

# The IRISH LENS

Spring 2024





# A First: State Champs!

By Marin Ruskusky (PND '24), Girls Basketball Team Manager

The 2023-2024 Lady Irish basketball team made history by ending the season with a 34-4 record and a first-place finish in the Class 2A state championship! After the past two years of managing the team, it was easy to see how this group of girls accomplished all that they did. The passion each girl had for the game was evident every practice and game. They never complained about being there for early morning weights or shooting, and never hesitated to stay after practice to work on different plays. Each and every player on the team wanted to finish out the season strong and become state champions.

Although winning the state tournament was the end goal, it wasn't the main focus of every practice or every game. At each practice, the girls focused on getting better in the moment and putting forth every ounce of effort they could for that day. Then a new day came and they would repeat the process.

I believe there are a few reasons why this team went all the way. To the girls, the team wasn't just a team. It was a sisterhood. The love that these girls had for each other pushed them to do better for themselves and for each other. This team loved each other like a true family and exemplified that on the court.

Secondly, the girls had faith surrounding them constantly. We prayed before every game and practice. They joined together to share their faith with each other and used that as fuel in every step of the way, entrusting their season to Our Blessed Mother, and Saint Sebastian, the patron saint of athletes.

Lastly, this year the team was motivated by something bigger than the team itself. During the summer before the season began, Coach Langholf's son Dylan was diagnosed with cancer. It became the girls' mission to support their coach and play the way that Dylan couldn't during his treatment. Toughness became a theme in practice and games, and I was able to see a new sense of passion within the girls. Senior co-captain of the team Brigid Dooley said, "We felt like it was more than just basketball."

The Lady Irish were a team like no other, not just because they made PND history, but because of the values they shared and the bond they created. The love these girls had for each other and the game will be what makes history in the Peoria Notre Dame girls basketball program. I am truly thankful for my time with this team and the lessons they have taught me. Being part of the Lady Irish family is one of the biggest blessings anyone could have.



Join us for

# The ShamROCK

## INTRODUCING PEORIA NOTRE DAME'S FALL SPORTS TEAMS

Friday  
Aug. 23  
2024

5 - 10 p.m.

### Location

PND Athletic Fields,  
upper parking lot

### Food

Alwan and Sons Meat Company  
grilled sandwiches, chips, and sodas

### Entertainment

Live band: 3 and a Half Men

### Beverages

Brewers Distributing Co.  
beer and seltzer tent

### Kids Activities

Balloon animals, face painting,  
tinsel hair, and caricatures



## Peoria Notre Dame FAN Club

Funding Athletic/Activity Needs

Athletics and activities provide many benefits and life lessons for our students including exercise, teamwork, and good sportsmanship. You can help us support these programs with a gift. Donate to our FAN Club, and help our students grow in strength and character through athletics and activities.



[pndhs.org/fan-club](https://pndhs.org/fan-club)





## The Irish Fight *is Strong and Mighty*

Peoria Notre Dame sports teams and activities enjoyed a successful year in competition. In addition to the girls basketball team winning the state title, our girls soccer team placed third at state.

The team also had its most impressive record in school history with 25-2-1.

## Boys Soccer Continues to be a Powerhouse

After a state championship win in 2022, the boys soccer team ended their 2023 season with a second place trophy in the Class 2A state championship. Junior Kayden Hudson earned the United Soccer Coaches All-American recognition.



## Wrestling Warriors



PND wrestling had the best year yet, with the boys ending their season as regional champions. In addition, junior Ian Akers placed second at state in his weight class, and junior Autumnne Williams became the first PND girl wrestler to place at state finishing in third for her weight class.





## Impressive Athletes

The boys baseball team was notable as they went all the way to win the sectional title which was the first time since 2014. Other teams and athletes performed exceptionally well this year including:

- Girls swim finished third in conference, and junior Bailey Amerman qualified for state.
- Every member of the boys swim team had a personal best time at the sectional.
- The boys basketball team was regional champs.
- The dance team took the top spot at a competition in Dunlap, qualifying them for the IDTA state competition.
- Girls track had 5 state qualifiers (4 alternates).
- Boys track had 9 state qualifiers (4 alternates).



## Accomplishments in Activities

We are proud of sophomore Henry Olsen for being selected for the All State Honors Chorus. And the drama club's spring performance of Rogers and Hammerstein's musical "Cinderella" was a huge success.

To top it off, the chess team qualified for state, scholastic bowl finished their regular season with a 14-6 record, and our robotics team won their very first competition.



## On the Cover

Shea Larson, Emy Wardle, Abigail Chaddock, Mya Wardle, Alli Stickelmaier, Rylie Bare, and Elly Bare, featured left to right on the front cover, played on both the championship-winning basketball team and state third place soccer team. Photo by Jessica Stickelmaier (PND parent).

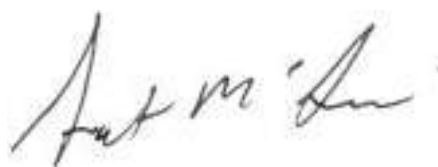


# A LETTER FROM THE COO

Peoria Notre Dame High School's legacy of more than 160 years in the Peoria area is a testament to the efforts of everyone in our community. From the teachers to the students to families and alumni, it is important to recognize the key supporters of Peoria Notre Dame. It is wonderful to celebrate our school's amazing achievements and milestones within academics, athletics, extracurriculars, and service to the community.

Central to our success is our foundation in faith. Peoria Notre Dame is a Catholic high school, and our mission is to ultimately form disciples of Jesus Christ. For the past three years, it has been my privilege to work with amazing supporters. The recent momentum has been truly inspiring and is a reflection of the dedication and hard work of our entire school community. We continue to witness the fruits of our collective efforts, which are represented in the accomplishments of our students.

Additionally, I encourage you to email me at [g.mcinnis@pndhs.org](mailto:g.mcinnis@pndhs.org) to receive my COO quarterly update. It will provide detailed insights into our progress and future plans. Together, we can ensure that Peoria Notre Dame remains the best high school in the Peoria area.



Grant McInnis, Chief Operating Officer

MISSING  
*Composites*

Since the fall, generous alums have helped us restore several composite photos to Alumni Hall. Classes still missing include:

AOL '29	AOL/SI '75
SI '60	AOL/SI '77
SI '66	AOL/SI '84
AOL/SI '68	BHS '85
BHS '75	AOL/SI '87

If you would like to contribute to restoring these composites, please email [t.shane@pndhs.org](mailto:t.shane@pndhs.org).

## Upcoming Reunions

The following classes will be holding reunions this year:

- **AOL/SI Class of 1979** on June 21 & 22. Contact Christy Frampton at [christyframp10@gmail.com](mailto:christyframp10@gmail.com).
- **BHS Class of 1984** on July 13. Contact Chris Coogan at [coogan66@gmail.com](mailto:coogan66@gmail.com).
- **AOL/SI Class of 1974** on August 24. Contact Mary Anderson at [acrew241@gmail.com](mailto:acrew241@gmail.com).
- **BHS Class of 1969** on September 13 & 14. Contact Terry Best at [tabest18@gmail.com](mailto:tabest18@gmail.com).
- **AOL/SI Class of 1984** on September 20 & 21. Contact Susie Hobin Jenkins at [susie6505@yahoo.com](mailto:susie6505@yahoo.com).
- **AOL/SI Class of 1969** on September 27 & 28. Contact Laura Dodge Havran at [lhavran1@aol.com](mailto:lhavran1@aol.com).
- **AOL/SI Class of 1964** on September 27 & 28. Contact Fred Schlink at [fredfcs@aol.com](mailto:fredfcs@aol.com).
- **BHS Class of 1974** on October 11 & 12. Contact Donna Draher at [steveanddonnadraher@gmail.com](mailto:steveanddonnadraher@gmail.com).

# A LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL



While forming disciples of Jesus Christ is an integral part of our mission statement, I'd also like to highlight the community aspect of that statement. It is the community aspect of our mission that allows us to share and grow in knowledge, faith, and service. Hebrews 10:24 invites us to "consider how to rouse one another to love and good works." Several initiatives we've started at PND this year are helping us build community and encourage one another to pursue prayer, friendship, and accountability.

One diocesan-wide effort put the Hallow app into the hands of all our students, faculty, and staff. The largest Catholic app for prayer and meditation, Hallow provides on-demand podcasts, prayers, challenges, and praise and worship music for our community. Teachers incorporate Hallow music and reflections into class, and small groups use prayers and homilies when they meet.



Another effort to grow in faith and community is that of Salt & Light, a monthly all-school prayer event featuring guest speakers, praise and worship music, and small group discussions. What a blessing it is to have time in the middle of our day to pray as a community and discuss the ways Scripture applies to our lives. Thus far, we've had one of our science teachers (Sister Agnes Paulina) and a local priest (Father Daniel Dionesotes from St. Philomena) speak about prayer, vocations, and doing God's will in our daily lives.



Though Phone Free Fridays initially caused some grumbling, our students, faculty, and staff have gotten creative as they've put away their phones during advisory time on Fridays and socialized with one another. From playing board games to throwing footballs on the track to making slime and painting magnets, our students and teachers are embracing building community, growing closer in friendship, and stepping away from their screens. We will continue to expand our community-building opportunities as we rouse one another to love and good works.

Jacqueline Kelly, Principal







# Campus Ministry

By Father Daniel McShane, Chaplain

## MARCH FOR LIFE

Campus Ministry took students to both the National and State Marches for Life this year, in Washington D.C. and Springfield, IL respectively. In addition to the march on our nation's capital, our students were able to participate in a Mass with more than 12,000 people at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, visit the Capitol building, and walk through Arlington Cemetery to witness the number of men and women who have laid down their lives for the sake of our nation's freedom.

PND strongly believes in the infinite dignity of every human life, from conception to natural death, and our students see how important it is to give public witness to the value of human life in our culture. One student writes, "Now more than ever, the value of life is being questioned in our culture. It is up to young voices to shift that conversation to one that protects the dignity, sanctity, and value of all life from conception until natural death. Attending the March for Life reminds us that we are never alone in that fight!"

Writing of his experience after the Illinois march, another student writes, "It was awesome seeing the number of people representing such a powerful cause. What was so remarkable was the joy that everyone had while marching for life."

Our Teens for Life club stays up-to-date on current events and judicial cases that relate to the pro-life cause, and are being formed to give joy-filled witness to the goodness of life!



## LENT

During Lent, PND Campus Ministry ran programs called Exodus and Magnify, which are designed to help men and women grow personally and spiritually during the Lenten season. More than 80 students participated!

Exodus is the program for men. Just as the Israelites journeyed 40 years in the desert from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land, men in Exodus are invited to journey together for 40 days to detach more from the world through limited technology use and grow closer to God and one another by spending more time in prayer and in fraternal gatherings. One student wrote, "Exodus helped me fully realize and enjoy the importance of brotherhood." Another wrote, "Exodus was great for me. The discipline, while very challenging, was so incredibly worth it. I had significantly less noise in my life, which helped me focus more on the Lord."



Similarly, Magnify helps women "magnify" the Lord more in their lives, by detaching themselves more from the world and technology while increasing time in prayer and meditation on Scripture. One student wrote, "Participating in Magnify allowed me to find a group of faith-oriented people that inspire me to strive for holiness and build my relationship with the Lord. I will forever be grateful for the Christ-centered friendships I have formed through this group." Another writes, "Magnify helped me rebel against the modern culture and grow in God's love at the same time."

These programs intend to have an impact far beyond the season of Lent. The acts of sacrifice, self-denial, accountability, and increased prayer have built a solid foundation for these students to help them face the many challenges life may bring their way. These programs show that true freedom and peace come from a life of deep prayer, community, self-sacrifice, and service.

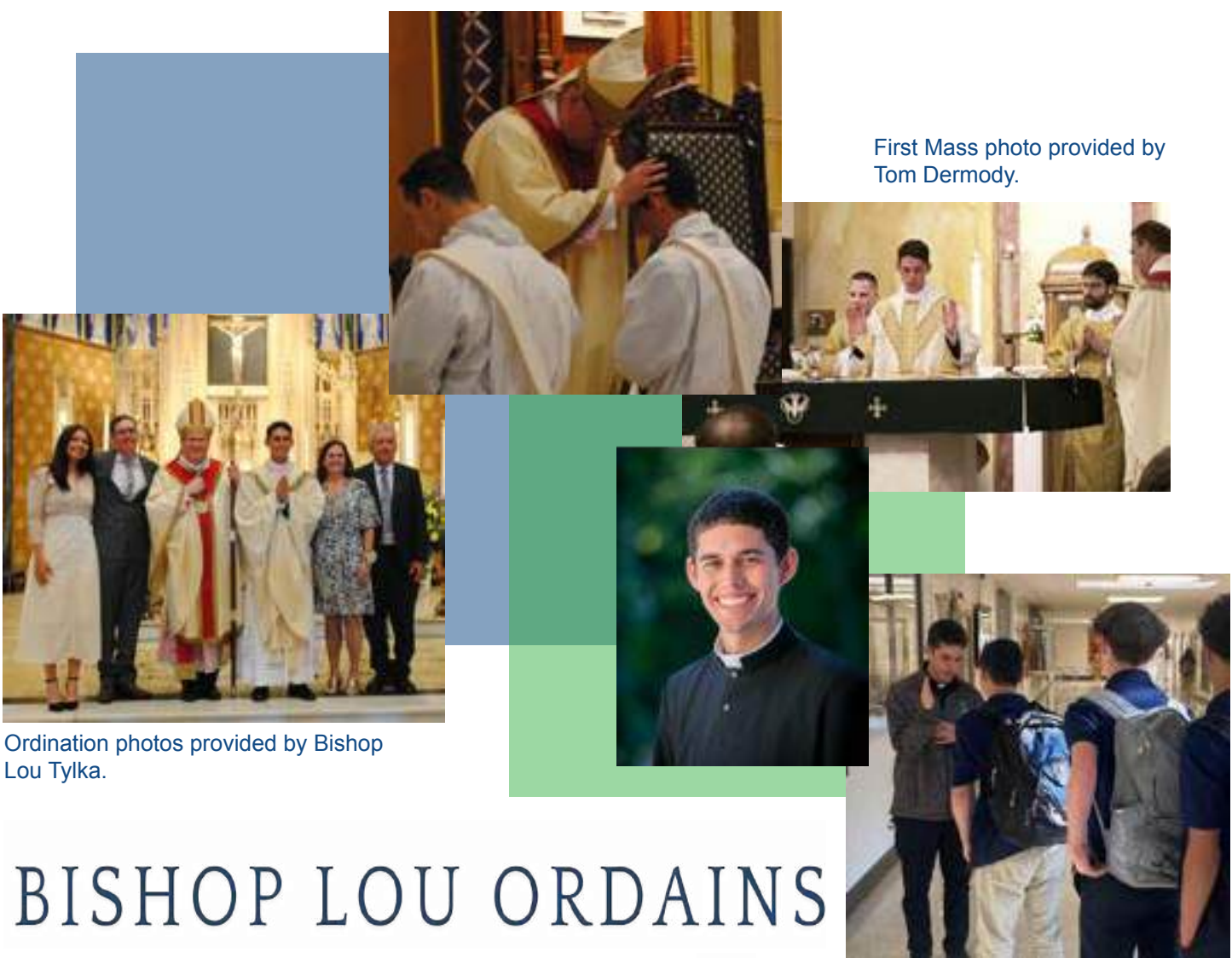
## STUDENTS ENTER CHURCH

This Easter, we welcomed four PND students into the Catholic Church: Bryce Lai, Keelyn McCombs, Riley Nowlan, and Sidney Yoder. Bryce and Keelyn were baptized and received Confirmation and First Holy Eucharist. Riley and Sidney made professions of faith and received Confirmation and First Holy Eucharist.

The joy of the Lord was alive in each of them as they were welcomed into the Church. Each student came into the Church through different paths: a friend from PND, a Campus Ministry event, or a teacher that made a big impact on their life of faith. Their conversions testify to the power of an entire Catholic community that is committed to living the mission and making disciples of Jesus Christ!







First Mass photo provided by Tom Dermody.

Ordination photos provided by Bishop Lou Tylka.

# BISHOP LOU ORDAINS

## & PND Celebrates

The Diocese of Peoria rejoiced when four men, including Father Nicholas Conner, PND '14, were ordained to the priesthood on May 25. The following day, Father Conner was the celebrant of his first Mass which took place at his home parish, Holy Family Church in Peoria. The sanctuary was filled with clergy, transitional deacons, and seminarians who showed their support for Father Conner, and the pews were filled with elated parishioners and friends.

On May 29, Father Conner came to Peoria Notre Dame to celebrate Mass and offer blessings to our students on their first day of finals. Reflecting on his first visit to Peoria Notre Dame as a priest, Father Conner commented, "I was able to celebrate Mass at the PND chapel today, and it was a wonderful reminder of the time I spent there. I have fond memories of so many of my teachers, whose personal example of living the

faith were compelling witnesses. I am especially grateful for the theology classes, which began to reveal to me the rationality of faith. To be Catholic is to be a recipient of the wisdom passed on from the saints who lived before us. Ours is a rich tradition and this is the center of Catholic education. My time at PND prepared me for my vocation by revealing to me that life is received as a gift and is meant to be gifted away."

Father Conner's first assignment is to serve as the parochial vicar of Blessed Sacrament Parish in Morton. We look forward to having Father Conner return to his alma mater for future visits.



# Newly Established Planned Giving Society



We are pleased to announce the formation of The 1863 Society, and you are invited to join this group of people who have remembered Peoria Notre Dame in their estate plan. The number 1863 refers to the year that Catholic secondary education began to take root in Central Illinois. For generations, families have been able to send their children to a Catholic school, knowing that they would receive an exceptional education and a solid Catholic foundation. A gift from an estate can allow Peoria Notre Dame to grow and flourish for future generations. It can help the school branch out by providing more offerings and educating more students. For these reasons, the image of a tree containing a large root structure, a solid trunk, and many branches was selected to be part of the logo. There are many ways to make a gift. They include the following:

- Bequests from a will or trust
- Retirement Plan Assets such as IRAs, 401(k)s, or 403(b)s
- Charitable Gift Annuities
- Life Insurance Policies
- Charitable Remainder Trusts
- Charitable Lead Trusts
- Real Estate or Property Gifts

*"Including Peoria Notre Dame in my estate plan is a fitting way to make a lasting difference in the lives of young people who will inherit the future." - AOL/SS '79 alum*

Please consult with a financial planner or an attorney to discuss your wishes and the best way you can provide support for the future students of Peoria Notre Dame. If you already have a will or trust, it can be a very simple revision to add Peoria Notre Dame to your plan. Once Peoria Notre Dame is part of your estate plan, please let me know by emailing me at [c.dermody@pndhs.org](mailto:c.dermody@pndhs.org) or by calling at 309-691-8741. I would enjoy thanking you and sending you a custom-made 1863 Society lapel pin which you can wear with pride.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cindy Dermody".

Cindy Dermody  
Director of Advancement

*"Bergan High School set the stage for my success in life, and a gift through estate planning will ensure that for future students."*  
*- Joe (BHS '68) and Linda Couri*





# LOVE. LAUGH.

## *Legacy.*

By Clare Kube (PND '22)

Two longstanding teachers will be retiring this year. Mrs. Kathleen Svoboda and Mr. Tim Irwin leave Peoria Notre Dame students, graduates, and co-workers with decades of memories, laughter, and love.

Kathleen Svoboda began her teaching career in 1981 at Spalding Institute, and she has been a solid and steady anchor for the English department ever since. In her numerous years of teaching, Kathy said the most significant change has been the integration of technology into the learning environment. "Students have lost the ability to write, collect research from printed sources, and generate citations well," she said.

Despite the ever-changing learning challenges, Catholic education has been a lifelong passion for Kathy, and she expresses that her students "are a delight, and to watch them learn and understand the concepts is wonderful."

Patrick Couri (PND '21) recalls, "Mrs. Svoboda was always animated and entertaining in her lectures, especially when discussing *The Canterbury Tales*."

She further detailed her love for the camaraderie and support of the faculty and staff of Peoria Notre Dame, stating that they are "truly a family" and desire nothing more than the success and mentorship of their students.







Her favorite PND tradition remains the Christmas Basket Drive. She says the drive “pushes the students to look outside of themselves and fosters community among the students and staff while helping those in need.”

Ann Kube (PND '94) fondly remembers, “Mrs. Svoboda taught us that tough love was real love, and she loved all of us enough to expect a lot out of us.”

After 42 years of passionately teaching, Kathy is looking forward to retirement. As she begins the next chapter of her life, the wisdom she most wishes to impart on her students and future classes is “choose to be kind. It is those little unremembered acts of kindness that leave the most impact and make the world a better place.”

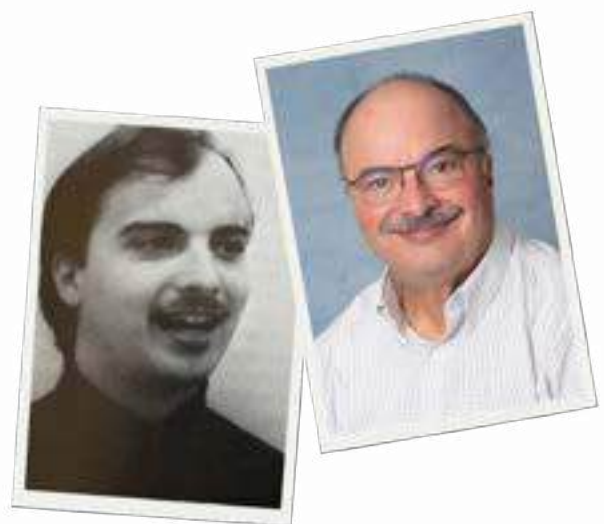
Kathy is joined in retirement this year by theology teacher Tim Irwin. After graduating from AOL/SI in 1972, Tim studied at Illinois State University and later Holy Apostles College and Seminary. A lover of the theatre, Tim began his career in professional theatre management before transitioning into teaching at AOL/SI in 1979.

Irwin fostered an environment where learning came with a laugh. As a continuation of his love for the theatre, Maggie Guingrich (PND '22) states that “he always began his class by suggesting we ‘add a little mood lighting’ to view the slides and he was ready with a pun or a one-liner.”

As a teacher, Tim’s greatest joy came from sharing the faith with his students. Having discerned as a seminarian briefly, he strived to instill in his students a deeper appreciation for their own faith and understanding of other world religions.

Amy Pfeiffer-Birnbaum (PND '03) recalls her favorite Irwinism which has stuck with her over the years. This advice is “People always say to think outside the box. The more challenging task is to find the box and learn to think inside it.”

The final lesson Tim wishes to share with students is that, “there’s more to happiness than pleasure and gratification. Love the Father as Jesus does, and love others as Jesus loves them. Through that love, which is the commitment to the good of the other, you will find true joy and contentment in life.”







The Invest in Kids Tax Scholarship Program was a state program allowing people to donate money which provided funding for qualified students to choose their best-fit school even if the family could not pay the entire cost of tuition. The Invest in Kids Tax Scholarship program began with the 2018-19 school year. That year, the financial needs of 13 Peoria Notre Dame students were met. This school year, we were able to meet the financial needs of all 71 students who applied as a result of \$620,000 in donations.

Unfortunately, at the end of 2023, the Illinois legislators decided not to renew this great program. And during the recent spring legislative session, the state budget did not include a tax credit scholarship program nor did it include any phase-out language for the students who utilized the Invest in Kids program this year.

This lack of action from our elected officials will now put more importance on our Peoria Notre Dame Scholarship Fund. If you are interested in donating to our general scholarship fund or to one of our existing named scholarships, you can do so with the enclosed envelope or online at <https://www.pndhs.org/support-our-school/>. If you would like information on how you can support future Peoria Notre Dame students by creating a named scholarship in memory of a loved one or in celebration of someone, please contact Cindy Dermody at [c.dermody@pndhs.org](mailto:c.dermody@pndhs.org) or by phone at 309-691-8741.

Thank you to the following individuals who supported our students through the Empower Illinois program in 2023. *Donors are identified here as they were listed on the Empower Illinois reports.*

#### 25 Anonymous Donations

Thomas L. Adams  
Mary Alwan  
Michelle Baker  
Michael Bartley  
Joe Beaudry  
John Becker  
John L. Bender  
Jeffrey Birkel  
James Carlson  
John & Maria Carroll  
Matthew Coulter  
Patricia Craig  
Mark Dalbey  
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Robert Yuhas





The PND gym was full of energy on March 23 when a sold-out crowd gathered to enjoy our gala which had a theme of “PND Madness.” The stage consisted of a desk resembling a broadcast studio, overhead lights and sound similar to that of a national sports show. Guests included Bishop Lou Tylka, about 15 area priests, seminarians, and sisters. Also, in attendance were PND parents, alums, members of our athletic committee and our consultative board. Our volunteers who staffed our games were easily identified as they wore referee shirts, and our students who assisted our guests at their dinner tables wore PND basketball jerseys. During the program, we honored senior Bobby Morris for raising more than \$36,000 for the school in 12 Days of Christmas Cash and Car Raffle tickets throughout four years.

At the conclusion of the live auction, we had surprise visitors - our state champion girls basketball team entered the gym wearing their team sweat suits and their state medals. They came in dribbling basketballs which they had signed after the state tournament, just a short time before the gala. The team was welcomed with an energetic standing ovation. The signed balls were auctioned off for our Fund-A-Need initiative which was to replace a 14-passenger bus. Thanks to the generosity of many, our goal was met and exceeded as our net profit for the evening was \$232,800, the largest in PND gala history.



Joe Girardi (SI '82), who has earned baseball World Series rings as both a player and a manager, offered to assist PND by signing limited edition bobbleheads of himself. People who raised their paddle to donate \$1,000 or more received a bobblehead. These special remembrances of our school history added to the energy of the evening. Thank you to Joe Girardi and all of our sponsors, donors, and volunteers who made “PND Madness” such a successful and enjoyable evening.





# A COACHING FAMILY

Former PND soccer stars follow their father into college ranks.

By Tom Dermody, former PND parent

Say “Hello, Coach” at a gathering of the DeRose family and three heads will turn. Former Peoria Notre Dame soccer stars and siblings Raleigh (PND ’10) and JR DeRose (PND ’16) have followed their father, Jim, into the college coaching ranks.


“We talk almost every day, and I am always picking his brain,” said JR of his dad, who retired from coaching in November after guiding the Bradley University men’s soccer team to 267 wins and national successes during 28 seasons. “Raleigh and I also speak regularly,” JR added, “and we will talk about coaching and soccer and what we can do to hone our craft.”

Those conversations are no longer distant. Just before Christmas, Raleigh – a wing player for the PND Lady Irish who later was a fierce defender for Knox College in Galesburg – was named head coach of the women’s soccer program at Illinois State University in Normal.

She had previously served eight years on the coaching staff of Brown University in Rhode Island, the last three as associate head coach for the Ivy League soccer powerhouse.

In April, JR – a standout goalkeeper at PND and later at Mercer University in Georgia – accepted a men’s soccer assistant coaching job at Northwestern University in Evanston. The hiring followed a year as assistant coach at Mercer, where JR helped lead the Bears to a 2023 Southern Conference Tournament championship. He was also assistant coach for a year at the University of North Carolina.

“I’m so excited to watch both of them and be part of their lives,” said Jim DeRose. He was quick to credit his wife, Robin, for the work ethic and love of family evident in their children. While his coaching career meant late nights and frequent travel, “Robin was at home full-time with Raleigh and JR having to do everything.”





The influence of their parents, as well as their time at Peoria Notre Dame, will always be a part of the lives of Raleigh and JR DeRose.

For example, one of the coaching lessons Raleigh learned from her father is the need to give priority to who and what is in front of you in the present moment, symbolized by the acronym W.I.N. – “What’s Important Now.” She is putting that into practice both on and off the pitch as she juggles her coaching profession and family life with husband Phil and young daughter, Anna.

She and JR watched as their dad – who now serves as president of Peoria City, a highest-level amateur team that plays in the summer – used soccer as a vehicle to teach life lessons.

“A part of coaching I learned from my dad is that coaching is a great chance to impact young people in their lives that goes well beyond winning and losing,” said JR. “At the core of what we do, sport is education.”

While both Raleigh and JR were on state-placing soccer teams at Peoria Notre Dame, their favorite memories are of people and relationships – teammates and coaches (including Jason Whalen and Mike Bare), working together toward goals in and out of soccer.

“I made the best friends there,” said Raleigh of PND, adding the school fortified her resiliency by emphasizing the life pillars of faith, family, and friends. “PND soccer taught me a good work ethic, to get up when you fall . . . that is part of your character.”

JR added that his coaches at PND “taught me the importance of competing every day and

being fully committed to a group that is more important than the individual. “They both said their father did not push them into soccer or coaching, but that they developed a love for the game on their own. Despite a five-year age difference, the siblings enjoyed kicking the ball around in the backyard in their childhood. They also had fun “kicking each other, pulling each others’ jerseys, and side-tackling one another” with no yellow card-toting referee in sight, said Raleigh with a laugh.

While supportive during their games at PND, Jim DeRose “never encroached on my time to be a student athlete,” recalled JR. But he would nervously pace the sidelines or on the baseball outfield behind the goal during their games, occasionally offering in-game advice.

“Even though it’s your job and it’s your profession,” said Jim of his spectator’s role, “when they’re your children it’s totally different.”

He said his daughter and son have different personalities and coaching styles. Raleigh, who has a bachelor’s degree in American Studies from Knox, is high energy and outgoing. JR is more reserved, measured, and analytical, and went into coaching after earning a master of business administration degree from Mercer. But both have a passion for soccer and continue to educate themselves in the coaching profession, said their proud father.

“They love mentoring, they love the game, and care deeply about the three-fold development of young people – body, mind, and soul,” he said.





BARCELONA  
MILAN  
DUBLIN  
LONDON  
PARIS



A group of recent PND graduates studying abroad this spring have made it a point to gather regularly for adventures. Spencer Joseph (PND '21), Tommy Jacob (PND '20), Caroline Williams (PND '21), Rhett Bianchi (PND '21), Mollie Unes (PND '21), and Zach Unes (PND '21) shared games, dinners, and sightseeing together during their time studying in various countries. Sometimes they were joined by visiting PND alumni.



**IRISH  
ADVENTURERS**

## Former Teacher Passes

By Katie Hausauer (PND English Faculty)

Despite my aversion to numbers and all concepts of math, I found myself drawn into the classroom of Mr. Ken Stetzler because more than math happened within the perimeter of those four walls.

To start, the most unique and varied YouTube music videos would welcome students each day as they walked into Mr. Stetzler's math classroom. One day it might be Irish folk songs, and then the next day would be a 90s boy band ballad, followed by an iconic jazz musician performance. Students never knew what sort of video to expect, and the music would always be a point of interesting conversation, a moment that students probably didn't realize gave Mr. Stetzler a chance to connect with kids before tackling math. Class would begin with an extemporaneous prayer from the heart and a subsequent fun fact or piece of trivia from Mr. Stetzler's vast array of endless knowledge. The man knew about everything. It was only after all those moments of connecting with students that Mr. Stetzler shared his greatest gift. He taught. He would navigate students through equations and formulas, answer their questions, challenge them to think outside the box, and encourage them to try again. Students enjoyed being in math class, not necessarily for the content (although there are those students out there!) but because Mr. Stetzler connected with them.



Mr. Stetzler taught math at PND for over ten years and retired in 2020. On May 4th, 2024, Mr. Stetzler passed away. He was certainly a "work dad" for me, offering daily words of encouragement, especially in my first years of teaching. His legacy remains for the many students he taught, the faculty he enjoyed, and the family he loved.

# Wings...

Deborah Ann Robinson (BHS '69) died 5/3/23  
William Sonnemaker (BHS '78) died 8/21/23  
Joanne Heyd Schaber (AOL '51) died 10/1/23  
Mary Michele Kocher Couri (AOL/SI '78) died 10/4/23  
Patricia Inskeep O'Connell (AOL '57) died 10/13/23  
Robert George Jr. (PND '91) died 10/17/23  
Sister Mary Lucia Wagner (BHS '78) died 10/20/23  
Michael McIntyre (SI '62) died 10/21/23  
Thomas Bishop (SI '65) died 10/21/23  
John A. Slevin (SI '53) died 11/1/23  
Anthony Doyle (SI '43) died 11/1/23  
Sue Ann Mueller McWhirter (AOL '60) died 11/3/23  
Claire Schlehuber Reilly (AOL '43) died 11/9/23  
Timothy Beckman (SI '61) died 11/20/23  
Mark Buettner (PND '92) died 11/20/23  
Nancy Wolfe Gunther (AOL/SI '81) died 11/24/23  
Gloria Capranica Murphy (AOL '60) died 11/26/23  
Judith Cady Maher (AOL '58) died 12/4/23  
Maureen Cain Wetzel (AOL '53) died 12/4/23  
John Shinn (BHS '73) died 12/4/23  
James E. Kelly (SI '65) died 12/5/23  
Kathryn Yakoff Gryz (AOL '40) died 12/6/23  
Patrick Money (SI '71) died 12/12/23  
David Hanley (BHS '87) died 12/16/23  
Eugene Martin (SI '48) died 12/17/23  
Mary Pat Duncanson Lambie (AOL '48) died 12/19/23  
Mary Brennan (AOL '50) died 12/25/23  
Mary Rick Schuck (AOL '47) died 12/25/23  
Eleanor Walloch Maroon (AOL '66) died 12/26/23  
Eileen Wilson Martyn (AOL '43) died 1/3/24  
Susan Langton (AOL '59) died 1/3/24  
Father Thomas Royer (SI '52) died 1/4/24  
Connie Streeper Pilon (AOL '70) died 1/11/24  
Lawrence Kissel (SI '62) died 1/13/24  
Sandara Kominski Pedreya (AOL '64) died 1/21/24  
Mary Margaret Murphy (AOL '44) died 1/22/24  
Annette Maibach (AOL '40) died 1/22/24  
Connie Norwood (AOL '62) died 1/25/24  
Anne Hoehne Giddens (AOL '64) died 1/26/24  
Robert Donlan (SI '54) died 1/26/24  
Norma Jean Donovan (AOL '47) died 1/29/24  
John Myatt (SI '53) died 2/4/24  
Verna Gorsage Clatt (AOI '47) died 2/9/24  
Cynthia Foley (AOL '71) died 2/14/24  
Mary Miller Tegtmeyer (AOL '64) died 2/18/24  
Margaret Craig Duhs (AOL '47) died 2/19/24  
Richard Schifeling (SI '53) died 2/20/24  
Susan Phillips Evans (BHS '76) died 2/22/24  
Alfred Suarez (SI '61) died 2/22/24  
Kimmie Shryock Christianson (BHS '74) died 2/25/24  
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Edward Palladini (AOL/SI '83) died 2/26/24  
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Bryan Hallengren (PND '01) died 2/29/24  
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Cathleen Heinz Duke (AOL '58) died 4/8/24  
Robert Peters (SI '54) died 4/9/24  
Joseph "Jay" Johnson, (BHS '69), died 4/18/24  
Mary Jean Tully Riggs (AOL '64) died 4/19/24  
Mark Schwindenhammer (BHS '74) died 4/29/24

In the Fall 2023 edition of The Irish Lens, we regreably omitted crediting Ann Kube (PND '94) with writing the article about former teacher Don Oberle. We thank Ann for this touching and beautiful remembrance.



# *Rings,*



Sarah Rashid (PND '19) married Dominic Appleton on October 14, 2023 in Peoria.



Gillian Hobin (PND '09) married David Gonzalez on August 5, 2023 at St. Philomena Church.



Juan Barzallo (PND '13) married Megan Linehan on July 30, 2023 in St. Louis.



Will Yemm (PND '18) married Genevieve Stedwill on December 2, 2023 at St. Philomena Church in Peoria.



Abby Rusk (PND '20) married Zachary Dover on September 30, 2023 at St. Mark's Church in Peoria.



# *Little Things,*



Cameron Michael Nolph was born January 6, 2024 to Sean and Amy (Carlson) Nolph (PND '09).



Louie Bruce Fiddes was born September 25, 2023 to Luke and Nicole (Aeschliman) Fiddes (both PND '10).

## *...& Tidings*



Proud BHS '86 graduate, Father Greg Nelson, was recently presented with the Distinguished Pastor Award from the Office of Catholic Schools at the Diocese of Peoria.

In March, BHS '73 alum Jim Carlson received the Neve Harms Meritorious Service to Sports Award from the Greater Peoria Area Sports Hall of Fame. He received the award for excellence in coaching basketball to Peoria area youth including Bergan and PND players for more than 35 years.



During this school year, the College Board notified the school that PND '23 graduate Edward Couri received a perfect score on his AP Research exam. Eddie was one of only 357 students (1.26%) from around the world to earn every point on this challenging, college-level examination.

Francesca (Boley) Kranz (PND '16) received a masters as a Physician's Assistant from Creighton University Medical School in December of 2023. Frankie was selected to address the graduating class at commencement.





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# Supporting Businesses

All businesses listed provided contributions between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023. All efforts were made to provide an accurate list of donors. Our apologies for any mistakes or omissions.

309 Marketing Group	Fortner Insurance	Peoria Toyota
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F & M Bank (CBI Bank & Trust)	Orthodontics Ltd.	Weaver's Fresh Food & Drink
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	Peoria Parochial Soccer League	Wright & Salmon Mortuary
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# distinguished alumni award

Peoria Notre Dame is seeking nominations for our distinguished alumni award. Nominees should demonstrate the following traits:

1. Loyal to Catholic education. 2. Active in the Catholic community, 3. Successful in personal and professional life.

Please provide the full name of the nominee, his/her school and year of graduation, and supporting credentials. The winner will be asked to attend the all-school Mass during Homecoming Week to receive the award.

Nominations are due by July 31, 2024. Send your nominations to the Alumni Office, Peoria Notre Dame, 5105 N. Sheridan Rd. Peoria, IL 61614, online at [peorianotredame.com/alumni](http://peorianotredame.com/alumni), or email [t.shane@pndhs.org](mailto:t.shane@pndhs.org).

Please include a summary that describes the nominee's accomplishments and service to our school and other worthy organizations. Posthumous nominations will be considered if the nominee has passed within the last year. All nominations will be considered for two years.

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

City\_\_\_\_\_State\_\_\_\_\_ Zip\_\_\_\_\_

Email\_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_-

School and year of graduation\_\_\_\_\_

---

My Name\_\_\_\_\_

City\_\_\_\_\_State\_\_\_\_\_ Zip\_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_-

My email\_\_\_\_\_

My relationship to the nominee\_\_\_\_\_



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Email Tara Shane at [t.shane@pndhs.org](mailto:t.shane@pndhs.org)

Stay in touch with your classmates and friends! Update your information with the alumni office.

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**Maiden Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**School Graduated:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Graduation Year:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Cell Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Life events (check all that apply):**

- ☐ I recently married
- ☐ I recently changed my address
- ☐ I recently changed jobs.

**Spouse's name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Today's date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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