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Mercy McAuley Alumnae Magazine | **SUMMER 2020**



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mercymcauley.org/alumnae

A Letter from President Patty Ragio

Dear Alumnae, Parents, Friends and Supporters,

One of the greatest privileges of this role is that I get to hear from the many, sometimes disparate, but always passionate voices of our alumnae and supporters each and every day. You have many things that you care about deeply, and are willing to speak up about for the betterment of our students, our community, and in the perpetuation of our Mercy, Catholic values. I thank you, and I hope that we have created, and will continue to build, an environment at Mercy McAuley where you feel you belong, have a voice, and where you see no barriers to sharing your views.

2020 seems to have turned the world upside down. Through all of this, however, we need only look to Christ and to his servant, Catherine McAuley, to recalibrate and reconfirm our mission, our values and our approach to Mercy Education.

Our mantra is familiar:

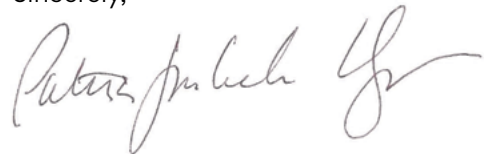
- Affirm our FAITH and strive to live it each day;
- Respond with COMPASSION to the “other,” even when we can’t walk in their shoes;
- SERVE one another, with special attention to the poor and marginalized;
- LEAD from wherever we are, regardless of title or traditional power;
- Strive for EXCELLENCE, without elitism, in all we do.

Our concerns have never been more relevant:

- Trust that in the “careful instruction of WOMEN,” that we build a more just society;
- A knowledge that VIOLENCE only begets more violence, and that we have a special obligation to the unborn and others without the power to defend themselves;
- A firm stand against RACISM, the systems that support its perpetuation, and a call action to undo past wrongs;
- A commitment to the IMMIGRANT, for after all, other than our native peoples, we are all the products of a country that welcomed us at the gate;
- Actions, no matter how small, to care for our EARTH, so that our cumulative effort will sustain our home.

Hopefully, this reassures you of our fidelity to what we have always stood for. I invite each of you, each day, to share your voices with me and with our community. We are ALWAYS STRONGER TOGETHER.

Sincerely,



Patty Lusheck Ragio
President



“I have great confidence in you to do what you think best. State your opinion and always act with courage.”

Catherine McAuley

If you would like to receive monthly email communications similar to this letter from President Patty Ragio, please fill out the online form at: mercymcauley.org/alumnae/update.

(Cover Photo) Hannah Krieger '20 and Abbi Krieger '20, daughters of Missy Rumpke Krieger, McAuley '86, before their individual graduation ceremonies.

Girls' Schools Unite Campaign

Mercy McAuley was proud to participate in a unique city-wide campaign called **Girls' Schools Unite!** From May 4 – 8, we teamed up with Mount Notre Dame, Saint Ursula, Seton, and Ursuline to raise awareness and financial support for all-girls Catholic education right here in Cincinnati! Together, we made the decision to continue with this campaign during this difficult time in our nation and our world.

We matched the energy of our alumnae competing against their old high school rivals on our social media that week: posting videos of beloved teachers, pep talks from our Athletic Director, a “Name That Teacher” game, and much more. We even had many alumnae participate in a spirit wear challenge which saw them filming themselves putting on as many layers of spirit wear as possible. Our unofficial “winners” put on over 20 layers of spirit wear!

It was absolutely thrilling to have 1,055 alumnae donate over \$51,000 in just one week! We had incredible support from all classes including Mercy McAuley’s first graduating class of 2019. The bonus is that 35% of alumnae gave for the first time and an additional 39% donated for the first time in many years! Gifts of all sizes truly made a difference in this competition.



Girls' Schools Unite!



Thank you to all who participated in our Girls' Schools Unite Alumnae Giving Challenge! Your gifts to Mercy McAuley’s Annual Fund will be used to provide financial assistance, scholarships and campus improvements for current and future students.

All of our schools are winners because our alumnae came together to show their support for all-girls Catholic education. We hope this becomes an annual tradition and will encourage even more alumnae to participate. Although we did not achieve first place, we are ecstatic with our numbers especially since we have the largest number of alumnae (nearly 23,000) among all the girls' schools in Cincinnati. Thank you for your support!

\$51,372.69 raised

1,115 total donors

386 first-time donors

\$45 average gift

Top 3 classes with the highest percentage of participation

1. Mercy 2012 - 20.7%
2. Mercy 2018 - 19.4%
3. Mercy 2011 - 17.7%

Top 3 classes with the highest number of donors

1. McAuley 1968 - 29
2. Mercy McAuley 2019 - 27
3. Mercy 2018 - 26
3. McAuley 1989 - 26

Oldest class to participate: **1948**

Youngest class to participate: **2019**



COVID-19 AND THE CLASS OF 2020

Long-held traditions for high school seniors and other end-of-the-year celebrations are occasions we generally take for granted. This year, due to COVID-19, all festivities from mid-March through June were canceled, postponed or reinvented to ensure the health and safety of our students, families, staff and alumnae.

Stories of COVID-19 had been in the news and in conversation for a few weeks prior, but it was hard for everyone to believe that it was going to change so much of our daily lives. The Mercy McAuley administration and staff started to plan for contingencies on online classes and events for the next few weeks. On March 12, the school building closed indefinitely, with the hope of reopening three weeks later. As students and faculty adjusted to online classes, the administration started looking ahead to the long-held traditions quickly approaching in April and May, like Prom, Baccalaureate, and Graduation. By the end of March, the stay-at-home order in Ohio had been extended from April 7 until May 1, and later for the remainder of the school year.

Events like Prom were cancelled. There was no great way to follow the guidelines that Governor DeWine had set in place while ensuring a fun night of dancing and socializing for students. However, many other events were reinvented, especially those geared towards the Class of 2020, to ensure social distancing. The first was the Mother-Daughter Mass and Breakfast. On May 1, some Mercy McAuley staff surprised the seniors and their moms by delivering flowers, cookies as well as their caps and gowns to them at home to let them know that the school was thinking of them on the special day that should have held the Mother/Daughter Mass and Breakfast. Students also received an emailed slide show including photos of them and their moms.

For the Baccalaureate Mass, families could watch a livestream of Fr. Ed Brodnick performing Mass from Mercy McAuley's Auditorium on May 18. Music Teacher Mary White accompanied the Mass on piano while staff

member Lisa Fluegeman sang. Seniors Lia Shutte, Anna Riedel, Eva Wright, and Lexie Kemble participated in the Mass by reading the first reading, the petitions, and the communion meditation while wearing their full regalia in pre-recorded videos. The songs "The Circle of Mercy" and "The Our Father" were sung to continue the traditions of the Mercy McAuley Legacy schools. The Mass ended beautifully with the Mercy McAuley Alma Mater.

The following night, on the original night of Graduation, the faculty and staff held a celebratory drive-through event. Students and their families drove through campus waving to all of their favorite teachers, the Parent Pack, and the Sisters of Mercy, while receiving treats and farewell gifts. Most notably, the students received a booklet of more than 200 inspiring letters written by alumnae, employees and friends of Mercy McAuley. It was a touching and energizing night, despite the rainy weather.

On May 23, individual graduation ceremonies began at school. Graduates, joined by their parents, were congratulated by school leaders and received orange cords and flowers on the Mercy McAuley Auditorium stage to the tune of "Pomp and Circumstance," and they stopped for photo ops at many special locations around campus. Because of the number of students in the Class of 2020, the individual ceremonies continued daily through May 31. It was wonderful to be able to honor our graduates in such a special and personalized way. Mercy McAuley still hopes to host graduation for the Class of 2020 in August if possible.

This year did not end as planned, but thankfully through the creativity, hard work, and pure love of the employees of Mercy McAuley, the Class of 2020 was thoroughly celebrated for their accomplishments and sent off to their future endeavors with as much well-wishes as any class before them. **Congratulations, Class of 2020, welcome to the Alumnae Family!**

(Top, from left to right) Seniors sit on the sunroofs of their cars waving during the drive through celebration.

Ashley Tudor poses with her diploma and a basketball; she will be playing for Radford University next year.

The booklets of more than 200 inspiring letters written by alumnae, employees and friends of Mercy McAuley that students received.

Principal Connie Kampschmidt gives a t-shirt to Amira Rowe at the drive through celebration.

Madelyn Dougoud poses in front of the stained glass window from Mother of Mercy after her individual graduation ceremony.

Emma Scott crosses the stage after receiving her diploma as Principal Connie Kampschmidt cheers.

(Bottom) A car decorated in Mercy McAuley colors drives through the celebration on May 19.

COVID-19 and Mercy McAuley

Members of the Class of 2020 weren't the only ones who experienced an unexpected ending to their school year. The underclasswomen at Mercy McAuley finished their school year on May 21, more than two months after switching to online learning. That style of learning is certainly not easy, but thankfully, due to the Mercy McAuley class schedule, all students had experience with at least one online or blended class previously. So, transitioning to learning from home was much easier and less disruptive than what many other schools and students experienced. The truly impressive part to this transition is that students continued to virtually attend all their classes at the same days and times that they would have in normal circumstances. Our faculty are incredibly adept and helped the students keep their daily school routine by actively engaging students in virtual classrooms from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. every day.

Some of our teachers innovated lessons that took students out of their virtual classrooms for class. Lisa Nissen held a "star party" at night for her astronomy class, where students looked at stars together virtually. Bailey Pearce created a webcam with her phone to show the students how she was painting. Randy Kent had his costume design students designing costumes and making videos or slideshows with their costumes. Along the lines of innovation, Wolves Wellness Days, days designated for catching up on assignments and rest, were created and spread out throughout the two months of online learning to aid in Mercy McAuley's commitment to the emotional and mental health of our community.



To keep the students' spirits high, the faculty and staff also created two videos to share. The weekend before Easter, employees gathered in the front circle in their cars and filmed a drive-by Easter greeting, complete with signs, car decorations, children and dogs. On the final day of school, May 31, the employees released a video thanking the students for another great year, congratulating them on their hard work and wishing them a happy summer.



There is cautious hope that the fall semester will be held in the building since Governor DeWine stated on June 2, "We fully intent to have school in the fall." However, students, parents and faculty are assured that if the virus has a second wave in the fall and winter months, Mercy McAuley can handle any adversity with Faith, Compassion, Service, Leadership, and Excellence.

(Top) A. Teacher Bailey Pearce poses in front of her streaming set up.

(Bottom) Teacher Lisa Nissen holds a sign for the end of the year video.



The Class of 2020 was accepted into **93** different colleges/universities and **96%** of our seniors will continue their education at **42** of those institutions. Together they were awarded **\$14,616,840** in scholarships. **2%** of our students are joining the military.

Career Day at Mercy McAuley

On February 28, 2020, over 40 alumnae (half from each legacy school), gathered at Mercy McAuley for a fellowship lunch and an afternoon of Career Day presentations for our students. These strong, inspiring women came from all walks of life: book authors, healthcare providers, scientists, business and non-profit leaders, politics and much more! We were so grateful for their wisdom and



perspectives. One alumna told us that she returned because her high school career day helped her decide on a college major and career. Now that's "Inspiring Potential Within!"



Over 350 guests and volunteers joined together on the evening of February 15 to celebrate the young women of Mercy McAuley and raise essential funds during the Fire & Ice Auction. The excitement in the room was palpable and attendees enjoyed the "old school" silent auction paper bidding as well as the excellent emceeding by WCPO's Chief Meteorologist Steve Raleigh. Our Mission Moment alone raised over \$50,000 for tuition assistance. Thanks to the generous businesses, alumnae, and parents who contributed and of course, we are sincerely grateful to the following sponsors: Mrs. Rita Driehaus, For the Girls -

Lammert/Shoemakers, Martins, Findleys, For 2020, a Class with Vision, Frederick Funeral Home, tdg Facilities Services, Johnson Investment Counsel, The Hergenrother Family, Hudepohl Construction, Bahl & Gaynor Investment Counsel, Andrew J. Dorr DDS Inc., Heister Insurance, Madison Design, Mount St. Joseph University, MR Label Co., Thomas More University, and The Ventura Family.



Patty Ragio, Willie & Pam Young



Scott & Tammi Hoffman



Sam Gagnon, Denise Harvey, Annie Vehr, & Olivia Hart



Connie Kampschmidt, Kurt & Charlene Verhoff



Wolf-themed silent auction items



Tammy Ventura, Merri Beth Hebler



Julie & Tim Horton, Chris & Margaret Sexton

Our Condolences

Please remember the family and friends of the following alumnae in your prayers:



Betty Simon Hardig
Mercy '48
January 14, 2020



Gladys Sammons Sheldon
Mercy '49
January 24, 2020



Jane Middendorf Kreams
Mercy '49
March 31, 2020



Mary Ann Knauff Ruberg
Mercy '49
March 5, 2020



Judith Hessler Wallenhorst
Mercy '51
January 17, 2020



Annette Riesz Huesman
Mercy '55
January 5, 2020



Mary Jo Merrill Steinkamp
Mercy '55
April 3, 2020



Arlene Kamphaus Stuhreyer
Mercy '58
February 29, 2020



Elaine Byrne Berninger
Mercy '60
January 28, 2020



Mary Sue Doepker-Shappelle McKenna
Mercy '61
March 22, 2020



Diana Striet Poston
Mercy '62
February 12, 2020



Susan Reff Erickson
McAuley '64
April 10, 2020



Karen Richter Leibel
Mercy '66
April 9, 2020

Upcoming Planned Events

Events planned through June were cancelled for this year. This includes our Golden Guild Prayer Service and Brunch for Mother of Mercy and McAuley Alumnae from the classes of 1969 and earlier.

However, our Wolves Classic Golf Outing at Pebble Creek Golf Course is still on for Friday, July 10! All proceeds benefit Mercy McAuley Athletics. We are currently working on the details for the day as they will depend on any guidelines/restrictions mandated by the state of Ohio. As soon as more information is available, it will be posted and emailed! Learn more and register at mercymcauley.org/athletics/golf-outing.

Additionally, as of now, all reunions planned for the Fall are still being held on their originally scheduled dates. They are subject to be rescheduled as the dates approach due to COVID-19. To be sure you don't miss out on communications about reunions, update your contact information at mercymcauley.org/alumnae/update

#MMHSBIGDayofGiving 3.17.20

Mercy McAuley is grateful to all of our supporters who donated during the BIG Day of Giving in March. We decided to go ahead even though school had just been moved online and so much uncertainty surrounded us because of the pandemic. People

gave generously! In one day, thanks to anonymous donors who provided matching dollars for every single gift, **we raised \$111,208 from 362 donors.** And that total may increase once we receive corporate matching gifts, which means some gifts were triple-

matched! Alumnae represented 81% of our donors during the BIG Day of Giving and the biggest percentage graduated from Mercy and McAuley during the years 1955-1978. Thank you to all who contributed!

Mercy McAuley High School

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Stay Connected:

Stay up to date on events, reunions, and other information at Mercy McAuley by visiting our website at mercymcauley.org/alumnae.

While there, update your information to ensure you never miss out on any news!

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-  McAuley High School Alumnae
-  Mother of Mercy High School Alumnae

-  @MercyMcAuleyHS
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the CLOVER



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President

Brigitte Foley
Managing Director of Advancement

Julie Leis Raleigh
Director of Annual Giving and Donor Engagement

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