her medical training, Toni was very involved in medical research and received a Medical College of Wisconsin Research Fellowship in Neurology in 1998, along with noted contributions to various research publications.

Toni is currently married to Chris Dillon, a Major in the US Army, Air Force Pilot and President of Dillon Aero. Since 2006, Toni has worked as a pediatric anesthesiology partner with Valley Anesthesiology, located in Phoenix, Arizona. She also works as an anesthesia instructor for residents at the University of Arizona and the Mayo Clinic Anesthesiology Residency Program. Toni has participated in numerous medical mission trips traveling to remote areas such as central India and Belize to offer free medical services as a pediatric anesthesiologist for cleft lip/palate surgeries as well as ophthalmology and plastic surgery procedures.

Toni is also a certified scuba diver and a licensed helicopter pilot. Despite all of her tremendous success, Toni's most personal achievement is to become a cancer survivor. She was diagnosed with cancer earlier this year and has undergone 14 rounds of chemotherapy thus far. Her strength and faith have been inspirational to those around her during this time.

At just 36 years old, Dr. Toni Dillon has only just begun to touch the lives of others medically, spiritually and personally, and we are so proud to honor her as a Xavier High School alumna.

### **Rev. Thomas Long '83**

Father Tom Long, son of Tom and Kathy Long, graduated from Xavier in 1983. He shares his alma mater with his two brothers, Tim (XHS '85) and Brian (XHS '86).

While discerning God's call to priesthood at St. Francis Seminary in Milwaukee, Tom earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Philosophy at Marquette University. Chosen to study in Rome,

Tom graduated cum laude in 1990 from Gregorian University with a pontifical bachelor's degree in Sacred Theology. He obtained his Master's in Theology in 1991 while a seminarian at the North American College. While in Rome, Tom was ordained a deacon at St. Peter's Basilica.

The final step in Tom's journey was his ordination to the diocesan priesthood on July 13, 1991. What a joyous and blessed occasion for his family and the community of Xavier as Tom is the first Xavier Alumnus to become a priest. And what an example of service he has been throughout the Diocese. Fr. Tom has served as assistant pastor at St. Jude's and Nativity Parishes in Green Bay, and pastor at Holy Family Parish in Brillion, where he merged parishes and schools and led the construction of a new church. He also currently serves as Sacramental Minister at St. Thomas the Apostle in Newton.

### **Thomas Wiltzius PhD '65**

After graduating from Xavier in 1965, Tom served his country as a photo-journalist in the US Army, assigned to duty in Vietnam from September 1969 to October 1970. While in Vietnam, he earned the Bronze Star and two Army Commendation Medals. Since leaving active duty, Tom has been awarded three Army Commendation Medals as a Public Affairs Officer in the US Army Reserves.

Following his military service, Tom turned his attention to obtaining a Bachelor's degree from UW-Stout, majoring in Industrial Engineering Technology and Sociology (Dean's List). He remained at UW-Stout and received a Master's degree in Counseling in 1974. Tom used his counseling skills for over 10 years at Fox Valley Technical College, often providing pro-bono career counseling for adults in the Fox Cities area.

It was his passion for career development that led Tom to further his education at California Coast University. In 2006 he received his PhD in Psychology, completing his dissertation entitled: *Toward a Structured Model of Individual and Group Termination Planning and Implementation*. Tom had earlier established "Career Development Group, Inc", served as its CEO for 15 years, and then sold the company to *Right Management* in 2000. Since serving as senior VP at *Right Management* from 2000-2010, Tom has ventured to create Wiltzius Associates LLC.

Beyond his education and the practice of career development, Tom has partnered with other professionals as an active contributing member of several organizations including the AOCFI (Association of Career Management First International) and chaired the Ethics and Standards International Committee. As an accomplished author and sought after speaker on topics related to leadership, ethics, and career development, Tom has also interviewed for numerous local and national publications and television/radio programs, including the NY Times and Boston Public Television. Most recently, Tom has designed and introduced two new corporate assessment tools; one for leadership and one for executive team alignment and performance.

Committed to community growth, Tom co-founded the 18-county regional economic development organization, "The New North", has championed causes such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving of Outagamie County, Good shepherd Health Services, Beacon of Hope-Light of Christ, and supports the fine arts at Xavier through the establishments of the "Spark Fund".

The Xavier Alumni Hall of Fame salutes Dr. Tom Wiltzius, his wife, Betsy, and their four children, Emily (XHS '06), Anna (XHS '07), Matt (XHS '12), and Samuel (AWHS '93).

## **2012**

### **Dr. Patrick Green '76**

Dr. Patrick Green is a 1976 graduate of Xavier. Patrick was a three sport letter winner while at Xavier. After high school, Patrick attended the University of Wisconsin Madison where he earned both his bachelor's degree and PhD.

Patrick currently works at The Ohio State University where he is the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies for the College of Veterinary Medicine. He is also the Leader of the University's Comprehensive Care Center Viral Oncology Program and the Director of their Center for Retrovirus Research. Patrick's responsibilities also include being a Professor in the Departments of Veterinary Biosciences and Molecular Virology, Immunology, and Medical Genetics.

Throughout his illustrious career, Patrick has earned many significant achievements and awards. He currently serves as an Editor of the Journal of AIDS Research and Human Retroviruses and is an Editorial Board Member for the Journal of Virology, Retrovirology, Virology Research and Treatment. In 2009, Patrick was awarded The Ohio State University's Distinguished Scholar Award, which is the highest research honor at the university. In 2008 he was awarded the Charles C. Capen Teaching Excellence Award for Graduate Education. The International Retrovirology Association honored Patrick with the Award for Exceptional Contributions to the Field of HTLV and Related Viruses in 2007. In addition, he was awarded the Pfizer Award for Research Excellence in 2000.

Patrick has received the honor of being named a Fellow on several different occasions. In 2009 he was named a Fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology. In 2006 he was named a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement for Science and in 1989 was named a National Fellow for the American Cancer Society. Patrick has also been named a Leukemia Society of America Scholar. This is a particularly prestigious and highly competitive research award as only 5-10 are awarded internationally in a given year.

Outside of his work and research, Patrick and his wife Kathy have raised three children. He also devotes his time to being a speaker, donor, and participant in Pelatonia, an annual cycling fundraiser in Ohio whose goal is to end cancer. He also serves on the Board of Trustees for the Ohio Chapter of the Leukemia/Lymphoma Society.

### **Tim Higgins '68**

Tim Higgins is a member of the Xavier class of 1968. Tim was a leader while at Xavier; he was elected Governor of the Wisconsin-Upper Michigan District of the Key Clubs and Governor of the American Legion Badger Boys State. Tim attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he studied and

earned a BA in Economics. Tim continued his leadership at UW-Madison when he was first elected President of the Wisconsin Student Association and then the President of the National Student Association. Tim later continued his studies and earned a law degree from IIT Chicago Kent College of Law in 1986.

For the past three years Tim has been owner and principal of ChiRho Services. ChiRho Services is a consulting firm focused on healthcare payment reform issues and the integration of complementary and traditional medicine. Prior to that, Tim was the owner and President of Chiropractic Services Network, Inc. for 15 years. That business developed quality and patient satisfaction measurement instruments. In addition, it brought seven of the most respected chiropractic clinics in Wisconsin together to form the Wisconsin Initiative for Chiropractic Quality, an organization aimed at establishing, measuring and reporting quality and cost information. Tim's position prior to that was as the Director of Sales and Marketing for Network Health Plan. His work there increased sales to small group businesses by 100%.

Outside of work, Tim is married to his wife Jonna. Tim has also been very involved in several community endeavors. Tim has been involved with the United Way Fox Cities since 1992. He has received their "Volunteer Service Award" and has served as their Board Chair and their campaign co-chair. Tim has also been involved with the Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce and Industry since 1992. In 2011 he received their "Champion of the Chamber" award. Tim has been their Board Chair, served on their Board of Directors, and chaired and been a member of several committees there. Tim has also served on the Board of the Family Services Association of the Fox Valley, where he has been involved since 1995. In 2004 he was honored with their "Family Services Leadership Award". Tim has also been very involved with the Wisconsin Alumni Association (WAA) since 2000. He has served on their Board of Directors and served two terms on the WAA national board. Tim established a Hmong high school student scholarship and recruiting program for UW-Madison. His work with the WAA earned him the "Alumni Advocate of the Year Award" in 2005 and he was named the "WAA – Fox Valley Badger of the Year" in 2007. Tim has also had further involvement with the University of Wisconsin system. He was named a member of the Board of Regents in 2011. He was also referred for membership on the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Higher Education. Tim gave the Welcome Address at a UW-Madison commencement ceremony in 2012 and was also a commencement speaker at UW-Fox Valley in 2012.

Tim's involvement in the community has also included being a member of the Appleton Rotary Club since 2002. He has chaired multiple projects there and received the "Charles & Patricia Heeter Community Leadership Award" in 2005. Since 2003, Tim has been involved with IndUS of the Fox Valley. He has served as the Board Chair there since 2005. Tim has also served in leadership roles for the Republican Party of Outagamie County, working for various national, state, and local political campaigns. The Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region honored Tim with the "Janet Berry Volunteer of the Year" award in 2002. Tim is also involved as a hospitality minister and lector at St. Mary Parish in Appleton.

### **Amy Jean Schmitz '88**

Amy Jean Schmitz is the daughter of Larry and Nancy Schmitz. Amy Jean graduated as Valedictorian from Xavier in 1988. Amy Jean's sisters, Michelle Wise and Renee Koch also graduated from Xavier. While at Xavier, Amy Jean participated in a myriad of activities including basketball, cheerleading, track, National Honor Society, Spanish National Honor Society, Key Club, Mock Trial, and volunteer work.

From Xavier, Amy Jean went on to graduate summa cum laude from Drake University with a BA in Political Science and Spanish. Amy was active during her time at Drake as a member of the Phi Beta Kappa and Omicron Delta Kappa academic honor societies and the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority. Amy Jean continued her education by studying law at the University of Minnesota Law School. She again graduated summa cum laude, this time earning her Juris Doctorate (JD) degree and was also awarded the Most Promising Attorney Award. Amy Jean participated in many activities while earning her JD, including being the Research/Note and Comment Editor for the Minnesota Law Review, being a Legal Writing Instructor, was the Law Forum President, and worked on the Gender Fairness Task Force.

Upon graduation, Amy Jean began her legal career working for Faegre & Benson LLP in Minneapolis, MN, and then Stoel Rives LLP in Seattle, WA. In 2000, Amy Jean joined the University of Colorado Law School faculty. She was granted tenure in 2007 and promoted to full professorship in 2011. Amy Jean has also taught International Arbitration as a Visiting Professor in Paris, France, and Oxford, England. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, her current research and writing projects include empirical studies of contracting behaviors and interests, as well as various other projects related to consumer, arbitration and contract law and policy. Amy Jean has created service learning programs that engage her students in presenting consumer skills seminars and publishing consumer rights manuals.

Amy Jean has earned a national reputation as a leading expert in the areas of consumer and contract law and alternative dispute resolution, including arbitration and online methods for resolving disputes. She has been an invited speaker at over 35 conferences in the United States and abroad regarding arbitration, contracts, consumer law, and outreach endeavors. In addition, she has published over 35 articles and other papers in both scholarly and professional journals, as well as editorials for popular press. Amy Jean is a frequent speaker for the American Bar Association Dispute Resolution Section, and is the Chairperson of the National Arbitration Roundtable's Online Dispute Resolution Working Group. In addition, she has assisted as amicus curiae in several United Supreme Court cases involving arbitration, and has been cited by the Federal Trade Organization on arbitration issues. She also serves as the American Bar Association Delegated Expert to the United Nations' working group seeking to create online methods for resolving both business and consumer disputes worldwide.

Service remains a constant in Amy Jean's life. She serves in many areas, including: the Association of American Law Schools (AALS) Executive Committee on Commercial and Related Consumer Law, the Executive Committee of the Legal Education, and the ADR and Problem-Solving (LEAPS) Task Force. Amy Jean is an American Bar Association Liaison for International Law, House of Genius, and the AALS Contract Law and AALS Humanizing Legal Education Sections.

## **2013**

### **Kelly Kornely '63**

Kelly Kornely is a member of the Xavier class of 1963. Kelly was a leader while at Xavier; he was freshman class president, a student council member, and a Badger Boys State Delegate. Kelly was also

elected to the National Honor Society and was selected as the Appleton Elks Club's Outstanding Senior in Business. In addition, Kelly was an accomplished athlete; he was a football player during the legendary Torchy Clark era. In football, he was a four-year varsity starter and was a co-captain in both 1960 and 1962, those two years he was also the co-most valuable defensive player. Kelly was voted to FVCC 1st team all-conference for offense in 1961 and both 1st team offense and defense in 1962 and was twice named to a Catholic all-state football selection.

Kelly attended Marquette University where he earned a B.S. in Business Administration majoring in Economics and Finance. Kelly's academic excellence was recognized at Marquette as he was a member of Beta Gamma Sigma (Business) and Pi Gamma Mu (Social Sciences) National Honor Societies and graduated in the top 2% of his class. Kelly also stayed busy in the Chain Pullers Athletic Club, the Economics Club, as a Research Assistant to the Graduate School, and in the Greater Marquette Program.

Kelly continued his insurance career education at the American College of Life Underwriters where he became both a Chartered Life Underwriter and a Chartered Financial Consultant. Kelly enjoyed great success during his 40 year career in the insurance industry; he was a partner for 33 years at Insurance Services, Inc. where he served as President for his final 12 years before retiring in 2008. He is a Life Member of the Million Dollar Round Table and has received National Quality awards, National Sales Achievement awards, as well as having served on numerous insurance company advisory councils.

Kelly is extremely active in the community. Kelly was involved with the United Way for 5 years working on their capital campaigns. He was an Appleton Downtown Rotary Director for 3 years and served as a Director and Vice President with the Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce. Kelly was actively involved in leadership roles with the Fox River Valley Association of Life Underwriters for 40 years. He was also involved with the Valley Figure Skating Club, where he served as President, and also served as a Director at Butte des Morts Country Club.

Kelly continues to serve at Church and at Xavier. He is a lifetime member of St. Mary Parish Appleton where he served on the Finance Committee. He is a Eucharistic Minister for St. Elizabeth Hospital and is a Hospice Volunteer for Affinity Visiting Nurses. Kelly spent nine years on the Xavier Foundation, two of those years as President; he co-chaired the Xavier Campaign in 2000. Over the years he has served on many committees, including Food Fair, Booster Club, the Torchy Clark Gym dedication, The Rocky Bleier Field dedication, the Kip Whitlinger jersey retirement, and Alumni Association Golf Outings.

Kelly and Sheila have been married for 45 years. Their daughter, Kristin (Kornely) Ceranski, and her husband, John, are also Xavier alumni. Kelly's grandchildren, Elizabeth and Matthew, currently attend St. Francis Xavier Middle School and both look forward to becoming Xavier graduates.

## **Jim Pfefferle '64**

Jim graduated from Xavier in 1964, but returned as a teacher for 38 years! Before returning to teach, Jim went on to earn 3 college degrees. Jim's first college degree was earned at UW Madison, where he earned a B.A. in History in 1970. Jim furthered his education again when he earned a B.A. in German from UW Oshkosh in 1975. Jim then earned an M.A. in German from the University of Northern Iowa and that coursework was completed in Austria.

Jim has definitely made an indelible impression on Xavier during his 38 tenure. He has not only been a favorite teacher for many, but has been very involved in many areas of the school. Jim's legacy is one of having helped create a global environment. Jim established the German-American Student Exchange Program in 1977 and has since coordinated 18 student trips sending close to 400 students abroad. Jim established and moderated the Xavier International Club and helped establish Xavier's Foreign Language Honor Society. Jim goes abroad every year and has made at least 25 trips to Germany. Outside of foreign languages, Jim also established the Xavier Bike Club and was a moderator of the yearbook. Jim is also an Adjunct Professor for UW Oshkosh. Jim was recognized by the Appleton Rotary Club with an Excellence in Education award in 1992. He has written numerous papers and made numerous presentations to the Wisconsin Association of Foreign Language Teachers (WAFLT).

Outside of his involvement in school, Jim has been a volunteer for the Fox Valley Literacy Council for the past three years. He has also been a Salvation Army volunteer.

Jim currently job shares at Xavier with his wife, Karen. Jim and Karen proudly raised their two daughters, Margot and Martina (both Xavier graduates), to be bilingual and with an international spirit. The family hosted students from Germany when the girls were in high school. In addition, the family has hosted teachers from various organizations from Germany, the Czech Republic, Ukraine and South Korea. Jim and Karen will also be sponsoring two international students from Lawrence University and will also act as liaisons between the university and the community.

Jim's indelible impact has not only been felt by the Foreign Language Department and the school, but also by countless individual students. Some of these students came together to nominate Jim for this Hall of Fame honor. One dozen former students and parents spanning all five decades of his tenure wrote letters in support of Jim's nomination. All wrote of the profound impact Jim had on them and the international spirit that he instilled in them. In her nomination cover letter, Anne Salm Higgins summed up the group's collective sentiment when she wrote, "The testimonials...tell how the lessons they learned from Herr [Jim] went far beyond the classroom; he literally changed their lives in ways big and small. Additionally, several are teachers themselves who now see the ripple effect of his influence."

## **Phil Gloudemans '70**

While at Xavier, Phil Gloudemans was a member of the National Honor Society, Student Council, and a Class Officer. In addition, he was a letter winner in football and track, and he and his teammates set a school record in the mile relay (now 4x400). Phil was awarded an Elks Scholarship and was the President of the Youth Association for Intellectually and Developmentally Disabled Children; he also

served as a camp counselor for intellectually and developmentally disabled children for four summers. Phil and his younger sister are both proud graduates of Xavier High School. His sister (Ellen Baisden) currently teaches in the St. Francis Xavier Catholic School System.

After high school, Phil attended Marquette University where he earned a B.A. in Sociology. While at Marquette, Phil served as a Freshman Orientation Leader, a dorm resident advisor, and a member of the Counseling Center Advisory Council. Phil was honored to attend Marquette's Christian Leadership Workshop and was also selected for an internship at the Counseling Center, a hospital-affiliated mental health facility. Phil also stayed active volunteering as a tutor at the inner-city religious education program at St. Boniface Church and playing several intramural sports.

Phil furthered his education at Boston University where he earned his M.S. in Communication in 1980. Phil financed his graduate studies working at the French Library in Boston. He was selected for an internship at Newsome & Company and during that internship was offered a full-time job.

Phil has held many prestigious positions throughout his career. He is currently the Director-Strategic Communications for the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. Phil leads the creation, implementation, and evaluation of strategic communications that broadens the institute's participation in the local and national education policy dialogues. Prior to this role, Phil was the Assistant Vice President-Media Relations for Boston University. As head of media relations, Phil and his staff built, lead, and guided the media relations team to unprecedented publicity results and he and his team were credited with significantly contributing to a record-setting number of applicants and increased alumni engagement. Prior to joining Boston University, Phil was a Senior Vice President at Agnew Carter McCarthy in Boston for 12 years. There he headed the consumer practice and generated over \$7 million in new business revenue and was responsible for over fifty percent of the firm's billings.

Outside of work, Phil has been very involved with The Arc Massachusetts for over 30 years. While serving on the marketing/development committee, Phil founded a corporate basketball fund-raising event entitled "Play on the Parquet," and he continues to serve as its chair today. This event has raised nearly \$1 million since its inception and is The Arc's largest annual fundraiser! In recognition of his board service and outstanding contributions, The Arc has recognized Phil with two Special Achievement Awards, and a Massachusetts Distinguished Citizen Award, presented at a State House ceremony. Phil's commitment to this cause started in high school when he served as a summer camp counselor for children with disabilities, founded by an Appleton-based Catholic women's organization, which his mother helped launch.

Phil serves as the Chair of the Massachusetts Amateur Sports Foundation (MASF), where he has been involved since 1987. MASF produces the commonwealth's youth Olympics for over 7,000 athletes. In addition, Phil is the President of the Board for the Lynch/VanOtterloo YMCA in Marblehead, Mass., which serves over 14,000 members.

Phil met his wife, Karen McLaughlin, at Marquette and they have a daughter, Brenna, who is currently attending Roger Williams University in Bristol, Rhode Island. Phil's mother, Germaine, still lives in the

Appleton area, as does his sister. Phil Gloudemans will leave a legacy of service, hard work, aid and comfort to his charitable endeavors, to his professional life and most of all to his loving family.

## **2014**

### **Mike Heideman '66**

Mike Heideman is a member of the Xavier High School class of 1966. Mike excelled in sports while at Xavier. He earned "All-Conference" honors in both football and basketball in his junior and senior years. In addition, he earned "All Fox Cities Team" honors in both football and basketball his senior year. Mike's accomplishments were also noticed by the American Legion when they awarded him the American Legion Award his senior year. In addition, he was also recognized as Xavier's outstanding athlete as a senior with the Tom Miller award. Mike was a Badger Boys State delegate in 1965 and was also a member of the "Senior Senate".

After high school, Mike attended the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse where he earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees in Physical Education. As an undergrad, Mike played basketball for UW-L and was selected as the "Outstanding Freshman" of the team and was also recognized as the "Most Valuable Player" his senior year.

Upon graduation, Mike began a long and illustrious teaching and coaching career. His career started at Augusta High School where he taught and was head basketball coach. Mike led Augusta High School to its first regional basketball final.

Mike then returned to Xavier where he taught physical education and coached basketball and football for eight years. During that time, Mike led his basketball teams to three conference championships and led teams to the WISSA State Tournament six times, including a trip to the championship game in 1978. Mike's coaching record while at Xavier was 158 wins and 53 losses, a .748 winning percentage. Mike's coaching abilities did not go unnoticed. He was named Coach of the Year in the Fox Valley Christian Conference three times and was awarded the UW-LaCrosse Alumni Coach of the Year in 1978.

Mike was named the basketball coach at St. Norbert College in 1982. At St. Norbert, Mike had an overall coaching record of 66 and 25 (a .725 winning percentage). During the 1983-1984 season, Mike led the team to its first Midwest Collegiate Conference Championship and a berth in the NCAA Division III National Tournament. In addition, Mike was named the Division III Coach of the Year for the Midwest Region by the National Association of Basketball Coaches.

In 1986 Mike made the move to work under Dick Bennett as an Assistant Basketball Coach at UW-Green Bay. He helped play a vital role in building UWGB's Division I basketball program. During his 9 years as an Assistant Coach, UWGB played in three NCAA tournaments and one NIT. In 1995 Mike took over as head coach of the UWGB basketball team. He had a very successful first year; his team had a 25-4 overall record, a 16-0 conference record, won the Midwestern Conference Championship, and was ranked in the Top 25 in the nation. During his tenure at UWGB, Mike received many accolades,

including Midwestern Conference Coach of the Year, Wisconsin Collegiate Coach of the Year, and District XI Coach of the Year. His overall head coaching record at UWGB was 110-97, a .531 winning percentage.

From UWGB, Mike moved on to Valparaiso University. As an Assistant Coach at Valparaiso, Mike helped lead the team to a conference championship and a berth in the NIT. From there, Mike again joined up with Dick Bennett, this time at Washington State University (WSU). Mike coached under Dick Bennett for three years and under Tony Bennett for three years. During that time, WSU reached the NCAA Tournament twice and the NIT once.

Mike then accepted a new challenge and career path when he became the Athletic Director and then the Assistant Principal at St. Mary Central High School. He was awarded the school's Honorary Alumnus Award in 2013.

Outside of work, Mike has been involved in the National Association of Basketball Coaches for 30 years. Mike was inducted into the Wisconsin Coaches Hall of Fame in 2012. He has given numerous motivational speeches and basketball clinic talks over his years. He is also an active member of Resurrection Parish in Green Bay.

Mike and his wife Sally (also Xavier Class of '66) have enjoyed 44 years of marriage. They have two sons Dave (Jen) and Tim (Julie) and are proud grandparents to twins Hannah and Isabella. Mike is also blessed with many friends and his nomination was supported by six letters from fellow coaches and co-workers as well as former basketball players. These testimonials to the extraordinary character of Mike go beyond his success on the basketball court.

The following are a few quotes from Mike's nomination. Paul Rechner stated, "The success and growth of the young men and women he taught, coached, and came in contact with, was always every bit as important as the basketball games his teams won or lost. When asked if he enjoyed his years of teaching and coaching at Xavier, without hesitation, Mike's response was about how much he enjoyed working with the students." Coach Dick Bennett wrote, "He lives his life as a true Hall of Famer should. It is a life of faithfulness, humility and love." Coach Gary Grzesk wrote in his recommendation letter, "Words cannot explain the impact that he has had on me during my young adult years. I would not be the person I am today without his guidance, and is the reason I got into coaching. He has been a tremendous teacher, coach, and role model for many young adults over the years." David Bradish stated, "What I also recognized...was that Coach Heideman cared more about his players for who they were off the court than who they were on the court." Lastly, Bob Semling summed it up when he wrote, "All of us who have had the opportunity to work with Mike Heideman are better people because of that experience."

## **2015**

### **Gina Bayer '80**

Fellow classmates will most likely remember Gina Bayer as an athlete. At Xavier, this class of 1980 graduate had sports legacy that included four years a starter on the varsity basketball team- competing

each year for the state championship and winning that trophy in 1978, two years of varsity volleyball, one year of varsity track, and one year of cross-country. Her athletic accomplishments were only part of that legacy. Gina also earned distinction as the salutatorian of 1980, and received many awards, such as the Appleton Rotary Outstanding Student for 1978, and the Bob Lloyd Noon Optimist Club Scholarship award, for her dedication to service and academics.

At UWSP, Gina continued her sports successes continued as a starter for the women's basketball team racking up numerous awards: Top 20 Scorer, All-Time leader for Blocked Shots, WWIAC All-Conference Honorable Mention, and team Co-Captain 1983-1984. Her academic accolades were no less impressive where she earned the Chancellor's leadership Award and obtained an Academic Excellence standing. Gina graduated college in 1984 with a B.S. in Water Chemistry.

Gina then began an impressive career that focuses on the environment. Fresh out of school, she fought fires and cut down trees with the US Forest service. She also worked at the US Department of Energy Savannah River Plant nuclear facility, the Center for Great Lakes studies, and Hazleton Labs before entering the environmental counseling field in 1987. Gina's desire to achieve has propelled her through the ranks, from environmental scientist to global practice lead to Project Manager for CH2M Hill directly managing 3 Superfund and 3 contaminated sediment cleanups.

In keeping with her Xavier legacy, Gina has a career decorated with many awards and achievement. She has won the Engineering News and Record Midwest Best Project Award and Environmental Excellence Award of the Year, in both 2011 & 2013, from Western Dredging Association. In addition, she has also been published in the Environmental Professionals Journal and World Dredging Mining & Construction magazine.

Outside of work, Gina has stayed committed to volunteering, service to the community, and service to the church. She has over 4 years of involvement with the American Red Cross, 10 years of volunteering with the Boy Scouts of America, participated in annual river trash cleanups, active as a member of the Christ Renew his Parish Renewal team, and serving meals to those in need.

Gina is wife to Bob Mayer, mother to Hunter XHS '14, and daughter of proud parents Jeanette and Jim Bayer. She currently resides in Appleton.

### **Richard Romenesko, DDS, '71**

Xavier has been a part of Richard Romenesko for most of his life. Rick graduated from St Pius X in 1967. The next year he officially became a Hawk. While at Xavier High School, he not only thrived in sports-

earning varsity letters four years in baseball, played two years of football, and was in track & field for two years. He also represented his class as a student councilman, and participated for two years in wind ensemble.

Following Xavier, Rick attended The University of Wisconsin Madison, majoring in Bacteriology and gaining early admittance into the Marquette University School of Dentistry. He graduated as a Doctor of Dental Surgery in 1978.

While in Dental School, Rick married his grade school sweetheart, Franki Baumann XHS '71. Upon graduation, Dr. Rick, Franki, and their newborn, Rick Jr. returned to Appleton where Dr. Rick opened his dental practice. Two more wonderful sons joined their family in 1980 and 1983.

The early 80's saw Dr. Rick elected to the St. Thomas More Board of Education and appointed to an all Appleton Parish committee to study Catholic Day School education, which created the Appleton Catholic Education System (ACES). He became the first layperson elected as President of the ACES Board and served on the board for many years. In addition, Dr. Rick and Franki became co-presidents of the St. Thomas More Home and School Association. Dr. Rick was honored by the National Catholic Education Association in Washington D.C. with the "Distinguished Graduate Award".

In 1986, Dr. Rick became a coach of his son's soccer team and that began a long commitment to the Appleton Soccer Club. Dr. Rick served Appleton Youth Soccer for 20 years. In addition to coaching his sons' teams, he served on the Appleton Soccer Club Board of Directors and as Tournament Director. While on the Board, he started two competitive soccer tournaments. Dr. Rick also headed the committee that began the search for a soccer complex in Appleton. That led to the creation of the USA Youth Sports Complex and Dr. Rick also served on that Board.

A family vacation in the early 90's jumpstarted another idea for Dr. Rick and Franki. While in California, they attended a Christmas program uniting Catholic Parishes. Dr. Rick and Franki came home and discussed it with their dear friends, Jack and Linda Ourada, and Christmas Stars was born. They went on to serve as the steering committee for 10 years, guiding us to the wonderful program that exists today. During that time, Dr. Rick's involvement at Xavier also expanded into athletics when he became the head boys' varsity soccer coach. His leadership and commitment to the soccer program also led to the formation of a JV boys' team and a girls' program at Xavier. Coach Romenesko enjoyed much success as a Xavier coach. His Xavier soccer teams won several conference titles and had three state semifinal appearances. His teams were ranked in the Top 10 Public and Parochial State Wide Polls several times and he was twice named the Post Crescent All Area Coach of the Year. Very important to him was the fact that several of his players went on to play Division I soccer in college. His overall record at Xavier was 181-61-21.

Rick's dedication to service and education has always seemed tireless to those that know him. As a recent graduate, he returned to Marquette to teach and later to mentor. At St. Thomas More, he served and then led the St. Thomas More Parish Picnic committee. He continues to volunteer his time

and services at Tri-County Dental Clinic serving those in need and teaching dental students in clinical rotations.

Dr. Rick Romenesko is the proud father, father-in-law and grandfather of: Dr. Rick Jr '96 and Beth with David and Wally, Dr. Michael '99 and Dr. Callie with Max and Frankie, and Dr. Nicholas '02 and Dr. Rachel with Fiona. He has been a successful dentist in Appleton for 37 years and currently practices with his son Dr. Michael and shares a state of the art facility with his brother Dr. Jeff '75 and Jeff's son, Ben '02.

## **2016**

### **Mark Miller '81**

Mark Miller was born on March 12, 1963 in Appleton, Wisconsin. He attended St. Therese Grade School, St. Mary Middle School and Xavier High School in Appleton, graduating in 1981. He then attended the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, graduating in May of 1985 with a degree in journalism.

His love affair with basketball began during the 1971-72 season when he, his three siblings and his parents attended home and away basketball games for Xavier High School. His father, Richard, was a freshman coach at Xavier at the time and the family made annual treks to the old WISAA State Tournament in Milwaukee from the early 1970s until WISAA's final year in 2000.

Mark continued to follow the Hawks through his senior year of high school, and then started following the UW-Oshkosh Titans as well as the high school teams in the area. He regularly covered Lourdes Academy, Oshkosh North and Oshkosh West for the Appleton Post-Crescent while attending college.

Mark has built his extraordinary career around the game of basketball, earning a reputation for honor, decency, and sportsmanship that transcends the daily work he undertakes. Mark's full-time career in journalism began in the spring of 1985 at the Marshfield News-Herald. It was during this time that he also began the Wisconsin Basketball Yearbook, the state annual previewing the high school and college basketball season. The Wisconsin Basketball Yearbook has become a staple on the high school scene in Wisconsin and will enter its 32nd year of publication this fall.

Mark also worked at newspapers in Oshkosh, Waukesha and Sheboygan and thoroughly enjoyed covering high school sports, especially basketball.

For the past decade or so, Mark has also worked with WisSports.net. Together with Nicholas Kartos, Rick Hamilton, Travis Wilson and Norbert Durst, WisSports.net has become THE source for high school sports in Wisconsin.

As boys' basketball editor for WisSports.net, Mark covers the sport 12 months of the year, writing on high school and AAU teams as well as standout players.

Eleven years ago, Mark also helped to start the WBY Shootout, an annual Christmas basketball event that attracts some of the top teams and players in the state each season. Summer tournaments and a camp at Viterbo have also evolved with the support of WisSports.net and Mark.

By far the most enjoyable part of the experience in covering high school basketball in Wisconsin for the past 30-plus years is the relationships Mark has developed with coaches, players and parents. Many of those relationships have developed into life-long friendships.

Mark met his wife, Pat, at the newspaper in Oshkosh. They have been married for 26 years and he credits her as a significant reason for the success of the Yearbook. Mark and Pat have been blessed with two daughters, Gwen, a sophomore at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, and Sonia, a freshman at Edgewood High School in Madison.

Mark's nomination was supported with letters from sports figures from all over Wisconsin. There was a recurrent theme with all letters-Mark's integrity. One letter stated that Mark weaves the teachings, positive examples, and values he learned from Xavier into the tapestry of his life. Many letters stated that those who Mark meets are better because they have been touched by the passion, professionalism and class of Mark Miller.

### **Stephen Wisniewski '86**

Stephen Wisniewski, a 1986 graduate of Xavier High School, is a devoted husband and father; an accomplished journalist; and a mentor to many. He credits his parents, the Xavier community, his Catholic faith and Wisconsin roots for instilling in him the values that have allowed him to experience personal joy and professional satisfaction every step of the way.

Stephen is thrilled to have the opportunity to return to Xavier, where so many fantastic memories were created. Stephen was a varsity basketball player, a member of the concert band

and other music ensembles, and involved in countless other activities. His first foray into journalism was serving as sports editor for the school newspaper. He's also happy to share the experience with his parents, who were long-time and much-beloved teachers at Xavier. Donald (band director) and Gladys (Spanish teacher) are still close to many in the Xavier community.

Stephen followed an unconventional path to journalism. He received degrees in Sociology and Urban Studies from Northwestern University in 1990, and a master's degree in Urban Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 1992. He worked as an urban transit planner at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in Madison for three years, and it was a friendship established in that job that paved the way for a move to Brazil, meeting his future wife and becoming a journalist.

Stephen has been married for 17 years to Patricia Villalon Wisnefski, of Port Clinton, Ohio. Stephen and Patricia met in São Paulo, Brazil in 1996 when both were working as translators at Gazeta Mercantil, a now-defunct-but-then-prominent Brazilian financial newspaper. Patricia likes to say that she had to move thousands of miles away just to meet a guy from Wisconsin.

Patricia and Stephen now live in Cranford, New Jersey with their two sons. Maximilian, a skilled actor, is 14 and Leo, an avid sportsman, is 11. While they love living on the East Coast, they relish every opportunity they have to visit friends and family in the Midwest.

Stephen is Deputy Managing Editor of The Wall Street Journal, one of the largest and most respected news publications in the world. In that role, he is responsible for all the news, analysis and data that the newsroom produces for business and financial professionals.

Stephen has worked for Dow Jones & Co, parent of the WSJ, for 19 years in a variety of roles as a reporter, editor and manager. He has had the opportunity to interview presidents and corporate chief executives; cover elections and the Olympics; travel the globe; and hire and guide extraordinarily motivated and talented journalists.

Stephen started as a correspondent for Dow Jones Newswires in Brazil and eventually became bureau chief. In 2000, he transferred to New York, where he served as a senior writer on emerging markets and then became chief editor for Latin America, running a group of reporters spread across eight countries.

In 2005, Stephen was appointed Chicago Bureau Chief, a role that involved overseeing Dow Jones's coverage of major Midwest manufacturers, airlines and the automobile industry, among other beats. In 2007, Stephen and a colleague were recognized with a "Best in Business Award" from the Society of American Business Editors and Writers for exclusive reporting of billionaire Kirk Kerkorian's bid to acquire DaimlerChrysler.

The Wisnefskis returned to the East Coast in 2009 as Stephen took on editing roles of increasing responsibility, culminating in his appointment as the senior editor for the Americas for Dow

Jones Newswires, guiding the work of more than 300 journalists. In 2013, Stephen was appointed as the first-ever editor of The Wall Street Journal's Global Real-Time News Desk, which is responsible for editing, publishing, and packaging content delivered over all digital platforms. He was appointed to his current role in early 2016.

Those who nominated Stephen noted that he is playing a leading role in guiding the Wall Street Journal through the forces that are reshaping journalism, and that he is widely respected and admired in the newsroom. They also pointed out that his professional accomplishments are all transcended by his innate kindness and the care he shows for others.

"Stephen has progressed far in his field, but maintains the same values he exhibited as a student at Xavier High School – intelligence, diligence, and, most importantly, devotion to his family, faith, friends and co-workers," said one of the supporting letters. "Stephen exemplifies the Xavier tradition."

As another nominating letter said, Stephen sets an example of what it means to be fully devoted to living an abundant life.

### **Tony Van Rooy '76**

Tony Van Rooy grew up in a Catholic family and was the 3<sup>rd</sup> youngest of 10. Tony attended Catholic grade school and his parents required that he not only attend, but also fund his own attendance at Xavier High School. So while working in the summers and on weekends, Tony managed to fund his education. Tony still managed to participate in sports and lettered a total of 6 times in football and track & field. That time at Xavier was also important to Tony as that is where he met the love of his life Laura Lindberg, (XHS '77).

Tony graduated Xavier in 1976 and immediately joined the workforce full-time to provide for his family. While working, he decided to serve as a volunteer basketball coach at the old St. Joseph's Elementary School. Tony wanted to serve the community and the Catholic Education System by serving as a basketball coach. Little did he know that he would continue coaching at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level for 40 years. Throughout those 40 years, he served many Catholic Schools as he coached at St. Joseph's Elementary School, St Mary's Elementary School, Catholic Central Elementary School, St. Joseph's Middle School and now, St. Francis Xavier Middle School.

During those 40 years, he also was able to find time to help coach at Xavier High School. Tony coached at Xavier for a total of 12 years in track and field, football and basketball. He was able to coach with

great coaches such as Mike Heidemen, Don Dineen and Tom Neises. Many years Tony would donate the money allocated for him back to Xavier for their athletic fund.

Tony has a passion for coaching/teaching not just about sports, but many life lessons. Tony took so much pride in making a positive impact in the lives of the kids on his teams. He taught them that similar to sports, life is not always fair. He would teach them about doing the right thing and treating everyone with respect. He taught them about giving back to the community and following the teachings of the Catholic Church. Throughout his 40 years of coaching, Tony was able to positively impact hundreds of young men and women at a critical age in their life where positive influences were most needed. Several of Tony's athletes wrote letters to support Tony's nomination. They, and others, have gone on to impact thousands of other people in their communities and pass on the lessons they learned from Tony.

In 1986 Tony started Cut'n Care Lawn Service. Tony has been the owner/president for 30 years and counting. His success with Cut'n Care Lawn Service embodies the hard work and dedication that he has exhibited throughout his life. Tony often hired current Xavier students to work for him in the summer.

Tony and his wife Laura have been married for almost 41 years. They have four children who are all Xavier Graduates: Jenifer '94 (Eric), Sara '95 (Devon), Kevin '99 (Marissa) and Brian '04 (Kerri). They also have 9 grandchildren with one more on the way in December. Tony and Laura have been active members of St. Thomas More Parish for 40 years.

Tony's belief in the Catholic Church and catholic education is evident throughout every facet of his life. His education and experience at Xavier High School afforded him the opportunity to find his faith, his family, and his characteristics that have helped him pay it forward through his service. His years of service to Catholic Schools and the community are something to be celebrated. Throughout his life, Tony has been a selfless leader who has put his faith, family, and community first.

## **2017**

### **JIM RATHER '64**

Jim Rather ('64) was the first four-year graduate of Xavier High School to receive a Congressional appointment to the United States Naval Academy. That appointment led to a lifelong career serving his country in the Navy and Naval Reserve. Jim embodies all of the attributes associated with Hall of Fame members, namely a life dedicated to serving God, family, and country.

Jim feels that his Catholic upbringing and years at Xavier provided him with an excellent foundation. His education began at St. Patrick's grade school in Menasha. While his parents' decision to enroll him at Xavier, which was then a new school, came as a surprise to Jim, he thrived as a scholar and an athlete. Jim played football and basketball all four years of high school. He was quarterback of Xavier's state champion football team in 1963, and played on the state champion football team in 1962 and the state champion basketball team in 1963. Jim was also a member of Xavier's National Honor Society.

Upon Naval Academy graduation, Jim's career assignment was in Naval Aviation as a Naval Flight Officer. Jim served in this capacity for ten years in three different P-3C squadrons as a Tactical Coordinator, Flight Instructor and Mission Commander, performing missions in many parts of the world and amassing 3,700 flight hours.

After active naval service, Jim pursued a civilian career, but his job was still associated with naval aviation. Jim took a position with the Navy's Air Systems Command, where he had numerous jobs supporting Naval Air programs. Jim was certified as an Acquisition Professional specializing in aircraft simulators, crew training devices and training curricula. Jim also managed the aviation branch of Navy Training Plans development and chaired a Joint Services task group that developed data element description standards for an update to the Military Training Programs Standard, MIL-STD-1379D.

A fellow worker of Jim's writes, ... "To a layman these tasks may seem difficult to comprehend but you have my assurance that the impact of these endeavors still reverberate through the offices of Naval personnel management."

Eventually that work led to Jim managing training programs of international customer countries. This responsibility, which required skills in diplomacy, took Jim to countries all over the world, including South Korea, Norway, Netherlands, Kuwait, Malaysia, Switzerland and Australia. Not only was he doing important work, but also experiencing interesting places and different cultures.

Even with his demanding civilian career, Jim continued to serve in the Naval Reserve for 15 years. He retired as a Commander, USNR in 1994. Jim retired as a Navy Civilian in 2010, after having served in or worked for the Navy in one capacity or another for 46 years. Upon reflection, Jim said that his naval service provided him with an exciting life full of unique challenges and personal rewards.

Jim attributes much of his success in life to the love and support he receives from his wife, Sue. Jim met Sue during his junior year at Navy and they were married shortly after graduation, a union that has lasted 49 wonderful years. Jim and Sue have been blessed with a son, a daughter and a granddaughter.

Jim remains very active even in retirement, especially in continuing to serve others. Jim serves as a check-in judge for elections, has logged an impressive 6,800 miles delivering over 2,600 meals for his county's Meals on Wheels program, and serves as volunteer docent and tour guide at the Dr. Samuel Mudd House Museum. In addition, he is a volunteer docent guide at St. Ignatius Catholic Church, which is the oldest continuously active Catholic parish in the United States dating to 1641.

Jim was nominated by a Xavier classmate and lifelong friend. Several letters in support of the nomination referenced Jim's core values and his service to others. "I observed the solid core values that Jim practiced at St. Francis Xavier High School and throughout the community which would be needed to meet the rigorous academic requirements, mental toughness, and to serve as building blocks for the responsibilities of leadership, self-sacrifice and devotion to country that would lay ahead in his highly distinguished military and civilian career." Another credits Jim with his own career, "... it was immediately apparent which of the 350 personnel assigned to the squadron you needed to learn from, not only to become a better Naval Officer, but a better leader and person. Jim Rather stood out as one of the finest...He is the initial reason I spent almost thirty years as a naval officer... he was honest, forthright and epitomized the Navy's core values of Honor, Courage and Commitment." Added another, in reference to Jim's volunteer work in recent years, "Your high school has produced an extraordinary civic-minded graduate."

## **2018**

### **Doug Simon '87**

Doug Simon, a 1987 graduate of Xavier High School, is a devoted family man, a successful and respected businessman, and a true model of discipleship. He grew up in the family business and learned the value of hard work and the importance of faith and respect at an early age. He has embodied those philosophies throughout his life and is respected in all areas of his life for his generosity, his commitment to his faith, and his service to others.

While at Xavier, Doug was very active. Doug was a great runner, running Cross Country all four years, going to state all four years, and earning all-conference honors his junior and senior years. He was also a member of the Track team all four years of high school and was on the state championship team his freshman and sophomore years. Doug also played basketball two years, was a member of Key Club for three years, Student Government for two years, National Honor Society his senior year, and Spanish Honor Society his junior and senior years.

Upon graduation from Xavier, Doug continued his Catholic education at Marquette University. He graduated with a BBA in Accounting and went to work at Schenck SC and earned his CPA license. He eventually left public accounting and went to work for the family business, Simon's Cheese, now Agropur, Inc. At age 38, Doug became the President of the U.S. Division of Agropur, Inc., a position he still holds today. Under Doug's leadership and vision, Agropur has expanded into one of the largest cheese and dairy companies in the United States. Hard work, as well as Doug's vision, his business sense, his ability to relate to others, and the respect and trust of those around him were key to Agropur's success.

Doug's skills extended beyond his company when he was elected President of the Wisconsin Cheese Maker's Association. He was the youngest person ever to hold that post. Today, Doug serves several national and international cheese associations.

While work keeps Doug extremely busy, he has always made time to give back to others. Doug served on the Finance Council at St. Mary Parish, on the Board (having served one term as President) of the Boys and Girls Club of the Fox Valley, and currently serves on the board for the Valley Kids Association. He has also been known as “coach” while coaching track, youth basketball, and girls’ soccer. People throughout the area know that they can count on Doug to lend a helping hand or financial support for initiatives involving youth, Catholic education, the Diocese, and really anyone in need.

Doug and his wife Renee recently celebrated 25 years of marriage. Together they have raised three beautiful daughters, Aubree, Olivia, and Emary, all of whom attended Xavier Catholic Schools. He is also the proud son to Dave and Judy and brother to Sarah, Chris, and Susan. Doug credits much of his success to his family.

People from throughout the Xavier family, the Agropur family, and the greater community supported his nomination. Doug is a true model of discipleship; he listens, cares, and sees the good in all people. He’s been known to literally give the shirt off of his back to someone in need. Doug is also committed to making our community and world a better place for everyone.

### **Sister Mary Ann Spanjers, OSF, '77**

Sister Mary Ann Spanjers, a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity, is blessed to be the daughter of Dutch immigrant parents, Tony (deceased) and Dora Spanjers, grew up with her three sisters in Mackville, WI and graduated from Xavier High School in 1977.

During her high school years at Xavier, Sister Mary Ann was part of the Drama Club, participated in track and field sports and enjoyed going to the football and basketball games. She also was part of the work/study program.

Upon graduation, Sister Mary Ann professed her vows as a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity and obtained a BA in Elementary Education and Religious Studies from Silver Lake College of the Holy Family, Manitowoc, WI. She later went on to get a MA in Theology and Religious Studies from St. John’s University, NYC.

When asked recently about her accomplishments, Sister Mary Ann reflected and believes that her life’s journey was directly influenced from her high school years at Xavier along with her call to be a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity. In addition, her parents’ immigrant life and faith continuously motivates her to reach out to people in other cultures. To date, Sister Mary Ann has lived a life of service all over the world. She has had the opportunity of ministry and community life in Catholic schools in Petoskey, MI, Hilbert, WI, and Yuma, AZ. She had the unique opportunity of ten years of missionary work in Lima, Peru and Andes mountain villages in the region of Otuzco, Peru. She served as Vocation Director of her Franciscan congregation, has done adjunct teaching at Silver Lake College of the Holy Family, bi-lingual teaching for the Diocese of Green Bay, and Parish ministry for St. Francis Parish, Manitowoc, WI. In addition, Sister Mary Ann has been reaching out to immigrants and refugees

ministering with Catholic Charities near the Mexican border in McAllen, TX and Tucson, AZ. She relates that teaching young people and adults, especially from the Hispanic community, continues to educate her about the challenges of immigrants in the United States at this time. Sister Mary Ann is currently teaching theology at San Miguel Cristo Rey High School in Tucson, AZ.

Sister Mary Ann views her ministry as an opportunity to walk with teens and young adults and is delighted to do so. She helped coordinate La Mision Catolica in the Andes Mountains of Peru. She and her college students (she was teaching at Champagnat University) integrated with the people of the mountain villages to form small Christian communities of catechesis for a number of weeks every summer. They began with five villages and the program today has over 30 villages participating in the Catholic Mission! Sister Mary Ann also spent weekends, during her years in Yuma, AZ, going to Tijuana, Mexico ministering to the poor in collaboration with the Missionaries of Charity and the local parish. She was also graced with an unexpected personal encounter with Mother Theresa of Calcutta during a weekend mission in Tijuana.

For her work in Peru, especially with economically poor state school students, Sister Mary Ann has received several service awards. Sister Mary Ann says that her heart, prayer and energy as a Sister and teacher is directed toward serving others and bringing out the best in them, as Jesus' love so clearly calls us to do.

### **Mike Weeldreyer '91**

Captain Mike Weeldreyer has served our country for the past twenty-three years. He has had a remarkable and dedicated career in the United States Navy and has received numerous Navy Commendations as well as praise from those he reports to and works with. Many fellow Naval officers refer to Captain Weeldreyer's breadth of knowledge and experience, yet his humble manner.

Captain Weeldreyer currently serves as an Operations Research Analyst in the Secretary of Defense's Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (CAPE) Directorate. CAPE provides independent analytic advice to the Secretary regarding weapon systems and force structure, and evaluates program alternatives and cost-effectiveness of defense systems as related to U.S. defense objectives, projected threats, allied contributions and resource constraints.

Prior to joining CAPE, Captain Weeldreyer served as Weapons Branch Head within the Chief of Naval Operations Surface Warfare Division (OPNAV N96) from May 2013 until February 2016. He was responsible for the development and management of the Navy's Surface Ship weapons programs, namely the Standard Missile, Tomahawk Land Attack Missile, Naval Gunnery, and Directed Energy Applications.

Weeldreyer previously served as Commanding Officer in USS *Russell* (DDG 59) from January until March 2013 after executing a hull swap with *Russell's* Pearl Harbor, HI crew. He also served as Commanding and Executive Officer in USS *Halsey* (DDG 97) from January 2010 to January 2013, and completed two deployments supporting Operations Enduring Freedom and New Dawn while assigned to the *Abraham Lincoln* and *Carl Vinson* Strike Groups in the Gulf of Oman, Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean. While

deployed, *Halsey* participated in multiple Maritime Security Operations in the Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, South China Sea and Western Pacific Ocean, specifically supporting the Oceania Maritime Security Initiative, serving as CTF 151's Flag Ship for Counter Piracy Operations, and representing the United States during numerous theater security engagements with India, Malaysia, the Philippines and Australia.

Weeldreyer completed his initial sea tour from 1996-2000 as Damage Control Assistant and Training Officer in USS *De Wert* (FFG 45) followed by an assignment as Fire Control Officer in USS *Monterey* (CG 61). He served a second sea tour from 2003-2006 first as Operations Officer in USS *Winston S. Churchill* (DDG 81) and later as Operations and Future Plans Officer with *Commander, Destroyer Squadron 28* in the *Eisenhower* Strike Group. During these operational tours, he completed deployments and missions in the Caribbean Sea, South Pacific Ocean, South Atlantic Ocean, North Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, Gulf of Oman, Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean.

Ashore, he served with the Bureau of Naval Personnel in Millington, TN from 2006-2009 initially as a Division Officer Sea Duty Coordinator within the Surface Warfare Officer Distribution Branch, PERS-41, and later as a Metrics Analyst and Assistant Community Manager. From 2000-2003 he taught as an Assistant Professor of Naval Science with The George Washington University Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps Unit, Washington, DC. He also served as the Senior Navy White House Social Aide supporting ceremonial events at The White House.

Captain Weeldreyer was born and raised in Appleton, Wisconsin and graduated from Xavier High School in 1991. He was very involved while a student at Xavier participating in the National Honor Society, Student Government, Campus Ministry, Key Club, Mock Trial, Math Team as well as being involved with jazz, pep and marching bands, and serving as a class officer. He was also on the football and track teams.

In 1995 he was commissioned through the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps after earning a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Computer Applications and several honors from the University of Notre Dame. He earned a Master of Business Administration from The George Washington University, Washington, DC in 2003.

Captain Weeldreyer's parents, Steve and Mary, instilled in their children that they need to live their faith each and every day. Captain Weeldreyer and his sisters, Ellen Reid ('97) and Kathleen Jarecki ('99) are all Xavier alumni. Captain Weeldreyer is married to the former Ms. Sarah Pfeifer of Little Rock, AR, and they have two sons, Steven and Lawson. His demanding job took him away from home for quite some time, but he is now able to carve out time to be a youth basketball coach, youth baseball coach, and youth flag football coach for his sons' teams.

2017

### **JANE BLAKE, Honorary Alumna**

Jane Kools-Blake is a devoted wife, mother and grandmother; a successful business executive; and a tireless volunteer. Jane has touched and improved countless lives through her volunteer work and professional career. She knows that her mother would be especially proud of this recognition as a Xavier Honorary Alumna.

Jane's Catholic faith has always been a central part of her life, dating back to her time as a student and parishioner at Sacred Heart Parish in Appleton. Jane began volunteering in the CCD program in seventh grade, work that continued into high school.

During her years at Xavier, Jane was involved in a myriad of activities and established lifelong friendships. She participated in choir, concert band, and jazz band, and also was a member of cheerleading and drill teams. Never one to rest, Jane also worked at St. Elizabeth's Hospital while in high school.

Jane has continued to emphasize education and self-improvement throughout her life. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Management as well as Masters in Business Administration. In addition, she has earned certifications as a Professional in Human Resources (PHR) and a Certified Compensation Professional (CCP).

Those that know Jane well and even new acquaintances can quickly see that Jane is the ultimate people person. She has perfectly combined her people skills and astute business acumen over the past 30 years in roles of increasing responsibility in the human resources field. Jane's current position as Executive Vice President and Chief Global Human Resources Officer for one of the world's largest hotel management companies gives her responsibility for over 33,000 associates in the United States, the United Kingdom and Russia. Jane works to make work life better and more satisfying for her associates by overseeing the implementation of training and development, health and welfare, labor and compensation programs, while maintaining a strategic focus for the organization as a whole. A significant accomplishment in her career was the development and implementation of an internal branding program that received a J.D. Power Award for customer satisfaction. Jane was recognized for her contributions to the program and its impact on associates.

Even with her demanding career and busy travel schedule, Jane has always made it a priority to give back to her church and the broader community. At Holy Apostles in New Berlin, her parish for over 20 years, Jane held leadership roles in school ministry, bereavement ministry, the human resources committee, and the Church festival. She also gave of her time for the St. Vincent DePaul meal and clothing programs, altar linen and Eucharistic ministries.

Outside of the parish, Jane also volunteered at Divine Savior Holy Angels High School, the Greater Milwaukee Free Clinic and the Green Bay Penitentiary Restorative Justice program, where she helped prison inmates learn conflict-resolution skills. Jane worked with the City of New Berlin's police department on community engagement, and she also coordinated meals for the department for several holidays and important days throughout the year. Jane also applied her business acumen as a volunteer committee member on the city's Civil Services Commission, where she administered and documented best practices for a salary and benefits program for city employees.

When inquiring with adoring people from all facets of Jane's life, all had beautiful insights. One letter stated, "I am honored to include my personal endorsement of an exceptionally talented woman who has continuously demonstrated her faith through countless acts of loving kindness insisting anonymity be intertwined throughout her actions." Another letter said, "Her commitment and values serve as a

model for others, and it is no wonder she has had such an outstanding career as those values and attributes translate to the workplace as well." Added another, Jane "is one of the most dedicated and humble individuals who has single-handedly improved and enhanced the lives of people in her community, her church and her family."

## **2018**

### **Jim Romenesko, Honorary Alumnus**

Jim Romenesko has been directing the main stage shows at Xavier for the past twenty-one years.

Jim is a graduate of Kaukauna High School, where he was supported and encouraged in his efforts by his high school theatre instructor, Barbara Roloff, with whom he remains friends to this day.

He studied theatre under the mentorship of Ken Anderson at UW-Fox Valley and began directing and choreographing shows there in the early 1980's.

As he began his directing career, he met Mary Stumpf, a Xavier teacher who brought many students to work on the production. Among them were John Paul Geurts, former vice-president at Nickelodeon and consultant on the Broadway production of "SpongeBob Squarepants," David Bushman, the Dance Captain for the Broadway production of "Chicago," and other professional performers and theatre artists.

Soon after, Jim was hired to direct the Xavier productions, then held in the Commons, and did so from 1981 through 1986, when he left to become the Artistic Director for the Classic Arts Dinner Theatre. In 1990, he began to work at Six Flags Great America where he worked as a show supervisor and director of some of the theme park's smaller productions and acting programs.

When Xavier announced the construction of this Fine Arts Center, made possible by a gift from Clarence and Delores Wallace, Jim became the theatre manager and director of mainstage productions. He quickly also began his work with Christmas Stars, which after a four-season run at the West High Auditorium, moved to its current home on Prospect Avenue. Jim has continued to direct the production for the past twenty years, involving hundreds of Xavier families, students and community members in this unique and powerful program.

In 2008, he led a team in developing "The Northeast Wisconsin Passion Play", an original dramatic musical which brings the ministry, Passion, and Resurrection of Jesus to the Xavier stage each year.

The Xavier Theatre Academy debuted in 2014. Middle school-aged performers from the entire Fox Valley unite to present a full-stage production of a Broadway musical each summer. The program has become a fantastic learning experience for the performers, a wonderful teaching experience for its high-school-aged student interns, and a successful recruitment tool for the theatre program and, in fact, the entire Xavier system.

During his time at Xavier, Jim has directed more than ninety productions including, "*Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*," "*Shrek The Musical*," "*Beauty And The Beast*," "*Fiddler On the Roof*," "*Hello Dolly*," "*Guys and Dolls*," "*A Christmas Carol*" and "*The Phantom Of The Opera*."

He feels blessed to have found his vocation at Xavier and to have the honor of working with such dedicated, generous, loving, and talented people and hopes to continue for many years.