

ACADEMY OF OUR LADY OF MERCY

# Lauralton Hall



HALLMARKS  
SQUARED

V1.2024



### *Coming Home...*

*If you ask any LH alumna, their Lauralton connection is one that lasts a lifetime. We are delighted at the number of alumnae who returned home this year for the many celebrations, volunteer opportunities, and events held on campus, including the Springtime in Paris Gala & Auction which took place on Saturday, April 20. Pictured L-R are Gala attendees Amanda Rodrigues '10, Jennifer Giaimo Katz '92, P'23, Nikki Woel Tirone '09, Sheila O'Connor O'Donnell '85, P'17, and Karen Pasacretra Sessler '85, P'26*

# EXPRESSING MY GRATITUDE

## A LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

When my children were little, we used to have a bedtime routine where I asked them to think about one thing that they were grateful for that day. I believe that it set them up for a night of sweet dreams. As I complete my first year at Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, Lauralton Hall, I find myself making my own gratitude list.

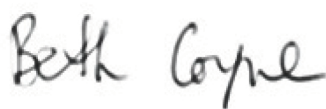
I am grateful for the students, faculty, administration, and staff I have interacted with every day throughout the year. The genuine care they have for one another is inspirational. I truly enjoy coming to work each day. I am grateful to the parents who have volunteered this year through our McAuley Parents Association, creating many fun-filled community events that have brought us together and raised funds for our school. Parents have also served as ambassadors, making calls, and attending accepted student days, to speak with prospective parents – thank you for your help!

Throughout the year I received notes, emails, calls, and visits from dozens of alumnae and alumnae parents. I am grateful for the opportunity to hear their stories of how Lauralton Hall transformed their lives or the lives of their daughters and how they continue to connect with their Lauralton sisters. Alumnae and alumnae parents serve on our Board of Trustees, and I am grateful to them for sharing their expertise to steward Lauralton deeper into its second century as we get ready to celebrate our 120th birthday next year.

For every single donor who chose to make a gift this year, I am grateful. Every donation matters to a school of our size, and it is clear to me that some of you are making Lauralton your philanthropic priority. Your donations allow our team to provide the resources that our girls and their teachers deserve – thank you! I also thank the entire community for helping to increase our word-of-mouth marketing to help increase enrollment! It is working.

Finally, I thank the Strategic Planning Task Force and the Board for supporting the completion of our new Strategic Plan, Building Lauralton's Future with Mercy, which was shared earlier this spring by email, and which you can find on our school website. I am proud and grateful to lead this community to achieve our shared goals of preparing and empowering young women to bring our Mercy values to a vulnerable world.

With gratitude,



Beth Coyne



Photo Credit: Shades Shutters Photography

*Lauralton's Board Chair Patrick Lagrange P'19, Head of School Beth Coyne, and Board Member Lisa Shea P'14, P'21 were all smiles at this year's Springtime in Paris Auction & Gala; this successful event raised \$115,000 for scholarships! Thank you to everyone who donated an auction item, which included luxury seats at sporting events, theater tickets, vacation homes, designer handbags, beauty services, and so much more.*

## Our Momentum Is Building

As another school year comes to a close, we extend our gratitude to every parent, alumna, friend, and volunteer for making this one of exceptional successes. We thank those who have volunteered, donated, used matching funds, and those who wish to donate now. You are making a difference and moving us toward our goals. Your commitment will ensure the continuation of educational opportunities and scholarships that will enhance the experience for current and future Lauralton Hall students.

When we give our teachers the support they need, they can give our students their very best—to educate, inspire, and help students reach their full potential. Our McAuley Parents Association (MPA), led by Chairs Dana Colangelo P'23, P'25 and Cate Steczkowski P'24, P'27, recently expressed their gratitude by coordinating Teacher Appreciation Week in celebration of our faculty's continued commitment to educating our students in the Mercy tradition. The accolades that poured in for our faculty were heart-warming. Another example of how a Lauralton education is “worth every penny”.



Photo Credit: Shades Shutters Photography

We are grateful for the increase in community involvement and generosity in support of our fundraising, starting with our fall kick-off of the Annual Fund and Welcome Reception for our new Head of School, Beth Coyne. Homecoming & Reunion Weekend, paired with the Athletic Hall of Fame Ceremony, brought alumnae back home to celebrate the outstanding achievements of our accomplished alumnae athletes and coaches while gathering with classmates to celebrate milestone reunions. A robust Giving Tuesday Day was a chance to boast that “Lauralton Girls are Smart Cookies.” Parents, students & faculty arrived on campus that day greeted with fresh chocolate chip cookies and information about the importance of giving. Our signature events, Christmas in the Mansion and Irish Night, continued the tradition of Mercy hospitality and good cheer as we hosted hundreds on our historic campus. A sincere Merci beaucoup to those who supported the Springtime in Paris Gala and bid in-person, and from afar, on amazing auction items donated by friends of Lauralton. The Brick



Photo Credit: Shades Shutters Photography

Campaign was re-ignited at this event, and many took advantage of the opportunity to leave their mark on the Athletic Field Promenade with an engraved paver. A record \$115,000 was raised for scholarships. Participating in The Great Give, a 36-hour, online giving event to support local non-profits, showed us a significant increase in donors who kept us on the Leadership Board's Top 100, and brought us another nearly \$10,000 in funds.

As we look toward getting ready to Celebrate 120 years of empowering young women, we know that with the continued support and enthusiasm of our Lauralton family, the future for Lauralton is bright. While the mission and spirit remain the same as when Mother Mary Augustine Claven opened the doors in 1905, the face of the School has evolved into so much more than we could have ever imagined. The momentum is building - **thanks to you!**



Photo Credit: Shades Shutters Photography

*To make your contribution to the Lauralton Hall Annual Fund, please use the enclosed envelope, visit our website to make a gift, use Venmo (@LauraltonHall), or call the Advancement Office 203-877-2876, ext. 129.*

## Checking In with Your Class Agents

In the previous edition of Hallmarks Squared, we shared that we are actively recruiting to fill spots in our Class Agent roster. Class Agents serve as leaders within the LH alumnae community, keeping their classmates informed about the happenings at Lauralton, and encouraging them to support all things Lauralton. This role supports our strategic plan goal:

*Cultivating Community—and a Commitment to Service—for Life by deepening the legacy of enduring relationships and traditions within the Lauralton Hall community. Over the past year, we have worked fervently to create opportunities for our alumnae to reconnect with LH, including Homecoming, Christmas in the Mansion, the Recent Alumnae Panel, Reunions on the Road (DC), Career Day, alumnae author events, and the Gala. We are still in the planning stages of an Alumnae Networking Group and additional Reunions on the Road in New York and Boston. We look forward to sharing more details soon.*

Now is the time for you to check in with your Class Agents! Learn more about plans for Homecoming-Reunion Weekend this September or join the planning committee for an upcoming event. If you are interested in helping us work on plans for our 120th birthday, please let us know.

Become a Class Agent! For more information, email [alumnaerelations@lauraltonhall.org](mailto:alumnaerelations@lauraltonhall.org).



*Class Agent Sue Brannelly Martin '79 is making calls and sending emails, reaching out to the Class of 1979 to make plans for Homecoming-Reunion Weekend when they will celebrate their 40th reunion!*

## Reunions on the Road Are Making a Comeback!



We are bringing Lauralton's spirit and camaraderie to YOU with our Reunions on the Road! As you may have seen on our social media channels, Lauralton held one of these alumnae gatherings in Washington, DC in February. Whether you are a recent graduate or walked the halls decades ago, this is a chance to reconnect with fellow alumnae in your local area. Deirdre Walsh '96, who attended the event with LH classmate and friend Summer Menchero '96, shared: "It was great to reconnect with other alumnae at the Reunion on the Road event in DC, a wonderful opportunity to maintain those LH bonds. The Lauralton experience is incomparable to any other and we are excited about all that Lauralton will do for generations to come." In the spirit Catherine McAuley's ministry of hospitality, we shared some light bits and an evening filled with laughter, reminiscing, and networking.

It is more than a reunion; it is an opportunity to weave new memories while celebrating the ones that made our time at Lauralton truly unforgettable. "Our experience at Lauralton prepared us to face college, and eventually the world. More than that, it was the foundation of a lifelong friendship, one that has seen us through life's highs and lows." Deirdre continues, "We met on our first day of freshman year in Mrs. Napolitano's class, and for over thirty years, we've shared hundreds of laughs, tears, and milestones together." We hope you will join us for an upcoming Reunion on the Road where you will rekindle old friendships, make new connections, and celebrate our shared legacy. We are finalizing plans for Reunions on the Road in New York and Boston. If you would like to host one of these alumnae gatherings in your hometown, please let us know by visiting [www.lauraltonhall.org/alumnae/events/host](http://www.lauraltonhall.org/alumnae/events/host).



*Deirdre Walsh '96 and Summer Menchero '96 enjoy catching up with Science Faculty member Theresa Napolitano P'11, P'13, (pictured in center) whenever they are in town.*

## Lauralton Ladies Share Their Light

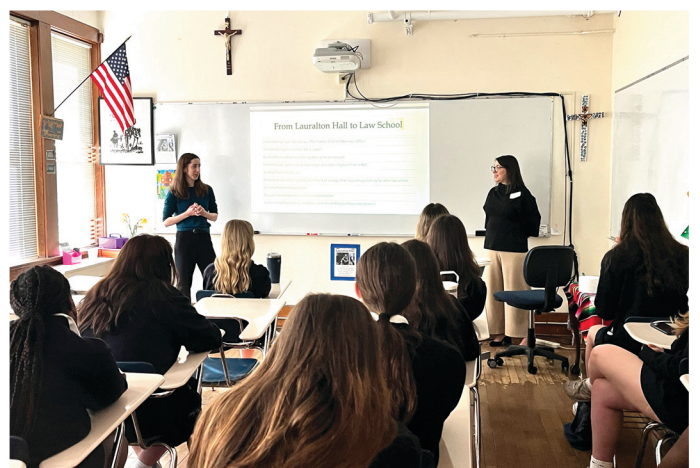
The last several months offered several opportunities for us to welcome back our esteemed alumnae! Their return to their alma mater, filled with laughter, stories, and invaluable advice, was a beautiful bridge between generations of students. It's not every day that our current students have the chance to interact face-to-face with those who have walked these halls before them, faced similar challenges, and achieved remarkable things in diverse fields. The experiences shared, from triumphs to trials, served as both inspiration and guidance, reminding us of all the enduring strength and support of our community. A huge thank you to our alumnae for making the time to come back and share your journeys. Your stories are not just your own but a beacon for those who follow. Here's to more such gatherings that bring us closer and keep the legacy of our institution alive and thriving!

On January 4, we welcomed a dozen recent Lauralton graduates as part of a panel discussion about Life After Lauralton. These young women shared stories about their college experience, offered sage advice about the college application process, and reminisced about their favorite Lauralton memories. Our current students learned the importance of sharing their light after Lauralton in their new communities and were told when they sit down to write their first college paper to just "Lauralton" it! We are thinking that "Just Lauralton It" would make a great slogan on a t-shirt like the "Just Do It" slogan for a particular sports company!

Monday, April 15 was simply Tax Day for some, but for over 50 alumnae and alumnae parents it was a chance to return to campus for Career Day to present "A Day in the Life" of their respective professions to our students. From female entrepreneurs to corporate CEOs, health care professionals to engineers, plus a radio host, detective, epidemiologist, and many more, students chose from a range of careers to learn about.

This signature program utilizes the time and talent of our own alumnae to introduce students to the demands of the working world. Students are exposed to opportunities to shadow a professional or establish opportunities for possible summer internships, and in some cases, to use the LH power of women as a springboard for career options.

All of our Lauralton Ladies, past and present, find immediate and intrinsic value in the day. With the return of alumnae to campus, current students see how important it is to give back, sharing time and talents in the Mercy tradition. For alumnae, it is a chance to reconnect with Lauralton and the other alumnae who are here for the day. It is a wonderful tradition to have Lauralton alumnae come back to campus to inspire young minds to go forth in the world and make positive change. For more information about upcoming alumnae events, please visit [www.lauraltonhall.org/alumnae](http://www.lauraltonhall.org/alumnae).



*Attorneys Jane Becker '07 and Renee Jarusinsky '91 share their journey from Lauralton to Law School as presenters during Career Day on Monday, April 15.*

Please keep us up-to-date on your latest moves at:  
[LAURALTONHALL.ORG/MYINFO](http://LAURALTONHALL.ORG/MYINFO)

For a list of Lauralton loved ones who have passed away in the last year, please visit:  
[LAURALTONHALL.ORG/INMEMORIAM](http://LAURALTONHALL.ORG/INMEMORIAM)

# Overwhelmed with Gratitude and Pride

*An Interview with the New Director of Enrollment, Mrs. Yvonne Fosse-Previs '90, P'27*



Photo Credit: Maya Williams '24

## Tell us about yourself and the transition from Counseling to Enrollment?

From my very first visit to Lauralton Hall in 1985, I've been mesmerized by the beauty of our campus. Each day feels like a fresh discovery, with the sunlight streaming through the windows, the intricate woodwork, and the vibrant energy of our community. It truly is a privilege to work in such an inspiring environment.

As a former School and College Counselor, I've had the joy of delving deep into our curriculum and extra-curricular offerings, all while staying connected with our incredible alumnae network. This wealth of experience has uniquely prepared me to guide prospective students through their journey, drawing upon real-life success stories to inspire and empower them.

## How has your experience helped to prepare you for this new role?

One thing I've learned is that there's simply no substitute for experiencing Lauralton firsthand. Our campus radiates warmth and enthusiasm, fueled by the passion of our faculty and the inclusivity of our student body. It's a place where every voice is heard, every perspective valued. And let's not forget the unstoppable force of our girls, they're the heartbeat of our community! Girl Power – we run on it!!

## Can you share some of the exciting things/events that have taken place this admissions season?

This admissions season has been nothing short of exhilarating, with an abundance of talented prospective students gracing our events. Their passion and accomplishments are truly inspiring, and I take great joy in showcasing how their unique gifts can develop under our tutelage.

## Can you share a favorite moment so far?

Reflecting on favorite moments? Well, where do I start? Enrolling my own daughter to carry on the Lauralton legacy ranks high among them. And reconnecting with fellow alumnae, some of whom were once my students and are now seeking the best for their own daughters – it's a full-circle moment, The Circle of Mercy to be exact!

Having said that, seeing the campus through the eyes of a first timer? The enthusiasm is contagious!

## How is the Class of 2028 shaping up? What are your goals for the Class of 2028?

As for the Class of 2028, I can confidently say they're shaping up to be one of our finest classes yet! Their enthusiasm and potential are palpable, and our goals for them are lofty – to nurture their growth, foster their talents, and empower them to embrace their futures with confidence and resilience.

Thank you for allowing me to share in the excitement of Lauralton's journey. May Sister Janice May shine her guiding light upon our endeavors. I aspire to echo her warmth and hospitality, ensuring that prospective students are greeted with the same open arms that once embraced me. Here's to the bright horizons ahead for us all!

## Celebrating the Class of 2024

For the last four years, the young women who make up the Class of 2024 have worked to embrace and celebrate each member of their class while forging their own path at Lauralton.

Despite the uncertainty of their 2020 freshman year, this group of young women have not only survived but have thrived. They embraced flexibility when distance learning was implemented, learning greater responsibility without the in-person presence of their peers, and mastered conditioning practices along with new guidelines for sports. After all, a Lauralton lady learns to adapt.

While there may have been struggles, there were also triumphs. These young women have navigated through these last four years with grit and grace. Now as seniors, adorned in berry-colored polos, they have managed to cultivate their own identities while staying true to the mission of the school.

Just as the 118 classes before them, these young women hold so much promise. And while they are creating a legacy of their own, they are also joining a powerful alumnae network. Graysen Byrnes shares: *"a neuroscientist spoke to us at Career Day, and as she remarked about her time at Lauralton, she concluded with this, "here at Lauralton, you are joining a sisterhood."* Not only was I given the opportunity to create my own legacy here at Lauralton, but I also joined a long-standing history of incredible women who have walked these halls."

So, as we send these young women out into the world, we pray they always feel that Lauralton is their home away from home, returning often for events, reunions, and more. *"My beautiful story started at Lauralton, but it also doesn't end after Lauralton because of the incredible opportunities and skills I have been given here."*



Meet Our Newest Class Agents!  
We are proud to present to you the Class of 2024  
Class Agents (L-R): Aida Ehlers, Katherine Kelly,  
Molly Ciuci, and Daphne Flores.



Congratulations to the Class of 2024 who received acceptances to 142 colleges and universities and will matriculate to 49 different campuses in the Fall.

**New this Year!** In addition to our fantastic enrichment camps, Summer@Lauralton will be offering sports camps for rising 5th through 9th-grade girls led by Lauralton's coaches and players. Register now: [lauraltonhall.org/summer](http://lauraltonhall.org/summer)



**Lauralton Hall**  
SUMMER SPORTS CAMP FOR GIRLS

## SAVE THE DATES

July 10, 2024

LH Concert on the Lawn: Alpaca Gnomes

September 21-22, 2024

Homecoming-Reunion Weekend

October 19, 2024

Science Olympics Open House

October 25-26, 2024

Fall Musical

December 7, 2024

Christmas in the Mansion Preview Party

December 8, 2024

Christmas in the Mansion

December 10, 2024

Christmas in Song

January 9, 2025

Recent Alumnae Panel & Reception

March 1, 2025

Irish Night

April 26, 2025

Spring Auction & Gala



Photo Credit: Mary Grund P24, P26

## Lauralton Hall

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### LH Athletics: More Than Tough Competitors

Mercy values don't stay on the sidelines. Lauralton's athletes are tough competitors and good sports. Athletic Director Chris Lindwall states, "I am so blessed to be a part of something so special here at Lauralton Hall. I could not be prouder of the growth in such short time since starting here in November."

With the winter sports season, we began the transition to a family atmosphere among the teams, reinforcing the idea that we are all in this together for one common goal: success both in the classroom and on the field/ court. The spring sports teams have taken it to a new level with many qualifying for the State Tournament already and significant improvements in their win-loss record compared to last year.

Chris continues, "But what I am most proud of is the success our ladies are having in the classroom by managing their time and focusing on their schoolwork while also participating in an incredibly competitive athletic atmosphere. Only great things are happening here at Lauralton that I hope more young ladies would like to be a part of!"



Mercy  
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Lauralton Hall is a sponsored ministry of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas and is a member of Mercy Education.