CRUSADER CONNECTION

BISHOP HEELAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



Rooted in Purpose.

Ready for What's Next.

Celebrating the faith, achievements and people who continue to shape the Bishop Heelan legacy.

2025-2026 School Year | *A Newsletter for Alumni & Friends* | *www.bishopheelan.org* | *Sioux City, IA*

Message from our President

Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools Community,

Greetings and welcome to another meaningful edition of the Crusader Connection! Each year these pages are filled with faith, success, and incredible moments that are lived out by our Bishop Heelan students and our alumni community. We are blessed to have finished the 77th year of high school Catholic education in Sioux City and the future is perhaps better than ever as we continue to provide mission driven education for all in our schools.

With tremendous enrollment growth in our schools, we are looking at a capital campaign for a west wing on the Bishop Heelan as well as much needed improvements and changes at Memorial Field. We hope you will all consider supporting this crucial component to the future for our students. The energy and enthusiasm around this is great and we don't want to delay in moving forward with these projects.

Please continue to keep the Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools in prayer. As each day provides opportunity, there are always challenges that our teachers, staff, students and families are facing. The legacy of our institution stretches across this country and world - Crusaders are truly making a difference in big and small ways in the lives of others.

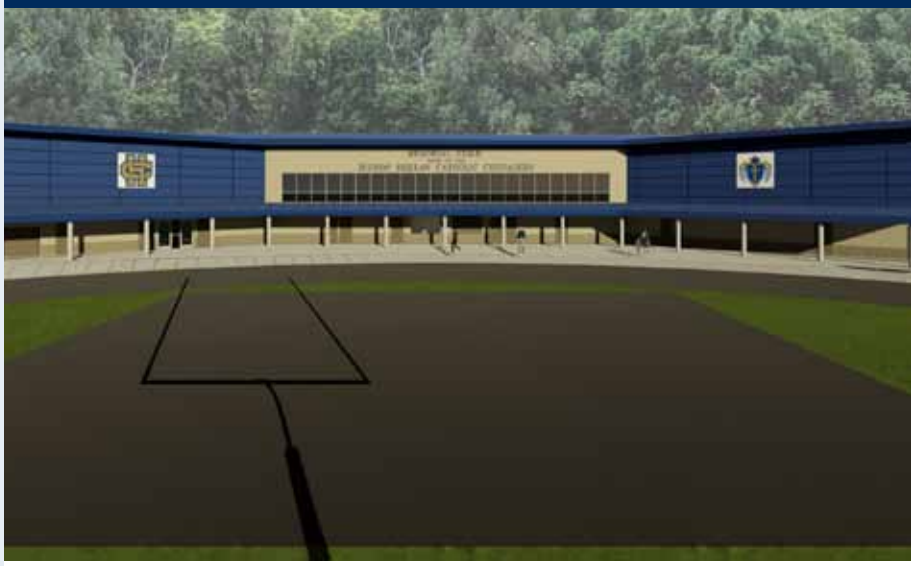
May God continue to bless you and may the mission of Christ be our mission. Bring His light to all those in your world and continue to live the motto, Once a Crusader, Always a Crusader.

Go Crusaders!



John Flanery
President,
Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools

Memorial Field Improvements







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Email: Rebekah.Armstrong@bishopheelan.org

CRUSADER CONNECTION

The Crusader Connection is published once a year for alumni and friends of Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools, a private PK-12 school system in Sioux City, Iowa.

Our Mission
The Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools relate the total student to God through an excellent education leading toward a lifetime of service.

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On the Cover
Jack Lohr '26 was the first ever graduate of the NW Fire Foundation Program. In the photo is Jack recieiving his diploma from Bobby Michaelson, Dean of Students.

A Legacy of Faith: Two Heelan Siblings Answer God's Call

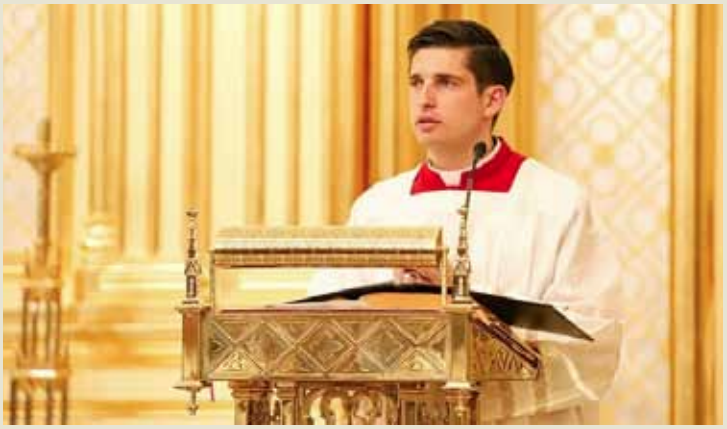
Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools has long been committed to forming young men and women who lead lives of faith, service, and purpose. For one family, that mission has taken shape in an extraordinary way.

Two Bishop Heelan alumni and siblings, Jimmy Fitzsimmons ('13) and Mary Kate Fitzsimmons ('21), have each answered God's call through lives of vocational service, one preparing for the priesthood and the other embracing religious life as a cloistered Poor Clare nun.



This spring, Mary Kate made her first profession as Sister Mary Incarnata of the King of Glory at Our Lady of the Angels Monastery in Hanceville, Alabama. During the March 25 ceremony, she professed temporary vows as a member of the Franciscan Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration, continuing a vocation journey that began during her senior year at Bishop Heelan.

Her profession was made even more meaningful as family members participated in the liturgy. Her brother, Jimmy, a seminarian for the Diocese of Sioux City, proclaimed the Scripture during the Mass while their brother Jack served at the altar. Former Bishop Heelan chaplain Father Shane Deman delivered the homily, making the celebration a beautiful reunion of faith, family, and the Heelan community.



Just a few months later, Jimmy reached a significant milestone in his own vocation when he was ordained a transitional deacon for the Diocese of Sioux City on June 6. A 2013 Bishop Heelan graduate, Jimmy's journey to the priesthood has been anything but ordinary. After graduating from Heelan, he attended Creighton University, earned a degree in accounting, and served four years as an officer in the United States Army's 82nd Airborne Division before discerning God's call to the priesthood.

Now studying at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary near St. Louis, Jimmy continues preparing for ordination to the priesthood, expected in 2027. Throughout his formation, he has emphasized that the heart of priesthood is not simply learning ministry skills but developing a deep and authentic relationship with Christ that naturally overflows into serving others.

The vocational journeys of Jimmy and Sister Mary Incarnata are unique, but they share a common foundation rooted in faith, prayer, and a willingness to respond to God's invitation. Their stories serve as powerful reminders that God calls each person differently and that faithful discipleship often begins with the simple decision to say "yes."

The Bishop Heelan community celebrates both Jimmy and Sister Mary Incarnata as inspiring examples of our mission in action. Their lives reflect the values nurtured within our schools and offer encouragement to today's students as they seek God's purpose for their own lives.

We ask our Heelan family to continue praying for Jimmy as he prepares for priestly ordination and for Sister Mary Incarnata as she faithfully lives her vocation of prayer and contemplation for the Church.

This article was developed using reporting by Dawn Prosser and Renee Webb of The Lumen Media, Diocese of Sioux City, and has been adapted for the Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools Crusader Connection. Photos courtesy of The Lumen Media.



Visiting Home: Father Lee Noel Celebrates Mass with Bishop Heelan

Just months after his ordination to the priesthood, Bishop Heelan alumni Father Lee Noel '10 returned to the place that helped shape his faith journey.

In November 2025, Father Lee celebrated Mass with Bishop Heelan Catholic School students and faculty, offering a meaningful full-circle moment for the school community. The same place where he participated in Mass as a student became the setting where he now shared God's Word and celebrated the Eucharist as a priest.

For current students, it was an opportunity to witness what a life of faithful service can become. For faculty, alumni, and those who knew Father Lee during his years at Heelan, it was a reminder that the seeds planted through Catholic education often continue to bear fruit long after graduation.



Father Lee visiting classmate, Brendan Dougherty '10.

Father Lee's return also reflected the deep relationships that continue to connect Bishop Heelan alumni long after commencement. While taking graduate classes during the summer at Mundelein Seminary (University of Saint Mary of the Lake) in Illinois, Father Lee made time to visit his Bishop Heelan classmate, Brendan Dougherty '10, at his home in Naperville. Though their paths have led them in different directions since graduating together in 2010, their friendship remains rooted in the shared experiences and values they developed at Heelan.

Father Lee's journey has been one of listening faithfully to God's call. After graduating from Bishop Heelan, he earned a degree in environmental science from Creighton University before pursuing graduate studies at the University of Wyoming. It was there that his involvement with the St. Paul's Newman Center helped him discern a vocation to the priesthood. He entered Mundelein Seminary in 2019 and was ordained for the Diocese of Cheyenne in May 2025.

His story continues to inspire the Bishop Heelan community. Whether celebrating Mass with students, reconnecting with classmates, or serving the people of Wyoming, Father Lee demonstrates that a Bishop Heelan education extends far beyond graduation. It forms leaders who carry faith, service, and compassion wherever God calls them.

We are grateful for Father Lee's ministry and for the example he continues to set for our Crusader community. Father Lee, thank you for reminding us that the Heelan family is never far from one another.



Standing for Life: Heelan Students Attend March for Life in Washington, D.C.

Four Bishop Heelan High School students recently traveled to Washington, D.C., to participate in the annual March for Life, joining thousands of people from across the country in a peaceful demonstration of their faith and commitment to the dignity of human life.

Sophomores Michael Anzalone, Kyan Macziewski, and Patrick Tott, along with freshman Kaleb Poss, made the trip with Deacon Kevin Poss from Bishop Heelan's Campus Ministry team.

When asked why they wanted to attend, Deacon Poss said the students' response was both simple and inspiring.

"This is something they truly believe in, and they wanted their voices heard. They wanted to demonstrate their faith," he shared. Although the journey to Washington was long, the students enjoyed the time together, passing the hours with games and conversation. Upon arriving, they were struck by the size of the crowd and the atmosphere surrounding the event.

"What stood out most was the joy," Deacon Poss said. "There was no rioting, no harassment, no destruction. Just joyful people peacefully committed to what we were there for."

The group marched alongside participants from across the United States and around the world, hearing many different languages and witnessing a diverse gathering of priests, religious sisters, and clergy united in their shared mission.

During their visit, the students also had the opportunity to meet with Senator Chuck Grassley. They listened as he spoke about his commitment to pro-life legislation, asked questions, and toured his Senate office.



The trip also included visits to several of Washington's most iconic landmarks, including the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, whose beauty left a lasting impression, and the National Air and Space Museum.

Despite the long travel days and winter weather, the experience proved to be both memorable and meaningful.

"I believe our students truly felt the impact of standing up for what they believe in," Deacon Poss reflected.

The March for Life offered these young Crusaders more than a trip to the nation's capital. It gave them the opportunity to live out their faith, witness to their convictions, and experience the strength of a community united by shared beliefs.



Class of 1975 Returns Home to Celebrate 50 Years of Friendship and Give Back

There are reunions, and then there are homecomings that feel like they were written into your bones. For the Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools Class of 1975, celebrating 50 years was about far more than marking time. It was about returning to a place that helped shape them, honoring classmates who are no longer here, and remembering that no matter how many years pass, you cannot unconnect from being a Crusader.

Class organizers Shavonne (Smith) Kopal '75 and Kathy (Uhl) Hart '75 said this reunion carried a different weight. After helping plan several reunions over the years, they wanted the 50th to center on one thing above all: belonging. Kathy reflected that not everyone experienced high school the same way. Some were shy, some faced difficult circumstances, and some never felt part of the core group. This time, they wanted everyone to know they mattered.

Working alongside Margeret Udell Bitters, Jane Murray Reynolds, Mark Bauer, Matt Blair, Mark Condon, Sue Tadlock, and Patsy Dougherty, Kathy and Shavonne divided the class list and personally reached out to as many classmates as possible. They called, mailed notes, and followed every lead they could find. The goal was simple: no one should feel forgotten.

Approximately 100 classmates and 20 spouses attended from a graduating class of about 250. Some returned after missing previous reunions, while others traveled from across the country, including Alaska. Those unable to attend because of health or financial circumstances were still included through photos and updates sent throughout the weekend.

One of the most meaningful changes was the atmosphere itself. Fifty years later, the reunion was no longer about teenage insecurities, accomplishments, or comparison. It was simply about friendship.

Conversations happened that had never happened before, relationships were renewed, and classmates discovered a deeper sense of grace for one another that only time can bring.

The weekend included nostalgic touches throughout, from yearbook photos and trivia to memories of classic Heelan homecoming mums. But one moment stood above the rest. The class presented a special Heelan jersey to Matt Malone, who had been part of the football team throughout high school despite living with significant lifelong health conditions. As he received the jersey with his sister beside him, classmates throughout the room were moved to tears.

The reunion also made space for remembrance. With an estimated 35 classmates deceased, the group honored those who were no longer able to gather with them. Losing several classmates in recent years made the 50th reunion feel even more important. It became an opportunity to say, in many ways, "I love you. You mattered. We were part of something together."

That spirit of connection also inspired the class to invest in future Crusaders. What began as an idea to donate perhaps $500 in leftover reunion funds grew into the creation of a scholarship for current Heelan seniors facing financial hardship. With the help of Laurie (Welte) Dougherty '80, the class established a fund specifically aimed at helping students remain enrolled through graduation when tuition challenges threaten to stand in the way.

Through classmate donations, storytelling, and a matching gift challenge during the reunion, the scholarship fund grew to $16,000. The first gift helped support a senior from a single-parent family who had attended Heelan for 12 years, was working to keep up with tuition, and hoped to become the first in his family to attend college. The class wanted his senior year to be about planning his future, not worrying whether he would be able to finish.

As the weekend came to a close, "Friends, We Will Remember You" began to play. Classmates formed a line, dancing, singing, and becoming emotional together. It was an unscripted ending that captured the heart of the weekend perfectly. Fifty years later, the Class of 1975 returned with intention: to gather the overlooked, remember the missing, celebrate the past, and invest in the future. Their legacy is not simply that they came back. It is how they came back: generous, impassioned, and still deeply connected as Crusaders.

Honoring their Father, One student at a time!

Some gifts do more than provide financial support. They tell a story, honor a legacy, and ensure that cherished values continue long after we are gone. For siblings Patrick O'Neill '71, Mary Siefert O'Neill '73, and Cindy O'Neill '76, the Ray C. O'Neill Scholarship is all of those things.

Created in honor of their father, Ray C. O'Neill, the scholarship provides assistance to some of the most financially challenged families attending Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools, opening the door for students who otherwise may never have the opportunity to receive a Catholic education.

Few things mattered more to Ray O'Neill than his Catholic faith and Catholic education. To his children, those two things were inseparable parts of who he was. "Catholic education was so important to my dad, and so was his Catholic faith," Cindy shared.

Ray's story began in rural Nebraska. Born in 1925 in Waterbury, he was the only son in a family of five children. He served his country during World War II, spending two years in the Army with assignments that took him through Africa, India, Burma, and China.

Following the war, Ray attended Wayne State College and later studied mortuary science in St. Louis. By 1955, he had opened his own funeral home in Randolph, Nebraska, eventually owning several businesses, including a clothing store and the local ambulance service. An award-winning photographer, entrepreneur, and community leader, Ray lived a remarkable life.

Yet his greatest role was that of husband and father. Ray and his wife, Gloria, were married on May 24, 1952, at St. Joseph Church in Sioux City. Gloria, now 97 years old, continues to live independently in Sioux City. A graduate of Cathedral School and a lifelong member of the St. Joseph parish community, Gloria shared Ray's deep appreciation for Catholic education. Her parents immigrated from Lebanon and settled near St. Joseph Church, beginning a family tradition of faith and Catholic education that continues through future generations of the O'Neill family.



"My dad was an amazing dad," Cindy said. "He taught me so much about life." "He was an incredible father, and I owe much of my success in life to him," Patrick added. Ray taught his children lessons that extended far beyond the classroom: treat everyone with dignity and respect, work hard, never give up, and always look for the good in people. "No matter how difficult things became, Dad would always say tomorrow was going to be a better day," Patrick recalled.

Faith was not simply something Ray talked about; it was something he lived. His children believe that faith carried him



through the hardships of war and life's many challenges. "He firmly believed God had a plan for him," Patrick said. "His Catholic faith was something you saw and felt all the time." That devotion naturally extended to Catholic education. "He always said that no matter the cost, you couldn't find a better education," Patrick remembered.

The O'Neill children agree wholeheartedly. "I firmly believe Catholic education was a huge help in my life," Patrick said. "That's one of the reasons Cindy, Mary, and I wanted to start this scholarship so others can have the same advantage we received." "Catholic education helped me throughout my life," Cindy added. "The discipline, respect, faith, and compassion that come with a Catholic education helped me tremendously in raising a family and building a business."

The siblings established the Ray C. O'Neill Scholarship so financial circumstances would never stand in the way of another family seeking the gift of a Catholic education.

Today, they continue to support the scholarship every month. "We would like to thank Janet Flanagan, former Director of Marketing at Bishop Heelan, for her help in establishing this scholarship," the siblings shared. "We also encourage anyone who is able to consider supporting Bishop Heelan so another child can have the opportunity to receive a Catholic education and be better prepared for life."

Patrick carries on the family's commitment from Arizona. Cindy remains close to home in Sioux City, where many know her not only for her dedication to Heelan but also for arriving at Saturday evening Mass on her Harley-Davidson motorcycle. Mary supports the mission from Rapid City, quietly but faithfully continuing the family's commitment to Bishop Heelan. Together, they ensure their father's legacy is not simply remembered but lived out through the lives of Heelan students and families.

The Ray C. O'Neill Scholarship represents sacrifice, gratitude, and faith in the next generation. Most importantly, it represents a family honoring the things their parents loved most: God, family, and Catholic education. Every month, because of Patrick, Mary, and Cindy, another student receives the opportunity to experience the faith, family, knowledge, and service that define a Bishop Heelan education. That is a remarkable legacy for Ray and Gloria O'Neill.

Perhaps an even greater tribute is knowing that their family continues to write that story together—one student, one family, and one scholarship at a time.

Forever Crusaders: Bishop Heelan's Class of 1950 Celebrates 76 Years of Friendship

As Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools celebrated the graduation of the Class of 2026 this spring, another milestone was quietly unfolding just a few miles away. At Holy Spirit Retirement Home, six members of Bishop Heelan's first graduating class, the Class of 1950, gathered for a reunion that served as a beautiful reminder that being a Crusader is a lifelong bond.

The Class of 1950 holds a unique place in Bishop Heelan history as the school's very first graduating class. Seventy-six years later, six surviving classmates came together once again to share stories, laughter, memories, and the enduring friendships that have carried them through every season of life.

The reunion was organized by Lois Walsh, wife of classmate Jim Walsh, and held at Holy Spirit Retirement Home, where three of the classmates resided. As conversations flowed throughout the afternoon, the group reflected not only on their days as students but also on the families they raised, the careers they pursued, the joys they celebrated, and the challenges they faced together over the decades.

Though time has brought gray hair, wrinkles, and slower steps, the connection between these classmates remains unchanged. Looking at one another, they still see the young men and women who helped establish the traditions, faith, and spirit that continue to define Bishop Heelan today.

Pictured at the reunion were Maxine O'Brien, Bob Rehal, Phil Neri, Mike Larson, Jim Walsh, and Mary Ann Kukula.

The gathering carried even deeper meaning as three members of Heelan's original Class of 1950 recently entered eternal life.

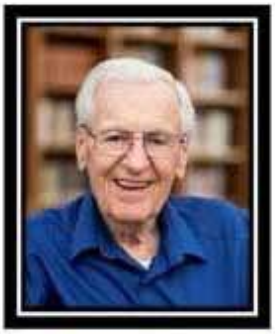
Paul "P.Q." Beacom, recognized as Bishop Heelan's very first graduate after completing his studies as a midyear graduate in 1949, went on to serve in the United States Air Force during the Korean War era before building a distinguished career in law and public service in Colorado. Throughout his life, he remained proud of his Sioux City roots and his identity as one of Heelan's Original Crusaders.



Paul



Mary Ann



Mike







Mary Ann Skarnulis Kukula devoted her life to faith, family, and service. Her decades of ministry in the Church, dedication to her community, and unwavering commitment to Catholic education reflected the mission that Bishop Heelan continues to instill in its students today. One of her greatest joys was witnessing her grandson, Father Shane Deman '99, be ordained to the priesthood.



1950 class reunion party.

Michael "Mike" Larson faithfully served both his country and his community as a United States Army veteran and a Sioux City Police Department lieutenant. Even after retirement, his commitment to Bishop Heelan never wavered. Whether welcoming fans at football games, volunteering for tuition assistance efforts, or serving the Church through RCIA and countless ministries, Mike embodied what it means to live a life of faith and service.

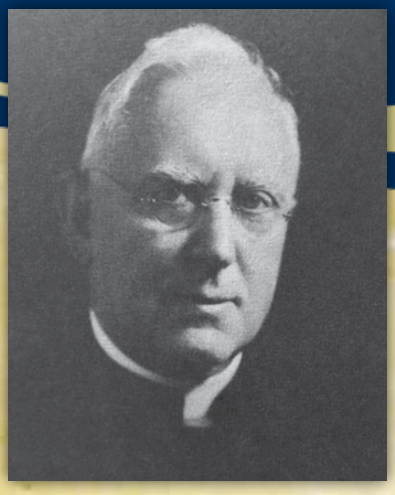
Together, these Original Crusaders helped establish the foundation upon which generations of Heelan students have built their own stories. Their lives reflected the school's enduring mission of faith, service, knowledge, and family, and their legacy continues through children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren who remain part of the Bishop Heelan community.

As the Class of 2026 begins its own journey, the reunion of the Class of 1950 reminds us that graduation is not the end of the Crusader story. It is the beginning of a lifelong connection rooted in faith, strengthened through friendship, and carried across generations.

Seventy-six years later, these Original Crusaders continue to show us what it means to live the Heelan mission with joy, perseverance, and gratitude.

As always, Once a Crusader, Always a Crusader.

Consider Joining the Heritage Society



Bishop Edmond Heelan

What is the Heritage Society?

The Bishop Heelan Heritage Society is a special group of individuals and families who have made a commitment to the future of our schools by including Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools in their estate plans. This lasting act of generosity ensures that the mission of Catholic education in our community continues for years to come.

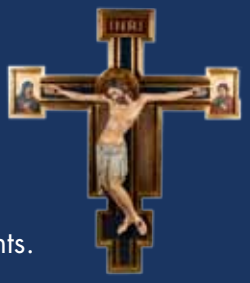
How do I get involved?

Becoming a member of the Heritage Society is simple:

- Let us know! Email Tom Betz at tom.betz@bishopheelan.org to let him know of your intentions.
- Include Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools in your will or living trust.
- Name the school as a beneficiary of your retirement account or life insurance policy.
- Explore other planned giving options that align with your financial goals.
- Once you've made a planned gift commitment, you can notify the Bishop Heelan Development Office so we may welcome you into the Heritage Society.

Heavenly Father,
we thank you for all you have given us
through Catholic education.
Send your Holy Spirit upon the
Bishop Heelan community,
that our pursuit of excellence
may root us in your truth.
We pray that we may always walk as your disciples
in holy virtue, loving service, and bold witness.
May the mission of
Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools
lead our students, faculty, and families to you,
as we raise up saints and scholars
destined for your glory.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Membership in the Heelan Heritage Society is provided by your written confirmation of your deferred gift arrangement. Qualifying gifts include wills, trusts, life insurance, IRA's, retirement plans, current gifts to endowment or life income arrangements.



BISHOP HEELAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
A LIFETIME ADVANTAGE

If you would like to become a member of the Bishop Edmond Heelan Heritage Society, please contact
Tom Betz, Vice President Advancement
Ph: 712-252-1350 | Tom.Betz@bishopheelan.org



Dr. John Flanery Receives National Lead. Learn. Proclaim. Award

Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools is proud to celebrate President Dr. John Flanery as a recipient of the prestigious Lead. Learn. Proclaim. Award from the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA).

The Lead. Learn. Proclaim. Awards recognize Catholic education leaders from across the country who exemplify innovative leadership, a commitment to lifelong learning, and a deep dedication to proclaiming the Gospel through Catholic education. Recipients are honored for fostering vibrant, faith-filled school communities while continually striving for excellence in their mission.

Since becoming president of Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools in March 2019, Dr. Flanery has led with vision, collaboration, and an unwavering commitment to providing an exceptional Catholic education for every student. He oversees Bishop Heelan Catholic High School and the system's four PK-8 schools, working alongside faculty, staff, parents, alumni, clergy, and community partners to strengthen the future of Catholic education in Siouxland.

Under Dr. Flanery's leadership, Bishop Heelan has experienced continued enrollment growth through innovative initiatives, including the addition of a dual-language program and the development of dual-credit opportunities in partnership with a local university. These programs have expanded educational opportunities while preparing students academically, spiritually, and personally for life beyond graduation. His commitment to Bishop Heelan is also personal: two of his five children have graduated from Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools, and three are currently enrolled in the BHCS system.

Beyond academics, Dr. Flanery has been instrumental in strengthening relationships throughout the Bishop Heelan community. His dedication to engaging alumni, donors, families, and community members has reinforced the lifelong connection so many have with Bishop Heelan. By fostering a collaborative, mission-driven culture among leadership teams and staff, he continues to build upon the school's rich tradition while embracing opportunities for future growth.

Before returning to Sioux City, Dr. Flanery built an accomplished career in higher education as director of choral activities at New Mexico State University and associate choral director at the University of Southern Mississippi. Over three decades, he has taught undergraduate and graduate students while directing mixed choirs, men's choirs, and community ensembles. He holds a Doctor of Musical Arts and a master's degree in choral conducting from the University of Kentucky, along with a Bachelor of Music Education from Briar Cliff University.

While this national recognition celebrates Dr. Flanery's individual leadership, it also reflects the collective commitment of the entire Bishop Heelan community. His leadership continues to inspire a culture where faith, academic excellence, service, and innovation flourish together.

Congratulations, Dr. Flanery, on this well-deserved national honor. Thank you for your faithful leadership and for continually advancing the mission of Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools.

A Second Chance, A Lifelong Mission



Doug Lehman '71

For Doug Lehman '71, February 18, 2012, was more than the day he received a new kidney. It was the beginning of a new purpose. While recovering from his transplant, Doug felt an unmistakable calling to use his experience to help others. "I had a vision that said, 'Do something with this. This is a miracle for you,'" he recalled.

That experience inspired Doug to establish Doug's Donors, an organization committed to supporting individuals navigating dialysis, organ transplantation and the physical, emotional and financial challenges that come with both.

Doug understands those challenges personally. As a Bishop Heelan sophomore, he was accidentally shot while handling a gun and lost one kidney. Decades later, complications from high blood pressure, diabetes and other health concerns caused his remaining kidney to fail. Before qualifying for a transplant, he needed to lose more than 100 pounds and then faced the exhausting realities of dialysis while waiting for a donor.

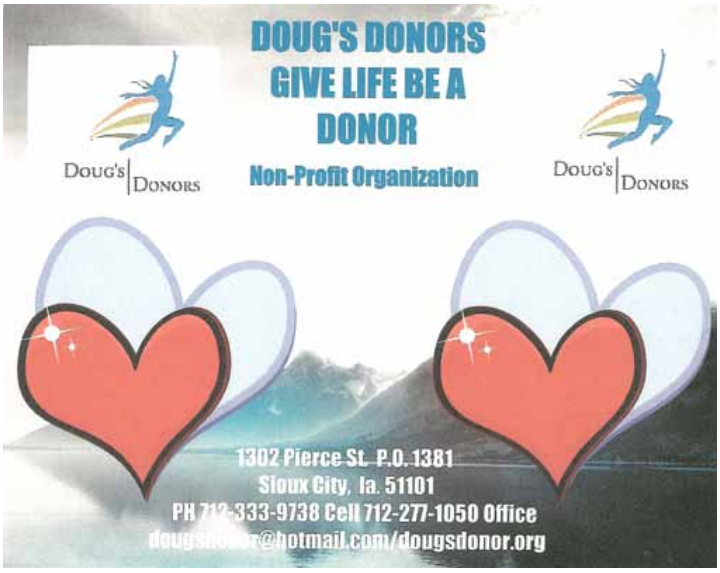
For many patients, dialysis means spending more than four hours in treatment three days each week. Doug remembers leaving treatments so weak that he sometimes had to pull over while driving home and rest for hours before continuing. As his health declined, he began to wonder whether a transplant would ever come.

Then came the call that changed everything. Two young people had died in an automobile accident in Omaha and, because they were registered organ donors, their organs were able to save several lives. Doug received one of their kidneys. "If those two young people had not been donors, I would not be here," he said. "They saved so many people."

The difference after surgery was almost immediate. Doug left the hospital within days and quickly felt stronger than he had in years. "I felt like Superman," he said. "I had been so sick for so long, and suddenly I had energy again." More than 14 years later, even after dozens of additional surgeries and medical procedures, he continues to view each day as a blessing.

Through Doug's Donors, Doug has helped individuals seeking kidney, liver, lung and heart transplants by providing transportation, lodging, meals, medications and financial assistance. Just as importantly, he has spent countless hours visiting dialysis patients, listening to their concerns and helping them understand the treatment and transplant options available to them.

At one point, Doug was personally visiting nearly 200 dialysis patients throughout Sioux City and surrounding



communities. Sometimes his goal was simply to help someone smile during a difficult treatment. "Even if I could just visit with them, make them laugh or tell them there are better days ahead, that mattered," he said.

Transportation remains one of the greatest challenges for dialysis and transplant patients, particularly for those living on limited incomes or traveling to medical centers in Sioux City, Omaha and beyond. Doug's Donors also helps patients explore treatment options that may provide greater independence, including forms of dialysis that can sometimes be completed at home.

Doug hopes to expand the organization throughout Iowa and eventually across the country. To do so, he is working to rebuild a network of volunteers who can visit patients, provide transportation, assist with outreach and support fundraising efforts. Many past volunteers were transplant recipients or dialysis patients themselves, giving them a unique understanding of the fear and uncertainty patients face.

He also continues to advocate for organ donor registration and education, speaking with students and community groups about the life-saving impact of donation. Doug emphasizes that living donors can also make a tremendous difference by donating a kidney or a portion of their liver. "People need to understand what one decision can do," he said.

Doug credits his Bishop Heelan education with helping shape the faith, discipline and respect for others that continue to guide him. More than five decades after graduating, he remains grateful for the lifelong relationships formed at Heelan and hopes fellow Crusaders will learn more about organ donation, support someone facing dialysis or consider volunteering. "It is not about me," Doug said. "I just want to help people." His life was saved through the generosity of an organ donor, and today he is dedicating that life to giving others the same hope.



Giving Back to the Blue and Gold

The Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools community is grateful for the continued generosity of Bob Kull '85 and Premier Bankcard, whose commitment to serving others continues to make a meaningful difference.

Bob was recently recognized as the winner of Premier Bankcard's annual employee volunteer challenge. As part of the award, he was given the opportunity to designate a nonprofit organization to receive a charitable donation. A proud Crusader, Bob selected Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools. The donation supported two important areas of need within the Bishop Heelan community.

A portion of the gift was designated to Then Just Feed One, continuing a partnership that began several years ago when fellow Class of 1985 alum, Tom Betz, connected Bob with the school's annual meal-packing event. Since then, Premier Bankcard has provided both financial support and employee volunteers who work alongside Bishop Heelan students to package meals for those in need. The company looks forward to participating again in the future.

The remaining funds were directed toward tuition assistance for two Bishop Heelan families facing significant hardships. Thanks to Premier Bankcard's generous gift, all six students will be able to continue receiving a Bishop Heelan education during this difficult season.

The donation was presented during a Premier Bankcard corporate staff meeting, where Bob, members of Premier's executive leadership team, Bishop Heelan President Dr. John Flanery, and Patty Considine McClintock gathered to celebrate the company's continued investment in Catholic education and the Siouxland community.

Bob, whose parents Walt '51 and Bernadine '51 Kull also attended Bishop Heelan, credits the Blue and Gold tradition instilled in him from an early age for his lifelong commitment to giving back.

Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools extends its sincere gratitude to Bob Kull, Premier Bankcard, and its employees for their generosity, volunteerism, and dedication to helping students thrive. Their support is making a lasting impact on both our school community and the families we serve.

Forever a Crusader: Remembering Austin Blakey, Class of 2026



Some students leave a mark through accomplishments. Others leave it through the way they make people feel. Austin Blakey did both.

Although Austin Xavier Blakey Jr. never had the opportunity to walk across the graduation stage with the Bishop Heelan Catholic High School Class of 2026, he has remained a member of that class in the hearts of his classmates, teammates, coaches, teachers, and the entire Crusader family.



Austin passed away on May 27, 2022, following a tragic accident, just days after completing eighth grade at Holy Cross. He was preparing to begin his freshman year at Bishop Heelan, where many believed he would become an outstanding student-athlete and leader. While his journey was cut far too short, his impact continues to be felt every day.

Those who knew Austin remember his unmistakable energy. His infectious smile, playful sense of humor, and ability to make anyone laugh could brighten even the hardest days. Whether he was joking with friends, singing off-key, dancing, or confidently reminding everyone that "curls get the girls," Austin lived life with joy that was impossible to ignore.

Basketball was one of Austin's greatest passions. He spent countless hours in the gym, competing with friends at Four Seasons, The Arena, and anywhere a basketball hoop could be found. His athleticism, competitive drive, and confidence made him a player teammates trusted in the biggest moments. One of those unforgettable moments came when he hit a game-winning buzzer beater against Okoboji, a shot that teammates still talk about today.

Former teammates Kaleb LaFavor and Caden Lester remember not only Austin's talent but the fun he brought to every practice and game. Former coach Jeff LaFavor recalled Austin as a young man of tremendous faith, incredible work ethic, and limitless potential. Austin dreamed of playing basketball at the University of Michigan and worked tirelessly toward that goal.

Yet, those closest to him say basketball was only part of his story.

Austin had a remarkable gift for making people feel seen. He welcomed classmates from every grade, befriended students who often felt left out, and built relationships that extended far beyond the basketball court. Teachers, coaches, teammates, and parents alike all considered Austin family because he treated everyone with kindness, respect, and genuine care.

His Catholic faith quietly shaped the way he lived. Austin believed in loving others, serving those around him, and striving to reflect Christ through his actions. Those values continue to define the legacy he left behind.

Following his passing, Austin's family requested that memorial donations be used to help children participate in athletics, ensuring other young athletes would have opportunities to pursue the game he loved. His legacy also lived on through the Austin Blakey 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament, which benefited the We Are Heelan Youth Basketball program. The tournament gave hundreds of young athletes the opportunity to compete, build friendships, and experience the joy Austin brought to the game every time he stepped on the court.

This past basketball season, that legacy was once again evident during Bishop Heelan's Senior Night. Alongside the members of the Class of 2026, Austin was honored as an integral part of the team. Austin's place among his classmates was recognized with the same love and respect that has surrounded his memory since the day he was lost.

The evening served as a powerful reminder that while Austin never had the opportunity to wear a Heelan varsity jersey, he has always been, and will always be, a Crusader.

The Class of 2026 graduated with one seat forever reserved in their hearts.

Austin's story is one of faith, friendship, joy, and unwavering kindness. His life continues to inspire those who knew him to laugh a little louder, love people more deeply, compete with passion, and never take a single day for granted.

Though his time at Bishop Heelan High School existed only in the dreams he held, his legacy remains woven into the fabric of our school. Austin Blakey will forever be remembered as a member of the Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools family, and his light will continue to shine through every student, teammate, and young athlete whose life is touched by the legacy he left behind.



2026 Bishop Heelan High School Graduates

Adam Andrews
Daisy Angulo-Ibarra
Rosario Argueta
Rex Barber
Israel Beltran
Addison Bertrand
William Bertrand
Taylor Billings
Reese Bleeker
Caitlyn Bloch
Maria Brown
Taylor Brown
Lauren Budzinski
Linh Bui
Jonathan Case
Adair Lopez
Sama Chaudhary
Shannon Cleary
Noah Conley
Olivia Curran
Benjamin Daffer
Elle Delaney
Wylee Delfs
Jenny Doan
Jaida Douch
Isaac Elbert
Mason Elliott
Payton Ericson
Kenadi Ernster
Avery Favors
Irelynn Feauto
Cecelia Flanery
Josie Fox
Aila Friis
Isaiah Galan-Quiroz
Jacob Galvan
Jose Garcia
Jesus Ramirez
Selaynne Garcia-Rangel
Nathan Gaswint
Gitu Gobana
Anuma Gobena
Christina Gonzalez
Angela Gonzalez-Velazquez
Madison Grant
Owen Greaves
Samuel Grieve
Haley Grimsley
Caridee Medina
Zackary Harpenau
Aidan Hauck
Missael Hernandez
Arturo Arreola
Kylie Holtz
Ireland Jackson
Clare Jacobs
Ashleigh Jochum
Kedan Johnson
John-Paul Judice
Austin Kathol
Kasey Thomas
Joshua Kensinger
Alex Lacy
Kaleb LaFavor
Ruby Lamoreux
Isabella Lendt
Caden Lester
August Letch
Maya Letch
Ava Lloyd
Jackson Lohr
Mackenzie Maas
Jacob Malenosky
Christian Marquez-Pinelo
Iliana Martin
Dulce Martinez
Joseph Martinez
Robert Mayberry
James Meyer
Trishelle Miller
Jazlyn Mozak
Logan Mueller
Ariana Munoz
Promise Munoz
McKenna Nichols
Gracyn Novotny
Andrew Nuno
Kevin Nuno-Galvan
Alec Ownby
Natalie Patee
Thomas Pattee
Reggie Pautsch
Christopher Pena-Lopez
Valeria Duenas
Natalia Perez
Jaretzy Perez Padilla
Bryan Perez-Calderon
Kenden Peters
Talen Peterson
Luis Ramirez
Baylee Reyes
Sindy Rios
Olivia Robertson
Grace Roerig
Chad Rooney, Jr.
Amya Ryba
Ivan Sanchez
Joanna Sanchez
Luis Sandoval
Madison Schermerhorn
Aaden Schmidt
Emma Schultz
Willy Sebastian Lorenzo
Talon Sexton
Presley Sitzmann
Ellison Spieler
Cole Sprague
Gus Stevens
Veerrathorn Sudsanguan
Jackson Thiele
Kasen Thomas
Benjamin Tooley
Daisy Truong
Demetrios Tsiobanos
Sophia Venne
Imani Vogt
Sophia Waldman
Solomon Walker
Olivia Wenzel
Anthony White, Jr.
Mia White
Sheyla Zavala
Natalia Zavala-Marquez

Alumni Yearbook Photo Feature

Class of 2026

These pages are dedicated to our graduates with parents, grandparents and great grandparents who are alumni of Heelan, Trinity and Cathedral High Schools. We pray for their success and God's blessings in the years ahead.

Highlights of 2026 Graduating Class

- 133 graduates in Class of 2026
- Valedictorian Owen Greaves and Salutatorian Jenny Doan
- 94% are attending college
- Graduates were offered $17,700,383.00 in academic scholarships and $5,625,340.00 in athletic scholarships
- 56 students graduated at 3.75 GPA or above and were enrolled in an honors course
- 44 students have parents, grandparents, and/or great-grandparents that graduated from Heelan
- The Top 5% in their senior class were (in alphabetical order): Rex Barber, Taylor Billings, Maria Brown, Jenny Doan, Owen Greaves, Olivia Robertson, Toni Sanchez, and Veerathorn Sudsanguan



Marilyn (Eufers) McCarthy '53 | Jill McCarthy '76 | Jennifer (Jochum) Barber '98 | **Ethan Barber '26** | Rex (Shawn) Barber '97



Addison Bertrand '26 | Rick Bertrand '88 | Luann (Uhl) Bertrand '64



William Bertrand '26 | Dianne McNabor '58



Taylor Billings '26 | Mike Billings '01



John Hartnett '56 | Kris (Hartnett) Brown '84 | **Maria Brown '26**



Virginia (Desy) Schuetz '50 | Ann (Schuetz) Hinds '73 | Sara (Hinds) Case '95 | **Jack Case '26**



Mike Curran '57 | Charlie Curran '94 | **Olivia Curran '26**



Thomas Bowen '66 | Julie (Sachau) Bowen '66 | Amy (Bowen) Delaney '94 | **Elle Delaney '26** | Max C. Delaney '93 | Deborah (Calhoun) Delaney '72 | Gerald Calhoun '55



Wylee Delfs '26 | Teresa (Everist) Delfs '80



Bernadine (Sitzmann) Feauto '46 Cathedral | Margaret (Tritz) Greer '45 Cathedral | Thomas Greer '44 Trinity



Irelynn Feauto '26 | Richard Feauto III '99 | Richard Feauto Jr., '73 | Miriam Ann (Greer) Feauto '75



Cecelia Flanery '26 | Juliane (Levich) Flanery '97 | Jameley (Rizk) Levich '65 | James Levich '66



Samuel Grieve '26 | Jeff Grieve '92 | Sue (Hickman) Grieve '67



Haley Grimsley '26 | Cathy (Boyle) Grimsley '01 | Nancy (Hanus) Boyle '72 | Randy Boyle '71



Zackary Harpenau '26 | Deb (Jochum) Harpenau '91 | Leo Jochum '63



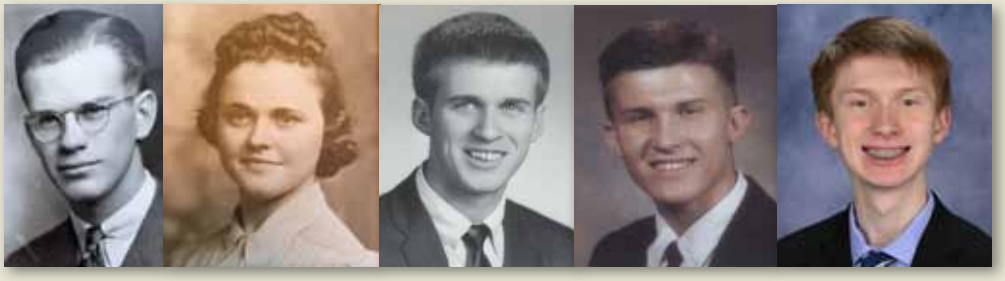
Glen Hanson '51 | Kathleen (Bourassa) Wiener '65 | Sarah (Wiener) Jacobs '99 | **Clare Jacobs '26** | Chris Jacobs '99



Ashleigh Jochum '26 | Gregory Jochum '93 | Leo Jochum '63



Austin Kathol '26 | Brenda (Combs) Kathol '83



Kenneth Keane '39 Trinity | Dororthy Jean (Meyer) Keane '40 Cathedral | Thomas Keane '65 | Kenny Keane '95 | **Kasey Keane '26**



Kaleb LaFavor '26 | Kathy (Dorcey) LaFavor '97



Ruby Lamoreux '26 | Dennis Lamoreux '67



Danielle (Merchant) Lester '09 | **Caden Lester '26** | Jordan Lester '09



Ava Lloyd '26 | Nathan Lloyd '92



Kenneth Keane '39 Trinity | Dororthy Jean (Meyer) Keane '40 Cathedral | Therese (Keane) Roder '78 | Julie (Roder) Lohr '00 | **Jackson Lohr'26** | Chris Lohr '98 | Roxanne (Full) Lohr '72 | Greg Lohr '70



Mackenzie Maas '26 Julie Schroeder '76



Jacob Malenosky '26 Kristen (Happe) Malenosky '91 Charles Happe '67 Carol (Gerch) Happe '66



Trishelle Miller '26 Thomas Alva Miller '64



Logan Mueller '26 Rex Mueller '90



Brittany Brewer '03 **Gracyn Novotny '26** Christopher Novotny '03 Elise (Meuret) Novotny '79



Thomas Pattee '26 Jenny (Hartnett) Pattee '85 Jacqueline (Cahill) Hartnett '50



Baylee Reyes '26 Amelia Serrano '06



Robert White '60 Angela (White) Robertson '01 **Olivia Robertson '26** Matthew Robertson '01



Chad Rooney, Jr. '26 Chad Rooney '92 Shella (Parks) Rooney '70 Loren Parks '33 Trinity



Madison Schermerhorn '26 Chris Schermerhorn '96



Cindy (Robinette) Rinnan '74 | Katie (Rinnan) Schultz '98 | **Emma Schultz '26** | Kevin Schultz '98 | Ann (Homan) Schultz '66 | Ron Schultz '66



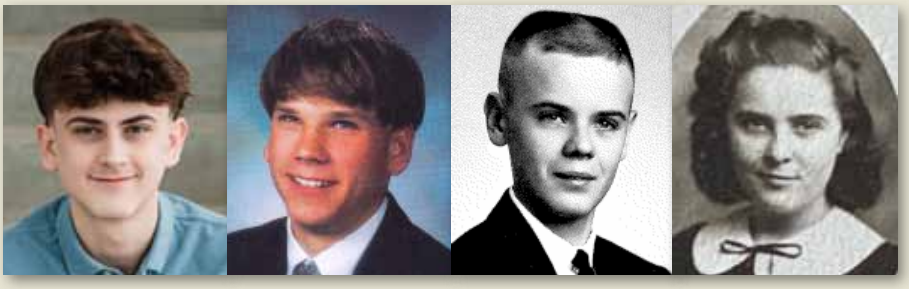
Talon Sexton '26 | Les Sexton '21 Trinity



Presley Sitzmann '26 | Yvette (Moreno) Sitzmann '93



Ellison Spieler '26 | Heather (Hoelker) Spieler '92 | Merritt Hoelker '67



Gus Stevens '26 | John Stevens '95 | Don Stevens '64 | Irene (Dziurawiec) Stevens '41 Cathedral



Jackson Thiele '26 | Jena (Dacres) Thiele, '83



Demetrio Tsiobanos '26 | David McWilliams '68



Sophia Venne '26 | Beth (Barkley) Venne '90 | Bill Barkley '61



Imani Vogt '26 | Andrew Vogt '02



Sophia Waldman '26 | Mary (Dailey) Waldman'92 | Patricia (Benton) Dailey '56



Tim Vaughan '69 | Kerri (Vaughan) White '96 | **Mia White '26** | JJ White '97

Heelan Student PRIDE In Action



Oakley Hoch, a first grader at Sacred Heart School, had one of the best days she has had in a very long time. Oakley had not seen her father since May 2025, when he was deployed. During her classroom Valentine's Day celebration, she was surprised by his return home. Staff Sergeant Dylan Hoch walked into the classroom as Oakley and her classmates were celebrating. What followed was a beautiful and emotional reunion that left few dry eyes in the room. It was a powerful reminder of the sacrifices made by military families and the joy that comes with a long-awaited homecoming.





As part of Bishop Heelan's annual Homecoming traditions, students took to the volleyball court for the crowd-favorite Muscle Man Volleyball game as well as the football field for Powder Puff Football. Filled with school spirit, friendly competition, and plenty of laughter, the events brought students together to celebrate Crusader pride while showcasing teamwork, enthusiasm, and some of the school's most beloved Homecoming traditions.





Students filled the gym with energy and school spirit as the 2025 Homecoming Royalty Court was recognized. The 2025 Homecoming Court included Will Bertrand, Taylor Billings, Austin Kathol, Kasen Thomas, Solomon Walker, Linh Bui, Kenadi Ernster, Jazlyn Mozak, Gracyn Novotny, and Mia White. Congratulations to Homecoming King Taylor Billings and Homecoming Queen Linh Bui on this well-deserved honor!



When a new safety policy prohibited students from tossing baby powder during the annual White Out football game, many Crusaders were disappointed that one of Homecoming's favorite traditions had come to an end. Rather than letting the tradition disappear, several Bishop Heelan faculty members came up with a creative solution by providing biodegradable white tissue paper for students to toss, preserving the excitement and iconic White Out atmosphere while keeping the celebration safe and environmentally friendly.



The Bishop Heelan community came together in a meaningful show of compassion during the Purple Out, raising nearly $1,600 to support those impacted by the Granville fire. Students, faculty, staff, and families united in prayer and generosity, demonstrating that the Crusader spirit extends far beyond campus. The fundraiser reflected Bishop Heelan's commitment to standing alongside neighboring communities in times of need, proudly supporting the MOC-Floyd Valley community through faith, service, and compassion.



Bishop Heelan's annual High School Service Day gave students the opportunity to put their faith into action by serving organizations throughout the Siouxland community. From lending a helping hand to completing meaningful projects, students dedicated their time and talents to making a difference. The day reflected Bishop Heelan's commitment to forming servant leaders who live out the values of compassion, generosity, and service beyond the classroom.

2025-26 Crusader Sports Update



The Crusaders boys soccer team continued their impressive run of postseason success in 2026, advancing to the Class 2A State Tournament for the fourth consecutive season. Bishop Heelan defeated Mount Vernon in a dramatic state quarterfinal that required two overtimes and penalty kicks before advancing with a 2-1 victory. The Crusaders' season ended in the state semifinals with a 2-0 loss to eventual State Champion Gilbert. The continued success of the program reflects the skill, composure and determination of its student-athletes.



The 2025 Crusader football team made an outstanding return to the UNI-Dome and finished the season as the Class 3A State Runner-Up. Heelan defeated Atlantic 28-6 in the opening round of the playoffs, Sioux Center 35-14 in the quarterfinals and defending State Champion Wahlert Catholic 34-21 in the semifinals. The Crusaders finished the season with a 10-3 record after falling to Nevada in the State Championship. The appearance marked Heelan's second trip to the title game in three seasons.



The boys golf team continued building on the program's tradition of success throughout the 2025 fall season. The Crusaders competed against strong teams from across the Missouri River Activities Conference while developing leadership, consistency and depth within the program. The season provided valuable experience for both returning golfers and younger athletes who will help shape the program's future.



The girls golf team continued to grow throughout the 2026 spring season. The Crusaders gained valuable experience while competing in conference and regional play, finishing seventh at their regional tournament. The season gave several golfers an opportunity to strengthen their skills, develop confidence and establish a strong foundation for continued progress.





The boys cross country team competed against several talented programs throughout the fall season and continued to build depth within its roster. The Crusaders demonstrated steady improvement while representing Bishop Heelan at the Missouri River Activities Conference meet and Alex Amarro running in the State Qualifying Meet. Their commitment, perseverance and willingness to compete together provided an encouraging foundation for the future of the program.

The girls cross country team added another successful season to the program's strong tradition. The Crusaders competed throughout the fall with determination and earned the opportunity to advance as a team to the State Cross Country Meet in Fort Dodge. Reaching the State Meet reflected the team's consistency, depth and commitment to one another throughout the Addison Bertrand and Ella Otten also showed great strides this year and took strides all the way to the State XC Meet.



The girls tennis team continued its tradition of competing at a high level during the 2026 season. After facing a challenging schedule, the Crusaders performed well in conference and postseason competition. The season was highlighted by another State Doubles appearance from Maria Ernesti and Kate Kelly, demonstrating the strength of the program and its ability to compete with some of Iowa's best tennis players.



The boys tennis team enjoyed another outstanding season, including a stretch of 10 consecutive victories and an undefeated start in Missouri River Activities Conference play. Seniors John-Paul Judice and junior Easton Lubarski captured the district doubles championship and advanced to the State Tennis Tournament. Their achievement highlighted a season marked by consistency, leadership and excellent team play.

2025-26 Crusaders Showcase Fine Arts



Dedication took center stage this year as Arianna Munoz and Elvis Li, two Bishop Heelan studentss balanced multiple roles during football season, participating in marching band while also serving as members of the football team and football cheer squad. Their commitment to representing Bishop Heelan in more than one capacity reflects the extraordinary work ethic, school spirit, and servant leadership that define the Crusader community. Their willingness to give their time and talents wherever needed is a testament to the unmatched dedication of Bishop Heelan students.



Excellence in the arts continued as the Marching Crusaders earned a Division I Superior Rating at the Iowa High School Music Association State Marching Band Festival in Sheldon. The achievement marked the program's eighth consecutive Division I Superior Rating at an IHSMA festival, reflecting the dedication, talent, and countless hours of preparation by student musicians and directors. The continued success of the Marching Crusaders is a testament to Bishop Heelan's strong tradition of excellence in the performing arts.



The Bishop Heelan Theatre Department brought imagination and adventure to the stage with its production of Peter and the Starcatcher. Featuring a cast of 22 students and an 11-member stage crew, the production showcased the creativity, talent, and teamwork of Crusaders both on stage and behind the scenes. Through months of rehearsals and dedication, students delivered a memorable performance that celebrated storytelling, collaboration, and the vibrant fine arts tradition at Bishop Heelan.





Bishop Heelan's music program reached another milestone as 16 vocalists earned selection to the Iowa All-State Chorus, including four third-time All-Staters, three second-time All-Staters, and nine first-time honorees. The celebration continued with three quartet groups advancing to Ames, along with outstanding performances from instrumentalists, including two students selected for All-State honor band and two named as alternates. These accomplishments reflect the exceptional talent, dedication, and perseverance of Bishop Heelan's student musicians while continuing the school's long tradition of excellence in the performing arts.



Bishop Heelan junior Hugo Romero achieved a remarkable milestone by conducting Sleigh Ride during the Sioux City Symphony's Home for the Holidays concert. Representing Bishop Heelan on a professional stage, Hugo showcased exceptional musical talent, leadership, and poise before a live audience. His accomplishment reflects the opportunities available to Bishop Heelan students and the school's commitment to developing excellence in the fine arts both on campus and throughout the Siouxland community.



The 2025-2026 show choir season was another exceptional year for Bishop Heelan's award-winning vocal music program. Harmonia Mundi, Magnifique, moMANtum, and Genesis represented the Crusaders with excellence throughout the Midwest, earning numerous division honors and finalist appearances. Harmonia Mundi also captured the Grand Championship at the Sioux Center Showdown and many more, while all four ensembles showcased remarkable talent, dedication, and school pride throughout the season.













2026 Catholic Schools Week











Crusader ATHLETIC HALL of PRIDE 2026

PAT DOYLE '56



One of the most dynamic athletes in Heelan history, Pat Doyle became the school's first high school All-American after averaging 9.95 yards per carry and leading the 1955 Crusaders to a 7–1 record. He still holds the City Meet record in the 100-yard dash, was a state runner-up sprinter, and went on to earn three football letters at Notre Dame.

DENNY CONWAY '62



Denny Conway was the star running back on Heelan's 1961 state championship team, rushing for a then-school-record 1,404 yards and 20 touchdowns while averaging 12 yards per carry and earning First Team All-State and All-American honors. A four-time state track qualifier, he went on to continue his football career at Notre Dame, where he lettered for the Irish.

TOM SCHOBERG '72



Tom Schoberg established himself as one of Iowa's premier distance runners, winning the 1970 state cross country title and finishing as the state runner-up in both the 1971 cross country meet and the 1600 meters in track. His 4:13.5 in the 1600, set in 1972, remains a school record and still ranks 15th in Iowa high school history. He later became an All-American at Iowa State as a member of the Cyclones' Big Eight Championship cross country team.

SUE (JONES) BERENS '75



Sue (Jones) Berens remains one of the most prolific scorers in Sioux City basketball history, finishing her 6 on 6 basketball career with a metro record 2,454 points, including the top two scoring seasons in metro history, and becoming Heelan's first three time All-State girls basketball player. Named team captain for both the basketball and track teams, she later starred collegiately at Kansas University and Morningside.

MARY BISENIUS-FERGUSON '05



Mary Bisenius-Ferguson was a standout two sport athlete highlighted by becoming Heelan's first female high school All-American, named by PrepVolleyball.com. Mary led the state with 560 kills in 2004, then a school record, and helped lead the Crusaders to a 49 win season. Mary was also a four time All-State softball player and went on to play collegiate volleyball at Iowa State, where she earned multiple Academic All Big 12 honors.

TYLER CROPLEY '14



Tyler Cropley was one of the most accomplished multi sport athletes in Heelan history, earning three All-State baseball honors while setting school records for career RBIs and single season doubles. He finished third in the state long jump, was a three year starting outside linebacker, and helped lead the football team to the 2013 state championship. Cropley became an All-American catcher at the University of Iowa, a semifinalist for the Johnny Bench Award, and reached Major League Baseball with the Kansas City Royals.

NOMINATE A Crusader

SCAN TO ACCESS THE HALL OF PRIDE

The Hall of PRIDE celebration takes place every fall in Sioux City and includes events honoring the inductees and celebrating the legacy of Bishop Heelan athletics. Learn more by going to: www.bishopheelan.org/hall-of-pride



From Crusader to Red Sox: Kaleb LaFavor Drafted into Major League Baseball

For generations of Bishop Heelan students, dreams have been nurtured in classrooms, on playing fields, and through the encouragement of coaches, teachers, and families. This summer, one of those dreams became a reality.

Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools proudly celebrates 2026 graduate Kaleb LaFavor, son of Kathy (Dorcey) LaFavor '97, who was selected by the Boston Red Sox in the 10th round of the 2026 Major League Baseball Draft, becoming the first Siouxland high school player ever drafted directly out of high school into Major League Baseball. Chosen with the 304th overall pick, Kaleb's selection marks a historic milestone not only for Bishop Heelan, but for the entire Siouxland community.

Kaleb's journey to professional baseball has been built on years of dedication, discipline, and perseverance. Standing 6-foot-7 on the mound, the right-handed pitcher developed into one of the state's premier prospects, earning attention from scouts across the country with a fastball reaching the mid-90s and a calm, competitive presence that set him apart.

His senior season reflected the excellence Heelan fans had come to expect. With limited appearances on the mound, Kaleb posted an impressive 0.79 earned run average while also contributing offensively with a .416 batting average. Those statistics only tell part of the story. His leadership, work ethic, and commitment to his teammates made him just as valuable in the clubhouse as he was on the field.

"He's going to go to work for any team that he's on," Heelan head baseball coach Jacob Wesselmann shared following the draft. "He has a quiet demeanor, leads by example, and I think moving forward with the Red Sox he'll be a bright spot for years to come."

While Kaleb had committed to continue his baseball career at the University of Iowa, the opportunity to begin his professional career with one of baseball's most storied organizations was one he embraced. Shortly after the draft, he traveled to Boston to sign his professional contract and officially begin the next chapter of his baseball journey.

For the Bishop Heelan community, Kaleb's achievement represents far more than athletic success. It is a testament to what can happen when God-given talents are developed through hard work, humility, and the support of a faith-filled community. His story serves as an inspiration to the next generation of Crusaders who are working toward their own dreams, whether in athletics, academics, the arts, or service.



As Kaleb begins his professional career, the entire Bishop Heelan family will be cheering him on from Sioux City to Fenway Park. We are incredibly proud of the young man he has become and look forward to following his journey in professional baseball.

Congratulations, Kaleb! Your Crusader family is behind you every step of the way.



Pat Sitzmann, Brendan Burchard, and Mary Kay Augustine.

Celebrating a Legacy of Excellence

The 2025 Legacy Gala was an evening of gratitude, celebration, and investment in the future of Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools as alumni, parents, faculty, staff, and friends gathered to honor the educators who have shaped generations of Crusaders while supporting the Teacher Salary Endowment Fund.

The evening recognized three extraordinary educators whose combined service to Bishop Heelan spans more than 150 years. Pat Sitzmann, Brendan Burchard '60, and Mary Kay Augustine '71 were celebrated for their unwavering commitment to Catholic education and the countless lives they have impacted through their dedication, compassion, and leadership. Their legacy reaches far beyond the classroom, leaving a lasting impression on students, families, and colleagues alike.

Guests were also inspired by a special tribute video featuring the three honorees, along with reflections from Bishop Heelan alumnus Father Lee Noel '10, who shared how the influence of Heelan teachers helped shape his own journey of faith and vocation.

The evening featured several memorable moments, including a stirring performance of the National Anthem by four members of the Bishop Heelan Choir and an opening prayer led by Bishop Emeritus R. Walker Nickless. During the celebration, Dr. John Jorstad '90 and Jennifer Collins Clay '92 were also recognized as recipients of the Diocesan Teacher of the Year Award, honoring their outstanding commitment to excellence in Catholic education.

The success of the Legacy Gala was made possible through the generosity of those who attended, volunteered, and supported the event. Special thanks were extended to Ron Demers for producing the evening's tribute videos, helping tell the stories of the educators whose dedication continues to strengthen the Bishop Heelan community.

At the heart of the Legacy Campaign is a commitment to investing in the people who make Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools exceptional. Funds raised through the gala will directly support the Teacher Salary Endowment Fund, ensuring the school system can continue to attract and retain outstanding educators who are passionate about forming students academically, spiritually, and personally.



Although the evening has concluded, the mission continues. Those who were unable to attend the gala can still support the Teacher Salary Endowment Fund by making a gift through the Legacy Campaign. Every contribution helps strengthen the future of Catholic education at Bishop Heelan by investing in the teachers who faithfully serve the next generation of Crusaders.

Fiesta of Faith, Family, and Friends Raises Nearly $850,000 for Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools

The Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools community once again demonstrated the incredible power of faith, generosity, and shared purpose during the 2026 Heelan Auction. This year's Fiesta of Faith, Family, and Friends-themed celebration brought together alumni, parents, grandparents, faculty, staff, and supporters for an unforgettable evening dedicated to investing in the future of Catholic education.

Together, attendees raised nearly $650,000 through the auction, while an additional $200,000 was committed to this year's Fund-A-Cause benefiting the Teacher Salary Endowment, with gifts continuing to be received after the event.

The evening served as a powerful reminder that the strength of Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools has never rested solely in its buildings or programs—it rests in the people who believe in its mission and choose to invest in generations of Crusaders.

Funds raised through the annual auction help provide tuition assistance, enhance academic opportunities, strengthen programs across the school system, and ensure Bishop Heelan continues to attract and retain outstanding educators who shape the lives of students each day.

Throughout the evening, guests also paused to celebrate individuals whose dedication has left an extraordinary mark on Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools. Dr. Ken and Lou Roach and Dr. Jerry and Sheryl McGowan were honored as the 2026 Crusaders of the Year, while alumnus Nick Hegarty '96 received the Volunteer of the Year Award for his exceptional leadership and service.



Leo '76 & Cris '76 Berger, Jeff & Abby Howenstein, David Cancino & Gabriela Valdovinos '09, Chris '98 & Sarah '99 Jacobs, Tim & Kris Brown'84, and Krishna Bishwokarma & Elise Burrows '90.

The evening was more than a fundraiser. It was a celebration of community that shares the same commitment of providing an exceptional Catholic education for current and future Crusaders.

To every volunteer, donor, sponsor, bidder, and supporter who made the evening possible, thank you. Because of your generosity, the mission of Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools continues to grow stronger for generations to come.

2026 Crusaders of the Year





Few individuals have influenced the history of Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools as profoundly as Dr. Ken and Lou Roach and Dr. Jerry and Sheryl McGowan, the 2026 Crusaders of the Year. For nearly five decades, both families have invested their time, leadership, and generosity into strengthening Catholic education in Siouxland.

Their impact began in 1979 when they joined a dedicated group of volunteers to establish what was then known as the Friends of Heelan Ball. That grassroots fundraiser has since grown into today's Heelan Auction, an annual tradition that has generated more than $13 million in support of Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools.

Through the years, their leadership and generosity have helped support major building projects, tuition assistance, academic programs, and Bishop Heelan teachers. Both families were also instrumental supporters of the PRIDE Campaign that helped make today's Bishop Heelan High School possible, while entrusting their own children to the school system they worked so faithfully to strengthen.

Their legacy reflects what it means to be a Crusader: leading with faith, serving generously, and creating opportunities for those who follow. Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools is honored to recognize the Roach and McGowan families for a legacy that will continue shaping generations of Crusaders to come.

2026 Crusaders of the Year



Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools proudly recognized alumni Nick Hegarty '96 as the 2026 Volunteer of the Year for more than a decade of dedicated leadership and service to the school system and the Siouxland community.

As a member of the school board and finance committee, Nick helped guide Bishop Heelan through significant financial challenges with steady leadership and long-term vision. Serving as vice chair, chair, and past chair, he played an important role in developing financial strategies, supporting the transition to the Adjusted Gross Income tuition model, navigating the implementation of Iowa's Education Savings Accounts, and strengthening tuition assistance efforts for families.

One of his most significant contributions came in 2021, when he partnered with fellow Crusader Doug Skinner to develop a plan to eliminate nearly $12 million in school debt over ten years. Through disciplined stewardship and the generosity of the Bishop Heelan community, that goal was accomplished in just three years. Nick's service has also extended beyond financial leadership through coaching football, wrestling, and track, as well as volunteering with Junior Achievement.

At the heart of Nick's service is a commitment to leadership, faith, and community. Alongside his wife, Amber '94, and their family, he continues to demonstrate what it means to live the Crusader mission. Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools is deeply grateful for his dedication and proud to honor him as the 2026 Volunteer of the Year.

Honoring Lives of Service: Celebrating Those Who Shape the Heelan Legacy

As the 2026 school year drew to a close, Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools faculty and staff gathered for one final professional development meeting. Rather than focusing on lesson plans or preparing for the next school year, the afternoon became an opportunity to pause, reflect, and celebrate the people whose dedication has shaped generations of Crusaders.

With graduation just days away, the timing was especially meaningful. Before sending another class of students into the world, the Bishop Heelan community recognized four extraordinary individuals whose lives of service have strengthened the mission of Catholic education through their commitment to students, colleagues, and the Heelan family.

Representatives from the Diocese of Sioux City presented three distinguished honors recognizing excellence in teaching, servant leadership, and lifelong dedication to Catholic education.

Carla Johnson Receives Bishop's Award for Excellence in Teaching



Carla Johnson

For decades, Carla Johnson has been a familiar and respected presence in the halls of Bishop Heelan Catholic High School. This year, she was recognized with the Bishop's Award for Excellence in Teaching for a career marked by academic excellence, mentorship, and unwavering commitment to students.

An English teacher whose classroom has inspired countless students to think critically and communicate confidently, Carla's influence has reached well beyond literature and writing. Through years of coaching on the softball field and basketball court, she has invested in the lives of young people both inside and outside the classroom.

Her legacy is one of consistency, compassion, and high expectations—qualities that have helped prepare generations of Crusaders for success long after graduation.

Good Shepherd Awards Honor Michelle Davis and Chris Bork



Michelle Davis

The Bishop's Good Shepherd Award recognizes individuals who model Christ's servant leadership through their daily work, and this year two members of the Bishop Heelan family were honored.

Michelle Davis has become much more than a member of the custodial team. She is known throughout the school community for creating an atmosphere of warmth and welcome, whether through her famous homemade chocolate chip cookies or the countless quiet acts of kindness she extends to students and staff.

Her dedication reflects the heart of Catholic education—serving others with humility, generosity, and genuine care. For many students, Michelle has been one of the familiar faces who made Heelan feel like home.

Also receiving the Good Shepherd Award was Chris Bork, the longest-serving principal in Bishop Heelan history.

Chris began his career as a social studies teacher and state championship baseball coach before transitioning into school leadership. Throughout his years as principal, he has consistently demonstrated that leadership is rooted not simply in administration, but in relationships.



Chris Bork

His commitment to students was perhaps most evident when senior Ronnie Vedin experienced the unimaginable loss of both parents within a short period of time. Chris and his wife, Amy, welcomed Ronnie into their home, providing stability, support, and love during one of the most difficult seasons of his life. Their example reflects the compassion and selfless service that define the Bishop Heelan community.

Celebrating a Remarkable Career: Mary Kay Augustine Retires After 50 Years



Mary Kay Augustine

The afternoon concluded with a standing ovation honoring Mary Kay Augustine, Bishop Heelan Class of 1971, as she prepares to retire after an extraordinary 50 years in Catholic education, including 45 years serving Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools.

Throughout her career as a teacher, coach, and Dean of Women, Mary Kay became known for holding students to high expectations while caring deeply about their success. Her firm standards challenged students to become responsible, resilient, and compassionate individuals.

Thousands of alumni have been shaped by her leadership over the past five decades. Her influence extends far beyond the classroom, leaving a lasting impact on generations of Crusaders who continue to carry the values she instilled into their families, careers, and communities.

While her retirement marks the end of an incredible chapter, her legacy will continue to be felt throughout Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools for years to come.

Congratulations to Carla Johnson, Michelle Davis, Chris Bork, and Mary Kay Augustine. Thank you for your extraordinary service to Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools and for the countless lives you have touched.

Your legacy will continue through every Crusader who carries the lessons, faith, and love you have so faithfully shared.

In Memory

1950s

Paul Quentin Beacom '50, Westminster, CO, May 9, 2026
Mary Ann Margaret (Skarnulis) Kukula '50, Sioux City, IA, May 9, 2026
Michael R. Larson '50, Sioux City, IA, May 20, 2026
James W. Kurzak '52, Olathe, KS, December 26, 2025
Mary Catherine (O'Connor) Audino '53, Indianola, IA, May 2, 2026
Rose Marie (Rossmar) Hoffman 53, Columbus, NE, March 23, 2025
Catherine L. (Cosgrove) Mahoney '53, Fernandina Beach, FL, May 7, 2025
Alburn A. Wiebelhaus '54, Fordyce, NE, December 9, 2025
Barbara (Brault) Bernard '55, Rapid City, SD, March 18, 2026
Barbara Lee (O'Bryan) Sitzmann '55, Le Mars, IA, August 2, 2025
Carol A. (Johnson) Beacom '56, Treasure Island, FL, December 14, 2024
Jeanette Jordan (Woolworth) '56, Holstein, IA, September 19, 2025
Judith Bellarie Igoe '57, Denver, CO, October 14, 2022
Thomas Masteller '57, Fremont, NE, December 2, 2024
Mary K. (Skamulis) Azara '58, Omaha, NE, May 6, 2025
Judith "Judy" (Wilber) Lock '58, Liburn, GA, February 9, 2019
Patrick "Pat" C. McCormick '58, Morrisville, NC, April 29, 2026
Donald L. Meinen '58, Olathe, KS, August 29, 2025
LaVonne (Freame) Treadway '58, Gilbert, IA, July 18, 2025
Virginia "Ginnie" (Sweeney) Wilson '58, South Sioux City, NE, Dec, 15, 2019
Ruth Alice McGarry Becker '59, Sunnyvale, CA, September 6, 2024
Kathleen Curran Fitzpatrick '59, Danbury, IA, April 13, 2025

1960s

Florence (Lewis) Campbell '60, Sioux City, IA, April 29, 2026
William L. "Bill" Griencewic '60, Sioux City, IA November 29, 2025
Lynn F. (Barry) Uhl '60, San Diego, CA, May 5, 2026
Michael F. Wilmes, Sr. '60, Sioux City, IA, March 30, 2025
Sara Lee "Sally" Guillaume Austin '61, Minneapolis, MN, 2025
Gail (Wilber) Bates '61, Omaha, NE, August 26, 2019
William "Bill" J. Twohig '61, South Sioux City, NE, April 20, 2026
Helen M. (Westendorf) Miller '62, Sioux City, IA, June 2, 2026
Phyllis (Griesel) Lucas '63, Pleasant Plain, OH, November 7, 2025
James "Jim" Bishop '64, The Villages, FL, August 10, 2025
Mary Jane (O'Neill) Dillon '64, Sioux City, IA, January 7, 2026
Daniel M. O'Bryan '64, Eau Claire, WI, November 17, 2025
Patti (Pope) Yamada '64, Iowa City, IA, December 11, 2025
Lorelei (Smith) Bruneau '65, Lawton, IA, August 30, 2025
Sandra R. Keane '65, Sioux City, IA, June 28, 2026
Sandra E. (Swanson) Lichtenwalter '65, Edmond, OK, September 30, 2025
Denny Lee Johnson '66, Nashville, TN, February 1, 2025
Thomas A. Vakulskas '66, Sioux City, IA, May 20, 2026
William (Bill) Bennett '67, Sioux Falls, SD, March 19, 2026
David J. Garvis '67, Eldersburg, MD, August 17, 2025
Tom Gerch '67, Lincoln, NE, February 6, 2026
Gary A. Jolce '67, Sioux City, IA, October 19, 2025
Janelle Martin Limoges '67, Ainsworth, IA, April 14, 2026
Janice (Thomas) Mischel '67, Peaks Island, ME, October 27, 2023
Paula (Nichols) Shanahan '67, Rex, GA, September 2, 2025
Mike R. Shaver '67, Burton, TX, March 3, 2026
Barb (Stuart) Duzik '68, Sioux City, IA, December 13, 2025
Annette (Mummert) Olsen '68, Cedar Rapids, IA, July 20, 2025

1970s

Randall "Randy" Boyle '71, Sioux City, IA, February 9, 2026
Bonnie (Davidson) Kalkman '71, Fairbanks, AK, September 26, 2025
Phillip F. Thompson '71, Sioux City, IA, December 19, 2025
James "Jim" G. Gubbels '72, Reno, NV, January 31, 2026
Thomas Ford Malone, Jr. '73, Waukee, IA, October 29, 2025
Matthew E. Murfield '73, Grant, NE, February 8, 2026
Scott Bresnahan '74, Le Mars, IA, February 9, 2026
Jack Lee Dailey Jr. '74, Sioux Falls, SD, November 3, 2025
Timothy "Tim" Sudbeck '76, Kingsley, IA, April 22, 2026

1980s

Lori Ann (Weigand) Morehead '81, Sioux City, IA January 9, 2026
Joan P. (Mari) Koser '84, Sioux City, IA, May 23, 2026
Gina Streeter Dam '86, McCook Lake, SD, October 13, 2025
Kenneth "Kenny" Goetz '86, Las Vegas, NV, October 20, 2025

1990s

Shawn W. Watson '90, Omaha, NE, November 2, 2023
Meghan R. Nelson '95, Sioux City, IA, September 12, 2026
Kathleen Ann Welsh '99, Durham, NC, October 5, 2025

2000s

Shannon L. Kulawik '03, Champlin, MN, May 17, 2026
Tanisha (Girard) Andersen '06, Dakota City, NE, September 7, 2022
Holly Jo Dunn '07, Sioux City, IA, March 9, 2026
Robert Ralph "Bobby" Kuehl III '10, Spirit Lake, IA, February 4, 2026

Family Members

Carol A. (Johnson) Beacom '56, sister of Veronica (Roni Johnson) Connors '59, Treasure Island, FL, December 14, 2024

Jeanette Jordan (Woolworth) '56, wife of Merle Woolworth, mother of Bryan Woolworth '76, David Woolworth '79, grandmother of Kyle Woolworth '99, Holstein, IA, September 19, 2025

Patrick "Pat" C. McCormick '58, father of Charles "Chad" McCormick '87, Timothy "Tim" McCormick '90, Katie (McCormick) Hanke '98, Morrisville, NC, April 29, 2026

Donald L. Meinen '58, brother of Father Dennis Meinen '69, Jim Meinen '68, Gene Meinen '65, Olathe, KS, August 29, 2025

William L. "Bill" Griencewic '60, husband of Judy (Hettinger) Griencewic '60, Sioux City, IA November 29, 2025

Michael F. Wilmes, Sr. '60, husband of Louise (Hogh) Wilmes '60, Sioux City, IA, March 30, 2025

Lynn F. (Barry) Uhl '60, wife of David L. Uhl '60, Deceased, San Diego, CA, May 5, 2026

Helen M. (Westendorf) Miller '62, wife of Paul M. Miller '59, Deceased, Sioux City, IA, June 2, 2026

Lorelei (Smith) Bruneau '65, daughter of James Bruneau (Teacher and Coach from '60-'65) and Mille Smith, mother of Becky (Bruneau) Hittle '92, Steve Bruneau '93, Ben Bruneau '96, sister of Kevin Smith '69, Collette McCullough '71, Shannon Smith, Shavonne Kopal '75, Colin Smith '78, Mary Catherine Doerr '82, aunt of Alex Smith '94 Eric Smith '97, Flynn McCullough, '05, Brigid McCullough '07, Lawton, IA, August 30, 2025

Sandra R. Keane '65, wife of Thomas R. Keane '65, Sioux City, IA, February 9, 2026

Denny Lee Johnson '66, brother of Veronica (Roni Johnson) Connors '59, Nashville, TN, February 1, 2025

Thomas A. Vakulskas '66, husband of Barbara (Dagle) Vakulskas '67, Sioux City, IA, May 20, 2026

David J. Garvis '67, husband of Frieda (Mech) Garvis '67, Eldersburg, MD, August 17, 2025

Paula (Nichols) Shanahan '67, wife of Robert L. Shanahan '66, Rex, GA, September 2, 2025

Barb (Stuart) Duzik '68, wife of John E. Duzik '68, Sioux City, IA, December 13, 2025

James "Jim" G. Gubbels '72, husband of Cynthia "Cindy" (Jamgotch) Gubbels '72, Reno, NV, January 31, 2026

Phillip F. Thompson '71, husband of Mary Pat (O'Neill) Thompson '71, Deceased, Sioux City, IA, December 19, 2025

Thomas Ford Malone, Jr. '73, brother of Molly (Malone) Tursi '71, Matthew Malone '75, Michael Malone '76, Marti (Malone) Starr '77, Peggy (Malone) Fagerland '79, Katie (Malone) Meador '80, Lizzie Malone '82, Eileen (Malone) Hatfield '84, Waukee, IA, October 29, 2025

Margaret "Margie" Ann Hinrichsen, mother of Chuck Hinrichsen '71, Sergeant Bluff, IA, April 20, 2026

Judge Dewie J. Gaul, father of Jackie Gaul '70, Sandara Gaul '76, Thomas Gaul '77, Robert Gaul '79, Randall Gaul '80, Laurie Gaul '82, Sioux City, IA, June 20, 2025

Gary Lee Determan, Sioux City, IA, December 1, 2025
father of Jon Determan '90, Liz (Keane) Determan '90, Jill (Determan) McCaulley '95, Nick Determan '97

Gloria Champ, Georgetown, TX, August 31, 2025
mother of Chris Champ '78, Andy Champ '79, Mike Champ '80, Mark Champ '80, Beth Champ '85

Class Notes



1950s

Members of Bishop Heelan's first graduating class of 1950 gathered in March 2026 to reconnect and reminisce. Pictured are Mike Larson, Jim Walsh, Mary Ann Skarnulis (front), Maxine Goeden, Robert Rehal, and Phillip Neri. Not pictured is Sylvia Tritz.

1960s

Bob Strawn '61 recently reflected on the journey that began at Bishop Heelan. After graduating in 1961, he earned an economics degree from South Dakota State, served in Vietnam after being drafted into the U.S. Army, and went on to a 40-year career in business management. In retirement, Bob served as mayor of Manhattan, Kansas, in 2011. He and his wife, Julia, have been married for 59 years, have two children and five grandsons, and enjoy spending their summers at a lake near Alexandria, Minnesota. Bob credits Bishop Heelan with preparing him well for a lifetime of service and success.



Ray O'Connor '65 was recently nominated for the 2025-2026 Lumen Christi Award, the Catholic Extension Society's highest honor, which recognizes individuals who radiate the light of Christ through exceptional service to the Church and their communities. A longtime real estate developer, philanthropist, and dedicated leader in the Diocese of Grand Island, Ray has played a significant role in parish and diocesan initiatives, including the development of St. Mary's Cathedral Square and service on the Diocese's Finance Council and Building Committee. Congratulations, Ray, on this well-deserved recognition!

Sister Marilyn E. Berger '68 was recently elected President of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary. She began her four-year term on July 1, 2026, and now serves on a three-member leadership team responsible for guiding the congregation and its sisters. Sister Marilyn will reside in Davenport, Iowa, during her term. Congratulations, Sister Marilyn, on this remarkable honor and leadership role.



The Class of 1967 continues to prove that Crusader friendships stand the test of time. Classmates gather regularly for lunch to catch up, share stories, and enjoy one another's company, keeping the bonds they formed at Bishop Heelan as strong as ever.

1970s







Class of 1975
CELEBRATES 50 YEARS!

The Bishop Heelan Class of 1975 recently celebrated its 50th reunion, welcoming nearly 100 classmates and spouses back to Sioux City from across the country. The weekend was filled with laughter, memories, and meaningful moments, including honoring classmates who have passed, recognizing classmate Matt Malone with a special Heelan jersey, and reconnecting with friends old and new. The reunion also left a lasting legacy by establishing the Class of 1975 Scholarship Fund, which has already grown to $16,000 to help Heelan seniors facing financial hardship complete their education. The Class of 1975 proved that while 50 years may pass, the bonds of being a Crusader never fade.



Linda (Blackburn) Lees '70 was recently nominated for the 2026 Women of Excellence Award in the Women Helping Women category through Women Aware. She was recognized for her longstanding commitment to serving others through volunteer work with the Retired Educators group, the Red Hats, and the Sergeant Bluff Legion. Linda also helps connect women with local food banks and community resources and shares her love of card games by teaching Canasta through Western Iowa Tech Community College's Lifelong Learning program. Congratulations, Linda, on this well-deserved recognition!



Joe Steil '75 was recently recognized by the Iowa Bankers Association for reaching the remarkable milestone of 50 years as an Iowa community banker. Throughout his career, Joe has served in leadership roles across the state, mentored countless bankers, and dedicated more than five decades to community service through numerous civic and charitable organizations. A 1975 Bishop Heelan graduate and former Student Council treasurer, Joe retired in 2025 from Community Bank & Trust Co. in Muscatine and continues to remain active in volunteer service. Congratulations, Joe, on this well-deserved honor!



Antonio "Tony" '76 and Michelle Audino were recently awarded the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice Medal, one of the highest honors the Catholic Church bestows upon laypeople, in recognition of their outstanding service to the Church. Presented by the Archdiocese of Seattle, the award honors their unwavering commitment to advancing Catholic education, philanthropy, parish life, and expanding access to Catholic schools for families. Congratulations to Tony and Michelle on this well-deserved recognition and for continuing their family's legacy of supporting Catholic education.

While attending a global humanitarian conference in Denver last June, **Donna (Mousel) Ludwig '78** unexpectedly found herself reconnecting with fellow Crusaders. Introduced to Teri Larson Ingram, a fellow Heelan alumna who graduated one year ahead of her, the conversation quickly shifted from their humanitarian work to fond memories of their days at Heelan. Donna also met another attendee whose grandchildren now attend Bishop Heelan and Mater Dei, making the event feel even more like home. Donna credits Sr. Anthony and her time in Heelan's Mission Club for inspiring her lifelong passion for serving others.



Joyce Geary '78 is enjoying retirement after a career as a principal. She lives in Omaha and spends her winters in Mission, Texas. Joyce stays active as an Associate with the Servants of Mary, plays guitar and sings at Mass, crochets hats for hospice patients, prepares lunches for those experiencing homelessness at Holy Family, and makes baby quilts for infants in the NICU at Methodist Hospital. She sums up this season of life simply: "Loving life!"

Julie (Verzani) Marr '78 recently launched Maps with a Mission, an initiative creating high-quality physical maps of the Siouxland area while supporting the local community. To learn more about the project and its mission, visit www.MapsWithAMission.org.

1980s



Bob Kull '85 was recognized as the winner of Premier Bankcard's annual employee volunteer challenge, earning the opportunity to designate a nonprofit organization to receive a charitable donation.



Class of 1986
CELEBRATES 40 YEARS!

The Bishop Heelan Class of 1986 celebrated 40 years on August 14-15, 2026, in Sioux City. The weekend included a Friday evening gathering at Buffalo Alice, a tour of the new Bishop Heelan High School and Mass on Saturday, followed by dinner, the opening of the class time capsule, and an evening of reconnecting at the Sioux City Railroad Museum.

1990s



Members of the **Class of 1992** continued their annual tradition of traveling together, this year heading to Deadwood for a weekend of friendship and fun. Pictured from left to right are John Stusse, Tony Vondrak, Kelly Rooney, Kelly Frisch, and Matt Verzani. Also part of the trip, but not pictured, were Chad Rooney and Scott Boyle.





Col. Benjamin Uhl '95 attended the 2026 State of the Union address in Washington, D.C., as the guest of U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley. A member of the Iowa Air National Guard's 185th Air Refueling Wing, Ben has served his country for more than 25 years, including deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. Promoted to colonel in 2024, he also serves the Siouxland community as the owner and optometrist at Sergeant Bluff Eyecare. Congratulations, Ben, on this distinguished recognition.

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Class Notes continued.

2010s



The Class of 2015 recently gathered for their reunion, taking a tour of the new high school before spending the evening catching up and making new memories together at Buffalo Alice.



Jake Brown '18 recently earned his Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from the University of Iowa. He now serves as a pediatric physical therapist at Boys Town Research Hospital in Omaha, Nebraska. Congratulations, Jake, on this outstanding accomplishment!



Sean McGarry '18 recently celebrated two exciting milestones. He married Ashley Czerniak on November 8, 2025, in Penticton, British Columbia. The day before, his film Destroy This Tape, which he directed, was released on Tubi. The production also featured several fellow Crusader alumni behind the scenes, including Brianna Martinez '20, Erin Cleary '20, and Bel Martinez '22, making it a project with strong Heelan connections.

2020s

Christopher Krogh '20 recently earned his Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Benedictine College. Congratulations, Christopher, on this outstanding academic achievement!



Start Planning Your Upcoming Class Reunion Now!

To get started on your next gathering, email Patty Considine-McClintock at Patty.McClintock@bishopheelan.org.