

# The Abbey Message

## Subiaco Abbey

Vol. 81, No. 1

Summer 2025

### Inside

2

### Abbot's Message

5

### Abbey Journal

Summer Notes

8

### Development

Making Adjustments

11

### Academy

News From The Hill

14

### Alumni

Alumni News

### Contact Information

Abbey: (479) 934-1001

Academy: (479) 934-1000

Coury House: (479) 934-1290

[www.subi.org](http://www.subi.org)

[www.subiacoacademy.us](http://www.subiacoacademy.us)

## Thank You for Your Service

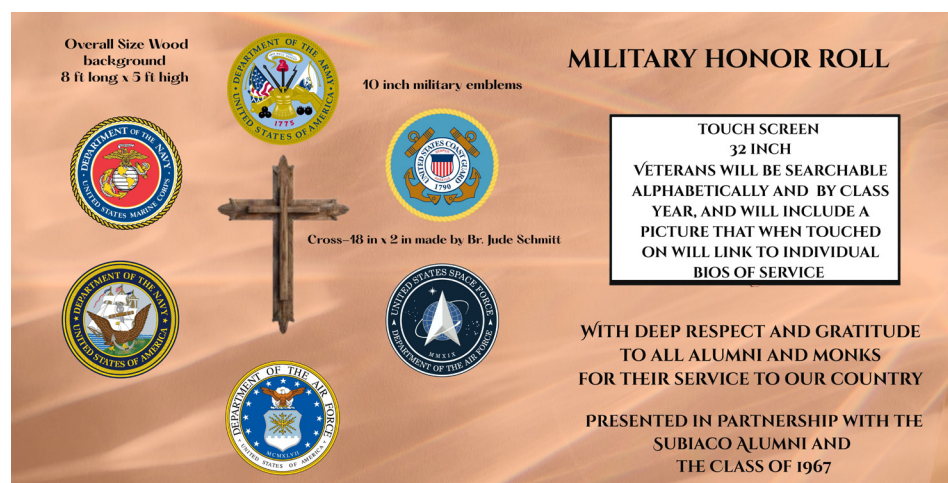
*by Tom Canada '09, Alumni Relations Director*

It seems I have used this phrase thousands of times. For Catholics, our gratitude should be more than just five words. Our gratitude should extend into the actions of our daily lives.

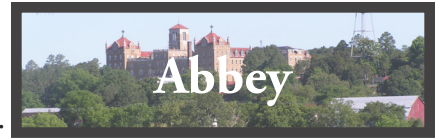
Gratitude can be defined as “a moral virtue, annexed to justice, which disposes one to remembrance and appreciation of kindness received and prompting to return it in any suitable manner.”

Now, most of us may never be able to reciprocate the same level of sacrifice that our veterans have made, but we can at least reciprocate at some level. Gratitude is more than just saying “thank you”. It’s a deep appreciation for the good things in our lives, both big and small. It’s about recognizing that we are the recipients of kindness, support, and opportunities, and acknowledging the role others play in our well-being and honoring those who have selflessly sacrificed to make sure others may enjoy their lives and their freedoms.

Honoring our veterans is a profound way to acknowledge those sacrifices. This special group of people have dedicated their lives to protecting the freedoms and security that most of us, unfortunately, sometimes take for granted. Their service extends beyond the battlefield, encompassing a commitment to duty, honor, and country.



*Design of the digital display honoring all Subiaco Abbey monk and Subiaco Alumni veterans to be placed in Alumni Hall of Subiaco Academy. This display will be continually updated as information of our veterans becomes available.*



There are many ways to honor veterans. Attending memorial services and parades is a powerful way to show respect and to remember those who have fallen. Supporting organizations that provide resources and assistance to veterans, such as healthcare, housing, and job training, is crucial for ensuring their well-being after service.

On a personal level, we can honor veterans by listening to their stories, expressing our gratitude for their service, and simply acknowledging their presence. It's important to recognize that veterans may carry physical and emotional wounds from their time in service and offering a supportive and understanding ear can make a significant difference in their lives.

This is the way we at Subiaco Abbey and Academy have chosen to honor our Alumni and Monastic service to our country. One of the things I wanted to do when I became the Alumni Relations Director was to find some way to honor my Trojan brothers that made sacrifices, both great and small, in service to our country.

Subiaco Academy has been the catalyst for many military careers throughout its history. We have a deep connection with the service academies, with many of our alumni finishing in the top of their respective classes. Those who enlist also tend to be standouts. After hearing and reading many of the stories of our alumni veterans, I'm left awestruck and inspired. It's these inspiring stories that first compelled us to create a page on our alumni website so that their names and stories may be heard by everyone.

It wasn't long after we began compiling this Wall of Honor that we concluded that we wanted to do more than just a digital Wall of Honor. Earlier this year, the planning process began on a physical Veteran's Memorial. The idea behind this was not only to honor our Veteran brothers, but also to inspire the next generation with the stories of service, sacrifice, duty, and honor in hopes that one day they too will rise up and answer whatever calling they have on their lives, whether that be service to their country, service to the Church, or servant leadership in their future families and communities.

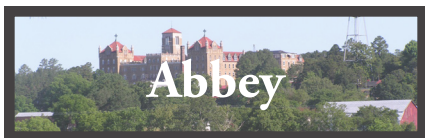
Gratitude is the cornerstone of honoring veterans. It's about recognizing their sacrifices, acknowledging their courage, and ensuring they receive the support and respect they deserve. By actively expressing our appreciation, we not only pay tribute to their service, but also reinforce the values of duty, honor, and selflessness that veterans represent. Let our gratitude be more than words; let it be a commitment to support and uplift those who have given so much for our freedom.



## Summer Sessions

Frs. Reginald, Raban, and Cassian are spending a good part of the summer in Spanish immersion in Guatemala. Prayer is our primary ministry as monks with our secondary apostolates at Subiaco of Education and Hospitality. Hospitality means not only operating our Retreat Center to sponsor and host retreats by welcoming guests, but it also means assisting our brother priests in the dioceses for weekend parish Mass assistance. By assisting them, they may take vacations, undertake continuing education, or visit their families for special occasions. Our monastic priests need to be bi-lingual to serve all the parishes, so our three monks set off to Priorato San José, Xela, Guatemala, (a mission of Marmion Abbey in Chicago) for an immersion program. Fr. Raban first, followed shortly by Fr. Cassian, and then Fr. Reginald for a return to Guatemala for a second immersion to strengthen his Spanish. Pray for our brothers as we commit even stronger to our Hospitality apostolate.





## PRO PATRIA MORI!

Dear Friends,

How many of you knew Brother Walter Sproull? Francis Sproull was born in Pennsylvania in 1916, and he loved baseball. He loved the sport so much that he played for three years (1939–1941) in minor league baseball as an outfielder for the St. Louis Browns. Sadly, a head injury cut his career short, and his life took a different direction. He later joined our monastic community, where he professed as a monk on December 8, 1948, taking the name Walter. He served our community by working on the abbey farm, assisting in the abbey laundry, serving as custodian of Alumni Hall for many years, and finally ending his assignments as the abbey refectorian until the 1980s. While he quietly served our community and the students of the Academy, few people knew of his incredible service to our country.

You see, this quiet and unassuming monk was a veteran who joined the U.S. Army in 1942 (see photo). He served primarily in Europe, where he was severely wounded in battle and earned the Purple Heart. He carried the effects of his war wounds and his baseball injury throughout his life. Last year, as I was reading his and other life stories of monks who served our country, I knew we had to find a way to ensure their service would never be forgotten.

As you see from this edition, we have begun a major project to honor the veterans of our Academy and our Abbey. Br. Joseph Heath and Fr. Reginald have been working to ensure that we have military markers for every monk in our cemetery who served our country. Tom Canada is now leading an effort with a dedicated team of alumni to provide a place to honor the countless Trojans who have served and who presently serve our nation.

In our Catholic tradition, we hold deep respect for those who have dedicated themselves to service and sacrifice. Veterans, who have risked their lives in defense of our freedoms, deserve special recognition and gratitude. As Benedictine monks, we share a unique perspective on honoring veterans, rooted in the timeless wisdom of the Rule of St. Benedict. In Chapter 53 of the Rule, St. Benedict writes: “Let all guests be received as Christ himself, for he will say: I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” Veterans, many of whom carry both visible and invisible scars of their service, like Br. Walter, are guests in our midst who deserve our care, respect, and hospitality.

The Latin phrase “Pro patria mori” (to die for one’s country) reminds us of the solemn commitment that veterans make. Many have faced hardship and even death in defense of their fellow citizens. In their courage, we find an echo of Christ’s self-sacrifice: “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.” Veterans’ experiences often include both suffering and triumph. Like monks, they understand discipline, obedience, and the demands of a life lived in quiet unassuming service to a higher ideal. In welcoming veterans as guests, we recognize a shared spirituality of sacrifice and community.

So, please join me in remembering and honoring those like the unassuming Brother Walter Sproull, who dedicated themselves to God and country, in both word and deed. In our monasteries and parishes, may the bells toll not only for prayer but as a reminder of the debt we owe to those who have fought for peace. And may our hearts, guided by Benedict’s Rule and the example of our veterans like Brother Walter, be ever more open to the call of Christ, the Prince of Peace.

+Abbot Elijah Owens



*The Abbey Message*  
is a composite quarterly  
publication of Subiaco  
Abbey.

*Publisher*  
Abbot Elijah Owens,  
OSB

*Editor in Chief*  
Fr. Jerome Kodell, OSB

Send changes of address  
and comments to:  
*The Abbey Message*  
Subiaco Abbey  
405 North Subiaco  
Avenue  
Subiaco, AR 72865-  
9220

Subiaco’s Website  
[www.subi.org](http://www.subi.org)

*The Abbey Message*  
E-mail  
[frjerome@subi.org](mailto:frjerome@subi.org)

# Dearest Sister Wendy

by Fr. Jerome Kodell

The most compelling spiritual book I have read since *The Letters of Flannery O'Connor* (*The Habit of Being*) is a surprising exchange of letters between a cloistered nun in England and a lay Catholic writer and publisher in the U.S. The book is entitled *Dearest Sister Wendy*, referring to Sister Wendy Beckett, and was compiled after her death in 2018 by her correspondent, author Robert Ellsberg.

Both of these persons have a rich history in the Church and strong backgrounds in Catholic thought and spiritual practice. Sister Wendy spent her early years as a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur in South Africa before becoming a hermit living in a trailer on the grounds of Quidenham Carmelite Monastery in England in 1970. In the 1990s she was discovered by the BBC to be a specialist in the history of art and became a sensation as a TV commentator in art galleries (series still available on YouTube). Later she withdrew to her hermitage and eventually to a room in the monastery as her health declined.

Robert Ellsberg had been an associate of Dorothy Day and the editor of *The Catholic Worker* in the early 1970s, and later became a spiritual writer and the publisher of Orbis Books, a ministry of Maryknoll. He became a specialist on the lives of the saints, authoring *The Saints' Guide to Happiness* and other best-selling books, and continues to bring attention to little known saintly figures in his daily contribution in *Give Us This Day*, a prayer resource from Liturgical Press.

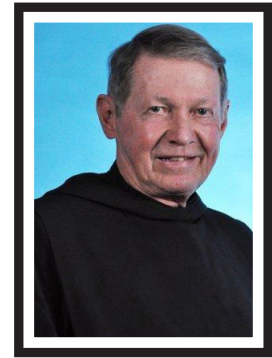
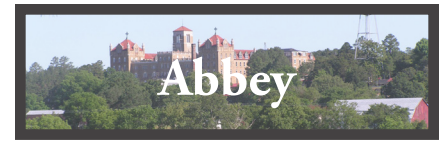
Though Ellsberg had been aware

of Sister Wendy from her TV series and from having published her books on icons at Orbis, and she had read his work on saints, the two were no more than professional correspondents until an Easter card went astray in 2016, and the search created an email dialogue which continued almost daily for the next two years until Sister Wendy's death.

Why did this book so impress me that I am reading it a third time? Here we have two thoroughly committed Catholic Christians from completely different but authentic vocations, both highly educated and acutely aware of the sad realities in Church and world, dialoguing about the spiritual search as their lives unfold daily. There is no dodging or sugarcoating of problems, and these are approached in the light of faith with no whining.

A third party who became essential to the dialogue was Sister Lesley Lockwood of the local Carmelite community, assigned by her prioress to help Sister Wendy for several hours a day with her correspondence. She would bring a laptop and record what Wendy had to say. Before this, Sister Wendy's atrocious handwriting made communication almost impossible; and her publishing correspondence had required the combined efforts of the Orbis staff to achieve an understanding of 75%.

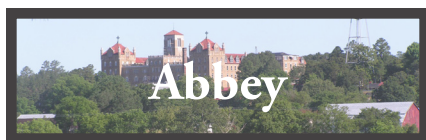
It is remarkable that the two have so much in common in spite of their quite different lifestyles. He is married and divorced, the father of three grown daughters, constantly on the go with writing, speaking, publishing, and lately appointed to the commission working on the cause of Dorothy



Day. She lived continually in her monastery room, going out only once a day to the chapel for Mass. It is their commitment to a life of prayer and the search for God which unites them, though his practice is to carve out a particular time during the day, while hers was to spend the hours of the night, from about 11:00 until time for Mass, in silent prayer union.

People might think that their intense spiritual pursuit would make them unaware or insensitive to the daily life challenges confronting people all over the world. But they do not dodge these issues or speak about them as detached onlookers. They are fighting the good fight with eyes wide open, and sharing the struggle with people like that gives us courage and hope.





# The Peace of Christ

by Br. Sebastian Richey



I remember when the Sign of Peace used to mean more. At least, it felt like it did. When I was growing up, I can still picture it: the priest would walk down from the altar and move through the pews, shaking hands not just with the person on the end, but three or four families deep. People would cross aisles; lean over pews to reach someone they hadn't seen in a while. They offered peace like they meant it. And when Mass ended, nobody rushed to their car. We stood outside, talking and laughing. It was Church not just in the building, but in the life around it.

Then came COVID. And like everything else, that changed. The Sign of Peace became a nod. A slight bow. No hands. No words. The pews were spaced out, choirs silenced. After Mass, people just left. Slowly, something faded.

This is my small way of saying I miss it, and we need it back. Not just the handshake, but the connection. The real act of saying to another person, "Peace be with you," and meaning it.

Sometimes we only offer peace to people we know, as if it's private. But

it's not supposed to stay in our comfort zone. It's supposed to stretch us even to the person we've had a hard time forgiving.

When I first arrived at St. John's and joined the monastic community for Mass, I was struck by how the monks exchanged peace: a hand-to-elbow embrace. It was quiet, simple, and at first unfamiliar, but over time, it felt sincere. It was a powerful way of saying, "You're not alone. I see you." Physical gestures, ground us in connection. So do kind words.

When someone offers you peace with sincerity, you feel it. It's not just science; it's Scripture. One of the first things Jesus says after the resurrection is, "Peace be with you." Then He says it again. Then He sends them out. It wasn't just a greeting. It was a gift. It was a mission (John 20:19-21). Paul echoes this in his letters. In 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, he talks about the Eucharist as a sharing in the body of Christ. Not just each person getting a piece, but the whole community being one body together. You can't share in that and still hold a grudge. You can't claim to receive Christ while refusing to forgive your neighbor.

That's why Paul is so strong in 11:27-29 when he says that if you eat and drink without recognizing the body, you bring judgment on yourself. The body isn't just the bread. It's the people in the pews. That's what the Sign of Peace is about. A pause that says: make peace. Even if it's small. Even if it's hard. It might not solve everything. But it could be a start.

The Church reemphasized this after Vatican II. The liturgy isn't just vertical; it's horizontal. Pope Francis called us to be "artisans of peace," not just wishing for peace, but making it.

So, what if we started again? What if the Sign of Peace became more than a routine? What if we looked

someone in the eye, shook a hand, and really meant it?

We don't need to turn Mass into a meet-and-greet, but we do need to remember that the Eucharist isn't just something we receive, it's something we become. We can't become the Body of Christ without the people sitting around us.

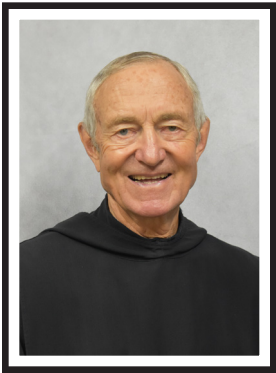
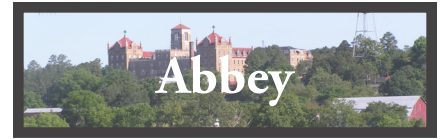
I miss the old days of chatting after Mass. I miss the warmth. But I don't think it's gone for good. I think we can rebuild it, maybe not all at once. Maybe just one person at a time. Maybe it starts with four simple words: *Peace be with you.*



**That's  
what the  
Sign of  
Peace is  
about.  
A pause  
that says:  
make  
peace .**

# Abbey Journal

by Fr. Mark Stengel



Immediately after the hubbub of the Alumni Reunion, during which the Abbey takes on a carnival atmosphere, we monks take a deep breath, a Sunday afternoon nap, and then shift gears for a week of quiet spiritual work—our annual monastic retreat. Monday is “Jubilee Day,” when those monks celebrating major anniversaries are honored with a special Mass, a happy hour, a festive dinner (with wine), Vespers, and then the first conference of the retreat. A retreatmaster who can maintain his composure in the face of many nodding heads has made it over the highest hurdle of the week.

Fr. William Orbih spoke to us on the topic of “Detachment.” He started us off by having all read together the twelve stanzas of his poem “The Way of Detachment.” The second stanza is this: If you want to see, / Take a step outside. You cannot see the picture / When you’re inside the frame. It seems that he “saw the picture” and detached from his plan, announcing that he would finish the first conference in the morning. A wise and detached man!

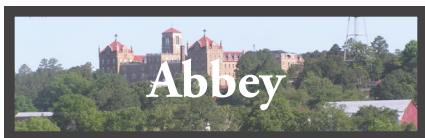
May was a wet month. Another term that has entered meteorologist jargon is “atmospheric river.” It seems that such a river set up over Arkansas during May, leading to nightly storms. One or two passed just to our north, another stayed just to the south, but mostly we were in midstream of the river. The tornado siren got a workout; there was tree damage and minor structural damage several times, and ten inches of rain fell for the month. A mid-month “river” produced a very heavy monsoon rain just after daybreak, with small hail, and then, as the rain eased, the storm struck a parting shot—a lightning strike to the stone chimney above the old powerhouse. Monks had just sat down to breakfast when the bolt hit the tower, only about forty yards away. Stones were blasted loose from the top of the chimney, and rained down on the metal roof above the maintenance office, where the crew was gathered for a morning briefing. The chimney seems mostly intact but is now (early June) being checked for structural damage. The lightning strike “fried” some electrical distribution panels near the base of the chimney.

As the saying goes, this cloud did have a silver lining. In between storms, many trees—about 80 in all—were being planted around campus. The 2024 Memorial Day tornado had taken out a lot of trees or mangled them, and now, a year later, replacement trees are in place. The silver lining is that nature provided steady watering for these young trees which need special care to get settled in. Our gardeners—mainly Frs. Jerome and Richard, and Br. Adrian, have not had to do any watering, but did have to use boots to get into the garden. Fr. Richard says his habanero pepper plants are looking “puny”—probably too much water.

The central part of a massive old oak near the greenhouse came crashing down in another storm. A crew clearing the road found an angry swarm of honey bees in the hollow trunk, and they let the debris alone. The bees have calmed down and Abbot Elijah, our beekeeper, may try to transfer the colony to a hive, if he can find the queen. And the common misconception is that monks lead quiet lives!! At least we are detached, and laugh about our troubles.

The retreat is doing us good already. Another completed project is the new prayer garden, dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe, in the center of the mall bounded by Alumni Hall, St. Benedict Church, and Centenary Hall. The white image of our Lady, La Reina de





las Americas, stands in the center of a flagstone plaza, with roses and spiraling topiary shrubs. She replaces the former three-tiered fountain in front of church, dubbed “Chris’s folly”, and the more recent “elephant mound”, which could have enclosed a buried elephant. Someone asked “Why Our Lady of Guadalupe?” Three reasons: First, Mary revealed herself to Juan Diego as a

loving mother, and she is given to all of us as a mother, not just to John of the gospel, or to Juan of Tepeyac. Second, she presented herself to Juan as a pregnant woman, “encinta,” and so she is a special patroness for the protection of unborn human life. Thirdly, our Hispanic brothers and sisters are contributing greatly to the fervor and vitality of our faith, and we gringos need to join forces with them.



## Faithful Servant



Father Brendan Miller, OSB, age 80, monk of Subiaco Abbey, died peacefully May 6, 2025. He had been a professed monk for 30 years and a priest for 41 years. He had resided in the Abbey Health Center the last 4 years.

Born in Glendale, CA, Brendan Miller received his elementary education at St. Peter & Paul School in Wilmington, CA, and attended San Pedro High School in Glendale, graduating with the Class of 1964. He attended Los Angeles College, receiving an Associate Degree in Business Administration and worked in retail management. Later, Brendan returned to college and received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology, with a minor in Sociology, from California State University. Brendan served as Youth Director for St. Margaret Mary Alacoque Parish of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. During his youth ministry, he was greatly influenced and inspired by the lives of priests of the LA Archdiocese

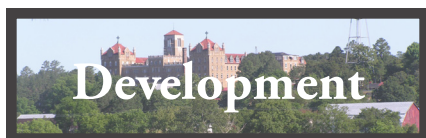
and began discerning a vocation to religious life. Brendan joined the community of Conventual Franciscans in Torrance, CA, during which time he discerned a calling to the priesthood. He was assigned by the Franciscans to attend Sacred Heart School of Theology in Wisconsin in 1980. Brendan Miller was ordained to the priesthood at St. Joseph's Church, Madison, TN, on November 3, 1983.

Father Brendan experienced a deepening desire for more focus on spirituality and a life of contemplative prayer. “I discovered I needed a direct experience of community, of sharing my life and rubbing shoulders with others in a closer way.”

After several visits to Subiaco, Father Brendan was granted permission to enter Subiaco Abbey as a postulant in September 1993. Father Brendan professed his first vows as a monk of our monastery on February 2, 1995, and made his final profession of vows on March 17, 1998. From 1995-2018, Father Brendan actively served in our Academy, Guest House, and parish ministries.

In his spare time Father Brendan enjoyed reading, primarily a variety of Catholic periodicals, mystery novels, as well as his daily spiritual readings and meditations. He enjoyed a good cup of coffee, and often mixed watching movies with a fresh bag of popcorn!





## Making Adjustments

by Linda Freeman, Director of Development Operations



If you have any love for the game of baseball, you have heard the saying of Ken Griffy, Jr—To succeed in baseball, as in life, you must make adjustments. Change is often a scary thought for most of us, so for this topic, let's consider how using the word adjustment might better describe the project ahead.

In June 2024, the newly nominated President-Elect of the Alumni Association, J.P. Koch, Class of 1994, considered what his duties would be as the incoming president of the SAA the following year. He knew full-well there were the normal responsibilities as stated in the by-laws such as meetings to conduct, events to plan, and phone calls with his brother alumni to discuss items pertaining to Subiaco Academy and the many ways that the Alumni Association continually supports this institution. What he may not have known was the “assignment” to lead a project of improvements and enhancements to the Subiaco Academy baseball field.

In the year 2000, after many years of dormancy, the baseball program for Subiaco Academy students was resurrected. A group of area alumni took on the task of

creating a space for practice and competition literally in the middle of the cow pasture! Dedicated

individuals, by the work of their own hands and at least partially funded by donations from their own pockets, set about developing what we know today as Alumni Field. Since then, basic improvements and maintenance kept the field playable. There were drainage issues to deal with, fill dirt to lay, fencing problems with the still-present cattle roaming just across the fence in the outfield, and an often-non-functioning scoreboard. But the Trojans played on, with both successes and lesson-learning seasons.

Fast forward to the year 2024 and the elevated interest in the baseball program by the students in the Academy that left many of them missing an important element of their day. That element was actual academic classroom instruction. You see, because our Alumni Field has no lights, our students were often dismissed early from class to play home games before darkness set in or to travel to other schools at extreme distances. That's a recipe for frustration for the teachers, parents and students who inevitably got behind in their schoolwork and witnessed some lowering of GPAs. Remember that the Benedictine tradition of education at Subiaco is about formation and balance. This problem was definitely tipping the scales and had to be addressed.

There's a great film called *For the Love of the Game* that portrays an individual baseball player's passion for the game at the end of his career which motivates him to persevere and give his all to leave a lasting legacy. The Subiaco Alumni Association Board of Directors

and our own Subiaco Alumni have professed their love of our Subiaco Trojans with the announcement at this year's Alumni Reunion that they would be leading the fundraising effort for adjustments and improvements to Alumni Field. With assistance from Subiaco's Development Department, the group will be raising approximately \$215,000 to add field lights, new appropriate-sized fencing, and a fully digital scoreboard with a target completion date for the 2026 baseball season at Subiaco Academy.

Right off the bat, an anonymous donor challenged the Alumni to raise \$50,000 in a 4-week span and that amount would be matched—an impressive gift that would bring the effort to the halfway mark! At the time of this article's submission, funds raised have reached and exceeded that challenge, which is a fantastic start!

Historically, the Alumni



Association's goal is not just to be financially supportive of the Academy, but to also encourage and engage alumni of all ages. Each year there are many events, get-togethers, projects and opportunities for alumni happening at the Academy and with the current students; their "little Trojan brothers." So, if you are reading this article and thinking it's all about money, I encourage you to maybe make an adjustment in your thought process and to look at this from a different perspective. It's an opportunity for your time, talents and/or treasures to make a difference! If now is not the time for you to make a gift towards this project for the baseball field improvements, maybe it's the right time for you to offer a bit of your time to help with other Alumni sponsored programs like Camp Subiaco or the annual Alumni Reunion. Maybe you would like to become a member of the Alumni Board of Directors or one of its



committees where you can join with your fellow Trojan brothers to bring about other important initiatives. Maybe you can be the voice for Subiaco Academy to a young father and mother who have a son that might be a good fit as a student here but have never heard of Subiaco Academy. Your story and testimonial could be inspiring enough to them to want to check us out. Just as a kind word often makes a person's day, an introduction to Subiaco Academy can give parents good, Catholic options for their son's education.

Whatever your situation, there are multiple ways to step up to the plate for the Subiaco Alumni Association and the Academy. There is strength in numbers, there is power in your life story, and there are multiple opportunities for you to help Subiaco be the best it's ever been. Can we count on you to join in as we bring the future of Subiaco into the light?

If you feel lead to make a gift to the Subiaco Alumni project now, please visit <https://alumni.subiacoacademy.us/g/alumni-field-baseball-improvements> or call 479-934-1001.

If you want additional information or have questions about any of the Subiaco Alumni Association initiatives, contact your Alumni Relations Director, Tom Canada at [tcanada@subi.org](mailto:tcanada@subi.org) or your Development Director of Operations at [lfreeman@subi.org](mailto:lfreeman@subi.org). We are happy to direct you to one of the committee members working closely on this project as well. Let's get brothers talking to brothers and enhance that Trojan Brotherhood that makes your bond so special! Onward Trojans!



Through their ministry of prayer and hospitality, the monks of Subiaco offer the opportunity for a peaceful and spiritual final resting place. The Subiaco Abbey Columbarium is a repository for the ashes of people who have been cremated. For more information, we invite you to contact Glenn Constantino, Procurator at:

**479-438-2653 or**  
**[gconstantino@subi.org](mailto:gconstantino@subi.org)**





## A Season of Joy and Legacy



Summer is here, and Subiaco is alive with the joyful sounds of campers across our campus. Watching the little ones run, laugh, and even stir up a little mischief warms my heart. As Psalm 127:3 reminds us, “Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from Him,” and Proverbs 17:6 tells us, “Grandchildren are the crown of the aged.” These verses remind us of the joy and responsibility we carry in raising the next generation, and in preparing for their care beyond our lifetime.

One of the most loving things we can do is ensure our children are raised by people we trust if something happens to us. Without naming legal guardians, state courts may place children in foster care and appoint someone you never would have chosen. Here’s an Easy Three-Step Process to guide you in naming permanent guardians rooted in your values and faith.

**Step One: Make a List** - List five to seven people who love your children and could serve as guardians. This could include family, friends, coworkers, or godparents. While godparents often play a spiritual role, they are not automatically legal guardians.

**Step Two: Define Your Priorities** - Identify what matters most: shared faith, location, health, marital status, etc. Don’t let finances influence your decision, parents should provide financially, typically through life insurance. The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us that children deserve a loving home, spiritual education, and protection

**Step Three: Match and Rank** - Compare your two lists and rank your top guardian choices based on alignment with your priorities. Also, consider listing a “Christian family” of supporters, godparents, relatives, parishioners, who can help guide your children’s spiritual formation.

Now put it in writing. Be sure your guardianship wishes are legally documented, typically in a Will or a Nomination of Permanent Guardian form (depending on your state). You may also create an “Instructions for Guardians” letter outlining your hopes, especially around faith and education. Don’t forget to document grandparent visitation or family involvement if that matters to you. Children belong in homes of faith, love, and security. Take this step to protect them and provide clarity for your family.

We’re excited to welcome Br. Francis Kirchner, OSB, to our Estate and Gift Planning team. Appointed by Abbot Elijah, Br. Francis joins Fr. Reginald Udouj, OSB, as a Monastic Liaison for Estate and Gift Planning. Together, we are here to help you plan with purpose and faith.

Fr. Reginald Udouj, OSB: 479-438-3901 | [frreginald@subi.org](mailto:frreginald@subi.org)

Br. Francis Kirchner, OSB: 479-438-9115 | [brfrancis@subi.org](mailto:brfrancis@subi.org)

George Lensing: 479-847-2718 | [glensing@subi.org](mailto:glensing@subi.org)

Thank you for being a cherished part of our Subiaco family.  
Your generosity makes our mission possible.

In the spirit of St. Benedict,

George M. Lensing  
Director of Estate and Gift Planning



# Exciting News from the Hill

by Dr. David W. Wright, Headmaster

For the past several months, members of the Academy academic team have been collaborating to re-engineer and ignite our academic curriculum. The result is a fusion of traditional Humanities-inspired content with 21st-century innovative STEM programming. The idea is to form young men as well-read and effective communicators while striving to be creative thinkers and complex problem-solvers.

Strong Catholic educational institutions are known for faith formation first and foremost - that remains our top priority. Secondly, using Latin and Greek language study to increase vocabulary is paramount for development of intellect and logic - key contributing factors for success in the professional world. Reading some of the Great Books and pondering philosophical thought are additional elements of a rigorous and substantial education.

Subiaco Academy is well positioned to accentuate our offerings in the STEM fields. The state-of-the-art Alumni Hall academic building will "come to life" with experiential learning laboratories for our students. Subiaco Abbey has a newly opened solar array on campus, and we supply the local area with drinking water, harvest timber, and manage land resources to name a few enterprises. Through a well-planned, multi-year rollout, we will adjust course offerings to include the opportunity to engage in innovative courses that utilize the 1,600-acre campus that is Subiaco. We have divided this half of the curriculum into 1- A&E (Agricultural and Energy units); and 2- STEPS (Scholars Thinking, Engaging, Problem Solving) that will focus on areas such as engineering, automation, and geospatial technology.

Of course, we will continue to offer our outstanding college preparatory curriculum, but I wanted to share some new opportunities coming to our vibrant campus. Below is an overview of the opportunities coming in our curriculum:

HUMANITIES (English, Fine Arts, Languages, Religious Formation, Social Studies) Taking primary responsibility for forming students in the principal



virtues: spiritual, moral, intellectual, and physical and seeking to create a culture of life-long learners

Beginning in the 2025-2026 school year—

- Addition of Introduction to Latin and Greek for all freshmen
  - Addition of Vocal Music: selections with emphasis on sacred music and chant
  - New Alignment in Theology Department:
  - Catechesis: Understanding the Basic Truths of the Catholic Faith (Middle School)
  - Sacred Scripture: Old Testament/New Testament (freshmen)
  - The Mass, the Sacraments, Prayer: Semester I (sophomores)
  - Introduction to Philosophy: Semester II (sophomores)
  - Theology of the Body: Semester II (Juniors)
  - P.A.T.H.S. (Prayer, Awareness, Teamwork, Humility, Service): a culminating experience incorporated into the senior religious formation class where seniors design and execute a significant and impactful project. This project requires students to apply knowledge and skills from various subjects while addressing real-world issues. Publicly presented in the 4th quarter of the senior year.
- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics)
- Connecting knowledge to innovation and entrepreneurial advancement and forming critical thinkers who are motivated by compassionate action to use and develop their God-given talents to serve others
- Forming ethical leaders and innovative problem solvers who care for God's Creation AND serve the least among us.



# The Class of 2025 Finishes Well

by Cheryl L. Goetz, Assistant Head of School  
for Academics and Communication

## Phase I: 2025-2026 School Year

- Agriculture & Energy
- Agricultural Science Course
- Animal Science I Course
- Future Farmers of America Organization w/Community Partnerships

- STEPS (Scholars Thinking, Engaging, and Problem-Solving)
- Graphics, Audio-Visual Technology & Strategic Media

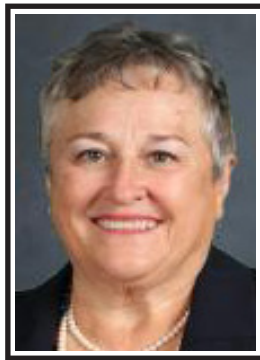
## Phase II: 2026-2027 School Year

- Agriculture & Energy
- Animal Science II

- STEPS
- Geospatial Technology, Water Resources
- Incorporated into Environmental Science course
- Healthcare Partnerships
- Available healthcare certifications

## Phase III: 2027-2028 School Year

- STEPS
- Robotics/Automation
- Engineering Partnerships



The Class of 2025 has had a unique journey during their time at Subiaco Academy and each graduate has his own special qualities. They started the 7th grade in August of 2019 with six in their class and finished that year remotely during the heyday of the COVID pandemic. More classmates joined their rank, some classmates went away, but on May 17, 2025, 30 young men, including four of the original six, earned diplomas from Subiaco Academy.

A little about the future of this class: Two have enlisted into the military, one into the Army and one into the Marine Corps. Two have joined the Air National Guard while attending college. Others plan to become teachers, pipe welders, industrial engineers, doctors, dentists, fisheries and wildlife managers, psychologists, businessmen, and aerospace engineers. They are matriculating to the following post-secondary institutions: University of Michigan, Oklahoma State University, University of Tulsa, University of Central Arkansas, Kansas State University, Grand Canyon University, UACCM, University of Arkansas Fort Smith, University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, and the University of Oklahoma.

The valedictorian is Connor Wasielewski. The son of Tamara and Don Wasielewski of Branson, Missouri, Connor will attend the University of Michigan and major in aerospace engineering.



Evan Everett earned salutatorian honors. The son of Beth and the late Dennis Everett of Van Buren, Arkansas, Evan will attend Oklahoma State University and major in biology/pre-medicine.



The class as a whole was offered over \$2,893,682 in scholarship money and will accept about half of that amount.

It has been the privilege of all on the Hill to work with these young men through their times of challenge and celebrate with them in their times of joy. We love them all and pray that God will continue to bless them on their journeys.



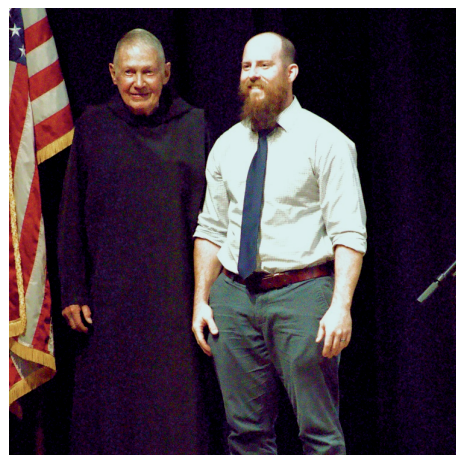
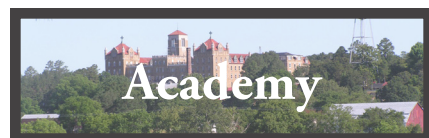
# Academy Special Recognitions

by Cheryl L. Goetz, Assistant Head of School  
for Academics and Communications

For the past several years, the Academic Honors Assembly has been held on the evening before graduation to facilitate attendance by more parents. This year was no exception. In addition to the alumni scholarships and subject awards that are given out that evening by department chairs in recognition of high achieving underclassmen, other special awards are bestowed as well.

The Martin Schriver Award, named in honor of Martin Schriver, a carpenter from 1900 to 1973 for Subiaco Abbey and Academy, is awarded to students who exhibit an exemplary work ethic, are involved in school activities, and show respect for teachers and fellow students. The recipients for 2024-2025 were Luis Araujo and Tyler Stevens.

Each year, Subiaco Academy names a member of the faculty as an Endowed Chair recipient. The purpose of the endowed chair program is to ensure and maintain high educational standards by rewarding outstanding faculty in specific disciplines and providing professional development that will enrich the life of the Academy today for the future generations to come. The selection committee considers excellence in the classroom, professionalism, support for all school programs and activities, and representation of the school's mission, goals, and philosophy. This year's recipient of the Fr. Jerome Kodell Endowed Chair for Excellence in Teaching was Mr. Isaac Cotherman of the English Department. Mr. Cotherman began his teaching and coaching career at the Academy in 2022. When bestowing the award to Mr. Cotherman, Dr. David Wright, Headmaster, noted, "I believe that all of you will agree that Isaac is passionate about this place and educating our exceptional students. He is a spiritual role model for many of us on the Hill." He and his wife Gabbi are the parents of six wonderful children with another expected in August. The final award for the evening was the Headmaster's Distinguished Service Award which is presented annually to a member of the community who goes above and beyond the call of duty to help the students and staff thrive on the Hill. According to Dr. Wright, "Such individuals are often described as selfless, sincere, caring and generous with their time and talents." The distinguished Service Award Recipient for 2025, Fr. Jerome Kodell, epitomizes the word grace. He always looks out for others and will do anything to make other people's lives enriched and more uplifted. He is respected by our students, the monks, and the faculty and staff at the Abbey and Academy.



## PRAYER HOTLINE 1-800-350-5889

Let us join you in praying for your needs. Prefer to email?

Please direct your requests to [prayer@subi.org](mailto:prayer@subi.org)

Prayers requested for family and friends can include a wellness or sympathy card sent to them from the monks of Subiaco. Please provide the name and address to send the card with your requests.

**Memorials** for deceased family and friends or

**Living Tributes** for birthdays, anniversaries, or special occasions are available at

[www.countrymonks.org/supportus](http://www.countrymonks.org/supportus) or call 479-934-1001.





## Alumni What's Up

The following information about our alumni was compiled by Tom Canada '09, Alumni Relations Director for Subiaco Academy. Have information you want to share with your Trojan brothers? Email Tom at [tcanada@subi.org](mailto:tcanada@subi.org).



On April 22, members of the Subiaco community made the trip down to Baton Rouge, Louisiana for our annual Baton Rouge Gathering hosted by the Guidry family. Roughly 20 friends and alumni of our Abbey and Academy were present for the 3-hour event that included food, drinks, and lots of laughs.



**Dan Smith '88** was recently announced as the incoming Associate Head of School for Subiaco Academy,



**Isaiah Kury '15** is the newest board member at Main Street Paris. Main Street Paris had this to say about Isaiah: "A proud local, Isaiah graduated from Subiaco Academy and has since built his own successful business, Kury Electric. His deep roots in the community and entrepreneurial spirit make him a fantastic addition to our team."

**Greg Barrs '82** visited with the monks the first weekend in February. Pictured is Greg and **Br. Ephrem O'Bryan '60**.



**Zach Franz '17** has been busy these last few months, obtaining Certified Flight Instructor status. He currently holds a Private Pilot License and a Commercial Pilot License as well. Great accomplishment!



# Brothers Called Home

## † E.H. “Junior”

**Lensing, '57**, age 86, of Subiaco, AR passed away April 5, 2025. Junior., served in the United States Air National Guard for 6 years. In recent years he was the owner and operator of Lensing Brothers Lumber in Ozark and Subiaco and always enjoyed working on his cattle farm. He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Carolyn Lensing of Subiaco; one daughter; two sons including Doug Lensing '81, and Kirk Lensing; two brothers; eight grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.



## † Herbert J. Geels '61,

age 81, of Morrison Bluff, AR, died April 17, 2025. Herbert retired from Innovation Industries in Russellville after 26 years of service. He was a member of Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church where he served as a Eucharistic Minister and taught youth religious education classes for years.



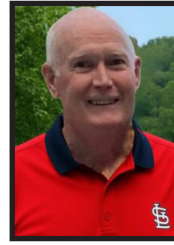
## † Cecil Soerries '58,

age 84, of Oklahoma City, died April 30, 2025. He moved to Oklahoma and began working for 7-Eleven in 1962 where he built a long and successful career, retiring in 1999. He was a member of Epiphany of the Lord Catholic Church in Oklahoma City for over 35 years and was an active member of the Men's Club. Cecil is survived by his wife of 61 years, Jane, and two daughters.



## † Dr. Francis “Frank”

**X. Neuner, Sr. '62**, age 80, of St. Louis, passed away May 2, 2025. Frank graduated from St. Louis University School of Dentistry in 1968. He went on to practice for 54 years, including service as a Naval Dentist during the Vietnam War. He is survived by his wife of 22 years, Ruth; and three brothers, Michael Neuner '61, Tom Neuner and David Neuner.



## † Edward F. Ahne '59,

age 83, of Scranton, AR, passed away February 21, 2025. Edward was a United States Navy veteran. He retired from Cessna Aircraft in Wichita Kansas after 32 years of service. After moving back to Scranton, he maintained his cattle farm and was a member of the St. Ignatius Catholic Church in Scranton.



## † Edward Hooks '73,

age 69, of Pea Ridge, AR, died February 22, 2025. Eddie attended the University of Arkansas in Little Rock where he pursued a career in business. He was an HVACR Class “A” licensed contractor. He began his career with Draco Service in Houston, TX, serving clients such as NASA and Chevron. Returning to Northwest Arkansas, Eddie established his own business, Absolute Air Solutions, Inc. in Pea Ridge and served Northwest Arkansas for the past 20+ years.



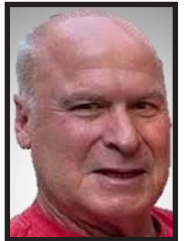
## † Patrick “Scott”

**Koenig '97**, age 45, of Paris, AR, died May 5, 2025. Scott served in the United States Army National Guard, including a deployment to Iraq. He served as the postmaster for the Booneville and Magazine Post Office and was a member of St. Benedict Church in Subiaco. He is survived by his wife of 13 years, Amber; two daughters; one son; one sister; one niece; one nephew and a host of friends.



## † Robert J. Klaser, Jr.

'74, age 68, of Lake Village, AR, passed away March 2, 2025. Robert was a member of Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church. He enjoyed exercising daily, sailing, hunting, and fishing.



# One Body

by Daphne Berend

*"In Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." (Rom. 12:5)*

I was beginning to say a rosary the other day, considering who I should pray for, - and a thought came to me to pray for an unknown priest suffering severe temptation. And I had an almost palpable sense of the oneness of the Body of Christ - an awareness, that my prayer would be effective. It felt as if an antibody from one part of the whole was sent out to do battle with an infection in another part. It was the Holy Spirit, reminding me of an invisible reality underneath what I can see with my eyes.

It's sometimes difficult to recall our oneness in Christ when we must deal with others, especially with trying people. The televised news, also, seems calculated to force a wedge between "us" and "them". Politically, socially, and in every other way it calls us to judge people we don't even know. It's hard to ignore. It's hard to make sense of.

But we are one Body, in a very real sense. "In Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others."

Not only are we his hands and feet on the earth, but we are also the poor, the imprisoned, the lame and the blind.

Did you ever in your imagination as a child wonder what it would have been like to have been born richer, or maybe in another country? That stranger you imagined yourself to be may be the one you are having problems with today. It may be the one you are called to love today.

"Love your neighbor as yourself" takes on a deeper meaning for me when I see that my neighbor is myself, a part of the Mystical Body of which I am a member, in fact or potentially.

Knowing that some of us don't love ourselves very well, Jesus takes us one further. "As I have loved you..."

## Upcoming Retreats

### July

11-13 Diocese of Tulsa Deacon Aspirants

15-17 Christ of the Hills UMC Women

18-20 AR K of C State Officers Organizational Mtg.

27-30 Silent Sisters UMC

29-31 DOLR Principals Retreat

### August

1-3 South Haven Knights of Columbus

1-3 Cedar Rock Ministries

4-7 DOLR Seminarians

7 St. Joseph's Conway Faculty

11-15 Abbey Quilters

22-25 Subiaco Women's Retreat

29-31 Serenity Retreat

### September

3-5 Anglican Mid-South Missionary District

5-8 Debbie Eckert Women's Retreat

12-14 AR Knights Annual Retreat

12-14 Gainesville, TX Knights "Ora et Labora"

18-21 Unbound Training Team

18-23 Wonder Voyage Pilgrimage to AR

23-26 St. Benedict Women's Retreat

26-27 Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary Overnight

29-Oct. 3 "Stitching Addiction"/ Natalie's Quilters



All guests, either private or on group retreats, are welcome to join the monastic community for daily prayer and Eucharist.

For more information or for reservations, call the Courty House at 479-934-1290 or email

[courthouse@subi.org](mailto:courthouse@subi.org)

Upcoming events may be found on our website, [www.countrymonks.org](http://www.countrymonks.org)