

ORA ET LABORA



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

Winter 2023

MEN OF BENEDICTINE: **Guided by the Spirituality of Monastic Presence**

(See story Page 6)



ABBOT GARY'S ADVENT REFLECTION



CHRISTMAS EVE MASS

We invite you to celebrate the birth of Christ with us at Christmas Eve Mass in the Abbey Chapel December 24th at 8:00 p.m.



The word Advent comes from the Latin “adventus,” meaning “coming, approaching, arriving.” Advent is a joyous time of year as we prepare in anticipation for the birth of our lord and savior Jesus Christ.

Advent is a uniquely hopeful season in the Church. The Advent wreath is a symbol with purpose in lighting the way to Jesus Christ, the true Light of the World.

The circular wreath represents God’s infinite and everlasting love for us while the four candles represent Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace. Each week we light candles to remove the darkness and prepare for new beginnings.



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

HOPE - The impending birth of Jesus represents Hope because our faith in God is strengthened and our relationships with others renewed through the forgiveness of sin and promise of eternal life.

LOVE - Christmas is a season to give and receive love. Scripture teaches, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16) Jesus is the ultimate gift of God’s love for us. Jesus calls us to share His spirit of love born on Christmas Day with others throughout our life.

JOY - The star and the angels bring us Joy as we reflect on the beauty of Christ’s birth. For each one of us the joy from Christmas comes in different ways. It may be seeing the angel on the tree, praying at the nativity scene, or singing “Joy to the World” at Mass.

PEACE - When the world is in turmoil or in a state of change our lives and those of our families can be affected, but the message of Christmas is timeless and we are reminded that the Prince of Peace is with us always.

As we celebrate the birth of the baby Jesus, we are reminded that even in our darkest days Jesus represents Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace for all of us. It is my prayers and wishes on behalf of the Benedictine Community that you truly appreciate the presence of Jesus and his love in your lives.

Peace,

Abbot Gary, OSB '74

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Benedictine Family and Friends,

The holidays are always a special time in our lives, especially the Christmas season. It is the perfect time to reflect on the year and think about what we are thankful for, our personal accomplishments, and most importantly, others. For me, Christmas is extra special because it was my mother's favorite holiday. Mom would bake, cook and spoil my brothers and me and then each of our children with more gifts than could fit under the tree. She was proud of her well-earned nickname "Santa Grandma." Mom loved seeing joy on the faces of her children and grandchildren, and I think it was without a doubt her favorite time of the year.

This holiday season is extra special to me because I find myself reflecting on one crazy year that included being an empty nester with both my daughters away in college, a retirement from 30 years in technology, a short three month summer of fishing, golfing and caring for my property, followed by a whirlwind of an experience becoming the president of my alma mater, Benedictine High School. It is amazing how life works and how God and our faith intervene as part of His master plan. I know in my heart that Mom was sitting right next to God this summer whispering in his ear that I had more to do with my life. I am 100% convinced that she put me back in the place where my life's journey truly began. A place so special to me and to her that it was a forgone conclusion and what seemed like 100 interviews (LOL) I had were a mere formality.

I am grateful for a lot of things in my life, starting with my wife and daughters. My family and friends are also right there at the top. Their support is unwavering and such a motivating force that it is almost hard to imagine where I would be without them. But as I reflect on my journey back to Benedictine High School, Mom, you are the one I am most grateful for.

There are so many things I want to share with the Benedictine Community after six months on the job, but I do not have enough ink in my pen. So let me be brief and as concise as possible, as I know Mr. Francioli will be grading this piece. First, I would say we have the most amazing teachers and staff anywhere and I would put them, up against anyone. This place is oozing with talent, both new and seasoned (notice I didn't say old). Our teachers, monks, counselors, and extended staff are so committed to their mission that it is hard to go home without a smile on your face. They inspire me every day, especially our school therapy dog Miss Benne :)

Our students are amazing young men who are transforming every day into proud Men of Benedictine. It is something to see the growth of our freshmen from day 1 to today, the maturation of the upperclassmen as they realize the days in the school continue to count down. Yes, we can all improve and that is what life is all about, getting better the next day and learning from our mistakes. These kids are special, they come from different backgrounds, but live in harmony and brotherhood in these halls each day. Academically, athletically, and spiritually, we are getting better each and every day.



Mr. Dave Schroeder '90

Our campus is rocking with our new Atrium entrance, Rufus Courtyard and paved parking lot. The improvements inside will continue with a focus on beautification of our campus and facilities. We are bringing back a Bengal Spirit store so alumni and students can purchase gear onsite. We have a brand new gaming room, and the faculty lounge is getting a makeover for the first time since the 1980s (it was built in '85). Next up we will re-imagine the business office, making it more welcoming and a first-class experience for our students and families. We will modernize our technology platforms, integrate our student records and improve overall business acumen in our operations. Looking forward, we will begin work on scoping our centennial campaign to celebrate the school's 100-year anniversary in 2027. This will be the most aggressive and exciting campaign in our history and re-establish Benedictine as the rightful owner of the designation "Home of Champions." Stay tuned, we are just getting started!

I will close with a sincere thank you and Merry Christmas to all Benedictine students, alumni and friends. It is with great pride and it is my honor to be back home and serving you.

Dave Schroeder '90



Daniel Schroeder '87, David Schroeder '90, Robert Schroeder '94

Saint Andrew Abbey Annual Benefit



On Saturday, September 16th, St. Andrew Abbey celebrated 101 years of Benedictine Monks in Cleveland. After Mass at the Church of the Assumption, everyone gathered at St. Michael's Woodside, dined together, and commemorated the deep roots that the monks had planted when they arrived in 1922.





The honoree of the night was Abbot Gary Hoover, OSB '74, for his ordination into the priesthood 40 years ago. Abbot Gary is well known to the Men of Benedictine. He spent many years as the school chaplain and was on the sidelines for many who passed through the halls of the Home of Champions. For winning teams and for losing teams, Abbot Gary was there as someone who believed in the Men of Benedictine. His presence was a reminder that they should put their faith in God and that God's faith and love was present for them. In addition to Abbot's support of Benedictine High School he is appreciated as a steady spiritual advisor to the monks at St. Andrew Abbey. He was named prior of the abbey in 2008 and was elected as the 7th abbot in 2014.

Abbot Gary has led many retreats over the years and his Kairos and Mountain of God retreats have had a deep impact. Many know that interactions with Abbot can be lighthearted but also confrontational. He doesn't shy away from the deeper questions and the tougher conversations. His phrase, "Go with God and fight with heart" is well known and is often said. Fr. Bob Stec brought up that very phrase when speaking about Abbot Gary as a colleague at St. Ambrose Church and now at St. Colette's Church. Fr. Michael spoke about Abbot Gary the spiritual leader. He reminded those gathered how the election of Abbot is something not done often and is deeply significant. President Dave Schroeder '90 spoke about the impact Abbot Gary had on him as a student and athlete at Benedictine and as someone who married him and his wife, Kathy.

Abbot Gary spoke from the heart and left the podium to a standing ovation. The monks of St. Andrew Abbey ended the night by singing the Benedictine Ultima, a traditional Latin hymn monks sing at interments to marry for a happy death.

Thank you to all who support St. Andrew Abbey!

Monastic Presence Today at BHS

Chapter 59 of the 6th century “Rule of Saint Benedict” talks about parents who would bring their sons to live in a monastery in exchange for an offering of property, or, if they were poor, without an offering. Some of these boys would stay when they came of age and become monks. Other boys would return to their families having received an education in body, mind, and spirit.

Although Benedictine monks see the witness of community life and liturgy as their primary work in the Church, there have been schools staffed by Benedictine monks for centuries. Since the founding of Benedictine High School in Cleveland in 1927, there have always been monks from Saint Andrew Abbey on the faculty. It is one of our unique attributes that is used by the admissions office when introducing BHS to prospective students.

Nowadays having religious priests, monks, brothers, or nuns on the faculty of a Catholic school is very rare. **In 1960, over 75%** of the teachers in Catholic schools in the United States were religious men or women.

Today, they account for less than 2% of the faculty in Catholic schools. The drastic change is the result of smaller families, a more secular society, more career opportunities, and, sadly, a lack of zeal in living the Catholic faith among younger generations.

On page 8 is a story about seven young Benedictine monks who were ordained on the same day back in 1942 and four of them were recent BHS alumni. All seven joined the BHS faculty. By 1960, it was common for there to be 30 monks and fewer than 10 lay teachers on the yearly school staff. By 1990 that ratio would be reversed.

However, Benedictine High School has been blessed in the present day to still have a vibrant monastic presence that helps maintain a unique Catholic influence in the “Home of Champions.” It is a religious presence unmatched in the other Catholic high schools in the Diocese of Cleveland.



Father Bede enjoys his Latin II class.



Father Michael performs Ash Wednesday blessing.



Father Anselm leads the soccer team in prayer.



Father Finbar leading Theology class.

Although Saint Andrew Abbey currently has 21 monks, as compared to 80 monks in 1960, in the course of a typical school day, there is a dedicated group of men in black religious habits who cross through the Rufus Courtyard from the abbey to work in the high school.

ABBOT GARY HOOVER, OSB '74 serves as the chancellor and participates in weekly meetings with the school administration and with a special group called Office of Mission Integration that discusses ways to strengthen the school's Catholic identity and mission. Abbot Gary also continues to personally lead Kairos retreats for students and to celebrate Mass periodically for the student body. The abbot is also a member of the BHS Board of Trustees.

FR. ANSELM ZUPKA, OSB '58 has been walking over to the school from the abbey to teach since the mid-1960s, longer than any monk in the history of Benedictine High School. Fr. Anselm, at age 83, continues to teach the German language classes, celebrates a weekly Mass, and organizes popular field trips with the German Club.

FR. MICHAEL BRUNOVSKY, OSB, although not a BHS alumnus, continues to serve BHS in many ways since joining the faculty full time after his ordination in 1993. He remains active in the classroom teaching AP European and U.S. History and a popular elective course in calligraphy. Fr. Michael directs the annual Bike Retreats and Living with Benedict retreat experience. He works with the Pro-Life Club and serves on the Catholic Identity Council and the Board of Trustees.

FR. BEDE KOTLINSKI, OSB, joined the abbey from Columbus, Ohio and for the last three decades has anchored the Classical Language department at Benedictine. Fr. Bede also works with the student altar servers and is moderator of the Latin Club.

FR. FINBAR RAMSAK, OSB, an alumnus of St. Ignatius High School, is now in his 13th year teaching freshman theology at Benedictine. He also serves on the BHS Board of Trustees.

FR. THOMAS SANDERS, OSB, an alumnus from Brookside High School in Sheffield Lake, became the full time campus minister at Benedictine High School this year. In this capacity he regularly meets with a student advisory committee planning religious activities and liturgies for the student body. Fr. Thomas also organizes an annual retreat for the faculty and staff. He also offers organ lessons to interested students and promotes vocation discernment for monastic life.

BRO. GREGORY COYNE, OSB, 29, who only joined the monastic community three years ago, has already become involved with the students at Benedictine through his work assisting with retreats, the Pro-Life Club, and vocations.

Finally, though not officially part of the high school staff, **Brothers Gabriel Balazovic, OSB and Simon Corrigan, OSB** impact the school community by their involvement in campus security and hospitality.

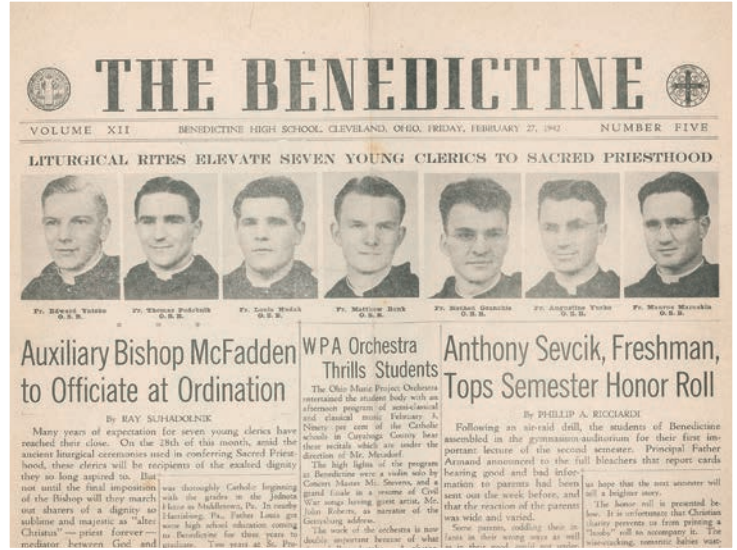
Although the number of black robes on campus is smaller than it was six decades ago, the Home of Champions is blessed by real Benedictine monks who work and pray with our students on a daily basis.



Father Thomas moderating Organ Club.

A Record Seven New Priests were Ordained for the Abbey in 1942

The February 27, 1942 issue of the BHS student newspaper, **The Benedictine** (later *The Bennet*), featured a banner headline that read “Liturgical Rites Elevate Seven Young Clerics to Sacred Priesthood.” Below that headline were the pictures of the seven new Benedictine priests who were being ordained that very day by Cleveland **Auxiliary Bishop James McFadden**. History was made because it was the largest number of monks of the abbey ever ordained on the same day. Four times in the 100 year history of the abbey three monks were ordained on the same day.



Of the seven newly-ordained in 1942, four were alumni of BHS: **Fr. Thomas (John) Podobnik, OSB '31** (first graduation class); **Fr. Louis (Andrew) Hudak, OSB '32**; **Fr. Maurus (John) Maruskin, OSB '32** and **Fr. Matthew (Anthony) Bonk, OSB '33**; **Fr. Edward (Joseph) Yatsko, OSB** and **Fr. Augustine (George) Yurko, OSB** were graduates of Chaney High School in Youngstown, while **Fr. Method (Stephen) Granchie, OSB** attended South High in Youngstown.

The first of the “Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit” (at they were affectionately called in the abbey) to die was **Fr. Method** who died on November 27, 1963. He was only 49 years old. The last of the seven to pass away was **Fr. Matthew**, who died on November 9, 1996 at the age of 82. After the premature death of Fr. Method, the remaining six classmates were able to celebrate together the 25th anniversary of their ordination at BHS in 1967 as well as their 40th priestly jubilee in 1982. And the only surviving member of the 1942 class to reach his Golden Jubilee of priesthood in 1994 was **Fr. Matthew**.



Abbot Roger Gries, OSB '54 joins the six remaining members of the Saint Andrew Abbey ordination Class of 1942 for their 40th anniversary in the priesthood in 1982. (L-R): Fr. Matthew Bonk, OSB '33, Fr. Thomas Podobnik, OSB '31, Fr. Louis Hudak, OSB '32, Fr. Augustine Yurko, OSB, Fr. Maurus Maruskin, OSB '32, Abbot Roger '54, and Fr. Edward Yatsko, OSB.



The six surviving members of the Saint Andrew Abbey ordination Class of 1942 gather around the head table at their 25th anniversary banquet in the Benedictine High School cafeteria in 1967. (L-R): Fr. Thomas Podobnik, OSB '31, Fr. Augustine Yurko, OSB, Fr. Maurus Maruskin, OSB '32, Fr. Edward Yatsko, OSB, Fr. Matthew Bonk, OSB '33, and Fr. Louis Hudak, OSB '32.



St. Benedict Statue

The new St. Benedict statue, which was installed in September 2023, is a beautiful addition to the community, made possible by the generous donation of Catherine and Leonard Lenny Toth '71. The statue is a testament to the school's commitment to its Catholic identity and serves as a symbol of the enduring values that Benedictine instills in its students. The statue's placement is also significant, as it serves as a reminder of the importance of faith and community in our daily lives. Overall, the St. Benedict statue is a meaningful and inspiring addition to the school, thanks to the generosity of the Toth family.

SEAN WASHINGTON

It is said that a Man of Benedictine is expected to be respectful in and out of the classroom, to be positively engaged in the community around them, to be helpful to others, and to honor family and friends. This month we spotlight Senior Sean Washington as an embodiment of these expectations. As Sean sets his sights on graduation in May, he does so with an amazing academic resume and a 3.7 GPA through the 1st Quarter. He embraced some of the most challenging programs offered through BHS and excelled in everything he put his mind to. We sat down with Sean to learn more about what drives him and how he juggles the high demands of his course load.

Why Benedictine?

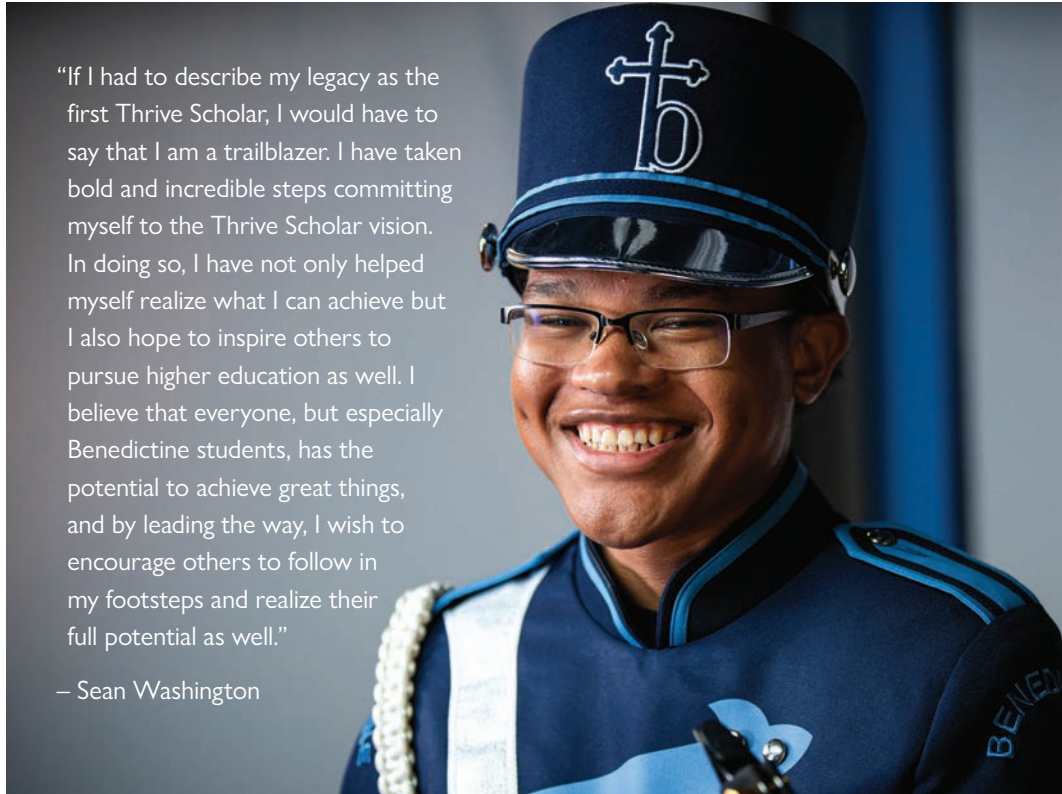
Sean is the seventh member of his family to become a Man of Benedictine and he was heavily influenced by the positive experiences they had while attending BHS. But what attracted him most was the diverse student population. He's enjoyed getting to know people with different backgrounds and upbringings and credits Benedictine for being an inclusive environment for him to thrive. Sean said, "It's a true representation of the world we live in, and I feel incredibly fortunate to be a part of such a welcoming community." He describes his four years here as truly "transformative."

A LEGACY OF FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE ATTENDED BENEDICTINE HIGH SCHOOL:

- Thomas Washington, Uncle, Class of 1963
- Byron Washington, Uncle, Class of 1963
- Jason Washington, Cousin, Class of 1992
- Emory Holmes, Cousin, Class of 2001
- Erich Holmes, Cousin, Class of 2002
- Rodney Washington Jr., Brother, Class of 2022

"Sean is one of the finest students I have ever worked with. He was a joy to teach, and I admire his drive and dedication with all of the activities he is involved with here at BHS. He has also particularly impressed me with his participation in multiple outside programs and organizations, including the Cleveland Clinic and The Howley Foundation's ASPIRE Nurse Scholars Program, the Gamma Rho Chapter of the National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa Sorority, and the Thrive Scholars Program. Sean truly embodies what it means to be a Man of Benedictine both on and off campus!"

– Dr. Salem, Academic Dean



"If I had to describe my legacy as the first Thrive Scholar, I would have to say that I am a trailblazer. I have taken bold and incredible steps committing myself to the Thrive Scholar vision. In doing so, I have not only helped myself realize what I can achieve but I also hope to inspire others to pursue higher education as well. I believe that everyone, but especially Benedictine students, has the potential to achieve great things, and by leading the way, I wish to encourage others to follow in my footsteps and realize their full potential as well."

– Sean Washington

Accomplishments and Community

Sean is humble about his long list of accomplishments, but his mom, Deanna, helped us fill in the blanks. Beyond his academic achievements as a Howley Aspire Nurse Scholar, Peck Scholar, Honor Roll recipient and band leader, he is Benedictine's first ever Thrive Scholar. "As a Thrive Scholar, Sean challenged himself to get out of his comfort zone. This was his first time away from home by himself for an extended period of time and this was his first time traveling on an airplane. He describes his experience as a Thrive Scholar as 'amazing!' He enjoyed studying college math and writing courses at Amherst College in Amherst, Massachusetts," Deanna shared.

Outside of school, Sean cares for his community through a number of service projects, including volunteering at the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, supporting The City Mission, donating school supplies to a local church, and donating toys to a local child care center. Last year, Sean was the President of the youth group, Gamma Rho chapter, for the National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc. (an organization for educators, of which his mother is a member). He was recognized for his leadership at the 62nd Annual Youth Leadership Conference in April 2023, at the Marriott East Hotel in Beachwood, Ohio. Also, during this conference, he won a regional creative writing award for a poem that he wrote using the theme, "Time Marches On."

One memory Sean will cherish after graduation is the Little Italy parades. He loves that the band has this annual opportunity to march, play music and meet other school band members. His favorite part? Indulging in Little Italy pizza, pasta and gelato.

Sean wants to encourage all students to step outside their comfort zones and take full advantage of the special programs offered at Benedictine.



Hall of Distinction

The Benedictine community recently came together at the Western Reserve Historical Society to celebrate the achievements of its 2023 Hall of Distinction honorees. This prestigious honor is bestowed upon alumni who have earned the highest esteem of their peers in their respective fields, have demonstrated excellence in their professions, and have made significant contributions to the world and society in line with the values of St. Benedict. Members of the Hall of Distinction are recognized through plaques displayed on the first floor of the school, next to the President's Office. This recognition serves as a testament to the exceptional achievements of the honorees and their dedication to making a positive impact on the world around them. *Congratulations to all the 2023 Hall of Distinction honorees!*



Throughout the course of the evening, stories were shared, laughter abounded and a real sense of the community of Benedictine High School could be felt. Whether it was the banter between Deacon Ken '66 and previous inductee Tom Perciak '66 in person or the heartfelt congratulations seen in the tribute videos, the impact of Benedictine was evident.

from left to right
 Tom Evert '69
 Deacon Ken Piechowski '66
 Brian Laczko '70

TOM EVERT CLASS OF 1969

Tom is the founding director of the Dance Evert Co. and has achieved international acclaim as a choreographer. As a teaching artist, Tom uses dance to help students make connections between math and science. This style of instruction joins the arts, movement and academic content, as well as enhances emotional learning and healing.

DEACON KEN PIECHOWSKI CLASS OF 1966

Ken has been a deacon for 41 years and was the Director of the Diaconate for the Cleveland Diocese. He served several parishes with distinction. In addition to his work as a deacon, he served on the faculty of the Center for Pastoral Leadership from 1992-2010.

BRIAN LACZKO CLASS OF 1970

Brian has been the Managing and Technical Director of several national theaters, including the Tennessee Repertory Theater, the Luther Carson Performing Arts Center and the historic Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. Brian's career has enabled thousands of people to enjoy the beauty and wonder of the fine arts.

FALL SPORTS

Great work to all of our Bengals athletes and coaches on an exciting fall sports season!



FOOTBALL

This young squad improved to a 4-6 regular season record this year, earned themselves a playoff berth and gave #3 Hudson all they could handle. But the Bengals came up short in overtime, falling 19-20 to the Explorers in an exciting OHSAA first round matchup. These Bengals had many junior and sophomore starters and contributors on offense, defense, and special teams. Senior Luke Reed (above) led the offensive rushing attack with 231 carries for an impressive 1,314 yards and 18 touchdowns on the season. Junior Linebacker Jamere Church led the defense with 57 tackles, not to mention a pick-6 to seal the win over Akron Buchtel.



GOLF

Junior Will Misconish (above) was the top golfer this year and earned a District appearance after shooting a 78 at Quail Hollow in the DII Sectional. Misconish, seniors Ben Trombetto and Nick Vitantonio, junior Brady Foss, and sophomore Luca Bucci all performed well overall this season and represented Benedictine's team in the playoffs. Sophomore Cameron Huggins, junior Charlie Koppitch, and freshmen Will Mylen and Zachary Ade make up a strong returning squad for next season.



SOCCER

The Bengals enjoyed their best regular season record of all time, going 14-2-1. They earned that 14th win with a 2-1 win over Chagrin Falls in the final game of the season. After a first round bye, they hosted Keystone on Bossu Field and won that game 2-1 as well to advance to the district semi-final against Lake Catholic. Sadly, they lost to a strong Lake Catholic side that went on to advance to the D2 State Final Four.

Senior Charlie Roberto (above) led the Bengals with 26 goals and 8 assists. Freshman Brandon Shaw scored 12 goals and had 12 assists, including the game deciding goal and an earlier assist in that Chagrin Falls game. Sophomore Mykel Henderson added 12 goals and 5 assists and senior multi-sport athlete Matthew Torres had 10 goals with an assist.



Check out our Winter Sports schedules and purchase tickets by scanning this flying B QR Code.

STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE IN

Dr. Salem recently commented that Men of Benedictine are “Renaissance men.” This is a testament to the well-roundedness of the student body. Not only do they excel in academics, but they have passion for the arts, athletics, and other extracurricular activities. This is what sets our men apart from other schools and makes them part of the Home of Champions community.

At Benedictine, being a champion is not limited to sports. It’s a mindset that encourages students to strive for excellence in all areas of their lives. From volunteering in the community to participating in clubs and organizations, our students put forth great effort to make the most out of their four years with us.

One benefit we have at Benedictine is our ability to offer college credits without students ever having to leave campus. Our team of adjunct professors, including Dr. Salem, Mr. Francioli, and Mr. Trabben, make this possible by teaching History, College Comp, Robotics, and other courses. Our faculty, including these adjunct professors, encourage students to explore their potential beyond the classroom and challenge them to think critically.

If it’s been a few years since you stepped on campus, you may not realize how much change has occurred and what the expanded opportunities are for students. While the campus improvements are transforming spaces into a modern and dynamic learning environment, our faculty and staff continue to emphasize intellectual, spiritual, and physical development. Through new and expanded programs, we continue to prepare men to become leaders while also fostering personal growth and character development. Through these pages we have captured just some of the expanded educational opportunities we offer.

We asked Principal Dominic Fanelli to sum up the Benedictine experience and he had this to say, “The beliefs we rely on are phrases that all of our Benedictine Community know well: Men of Benedictine, Ora et Labora, Home of Champions. There is another belief we have that has always been present at Benedictine but unsaid: We believe in letting students lead. From our award-winning *Bennet* to how our sports are led and our student council leads, we believe in allowing our students to lead, fail and succeed over and over again, believing that this gives them the greatest gift other than the gift of faith, resiliency.”

Mr. Fanelli added, “Our next goal is having our student leadership team lead the Men of Benedictine in day-to-day operations of the school. We look to our brother school St. Benedict’s Prep in Newark, famous for their student leadership model, but realize that we have to grow this organically and methodically at Benedictine. Our current seniors are tasked with running convocation and coming to the faculty and

administration with ideas to improve the school. I would love to see them take this to a level where they are on their brothers about being on time or being in uniform, because it matters. When we get to that point, we will be in the culture we want to be.”

Benedictine High School is indeed a great place to be during these times of exciting change. With the recent campus improvements and the development of our faculty and staff, we are running towards our centennial and focused on growing Benedictine for the next 100 years.



Adjunct professor Mr. Francioli teaching Honors English.

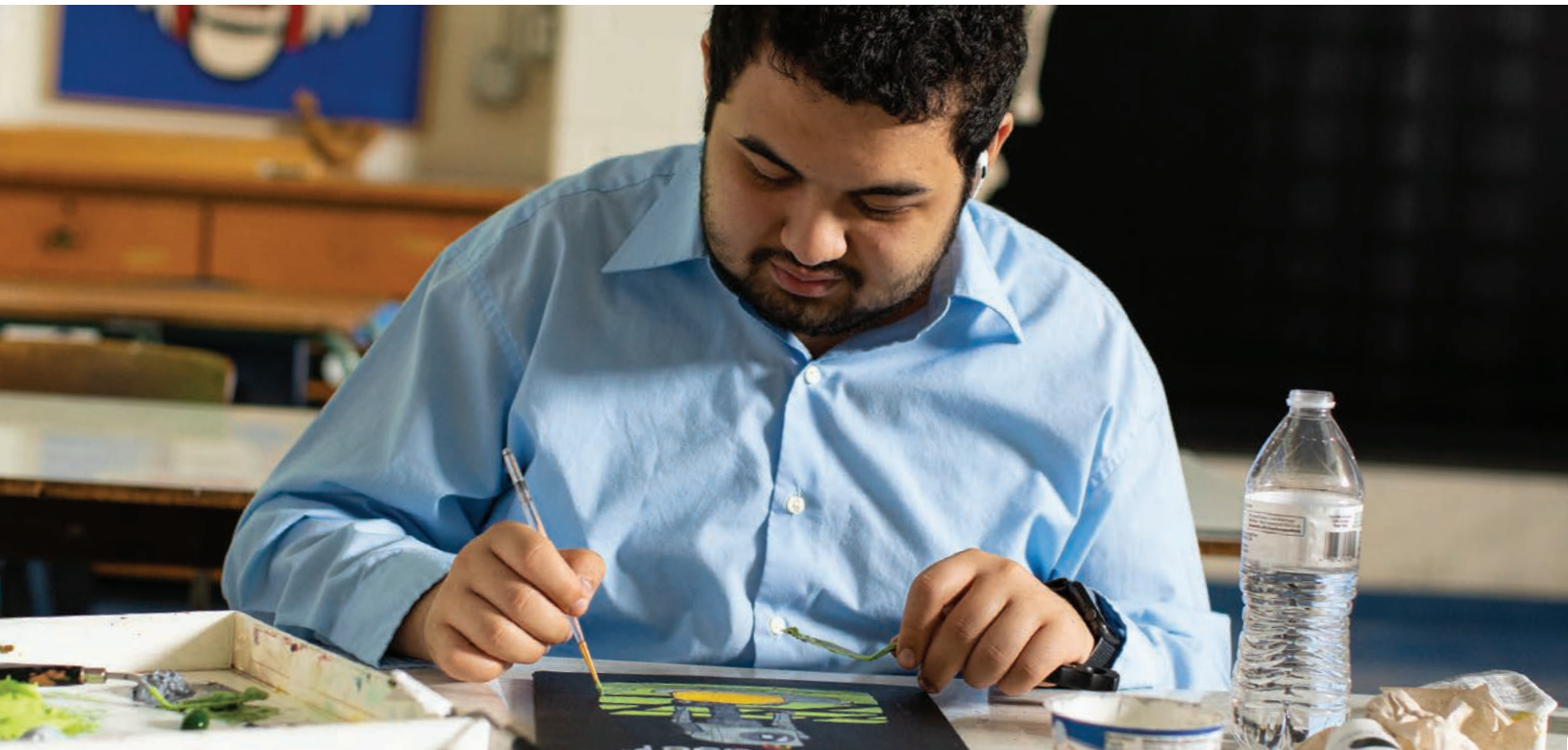
COLLEGE CREDIT + Saves families time *and* money

With the average cost of a college credit hour in Ohio at \$336, a student who graduates with 20 CCP credits can save over \$6,500.

While many schools offer CCP courses, Benedictine has the distinction of adjunct professors on campus so students can earn those college credits through their normal course work and not have to go offsite.



ACADEMICS & ARTS



Fine Arts, encompassing visual arts, music, drama, and dance, plays a vital role in nurturing well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, and building essential life skills. With so much emphasis on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), the arts are often overlooked. At Benedictine, we are blessed to have the creativity of Fine Arts Department Chair Elizabeth Backowski. Through varied programs, techniques, and forms she continues to focus on cultivating creativity, enhancing critical thinking, creating cultural awareness and diversity, and building confidence through self expression.

Many Fine Arts experiences, such as theatrical productions and musical ensembles, require collaboration and teamwork. Learning to work harmoniously with others towards a common artistic goal instills important interpersonal skills. These experiences teach students the significance of collective effort, compromise, and effective communication—skills that are invaluable in both personal and professional realms.

MARCHING BAND



How many people can say they created a significant and meaningful turnaround in just three years time? Benedictine Music Director Hannah Westfield has done exactly that and she's not stopping any time soon.

When Hannah joined CBHS in 2021, the marching band had just nine members and the theater program had dissolved, so she was excited to come in and help rebuild something great. She came from a small town high school in rural Ohio that only had 12 band members so she knew first hand what it felt like to be in awe of larger programs with greater resources. It was that experience that inspired her to pursue music as a career.

Hannah is a University of Akron graduate with a music education degree. Prior to joining Benedictine, she taught middle school for four years. When Covid had a negative impact on their band, she sought to try something new, ironically at the same time we had an opening. Not only is she leading the band, but she teaches Music Technology, Music History and Music Theory, while also moderating the drama club.

She was anxious to build up the team, instill confidence in the musicians, and give fans a great musical experience. By partnering with Beaumont for majorettes and instrumentalists, she more than quadrupled the size for this year and is ecstatic with the progress. She led fundraising efforts to purchase new uniforms and worked with the team to offer music scholarships. While she anticipated needing several years to replace the uniforms, a kind donor stepped up and provided the funding sooner.

The impact of Hannah's efforts has created a better sense of community and family for the members. We may be small, but we are mighty and she often receives compliments from complete strangers. She can see that the students work hard and truly care about what they do, which positively impacts how they play. Impressive sound for the size of the group.



26 instrumentalists + **13** majorettes
 8 brass | 9 woodwind | 9 percussion



7 community performances
 Performances outside of game day include:
 Columbus Day Parade, Woollybear Festival,
 St. Patrick's Day Parade, The Gala, and multiple
 band show performances

1 graduate
 from 2022 is attending
 one of the best music
 schools in the country
 (The University of
 North Texas) majoring
 in jazz studies

2 members
 invited to perform at
 the All-Ohio State Fair
 Band (Summer 2023)

3 students
 played in Pit Orchestra
 for the musical Chicago
 in collaboration with
 Beaumont

14 music
 scholarships
 awarded to students
 from the generosity
 of alumni and friends



ACADEMICS

These are just some of the expanded educational programs that help students succeed academically and professionally.

THRIVE SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Thrive is designed for high achieving students of color from low-income backgrounds. The program is entirely free, including flights, housing, meals, and classes. During the program, students attend two residential summer programs for six weeks each, at the colleges of their choosing. They receive coaching on college prep and admissions, 1:1 advising, career development, mentorship, and specialized pathways to careers. After completing the six-year program, students receive support for a graduate program or have access to an alumni career coach. The program is highly selective, only accepting two students per school per year.

ASPIRE PROGRAM

The pre-nursing program offered in partnership with Ursuline School of Nursing is an excellent opportunity for students who are interested in pursuing a career in nursing. This year-long program allows students to explore the nursing field by shadowing at the world-renowned Cleveland Clinic. By participating in this program, students can gain valuable experience and insight into the nursing profession, which can help them make an informed decision about their career path.

HOBY - HUGH O'BRIEN YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Hugh O'Brien Youth Leadership is a 5-day leadership conference in June for sophomores in Ohio. The experience includes seminars, leadership development, speakers, socialization, idea sharing, and dorm life. An added benefit is access to a network of HOBY Alumni afterwards. This year Benedictine is sending Uchenna Njoku, Micah Smith and Patrick Shea from the Class of 2026. is a 5-day leadership conference in June for sophomores in Ohio. The experience includes seminars, leadership development, speakers, socialization, idea sharing, and dorm life. An added benefit is access to a network of HOBY Alumni afterwards. This year Benedictine is sending Uchenna Njoku, Micah Smith and Patrick Shea from the Class of 2026.

ROBOTOTS

Robotots is in its fourth year at Benedictine. Currently we partner with Truline Industries in Wickliffe and are supported by three techs who volunteer their time to meet weekly with students. The team spends the fall designing their robot and winter assembling it in preparation for competition in April hosted by Lakeland Community College. Students also take field trips to tour the Truline facility and learn how parts are manufactured. From drawing up blueprints to assembly of their robot, this is a highly interactive experience of the whole engineering process end to end. In preparation for the tournament, the students must provide thorough documentation on their process as well as participate in a panel interview. The whole experience mimics the real world experiences of manufacturing and engineering.

MAKERSPACE

Makerspace offers hands-on machine work with 3D printing and laser etching. This is Mr. Traben's first year teaching a Tri C level 3D modeling class with laser etching equipment. The intention is to create more opportunities with additional equipment in the future.

MOTOGO

Under the leadership of Mr. Traben, we are the first all-boys high school to offer Motogo to our students. The team is supported by an outside organization that sends mechanic instructors to help students disassemble and reassemble a motorcycle engine. Students love the hands-on experience which sparks confidence and builds problem solving skills. At the end of the year the students mount their engine to a motorcycle and enjoy a kick start graduation. The club is akin to a trade school program preparing young men for potential employment.

ENGINEERING CLUB

This very popular club is offered twice a month and averages 30-60 students. They participate in small group challenges by using a kit of supplies to compete in accomplishing a goal. Ex: newspaper, tape and pipe cleaners to build a structure that can support a basketball. Students also take field trips and enjoy guest speakers.

COMING SOON!

BenX 2.0. Dr. Salem and team are working to relaunch experiential learning and we can't wait to share more details.



SERVICE DAY

On Saturday, September 21, we hosted a day of Ora et Labora here on the Benedictine campus. Over 50 families, students, faculty and staff participated in a day of “Prayer and Work.” Our community came together and made significant contributions to the overall beauty of our campus including landscaping, tree cutting, room painting and wall building.



Meet the other MOB

Moms (and Dads) of Benedictine

In every great school community there are parents that go above and beyond in support of the students, staff and coaches to ensure every experience comes with a personal touch. These are parents who are very passionate about their children's education and well being. Whether they're feeding staff and students or speaking to prospective parents at Open House, the parents of Benedictine are present to help create memorable moments for their sons and classmates.



The Parent Engagement Club (PEC) was founded by Vicki Przybylski as a result of the Booster Club dissolving. The team, now led by Mary Ann Meitin and Tammi Amata, strives to provide a collaboration with and support of teachers and staff to assist the young men of Benedictine to positively grow in mind, body and spirit. Through work and prayer, they aspire to assist clubs and organizations in their endeavors to challenge and celebrate the Men of Benedictine.

When not working to support our community, they also gather in support of each other. The common thread of raising Men of Benedictine binds them together in social moments like Happy Hours, Craft Nights and more.

We encourage you to save the following dates as an opportunity to connect. All events are in the high school cafeteria unless otherwise noted.

PEC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

| | | |
|---------------------|---|---------|
| DECEMBER | | |
| 12/20-12/22/23 | Midterm Breakfast for Students | 7:00 AM |
| JANUARY | | |
| 1/31/24 (tentative) | Catholic Schools Week Faculty/Staff Lunch & Ice Cream for Students | |
| APRIL | | |
| 4/22/24 (tentative) | Senior Week Breakfast | |
| 4/25/24 (tentative) | Senior Week Lunch | |
| MAY | | |
| 5/8/24 (tentative) | Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week Teacher/Staff Lunch | |
| 5/29-5/31/24 | Finals Breakfast for Students | 7:00 AM |

* Note that all dates are still being confirmed and we will send out a revised list once dates are finalized.

** PEC meetings are being held the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7pm in the cafeteria.

If you would like to be added to the Parent Engagement Club email distribution list to receive notifications of upcoming meetings, events and volunteer opportunities, please email your name, your email address, your cell phone and your son's name/grade level, to **Tammi Amata** at tammi_amata@ameritech.net. You can also refer to the Principal's Weekly email that is distributed to all current Benedictine families.



from left to right
 Tammi Amata (Vincent '24), Mary Ann Meitin (Bryce '25),
 Mary Eileen Vitale (Anthony '23) and Vicki Przybylski (Aiden '23)

50th and 20th Class Reunion

Champions returned home on September 30th as we recognized the 1973 and 2003 State Championship football teams! At halftime, many members and coaches of both teams took the field to be recognized.

The 1973 Team was the first Cleveland team to win an on-the-field championship after OHSAA established the playoff system in 1972. They earned enough computer points with a 6-2-2 record against tough competition and proved, without a doubt, they deserved to be there when they defeated Ironton 38-13 in the Class AA Championship.

In 2003, the (14-1) Bengals defeated Kenton 12-0 and won the Division 3 State Title. They became the first Ohio school to win a State Championship in four different decades. Many of the returning players were also on the 2004 State Championship team.

It was great to see all of this Bengal Football history together on the field at the same time!



Class of 1959

Fr. Johnnie Smith recently retired from his Nashville diocese and returned home to live in Ashtabula. We were honored to have him celebrate the opening Mass for the 2023/24 school year. Fr. Smith is the only African-American Benedictine alumni to be ordained as a Catholic priest.

Class of 1983



Martino Harmon, a Benedictine Hall of Distinction inductee, was recently honored by the University of Toledo with the Gold T Award. The Gold T award is presented to a University of Toledo graduate in recognition of outstanding achievement in his or her field of endeavor, while providing leadership and noteworthy service to the community. The 2023 Gold T award was presented to Dr. Martino Harmon for dedicating his career to improving college students' well-being. He has made an impact at institutions, including Iowa State University, Cincinnati State Community College and University of Toledo. He currently serves as the Vice President for Student Life at the University of Michigan (U-M) in Ann Arbor, MI.

As a senior leader at one of the leading public institutions in the country, Dr. Harmon has helped to transform U-M's approach to holistically addressing student health and well-being, leading to the formation of a collective impact group and the signing of the international Okanagan Charter for health-promoting universities.

Class of 1999

Cameron Dedrick was elected president of the Ohio Alliance for Arts Education in September. Cameron is a Visual Art and Media Arts Teacher and Assistant Band Director at Ashland High School in Ashland, Ohio.

Class of 2008

Anthony DiGeronimo began working at the Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine as the Director of Special Annual and Leadership Giving in May. Anthony also is a baseball coach at Benedictine.

Class of 2010

Danny Sudetic married Jackie Ammar, Walsh Jesuit, on September 23, 2023 at St. Christopher's Church in Rocky River. They were joined by fellow Benedictine alumni **Matt Dudash '03**, **Jeff Heinrich '06**, **Lewis Alvis '06**, **Andy Dudash '07**, **Dave Sudetic '10**.



Class of 2012

John Kocsis, Jr. has been the Broadcast/Media Relations Manager for the Columbia Fireflies in South Carolina since February 2020. The Fireflies are Single-A affiliate for the Kansas City Royals. John has worked play-by-play and other media and marketing roles for minor league baseball teams since graduating from the Ohio University Scripps School of Journalism. He has recently written a new book entitled *Play-by-Play from the Minors: Profiles of Baseball Broadcasters from Scranton to Yakima*. The book includes profiles of 13 different minor league broadcasters, including John. John has appeared on a number of podcasts to talk about his work, including The Show Before the Show Podcast, the official podcast of Minor League Baseball. He got his start at Benedictine when he interned for ESPN Cleveland when the Bengals were making state runs in basketball. You can follow John on Twitter @JKocsis8 and you can purchase his book on Amazon.



Class of 2016

Louis Marrone married his high school sweetheart, Elizabeth Pfahler, Magnificat '17, on Saturday, September 16, 2023. By their sides were **Joseph Marrone '19**, **Cameron Mazzone (Hawken graduate '16)**, **James Marrone '26**, and **Chris Azzarello '13**. Bridesmaids from the center out: Emily Pfahler-Clark, Magnificat '13, Stephanie Pfahler-Dormendo, Magnificat '06, Brandy Wolfe, Padua '17, Lyla Marrone, Magnificat '24, and Aubrey Montgomery, Magnificat '17.



T.J. Beltavski graduated from Mount Union this past summer and recently joined Wee Ones Pediatrics in Canfield, OH as a Physician Assistant.

Class of 2025



This past October **Charlie Koppitch** represented Benedictine and the Italian Heritage Club at the Cleveland City Hall Rotunda, where the mayor, city council and hundreds of prominent Italian-Americans celebrated the start of Italian Heritage month in Cleveland.

On November 9th

Mr. DiGeronimo attended the Heinen's Anniversary Lunch where two Benedictine graduates were recognized for their years of service. **Al Okal '74** and **Earl Hotchkiss '75**, who both work in the produce department, were honored for 50 years! The owners, Jeff and Tom Heinen, were both overwhelmed with the fact that two individuals were still with the same company for that period of time. It is unheard of in this era.

Share Your News!

New Job? Engagement? Marriage? Baby? Professional Awards and Accolades?
We are always looking for fresh ideas and new content for our readers. Send your story ideas and personal updates to lschroeder@cbhs.edu.

In Memoriam

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



William Avsec, 90, of the Class of 1951 passed away on Thursday, September 28, 2023, peacefully at his home in Lorain, Ohio. He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Eileen; and his sister, Sister Mary Avsec, SND; seven children, 12 grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. Upon graduation from BHS, he served in the United States Army during the Korean War. After the military, he worked as a machinist

where he would install printing presses for newspapers, such as *The Lorain Journal*, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, and several other notable newspapers. Bill later worked as a millwright for the Ford Motor Company where he proudly completed over 25 years of service. His funeral Mass was celebrated at Saint Peter's Catholic Church in Lorain.



Dr. Bela Ballo, M.D. 84, of the Class of 1956 passed away Saturday, October 7, 2023. Born in Budapest, Hungary he emigrated with his parents to the United States when he was 12 years old. Bela graduated from Benedictine High School and attended Baldwin-Wallace College where he studied biology. He completed his medical degree at SUNY Buffalo and then a residency at Detroit Receiving Hospital. After completing a fellowship at University Hospitals in Cleveland, Ohio he

joined Drs. Hill & Thomas as a diagnostic radiologist working mostly at Lake County Hospitals and Deaconess. He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Patricia, and children, Bela R. Ballo, M.D.; Michael S. Ballo, M.D.; Matthew T. Ballo, M.D.; and Nicole L.F. Ehrbar, J.D.; 11 grandchildren and one great-grandson.



Francis Gronowski, 86, of the Class of 1955, died on October 16, 2023. He was preceded in death by his loving wife of 53 years, Diana. Beloved father of Karen Prescott, Frank M., Ricky P., and Brian J.; devoted grandfather of nine, and great-grandfather of four. Francis was a retired Senior Manufacturing and Industrial Engineer. He was also a Cleveland Playhouse Square Redcoat Volunteer and an Ohio State Master Gardener. He was an active member of Saint

Anselm Parish in Chesterland where his funeral Mass was celebrated.

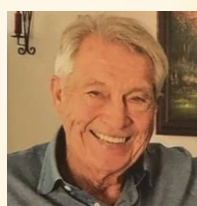


Brian Marcinick, 35, of the Class of 2006 died on October 3, 2023 of internal health complications. He is survived by his parents, Robert and Molly, his brother **Kevin of the BHS Class of 2008** and his sister Megan. His funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Luke's Church in Lakewood. Fr. Michael Brunovsky, OSB and classmates represented Benedictine.



Edward Toth, 82, of the Class of 1959 passed away on September 21, 2023 with his wife of 60 years, Barbara, at his side. He was the brother of **Bob Toth of the Class of 1963**.

He is also survived by his daughter Laura and son Brian. He was the first in his family to graduate from college, with a Bachelor of Arts in Accounting from Ohio University. Ed was an Akron area resident for over 50 years. He began his career with the B.F. Goodrich Company, and culminated it with the co-ownership of the Metzger Photo Supply Company. His funeral Mass was celebrated at Saint Hilary Catholic Church in Fairlawn, Ohio.



Frederick Yarris, 85, of the Class of 1956 passed away on September 13, 2023. Beloved husband of 63 years to Nancy and loving father of Dr. Linda Yarris-Ewert, Beth Johnston, Kenneth, and Dr. Amy Casey. Frederick enjoyed getting together with fellow BHS alumni. He grew his 43 year career at NASA Glen Center in Cleveland

from a drafting apprentice to a leader in the Design Engineering Section. After NASA he mentored and taught students at Lorain Community College and within private industry. He was also instrumental in founding the St Elizabeth Seton Parish Knights of Columbus Council. His funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Columbia Station, Ohio.

RECENTLY DECEASED

The following members of our Benedictine Community have gone on to Eternal Rest between August 22nd, 2023 and October 30th, 2023. May they all Rest in Peace.

| Name | Year | Deceased |
|-------------------|------|------------|
| Francis Parker | 1950 | 10/15/2023 |
| William Avsec | 1951 | 9/28/2023 |
| Francis Gronowski | 1955 | 10/16/2023 |
| Frederick Yarris | 1956 | 9/13/2023 |
| Bela Ballo | 1956 | 10/7/2023 |
| Ed Toth | 1959 | 9/21/2023 |
| Frank Kickel | 1969 | 10/13/2023 |
| Brian Marcinick | 2006 | 10/3/2023 |
| Lawrence Martello | | 8/22/2023 |
| Janet Schemmel | | 9/1/2023 |
| Phyllis Cummings | | 10/1/2023 |
| Christina Pino | | 10/30/2023 |

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

7th or 8th grade boys are encouraged to experience **Bengal for a Day**



BENGAL

FOR A



Scan the QR Code
to register.



DAY



SAVE THE DATE

REUNION WEEKEND 2024

JUNE 14-15, 2024

Celebrating classes ending in '4 and '9

2019

5 YEAR REUNION

1979

45 YEAR REUNION

2014

10 YEAR REUNION

1974

**50 YEAR
GOLDEN
REUNION**

2009

15 YEAR REUNION

1969

55 YEAR REUNION

2004

20 YEAR REUNION

1964

60 YEAR REUNION

1999

**25 YEAR
SILVER
REUNION**

1959

65 YEAR REUNION

1994

30 YEAR REUNION

1954

70 YEAR REUNION

1989

35 YEAR REUNION

1949

75 YEAR REUNION

1984

40 YEAR REUNION

1944

80 YEAR REUNION

2024 Reunion Weekend Dates

**STAG
NIGHT**

**FRIDAY
JUNE 14, 2024**

**CLASS PLANNED
ACTIVITIES**

**SATURDAY
JUNE 15, 2024**

REUNION 2024

We are looking for class leaders and ambassadors from the above classes to help get the best out of the celebration of your reunion milestone during Reunion Weekend 2024.

Please contact alumni@cbhs.edu.

MESSAGE FROM THE COO

Dear Alumni and Friends,

The Christmas Season is one of the best times of year at Benedictine High School and St. Andrew Abbey, not only from the joy and spirit the community provides, but because we are reminded of our dedicated philanthropists who so kindly share their support towards the development of our students and the monks with end-of-the-year financial gifts. *Thank you!*

In addition to the traditional support you all provide via time, talent, and treasure, we are extremely excited to inform you that Benedictine High School has established our own “SGO” (Scholarship Granting Organization) which allows individual taxpayers to claim a credit for monetary donations up to \$750 (\$1,500 if taxes filed jointly) who have an Ohio tax liability. We often refer to this opportunity as “turning tax dollars into tuition dollars”!

BengalSGO allows donors the opportunity to provide tuition assistance to our students while also receiving tax credits (if eligible). Please note that **BengalSGO** is fully certified with the State of Ohio as a scholarship granting organization and traditional gifts made to the annual fund are not eligible for the credit.

To learn more about this opportunity, as well as specific details around the **BengalSGO**, please visit <https://cbhs.net/bengalsgo/>.

As we celebrate year 101 of St. Andrew Abbey and year 96 of Benedictine High School, we truly are blessed to have your support. Traditionally, we have highlighted our annual benefactors in the



Mr. Chris Lorber '04

December publication of the *Ora et Labora*, but because of significant participation and the overall size of the booklet, we have made the decision to communicate our Annual Report portion digitally. The Annual Report can be found online by scanning the QR code enclosed!

I wish you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year.

Yours in St. Benedict,

Mr. Chris Lorber '04
Chief Operating Officer



Just 3 Easy Steps to turn your tax dollars into tuition dollars!

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Determine Your Tax Liability To estimate how much you might owe the state in taxes for 2023, review line 8C on the 1040 form you filed for 2022. | <input type="checkbox"/> Make Your Contribution Give securely on our website or by check to the “BengalSGO” to benefit our students in transforming to Men of Benedictine. | <input type="checkbox"/> Claim Your Ohio Tax Credit Claim your tax credit on your 2023 Ohio tax form and be sure to attach the tax credit receipt that you receive from us. |

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Abbot Gary Hoover, OSB '74
Publisher

Chris Lorber '04
Chief Operating Officer

Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB '71
Contributing Editor

Lynne Schroeder
Director of Marketing

Brian Devers '08
Director of Media and Communications

Tom Bennett
Director of Development

Ainsley Gialamas
Director of Advancement Operations & Events

BLUE AND WHITE

GALA


benedictine
HIGH SCHOOL

SAVE
THE
DATE

Saturday,
MARCH 16
2024

INTERCONTINENTAL
HOTEL