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A Legacy of Community and Growth: Cardinal Newman 1995-1999

Cardinal Newman High School is long known for its high academic standard, strong athletic programs, and emphasis on community and building character. From 1995 to 1999 Cardinal Newman experienced an immense amount of growth as it transitioned to a co-educational environment. During these years, students made lifelong friendships and navigated their coming to adulthood in an environment untouched by social media or cell phones. Ursuline, the neighboring all girls school to Newman, shared a close relationship with the boys at Newman, and played an important role in shaping the social community at the time. The stories and reflections of Cardinal Newman's alumni from 1995-1999 reveal how the interactions and lessons from Newman and Ursuline prepared them for life beyond graduation. Many students from both schools participated in sports, and other extracurricular activities, while also getting collegiately prepped and growing in their values of faith and discipline. As we look back at this influential period, we can clearly see that Cardinal Newman was vital to shaping its graduates' lives in school, and for the many years beyond. Cardinal Newman, since its founding in 1964 has grown a community that believes in something bigger than oneself, highlighting the importance of faith, as well as relationships that can last a lifetime. This essay will highlight the school's atmosphere, memorable events, trends, and the lasting impact the Cardinal Newman community has on all our lives.

During 1995 there was a strong sense of discipline developed at Newman in order to guide the students to good behavior and a strong sense of faith. There was also a lack of social

media or any online communication which led to a stronger sense of camaraderie between the two schools and its students. They took classes together junior and senior year and every day were able to interact under the covered eating area, also referred to as Jakes Place. However, the students were inevitably affected by various external forces that helped shape their perspectives and experiences during their time in highschool such as prominent social issues and national events.

Peer pressure, body image concerns, and mental health struggles emerged as significant challenges for many students. These issues were elevated by the toll that personal and communal losses had on the community. The tragic death of a fellow student in a car accident shed light on these emotions. This death had a lasting impact on the community, and helped shape their perspective on life. The 1990s also marked a period of high-profile national and global events. The Columbine High School shooting sent a shockwave to schools all over the country, affecting the way students and educators approached safety issues. Moreover, there were several other events mentioned by the alumni such as Desert Storm, the Monica Lewinsky scandal, the Y2K scare, and the lead up to 9/11 that flushed uncertainty over many students. Although the students' information was limited by the pre-internet/social media age, these events still shaped their opinions on politics, social issues, and global conflicts. This is the most prominent difference between students of 1999 and now, the lack of social media. With limited access to digital communication and the pressures of social media standards, life was simpler. The alumni stated that they could just be kids. They were able to benefit from more face-to-face interactions and a stronger sense of privacy that students today lack.

The 1990's and 2000's brought more than just a shift in culture, they sparked a wave of popular trends that swept through high schools across the country, including Newman. For

Newman, the most overwhelming trends included baggy jeans, platform shoes, flannel shirts, and voluminous blown out hair styles. The yearbook photos from this period show women with full, curly hair-piled high with layers. While the boys typically had sleek shorter haircuts, far from what is seen in high school today. One fashion trend that won't be going out of style any time soon is the baggy jeans, they were the biggest hit of the 1990's and have returned as a trend in recent years. Musically, this period was marked by icons like Eminnem, Shania Twain, and many classic rock legends. On Campus, theater was a central part of student life, with many kids performing in plays, and joining singing classes. This extracurricular activity has faded somewhat in Newman today. However, one aspect of the school's culture that has remained constant is the performing arts. There were many dancers, and modern band members, very similar to now. Another significant change during this time was Newman's dress code. Students transitioned from the uniform of khakis and a white polo to a more relaxed policy allowing jeans and any color Newman polo. This time marked the beginning of a new dress code, one that continues to shape our policies now.

Cardinal Newman highlights the idea of building a community, and as stated by the alumni in their interviews, this was largely based around shared experiences within the school. Anything that Newman did was done with pride. The athletics took pride in their teams and their contributions to the community. The leadership each year from 1999-1995 put on amazing rallies and dances, most notably, homecoming. These experiences are what shaped Newman's community and allowed students to build such strong lasting relationships. There were many events, similar to now, that helped bring the community together. The father son picnic and mother daughter dinner were important to not only the parents, but the students as well, highlighting the importance of family and shared values. At school events, the two student

bodies worked together to get the gym packed and the spirit unmatched. In 1995 Cardinal Newman won the Rose City Men's Basketball tournament in a three time overtime which was a huge win in the athletic community. The school experiences of this time is what brought the students together and created the many lasting traditions within the Newman community to this day.

Cardinal Newman not only supported a high academic rigor, but it also prepared students for life beyond high school. The years from 1995 to 1999 were transformative in numerous ways, leaving a profound and lasting imprint on the students who attended during that time. This period, marked by the transition from a time without cell phones to the rise of new social pressures, helped shape a generation that would carry these lessons forward. The sense of community created by Newman provides students with lasting relationships, opportunities, and a strong sense of faith. As stated by the alumni, and still true now, Cardinal Newman fosters confidence, humility, and a strong sense of personal identity. This was an influential time for Newman figuring out the ins and outs of teenagers facing societal pressures. This period had a lasting impact on our community today and the sense of pride we have in our academics, athletics, faith, and community. A tight-knit, supportive community is a rare gift, but those fortunate enough to attend Cardinal Newman High School are guaranteed to experience the warmth of kindness, the strength of faith, and the lasting bonds that come with being part of such a special place.