



**COTTER**  
SCHOOLS



**ANNUAL REPORT**  
2023



# Family Legacies at Cotter



The community of Cotter Schools is blessed to have many families that have had multiple generations attend and remain connected to the school throughout their lives. For the Modjeski family, Cotter has not only been a school, but a legacy connecting the past, present, and future. The Modjeski family legacy began in 1954 when Gerald (Jerry) graduated after his years at St. Stan's and his wife, Anita, graduated in 1967. Faith, community, academics, and athletics were the foundation for a lifelong connection for the Modjeskis, as for many other Cotter families. The Modjeski family legacy spans multiple decades with over 20 family members having attended Cotter and some working for the school. The Modjeski family story includes students who were Salutatorians, AAA award winners, state-level athletes, choir and band recognitions, National Honor Society members, student council leaders, and athletes in basketball, football, soccer, and track and field.



Through the years, Cotter has shaped the character and supported the growth of the Modjeskis. Currently, Annie and Ashlee are seniors, graduating in 2024. Hugh is in first grade and will graduate in 2035, and two-year-old, Miriam, attends Educare and will graduate in 2039, 85 years after her grandfather.



Cotter Schools is grateful for the service provided by the Modjeski family. Fran '82 served on the board of directors for nine years and continues to support Cotter initiatives. Amy and Maggie have contributed many volunteer hours as well as donations to the Cotter Auction and athletic and community events. Amy has been working in the elementary level for eleven years, and Fallon '05 is in her seventh year teaching in early childhood.

The Modjeski family legacy stands as a testament to education, community and faith. Their family story is a great example of the importance of high quality, Catholic education at Cotter Schools and the strength of the Cotter community.

***Pictured top to bottom:***

*Fran '82 & Amy Modjeski with children Ashlee '24 and Ian '21  
Andy '83 & Maggie Modjeski with children William '19,  
Thomas, Annie '24  
Jerry '54 and Miriam '39 Modjeski*

**Share your  
Cotter Family Story!**  
[coterschools.org/family-story](https://coterschools.org/family-story)





Meet **Jack Spiten**, a senior who has been a Cotter student since he transferred in the third grade. Cotter has provided Jack with ample opportunities to explore activities such as band, math team, National Honor Society, baseball, football, and basketball. He appreciates the flexibility of Cotter teachers and staff, which allows students to branch out and participate in various activities. One of the things he loves most about Cotter is the kind and understanding teachers and staff who create a supportive yet academically challenging learning environment. Jack, a Commended Student in the National Merit Scholarship Program plans to attend the University of Alabama on a full academic scholarship to study finance after graduating in the spring.



A junior, **Sonja Semling**, has been a proud Cotter student since kindergarten. She feels that Cotter has always felt welcoming and she is grateful for the presence of God evident on campus. Certainly, the Lord has blessed Cotter and works through the wonderful teachers to show His love and care for His children. Sonja has met the high academic standards of Cotter, taking advantage of Advancement Placement classes and electives in topics she enjoys. She has been very involved with extracurricular activities including National Honor Society, student council, yearbook, PARMIES, and the math team. Also, she founded a prayer group, Power in Prayer, which has helped her and her peers enhance their relationship with God. Sonja is a very successful runner on the cross-country and track-and-field teams. Through her training and tremendous support from her coaches, she has run at the state level seven consecutive times. Most recently, she finished ninth and helped lead the girls to a third place cross country team finish.



A proud international student from Mexico, **Emma Juarez Hageman**, is a sophomore living in the residence hall. Despite just starting at Cotter this fall, she has already had an amazing journey. A member of the tennis team, Emma achieved first place in the section championship and qualified for the state tournament where she earned third place. This experience taught her that anything is possible if you set your mind to it and work hard. She is excited to continue developing her skills, following her passions and achieving her goals. She is confident that her time at Cotter will afford her many more new experiences and enable her to create long-lasting friendships. Being a part of the Cotter community is an honor, and she is grateful for this opportunity.



**Mr. Mike Costello**, a 1982 graduate, has been teaching, coaching, and mentoring at Cotter for 32 years. Mr. Costello recalls a recent day at Cotter when he was able to take a deep dive into the poetic elements of "Mr. Tambourine Man" and discuss the structure of "Sonnet 73" in English class. Later, he assisted a student with his college application essay, provided a tour to an alumnus visiting campus, and led the cross-country team on a run on the beautiful Cotter campus. Recently, he has begun working in alumni relations. Mike says that it is clear that as Cotter continues to grow with new buildings, new courses, new teachers, and new students, the core faith and values of the school are still rooted firmly in place. Every year, Cotter alumni carve their own paths in the world, but will always be there for their classmates in times of joy and pain for the rest of their lives. Ramble on!





### **The Cotter Fund**

Did you know that tuition at Cotter Schools only accounts for about 30% of the total cost to education a student? This means that relative to other Catholic and private schools, the Cotter experience is an exceptional value. The remaining cost to educate a student is paid for with contributions from benefactors, parishes, and individual donors.



### **Embracing our Catholic Identity and Faith**

Cotter students are encouraged to develop their spiritual lives through attending school Mass, learning about the Catholic faith in the classroom, and through an active Campus Ministry program. They are presented with opportunities to put their faith in action through prayer, community service, ministry trips, and the planning of and participation in religious services.



### **Exceptional Value and Affordability for All**

Cotter's total enrollment has increased significantly in recent years and low tuition rates have played an essential role in this growth. Cotter remains committed to making financial aid available to all families in the community interested in Catholic education for their children. Your generosity can help bring this vision to fruition.

Your support is needed to ensure a Cotter experience remains accessible. Your contribution to the Cotter Fund will enable us to welcome all families desiring a high quality, Catholic education into the Cotter community.

**PLEASE MAKE A GIFT TO THE COTTER FUND ONLINE:  
COTTERSCHOOLS.ORG/DONATE**

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