

# irish

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success for  
2004 alum**

## Faith, family, goodness

2013 alum works in  
South America to assist  
victims of domestic  
violence

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Fr. Eric Fedewa

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Alumni notes

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***Mike Kastler, MSF  
NDHS, Class of 1975***



# irish

IRISH is a magazine devoted to the alumni and friends of Notre Dame Preparatory, Notre Dame, Oakland Catholic, Pontiac Catholic, St. Michael and St. Frederick schools. It is distributed free of charge. For more information, please see the alumni section of Notre Dame Prep's web site at [www.ndpma.org/alumni](http://www.ndpma.org/alumni).

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#### ON THE COVER:

2013 alum (with the help of her family) works in South America to assist victims of domestic violence. See page 24.

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## A WORD FROM YOUR ALUMNI DIRECTOR

As the school year winds down and spring is upon us, the alumni board is refreshed and ready to take on a new year. We are excited to announce the addition of Dean Aldo '76 (PC), Michael Kastler '75 (NDHS), and Molly Campbell '08 (NDP) to our alumni board. We are still looking to add a few more members to the board; we hope you will consider joining!

We are really looking forward to unveiling our new softball and baseball fields on April 12, at our "Bless the Bats" event. We invite all alumni, especially former softball and baseball players to join us! There will be a ceremony beginning at 3 p.m. followed by a reception located between the fields. Both our softball and baseball teams will then hit the fields for games! Please join us for this wonderful event! RSVP to [bcampbell@ndpma.org](mailto:bcampbell@ndpma.org).

Do you have old yearbooks you no longer want? We are looking to expand our yearbook collection. We're looking for yearbooks or any other memorabilia from Notre Dame High School, Pontiac Catholic, Oakland Catholic, St. Mike's and St. Fred's. Please contact me if you have any items you would like to donate to our archive.

On July 15, we broke ground on our new 26,000 square-foot academic expansion! The building is on schedule to open for the 2018-19 school year and will offer two new science labs, a robotics room, two art studios, a green house and eight additional classrooms! The campaign has raised nearly \$6 million toward a \$7.5 million goal. This space will transform our building and provide state of the art learning space for our kids.

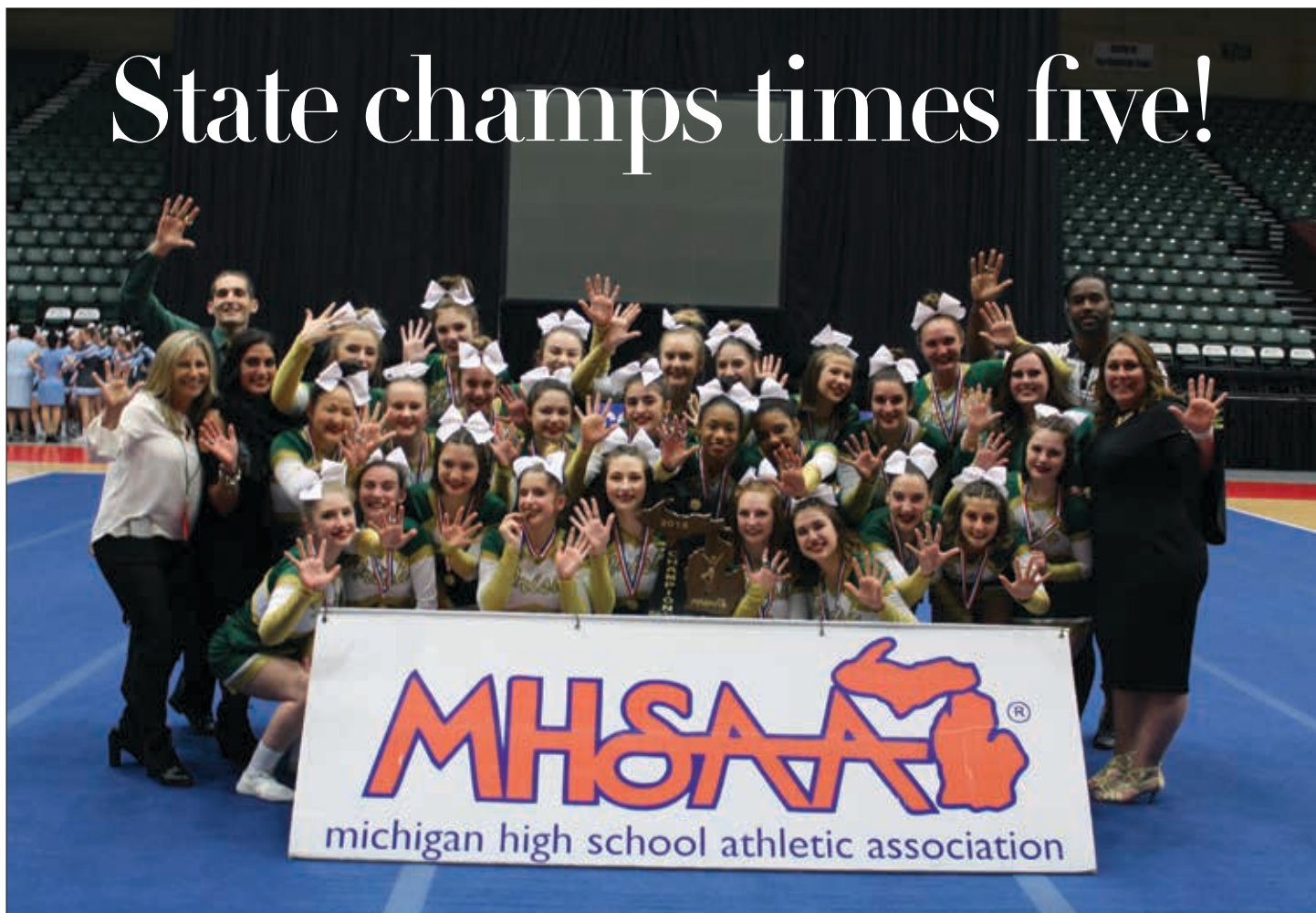
Great things are happening here at Notre Dame! We hope you will find a way to a part of it! If your travels ever bring you near Giddings Road in Pontiac, please don't hesitate to stop by and check out all of the amazing things happening here on campus. I would love to meet you!!

*Beth Campbell*

Beth Campbell  
Director of Alumni Relations, Notre Dame



## State champs times five!



On March 3 in Grand Rapids, Mich., Notre Dame Prep's competitive cheer team earned its fifth consecutive MHSA state championship by finishing atop second-place finisher Richmond and third-place Monroe Jefferson. See page 6 for more.

# Homecoming date set

Oct. 12 homecoming football game to be played against Portland High School on William Kozyra Alumni Field; rest of season schedule set



**T**he athletic department of Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy announced in February that the school's 2018 homecoming football game will be held Friday, October 12, at 7 p.m., vs. Portland High School.

According to Betty Wroubel, NDPMA's athletic director and assistant principal, the Oct. 12 homecoming game joins a complete regular season schedule of games in 2018 for the Fighting Irish varsity football team.

"As is typical, it has been a lot of work to get this schedule together, but it's now pretty much set in stone and Coach Fox and his staff are very much looking forward to it," Wroubel said.

The 2018 campaign for the Irish opens August 24 with a home game vs. Detroit Collegiate Prep (Northwestern) followed by a tough matchup on August 31 at Muskegon Catholic Central, which finished 8-2 last season.

The homecoming game features a match with the Portland Raiders, who ended their 2017 campaign with an overall 11-2 record. Last season, the Irish fell to Portland, 29-27.

The Irish finished their 2017 season at 8-3 after falling to Williamston in the MHSAA district final.

## STAYING IN TOUCH:



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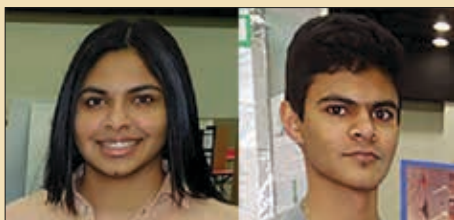
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**Amy Tkac '02** (NDP)



## NOTRE DAME SIBLINGS EARN BIG AWARDS AT DETROIT SCIENCE FAIR

Notre Dame senior Malini Mukherji and her brother, Devarshi, earned significant accolades in early March as part of the Science and Engineering Fair of Metro Detroit, which was held downtown at Cobo Center. Malini won first place in the “Energy: Physical” category and qualified for the Michigan Science Fair. Devarshi, a 9th grader at Notre Dame Prep, brought home second place in the “Computational Biology” category and also qualified for the Michigan Science Fair, which will be held April 7, 2018, at Kettering University in Flint.



In addition to her first-place award and earning her entry to the Michigan State Fair, Malini also won the Great Lakes Water Authority cash award and luncheon; the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office Professional Award; and the Yale Science & Engineering Association, Inc., Certificate and Pewter Medalion.

Last spring, Malini won a “Third Grand Award” in the best of Energy: Chemical category at the International Science and Engineering Fair, the world’s largest international high school STEM event, which was held in Los Angeles. She also picked up an honorable mention in the “Special Awards” category in L.A. for her project, which was called, “A Smart Light-Tracker Using Machine Learning and Dye-Sensitized Solar Cells.”

## ATHLETIC SUMMER CAMPS REGISTRATION IS OPEN



Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy’s youth summer camps will soon be here on campus. And this year, Notre Dame’s

summer program is bigger and more diverse than ever before and parent/student interest is expected to be high. So it’s time now to sign up to ensure your children get a spot in the camp of their choice. Check out NDPMA.org for more information.

As one of the area’s most recognized programs, NDPMA’s summer camps curriculum provides safe, fun, and skill-focused experiences for kids entering grades kindergarten through 12. This year’s lineup includes a wider variety of both athletic and academic camps. The program includes athletic camps in volleyball, soccer, football, basketball and tennis. Academic camps include sessions in art, college essay writing, math, debate and theatre. Camps range from two to five-and-a-half hours per day and offer instruction for all skill levels, from introductory to advanced. All camps are run by Notre Dame faculty members or

Notre Dame staff.

NDPMA has been providing quality and fun-filled summer-camp experiences for more than 10 years and maintains a proven safety track record. Under the expert care of our camp coaches, kids not only learn individual, sport-oriented or creative skills, but also develop personally and socially, learning teamwork and building life skills through interaction with fellow campers.

## SEVEN FROM NDP GET NATIONAL ART HONORS

Notre Dame Prep student-artists Destiney Sandle (12), Maria Mora (12), Kyle Conroy (12), Amelia Cumming (10), Thomas Fazio (12), Kathryn Lee (11) and Natalie Lyijynen (11) learned in early March that they have earned national recognition in the 2018 Scholastic Art and Writing Awards competition.

Sandle and Mora received one gold award each and Conroy, Cumming, Fazio, Lee, Lyijynen and Sandle received silver awards from Scholastic, with Fazio and Sandle each getting two silver awards.

Gold award recipients have an opportunity to travel to New York in early summer to be honored at Carnegie Hall.

Earlier this year, NDP students earned a total of 50 regional awards in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards competition for the Southeastern Michigan region, beating last year’s 45 awards for the school, which was a big increase from the 2016 school record of 27 awards.

According to Sandy LewAllen, Notre Dame’s art chair, earning 50 awards tops the number of awards ever won at Notre Dame Prep and is one of the largest groups from any school in the region, including very large public schools such as Stoney Creek and Novi. “I couldn’t be any more proud of all of our art students and their efforts,” she said back in January.



One piece from Destiney Sandle, Grade 12, “Everything in Me” portfolio of eight pieces, National Silver Award

## FIVE FOR CHEER



(Story and photo by Drew Ellis, The Oakland Press)

The Division 3 cheer state championships once again came down to Richmond and Pontiac Notre Dame Prep in 2018.

However, the story remained the same for both teams, as the Fighting Irish held their position over the Blue Devils, scoring a 776.48 to claim its fifth straight state championship.

“We have an amazing community at Notre Dame and our kids just have a different standard of excellence,” Irish coach

Beth Campbell said of winning five straight titles. “They refuse to not give it their all. They never come in with 80 percent. That is something special and when I came to Notre Dame that is something I noticed from the minute I walked in the door. The effort and the standards are different here than other places and I think that is the key to our success.”

Richmond finished with a total of 771.50 to earn runner-up for the fourth straight year. The Blue Devils won the D3 title in 2012 and 2013 before the Irish began their current run.

The Irish had a young squad in 2018, making Saturday’s title even more impressive. With just four seniors and five juniors, the roster of 25 came together quickly to make another championship happen.

“This season I had 10 freshmen, five sophomores and two have never been on the mat. We graduated seven kids that were outstanding in our program and I thought in the beginning of the season it was going to be a rebuilding year,” Campbell said. “These kids came in and bought into our culture from Day 1. This is a humungous accomplishment and I never would have dreamed it, to be honest.”

#### NOTRE DAME SENIOR WINS SPECIAL STATE SCHOLARSHIP

Notre Dame senior Celia Gaynor was named one of only six senior student-athletes in Michigan to earn the 2018 Michigan Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (MIAAAA) scholarship.

“Congratulations to Celia on winning this honor and scholarship,” said NDPMA athletic director and assistant principal Betty Wroubel. “This is quite an honor! The Michigan Interscholastic Athletic Administrators (MIAAAA) scholarship is a highly competitive scholarship reserved for student athletes who best exemplify the values found and developed in educational athletics.”

The \$1,000 grant is part of an annual MIAAAA program that helps defray the college expenses of exceptional graduating seniors as they make their way to colleges and universities in the fall.

A two-sport (basketball and soccer) athletic and academic standout for the Fighting Irish, Gaynor, who is the daughter of NDHS alum Paul Gaynor (’84), also was named 2017 First-Team All-State in soccer and was instrumental in Notre Dame’s 2016 state title in soccer. In January, she was named a finalist for the Michigan High School Athletic Association’s Scholar-Athlete Award in Class B.

Gaynor will take her soccer skills to Butler University in the fall.

“I am so excited and proud that our professional organization (MIAAAA) chose Celia as one of the six recipients from the hundreds of applications they received,” Wroubel added. “Her



character, values and understanding of the role that high school sports plays in developing good young people, citizens and academic scholars serves as a great example for others to model.”

Gaynor will be playing soccer at Butler University in Indianapolis, Ind.

#### FOUR SENIORS NAMED NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP FINALISTS



NDP seniors, from left, Olivia Heming, Sean Higgins, Gretel Keller and Malini Mukherji were named National Merit Scholarship finalists by the National Merit Scholarship Corp.

Four members of Notre Dame Prep’s Class of 2018 have been named finalists in the 2018 National Merit Scholarship Program. NDP seniors Olivia Heming, Sean Higgins, Gretel Keller and Malini Mukherji will now compete for more than 7,500 scholarships worth more than \$32 million that will be awarded in the spring.

Three types of scholarships will be offered by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, including about 2,500 awarded by state allotments, 1,000 corporate-sponsored scholarships and more than 4,000 sponsored by 200 colleges and universities.

In March, NMSC will begin mailing scholarship offers to winners of the 2018 scholarships. Notre Dame’s four seniors were named NMS semifinalists in September of last year.

The National Merit® Scholarship Program is an academic competition for recognition and scholarships that began in 1955. High school students enter the National Merit Program by taking the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®) — which serves as an initial screen of approximately 1.6 million entrants each year — and by meeting published program entry and participation requirements.

#### NOTRE DAME’S SKI TEAMS EARN SPECIAL AWARD

In early February, as Notre Dame’s girls and boys teams were both wrapping up MHSAA regional titles at Pine Knob, they found out they also won the special “Dan Costigan Award,” which goes to the top combined girls and boys team in each division. It also was the first time in school history that both teams captured regional titles in the same season.

Longtime Detroit Country Day ski coach Dan Costigan passed away in 2010.

The Dan Costigan award was initiated during the 2014 ski season and is named in memory of longtime Detroit Country Day ski coach Dan Costigan, who died in 2012 at the age of

*Please see IRISH News, page 14*

The world of nonprofits is one fraught with peril as there is an infinite number of causes worthy of support but a seemingly finite number of those willing to contribute to those causes. Ensuring that aid reaches needy individuals or organizations is a tough job requiring trained development personnel willing to do the hard work that has as its essence the often uncomfortable task of asking others for money.

Working hard, however, doesn't appear to be a problem for 2002 Notre Dame grad Kristen Rossi, who currently is vice president of development and communications at the Alzheimer's Association of Greater Michigan.

She said that despite the sometimes frustrating and difficult work, she loves working for nonprofits because it's challenging and because of its diversity — diversity of people and diversity of need.

"I've had the great opportunity to step into many different spheres and wear many different hats in the nonprofit sector," she said recently in an interview with the Notre Dame Alumni Association. "Apart from where I work, I'm also engaged in other local nonprofits as a volunteer. I serve on the board of a human-services organization, Community Social Services of Wayne County. I also sit on a committee for the Eastern Market and I'm very active in the Detroit Boat Club Crew."

### WANTED TO BE A TEACHER

Rossi's interest in development and fundraising actually began back in college while working toward an expected career in education.

"I went to Western Michigan University and absolutely loved my time there," Rossi said. "Western was a perfect choice for me. I wanted a college on the smaller side, but not tiny. I wanted to be outside of my hometown, but not too far. And I wanted to be a teacher at that time, and WMU had a great teaching program."

But the path to becoming a teacher ended up being rather short.

"I must have changed my major five times or more at Western," she said. "I wanted something that wasn't quite as scripted but still very action-oriented. I just happened to take a class in nonprofit leadership during my junior year of college and I was immediately smitten. I ended up minoring in that subject and that drove me into a master's program in public administration with a focus on nonprofit management."

### PERFECT GRAMMAR AND READY FOR ANYTHING

Rossi recalls how she felt totally ready for the rigors of college when she first arrived on campus in Kalamazoo.

"I felt very well-prepared in my first semester at college," she said. "I remember getting back my first writing assignment in advanced Spanish, and my professor congratulated me on having perfect grammar. I attributed that to Senora Tessada and Senora Anderson at NDI."

Rossi also noticed that many of her fellow students at Western were struggling during their first semester. But in her case, she felt totally prepared due to some really great teachers at Notre Dame.

"I knew Mrs. Anderson when she was Ms. Rose and she was definitely one of my favorites and just an amazing Spanish teacher," Rossi recalled. "Mrs. Bembas taught me the enormously valuable five-paragraph essay and really helped foster my love of reading. And, of course, Mr. Simon made political science so much fun!"

### FIRST NONPROFIT JOB

Meanwhile, as she was going through her master's track at WMU, Rossi picked up her first actual job at a nonprofit in the university's Foundation, which promotes and provides donor investments to the school.

"I received a crash course in fund development and learned what it actually takes to execute big initiatives," she said. "During my four years at the Foundation, I learned the importance of community connections and how to lead a team. This also was the first place that I truly felt part of a wider network. I joined a local board, I volunteered on an equal-rights campaign and felt totally connected to the Kalamazoo community."

She was tempted to stay in the WMU/Kalamazoo community after completing her Master of Public Administration degree because it had become like home to her. Instead she took a big leap, literally and figuratively, and she moved to Italy for two years to teach English as a second language with Berlitz.

"That really was fulfilling another one of my dreams of living abroad, plus I did get to do some teaching after all," she said. "Later, I even wondered if I should take those two years in Italy off of my resume because it wasn't really congruent to the rest of my career at that point. But eventually I realized that it was not only a pivotal experience in my life, but it actually taught me just as much if not more than any other job or course of study I had. I learned to get by on my own in another country, I had a front seat to ancient history, I learned another language and I connected more deeply with my family in Italy."

When Rossi returned to the states, however, she was eager to jump back into the nonprofit sector again, this time in Detroit. She got a job in development for the Detroit Opera House and quickly moved to the Detroit Historical Society where she also worked with another Notre Dame alum, Robert Bury ('71), who recently retired as the executive director and CEO of the Historical Society.

"I loved working in arts and culture — it's a tough game, but it is very rewarding."

She also learned a lot about community and economic development and how to make sure that one's organization always has a seat "at the table" in Detroit's philanthropic arena.

Now at the Alzheimer's Association, she said she considers herself lucky to be able to gain even more insight into public policy and research, and how to work toward big institutional goals. Rossi also is quick to credit her education and past positions for her early career success.

"Without a doubt, the mentorship and guidance I've received over the years has been the most influential as I moved into increasing levels of leadership," said Rossi, who in 2014 earned a fellowship in the Association of Fundraising Professionals Greater Detroit Chapter Marjorie S. Fisher Fellows program. "I love to meet and get to know new people, so asking for help has always been second nature to me. But especially early on, I never expected those connections to truly help guide my career. Starting with the professors in college and other people I've admired, I have benefited greatly from the kindness of others."

She said that because she realizes that her own good fortune was due in large part to her own mentors, she's learned to pay it forward, to be assertive, to never miss an opportunity to connect and be connected with others, to be a lifelong learner and to be genuine in all interactions.

"I am honored to work in service to others and hope that over time I can help give back all that has been generously given to me." ■



# Serving others

A professional portrait of Kristin Rossi, a woman with long, wavy brown hair and blue eyes, smiling warmly. She is wearing a dark blue pinstriped blazer over a light-colored collared shirt. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue.

Notre Dame alum takes a strong stand for nonprofits.

Kristin Rossi '02 (NDP) currently is vice president of development and communications at the Alzheimer's Association of Greater Michigan.

# Handcrafting success

Notre Dame alum is comfortable with both global supply-chain management and woodworking.



One of 2004 Notre Dame alum Paul Bonenberger's recent installations at a home in Royal Oak.

When 2004 Notre Dame grad Paul Bonenberger got to Michigan State University as a freshman, he wasn't quite sure what he would major in although he knew it would be business-related. He also didn't know then that his interest in business would ultimately lead him to a successful career in global manufacturing and operations management as well as a second career as a business owner.

"I was undecided for my freshman year and focused on entering the Broad College of Business at MSU while I decided on a specialization," said Bonenberger, currently working in risk management at General Motors, while maintaining his own company, M1 Craft Co., which specializes in made-to-order home fixtures, tables, shelving, lighting fixtures and wall art.

Bonenberger got bit by the global supply-management bug when, as a student at MSU, he spent a summer abroad in Rome, Italy, participating in a program focusing on global interdependence.

"Following that experience and my general interest in global business, I chose to focus on supply-chain and operations management, which eventually led to a bachelor's degree in supply-chain management," he said. Bonenberger then went on to receive an Oakland University MBA, which focused on operations management and entrepreneurship.

## WELL-PREPARED, THANKS TO NOTRE DAME

He credits Notre Dame with providing the proper study and time-management skills necessary to succeed both in college and in the workplace.

"My freshman year at Michigan State was a relatively easy transition," he recalled. "At NDP, time-management skills are essential and there are high academic expectations expected of students. As a result of the challenging NDP environment, I found freshman year at MSU to be relatively underwhelming. It actually allowed me to focus on academics and have more time for extracurriculars as well. By establishing 'good habits' before entering the college curriculum, i.e., from Notre Dame, I juggled these activities while maintaining my GPA."

Like all of Notre Dame's alumni, Bonenberger has a boatload of fond memories and recollections from his years in high school. But what comes to mind when asked about a favorite memory? "Father Joe's [Hindelang] understated sarcasm is probably among what I miss the most," he said with perhaps a smidgeon of his own brand of sarcasm.

After graduating college, Bonenberger's first professional position was in logistics at General Dynamics Land Systems, where he assisted with the distribution and support of parts supply to teams positioned in the Middle East during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Following that job, he moved to an engineering com-



pany responsible for supporting the simulation and tooling of Chrysler's Belvedere vehicle assembly plant. This gave him the opportunity to work in a hands-on position, learning about the vehicle-assembly process and the tooling used to ensure efficient plant operations and operator safety.

Bonenberger then spent 2012 to 2016 at Fiat Chrysler Automotive, managing the outbound supply chain to international customers in the Middle East, Asia Pacific and South America.

"I experienced first-hand the global interdependencies of the automotive industry, and the dynamic environment that exists within global economies," he said. "At FCA, I was responsible for the performance of multiple warehouses around the world and was immersed in diverse cultures and business practices. This truly was an incredible experience."

Now at General Motors, he's working in a relatively new field within the manufacturing and production world, which gives him an opportunity to develop and implement newer tools to help manage business better in a highly competitive industry.

But if all that wasn't enough, Bonenberger decided he actually needed more to keep him occupied. Which, for someone with outstanding time-management skills, was no problem, of course.

## TV SHOW

About seven years ago, Bonenberger purchased and began renovating his first home, and in 2015, he began a full flip of another property he had purchased.

"During those experiences, I learned that I really enjoyed woodworking, building and being hands-on with projects," he said. "This led me to the founding of M1 Craft Co., which was my opportunity to go through the process of founding and creating a brand, and creating a unique product that could appeal to a broad customer base. The opportunity to create something that becomes a fixture in someone's home is an incredible feeling for me."

Also a bit incredible for Bonenberger was the fact that not even five months after establishing his company, he was asked to appear on a popular TV series that focused on entrepreneurs who are into handcrafting and marketing products for the home-goods market.

"There is a lot of value, perceived and actual, associated with having a handmade good in your home," he added. "It is not necessarily a guarantee of quality, and mistakes can happen when building any product, however, there is a level of satisfaction for the consumer knowing they are purchasing something that was



At his company, M1 Craft Co., Bonenberger uses electrical voltage to create patterns similar to a lightning flash on his products. These are often called "Lichtenberg figures," which are branching electric discharges that sometimes appear on the surface or in the interior of insulating materials.

built by someone's bare hands, from start to finish."

## 'NAUGHT WITHOUT LABOR'

Because of its good online presence, Bonenberger's company grabbed the attention of the INSP Network, an American digital cable and satellite television channel that broadcasts family entertainment programming, and was featured on the network's show, "Handcrafted America."

"My company was featured in season 3, episode 7," he said. "This was incredibly stressful and intimidating, but well worth it and an amazing experience. As a result, I've seen a drastic increase in order volume and it's given me the opportunity to further develop custom applications for my products."

He said that in addition to his healthy online sales, he's also sold products directly to several southeast Mich.-based businesses to furnish their sales space.

He's ecstatic about his early good fortune, but he doesn't for a minute suggest that anything other than hard work had anything to do with such extraordinary success.

"'Naught without labor' was one of the expressions I found on my fraternity crest in college," he said. "That, plus the single word 'onward,' which I've always kept in the back of my mind. They constantly remind me that there is no such thing as 'deserving' something; one must be willing to work much harder than expected to achieve incredible goals, and instead of reflecting on shortcomings, to keep pushing toward greater things."

Bonenberger plans to continue to grow M1 Craft Co. and to also continue as a risk-management professional. He said he may decide to pursue still more other ventures, too.

"What will lead to the success of these things is the ability to continue to create value for customers," he said, "and to properly leverage risks to create a strong foundation and brand as needs change in the world around us." ■



Bonenberger is with Jill Wagner, the host of INSP TV's "Handcrafted America."

# Living, breathing legacy

Notre Dame's head of school (and alum) Andy Guest talks about how Notre Dame students represent the culmination of the experience of all alumni.



Andy Guest, right, was named head of school of Notre Dame in February 2017. Prior to that, he had been serving as interim head of school and before that was director of advancement for the school.

Operating a faith-based school in current times is both exhilarating and challenging. The exhilaration comes from the confidence and success in knowing that we deliver a Catholic and internationally recognized, college-preparatory experience of lasting value to a diverse population of students. Last fall, we were selected as the best Catholic school in the state of Michigan for the second time in three years! This is directly attributed to the hard work and dedication of the Notre Dame faculty and staff, and to the guidance of the Marist Fathers and Brother Louis.

The challenge comes from the constant attacks from outside forces that continue to shake our country and its faith. NFL players refusing to stand during the national anthem, racial violence, political divisiveness, changing marital laws and definitions of sexuality, legalization of marijuana and the school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, are all issues that we have had to address this school year alone. Add to that the influence of social media and 24/7 connectedness and you can only imagine how difficult it can be for a young person growing up in today's world.

Fortunately, Notre Dame remains committed to forming good Christian people, upright citizens and academic scholars. We are an oasis of safety, academic excellence and faith formation in a desert of social chaos. Our teachers and coaches are committed to being role models for our students and our students work diligently to be the best version of themselves possible at a school where it's "cool to be smart."

We teach children to strive for success, but also to cope with failure. Life is a marathon, not a sprint. While we often tout our

college-acceptance rates, we also tell students it is far more important for the "what they do" with their college experience than "where they attend." Last year alone, our graduating class of 181 seniors were accepted to more than 140 different colleges and universities across the country.

As alums from NDPMA, NDHS, PC/OC, St. Michael or St. Frederick, we ask you to embrace the current student body as the living, breathing legacy of your experiences as a graduate from a Catholic school. We strive to create the best environment possible for students, an environment where young people can grow, learn and excel in life.

In four short months, we will be opening a brand new 26,000-sq.-ft. science, arts and technology wing. The new wing will include classrooms, science labs, art studios, a robotics lab and a greenhouse. We have currently raised nearly \$6 million toward our \$7.5 million goal through the March on to Victory campaign, and while we still have more to raise, we appreciate the many alumni who have come forward to support this project.

I would like to personally invite all alumni to visit the school to see first-hand the great things that are happening at Notre Dame. Remember, we would not exist without the legacy of all our alumni.

I wish you all a happy and blessed spring. Go Irish!

*Andrew J. Guest*

Andy Guest '84 (NDHS)  
Head of School



# Irish Week Challenge reaches new heights

The Notre Dame community participated in force during the 2018 Irish Week Challenge, smashing last year's marks.

**T**he 4th Annual Irish Week Challenge finished up on March 16 as another big success for NDPMA students! This year's Challenge raised more than \$11,000 in support of Notre Dame and its annual appeal, The Notre Dame Fund, which directly benefits students at the school from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade.

Similar to last year's Challenge, this year's fundraising effort was focused on everyone who's served at any of the Notre Dame schools as well as Pontiac Catholic or Oakland Catholic. As a result, 160 faculty and staff members were honored last week, a big increase over 2017's 115. Among those called out for honor during the week were Tony Borton, Fr. John Bryson, Betty Wroubel, Fr. John Kiselica, Br. Louis Plourde, Conrad Vachon and Sandy LewAllen. A complete list of the 2018 "champions" is available below.

"One hundred eighty gifts were made by 124 donors," said Notre

Dame Fund director Atif Lodhi. "More than 60 members of the Notre Dame community contributed \$100 or more to the Irish Week Challenge, which earned them a special limited-edition t-shirt."

Lodhi said that each "champion" also was recognized on social media and on the NDPMA website. In addition, Irish Week Champions will receive a personalized letter and be recognized in the school's annual report.

"A big thank you to all in the community for taking part in the Irish Week Challenge and making it a week to remember," Lodhi said. "We appreciate the recognition and support for such a vital institution. Go Irish!"

The overall goal for The Notre Dame Fund is \$600,000, which school officials hope to reach or surpass by the end of the fiscal year, June 30, 2018. More information on the fund is at [ndpma.org/ndfund](http://ndpma.org/ndfund). ■

## THE IRISH WEEK 2018 "CHAMPIONS" CHALLENGE BENEFITED ALL NOTRE DAME STUDENTS

Kim Anderson  
Melissa Archer  
Diana Atkins  
Joanne Beauchamp  
John Barbee  
Carol Belkowski  
Kathy Bembas  
Kelly Bicknell  
Maria Billings  
Margie Bond  
Jason Borngesser  
Tony Borton  
Kathy Bowers  
Fr. John Bryson, s.m.  
Anthony Butorac  
Beth Campbell  
Molly Campbell  
Russ Cannon  
Michael Carman  
Daniel Chun  
Joan Cross  
Ed Davis  
John Deibel  
Allison Dery  
Fr. Ron DesRosiers, s.m.  
Ned Devine  
Kathy Downs  
James Doyle  
Kathy Dugan  
Dolores Connors Elbode  
David Fazzini  
Julie Frakes  
Pat Fox  
Rachel Fruchey  
Michelle Garcia  
Bev Gifford  
Jenny Gillis  
Gretchen Glick  
Stacy Goliff  
Jim Grossi

John Grossman  
Andrew Guest  
Bobbie Hall  
Patricia Hall  
Laura Hand  
Claudia Heinbuck  
Fr. Joe Hindelang, s.m.  
Duane Holmes  
Larry Jack  
Brandon Jezdimir  
Greg Kaiser  
Mike Kelly  
Tom Kelly  
Virginia "Gini" Kelly  
Denise Kelly-Kirk  
Fr. John Kiselica  
Eden Konja  
Steven Konopacki  
Joan Kopytek  
Norm Kotarski  
Donna Kotzan  
Lin Krankel  
Kim Kriesel  
Anthony "TJ" Kulick  
Bob LaPointe  
Marty Lappe  
Della Lawrence  
Mary Jo Leseman  
Sandy LewAllen  
Kyle Lilek  
Brian Little  
Atif Lodhi  
Carrie Lytle  
Denise Mahoney  
Alayna Manos  
Joe Martin  
Clare McCaffrey  
Kathleen McCaffrey  
Eleanor McCaskey  
Mark McCaskey

Jerry McGhee  
Sue McGinnis  
Mark McGreevy  
Tina McLaughlin  
Amy McLeod  
Stephanie Medina  
Greg Milewski  
Rachel Alexander Miller  
Cathy Moras  
Sylvia Mulrenin  
Mark Murphy  
Stephanie Nester  
Heidi Newby  
Fr. Ron Nikodem, s.m.  
Kathleen Offer  
Eric Olson  
Fr. Leon Olszamowski, s.m.  
Dave Osiecki  
Jennifer Pakkala  
Katrina Palushaj  
Ken Parent  
Kala Parker  
Mary Jane Pasko  
Kelly Patterson  
Robert Patterson  
Virginia Pauwels  
Shari Phillips  
Michelle Pittel  
Marie Place  
Br. Louis Plourde, s.m.  
Chris Polsinelli  
Amy Priess  
Lauren Raleigh  
Elaine Reimann  
Hal Rice  
Pete Riley  
Whitney Robinson  
Megan Rochon  
Jamie Rodda  
Katrina Sagert

Patricia Salazar  
Vlado Salic  
Justine Sciriha  
Jim Sesi  
Larry Sigel  
Marty Simmonds  
Gregory Simon  
John Smith  
Dan Staniszewski  
Fr. James Strasz, s.m.  
Bob Strong  
Donna Stuk  
Mychal Thom  
Katherine Thomas  
Ellen Tessada  
Susan "Toz" Toczykowski  
Jim Travis  
Vince Trzcinski  
Conrad Vachon  
Barb Wade  
Mary Watson  
Jason Whalen  
Mary Jane Williams  
Rick Winiarski  
Betty Wroubel  
Sue Wylie  
Patricia Wyza  
Sheri Yanik  
Tyler Yanik  
Jocelynn Yaroch  
Melissa York  
Lauren Zajdel  
Michelle Zimmerman  
Cathy Zuccaro  
NDPMA faculty and staff  
Oakland County Sheriff deputies:  
Gary Claudio  
Nicole Davis  
Scott Tewes  
Brian Thomas



55 after a brief illness from a skin and blood disorder. He also was named the MHSAA ski "Coach of the Year" in 2006. Costigan's wife, Patty, now heads the DCDS program.

Craig McLeod, who assists Notre Dame's boys and girls head coach John Deibel, said that when Costigan died, his wife created the award in his honor.

"We earned that distinction and were given the award by Patty yesterday," McLeod said. "Dan was a great guy and we should be really proud of being recognized with this award!"

NDP head coach Deibel added that getting the award also meant a lot to him. "There were a lot of tears when the award was presented to us," he said. "This was very moving for me personally."

### NOTRE DAME ART TEACHER RECEIVES 'INSPIRING' AWARD

On Feb. 6, Notre Dame visual arts teacher Sandy LewAllen received the inaugural "Inspiring High School Teacher Award" at the 2018 Scholastic Art awards ceremony, which was held at the Detroit Film Theatre.

According to Amy Armand, who is the director of recruitment for Detroit's College for Creative Studies and regional coordinator for the Scholastic Art Awards competition, LewAllen, who also serves as Notre Dame's visual and performing arts chair, was nominated by her students after the 2017 competition.

LewAllen also serves as Notre Dame's visual and performing arts chair.

"Last year, after the exhibits and ceremonies were over, I reached out to all students who had participated and asked if they would complete a survey to nominate a teacher who went above and beyond — to help them, push them, mentor them, and inspire them," Armand said. "I figured it's about time to start recognizing teachers like Sandy who go that extra mile all the time."

Armand said that out of all the nominations that she received, the stories about LewAllen from her students touched her the most. "Congratulations to her on this well-deserved honor!"

"We've always worked hard to make sure the program is one that students and teachers can all be proud of, and that there are no barriers to enter for any student who wants to participate," Armand added. "However, I realize that if it wasn't for dedicated teachers like Sandy LewAllen, there would be no program at all."

### NOTRE DAME STUDENTS GO TO THE DOGS

Twenty-four students from Notre Dame's upper division received a lesson in leadership last month courtesy of the Leader

Dogs for the Blind during a visit to the nonprofit's headquarters in Rochester Hills.

Notre Dame assistant athletic director Maureen Radulski, who accompanied the students to Leader Dogs, said that the kids were excited about the visit where they also learned a great deal from a program called "Harness the Power of Leadership." The interactive workshop, sponsored by Leader Dogs, teaches those in the sighted community how to use the same skills used by blind people and their guide dogs to communicate more effectively and to lead more successful personal and professional lives.

"As someone with a passion for teaching young people to be leaders, I thought this was a unique opportunity for our students to learn a different approach to learning leadership," Radulski added.



Michael Dzialo, a Notre Dame alum ('82) and current parent of two NDPMA students, helped set up the workshop for Notre Dame after exploring the same workshop for employees of his own company, Managed Assets Portfolios, LLC, based in Rochester.

"I saw this as an excellent opportunity for Notre Dame students to learn and practice some real-life leadership skills they can apply in both their academic and professional endeavors," said Dzialo, who

founded MAP in 2000.

The one-day workshop, which was taught by a person who is blind along with his own leader dog, demonstrated to the students foundational principles in leadership, management, communication and team-building. The tools presented are based on training techniques Leader Dogs for the Blind, named a "Best In America" Charity by the Independent Charities of America (ICA), has been using for more than 80 years as part of their mission to empower people who are blind or visually impaired to lead independent lives.

Andy Guest, Notre Dame's head of school, helped facilitate the session due to his acquaintance with Dzialo as a parent and fellow NDHS alum. (Guest graduated from NDHS in 1984.)

"I am excited for our students to gain these communication and team-building skills from such a unique perspective, but also for their empathy for the blind," Guest said. "It is good for students to experience life from the viewpoint of those who don't have the good fortune of visual sight."

### NOTRE DAME STUDENTS COME OUT ON TOP AT REGIONAL CHOIR FEST

Three students from Notre Dame's upper division sang in a regional Solo and Ensemble choir festival held Jan. 20 at Detroit Country Day School and came home with the top prize.

All members of the school's chamber choir, junior Rowland Scheessele, senior Emily Macks and junior Grace Mersino each received a level-1 rating, which is the highest possible from such a competition. It gives the three of them the opportunity to participate in the upcoming Michigan Youth Arts Festival, a state-wide competition.

Scheessele said he's looking forward to competing in such a large group.

*Please see IRISH News, page 18*



# 'Time to pay it forward'

NDPMA family says their children have benefited from attending Notre Dame. Now they want to ensure that future students enjoy those same benefits and more.



The Seitzingers are generous contributors to the March on to Victory campaign for a new science, art, and technology wing. From left, Brad, Jill, Eli and Claire.

**O**n March 9 of last year, Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy launched the public phase of its campaign to raise a total of \$7.5 million for a new science, art and technology wing to be built on its campus in Pontiac.

Dubbed the "March on to Victory" campaign, the public phase of the fundraising effort was introduced at a special celebration to a crowd of more than 700 who heard from school and campaign officials and watched a special video presentation.

Notre Dame head of school Andy Guest said that since the launch of the campaign, more than \$5.8 million has been pledged to date. "But we are working hard to close the gap between where we are today and the \$7.5 million goal. We want to secure as much as we can if not all of it before we open the facility ahead of the 2018 school year."

Daron Gifford is the NDPMA board chairman and co-chair of the MOTV campaign.

"The big goal of this campaign, which is the most ambitious in the school's history, is to help our great school to maintain its educational leadership not only for our current generation of students, but also for many generations of students to come," said Gifford, who also is an alumni parent.

Echoing Gifford are Jill and Brad Seitzinger — parents of Claire, an NDP senior, and Eli, a

freshman — who are significant contributors to the campaign.

"Our children have benefited from the school's current facilities, which have been provided to us in part from donations that came before us," said Jill Seitzinger, who also is a school trustee. "Now it's our time to pay it forward."

The new 26,000-square-foot facility, which is well underway and on schedule, includes a one-story science, technology and arts building that has already been connected to both the current middle-school and upper-school wings. When it opens before school begins in August, it will feature science laboratory facilities, collaborative learning classrooms, a robotics lab, a specially designed greenhouse, and a fine arts studio.

For the Seitzingers, even though Claire will have graduated before the new facility opens and Eli will be starting his second year in the upper school, they are thinking about the many students who will benefit from it well into the future.

"We hope the new science, art and technology wing will provide teachers with the space they need to teach all of the programs that future students want and deserve," Jill Seitzinger said. "Also, the facility's robotics lab and greenhouse are new and exciting ways to learn and are steps ahead of most schools in this area. We believe this will help keep NDPMA a top-ranked school."

The 1,200 square-foot robotics lab and 850 square-foot adjoining classroom are key components to the new wing. Notre Dame's robotics program has grown to encompass world-ranked programs at its lower, middle and upper divisions and the robotics center will complement the space currently provided through the school's ongoing relationship with FIAT Chrysler, a sponsor of our robotics program since its inception.

"The new greenhouse has been designed to be a powerful environmental education tool for Notre Dame students of all ages," said Fr. Leon Olszamowski, s.m., Pontiac Notre Dame's founder and its current corporate president. "The greenhouse also will provide students with the unique opportunity to explore hydroponic growing systems, which is a new way to develop efficient food sources. Our students who study natural and social science, math, language arts, visual arts and more will benefit from the greenhouse and its garden-like setting."

The many other unique opportunities that Notre Dame has already provided to students and their families are not lost on Jill Seitzinger, who has been consistent in her assessment of the school.

Notre Dame "is a phenomenal school and everyone here truly lives the mission," she said when the campaign for the new wing was first announced. "Both our children are thriving not only academically, but as good Christian people and upright citizens. We are very happy with Notre Dame."

Today, Seitzinger is equally effusive.

"NDPMA has given our family an environment to meet many great kids and parents with similar values as well as a top-notch education to Claire and Eli," she said. She also said that her kids are being brought up to be both responsible and generous with their own money.

"We have taught our children that when budgeting money, five categories are important: save, spend, invest, tithe and donate," said Seitzinger, who noted that she and her husband strive to be role models in those areas as well as in the volunteer work they do. "We participate and serve because nonprofits like NDPMA typically need lots of help and we believe all parents should play a role."

To learn more about the campaign, its impact on students and how to participate, please visit [ndpma.org/marchontovictory](http://ndpma.org/marchontovictory). ■

# Fun, faith and formation

Alum and parish priest says Notre Dame Prep was both fun and profoundly influential in his journey to the priesthood.

**T**wo-thousand-six Notre Dame Prep alum Fr. Dennis Strach, C.S.C., was ordained in 2016. His ordination completed a journey to the priesthood that included a bachelor's degree in music from Oakland University and an M.Div degree from the University of Notre Dame. Currently, he is the parochial vicar at St. Ignatius Martyr Catholic Church in Austin, Texas. And while Strach's journey to the Congre-

said Hindelang. "He was involved in a lot of things, well-rounded, compassionate and well-liked by peers and teachers. And despite the impersonations he did of many of us, he was talented and really funny. Without being showy about it, he seemed very much at ease putting his faith into action. And as a Holy Cross priest, Fr. Dennis is still that impressive, down-to-earth, service-oriented and funny guy. It was good to see him grow over the years on his journey to something that has

**NDPMA:** So what have you been up to since then?

**DS:** I was assigned to St. Ignatius Martyr Catholic Church (Austin, Texas) in 2015, so my parishioners have known me as seminarian Dennis, Deacon Dennis, and now Fr. Dennis! Our community is very active, with more than 3,500 parishioners, two to four Masses each day, and six Masses each weekend. All of our sacraments are celebrated in both English and Spanish (Thank you, Sra. Tessada!). We also have an elementary school (pre-k through eighth grade) with about 235 registered students.

I minister as the associate pastor of the parish, although I just finished a brief five-month run as administrator (essentially "temporary pastor") after our previous pastor, Fr. Bill Wack, C.S.C., was elected bishop of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee. I was asked to "hold down the fort" until our new pastor arrived. While challenging in many respects, this really gave me a sense of what it is like to be a full-time pastor, which is really an invaluable experience this early on in my priesthood.

In addition to my regular duties as a parish priest, I have been assigned by my religious superiors to assist with secretarial tasks and music/liturgy preparations for our annual Congregational leadership meetings in Rome, where I travel each November. I also serve on a committee that advises the Bishop of Austin on decisions related to the formation of permanent deacons for the diocese.

There is always so much to do and no day is ever the same. I love being a priest!

**NDPMA:** How has your time at Notre Dame Prep informed your choice to become a priest? Did you consider the priesthood back then?

**DS:** The time I spent at Notre Dame Prep was — hands down — critical in laying the groundwork for my discernment and prayer, and my eventual decision to become a priest. I first thought about becoming a priest when I was in grade school. I actually used to play Mass with Wonder Bread and Juicy Juice. I made my mom listen to my homilies and I gave "communion" to our dog because none of my friends wanted to play Mass with me, I guess. As a sophomore in high school, the desire to be a priest took root in a more profound way and I began to explore what the life of a



Notre Dame alum Fr. Dennis Strach, C.S.C., ('06) is the parochial vicar at St. Ignatius Martyr Catholic Church in Austin, Texas.

gation of Holy Cross also included a profoundly influential four years at Notre Dame Prep, it actually began much earlier in his life.

"I first thought about becoming a priest when I was in grade school," said Strach. "I used to play Mass with Wonder Bread and Juicy Juice. I made my mom listen to my homilies and I gave 'communion' to our dog because none of my friends wanted to play Mass with me."

But Strach said the time he spent at Notre Dame Prep was, hands down, absolutely critical in laying the groundwork for his discernment and prayer — and for his eventual decision to become a priest.

Fr. Joe Hindelang, ND Prep's principal, recalls Strach as a talented and faithful young man.

"As a student, Dennis was impressive,"

made him so happy."

Check out what Fr. Dennis said recently about that journey and how Notre Dame Prep figured so prominently along the way.

**NOTRE DAME:** When and where were you ordained to the priesthood?

**FR. DENNIS STRACH:** I was ordained a priest for the Congregation of Holy Cross on April 2, 2016, at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart on the campus of the University of Notre Dame (Notre Dame, Ind.). The Congregation of Holy Cross is a religious order that was founded in France (like the Marists) by Bl. Basil Moreau. After coming to the United States, they founded a number of apostolates, including the University of Notre Dame. Holy Cross also boasts one saint from the order, St. (Brother) Andre Bessette.



priest actually looked like (What did priests do besides Mass anyway?). But I was like any other high schooler — I had a girlfriend and was involved in lots of after-school activities and clubs — but I was talking to different priests, reading books about prayer, and learning more about the Mass. Looking back, the most influential and directive part of my formation at NDP was the personal attention I received from the faculty, staff, and from the Marist community.

All of my teachers, even the administration, knew who I was (for mostly good reasons, I think), they knew my gifts and my shortcomings, and they pushed me to do my absolute



best. To them, it wasn't just about my grades, it was about me becoming the person that God wanted me to be. While, I'll admit, I was not entirely responsive at the time, the goodness they saw in me and the ways they articulated their care for me was so profound. In the years that followed, it led me to delve more deeply into the question of how God was calling me to love. Fr. Joe Hindelang, s.m., and Fr. Jim Strasz, s.m., both took intentional time to teach me how to pray, how to discern God's will, and introduced me to the consecrated religious life. The influence of all of these teachers and mentors at NDP laid the groundwork for my decision to eventually pursue the vocation to the priesthood.

If anyone reading this ever considered (even briefly) a vocation to religious life or priesthood, I would recommend talking about it with someone you trust. It really helps to get your questions out on the table and get some advice from others who know you well.

**NDPMA:** What about any challenges you've encountered thus far and perhaps some positive experiences since becoming a priest?

**DS:** People don't know how to relate to priests;

it's really amusing to me! I am a normal dude and yet when I tell people that I went to the movie theater or I watched a Notre Dame football game at a bar, they say, "Wow, they let you do that?" I mean, yeah... who is "they?" I'm just a guy who wants to give my life for others as a witness to Christ's love. People want it to be way more complicated or interesting than it is. Any of my high school classmates would tell you that I have always loved bringing joy to people's lives, making people laugh, dumping myself into relationships and that I'm very driven and convicted by truth and beauty. In those respects, I am very much the same person I was back in 2006 when I graduated from Notre Dame Prep, those desires and joys are just more fully developed now.

In that sense, the biggest joys come by way of relationship. I love meeting people and hearing their stories. I love being a witness of encouragement and hope, and I typically do that in moments of great celebration (marriages, anniversaries, school and athletic functions) and moments of unimaginable tragedy (visits to the sick, visits to the emergency room or scenes of accidents, comforting families who have lost a loved ones). I enjoy being able to mentor students, especially having been mentored so well at NDP.... and all of these things in a Catholic context. Above all, I enjoy celebrating the Eucharist and preaching because I love the challenge of translating the Gospel into an approachable, relational context that speaks good news and brings Jesus into the lives of everyday people.

In terms of challenges, the biggest difficulty for me (which isn't unique to being a priest) is a work/life balance. To be a spiritual father means to be constantly available and always "on," and yet, in some sense, that is simply unrealistic and unsustainable. Self-care is essential (prayer time, silence, time to hang out with friends, exercise) but ministry can tend to sort of run your life. So there is always a tension in finding a balance. Another challenge more unique to the priesthood would be going from one thing to another when the events are completely on opposite ends of the spectrum. For instance, it is really difficult when I have to go to the hospital to bless the body of someone who has just died and visit with their relatives, then turn around and do a wedding rehearsal. This goes back to what I was saying about being "on" all the time — people don't know what your entire day looks like, they just see you in front of them in the moment and expect an encounter with Christ. To be present to them and be a witness of joyful hope at all times is challenging.

**NDPMA:** Any specific memories, fun times, favorite classes, etc., at NDP?

**DS:** I just remember laughing a lot! I had fun in high school. My class was pretty close, and in the ways that we were dysfunctional, we made the best of it and had a good time. I know this is sort of supposed to be a "fun question" but I'm going to take it in a different direction because this is important to me....

There are definitely specific memories that stick in my mind as being pivotal in some ways (I already mentioned the influence of Fr. Joe and Fr. Jim). There were specific conversations throughout my time at NDP that I can replay in my mind with incredible detail — conversations with David Fazzini (choir), Ellen Tessada (Spanish), and John Smith (literature, but we were doing a lesson on public speaking at the time) — and, I'm probably painting a completely negative picture of myself here but, at various points during my academic career, each one of them absolutely kicked my butt! They kept me after class, sat me down and they said, "Dennis, you are so much better than the work you're turning out. You have the capacity to be a leader here and to knock this out of the park. Do it!" I was by no means a horrible student, so I don't know that I completely appreciated what they were saying at the time but — look-



ing back — those conversations changed the trajectory of my academic career into college and grad school. They landed me on the dean's list in college, they prepped me for graduate studies at the University of Notre Dame, and they became in my mind key moments that helped me to embrace the call to the priesthood — especially since my vocation hinges on public speaking, my command of the Spanish language, and music! I'm so grateful to these teachers for caring enough to pull me aside and steer me toward the realization of my full potential. ■

*NOTE: Strach said that if anyone would like to contact him, his email is [dstrach@holycrossusa.org](mailto:dstrach@holycrossusa.org). Also, the website for his parish is <https://st-ignatius.org> and for his religious order, it's <https://www.holycrossusa.org>.*

"I'm excited to get the chance to go to states," he said. "I felt like the Country Day event went well and really helped me with my singing ability. The judge was able to help me with my performance ability and some singing techniques."



From left, Notre Dame junior Grace Mersino, senior Emily Macks and junior Rowland Scheessele received the highest possible score at a recent Solo and Ensemble choir competition.

For Mersino, it was about the improvements she's made since last year.

"I had a wonderful time performing at S&E last Saturday," she said. "It was nice to see the growth in my performance and receiving a level-I rating this year after a level-II rating last year. I'm excited for the prospect of further growth in my singing abilities through this experience as well as with my vocal teacher and singing throughout the year in the NDP choir program."

Senior Macks said she's happy that her four-year choir career will end with the big competition.

"It has been a wonderful journey participating in Solo and Ensemble through my years of high school here at NDP," she said. "I'm excited to challenge myself and learn even more as I go to states this year."

## NOTRE DAME NAMES NEW BOYS GOLF COACH

The athletic department of Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy announced in January that Mike Erskine has been named head coach of the boys varsity golf team, effective immediately. Erskine replaces Tom Gillis who left Notre Dame to prepare for the PGA Tour Champions competition.

A 20-year veteran of coaching golf at the high school level, Erskine was head coach of the varsity girls team at Waterford Mott High School until 2016 and led the Mott boys team for 18 years, most recently in 2015. A 21-year teacher at Mott (history, economics, government), he also has coached the school's boys and girls basketball teams.

Erskine holds a bachelor of arts degree from Oakland University and earned his teaching certificate at Eastern Michigan University.

## ANOTHER NOTRE DAME STUDENT EARNS EAGLE SCOUT RANK

Notre Dame sophomore Kalan Hand has earned the rank of

Eagle Scout, the highest award given by the Boy Scouts of America. According to BSA, only about 4 percent of the nearly three million scouts nationwide earn Eagle Scout status.

Hand is the 17th from Notre Dame Prep to receive Eagle Scout status and joins fellow NDP students John Kenny, Austin Greif, Kevin Cragg and Kalan's brother, Logan, as well as alums William Ballew, Anthony VanDieren, Logan Verheyen, Brennan Eagle, Tyler Obear, Ryan Flaherty, Ryan Dau, Erik Egner, Connor Verheyen, Jack Stouffer, Joe Lombardo and Peter Dondanville who have received such an honor.

To date, Hand has completed 40 merit badges, camped 90 nights, hiked over 200 miles, completed 72 hours of service and has been an active mentor to the younger scouts of his troop.

For his Eagle Scout project, Kalan Hand removed and replaced an 8-foot high, 280 linear-foot fencing around The Giving Garden at St. Mary's Retreat House in Oxford. The garden produces many vegetables for several local churches, senior centers and food pantries, so keeping garden "invaders" out is of critical importance.

Hand has been a scout for many years, beginning as a member of Cub Scout Pack 186 at St. Joseph School in Lake Orion. After receiving the Arrow of Light, he crossed over to Boy Scout Troop 128 based at St Mary's In the Hills Episcopal Church, also in Lake Orion. With Troop 128, he's held multiple leadership positions, including senior patrol leader, assistant senior patrol leader, chaplain aide, quartermaster, troop guide and patrol leader.



## STRENGTH PROGRAM GETS STRONGER

Legendary college football coach Tom Osborne (Nebraska) once said, "Schools should hire qualified coaches who have been trained to develop athletes safely."

At no other time in amateur and professional athletics has that statement and the sentiment behind it been more true than it is today with such a white-hot light shining on the protection of athletes, especially in the area of concussions.

Siebert is now in his fourth year at NDPMA.

Fortunately, at Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy, all coaches have been trained in the recognition and in some cases the initial treatment of many common injuries sustained on the field, in the gym and on the courts.

Also, perhaps most important is the fact that Notre Dame employs a full-time strength and conditioning coach, with Jake



Strength and conditioning coach Jake Siebert received certification as a registered strength and conditioning coach (RSCC) from the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA)



Siebert ably filling that role currently for the school.

Already a certified strength and conditioning specialist (CSCS) with a B.A. in exercise science from Albion University and an M.S. in exercise science from Oakland University, Siebert in December received his certification as a registered strength and conditioning coach (RSCC) from the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA). It's the highest distinction a strength coach can achieve and ensures strength coaches like Siebert have adequate mentoring and experience to independently design and implement individual and team conditioning programs.

The new certification means Siebert joins a registry of individuals who have demonstrated experience and knowledge in the field of strength and conditioning to apply foundational knowledge to assess, motivate, educate, and train athletes for the primary goal of safely improving sport performance.

### NOTRE DAME COACH HONORED FOR 1,400 WINS



At the 2017 AVCA Convention held in Kansas City, Missouri, last week, longtime NDP volleyball coach Betty Wroubel, right, receives the AVCA 2017 AVCA Victory Club Award from AVCA executive director Kathy DeBoer for getting to 1,400 wins.

In 2016, NDP's Betty Wroubel earned the American Volleyball Coaches Association's 2016 Victory Club Award for 1,300 wins. There was little doubt she'd hit the next milestone, 1,400 wins, this season, and she and her Irish volleyball team did not disappoint as Notre Dame helped their head coach hit that

mark in early October after defeating Regina High School. In late December of 2017, at the American Volleyball Coaches Association Convention held in Kansas City, Missouri, NDP's Wroubel was formally presented the 2017 AVCA Victory Club Award by AVCA executive director Kathy DeBoer for getting to 1,400 wins.

Now, she's looking at 1,500 likely very soon as the Irish, which steamrolled through the 2017 season to win a Class B state championship — Wroubel's third — and finished the season with a No. 8 national ranking, are well-positioned for a repeat.

Just ask Gabi Shilling.

"I think this team can be amazing next year," said NDP senior Shilling, who was one of the team's major contributors throughout this past season. "You have a lot of key players returning and a lot of good hitters. It really comes down to how hard they work, but they definitely will have the talent to repeat."

Fingers crossed!

### WORLD-RENOWNED FORENSIC PATHOLOGIST WERNER SPITZ LECTURES AT NOTRE DAME

Werner Spitz, a forensic pathologist recognized for his work on a number of high-profile cases, including the civil trial of O.J.

Simpson and the assassinations of President Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., conducted a special lecture at Notre Dame on December 11. The event was sponsored by the school's Pre-Med Club, which currently has as its co-presidents, seniors Nicholas Foltényi and Madelyn McCullen.



Werner Spitz, a forensic pathologist recognized for his work on a number of high-profile cases, including the civil trial of O.J. Simpson and the assassinations of President Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., lectured at Notre Dame Prep on Dec. 11.

"Dr. Spitz is asked to give lectures regularly, and at the age of 91, he still conducts regular autopsies nationwide," McCullen said. "In addition, he is in great demand by forensic pathology organizations across the world to give lectures and speeches. It is a great honor for NDP to host such a respected figure in the medical world and we are very fortunate to have him visit us with such a busy schedule."

According to McCullen, Spitz also assisted in the exhumation of the body of Fr. Solanus Casey upon the request of the Catholic Church for the purpose of extracting relics before his beatification.

NDP's Pre-Med Club meets regularly throughout each month, depending on the number of speakers the club signs up and when they are available.

"We are still working on getting the word out about the club and currently we have around 15 members," McCullen said. "At our meetings, we discuss different areas of the medical field and are hoping to teach members about different applications of first aid. In addition to this, we are working on offering service hours to students through volunteering associated with hospitals."

### Weddings/Engagements

Candace Shankin '02 (NDP) married Forrest Becker at St. Andrew in April 2017. Jared Shankin ('07), Kyle Shankin and Stephanie (Azoury) Shankin ('04), and Lisa Dabrowski ('02) were members of the bridal party.

### Births

Annalisa Simmer de Gomez '03 (NDP) and her husband welcomed **Lilian Marie Gomez Simmer** on August 5, 2017. Andre Daher '89 (NDHS) welcomed twins **Ava and Andrew** who were born March 31, 2017. They join big sister Casandra, 7 yrs. old, and Angela, 5 yrs. old.

### Alumni/staff/faculty rest in peace

Don Carrier '60 (NDHS) 8-1-17

John Sienkiewicz '62 (NDHS) 10-1-17

Dottie Carroll, faculty, worked in school cafeteria 10-10-17

David Wolshon '65 (NDHS) 11-1-17

Matthew Swita '98 (NDHS) son of Richard '66 (NDHS),

*Please see IRISH News, page 20*

# Alumni Notes & Info

Notre Dame Prep: **(NDP)**; Notre Dame High School: **(NDHS)**; Pontiac Catholic: **(PC)**;  
Oakland Catholic: **(OC)**; St. Frederick: **(SF)**; St. Michael: **(SM)**

## NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI

**Thomas Edelmayer '65 (NDHS)** Hello to all my fellow NDHS alumni! Dianna and I are now back in the U.S. after living in Brescia, Italy, for 18 months. Our son and daughter have blessed us, respectively, with two each granddaughters and grandsons. I thought I was retiring in Aug. 2015 when, as I like to say, "An Italian made me an offer I couldn't refuse." Seriously, no animals were injured during this event. Since then a lot has happened: I was awarded my 11th U.S. patent and two more are currently applied for. Living in Brescia was wonderful - great food, people, sights to see, and fulfilling work. I'll retire at the end of March, working part-time for Gnutti Carlo (lots of irons in the fire!), and we'll move into a new Winnebago Diesel Pusher to live full-time while we enjoy the wonders of this great country of ours. Unfortunately, I missed catching up with

**We'd love to hear from you!** Send a note to let us know what you're up to: e-mail Beth Campbell at [bcampbell@ndpma.org](mailto:bcampbell@ndpma.org), or visit [ndpma.org/update](http://ndpma.org/update).

my fellow '65 grads in 2015, but I had a good excuse - I was in Italy. Hopefully I can attend the next reunion.

**Douglas Jardine '72 (NDHS)** I have been a professor of plant pathology at Kansas State University for 33 years. I am a Fellow of the American Phytopathological Society. Our first grandchild was born in June of 2017.

## NOTRE DAME PREP ALUMNI

**Kathryn Woodstock '07 (NDP)** Upon graduating from graduate school at University of Detroit Mercy, I began a career on the marketing and public relations team at Children's Hospital of Michigan at the DMC, working on our new hospital, the Children's Hospital of Michigan in Troy. I always knew that I wanted to work at an organization whose mission is supporting the health and well-being of children. I recently began a new position at a nonprofit called Methodist Children's Home Society in Redford, Mich. We are a residential treatment facility for boys ages, 6-19, who have been exposed to abuse or neglect. I am the Director of Major Gifts but transitioning into the chief development officer role on November 1. I love my job!

**Kolin Karchon '07 (NDP)** Recently moved out to Seattle, Wash., with my wife. Currently operating my business isleBox.com for the third consecutive year.

**Anastasia (Annie) Stevens-Chase '07 (NDP)** Since graduating from NDP in 2007, Annie attended Michigan State University, where she studied human biology

and physiology, and met her now husband, Scott Chase. She then went on to attend the University of Toledo College of Medicine. She is currently a third year resident in general surgery at the Detroit Medical Center and hopes to continue her career as a minimally invasive/bariatric surgeon in the metro Detroit area once residency finishes. When she isn't working, she enjoys long-distance running, traveling and cheering on MSU sports.

**Erica Saad '07 (NDP)** She is working at Campbell Ewald on the Harley-Davidson account.

**Alexander Stevens '09 (NDP)** After I graduated from Central Michigan University in 2014, I worked in metro Detroit for two years. During that time, I completed a second degree in journalism at Oakland University. At the beginning of 2017, I moved to Washington, D.C., and worked as a media relations intern at the Cato Institute. I'm currently working as a policy associate at the Institute for Energy Research and pursuing graduate work in economics.

**Phyllis Schacht '96 (NDP)** I would just like to update that I am very healthy! My liver transplant was a total success! I have to thank God, my family, friends and parishioners for all the prayers and support. My new liver will be three years old on Sept 21, 2018. I'm very blessed to be writing about it today. I no longer have Carolis Disease, which I was born with and suffered from for many years. I am living proof that the power of prayer really does work!

**Katelyn Obear '13 (NDP)** I am working in a service- and faith-based masters program through the University of Dayton called Lalanne. We commit to serving in low-income or under-resourced areas at Catholic schools for two years and live in community with other teachers. I am currently living in Jackson, Mich., where I'm teaching 7th graders.

**Eda Obermanns '11 (NDP)** Eda recently graduated from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, where she received a master of letters in Early Modern History with distinction in the dissertation.

**Nick George '13 (NDP)** I am excited to announce that I have accepted a full-time position with Oswald Companies as a client service administrator with their property and casualty team! Words cannot describe how excited I am to get things started with such an amazing company. That being said, I have relocated to Cleveland, Ohio, to start my career in corporate insurance. Thank you to everyone who has supported me over the years, as I would not be in the position I am today without your help. I can't wait to see what this next chapter in my life holds! ■

## NEWS, from page 18

brother of Ryan '96 (NDHS), nephew of Michael '79 (NDHS) 11-11-17

**Joseph Ciolino '77 (NDHS)** brother of John '79 (NDHS) and the late Anthony '73 (NDHS) 11-24-17

**Jim Corte '64 (NDHS)** brother of Gary '68 (NDHS) 12-8-17  
**Fr. Robert Graham**, Marist father and staff member at NDHS 1-20-18

**Robert Barnes '68 (NDHS)** brother of David '71 (NDHS) 1-25-18

**Ronald Gaynor '58 (NDHS)** brother of Raymond '58 (NDHS), uncle of Mark '83 (NDHS), Paul '84 (NDHS) and John '89 (NDHS) 1-26-18

**Helen "Cosgrove" Gagel '32 (SF)** mother of Ann "Gagel" '73 (PC) 1-31-18

**Vincent Pipia '72 (NDHS)** brother of Michael '68 (NDHS) 2-15-18

NOTE: For a complete list, see [ndpma.org/prayers](http://ndpma.org/prayers). May their souls, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen. ■

The Notre Dame Alumni Association publishes prayer requests on its website for alumni and family members who are in need of prayer, including prayers for those who have died and those who are sick.

If you would like to request that someone be added to our prayer list, please email Beth Campbell at [bcampbell@ndpma.org](mailto:bcampbell@ndpma.org).

Please be certain that the person(s) for whom you are requesting prayers has approved that his/her name and prayer request be published. We strive to respect everyone's privacy and personal matters.



# Of singers, writers and running shoes

Alum's music career is fast off the blocks; she says Notre Dame pushed her intellectual boundaries far.

As a freshman on Vanderbilt University's track team, Notre Dame alum Sara Barron broke the university record in the mile with a 4:44.44. She went on to earn numerous SEC and NCAA honors for the Commodores, including being named to the conference academic honor roll all four years in college.

Her running prowess, however, began at Notre Dame Prep where she lettered all four years in track and earned state championships in the 800 and 1600-meter as a senior. She also was named a High School Heisman winner for the state of Michigan in 2011 and earned the Catholic League's Walt Bazylewicz Athlete of the Year Award in 2012.

But Barron's prowess doesn't end on the track. Not by any means. In fact, if the term renaissance woman was designed with a specific person in mind, it must've been this 2012 NDP grad.

## MUSIC PLUS WRITING

After finishing up at Vanderbilt in 2016, she set forth on a journey that explored her one main passion: music. But it wasn't just about "making" music.

"My degree at Vanderbilt actually was a self-designed interdisciplinary major I called 'music, marketing and management,'" she said. "I had the option to create a well-rounded curriculum under the supervision of a professor in my school (Arts & Sciences), and present it to the dean to approve as my major. Though the process was tedious, it ended up being the perfect fit for my long-term goals and interests."

Currently, Barron has just finished her first album of songs that dropped in November. This comes during a very busy period for her that included working for a bit in Portland, Ore., for Marmoset, a music-licensing agency where she interviewed artists and filmmakers and wrote blogs and features about them for the company's website.

"I've always loved journalistic storytelling because it sort of complements my songwriting," she said. "When I moved back to Detroit from Oregon, in addition to music-making, I knew I wanted to continue writing about music and arts, so I started pitching stories to the Metro Times, a weekly tab based in Ferndale."

Since then she's had a number of bylines with the Metro Times as well as with The Odyssey and Filmmaking Stuff publications. She's also in the process of pitching to major national music publications, where she's hoping to land some nice assignments.

Meanwhile, Barron continues to pursue her true aspiration, which for her began when she was quite young.

"I actually started singing very young, around the age of four," she said. "I was classically trained in voice from ages eight to 14 and also started

writing songs at around eight. Besides being in musicals at Notre Dame and performing at open mics around town while growing up, I wasn't really serious about music as a career until I started school at Vanderbilt.

"And like most 18-year-olds entering university, I was faced with the big question: What did I want to do with my life?"

For Barron, though, music was a no-brainer, she said.

"So from then on, it was just about balancing my running career in college at the same time I was learning as much as I could about songwriting, performing and the business of music."

## VINYL, CDS AND STREAMING

Now she's at a point where she has a succinct body of work that she'd like to share with the world. Her upcoming album was recorded at a small studio in Detroit with a producer she met through friends. She said it will be available on vinyl and CD for initial release and then for streaming after a month or so. For more information,

check out [www.samariebarron.com](http://www.samariebarron.com).

To be sure, Barron is a busy and talented young lady, who with any luck will have a busy and prosperous career ahead of her.

She's also well aware that it will take more than just luck and talent: It will take lots of hard work, which, she says, also was a significant factor in getting her through high school and college.



**At Vanderbilt University, Barron broke the university record in the mile and went on to earn numerous SEC and NCAA honors for the Commodores.**

"Running at Vanderbilt was an amazing experience and prepared me for nearly every challenge life has to offer," she said. "It taught me how to deal with all kinds of people, how to lead, and, most importantly, how to push through when things get really, really hard. The women on my team have become a family that I plan to have in my life forever.

And the physical and mental strength I gained in the sport will hopefully stay with me forever."

Barron also had props for her high school experience.

"NDP was a very disciplined school," she said. "It helped me learn how to prioritize and always be punctual, lest I receive the dreaded 6 a.m. detention. In addition, teachers like Sra. Tessada and Ms. Derico taught me how to push my intellectual boundaries and showed me that I can do anything I put my mind to, and I am very grateful for that." ■

# Prayer power

Notre Dame alum says a preoccupation with prayer led to the priesthood and to administering his own parish in Michigan.

**T**wo thousand Notre Dame alum Eric Fedewa had just graduated from Oakland University and was well on his way to a career in marketing. He had a good job in the automotive industry and he and his girlfriend of three years were discussing wedding plans. But at the same time he'd been noticing an ever-so slight "pull" in a decidedly different direction.

"Around the last month of college, I had a 'reconversion' after a Mass when I was prayed with and began living my faith more fully — and also wanting to begin doing what Jesus wanted me to do," Fedewa said. "A few months later, I was asked to pray about the priesthood by a parishioner at St. Lawrence Parish in Utica, which is the parish in which I grew up."

A long story shortened, all of that prayer and contemplation ultimately led Fedewa to the priesthood and to his current position as pastor of St. Basil the Great Parish in Eastpointe, Mich.

"During the time right after college, when I was working at the Volkswagen/Audi headquarters in Auburn Hills, my girlfriend started to take classes to become Catholic," he said. "But she didn't know I was praying about the priesthood until October of that year when she told me she felt like she was dating a priest. I had been reluctant to tell her because I feared it would break her faith, but now it was clearly out in the open!"

Fedewa then spent nearly six months praying about his potential life switch in front of Jesus at the Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament after work, and he also met regularly with the vocations director for the Archdiocese.

"By the end of January 2005, I decided to spend a weekend at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, which clinched it for me. It was time to make the step and apply for acceptance into the priestly formation



**Fr. Eric Fedewa, a 2000 graduate of Notre Dame, is pastor of St. Basil the Great parish in Eastpointe, Mich.**

program there," he said. "That was the moment I had to end my relationship with my girlfriend. Thankfully, she had a strong sense from the Lord that this was coming. She subsequently was baptized, confirmed, and received her first Eucharist that spring at an Easter Vigil Mass and chose my father to be her godfather!"

In June of that same year Fedewa found out he was accepted into the seminary, but since he already had a degree, his time living and studying in the seminary was estimated to last about six years instead of the more typical eight. He said that during the seminary years, each seminarian gets reviewed annually to find out whether or not he will



keep moving through the program, assuming that he wants to continue and that the team of formation priests feel each seminarian is still called to the priesthood.

"From 2005 to 2007, I was living in the undergraduate residence in the seminary while getting a bachelor's degree in philosophy," he said. "Then I moved to the graduate residence and after four more years of additional full-time classes as well as human, spiritual and pastoral formation, I received a master's degree in Divinity (theology) and a Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology (STB), which is the European equivalent of a master's degree."

The STB degree is granted through the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome, Italy, after one completes a four-year comprehensive written and oral exam, which Fedewa passed with flying colors. He was then ordained a priest on June 11, 2011, in the Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament by Archbishop Vigneron.

Soon after his ordination, Fedewa began an assignment as associate pastor at St. Anastasia in Troy, which lasted a couple of years,



**Performing marriage ceremonies is one of Fedewa's many ministries at St. Basil.**

followed by three years as an associate pastor at St. Hugo of the Hills in Bloomfield Hills. He also served as chaplain at Marian High School during his time at St. Hugo.

"I was then assigned as associate pastor of the Guardian Angels parish in Clawson for a little over a year, and since November of 2017, I am administrator and pastor of St. Basil, having my own place for the first time."

Now, well past his college years and his girlfriend, Fedewa said he's very happy.

"I would never want to be anything other than a priest, which is not just a job, but an entire way of life," he said. "Of course, just like it is sometimes for people in a marriage, there can be challenges to being a priest. One of the most difficult challenges for me is deciding what must take priority of my time, as the 'things' I can do are many but the time to do them is short."

But Fedewa said that just as it was when he was seriously contemplating

the priesthood, prayer still is most central in his life, for without it, he said, he could become distant from the Lord, and then what would he have to offer his parishioners?

All challenges aside, however, Fedewa said there are many, many more positives about his vocation than negatives.

"One of my favorite experiences since becoming a priest is when a family invites me over for dinner," he said. "That is when one can really see that the Church is most fully expressed by both marriage and celibacy for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. While they seem so different, in actuality they need each other, because as the priest sees the sacrifices a mother and father make for their children, they in turn see the sacrifices the priest makes for the sake of his spiritual children, to whom he brings spiritual life through the Sacraments."

Fedewa also recalls many positives from his Notre Dame Prep experience.

"One of my favorite memories from NDP was when, at the beginning of Fr. Joe's [Hindelang] church history class, he would inevitably have to say to Bill Holland and me: 'Eric and Bill...are you ready to begin class?!' That's because Bill and I would no doubt be absorbed in blabbing together about whatever topic mattered to us that day."

Fedewa said that to jump from that babbling in high school to now being a priest — where among other things he's listened to group confessions with the likes of Fr. Joe, Fr. Leon and other priests — is quite amazing to him.

"Back in high school, I think I probably never once thought that one day I would serve as a priest alongside the ones I had at NDP!" ■



**Fedewa is with his mother after a recent banquet.**



Notre Dame alum Maria Pangori ('13) is spending a year working with women and children coming from abusive situations at Casa de Acogida (House of Shelter) in Ecuador. She graduated from John Carroll University in 2017.

# Faith, family, goodness

2013 alum (with the help of her family) works in South America to assist victims of domestic violence.



**L**ast year, Maria Pangori, a 2013 graduate of Notre Dame Prep and 2017 alum of John Carroll University, earned the Schell Award, which honors JCU seniors who have provided consistent and outstanding leadership in campus ministry through retreats, immersion experiences, liturgy, prayer and justice and who live as “women and men for others.”

The award is no surprise to people in the Notre Dame community who know Maria and who know her family. That’s because the Pangoris have dedicated a significant portion of their lives to helping those in need — wherever in the world they might be.

Case in point: the Pangori family (NDP senior Anthony, mom Laura and dad Steve) recently returned from Ecuador after spending a week helping daughter Maria, who has been immersed in a year-long ministry in the city of Monte Sinai, which is located in southwest Ecuador. Maria works with Rostro de Cristo, a Catholic program that provides spiritual, educational and ministerial opportunities in Ecuador for young people of faith in the United States.

“There are many Bible verses explaining the need for compassion for the poor, impoverished and homeless people of our society,” said Laura Pangori after returning to Michigan from Ecuador. “One verse in the Gospel of Matthew reminds us that being charitable and loving to everyone is important in our faith, and we are called to see the Christ in every person, putting all prejudices and doubt aside. We cannot be more proud of Maria! She is so compassionate and loving.”



**Maria Pangori says sometimes the women and children at Casa de Acogida just need a good hug. Maria's mother, Laura, shares a good hug with friends.**

As part of her year-long stay in Ecuador, Maria Pangori works at Casa de Acogida (House of Shelter), which is a shelter for women and their children who are escaping extreme and even life-threatening situations of domestic violence and sexual abuse. Unfortunately, with a culture heavily steeped in machismo in Ecuador, this situation is very normalized and common.

“The house where Maria works is a safe place for the women and their children to learn to be autonomous, build back their own strength and esteem, and listen and support other women who faced similar devastating realities,” Laura Pangori said. “But the stories about what the women and children have experienced prior to coming to the shelter are unbelievably horrific.”

## BLESSED TO HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO HELP

For Maria, who spends her weekdays working at Casa and her weekends building relationships with those in her neighborhood, she truly believes she is seeing Christ in everyone she’s worked with so far in Ecuador.

“It is extremely difficult to put this experience into words,” she said. “My heart wants to share some of the many sacred moments and neighbors that have allowed me to see God’s kingdom so alive. I knew before starting this year that Rostro de Cristo’s mission was to recognize the face of Christ in everyone I encounter, but what I didn’t realize is how much this has given me such an indescribable inner peace.”

Maria said that she and her fellow volunteers look at their ministry in Ecuador as all-inclusive.



**Steve and Anthony Pangori are with a couple of new friends in Monte Sinai, Ecuador.**

“We are here to be a shoulder to cry on, someone to hug, someone to play with or dance with, or someone to just sit with,” she said. “Hearing some of the most unimaginable situations and stories from the women can be extremely hard, but I see God in their strength and in their love they have for their children.

“I also see God in the way of a 17-year-old girl, who has a 3-year-old daughter from the result of being raped, but who dances so freely while she is cleaning the dishes, and with the most beautiful smile,” Maria added. “I see God in the children who run into my arms with unconditional love every time I enter the gates. I see God in the way a mother who was burned with acid from her abuser reads the Bible out loud on the patio and prays with her children before every meal.”

She said she has deeply fallen in love with every woman and child who lives in the shelter.

“I feel eternally blessed that God has given me the opportunity to cry with them, laugh with them, pray with them, learn from them, and love them.”



**The Pangoris traveled to Ecuador last month with suitcases full of donated tank tops for the women and children at Casa de Acogida.**

## TANK TOP DRIVE

When planning to visit Maria in Ecuador last month, the Pangori family did not want to go empty-handed, according to mom Laura.

“I had spoken to the executive director of Rostro de Cristo for approval and Maria spoke to the owner of Casa to find out what the most immediate needs of the women were,” Laura Pangori said. “We were told that the women and children have absolutely nothing in their possession after escaping to Casa. They arrive with their children and just the clothes on their back.”

So the Pangoris initiated a “tank top drive” in Michigan and within the NDPMA community to collect women and children’s clothes.

“We didn’t know what response we would receive when deciding to do such a clothing drive for Casa,” Laura said. “The support and donations from all of our acquaintances and fellow Notre Damers made our drive a huge success. In two weeks, we collected more than 175 tank tops and also received a monetary donation that will be used for diapers and other needs for the children at Casa.

“Much love and happiness were delivered to the women and children at Casa!” ■

# A stroke of bad luck and some great music

Notre Dame alum who survived a devastating stroke continues to make music that inspires. He's also writing a book about his near-death experience and how he's come back strong despite some lingering physical limitations.

**O**n September 4, 2001, Notre Dame alum Tony DeNardo ('90) suffered a hemorrhagic stroke that nearly ended his life. He was completely paralyzed on his right side and unable to speak, which was devastating on many levels, not the least of which was what it could have done to DeNardo's burgeoning musical career with the increasingly popular Detroit band at the time known as the Muggs.

But fellow 1990 Notre Dame alum Danny Methric, who was the lead singer and guitarist for the Muggs, and drummer Matt Rost decided that the group would not continue until DeNardo, who played bass and sang in the band, was well enough to rejoin them.

Meanwhile, DeNardo was undergoing intensive therapy both in Detroit and in California where his father lived. From January until June of 2003, he worked hard on his recovery and kept in close contact with his buddy

Methric. He also quickly found out that defiance was absolutely necessary in order to overcome the effects of his stroke.

"I am Tony DeNardo!" he remembers saying loudly and proudly back then. "I am a stroke survivor! I never would have thought this could happen to me. But now what?!" He said, "Stroke never had a greater adversary!" DeNardo continued to make positive strides health-

wise, but still he could not use his right arm at all let alone play bass guitar with it. But a friend of the Muggs, Matt Smith, from the band Outrageous Cherry, had an idea. Maybe DeNardo could play his bass lines on a piano keyboard with his left hand.

So in early 2003, DeNardo decided it was worth a shot and bought a Fender Rhodes Mark I piano to try and perform the same bass lines with one hand that he used to play with two hands on his guitar. After months of grueling practice in California, DeNardo returned to Detroit, still unable to use his right arm but now ready to start rehearsing again with his new instrument and one good hand. After about a month of rehearsals together, the Muggs returned to the stage almost two years to the day after their last show together before DeNardo's stroke.

Since then the Muggs have been one of Detroit's most successful bands, stringing together a number of successful albums and touring around the world. In addition, they were chosen in 2007 to appear on the FOX TV national series, "The Next Great American Band," and have earned numerous awards within both the Detroit and national rock scenes.

## NOTRE DAME "DUDES"

Currently, the Muggs are on temporary hiatus. "We pushed so hard up until the end of 2015, so we felt we needed to cleanse our songwriting palates and take a well-deserved break," DeNardo said recently during an interview with the Notre Dame Alumni Association. Not being one to just sit around, he has recently embarked on a new musical journey with a band called Dude, which features still another Notre Dame alum, Stephen Garcia, from the Class of 1994, who also works by day as an attorney with an international law firm.

"Stephen is just too cool," said DeNardo, who brought in Garcia to play rhythm guitar and sing harmony. "Dude is predicated on two things: 'guitarmonies' and harmonies. And I love playing with people who I can trust to get the song right. Stephen adds so much to Dude and he and the rest of the band inspire me to try and outdo even myself."

In the summer of last year, DeNardo's Dude also released its first album, "Kid Gloves," which was pressed in Spain, and perhaps not so coincidentally, which is where

the band toured last year.

"Spain is just gorgeous," he said. "I've been there six times now (five times with the Muggs) and highly recommend this country to anyone and everyone. The tour went just about how I expected a first tour to go. We lost money! But we played our butts off and the crowds loved it. Since then, I've tweaked the lineup a bit and now Dude is starting to get around the Midwest in cities such as Chicago, Madison, Wisc., Windsor, and Athens, Ohio, among others."

Dude's first album is selling just alright, according to DeNardo. He says that's because he's not been able to promote it as hard as he'd like. Which is a shame because the album sounds really good and because it's also a touching rendering of DeNardo's health struggles since his stroke and how he has overcome them.

## ALBUM, BOOK DETAIL STRUGGLES

"I wrote the album almost as a prayer," he said. "After my stroke, needless to say, I was a broken man, full of sorrow and just trying to figure where my life was heading. I actually titled the album Kid Gloves to help me say, 'Hey, when you listen, handle me with kid gloves. That was some heavy stuff I went through!' Many songs on the record deal with my struggles in the hospital, my near-death experiences, and the overall lamentation of what fate brought to me."

He's also been working on a book over this past year that will explore those same health struggles as well as his musical career.

"It will basically be an autobiography about my stroke, the Muggs, Dude, and my own philosophies on how I was able to succeed after such a life-altering event," DeNardo said. "Even though I am relatively young now, still I think I've lived such an interesting and — maybe I can honestly say — a fairy-tale life, especially after my stroke. So I've been writing week in and week out now since the beginning of the year."

We have little doubt that it will be an inspiring account of a truly inspiring alum.

NOTE: DeNardo occasionally plays in two tribute bands in the Detroit area: Rattlesnake Shake, which is a Peter Green-Fleetwood Mac (1967-1970) tribute band that also includes Danny Methric; and Mega Weedge, a WEEN tribute band, which includes still more Notre Dame alums, Andy Misuraca and Brian Sheehan. ■





# From NDP and MSU to NBC

Notre Dame alum and news junkie gets key position on TODAY Show staff.

When 2012 Notre Dame alum Micaela Colonna was growing up, the television at home was usually tuned in to NBC, including news shows and regular programming. She said that as soon as she was old enough to actually understand the concept of news, she knew she'd one day work in the business. Now, nearly six years after graduating from Notre Dame Prep and a degree in journalism from Michigan State University, she is in fact working in the news business — for NBC, no less — and specifically on the network's TODAY Show.

"My family was an NBC family, and I grew up watching TODAY every morning during breakfast and NBC Nightly News every evening during dinner," she said. "So needless to say, it feels like an absolute dream to be in the position I'm in now, working right alongside the correspondents that I've admired for so many years."

As a researcher for TODAY working in NBC's Washington, DC, office, among Colonna's daily assignments is to assist on spots (segments) that air on the show each morning. She is responsible for gathering elements and helping to create a comprehensive research packet

consisting of all the material that the NBC correspondent and producer will need to write and edit the spot. The spots could be politically based, including the White House, Capitol Hill, the Supreme Court, the State Department, etc., or they could consist of anything else non-DC related, just depending on the day.

"The material I gather for these segments typically includes the most recent videos or photos relating to the subject, interview transcriptions of politicians or other industry analysts, social-media posts from politicians, governmental agencies, etc.," she said. "I also assist on DC live shots in the mornings, book crews for our correspondents' live shots, and sometimes cut spots myself for the show in the edit room."

Colonna said that her tenure at NBC actually began while still a student at MSU.

"I interned for NBC three times while in college, both in New York City and Washington, DC," she said. "First, I interned with TODAY up in NYC over a summer. The next spring, I traveled down to DC for a semester away at MSU where I interned in the Washington bureau for longtime correspondent and anchor Andrea Mitchell. The following summer, I headed back up to NYC to intern for Tom Brokaw."

Colonna's internship with Mitchell actually was during the most recent presidential campaign season, and she had the opportunity to travel

with her to New York on the day of a Democratic debate in Brooklyn.

"My internship with Tom Brokaw also was during the campaign season, and I attended the Republican and Democratic National Conventions in Cleveland and Philadelphia with him and his producing team," she said. "In addition, at TODAY, I was able to work with a variety of their anchors and correspondents on different shoots and segments and recently went on a shoot with Lester Holt and the DC producing team for NBC Nightly News at Arlington National Cemetery here in Washington, DC."

While it appears Colonna's "beat" primarily revolves around politics, she does get to work on stories that don't involve the government.

While working as a production assistant for NBC Nightly News in Washington, DC, this past fall, Colonna pitched a story to the nightly

broadcast team about an 81-year-old flight attendant named Bette Nash, who has been serving on what is now American Airlines for 60 years and currently is the oldest active flight attendant in the world.

"I was fortunate enough to be able to attend the shoot, where the whole team — our correspondent, producer,

camera crew and myself — flew to Boston and back in one morning, interviewing Bette on the plane and seeing her interact with her customers," Colonna said. "Once we returned to DC, I helped transcribe the interviews and assisted the producer and the editor in piecing the spot together. One day later, it was the closing story on NBC Nightly News. It is to date my biggest and most exciting accomplishment!"

As for what the future holds for this still-young and successful journalist, she says it really doesn't matter, as long as she gets to work on the news business.

"I think about my future a lot, and I find it so interesting that so many successful news producers had completely different paths to get to where they are today," she said. "I think ultimately I would love to be a senior producer or executive producer for a show like TODAY or Nightly News. But in the meantime, I'm excited to continue to work my way down my own path, field-producing, cutting spots in the edit room, and maybe even producing for a specific beat like the White House, Capitol Hill, etc. I would also like to be involved in some way during the next presidential campaign season in 2020, if possible." ■



PHOTO PROVIDED MICHAELA COLONNA '12 (NDP)

# Cars, chickens, the U.S. C

Attorney and Notre Dame alum works mostly in business law; discusses a 1963 U.S. tariff called the “Chicken Tax” that figured in a big case involving one of Detroit's Big 3 automakers.

**B**ob Hindelang is an attorney living and working in the Grosse Pointe area, not far from where he attended and graduated high school at Notre Dame (1964). He works primarily on business law, including forming new business entities and all of the related work, which could involve the purchase of buildings or factories, international purchases of machinery or products, the related banking and U. S. Customs entry work, and income tax preparation and filings.

Lots of complicated projects on his resume and radar, for sure.

But one that he likes to talk about fairly often involved one of Detroit's Big 3 automakers and the “Chicken Tax.” Yes, the Chicken Tax.

“In my dealings with U. S. Customs, I have worked on a number of issues, all of which have reinforced the proposition that if a company or corporation plans in advance, it can save money and make its imported product more competitive in the U.S.,” said Hindelang, who is the older brother of NDP principal Fr. Joe Hindelang, S.M., a 1968 NDHS graduate.

“Years ago, one of the Big 3 was involved with an interesting import involving the “Chicken Tax” under which vans imported into the U. S. as passenger vans were subject to a 5-percent rate of duty, but if vans were imported as cargo vans, the duty rate was 25 percent rate.”

## DUTY BOUND

Hindelang said that the creative solution they came up with was that the automaker would import the cargo vans from Turkey as “passenger” vans equipped with seats and windows for passengers, plus carpeting and seat belts.

“Upon arriving in the U. S. before clearing customs, the seats in the van were removed, the seat belts were removed, the carpet was removed and the windows were removed and replaced with metal panels, thus effectively transforming the utility of the vehicle from a passenger van with a 5-percent duty rate to a cargo van with a duty rate of 25 percent,” Hindelang said.

Which brings us to the “Chicken Tax” reference. . .

“The Chicken Tax is a 1963 tariff imposed by the United States during the Johnson administration on potato starch, dextrin, brandy and light trucks,” Hindelang said. “It was a tit-for-tat response to tariffs imposed back then by France and West Germany on U.S. chickens. The period from 1961-1964 was actually known as the ‘Chicken War.’ So the car company took advantage of the provisions of the Chicken Tax by import-

ing all of its first generation cargo van models as passenger vehicles by including rear windows, rear seats and rear seat belts.”

Hindelang said the vehicles would arrive from Turkey in Baltimore, and were converted there back into cargo vans. He said the removed parts were not shipped back to Turkey for reuse, but instead were shredded and recycled in Ohio.

“The conversion process cost the automaker hundreds of dollars per van but saved them thousands in taxes on each,” Hindelang said. This scheme worked for several years — but federal regulators eventually caught on. In early 2013, the U.S. government forced the company to begin paying the full tariff. (Note: The second-generation cargo van in question, which debuted for the 2014 model year, is no longer built in Turkey — but it's still built overseas (in Spain), meaning the car company likely still pays that tax despite their original plan to avoid it indefinitely.)

## READY FOR ANY COURTROOM

In addition to his customs work, which often has Hindelang working in the United States Court of International Trade, he is a Certified Public Accountant and has been formerly admitted to practice in the United States Court of Appeals, the United States Court of Veterans Appeals and the United States Supreme Court.

“My practice includes many interesting areas of accounting and law, which has been a really rewarding way to practice law,” said Hindelang, who has been practicing as an attorney/CPA based in the Grosse Pointe area since 1987. He was admitted

as a CPA in 1972, and as an attorney in 1975 shortly after earning his law degree from the University of Detroit Mercy law school.

With such a long and storied career, Hindelang still credits his high school for what he's accomplished thus far.

“I attribute much of my professional and personal success to my teachers and counselors at Notre Dame in Harper Woods,” he said. “And I think about many of them — and the wisdom they taught — with fond memories on a daily basis.”

When he's not in court or in his office, the 35-year resident of the City of Grosse Pointe and his wife, Paula, a teacher at St. Paul on the Lake Catholic School in Grosse Pointe Farms, are kept very busy with their five children — Marianne, Maureen, Michael, Matthew '00 (NDHS) and Mark '01 (NDHS) — and 16 grandchildren, the oldest of whom is 9 years old. ■

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Hindelang and his wife, Paula, have 16 grandchildren, the oldest of whom is 9 years old.



# ustoms and Notre Dame



Attorney Bob Hindelang graduated from Notre Dame in 1964. His four brothers also graduated from Notre Dame: NDP principal Fr. Joe Hindelang, s.m., ('68), Ron Hindelang ('59), Tom Hindelang ('61) and Mike Hindelang ('63). (Photo by John Martin)

# Storytelling alum is making



**B**en Derico says that he's doing what he loves for a living. And he credits his time at Notre Dame for giving him the head start necessary for not only a successful working career, but for getting him through college with flying colors.

This 2007 ND Prep alum, who is making waves in Chicago with his video production business, also said his classes at Notre Dame fostered both a real love for learning and the ability to be a storyteller for those whose stories need to be told.

Read below an interview the Notre Dame Alumni Association conducted with Derico from his studio in Chicago. It has been edited for clarity and space.

## **You've been working for a while for yourself in Chicago in video production. How did you get to that point? Was it part of a plan you hatched at Notre Dame Prep?**

As my time at Notre Dame Prep wound down, I wasn't really sure where I wanted to go or what I wanted to do next. I had applied to schools in Michigan, Ohio and Chicago, and liked them all for different reasons. But I didn't have a very particular pull to any one school over the others. My initial idea was to attend the linguists program at the University of Michigan where I'd continue studying with some of my friends from NDP. I had always enjoyed my Spanish and French classes at NDP, so it felt like a good move — especially so after traveling with the NDP AP Spanish class on a two-week-long trip to Spain, I realized I wanted to learn more than just the language. I wanted to learn about different people and new places. In Spain during my NDP trip, I was able to try new food and see a culture and landscape very different from the one I

knew in the Detroit area. I knew then that I had to find a way to get back someday and experience that country even more.

So as soon as I got home, I looked at which schools offered a study-abroad program in Madrid. Loyola University in Chicago was offering a full-year exchange program at the Complutense University of Madrid, a public research university located in Madrid and one of the oldest universities in the world. It actually was through a partner program with a fellow Jesuit school, Marquette University in Milwaukee. So that was it! I made my decision and packed up for Chicago. I would attend LU in Chicago and then spend one year in Spain to learn everything I could.

## **So what was it like attending your first year of college in Chicago?**

Arriving at LUC, I felt much more prepared for the academic challenges of a university class load than for the new life I was living in the nation's third largest city. I spent my (late) mornings in class and my afternoons exploring the city. I got involved with a bike club and soon began traversing the dozens of neighborhoods throughout the city on two wheels.

Meanwhile, at school, I was searching through a wide variety of classes to try and figure out what major I wanted to pursue. Jumping from philosophy classes to political science, English literature, and even classical guitar, I tried my best to use the full offering of liberal arts classes available to me to help me find my "true calling."

I believe that my exposure at NDP to AP and Honors classes made the class load in college easier on me and helped free me up from being too concerned about passing classes and more about if the content of those classes would help me find what I was looking for.

Eventually, after a year at Loyola and working for the school paper, I



# movies in the Windy City

took an intro to photography class, and documenting my time abroad in Madrid with a DSLR I had purchased before I left, I fell into the international film program at LUC. A mixture of both theory and production, the major allowed me to learn the basic tools I needed to tell a story, just like we did at the paper, but with a visual lexicon, thanks to my photo classes.

From there the rest is history. I finished my final year at Loyola making several documentaries around the city. After graduation, I began my quest to become a full-time filmmaker.

## **How did you actually get from college to eventually operating your own business in such a relatively short amount of time?**

I think if I had told myself 10 years ago when I graduated NDP that I would be running my own business, it would have not only sounded laughable to me, but also pretty strange. It's not really something I set out to do.

After graduating college, I wanted to take a gap year before getting right to work. So, naturally, I applied to become an English language teaching assistant in a public high school system in Spain. Then, in the fall of 2011, I moved back to Madrid and started working part time teaching English to Spanish kids between 12-18. But as much fun as I had with the students, I quickly realized that teaching wasn't really for me.

## **So then what? How did you end up back in advertising and marketing?**

Luckily, I had met a woman in Chicago a year before who happened to be working at a media and design consultancy in Madrid. I sent her an email and asked if they were looking for any interns. She said they weren't, but she said to come in anyway and they'd see if they could find something for me to do. I had never worked in an agency and my Spanish was still pretty shaky, but they said they had some part-time work I could do and that I should come back on the following Monday to start.

From that point forward, I taught in the morning, made a big Spanish lunch, took a quick siesta, and then headed in the afternoon to my new job with the marketing team at a firm called The Cocktail, which is where I really started to learn how to make videos, take photos and create designs professionally.

The projects I was working on were mainly for internal meetings or for the social-media channels of big brands in Spain like Kellogg's, Heineken and Santander. I even got to make a promotional video for the tourism board of La Rioja, the Spanish wine region. At the same time, I worked on side projects, which involved creating ads for some of my friends and their cafes and small businesses.

## **When did you come back to the U.S.?**

When my visa ran out at the end of 2012, I decided to leave Spain and head back to the U.S. to use the new skills I had acquired and try to find a job stateside. Plus, I had taken on a fair amount of student debt in college and the salary I was making in Europe just wouldn't be enough to cover it.

So I started looking for jobs in Chicago in film or video production after creating a show reel from all the projects I had created while in Madrid. After a few weeks of searching, I got a call from a recruiter at LAPIZ, the Hispanic division of Leo Burnett, the largest ad agency in Chicago and one of the largest in the U.S.

The problem was that I knew nothing about advertising! I hadn't even seen an episode of *Mad Men*, let alone consciously study advertising

or marketing.

But through a combination of luck and broken Spanish, I made my way through the interview and started the job.

## **What kind of work did you do for LAPIZ and how long did you stay there?**

I spent my next two years organizing productions for radio, TV and the web for clients like P&G, Allstate, Nintendo and the Mexican Board of Tourism. And as much as I enjoyed being close to the productions, the role of a producer in the agency world is more of a project manager than



a creative role. I desperately wanted a camera back in my hands. I wanted to edit the project, not just organize it. I also wanted to help write the concepts. And I wanted to help tell stories like I had when I first started filmmaking back in college.

So in March of 2014, I left Burnett and decided to try my hand at freelancing in Chicago as a videographer and producer. I reached out to small businesses and brands like I had two years before in Spain to see if they needed videos. I took anything I could get my hands on. Events, weddings, case studies, you name it. Finally, that summer, I landed my first "big" project with a start-up company called Belly. They were refreshing their brand and website and needed all new photos and a bunch of testimonial/commercial videos on their site to help sell their product. From there I found another start-up, and another, and eventually began to get bigger and bigger jobs myself — even some offers from agencies where I used to work. I took some projects with no pay, but those usually included an opportunity to travel or gain access to more work in the future.

## **Did you find all of this extra work overwhelming for a one-man operation?**

Yes, because as I did work in Morocco, Spain, Cuba, Uganda, Ghana and Portugal, my portfolio had gotten much stronger and I didn't have to work for free or cheap anymore. And yes, I quickly realized I couldn't do everything myself. So I began to get bigger budgets that would allow more people to help me out in the field and in the studio.

Then, after two and a half years of freelancing, in the summer of 2017, I launched a proper production studio called Sidekick Video,

*Please see WINDY CITY, page 34*

# Motown missionary

Strong work ethic and Notre Dame experience convinced alum of the importance of philanthropy for schools and students.



Notre Dame alum Paul Barker ('88), right, is with Smokey Robinson and Berry Gordy during the time he worked for Gordy in Los Angeles.

**L**ike many if not most newly graduated high school students, Notre Dame alum Paul Barker ('88) wasn't sure which career path he should set foot on. But unlike most high school grads, he ended up with one that involved rubbing elbows with the likes of Smokey Robinson, Michael Jackson and Berry Gordy.

That's because once Barker found his footing, he began a progression of jobs in the nonprofit and entertainment industries that had him ending up with his current position as director of development and community activation at Detroit's Motown Museum.

"My love of music led me to volunteer at the museum in 1989 when I was only 18," he said. "I soon became their first paid employee and spent 13 years working for Motown in one capacity or another. I held many positions and at one time was responsible for a staff of 13 before I even turned 30."

His work initially with Motown forced Barker's post-secondary education into a hold after a brief stint at Macomb Community College.

"I attended Macomb and took general requirements until I chose a career," he said. "As

soon as I could, I transferred to Wayne State University to attend classes with my friends, but still did not really know what I wanted to do with my life. Eventually, I chose to pursue a marketing degree, but quickly became disinterested and eventually stopped going to school and started to work full time."

Full-time work was his best education, Barker said, and he started volunteering at the Motown Museum after Notre Dame. A year later, he became the museum's first paid employee. He spent the next six years working full time. The experience of hands-on work was the right fit for him at that time, but he



The three Pauls: Barker, at right, is with NDHS classmates Paul Kocheckodan and Paul Serra after graduation.

always knew he would finish his degree.

"In 1995, I moved to California and spent the next three years working in the music and film business for my hero, Berry Gordy, the founder of Motown," Barker said. "Although the time was exciting, I never intended to stay out west. After three years, I moved back to Detroit, returned to work at the Motown Museum and went back to Wayne State University. This time, I actually wanted to be in school, so I took night classes and worked full time and finally received a bachelor's degree in marketing."

After college, Barker thought it might be time to explore other possible careers, so he made the hard decision to leave the Motown Museum and seek new challenges.

"I worked at The Roostertail in Detroit for seven years as their first director of marketing and events, and then transitioned to the Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield where I worked in events and development for nearly 10



Barker is with composer Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber during a visit to the Motown Museum.

years," he said. "The next few years were ones of further discovery with time spent at the American Red Cross, the Judson Center and Hospice of Michigan — all in development with some events management."

And then — on his somewhat circuitous career journey — he recently returned to the Motown Museum.

"It feels like home once again," he said.

It's a home that continues to provide not only job satisfaction for Barker, but a real sense of accomplishment one gets from setting and reaching goals, he said. He's also happy he's been able to help provide satisfaction and resources for others through his development and

*Please see MOTOWN, page 34*



When Mel Larsen, a former principal and football coach at Pontiac Catholic High School who went on to become a Michigan state legislator, co-sponsored a major civil rights bill in the early 1970s, he was told it would end his political career. His bill would finally pass in 1976 and it not only did not end his political career, the bill, called the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act of Michigan, became the most important anti-discrimination law in Michigan that touched upon fair housing, age discrimination and sex discrimination.

Now 80 years old, Larson continues to serve others in the state and has said that that sense of service comes from his faith, undoubtedly reinforced during his own education at the University of Notre Dame and the time he spent at Pontiac Catholic. He also said that he now finds great joy in mentoring the next generation of civil rights leaders.

## SETTING AND EXCEEDING BIG GOALS

One member of that next generation perhaps is NDPMA's Kala Parker, the school's dean of diversity and associate dean of admissions — and a 2000 NDP graduate. She's an attorney and can likely make a lot more money elsewhere, but instead has devoted her six-plus years on campus to the education of young people — and more importantly, the education of a more diverse school community of young people.

A big goal for Parker over those years has been increasing NDPMA's student diversity to at least 20 percent, which to her delight, according to recent numbers, is now at 22 percent.

She said the school has had a three-prong approach to making its community more inclusive: 1) developing student activities highlighting current domestic and global issues to widen their outlooks and to encourage valuing the culture and perspectives of others;

2) utilizing the faculty diversity committee (FDC) as mentors to support faculty in seeking/developing multicultural teaching material and making their classroom discussions and activities more inclusive; and 3) engaging parents in meaningful discussion around

into the Multicultural Alliance, which still exists today. I also have to mention that Greg Simon, the school's director of advancement, was the staff member most responsible for making all of this happen. When he was a teacher here in the early days, Greg really was THE

said. "Upon my return to visit the school recently, Mrs. Parker and crew appeared to have recruited the largest pool of diversity in this current year's freshman class that I had ever seen during my time at Notre Dame Prep."

Parker said that during the

# Diversity takes center stage at Notre Dame



creating a diversity action plan to move the school forward.

Notre Dame's upper division also offers a diversity scholarship, available to ninth through 11th graders in their first year at NDP. It is based on a student's response to the diversity statement in his or her application for admission. The scholarship was launched in 2002 based on the recommendation of the student council at that time and it was funded initially by some faculty payroll deductions as well as a percentage of walkathon/raffle proceeds.

"The school's commitment to diversity actually stems back to 1998 when a group of students launched The Minority Caucus to provide a stronger voice for minorities, an avenue for leadership, and to celebrate the cultures that existed within our school community," Parker said. "Over the years, the group grew and matured

pioneer for the school in its quest for more diversity."

## 'LARGEST POOL OF DIVERSITY'

James Pillot, a 2016 graduate of Notre Dame Prep currently enrolled at Stanford University, also commented on the diversity strides made at his alma mater.

"When I first started at NDP and when I graduated in 2016, the diversity at the school still was lower than ideal," he said. "In my class year, I was the only black male, and in class years above or below me, there were usually less than 10 students of color," which he said means Latino or black, by his definition.

"However, through the work of Mrs. Parker and Mr. [Corey] Porterfield [also in admissions], I can see NDP taking tremendous steps forward in adding some color to the yearbook," Pillot

years following 1998, the population of the school and the number of diverse students actually has ebbed and flowed. She said some years were much better than others.

"But as concerns grew over the decrease in students from underrepresented populations, the faculty diversity council continued to work to support multicultural education in the classrooms," Parker said. "And this committee successfully procured annual funding to support the enrollment of diverse students and diversity resources."

Parker said that the school's admissions department, along with its usual responsibilities of enrollment, financial aid and scholarship disbursement, is committed to the very important charge of recruiting a diverse student body. ■

which allows me to create more work that helps tell stories, inform people and get important messages out through video.

**So now that you're doing well and, more importantly, doing what you want to do, have you had a chance to look back and ascertain what skills and/or experiences were most important or influential in getting you where you are today?**

I've always loved learning, especially about people. I think that's at the core of why I do everything. Learning a new language lets you speak to new people and hear their stories. Learning to take a photo or craft a film gives you the opportunity to meet new people and share their stories with others. It's that desire to learn and to be around others that I've always been drawn to.

I also think getting a good exposure to lots of different disciplines as both a high school and college student let me figure all of this out. Instead of being shoehorned into a career, I was allowed to explore lots of different areas of study. Instead of trying to focus on one specific career path, such as becoming a doctor, I was able to realize that the area I was most interested in was learning about other people and the stories they have to tell.

Basically, I think that drive to learn has always been really important for me and motivated me to pursue what I've pursued so far in my life.



Notre Dame alum Ben Derico ('07) NDP is on set in his studio in Chicago.

**Getting back to Notre Dame, is there anything you especially miss about that time in your life?**

It's really hard to pinpoint any one or two things. Suffice it to say I had a wonderful high school experience. I was the VP of my class's student council, a four-year member of the cross country and track teams, and I was involved with a bunch of other clubs. I think it's important for students to experience as much as possible in high school.

I also loved having the opportunity to get to know my whole class. Spending four years with about 200 of the same kids, you really get to know everyone. You figure out who they are and what they like. And that's really neat in a small community because each individual has something interesting to offer. Whether that be learning to play the guitar with some of the talented musicians in my class, watching a European soccer match with a school soccer player, or just hanging out with someone new during Irish Week, I really enjoyed that I could interact and learn from so many different people.

**Okay, here's the tough question: Did you have a favorite teacher?**

I did have my mom as my English teacher twice, so if I say anyone else, I think I'd get in trouble. But I always loved my Spanish classes with Sra. Tessada and my time in student council with Mr. Kator.

**Any other thoughts about your high school alma mater?**

I think NDP is a special place. I really do feel like it changed the course of my life and made me into who I am. Being challenged to be a great student by both the faculty and my fellow students helped me grow to love learning. I don't think that's something everyone everywhere is as privileged to have. NDP created avenues for me to become successful. It built a path for me to move forward and I grew to really embrace the entire learning process. ■

fundraising work.

"I would have to say that setting goals, finding something you love to do and doing something that positively affects others has been what's inspired me," he said. "As mentioned before, I didn't know what I wanted to do or what I wanted to be after Notre Dame, but I knew I wanted to finish college. And I knew I wanted to love what I did for a living and I knew I wanted to leave this earth better than I found it. I took my love for music and found a place for myself in it and made a career out of it. I also made an impact raising money for those in need. From disaster victims in need of relief, to supporting children and adults with special needs. All the jobs I've ever had and excelled at were mission-based and encompassed these principles. In the middle of all that work, I still found time to get that degree. Another personal goal and promise kept."

Barker credits his time at Notre Dame High School for getting him where he is today. It also convinced him about how important philanthropy is for helping students who may need

tuition assistance in getting through a private, Catholic education.

"Attending Notre Dame prepared me for success because it was an environment where you had to work for what you wanted," he said. "In my case, it was very literal. While I was in high school, our family faced some real economic challenges and I had to work very hard to help pay tuition. I worked three jobs at an average of 30 hours a week."

Some of those jobs actually were at Notre Dame where he worked after school cleaning the classrooms and bathrooms. Another was working for NDHS maintenance manager Joe Pompeo at Midwest Contracting, where he helped set up and break down bingo in the gym and cafeteria.

"I also worked at the same time at Otto's in Eastland

Mall," he said. "All of this work helped our situation immensely and gave me a strong work ethic early on. For this reason, I send my contributions to NDPMA's annual fund via 'Mary's Way.' A gift to Mary's Way provides much-needed financial support to need-based and merit-based scholarships for kids at Notre Dame. This hits very close to home for me.

"Kids need to think about tests and grades and careers — not about how they are going to pay for class, lunch and books. If I can help that in even a little way, it means so much to me." ■

If you have any questions about the Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy's admissions process, please contact the school's office of admissions at 248-373-1061 or [koffer@ndpma.org](mailto:koffer@ndpma.org).



## CLASS REUNIONS

### INTERESTED IN PLANNING A CLASS REUNION?

Contact **Beth Campbell, Director of Alumni Relations** at [alumni@ndpma.org](mailto:alumni@ndpma.org) or (248) 373-2171 Ext. 3.

A reunion planning informational packet is available to you, and the alumni office can offer you help in getting started and throughout your planning process. We can provide you a class list with classmates' contact information, and can print and mail your invitations, covering the postage.

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO PLAN 2018 REUNIONS

NDP Class of 1998, 20 year

NDP Class of 2003, 15 year

NDP Class of 2008, 10 year

NDP Class of 2013, 5 year

NDP Class of 1963, 55 year

NDHS Class of 1978, 40 Year

NDHS Class of 1983, 35 year

NDHS Class of 1993, 25 year

NDHS Class of 1998, 20 year

NDHS Class of 2003, 15 year

PC/OC all class years ending in 8 and 3

### NOTRE DAME PREPARATORY SCHOOL

None scheduled at this time.

### NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL

**Class of 1958** Saturday, June 9, 2018 – Capital Banquet Center, 12350 31 Mile Rd., Washington, Mich. 48094

Family style dinner from 6 p.m. – midnight

\$60.00 — Single

\$120.00 — Couple

If interested in attending or for more information call, Bob Bendzinski — 586-293-3693 or Bill Vallee — 586-649-7501. If interested in a game of golf on Friday, June 8, contact Bill Vallee.

### PONTIAC CATHOLIC

**Class of 1969** 50th reunion on Friday, September 21, 2019, at the Lafayette Grande in Pontiac, Mich. Contact Jerry Ball for more information at 248-229-5687.

### OAKLAND CATHOLIC

None scheduled at this time.

### ST. FREDERICK

None scheduled at this time.

### ST. MICHAEL

None scheduled at this time.

## NOTRE DAME UPCOMING EVENTS

### BLESS THE BATS April 12

ALL softball and baseball alumni are invited back to check out our newly renovated fields as they are blessed. Ceremony will begin at 3 p.m. with refreshments and free alumni gift. Both home softball and baseball games will begin immediately following the blessing. To RSVP, please email [bethcampbell@ndpma.org](mailto:bethcampbell@ndpma.org).

### NOTRE DAME THEATRE PRESENTS 'TONY N' TINA WEDDING' April 19-21

Notre Dame Theatre invites you to their first-ever dinner theatre by Artificial Intelligence conceived by Nancy Cassaro.

Notre Dame Cafetorium

April 19, 20 and 21

7 p.m. Pre-show starts at 6:30 p.m.

One of the longest running shows in off-Broadway history, Tony n' Tina's Wedding is one-of-a-kind entertainment – an immersive comedy show staged as an evening of nuptials for two Italian-American families. It invites the audience to actively participate in all festivities: everyone is a welcome guest at the ceremony and reception, there's real food, a real wedding band, and real mingling with a cast of lovable characters.

Seating will be limited for this show. Presale tickets on sale until Monday, April 16, at 4 p.m. Available at [showtix4u.com](http://showtix4u.com)

### NOTRE DAME UPPER DIVISION ART SHOW April 9-27

Art show runs from April 9-27, 2018, in the upper division. Reception April 23 at 6:30 p.m.

### BIG BAND DINNER DANCE May 19

Saturday, May 19, 2018, at LaFayette Grand, 1 Lafayette, Pontiac, Mich. Also featuring performances from jazz band alums. Ticket information will be available soon. Please contact Joe Martin, [jmartin@ndpma.org](mailto:jmartin@ndpma.org) for more information.

### 22ND ANNUAL GOLF OUTING June 4

Monday, June 4, 2018, at Pine Knob Golf Course in Clarkston. To register, bid on auction items or to become a sponsor, log onto [www.ndpma.org/golfouting](http://www.ndpma.org/golfouting). Sponsored by the NDPMA Booster Club. Proceeds to benefit NDPMA athletics.

### HOMECOMING 2018 October 12

Mark your calendar for October 12 for this year's homecoming game and October 13 for the Alumni 5k Fun Run.



# PEOPLE. SOLUTIONS.

We take care of the things  
that take care of your people.



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