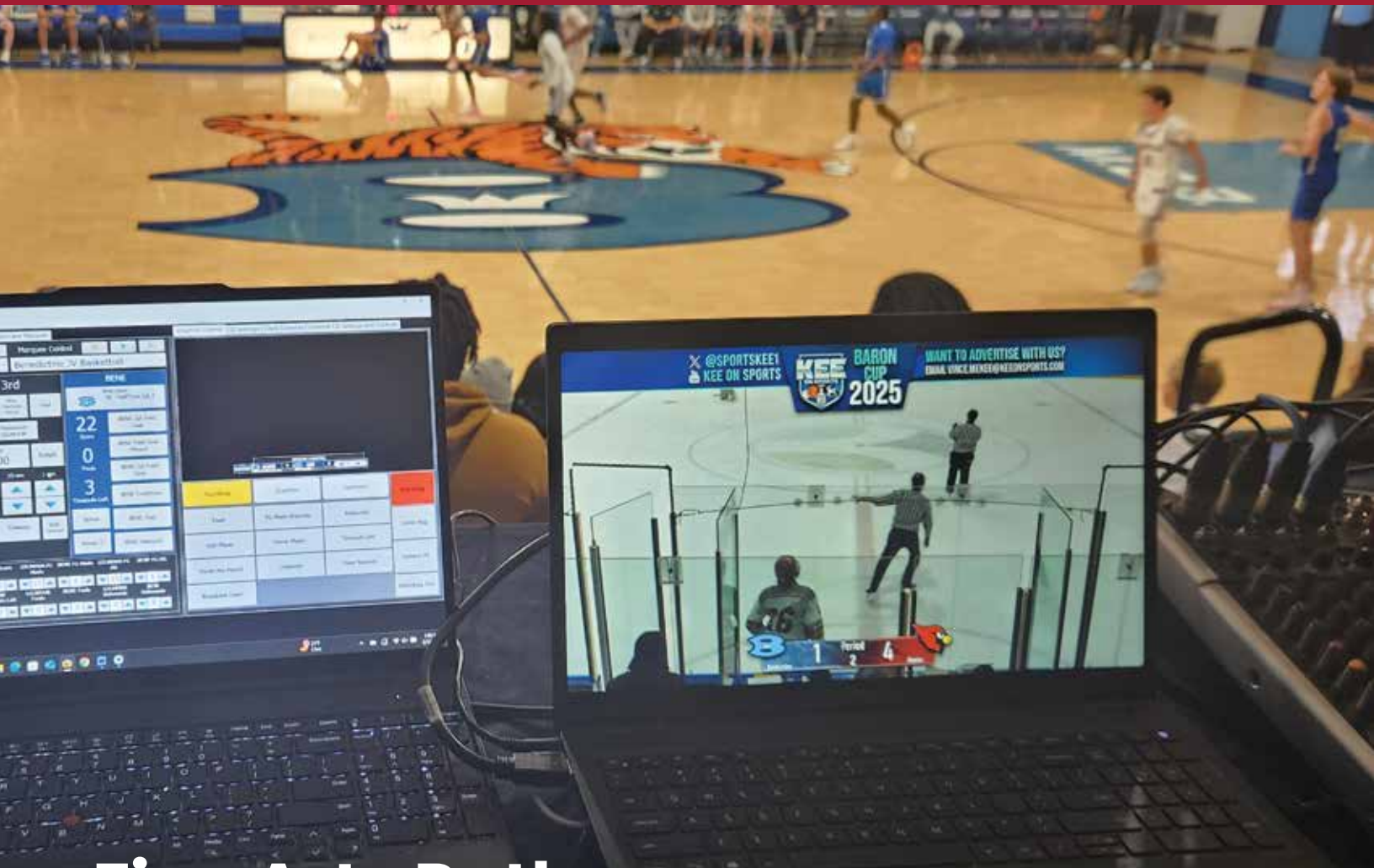


ORA ET LABORA



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

Spring 2025



Fine Arts Pathway Brings Student Voices to Sports Broadcasting

(See story Pages 12-13)

Our BSN team livestreams Benedictine basketball while keeping fans updated on the Baron Cup hockey score in real time.

A Reflection on Spring and Easter:

RENEWED HOPE IN CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

As the world around us awakens from the cold slumber of winter, I invite you to pause and reflect on the deeper truths of our Catholic faith. The season of spring, with its renewal of life, offers a profound parallel to the divine work of restoration that we celebrate in the Easter mystery.

For us as Catholics, spring is not merely a time of nature's revival; it is a time to contemplate the mystery of the Resurrection — Christ's triumph over death and sin, which brings forth the promise of new and eternal life.

In the Church's liturgical calendar, the season of Lent prepares us for Easter. It is a time when we are called to die to ourselves, to surrender our sins, and to enter into the wilderness of penance. Just as the earth undergoes its own dormancy in winter, we too enter into a period of sacrifice and fasting. But Lent is not the end—it is the prelude to the Paschal mystery. The Resurrection of Christ at Easter reveals to us that the cold and barren seasons of life are never the final word. Christ, in His infinite mercy, transforms the tomb of our sorrow into the garden of new hope.

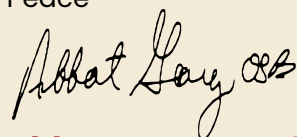
Spring, with its blossoms and growth, serves as a visible sign of the spiritual truth we celebrate. We are reminded that Christ's victory over the grave brings about the resurrection of our souls. Through His Passion, Death, and Resurrection, we are invited to rise with Him, to share in the new life that He has won for us. The renewal of the natural world echoes the transformation that happens in the heart of every believer who experiences the grace of the Resurrection.

In the darkness of winter, the seed lies dormant in the soil, awaiting the light of spring to bring it to life. So too, in our own lives, there are moments when we feel buried under the weight of sin, suffering, or despair. Yet, as Christ rose from the dead, so too are we called to rise from our own graves of fear and doubt, to experience the flourishing of grace and peace that comes from the risen Christ.

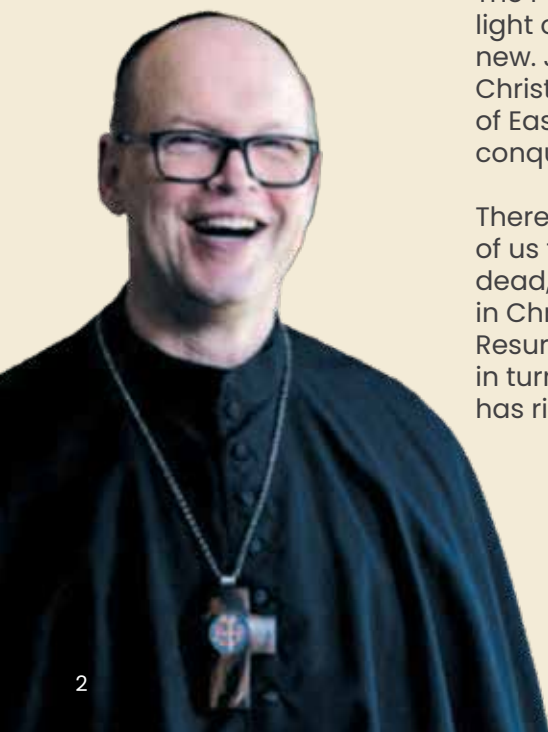
The Paschal season calls us to live with a renewed sense of hope, to walk in the light of Christ's Resurrection, knowing that through Him, all things are made new. Just as the flowers bloom and the trees regain their leaves, so too does the Christian soul flourish when nourished by the grace of God. This is the message of Easter: that the love of God, which was poured out for us on the cross, has conquered death itself and has opened the gates to eternal life.

Therefore, let this season of spring, and this season of Easter, be a time for each of us to reflect on the resurrection we are called to live. Let us shed the old, the dead, and the withered parts of our lives, and embrace the new life that is ours in Christ. As we see the earth come alive, may we be reminded that Christ's Resurrection has brought life to our souls and the promise of eternal joy. May we, in turn, be the bearers of that hope, witnessing to the world the truth that Christ has risen—indeed, He is truly risen. Alleluia!!!

Peace



Abbot Gary, OSB '74



Benedictine Friends and Family -

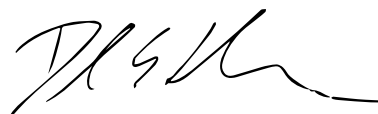
It is an exciting time to be part of the Bengal Nation and I am very proud to have been given the opportunity to help shape the future of our great institution. As the days get longer and the temperatures climb, a noticeable optimism and energy among our guys seems to fuel them forward towards the completion of another school year. The start of the fourth quarter also comes with the reality of saying goodbye to a very special group of seniors who will be on to new adventures, new experiences and the start of their journey as alumni of Benedictine. I have had two years to develop relationships with many of these guys, attending their events and witnessing their growth and development as young men. I have enjoyed the opportunity to get to know them and perhaps in a small way impact their lives, but it won't make it any easier to see them leave.

In case you missed it, this year's Blue and White Gala theme was "Breaking Records" and breaking records is exactly what we did. Thank you to all who supported what surely was a remarkable event highlighted by an evening celebrated by over 550 guests and raising over \$750,000 that goes directly towards student financial aid. Our venue change to the downtown Hilton backdropped by a gorgeous sunset over the shores of Lake Erie provided the perfect setting to tell the Benedictine story. If you were unable to attend, I encourage you to take a look at the amazing tribute produced by our own Mr. Brian Devers who captured the essence of what being a record breaking Man of Benedictin is all about. You can find the Gala video on the BHS YouTube channel!

During my remarks at the Gala, I told the story of Caleb Gianzero who was the young man who put his goal "Win the Archery State Championship" on my office wall. This simple act led to a donor who saw it and connected him with a company who donated a brand new hi-tech bow to Caleb. Well, I am proud to say that on March 15, Caleb finished 3rd in the State Championship tournament. It just goes to show that by combining "goal setting" with hard work and determination, anything is possible.

I remain incredibly optimistic about the future of Benedictine. We are gearing up for a significant milestone in just two years and I look forward to sharing with you very shortly our plans for the Centennial. We are anticipating an incredibly strong freshman class not only in terms of numbers, but all metrics show a class with higher average test scores, multiple students from key feeder schools and of course our signature diverse representation of guys from all over northeast Ohio. I firmly believe the word on the street is that Benedictine is back in a significant way and we feel this incoming class is just the start. This class will also mean our third consecutive year of 90+ students.

Once again, thank you to the entire Benedictine community for your continued support of our mission!



Dave Schroeder '90



Brother Gregory: A Porter in the Benedictine Tradition, A Welcoming Presence at Benedictine

In the Benedictine monastic tradition, the Porter holds a sacred role—welcoming all who enter with warmth, humility, and a spirit of hospitality. Brother Gregory embraces this calling as he takes on his new role as morning greeter and attendance coordinator at Benedictine High School. Each day he welcomes students, faculty, and guests, offering a kind word, a reassuring presence, and a reminder of the respect and accountability that define a Man of Benedictine.

Beyond this role, Brother Gregory also leads our Right to Life Club, guiding students in faith and service. Most recently, he accompanied a group of students to the March for Life in Washington, D.C., reinforcing the importance of advocacy and moral leadership. Whether at the school entrance or in moments of spiritual guidance, Brother Gregory continues to shape our young men, embodying the Benedictine values of hospitality, stability, and brotherhood.



Abbot Gary addresses the Convention before elections



Newly elected officers take the oath, including Fr. Michael as SCF Spiritual Director



Abbot Gary and Board of Directors at the SCF Convention Mass.

Damascus Retreat begins training for future BHS Chaplains



Adoration and Praise session of the conference



Fr. Thomas Sanders, OSB

Between February 19–21, **Fr. Thomas Sanders, OSB**, Campus Minister for Benedictine High School accompanied four students on the Empower Conference in Centerburg, Ohio, which is sponsored by the Damascus Center for Young Adult Youth Religious Leadership. The purpose of this experience is to form and shape young adult leaders to give witness for their faith. Fr. Thomas specifically takes students there to prepare them for Convocation Leadership at Benedictine. These students will act as leaders to provide creative ideas and opportunities to train further BHS chaplains who plan numerous activities throughout the year for fellow students, faculty and staff members.



Damascus Hall filled with students and young adults to be empowered

Pro-Life Witness is Active and Strong

Brother Gregory Coyne, OSB, Moderator of the Benedictine Pro-Life Club works to pump-up his students in the organization by participating in some high-profile events over the last few months. In January, He journeyed with a number of students to the March for Life in Washington, DC, where they joined thousands of other Pro-Life advocates in keeping this issue before the mind of the American public. While engaged in this event, he also stopped at Christendom College where he made a presentation on vocations and the calling to serve in the religious life. On Friday, March 7, Br. Gregory and the Pro-Life Club attended the Bringing America Back to Life Convention held at the Embassy Suites in Independence, Ohio. There he and the students listened to nationally recognized speakers and attended a student forum on leadership in the Pro-Life Movement. Their attendance was made possible by the generosity of Greg and Kathy Rufus, BHS '74.



Brother Gregory and BHS students at the BABL Conference in Independence

Slovak Catholic Federation holds 61st Convention

On March 3, 2025, Benedictines were well represented at the 61st National Convention of the Slovak Catholic Federation, held in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. **Abbot Gary Hoover, OSB, Fr. Michael Brunovsky, OSB and Brother Gabriel Balazovic, OSB** represented the Benedictine Order of Cleveland at the Convention. All three serve on the Board of Directors for the organization, which acts as an umbrella in preserving the Catholic character and foundation of Slovak Organizations in the United States. Abbot Gary serves as "protector" of the organization, while Fr. Michael serves as spiritual director.

Both were re-elected to these positions in the elections held at the convention. The SCF seeks to improve relations between Slovak organizations in promoting the Catholic faith and in developing activities that promote evangelization and the preservation of Slovak Culture. The SCF also acts in union with the Conference of Slovak Clergy and Religious to financially support the Slovak Institute of Saints Cyril and Methodius on the outskirts of Rome, which serves as the house of study for Slovak graduate students who attend the Roman Universities, most of whom are clergy.

Climbing the Mountain of God

Under the leadership of **Abbot Gary Hoover, OSB**, the Mountain of God Retreat (MTOG) was held again at the Loyola Retreat House from March 9 through 13. This intensive retreat experience involves a number of witness talks, worship experiences, reconciliation, and fellowship that helps to bring students out of themselves and into a realization of their experiences as blessed by God. Retreat coordinators this year also included **Fr. Thomas Sanders, OSB**, Mr. Michael Younes and Mr. Paul Gambon of the BHS faculty, and others, who worked over several weeks to fine-tune the religious experience for over twenty Benedictine students.



Leadership Enhancement for the Abbey

From March 11-13, **Fr. Conrad Wald, OSB**, Abbey Subprior and Business Manager attended the New Leadership Workshop in Hyattsville Maryland, sponsored by the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) of which the abbey is a member.

The seminar focused on a number of relevant issues currently facing religious communities of men in the United States. The workshop enabled attendees to network with members throughout the country facing similar challenges in religious leadership.





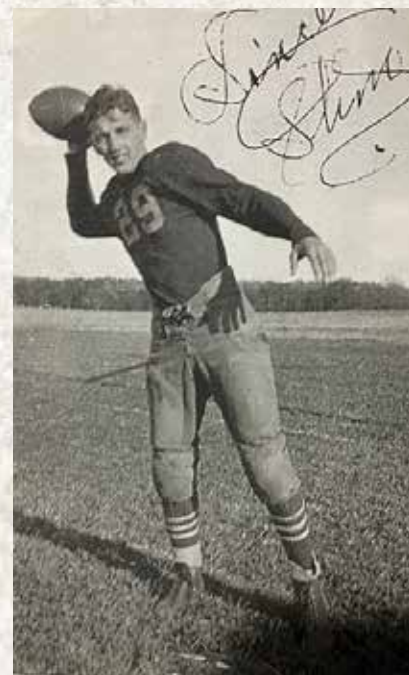
Fr. Bernard Slimak, OSB '31 and the Battle of Iwo Jima – 1945

by Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB '71 / Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base, Georgia

The famous **Battle of Iwo Jima** took place 80 years ago this Spring from **February 19 to March 26, 1945**. It was one of the fiercest and bloodiest battles of World War II.

In only 36 days of intense fighting the U.S. Marines killed approximately 22,000 Japanese soldiers and sailors. The cost was staggering. The assault units of the corps—Marines and Navy personnel—sustained 24,053 casualties, by far the highest single-action losses in Marine Corps history. Of these, a total of 6,140 died. Roughly one Marine or corpsman became a casualty for every three who landed on Iwo Jima. When it was all over, the Americans had captured the strategic island.

Now, eight decades later, many members of the Benedictine family may not know that Saint Andrew Abbey, only in its 20th year of existence, had an important representative in that battle. **Fr. Bernard (Andrew) Slimak, OSB** was a member of the first graduating class of Benedictine High School in 1931. A member of a prominent Slovak Catholic family in Lakewood, Ohio, Andrew Slimak was an honor student and the captain of the first Bengal varsity football team in 1929.



Two years after graduation, Andrew was one of four members of the first graduating class to join Saint Andrew's Abbey and become a Benedictine monk. He received the religious name of "Bernard" and professed his first monastic



vows in 1934. After his ordination as a priest in 1940, he was assigned as the assistant pastor of historic St. Andrew's Parish in downtown Cleveland where the abbey and high school were first located. At the time, World War II was raging in Europe.

However, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 and the war was extended to the Pacific theatre. More

Catholic chaplains were needed and an appeal went out to dioceses and religious orders seeking priests who were willing to become military chaplains. Fr. Bernard, age 29, and only a priest for two years, received permission from Abbot Stanislaus Gmuca, OSB and volunteered in 1942 for chaplaincy training for the U.S. Army.

Fr. Bernard was assigned to minister to the U.S. Marine divisions in the Pacific. He served as a military chaplain from 1942 until the end of the war in 1945. In 1943, he was promoted to the rank of Captain. However, it was the month that he spent on the infamous Japanese island of Iwo Jima that would have the deepest effects on him spiritually and emotionally.

The Japanese army positions on the island were very well protected using tunnels, bunkers, and hidden artillery. The American Marines were supported by Navy and Marine air power as well as artillery from naval vessels. However, the five-week battle that Fr. Bernard found himself inserted into saw some of the fiercest combat of the Pacific war.

In an interview with "The Benedictine" (the BHS school paper that preceded The Bennet) when he returned to the abbey in 1945, Fr. Bernard explained, "At the base of Mt. Surabachi, an inactive volcano, the ground was so hot that soldiers laid boards on the ground to offer them some protection from the intense heat which affected everyone. Nobody thought we'd get out alive. There were dead bodies all over."

Yet, before he left Iwo Jima, Fr. Bernard was privileged to see a symbol of hope rising from the ashes of despair. He witnessed both famous raisings of the American flag by the Marines on Mt. Surabachi. Both occurred on **February 23, 1945** after the mountaintop was captured by the Marines. First, a smaller American flag was raised and then two hours later a larger flag was

raised because Joe Rosenthal, a photographer with the Associated Press was present.

The second iconic photo showing six Marines planting the flag was soon published in newspapers throughout the United States and it won the **1945 Pulitzer Prize** for Photography. It became the model for the Marine Corps Memorial dedicated in 1954 to honor all U.S. Marines who died in service since 1775 which is located near the gate to Arlington National Cemetery.

As a chaplain, Fr. Bernard was able to bring the power of religious faith to counter the horrors of the battlefield. In his 1945 BHS interview, Fr. Bernard explained, "Not once was religion forgotten even in the heaviest fighting. Many of our men died with a prayer on their lips. When pinned down by crossfire from the enemy, men lay in the open, wounded and dying, with a prayer streaming forth."

Fr. Bernard said that as the battle wore on, it got that some of the men didn't care for life anymore and many went insane or committed suicide. Many Iwo Jima veterans suffered from the emotional

stress the rest of their lives including Fr. Bernard. At a time when PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) was not understood or treated, he was granted a leave for rest and recuperation when the battle ended when a senior officer told him "Get yourself to a hospital." However, Fr. Bernard

asked for his accumulated leave

time and returned to Benedictine where he was promptly assigned to teach five classes. The former Army chaplain taught English at BHS at intervals for the next 20 years and then was assigned to a number of parishes. He died in 1999 at the age of 86.





A RECORD-BR



23rd Annual

Blue & White GALA

BEAKING NIGHT!

On March 8th, the Benedictine Community came together for an unforgettable evening at our 23rd Annual Blue & White Gala. With a spirit of determination and generosity, we set out to break last year's record—and thanks to you, ***we did just that!***

From the heartfelt stories shared by seniors Ryan Kehres and Chris Maloney to the incredible energy in the room, the night was a testament to the power of faith, tradition, and brotherhood. Together, we raised an astounding **\$755,920** — a **6% increase** over last year—ensuring that more young men will have the opportunity to receive a life-changing Benedictine education.



667
Supporters



550
Attendees



62
Sponsors &
Advertisers



50+
Faculty, Staff
& Spouses



120+
Auction &
Raffle Items

Total

\$755,920
Raised!

Thank You!

To our sponsors, donors, attendees, and volunteers—**thank you** for believing in our mission and investing in the future of our Bengals. Your impact reaches far beyond one night; it transforms lives.

BSBN: Empowering Students Through Sports Broadcasts

*Written by
Lynne Schroeder*

The **BSBN (Benedictine Sports Broadcast Network)** has emerged as a beacon of success within our community, offering students the opportunity to develop real-world, marketable skills through sports live-streaming.

The Benedictine High School Media Program under the leadership of Mr. Brian Devers '08 allows students to gain hands-on experience that directly aligns with our Fine Arts Pathway.

From the moment the first camera is set up to the final whistle, students involved with BSBN are fully immersed in the process of live sports production. They are responsible for operating cameras, managing the audio feed, editing footage, and handling all aspects of live-streaming. These roles are crucial in making each broadcast a success, and they provide students with the opportunity to master industry-standard technology while working in a collaborative, fast-paced environment.

According to Mr. Devers, "BSBN isn't just about running the cameras; it's about building a strong set of technical, creative, and soft skills that will set students apart in the job market. By participating in these broadcasts, students learn skills in project management, teamwork, problem-solving, and communication, all of which are highly valued by employers in the media and entertainment industries. Moreover, the students develop an understanding of how to navigate deadlines, adapt to unexpected challenges, and maintain a professional attitude in high-pressure situations."

"Through BSBN, I've developed play-by-play commentary skills that have expanded my vocabulary and ability to vividly describe the game. I've also gained experience in creating professional-grade graphics, from scorebugs to full-screen visuals that enhance the broadcast. BSBN has sparked my interest in pursuing a career in sports broadcasting by giving me early hands-on experience and access to top-tier tools. I encourage anyone to join — it's an incredible opportunity to learn how professional broadcasts come together while providing a valuable service for those watching at home. BSBN stands out from anything else I'm involved in; the level of commitment and resources available make it truly unique."

- Patrick Lloyd



Patrick Lloyd '27 and Luca Bucci '26





Through their involvement in the BSNB broadcasts, students are also gaining tangible experiences that they can showcase on resumes and in interviews. This aligns seamlessly with the broader goal of our Pathways program, which is to provide students with a comprehensive education that prepares them for future success in the workforce. Whether they aim to pursue careers in media production, sports journalism, broadcasting, or other related fields, the BSNB team provides them with the opportunity to gain a competitive edge.

Fine Arts: Media

	Freshmen	Sophomores	Juniors	Seniors
Courses	Indigo Skill & Interest Assessment	Film Photography Journalism Music Technology Painting Drawing Sculpture Intro to Digital Media Digital Media Production Morning Announcements Production	Film Photography Journalism Music Tech. Painting Animation 1 Animation 2 Graphic Design Drawing Sculpture Intro to Digital Media Digital Media Production Journalism & Mass Communication Morning Announcements Production	Film Photography Journalism Music Tech. Painting Animation 1 Animation 2 Graphic Design Drawing Sculpture Intro to Digital Media Digital Media Production Journalism & Mass Comm. Sports Lit. Morning Announcements Production
Clubs	Yearbook The Bennet Literary Magazine Photography Media Production Art			
Extracurriculars, Independent Study & Internships	Sporting Event Broadcasts	Sporting Event Broadcasts Social Media Marketing	Sporting Event Broadcasts Social Media Marketing Fox 8	Sporting Event Broadcasts Social Media Marketing Fox 8

Digital Portfolio



Will Lloyd '25

"I have developed the skills to show ads and manage the broadcast audio. I would not go into this as a career, but it is definitely a good experience. I encourage others to get involved, it shows you what it takes to put on a good broadcast. Compared to other things I have been in, I love that Mr. Devers allows us to partake in a broadcast because a lot of schools have adults doing the whole thing." – **Will Lloyd**

In addition to the technical skills gained, students also experience the rewards of contributing to the larger community. The sports live-streams are an integral part of connecting fans, families, and the wider community to local sports events. By sharing these moments live, students witness firsthand the impact their work has on bringing people together and elevating the sports experience.

"BSNB Livestream broadcasts do more than just showcase our games—they unite the entire Benedictine community. From alumni reminiscing about their playing days to parents cheering from a distance and future Bengals experiencing our tradition, these broadcasts keep everyone connected to our teams and school spirit." – John Carter, Athletic Director

This year, our partnership with Rock Entertainment Sports Network is expanding the reach of our student broadcasts across Northeast Ohio. After each game, our team submits the content to Rock, allowing our games to be re-aired on traditional network TV, bringing even greater visibility to our athletes and student broadcasters.

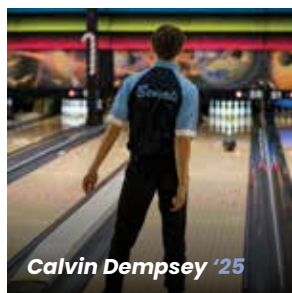
Through the combination of hands-on experience, professional skill-building, and community involvement, the BSNB is paving the way for students to become leaders in media production and other industries.

Winter Sports Recap

Wrestling

The Wrestling Team had an incredible season as a group with some impressive final State Placements! Seniors Antonio Hobbs (144) and Chris Maloney (175) finished their Benedictine Wrestling Careers as 5th place finishers in their respective weight classes. Both guys had incredible seasons and Benedictine wrestling careers. Antonio Hobbs earned his 100th win earlier this year and entered the state tournament a District Champion. Chris Maloney is the record holder for all-time career wins in Benedictine History with over 150. He also entered states as a District Champion.

The Bengals boasted many playoff successes this season. Junior Devion Coffin (126) went 2-2 in the State Tournament and was 2nd overall in our District along with earning a Sectional Championship. Junior Shepard Charlton (285) and senior Tristan Wilson (165) were 6th place finishers at Districts and alternates for States. Senior Jamere Church (215), Sophomore Jayzahn Jones (132), and sophomore Elijah Day (138) were District Qualifiers. Senior Dylan Irelan (190) and sophomore Gabe Dolan (150) competed for the Bengals in the postseason, helping them to a 2nd place Sectional Finish. The Bengals were 4th in the Kenston District Tournament and delivered an incredibly memorable wrestling season.



Calvin Dempsey '25

Bowling

The Bowling Team was led by Senior Calvin Dempsey who averaged 165 on the year and had a 224 game in the Sectional Tournament. He had 4479 pins on the season. Junior Nate Queener

performed 2nd best on the squad, with 4072 pins. Seniors Caleb Bartlett had 3986 pins and Ethan Fliegel totaled 2866 pins.

Hockey

The Hockey Team played their typical tough schedule this year, and while finishing with more losses than wins, had memorable moments including a 4-2 win over eventual state-semifinalist Mentor in Kent, OH. The Bengals beat Olmsted Falls 3-1 after earning 2 byes in the OHSAA Playoffs and lost to state runner-up St. Ignatius in the next round.



From left:
Jack Kehres '22,
Ryan Kehres '25,
Maria Kehres,
Coach Bob Kehres '91

Ryan Kehres was 3rd team all-state and became the all time leader in points (200) with 101 assists and 99 goals in his Benedictine career. Defensemen Lex Herr earned All-State Honorable Mention, finishing an outstanding Benedictine Hockey career. Coach Bob Kehres was also recognized with the OHSAA Sportsmanship, Ethics & Integrity Award.



Bryce Meitin '25

Basketball

The Basketball Team ended their season with a 10-13 record and lost in the playoffs 51-61 to Bay. Senior Bryce Meitin led the team with 239 points on the season. Noah Whisler had

221 and earned a News-Herald Player of the Week honor. Damone Darmond was 3rd in points, 158, and had plenty of rebounds and blocks.

Swimming

The Swimming Team continues to grow with freshmen Josiah Nevells, Ethan Roney, and Mikhail Ceasor joining Caleb Gianzero, Jacob Bales, and Joshua Vogley. The Bengals continue to improve their times and placements after restarting the program last year.

Welcome to the Benedictine Brotherhood, Class of 2029!



We were thrilled to celebrate our new students with our annual Knock Box Day, where our students hand-delivered Benedictine SWAG to welcome them into our community.

The excitement continued at Invite Back Night, where students and their families gathered for a night of fun, fellowship, and connection with faculty, coaches, and staff.

These moments are just the beginning of the journey at Benedictine, and we can't wait to see the impact you will make as part of our rich tradition.

Welcome home!

Chris Maloney and Ryan Kehres:

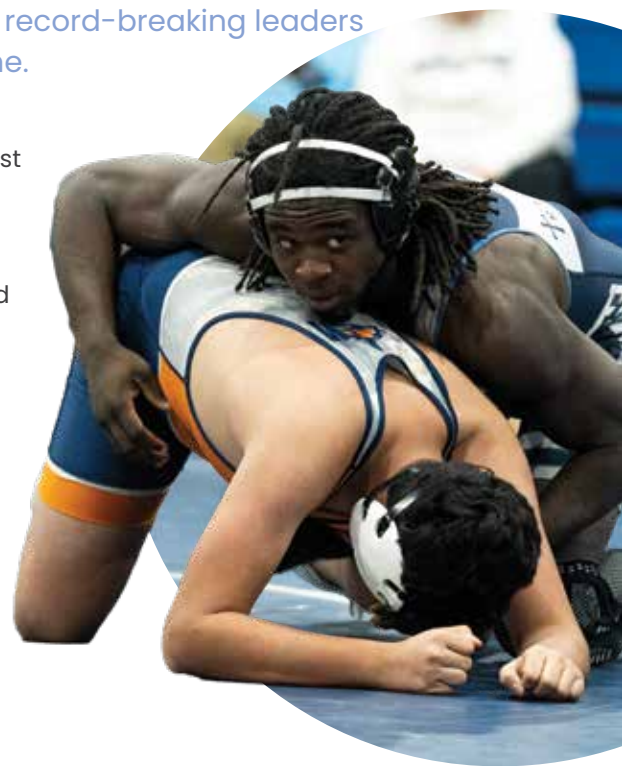
Defining Excellence in Benedictine Athletics

Written by
Lynne Schroeder

Two standout seniors, **Chris Maloney** and **Ryan Kehres**, have left an undeniable mark on Benedictine athletics, not just as multi-sport competitors but as record-breaking leaders whose achievements will inspire future Bengals for years to come.

Chris Maloney has dominated across football, wrestling, and track. Last November, he rewrote the record books, rushing for an astonishing 386 yards in a single game—breaking the previous record of 337 yards held by Raymond Williams. He powered the Bengals to a 10-2 season, racking up 1,922 rushing yards and 25 touchdowns on 184 carries. On the wrestling mat, Chris continued to etch his name into history, securing his 139th career victory on Senior Night, surpassing Dan Carcelli '91 as the school's all-time wins leader. Now, after beating Izaiah Siler from Madison at Districts, Chris has set his sights on the state tournament, poised for yet another major accomplishment. As a top sprinter, Chris will also compete for a state title in track this spring. Whether on the field, the mat, or the track, Chris thrives under pressure—his dedication and talent exemplify what it means to be a Man of Benedictine.

"My experience has taught me to overcome adversity and connect with people from various backgrounds. My advice is take grades seriously, be a student first, and practice discipline." – Chris



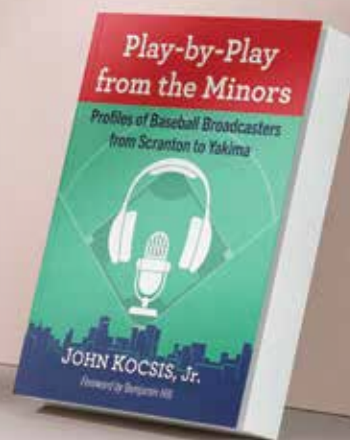
Ryan Kehres has been equally impressive, excelling in soccer and hockey while emerging as a true leader. A four-year letterman in both sports and a two-time captain, Ryan shattered Benedictine's all-time points record in hockey this January, amassing an incredible 189 career points and surpassing Matt Carson '18. His skill, leadership, and relentless drive on the ice have cemented his legacy as one of the program's all-time greats. Beyond athletics, Ryan embodies the well-rounded Benedictine student: serving as Vice President of Student Council, an NHS member, a Bennet editor, and an active participant in multiple clubs.

Together, Chris and Ryan define the spirit of Benedictine athletics—breaking records, leading with character, and setting new standards for excellence. As they prepare for the next chapter, their impact will continue to inspire the next generation of Bengals to dream bigger, work harder, and leave their own legacy.

"My favorite sport is hockey. I have been playing hockey since I was three years old, and have loved it ever since. I love the team camaraderie and the brotherhood that comes along with the sport. I enjoy the fact that you can always get better and you can never have the perfect game, it makes me disciplined and keeps me humble. Lastly, the life lessons along the way have shaped me into the person I am today." – Ryan

Book Review of "Play-by-Play"

by Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB '71



It is something of an honor for a former English teacher to read a book published by a former student. This fall I found a good incentive to go to the naval base fitness center several times a week to pedal away on the stationary bike.



John Kocsis and his friend Madison Stoll pose before the Browns game at the Jacksonville Jaguars Stadium in Florida on September 15, 2024.

Similar to the stationary bike at the abbey, this bike machine was constructed in a way that allows a book to be opened against the data screen. So, I took a copy of **"Play-by-Play from the Minors: Profiles of Baseball Broadcasters from Scranton to Yakima"** by BHS alumnus **John Kocsis '12** who is himself the broadcaster and Media Relations Manager for the Columbia (South Carolina) Firelies, the Single A affiliate of the Kansas City Royals.

The book, originally published in 2023 by McFarland and Company, Inc., is available on-line through Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and other distributors. John began researching and writing the book in September of 2020. Then he learned the technical stages and challenges of getting a book published professionally. The first draft was finished in a year but then it took about six months to submit proposals to agents and publishers and to wait for a positive response. Once he chose McFarland, they asked him to add several more chapters which he wrote in 2022. Next the book went through a number of editing and copyright stages until publication in 2023. Much of this happened while John was working full-time for the Firelies during the baseball season.

The book consists of an overview of the careers of 13 minor league baseball announcers including John himself. Research through personal interviews covers each announcer's biography, career steps, and answers to questions such as "Who were your role models in baseball broadcasting?" "Who were the most talented player prospects you saw during their development?" "What was your most memorable team bus trip?" and "Given the chance, which event in Major League Baseball history would you like to have called at the microphone?" This approach allows the reader to hear about a wide range of views and experiences.

While progressing through the book, you encounter minor league franchises

with original names such as the Hickory Crawdads, Lansing Lugnuts, Montgomery Biscuits, Asheville Tourists, Jacksonville Jumbo Shrimp, London Rippers, New Orleans Baby Cakes, and, my favorite, the Albuquerque Isotopes. You also hear about hidden eateries on the road and their famous dishes such as the Diamond Deli in Akron and its famous corned beef sandwiches and friendly owner which is a favorite stop for former minor league announcer Robert Ford, now the lead voice of the major league Houston Astros.

I also was fascinated with the creativity and fun associated with the various fan promotions devised by team marketing directors. Some are rather normal such as Mariachi Night in cities with large Latino populations, while others are a bit off-the-wall such as the Cowboy Monkey Rodeo (monkeys riding on dogs), Awful Night (awful statistics are posted on the scoreboard and awful prizes are given out), Diamond Nite (fans are allowed to dig in the infield after the game looking for buried diamonds), or even Billboard Night where a fan gets strapped to an outfield billboard and all the fans get a prize if he catches a homerun ball.

Aside from the anecdotes of minor league baseball culture, there is also a lot of genuine baseball lore to satisfy the true baseball fan. A number of the featured broadcasters reveal that the greatest moment to have been able to announce was Jackie Robinson's debut with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947 breaking the color barrier. Others cited the famous 1960 walk-off homerun by the Pittsburgh Pirates' Bill Mazeroski in the final game of the World Series.

As a former fan still soured by the loss of Cleveland's century baseball identity, John's book was able to rekindle my interest in the Grand Old Game and also to lose some needed pounds on the bike.

Class of 1954



Cy Buynak, who spent 45 years as the clubhouse manager for the Indians and visiting teams at Municipal Stadium and Progressive Field, was inducted into the team's

Distinguished Hall of Fame along with Johnny Goryl on Aug. 3. From 1962–93, Buynak was head of the Indians clubhouse. From 1994 through 2006, he ran the visitor's clubhouse at Progressive Field.

Class of 1970

Lenny Toth '70 reached a couple of milestones in 2024. In December, Lenny served 30 years as Extraordinary Eucharistic Minister and Sacristan at Marymount Hospital in Garfield Hts. "Serving the Lord by bringing Eucharistic Jesus to patients who need Him has been a real blessing." AND ... this past 2024 softball season was Lenny's 50th consecutive season of playing competitive adult softball. Player-manager of his own team, Tonelli's Softball, Toth played 25 years in west suburban Mens' league and then 20 years Coed with his daughters and 12 overlapping seasons in a Parma Senior softball league.

Class of 1979

Ed and Vanessa Sanders celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary on November 28th, marking 43 years together since meeting through MIT graduate students. Vanessa's Cambridge family embraced Ed during his freshman year, and their journey has included two wonderful daughters, Eleni (31) and Carol Ann (33), living across the U.S., extensive travel, and careers spanning technology startups, innovation at Procter & Gamble, education, and more.

Class of 1988/1989



Benedictine alumni **Anthony Russo '88** and **Joe Russo '89** were honored outside the iconic TCL Chinese Theatre in Hollywood! Best known for directing some of the

biggest Marvel blockbusters, the Russo brothers' journey started right here in Cleveland, where they graduated from Benedictine High School and attended Case Western Reserve for graduate studies.

Class of 1992



BHS '92 annual get together (l to r); **Mike Mylen, Dominic Powall, Mike Mihalek, Tony Matijevic, Sean Fontanella, Pat Judy, Rich Kacvinsky.**

The photo was taken over the Christmas holiday (December 2024) at Tavern Six in Kirtland, Ohio. It's been an annual get together since 1995.

Class of 2006

Stephen Furlow is at Case Western Reserve University as an associate director for community engagement and partnership at the Office of Multicultural Affairs. He is also advisor for the Black Student Union, a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., and part of the CWRU Spirit Committee and Bicentennial Subcommittee.



Class of 2007



Classmates **Aaron Horn** and **Kevin McKinley** take a moment to pose for a picture post the University of Minnesota and The Ohio State University women's basketball game. Aaron is an assistant coach for the Gophers, and Kevin resides in Columbus.

Class of 2012

Michael Kocsis '12 married **Sara Elharoun** on 10/12/24.



Class of 2013



The Joyce family recently celebrated two weddings for alum twin brothers **Jack** and **Greg**.

Class of 2017



Glenn Parker III graduated with a Master's Degree in Urban Studies from Cleveland State University (CSU). He was also appointed to Cleveland's Civilian Police Review Board (CPRB) by the City Council for a full term beginning in August 9, 2024, through August 8, 2028.

Class of 2018

John Dosen married **Sara Bockelman** on Saturday, October 19, 2024 at St. Stephen's Church in Cleveland. Witnessing their vows were Frs. Bede Kotlinski, OSB, Finbar Ramsak, OSB, Louis Carey, OSB and Justin Dyrwal, OSB. Fr. Kenneth Katricak, OSB was also in attendance. John and Sara are living in Westerville, Ohio and John is working as an equity research analyst. They felt extremely blessed to have such a strong Benedictine presence at their wedding.



Class of 2019



Nick Demchuk '19 graduated in 5 years from Gannon University with 3 degrees, honors in Biology and an MBA. Recently, Nick was accepted into the University of Louisville Dental School.

At Benedictine, in addition to

excelling academically, Nick was the quarterback on the football team having success as a 1st team all conference and all-district performer for two years along with being the recipient of the Joe Rufus Spirit Award.

Class of 2020

Nick Pietrzycki '20 graduated from Arizona State University in May 2024. After completing an internship with the Cincinnati Cyclones in media relations and game day color commentator, he joined Houston Christian University as Play-by-Play Broadcaster/Assistant Director of Athletic Compliance.



Stephen Zachlin '20 graduated from the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana in June of 2024 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics and Applied Mathematics. He now works as a financial analyst for MarshBerry Investment Bank in Woodmere, Ohio.

Coach 2000-2015



Brian Sliwinski, former Benedictine baseball coach (2000-2015) was honored with the Dennis Woods Lifetime

Achievement Award presented by the Northeast Ohio Baseball Coaches Association (NEOBICA) at Canal Park on June 24, 2024. Sliwinski's total of 230 wins at Benedictine places him second behind the legendary Augie Bossu's win total of 681. Bossu was the Bengals head baseball coach from 1954 to 1994. Brian is the son of BHS alum Roger Sliwinski '60.

Benedictine's Pro Life Club Attends March for Life in D.C.

Benedictine High School's Pro Life Club, led by **Brother Gregory**, proudly represented our community at the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C.



Students joined tens of thousands from across the country to stand in defense of the unborn, demonstrating their commitment to the dignity of all human life. Students making the trip were: Charlie Koppitch '25, Aidan Spear '25, Christopher Fallon '25, Athanasius Fischer '25, Cyprian Fischer '27, Paul Karboski '26, Dominic Heskamp '28, David O'Reilly '28, and Devin Kimbrell '28. The experience was both inspiring and unifying, reinforcing the Benedictine values of faith, service, and justice. Thank you to Brother Gregory and all who participated in this powerful witness to life!

Students from our entrepreneurship club attended the Veale Foundation thinkBig! Challenge & Summit.



Teams worked together with items and scenarios provided to make a product. Here they are pictured with

keynote speaker and entrepreneur Johnny Cupcakes.

In Memoriam

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



Craig Baranovic, 72, of the Class of 1970, passed away on Valentine's Day, February 14, 2025. He is survived by Joanne, his wife of 51 years, and children Ben, Rachel, and Christopher. During his time at BHS, he was involved with publications

and provided music for retreats. Craig obtained his Masters of Information Technology from Western Governors University and worked there as a Program Mentor in Cyber Security. He was an adjunct faculty lecturer in Electronic Engineering Technology at Cuyahoga Community College and served on the Benedictine High School Board of Trustees.

Charles Janki, Jr., 84, of the Class of 1958, passed away on February 18, 2025. He is survived by Margaret, his wife of 61 years, and three children, eight grandchildren, and one great-grandson. After graduating from John Carroll University, Charles worked for 30 years as an electrical engineer for Reliance Electric before he founded EU Compliance Services of which he served as president for 26 years. He lived in Chesterland, Ohio for 45 years and was an active parishioner and Eucharistic minister at St. Anselm's Church where his funeral Mass was celebrated.



Douglas Kempinski, 79, of the Class of 1964, passed away on October 30, 2024. As a freshman, he earned an athletic scholarship as Equipment Manager for the football team, serving as Head Manager from sophomore year through graduation.

He took great pride in the team's appearance on game days. Doug served in the Army in Korea and Kentucky, where he earned his first FAA air traffic controller license. His career spanned roles at Toledo Tower, Chicago O'Hare, Sandia National Laboratories, and Johns Manville, where he retired as Senior Corporate Engineer with 12 patents. He and his wife, Karen, were married for 57 years.



John Kness, 74, of the Class of 1969, died on December 29, 2024. During his years at BHS, John played basketball and had a key role in the upset of East Tech in a regular season game in 1969 at a time when East Tech was making appearances in the state tournament.

Later in life, John was known and admired by the Pro-Life community in Cleveland for the 25 years he devoted to sidewalk prayer and counseling on behalf of the unborn and women with crisis pregnancies. His funeral Mass was celebrated at Mary, Queen of Peace Church in Cleveland.

Dr. Richard Kollarits, 81, of the Class of 1961, died November 24, 2024. He was a graduate of St. Margaret of Hungary Elementary School (1957), John Carroll University (1966-68), Benedictine High School (1961), John Carroll University (1966-68), United States Army (1970), and Drexel University (1976). He was a physicist and researcher who worked at Bell Labs in Holmdel, NJ. He was a member of St. Mary's Parish in Colts Neck, New Jersey. His older brother Dr. Francis Kollarits (deceased) graduated from BHS in 1957 and also became a research physicist.

Catherine Lozick, 79, friend to Benedictine, passed away on January 16, 2025. She was daughter of the late Fred and Alice Lennon and mother of Kelly, Timothy, and Thomas. She was very supportive of the work of Benedictine High School and provided generous scholarship assistance to students through the Lozick Family Foundation.





Allen John Meyer, 94, of the Class of 1950, passed away on January 18, 2025. He attended John Carroll University before joining the United States Air Force during the Korean War as a First Class Airman. Allen was honored with multiple service medals including the Korean Service

Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, and the Korean Presidential Unit Citation Medal. After his military service he worked as a sales representative for Gerber Baby Products and for the Maple Heights Transit system. He was preceded in death by his first wife of 34 years, Anna and his second wife, Mary. He is survived by his six children, 16 grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren



Charles Otto, 88, of the Class of 1955, passed away January 1, 2025. After BHS, Charles graduated from John Carroll University with majors in math and history while participating in ROTC. Charles served in the U.S. army and was honorably discharged as 1st Lieutenant.

He then served in the Ohio Army Reserves for eight years. He taught math at Parma Senior High and later worked for Connecticut General Insurance Company, Pacific Mutual, and finally with the Cleveland Agency of New England Life. Charles and his wife Audrey were married 67 years and had four children. He served Mass for years at St. Hilary Catholic Church in Fairlawn, Ohio.



Gary Pillar, 71, of the Class of 1971, passed away on December 21, 2024. As a student athlete at BHS, Gary played football and baseball for the Bengals. He graduated from Ohio University and played baseball for the Bobcats. He then taught math and coached football at BHS and Holy

Name High School. After three years working as a stockbroker, he returned to education and applied his skills in development and advancement. He spent a decade directing the Development Office at BHS and then moved to Case Western Reserve University where he worked for the next 19 years. During this time he served as an Adjunct Professor in the Weatherhead School of Management and as Senior Director of National Development and Assistant Athletic Director. He was instrumental in the construction of a new baseball stadium at Case dedicated to BHS and CWRU alumnus Nobby Lewandowski '55 where BHS has played home varsity baseball games. In June of 2022, Pillar Plaza was dedicated at the ballpark in his honor. His funeral Mass was celebrated at Conversion of St. Paul's Shrine in downtown Cleveland.



Richard Sabol, 75, of the Class of 1967, passed away on January 18, 2025. He was the loving father of Debra, Denise, and Richard. Rich was a competitive and talented athlete who especially loved playing baseball with his twin brother, Rob '67. He was a U.S. Army veteran who

served honorably in the Vietnam War. Rich built a successful telecommunications business, driven by his meticulous work ethic and pursuit of perfection. His funeral Mass was celebrated at Saint Francis Xavier Church in Medina.

RECENTLY DECEASED

The following members of our Benedictine Community have gone on to Eternal Rest between October 16, 2024 and February 28, 2025. May they rest in peace.

Class Of	Name	Deceased
1943	George Sobey	10/21/2024
1945	John Plucinsky	11/15/2024
1950	Allen Meyer	1/18/2025
1951	John Fogarty	12/30/2024
1952	Gerard Notarberardino	2/24/2025
1953	Elmer Nemeth	11/13/2024
1955	Charles Otto	1/8/2025
1956	Raymond Hudiak	11/3/2024
1956	Paul Hlavacs	11/19/2024
1958	Thomas Ciehanski	1/12/2025
1958	Charles Janki	2/18/2025
1960	Paul Panehal	11/3/2024
1960	Edward Holicky	11/9/2024
1961	Richard Kollarits	11/24/2024
1964	Douglas Kempksi	10/30/2024
1967	Richard Sabol	1/18/2025
1968	Fred Foreman	10/15/2024
1969	John Kness	12/27/2024
1970	Craig Baranovic	2/14/2025
1971	Gary Pillar	12/21/2024
1972	Stanislaus Kodrin	10/31/2024
1975	John Parey	10/21/2024
1979	Edward Sanders	2/7/2025
1982	Brian Cassidy	2/15/2025
BHS friend	Robert Chase	11/10/2024
BHS friend	Frank DiGiacomantonio	12/17/2024
BHS friend	Catherine Lozick	1/16/2025
BHS friend	Stanley Peters	12/13/2024

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

SAVE THE DATE

REUNION WEEKEND

2025

Celebrating Classes Ending in '0 and '5

JUNE

13

Mr. Benedictine Reception
Stag Night

14

Halls Of Excellence Induction
Class Planned Activities

NEW

Halls Of Excellence Induction

HALL OF FAME



Jerome Baker '15



Cameron Wright '10



Terry Modzelewski '78

HALL OF DISTINCTION



James Shea '94



Dr. John Gyekenyesi '57

HALL OF HONORS



Dr. Frank Bossu '67



Scan the QR code or visit
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5 YEAR REUNION

2020

10 YEAR REUNION

2015

15 YEAR REUNION

2010

20 YEAR REUNION

2005

25 YEAR REUNION

2000

30 YEAR REUNION

1995

35 YEAR REUNION

1990

40 YEAR REUNION

1985

45 YEAR REUNION

1980

50 YEAR
GOLDEN REUNION

1975

55 YEAR REUNION

1970

60 YEAR REUNION

1965

65 YEAR REUNION

1960

70 YEAR REUNION

1955

Dear Alumni & Friends,

I am often quoted saying that the Blue & White Gala is my favorite night of the year. There's certainly a number of reasons why I believe this to be true such as the entertainment that our students showcase, the delicious meal, the significant support of monies raised in one evening earmarked towards scholarships & tuition assistance, etc. But, for me, the single most-important reason why the night is so special is because we are using this public platform to celebrate our mission and tell our story with many of our closest alumni and friends, as well as new philanthropists who believe in Catholic education.

We value the overwhelming participation on this night and are beyond grateful for all who made it a record-breaking year in both overall attendance and monies raised!

We know that the Blue & White Gala and Annual Fund provide opportunities for more young men to experience the Benedictine education today. As we approach nearly 100 years of Benedictine High School's rich tradition of academic excellence, faith, and community, we are reminded of the enduring impact that this institution has had on countless lives. It is with great pride that we reflect on the legacy of those who came before us – the students, teachers, and friends who have contributed to the growth and success of our beloved school. As we look to the future, we invite you to consider how you can be part of ensuring that Benedictine's mission continues to thrive for the **generations** to come.

Planned giving offers a unique opportunity to make a significant and lasting contribution to Benedictine High School. By designating a gift through your will, trust, or other planned giving vehicles, you can create a lasting impact while ensuring the values and traditions cherished at Benedictine are passed on to students of the future.

Your planned gift not only honors the legacy of the school, but it also reflects your personal commitment to the continued success of an institution that helped shape your life or someone close to you.

While we celebrate today's students, let's also continue to think of the students of the future. If you are interested in discussing planned giving opportunities or learning of different options to provide legacy support, please contact me at lorber@cbhs.edu or 216-421-2080 ext. 246.

On behalf of our Benedictine Community, I express my deep appreciation for your continuous support aiding in the development of our **current** students, as well as our **future** Men of Benedictine.

Yours in St. Benedict,

Chi L '04

Mr. Chris Lorber '04
Chief Operating Officer



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

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ELEVATE YOUR GAME THIS SUMMER

Benedictine High School Football, Soccer, and Wrestling Camps
are now open for registration!

Join us for intensive drills, strategy sessions, and teamwork activities that will help develop your skills and boost your confidence on the field while making new friends. Scan the QR or visit the website below. For questions about registration, please contact mclaughlin@cbhs.edu

www.cbhs.edu/camps

