

# ORA ET LABORA



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

**Spring 2023**



**2023 Gala Celebrating Bishop Roger's  
70 Years Impact on the Mission of BHS**

See pages 16-17



# Worn Out Floorboards

A friend of mine was telling me about a church she went to on Christmas Day. She has been to the church many times since birth. This particular church is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year. She noticed something that she never realized before that made her think about the faith of the people of God. What did she notice? The wooden floorboards! The wooden floor of this church was worn out. You could see where people stood. 150 years of faithful people coming to hear the message of Jesus Christ. Imagine how many people have heard his message and stood on those boards.

The world has changed a lot since that church opened its doors but Jesus Christ's message has stayed the same, God's love for us and the hope that we receive from Christ's resurrection. Each spring we are called to renew our promise to God as did the people of that church for the past 150 years have done. Each Easter we renew and strengthen our faith that enables us though our Lord Jesus Christ to achieve the impossible. The Easter message is not just about the Resurrection, but continues every day with faithful followers. We must strive to be models of love and hope. Our good works and sacrifices during the Lenten season must continue throughout the whole year. We are the next generation to be the ones who wear out the floorboards as faith followers.

As faith followers, Christ has called us to have a connection with Him through prayer. As we celebrate this year's Easter season, we Catholics find ourselves in the

midst of the **National Eucharistic Revival**, that was launched last June 19 by the bishops of the United States. The Eucharistic Revival is a three-year initiative that aims to inspire, educate, and unite Catholics around Jesus's great gift of the Eucharist. It will conclude with a **National Eucharistic Congress in July of 2024 in Indianapolis**. In a world where not many people know Jesus intimately, the revival is meant to show everyone what wonders the True Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist can do to heal the soul. Today's generation of American Catholics is being asked to "wear out the floorboards" in our churches as previous generations of Catholics who participated in living worship of Christ present among us.

One way you can renew your faith is through **Eucharist Adoration**. We monks of Saint Andrew Abbey celebrate an hour of prayer and silent reflection before the Blessed Sacrament **each Tuesday evening**



Rt. Rev. Gary A. Hoover, OSB '74

**from 7 to 8 PM in the Abbey Church.** In this past year, we have been welcoming visitors to join us. **Simply come to the front doors of the abbey and either someone will welcome you or press the buzzer.** You will leave renewed in your faith.

Peace,

Abbot Gary, OSB '74  
Abbot / Chancellor



# Dear Benedictine Community,

When we talk about a well-rounded Benedictine High School experience, we focus on development in mind, body, and spirit. This winter, we were blessed to have our upperclassmen experience the Living with Benedict retreat in St. Andrew Abbey, our Kairos/Mountain of God retreat in Clinton, OH, and our inaugural Abundant Life retreat in Centerburg, OH. Our hockey team won our first Baron Cup in 52 years, our basketball team scored the biggest upset across the entire state in the first round of the playoffs, our wrestling team sent competitors down to the State tournament, and our bowlers and indoor track runners competed at a high level. But where we have seen the most positive trend is an uptick in our students' experiential learning opportunities. For years, we have afforded top flight education within the four walls of our classrooms, but our teachers and students have found practical learning applications during our Meeting Period and at various destinations in Northeast Ohio. Many of these activities are a part of our Ben-X Program, which focuses on exploration and experiential learning in Engineering, Entrepreneurship, Media, and Medicine.

This year, we established a relationship with a local non-profit organization Motogo. Members of our Engineering Club worked during our Meeting Period to rebuild a motorcycle motor. Using trial and error other STEM-related processes, the project culminated in Kick Start Day, where the group was able to hear the fruits of their labor as the sweet hum of the motor filled Rufus Courtyard. In addition, Mr. Traben established a new corporate sponsorship with Truline Industries in Wickliffe. The Truline engineers taught our students how to manufacture components for our robot, which is slated for the RoboBots Competition at Lakeland Community College at the end of April.

The Entrepreneurship Club took their show on the road to attend the Junior Achievement Inspire Career Fair at Baldwin Wallace University. Having the chance to speak with career entrepreneurs continues to inspire an entrepreneurial mindset when it comes to potential careers and everyday critical thinking and problem solving skills.

Our Film Club also attended the Cleveland International Film Festival *Film Slam*. This media literacy program and

mini-festival of films for students in grades 5-12 provides students with the ability to evaluate and critique the messages they perceive when viewing films. It also encourages thought provoking discussion, embracing curiosity and fueling creativity, and experiencing social emotional growth.

Finally, our BenMed students have been doing regular rotations with Dr. Joseph Stoker '65 who recently retired from pediatrics at Akron Children's Hospital's Youngstown Campus. In addition, they will be working with MetroHealth physicians on making patient follow-up calls for colon cancer screenings.

It's safe to say that our young men are taking advantage of our vast network of alumni and friends when it comes to furthering their educational pursuits. As a request, if you or someone you know

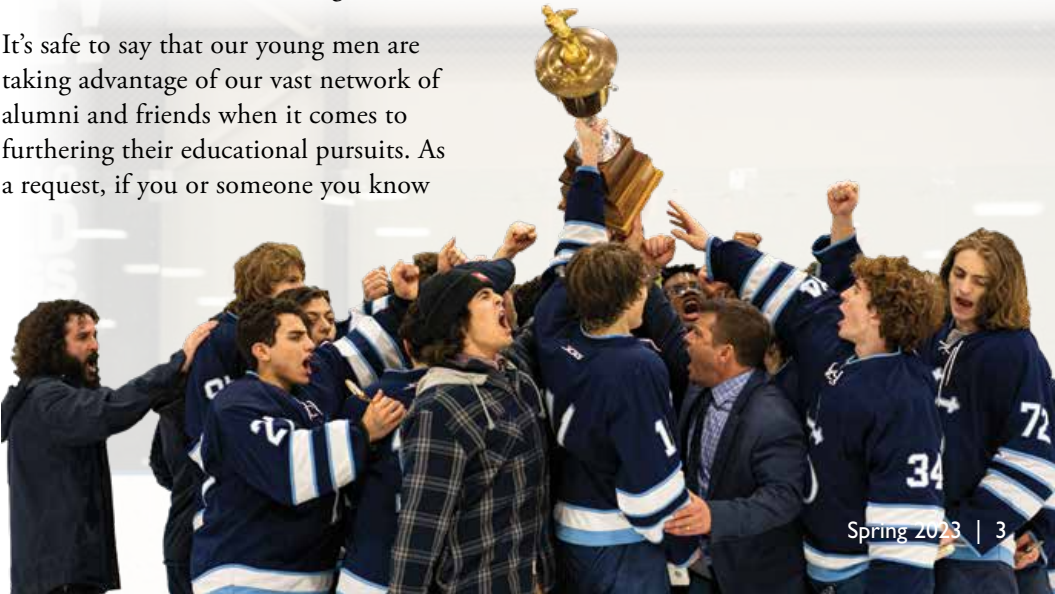


Mr. Ryan Ryzner '95

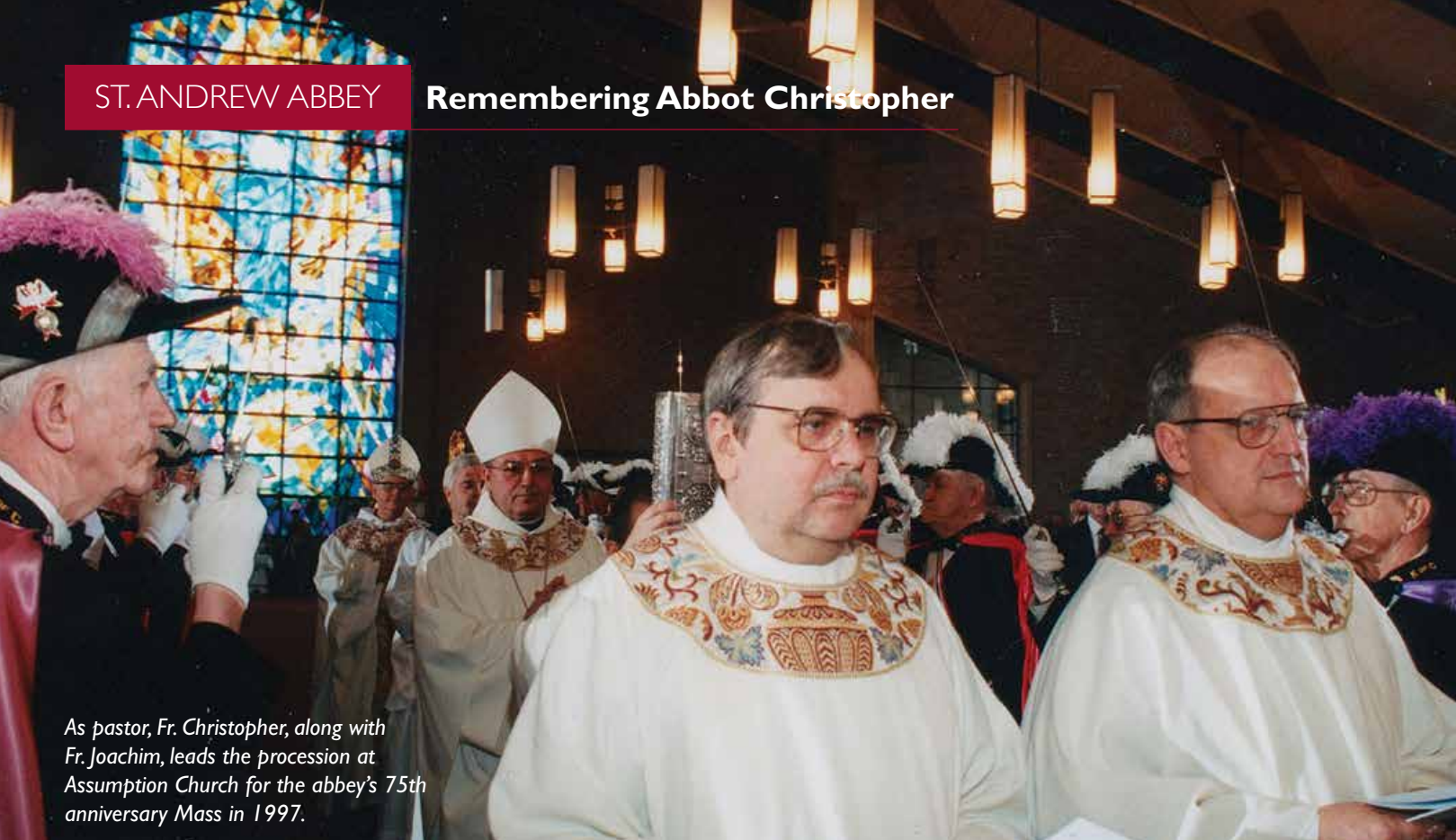
might be interested in providing a real-world experience for some of our young men, please feel free to reach out to our Ben-X Coordinator Dr. Beth Salem at [drsalem@cbhs.edu](mailto:drsalem@cbhs.edu).

Thank you all for your continued support of our mission of shaping a diverse group of young men into leaders in the tradition of St. Benedict.

Ryan M. Ryzner '95  
President







As pastor, Fr. Christopher, along with Fr. Joachim, leads the procession at Assumption Church for the abbey's 75th anniversary Mass in 1997.

# Abbot Christopher Dies, Served as Sixth Abbot

On Friday, February 17, 2023, at 11:26 AM, our retired sixth abbot, Christopher (Robert) Schwartz, OSB, died at Regina Health Center in Richfield, Ohio where he had been in residence the past eight years. Abbot Gary was concelebrating Mass in the nursing home chapel at the time Abbot Christopher passed into Eternity. Abbot Christopher was 76 years old, a professed monk for 49 years, and had completed 48 years in the priesthood.

Born as Robert Schwartz on June 28, 1946, he was the oldest son of the late Frank and Gertrude Schwartz. He is survived by his younger brother James (wife Glenda). Frank Schwartz was born in Austria and came to Cleveland where he operated several bakeries and met his wife. The family settled in St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Parma, Ohio where Bob attended



elementary school. He continued his education at St. John Cantius High School from where he graduated in 1964.

While discerning a vocation to the diocesan priesthood, Bob Schwartz attended Cuyahoga Community College for the next two years. He was accepted as a seminarian for the Diocese of Cleveland and earned a degree in history from Borromeo College Seminary in Wickliffe, Ohio.

During his third year of theological studies at St. Mary's Seminary, Bob acknowledged a call to Benedictine monastic life and entered the novitiate of our abbey in the summer of 1972, shortly before he was to be ordained a transitional deacon. He received the religious name of Christopher and professed his first vows on July 15, 1973. He returned to his final year of



Fr. Christopher was a popular freshman World History teacher in the 1970s and '80s.

studies at St. Mary's Seminary and was ordained a priest on June 8, 1974. He professed his solemn vows as a Benedictine monk a year later on July 20, 1975.

Fr. Christopher was a popular freshman World History and theology teacher at Benedictine High School from 1973 to 1991. During those 18 years on the faculty he also served as school chaplain, athletic chaplain, moderator of the Student Council, and moderator of five graduating classes. The Class of 1980 dedicated their yearbook to him. Also during this time, he held positions in the abbey as director of junior professed monks, vocation director, subprior, and prior (1988-91). His friendly personality and soft-spoken nature made him approachable by people of all ages.



Cleveland Bishop Richard Lennon (center) blesses newly-elected Abbot Christopher Schwartz, OSB in Assumption Church, Broadview Heights on August 29, 2008. Flanking the bishop are BHS alumni permanent deacons Robert Bubnick '64 (left) and Edmund Gardias '77 (right).



Monks in formation in 1972 (l-r): Novice Christopher Schwartz, Novice Francis Fergus, newly-professed Brother Glenn Stalder, professed Brother Theodore Girard '66, and Novice Bruce Mancini '70.

Fr. Christopher learned to celebrate the Ruthenian Byzantine Rite and Maronite Rite liturgies and assisted at churches of those eastern rite dioceses as well as assisting on weekends at St. Michael's Roman Catholic Parish in Independence, Ohio.

In 1991, Fr. Christopher accepted an appointment as pastor of Assumption Parish in Broadview Heights, Ohio which had been administered by monks of our abbey since 1977. For the next 13 years, he led the large suburban parish and its school initiating such projects as perpetual Eucharistic adoration, adding a new addition to the school, and constructing a Garden of Memories with an outdoor shrine to the Blessed Mother.

Suffering from poor health at different intervals throughout his life, Fr. Christopher resigned as pastor in 2004 and for the next two years served as the resident chaplain to the Sisters of the Incarnate Word in Parma Heights. He returned to the abbey in 2006 and was

named subprior. Upon the resignation of Abbot Clement Zeleznik, OSB in 2008, Fr. Christopher was elected the sixth abbot of our community and was blessed by Bishop Richard Lennon in Assumption Parish Church on August 29, 2008.

Abbot Christopher actively served as the superior of our community for only five years, the shortest term of any of our seven abbots. Yet, during that time he oversaw the construction of the much anticipated Bossu Athletic Field, formalized our community's sponsorship of Loyola Retreat House in Clinton, Ohio, and had to deal with the unexpected deaths of our monastic business manager, Fr. Albert Marflak, OSB, and his predecessor, Bro. Theodore Girard, OSB.

In 2011, Abbot Christopher was granted a six-month leave of absence for health reasons. After his return in June 2011, he resumed his administrative duties but underwent open heart surgery in the fall of 2012. After a special visitation of our community in the summer of 2013, Abbot Christopher stepped down as superior. His continued health problems caused him to move into Regina Health Center soon after where he remained until his death.

Abbot Christopher held many positions of responsibility in our community, but exercised them with humility and modestly. Despite various setbacks in his life, he overcame the potential inner pressures of self-pity and discouragement. He bore his crosses with quiet dignity. May he now enjoy Divine mercy and entrance into the Kingdom of God. His funeral Mass was celebrated at the Abbey on Thursday evening, February 23, 2023 at 7:00 PM. Burial was on Friday morning at Calvary Cemetery.



Fr. Justin, present pastor of Assumption Parish, visits with his predecessor Abbot Christopher at Regina Health Center in May, 2022.



This is the fifth and final installment of the Centennial Year History of Saint Andrew Abbey. All five installments appeared in the Commemorative Booklet that was given to those attending the Gala Banquet on September 18, 2022. However, the booklet itself can be viewed online by going to the BHS website (cbhs.net) and clicking on “Support Benedictine” and then by going to the drop down menu under “Publications and Annual Reports.”

# REACHING 100 YEARS

## Part 5 Centennial History 2008-2023 by Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB '71

Elected at the age of 69, Abbot Clement increasingly had to deal with health issues as he began his seventh year as superior in 2008. At the celebration of **St. Benedict's Day on April 1, 2008** (transferred from March 21 due to Holy Week), he announced that the Abbot President had accepted his request to resign. The 28 solemnly professed members of the monastic community met from June 9 -10 and elected **Fr. Christopher Schwartz,**

**OSB,** 62, as the **sixth abbot** of St. Andrew Abbey. At the time of his election, Fr. Christopher was in his second year as the subprior, or third superior of the abbey. He had taught history at BHS from 1974-91 while also holding the positions of prior, director of monks in formation, and vocation director at various times. From 1991-2004, Fr. Christopher was the pastor of Assumption Parish in Broadview Heights and then served two years, 2004-

2006, as chaplain to the Incarnate Word nuns in Parma Heights.

In his first act as superior, Abbot Christopher appointed **Fr. Gary Hoover, OSB,** as his prior and **Fr. Albert Marflak, OSB** as the new subprior. Fr. Gary had been serving as chaplain of Benedictine High School at the time and Fr. Albert had completed four years as the president of BHS. During his tenure as president,



Senior Colin Kendig '08 and Fr. Albert Marflak, OSB '65

Fr. Albert had to deal with an alumni initiative, specifically from a select group of the Class of '78 to build a practice athletic field on the Benedictine campus. Those who initiated the concept felt that the long standing arrangement of having BHS student athletes run down five or six blocks to Luke Easter Park (formerly Woodland Hills Park) after school in the fall and spring for sports' practice had become an obstacle for recruiting some students who families felt it was not safe.

When legendary **Coach Augie Bossu** died on **January 1, 2008**, at the age of 91, a consensus emerged that the proposed athletic practice field be named in his honor. First, the proposed location of the field shifted from the large parking lot to the lower area that formed the abbey's backyard and where the Transportation Garage had been constructed in the 1970's as the bus fleet expanded.

Abbot Christopher had to get the approval of the monastic chapter first, since the proposed field would eliminate the privacy of that part of the abbey grounds. Secondly, the proposed cost of **\$2.25 million** that would cover the construction of the field itself as well as a pavilion (later courtyard) honoring long time coach and athletic director, the late **Joe Rufus,** and a Walkway of Champions in honor of **Bishop Roger Gries, OSB '54** would necessitate a formal Capital Campaign at a time when the national economy was once again in crisis. Finally, the current Transportation Garage would have to be demolished and a new one constructed in the upper parking lot.

The monastic community gave approval in September, 2008. The public kick-off of the campaign took place in the fall of 2009. For the next year and a half plans were made and a silent phase of solicitation took place. Finally, ground was broken on March 21, 2011 and construction began. Sufficient funds were raised for the basic **Bossu Field** and it was ready for use in the summer of 2012. Abbot Christopher blessed the field on the last day of school in June, and it was formally dedicated on August 4, 2012.

Having one of its own monks as a bishop, presented new opportunities for Saint Andrew Abbey. Bishop Roger continued to make time in his schedule to preside at important alumni funerals and weddings and events at BHS. On **June 3, 2011**, history was made when one monk of the abbey ordained another monk as a priest. Bishop Roger ordained **Fr. Finbar Ramsak, OSB** in the Abbey Church.

Prior Gary had developed a successful **Kairos** retreat program at the high school since 2006 which involved the students spending several successive days on retreat. **Loyola of the Lake Retreat House** in Clinton, Ohio proved to be a popular location for the Kairos retreats because of



History was made on June 3, 2011 when one abbey monk (Bishop Roger) ordained a fellow abbey monk (Fr. Finbar).

its secluded location and 75 acres of land. It had been opened in the 1960s by the Jesuits and a lay board of directors who wanted a retreat house in the Akron area. For 44 years the Jesuits provided priests to staff Loyola, but by 2008, because of a lack of available personnel, they decided to end their affiliation with the retreat house.

**Prior Gary**, representing **Abbot Christopher**, entered into discussions with **Becky Haller**, the director, and members of the Board of Trustees who now had full ownership of Loyola. By 2010 **Bishop Richard Lennon** of the Diocese of Cleveland gave full recognition to a new relationship between Loyola Retreat House (as it was now called) and the Benedictine Order of Cleveland who would serve as its sponsoring community. Two monks would be added to the Board of Trustees to oversee its Catholic identity. Monks would be invited to give retreats and conferences. From 2011 to 2018, retired **Abbot Clement Zeleznik, OSB** served as the chaplain-in-residence.

Toward the end of 2010, Abbot Christopher dealt with several serious health issues and requested permission from the Abbot President to take a six-month sabbatical to address them. The Abbot President appointed Prior Gary as the **administrator** of the abbey with full authority from January 7, 2011 to June 29, 2011.

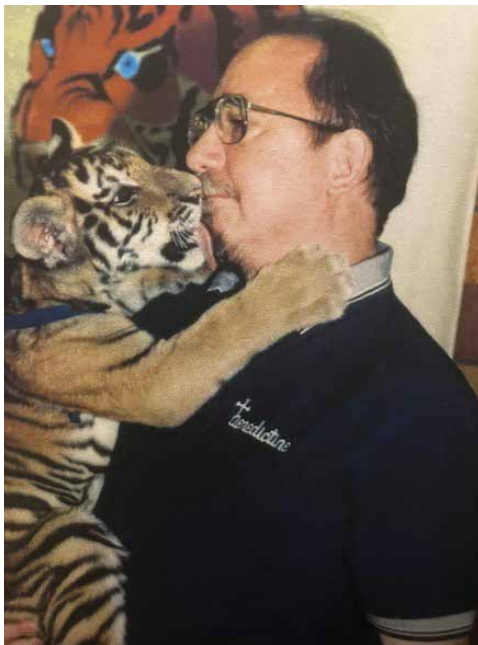
When he returned, Abbot Christopher responded to a number of important personnel issues over the next two years. On July 25, 2011, he granted permission to **Fr. Anselm Zupka, OSB '58** to accept an appointment as the chaplain of **Walsh University** in Canton, Ohio (Youngstown Diocese). Leaving the faculty of BHS after 47 continuous years of teaching, Fr. Anselm became the first monk in the history of the abbey to serve full time as a **university chaplain**. He would remain at Walsh for the next five years.

The entire Benedictine community was shocked by the sudden death of **Fr. Albert Marflak, OSB '65** on May 26, 2012 who suffered a heart attack while tending flowers at the Marian grotto on the campus. The 65-year-old monk had

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“Three Abbot Blessing” of the formal groundbreaking for the new Bossu Athletic Field on March 21, 2011. Actually it was (l-r) Prior (later Abbot) Gary Hoover, OSB '74, retired Abbot Clement Zeleznik, OSB '50, and former abbot Bishop Roger Gries, OSB '54.





For nine years, beginning in 1998, Bro. Theodore had the most unusual monastic assignment of taking care of Bengal tiger cubs that functioned as mascots for the BHS football team. Bro. Ted's unexpected death a year after the death of Fr. Albert was a shock.

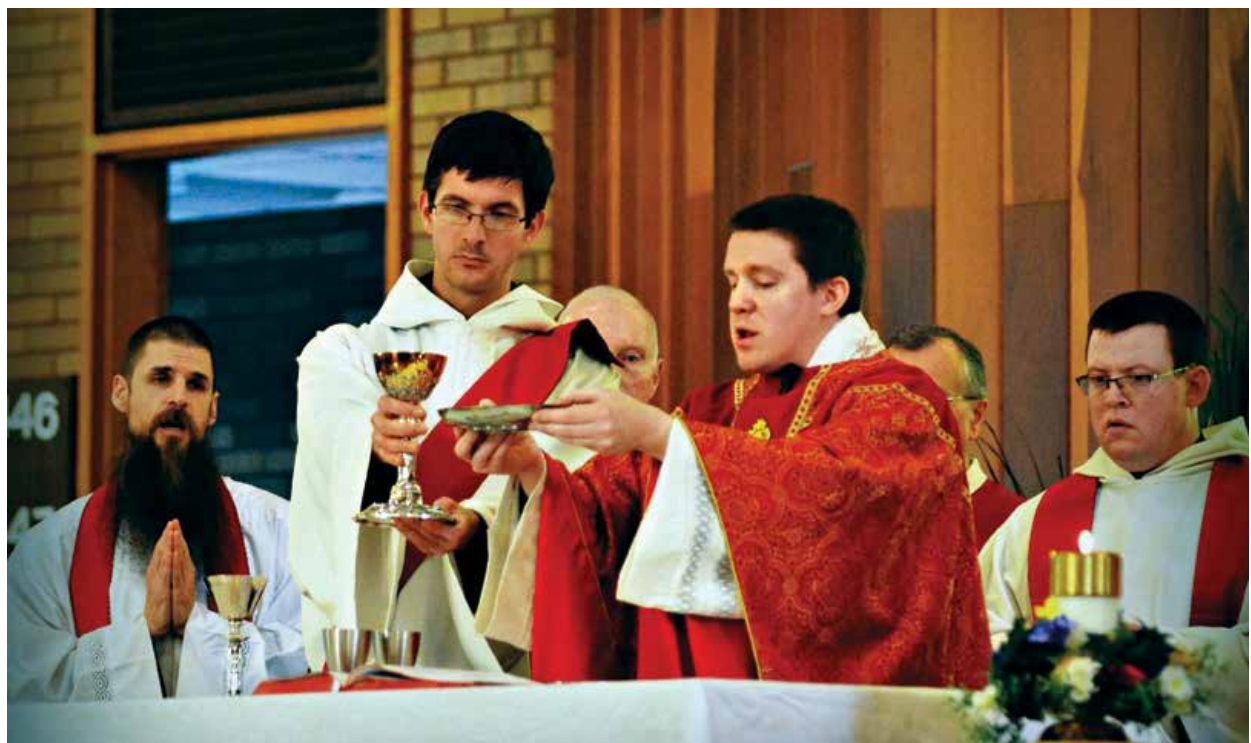
been serving as the third superior of the abbey since stepping down as President of BHS in 2008. Before that appointment he was the abbey treasurer or business manager from 1994 to 2002. Ironically, almost one year later, on May 19, 2013, **Brother Theodore Girard, OSB '66**, Fr. Albert's successor as abbey treasurer in 2002, died in his sleep at the age of 65. He had spent most of his monastic life in the business office of either the high school or monastery. Both Fr. Albert and Bro. Theodore had been successors to long-time treasurer of the abbey and high school **Fr. Placid Pientek, OSB '36**, who lived to become the oldest monk in the history of the abbey, dying on May 6, 2018, just two months short of his 100th birthday.

Shortly after Bro. Theodore's funeral, at the **2013** Benedictine High School graduation, Abbot Christopher announced that he would be stepping down as abbot later in the summer after five years in office. The abbot had undergone heart surgery in the fall of 2012. A special visitation from **Abbot President Hugh Anderson, OSB** took place from July 21-27. Because Abbot Hugh felt that the monastic community needed time before electing their third abbot in a dozen years, he re-appointed **Prior Gary Hoover, OSB**

'74 as the administrator of the abbey with full authority until an abbatial election would be scheduled. He would serve as administrator for the next year. He was assisted by **Fr. Joachim Pastirik, OSB '60**, who agreed to serve as the temporary prior and **Bro. Gabriel Balazovic, OSB**, who became the first brother to be given the position of subprior.

The delayed abbatial election was finally held on August 6, 2014 and **Prior Gary Hoover, OSB '74**, 58 years old, was elected as the 7th abbot of Saint Andrew Abbey. He was blessed by Cleveland Bishop Richard Lennon on October 5, 2014 at **St. Ambrose Church** in Brunswick where the new abbot had assisted on weekends for a number of years.

During his first five years in office, Abbot Gary experienced the blessing of seeing three monks ordained to the priesthood: **Fr. Thomas Sanders, OSB (2016)**, **Fr. Louis Carey, OSB '88** (2018 – the first BHS alumnus ordained as a member of the abbey since Abbot Gary in 1983), and **Fr. Conrad Wald, OSB (2019)**. He also supported the appointment of the first woman principal for Benedictine High School, **Mrs. Sue Zulandt**, the mother of six BHS alumni, who stepped up in 2016 from being the assistant principal.



She was also the first head of an all-male school in the Diocese of Cleveland. And in 2017, Abbot Gary appointed the first lay president of Benedictine High School, **Dr. Frank Bossu, '67**, oldest son of legendary Bengal football and baseball head coach, the late **Augie Bossu**.

To assist him in governance after his election, Abbot Gary appointed **Fr. Timothy Buyansky, OSB '60** as his prior. Fr. Timothy had also been the prior from 1991-1995. He retired as the BHS librarian and drama director in 2018 after 48 years on the BHS faculty, and continued to serve as prior until his unexpected death from cardiac complications on February 25, 2021 at the age of 78. He was the first prior of the abbey to die in office. Abbot Gary appointed **Bro. Peter Ancell, OSB** to succeed him. Bro. Peter became the first brother to hold the office of prior in the history of the abbey.

In 2016, the abbey began working with the Board of Trustees of the high school to formulate a meaningful way to celebrate the centennial of the arrival of the first monks in Cleveland in 1922. A strategic plan was developed for the high school based on the **Benedictine Hallmarks** of Hospitality, Stewardship, Conversion of Life, Stability, and Love of Christ and Neighbor. These characteristics taken

from the Rule of St. Benedict have been used often in the last twenty years in Benedictine educational institutions to help preserve the Benedictine charism and spirit as less monks and nuns work in schools sponsored by their monastic communities.

Based on elements of the strategic plan, a professionally-directed feasibility study was utilized to see what physical improvements were possible. The resulting **\$4 million Centennial Campaign** was publicly launched in 2020 with prudent Phase One goals: 1) to unify the abbey and school physically by creating the **Rufus**

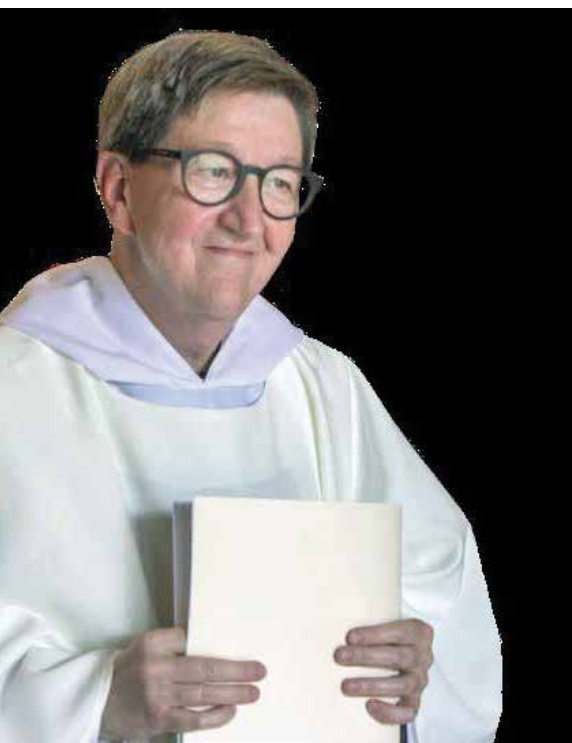
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Abbot Gary and his parents Dorothy and Ray Hoover at the reception for his abbatial blessing on October 5, 2014.



Abbot Gary, Prior Timothy, and Bro. Mario with Coach Mark Kobylinski '93 (left) and Kairos Retreat students at Loyola Retreat House in 2012.



The abbey was blessed with three ordinations between 2016-2019 (l-r): Fr. Thomas, Fr. Louis, and Fr. Conrad.



**Courtyard** in honor of former coach and athletic director **Joe Rufus**, 2) to provide a new, more welcoming entrance to the high school with a two story atrium that would connect the main building with the science building, 3) to remodel the science labs, and 4) to replace the roof of the 1984 Abbey Church. Over \$5 million was raised by 2023 in the face of COVID era cost increases.

Abbot Gary explained, “These practical improvements have brought us to this point of celebrating our history with a view to the future.” Alumnus **Christopher Lorber ’04** was given new responsibilities as Vice-President for Advancement, while another alumnus **Ryan Ryzner ’95** returned as principal and later president of his Alma Mater. Together with Abbot Gary, they had the unprecedented job of figuring out how to bring the monastery and the high school safely through the disrupting and dangerous COVID-19 pandemic of the last few years.

The pandemic interrupted a popular practice instituted by Abbot Gary in 2015 of having the monks from the abbey drive out to **Regina Health Center** on the first Wednesday afternoon of each month to share vespers and supper with any monks who are currently in residence there.



Organist Fr. Michael and cantor Fr. Thomas at the closing Mass.

However, the COVID restrictions eased up enough as 2022 arrived and allowed the monastic community to hold a variety of ceremonies and celebrations to mark the **Centennial** of the arrival of the first monks in Cleveland. **Bro. Simon Corrigan, OSB** and **Brother Gregory Coyne, OSB** made final and first commitments to monastic life on **February 5, 2022**, the exact date of the arrival of Fr. Stanislaus Gmuca, OSB to Cleveland 100 years earlier.

On **Sunday, March 20, 2022**, the annual traditional **Feast of St. Benedict** (March 21) was celebrated as a Centennial event with an afternoon **Eucharistic Holy Hour for Vocations** attended by priests, deacons, and religious order representatives from around the diocese. A dinner followed in the high school Dining Hall.

From **June 6-10, 2022**, the monks of Saint Andrew Abbey traveled by bus to Lisle, Illinois to make an historic combined retreat with the monks of **St. Procopius Abbey**. From **July 2-15**, **Fr. Michael Brunovsky, OSB**, **Fr. Justin Dyrwal, OSB**, **Fr. Finbar Ramsak, OSB**, and **Bro. Gregory Coyne, OSB** led a pilgrimage to locations in Italy and Slovakia associated with St. Benedict and St. Andrew Svorad, the patron saint of the abbey. The titular **Feast of St.**

**Andrew Svorad**, the abbey’s patron was celebrated in a more relaxed form on Sunday, July 17 with vespers and dinner at the home of **Bob and Lori Campana** on the shore of Lake Erie in Bay Village, Ohio.

Heading into the new year of 2023, the abbey still had a little over a month remaining in its Centennial Year celebrations. **January 7, 2023** was the occasion of two notable funerals. Alumnus and current BHS staff member **Dale Jakab ’68**, who lost a year-long battle to cancer at age 71, was buried from St. Francis of Assisi Church in Gates Mills with **Fr. Michael Brunovsky, OSB** as the celebrant. At the same time closer to the Abbey, longtime benefactor and local ethnic radio personality alumnus **Joe Kocab ’50’s** funeral Mass was celebrated by **Bishop Roger Gries, OSB ’54** at St. John Nepomucene Church in Slavic Village.

Reflecting an old proverb that funerals often come in trios, the monks mourned the death of long-time abbey receptionist **Rose Siftar**, 75, on January 10, 2023. She had served as the abbey’s lay portress for 23 years. Her funeral was celebrated by **Abbot Gary Hoover, OSB ’74** and the monks in the Abbey Church on January 28 with **Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB ’71** as homilist.



The special Centennial Candle designed by Fr. Michael.



The monks celebrate Mass to conclude the Centennial Year on February 11, 2023.

Unable to attend the Centennial Mass and Gala Banquet on September 18, local Byzantine **Bishop Milan Lach, SJ**, of the Ruthenian Eparchy of Parma, joined the monks for vespers and supper on **January 12, 2023**. A native of Slovakia, Bishop Milan had become a close friend of Saint Andrew Abbey since arriving in Cleveland in 2018. The monks were surprised eleven days later on **January 23, 2023** when Pope Francis transferred Bishop Lach back to Slovakia as Auxiliary Bishop of the Byzantine Eparchy of Bratislava.

On **February 10**, the Feast of **St. Scholastica**, the twin sister of St. Benedict, the abbot blessed a new statue of the foundress of the Benedictine nuns (see page 12) that has been placed alongside the statute of St. Benedict in the abbey narthex. The next day, **Saturday, February 11** marked the official end of the abbey’s Centennial Year. The monks gathered for a special, private Mass in late morning (see photos) which was followed by a festive meal in the refectory.

Back in November, a special 54-inch high **Centennial Candle**, that had been decorated by **Fr. Michael**, was lit

in the abbey refectory. Inspired by the medieval Jesse Tree design, he carved into the candle representations of the monasteries of the history of Saint Andrew Abbey from Monte Cassino to St. Procopius Abbey and then painted it with acrylic layers in different colors. He then added the coats of arms of each monastery through color printing on clay wax label paper highlighted with gold leaf (see photo). The candle was burned continuously each day from breakfast through dinner. Interestingly, the candle lasted exactly to the end of the Centennial year, burning itself out right after the festive Mass and meal on February 11.

The 23 members of Saint Andrew Abbey remained intact for the duration of the Centennial year. However, shortly after the concluding events of February 11, retired **Abbot Christopher Schwartz, OSB** was summoned by the Lord on **February 17, 2023** to join his 73 deceased confreres in the heavenly monastic choir (see story on page 4).

Still on the horizon for Abbot Gary and the monks of the abbey as they enter their second century in Cleveland will be decisions on how to best utilize space available in the **1952 wing of the**



Abbot Gary preaches at the closing Mass.

**abbey** and how to deepen the authentic Benedictine spirit of the abbey and the high school in an increasingly secular age that pays less and less attention to God.

A **prayer for vocations** is offered each evening by the monks with faith and hope that sufficient young men will respond to God’s call to become monks, especially **alumni of Benedictine High School** so that Benedictine monastic life will remain an effective presence in the Diocese of Cleveland for years to come. Fifteen centuries earlier, a young Italian Christian named **Benedict** faced the same challenge while trying to live his faith in the closing years of the Roman Empire.

In the Centennial Year of 2022, another young Italian man of faith, named **Dominic Fanelli**, 33, the grandson of the late **Augie Bossu**, was named principal of Benedictine High School. He tries to start each morning by joining the monks for the Liturgy of the Hours and Mass and has encouraged members of the school and abbey to gather at the grotto of the Blessed Virgin for a rosary at noon each Friday. Indeed, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the tradition of Benedict continues ...



# SAINT SCHOLASTICA STATUE

On Friday, February 10, 2023, a newly-commissioned wooden statue of **Saint Scholastica**, the twin sister of St. Benedict, was blessed by Abbot Gary at the conclusion of vespers. February 10 is the feast of St. Scholastica. Earlier in the Centennial Year of 2022, the Leadership Team of the abbey expressed a desire to have a statue created of St. Benedict's sister to match the wooden statue of St. Benedict that has stood outside the doors of the abbey church for a number of years.

The superiors contacted **Norbert Koehn** from Koehn Studios in South Euclid across from Notre Dame College. Norbert's wife, Victoria, is one of the daughters of the late **Robert Peck** of the BHS Class of 1946 who died in 2021 and his wife, Delores, who survives him. Robert and Delores were actually married 71 years ago by **Fr. George Luba, OSB**, the founder of Benedictine High School. Bob went on to teach German at BHS and served as an assistant to head football coach, the legendary **Joe Rufus**. Bob's son **Gregory Peck '70** and his grandsons **Robert Peck '89** and **Erol Senel '98** are also alumni. So Norbert approached the project with very good Benedictine credentials.

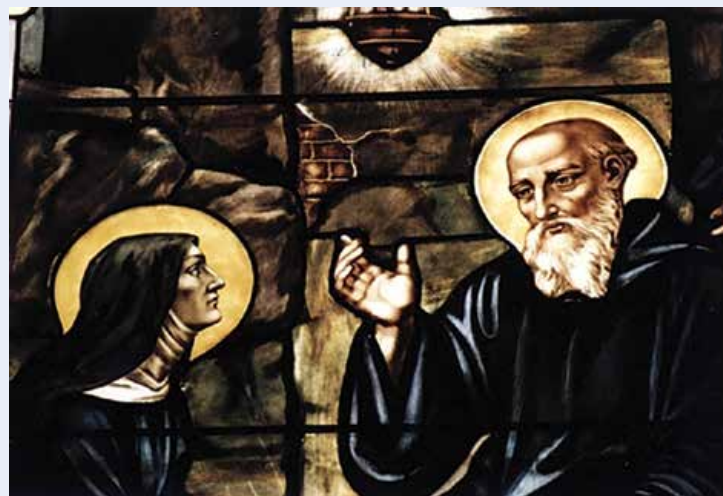
Interestingly, Norbert knew the sculptor of the abbey's wooden St. Benedict statue. They studied together in Europe and he was familiar with his work and the materials used. The same wood was used and Norbert was able to achieve a close proximity to the design, height, carving method, and finishing with the new statue.

Unlike her famous brother, **Saint Scholastica** is not one of the more well-known female saints in the history of the Catholic Church. St. Benedict's early biographer, **St. Gregory the Great** (the first Benedictine pope), tells us in the second book of his 6th century, four-book series called "The Dialogues," that she was dedicated to God at a young age. Benedictine tradition holds that Scholastica established a hermitage about five miles from St. Benedict's famous mountain top abbey of Monte Cassino and that this was the first convent of Benedictine nuns.

The famous story that St. Gregory relates about St. Scholastica involves a practice in which Scholastica would visit Benedict at a small house near his monastery once a year and engage in prayer and spiritual conversations with him. It was his custom to return to his monastery before nightfall. One year, after they ate supper,



New statue of St. Scholastica



St. Scholastica and St. Benedict



Monks of St. Andrew Abbey and the Polish Benedictine Sisters in Oak Forest, Illinois, June 2022.

as Benedict was preparing to leave, Scholastica begged him to stay longer, but he declined. Scholastica, in turn, bowed her head in prayer and soon a storm broke out that prevented Benedict from leaving. Disturbed by her spiritual intervention, Benedict exclaimed, "May God forgive you, sister, what have you done?" Scholastica explained, "Well, I asked you and you would not listen; so I asked my God and he did listen." The two saintly siblings spent the rest of the night in holy conversation. Three days later, Scholastica died.

Scholastica's followers, the early **Benedictine nuns**, living according to the Holy Rule written by St. Benedict, grew in numbers and spread throughout Europe, often establishing convents near male Benedictine abbeys. The same occurred in the spread of the order in the United States. Although there has never been a female Roman Catholic Benedictine monastery in Ohio, St. Andrew Abbey had a relationship with the **Slovak Benedictine nuns of Our Lady of Sorrows Priory in Tinley Park (Oak Forest), Illinois** from its founding in 1951 until it closed in the 1990s.

Benedictine priests from St. Andrew Abbey served as resident chaplains to the nuns. Last June when the monks of the abbey traveled to St. Procopius Abbey in Lisle, Illinois for their combined retreat, they made a side trip one evening to visit the **Missionary Sisters of St. Benedict** from **Poland** who now staff the priory where they conduct retreats and provide a preschool and daycare for children. The Polish Benedictine sisters joyfully welcomed the monks from Cleveland and provided some delicious treats for them before they returned to Lisle (see photos).



Polish Benedictine Sister offering Fr. Gerard and the monks homemade kielbasa.

However, there is still another connection between **St. Scholastica** and **Benedictine High School**. In the late 1980s, **Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB '71** began telling the story of how St. Scholastica changed the weather to his English and Theology students when there

were long periods of the winter without enough snowfall to provide the well-loved "**snow days**" with unplanned cancelled classes.

He explained the Catholic custom of a **novena**, praying for a particular intention for nine consecutive days. So each year a novena was started on February 1 with the invocation "**St. Scholastica, pray for us**" instead of "**St. Benedict pray for us**" used at the beginning of class. Over the span of a decade, snow days did occur remarkably close to her feast day at the conclusion of the novena.

But the most remarkable example happened in **1987** when **Derek Wrobel '90** was a student in Fr. Gerard's freshman English class. His older brother **Jerry Wrobel** graduated from BHS in **1986** and a



Jerry (left) and Derek (right) Wrobel in 1987.



Bro. Peter (left) and Bro. Gabriel (right) in 1987 at the time of the St. Scholastica snowstorm.

younger brother **David** attended Benedictine for two years. **Brother Peter Ancell, OSB** and **Brother Gabriel Balazovic, OSB** of the abbey had become friends of the **Wrobel family** and periodically came to their home in **Twinsburg** for Sunday dinner (see photos).

In **1987**, the feast of **St. Scholastica**, February 10, fell on a Tuesday. Fr. Gerard led his students in invoking her intercession for the first six days of the novena up to Friday but pointed out to the class that they had to continue the novena through the weekend if they wanted a "snow day" on Monday, February 9, the last day of the novena. There was no snow in the forecast that weekend and Brothers Peter and Gabriel went to the Wrobels for Sunday dinner.

Suddenly, late Sunday afternoon, a snow storm came off the lake and took Greater Cleveland by surprise. The **Monday, February 9, 1987** edition of **The Cleveland Plain Dealer** ran a front page story on the storm which closed roads and forced some people who couldn't get home to spend the night in shelters in Geauga County. Despite a valiant effort, Brother Peter and Brother Gabriel were not able to leave Twinsburg and called the abbey to explain why they had to spend the night at the Wrobels' home. Abbot Roger was not pleased the next morning when they returned. But schools were indeed closed on Monday and St. Scholastica became the favorite saint of the freshman English class at Benedictine.



# John Zappola, 40-Year Voice of the Bengals, calls it a career on Saturday, February 11

by Wally Mieskoski '71

"The timing is just right," said John Zappola, whose last gig as the Benedictine High School public address announcer came to an end after 40 years on Saturday night, February 11 in the Bengals last scheduled regular season basketball home game against Notre Dame-Cathedral Latin.

It ended on a winning note as the Bengals defeated the Lions, 68-56.

Zappola made a curtain call for the final time on Tuesday, February 21 in a state tournament home basketball game as the Bengals defeated Lincoln-West, 66-28.

*Benedictine then defeated Holy Name, 71-59, before falling to Glenville 63-55 to end the season. The Bengals finished with a 10-15 record but finished strongly under coach Chris Salata by winning six of their last eight games.*

Zappola closes a colorful yet subdued career. "Forty years is a nice round milestone number," said Zappola. Just as importantly, it aligns with the upcoming retirement of his wife, Phyllis, and his desire to spend more time with her.

Zappola retired as a production consultant in February 2022 from Hughie's Event

Productions, which supplies audio, lighting, video, décor, and special effects for live events.

"There's no question I'll miss the camaraderie in the press box and the excitement that builds leading up to the games and during the games."



John at his farewell game with his wife Phyllis, son Johnny, and granddaughter Amara.

"Although I'm not an alumnus of the school," said Zappola, a 1973 Cleveland Heights High grad, who now lives in Aurora, "I've felt that the school community has adopted me as a 'Man of Benedictine.' And that's something of which I am enormously proud."

Ryan Ryzner '95, Benedictine president, said of Zappola, "While he might not be a Benedictine graduate, he is certainly cut from the same cloth. The man bleeds Blue and White and will always be a special part of the Bengals Community."

"Many people would know John as the 'Voice of the Bengals' for decades, but few would know how much time, effort, energy, and professional expertise he has lent to the school on audio/visual projects and events. Whether it came in the form of advice or service, John has always gone the extra mile to help Benedictine in any way possible," added Ryzner. "We are truly grateful for everything, both recognized and unrecognized, that he has done for Benedictine High School and Benedictine Athletics."

Zappola's Bengals career began in 1982 (1982-83 academic year) as a football scoreboard operator next to Howie Chizek, the PA announcer at Cleveland Heights Field, where the Bengals played their home games from 1982 to 1993.

Chizek was more famous for being the Cleveland Cavaliers PA announcer at the old Richfield Coliseum as well as hosting a radio talk show in Akron.

"I jumped at the chance to help him out in the press box," said Zappola.

When the Bengals moved to Bedford Stadium for their home football field in 1994, Zappola became the PA announcer and had control of the microphone until his retirement. It was just a natural progression as just two years earlier (1992-93 academic year) he became the PA voice of the Bengals basketball team.

At Benedictine home football games, Zappola embraces the crowd with the "Bengal Brain Busters" pop culture trivia questions at the end of the first three quarters.

Respondents are requested to come to the press box with their answers.



John Zappola takes break in the press box with spotter John Luskin.

Zappola said that he spends about three hours before each home game researching information for questions that are not easily Googled.

Zappola has always tried to do his part to keep the purity of high school athletics in perspective.

"Let's face it, some of these players may play at college and even fewer will play in the pros, so let's give some praise to the vast majority of players who play for the love of the game and the love of their school," he said.

Typically, the offensive linemen on the football field are the most anonymous players on the field, but not at the Benedictine home games.

"I make it a point to announce the names of the offensive linemen who are on the field doing the hard work after the Bengals score a touchdown or convert a field goal. That might be the only time they hear their name over the PA," said Zappola.

One time, Zappola recalled that he had to play the role of a diplomat on the microphone.

"In one basketball game, I pronounced a player's last name with a 'long I' sound. Apparently the parents were going through a divorce. At the end of the first quarter, one parent came down to tell me that it is pronounced with a 'short i' sound. Then at the end of the second quarter, the other parent told me that the last name is pronounced with a 'long I' sound," said Zappola.

So how did Zappola get out of the jam?

"At halftime, I went into the locker room to ask the player how he wants me to pronounce his last name. So, for the rest of the game and the season I used the 'short i' sound," smiled Zappola.

"I am most proud that no matter how big of a winning margin that Benedictine might have had in a game, we in the press box always acted like professionals to our opponents," Zappola said. "Never did we rub it in to any of the representatives of our opponents. Our press box team always showed what Benedictine is all about.... CLASS. Win or lose, we showed class."

"Up in the press box, we were a well-oiled machine. We knew our roles and performed them well. John Luskin, the spotter, would keep things loose and always did his job. Dan Fyfe '06 has done a great job with the game clock and scoreboard updates. Andy Hudak '60 and Wally Mieskoski '71 had the ability to deliver stats during the game with just a simple ask," he said.

When Zappola turned off the mic the last time, he recalled with attachment the great memories he's accumulated. "It's been a great run, with great fun, and with great friendships," he said.

He'll be remembered by his philosophy throughout his career, "I'm not the show," said Zappola, "the game is the show. And the show must go on."





## What a Night!

With over 500 alumni, friends, volunteers, and Men of Benedictine in attendance, the sold-out Blue and White Gala on Saturday, March 11, 2023 was another night to remember as we honored Bishop Roger Gries, OSB '54 for his 70 years as a Man of Benedictine!

We thank all of our staff, parents, students, volunteers, alumni, friends, and philanthropists who provided over \$550,000 to support the Home of Champions specifically earmarked towards tuition assistance and scholarships.

The night was a very inspiring and emotional evening, and we are grateful for all those who participated in-person at the InterContinental Hotel or remotely!

Enjoy the photos and we look forward to seeing you at the 2024 Gala!



**THANK YOU!**  
TO ALL WHO  
PARTICIPATED IN THE  
BLUE AND WHITE GALA!



## HOCKEY WINS BARON CUP

FIRST BARON CUP CHAMPIONSHIP SINCE THE CLASS OF 1971 WON 52 YEARS AGO.

The Benedictine hockey team finished as a top 16 Team in Ohio after ending their season with a 4-0 loss to St. Ignatius outdoors at Browns Stadium. The Bengals finished 15-13-1 and 7-4-1 in their conference. They won the Baron Cup for the first time since the class of 1971 did it in the inaugural Baron Cup Championship. They beat Amherst 3-2 in a memorable final after an outstanding run in the month of February.

**Michael Pelc** had 723 saves this season for a 90% save percentage with 3 shutouts. Sophomore **Ryan Kehres** led the Bengals in points with 42, including 22 goals and 20 assists. Seniors **Luke Parker** and **Nick Desbin** tied for 2nd with 26 points apiece. Desbin had 14 goals and Parker had 15 assists in their senior seasons.

Congratulations especially to seniors Parker, Pelc, Desbin, **Nolan Patton**, **Brandon Jordan**, and **Evan Bleick** on a memorable hockey campaign.



### The Benedictine Wrestling Team ended their season at the State Tournament in Columbus

Senior **Jake Dolan** qualified and went to States along with alternates, sophomores **Chris Maloney** and **Antonio Hobbs**. Jake finished second in the Garfield Heights District and narrowly missed being District Champ. He ended his high school career with a 4-2 loss to Cooper Rathborn of Bishop Hartley, who went on to finish 3rd in the State at 138 lbs. Jake ended his high school career with a total of 118 wins. Congratulations to Jake and Benedictine wrestling on a great season!



### BASKETBALL

Benedictine basketball ended their playoff run with a 63-55 loss to Glenville in the District Semi Finals, but not before upsetting the number 2 seeded Holy Name in their home gym, 71-59.

Senior **Tremaine Edwards** (above) led the way for the Bengals, scoring 24 against Holy Name and 20 vs Glenville. Tremaine was selected to play in the GCBCA All-Star Game on 4/20 at Gilmour Academy, where he scored 22 points.

Congratulations to Edwards and fellow seniors **Joe Watts**, **Jermaine Mathis**, **Brelan Brand**, **Gre'Shawn Howard**, and **Aiden Smith** on their contributions to Benedictine basketball.

### BOWLING

The varsity bowling team participated in the OHSA Sectional tournament on February 12th and placed 4th, just missing advancing by 25 pins. Seniors **Ben Andel** (below), **Wyatt Toth**, **Sam Ali**, and **Mason Adrine** stood out for this squad. Congratulations to them for their great play all season.



# SAVE THE DATE!

## REUNION WEEKEND 2023

### JUNE 16-18, 2023

*Celebrating classes ending in '3 and '8*

2018	5 YEAR REUNION	1978	45 YEAR REUNION
2013	10 YEAR REUNION	1973	50 YEAR REUNION GOLDEN YEAR!
2008	15 YEAR REUNION	1968	55 YEAR REUNION
2003	20 YEAR REUNION	1963	60 YEAR REUNION
1998	25 YEAR REUNION	1958	65 YEAR REUNION
1993	30 YEAR REUNION	1953	70 YEAR REUNION
1988	35 YEAR REUNION	1948	75 YEAR REUNION
1983	40 YEAR REUNION	1943	80 YEAR REUNION

2023 Reunion Weekend Dates

STAG NIGHT

FRIDAY  
JUNE 16, 2023

Alumni of all classes are welcomed on Stag Night!

CLASS PLANNED ACTIVITIES

SATURDAY  
JUNE 17, 2023

REUNION 2023

We are looking for class leaders and ambassadors from the above classes to help get the best out of the celebration of your milestone reunion during Reunion Weekend 2023.

Please contact [alumni@cbhs.edu](mailto:alumni@cbhs.edu).



Class of 1962



Blaise with grandson Luke and wife, Arlene.

Blaise Tylicki was honored on September 9, 2022 by Glasgow (Kentucky) High School for his 35 years of service to the Glasgow Scotties football program. His grandson Luke Simmons, a Scottie player, presented a commemorative plaque to him. Blaise has served as the special teams and kicking coach, supervised team weightlifting, maintained the football equipment, cleaned the uniforms, and has been the caretaker of the football fields with mowing and marking. Blaise worked as a Gear Engineer for Eaton Corporation, retiring in 2001 after 38 years. He has been married to his wife, Arlene, for 57 years and they have four children: Debbie, Richard, Scott, and Michelle.

Class of 1971

Mark Francioli has become the first lay teacher in the history of Benedictine High School to continue teaching in the classroom beyond his 70th birthday. It used to be customary for BHS lay teachers to retire at 70. Mark, who began teaching English at BHS, in the fall of 1978, turned 70 on his birthday March 3. Fabled Coach Augie Bossu retired from teaching when he turned 70 at the end of the 1986 school year but remained coaching until he was 90 in 2006. Joe Rufus retired from teaching in 1987 at the age of 69.

Mark was recently interviewed on WKYC-TV Channel 3 as part of a story on March 14 about The Oscars where Best

Picture honors went to the film *Everything Everywhere All at Once* produced by Mark's former students BHS alumni Anthony '88 and Joe '89 Russo. The interview explained, "Their former English teacher, Mark Francioli, remembers the brothers as funny and smart when they were students in the 80s in his classes and electives. Francioli recalls their interest in subject matter surrounding the humanities and self-expression, such as speech and debate and the literary magazine. Francioli said during his classes, he would sometimes bring in classic films or film adaptations to show his students the way literature is translated into film.

"I think they got a kick out of seeing connections between let's say literary point of view and what you do with a camera," Francioli said of the brothers. "How does a camera become point of view parallel to what the writer is doing?"

Through the years, Francioli said the brothers have kept in touch, at one point early in their careers, even offering Francioli a small part in a movie. While it may have been decades since the brothers were in his classroom, Francioli is still proud of his former students.

Jack Siemen has planned two golf outings this summer for his classmates by popular demand. **First Outing:** (for 32 golfers) is June 17th @ Gleneagles Golf Course in Twinsburg starting at 10:03 am with dinner to follow for all @ 4:00ish @ the Burntwood Tavern in Solon. **Second Outing:** (for 24 golfers) is August 5th @ Manakiki Golf course starting at 9:00 am with a get-together for all at the course after golf @ around 1:30/2:00. If you are interested in playing, contact Jack at 440-799-1535 or at jacksson071@gmail.com. *And a happy 70th birthday to all members of the Class of '71 born in '53. It seems like only yesterday that we began our freshman year at BHS in September of 1967 with Fr. Robert, Fr. Roger, Coach Bossu, Mr. Csaszar, Mr. Rufus, Mr. Heyer, Mr. Krajnak, Fr. Anselm, Coach Stevens and many more.*

Class of 1979

"Mr. Benedictine" Ed Sanders in Plano, Texas thanks everyone for their prayers, especially Bishop Roger who called for those attending the recent "Blue and White Gala" to pray for him. Ed has experienced a miraculous healing from multiple injuries sustained in a serious car accident and subsequent medical complications. He was discharged from the hospital February 28 and returned to work on March 6.

Class of 1986

Jerry Wrobel co-founded Xact Laboratories in 2012 which is a Twinsburg, Ohio-based biotechnology company focused on providing state-of-the-art molecular diagnostic tests and one-of-a-kind result integration to assist patients in obtaining medical drug prescriptions that have the best potential of effectiveness based on genetic testing. Jerry works out of Sarasota, Florida.

Class of 1990

Derek Wrobel lives in Macedonia and serves as the Vice-President for Operations for Xact Laboratories. He has been responsible for all aspects of the company's operations since it was founded by his brother Jerry '86 in 2012.

Class of 1994

Renato Gilberti was promoted to Partner in the BKV Group, a holistic architecture and design firm in Chicago. Renato, his wife, Dana (also an architect), and their daughter, Isabella, took an eventful family trip to Austria and Germany last summer which included hiking in the Alps and driving electric bikes through the German countryside.



Class of 2003

Tommy Zagorski was recently hired as the new Head Coach for the Otterbein University Football team. Tommy has also had experience at local institutions coaching football including the University of Akron and John Carroll University.

Tom with wife, Analee, son Bronko and daughter Lenny.



Class of 2007

Aaron Horn was recently hired as an Assistant Basketball Coach for the University of Minnesota Women's Basketball team. He also has spent time as an assistant coach at West Virginia University, University of South Dakota, and Ursuline College.



Christopher Frato and his wife, Riley, are proud parents of a son named Christopher Michael Frato III. Chris is a policeman for the City of Euclid.

Class of 2010

Fr. Martin Dober, a priest of the Diocese of Cleveland, has concluded his appointment as parochial vicar of St. John Vianney Parish in Mentor and was granted permission to pursue an advanced degree in Patristics (studying the early Christian Church fathers) and Church history in Rome effective June 13, 2023.



Addition to the Winter 2022 issue of the ORA et LABORA: Benedictine gratefully acknowledges a gift of \$10,000 from Mr. and Mrs. James R. Flowers, Class of 1959, which was inadvertently left out of the annual report.

Class of 2015

Charlie Spinks married Samantha Braden at Saint Andrew Abbey Church on January 28, 2023. Fr. Michael Brunovsky, OSB witnessed their vows during a Nuptial Mass.

Class of 2019

Gavin Majikas married Ava George on December 17, 2022 at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in South Euclid. The newlyweds will relocate to Bowling Green this summer.



Maxwell Monachino was awarded the Wittenberg University Department of Business and Economics Faculty Award for Excellence. This award recognizes the business major with the greatest potential for career success.



Class of 2012

John Kocsis, Jr., will have his own book published by this summer. Entitled, *Play-by-Play from the Minors*, the book profiles baseball broadcasters in the minor leagues. It details over 100 seasons of experience among a dozen broadcasters. John is the Broadcasting/Media Relations Manager for the Columbia (South Carolina) Fireflies, the Single-A affiliate of the Kansas City Royals MLB team. Those interested in purchasing the book can preorder on Amazon: amazon.com/Play-Play-Minors or they can purchase the book directly from the publisher at McFarlandBooks.com. Cost is \$35.



Class of 2013

Chaz Bottoms was chosen in the fall for *Forbes* magazine's prestigious "30 Under 30" Class of 2022: 600 of the brightest young entrepreneurs, leaders, and stars. Chaz was chosen in the category of Hollywood and Entertainment for his Los Angeles-based boutique animation company CBA Studios that works with diverse artists connected by the love of Black Culture.



Alumni: Please let us know any important news in your life such as marriages, birth of children, job promotions, and interesting experiences by sending updates to alumni@cbhs.edu.





Charles and Margi Sidman approx 1999

## Featured Alumnus

# Charles Sidman '49 and his Global Academic Adventures

The fabled “Four Horsemen” of the Apocalypse of the Bible were Conquest, War, Hunger and Death; the “Four Horsemen” of the Fighting Irish of Notre Dame in 1924 were Stuhldreher, Crowley, Miller and Layden. The “Four Horsemen” of **Benedictine High School (BHS) in 1949** were **Sidman, Zaker, Cenkner and Petzel**.

These close friends who graduated from BHS in 1949 all went on to notable academic careers. **Don Petzel '49** attended St. Meinrad's Benedictine College and earned a master's degree in English which served him well in his four decades on the faculty at Laval University in Quebec City, Canada. **Bill Cenkner '49** became a Dominican friar following which he took his doctoral degree in theology with a specialty in Hinduism at Fordham University in New York City. Later he became Dean of the School of Religious Studies at Catholic University of America in Washington D.C., the singular pontifical institute of higher education in the United States. **Tom Zaker '49**, gifted in mathematics, was awarded his doctorate in physics by the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago after which he was engaged as a scientist with the Atomic Energy Commission. **Charles Sidman '49** studied in Germany as a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Tuebingen before completing his doctoral studies with an emphasis on modern German history at the University of Wisconsin (Madison).

Charles Sidman will be 92 years old in 2023 and is the last surviving member

of this scholarly quartet. His association with Benedictine goes back to the beginning of his life. In 1931 he was baptized by **Fr. George Luba, OSB**, the founder of Benedictine High School who was then pastor at St. Andrew's Parish on Superior Avenue, the first location of St. Andrew Abbey and BHS.

It did not at all seem likely that Charles would attend Benedictine High School. His father graduated from Cathedral Latin High School in 1926 before BHS was opened. He worked for a large Cleveland corporation whose policy involved the periodic transfer of its management cadre to posts in different state capitals. Thus the family moved first to North Carolina and then to Iowa. When the family resettled in Cleveland in 1947, Charles was set to enter his junior year of high school. He chose to attend the “Home of Champions.” After a few weeks commuting from Euclid, Ohio, a one hour forty-five minute trip that began at 6:00a.m., he persuaded his father to permit him to live with his father's Slovak parents (and Charles' grandparents) on Forest Avenue across from BHS. At Benedictine Charles was the regular first baseman for the Bengals baseball team under coach **Fr. Florian Hudac, OSB '34**.

He also now had the time to cultivate after school friendships based on academics that mattered to a maturing teenager.

Charles attended Notre Dame and John Carroll Universities. From the latter he received his BA and MA degrees and also entered the ROTC program which resulted in an army commission and a two year military tour of duty, most of which time was spent in Japan and South Korea. With his doctorate in Modern German History from the **University of Wisconsin** in hand, he began his 18-year tenure at the **University of Kansas** in 1960, almost five years of which were spent in Europe on various academic appointments. While in Lawrence, Kansas, he advanced in academic rank from instructor to full professor and then to Chairman of the History Department (with 42 faculty members).

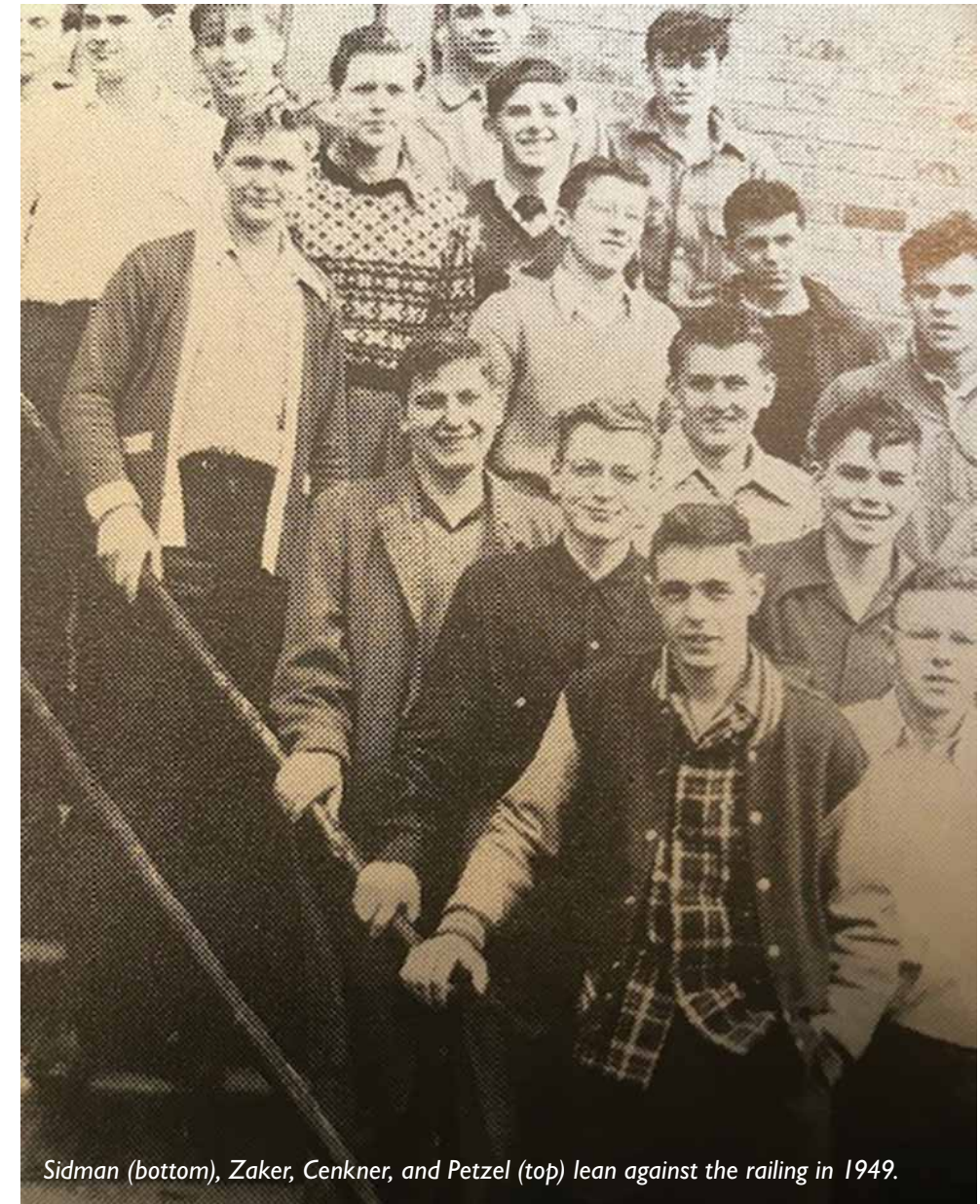
The **University of Florida** came calling in 1978 when Charles was invited to become its Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. This was truly a promotion to the major leagues of academic life in the United States. The University of Florida is the preeminent university in Florida and is considered

one of the very best public universities in the country with an enrollment of over 53,000 students. As Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Charles had responsibility for more than 650 tenured faculty members and more than one-half of the student body. His control over the budget and sole responsibility for hiring gave him major weight in university policy.

Two examples illustrate the international nature and scope of Charles' activity as dean. During his time in office he was invited to Sweden by a senior member of the Nobel Prize Committee while he promoted an interdisciplinary Quantum Theory program at the University of Florida. Charles hired some top Quantum Theory scholars from Sweden. The result was a knighthood from the King of Sweden (The Order of the North Star, First Class) for services rendered to the field of physics. The honor was bestowed deftly and with class.

The second example came from a major initiative Charles took in Spain. Spain matters to Florida. Its flag has flown longer over Florida than has the flag of the United States. Spanish is still widely spoken in the state. These negotiations culminated in a strong multifaceted working relationship between the Spanish government and the University of Florida. When the agreement was signed in Gainesville, Florida, three Spanish ambassadors were present for the ceremony, one of whom was the ambassador with whom Charles had worked out the details in Madrid (he was one of the King of Spain's closest friends and a direct descendant of Christopher Columbus) and another the Spanish ambassador to the United States, who was staying as a guest in the Sidman home.

During his entire adult life, baseball has remained a compelling avocation for Charles. It led to the development over sixty years ago of a tabletop baseball game that simulates accurately how the game evolves in its major league play.



Sidman (bottom), Zaker, Cenkner, and Petzel (top) lean against the railing in 1949.

Ballpark Baseball, as it is called, enjoys an enduring international reputation among its widespread clientele of game players. The program for the game, comprising almost 25,000 lines of code, is currently being automated and adapted to other baseball-related uses to keep the game in the forefront in the game industry.

Charles and **Margaret Anne (nee Clarke)** will celebrate 66 years of marriage in 2023. Margaret (Margi) graduated from Lourdes High School and Ursuline College in Cleveland. They adopted five

children through Catholic Charities in Kansas City, Kansas. The sense of humor and joy in living within the family which the children exhibit in full measure emanates from its West Side Irish mother. It represents a delightful counterbalance to Charles' more stoic Slavic virtues.

A final thought from Charles: “Success and satisfaction in life can come in many guises, in sports to be sure, but for most of us it comes from always doing ones best and leaving the umpiring to God.”



# In Memoriam

of alumni and friends of Saint Andrew Abbey and Benedictine High School



**William Simon, 76**, of the Class of 1964 passed away on Christmas Eve, 2022. He was the beloved husband of Mary for 40 years. Bill was a proud U.S. Army veteran. He was a graduate of The Ohio State University and earned his Master's degree at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business. He was a prominent banker and a business owner of Larmco Windows. Bill contributed to the building of Benedictine's Bossu Field. His funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Charles Borromeo Church in Parma.



**Gregory Crane, 76**, of the Class of 1964 passed away on December 29, 2022. He served as the Director of Public Service and Public Safety for the City of Brunswick from 1974-2002. Greg was also an adjunct professor at the University of Akron teaching upper-level graduate courses in Urban Politics and Policies. He served on numerous civic boards and was active with various ministries at St. Ambrose Parish in Brunswick where his funeral Mass was celebrated. He is survived by his wife, Linda, of 55 years and three married children and six grandchildren.



**Steven Ciuni, 86**, of the Class of 1954 died on January 4, 2023. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, JoAnne, four children, 16 grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren. He was a Registered Professional Engineer in Ohio, Kentucky and South Carolina and a Registered Professional Surveyor in the State of Ohio. He was the Founder and President of Adache-Ciuni-Lynn Assoc., a civil engineering and surveying firm that specialized in municipal engineering. He was the former City Engineer for the cities of Bedford, Macedonia, Shaker Hts., University Hts. and Walton Hills. His funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Dominic's Church in Shaker Heights.



**Rose Stifter, 75**, longtime abbey receptionist, died on January 10, 2023 after a short, but intense battle with cancer. Her funeral Mass was held on Saturday, January 28, at 11:00 AM in the Abbey Church. Rose lived the Benedictine charism of hospitality by providing a friendly face and voice to those who called or visited the abbey for the last 22 years. She was the first person that visitors met when they entered the glass doors of the abbey narthex. Rose grew up in the Polish neighborhood of the former St. Hyacinth's Parish not far from the abbey off East 55th Street.

She worked as a parish secretary to the late **Fr. John Deka** at St. Hyacinth's and BHS alumnus **Ken Piechowski '66**, his deacon,

and got to know the late **Fr. Lawrence Sevcik, OSB** of Benedictine who provided pastoral assistance on weekends. In 2001 when **Abbot Roger Gries, OSB** was named an auxiliary bishop, the abbey receptionist at the time, **Cheryl Zelenka**, followed him downtown as his personal secretary. Fr. Lawrence introduced Rose Stifter to **Prior Anselm Zupka, OSB** and she was hired as Cheryl's replacement.

Rose was married to the late Michael for 53 years. She was the mother of three and the grandmother of 8 including Benedictine alumni **Thadeus (TJ)** and **Nicodemus Stary** of the Class of 2020. Their mother, Rose's daughter **Lisa Marie Stary**, has assumed the duties of abbey receptionist. Rose's brother **Ed Luzniak** is the abbey's maintenance director.



**Dale Jakab, 71**, of the Class of 1969, school psychologist and administrative assistant at Benedictine High School since 2017, passed away Tuesday afternoon, January 3, 2023 after a valiant year-long battle with cancer. He was 71 years old.

Growing up in the Buckeye neighborhood, Dale entered Benedictine as a freshman in the fall of 1964. As a student he was a member of the National Honor Society and the varsity golf team. After his graduation in 1968, Dale attended the University of Dayton where he earned a bachelor's degree in psychology.

He then entered Ohio State University and received his master's degree in school psychology in 1973. Two years later he was hired as a school psychologist by the Shaker Heights City Schools. He was appointed Coordinator of Pupil Services for the Solon schools in 1988. Over the next three decades, he helped the district to develop its integrated special education preschool, parent mentor program, and multi-handicapped classrooms.

After he retired from the Solon school district in 2017, he returned to BHS and joined the staff as an administrative assistant and also worked in the guidance office, positions he held into this current school year.

He married Margaret (Peggy) Fanelli in 1979 and had three children: Justin (BHS '01), Jessica, and Jordan (BHS '06). He was an active member of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Gates Mills. Dale was a true Man of Benedictine who already served on the BHS Board of Trustees in the late 1970s and even served as the assistant director of the BHS CYO basketball league then for several years. Later, his son Dr. Justin Jakab would follow his dad's legacy and serve on the Benedictine Board of Trustees. Over the years, Dale volunteered for many special committee assignments and programs.

Dale and Peggy were generous in their support of the Home of Champions in many ways. The BHS Guidance Center was renamed the **Jakab Family Counseling Department** in

recognition of Dale's contributions. From the time he first walked the halls of Benedictine in 1964 until his work on the faculty as recently as last fall, Dale was proud to wear the Blue and White.



**Joseph Kocab, 90**, of the Class of 1950 entered Eternal Life on December 17, 2022. Joe was a proud graduate of Benedictine High School. While he was a student at BHS, he was a cheerleader for two seasons, a member of the library staff, business manager of *The Bennet* newspaper, and maintained a 4.00 grade point average. He was awarded a Cleveland Press Carrier Scholarship to Ohio University where he received his B.A. in zoology and his master's degree in educational administration. He was a teacher and department head at John Adams High School in Cleveland from 1955-65 and served there as assistant principal in 1967. He was also assistant principal at Rawlings Junior High and South High schools from 1969-85.

Joe was the co-founder, along with Vaclav Hyvnar, of the Czech Voice of Cleveland, a radio program which he hosted for 49 years.

He was also the secretary of Ceska Sin Karlin for more than 45 years. He was a past president of the Czech Catholic Union, a past president of the Saint Joseph Society #156, a member of the Knights of St. John and of St. John's Men's Club, and a member of Sokol Greater Cleveland for more than 50 years.

Joe was an educator, friend, and mentor, whose reputation was built and maintained with a singular focus on service. He had a lifelong commitment to advancing the Czech heritage and community. He valued education and established a scholarship fund at Benedictine High School named after his parish of St. John Nepomucene and regularly contributed to its corpus.

**Bishop Roger Gries, OSB '54** was the main celebrant of Joe's funeral Mass at St. John Nepomucene Church on Saturday, January 7, 2023. **Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB '71** represented the Home of Champions along with alumnus **John Sabol '63** who succeeded Joe as host of the "The New Czech Voice of Cleveland" Sunday radio show on WHKW AM 1220 in 2019.



**Laurence Laurenzi, 59**, of the Class of 1982 died on February 1, 2023 after a long battle with various illnesses. He was a graduate of John Carroll University and was a successful entrepreneur as president and owner of Paragon Data Systems. He is survived by his parents. Fr. Gerard, OSB, represented BHS at the internment at Lakeview Cemetery.



**Dr. John Bedosky, DDS, 93**, of the Class of 1948 passed away on February 7, 2023 in Sayre, Pennsylvania. A native of Binghamton, New York, he attended Benedictine as a boarder his final three years and consistently made the honor roll and was captain of the football team under **Coach Joe Rufus**. John and his brother **Richard** graduated from dental school together and after two years of military service, they opened their family dentistry clinic in Binghamton. John was married for 57 years to his wife, **Dorothy**, until her death in 2015 and they had three sons. After his retirement from dentistry, John bought and built hotels and travel lodges. His **Uncle Mike Bedosky** provided the lead gift for the **1982-85 Benedictine Capital Campaign** that completed the abbey buildings and renovated the science department of the school.



**Raymond McGuinness, 92**, of the Class of 1948, died on March 1, 2023. Ray was a proud Marine who fought in the Korean War, came home, and studied business at John Carroll University. He built a successful career as a real estate entrepreneur and broker. In 1959, he purchased Webster Realty and worked until he retired at age 90. He contributed to BHS and to his community serving on countless boards and teaching real estate courses at Lakeland Community College. Ray also advocated for fair hiring practices by American companies in Northern Ireland which became known as the MacBride Principles. His funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Gabriel's Catholic Church in Concord, Ohio.



**Charles Braschwitz, 76**, of the Class of 1965, passed away on March 12, 2023. Charles was elected **Mr. Benedictine** by his classmates. He was the president of the BHS Student Council and played right end on the football team. He was Vice-President of Sales for Medical Mutual of Ohio. He is survived by his wife, Loraine, and daughter, Holly. His son, Adam, passed away in 2018. Charles was very proud to be a Benedictine alumnus and requested that his Bengal varsity jacket be buried with him.



**Russell Sopko, 81**, of the Class of 1959, died on February 25, 2023. His late father, Valentine Sopko, graduated in the Class of 1933. Russell taught for 30 years at Tremont Elementary School. He was a Eucharistic Minister at St. Anthony of Padua Parish and later at St. Matthias Parish and was dedicated to bringing the Eucharist to the elderly and sick in their homes

*continued on page 26*



and in the hospital. Committed to children, he taught PSR and was a volunteer teacher of music and literature appreciation at St. Anthony of Padua school for twelve years. He also volunteered at Metro Health Hospital for twenty years in the Pediatrics ward. He is survived by Carolyn, his wife of 57 years, and two children.



**Eleanore Spisak, 91**, the mother of Brother Nicholas of the abbey, died on March 24, 2023. Her husband of 64 years, Steve, passed away in 2020. In addition to Brother Nicholas, she was the mother of Fr. Stephen of the Cleveland Diocese, Ed (BHS alumnus of the Class of 1983), and Richard. Her funeral Mass was celebrated at St. John Bosco Catholic Church in Parma Heights.



**Fr. William Krizner, 74**, of the Class of 1967, died on April 1, 2023. Ordained in 1979, Fr. Krizner served as chaplain and Director of Campus Ministry of Holy Name High School for 22 years. His popular retreats at Holy Name were legendary and produced many religious and lay Church vocations. Since 2007 he has served as the pastor of St. Colette's Parish in Brunswick where he continued to touch many lives. He was inducted to the Benedictine Hall of Distinction in its inaugural class in 2012.



**Tom Rini, 85**, who was the Mr. Benedictine of the Class of 1956, died on April 14, 2023 after a long illness. Tom was elected to the Benedictine High School Hall of Fame in 1993. He was the captain of Augie Bossu's first Bengal varsity football team where he excelled as a running back earning The Sporting News Honorable Mention All-American as a senior. He also played basketball, baseball, and track. He attended the University of Notre Dame on a football scholarship. He was past president of the Notre Dame Alumni Club of Cleveland and its 1984 "Man of the Year." He was the owner of Industrial Safety Products, Inc. and Weldinghouse, Inc. of Valley View. He is survived by his wife, Sally, and children Chris Britsch, Scott (BHS '87), and Julie. Tom was a devout and active Catholic and his funeral Mass was celebrated by Bishop Roger Gries, OSB at St. Gregory the Great Church of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in South Euclid.



**Clarence Franko, 93**, of the Class of 1948 passed away on March 10, 2023. His two brothers also graduated from BHS: Michael '52 (deceased) and Dennis '58. Clarence was an accomplished baseball player in the Buckeye neighborhood. He served in the U.S. Army for two years during the Korean War. He became a tool and die maker and eventually was the shop foreman at Teledyne Technologies. His wife of 68 years, Agnes, died in 2020. He is survived by 5 children, 11 grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren. He was buried from St. Leo the Great Parish where he served as an usher. He is pictured (on the right) with his brother Dennis.

RECENTLY DECEASED

The following members of our Benedictine Community have gone on to Eternal Rest between November 30, 2022 and April 14, 2023. May they all Rest in Peace.

Name		Deceased
Joseph Lombardo, 72	Class of 1968	September 22, 2022*
Daniel Boyle, 66	Class of 1974	November 11, 2022*
Steven Gittinger, 91	Class of 1949	November 18, 2022*
John Josza, 83	Class of 1957	November 30, 2022
Victor Germano, 82	Class of 1958	December 2, 2022
Donald Kalinowski, 84	Class of 1956	December 3, 2022
Joseph Kocab, 90	Class of 1950	December 17, 2022
George Penfield, 78	Class of 1962	December 22, 2022
William Simon, 76	Class of 1964	December 24, 2022
Michael Geletka, 68	Class of 1972	December 28, 2022
Raymond Pongonis, 90	Class of 1950	December 28, 2022
Gregory Crane, 76	Class of 1964	December 29, 2022
Dale Jakab, 71	Class of 1968	January 3, 2023
Steven Ciuni, 86	Class of 1954	January 4, 2023
Rose Stifter, 75		January 10, 2023
Gary Brichacek, 63	Class of 1977	January 28, 2023
Laurence Laurenzi, 59	Class of 1982	February 1, 2023
Otis Cavers	Class of 1976	February 6, 2023
John Bedosky, DDS, 93	Class of 1948	February 7, 2023
Lawrence Fousek, Jr., 84	Class of 1956	February 20, 2023
Russell Sopko, 81	Class of 1959	February 25, 2023
Raymond McGuinness, 92	Class of 1948	March 1, 2023
Richard Korecko, 84		March 5, 2023
Clarence Franko, 93	Class of 1948	March 10, 2023
Charles Braschwitz, 76	Class of 1965	March 12, 2023
Thomas Poplar, 80	Class of 1959	March 10, 2023
Jim Emery, 74 (former track coach)		March 21, 2023
Eleanore Spisak, mother of Bro. Nicholas		March 24, 2023
Fr. William Krizner, 74	Class of 1967	April 1, 2023
Elizabeth Anne Browne, 92		April 3, 2023
Thomas Rini, 85	Class of 1956	April 14, 2023

If anyone knows of other recently deceased alumni, please contact the alumni office at 216-421-2080 ext. 342 or alumni@cbhs.edu

\* late notice

Dear Benedictine Community,



Chris Lorber '04

You will often hear me make the comment that the annual Blue & White Gala is the best opportunity for us to publicly communicate our story and mission. As we wrap up some of the loose ends from this very successful event, I am more strongly convinced that the best of Benedictine was in evidence on March 11, 2023.

With nearly 500 guests in attendance and hundreds others participating remotely, I, along with our staff and the Benedictine Community, express our deepest gratitude for the support contributed. Through your generosity, we were able to generate over \$550,000 earmarked towards tuition assistance and scholarships.

The night was special as we recognized Bishop Roger Gries, OSB '54 and the 70+ years of service he has contributed to Benedictine High School. The evening consisted of guests enjoying a dynamic silent auction, a vibrant live auction, a jewelry raffle, a delicious meal, entertainment provided by the school's music department, and a monumental fund-a-need paddle raise.

Your kindness to contribute and participate whether in-person or remotely to this annual event allows for us to carry on the 95+ year tradition of educating young men — Thank you!

Speaking of Tradition...

During the third week of each June (Friday, June 16, 2023), Benedictine graduates return back to 2900 MLK Jr. Dr. to reminisce, enjoy many laughs and memories, and experience all of the campus improvements at the annual Reunion Weekend. This year we are excited to celebrate special milestones from our

classes ending in '3 and '8. The Class of 1998 (25 years) and the Class of 1973 (50 years) headline the respective milestones! Although we will be recognizing the classes ending in '3 and '8, please know that Friday's Stag Night is open to ALL graduates and will be held in the school's gymnasium.

If you would like to attend or have questions on obtaining a class roster to assist to contact other classmates, please reach out to me at lorber@cbhs.edu or 216-421-2080 ext. 246.

We encourage you to reach out and identify a day/time that works for you to visit campus later this Spring or into the Summer. You will enjoy what you see, and the hallways will certainly bring back many fond memories of your time at the Home of Champions.

Thank you for your continued support of our beloved alma mater.

Yours in St. Benedict,

Chi L '04

Mr. Chris Lorber '04  
Vice President of Advancement

\$282,500.00  
RAISED DURING THE FUND-A-NEED

485  
IN ATTENDANCE

141  
SILENT AUCTION ITEMS

9  
LIVE AUCTION EXPERIENCES



# ORA ET LABORA

**St. Andrew Abbey/Benedictine High School**

2900 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive  
Cleveland, Ohio 44104-4898

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**Ora et Labora: A publication of  
Benedictine High School and  
Saint Andrew Abbey**

Abbot Gary Hoover, OSB '74  
*Publisher*

Mr. Chris Lorber '04  
*Vice President of Advancement*

Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB '71  
*Editor and Donor Relations*

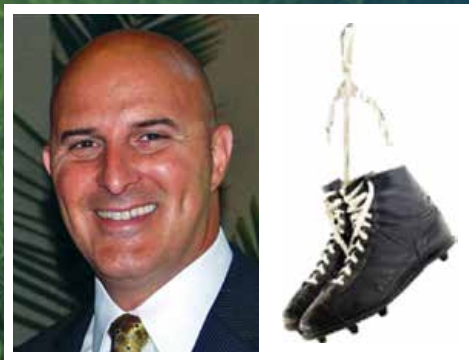
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## 7th Annual Joe Marino Memorial

**Alumni and Friends Scholarship Golf Outing**

**FOURSOMES AND INDIVIDUAL GOLF  
OPPORTUNITIES SOLD OUT!  
HOLE SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES  
STILL AVAILABLE!**

**Thursday, June 1, 2023**

**Red Tail Golf Club**

**4400 Nagel Rd. Avon, OH 44011**

**9:00AM Registration**

**10:00AM Shotgun Start**

**4:00PM Barbecue Dinner and Awards**

**To RSVP** your participation, visit [cbhs.edu/marino-outing](http://cbhs.edu/marino-outing).

**Contact:** Mr. Chris Lorber '04 at [lorber@cbhs.edu](mailto:lorber@cbhs.edu) or  
216-421-2080 ext. 246 for hole sponsorships and questions.

