

The IRISH LENS

Spring 2026

I can do
all things
through Christ
who gives
me strength
Phillipians 4:13



BERGAN



A LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL



When I reflected on the past school year, I found it difficult to write about the many ways we lived out our mission to form disciples of Jesus Christ. The difficulty didn't lie in finding things to write about; the difficulty came from determining just how to quantify all the amazing things that have gone on within and outside our building this school year. We can measure the number of students becoming Catholic and being baptized into the Church at Easter; we can't count the number of students who choose daily to grow deeper in their faith through prayer and the sacraments. We can measure the number of alumni who are seminarians, priests, and religious within our diocese; we can't count the number of daily prayers for the future vocations of our students as a mother or father, layperson, priest, or religious sister. We can count the students recognized by the National Merit Scholarship program for impressive PSAT scores; we can't measure students who became more engaged learners, improved their study habits, or explored a new area of interest. We can tally Christian Service Program hours; we can't measure the impact of volunteering on those we served, as well as ourselves.

For as meaningful and clear as our mission is and for as much as it guides the decisions we make, we know we can't fully quantify its impact—and probably never will be able to. Ultimately, it's God who calls us to this mission and God who does the work; as we talked about at a recent faculty faith formation, God asks us to participate in His work, not do it for Him. One of the things I loved about being in the classroom and coaching on the court was how easy it was to measure success. Stats, grades, AP scores all told a story and provided an easy progress check, as well as a plan for improvement. When you're attempting to do God's will, you never know what seeds you plant with God's help and what they ultimately yield. An invitation to attend confession today may not bear fruit until years in the future. A meeting led by prayer and guided by virtue today may not have its intended effect until months down the road. All we can really do is trust in God's mercy and providence to take our small efforts and transform them into something meaningful and worthwhile.

There's no really great way to summarize the school year because numbers tell but a small part of the story. The full story, written by God, has yet to be finished. Our students' accomplishments in the classroom and on the athletic fields and courts are a measure of success in the present moment while the virtues and habits our students build in the classroom and in athletics help lead them to a much, much bigger win—eternity with God in heaven. This school year, like all the others, belongs to God, and how blessed we are to be able to share daily in His work.

Jacqueline Kelly

Meet us IN ST. LOUIS!



Connect with your PND family members from around the world all under one arch as we celebrate our most notable alum, Ven. Fulton Sheen, on the day of his beatification!

Open house with a light breakfast

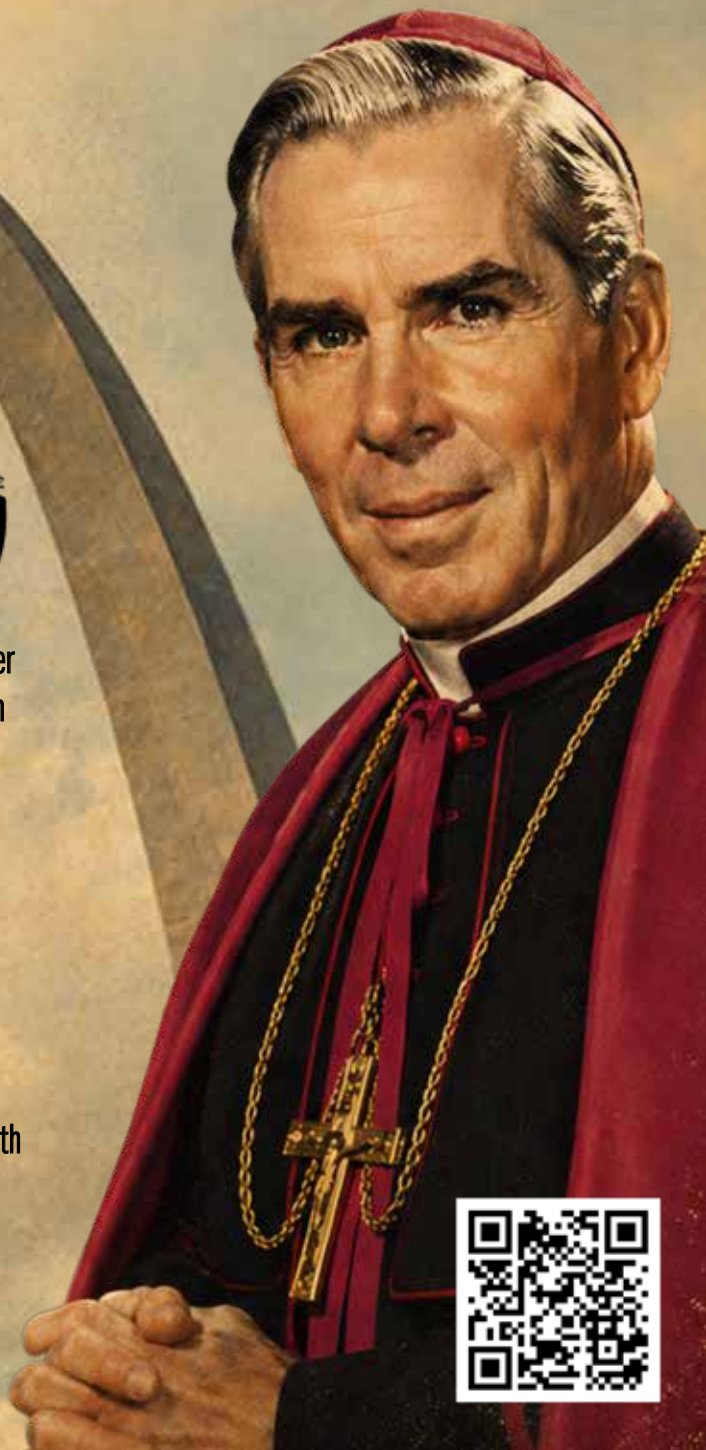
September 24, 2026

Embassy Suites by Hilton St. Louis Downtown

8:00 am - 12:00 pm

All PND-affiliated families, alums, and donors are invited to join us for a light breakfast on the morning of the beatification at the Embassy Suites - just one block from the Dome of America! Spend some time with us before you attend all of the festivities of the day.

RSVP required at www.pndhs.org/meet-us-in-st-louis/ or scan the QR code. You may also contact Alumni Coordinator Tara Shane at t.shane@pndhs.org, or by calling 309-691-8741.



A LETTER FROM THE COO

I had the privilege of meeting with many members of our community in recent months, and each conversation has reaffirmed what makes Peoria Notre Dame so special. It is a blessing to be part of a community that deeply understands and actively supports our mission to form disciples of Jesus Christ in a community of Catholic faith, knowledge, and service.

Each year, our students accomplish amazing things. Their growth in faith, knowledge, and service is a powerful reminder that God is at work in our school. As we continue to make mission-driven decisions, we are seeing the impact with more students entering the Catholic Church, enrollment growing, and donor support continuing to strengthen. These positive trends prove that our faith-filled community is committed to the future of Catholic education.



Looking ahead, I am filled with both gratitude and a sense of responsibility. The momentum we are experiencing is not something to take for granted. The strength of Peoria Notre Dame has always come from the people who believe in it: our alumni, donors, priests, faculty, staff, administration, and coaches. Your commitment does more than sustain our school—it makes possible the formation that happens here each day. Because of you, we are not only continuing a tradition, but actively building a stronger future for the next generation. Thank you for your support and prayers. Together we are ensuring that the mission of Catholic education thrives in our community for years to come.

Grant McInnis

A LETTER FROM THE CHAPLAIN

One of my favorite aspects of being back in a high school environment is the hope that the students have at this stage of their lives. They love to dream about the future: what colleges they can go to, what jobs they can have, what sports they could play at the next level. However, I've also noticed many of the students possess a great spiritual ambition as well. I was particularly impressed with the students during Lent when attendance at both Mass and confessions were noticeably up. We also had two boys who entered the Catholic Church this year, and a couple other students currently in the process of becoming Catholic as well! There is a real desire among many in the school to strive for holiness and sanctity; to strive to become saints. The Letter to the Hebrews states, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us." This desire to be a saint is always the first step in actually becoming one. And I thank the good Lord for giving that desire to so many students here at PND.

Fr. Daniel Dionesotes



Campus Ministry



What a year for Campus Ministry! Along with some new faces came many fun adventures. This year, Mr. Conley and Mr. Best returned to helm the Campus Ministry crew while Mrs. Bernhardt and Fr. Daniel joined the team. Built within the culture of PND is a desire and a drive to make every student, faculty, and staff member a devoted disciple of Jesus Christ. Campus Ministry seeks to do that in a more formal way through retreats, small groups, and mission trips offered to the student body. Every year, we offer retreats for each of the classes. We started off the school year with the senior and freshman retreats. We held our Sophomore and Junior retreats around the beginning of the second semester. These retreats are always a good "retreat" away from the usual routine in order to take some intentional time of prayer, reflection, and friendship. The students also receive opportunities for Mass, adoration, and confession.

Campus Ministry led three different trips this year. The first was the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) in Indianapolis. Our students were joined by more than 16,000 high schoolers from around the country who came together to show their faith and grow closer to Christ. One particular highlight was that Pope Leo live video-called during the conference to talk with the high schoolers! We also enjoyed two different pro-life trips: the national March for Life in Washington DC and the Illinois March for Life in Springfield. Both of these trips were great ways for the students to make their voices heard in standing up for the sanctity of life.

God is good, & He is truly at work at PND!



One last aspect of Campus Ministry's work is the day-to-day sacramental and faith life in the school building. We have Mass every day, adoration twice a week, and confessions twice a week. The weekly small groups have also been a big hit. The students, led by one of their teachers, have had the opportunity to dive deeper into their faith and share it with their peers. God is good and He is truly at work at PND!



Part of the Club

Peoria Notre Dame offers many clubs for students to expand their skill sets. Below is a sampling of the clubs offered to our students; a full list can be found on our school website at www.pndhs.org/clubs-activities.

Robotics:

The PND Four Leaf Rovers FTC robotics team has concluded a remarkable 2025-2026 season. While the year was marked by dominant performances and statewide rankings, its true success lay in the team's evolution as a young organization dedicated to mentoring, expertise, and community engagement.

The regular season ended with a 19-1 qualifying record, ranking first out of 29 local teams. In February, they won the "Innovate" award at Regionals for their custom CAD and 3D-printed robot construction.



In March, the team finished 19th out of 48 teams at the Illinois State Championship at Northern Illinois University. Additionally, the team's freshman members won first place in a dedicated "rookie robot" competition in East Peoria after designing and building their own unique robot. The team concluded the season as 2026 IHSA Regional Champions. Individual honors include Liam Hamilton and Nathaniel Howard (All-Sectional and All-Conference) and Owen Robotham and Frankie Plaskon (Junior Varsity All-Conference).



Drama Club:

The PND theater program delivered a phenomenal performance of *Bye Bye Birdie* in March. To prepare, students spent nearly every weeknight from January through March learning lines, choreography, and music. Students also managed all backstage operations, including painting sets, running lights, and organizing props.



Bass Fishing:

The bass fishing team competed in four tournaments this season. Students practiced adjusting their techniques for various water and weather conditions. Members also learned boat operation and fish cleaning skills, which they demonstrated during their year-end banquet.

SPORTS HIGHLIGHTS

Both boys and girls basketball won their respective Thanksgiving tournaments, and several players earned All-Conference and All-State recognition.

The wrestling team placed 3rd at the Big 12 meet and 2nd at Class 2A Regionals. Remi Joesting was crowned the Big 12 Conference Champion and Brady Mullens qualified for the IHSA 2A state tournament.

The dance team won the Open Pom division at their first competition of the season in Eureka and qualified for the state competition. They placed in the top three at every IDTA competition and had a strong performance at the state level.

Cheer performed well at the Big 12 competition. The JV team placed 3rd and varsity placed 4th at the competition.

Still In

P
O
S
T
S
E
A
S
O
N

Girls track had a great season with Mya Zopel (3200m), Kate Fitzjarrald (triple jump), and Eileen Hamilton (pole vault) qualifying for the state tournament.

The boys track team won the Dale Collis Invitational and saw numerous personal bests this season, with several athletes achieving state qualifying times prior to the postseason.

Girls soccer has had an impressive season on the field finishing the regular season with an undefeated 21-0-2 record! They have outscored opponents 115-5 and enter the postseason with strong momentum.

ON THE COVER

The Lady Irish soccer team finished the regular season undefeated. On to playoffs!

The Four Leaf Rovers robotics team qualified for state.

Henry Olsen was selected as a National Merit semi-finalist.

With talents that are gifts from God, PND students pursue and obtain excellence. With guidance and encouragement from others, they committ to their interests and center their lives on Christ.



100% of the 33 PND students who took the Spanish or French AAPPL exam earned a seal of biliteracy.

Max Kirby placed 6th at the state cross country meet.

Choir students were selected for the ILMEA all-district choir.

Angela Horning's drawing was one of many selected for the ART CONNECTED Central Regional Exhibition.

Winterim Internships



Peoria Notre Dame students recently completed their second round of Winterim, a two-week period where they explore two electives outside of their regular academic curriculum. This year's offerings ranged from personal finance and swing dancing to hiking and haikus.

Several students also participated in internships tailored to their career interests, gaining hands-on experience in fields such as medicine, finance, and education. These opportunities provided valuable perspective and insight into their future professional paths.

One student, Felicity Shane (PND '27), spent her internship in the cardiology department at OSF. Regarding the experience, she stated, "My internship was a very insightful experience into what my future could look like. The two weeks I spent at OSF allowed me to gain experience in a clinical setting, learn anatomy and physiology specifically of the heart, watch open heart surgery and catheter procedures, and see physicians and other healthcare providers work together for the good of the patient. The opportunity to intern at OSF gave me a chance to see the career that I am working towards in action and make me even more excited about my future."



Julian Sturm (PND '26) spent two weeks shadowing the electrical, hydraulic, fluid dynamic, and modeling departments of Komatsu America Corporation located here in Peoria. Daily, he would be assigned a system of the truck to learn about, then walk through how the system was designed, modeled, tested, and ultimately installed. Julian had the opportunity to spend time in the factory to watch trucks in production. "This experience was very enlightening to see the overlap of engineering and production. I am thankful for this time."

Overall, Winterim continues to be an excellent way for students to engage with different grade levels, pursue personal interests, and begin the second semester with enthusiasm.

Student Ambassadors

The Student Ambassador organization brings together a diverse group of students with a variety of talents, interests, and involvements. Together, the Student Ambassadors work to further the tradition of Catholic education in the Peoria area through welcoming and supporting past, present, and future members of the Peoria Notre Dame community!

The student ambassadors lead events including grade school visit days for Grades 4-8, annual Santa and Bunny Breakfasts to celebrate the holidays, and Registration Nights for incoming students. Each ambassador serves as the mentor in our mentor-mentee program in which every new student is assigned a PND ambassador to help them acclimate to a new school and environment.



"I really enjoy our information/registration nights as we show our school and give the opportunity for visitors to ask questions to students."

Josh Stedwill, Class of 2027

"My favorite part about the lunch/recess visits to the grade schools is being able to play with the kids outside. Specifically, I went to St. Mary's in Metamora for the last three years, so I have gotten to know the kids well and built special relationships with them."

Caroline Couri, Class of 2026



"Student Ambassadors not only represent the school at events with the community, but we are also able to connect with so many students and parents... We are able to answer questions and help both students and parents with their transition into high school and then also support the students throughout their entire time here at PND."

Adeline Frey, Class of 2026

"My favorite part about being a Student Ambassador is participating in the grade school visit days. Seeing the kids engaged and excited to be at PND makes me glad to know I'm making a difference."

Daphne Herman, Class of 2027



"Student Ambassadors is a great opportunity to flex your socializing skills and bring joy to people, old and young, through the interactions and events we have like visit days and grade school visits."

Vusi Mugurasawe, Class of 2026

PND GOES FOR GOLD

Peoria Notre Dame truly went for gold this year—and achieved it in spectacular fashion. With the resounding success of its largest annual fundraising event, the Blue and Green Gala, the school community once again demonstrated the power of generosity, tradition, and shared purpose in support of its students.

This year's gala set an ambitious goal: raising \$150,000 through the Fund-A-Need initiative to replace the main gym floor bleachers, an essential improvement that will benefit students and families for years to come. Thanks to the unwavering dedication of supporters and the enthusiastic spirit of the evening, Peoria Notre Dame met that challenge head-on, proving once again what can be accomplished when a community rallies together.

From the moment guests arrived, the atmosphere was filled with excitement and camaraderie. Attendees enjoyed delicious food, lively conversation, and a full slate of engaging activities. The ever-popular Podium Pops game sold out quickly, while the spirited Heads-or-Tails game re-energized the crowd midway through the Live Auction, drawing cheers and laughter from around the room.



One of the most memorable highlights of the evening was the presence of two distinguished Olympians—Teri Montefusco-Greer, Gymnast, Rome 1960, and Lance Brooks, Discus Thrower, London 2012. Their participation added a truly special dimension to the celebration. As they met with families, students, alumni, and supporters, they shared stories of perseverance, discipline, and determination. Their journeys served as powerful reminders that dreams are achievable through hard work and dedication—an inspiring message for the young people of Peoria Notre Dame.



With a sold-out crowd of 245 guests, the gala delivered remarkable results. The event generated a net profit of a quarter of a million dollars—including the Fund-A-Need contributions—ensuring meaningful investments in student experiences and school facilities. The success of the evening stands as a testament to the loyalty and generosity of sponsors, donors, attendees, volunteers, students, and the dedicated members of the gala committee who work tirelessly behind the scenes year after year.

Peoria Notre Dame set its sights on gold—and this year, we proudly brought home the medal. More than a financial achievement, the Blue and Green Gala was a celebration of faith, community, and the shared commitment to nurturing the next generation.

Passing the Torch

In keeping with the theme of this year's gala, Cindy Dermody, Director of Advancement, "passed the torch" by announcing that PND '00 alum Rachel Kress will succeed her when she retires in June. Rachel already began her employment so that there will be overlap before Cindy leaves.

Rachel experienced being a student while having her mother work at PND at the same time. Now, Rachel can experience the other side of the scenario as she and her husband, Nathan, are parents of a current freshman. They also have two children who attend St. Philomena School.

The Advancement Department is responsible for many initiatives including fundraisers, alum relations and donations. For any questions, feel free to reach out to Rachel Kress at r.kress@pndhs.org or 309-691-8741 x 4248.



From Our Lady to the Olympics

By Karen Metzinger (AOL '73)



In the summer of 1958, Teri Montefusco-Greer had just finished her junior year at the Academy of Our Lady. That was the summer she was selected to train in Flint, Michigan with gymnastics coach Herb Vogel with the intention of qualifying for the 1960 Rome Olympics. She would be leaving her very close-knit Peoria family and all her Academy classmates in order to train in Michigan under the guidance of Vogel and his family.

"Although I was a mature 16-year-old, that was such a tough decision," Teri said. "I'll never forget it. I prayed for the Lord's guidance as my parents had left that decision completely to me. I remember praying at my parish church, St. Patrick's, and thinking, if I made the Olympic team, this would be my chance to repay my parents for all their sacrifices and support for me."

As a result of her intense training schedule, Teri brought home four medals from the Pan American Games in Chicago, winning the gold medal for All-Around and was named top female gymnast in the Floor Exercise event in the entire Western Hemisphere.

After competing in a challenging Olympic trials in Philadelphia, Teri placed 4th to qualify for the USA women's gymnastic Olympic team. She could not wait to call her family who took time off and flew to Rome to support her through her Olympic competitions. Teri and her teammates catapulted the women's gymnastics team to a 9th-place finish from its 23rd-place finish in 1956.

One of the highlights of her Rome experience was a private audience with Pope John XXIII. While sitting in the front row, only three feet away from the pope, the athletes had the opportunity to kiss his ring. "Representing my country at the 1960 Rome Olympics is a memory I have cherished my entire life," said Teri.



Read the full article by visiting www.pndhs.org/from-our-lady-to-the-olympics/ or scan the QR code!



Named Scholarships

Thanks to many donors, we are proud to say that every parent who wanted to enroll their child at Peoria Notre Dame this school year was able to do so. No one was turned away due to a lack of ability to pay tuition. Approximately \$950,000.00 in financial assistance was awarded, and funds came from a variety of sources: donations to the scholarship fund, earnings from our general endowed scholarship fund, and earnings from several named endowed scholarship funds.

One of these funds is the Geoffrey Nault Memorial Scholarship. Your dollars donated to this fund will be matched through November 24, 2026, the 25th anniversary of Geoff's passing.

Each year, a student is selected who wants to grow in their faith by attending Peoria Notre Dame. Upon receiving notification of the award, a prior recipient said, "The main reason I want to attend Peoria Notre Dame is to continue learning about my Catholic faith. I don't want to lose sight of God, especially in high school."

Another named scholarship is the Randy Simmons Tuition Assistance Scholarship. This scholarship was established by Patti Simmons, in memory of her late husband, Randy Simmons, who was the principal of Peoria Notre Dame from 2014 to 2019. The scholarship was established with a sincere desire to encourage and support families whose student may not otherwise be able to attend Peoria Notre Dame.

The scholarship is awarded annually and provides assistance to the recipient for all four years as long as certain criteria (GPA, involvement at school) are met. The application includes submitting an essay and a letter of recommendation.

A third named scholarship is the Will Kenny Sci-Tech Scholarship which is given to honor the memory of Will Kenny who died when he was an 8th grader at St. Vincent de Paul School. He loved working with his hands to build things, especially robots.

This scholarship provides financial assistance to an 8th grader who will be attending Peoria Notre Dame. The submission requires the student to describe their dream robot in no more than 1,000 words. The essay should explain the robot's intended use and how will it help humans.

Donations can be mailed to the school. Please write the named scholarship on the memo line. You can also go online to pndhs.org, and click on the green "Support PND" button, followed by "Become a Donor." You will then see an option to select the scholarship.

On behalf of all the students who benefit from your generosity, thank you!




Daisy Brautigam of St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School is the 2026 recipient of the Geoffrey Nault Memorial Scholarship.



Annellie Tshibanda of Holy Family Catholic School is the 2026 Randy Simmons Tuition Assistance Scholarship recipient.



Vera Scherbinske of St. Philomena Catholic School is the 2026 recipient of the Will Kenny Sci-Tech Scholarship.



PEORIA NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL IS EXPERIENCING A REMARKABLE RESURGENCE, DEFINED BY FAITH AND EXCELLENCE. ROOTED IN ITS MISSION TO FORM DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST, PND IS NOT ONLY GROWING—IT IS THRIVING. THIS GROWTH REFLECTS INTENTIONAL LEADERSHIP, STRONG CATHOLIC IDENTITY, AND A COMMUNITY DEEPLY COMMITTED TO FORMING YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN OF FAITH, INTELLECT, AND SERVICE.

PEORIA NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION IN ACTION

- Evangelization – Students actively witness Christ through service and leadership
- Discipleship – Daily Mass, prayer, and retreats foster deep faith formation
- Vocations – Alumni pursuing priesthood and religious life
- Eucharist – Central to student life through Mass, adoration, and sacraments
- Fulton Sheen Legacy – A tradition of intellectual and joyful Catholic witness

MEASURABLE MOMENTUM

- Enrollment growth for four consecutive years
- Largest incoming class in recent history (~146 students)
- 8th-grade retention increased from 45% to 62%
- National Merit Finalist and 17 Illinois State Scholars
- 100% AP pass rate in multiple disciplines

FAITH & IMPACT

- 14 students entered the Catholic Church last year
- Daily Mass, Eucharistic adoration, and regular confession
- 4 current seminarians and multiple religious vocations
- A chaplain and 3 religious sisters serve and form our students daily.

STRATEGIC GROWTH

- Annual giving increased from \$350,000 to \$900,000
- Endowment growth from \$7.9M to \$10.4M
- Major investments in facilities, STEM, and student experience
- Tuition assistance ensures access for all qualified families (\$960,000)

PND stands at a pivotal moment. With strong leadership, growing enrollment, and a vibrant Catholic identity, the school is poised for even greater impact.

This is more than a school—it is a mission shaping the future of the Church and our community.

We invite you to partner with Peoria Notre Dame High School in this transformative work.



LEADING THE FIGHT AGAINST

CANCER

Together

TWO STUDENTS SHARE THEIR
EXPERIENCE WITH ST. JUDE CLUB

For as long as I can remember, I have been devoted to volunteering for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. My grandfather helped Danny Thomas establish the hospital in 1962, and our family has upheld that legacy ever since. This mission has always been deeply personal to me, which is why, upon arriving at PND, joining the St. Jude Club, and ultimately serving as co-president alongside Caroline, was something I was so excited about.

At the outset of the year, we set two ambitious and purposeful goals, to surpass 200 members and to raise more than \$50,000. I am proud to say we achieved both. In addition, our efforts earned us recognition from the St. Jude ALSAC Board and the Association of Fundraising Professionals, where we were honored with the Outstanding Youth in Philanthropy Award.

The PND St. Jude Club is truly exceptional in its ability to unify students from all backgrounds out of love for our altruistic mission. In our largest event, the No More Cancer Rally, members reach out through calls, texts, and emails to raise money from friends and family for St. Jude, embodying Thomas's belief that collective generosity drives impact. "I'd rather have a million people give me a dollar than one give me a million. That way you've got a million people involved." We also host engaging half-court challenges at basketball games to further our fundraising efforts. Most recently, we created heartfelt video messages for St. Jude patients, offering encouragement in a safe, meaningful way.

This club holds a profound place in my heart, and I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to lead and serve.

-Ethan Maloof (PND '26)

Being in St. Jude Club all four years of high school has presented me with many new experiences, enabling me to develop both leadership and organizational skills. As a freshman, I set a goal to remind myself of the purpose of participating in the club: to use my roles in the club to make a difference in someone's life, no matter how big or small the contribution may be.

When I was given the opportunity to serve as an event coordinator during my junior year, I was thrilled to continue carrying out my goal. With this job, I helped plan our main events, including the No More Cancer Rally and the annual 5K. These responsibilities required me to stay organized because, along with the four other Event Coordinators, I collaborated to coordinate tasks and ensure each event ran smoothly.

Currently, as a senior, I am the co-president of the club alongside Ethan Maloof. With this role, we oversee the



Seniors Caroline Couri, Ethan Maloof, and Abigail Chaddock after receiving the Outstanding Youth in Philanthropy Award from the Association of Fundraising Professionals Illinois Chapter.

other board members and reach out to the community on a more personal level. Specifically, I was able to go to the ALSAC office more frequently to discuss the club's aspirations and our plan to achieve them. Through these visits, I was able to gain stronger leadership skills, as I represented the club not only through my words but also through my actions, reinforcing my commitment to make an impact and strengthen the club's mission.

-Caroline Couri (PND '26)

From the BOOKSHELF to the BIG STAGE!



Classical work based on "How Mr. Silver Stole the Show" was commissioned and premiered by The Metropolitan Orchestra of St. Louis on May 17th.

Two books written by Kate Klise (AOL/SI '81) and illustrated by Sarah Klise (AOL/SI '80) were recently re-imagined for the stage!

"Stand Straight, Ella Kate," a true story about a Missouri woman, was made into a musical called "Dream Big." The production premiered by The Ozarks Lyric Opera in Springfield, MO on May 15th.

Learn more!



LORRAINE SCHWASS

By Tim Irwin (SI '72)

Mrs. Lorraine Schwass, a former guidance counselor at Peoria Notre Dame, died on April 14, 2026 at OSF St. Anthony's Medical Center in Rockford, surrounded by family. Mrs. Schwass worked at PND from the fall of 2009 until the spring of 2015. She was a kind and caring person.

A former student writes, "Thank you for the timeless example you set with your advocacy on behalf of all students and teachers, but especially those who weren't winning popularity contests. You stood up for people and for your beliefs in a time and place when such advocacy often was at odds with the traditional pathways to success. Though your pathway was never traditional, your success has stood the test of time." Mrs. Schwass was 75.



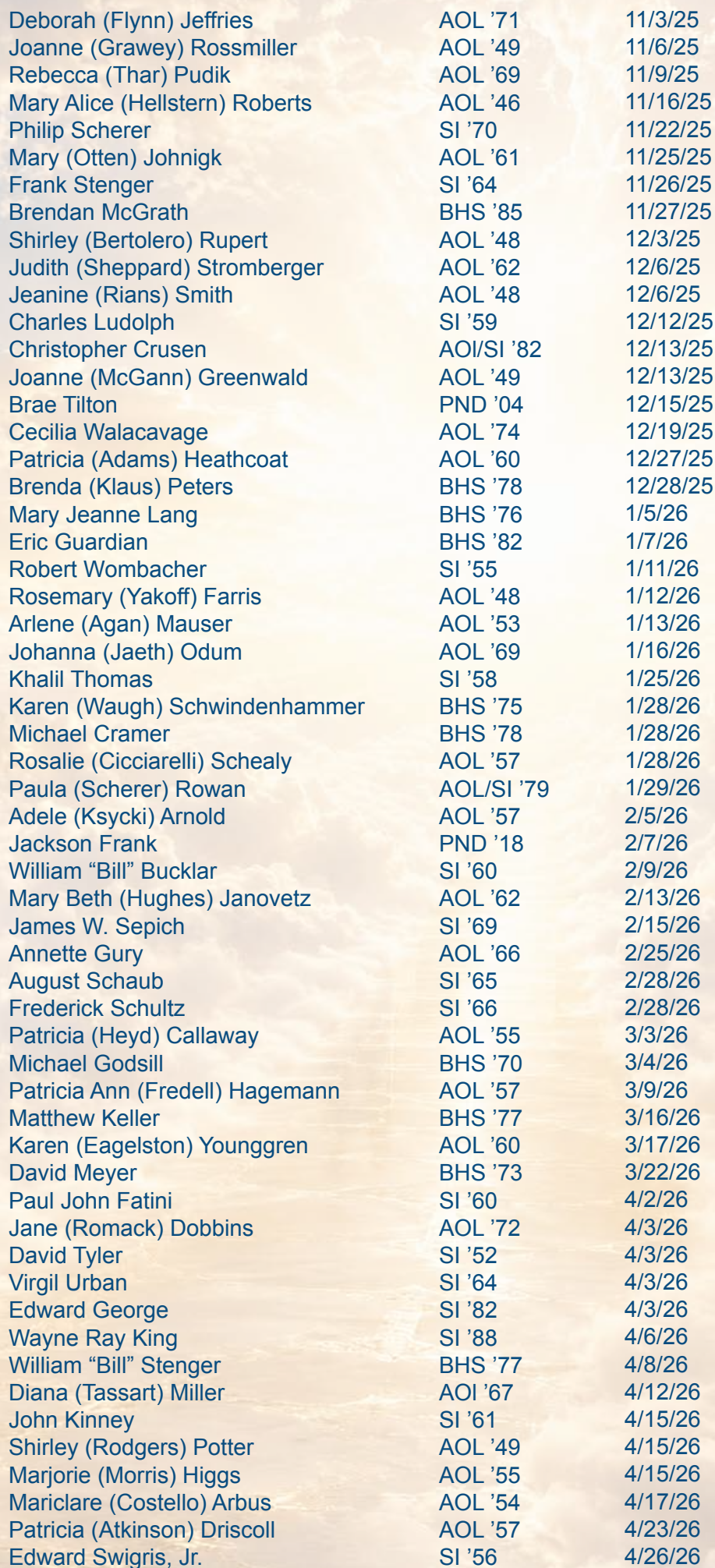
ANNETTE GURY

By Tim Irwin (SI '72)

Ms. Annette R. Gury, a former attendance clerk at Academy/Spalding, died on February 25, 2026. A 1966 graduate of the Academy of Our Lady, she worked at AOL/SI from the fall of 1968 until the spring of 1988. In those days before personal computers, keeping track of hundreds of students throughout the school day was a challenging task. She is remembered for her attention to detail and especially for her kindness to students during her two decades of service. Ms. Gury was 78.



WINGS...



Deborah (Flynn) Jeffries	AOL '71	11/3/25
Joanne (Grawey) Rossmiller	AOL '49	11/6/25
Rebecca (Thar) Pudik	AOL '69	11/9/25
Mary Alice (Hellstern) Roberts	AOL '46	11/16/25
Philip Scherer	SI '70	11/22/25
Mary (Otten) Johnigk	AOL '61	11/25/25
Frank Stenger	SI '64	11/26/25
Brendan McGrath	BHS '85	11/27/25
Shirley (Bertolero) Rupert	AOL '48	12/3/25
Judith (Sheppard) Stromberger	AOL '62	12/6/25
Jeanine (Rians) Smith	AOL '48	12/6/25
Charles Ludolph	SI '59	12/12/25
Christopher Crusen	AOI/SI '82	12/13/25
Joanne (McGann) Greenwald	AOL '49	12/13/25
Brae Tilton	PND '04	12/15/25
Cecilia Walacavage	AOL '74	12/19/25
Patricia (Adams) Heathcoat	AOL '60	12/27/25
Brenda (Klaus) Peters	BHS '78	12/28/25
Mary Jeanne Lang	BHS '76	1/5/26
Eric Guardian	BHS '82	1/7/26
Robert Wombacher	SI '55	1/11/26
Rosemary (Yakoff) Farris	AOL '48	1/12/26
Arlene (Agan) Mauser	AOL '53	1/13/26
Johanna (Jaeth) Odum	AOL '69	1/16/26
Khalil Thomas	SI '58	1/25/26
Karen (Waugh) Schwindenhammer	BHS '75	1/28/26
Michael Cramer	BHS '78	1/28/26
Rosalie (Cicciarelli) Schealy	AOL '57	1/28/26
Paula (Scherer) Rowan	AOL/SI '79	1/29/26
Adele (Ksycki) Arnold	AOL '57	2/5/26
Jackson Frank	PND '18	2/7/26
William "Bill" Bucklar	SI '60	2/9/26
Mary Beth (Hughes) Janovetz	AOL '62	2/13/26
James W. Sepich	SI '69	2/15/26
Annette Gury	AOL '66	2/25/26
August Schaub	SI '65	2/28/26
Frederick Schultz	SI '66	2/28/26
Patricia (Heyd) Callaway	AOL '55	3/3/26
Michael Godsill	BHS '70	3/4/26
Patricia Ann (Fredell) Hagemann	AOL '57	3/9/26
Matthew Keller	BHS '77	3/16/26
Karen (Egelston) Younggren	AOL '60	3/17/26
David Meyer	BHS '73	3/22/26
Paul John Fatini	SI '60	4/2/26
Jane (Romack) Dobbins	AOL '72	4/3/26
David Tyler	SI '52	4/3/26
Virgil Urban	SI '64	4/3/26
Edward George	SI '82	4/3/26
Wayne Ray King	SI '88	4/6/26
William "Bill" Stenger	BHS '77	4/8/26
Diana (Tassart) Miller	AOI '67	4/12/26
John Kinney	SI '61	4/15/26
Shirley (Rodgers) Potter	AOL '49	4/15/26
Marjorie (Morris) Higgs	AOL '55	4/15/26
Mariclare (Costello) Arbus	AOL '54	4/17/26
Patricia (Atkinson) Driscoll	AOL '57	4/23/26
Edward Swigris, Jr.	SI '56	4/26/26

RINGS,

Jessica Flores (PND '14) married Quinlan Stoffer on October 11, 2025 in Peoria.



Joseph O'Brien (PND '13) married Katie Krieg on November 19, 2025 at St. Jude Catholic Church in Peoria

Margaret Shane (PND '21) married Owen Gray on April 17, 2026 at St. Jude Catholic Church in Peoria.



Danny Aeschliman (PND '13) married Rileigh Johnson (PND '18) at St. Mary's Catholic Church, Kickapoo on October 11, 2025.

LITTLE THINGS,



Kolbe Rae was born to Tyler and Kiersten Lyons (both PND '13) on November 13, 2025.



Marta May was born to Jack and Sydney Conley (both PND '16) on July 20, 2025.

& EXCITING THINGS

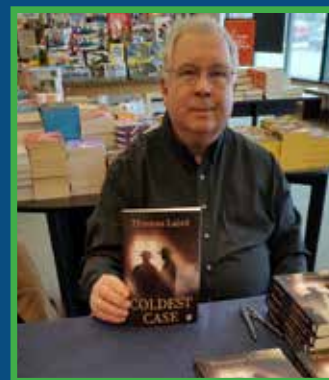


John Paul Stedwill (PND '16) was ordained to the transitional diaconate for the Diocese of Peoria on December 20, 2025. Our next issue will include his priestly ordination.



Trey Socha (PND '22) and Maci Cave (PND '22) both completed the Boston Marathon on April 20th with personal records!

Former faculty member Tom Laird recently released his newest book, *Coldest Case*, which is available on Amazon.



Mike Gray (PND '12) was presented the Silver Beaver Award by the W.D. Boyce Council of Scouting America for noteworthy service of exceptional character to youth by registered scouters. Only 800 Silver Beaver Awards are bestowed annually.

SENIOR SHOWCASE

Each year, the senior art students and Advanced Placement Research students have the opportunity to showcase their hard work during their four years at PND. In May, the students took over The Commons to display their projects for the public to view.

The art ranged from paintings, drawings, and pottery to digital media, jewelry, and even leatherwear. Guests had the opportunity to purchase items created by the students.

The AP Research students took part in one final project by displaying posters explaining their capstone research, thesis, and findings. The topics ranged from a study on Eucharistic hymns to research on the effects of hormone replacement therapy on joint pain.



RECONNECT, REMINISCE, AND REJOICE! Alumni Reunions

AOL/SI'66 - June 6 - Contact Cindy Niemeier Larson at cindylars@aol.com
AOL/SI '71 - August 21 & 22 - Contact Dan Callahan at callahan53@aol.com
AOL/SI '76 - September 18 & 19 - Contact Linda Rogy-Gutierrez at webegutrog7@gmail.com

BHS '76 - June 12 & 13 - Contact Mary Jo Ghighi at mjwghix2@yahoo.com
BHS '71 - August 29 - Contact Patty Rettig at pdrettig1@gmail.com
BHS '66 - September 18 & 19 - Contact Tom Wetzler at twetz48@gmail.com
BHS '81 - September 25 - Contact Angie Aeschliman at aesch5802@aol.com

PND '01 - November 27 & 28 - Contact Cathie Trimble at cathyltrimble@gmail.com
PND '06 - September 25 - Contact Anna Yee at ayee1229@gmail.com

Peoria Notre Dame is seeking nominations for our annual alumni awards presented during Homecoming week. This year, we are seeking nominations for both our Fulton J. Sheen Distinguished Alumni Award and the General Wayne A. Downing Public Service Award.

Nominees for the distinguished alumni award should demonstrate the following traits: 1. Loyal to Catholic education, 2. Active in the Catholic community, and 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. For the distinguished alumni award, this should include the nominee's accomplishments and service to our school and other worthy organizations. For the public service award, supporting credentials may include branch of service (military or first responders), rank, and accomplishments or awards.

The winners will be asked to attend the all-school Homecoming Mass on September 25 to receive the award. Posthumous nominations will be considered if the nominee has passed within the last year. All nominations will be considered for two years.

Nominations are due by July 31, 2026. Send your nominations to the Alumni Office, Peoria Notre Dame, 5105 N. Sheridan Rd. Peoria, IL 61614 or email Alumni Coordinator Tara Shane at t.shane@pndhs.org.



Name _____ School and year of graduation _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Cell Phone (_____) _____ - _____

Fulton J. Sheen Distinguished Alumni Award General Wayne A. Downing Public Service Award

****Please remember to include supporting credentials!****
 Nominations without all of the proper elements will not be considered.

My Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Cell Phone (_____) _____ - _____

My email _____ My relationship to the nominee _____



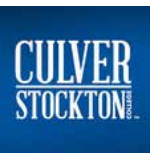
Trades



Work Force



Military Service



A Gift



We know Peoria Notre Dame is a gift to every student who walks through its doors. With God's grace and blessing, its impact has been immeasurable for generations. We want to do our part to ensure PND will be here teaching and modeling the Catholic Faith for the young people of many generations.

Tom & Cindy Dermody



Making Peoria Notre Dame a part of our estate planning was an easy decision.

After all, it was the high school our only child attended, and where we watched her perform on stage, cantor at Masses, and compete at Scholastic Bowl events. Nurtured by caring teachers and chaplains, Colleen's faith was nourished at PND and her passion for education grew. She is now in her 15th year as a Catholic school teacher in Des Moines.

But that's only one chapter of our long history with PND. As the former editor of The Catholic Post newspaper, Tom regularly

reported on school events for decades. And for the past seven years, we have been thoroughly immersed in PND's community and mission through Cindy's role as Director of Advancement. We have witnessed the amazing generosity and support of so many who love this school and its students.

One more chapter opened two years ago when Tom became assistant coach of the Irish men's and women's tennis teams. Getting to spend time with 50 student athletes has been a privilege and a daily reinforcement of how well PND is fulfilling its mission.

More Information

For more information about The 1863 Society, please contact Director of Advancement Rachel Kress at r.kress@pndhs.org or call 309.691.8741.



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
309-691-8741

NON-PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
PEORIA, IL
PERMIT NO. 531



Update Your Information!

MAIL TO: Peoria Notre Dame Alumni Office
5105 N. Sheridan Rd. Peoria, IL 61614
Phone: 309.691.8741
www.pndhs.org
Email Tara Shane at 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. Hover over "Alumni," and click on "Update Your Info."

