

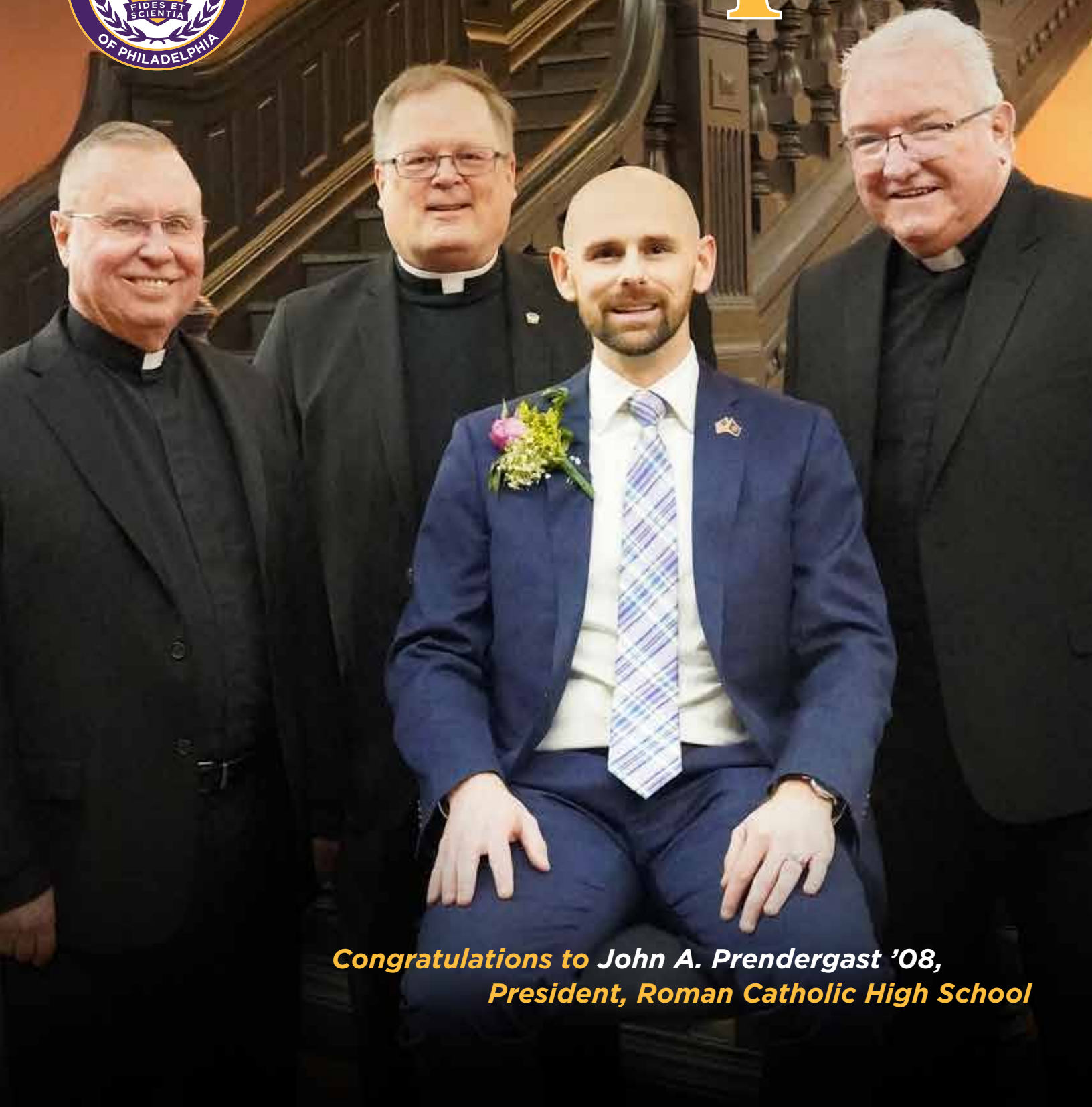
THE

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI, FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF
ROMAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL



Empire

Summer 2024



***Congratulations to John A. Prendergast '08,
President, Roman Catholic High School***



The RCHS MISSION



Founded by Thomas E. Cahill in 1890 as the first free Diocesan Catholic high school for boys in the nation, Roman Catholic continues its tradition of excellence as it strives to offer a comprehensive academic curriculum within a disciplined Catholic environment. Enriched by its cultural, racial, and religious diversity, Roman Catholic provides a community where each young man can learn to appreciate and respect the uniqueness of others while becoming a man of personal integrity. Roman Catholic High School strives to bring the Gospel values of Jesus Christ to its students, while forming a Catholic community which embodies the Christian spirit of service to all.

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The Empire designed by:
Gene Burns '81

Dear Roman Community,



It is with great enthusiasm that I write to you in this edition of *The Empire* for the first time as President of Roman Catholic High School.

While we are only a few short months in, 2024 has been a great year so far for Catholic High. Our Basketball team won its second consecutive Philadelphia Catholic League Championship (its 34th PCL title in team history) in

dramatic fashion with Kabe Goss' buzzer-beater in overtime in front of a sold out crowd at the Palestra. Our Mock Trial team won its 11th City Championship in team history – its 10th city title in the past 11 years. Roman alumnus Dom Colasante '06 returned to Broad & Vine to present a \$525,000 EITC gift to our school. For those unaware, EITC is the tax credit program which allows both individuals and businesses with a Pennsylvania tax liability to redirect those funds to students at Roman in the form of financial aid. Dom's generosity was recognized by various media outlets such as 6abc, CBS3, FOX29, and the South Philly Review, among others – tremendous press for Roman Catholic! We recently began a Presidential Initiative in which I invited local university Presidents to our campus to speak with their admitted

students. Presidents Dan Allen from La Salle, Anne Prisco from Holy Family, and Richard Englert from Temple all came to Roman to participate in this opportunity.

Though the school year is winding down, Roman continues to bustle with activity. Spring sports wrapped up a successful season. We celebrated a beautiful Junior Ring Mass and Senior Prom. Commencement exercises at the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul will be here before we know it. Our 8th Annual Day of Giving was on May 14. Thanks to all who generously donated in direct benefit of our students. While there is much going on, I pause to reflect on how grateful I am to all who make this incredible community thrive: our fantastic leadership team, dedicated group of faculty and staff, parents and families, alumni, students, and friends. Each of you has a special role to play in our success, and I am so thankful for your support. As I've said many times before, for Roman Catholic High School, the best is yet to come!

Sincerely,

John A. Prendergast '08
President

My Fellow Sons of Cahill,



It has been my privilege to have had the opportunity to serve as President of the Alumni Association. This privilege has given me the chance to meet so many of my fellow Sons of Cahill, future Sons of Cahill, members of our faculty, and supporters of Catholic High.

I recently attended the Spring Open House where I talked to some of our future students and their parents. It was a wonderful experience to hear their stories and their impressions of our great school.

I always enjoy listening to Past President Chris Gibbons '79 give his talk to the visitors on the history of our brothers who served and sacrificed for our country. Chris also shares the history of Roman and the gift of Thomas and Sophia Cahill. Their gift created this wonderful institution where we all grew into men and were prepared to take on our future challenges in life.

We need to keep Thomas Cahill's dream alive. The Roman community made that dream a reality on our 8th Annual Day of Giving, which was a great success. Thank you to all the alumni brothers, family, and friends of Roman for their participation and contributions on this special day. Our alumni community is

doing a great job supporting Roman, but we aim to make an even greater impact moving forward. Many of the organizations that our development team apply to, for grants, are often inquire about the percentage of alumni participation. Together, we can, and will, continue to grow alumni engagement, and advance Roman! Thanks again to all those who made a difference on May 14!

North Wildwood, New Jersey will once again get "Roman Rocked," on August 10 at our annual Day at the Bay. Chuck Taylor's leadership has turned this day into our premier alumni event. Grab some friends and family and share the day with your fellow Cahillites at the Seaport Pier.

I want to thank my fellow officers of the Alumni Association, the Executive Board, and our Trustees for their tireless efforts on behalf of Roman. Please join us and become an active alumni member, helping to preserve the proud tradition that is Roman Catholic High School.

Brothers for Life,

Pat Mundy '75
President
RCHS Alumni Association



It is with great joy and pride that we celebrate the appointment of Mr. John A. Prendergast '08 as the 15th Head of School and 6th President of Roman Catholic High School. This momentous occasion marks a significant milestone in our institution's history, heralding a new era of leadership and excellence.

The journey leading to this announcement was one of careful consideration and thorough evaluation. Through late 2023, the Office of Catholic Education, in collaboration with Roman's Board of Directors, engaged in a comprehensive search process to identify the ideal candidate to lead our beloved school. It is with utmost confidence and enthusiasm that Mr. Prendergast emerged as the perfect choice for this esteemed role.

John Prendergast '08 is not just a distinguished leader; he is a proud alumnus of Roman Catholic, graduating as a member of the Class of 2008. His deep-rooted connection to our school community and unwavering dedication have been evident throughout his tenure.

As the former Executive Director of Mission Advancement, John served as the chief architect of our fundraising campaign, securing vital resources to propel our mission forward. His extensive experience at La Salle University and Drexel University further equipped him with invaluable skills in development, marketing, enrollment, and communications.

Since his graduation in 2008, John has continued to serve Roman Catholic High School in various capacities, including his role on the Alumni Association's Board

of Trustees. His leadership as Chair of the Marketing and Fundraising Committee and Chair of the Day of Giving Subcommittee has been instrumental in advancing our school's objectives and strengthening our community ties.

On January 8, John Prendergast assumed his presidency at Catholic High, embarking on a journey to shape the future of our institution. His formal installation on January 31, witnessed by his family, friends, and the greater Roman community, marked the beginning of a transformative chapter in our history.

As we welcome President Prendergast into his new role, we are filled with optimism and anticipation for the promising future ahead. With his fresh perspectives and resolute dedication, John is prepared to inspire and lead Roman Catholic High School to new heights of excellence.

We eagerly anticipate the positive impact and transformative leadership he will undoubtedly deliver.

Together, as a united community, we celebrate the dawn of a new era at Roman Catholic High School. Guided by President Prendergast's vision and commitment to excellence, we are poised to uphold the legacy of Thomas E. Cahill and continue our pursuit of academic, spiritual, and personal growth.





NEWS AROUND ROMAN

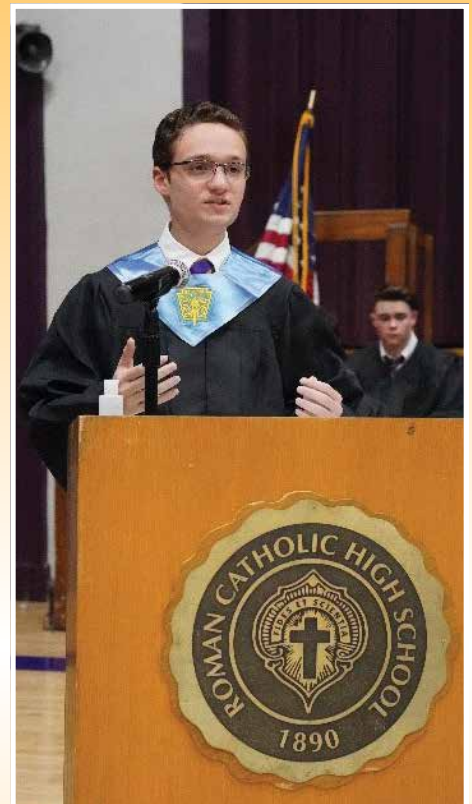
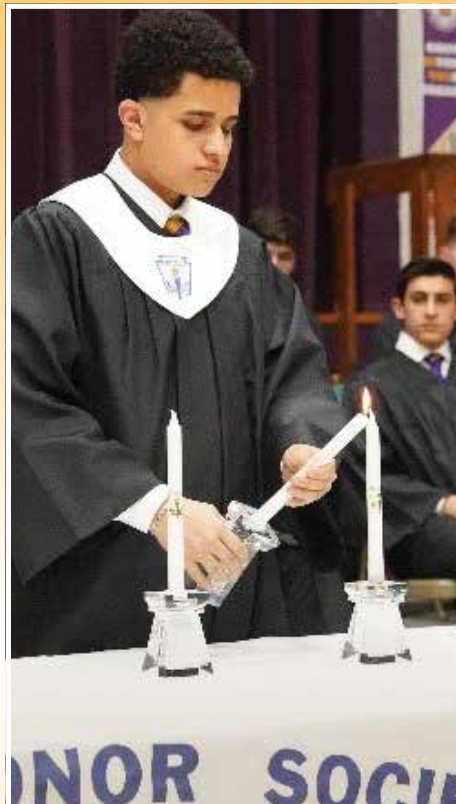
Roman The Halls

On Tuesday, November 28, 60 families ventured to Broad & Vine to attend the school's inaugural Roman the Halls Open House event. Zach Demusz '18, Roman's Director of Admissions & Communications, collaborated with colleagues, students, and alums to put on a great night for the prospective students and families of Catholic High's incoming classes.



Honoring Brilliance: Roman's 2023-2024 NHS Ceremony

Roman Catholic High School's NHS Ceremony honored the outstanding academic work and exemplary character of this year's Inductees from 2024 and 2025. Congratulations to the newest members of the Thomas E. Cahill Chapter of the National Honor Society!



Spiking Stereotypes

In a thrilling showdown, Roman's faculty and staff team took on the Class of 2024 in a spirited volleyball match. Laughter filled the air as faculty and staff members showcased their skills, while students brought their A-game. It was a celebration of camaraderie and connection, bridging the gap between generations. It is evident that these moments of interaction go beyond the classroom, fostering a sense of community and mutual respect. Here's to many more memorable matches and moments that bring us together as one Roman community.



Cheers to the Class of 2024!

As the sun rose on February 28, the senior class at Roman was greeted with a lavish catered breakfast, marking 100 days until their graduation. Amidst the conversation and laughter, the breakfast became a moment of reflection, gratitude, and anticipation; a poignant reminder of the journey they've embarked upon and the milestones they've conquered.

Amidst the festivities, the Alumni Association's presentation added a layer of wisdom and inspiration. Graduates of days gone shared tales of triumphs, challenges, and the enduring spirit of camaraderie that forges bonds for life. The presentation ignited a spark of motivation in the hearts of the soon-to-be graduates, reminding them that their journey doesn't end with the turning of the tassel but rather evolves into a lifelong commitment to excellence, community, and growth.



NEWS AROUND ROMAN

Continuity and Change Over Time



On the same day the senior class gathered to celebrate the Class of 2024, Director of Development & Alumni Relations, Richard Zambino, Jr., welcomed two esteemed and passionate Executive Trustees of the Alumni Association to speak to the graduates about the historic organization, and empower the next and newest alumni to aspire for excellence in everything they do.

Chris Gibbons '79 delved into the fascinating origins of the Cahill Club and the eventual formation of the Alumni Association of Catholic High. Chris recounted the transformative journey of RCHS alumni, illuminating their profound influence on Roman's growth and advancement. His presentation encapsulated the evolution of Roman's alumni network and its pivotal role in shaping Roman's trajectory.

Jerome Taylor '15, shared insights with the Class of 2024 about the Executive Committee's inaugural Diversity Committee. His presentation highlighted the Committee's mission to foster inclusive alumni engagement, bridging Cahillites from diverse backgrounds to strengthen our community.



50 Years of "Uniting in Faith and Community"

Roman Catholic High School commemorated the 50th Anniversary of Catholic Schools Week by embodying the theme of "Uniting in Faith and Community." Each day was a testament to the power of collaboration and shared values, as the Roman community delved into themes highlighting the crucial role of parishes, communities, students, faculty, staff, and volunteers in shaping the educational landscape of Greater Philadelphia. Through prayer, outreach, and celebration, Roman affirmed its commitment to nurturing minds, spirits, and communities, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts of all who participated.





Roman Alumnus Pays It Forward in a Big Way

Roman Catholic alum and BLOCS donor Domenic Colasante '06 visited Broad & Vine on Tuesday, February 27, to present a \$525,000 EITC tax credit donation to his alma mater.

Thanks to Dom for his support of Catholic High through the EITC program!

Welcome Vice President Joyce!

Roman Catholic High School is delighted to celebrate the appointment of Mr. Daniel P. Joyce as Vice President of Mission Advancement.

Dan fills the vacancy previously occupied by Mr. John A. Prendergast '08 prior to his elevation to President.

Having become an integral part of the Roman family since May 2023 as Senior Development Officer, Dan has diligently contributed to the enhancement of Catholic High and the overall well-being of its students through his work in the Mission Advancement Office.

With a distinguished career spanning more than 18 years in fundraising and alumni relations, Dan previously dedicated his expertise to La Salle University in various capacities. Before coming to Roman, he served as Assistant Vice President of Principal Gifts and Presidential Initiatives at La Salle, and prior to that, he served as Vice President of University Advancement, assuming the responsibilities of Chief Development Officer and overseeing the entirety of La Salle's Advancement operation.

"Dan's extensive experience building genuine relationships with donors and inspiring significant support undoubtedly makes him the natural choice to lead our Advancement division," said John A. Prendergast '08, President of Roman Catholic High School. "Not to mention, Dan's team-first, collaborative approach and wonderfully affable disposition make him a particularly good fit to join our senior leadership team. I am confident that our entire community will continue to enjoy working with Dan in this new capacity."

Please join us in congratulating Dan Joyce as he begins a new venture at Broad & Vine!

The Empire, Summer 2024



NEWS AROUND ROMAN



“From Good to Great”: An Advancing and Enriching Education



RCHS Faculty Member, Terrence Caldwell, and his business students visited Temple University to take part in the 3rd Annual Temple NABA Student Symposium.

There, students had the opportunity to engage with the university community and learn from a moderated panel of professionals that included Temple alumni. The invited guest speakers shared stories and insights from their successful career journeys to inspire the next generation of business leaders.

The *Luck* of the Cahillite

Marching proudly through the streets of Philadelphia, the JR AOH club at Roman and the Alumni Association of RCCHS brought the spirit of St. Patrick's Day to life on March 10. Amidst the sea of green, Cahillites of all ages united in celebration, showcasing the enduring bonds of camaraderie and tradition. Their presence not only honored their shared heritage, but also exemplified the unwavering support that defines the RCCHS community. As the cheers echoed and the banners waved, it was clear: the legacy of RCCHS thrives in the hearts of all who call themselves Cahillites.



Roman Catholic High School

Leading through Initiative

Roman Catholic High School is proud to pioneer an initiative inviting university presidents to directly engage with our senior class. Huge thanks to Presidents Dan Allen of La Salle University, Anne Prisco of Holy Family University, and Richard Englert of Temple University for joining us, sharing insights, and distributing swag. This personalized interaction not only empowers our students to make informed decisions, but also strengthens our ties with esteemed higher education institutions. By bringing these leaders to our campus, we're opening doors to exciting opportunities and fostering a sense of community.

Roman is committed to providing our students with the resources and connections they need to succeed in their academic journeys. Here's to more fruitful collaborations and empowering experiences ahead!



The Top of Their Game

Roman's Mock Trial Team soared to victory in the 2024 season, clinching the coveted title of City Champions for the tenth time over the past eleven years. With each objection raised and argument presented, they showcased unparalleled growth, dedication, and tenacity. Through tireless preparation and unrelenting camaraderie, these legal luminaries transformed into formidable advocates, leaving no doubt of their prowess in the courtroom. Congratulations to the Roman Mock Trial Team for their outstanding achievements and for embodying the true spirit of excellence.





No Man is an Island – The Story of Al Perkolup '43

By: Ed Keenan '54

What motivates some individuals to do something above and beyond the usual norms in any situation and thus, inspires us to alter our own behavior? Sometimes, it may only be another's words that inspire, but more often, it is the actions of those individuals that jostles our sensibilities as we then more clearly see that the actions of this individual are in sync with their words.

Al Perkolup from Roman's Class of 1943 is a wonderful example of this kind of inspirational leader, not only as a teenager, but later in his life as well. In two critical occasions in his short life, Al Perkolup demonstrated his true sense of self and his unselfish behavior.

The initial story of Al's unique life is told by a young Cahillite from the class of '44 – Andrew Cafagna. Cafagna was just a Junior at Catholic High when he wrote a story in 1943 for the *Purple & Gold* about an event that occurred in the Spring of '42. The story was titled *The Spirit of Catholic High*.

The principal character in Cafagna's story was Al Perkolup. Throughout that year, Perkolup had been the "stroke" of the crew team's varsity eight. But when the Catholic League Championship races were to begin on the Schuylkill River that spring, Al, Roman's best rower, was not going to be in that race. He was in the hospital in critical condition, the result of a hit-and-run car accident. Cafagna wrote that "the doctors questioned whether Al Perkolup would survive the week ahead."

The night before the big race, the team's coxswain, Art McArdle, visited the critically ill stroke of his team in the hospital. Cafagna didn't offer any content of what both men shared in that visit at this point, but he instead takes the reader to the following day and the CL Championship race between Catholic High and West Catholic. From the race's outset, without Al as their stroke, the crew from Broad & Vine fell way behind. Approaching the half mile marker,

the strong West eight was almost two boat lengths ahead of the Cahillites. Despite repeated taunts by Coxie McArdle to his exhausted rowers along the course's swollen currents, West's surging crew remained comfortably in the lead.

At this critical moment in the race, McArdle screamed to his crew as he appealed to the emotional side of the team. "Remember Al! Are you going to let Al down?"

McArdle then shouted out an order to the crew, as every crew does to this day, to row a "Power Ten." The command was for each rower to pull harder into the Schuylkill's testy waters and at a faster pace for the next 10 strokes. As Cafagna tells it: "The crew of Cahillites picked up the pace and began to close in on the West Catholic boat...the Cahillite crew rowed with greater vigor rowing faster, faster, faster." The gap between the two boats narrowed. The Cahillites were on a mission – "to win one for Al."

As the two boats reached Peter's Island, very likely, both Coxies called for another "Power Ten" as both sprinted to reach the flag first. As Cafagna tells his story: "Then to the great surprise and astonishment of both team's supporters, the Cahillite crew reached the finish line scarcely five feet in front of the West Catholic boat."

To end his exciting and dramatic story, the author, Andrew Cafagna, waxed philosophical. With Perkolup back at stroke of the varsity 8-oared shell for his senior year, Cafagna suggested that his recovery was a reality that "no words can explain...now, (Al) had something to live for. Now, he owed Catholic High something – his life. He wanted to pay that debt back...in his senior year, Al Perkolup won every race he entered under the name of Catholic High...Al helped the team reclaim our national championship. Here is a loyal son of Catholic High... HE IS THE REAL SPIRIT OF CATHOLIC HIGH."



The second courageous, unselfish event in Al Perkolup's life would take place some three years later, and thousands of miles from home. It was the spring of 1945, and Al Perkolup was a U. S. Marine fighting on the island of Okinawa – the last great battle of WW II. The marines lost thousands of men in that battle. Al Perkolup was one of them. Combat

Correspondent George R. Voight of the Marine Corps wrote in the Philadelphia Inquirer: "It was his life or the lives of several marines. Private Perkolup knew that when he charged three Japanese soldiers sneaking through heavy under-brush, above Taira Bay, toward a group of unsuspecting Marines, he fired from his hip while he ran and killed two of the foe. He was cut down by the third soldier, who, later was killed by the Marines who were alerted by the shooting."

Perkolup was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star for bravery.

On November 9, 2023, nearly 80 years after Al Perkolup gave his life on Okinawa, there was a gathering at the historic 3rd floor gymnasium at Broad & Vine. It was Roman's annual Veterans Day Assembly, and several Cahillite military veterans, including Al Perkolup '43, were honored by the students and the alumni. Sitting among the attendees was a tearful Diane Perkolup, Al's sister. She had no idea that Roman still remembered and honored its fallen alumni,

and later wrote to the school: "It was a very emotional experience for me and made me appreciate all the more the great sacrifices not only that the honorees made but also that of their families. I also wanted to mention how impressed I was with the students. Every student I met was polite, respectful, thoughtful and generous in their offers to help us navigate the endless corridors and stairs to help us get to our several destinations. In every one, I saw young men of character who are destined to be successful adults, each one a reflection of the principles instilled in them at Roman."

You may ask yourself, how did such a young man of Al's age, possess an understanding about life that he had the courage to make the choices that he did – both as a teenager and as an adult? Certainly, at home, his own father's commitment to be of service to his community as a police detective played a part in the transference of values and concerns to protect others-in-need. But there can be no doubt that Catholic High played a pivotal role as well. As Al's sister so eloquently wrote, Al was "a reflection of the principles instilled in (him) at Roman."

A decade before Thomas Merton, Trappist monk, shared his thesis with the world: "No Man is an Island," Al Perkolup was already there. He was very familiar with the Second Commandment. He got it. He lived it. He died for it.

"Fides et Scientia" and "Semper Fi," Al.

DETENTION BLUES

By: Dennis Nicastro '82

I'm running late...wrong bus. Just running now; past the homeless woman and her dog. (*You stupid, simple, soulless freshman*). The bus dropped me off at 19th & Wood; I must make it to Broad & Vine streets quickly. If I'm late, the one demerit penalty will give me ten demerits, suspension, and a week's detention. Passing Lou's bar and then past the Athletic Club. Finally at school, but the main doors are already locked (*DARN!*) and both bells have rung (*Double DARN!*) I'm late for Mr. Bell's social studies class. He may be lenient and allow me to come into the class late; no such luck. I'm heading to the S.P.S. office for a late slip to get into class. Mr. Gibson fills out a late



slip, and I head back to the classroom. Mr. Gibson doesn't immediately realize that I now have ten demerits, but I'll soon be called back to the S.P.S. office to suffer my fate.

"Take a seat gentlemen, take a seat. Plenty of seats available; no talking." Intones Father Hanlon, who will moderate this week of detention and the morose, monastic monotony of being a scribe.

Father Hanlon begins with a prayer. "St. Jude pray for us all who invoke your aid. St. Jude the oft forgotten, You shall remembered be. We hail you now in glory and have recourse to you for help, for the despairing, when hopeless seems the task and from the Heart of Jesus through you we favors ask. O St. Jude, pray that God's grace and mercy will cover my intentions. Pray for the impossible if it is God's will. Pray that I may have the grace to accept God's holy will even if it is painful and difficult for me. Amen."

"Gentlemen, discipline is a necessary virtue. The more learned a person becomes, the better should be his behavior. A man with an improper attitude toward discipline is not using his human intelligence, reason, understanding, and free will to the fullest." (*Roman Student Handbook)

"Gentlemen, you will be in this classroom for the next two hours. You will spend that time transcribing the Student Handbook, pages 20 to 40, inclusive. If you complete that assignment, please sit quietly, and read the Handbook or your New Testament. Please begin."



Father Hanlon

So it begins. I gaze around the basement classroom at the other forlorn souls. The basement classroom is musty and dusty; the windows are open as cars hiss by on Vine Street, exhaust spewing, horns honking, radios blaring. "Hey Jude," "Highway To Hell," and "Funky Town." Students air drumming, heads bopping, feet shuffling. No early Septa charter today. A walk to City Hall and a wasted token. No Bugs Bunny, Dancin' On Air, WYSP, or WMMR this afternoon. No Tastykakes, Iced Tea, billiards at Frank's, or hanging on Hagner. Just writing; school fees, guidance services, student personnel services, and detention regulations.

As I write, I reflect... (*Hey Buddy, you're gonna wind up in Byberry or worse; you're on the road to hell and self-destruction, sitting in this fungi, funky smelling basement classroom after school*). I say a silent prayer to St. Jude.

I never spent another week in detention.

THE CAHILL CLUB



On Thursday, May 16, the Cahill Club celebrated its annual Thomas E. Cahill Awards Dinner. At the dinner, the Cahill Club Committee honored the following:

Matthew Gardner '83 – Thomas E. Cahill Award

John "Jack" Maxwell '62 – Distinguished Alumni Award

Gene Burns '81 – James McSherry '40 Award for Service

Dennis DiGiovanni '02 – Teacher of the Year

Matthew Bera '24 – 2024 Student of the Year

Michael Gedraitis '23 – 2023 Student of the Year

Steven Patton '08 – For Service as Previous Cahill Club President

Martin Dziura '77 – For Service as Treasurer of the EBOT

A special thanks to Chris "Gator" McCoy '94 and Kevin Wong '17, for spearheading the preparation and execution of a wonderful event. Also, thanks to all attendees, who spent the evening celebrating the excellent work and service of this year's Honorees.



Kevin Wong '17, Chris "Gator" McCoy '94, Jack Maxwell '62, Matt Gardner '83, Gene Burns '81, Matt Bera '24, Mike Gedraitis '23, Mr. Dennis DiGiovanni '02, and President John Prendergast '08



Matt Bera '24, Mike Gedraitis '23, and Mr. Dennis DiGiovanni '02



Gene Burns '81



Zach Demusz '18 and Mr. Joey Travaline '11



Mr. Dennis DiGiovanni '02 and his sons

ALUMNI RESOURCES

Board of Trustees Nominations

Do you want to be more active and represent your class as an alumni trustee? Please contact one of the following:
Joe Mangano '84 (josephmangano@msn.com) or
Mike Pelone '77 (mjpelone@yahoo.com).

Reunions



On Friday, December 1, 30 members of the classes of 1998 and 2008 held a successful reunion at Wissahickon Brewing Company. The celebration marked the 25 years and 15 years, respectively, since these gentlemen graduated from Broad & Vine. Thanks for your continued loyalty and support of RCHS!



The Class of 2009 celebrated their 15th reunion on Saturday, April 27 at Buffalo Billiards in Old City. Thanks for your continued loyalty and support of RCHS!

If you are interested in helping organize your reunion or need more information, contact Tim Storino '13, Reunion Committee, at timothystorino@gmail.com, or Richard Zambino, Director of Development & Alumni Relations, at rzambino@romancatholichs.com.

Scholarships

Gratitude to all benefactors and scholarship providers for empowering the educational journey of our Catholic High students. We extend heartfelt appreciation to the Roman community for their unwavering philanthropic support, exemplifying generosity and compassion. Your contributions pave the way for our Cahillites to excel and thrive.

For those inspired to make a difference, consider joining our mission by establishing scholarship funds. Together, we can shape futures and nurture aspirations.

For inquiries about initiating scholarship programs, please contact the Office of Mission Advancement at (215) 627-5487 x203. Let's continue uplifting and empowering our youth through the gift of education. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to our student success!

Update your Information

Change in address? New email address? Have a classmate or fellow Cahillite who isn't in contact with Roman? Scan the QR code or visit RomanCatholicHS.com/Update to easily update any contact information.



EVENTS

Join us for these upcoming events:

Class of 2024 Graduation

On Friday, June 7, Roman will celebrate the Class of 2024 with its annual Baccalaureate Mass and Commencement Exercises at the Cathedral-Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul. The procession starts at 1:45 pm, followed by the ceremony at 2:00 pm. Watch live at <https://vimeo.com/event/2185235/embed>. Congratulations, graduates! Welcome to the Alumni Association!

2024 Day of Gratitude

Friday, June 14, 2024, on Roman's social platforms

P/O Gary Skerski Memorial Golf Outing

Saturday, June 1, 2024 at Byrne Golf Course

John Hoban '59 Memorial Golf Outing

Monday, June 3, 2024 at Jeffersonville Golf Club

2024 Day at the Bay

Saturday, August 10, 2024 at Seaport Pier in North Wildwood, NJ from 2 pm–7 pm. Cost is \$30 per person in advance, \$40 at the door. Includes beer specials, food, and music. Must be 21 to attend. For more information visit: www.RomanCatholicHS.com/DayAtTheBay

Class of 1974, 50th Reunion

Friday, October 18, 2024, at Sandy Run Country Club in Oreland, PA. The event begins at 6 pm. Tickets are \$75. Please contact Mike Zakrzewski '74 at mjzakdo@gmail.com, or Bob Cahill '74 at b.cahill10@verizon.net with any questions.

Class of 1979, 45th Reunion

Saturday, October 5, 2024, at Throwbaxx Bar and Grill in Philadelphia, PA. The event begins at 3 pm. Please contact Chris Gibbons '79 at gibbonscg@aol.com with any questions.

Class of 1964, 60th Reunion

Friday, October 11, 2024 tentatively planned for at Miller's Ale House in Plymouth Meeting, PA. The event begins at 1 pm. Please advise us as soon as possible if you "hope to attend," or "definitely will not attend," via email to dreichert@vtssales.com, or text 610-574-5811, or voice mail to 610-277-0783, or US Postal Mail to: 1517 Plymouth Blvd., Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462.

Classes of 1990 and 2000 Multi-Year Reunion

The Classes of 1990 and 2000 are planning a combination reunion in the Spring of 2025. Contact Bob Danford '90, at RDanfordJr@gmail.com, or Patrick Danford '00, at DanfordPatrick@gmail.com, if you would like to get involved or just want to say, "Hi, I'll be there!"

For more details and updates on all of these events please visit www.RomanCatholicHS.com and follow Roman's social media platforms. You may also contact Richard Zambino, Director of Development & Alumni Relations, at rzambino@romancatholichs.com with questions.

Spring Open House

Roman Catholic's Admissions Team hosted close to 60 prospective students and their families from across the Delaware Valley for the annual Spring Open House on April 7. The students and their families were able to hear from various members of the RCHS Administration and Staff while touring the historic halls of Catholic High. While learning about the various academic and extracurricular opportunities available at Broad & Vine, parents and students alike were able to see firsthand that Roman Catholic is a choice destination and a culture like no other!



Know of a young man in 7th or 8th grade that may be interested in attending RCHS?

For information on private tours and the admissions process, please contact:

Mr. Zach Demusz '18

Director of Admissions & Communication

(215) 627-1270 ext. 110, ZDemusz@RomanCatholicHS.com



Please scan the QR code for information on all upcoming Admissions events.

Visitation Day

On Thursday, March 21, 2024, Roman Catholic welcomed over 190 prospective 7th graders from 62 different schools across the Archdiocese and beyond to Broad & Vine for Universal 7th Grade Visitation Day. The students were able to meet our leadership team, faculty, and staff while experiencing what it is like to be a Cahillite for the day. At the end of their visit, the students showed off their Roman Pride and team spirit by taking part in the Purple vs. Gold Games led by members of our Back-to-Back Catholic League Champion Basketball Team!



Roman Basketball Wins its 34th PCL Championship!



Roman Catholic's basketball team faced off against Archbishop Ryan in the 2024 PCL Championship. With both teams hungry for victory, the game unfolded as a battle of wills, each possession fraught with tension.

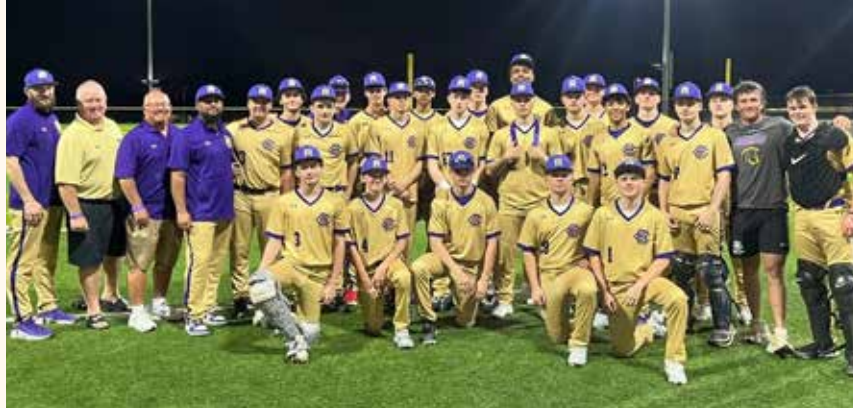
As the clock wound down in the final moments, Ryan's sixth man, Ryan Everett, sunk a clutch shot to put Ryan ahead by one point with seconds remaining. It would come down to one last possession, as Roman inbounded with the score 45-44 in favor of Ryan. Senior standout, Kabe Goss, a pillar of leadership for the Cahillites, found himself in the spotlight. With nerves of steel, he rose to the occasion, sinking a clutch jumper just as the buzzer sounded.

The Palestra erupted in jubilation as Roman secured their 34th PCL title in program history, defending their crown with unwavering determination. It was a testament to the team's resilience, unity, and indomitable will taught to them by Head Coach Chris McNesby '95.

Roman's Road to the 2024 PCL Championship

Quarterfinals	Roman 71, O'Hara 32
Semifinals	Roman 65, Judge 57
Final	Roman 46, Ryan 45





Roman Baseball Basks in the Sunshine

A BIG THANKS to Roman Catholic Alums Jim "Turtle" Marino '75, Kevin Flaherty '84 and Rob Flaherty '84, and Rob Buckley '20 who came out to support the Roman Baseball squad who traveled south, from Broad & Vine, for Spring Training.



Navigating the Course

We congratulate one of our own as Senior Jayden Goodson recently received the Herb Lusk First Tee Academic Scholarship! The First Tee of Greater Philadelphia has provided golfers from all over the city the chance to learn and play the game they love. Jayden played a pivotal role in our golf team winning the Spring PCL in 2021, and has served as a mentor and leader on the team ever since. Congratulations, Jayden!

Cahillites Running Wild

Congratulations to Senior Julian Ward who has been selected to represent the United States in the World U20 Relay Championships on May 3,4,5 in Nassau, Bahamas! Julian is 3-time first team All-Catholic, 2-time league Championship meet MVP, 2-time All-State selection and current High School All-American. Julian will be running the 4x100 Relay, and the mixed 4x400 relay for the United States team. Congratulations, Julian!



Charting New Waters at La Salle University

Senior Nicholas Ricci signed his National Letter of Intent to Row for La Salle University next year! Nicholas has been rowing for all four years at Roman Catholic and we all want to wish him the best of luck in the next four years at La Salle!



Spiking Expectations and Setting New Standards

Congratulations to Coach Michael Bulong in his first season leading the Roman Volleyball team on a recent win streak over PCL opponents.

On Friday, April 12, the Alumni Association's SHOF Committee hosted its 32nd Annual Sports Hall of Fame Induction and Awards Dinner at the FOP in Northeast Philadelphia. It was great night for all – 303 people were in attendance!



From left to right: Jim Murphy, Bob Campbell '97, Andrew Jaskel '08, Brian Glynn '91, Chas Esposito '82, Mike Moore '92, Chris Gibbons '79 (accepting for Joseph Fogarty 1902), JeWhan Edwards Jr. (accepting for JeWhan Edwards '08)

The following new inductees received this tremendous honor:

Joe Fogarty 1902 – Basketball
 Dan Cahill '59 – Soccer
 Charles Esposito '82 – Football
 Brian Glynn '91 – Soccer
 Mike Moore '92 – Baseball
 Bob Campbell '97 – Football
 James Murphy III – Football Coach
 JeWhan Edwards '08 – Football
 Andrew Jaskel '08 – Golf
 Will Fuller '13 – Football

In addition, the following individuals were honored with Special Awards:

Bob Koch –
 John Gillen '33 Memorial Inter League Award
 The Taylor Family –
 Joseph "Goldie" Graham '33
 Memorial Award for Loyalty
 Pat Mundy '75 –
 John Hoban '35 Memorial Service Award
 Kevin Weber '74 –
 William "Speedy"
 Morris '60 Community Award
 Edmund Arquitola '24 –
 Patrick E. Ward '66
 Memorial Scholar-Athlete Award



SHOF Chairman Gary Citrone with Edmund Arquitola '24



SHOF Chairman Gary Citrone with JeWhan Jr. and Venessa Edwards

Please help us find future Hall of Fame nominees

To nominate a former RCHS alumnus, athletic team, or coach for consideration for induction into the RCHS Sports Hall of Fame, please send a short summary of their athletic accomplishments while at Roman to:

Gary Citrone '76, RCHS SHOF Chairman – gjcitrone76@gmail.com



8th Annual Day of Giving

Day of Giving is about the power of the Roman community, and together we demonstrated the collective impact which resulted in more donors and more dollars raised than ever before. Because of generous donors like you, we raised funds that will directly impact our students.

Day of Giving 2024 was a huge success. We raised \$170,297 from 865 donors! Alumni, faculty & staff, parents, students, and friends came together and demonstrated the power of community. Thank you again to everyone for giving and spreading the word about this important day!

This year, we had several in-person events to bring alumni and friends together in community.

During the morning of Roman's 8th Annual Day of Giving, the sons of Cahill honored the legacy of the school's founder, Thomas E. Cahill. Staff, alumni, and students in attendance paid tribute to the first donor of Catholic High, whose philanthropy continues to inspire Cahillites to give back to the school that shaped so many.

Thanks to Roman alum, Tim Gill, Jr '04, for hosting a memorable Day of Giving happy hour with the Cahillite community. Your presence and generosity made a difference – together, we've made an impact.

Thank you for being part of our day and showing that together, we #IMPACTROMAN

Day of Gratitude

Also, please mark your calendar for Friday, June 14, the 5th Annual Day of Gratitude, held in honor of all our donors.

#IMPACTROMAN

Thank you for your support of Catholic High!



Liam Riehman-Murphy '26

**Pat Mundy '75, Erik Snyderman '24,
Liam Riehman-Murphy '26, Chris Rodriguez '25,
Arcell Magee '26, and Nicholas Conway '26**



**Gene Burns '81, Kevin Wong '17, Chuck Taylor '12,
Tim Gill, Jr. '04, and Adam Gault '08**



**John Prendergast '08, Jim Schneider,
Steve Paul '83, and Jerry Vetter '75**

Thank You from Broad & Vine!

Thank you for your donations! Because of you, I am able to pursue a great education at this amazing school. I am very grateful and very appreciative to all who donated on our eighth annual Day of Giving.

Louis Gaddy '25

I wanted to thank you for donating on our eighth annual Day of Giving! Thanks to your contributions, I am able to receive a comprehensive education and participate in several student clubs and organizations.

Zamir Newsuan '25

Dear Roman community, Thank you for your donations. Your kindness and generosity supports my education and all the opportunities that await me in my future. My time at Broad & Vine has been full of enriching experiences and great friendships.

Christian Palmer '25

EITC & OSTC Tax Credit Program

What is the tax credit?

The state tax credit program allows both businesses and individuals who pay Pennsylvania taxes to redirect their tax dollars to Roman Catholic High School in the form of tuition assistance and financial aid rather than the state government.

How does it work?

There is a simple, one-page form that you can fill out. From there, Roman and an accredited scholarship organization will handle the rest. Once you are approved, you will submit your contribution to your assigned scholarship organization and earmark your gift for Roman Catholic High School. The scholarship organization will provide you a K1 in February which you will use when filing your taxes to process the credit or refund.

How much is the tax credit?

For a one-year commitment, you will receive a tax credit for 75% of your contribution. For a two-year commitment, you will receive a tax credit for 90% of your contribution.

What is the money used for?

All monies allocated to Roman Catholic High School are used to provide tuition assistance to families so that students can have a quality Catholic education.

EITC/OSTC are tremendous tools for Pennsylvania businesses and individual taxpayers to provide much needed tuition assistance to families who want to send their sons to Roman instead of these dollars being used at Harrisburg's discretion.

Domenic Colasante '06 EITC Donor Profile

Neighborhood (where you grew up and currently live):

I grew up in South Philadelphia. Presently, I live in West Grove, PA in Chester County.

Parish and Grade School: St. Monica

College/University and Studies: Undergraduate Business Degree at Widener University and MBA at Villanova. I am currently on the Board of Trustees at Widener University.

What were you involved in during your time at Roman?

Band with the one and only Mr. John Stroud!

What have you been up to since you graduated from Roman?

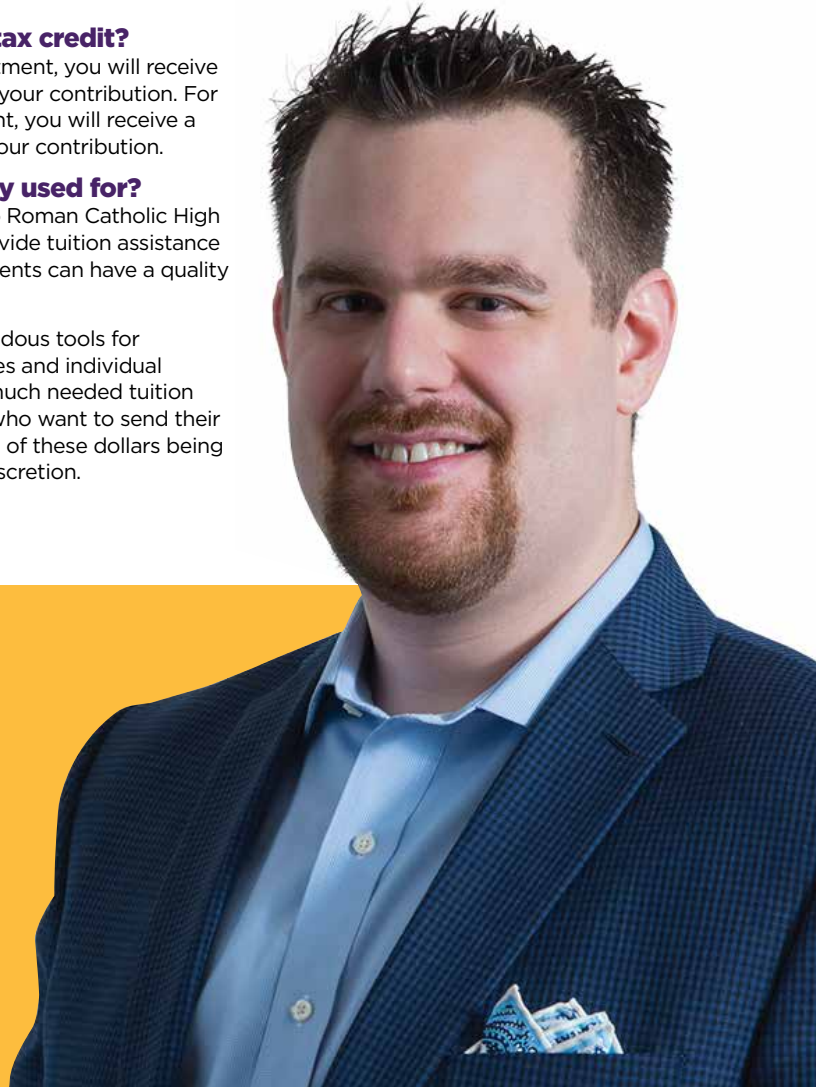
I went into the marketing industry for tech companies. I was a CMO for a leading management consulting business and then co-founded 2X where I am CEO. 2X is one of the fastest-growing marketing services companies in the world with nearly 1,000 employees.

What do you feel makes Roman unique?

Its diverse student population. Growing up in South Philadelphia, you live the bulk of your life in a 5-block radius. You interact with people just like you and most inner-city high schools are just like that. Due to its location in Center City Philadelphia, Roman draws on a student population from all over the Philadelphia region – and brings students from all walks of life. Getting to really know peers from other backgrounds changes your worldview – it gives an understanding for the diverse city and country we live in, and the importance of embracing those differences.

Why do you give back to Roman?

Roman is a special place and gave so much to me. Growing up in an urban single-mother household without a father, Roman was one of my primary sources of positive male influence in my life. It was an



incredibly impactful education, and also where I learned that I wanted to go into the marketing profession (via a business class – thanks Mr. Shanahan!). There was also a point in my Roman education where my family was unable to pay my tuition, and I was likely going to drop out. A financial aid program at Roman, just like the scholarship program that is possible with the EITC program, kept me enrolled. I'm forever grateful for that.

Why did you decide to participate in the EITC Program?

It is an excellent way to make an impact with PA state tax dollars that you are frankly going to pay anyway. The ability to have a near 10:1 impact on a gift to support deserving students at Roman is a cause worth acting on.

What would you say to someone who is thinking about participating in the EITC program?

Just ask your tax accountant and/or your financial advisor about it! A lot of programs like this might seem complicated, but I was surprised to learn how well-known the program is in the advisor community and how many of my advisors' other clients were already using it. The process was not difficult, and knowing that it was a very common vehicle for making a gift to a K-12 school made it an easy decision.

What is your vision for the future of Roman?

An educational institution that continues to turn boys into young men of character – and men that become leaders. A place that continues to build a lifetime love of learning and teaches the skills to excel in whatever path a Roman grad wants to achieve.



For information about providing tuition assistance through these programs, please contact:
Richard Zambino, Jr.
Director of Development & Alumni Relations
Roman Catholic High School
RZambino@RomanCatholicHS.com
(215) 627-5487, Ext. 203

From Broad & Vine to Main Street U.S.A: Supporting Roman Businesses

As you may be aware, many alumni, friends, and family members of Roman are running their own businesses. To support them, the Office of Mission Advancement has created a business listing on Roman's website. This list details those businesses owned and operated by members of the Roman family. To view the listing, visit: www.RomanCatholicHS.com/Biz. The Roman community is strongly encouraged to patronize these fine establishments run by fellow Cahillites.

Also, if you are an alumnus or have any affiliation with Roman (parent, grandparent, donor, relative, etc.) and own a local business (restaurant, bar, caterer, service firm) please feel free to add your organization's information to the listing. www.RomanCatholicHS.com/AddBiz



Roman Business Spotlight: Vietnam Restaurant & Vietnam Café Philadelphia, PA



The Lai family was among the first wave of Vietnamese refugees who came to Philadelphia to build a life on hard work and entrepreneurship fueled by lemongrass-scented feasts. The founding couple, Nhu Lai and Thuyen Luu, fled Vietnam by boat with their eight children after being stripped of their sandal factory in 1978. After nearly a year in a Malaysian refugee camp, they arrived in Philadelphia in 1979, began with a grocery store, then quickly transitioned to a modest restaurant space in Chinatown in 1984.

By 2000, after handing the business over to their son, Benny, moving to a larger multi-floor space next door, and undergoing a decor makeover evoking French colonial accents, the family secured Vietnam's place as one of Philly's favorite date-night destinations for classic Vietnamese cuisine. From barbecue platters laden with grilled meats, stuffed grape leaves, and Philly's crispiest spring rolls, to nu'óc chấm-splashed vermicelli bowls, fragrant noodle soups, lemongrass stir-fries, and clay pots sizzling with caramelized pork, Vietnam's kitchen has remained a model of consistency for decades.

A second branch in West Philadelphia, Vietnam Café, has become a neighborhood favorite there, too, while the family's neighboring market, Fu Wah, has become a standard-bearer for its bánh mì.

The James Beard Foundation announced the recipients of its 2024 America's Classics Award on February 29, 2024 and Vietnam Restaurant in Chinatown is honored to be a recipient of that award.

Jonathan Lai, Roman Catholic High School Class of 2014, helps with the family business in his spare time.



Vietnam Restaurant Chinatown

221 North 11th St.
Phila., PA 19107

(215) 592-1163

Visit us online: eatatvietnam.com

Vietnam Café University City

816 South 47th St.
Phila., PA 19143

(215) 729-0260



1950s

Congratulations to **Edward Knappenberger '59** for his dedicated service to the United States Air Force during the Vietnam era, from 1959–1964 and 1970–1980. Your commitment to our nation's security is truly commendable. Thank you for your years of service, Ed!



1960s

Years ago, when a young man felt the call to the Priesthood, he was able to complete his Junior and Senior Years of High School at Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary and then proceed to the Seminary College & Graduate School of Theology.

So, young men came from various schools throughout the Archdiocese such as Cardinal Dougherty, Father Judge, Northeast Catholic, St. Joseph's Prep, and West Catholic. However, when they completed the two years of High School at Saint Charles, they were granted a High School Diploma from Roman Catholic High School.

Well, **Archbishop Edward J. Adams**, was one such student. He entered Saint Joseph's Prep in the Fall of 1958 and two years later entered Saint Charles Seminary to complete his high school courses, which he did in the Spring of 1962. However, for some reason, he never received his High School Diploma from Roman Catholic.

That oversight was finally corrected. Following the Confirmation Liturgy at Saint Helena's in Blue Bell, Principal Mr. John Curry and Rector Emeritus, **Father Joseph W. Bongard '77**, bestowed the Diploma of Roman Catholic High School on Archbishop Adams and formally accepted him as a member of the RCHS Class of 1962.

Welcome **Archbishop Adams** as the "oldest" newest graduate of Catholic High!



Daniel W. Rose '66, has written a book about his career as an IRS Special Agent titled, *Chased How I Caught Tax Cheats*. It is an inside account of never-before-told IRS investigations and the agents who took down sophisticated criminals. As the agents pursue the evidence, the reader is taken along as a witness: interviewing targets, following money trails to offshore bank accounts, arresting wild suspects, and trying the cases in the courtroom where twelve jurors decide the defendants' fate. The reader is also brought undercover into the world of money laundering and drugs, where the lines between good and evil sometimes become blurry.

Danny's book is available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

1970

Mark Gibbons '76 attended the opening night of Charles Fuller's '56, *A Soldier's Play* when it debuted in 1983 at the Walnut Street Theater. Over 40 years later, Mark contacted the Office of Mission Advancement and shared his Playbill from that evening, signed by none other than Charles Fuller. Thanks to Mark for preserving this powerful piece of Roman history!

1980s

The daughter of **Steve Paul '83**, Mary Ellen, married Nick D'Orazio in December of 2023.



One of Philadelphia's newest criminal court judges, **Judge Elvin Ross '89**. Elvin was the first black student body president. Pictured in a personalized Roman Cardigan in front of his courtroom.

He now serves as a Judge on the Court of Common Pleas, criminal division. Elvin is also a member of Roman's Board of

Directors. He was previously the managing partner of the Legis Group, Legal Counsel to the Philadelphia Democratic Party, and an active pro bono attorney.



2000s

Father Eric Banecker '07 welcomed Archbishop Nelson Perez to Saint Francis de Sales Parish in West Philadelphia in December 2023, celebrating the successful completion of the decades long church facade restoration project.

2010s

Tom Stevens '16 and his wife Josie are the proud parents of a baby boy, Jonas, born on November 23, 2023. The Stevens live in the Los Angeles area.

Kevin Wong '17 was inducted into the Union League on November 20, 2023. His sponsors were fellow Roman alums Elvin Ross III, Esq. '89 and Michael H. Finnegan '75.

2020s

Since graduating from Roman Catholic High School in 2023, **Mike Gedraitis** has been on an incredible journey of growth and achievement. He is excited to share some updates with you all. Michael secured a full scholarship to La Salle University, where he's been actively involved in various extracurricular activities. As a Freshman Class Senator, a member of the Honors Council, and a host and producer for La Salle TV News, Mike has had the opportunity to engage deeply in campus life and contribute to the university community.

Building upon the foundation laid at Roman, where Mike honed skills in public speaking and leadership, he recently embarked on a new role as an Ambassador College Explorer. In this position, Mike has the privilege of showcasing La Salle University to prospective families, sharing his passion for education and community. Mike is deeply grateful to Roman for providing him with the tools, opportunities, and support to become the person he is today.

Mike thanks the alumni for supporting his journey!

Congratulations to **Turner Coomes '24** on being recognized by the Italian Society of Philadelphia for achieving excellence in the Italian Program and the study of the Italian language.

Next year, Turner is off to the United States Naval Academy to serve our country!

IN MEMORIAM

Please remember and keep in your prayers our brothers and family members who have been called from this world to eternal life (October 21, 2023–May 18, 2024)

To submit a name for this list, e-mail: Alumni@RomanCatholicHS.com or call 215-627-5487 ext. 200

Alumni

Patrick Cioci '50
Joseph Coylar '50
Louis Pell '52
Thomas F. Robinson '52
Francis Woelfel '52
Richard Brennan '53
Robert Grudowski '53
Raymond Ferretti '56
John Hopkins '56
Gerald Kelly '56
Carmen Gaspero '57
John McColgan '57
Robert Charters '58
John Gretzula '58
John (Sean) McNeilis '58
Robert Nentwig '58
Charles Egrich '59
Vincent J. Bransfield '60
Edward Gudera '60
Joseph Rumsey '60
Athanasius Shopa '60
James Carr '62
Frank Opuszynski '64
Joseph McKeever '65
Mark Syrnick '66
William Moffitt '67
John Bonis '68
Francis Hannigan '68
Dale Trout '69
Tyree Blocker '70
Leo Kindon '70
Timothy Gannon '71



Robert Hillanbrand '71
Frank Marchiano '71
William Coonelly '72
Gregory Dawson '72
James DeWees '73
David M. Stewart '80
Joseph DeLuca '82
Daniel Stafford '95
Kevin Berk '13

Family & Friends

Sr. Antoinette Medori Former Faculty
Rosemary Carney Sister of Jim Cute '68
Ann Colantonio Mother in law of Brian Conroy '91
Deborah Cupchak Wife of Barry Cupchak '69
Margaret Mary Dunlap Mother of Kenneth Dunlap '84 and the late Robert '78
Mary Louise Gratzinger Wife of Joseph '56, mother of Joseph '81 and Jay '93, grandmom of Joseph '17, Jake '17, Gavin '22, and Bill Martelon '20
George Kulger Father of Patrick Mundy '75 and grandfather of Vincent Mundy '05
Dylan Leskusky Grandson of Richard Dicciani '64
Christine McKeever Wife of Tom '67
Donna Pantalone Mother of Anthony '19
Jean Marie Smith Mother of James '04
Mary Stranieri Mother of Joseph '72

MEMORIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Alumni and friends of RCHS have the opportunity to memorialize a classmate or family loved one. Here are a few of the ways you can memorialize a friend and help Roman's Ministry program at the same time. For more information, please email Daniel Joyce, Vice President of Mission Advancement, at djoyce@romancatholichs.com.

Seasonal Religious Banners	\$450
Classroom Crucifix (Howard Center)	\$325
Altar Linens	\$100
Seasonal Reflection Books	\$125
Kairos Retreat Sponsorship	\$175
Sanctuary Candles	\$125
Altar Candles	\$75
March for Life Sponsorship	\$75





Roman Catholic High School
301 N. Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Calling all Roman and Hallahan Alumni!

Please join us for:

DAY AT THE BAY

THE PARTY WITH A PURPOSE!

Saturday, August 10, 2024
from 2:00pm–7:00pm at the

SEAPORT PIER

in North Wildwood, NJ

Cost is \$30 per person in advance,
\$40 at the door. Includes beer specials,
food and music. Must be 21 to attend

www.RomanCatholicHS.com/DayAtTheBay



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