



ALUMNI SAINT

In the Spotlight



“I love working as the CEO of my company always focused on betterment, growth, and making an impact on the lives of the people we serve. .”

George Ortiz (HN 2003)

George Ortiz (HN 2003), Founder/CEO of American Barber Academy

Tell us about your career path.

After graduation in 2003 I studied Business Management at Reading Area Community College. In 2005 I decided to pursue a career in Professional Barbering and attended a program in Lancaster, PA. I worked for several years in the business perfecting my craft at a local barbershop before opening my own barber studio, New Style Barber Studio in Kenhorst, PA, at the age of 22. After a few years in the business I struggled to find qualified

employees to hire and grow my business, so as a solution and a path forward, I decided to open an academy to train professional barbers. In 2012 American Barber Academy (ABA) was founded in Reading, PA. With a 2200 sq. ft. facility, we had the capacity to enroll 20 students at one time. In 2016 ABA became a nationally accredited institution, and we were awarded the opportunity to offer Title IV funding to our students. After several years of success, ABA was primed for expansion, and in 2020 we relocated to a 10,000 sq. ft. facility and also rebranded as American Barber and Beauty Academy (ABBA). We now have over 90 students enrolled and offer several new programs, mainly in Cosmetology and Esthetics. Since the opening of our Academy in 2012 we have produced hundreds of graduates who are now happily working as licensed professionals and opening their own salons, barbershops, and spas. I now operate as the CEO of ABBA as well as a real estate investor and private consultant for career schools.

How do you feel your education from Holy Name helped get you where you are today? Do you credit any teachers/peers/classes?

Something I couldn't appreciate as a young man while I was a student at HN was the structure, the safe environment, the accountability, the culture, and the passion that all the faculty brought to education day in and day out. Now, as an educator and owner of an educational institution, all of those are components I strive hard to emulate and build into our culture because they were so instrumental in my personal development and professional success.

What advice would you give to current Berks Catholic students?

Enjoy some of the best years of your life, responsibly. Don't ever take for granted the privilege of being a BC Saint. You are there because you are loved by people who work hard to give you the best. "Nothing in life is free." Make sure you repay them by working hard to be the best version of yourself that you can be.

Tell us a little bit about yourself and what you like to do in your spare time.

I am married to Laura Ortiz, and I have two wonderful boys, Leo (6) and Julian (3). In my spare time I enjoy spending quality time with my boys, coaching their sports teams, and outdoor adventures. I also enjoy fitness, traveling, and practicing as a part time barber.

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