

# *The* IRISH LENS

Fall 2025

Cover photo by Nellie Photography



**PRESERVING  
THE PAST.**

**BUILDING  
THE FUTURE.**



# A LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL



One of the pillars of our mission statement—community—is such an important part of what we do and who we are at PND, not just for current students and their families, but for alumni of PND and our predecessor schools. The word community encompasses who we are as the Body of Christ, called to serve one another and to serve God through our vocation to holiness. Nowhere is that more evident than during All School Mass, or even daily Mass, when we gather as a school community to celebrate Jesus' presence in the Eucharist, or during all-day adoration, where our theology classes, students, faculty, staff, and families spend time in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

This past week, we hosted a traveling monstrance to commemorate the Diocese of Peoria's 150th anniversary. The monstrance is traveling to schools throughout the diocese this year and next, connecting all of us through the presence of Jesus and the power of united prayer and reminding us that we are truly one community of believers. We celebrated All School Mass with the monstrance, then participated in All School Adoration along with families and relatives of our junior students, who were recognized as part of our annual Ring Day ceremony. Our chaplain, Fr. Daniel, blessed our juniors and asked God to bestow upon them the graces necessary to become servant leaders in our school building.

Our community extends outside our school building to the greater Peoria community, diocese, and nation through our extensive alumni network. Our alumni provide witness to the transformational power of Catholic education, academics founded in faith, and a life lived in relationship to Jesus Christ. And they remind us that the call to holiness in our vocations in families, at jobs, as priests, and within religious communities never ends. Through their presence in our community—as parents and grandparents, priests, religious sisters, business and restaurant owners, teachers, coaches, and more—they inspire our student to pursue excellence aligned with God's will for their lives. - *Jacqueline Kelly, Principal*

## A LETTER FROM THE COO

The foundation of everything we do at Peoria Notre Dame High School is our mission: to form disciples of Jesus Christ in a community of Catholic faith, knowledge, and service. I am now in my fifth year at PND and the longer I have been part of the community, the more clearly I see just how vital this mission is, not only for our students and their families, but also for the entire Peoria area. PND plays a central role in shaping the future of our community through faith-filled leadership, academic excellence, and a dedication to service.

Catholic education is something my family and I truly value. Our son, Evan, currently attends St. Jude Catholic School, and our twin daughters, Annalise and Annmarie, will begin their journey next school year. Seeing firsthand how Catholic education forms young people in both faith and knowledge strengthens my belief in the mission we live out each day at PND. It is a blessing to be part of a system that guides students from their earliest years through high school, preparing them to live lives as disciples of Jesus Christ.

It is always important to recognize everyone who supports our school and our mission including our devoted stakeholders, alumni, donors, priests, dedicated administration, faculty, staff, and coaches. Each plays a vital role in keeping PND strong. Your generosity, faith, and commitment allow us to remain the premier high school in the Peoria area and make all the difference in the lives of our students. Thank you for your continued prayers and support for PND. Together, we ensure that Catholic education remains strong for our students, our families, and our entire community. - *Grant McInnis, Chief Operating Officer*





# A LETTER FROM THE CHAPLAIN

God, throughout the history of salvation, has consistently used communities and families to accomplish His saving plan. In the fullness of time God sent His only Son into the world in order to form a new family: a family of sons and daughters of God the Father. As John says in his Gospel: "to those who did accept [Jesus] he gave power to become children of God." This idea of a family, rooted and united in Christ, is at the heart of what PND offers to its students, faculty, and community.

Since beginning as chaplain earlier this year, I have been impressed with how the sacraments are at the forefront of what the school seeks to offer its students. The sacraments are the most powerful encounter we can have with Jesus and are the source of our union with Him, and therefore, with each other. It is the sacraments that form this new family of God. Peoria Notre Dame offers Mass every day, confession twice a week, and all-day adoration twice a week. I immediately noticed that many of the kids eagerly take advantage of these opportunities to receive the sacraments. We started off the year strong with the senior and freshman class retreats where they were challenged to live their faith with intentionality. Yet, when we asked for feedback from the students about what they enjoyed the most, many of them said the same thing: adoration and confession. This is the beating heart of Peoria Notre Dame: the presence of Jesus Christ in the sacraments.

Many students in high school are beginning the pivotal journey of discovering who they are and who they are meant to become. It is our responsibility to guide them in the truth. The truth is that they are a part of God's family as sons and daughters of God the Father, and their goal is to become saints. It is in the sacraments that this family is first formed, and here at PND, it is in the sacraments that this family is continually strengthened. - *Fr. Daniel Dionesotes, Chaplain*



Celebrating  
**HOMECOMING**  
MASS 2025



We were blessed to have Bishop Tylka, Fr. Willard, and Msgr. Gray join us for the Mass.



Students from St. Vincent de Paul Grade School joined us to celebrate Mrs. Molly Winkler's Fulton J. Sheen Distinguished Alumni Award.



We were proud to honor past recipients of the Fulton J. Sheen Award, Pillar Award, and General Wayne A. Downing Public Service Award.





# REPORT CARD

## ABOUT US

Peoria Notre Dame is a private co-ed high school located in the Catholic Diocese of Peoria. The school has a proud history of educating Peoria area students for more than 160 years. Focusing on educating in body, mind, and soul, we serve students across 4 counties and from 36 Catholic parishes and other churches.



Current Enrollment  
**515**



Financial Assistance Awarded  
to Students in FY 2024-2025  
**\$972,000**



Average Class Size  
**20**



2024-2025 Parish Subsidies  
**\$792,000**



Digital Learning Access  
**1:1 Computer Program**



Accredited by  
**State of Illinois**

## ACADEMIC OVERVIEW

- **Rigorous semester system uniquely prepares students for college**
- **Two-week Winterim period allowing students to explore additional interests beyond traditional graduation requirements as well as internship and service opportunities**
- **Differentiated college preparatory instructional levels are available including college preparatory and honors**
- **GPA is calculated on a 4.0 weighted scale**
- **Students are ranked by GPA; ranks and GPA are provided to colleges on student transcripts**
- **Beginning with the Class of 2028, Latin honors - Summa Cum Laude: 4.25 and above | Magna Cum Laude: 3.8-4.24 | Cum Laude: 3.35-3.79**

## ADVANCED COURSEWORK

- **18 Advanced Placement (AP) courses offered**
- **20 additional Honors courses prepare students for AP testing, but without official AP designation**
- **5 Dual Credit and 4 Early College online options are available through partnership with Illinois Central College**
- **92% of students who took AP exams in the spring of 2025 scored a 3 or greater**

## AP CAPSTONE AND PLTW

Peoria Notre Dame is proud to offer the AP Capstone Diploma administered through the College Board as well as Project Lead The Way STEM program with pathways in biomedical science, computer science, and engineering.

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Theology	4.0 credits
English	4.0 credits
Mathematics	3.0 credits
Science	3.0 credits
Social Studies	3.0 credits
Health	0.5 credits
Physical Ed	1.0 credits
Fine Arts and World Languages	2.0 credits
Winterim	2.0 credits
Additional Electives	3.0 credits
Drivers Education	0.25 credits
<b>Total</b>	<b>25.75 credits</b>

## GRADING SYSTEM EQUIVALENCE TABLE

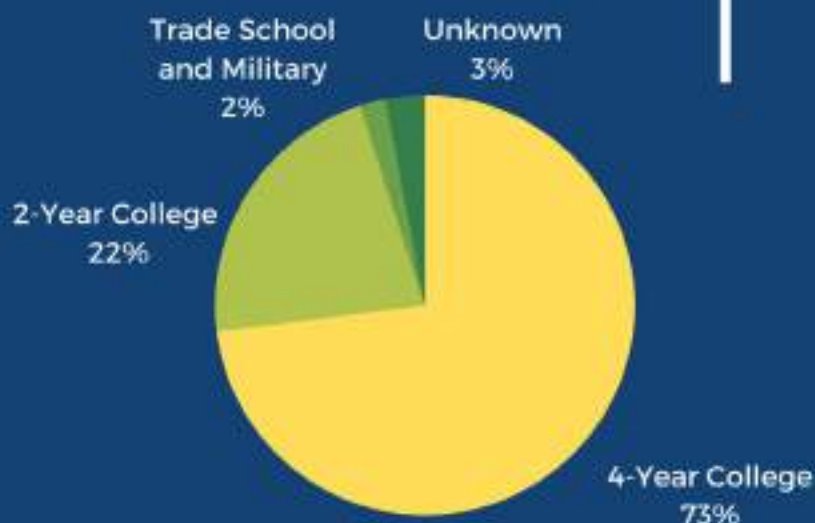
A+	100-98	4.33-4.67
A	97-95	4.00-4.33
A-	94-93	3.67-4.00
B+	92-90	3.33-3.67
B	89-87	3.00-3.33
B-	86-85	2.67-3.00
C+	84-82	2.33-2.67
C	81-79	2.00-2.33
C-	78-77	1.67-2.00
D+	76-75	1.33-1.67
D	74-72	1.00-1.33
D-	71-70	0.67-1.00
F	69-0	0.00-0.67



## CLASS OF 2025 PROFILE

### RECENT GRADS ARE NOW ATTENDING

Augustana College  
 Bradley University  
 Butler University  
 Colorado State University  
 Columbia University  
 DePauw University  
 Drake University  
 Florida State University  
 Illinois Central College  
 Illinois College  
 Illinois State University  
 Illinois Wesleyan University  
 Iowa State University  
 Lewis and Clark Community College  
 Loyola University Chicago  
 Marquette University  
 Maryville University  
 McKendree University  
 Michigan State University  
 North Central College  
 Northwestern University  
 Rock Valley College  
 Saint Francis College of Nursing  
 Saint Mary's College  
 Santa Clara University  
 School of the Art Institute of Chicago  
 Southern Illinois University - Edwardsville  
 St. Ambrose University  
 Tallahassee State College  
 The University of Arizona  
 The University of Mississippi  
 Tricoci Univeristy  
 United States Air Force  
 United States Military Academy  
 University of Dubuque  
 University of Illinois Chicago  
 University of Illinois Springfield  
 University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign  
 University of Iowa  
 University of Kentucky  
 University of Miami  
 University of Missouri - Columbia  
 University of Missouri - St. Louis  
 University of Notre Dame  
 University of the Cumberland  
 University of Wisconsin - Madison  
 Western Illinois University



### POST HIGH SCHOOL PLANS

While 65% of 4-year college students attend a public university or college, 35% attend a private university or college. Of those attending a private college, 50% are Catholic or "Christ-Centered" institutions.



\$11,947,257

Awarded in Scholarships



24.3

Average ACT Composite



27

President's Academic Awards



14,556.5

Service Hours Completed

### Administration and Counseling

Superintendent  
 Chief Operating Officer  
 Principal  
 Assistant Principal  
 Dean  
 Counselor (A-K)  
 Counselor (L-Z)  
 Registrar

Dr. Jerry Sanderson  
 Mr. Grant McInnis  
 Mrs. Jacqueline Kelly  
 Mrs. Laura Wiggers  
 Mr. Isaac Rudolph  
 Mr. Jack Skibinski  
 Mrs. Lindsey Lindberg  
 Mrs. Tonya Ganson

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[l.lindberg@pndhs.org](mailto:l.lindberg@pndhs.org)  
[t.ganson@pndhs.org](mailto:t.ganson@pndhs.org)



Our annual homecoming Mass celebrated four individuals who have contributed to the legacy of Peoria Notre Dame. St. Vincent de Paul teacher Molly Winkler received our Fulton J. Sheen Distinguished Alumni Award for her dedication to Catholic education. Paul and Jeri Gilfillan received the Pillar Award for their contributions in time, talent, and treasure to PND. And Major General

Dan McDonough was presented with the General Wayne A. Downing Public Service Award for his service as the Commander of the Illinois Air National Guard.

Recipients of the Fulton J. Sheen Distinguished Alumni Award must show loyalty to Catholic education, be active in the Catholic community, and be successful in their personal and professional life. Molly Winkler exemplifies all three of these traits. She is a St. Mark's Grade School alum and a 1983 graduate of the Academy of Our Lady/Spalding Institute.



After graduating from Bradley University in 1987, Molly started her teaching career at St. Thomas Grade School in Peoria Heights as a 2nd grade teacher. She married Paul (Barney) Winkler in 1990, and they moved to Milwaukee, WI, where she continued teaching. Throughout their early married life, Molly also taught in Lake Zurich, IL and Galesburg, IL. While in Galesburg she taught Adult Education at a local junior college.

When the Winklers returned to Peoria in 2000, Molly joined the staff at Peoria Notre Dame as a freshman literature teacher. Once Molly's own boys were close to entering high school, Molly returned to teaching at the grade school level, this time at St Vincent de Paul Grade School. Since 2007, Molly has taught 2nd grade and currently junior high language arts.

In addition to teaching, Molly has guided the Student Council, served on the school leadership team, and led various sub-committees. Aside from her time in the classroom, she also attends every game and extracurricular activity of her students. She loves to see them participate, compete, and succeed. Molly is an avid supporter of St. Vincent de Paul and Peoria Notre Dame!

Molly and Paul have two sons, John and Patrick, who are both graduates of Peoria Notre Dame.



**PILLAR AWARD**  
PEORIA NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL

The Pillar Award honors a supporter of Peoria Notre Dame through consistent dedication to the mission of the school. That is why this year's Pillar Award is presented to Paul and Jeri Gilfillan. Decade after decade, they have served the students of Peoria Notre Dame.





Jeri is a graduate of Blessed Sacrament School, Academy of Our Lady, and Illinois State University. Originally, Jeri helped Blessed Sacrament in a variety of volunteer roles and later accepted a teaching position in physical education. She became the first Blessed Sacrament alum to return to the school as a teacher and stayed for 34 years.

Paul is a graduate of St. Cecilia's Grade School, AOL/SI, Illinois State University and Valparaiso University School of Law. He was in private practice for more than 20 years at Quinn Johnston and later became a Circuit Court Judge of the 10th Judicial Circuit including four years as Chief Judge.

Between the two, they have served the parishioners and school children at Blessed Sacrament in many ways. Their volunteer initiatives continued when their three sons, Ben, Mitch, and Cody, all attended and graduated from Peoria Notre Dame. Paul and Jeri served on the Peoria Notre Dame Foundation Board, Booster Club, and Parent Board.

Today, they continue to support PND by serving on The 1863 Society committee. In 2022, Paul established a scholarship to honor his wife Jeri's 34 years at Blessed Sacrament School. It provides tuition assistance for Peoria Notre Dame students who graduated from Blessed Sacrament and were taught by Jeri.



Major General Dan McDonough has dedicated his life to service in the military and in the Peoria community. His unwavering service to others is the reason he has been chosen for the General Wayne A. Downing Public Service Award.

Maj. Gen. McDonough is a 1981 graduate of the Academy of Our Lady/Spalding Institute. He earned a Bachelors of Science degree in Aviation Administration from Indiana State University. In 1987, he completed his United States Air Force Undergraduate Pilot Training at Laughlin Air Force Base in Texas. Maj. Gen. McDonough served in many capacities such as an Airborne and Ground Forward Air Controller, fighter pilot, and Commander of the 182nd Airlift Wing before being appointed to his current position as the Assistant Adjutant General-Air for the State of Illinois and the Commander of the Illinois Air National Guard.

Maj. Gen. McDonough has accumulated more than 5,600 flight hours, including 700 in combat in both Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM. He has flown six types of aircraft and earned countless accolades and medals such as the Legion of Merit and the Meritorious Service Medal.

Considered an expert in the military airlift business, Maj. Gen. McDonough has served as the National Chairman of the Air National Guard Operations Group Commander Council. He has graduated from the Air Force Squadron Officer School, the Air Command and Staff College, and the United States Air Force Air War College.

In addition to his military accomplishments, Maj. Gen. McDonough is active in the Rotary Club of Peoria and at St. Thomas where he and his wife Cindy are parishioners. Maj. Gen. McDonough and Cindy have twin children, Danny and Kelly, who are both 2018 Peoria Notre Dame graduates.





# Recapping

## REUNIONS



BHS '80



AOL/SL '65



AOL/SL '75





# UPCOMING REUNIONS

- BHS '76 on June 12-13, 2026 - contact Mary Jo Ghighi at [mjwghix2@yahoo.com](mailto:mjwghix2@yahoo.com)
- AOL/SI '71 in August of 2026 - contact Dan Callahan at [callahan53@aol.com](mailto:callahan53@aol.com)
- BHS '66 on Sept. 18 & 19, 2026 - contact Tom Wetzler at [twetz48@gmail.com](mailto:twetz48@gmail.com)
- PND '01 - Details to come - contact Cathy Trimble at [cathyltrimble@gmail.com](mailto:cathyltrimble@gmail.com)

FUN TIMES AT PND '00 REUNION LAST JUNE



**2 0 2 6**  
**BLUE & GREEN**  
**G A L A**

**PND**  
GOES  
FOR  
**GOLD**

**Save the Date:** Saturday, March 21

## Composites COMPLETED ✓

We are so proud to announce that all of the missing class composites have been restored to Alumni Hall. With the help of generous donors from each of the missing classes, our Advancement Department has been able to have each composite recreated and framed during the fall, just in time for reunions.

“Approximately 20 composites were missing when I began working at Peoria Notre Dame in 2019,” said Alumni Relations Director Tara Shane. “Since then, it has been my goal to fill the empty spaces with the photos that belong there. Thanks to generous donors, our COO Grant McInnis, and photographer Daryl Wilson, this goal has finally come to fruition. I’m so happy to say now when any alum from the Academy of Our Lady, Spalding, Bergan, or PND comes to visit our school, they will find their photo in its rightful place among those who have contributed to the great history of Peoria Catholic education.”

There is one exception...the Academy of Our Lady Class of 1929 photo remains elusive. Without a yearbook from the class, the Advancement Department is unable to have the composite created. If you or someone you know has an AOL '29 yearbook, please contact Tara at [t.shane@pndhs.org](mailto:t.shane@pndhs.org) or 309-691-8741. We would be so grateful to borrow the book to recreate the composite photo.



## AOL/SI ORNAMENTS

For Sale!

\$25  
Each

To purchase an ornament, contact  
Tara Shane at [t.shane@pndhs.org](mailto:t.shane@pndhs.org)  
or call 309.691.8741





# STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

*by Laura Wiggers, Assistant Principal*

PND's mission to form disciples in a community of faith, knowledge, and service guides all decisions about our academic programs and calls upon us to provide opportunities for students to use their unique, God-given gifts. This school year, we continue to improve upon our strategic plan goal to provide a differentiated and comprehensive curriculum for all students.

To support learning growth and encourage service, we began a peer tutoring program. After receiving training on how to best support their peers, our tutors have provided one-on-one support in math during study halls and within select math classes, and we look forward to expanding the program soon to provide writing assistance. We also revamped our advisory tutoring program to include drop-in assistance from math, science, and reading specialists.



With a generous grant from the Gilmore Foundation, we hired a full-time special education teacher for the first time in PND's history. Margaret Noe, a recent Illinois State graduate, has been instrumental in expanding support for students with exceptionalities. Sharing what inspires her work, Margaret explains, "The Catholic faith has always taught us the importance of accepting one another the way Christ has loved us. However, Catholic schools as a whole are still working towards making the classroom a truly inclusive environment...I was drawn to special education because of how it approaches student learning, both from an academic and functional perspective. I am happy to be a part of a school that is making the change to bring special education services into schools, and to practice what the Catholic faith teaches."

Following best practice, Margaret has spearheaded a push-in model of instruction. Margaret describes the model as "a collaboration between a special education teacher and general education teacher, within the general education classroom. The general education teacher's focus is on content, while the special education teacher focuses on supporting the ways students are learning the content... The biggest benefit to this is that a student who has a disability is able to stay in the same learning environment as their non-disabled peers."

PND has already seen this approach bear fruit, including students utilizing more self-advocacy skills and asking further questions for clarification. Also, through their collaboration in the classroom, faculty are setting positive examples for students.

Our AP Capstone and Project Lead the Way programs continue to provide students with enrichment opportunities through hands-on application and research. This year, we have record numbers of students enrolled in our PLTW Biomedical and Engineering Pathways. From forensic bone labs to 3-D printed Christmas ornaments to visits from industry professionals, students have practiced real-world skills, innovated to solve complex problems, and gained valuable insight into STEM career pathways.

As our programs grow, so does our commitment to provide all students with the opportunities and support that they need to succeed.



# AOL/SI



## ALL-CLASS REUNION

The culmination of several years of hard work, the Academy of Our Lady/Spalding Institute All-Class Reunion took place on October 11, 2025. The event brought memories and friendship together in one day of celebration to commemorate a history which dates back to 1863.

The day started with an open house at Peoria Notre Dame. Alumni, former faculty, and guests toured the school and visited Alumni Hall where, for the first time, all class composites dating back to 1895 (with the exception of AOL '29) were viewed together. Then visitors filed into the gym for the unveiling of the 101-year-old trophy won by the

Spalding Institute basketball team that won the National Basketball Tournament in 1924. Decendants of the team members joined the presentation and had the honor of uncovering the trophy for the public to view for the first time in PND history.

In addition, current PND basketball players Lexi Baer (PND '26) and Kevin O'Donnell (PND '26) unveiled a new banner on the gym wall which commemorates the team's success.

Following the unveiling, alumni were invited to meet on the lawn of the old Spalding and Academy





buildings and attend Mass at the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception. The evening concluded with a catered dinner at Embassy Suites in East Peoria. More than 500 people attended the events throughout the day.

Graduates gathered with their classmates as well as mingled with friends and family from other years. The oldest attendees were from the class of 1947!



During the dinner, Msgr. Jason Gray revealed a plan for the former Spalding Institute building to be transformed into a new museum called "The Sheen Experience" which will be dedicated to our celebrated alum, Ven. Fulton Sheen. The following weekend, PND student Brady Mullens (PND '26) participated in the groundbreaking for the project with Bishop Lou Tylka.

The reunion planning committee was comprised of John Crowley (AOL/SI '81), Teddi (Delmastro) Slabaugh (AOL/SI '80), Mary (Marie) LaKemper (AOL/SI '80), Val (Burnett) Berry (AOL/SI '79), Barb (Jordan) Evans (AOL/SI '79), Jenny (Burnett) Parkhurst (AOL/SI '82), Linda (Schrader) Gutierrez (AOL/SI '80), and Marty Couri (AOL/SI '81).





# The ShamROCK

The ShamROCK served as the perfect kickstart to our new school year, with introductions of our fall sports teams and athletes. This evening centers around the relationships and “family first” mentality that we have within our Catholic community. We always look forward to having families from our 12 partner schools come on campus to join in the fun, in addition to welcoming their parish priests to offer prayers and blessings over many of their former student athletes.

Grilling up great food, and cooling down with some ice cream, snow cones, or candy, in addition to the adult beverages served by our very own PND coaches, faculty, staff and Athletic Advisory Board members is a great way to end the summer. And although, at the heart of this event is friendship, community, and family, this year's ShamROCK brought in \$10,425 to help kickstart our Funding Athletic/Activity Needs (FAN Club).



## Grandparents' Day



We were thrilled to celebrate Grandparents' Day with nearly 300 students and grandparents. The morning included Mass, an Open House, and time for our students to spend with their grandparents.

It was heartwarming to hear our chaplain, Fr. Daniel, speak about the influence of his grandmother and the special gift he received from her on his ordination day – a chalice that had been gifted to her.



Our celebration took place on a beautiful fall morning which allowed students and grandparents to visit our grotto, stroll through Alumni Hall, have photos taken, and to simply sit together and talk with one another. When people in some families are very busy or separated by distance, we were happy to provide the gift of time for these valuable relationships.





This year was a record-breaking year in regard to funds raised through our 29th Annual PND Golf Classic: \$70,545.

With the outing always being close to the date of Mother Mary's birthday, she once again came through for us! The rain held out until we were all safely inside for the dinner and program at the Country Club of Peoria. Registration opened on June 1st, and the event was sold out by mid-July, as it has been in the previous three years! All credit is due to the tireless work of our PND Golf Committee members who begin meeting in early May to make this event a success!

With 50/50s, hole contests, raffles, and hole games, plus on-course snacks, drinks, and mid-afternoon treats, the "come hungry, leave happy" tagline seems appropriate for this event. The day ended with two heartfelt speeches by members of our golf teams, senior Ethan Maloof and junior Josie Heffron. Their testimonies authenticated and reminded us of what the day was truly all about - a strong education rooted in the Catholic faith.



# SPORTS HIGHLIGHTS



In the spring, Corrina Fassino (PND '25) placed 8th at state in the 300 hurdles with a time of 46.04 seconds, and Meghan Zopel (PND '25) placed 6th in the 1600M run with a new PR of 5:03.60.



The girls soccer had another amazing season last spring taking 2nd in state. Abigail Chaddock and Ava LaFollette were named All-State and they joined Rylie Bare, Ryleigh Bennett, Hannah Daly, Baylie Lefler, Allie Stickelmaier, Maddie Stickelmaier, and Emmy Wardle in being named All-Area and All-Conference players. In addition, Ava LaFollette was named the PJStar Player of the Year.



Junior Max Kirby broke a 32 year school record in Cross Country. Adam White's (PND '94) 14:31 school record at Detweiller was shattered by Kirby during the Richard Spring Invitational with a run of 14:29.5.



Our solid Cross Country program took both girls and boys teams to state once again. Boys placed 5th while girls placed 11th. Junior Max Kirby came in 6th at state with a new school record of 14:20.61 (breaking his own record from earlier this season.) Max is our first boy to be All-State three times in his first three years. Freshman Lillian Chaddock finished at 23rd during the state meet and was named All-State.



Sophomores Bianca Cisel and Madelyn Monge competed in the individual girls state tennis tournament. Bianca won two matches and Madelyn won one match before elimination. They were the first girls tennis players to attend state in three years.



Sean Graham shot a 75 at the Sectional at Prairie Vista Golf course to qualify for state competition. On Day 1 of state, he shot an 80 to advance to Day 2 of the state finals where he finished +18 over par at Weibring Golf Club in Normal.



Freshman Kamryn Gardiner qualified for the state in 100-yd butterfly and 200-yd individual medley. Freshman Eileen Hamilton qualified for state in the 200-yd and 500-yd freestyle. The team finished 5th in the sectional.



# PEORIA NOTRE DAME APPAREL STORE

OPEN ON SCHOOL DAYS  
8:00am - 3:00pm



Or purchase online at  
[https://stores.inksoft.com/peoria\\_notre\\_dame](https://stores.inksoft.com/peoria_notre_dame)

## THE INSPIRING LIFE OF DAVID LANG

After graduating from the University of Dallas, BHS '72 alum David Lang returned to Peoria to devote his life to teaching and impacting the lives of students. Many colleagues and students remember Lang as being an outstanding communicator in the classroom and on the athletic fields.

Tom Kahn was the head football coach, athletic director and dean of men while David coached at Spalding Institute. Kahn reflected, "I had the privilege to coach football with Dave at Spalding Institute for three years. He was also the head baseball coach. He was highly respected by both his academic and coaching peers. He taught at both Spalding and a public school and was named Teacher of the Year at each school."



Lang is remembered for being highly motivational. Every day, he posted a note card with a hand-written positive quote or message.



"I am so grateful Coach Lang was such a huge part of my life," said former student and pro athlete Joe Girardi. "Whether my math teacher or coach, he always showed his belief in me. He gave me responsibility and the freedom to paint my own picture, whether in the classroom or on the field. In return, he taught me that I had to be accountable for everything I did. I know without him I would have never become the person I am today. Dave also always had my back. Dave was a brilliant math teacher and well-respected coach. But most importantly, he was a great teacher of life."

Kahn said, "The Good Lord needed a great teacher, great coach, and a greater person to teach and coach His all-stars. He drafted a winner!"

# A TRIBUTE TO BILL BECKMAN

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*By Ray LaHood (SI '63)*

Bill Beckman (SI '63) taught his students so much more than what was found in a textbook. Throughout his 51 years of teaching, he spent many of these at Spalding Institute, Bergan High School, East Peoria Community High School, and Peoria Notre Dame. He was an environmentalist and always enjoyed photography.



I have known Bill since we were childhood friends growing up in St Bernard parish and attending Spalding. Bill grew up in a wonderful family. Bill loved his family and was very proud of his children. He was an extraordinary teacher who engaged his students in ways that taught them how to be involved in the community. He had a great love of the Illinois River and worked together to improve the river while getting his students engaged. It was a collaboration of young and old where everyone worked together to improve the local waterway we all know and love.

In more recent years, I found Bill to be upbeat and positive even during his most serious illnesses. He was a positive inspiration to those of us who had an opportunity to share a cup of coffee and breakfast on a regular basis. May his memory be a blessing to those who knew and loved Bill.

# REMEMBERING VIRGINIA HELDERLE

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*By Tom Menger (Former Faculty)*

As companions and co-workers, we were all among Virginia Helderle's students. As a teacher and friend, Virginia sought experiences, bringing everyone along with her in an, "I'm not sure we can do this, but let's give it a try" sort of way. Time and again, in this light, Virginia taught lessons and students embraced them.

Virginia was an observer, often expressing whole volumes with one of those "teacher glances," or - when appropriate - a few words, but so often with her smile!



Having seen her own children benefit so strongly from living in Geneva when they were young, Virginia particularly enjoyed opportunities as a Peoria Notre Dame teacher to share with her students and co-workers experiences in France, Switzerland, Italy, and other places during so many shared summers. Virginia was always enthusiastic for these adventures, proposing some of the most memorable sites for visits, and recruiting some of the most successful participants.

Virginia was a teacher; her life a presentation. As she exemplified it, standing in a high school hall, strolling across the 180-foot high Roman Pont du Gard in France, or even in a Peoria Knights of Columbus bowling alley, Virginia enabled each of us to imagine, experience, and incorporate more challenging, more interesting, more significant worlds.

Urging us along with her, Virginia Helderle regularly shared extraordinary opportunities. In light of her indomitable spirit, her students and friends have gone forth as she so clearly believed they could, to embrace important new challenges like those so often accompanied and encouraged by that smile.



# Wings...

Sue Ellen Kedzior	BHS '72	10/26/22	Heath Armentrout	BHS '84	6/17/25
Greg Matarelli	SI '67	10/21/24	Jayne Forker-Schwartz	PND '98	6/24/25
Michael Donnelly	SI '62	1/20/25	Madelyn Beck	BHS '68	6/26/25
Jay Richard Tyler	SI '58	1/23/25	Patricia (Sullivan) Whalen	AOL '49	6/29/25
James Engrissei	BHS '67	3/15/25	Sr. Ruth Ksycki	AOL '56	7/3/25
Keith Humbles	AOL/SI '81	3/27/25	David Olenjiczak	BHS '80	7/3/25
Daniel Patrick Cain	SI '58	3/29/25	John Michael Cramer	SI '58	7/3/25
Kathleen (Salmon) Comte	BHS '69	4/2/25	Katherine Bartley	AOL '66	7/11/25
Robert Cusack	SI '62	4/5/25	Judtih (Karl) Maroney	AOL '46	7/16/25
Robert Carman	SI '56	4/5/25	Theresa Williamson	AOL '74	7/18/25
James Kinney	SI '49	4/13/25	Richard Kirchgessner	BHS '68	7/30/25
Theresa (Nader) Oppe	AOL '47	4/16/25	Patrick Gallagher	SI '56	8/2/25
Mary Charlene (Bowers) Smith	AOL '59	4/28/25	Anthony Lawless	SI '52	8/8/25
Donald Wheeler	SI '54	4/29/25	Elizabeth Ann (Haddigan) Oberle	AOL '59	8/17/25
Jeanette (Dickerson) Schaal	AOL '57	4/29/25	Timothy Orr	SI '73	8/23/25
Jeanne Louise (Hofer) Donahue	AOL '58	5/1/25	Peggy Jo (Gregory) Hessling	AOL '55	9/5/25
David Lang	BHS '72	5/2/25	Thomas Houlihan	SI '67	9/6/25
Toby Clayton	AOL/SI '87	5/4/25	Maxwell Shea	SI '62	9/8/25
Mark Hallinan	SI '74	5/6/25	Donald Roling	SI '58	9/8/25
Marilyn (Markoski) Adams	AOL '48	5/10/25	James McKenna	BHS '80	9/10/25
William Beckman	SI '63	5/10/25	Joann (Hahn) Benisch	AOL '51	9/10/25
Mary (Gilles) Ambrosch	AOL '45	5/11/25	William Forbes	SI '71	9/10/25
Catherine (Speck) Bailey	AOL '52	5/20/25	Patrick Logsdon	SI '74	9/16/25
Nancy (Johnson) O'Brien	AOL/SI '82	5/22/25	Angela (Storm) Holcomb	AOL/SI '88	9/17/25
Daniel Bohan	SI '67	5/25/25	Ruth (Heinz) Sobiech	AOL '67	9/18/25
Patricia (Williams) Schelp	AOL '57	5/28/25	Fr. David Roche	SI '50	9/24/25
Alexandra Zich	PND '08	6/1/25	Mary Ann (Arnold) O'Neill	AOL '49	9/25/25
Susan (Pauli) Lambert	AOL '64	6/1/25	Sharon Anne (Atkins) Weisbruch	AOL '60	9/25/25
Sally (McCarthy) Kaiser	AOL '63	6/4/25	Mary Angela (Crowley) Kenny	AOL '47	9/28/25
Mary (Fitzgerald) Carrell	AOL '47	6/5/25	David Skender	SI '58	10/2/25
Ora (Lawrence) Johnson	AOL '66	6/7/25	Elizabeth (Mathers) Vonachen	AOL '58	10/8/25
Carolyn (Phillips) Coleman	AOL '64	6/11/25	James Hinton	SI '68	10/11/25
Marilynn Trinder	AOL '51	6/11/25	Mary Stenoish	BHS '73	10/12/25
Daniel Ringness	AOL/SI '75	6/12/25	Mary Angela (Venzon) Irrera	AOL '49	10/14/25
Mary (Driscoll) DuBois	AOL '72	6/13/25	Kurt Rostetter	BHS '66	10/15/25

# *Rings, & More Exciting*



Hudson Michael was born to Toby and Shea (Olehy - PND '09) Marshall on May 15, 2025.

Sofia Hoeft (PND '18) married Giulio Patriarchi at Badia Fiesolana Catholic Church in Florence, Italy on June 15, 2025.



Melody Kathleen was born to Drake and Marysue (Cicciarelli - PND '13) Koelling on December 18, 2024.



Jackson Miller was born to Douglas (PND '11) and Paige Cicciarelli on November 23, 2024.



Daniel (PND '11) and Courtney Smith, along with their sons Declan and Harlan, welcomed baby Theodora on June 27, 2025.



# Things

Jake Brown (PND '14) married Rachael Cinquanta in Overland Park, KS on June 29, 2024.



Lucy Ann was born to Matt (PND '06) and Brittany (McGann - PND '08) Wille on September 9, 2025.



Brady and Brittaney (Jackson - PND '18) Varwig welcomed baby Blair Eloise on July 15, 2025.



Jack (PND '17) and Caroline Skibinski welcomed baby Sebastian on August 9, 2025.

Brett Dickerson (PND '21) joined his siblings, Captain Allison Dickerson, (PND '16) and Captain Brady Dickerson (PND '16) as an officer in the United States Air Force. Brett was commissioned a Second Lieutenant on May 17, 2025.

Allison is a Nuclear Missiler, Brady is an HC-130J pilot, and Brett is in pilot training in Columbus, MS.



# EQUIPMENT AND FACILITY UPDATES



As we all know, having exceptional teachers and staff can make all the difference in a student's learning. To augment the experience, some upgrades were made to the facility this past year. Thanks to donors of the FAN (Funding Athletic/Activity Needs) Club, our largest project was an upgrade to the weight room. Not only do our students who participate in athletics use the updated room, but students who take an elective class in weights also benefit. The room got an overhaul with new lighting, new paint, new equipment, a sound system, and the availability of an app to track progress.



Other projects completed this year:

- Sophomore hall: interlocking ceiling tile removal, paint lockers, ceiling and walls, replace lighting fixtures
- Gym: paint steel structures (ceiling, walls)
- Dock: repair spalling concrete and paint
- Advancement/Business office hallway: paint, cove base replacement
- Parking: minor repairs, sealcoating, and striping
- Track: poured concrete pads and added bleacher seating specifically for track and field events
- Security: additional cameras and access control added to campus exterior
- Transition from parent-purchased to school-provided laptops for freshman class, platform transition
- Six new robotics kits for engineering program
- New technology for the *Advanced Digital Media - Podcasting* class



## TRADITION ON THE GREEN

For the last 27 years, a group of Spalding Institute 1972 graduates have made an annual trip to the Ozarks for golf and camaraderie.

Left to right: Gary Kahn, Ron Juricic, Carlos Rivera, Bill Clarey, Bo Strathmeyer, Terry Davis, Dave Donnelly, Jim Mishler, Bob Yuhas, TJ Seiler, and Dick Kelly.





# Leave a Legacy



Matt Waugh (AOL/SI '75) has received so many gifts from the Catholic institutions in Peoria. After being adopted through Catholic Social Services, he attended St. Bernard's Grade School and Spalding Institute. Now he wants to give back.

"My wife and I, along with all of our children, are the products of the great Catholic K-12 education offered in Peoria. Our children breezed through college because they were well prepared. I want to ensure other students have the same opportunities we've had.

Matt has become a member of the 1863 Society for those who have specified a legacy gift to Peoria Notre Dame.

But instead of a standard monetary sum, Matt's gift names the school as a beneficiary of an insurance policy upon death.

"Insurance is a great way to create a legacy gift for a Catholic school. If I continue to make the premiums, which I intend to do, the school will receive a nice sum upon my death."

## More Information

For more information about naming Peoria Notre Dame as an insurance beneficiary or other types of legacy gifts, please contact Director of Advancement Cindy Dermody at [c.dermody@pndhs.org](mailto:c.dermody@pndhs.org) or 309.691.8741.



# Legacy

Giving back!



"I encourage all alumni to investigate buying an insurance policy and naming PND as beneficiary. I suggest doing it while you are young as the premiums are much lower and insurability is much easier."

## THE 1863 SOCIETY ENROLLMENT FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I/We give permission to have our names published as a member of The 1863 Society.

☐ I/We wish to remain anonymous.

☐ I/We have included Peoria Notre Dame in our estate plans. ☐ Please contact me with more info.

Mail to: Peoria Notre Dame, 5105 N. Sheridan Road, Peoria, IL 61614

**Peoria Notre Dame High School**  
5105 N Sheridan Rd  
Peoria, IL 61614

[www.pndhs.org](http://www.pndhs.org)  
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# Update Your Information!

**MAIL TO:** Peoria Notre Dame Alumni Office  
5105 N. Sheridan Rd. Peoria, IL 61614  
Phone: 309.691.8741  
[www.pndhs.org](http://www.pndhs.org)  
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.

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

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

New Address: \_\_\_\_\_

New Job: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Update your information online! Use the QR code or visit  
[www.pndhs.org](http://www.pndhs.org). Hover over "Alumni," and click on "Update Your Info."**

