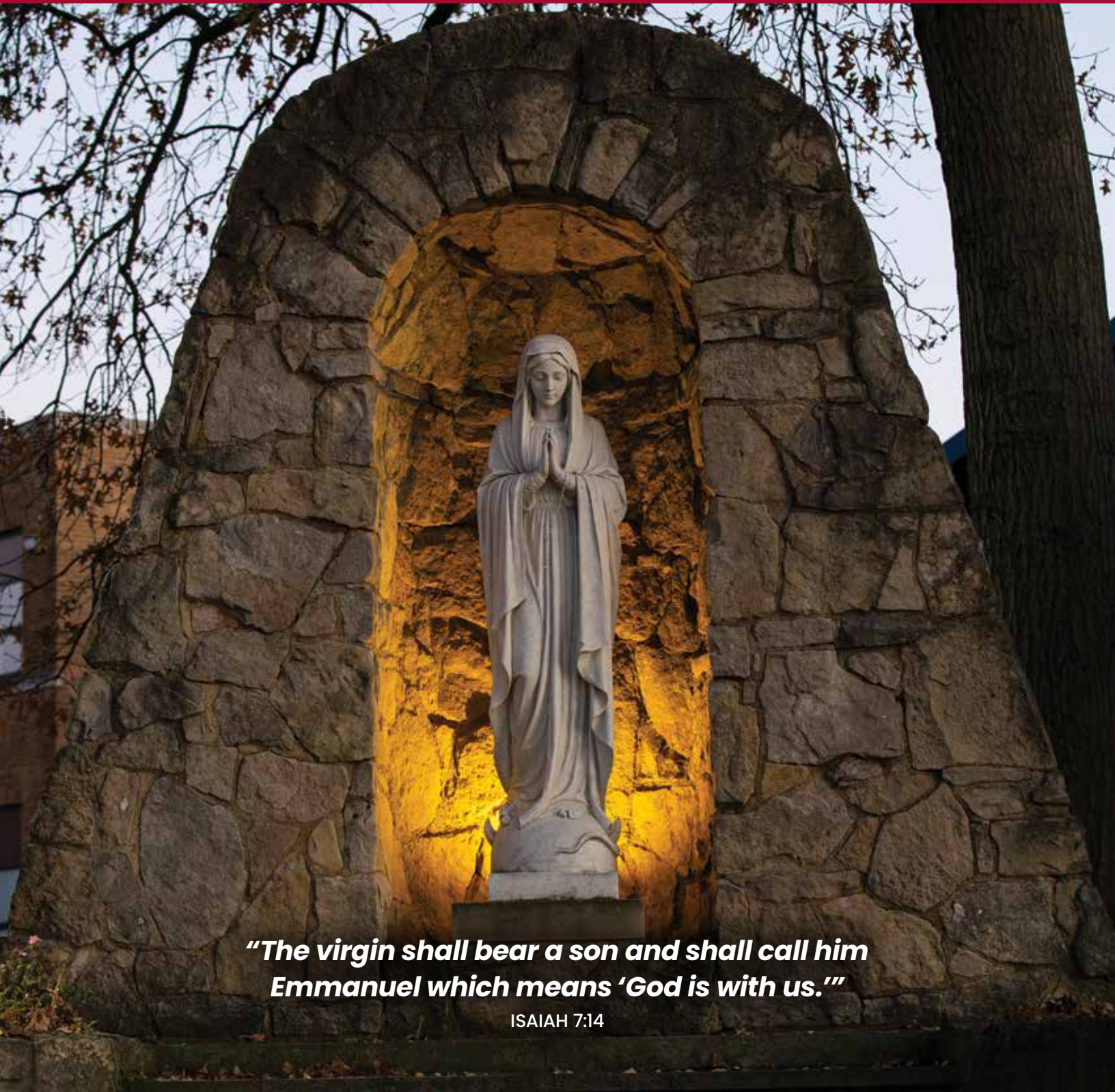


ORA ET LABORA



A publication of **Benedictine High School** and **Saint Andrew Abbey**

Winter 2020



***"The virgin shall bear a son and shall call him
Emmanuel which means 'God is with us.'"***

ISAIAH 7:14

A JOINT MESSAGE FROM
ABBOT GARY HOOVER, OSB '74 AND MR. RYAN RYZNER '95

DEAR BENEDICTINE COMMUNITY,

As we bring this very unusual year of 2020 to a close, we realize many blessings that we ordinarily have taken for granted. It's been said that "necessity is the mother of invention," and the fact that we have live-streamed Masses, held remote classes, and laughed together at virtual happy hours have proved those words to be accurate. Our communities of faith and academics have taken these challenges in stride, and it has allowed us to worship and learn in innovative ways. We have found alternative methods of strengthening our cherished traditions, proving that with grit and grace, great things are possible.

And so, as we bring this unusual and challenging year to a close, we, the leaders of Saint Andrew Abbey and Benedictine High School, want to let you know how much we value the students entrusted to our care, the faithful our monks minister to at our weekend parish assignments, the many alumni who continue to live out their Benedictine values, and the countless friends and benefactors who believe in our mission of "Prayer and Work" and make sacrifices to support us.

Because of the uncertainty about the virus in the coming months, we have made the decision to once again host our annual **"Blue and White Gala"** major fundraiser for the high school online from **March 8-13, 2021**. We hope to match the success of last year's Gala through your generous participation. See page 22 of this issue for more details about how you can participate.

In this issue you will also read about the opening of our new Media Center that provides our students with hands-on experience with the latest technology available for communications work. This unique addition to our curriculum was made possible by generous gifts of our alumni and friends. And, we thank all of you who have or will include Benedictine in your end-of-year giving.

May our annual celebration of the birth of Jesus into our world renew in each of us the faith that our Lord said could "move mountains." We ask for continued strength and guidance that will carry us to successfully living our mission of developing young men in mind, body, and spirit.

Yours in Saint Benedict,



Abbot Gary Hoover, OSB '74
Abbot / Chancellor



Rt. Rev. Gary Hoover, OSB '74

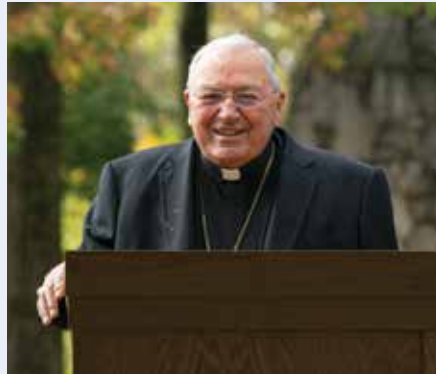


Mr. Ryan Ryzner '95



Mr. Ryan Ryzner '95
President and Principal

RUFUS COURTYARD GROUNDBREAKING



On October 28th, 2020, the Benedictine Order of Cleveland broke ground on the new courtyard to be named in memory of Mr. Joe Rufus. This is Phase One of the Centennial Campaign: *A Present and Future Community of Faith*. Construction will soon begin on the faculty parking lot to transform it into a natural courtyard which will connect the main buildings with the Marian Grotto and Bossu Field. Phase Two will begin next summer with the construction of the new atrium entrance that will connect the current high school classroom building with the science building, and incorporate the Brother Ted Spirit Bridge. The small gathering heard from Bishop Roger Gries, OSB '54, Abbot Gary Hoover, OSB '74, President and Principal Ryan Ryzner '95, Chair of the Construction Committee Matthew Joyce '90, and Chris Lorber '04, Vice President of Advancement. 2022 will mark 100 years since the first Benedictine Monks arrived in Cleveland and we are proud to still be going strong while entering our next 100 years!

Below l-r: Matt Joyce '90, Chris Lorber '04, Ryan Ryzner '95, Greg Rufus '74, Mary Kay (Rufus) Popovich, Frank Bossu '67, Bill Wilkinson '82, Bishop Roger Gries, OSB '54, Abbot Gary Hoover, OSB '74



THE BENEDICTINE MEDIA LAB

STORY BY BRIAN DEVERS '08
DIRECTOR OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS



If you know where the Benedictine Bookstore was on campus, it has been transformed into the Benedictine Media Lab.

When I see the Media Lab we have created at Benedictine, I am in awe of the community of people who have come together to make this happen.

It all started when Chris Lorber '04 and Ryan Ryzner '95 came to me and said, "We have an incredibly generous offer from an alum who would like to donate to our media program. What would you recommend?"

I knew from years of working in video production that ready access to high quality professional equipment was incredibly important to creating media. When I was the 2nd Unit Director on the documentary *A Murder in the Park*, we were constantly having to fight for funding and rent additional equipment to successfully capture the interviews and reenactment footage we needed to make that film.

I knew from my media education experience that universities often miss the boat when it comes to preparing their students for a career in media. They overly rely on television studios that don't challenge

students to create their images from scratch and on location. When Benedictine came to me and offered me the opportunity to help create a media program at the institution where I gained such a valuable education, I jumped at the chance. We have created a completely modular space where students can either create what they want here or take the equipment out into the world to create there.



Photo by Gabe Roberto '21

The bulk of the funding for the Media Lab came from an alumnus who wishes to remain anonymous. Benedictine now has the means of a sustainable professional production company. With three Sony 4K cameras capable of ultra high definition video and still photos, a large variety of lenses, five new editing IMacs, professional sound



and podcast recording equipment, lights and tripods, Benedictine has the resources I only dreamed about when I started out as a professional.

This donation has already inspired others. My old boss, Don Gregory, owner of Cleveland Camera Rental, came to me with an equipment donation worth thousands of dollars because he heard what we were putting in place. Kevin Hughes, class of '85 and experienced executive producer of many short films, came to Chris Lorber with another huge equipment donation worth tens of thousands of dollars, donating three additional cameras, lenses, lighting, and tripods. The Sterkel family came through earlier in the summer with a multi-thousand dollar sound equipment donation, applicable to the music tech program and the media program at large.

The generosity of this community is incredible.

You may have already noticed the impact. We broadcast every football game we were permitted to air this year. We broadcast three soccer games on Bossu Field, including a playoff win. We broadcast our Morning Announcements every morning on Benedictine's YouTube channel. This is only the beginning.

Benedictine has an extensive list of alumni who work in film and media. Anthony Russo '88 and Joe Russo '89, the directors of Marvel's *Avengers: Endgame* are the most famous examples. It helps that they directed the highest grossing film of all time. Hall of Distinction inductee Stefan Czapsky '69, veteran cinematographer whose credits include *Batman Returns* and *Edward Scissorhands* and the seminal documentary film *The Thin Blue Line* has to come close behind. Locally, we know Jack Marshall '71 and Ben Holbert '79 from their local news days. Kevin Riley '80 is the longtime editor-in-chief of the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*. More recently, Chaz Bottoms '13 has been on the rise for his work in animation, even collaborating with the aforementioned Executive Producer Kevin Hughes '85 to produce his short animated film, *Battu*, due later this year.

How do we empower the new Stefan Czapskys, enable the next Russo brothers, or supply resources for the next Chaz Bottoms? How do we prepare the new Ben Holberts, Jack Marshalls, and Kevin Rileys? How do we arm the leaders of tomorrow with the knowledge of how media is created and how it affects our lives and changes our perception of reality? With the creation of this new Media Lab, we have taken a major step forward.

It is objectively true that Benedictine has the resources to be on the forefront and it's thanks to the generosity of our community. It's the individual alumni we have, stepping up and supporting the school who helped form who they are today. I am proud to count myself among the Men of Benedictine and grateful for the opportunity to lead this program into a new era.

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STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

DREW JOYCE '22

"I originally chose Benedictine because of the hallmark of Community. As a student, I have not been disappointed. Here at Benedictine, we treat each other like brothers. The community here is something that I do not see in any other high school. We are truly unique in our character as a school and I believe that my choice of Benedictine was my greatest decision in my short lifetime. Thank you for supporting me and my opportunity to excel in an environment in which I have thrived."



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DONOR TESTIMONIAL

BEN '06 and KATIE DRDA

"We donate to Benedictine out of a deep respect and gratitude for her role in guiding and educating multiple generations of our family. My grandfather, George Drda, Class of 1945, was proud to support this community, and we're happy to continue that legacy. We trust that Benedictine will continue in her mission of pointing to the virtues of the Spirit as the way to a life worth living. The world and the Church need good men. Donating to Benedictine is one way we can fulfill that need."

– Ben Drda, Class of 2006 and his wife Katie and daughters Agnes Maria and Felicity Benedicta



Ben and Katie (holding baby) are pictured with Ben's grandfather, BHS alumnus George Drda, Class of '45, as his grandchildren and great-grandchildren celebrate his 90th birthday in 2017. George passed away in 2019.

† deceased

FR. ANSELM AT 80

As **Fr. Anselm** celebrated his 80th birthday on August 28, 2020, he became the first monk or lay teacher at Benedictine High School to still be **actively teaching** at that milestone birthday. **Congratulations!** He began part-time teaching as a seminarian in 1964 and taught 47 consecutive years until leaving for Walsh University in 2011. He returned to the BHS faculty in 2016.

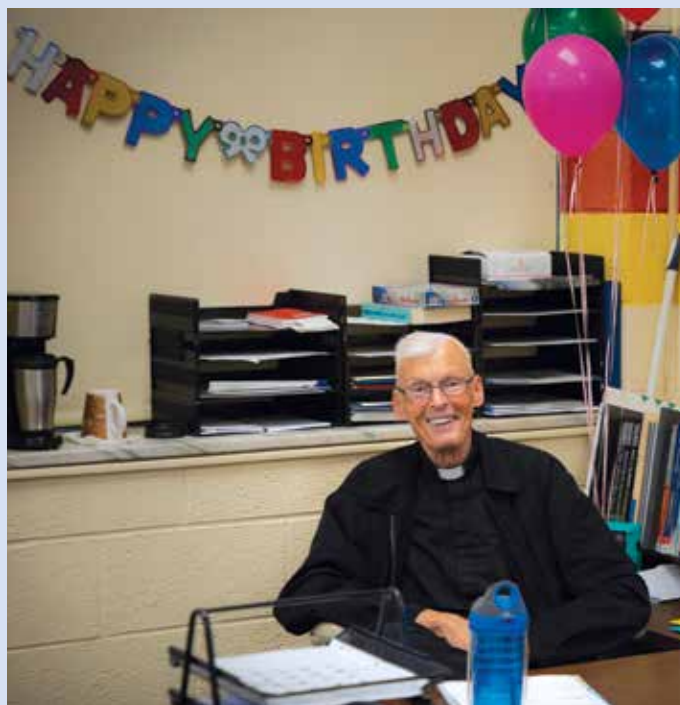
Fr. Anselm teaches four classes of German and supervises a study hall this school year which involves teaching both a majority of the students in person, but also some who have chosen remote learning due to the virus. On October 8, 2020, Fr. Anselm took 27 German students on the annual field trip to Walnut Creek, Ohio where they experienced German and Swiss culture and enjoyed a sumptuous full course meal at the famous Der Dutchman restaurant. Fr. Anselm has been organizing this popular annual trip for students since 1979.

No BHS teacher, religious or lay, has come close to still being an active classroom teacher at the age of 80. **Coach Augie Bossu** retired from teaching in 1986 at the age of 70 but remained active as a coach until 2006 when he retired as freshman football coach at age 90 (53 consecutive years on staff). **Joe Rufus** retired from teaching in 1987 at the age of 69, completing 42 consecutive years on staff.

Fr. Timothy Buyansky, OSB '60 retired from the BHS faculty as librarian in 2018 at the age of 76 after 48 consecutive years. **Bro. Alfred Nasticky, OSB** retired from the BHS faculty as the typing teacher in 1993 at the age of 73 after 40 consecutive years. **Fr. Robert Wilkes, OSB '39** retired from the BHS faculty as business teacher in 1992 at the age of 71 after 49 consecutive years. **Fr. Cyril Novotny, OSB '31** died in 1981 at age 69 while in his 44th consecutive year of teaching. **Fr. Dominic Mondzelewski, OSB '60** left the classroom at the age of 65 in 2007 after 42 years as a teacher and administrator at BHS.



Newly-ordained Fr. Anselm, age 27, poses with the sophomore class officers of the Class of 1970 in 1967 (l-r: Steven Vanjo, Kenneth Kurz, Joseph Russo, Ronald Fioritto, and Brian Laczko).



Fr. Anselm celebrates his 80th birthday in his classroom.

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 Saint Benedict Catholic School

BILL MANDICH '97 – FIRST RESPONDER

Bill Mandich, an Orange Village firefighter and paramedic, was at the birthday party of a three-year-old boy in August when he heard screams from the swimming pool. When he arrived, he found the boy in cardiac arrest after he was found face down in the pool. The Orange Village Fire Department news release said, "Simply put, this young child was in big trouble." When Mandich arrived he assumed control of the situation and gave the boy CPR while making sure 911 was called. By the time the rescue squad arrived the boy was breathing. The family later brought the boy to visit Mandich at the Maple Heights Fire Department, where he serves as Lieutenant in addition to his role in the Orange Village Fire Department. Congratulations to Bill and to all our Benedictine first responders. We appreciate all that you do!



DONOR TESTIMONIAL

JOSEPH SWEENEY '98

"Through my volunteerism and giving, I hope to provide opportunities for our current and future men to experience the lifelong impact of a Benedictine education and strong Catholic formation. I am forever grateful to the monks, teachers and administrators who dedicate their lives to forming our men and keeping our traditions alive. I'm proud to support Benedictine's mission and am truly excited about the transformation that our Centennial Campaign will bring to our Benedictine family. It's an exciting time to be a Bengal!"

– Joseph Sweeney '98
Deloitte and Touche LLP
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STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

MIKEY PRICE '21

"When I was looking for a high school, I didn't really know which high school to go to. I knew of Benedictine because my dad (Michael Price '75) and brother (Tyler George-Price '08) came here. I really started falling in love with Bendictine during freshman year football. I especially felt the love and brotherhood of Benedictine when the football and hockey teams showed up to my Dad's funeral at St. Andrew Abbey. My dad died in September of my freshman year, but his wish was for me to go to Benedictine and graduate. Four years later I'm still attending Benedictine High School as a senior class member of 2021. Through the four years here, I believe that the brotherhood and the love from the school only got stronger over time. I am extremely blessed to have the financial support from the school so that I can be a Man of Benedictine."

RUDMANN '17 REFLECTS AS WALSH SENIOR

Recently Blaise Rudmann '17 was featured in the Walsh University's online news. Now a senior, Blaise chose Walsh



University four years ago at the urging of his BHS German teacher Fr. Anselm who had served five years as chaplain at Walsh and who felt it would be a "good fit" for Blaise. As a freshman at Walsh in 2018, Blaise felt that he lacked the discipline he needed to succeed to his fullest potential. That self-reflection led him to join the Air Force National Guard.

After joining the National Guard, Blaise left Walsh for seven months while he went to boot camp and five months of job training in technical skills such as masonry, carpentry, sheet metal, dry wall and duct work. He returned to Walsh in the spring of 2019 resuming his college studies with a new major - Psychology Pre-Occupational Therapy. He made the switch from Pre-Bio Engineering because he wanted to work more directly with people.

"Joining the military was 100% the best decision of my life. I'm a better student and more productive with my time," said Blaise. When he returned to Walsh he also got more involved as a member of the Walsh Chorale, campus ministry, the AGAPE retreat, and serving as the Veteran's Commissioner for Walsh University Student Government of which he is serving as President in his senior year.

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STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

JOHN HANNAN '21

"One of the big factors for why I chose to come to Benedictine is the brotherhood between the students. When I was looking at another high school, I would ask my shadow if he had any classes with certain kids that I knew, and he said he had never heard of some of those students before. However, when I shadowed Benedictine, it seemed as if every student knew each other. For example, I saw freshmen interacting with seniors both in the classrooms and in the hallways, something that you don't see at too many high schools. This sense of community made me believe that Benedictine was the right fit for me. A big reason why my classmates and I are able to experience this camaraderie is due to the scholarships provided by the school. Without the support from the donors, many of these scholarships wouldn't be available, and many students wouldn't be able to attend Benedictine. This is why I am extremely grateful to those who support the Home of Champions."



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STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

MASON ADRINE '23

"I am currently a sophomore at Benedictine and am proud to participate in the Student Council, track & field, and to be a top student in my class. Benedictine has helped me grow as a person and in my faith. I can not imagine going anywhere else, Benedictine is my home. Out of all the other schools I looked at, none of them had the same sense of community and brotherhood Benedictine did. There are no words for how grateful I am to have received a scholarship to go here. In my time here I have learned to be a better man and child of God. I want to thank all of the donors and alums who made it possible for me to go here."



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DAVE SCHROEDER '90

"Benedictine has been an important part of my life as far back as I can remember. I still remember the first football game I attended when I was in grade school. When it was my time for high school, I think my mom had already made my mind up for me. Having two uncles and two brothers who all attended the school, you can say the Schroeders are a Benedictine family. I cherish the life learnings of respect, determination and leadership that I walked out of that building with and I value the friendships, memories and ideals that were all part of my experience. I continue to support the mission of mind, body and spirit and I am happy to help future Men of Benedictine."

– Dave Schroeder '90



Dave and Kathy Schroeder with daughters Stephanie & Melissa and dogs Shelby & Benny.

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STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

MARVIN CONKLE '22

"When I first walked into the doors of Benedictine High School as a shadowing eighth grader, it felt like this place would be my future home. When I first arrived here as a student, I didn't know much academically. I struggled my freshman year trying to adjust to being a student at a private, Catholic, college prep school. My sophomore year, I started to get the hang of it and I improved as a student in the classroom. My G.P.A. went up from a 2.7 to a 3.2 by the end of my sophomore year. Dr. Salem recently told me, "Your writing has improved quite a bit since your freshman year." When she said this, I had a big smile on my face because I realized that I'm not the only one who had noticed my improvement as an English student or a student in general. I would like to thank the Benedictine community for honoring me with such prestigious scholarships. I'm so grateful to be at the Home of Champions."

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SPORTS WRAP UP

The Benedictine Bengals wrapped up successful fall sports seasons across the board. While the goal is always to advance as far as possible and win championships, every sport performed well and looks poised to perform even better next year if they put in the work!

CROSS COUNTRY

Our Cross Country team was admittedly small to start the year, but many joined the team late in the season to bring our numbers back up. They were led by junior Henry Peyrebrune '22 who finished 33rd at Districts, just missing top 24 in a crowded finish. Freshman Owen Murphy '24 also showed a lot of promise and was able to recruit his older brother Finn Murphy '22 to join the squad, along with James First '24, Henry First '21, Marshall Jones-Graham '22, and Alexander Papesh '22. Golfers Eric Smith '21 and Ryan Plisko '21 also participated, with Eric Smith competing at Districts.



GOLF

The Golf team competed at Sectionals at Quail Hollow Country Club, with senior Corey Misconish '21 just missing the cut to advance. Ryan Plisko '21, Eric Smith '21, Derrick Faulisi '23, and Nicholas Vitantonio '24 also competed on a beautiful fall morning.

SOCCER

The Soccer team finished the season 12-5-1 and advanced to the third round of the playoffs and lost a tough double overtime 1-0 game to Buckeye. To get there, they beat Rocky River 4-2 at home during an exciting live broadcast on Benedictine's Boxcast. Christian Cora '22 led the team with 25 goals and sits at 99 career goals for the Bengals. Christian was voted All Ohio and First Team in Greater Cleveland. Head Coach Miguel Cora was voted District Coach of the Year and Samir Gonzalez '21 was voted First Team Greater Cleveland, Omari Sanders '22 finished Second Team Greater Cleveland and Peter Sterkel '22, Charlie Roberto '24, and Cam Mitchell '22 were all Honorable Mention Greater Cleveland. This team has a lot of talent and will be exciting to watch next year!



FOOTBALL

The Football team played a grueling schedule and finished the regular season 2-4. Even with that record, area coaches awarded the Bengals a first round bye. After beating Willoughby South 35-0 in the 2nd round of the OHSAA Playoffs, they faced Walsh Jesuit at home in Euclid. After being down early 14-0, they came back to put themselves up 20-14. Walsh Jesuit drove down the field to tie the game but had their extra point blocked by senior Gary Merrill '21. The Bengals pounded in a touchdown and played great defense to advance to a rematch with Akron Archbishop Hoban. Hoban gave the Bengals their 1st loss at home 31-24 in the regular season. The Bengals lost senior quarterback Ronnie Schulz '21 to injury two games later and couldn't quite find their rhythm against a tough Hoban team and lost 37-0 to end their season. The team was very talented with many All-District players including First Team Marvin Conkle '22, Luke Beltavski '21, Derell Bedingfield '22, Chris Gales '21, Second Team Terrance Hollon '21, and Honorable Mentions Jacob Vasko '21, Angelo Lott '21, Duane Jackson '23, Andre Rodgers '21, Thomas Jolley '21, and Ivan Shuran '21.



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NEW NOVICE INVESTED

During evening vespers on Friday, October 30, 2020, postulant Seamus Coyne was invested as a novice of Saint Andrew Abbey. He received the religious name of Brother Gregory and the tunic and cincture of the Benedictine habit.



Having lived with the monastic community for several months as a postulant, Brother Gregory will continue his formation for the coming year under Fr. Michael Brunovsky, OSB. The year of novitiate training is a more intense period of study and work leading up to the profession of first vows. The novice remains at the monastery without visits to his family nor does he pursue any studies or training outside of the abbey.

Brother Gregory, 26, is the son of Tim and Mary Jo Coyne of Lakewood, Ohio. He has two brothers and six sisters. He attended the former St. Rose of Lima Elementary School and Padre Pio Academy on Madison Avenue. He graduated from Saint Gregory's Academy in Elmhurst Township, Pennsylvania and then pursued studies at Christendom College in Front Royal, Virginia. He played rugby in high school and college and enjoys juggling as a hobby.

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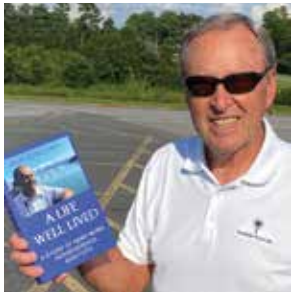
Ed and Edythe Webber

Ms. Eleanor Kvetko

Class of 1939

Al Grossman reports that he is doing fine, but is dealing with mobility issues in assisted living at St. Mary of the Woods Home in Avon, Ohio. He is grateful for the resumption of daily Mass and communion. At age 99, he is Benedictine's oldest living alumnus. Until he developed knee problems three years ago, he was swimming daily and quite active. Al served as Operations Administrator of the Cleveland Art Museum for 37 years. He has three sons who are BHS alumni: Robert '61, Tom '64, and Bill '66 (Brother Nathaniel, OSB – St. Bede's Abbey, Peru, Illinois).

Class of 1959



John Zvolensky recently published his autobiography, *A Life Well Lived*. Much of the book is devoted to family and career. In his chapter, "High School 1955-1959," he relates some stories about Fr. Jerome, Fr. William and Fr. Florian. John's intramural basketball team won the school championship and the team was

bragging to Fr. Florian in Latin class. Fr. Florian said, "You guys can't even beat my JV team." We bet a case of beer! Long story short, the JV team outran them and the score wasn't even close.

John included a 1959 yearbook picture of the varsity golf team. He is standing behind a crouched freshman by the name of Tom Weiskopf who went on to bigger things in golf.

Class of 1961

Marty Gray belonged to a club in Cleveland called the Ohio State Former Boxers. In 2001 he was inducted into their Hall of Fame. The club is comprised of former pro and amateur fighters. He served our country in Vietnam 1968-1969. He received an Army Commendation Medal for Meritorious Service Against Aggression in Vietnam! Marty is a retired Business Agent of Plumbers Local 55 of Cleveland, Ohio. He now lives in Murrells Inlet, S.C. with his wife.



Thanks to alumnus **John Colagiovanni '75** for identifying his classmate **Anthony Morgan '75** as the unidentified graduate on page 8 of the Fall issue.

Class of 1971

Tom Ennemoser is retired and spends time between his home in Wickliffe and his summer house on Catawba Island. The retired English teacher recently put together a series of essays on various topics involving history, literature, and culture. He is interested in hearing from classmates who might enjoy remembering Fr. Cyril's physics lab adventures, Daddy O's challenges during freshman football, or other 50 year memories from the Home of Champions. Not a fan of social media, he prefers to be reached by calling 440-478-5858.

Class of 2011

Marco Orlando married Lindsay Schoen of Elyria at Saint Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in Elyria on October 3, 2020. In the wedding party were Marco's BHS classmates **Tim Szalay** and **P.J. Spicuzza** (see photo below). Marco works at Preformed Line Products in Mayfield, Ohio as an Internal Audit Specialist.



CORRECTION:

In the previous issue of *Ora et Labora*, in the obituary for **Lois St. John** on page 21, we apologize for the omission of her brother alumnus **Thomas Flowers '65**.

In Memoriam

of Benedictine High School and
friends of Saint Andrew Abbey



Michael Conroy, 77, passed away on September 19, 2020. He was the father of Robert, BHS Class of '09 and beginning in 2012 served as the breakfast cook at Saint Andrew Abbey. Michael was a committed and devoted member of St. Agnes Our Lady of Fatima Parish in the Hough neighborhood and a good friend of the Benedictine community.



Lawrence Curk, 83, of the Class of 1955, passed away on October 15, 2020 in Dayton, Ohio. After earning degrees in Chemical Engineering and Business Administration, in 1976 he co-founded the innovative Paper Systems Inc. (PSI) in Springboro, Ohio. Over the next 42 years, and through his leadership as President and CEO, the company grew to

include manufacturing facilities in Arizona, Florida, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. He never lost his passion for the Cleveland Browns and spoke recently to BHS Vice President of Advancement Chris Lorber about the challenges of the current season. A lifelong Catholic, he was a member of the Church of the Incarnation and active in many social organizations.



Richard (Red) Golias, 90, of the Class of 1947, passed away 8/10/19 and was buried from St. Therese Church in Garfield Heights. A fixture at Bengal sporting events for many decades, his strong voice from the bleachers chastised many officials whom Red suspected of partiality. As a professional painter, he used his skills in projects at the abbey and high

school. He was proud of his five sons who also graduated from the Home of Champions: Robert '70, Richard, Jr. '74, Karl '78, Timothy '81, and Paul '86, as well as his daughters Anne and Marie. He was preceded in death by his wife, Wanda.



Edward Hassing, Jr., 88, of the Class of 1951, passed away on All Souls Day, November 2, 2020. Ed was an all-state lineman for the Bengals in the days of Chuck Noll '49. He was married 66 years to Alice Marie and had 4 children, 10 grandchildren, and 7 great-grandchildren. He was a Korean War veteran and worked 36 years in the

Circulation Department of the *Plain Dealer*. He was the brother of the late Mary Jane Siemen, long-time secretary in the BHS alumni office, brother-in-law of the late Jack Siemen, Sr. '48, the uncle of Jack Siemen '71, Ken Siemen '74, and Chris Siemen '79, and the grandfather of Chris Scalisi '05. His funeral Mass was at Mary Queen of the Apostles Church in Brook Park where he was a faithful weekday Mass server.



James St. John, 87, of the Class of 1950, passed away on September 11, 2020. He leaves behind his wife, Eleanor, and ten children including BHS alumni David '85 and Patrick '88. He was the brother of Jack '49 and Chuck '54. He served as a councilman for the City of Bedford and as a funeral director of the family business as well as coaching CYO basketball.

He was a lifelong fan of Bengal sports. Abbot Gary Hoover, OSB and Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB represented BHS at his funeral Mass at Our Lady of Hope Church in Bedford.



Eugene Slane (Slaninka), 99, of the Class of 1939, died on September 26, 2020 in Westlake, Ohio. **At the time of his death, Eugene was the oldest living Benedictine alumnus.** He is survived by

Pauline, his beloved wife of 76 years, four children, and seven grandchildren. After World War II, he became a member of the Cleveland

Fire Department. He and Pauline retired to Vero Beach, Florida where he was active at St. Helen's Church and especially with the Knights of Columbus where he served as Grand Knight. He often told his children that while he was a student at BHS, he submitted the team name "Bengals" in a contest to replace the earlier names of "Bennies" and "Buckeyes." The name was officially changed in January 1940. Eugene's funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Raphael's Church in Bay Village, Ohio and livestreamed to St. Helen's Parish in Florida. Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB delivered remarks on behalf of BHS after communion.



Edwin Sovol Sr., 95, died November 30, 2019. Ed was an active member and served in a number of leadership positions in the BHS Parent-Boosters Club in the 1960s including president. He was married to Helen Sovol who was also a longtime part of the BHS administration (1962-1973). Working with several principals, she also played a key role in

the founding and development of the Public Relations Department and the revived Alumni Association. Ed was the father of David '66, Christine (husband Dave Behm '67) and Ed Jr. '73. He was also grandfather to Casey Behm '97 and great grandfather of Nick Dalton '19.



Edmund Yemec, 87, of the Class of 1951 passed away in Hilton Head, South Carolina on May 1, 2020. After four years as an education services officer in U.S. Navy, he taught General Science and coached football and track at Benedictine High School from 1961-65. Over his 35-year career in Northeast Ohio, he was employed by high schools in

Warrensville Heights, Cleveland Heights, Fairport Harbor and Parma where he taught health and physical education. As an exceptional athlete himself, he also coached numerous student athletes in football, track and tennis during his career. Active in his parish, he was also a First Degree Knight of Columbus.

Priority is given to notable deaths that have occurred since the last issue of Ora et Labora.

VINCE FRANCIOLI DIES AT 96

BY FR. GERARD GONDA, OSB '71 AND MARK FRANCIOLI '71

One of the most popular and beloved lay faculty members of Benedictine High School, Vincent Francioli, passed away at the age of 96 on October 17, 2020. He taught social studies at BHS from 1955 – 66. He was also the father of veteran English teacher Mark Francioli who is now in his 43rd year on the faculty. Vince is also survived by his daughter Gail. His wife of 67 years, Evelyn, died in 2015.

Vince graduated from Collinwood High School in 1943 and served as a combat engineer with the 36th Infantry Division in World War II when that division broke the Siegfried Line and later opened up the concentration camps. Being a witness to such a significant event left a deep impression on him and later developed into his passion for history and social studies. In recent years he published his war year memories in a book entitled *From Cleveland to Nazi Germany*.

After the war he attended John Carroll University and Western Reserve University (CWRU) receiving a B.A. and M.A., respectively, in history. He was hired at Benedictine in 1955 by the late Fr. Benedict Dobrancin, OSB. He became chair of the social studies department and moderated the Model United Nations Group. Later, under principal Fr. Robert Wilkes, OSB '39, Vince helped to set up the first lay teachers' retirement plan in the Diocese of Cleveland.

Many of his former students still acknowledge that Vince's animated style of teaching made his class one of their favorites, even if they had not liked history up to that point in their studies. Fr. Dismas Boeff, OSB '66 had Mr. Francioli for government in one of Vince's final years on the faculty. "He made that class so interesting because he was like an actor on stage. He really knew how to engage a class," remembered Fr. Dismas.

After leaving teaching, Vince got very involved with local government as director of the Cleveland Civil Service Program and CETA and worked with the Ohio Lottery, Cuyahoga County Youth Services, and



the Republican Party. Later, in retirement he taught some classes at Cuyahoga Community College and gave tours and lectures on the history of Cleveland. He was active in several Italian cultural organizations as well as in Our Lady of Peace Parish.

Vince stayed connected to Benedictine through his participation in the early years of the Board of Governors of the high school and on the committee for the annual Abbey Benefit. Every Lent he could be seen at the fish fries sponsored by clubs moderated by his son Mark. He also enjoyed attending the yearly induction ceremony for the BHS Hall of Distinction, having taught some of the honorees.

He counted a number of the veteran monks among his friends, including the late Abbot Jerome Koval, OSB '35; the late Fr. William Matyas, OSB '45; and especially the late Fr. Placid Pientek, OSB '36. In recent years, he was meeting for lunch with two colleagues from the BHS lay faculty in 1956: Jose Cintron (art) and Robert Peck (German). Abbot Gary Hoover, OSB '74 celebrated Vince's funeral Mass at the Abbey Church on Friday, Oct. 23, 2020 with a number of monks participating, including Bishop Roger Gries, OSB '54.



Vince Francioli (L) and his son Mark '71 (R) – represent over half a century of teaching at BHS.

JOHN F. SZUCH '55

BENEDICTINE'S FIRST FOOTBALL HISTORIAN 1938-2020

BY WALLY MIESKOSKI '71

The Benedictine family lost one of its most unsung heroes of history.

Since his time at Benedictine High School, John F. Szuch, Class of 1955, was a cheerleader for all things dear to his heart. And next to the devotion to his family, he displayed a passion for Benedictine football.

That love affair began in 1948 as an elementary school student when he watched the Bengals, after 15 straight losses, finally defeat Cathedral Latin for the first time. The 15-0 victory was played at the old Cleveland Stadium in front of a crowd of 20,037.

That spirit for Benedictine football continued as a Benedictine student and remained for decades. Szuch, age 82, died on October 8, 2020.

He was a cheerleader for the Bengals in his high school days. As a John Carroll University student, he was a cheerleader for the Blue Streaks, and even served one year as a cheerleader for the Cleveland Browns.

After college graduation and two years serving in the Army as a helicopter pilot, Szuch regained his Benedictine football interest in the mid-1960s. That's when he began research on the early days of Benedictine football dating to the first game in 1929. He was Benedictine's first football historian.

Before the Internet, he tackled the research the old-fashioned way.

Szuch spent hours and hours, weeks and months in the evenings poring over microfilm through pages of old newspapers in the *Plain Dealer* library. He also reviewed old Benedictine student newspapers and other school publications.

He was a pioneer, by at least a generation or two, of high school football research. In those days, football history was reserved for mostly college and professional football teams.

In that period from the late 1960s and early 1970s, he would write a full-page article about that night's opponent's history with the Bengals in the game program sold at the gate.

At the same time, he began attending Bengals football games religiously. Starting in 1965 with a 29-12 loss to Massillon and ending in 1985, with a 47-0 win over John Marshall, he



Szuch at the end of his 204 consecutive BHS varsity football game streak in 1985. The scoreboard tells the story: BHS – 47, John Marshall – 0.

attended 204 consecutive Benedictine football games... that's 20 years without missing a game – home or away.

You could spot him easily with his trademark porkpie hat decorated with his collection of Benedictine spirit buttons.

His two sons, John, Class of '78 and Chris, Class of '79, are Benedictine graduates.

In the spring of 1978, Szuch began paying a lot more attention to the Bengals baseball team as the team marched its way through the state tournament. John Jr. was the starting catcher on the Bengals state runner-up team that year and was a starting defensive back on the 1977 Bengals football team that just missed the

state playoffs.

He followed the Bengals through the years and interest soared once again in the early 2010s when his grandson Jonathan Szuch, Class of 2015, was a quarterback on the Bengals 2014 state title football team. Jonathan is now a member of the Bengals football support staff.

The Szuchs are a proud three-generation Benedictine family of graduates.

John wanted to continue his consecutive decades streak of watching the Bengals into the 2020s. Sadly, that dream was extinguished when his poor health followed him into this season. Yet, his streak of watching the Bengals in eight straight decades from the 1940s to the 2010s is a remarkable achievement.

John's Benedictine football avocation had ironic bookends. His first game came when the Bengals defeated archrival Cathedral Latin 15-0 for the first victory over the Lions.

On Friday, October 16, the Benedictine 35-0 victory over Willoughby South was the first game without John, but he was there in spirit. His son John and grandson Jonathan brought to the game his trademark porkpie hat as a sentimental symbol of John's love of Benedictine football. And, just like his game in 1948, the Bengals defeated that night's opponent for the first time ever.

It was a fitting tribute to a man who discovered Benedictine football history.

SAVE THE DATE!

REUNION WEEKEND 2021

JUNE 18-20, 2021

Celebrating classes ending in '0, '1, '5 and '6

2015/16

5 YEAR REUNION

1975/76

45 YEAR REUNION

2010/11

10 YEAR REUNION

1970/71

**50 YEAR REUNION
GOLDEN YEAR!**

2005/06

15 YEAR REUNION

1965/66

55 YEAR REUNION

2000/01

20 YEAR REUNION

1960/61

60 YEAR REUNION

1995/96

25 YEAR REUNION

1955/56

65 YEAR REUNION

1990/91

30 YEAR REUNION

1950/51

70 YEAR REUNION

1985/86

35 YEAR REUNION

1945/46

75 YEAR REUNION

1980/81

40 YEAR REUNION

1940/41

80 YEAR REUNION

2021 Reunion Weekend Dates

**STAG
NIGHT**

**FRIDAY
JUNE 18, 2021**

**CLASS
PLANNED
ACTIVITIES**

**SATURDAY
JUNE 19, 2021**

**REUNION
MASS**

**SUNDAY
JUNE 20, 2021**

REUNION 2021

We are looking for class leaders and ambassadors from the above classes to help get the best out of the celebration of your reunion milestone during Reunion Weekend 2021.

Please contact alumni@cbhs.edu.

THANK YOU!

DEAR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS,



Chris Lorber '04

The December issue of the *Ora et Labora* publication is always my favorite of our seasonal magazines.

Why? It is because it provides the fiscal year's report of all our generous alumni, friends, foundations, organizations, corporations, and like-minded philanthropists that believe and invest in the missions of Benedictine High School and St. Andrew Abbey.

You have witnessed firsthand, as well as read our literature and communications to know that your support provides the resources necessary for our young men to receive the quality education at 2900 MLK Jr. Dr. Additionally, you have assisted our monks continue to spread the word of God to our Community along with the respective parishes they represent each week.

As we were preparing this issue, I asked one of the veteran monks to be an additional set of eyes and read through this year's list of contributors. After he finished, he remarked to me how impressed he was with the wide range of supporters who keep the high school and abbey functioning each year.

He saw the names of students from 50 years ago who were in school when he was a student. He recognized parents of students who graduated decades ago who still support BHS. Then there were the names of Slovak individuals and organizations whose cultural ties with the abbey underscore its original mission. Most gratifying were all of the gifts from alumni who have accomplished much in life and who realize that their Benedictine education provided the foundation for their professional success.

We are grateful for your investment.

As Christmas nears, please consider to continue being part of the resources that allow for these special experiences to turn

in to the *gifts* of the future through these different funding platforms:

GIFTS OF CASH:

Cash contributions may be made by check, money order or credit card through one gift or installments. If you or your spouse work for a company that matches gifts to secondary schools, your contributions can have double the impact. Your human resource office typically can provide you information on match opportunities.

GIFTS OF SECURITIES:

These can have advantageous tax benefits. Appreciated securities contribution values are determined by the average fair market value of the stock on the date the gift is transferred, provided the securities were owned for more than one year. Additionally, you, the benefactor, incur no capital gains tax on direct transfer of securities to Benedictine. Consult your tax advisor for more information.

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- Real Estate
- Intangible Personal Property
- Life Insurance
- Gifts of Will

If you have any questions on specific giving opportunities, please contact me at lorber@cbhs.edu or 216-421-2080 ext. 246.

Merry Christmas,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chi L '04".

Mr. Chris Lorber '04
Vice President of Advancement

ORA ET LABORA

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Winter 2020

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GIVE FROM YOUR IRA THIS YEAR

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Here are the steps:

- 1) Communicate with your financial advisor, IRA custodian, or bank your desire to make a "Qualified Charitable Distribution" (also known as QCD) to Benedictine this year.
- 2) This reduces your taxable income even without itemizing.
- 3) The gift is sent directly to BHS from your financial institution with no tax obligation to you.
- 4) Your gift goes to work in furthering authentic Catholic education at Benedictine High School.

This has become one of the preferred methods of giving for many alumni and benefactors in order to support Benedictine in the most tax efficient way possible.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Chris Lorber '04, Vice President of Advancement, at (216) 421-2080, Ext. 246.