

# IRISH

fall 2010

5

Athletic  
program  
award  
continues  
proud  
tradition

*plus:*

John Nixon  
Julie Kherkher  
Kathy Bembas  
Gregory Simon  
Joe Mejaly  
Irish games  
Fr. Coolong  
Alumni notes

Notre Dame Preparatory School  
1300 Giddings Road  
Pontiac, MI 48340

Non Profit  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Royal Oak, MI  
Permit 615

# A WORD FROM YOUR ALUMNI DIRECTOR



When I have the opportunity to interview alumni, I almost always ask this question: “What are your hopes, dreams, and aspirations?” And, I always get a different answer. Often, they first look at me quizzically, and then they always have some kind of answer. One 2005 alum said that after pursuing nutrition science in college she wants to use her career “to improve the health and the lives of others to help them create the best life possible.” Another grad, also from 2005, who is involved in Teach for America, said he wanted to play just a small role in making his students’ lives better. I’m sure they both will succeed in realizing their noble and lofty goals.

I like to ask this question because the answer is a window into their future. It’s also a link to another interview ten years down the road. Alumni from Notre Dame are “doers” and people on the move. Alumni from Notre Dame are dreamers in the very fantastical sense of the word; men and women who have learned from teachers, Marists, staff, and each other how to reach higher and never settle for complacency.

At Notre Dame, our alumni are not only academic scholars, but as you will witness in the next 22 pages, they are agents of positive

social change in their world. Using their talents to the best of their ability is the mission and they honestly listen to the “pull” which guides the decision making. In this issue, you will be engrossed in alumni who are following the direction of their dreams. How inspiring!

What are your hopes, dreams, and aspirations? As for me, they do not include lofty travel plans or being famous. I simply wish to continue developing youth to their highest potential. I dream of having a family one day and being a gentle mother like mine. I may not change the world, but I’ll change the world within my reach, one encounter at a time. What are your hopes, dreams, and aspirations?

Irish blessings,

Kelly A. (Cole) Patterson ‘99 (NDP)

## Message from Frank Castronova ‘89 (NDHS)

Dear Fellow Alumni,

Twenty-five years ago, my parents gave me one of the best gifts possible—they enrolled me in Notre Dame High School. At the time, I was nervous to start a new school, especially because I was leaving my friends in the East Detroit Public Schools. But I soon realized it was the right place to be. I was challenged to be my best by a stellar faculty that included Mr. Kelly for English, Mr. Rice for AP U.S. History, Mr. Lynch for trigonometry, and Fr. Leon for Latin and philosophy. Expectations were high. Classes were tough. But I got through it manfully and took from the school lessons and life skills that have served me well to this day.



I had little or no involvement with my alma mater for many years—much to my regret. I saw some friends who, like me, attended Wayne State University. I visited the school occasionally and even worked in its St. Peter Chanel Library for a little while. I read the alumni newsletter with great interest, but never attended a reunion until my twentieth. That was the spark that got me interested in getting re-engaged.

But, in the meantime, my school closed and that made me very sad. What was once, in my opinion, the greatest boys’ school on the east side, was a vacant, rotting, building. The halls I walked, the rooms I learned in, the stands from which I watched football games, were frozen in time. The memories, however, became more powerful despite the sad visuals.

I began to receive notices of gatherings from a different school—Notre Dame Prep—not my school, but the home of many of my

teachers. I met lots of great people—both men and women—who had the same great college-preparatory education, just in a different building. Different, but yet the same—one that is presided over by the Marist Fathers and Brothers. That is the crucial link between my all-boys’ east-side school and the coeducational school on the east side of Pontiac.

Just like the Marists, the Notre Dame Alumni Association serves as an important link. One between the past and the present. Between the men of Notre Dame and the men and women of Notre Dame Prep. And one that cherishes the legacies of gone-but-not-forgotten Pontiac Schools—St. Michael, St. Frederick, Pontiac Catholic, and Oakland Catholic. The NDAA board is made up of dedicated alumni and alumnae who care deeply about the schools they attended and work hard to ensure our alumni have a positive connection. The board has been up and running for more than a year, but needs your help to keep the momentum going.

I urge you, my fellow alumni, to get involved, to venture into the unfamiliar, just as I did twenty-five Augusts ago when I walked into 20254 Kelly Road for the first time. It will be different, but it will, I assure you, feel right. Come to an event, such as a Traveling Irish Dinner, Homecoming, or Oktoberfest. Volunteer as a reunion planner. Become a Class Captain by acting as a liaison between the Alumni Association and your classmates. Support the Annual Fund. Drop by ND Prep and say hello to an old teacher. Join the Alumni Association board. These are just a few suggestions—among the myriad ways you can become involved.

May God bless you and yours,

**Frank Castronova, ‘89 (NDHS)**

Vice President, Notre Dame Alumni Association

# 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 high 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).

## CONTENTS

### 4 IRISH NEWS

Get the latest about NDPMA and alumni.

### 7 ALUMNI IN ARMED FORCES

See where some of your fellow alumni have served in the military.

### 8 SIMPLY THE BEST

Read about how NDP's athletic program was named best in the state.

### 12 BUSY 1978 ALUM HELPS GLOBAL MANUFACTURER GROW

Joe Mejaly '78 (NDHS) keeps the world's trucks supplied with components.

### 13 FIFTEEN YEARS (AND COUNTING) AT PREP

What do alumni from 1995 and 2010 have in common?

### 15 PULLED TO PRIESTHOOD

Dennis Strach '06 (NDP) listens to a higher calling.

### 19 FOLLOWING SCHOOL MISSION TO CENTRAL AMERICA

NDHS/NDP alum volunteers in Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

### 21 A QUESTION OF VOCATIONS

Fr. Jim Strasz '70 (NDHS) talks about how to build a culture of vocations

### 22 LETTERS AND NOTES

Alumni send their notes and letters.

### 23 CLASS REUNIONS

Read about upcoming reunions.

DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI RELATIONS  
Kelly (Cole) Patterson '99 (NDP)

EDITOR  
Mike Kelly '73 (NDHS)

ASSOCIATE EDITOR  
Monica Drake '06 (NDP)

CONTRIBUTORS  
Catherine (Kathy) Bembas  
Paul Carr  
Frank Castronova '89 (NDHS)  
Andy Guest '84 (NDHS)  
James Strasz, s.m. '70 (NDHS)

IRISH is published twice yearly in the spring and fall by the Notre Dame Alumni Association.

The magazine's address is  
1300 Giddings Rd.  
Pontiac, MI 48340  
248-373-2171  
[alumni@ndpma.org](mailto:alumni@ndpma.org)  
[ndpma.org](http://ndpma.org)



ON THE COVER: P.J. Barron '10 (NDP) in semifinal lacrosse win against De La Salle. Photo: Mr. Mack Photography

Contact us:

**Advancement Office - Alumni Director**  
**Notre Dame Preparatory School**  
**and Marist Academy**  
1300 Giddings Road  
Pontiac, MI 48340  
248-373-2171 - ext. 4  
Fax 248-373-2175  
[alumni@ndpma.org](mailto:alumni@ndpma.org)  
[www.ndpma.org/alumni](http://www.ndpma.org/alumni)

## Advertise in IRISH?

Are you interested in advertising to 10,000 of your alumni friends? Place an ad in an upcoming IRISH. Contact Mike Kelly '73 (NDHS) for more information and pricing: [mike@group-ex.com](mailto:mike@group-ex.com).

## Maloney in coaches' hall of fame

On March 27, 2010, Ed Maloney '64 (NDHS) was inducted into the Michigan High School Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame in Ann Arbor. He has specialized in building football and lacrosse programs during a career that began at his alma mater, Notre Dame High School. He was the head football coach at ND along with Notre Dame Prep, Bishop Gallagher, Crowell-Lexington, Pontiac Catholic, Riverview Gabriel Richard and Ann Arbor Gabriel Richard. He was a teacher and assistant coach at Monroe Catholic Central in the 1970s. Maloney played club lacrosse during his college days at Dayton and started lacrosse programs at Bishop Foley, NDHS, Ann Arbor Richard, and Notre Dame Prep. He is in the process of starting the sport at Siena Heights University, which will make its lacrosse debut in the spring. He is the former head lacrosse coach of Pontiac Catholic HS, Notre Dame HS, and Notre Dame Prep.

## American Idol musical director

Gerry Mattei '02 (NDP) was named musical director for the Allison Iraheta tour. He also played keyboards and conducted the band. Allison Iraheta took fourth place in last year's American Idol competition. She was on tour with Adam Lambert, who finished as runner-up on AI, and performed around the country this summer.

## Notre Dame athletic director earns accolades from MHSAA



NDPMA athletic director Betty Wroubel has been selected by the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) to be the 2010-11 recipient of the Allen W. Bush Award.

The award is named for the MHSAA's second full-time executive director, who served in that capacity for ten years after eight years as an assistant. It recognizes past and continuing service to

interscholastic athletics in general and to the MHSAA in particular.

## New principal at middle division

Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy announced in May that it has named Jill M. Mistretta principal of the school's middle division, effective July 1, 2010. Mistretta replaces Sandra J. Favrow, who is retiring after 15 years as division principal.

"Jill is wonderfully suited to succeed Sandy Favrow, who has toiled here as founding principal of both our middle and lower divisions," said Fr. Leon Olszamowski, s.m., '65 (NDHS) president of NDPMA. "We wish Sandy and her husband our best as they move into retirement and look forward to Jill continuing Sandy's great work at our middle division. I am sure Jill will work tirelessly alongside the rest of our faculty and administration in helping our students become Christian people, upright citizens, and academic scholars."

Mistretta, who was the first faculty member hired when ND's Marist Academy first opened in 1996, has served as both a science and literature teacher at the school and was named vice principal in



Jill Mistretta

2006. She was instrumental in helping the middle division earn International Baccalaureate World School status in August of last year.

## Jerry Potter retires after 12 years of service



Security guard Jerry spent the past 12 years of his life taking care of everyone on the NDPMA campus. He guided traffic, kept the road and circle driveway clear, and most of all, he knew every student's name. He truly was invested in the Notre Dame community, not just as a security guard or traffic director, but as a friend and role model. Now Potter is retiring.

When alumni come back to the school, one of the first things they usually ask is, "Where's Jerry?" Everyone could count on Potter for a hug or high five, or just a friendly smile. He was very emotional when he said that he would

miss the kids the most. "I just love them."

After retirement, Potter doesn't have firm plans. "I think for a couple weeks I'll kick back a little bit." He is traveling to Kentucky this summer, but will come back in the fall for some football and basketball games. He says that he'll actually be able to see some of the games now because he won't be stuck in the parking lot. "I'll miss it though. I'll miss the kids," Potter said.

## Muscle man

Bodybuilder Steve Kuclo '03 (NDHS) was featured in July's edition of MuscleMag International magazine. He is training to compete at higher levels in the sport, including for the Mr. USA contest held in Las Vegas, Nev., on July 31. "This will be my first time competing for the USA championships and I really looking forward to getting on stage," he told IRISH.



When asked about a memorable event from his days at NDHS, Kuclo said it probably was senior-year skip day. A group of classmates—he said he wouldn't mention names to protect the innocent—had a WWE-style wrestling match in the school parking lot. "After that, Bill Jennison, Lee Dyer, Jason Gifford, Anthony Disante and I ran through the halls of Regina with wrestler masks on. Wait a minute! I said I wouldn't mention any names—but I think I would get some flack for not giving them props!"

## Refurbishment continues on NDHS building

Major construction and refurbishment continued throughout the summer at the Harper Woods campus of the former Notre Dame High School. Work on both the interior and exterior of the building, including new windows all the way around and masonry repairs, is being done in anticipation of Chandler Park Academy charter school



opening in the fall of 2010. According to the Archdiocese of Detroit, CPA closed on the sale of the property May 13 and now

will operate schools in the former Lutheran East, Regina, and Notre Dame buildings.

### Tolliver and Garippa receive D1 athletic offers

Two NDP athletes have received division-1 offers to continue their athletic careers at the collegiate level. Destiny Tolliver '10 (NDP) has signed a national letter of intent for the University of New Hampshire to play volleyball. The 6'-1" all-state, right-side hitter becomes the seventh athlete from NDP's 2007 state championship team to sign on to play at the next level. Nick Garippa '10 (NDP) signed a national letter of intent to play lacrosse at the University of Detroit Mercy.



### Coldren honored at CMU

Molly Coldren '08 (NDP) of the Central Michigan University softball program was named a State Farm Scholar-Athlete of the Week during this past season. At the time, Coldren was leading CMU to a 3-0 record, including a weekend sweep of Eastern Michigan and a 5-1 win over Michigan State University that also was the 1,000th career victory

for head coach Margo Jonker. For the 2010 season, Coldren started all 46 games at shortstop, clubbed a school-record 11 home runs and led the squad with 35 RBI. She was ranked third in the MAC with .76 RBI average per game. Batted .301 with a .374 on-base percentage and a team-best .636 slugging percentage. Coldren is a language arts major with a 3.51 grade-point average.

### Bologna opens new restaurant

Danny Bologna '03 (NDP), son of long-time restaurateur Joe Bologna, opened the family's third restaurant Monday, June 21st, in Clinton Township, Mich. The Wildwood Friendly Tavern features primarily Michigan fare, including perch and walleye from the Great Lakes and corned beef from Grobbel's. The restaurant's decor is designed to be an "Up-North neighborhood get-away in the city." It is located at 46712 Hayes, at 21 Mile Rd. 586-203-8600. joebologna.com. In addition, Joe Bologna Trattoria in Sterling Heights is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year.



### NDHS alum named president of prestigious medical society

Daniel Michael, M.D., '72 (NDHS), a neurological surgeon residing in Grosse Pointe Shores, was installed May 2010 as president of the 16,000-physician Michigan State Medical Society.

Michael, who practices at the Michigan Head and Spine Institute, is a 1979 graduate of Wayne State University School of Medicine and director of neurotrauma at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak.

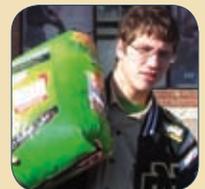
He also has medical staff privileges at several Southeast Michigan hospitals, including Detroit Medical Center, St. John Hospital and Medical Center, Mt. Clemens Regional Medical Center, and Bi-County Community Hospital. (*Crain's Detroit Business June 7, 2010*)

### Dominique, Johnston named Eagle Scouts

Daniel Dominique '10 (NDP) of Troop 255 (Rochester Hills) and Carson Johnston '10 (NDP) were awarded Eagle Scout status by the Boy Scouts of America. Dominique's project was a playground he created for the preschool at Brewster Elementary in Rochester Hills. He built two compost decking benches, an 8' by 8' sandbox and arranged to have a play structure donated for the children. He collected over \$600 in donations to support his project. The preschoolers previously were unable to use the large playground because it was built for children over five years of age. Dominique worked with the pre-K teachers, scouts, and parents to make this project possible.



David Dominique



Carson Johnston

Johnston's project was to raise over one thousand pounds of dog and cat food for the Oakland County animal shelter during a time of very tight county budgets. He planned the project, carried out the marketing for public awareness, and led a team of scouts and community members to raise food for the shelter. He brought the Clarkston, Oxford, Waterford, Brandon, Rochester, and Rochester Hills communities together by demonstrating the urgent needs of the animals, as well as collecting and delivering the needed food. Carson and his friends worked over 220 hours to complete the project and want to make it into a yearly project campaign.

### Making a difference

The Michigan Catholic Credit Union announced that ND Prep sophomore Keith Watzka and the Kaye family (Lauren and Emily Kaye

are students at NDP) were named recipients of their 2010 "Make a Difference" Scholarship Program. The Scholarship Program recognizes those who demonstrate a commitment to making a difference in the lives of others through volunteer services in their school, parish and/or community. Recipients were selected based on their service, letter of recommendation and written essay answering the questions, "How has helping others made a difference in your life?" and "What has been your most rewarding experience?" Each of the winners was presented with a one-year \$500 educational scholarship for Catholic-school or college tuition.



Keith Watzka

### Former NDHS grid coach retires

Bob LaPointe, who coached football at NDHS during the mid-80s before moving to Belleville High School as head coach, is retiring after 42 years. LaPointe has been at Belleville for almost 20 years. He also coached at Divine Child High School, where he won a state championship in 1975, and at Eastern Michigan University as interim head coach during the 1982 season.

### East-side get-together draws a crowd

On April 24, alumni from both NDHS and NDP gathered at Scott Baumgart's '84 (NDHS) Robusto's Martini Lounge in Grosse Pointe Woods to enjoy a few libations and reminisce. It was a fun event with ND alumni from the 1960s through the 1990s attending. There were an estimated 45-50 attending in total, including significant others. Big thanks to Scott Baumgart, his wife, and to the staff at Robusto's for great food and excellent service. The alumni association is hoping to schedule another east-side event in the fall to accommodate the many ND grads from that side of town.



### Bonior group calls for BP worker safety

American Rights at Work, a worker advocacy group based in Washington, DC, and chaired by David Bonior '63 (NDHS), called on British Petroleum to protect workers engaged in the cleanup after the Deepwater Horizon explosion and oil spill. ARW launched a petition to BP urging the company to take every possible step to keep cleanup workers safe—including making all necessary safety equipment available. More than 21,000 signed the petition in less than 24 hours after its issue on June 22nd.

### Painting inspiration



Bryan Clifford, who graduated from Notre Dame Prep in 2002, has been very busy hand painting numerous inspirational sayings and slogans around the Pontiac and Waterford campuses. The school's mission statement was most recently painted in the main lobby triangle of the school. That follows many other statements Clifford painted on the school's interior walls, including those attributed to Fr. Jean-Claude Colin, s.m., founder of the Marist Fathers and Brothers, and St. Marcellin Champagnat, s.m.

### NDP volleyball earns academic award

For the third straight year, the ND Prep volleyball team has been awarded the American Volleyball Coaches Association Team Academic Award. The national award honors collegiate and high-school volleyball teams that also displayed excellence in the classroom during the school year by maintaining at least a 3.30 cumulative team grade-point average (on a 4.0 scale).

### Author writes second book

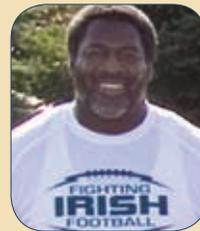
Joe Borri '80 (NDHS) has finished his second book, *Three Can Keep*

*A Secret*, a novel, and is currently seeking an agent and/or publisher. The title borrows from a line credited to Ben Franklin ("Three people can keep a secret if two of them are dead."). The book starts out in Chicago, circa 1938, and culminates in 1984 Detroit. It's set in Borri's old east-side neighborhood, Copper Corner, the setting for many of the short stories in his first book, *Eight Dogs Named Jack*, published in 2007. Website: joeborri.net.



### Three LAX players make all state

The Michigan High School Lacrosse Coaches Association named ND Prep's Brandon Beauregard (First Team Attack), Thomas Sardelli (First Team Midfield) and Joe Gifford (Second Team Defense) to its 2010 All State team. All are 2010 grads.



### Ex-Lion Lomas Brown hosts free football camp for kids

Former Detroit Lions offensive lineman Lomas Brown, the father of two students at ND Marist Academy, hosted a free football camp in July for kids in Detroit. Nearly 300 sixth-through-12th-grade football players participated in the camp. Brown said he organized and coached at the event because he loves Detroit and wanted to "give back to the kids." Brown is an assistant football coach at Notre Dame Prep.

### Happy retirement

**Merrie Gay Ayrault**, English teacher who taught at NDHS for many years, retired from Shrine High School in Royal Oak.

**Sandy Favrow**, as ND Marist Academy (middle division) principal.

**Christine VanDam** has retired after ten years of service to the Notre Dame community. She taught Modern Language.

**Dolores (Dee) Elbode** retires after teaching language for 15 years at ND Prep and one year prior at Oakland Catholic.

### Weddings

**Rachel Alexander '00 (NDP)** and Tommy Miller, August 22, 2009.

**Jon Robb '00 (NDHS)** and Jennifer VanValkenburg, July 31, 2010. Among the groomsmen were best man Patrick Kelly '00 (NDHS), Scott Jiles '00 (NDHS) and Chad Spigner '00 (NDHS).

**Dan Staniszewski '02 (NDP)** and Lauren Peterson, April 9, 2010. In attendance were best man Scott Moseley '02 (NDP), bridesmaid Katie Staniszewski '99 (NDP), and friends Kelly Cole Patterson '99 (NDP), Bobbi Bieszki Hall '00 (NDP), Chris Moseley '03 (NDP), Tim Collinge '04 (NDP), David Moseley '06 (NDP), Jim Moseley '68 (NDHS), Fr. Joe Hindelang, s.m. '68 (NDHS). NDPMA staff in attendance: groomsmen John Smith, groomsmen Nick Kator, Donna Kotzan, Mark McCaskey, Kati Swieca-Brockman, Michelle Garcia, TJ Kulick, Anthony Butorac, and Jamie Rodda.

**Amanda Schmitz '02 (NDP)** and **Paul Wezner '02 (NDP)**, June 26, 2010. In attendance were best man Mark Wezner '04 (NDP), maid of honor Christelle Penkala '02 (NDP), bridesmaid Jenny Gammicchia '02 (NDP), and groomsmen John Adams '02 (NDP).

Please see IRISH News, page 16

# ALUMNI AND THE U.S. ARMED FORCES

(More profiles can be found on the NDAA alumni association web site.) 



**Carl Schmidt '01**  
(NDP)  
S/Sgt USMC

I officially signed my enlistment papers at the age of 17 on April 5, 2001. I had contemplated joining the military throughout middle and high school. I wanted something different than the traditional classrooms. I wanted to be part of a more rugged, tough, and challenging lifestyle. The Marine Corps was the obvious choice for me.

Both my father and grandfather were U.S. Naval veterans and they valued their service as a very important part of their lives. My friends questioned my decision, finding it not a popular choice. I attended Marine Corps Recruit Training ("Boot Camp") in South Carolina. The entire 13 weeks is extremely demanding; 110% effort 24/7. The Marine Corps prides itself on mental toughness and

pushes recruits to the limit of their abilities under very adverse conditions. It taught me to do things I never thought possible. Recruit training is just the first step to being a Marine; it is a very important step, it makes the Marine.

Since 2001, I have been deployed three times in support of the Global War on Terror and Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom: Iraq, Afghanistan, and most recently to Djibouti, Africa.

Home is always in the back of your mind and you miss it, but you get used to where you are. You have to; otherwise you would go crazy. There have been a lot of improvements to most of the facilities since the beginning of the war that makes life much more bearable and more comfortable.



**William Kay '61**  
(NDHS)  
M/Sgt USAF  
(retired)

I was drafted into the United States Air Force and sent to San Antonio, Texas, for training. From 1961 to 1962, I served and trained at the Beale Air Force Base in California. During the Cuban missile crisis, I moved to the Goose Air Base Labrador, "The Goose," in Canada. Between 1963 and 1972, I jumped around a bit more from the Strategic Air Command Headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska ('63-'68), back to The Goose ('68-'71), and to the Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas, Nevada ('71-'72).

During Vietnam, in 1973, I was sent to Korat Royal Thai Air Force Base which was located five miles south of Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand (AKA Korat City). At that time, the base served as home to many permanent and transient Air Force squadrons

and military and civilian forces.

From 1974-1984, I was sent back to Omaha and to Marquette County's K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base where I retired as Division Fuels Superintendent.

Throughout my years in the Air Force, I earned the Air Force Commendation Medals, Vietnam Service with Battle Star, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Gallantry Cross, and National Defense Medal.

Now a disabled veteran, I keep a relationship with God as a special minister in the Church. Also a Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus member and Grand Knight. I still have a passion for traveling.



**Sarah Huston '09**  
(NDP) MIDN  
3/C USN

When I was 12 years old, I decided I was going to join the Navy. I wanted to serve my country, travel around the world, have a fast-paced lifestyle, take pride in what I do, and do things many people only dream about. The military helped me achieve all those dreams.

At first my family wasn't crazy about the idea, but knew it was important for me to follow my dream. In the Navy Reserve Officer Training Corps, I had my indoctrination that took place the week before the class of 2013 was sworn into the Battalion, and the rest of my four years will serve as my training.

Mentally, it was very tough. The cadre, the group of officers who train a new military unit, were yelling at us all the time. We

had the privilege of waking up each morning to the cadre slamming metal chairs against the walls and lockers.

One of my best learning moments was when we did this thing called the Leadership Reaction course. Our class wasn't locked on during our entire first semester, meaning many people were late on more than one account. In the military being early is on-time and being on-time is late, being late meant trouble. It was about then when I learned the importance of accountability, teamwork, and shared responsibility.

Currently, I am about to enter my second year in the University of Michigan NROTC Battalion and I am more motivated than ever.



**Trip Reimann '02**  
(NDP)  
1st Lt. US Army  
National Guard

While at Notre Dame Prep, I decided that I wanted to enlist in an ROTC program. (NDP teacher) Mr. Cannon provided insight and guidance when I was debating between enlisting or going through the ROTC program. His support meant a lot to me. I found that the Army ROTC program at Niagara University was the best fit for me. Upon graduation, I decided to continue in the military and lead a civilian life simultaneously, which led me to the Army National Guard.

I was directed to deploy with the 1-125 Infantry Battalion to Iraq. Not only did I only have a month to prepare for the year-long deployment, but I was going with a completely unfamiliar unit and branch. The night before I left for training, my mother gave

me a Rosary that was the same that her grandmother gave her father the night before he left for World War II. It was an emotional and unforgettable moment. I carried the Rosary on my person every time I had to fly or convoy. And I grew in my personal relationship with God overseas by praying at night before I went to sleep, and taking a few minutes out of the day to meditate and think about where I was, how I got there, and understanding that God never puts anything in front of us that He knows we cannot handle.

I am still serving in the Guard with Company C, Brigade Special Troops Battalion (BSTB), and 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) out of Grand Rapids, Michigan.



# simply the best

## ATHLETIC AWARD CONTINUES PROUD TRADITION

“Simply the best.” That was the headline of a recent Detroit Free Press article about Notre Dame Prep earning the Michigan High School Athletic Association’s “Exemplary Athletic Program Award.” Now in its 16th year of athletic accomplishments, Notre Dame Prep carries on a proud tradition of 51 years of “bests” from Notre Dame High School in Harper Woods and 25 years at Pontiac

Catholic and Oakland Catholic high schools.

Named the state’s top high school athletic program for 2010 by MHSAA, Notre Dame Prep’s athletic teams again ended the school year with a flourish of strong finishes and championships. The boys lacrosse team won

the Catholic League crown and played all the way to the state finals, coming up just short of a victory after a hard-fought game against perennial powerhouse Grand Rapids Forest Hills Central. Cross-country runner Chris Burns earned a state title in division-2 in November, carrying on a tradition that included Matt Hartung ‘96 (NDHS) and Doug Brown ‘70 (NDHS) also as state cross-country champions. The NDP volleyball team, which won a state championship in 2007 and made it to the 2008 state quarterfinals, reached the regional semifinal game this season where it was upset by Bloomfield Hills Lahser. And the Fighting Irish girls ski team, which won a state title in 2006, earned its fifth straight MHSAA regional championship at Cannonsburg Ski Area.

The football team finished its first season under head coach Kyle Zimmerman at a much-improved 6-4, and played in the CHSL C-D championship game against Ann Arbor Gabriel Richard at Ford Field.

But athletic records, championships and

accolades for a school mean very little if not balanced with a strong academic focus and record of success. And it’s this balance that earned Notre Dame Prep the award from MHSAA. As evidence, ND Prep athletes have averaged a 3.62 grade point average over the past seven years (3.7 this year) and numerous teams have repeatedly earned academic all-state honors—including volleyball and softball, which have been so honored every year since the school opened in 1994.

For the 2009-10 school year, nine teams—hockey, volleyball, girls basketball (fifth overall in class B), boys ski (first in state GPA), girls ski (second in state GPA), softball, competitive cheer (first in state GPA), girls soccer, and girls tennis—were named academic all state.

In fact, ND Prep teams have earned academic all-state honors more often than any other school in the Catholic League,

according to NDPMA athletic director Betty Wroubel.

“Every year, two or three of our teams end up being in the

top three GPAs in Michigan in their sport,” she said. “That is phenomenal. These kids are taking eight classes, many with other extracurriculars, some even in band!”

### STANDING ON FIRM GROUND

On why the school has always done so well, Wroubel said, “I attribute this directly to (school president) Fr. Leon (Olszawski) ‘65 (NDHS) for standing on firm ground, putting the overall mission of the school first and foremost, without compromise. Also, Father has surrounded himself with administrators who have fully bought into this. We really believe the mission of the school is the common thread of everything we do. Building good, Christian people and leaders, not just good athletes and championships. We want good leaders down the road.”

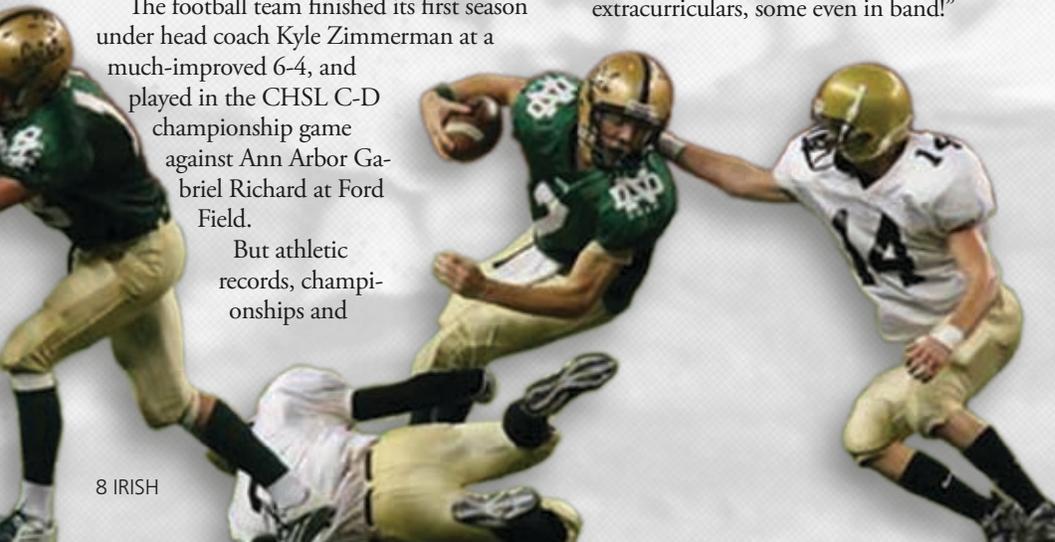
Though she says there is a ton of athletes who have thrived after graduation from Notre Dame, Wroubel cites as an example, Jeff Schuele, who graduated in 2005. “Jeff attended and played football at the U.S. Naval Academy,” she said. “But at NDP, he played football, lacrosse and wrestled, and did very well academically. He is a good example of going on and doing very well in college. He juggled a very busy athletic career and maintained a high grade-point average at NDP and did extremely well in Annapolis. But he’s just one example of many. I really can’t think of any of our athletes who have failed to continue their success in college.”

Schuele also wrestled for Navy. He graduated in May 2009 with a degree in ocean engineering.

### TEACHING LIFE LESSONS

At NDPMA, as well as at every other school, balancing academics, athletics and good sportsmanship provides challenges for all—administrators, teachers, coaches, and especially, the students.

According to Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA)—a nonprofit organization founded at Stanford University in 1998 and dedicated to using sports to teach life lessons through





Background image and left: NDHS varsity football players Bob Kady, Frank Spezia and John Ureel bring down an Austin High School ball carrier during the 1958 season. Notre Dame won the Central Division championship that year with a 6-1 record.

positive coaching—schools that create or strengthen a culture that promotes academics, good behavior and values for players, coaches and parents do so for a number of reasons, despite a strong win-at-all-costs mentality present today in youth sports. These schools give athletes a better overall experience, get parents and coaches on the same page about what it means to “honor the game,” increase



the ability to recruit and retain coaches and volunteers, and most importantly, develop a sports program that reinforces the educational

mission of the school.

With academics, PCA says that the research is clear: when parents, coaches and teachers work together, a child tends to do better in school.

Notre Dame AD Wroubel, who recently was honored by the MHSAA as a recipient of the Allen W. Bush Award for 2010, agrees and adds that balancing the needs of the student with the needs of the athlete is sometimes a tricky issue. Each sport has minimum academic standards that have to be met. These are driven primarily by the various coaches associations. But according to Wroubel, Notre Dame has a much more stringent criteria that have to be met in order for a student to play sports.

### ACADEMICS HIGHEST PRIORITY

“Our standards are much stricter than the state,” Wroubel said. “And one of the initiatives we’ve taken in the last three years and on which Notre Dame Prep assistant principal Donna Kotzan (’70 Regina HS; husband Joe ’70 NDHS) has done a phenomenal job, is tutor the kids—bringing them in on a regular basis and emphasizing the importance of staying on track. The leadership of Donna has been phenomenal. She does a great job of monitoring the

mission of the school.



kids, especially if or when they may slip below their potential.

“We all agree that first and foremost academic performance is the highest priority,” Wroubel said. “We go out of our way

to make sure that coaches know when one of their players may be struggling in school. We have guidelines in place designed to keep the focus on the student. It makes no sense to have a student spend extra time on the playing field when he or she may need that time to catch up on his or her class work.”

For many students, however, handling the rigors of academics and sports—sometimes multiple sports—may not be a problem. In fact, the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) says that when certain types of athletes play only one sport during the year, they may lack the additional enrichment and experience of participating in other sports or activities. In a media release, MHSAA says that single-sport-focused athletes sometimes find that participation is no longer fun and eventually drop out of their “chosen” sport because of the actions of overzealous coaches or pushy parents.

According to MHSAA, playing more than one sport offers more than what most people see on the surface—kids playing games four to five days a week. For families, multi-sports offer more opportunities to be together away from work or school. Often—at critical



times in their lives—playing multiple sports offers kids more than one way to connect with each other and work toward common goals.

Helping student-athletes thrive also is a focus of the Detroit area’s Catholic High School League. Each year, the CHSL presents

### DID YOU KNOW?

“High school athletes have higher grades and lower dropout rates and attend college more often than non-athletes.”  
(Minnesota State High School League)

“By a 2-to-1 margin for males and a 3-to-1 margin for females, student-athletes do better in school, do not drop out and have a better chance to get through college.”  
(University of Chicago)

“The one yardstick to predict success in later life (self-satisfaction and participation in a variety of community activities two years after college) is achievement in school activities.”  
(College Testing Service)

“Ninety-five percent of Fortune 500 executives in the 80s and 90s participated in school athletics.”  
(FORTUNE Magazine)

scholar-athlete leader awards to students in more than 20 sports. Wroubel says that 25 Notre Dame Prep athletes have earned the award since the school opened in 1994.

Perhaps the best way to describe the unique balance at the school between athletics and academics is from what the MHSAA said about Notre Dame in its press release announcing the exemplary athletic program award: “Notre Dame Preparatory School’s athletic program reinforces the aims and goals of the academic program and is an integral part of the educational system designed to promote the physical, moral, spiritual, emotional and social development of the individual student.” ■



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Additional information for all events on [www.ndpma.org/alumni](http://www.ndpma.org/alumni).

### September

- 11 NDHS Class of 1990 20-year reunion
- 12 St. Frederick all-class reunion
- 14 Monthly alumni board meeting
- 19 St. Michael all-class reunion
- 24-25 NDHS class of 1960 50-year reunion weekend

### October

- 1 Homecoming NDP varsity football vs. clarenceville  
Alumni Afterglow following the game, Red Ox in Auburn Hills
- 2 Pontiac Catholic Class of 1970 40-year reunion
- 8 Oktoberfest and Super Raffle Drawing
- 12 Monthly alumni board meeting

### November

- 7 NDPMA Open House
- 9 Monthly alumni board meeting
- 23 Christmas Tree Fundraiser kick-off
- 27 NDP Class of 2005 5-year reunion

### December

- 13 Artists begin dropping off artwork to NDPMA
- 14 Monthly alumni board meeting.
- 29 Alumni Night at the Palace - Pistons vs. Celtics

### January

- 1 Alumni Hockey Game and Family Skate
- 11 Monthly alumni board meeting
- 22 Last day to drop off art work for art show
- 27 Alumni Art Show kick-off reception

### February

- 8 Monthly alumni board meeting
- 11 Ann Arbor vs. East Lansing Traveling Irish Dinner

### March

- 9 Monthly alumni board meeting
- 12 2nd Annual Alumni Irish Games - gym and cafeteria or triangle 12-9 p.m.

### April

- 12 Monthly alumni board meeting

### May

- 10 Monthly alumni board meeting
- 21 NDP Chorale & Alumni Concert
- 22 NDP Baccalaureate Mass and Commencement

### June

- 14 Monthly alumni board meeting

For a complete calendar, visit [ndpma.org/alumni](http://ndpma.org/alumni).

## SAVE THE DATE

March 12, 2011 – 2nd Annual Alumni Irish Games

## 2006 GRADUATE WINS PHILOSOPHY PRIZE



Caitlin Wylie '05 (NDP), who recently graduated from Michigan State University, won the Zerby Essay Prize for 2010 for her essay entitled "Pleasures of the Intellect in Mill's Utilitarianism." The Zerby Prize is given annually by Michigan State University's Department of Philosophy for the best essay written by an undergraduate student.

The following is from the selection committee's report: "The committee agrees that Caitlin Wylie's 'Pleasures of the Intellect in Mill's Utilitarianism' is the clear winner. It lays out Mill's arguments clearly and concisely, assesses them critically, finds them unpersuasive, and then offers a plausible way to save Mill's position. She argues deftly and carefully, like the fine philosopher she has shown herself to be."

Congratulations to Caitlin! ■

## FIVE QUICK Q&As FOR BRAD MURPHREE '03 (NDP)

### 1. What college did you attend?

Middle Tennessee State University. Major: Audio Engineering

### 2. What are you currently working on?

I'm currently working on broadcast systems for DirecTV called "Local Control Facilities." They are unmanned broadcast centers that allow DirecTV customers to receive local channels through their service.

### 3. Where do you work?

National Teleconsultants. It's a media and broadcast firm. We design recording studios and broadcast facilities.

### 4. Do you have any great memories from NDP?

Tons—but I don't know if you really want me to share them. Ha-ha.

### 5. What are your hopes, dreams, and aspirations?

I hope one day to have my own company that deals with all sorts of different types of media. ■

*Murphree, below, at the Sony BMG recording studio in Nashville, Tennessee. He says he worked with many famous people there and loves Nashville.*



# animal logic

NOTRE DAME PREP GRAD WANTS TO HELP HEAL ANIMALS



Becca Sidor, Notre Dame Prep class of 2009, is starting her junior year at Mississippi State University. She says the AP classes she took at NDP gave her a big head start at MSU as she began there with 21 college credits already on her record. Sidor spoke with IRISH on how and what she's doing at Mississippi State. She also looks back at her time in high school.

**IRISH:** We'll start with the easy question: How did you decide on Mississippi State University? What appealed to you about MSU?

**SIDOR:** My mother suggested that I Google schools with early admission and I found the Early Entry Program for The School of Veterinary Medicine at Mississippi State University. I applied my senior year at NDP. The weather also is part of what attracted me. There were other schools—some in Boston—but I wanted to go where it was warmer.

**IRISH:** What is the Early Entry Program and what is the application process?

**SIDOR:** The program admits students into the veterinary school program from the beginning and they are automatically matriculated into the vet school after receiving a bachelor's degree. The

applicant qualities they focus on are: the ability to handle animals, attitude toward others, character, industry, maturity, motivation, understanding of dedication, and understanding of veterinary profession. The requirements include maintenance of a 3.35 GPA in all subject areas. All applicants must have documentation of 480 hours of veterinary and/or research science experience at time of matriculation to the CVM professional program.

**IRISH:** Wow! When did you know you wanted to be a vet?

**SIDOR:** I knew since I was in kindergarten. And sophomore year at NDP, I started working at the North Hills Vet Clinic. I gained experience with surgeries, with blood work, equine and large animals, and in-house animal

therapy, which brings animals to humans in nursing homes.

**IRISH:** What practice do you get at Mississippi State?

**SIDOR:** I joined the Block & Bridle club, which my mother endearingly calls the "cow club." I learned about calf breaking.

**IRISH:** What's that?

**SIDOR:** Animals are wild and don't like to be touched at first, so you start off petting them and getting close to them in order for them to get used to you. Then you put a rope halter on them and walk them around. ■

*(Read the rest of the interview ("Sidor") on the alumni web site: [ndpma.org/alumni](http://ndpma.org/alumni))* 

## '79 alum loves silent films

San Francisco resident Thomas Gladysz '79 (NDHS) grew up in Harper Woods, not far from Notre Dame High School. Today, he is an author and arts journalist, and lives in California with his wife Christy and a dog named Tula.

His latest book project involved the editing for *The Diary of a Lost Girl*, originally published in 1905 and for which he wrote a long introduction. *Diary* was written by Margarete Bohme and was a sensational best seller back then, but has been out-of-print for more than 100 years. Gladysz's introduction discusses the book's remarkable history and he hopes it revives interest in it. Gladysz also contributed to a handful of other books, including earlier in the spring of this year, his interview with Allen Ginsberg, which appeared in *Beat Memories*, an exhibition catalog published by the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C.

Gladysz says he's been involved in quite a few other arts-related projects. "I have had a couple of concurrent careers. One has been as a bookseller. I worked at an independent bookstore in San Francisco, and ran the events program. I organized nearly 1,000 events with all kinds of authors—novelists, poets, artists, musicians, and actors. If they wrote a book, chances are I hosted an event with them—everyone from the Nobel Prize-winning Polish poet Czeslaw Milosz to the bestselling children's author Lemony Snicket, as well as rock musicians like Neil Young and Patti Smith."

He's also worked as an arts journalist for many years and has been a reviewer, columnist, and critic for a wire service. His "beat" is books,

authors, early film, the visual arts, and 20th-century popular culture.

Gladysz is a huge fan of silent films. Back in the early 1990s, he chanced upon a 1929 German silent film called *Pandora's Box*. In it, Louise Brooks plays a character named Lulu. "I was wowed, and wanted to find out more about the actress," he said. "That started me on a quest, so to speak. In 1995, I founded the Louise Brooks Society ([www.pandorasbox.com](http://www.pandorasbox.com)), an online archive and international fan club. Since then I've contributed to books, organized exhibits, appeared on television, and introduced her films. I love all kinds of movies—but I have a special passion for the films of the twenties and thirties, and a special interest in Louise Brooks."

A San Francisco resident since finishing college at MSU in 1985, Gladysz says it's a "great town." He noted that Bill Garr, who also graduated from NDHS, lived in San Francisco for awhile. "I've also met up with another friend from our class, Bill Carney, who lives in New York and is in a rock band. I've seen him play here in San Francisco." ■

*(See "Gladysz" on the alumni web site: [ndpma.org/alumni](http://ndpma.org/alumni) for more on his career and ND memories.)* 



# busy 1978 alum helps global manufacturer grow

## JOE MEJALY '78 (NDHS) SAYS VALUES AND DISCIPLINE FROM HIGH SCHOOL INSTRUMENTAL IN LATER SUCCESS

Joseph Mejaly '78 (NDHS) is a vice president at Troy, Mich.-based ArvinMeritor Inc. and president of the company's Aftermarket and Trailer businesses. ArvinMeritor is a global supplier of a broad range of integrated systems, modules and components for commercial truck, trailer and specialty original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and related aftermarkets.

In his global senior management position, Mejaly oversees the strategic growth and operations of the Aftermarket business, and the Trailer Products business, with both businesses operating multiple locations around the world. A primary goal is to expand the company's trailer suspensions operation in North America, grow the aftermarket business in Asia Pacific, as well as develop and grow the company's remanufacturing business. He has held this position since November 2009.

Mejaly joined the company in 1985 and holds a bachelor of science degree in business administration from Western Michigan University. He, his wife Lori, and children Hunter and Jordan reside in the Detroit metropolitan area. Daughter Jordan just graduated this year from ND Prep and Hunter is heading to high school in the fall. Mejaly gives IRISH his take on his job and on the four years he spent at Notre Dame.

### *On traveling at ArvinMeritor:*

At least every other month, I am traveling outside the country—into Canada, Mexico, South America, Europe, or Asia Pacific. Distinct business groups under my responsibility are based in Cwmbran, Wales; Zurich, Switzerland; Sao Paulo, Brazil; Shanghai, China; Mysore, India; Monterrey, Mexico; Brampton and Mississauga, Ontario; as well as Florence, Ky., Plainfield, Ind., Frankfort, Ky.

### *On growth markets for the company:*

To grow our entire business portfolio, we remain diversified in the markets we serve. For instance, while the truck and trailer business were hard hit by the recent economic downturn, our military-defense, off-highway, and aftermarket businesses were solid and performing with products and services to OEMs



and end-users. We're fortunate to have such a product mix, and at the same time, we manage globally so if Europe is down, then South America is performing well, and on it goes around the world.

### *On product innovations at ArvinMeritor:*

In the aftermarket: PlatinumShield remanufactured brake shoes, which resist rust corrosion (launched in '09), and coated rotors for hydraulic disc brakes also resist rust corrosion. In the trailer market: a new trailer suspension (MTA) (lighter, more durable, longer-lived), which joins our broad portfolio of suspensions, axles, brakes, and wheel ends. In axles: brand new 14X tandem-drive axle, which follows a 20-year successful axle family (RT). Launched in March '10. In brakes: air disc brakes and even longer life drum foundation brakes, as well as collision-mitigation systems for tractors to make roads even safer.

### *On his success to date and how it's attributable to NDHS/Marist education:*

To this day, I still remember fondly my experiences at ND. Remembering the four

years is made easier by the friends that I get to be with to this day. At our periodic get-togethers, the discussions always return to reminisce about the times we shared at ND. Although the stories have been told a thousand times, they never get old and laughter always is literally gut-wrenching.

I remember also (although at the time I didn't realize it) the teachers, discipline, and values instilled at ND—we were known by our first name; time was made available whenever needed; and ND was an extension of my family at home. It is an environment that today I look for with my own kids, Jordan and Hunter, to experience through their high school years. It was a lasting and meaningful memory.

### *On influential teachers at ND:*

I remember Ken Parent most fondly, because he traveled through a legacy of family members at the school: my brother George '71 (NDHS), nephews Anthony '97 (NDHS), Michael '99 (NDHS) and Joe Savona '07 (NDP), and now my daughter Jordan '10 (NDP). Ken's passion for the kids and teaching were exceptional, only to be surpassed by his unmatched ability to remember names and events about everyone.

I also remember fondly Conrad Vachon's deep, grumbly, stern voice that was followed by a unique dry sense of humor. And I remember Roy Johnson for his ability to promote leadership and team play above all individual accomplishments. Great basketball coach for us. ■

By Monica Drake '06 (NDP)

While the first and most recent graduating classes of Notre Dame Prep are fifteen years apart, some of the “old timers” now with families of their own and the newest alums just embarking on their freshman year of college all have had their lives touched by two individuals.

Gregory Simon '89 (NDHS) and Catherine Bembas.

In August, Simon and Bembas celebrated 15 years of teaching at Notre Dame Prep.

Simon said that he and Bembas have been friends ever since they met in the fall of 1995. “She’s a great teacher and still keeps me on my toes!” Simon said.

Simon’s first teaching job was at NDP, and he told IRISH that he was lucky to find his calling early. After finding out that the Marist Fathers and Brothers had opened Notre Dame Prep in Pontiac, he fatefully drove out to the school and walked into the cafeteria. Simon said his first memory was of Father Leon (Olszamowski) '65 (NDHS) and

Notre Dame High School in Harper Woods, Simon credited one of his high school teachers, Father Kiselica, with inspiring him to love history and to see the importance of analyzing information and coming to one’s own conclusions. He says Mr. (Conrad) Vachon taught him how to write and to always find my own voice and that NDHS faculty members Hal Rice and Fr. Joe Hindelang taught him to treat every student with kindness and dignity, modeling the Marist way, even when the students were out of line. “And Mr. Norm Kotarski saw the leader in me on Student Council,” Simon added. “I honestly believe that my experience on Student Council in high school gave me the desire to lead that I have carried with me in every aspect of my life.”

Simon is currently working as the Dean of Admissions and Diversity for NDP. “The role is a great fit for me because I have the opportunity to be an ambassador for the school that I love. I really enjoy getting to know new students and families as they become part of our school community,” he said. His entire family is part of Notre Dame. His daughter is a first grader in NDP-grad Emily Giacona’s '01 (NDP)

# fifteen years (and counting) at prep

## WHAT DO 1995 AND 2010 NOTRE DAME PREP GRADUATES HAVE IN COMMON?

Father (Jim) Strasz '70 (NDHS) sitting in the cafeteria during lunch period. Simon returned the next day for an interview and was hired the following day.

“I can’t imagine being anywhere else,” he said.

Bembas, on the other hand, worked at many other schools before coming to NDP. Prior to her job at NDP, she worked part-time at Oakland Community College and the Detroit College of Business—now known as Davenport University—for five years. Before that, the majority of her teaching experience was at parochial schools, but she never taught for more than seven years in one place—until NDP, that is.

She applied to NDP after her son expressed an interest in attending the school. After attending their open house, she said she was impressed and felt that NDP held to the Catholic-school philosophy of stressing academics balanced with a healthy dose of discipline.

“I have been at NDP the longest. The staff here has been phenomenal. I have made some wonderful friends who I know will be lifetime buddies. There are some truly terrific, dedicated teachers here who are some of the best instructors in their areas. The administration is supportive, and Father Joe (Hindelang) '68

(NDHS) is probably the best principal with whom I have ever worked. Most importantly, the students are very special.

They make teaching worthwhile. The greatest reward is when they come back and thank us for preparing them so well for college,” Bembas said.

Simon is known for teaching government and also for leading the student council. He said that many teachers served as inspiration for him in his teaching career. “I wanted to be for students what so many teachers were for me,”

Simon said.

A 1989 graduate of

class; his son is in junior kindergarten at the lower division of Notre Dame Marist Academy, and his wife volunteers for many events in the school. “We’re all green!” Simon said.

Bembas said that she wanted to be an English teacher because she loves to read and because she wanted to instill the love of literature in others as well. “I also remember having the best discussions after reading a book or essay in high school and college,” Bembas said. “I really appreciated the fact that NDP valued the literary classics.”

She said that she was inspired to be a teacher in grade school by her eighth-grade teacher Sister Josephine Sferrella, IHM, who is now retired.

“Ever since I can remember, I have always wanted to be a teacher,” Bembas said.

Both Simon and Bembas told IRISH that with so many memories picked up while teaching at NDP, they couldn’t pick just one. Bembas smiles broadly in recalling her 15 years at NDP. “I actually have a fond memory from each class that leaves A10, though some fonder than others. There are definitely classes that have graduated that I feel closer to than others, but the majority of the students leaving us are truly special people,” Bembas said.

Bembas said that when she took education classes in college, the professors always reminded students not to smile during the first two weeks of class. “Well, I have to tell you, at NDP, with many of my students, there are times I can’t help but smile and there are times I have laughed so hard I have cried. Those are the memories I will carry with me when I retire. Those are the rewards that make teaching worthwhile,” she said.

Simon said he is still close with many classes at NDP. “With an earlier class I had a great time making ziggurats out of LEGOs and wearing togas for our Greek festival in World

Please see *Fifteen*, page 18



# alumni compete in "games"

## PARTICIPANTS SAY NEW IRISH WEEK TRADITION SHOULD CONTINUE FOR MANY YEARS

By Monica Drake '06 (NDP)

For 2010 graduates of Notre Dame Preparatory School, this was their last year to participate in Irish Week—to play in the games with all of their classmates, decorate their hallway, hear Fr. Leon do the whistle cheer, and hold the golden trophy above their heads.

"I will miss the class spirit because it's one time in the school year that the groups go away and everyone just bands together to beat the other classes," said Laura Clawson '10 (NDP). "Also, it gives the upperclassmen, especially seniors, the opportunity to have one last big fun moment in high school and show the other classes that they deserve the title of best in the school."

Alessandra Jannette '10 (NDP), who also graduated this year, said that her favorite game to play during Irish Week was always tug-of-war, which she participated in every year except for her senior year. Jannette said that the most memorable moment of this year's Irish games was when classmate Chrissy Kaub '10 (NDP) won the pillow fight.

"During Irish Week, Kaub whipped out some serious skills in the pillow fight and has been undefeated for four years. Watching her win, especially senior year, was really amazing for our class because we knew it had to have been one of her proudest moments of high school, and it was really cool to see her surprise us all," Jannette said.

Kaub said she thinks that it was great that

she could directly help win a game for her class. "Of course it put a lot of pressure on me, but it was worth it."

Jannette said that, most of all, she's going to miss the competition of Irish Week and that their class, which she described as "disjointed," always managed to rally together in an effort to beat the other classes.

Both NDP and NDHS alumni know how much fun Irish Week was. So, why does it have to end senior year? This year, Notre Dame held their first alumni Irish games on March 13, and, for one night, alumni could relive those great times. Alumni played head-to-head with other alumni, some of whom they hadn't seen in years.

Jane Dika '02 (NDP) won the most points, receiving a medal along with the second and third place winners, and her name was put on a trophy, just like the good ol' days of Irish Week.

"I enjoyed seeing everyone and how the school had changed. I enjoyed being able to meet and talk with other alums that I didn't go to school or graduate with," said Dika.

For \$10, alumni got to play the games, received a t-shirt, pizza, and alcohol for the 21 and older crowd. Drinking wine (and not church wine either) in the hallways of their alma mater was an experience many alumni said they never thought they would do.

Felicia Guest '06 (NDP) played musical

chairs, find the pole blind-folded, dodge ball, Trivial Pursuit, tug-of-war, name that tune and cage ball. "Cage ball was the best game because the younger years creamed the oldies," said Guest. "I definitely plan on going again next year because I had such a great time, and I hope that more people come as well. Come on 2006 grads, represent!"

Mr. Greg Simon '89 (NDHS) and Mrs. Kathy Bembas were the teacher coordinators of the event, and Caitlin Dodge '99 (NDP) said she enjoyed catching up with them at the alumni games. "It was nice to go back and enjoy something that was one of the best parts of high school," said Dodge.

IRISH hopes that the alumni games will be a new tradition for all graduates of Notre Dame Preparatory, Notre Dame High School, Oakland Catholic and Pontiac Catholic for many years to come. ■



ND alumni participate in dodgeball, top, and cageball, below, at the first annual alumni Irish Games.

### THIS JUST IN: NEW BOARD MEMBERS ELECTED!

*Congratulations to our newly elected board members:*

Gina (Coppola) Cereska '00 (NDP) - member-at-large 2010-2013  
Jane Dika '02 (NDP) - member-at-large 2010-2013  
Lou Perlotto '74 (NDHS) - member-at-large 2010-2011  
Scott Lockhart '98 (NDP) - member-at-large 2010-2013  
Trent Thiry '00 (NDP) - member-at-large 2010-2013  
Victoria Sidor '01 (NDP) - member-at-large 2010-2012  
Mark McGreevy '76 (NDHS) - member-at-large 2010-2012  
Caitlin Dodge '99 (NDP) - member-at-large 2010-2012

*Incumbent members:*

John Schwartz '00 (NDP) - member-at-large 2009-2011  
Jim Gammicchia '99 (NDP) - president 2009-2012  
Frank Castronova '89 (NDHS) - vice president 2009-2011  
Tricia Knauss Sage '97 (NDP) - member-at-large 2009-2012

The board will be electing a new secretary and treasurer at its September 14, 2010 meeting.

# pulled to priesthood

## GRAD DECIDES TO FOLLOW HIS HEART AND BECOME A PRIEST

ND Prep 2006 grad Dennis Strach, who has decided to follow his heart and become a priest, says the decision did not come easily. He struggled with the “pull” to the vocation of priesthood for many years. The term “vocation,” Strach explains, is often misperceived as solely about the priesthood or religious life. “Someone also can just as well make a vocation to one’s family, for example,” he says.

But he does feel that everyone has a vocation and that everyone has been made for a purpose. “Through life and experiences, you’ll eventually figure out your vocation,” the 21-year-old seminarian said. “If you use the gifts that God gave you to the best of your ability, you will find your true vocation.”

Strach felt that no matter what other things he had considered for his life journey, there was always something pulling him to the religious life. “No matter what I planned, God had His own plan for me and He knew exactly where I would best serve the world.”

As Strach studied in college (and played music), he prayed that God would lead him to where he was meant to be. “He will lead you to your next place,” he says. “It’s a journey and you have to keep moving to the next stop. Eventually, you will be led where He wants you to be.”

There were many stops along Strach’s journey. At Notre Dame Prep, he had numerous conversations about his vocation to religious life. He turned to his former teacher, Ms. Ellen Tessada, often for support and she continues to be a very good mentor and friend. Participating in the school choir also provided a good foundation that continued to solidify as he led its Praise and Worship group. Strach believes that music has been a way for him to share himself through the church while growing and learning through experience.

Looking back on his high-school experience, Strach fondly recalled a few memories from ND Prep. He remembers how he would imitate the Marist priests in school. In a voice that perfectly imitates Fr. Joe Hindelang, Strach recounts how he once made an announcement in Fr. Strasz’s voice. Now switching to Fr. Jim’s voice: “Classes are cancelled for the rest of the afternoon.” Strach then heard a familiar and somewhat scary voice yelling, “Strach! In my office!” Needless to say, Fr. Jim wasn’t impressed by Strach’s impersonations, even though they were spot-on—or perhaps because they were spot-on!

After graduating from NDP, Strach entered Oakland University and was planning to graduate this past spring with a bachelor’s degree in music and a minor in Spanish.

Throughout college, though, Strach continued to struggle with the “pull” to religious life. He would play music during the weekends at his parish, St. Andrew in Rochester Hills, work with students preparing for confirmation, and help wherever and whenever he was needed. Although the “pull” kept “pulling ever harder,” he tried to avoid it as much as possible. He had a steady girlfriend, and the priesthood was the furthest thing from his mind.

Or so he thought.

Strach said that during his grandfather’s funeral, the celebrant gave him a rosary and said, “I blessed this especially for you—and for your vocation.” After the funeral, Strach e-mailed a general inquiry to the vocations director for the Archdiocese of Detroit, Fr. Jim Bilot. They kept in regular contact, and after a few weeks of discussions with Fr. Bilot, he decided to go on a discernment weekend at Sacred Heart Major Seminary. The die was beginning to be cast.

But his parents encouraged him to complete his bachelor’s degree before entering the seminary. He would often visit the University of Notre Dame during college, where he noticed the men of Holy Cross and how happy they appeared in their vocations. He continued to research and to learn more about the priesthood.

Strach’s journey continued as conversations with the Congregation at Holy Cross began to get more frequent. Often he would receive calls from a Holy Cross priest who served as a spiritual brother. “He would call just to check in or say hello and I began to feel the support of the Holy Cross community,” said Strach. He said at this point, he began to really focus on where God wanted him to be. Finally, he took a leap of faith and scheduled a formal visit to Moreau Seminary (at the Congregation of Holy Cross) where he completed the application process. He felt content that he had finally made the difficult, but correct, decision.

Strach says that the Holy Cross order creates “educators of the mind and heart” and that it has always been his personal goal to not only help people with the external, but with the internal and spiritual as well. He says he wants his work to point to God. ■



### Births

**Casandra M. Daher**, born March 29, 2010. Proud parents: **Andre Daher '89 (NDHS)** and Teresa Daher

### Please pray for:

**Ed Till '73 (NDHS)**, who suffered a stroke earlier this year.

**Pete Rivera '99 (NDP)**, who is suffering from tachycardia, which leads to experiences of painful heart episodes. He will be having open heart surgery to receive a stent.

**Joey Caretti**, who is the ten-year-old son of **Joe Caretti '84 (NDHS)** and Lisa (Verkest) Caretti ('84, Regina). Joey has been diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor and will be undergoing chemotherapy and radiation for the next six to eight months. Joe (Sr.) wrestled, ran track and was the captain of the football team during his time at ND. He currently resides in Washington Township with Lisa, Joey, son Richard, 12, and Maggie, 10.

### Alumni rest in peace

**Carl Coppola '03 (NDP)**, brother of Matthew (Stacy) '00 (NDP)

**Fr. Ray Boulanger, s.m.** served at NDHS from 1957-1975.

**Raymond P. Gaynor '58 (NDHS)**, father of Mark '83, Paul '84 and John '89 (all NDHS), grandfather of Nathaniel '12 (NDP), brother of Ron '58 (NDHS).

**Gene Haddad '58 (NDHS)**, brother of Lawrence '74 (NDHS)

**Jim Kline '51 (SF)**

**Joe LaFata '60 (NDHS)**

**Antonio (Tony) Mancuso '67 (NDHS)**

**John (Jay) Joseph Newman '58 (NDHS)**

**Donal J. Nolan**, teacher at Pontiac Catholic Central H.S. in the '60s and '70s

**Emily Rice** passed away from cancer. She is the wife of Harold Rice (Hal retired after 52 years of teaching with the Marist Fathers at both NDHS and NDP.)

**Allan J. Schweitzer**, husband of MaryAnn Schweitzer (NDPMA staff member)

**Joseph Sepos '67 (NDHS)**, father of Joseph Sepos '04 (NDHS)

**Gordon Steil '67 (NDHS)**

**Michael B. Talley '85 (NDHS)**

**Bill John Wargo '04 (NDHS)**, brother of Jeffrey Wargo '01(NDHS)

**Dave Wolfbauer '79 (NDHS)**

*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.

### SUPER RAFFLE

The NDPMA Parents Club is sponsoring a \$50,000 Grand Prize Super Raffle. The Super Raffle is open to all ND alumni who would like to participate. Tickets are \$10 each and can be secured by calling the Alumni Office at 248-373-2171. The drawing will take place at Oktoberfest on October 8th. Need not be present to win.

1st prize: \$50,000; 2nd prize: \$10,000; 3rd prize: \$5,000.

### OKTOBERFEST-IRISH STYLE:

Alumni (21+) can purchase tickets for Oktoberfest. Tickets include entrance to Oktoberfest, dinner, beer, and wine, plus door prizes. Tickets are \$30 each.

You can print the invitation on-line at [www.ndpma.org/alumni](http://www.ndpma.org/alumni), or through the alumni office by calling (248) 373-2171 ext. 4. Purchase your tickets today for the Raffle and for Oktoberfest!

# cool visit



Fr. Ray Coolong recently paid a visit to the Pontiac campus of NDPMA. He spent the week relaxing but had some time to sit down with IRISH and share a few stories about his career and life teaching at Notre Dame.

A well-traveled priest who has dedicated his life to service, Fr. Coolong answers questions in a typically humble Marist way, laughing as certain memories come back to him about Notre Dame. He is quick to note those who have helped him out along the way. And it's clear, that in his simple way, he has worked through Mary's intercession.

Father Raymond Coolong started teaching at Notre Dame High School when he was a seminarian. He was ordained in 1972 and stayed at NDHS until 1976, when he began his worldly travels of service and peace.

He bounced around quite a bit at first—from an exchange program in New Zealand to Washington, D.C., then to Ireland, back to D.C., a parish in Massachusetts, then to a 10-year stint in Peru—you could say that he has certainly seen much of the world while humbly serving God through his ministry.

He retired from Notre Dame High School in 2003 and served on the Board of Trustees until the school closed in 2005. He retired to the Marist House in Framingham, Mass., but still served in a management capacity at the house. In June of this year, he moved to Tampa, Fla., where he will serve as pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish.

**IRISH:** When did you decide to become a priest, specifically a Marist?

**COOLONG:** I grew up in a Marist-administered parish in Lawrence, Mass., so I had the

idea of being a priest about the age of eight—it was always the only thing I had in my mind. And of course it was the Marists because it was the only order of priests I knew.

**IRISH:** What were some challenges you discovered along the way, both as a missionary and as a teacher?

**COOLONG:** In my missionary work, to see the people in poverty was very difficult. And trying to alleviate their poverty—especially materialistic poverty. Most lacked proper food and clothes and had houses made out of bamboo and adobe. Some had grass roofs or metal roofs. Just trying to help them out was challenging. One thing I was grateful for was the help I received from some of my former students from Notre Dame. When they found out I was there in the missions in Peru, they helped me. When I asked for money for the missions there, they helped me. A lot of them helped me.

**IRISH:** How was it when you started teaching?

**COOLONG:** Starting off as a new teacher is the hardest. As time went on and students got to know me, things got easier. They start to respect. But kids being kids, they sometimes tried to pull the wool over your eyes until you know the ropes of teaching. ■

*(For the rest of Fr. Coolong's interview, please see "Coolong" at the alumni web site: [ndpma.org/alumni](http://ndpma.org/alumni).*

*Contact Fr. Coolong at Our Lady of Perpetual Help: 1711 East 11th Avenue, Tampa, FL 33605-380. E-mail: [rcoolong@conversent.net](mailto:rcoolong@conversent.net).)*

## ALUMNI ANNUAL FUND

Thanks to a more concentrated effort to better connect with our alumni, we are pleased to report that the total number of alumni that participated in our 2010/2011 Annual Fund has increased by a whopping 246%! Proceeds go toward the continued enhancement of student programming in the areas of academics, arts and athletics as well as financial assistance for families in need. We appreciate your support and hope that you will continue to support the Annual Fund in 2010/2011.

## ALUMNI VISITS

Visit the school any time! We welcome our alumni to come back, see former teachers, and tour the school. On average, over 20 alumni visit the school per month. Come visit and enjoy a FREE coffee or cappuccino from the new Irish Bookstore and Café.

## NDAA BOARD MEETINGS

The Alumni Board of Directors meets the second Tuesday of every month at 6:00 p.m. at Notre Dame Prep. Meetings are open to all alumni. If you have an agenda item, please contact the Alumni Board president Jim Gammicchia '99 (NDP), [jgammicchia@ndpma.org](mailto:jgammicchia@ndpma.org). For a complete list of meetings, agendas, and minutes, visit [ndpma.org/alumniboard](http://ndpma.org/alumniboard).

## ADDRESSES

Does the Notre Dame Alumni Association have your street address and e-mail address on file? Please add us to your list of people to update when changes occur. Visit [ndpma.org/update](http://ndpma.org/update). Join the e-mail list and receive the latest reunion news, information, and alumni news.

## BRICK PAVERS

The Booster Club is offering an opportunity to become a part of NDPMA history by having your own personalized brick placed in the beautiful courtyard area of the Grimaldi Center. Leave your legacy at NDPMA. 4" x 8" bricks are \$100; 8" x 8" bricks are \$150. Order forms can be found on [www.ndpma.org/forms](http://www.ndpma.org/forms) or by contacting Pat D'Agostini (248-650-8601).

**FOLLOW THE NOTRE DAME ALUMNI ASSOCIATION** for all things Notre Dame:



# palace coup



Julie Kherkher built a career using an extroverted personality and a passion for athletics. Working in the sales department as a corporate account executive for the Palace of Auburn Hills, the Detroit Pistons and DTE, Kherkher combines a real love of sports with an uncanny ability to work with people in her job. "It's fun to work with people. Once I got started, I knew I could survive in this industry," she said.

Kherkher talked about how she started in the sometimes grueling world of sales. She cautions against fellow alums or anybody getting into the business if you don't have lots of time to dedicate or the ability to handle stress. "People in sales have to be prepared to handle stress. You must have a lot of patience."

Graduating from NDP in 2001 and being a graduate of the very first Notre Dame Marist Academy eighth-grade class, Kherkher surrounded herself with great people early on. "I had very close friendships with students and student/athletes. I had a great five years on campus in eighth through twelfth grade. I would like to get more involved now and one day I'd love to send my kids here. I can't say enough about how it prepared me for college academically."

Not only did NDP prepare Kherkher academically, but she was a star athlete for the Fighting Irish, playing varsity softball for Betty Wroubel for all four years of high school. When reflecting on her athletic career, Kherkher says, "Coach Wroubel was tough. She prepared me well, maturity-wise, and for the next level of athletics in college. Mentally tough." That mental toughness made her good enough to play ball for Northwood University.

She played for the Timberwolves for two years while staying focused on her majors in hotel restaurant resort management and marketing management. As a student athlete, Kherkher understood the need for balance in her life. And she said that transitioning from college to "the real world" takes a whole lot of balance and prioritizing.

She attributes her ability to successfully make that transition to her time spent at NDPMA and to many favorite teachers. "Senora Tessada was a big favorite. She was so motherly—a great teacher who spoke fluently to us. What a great way to learn Spanish."

She also misses the chocolate chip cookies in the cafeteria and the uniforms. "I miss my friends back then too. I just loved it all." ■

# the right notes

## GRAD CREDITS NDHS AND ITS MUSIC PROGRAM WITH HELPING HIM FIND THE RIGHT NOTES

Nineteen-eighty-three NDHS graduate and musician John Nixon is the lead composer and executive producer at Southfield-based Coda Music and Design. Coda is part of Ron Rose Productions, a full-service audio and visual studio providing turnkey services to the independent film, advertising and web communities. Nixon, who played drums in the band program at Notre Dame, is a married Grosse Pointe resident with a 14-year-old daughter. He took some time from a busy summer schedule to answer a few questions from IRISH.

**IRISH:** How did the name Coda come about?

**NIXON:** Since I had worked for a few other music companies before joining the staff of Ron Rose Productions and since I had hoped for this new venture to be both a new beginning as well as a final destination, the name seemed apt. The term Coda (typically in classical music) is

a section of music that serves to work as an ending to a piece that usually includes some new musical motif as a summary to the larger composition.

**IRISH:** How long have you been with Coda/Ron Rose?

**NIXON:** I joined Ron Rose as an audio engineer in 1989, but left to begin my composition career with Brad Music in 1996. That company later became known as The Bad Little Man. I re-joined Ron Rose Productions in 2001.

**IRISH:** Any interesting projects, recent or otherwise, that you can share?

**NIXON:** My biggest success was landing an opportunity to score a section of the trailer for the movie "The Visitor." They were looking for a track for a section of this trailer, and put out a notice for what they were looking for. I submitted a demo and it was selected. Nice to have something in a movie trailer with worldwide release.

**IRISH:** You've experienced

much success over the years in your career. Can you attribute any of that to your NDHS education/experience and if so, why?

**NIXON:** NDHS taught me how to compete at the highest levels; whether it be for grades, for sports, or band. Competition and doing one's best were always at the core of what we did, and understanding that this is what we face everyday in the real world, adversity is now far less of an obstacle for me.

**IRISH:** Any Larry Egan memories? (Ed. note: Larry Egan was the long-time director of music at NDHS. He passed away in 1995.)

**NIXON:** To this day, I find myself quoting Larry in my



John Nixon '83 (NDHS) says his ND band director Larry Egan continues to influence his career in music.

musical ventures. Sometimes it is in the way I am giving direction to other musicians, where I explain what I am looking for in a language only musicians understand. Such as saying, "I need you to articulate it more like 'fway-day-day-dot-dway-day-day!'" This is a language I learned in ND Jazz Band that seems to be understood worldwide.

(See "Nixon" on the alumni web site: [ndpma.org/alumni](http://ndpma.org/alumni) for more from Nixon.)



### THE MUGGS ARE PLAYING NEAR YOU:

- Sept 4 Arts, Beats, and Eats in Royal Oak.
- Sept 30 Green Lantern in Lexington, KY
- Oct 1 Frog Bear & Wild Boar in Columbus, OH
- Oct 2 Happy Dog in Cleveland
- Oct 14 Savoy in Ypsilanti
- Oct 15 Reggie's in Chicago
- Nov 5 Callahan's in Auburn Hills
- Nov 20 Small's in Hamtramck
- Dec 4 Blind Pig in Ann Arbor
- Dec 10 Green Lantern in Lexington, KY

Tony (DeNardo) Muggs says the band currently is working on their third LP due out in winter 2011. Web site: [themuggs.com](http://themuggs.com)

### Fifteen, from page 13

Cultures. I had the privilege of teaching that entire class as freshmen and juniors," he said.

Some of the memories Simon pinpointed were when freshman won Irish Week, JV basketball winning the division title, an NDP student parachuting from the Eiffel Tower, student council sponsoring Chill Fest, the homecoming game bringing in a record crowd, mock trials, government class student presidential elections, and student council winning at states.

"My hope is to see more and more of my classmates from NDHS along with former students from NDP coming through the doors with their children. I cannot tell you how exciting it is to see Notre Dame High School's history and future coming together at Notre Dame Prep and Notre Dame Marist Academy," Simon said. ■

# just super!



Eyan Konal at the second annual Eyan Joseph Konal Golf Outing with dad Jeff '89 (NDHS), right, and Dave Chlebnik '89 (NDHS).

Usually, five-year-olds are not the most articulate speakers when given a microphone and put in front of more than 100 friends, family members and strangers at a banquet, but then again, nothing about Eyan Konal is usual.

Diagnosed with stage-4 neuroblastoma in February of 2009, Eyan began undergoing aggressive chemotherapy treatments. Throughout the past year and a half, Eyan fought the cancer with remarkable courage and poise, earning the nickname "Super Eyan" in the process.

At the second annual Eyan Joseph Konal Golf Outing, held June 7 at Gowanie Golf Club in Harrison Township, Mich., Eyan, now five, addressed all the attendees and thanked them for their support of his family. There was not a dry eye in the clubhouse.

The event was attended by many alumni, including alumni director Kelly (Cole) Patterson '99 (NDP), Greg Simon '89 (NDHS), Andy Guest '84 (NDHS) and former NDHS/NDP teacher Roy Johnson along with numerous other friends of the Konal family.

Seven Konals graduated from NDHS, including Marty '76, Jerry '77, Chris '79, Joe '80, Paul '82, Tom '83 and Jeff (Eyan's father) '89.

(At press time, it was determined that there is "no evidence of disease." The family credits God, Fr. Solanus and all family and friends for their support over the last couple of years). ■

## following school mission to Central America

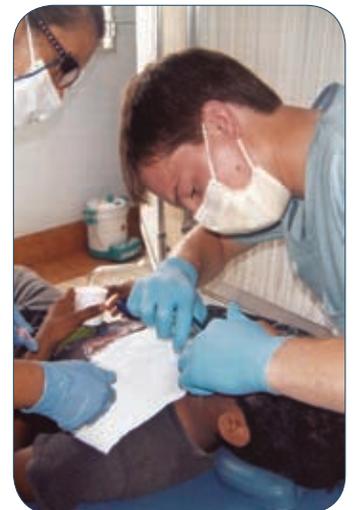
### MEDICAL STUDENT BEGAN HIGH SCHOOL AT NDHS BUT FINISHED AT NDP AFTER HARPER WOODS CAMPUS CLOSED

Meet 2007 Notre Dame Prep graduate Doug Orzel, who recently returned from a two-week trip to Central America where he completed a rather intense program in medical dentistry. Through VIDA (Volunteers for Intercultural and Definitive Adventures), a non-profit humanitarian volunteer program that offers hands-on, eye-opening, and mind-enriching international volunteer experiences to students and professionals of medical, dental, veterinary and other fields, Orzel had an opportunity to learn about tropical medicine while discovering new cultures, and by sharing with those less fortunate. The program provides free health and construction services to improve the quality of life for impoverished people in Central America.

During his volunteer trip, Orzel visited Costa Rica and Nicaragua and stayed with host families who spoke no English. He used some of his Spanish skills, which he learned first at Notre Dame High School and ND Prep and then at the University of Michigan, to communicate across the cultural barrier. "It was difficult even to say 'let's go out for a meal' because of the language barrier, but the overall experience was amazing," he said.

Currently a U of M student entering his senior year, Orzel is studying neuroscience brain behavior and cognitive science. He says that he has always been interested in the medical field. "My mom's a nurse and I've always had an interest in helping people."

Specifically, Orzel is focusing on oral and maxillofacial surgery, which corrects a varied spectrum of diseases, and injuries and defects of the head, neck and face. It is considered to be one of the nine main specialties of dentistry and is a highly recognized and sought-after surgery worldwide. ■



(See "Orzel" on the alumni web site: [ndpma.org/alumni](http://ndpma.org/alumni) for the rest of article plus more photos.)



# marist mission in jamaica

## FATHERS BOLDUC AND RIETER PART OF THE MARISTS' WORK IN THIS PREDOMINATELY POOR COUNTRY

by Paul Carr, *Marist Outreach*

Back in 2005 the Marist Fathers and Brothers took on a new mission in Jamaica. The call had come from the local bishop there, requesting help in St. Catherine Parish County, where there were only four priests spread among 16 Catholic churches and 17 Catholic schools in a population of a half million people.

The island of Jamaica is located 500 miles south of Florida, and only a small section includes the sun-drenched beaches and idyllic lifestyle portrayed in tourist literature. Poverty and economic depression, the ensuing crime, and desperate living conditions are more the norm. In a recent year, there were 1,496 murders recorded on the island. It is a land where HIV/AIDS cases are on the rise, and unemployment is chronically high. The nation's minimum wage of \$50 per week does little to cover the costs of food and other essential items due to government-imposed duties on imported goods.

In 2005, Fr. Roland Lajoie, the Marist provincial, visited Jamaica to explore the possibility of helping there. He was taken throughout the Diocese of Kingston to visit parish ministries. The tour included a home for the poor and elderly, and a program for youth living in the streets to help with job skills.

Jamaica's poverty has led to much despair among young people. Fr. Roland was asked to consider sending Marists to serve four churches and two parish schools in the Diocese: St. Helen's Church is located in the mountains in the Town of Linstead; St. Catherine of Sienna Church is located 15 miles away in Ewarton; Our Lady of Perpetual Help is a forty minute drive from Ewarton on a narrow winding road rising up into the mountains and built along the edge of a cliff; and the most remote church, Sacred Heart in Donnington, has a school and enjoys a lively community in what can only be described as the jungle. Due to the isolation and poverty, this is an area of Jamaica tourists rarely ever experience.

The call for Marist missionary work and desperate need for pastoral staffing was clearly evident and it didn't take long for the Marists to spring into action. Former NDHS faculty member Fr. Frank Reiter, s.m., was the first Marist to take on the Jamaica mission but has since moved back to Alaska. Fr. John Bolduc, s.m., who also taught at NDHS, picked up the work in Jamaica in 2006 and is currently devoting himself to the re-evangelization of the Catholics in the central part of the Diocese of Kingston. ■

# actor/comedian/alum visits students

Actor/comedian Dave Coulier, "Joey Gladstone" from the hit ABC sitcom "Full House" and a 1977 Notre Dame High School alumnus, graciously visited the Pontiac campus of Notre Dame Prep and Marist Academy on March 26 and spoke to an enthusiastic student assembly.

He was back in his home state from California to headline Comedy Fest at Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle in Royal Oak. This was a "Clean Guys" all-ages show. Dave is known for keeping his humor very family-friendly. ■

(More photos of Coulier's visit can be found on the alumni web site: [ndpma.org/alumni](http://ndpma.org/alumni))



Above, Dave Coulier '77 (NDHS), entertains a rapt student audience at NDPMA. Coulier also spent time visiting with some of his former teachers: Ken Parent, left, Roy Johnson, and Dennis Lynch.





# a question of vocations

Fr. Jim Strasz, s.m., '70 (NDHS)

For a number of years, a painting of the Immaculate Conception completed by a school run by the noted Spanish artist Bartholomew Murillo hung in the Marist Seminary Chapel in Washington, D.C. It is believed to have been painted around 1640 by Murillo's students under his direction. And he is said to have added a number of final strokes as final touches. The painting measures 9 feet by 6 feet.

The practice of having one's students help in paintings or other artifacts was not uncommon. Students were disciples—literally “learners” of the masters. They were employed in numerous positions during their time of apprenticeship. Eventually they would rise from one position to another and then with some patronage and talent emerge as an artist in their own right. It was expected that the best students would help paint portraits by the masters because they knew their style so well. The master would then come and finish it off.

We can apply this analogy to Christian life. Each Christian, by his or her baptism, becomes a student in the Christian life. We learn from the Spirit the way of Jesus starting with simple tasks and progressing through our lives. This is the “vocation” of all Christians—to learn “Jesus” as it were. As time goes on and our experiences in the school of Christian life progresses we begin to take notice of where our talents lie. We are guided by that master—the Spirit. Through the generosity of others, we gradually, almost imperceptibly, learn about form, shape and color in our lives. And they often make recommendations as to where our talents might best be used: marriage, single life, consecrated life or priesthood.

The question for us: What can we do to help build this culture of vocations? In the short term, the answer is to learn Jesus—to live the basic Christian vocation we have been given, and in the long term, to invite men and women to notice and discern what is the best path for them to take.

At Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy, our Marist heritage points us in the direction of learning from Mary, the mother of Jesus, how to experience Jesus and to be present to others around us. From Mary's example, we learn to be open to the promptings of the Spirit. Like Mary in the early church, we seek to build in quiet and unassuming ways the community of disciples.

The late Bishop Ken Untener wrote in 1979: “This is what we are about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities... It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.”

Like the Murillo's students we learn and wait for the hand of the master to give the final touches. And “vocations” are everyone's business. ■

*Fr. Strasz '70 (NDHS) is assistant principal, chair of the Religion department and Marist Fathers Superior at Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy.*

## LEADERSHIP PROGRAM AT NDP RUN BY NDHS GRAD

This past spring, Notre Dame Prep kicked off a new leadership program designed to help students learn and develop proven leadership techniques that can be used in everyday life, in college, and in the business world.



The innovative program, spearheaded by Jody Lesinski '88 (NDHS), (pictured) featured an initial workshop of 20 NDP students of all grade levels. The workshop debut consisted of leadership exercises, activities and discussions all framed within the goal of teaching quality leadership in a Christian context.

## PARENTS

If you're reading this, ask your alumni son or daughter if they have updated their new address, new name, or recent graduation/job placement. We still have a lot of addresses for many alumni who are no longer at home, so please help pass the word along to your alumni. If you know someone who wants to be on the mailing list, please contact [alumni@ndpma.org](mailto:alumni@ndpma.org) with your request. IRISH is also available on-line at [ndpma.org/irish](http://ndpma.org/irish). Thank you!

## ALUMNI BUSINESS DIRECTORY ON THE WEBSITE

In response to alumni requests for networking opportunities, the Alumni Online Community offers an Alumni Business Directory. This directory of companies and businesses owned by members of the Notre Dame Alumni Association is intended to provide information to other Notre Dame alums seeking products or services, and who wish to consider doing business with a fellow graduate.

The Notre Dame Alumni Association encourages networking and the support of alumni businesses. Provide your business information at [ndpma.org/abdirectory](http://ndpma.org/abdirectory).

## NOTRE DAME PREP ALUMNI

**Lauren Rao '09 (NDP)**—She will be competing in Miss Michigan this September! She's very excited for this as it will be a great opportunity for her and an all-around fantastic experience.

**Elizabeth Battiste '08 (NDP)**—I tempted fate and jumped out of a plane again... I know crazy, right? At least it's for a good cause! The MSU Sexual Assault Crisis Intervention Team once again participated in Operation Freefall. This year was the 10th anniversary and we could not have been more excited to raise funds and awareness for our program, as well as Speaking out about Rape (SOAR), a national sexual violence education organization. On April 24, 2010, volunteers, family, and friends jumped from perfectly good airplanes (we hoped) to take a bold stand against sexual assault.

**Julie Jackson '06 (NDP)**—found a job in the Metro Detroit area. She is now working for Scripps Networks on the HGTV account in Southfield. Julie graduated with honors from Albion College this spring.

**Kathryn Siunaik '06 (NDP)**—attended the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Graduated with her BSE in chemical engineering in May 2010. Since June, she has been serving in the Peace Corps in Burkina Faso to teach science and math to middle- and high-school students.

**Krysten Aquilina-Raumpz '04 (NDP)**—after graduating with a BBA from Northwood University in Spring 2008, she started her career at Perrigo Company in Allegan, Mich. She's currently on her third job within the company as a marketing promotions coordinator. She is married to Chris Raumpz and they're living in Plainwell, Mich., where they purchased a house last year. And they have our little Yorkie, Emma.

**Brian Connolly '04 (NDP)**—going to law school at University of Michigan. Has returned to the state after a six-year hiatus.

**Patrick Fodell '04 (NDP)**—The Pajaronian recently published an article on the Watsonville Law Center and Patrick was quoted (several times) in it. For the complete story, follow the link from our website. Fodell has done presentations at Costonoa High School, Barrios Unidos and youth shelters and centers across Santa Cruz County, California."

**Paula Gialdi '04 (NDP)**—Works for the ESL department at Will Rogers Elementary School in Pontiac. She's worked there since graduating from NDP in 2004. She has a Bachelor's degree from Oakland University and will begin an MBA this fall.

**Gerry Mattei '02 (NDP)**—Recently received the position of musical director for the upcoming Allison Iraheta tour. He will be playing keyboards and conducting the band. (Iraheta took fourth

# We get letters and notes

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

place in American Idol competition. She will be on tour with Adam Lambert (second place Idol), and will be performing at several places in the area this summer). Also, Gerry recently performed on the George Lopez show with the Idol finalist Iraheta.

**Kate Reimann '01 (NDP)**—Kate and her husband, Maj. Dan Munter, welcomed Paul Joseph Munter Reimann into the family on May 20, 2010. Kate finished her masters of education in February.

**Dr. Leah Kohler (LT, MC/FS, USN) '98 (NDP)**—Assumed duties as Flight Surgeon for VMGR-152, a KC130 squadron based in Okinawa, Japan. She is the recent recipient of the Navy Achievement Medal and the Navy Sea Service Deployment ribbon.

**Brett Valentine '95 (NDP)**—Earned a BS in Computer Science and an MBA. Currently, he is a consultant for PricewaterhouseCoopers. He gives advice on project and portfolio management, and is involved in leading identity management engagements. He's been married for almost nine years and has three kids: Lucy (7), Ruby (2), Rocco (4 mos). His hobbies include skiing and backpacking.

**SPECIAL: Notre Dame Prep Class of 2000—Celebrating 10 Years...**

**Deacon Eric Fedewa**—After five years at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, I was recently ordained a transitional Deacon for the Archdiocese of Detroit on May 15, 2010, and have been assigned to St. Frances Cabrini Catholic Church in Allen Park, Mich., for the summer. I have one more year of classes in the seminary and then I will, God-willing, be ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Detroit by Archbishop Allen Vigneron on June 11, 2011. God Bless!

**Tracey Healy Rathsburg (Marty Rathsburg)**—After graduating from Michigan State University with an Early Childhood Teaching degree, I began teaching kindergarten at Notre Dame Marist Academy in Waterford. While I truly loved my job, after we had our first baby, Jack, I decided to take some time off to stay home with him. Then things got really busy as I found out I was pregnant with twins! Two more additions to our family came this past September, Luke and Ryan! Marty and I have been married for six years this October and we are having the best time raising our boys together.

**Phil Kotzan**—Has been busy these last two years raising his chiropractic practice in San Jose, California. He runs a family and sports-injury-

based practice that specializes in soft-tissue injuries. During his weekends and vacation time, he's been traveling as much as possible around beautiful California, national parks and other fun countries. He's in a six-year relationship that is going fantastic.

**Sara (LaFlamme) Peterson**—Graduated from Aquinas College in 2005 with a BA and Teaching Certification. Married Eric Peterson July 7, 2007, and has two children, Eli LaFlamme Peterson born July 2, 2008, and Evan LaFlamme Peterson born November 1, 2009.

**Tony Ostrowski**—I am currently working with US Steel at their Great Lakes Works Plant in Ecorse, Mich. I graduated from Oakland University in 2004 with a degree in Finance. I have been working for US Steel ever since I graduated and currently obtained my MBA from Wayne State University this past May. I got married in June of 2008 to my wife Sandra. We currently reside in Clawson, Mich., with our cat Hercules. Mike Rome ('00), Mike Niemczyk ('00), Walt Wojtkowski ('00), and Dan Frees ('00) are all still very close friends.

**Bobbie (Bieszki) Hall**—I am going into my fourth year teaching and coaching at NDP. I teach English and Physical Education/Health and coach girls' basketball and softball. My husband and I just celebrated our fifth anniversary and are expecting our first child in early January!

**Jaime (Aluia) Schomer**—I am married, living on the east side in St. Clair Shores and working at Beaumont Grosse Pointe as a nuclear medicine technologist.

**SPECIAL: Notre Dame HIGH SCHOOL Class of 2000—Celebrating 10 Years...**

**Greg Fekin**—For the past 10 years I've been living in Grosse Pointe Park. I manage my own pizza place, Jets Pizza, in Grosse Pointe Woods, as well as bartending at Excalibur Park Bar in Grosse Pointe Park. Come see me for the BEST pie in town or for a cocktail.

## NOTRE DAME ALUMNI

The Muggs (**Danny Methric '89 (NDHS)** and **Tony DeNardo '89 (NDHS)**) now have CDs at Rock-A-Billy's in Utica, MI (8411 Hall Road, Utica, MI 48317-5532, (586) 731-0188) Other local record stores: RecordTime in Roseville, Melodies And Memories in Roseville, Street Corner Music in Beverly Hills, Mich., and Stormy Records in Dearborn. Or visit [www.themuggs.com/merch](http://www.themuggs.com/merch) for: CDs; vinyl; several styles of shirts for men and women; downloads; and Muggs belt buckles.

**Mark Zahringer '85 (NDHS)**—I love reading the newsletter and keeping up with alumni news. We've been busy the past few years!

Pam and I adopted Grace and Abby two years ago so Max and Ryan would have a couple of sisters and now our family is complete. We still live in Colorado but we come back to Michigan every couple of years. I never forget how blest I was to attend Notre Dame, and because of that blessing, I am a successful and honest business person today and try to give back to the community whenever I can. God bless you!

**Dan D'Orazio '69 (NDHS)**—In May, Dan, along with a colleague from EMC Corporation, Andrew Linnell, were awarded a U.S. Technology Patent (US 7,711,711 B1), entitled "Network Storage Solution Employing Information Lifecycle Management in Conjunction with a Global, Distributed-File System." Dan is currently employed at EMC Corporation as a senior manager in the Unified Storage Competitive Analysis Group and resides in Lake Zurich, Illinois, with his wife of 30 years, Debbie. Dan and Deb have three sons: Evan, 27, Brandon, 20, and Cameron, 16. Was also recently awarded a U.S. Technology Patent, number 7,711,711 entitled "Networked Storage System Employing Information Lifecycle Management in Conjunction with a Distributed Global File System" on May 4, 2010. In addition, he was recently promoted to senior manager of the Competitive Intelligence and Architectural Analysis Group at EMC Corporation. He is an alumnus of the MSU Engineering class and received his BSEE in 1973. He has his MSEE from The University of Michigan.

**Dave Pierce '61 (NDHS)**—Thank you for your efforts in keeping the newsletter and the alumni group going. Maybe we can get someone to organize a party in southern California. Maybe Dave C., the actor(!) It has now been 30 years since I moved to San Diego. The youngest of my nine kids is graduating from UCLA this summer and I will have my 10th grandchild next month. One son is in Afghanistan with the Navy Seals, another is a Lt. Commander, two daughters are teachers, and there are two nurses in the family as well as an engineer and an artist. My youngest was in Africa for six months and worked as an intern for Condoleezza Rice and another is in the Peace Corps in Macedonia. Hard to believe that next year marks 50 years since graduation from ND.

## PONTIAC CATHOLIC ALUMNI

**Sal Basirico '77 (PC)**—Organized a successful Pontiac Catholic reunion in June at Kennedy's in Waterford. There were approximately 100 people in attendance. Alumni from St. Mike's to 1989 Pontiac Catholic graduates. It was a large, happy group. Also, some faculty attended as well.

## MILESTONE YEARS

A number of faculty and staff members at Notre Dame Prep and Marist Academy celebrated milestones this year. Three recently have retired.

### 5 years

Anthony Block '80 (NDHS)  
Katharine Dugan  
Emily Giacona '01 (NDP)  
Andrew Guest '84 (NDHS)  
Kelly (Cole) Patterson '99 (NDP)

### 10 years

Joanne Beauchamp  
Cynthia Brown  
Janice Corteville  
Matthew McGuire  
Deacon Tony Morici  
Elizabeth Morici  
Christopher Polsinelli  
Mary Ann Schweitzer  
Christine Van Dam (ret.)  
Joanne Widmaier

### 15 years

Catherine Bembas  
Sandra Favrow (ret.)  
Gregory Simon '89 (NDHS)

### 15+ years

Dolores Elbode (ret.)  
Fr. Leon Olszawowski, s.m. '65 (NDHS)  
Marie Place (also staff - NDHS)  
Br. Louis Plourdes, s.m.  
Justine Scirha (also faculty - PC/OC)  
Vincent Trzcinski  
Betty Wroubel (also faculty - PC/OC)

# CLASS REUNIONS

## NOTRE DAME PREP

### Class of 2000

10-year reunion. Wednesday, November 24, at Tre Monti Ristorante in Troy, Mich. Reunion contact: Rachel Alexander Miller rachel.lauren.miller@gmail.com C: 248-766-8313

### Class of 2001

10-year reunion. Committee: Lauren Rao - reesedancer@yahoo.com; Vicki Sidor - sidorvictoria@gmail.com; Pamela DeMartinis Bishop - demartinisp@hotmail.com; Jennifer O'Rourke Bennett - jlbennett@ymail.com; Lynsey Bramstedt - lbramstedt@yahoo.com

### Class of 2005

5-year reunion. Saturday, November 27, 2010. Rochester Mills Brewery (400 Water St., Ste. 101, Rochester, Mich.) Contact: Erin Welsh - erin.r.welsh@gmail.com

## NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL

**Class of 1960** 50-year reunion. Pre-reunion weekend event: Friday, Sept. 24 at ND Prep - Alumni Field. The 1960 NDHS football team will be honored before the home football game at Notre Dame Prep. Reunion: Saturday, Sept. 25, 2010. Best Western Sterling Inn, 15 Mile Rd. and Van Dyke, Sterling Heights, Mich. Website: www.notredamehw1960.org

Committee: main contact: Ed Kay, 248-685-3058 - ewk3058@comcast.net; Gary Breight, 916-616-6895 - gpb@surewest.net; Don Chiodo, 586-469-4439 - chiodod@aol.com; George Garascia, 586-979-7012 - ggarcia@comcast.net

**Class of 1961** 50-year reunion. Committee forming now. Contact Bob or the alumni office if you would like to help. Contact: Bob Domine bddoesit@bellsouth.net

**Class of 1971** 40-year reunion. Committee forming now. Jim Bieszki - jamesbieszki@aol.com C: 734-604-1112 O: 734-457-0545

**Class of 1980** 30-year reunion. Committee forming now. Ralph Panella - rpanella@cisco.com

**Class of 1986** 25-year reunion. Currently being planned. Committee: John Kaminski H: 612-822-4759 C: 952-261-5546 - jkaminski1700@yahoo.com; Dan O'Brien 248-840-8391 - dobrien734@comcast.net

**Class of 1990** 20-year reunion. September 11, 2010. Blackfinn Restaurant and Saloon, 530 South Main Street, Royal Oak, Mich.; 7:00 p.m. Committee: Matthew Sokol - mattsokol@ymail.com; Mike Balow - mikebalow@gmail.com; Kevin Breitschuh - kevin.breitschuh@globalcrossing.com

## PONTIAC CATHOLIC

**Class of 1970** 40-year reunion. October 2, 2010. Kennedy's Irish Pub, 1055 W. Huron St., Waterford, Mich. 248-681-1050; 6:00 p.m. Committee: Beth Brown, 248-332-5464 - caicosbeth@hotmail.com; Sue (Schmansky) Lamparter - slamarter@yahoo.com; Celia (Bellisario) Dawson - celiadawson245@hotmail.com

## ST. FREDERICK

**All Class Reunion and Memorial Mass** 30th-anniversary celebration. St. Damien Parish / St. Vincent DePaul Catholic Church. Santia Banquet Hall: \$23 per person; Mass at 11:00 a.m. (St. Damien - St. Vincent); sit-down lunch at 1:00 p.m. (1985 Cass Lake Road, Keego Harbor, Mich.) contact: Patty Dean Phillips (248) 544-8682

## ST. MICHAEL

**All Class Reunion and Memorial Mass** Santia Banquet Hall, Keego Harbor: Tickets are not available at the door. All students who have ever attended St. Michael are welcome to attend. Memorial Mass at 11:00 a.m. (doors at 10:30 a.m.) Family-style dinner at 1:00 p.m. Contact: Lance Butler 248-335-5243

*Looking for your reunion? Want to plan a reunion? Contact Director of Alumni Relations Kelly (Cole) Patterson '99 (NDP) for all your reunion information. alumni@ndpma.org. For complete reunion information, visit www.ndpma.org/reunions.*

## NOTRE DAME PREP CONTINUES TO LEAD IN ACADEMICS

Notre Dame Preparatory School, named once again one of the top-50 Catholic schools in the country, has had much to celebrate academically in 2010, when it graduated its sixteenth class.

The 161 graduating seniors, including eight valedictorians, one of whom scored a perfect 36 on his ACT, walked the stage in May as one of the most awarded classes in NDPMA history. Still more accolades for this academic powerhouse of a school.

The Class of 2010 was accepted into 128 colleges and universities across 29 states and the United Kingdom and was offered over \$10.4 million in scholarships—that's an astounding average of over \$64,197 per graduate! 100% of NDP's graduates were accepted to a four-year university and 36 of the 162 graduates scored a 30+ on their ACT. The average ACT score was 26.25. Students at ND Prep

have access to more than 150 college-preparatory courses, including honors courses in each subject area, as well as 18 Advanced Placement course offerings.

The school's first class of International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme candidates graduated this past spring.

Notre Dame Prep is considered a National Top 50 Catholic High School, making the prestigious Honor Roll four times in the last five years and the school's FIRST Robotics Team won the Michigan Chairman's Award, one of the highest honors given at this year's state championship.

With all faculty members having or pursuing at least one master's degree or Ph.D., and teachers averaging almost 14 years of classroom experience, Notre Dame Prep and Marist Academy is poised for a future as exciting and successful as its first 16 years.





**Save. Survive.**

# SUCCEED.

Controlling benefit costs while taking care of your employees is tough—and it's going to get tougher. It's even tougher to keep them happy, healthy and productive.

That's why BenePro designed a system called BeneView™, which will greatly simplify your HR process and give you the tools to make critical personnel and benefit decisions with confidence.

With BeneView's three-phase process, we will lead you to a strategic plan for recruiting and retaining your best employees, saving you time and money, and meeting your corporate financial goals.

In short, we'll show you how to turn your most important asset — your people — into positive (and happy) results.

Call us. Then relax.



BENEPRO, INC.  
1423 E. 11 MILE RD.  
ROYAL OAK, MI 48067  
248-543-8181 BENEPRO.COM  
KRIS POWELL '75 (NDHS)

