

ORA ET LABORA



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

Winter 2025



The Year of HOPE

HOPE: BORN IN POVERTY, SHARED IN LOVE

Our greatest hope is in Jesus Christ, through whom God reveals His boundless love and mercy. Each Christmas, we celebrate the birth of Hope itself — divine light shining in human darkness.



Created in God's image, we turned away through sin, yet God's mercy is greater still. Out of love, He sent His Son to share our human nature while remaining fully divine. Jesus chose to be born in humility, live in simplicity, and offer His life so that we might share in the hope of eternal life.

In our old Abbey chapel, a stained-glass window titled "Poverty" depicts the Infant Jesus in a crib. It reminds us that God's love is shown not in wealth or power, but in humility and service. Hope was born in the simplicity of Bethlehem, where divine love took on human weakness to lift us toward heaven.

As our Abbey celebrates 103 years of monastic life, and our high school prepares for its own centennial, we give thanks for all who have walked this journey of hope before us. Their faith, prayer, and service have shaped generations. Now it is our turn to carry the light of Christ forward — to live and share the hope that sustains our Benedictine mission and touches countless lives.

Pope Francis has declared 2025 as the Jubilee Year of Hope, beginning on Christmas Eve 2024 and concluding on the Feast of the Epiphany, 2026. This holy year invites us to renew our confidence in God's promises and to become living signs of hope for one another.

May this Christmas and Jubilee remind us: hope is not just an idea — it is a Person. Hope has a face, and it is the face of Jesus Christ.

In Hope and Peace,

Handwritten signature of Abbot Gary OSB

Abbot Gary, OSB '74

A Benedictine Christmas Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,

*You who chose to be born in
the poverty of Bethlehem,*

*fill our hearts with the
richness of Your hope.*

*May Your light shine
in our darkness,*

Your peace dwell in our homes,

*and Your love guide us on our
journey toward the Father.*

*Grant that, following
the way of St. Benedict,*

*we may bring hope to others
through prayer, work,
and charity.*

*You who live and reign
forever and ever. Amen.*

**Merry Christmas and
Blessed New Year**

Dear Benedictine Friends and Family,

Earlier this year, I shared my strategic vision for Benedictine built around three pillars: **Stabilization, Repeatability, and Transformation**. Stable leadership and repeatable processes provide a strong foundation, but what truly inspires us and excites our community is transformation, which we define as “growth.” To me, transform means setting a goal, executing a plan, and realizing the outcome.

I am a firm believer in goal setting. If you visit my office, you’ll see that my east wall is covered with the goals students have written in exchange for me bribing them with a piece of candy. Alongside their goals are the goals I set during my first week as president: **Growing Enrollment, Capital Improvements, and a Reimagined Future** through what we now call Benedictine Pathways. Pathways builds on our long tradition of academic excellence and brotherhood, while placing renewed emphasis on preparing our young men for life. It formalizes experiences that give students early exposure to career opportunities, hands-on learning, and life-skills development; whether they pursue college, the trades, the military, or enter the workforce directly.

Enrollment is at the heart of our success. When I began in FY24, we had 265 students; our goal is 375 by FY30. Today, as we enter FY26, we have grown enrollment approximately 15% to 300 students. Equally encouraging is our improved retention; our two-year average attrition rate is just 9%. Looking ahead, we will graduate a smaller senior class of 50 students this year, but strong admissions metrics point to a realistic goal of 340 students in FY27. At the same time, we are raising the standard of what it means to be a Man of Benedictine, investing in summer enrichment programs that not only attract new students but also support those who need extra preparation before beginning high school.

To sustain this growth, it is essential that we invest in our facilities. In just three years we have: opened a new atrium entrance; paved and secured the parking lot; installed automated gates and badge access to all doors;

beautified the 70-year-old Marian Grotto; updated several offices; added a pro-shop style spirit store; and most recently, transformed our former cafeteria into the new **Student Commons**. This beautiful space embodies our Benedictine hallmarks of community and hospitality. It now serves not only as a dining area, but also as a place for study, celebration, and socialization. Our principal, Dominic Fanelli said it best when he described it as “a hub of school life that reflects our pride in who we are”.



And, we’re only getting started! Behind the scenes, a major transformation is underway that will bring Benedictine Pathways to life in new and exciting ways. I can assure you that it will set a new standard for what it means to be part of the Benedictine Community. I invite you to visit with us on campus to hear and see the transformation taking place.

Thank you for your continued support of our mission. None of this would be possible without you, and we are deeply grateful for your commitment to Benedictine.

With gratitude,

Dave Schroeder '90

President, Benedictine High School

News from the Abbey

Br. Nicholas Spisak, OSB, Grand Advocate for the Cleveland-based Carmona Caravan of the Order of the Alhambra worked with other members collecting at various parishes during September and October. The Alhambra works to ensure assistance to develop social activities for the intellectually disabled.

Fr. Thomas Sanders, OSB, Benedictine's Campus Minister, visited BHS alum Charlie Koppitch '25 at a vocation fair event at Franciscan University of Steubenville on October 10. Both also visited the new College of St. Joseph the Worker dedicated to education in the trades. This is most appropriate, since Fr. Thomas will be working with Matt Falk in the new SEC on the Benedictine Campus when it opens in January and is also currently studying Personal Fabrication at Lorain County Community College to help support this venture. Fr. Thomas also attended the 53rd annual Woollybear Festival in Vermillion, OH with the BHS Marching Band. Fr. Thomas also participated in the **Theology for Teachers-Missionaries of the Imagination** at the Cleveland Center for Pastoral Leadership led by Fr. Ryan Duns, SJ, learning how to deliver education that is both informative and transformative.

Holy Year Pilgrimage Weekend October 3-5 sponsored by the Catholic Chapel community of the Naval Submarine Base. Bishop Parkes was the guest of Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB who organized the joint event with the local Catholic parish, Our Lady Star of the Sea in St. Marys, Georgia. **Bishop Stephen Parkes** of Savannah requested a tour of the naval base and then participated in a 30 car motorcade to the downtown parish where he presided at a Holy Hour for Religious Vocations in which Bro. Gregory led the Litany of the Saints. Bro. Gregory also spoke at the weekend Masses at the Base Chapel and led a "Theology on Tap" session.



Br. Gregory, Fr. Gerard ministers with Bishop



National Officers of the **First Catholic Slovak Union** were invited to dinner at the abbey on Tuesday, October 14, where they presented a truly significant historical gift to the community for the renovation of the **Slovak Institute**. This is the largest single monetary gift ever given to the Institute since its founding in 1952.

FCSU presents historic donation for Slovak Institute: Tom Ivanec, Board of Directors; Fr. Michael; Milan Kobulsky, Institute Director; Ken Arendt, National President; Kevin Collins, National Secretary, Bishop Roger Gries.



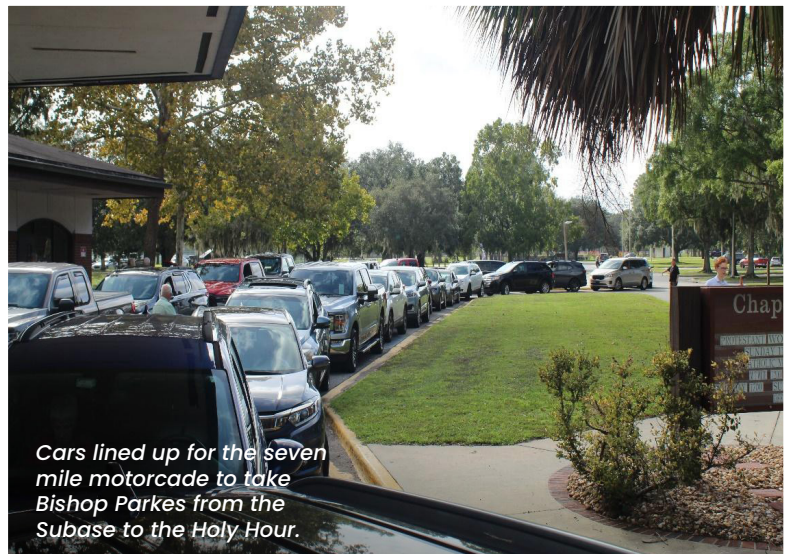
The weekend of September 12-14 saw **Abbot Gary Hoover, OSB** and **Fr. Michael Brunovsky, OSB** heading to Washington, DC for the 60th anniversary of the Mother of Sorrows Chapel at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Donated to the largest Catholic church in North America in 1965 by the First Catholic Slovak Union, the striking chapel with its green marble offsetting the white marble image of the Pieta and a huge cross with crown of thorns, is one of the most visited chapels of the Basilica. They participated in the Mass to mark the occasion celebrated by Greensburg Bishop Larry Kulick.



Abbot Gary at the Sorrowful Mother Shrine



and Pilgrimage Parkes of Savannah.



Cars lined up for the seven mile motorcade to take Bishop Parkes from the Subbase to the Holy Hour.



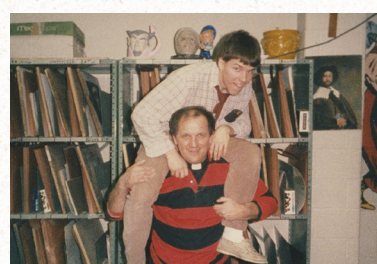
September always means Cycling Retreats for BHS students. This is the 31st year that **Fr. Michael Brunovsky, OSB** has led these retreats along the Cuyahoga Valley Tow Path. He was assisted this year by **Fr. Thomas Sanders, OSB**, Faculty members **Michael Younes** and **Greg Stovicek**, and principal **Dominic Fanelli**.

Fr. Michael with Cycling Retreat Participants.



Brother Gregory Coyne standing in the atrium by his post as school porter, where he greets students every morning and handles attendance. He's been hard at work there and has even started a club rugby program at Benedictine, which has seen some success early on.





Shortly after vespers on Sunday evening, October 19, 2025, **Fr. Joachim Pastirik, OSB** passed into eternity at Regina Health Center. He had been under hospice care since inoperable cancer was found a month earlier. “Fr. Joe” as he was known by so many, spent his life bringing the joy of Christ to many lives.

Born in Lakewood, Ohio with his twin brother John on December 9, 1941, Joseph Pastirik is the son of John (deceased) and Margaret (Bobovnick). He attended Sts. Cyril and Methodius Elementary School and graduated from Benedictine High School with his brother John in 1960. After two years of studies at St. John’s University in Minnesota, he entered the Benedictine Order at St. Andrew’s Abbey in Cleveland and received the religious name of ‘Joachim’ after the saintly father of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

He completed his Bachelor’s degree in classical languages from Borromeo Seminary-College in 1965 and continued studies for the priesthood at Blessed Sacrament and St. Mary’s Seminary being awarded a Master of Divinity degree in 1969 when he was ordained with his classmates Fr. Dominic Mondzelewski, OSB and Fr. Timothy Buyansky, OSB by Bishop William Cosgrove on June 7, 1969.

Fr. Joachim taught senior theology, technical drafting, studio art, and art appreciation at Benedictine High School from 1969 to 2001. He earned a B.A. in art education from Baldwin-Wallace College in 1976. His third floor art studio was one of the most popular classrooms at BHS during those years with a relaxed atmosphere and background music conducive to fostering creativity. The free-flowing conversations in the art room also became a means for Fr. Joachim to offer guidance and practical advice to students who would hesitate to bring up some topics with their parents. He was



moderator of the Benedictine Parent-Booster Club, a position he held for over 20 years.

Fr. Joachim forged many life-long friendships with former students and encouraged a number of them into successful art-related careers. He celebrated more weddings than most of his brother monks and continued to minister to many of these families through times of joy, challenge, and sorrow over the years.

It is hard to find a photo of Fr. Joachim without a smile because he enjoyed making others smile and laugh. He was famous for giving out pictures of the "Smiling Jesus" and would liven up Christmas parties at nursing homes or Booster Club meetings or abbey gatherings in costume as Santa, Pope John Paul II, or any number of celebrities and personages.

Fr. Joachim's command of the Slovak language was much appreciated in his work with numerous Slovak-American fraternals and organizations. He was a member of the First Catholic Slovak Union (Jednota), First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association (Ženská Jednota), Slovak Catholic Federation, Slovak League of America, Cleveland Slovak Radio Club, and served as chaplain to Group 5 (Northern Ohio) Slovak Catholic Sokols and Cleveland Slovak Zemplin Club.

Together with his talented brother John, Fr. Joe has added energy and fun to many fundraisers, dinners, anniversary parties, and weddings with his rendition of a variety of dance styles from polka and csardas to "electric slide" and line dancing. His own musical talent contributed to the prayer life of the monastery where he served as one of the abbey organists since the time he was a seminarian.

In the monastery, Fr. Joachim has also served his confreres generously in a variety of positions: Subprior (3rd superior) 1991-1995 and Prior (2nd superior), 1995-1999. He served on the Senior Council, was a member of the abbey evaluation committee and served as a community barber for over four decades.

He offered weekend assistance at the following parishes in the Diocese of Cleveland: St. Peter (Lorain) 1969-1972, St. Charles (Parma) 1972-1975, Assumption Parish (Broadview Heights) 1975-1991, St. Barbara (Cleveland) 1991-1994, Sts. Cyril and Methodius (Lakewood) 1994-2014.

Due to declining health, Fr. Joachim moved to Regina Health Center in Richfield, Ohio, in December of 2014. He continued to enliven fellow residents and staff by drawing, celebrating Mass, assisting with the sacraments and visiting. As time went on, he lost the

use of his legs and was confined to a wheel chair. However, he never lost that interest in others, continued to use his talents in the various activities at Regina Center, and enjoyed the company of his confreres, who visited him monthly as a community.

A month before his death, Fr. Joachim was diagnosed with inoperable metastatic cancer. He decided to let things take their course. He passed away peacefully on the evening of Sunday, October 19.

The community received the body in the abbey church at 2:30pm on Thursday, October 23, followed by a wake and Mass of Resurrection at 7:00pm that evening. Burial was Friday morning, October 24, in the monastic plot at Calvary Cemetery in Cleveland. Please remember our confrere, Fr. Joachim in the customary Masses and prayers. May the Loving Lord, whom Fr. Joachim served, and the many people touched by his service, smile and good humor, welcome him into the heavenly realms.



Abbey Benefit

The annual Abbey Benefit, held this past July 17, 2025, was a wonderful evening of fellowship and generosity in support of the monks of St. Andrew Abbey and their ongoing mission of prayer, work, hospitality, and service. Over 100 guests gathered to celebrate and contribute to the Abbey's important work, enjoying an atmosphere filled with gratitude, community, and faith. The event included vespers with the monks along with cocktails and fellowship in the Abbey's beautiful refectory & courtyard.

Thanks to the generosity of all who attended and supported the event! The monks extend their heartfelt appreciation to everyone who made the evening a success from sponsors and volunteers to each guest who shared in the spirit of giving. Stay tuned for next year's Abbey Benefit date - we would love to have you join the experience!



Abbey By The Numbers

Abbey Appeal

\$186,867.50

Abbey Benefit

\$110,034.00

Total # of gifts

933

Student Spotlight

When Benedictine played St. Ignatius in Football on September 26th, the headline we remember was the 16-14 win.

But an underrated headline was the Benedictine Marching Band performed without their captain, **Cameron Huggins '26**. That's because Cameron was chosen to participate in the Ohio State Honors Jazz Band Weekend. In order to qualify, Cameron had to audition and be nominated, which he was by Benedictine Band Director Hannah Westfield.

"We worked with members of the Ohio State Jazz Band Ensemble and the Directors of the program, Mike Smith and Dave Powers. When we attended the weekend, they split us up into two bands: Scarlet and Gray. Based on my audition, I was chosen as the lead trumpet for Gray."

Initially, Cameron undersold this achievement. To put it into context, there were a lot of Columbus Area high school musicians but also members of bands across Ohio and outside of it. Some people flew in to participate in this Weekend.

"It's really impressive that Cameron was asked to be Trumpet First Chair for this ensemble" Benedictine Band Director Hannah Westfield said.

From Cameron again:

"Meeting the Directors was really interesting, we got to hear about their careers and what it takes to be a musician professionally. We also got to hear the college ensemble play and they blew us away."

Over the two days, Cameron participated in 4 rehearsals Scarlet and Gray played a concert on Sunday.

"At first, I was nervous but I settled in and it became smooth sailing. Just a lot of talented musicians there. There was some culture shock, I didn't realize the differences between Columbus and Cleveland and even though they are only two hours away. Overall, definitely a great experience"



Cameron Huggins '26



Matthew Furst '26

Isaac Sprogis '27

First Place at VEALE FOUNDATION'S THINKFEST

Our Benedictine Honors Microeconomics Class taught by Mr. Dodds went to John Carroll on October 8th to participate in the Veale Foundation's Thinkfest. Along with students from St. Ed's, Chagrin Falls, and Olmsted Falls, our guys got to hear the story of professor and entrepreneur Dr. Jeffrey Stamp. Dr. Stamp is a professor at the University of Minnesota who has created numerous food products including Baked Lays Potato Chips.

During the morning, the teams had to create an invention or product from a Pringles can. 14 teams competed with a vote to determine the top 6 teams. Those teams then had a student representative make a presentation pitch to the crowd. 4 of the top 6 teams had a Man of Benedictine get up in front of the crowd and make their team's final pitch. The winning team did have two Bengals on it, **Matthew Furst '26** and **Isaac Sprogis '27**. Mr. Sprogis delivered the final pitch that helped earn his team first place.

The guys had an amazing time learning about how to develop entrepreneurial ideas and collaborating as a team to contribute to a final product. Thanks to the Veale Foundation, John Carroll University, and Mr. Dodds for making this happen for our Men of Benedictine.

Campus Happenings



HOMECOMING COURT 2025

(L-R) BRENNAN O'CONNELL, KELLEN DONNELLY, LUCA BUCCI, ANTHONY VITANTONIO, LUCAS DOLAN

Our **Homecoming Dance** was held Saturday, October 4 inside Trueman Memorial Fieldhouse and was a great success thanks to our Faculty and Staff volunteers, our student photographers, and our 200+ guests who had a great time.

Thanks to all who helped put on this event and congratulations to our Homecoming Court of **Brennan O'Connell ('29), Kellen Donnelly ('28), Anthony Vitantonio ('27), Lucas Dolan ('26) and Homecoming King Luca Bucci ('26).**

The Bengals held their **Homecoming Pep Rally** a few days prior to the dance with all of our fall sports teams getting recognized for their hard work this season. The student body ended the event with a volleyball single elimination tournament with our seniors, the class of 2026, taking down the sophomores, juniors (who were victorious over the freshmen), and faculty.



We concluded the pep rally by singing the Alma Mater in the center for the Rufus Courtyard.

During our Homecoming Week festivities organized by Student Council, our Bengals got to enjoy dunking their teachers in the Rufus Courtyard during lunch. Many, many, many Bengals paid for the opportunity to do this and many teachers were dunked. Student council was also selling ice creams and snow cones, all great treats to enjoy during those sunny September days.

Thanks to our faculty for participating and thanks to those students who took their turn the next day to get dunked!





Our new **Cleveland History Club** started by **Mark Francioli '71** (Pictured upper right) has gotten off to a strong start! Mr. Francioli began with a lecture on Cleveland Municipal Stadium, complete with hotdogs and Bertman Ballpark Mustard which was thoroughly enjoyed.

The week after, **Dennis Sutcliffe '69** (Above, far right) gave a talk on Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, the creators of Superman. He focused on their upbringing and ties to Cleveland and Glenville and how the early Superman comics connected to their Cleveland upbringing.

The following meeting, **Jim O'Hare** (Lower Right), former Benedictine teacher and father of Bill '05 and Pete '07, gave

a talk on the strong Rock and Roll connections in Cleveland, including the impact of prolific concert promoter Mike Belkin of Belkin Productions, who produced the World Series of Rock concert series along with WMMS. Jim is a co-owner of Act 3, which produced and helped publish Mike Belkin's book: Socks, Sports, Rock, and Art.

It's been a great start with some knowledgeable guest speakers with Benedictine ties. Great job by Mr. Francioli for innovating and implementing great ideas!



September 8th was The Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and we held our first All School Mass of the 2025-26 school year. We were joined by the newly ordained Fr. James Parisi, the parochial vicar of St. Mary in Painesville, OH.

Thank you to **Fr. Parisi** for celebrating Mass with us and we look forward to the many times we will gather together to celebrate Mass in the Abbey Church this year.



Eighteen members of this year's Student Council came together for a transformative day centered on spiritual growth, service, and teamwork. Their focus was on recognizing the unique value of our individual skills—and how, when combined, those skills help us thrive together as a group.

They began their day at Jennings assisted living facility in Garfield Heights, where we experienced an uplifting and peaceful spiritual gathering. Following Mass, they split into service teams to assist Jennings staff with resident activities, including patio exercises and trivia games. It was a meaningful way to connect with the community and give back.

They are pictured above with Sister Juanita Shealey, CSJ, who received the 2025 Bishop Roger Gries Heart of a Shepherd Award at the First Friday Club of Cleveland's Bishop's Luncheon in February.

At 94, Sister Juanita continues to inspire through a legacy of more than 70 years in Catholic education, ministry and social justice.

In the afternoon, they headed to Go Ape Zipline and Adventure in Mill Stream Run Reservation, Strongsville. This was designed to build leadership, teamwork, and help them confront fears—knowing they had each other's backs on the course. From rope bridges to zip lines, every obstacle was a chance to grow stronger together.





RENEWING THE DINING HALL FROM DECADE TO DECADE

As Benedictine High School approaches its centennial anniversary in 2027, memories will surface in the minds and hearts of thousands of alumni about the years they walked the halls of the Home of Champions.





Current alumni are too young to remember the halls in the first BHS which was located at Saint Andrew's Parish at East 52nd Street and Superior Avenue from 1927–1929 or the second BHS which was located in the now demolished abbey/school combination building in the lower part of the current property.

However, Men of Benedictine from the Classes of 1940 to the present share memories of the “new building” that opened in the fall of 1940 and is still in use.

Over the years this building has undergone many transformations most especially in the central area that has been used as the gymnasium, then as the cafeteria, and now has been unveiled as a new **Student Commons**.

The location of this important space in the middle of the classroom building reflects its role over the years as the **heart of the school**. From 1940 to 1962, that central space was actually two stories high when it functioned as the **gymnasium**. Windows opened from the second floor hallway that allowed students to watch **athletic events** and **sports rallies** from a higher perspective. The old gym also was used for the popular annual **Dads' Club Bazaar** that featured raffle booths and games of chance. During football season the gym rocked with cheers during weekly football rallies with the walls covered with homemade signs to motivate teams and fans to victory. Speeches by the legendary coach and later athletic director **Joe Rufus** and popular school chaplain (and later abbot) **Fr. Jerome Koval, OSB** shook the rafters.

As Benedictine's enrollment leveled off at just under a thousand students in the early 1960's, more space was needed for its expanding athletic program and for a separate auditorium. The school's first capital campaign was successful and resulted in the construction of a new gymnasium that could



From 1940 through 1962, the gymnasium was the original space of today's Student Commons! Source: 1960 Yearbook

seat over a thousand fans. The former two-story gymnasium in the heart of the school was divided into a **first floor cafeteria** and a second floor auditorium that became part of the life of the school in 1962.

For the last 60 years, the Benedictine cafeteria provided more than **daily lunches** for students. It hosted weekly evening **bingo games** for three decades that helped the bottom line of the school's budget. Later, Fridays of Lent would feature **Fish Fries** in the cafeteria that raised funds for various student clubs and organizations. Customers included many alumni who used the dinners as a way to visit the Home of Champions and meet old friends and teachers. Long time popular art teacher **Fr. Joachim Pastirik, OSB** was in demand to decorate the cafeteria for **student dances** like Homecoming and adult dinner dance celebrations such as the annual **Parent-Boosters Club Mardi Gras**, the **German Club's Oktoberfest**, and the popular **Italian Festa**. His theme décor went from Roman toga party to Country Western line barn dance.

The cafeteria has conveyed the Benedictine hallmark of Hospitality by providing a central location of gathering not only students, but welcoming guests. For many years, the bishop and clergy of the Diocese of Cleveland enjoyed a festive **St. Benedict's Feast Day luncheon** on March 21 in the cafeteria. Monks celebrated their **profession**

of vows and ordination with family and friends and for nearly a decade operated a unique **Abbey Deli** catering service from the cafeteria under alumnus **Dave Zelenka '72** and master baker **Brother Ambrose Matulak, OSB**. Each December Slovak-Americans from across the greater Cleveland area are welcomed to Benedictine to experience the traditional **Viliya Christmas Eve celebration and dinner** with unique delicacies such as sauerkraut mushroom soup and dough balls rolled in honey and poppyseed (bobalky).

Over the years, the cafeteria was also a place where students could interact with adults outside of the classroom. Until the 1970's, a monk was assigned as the cafeteria manager who would usually make his presence felt during lunch hours visiting the tables. **Fr. Maurus Maruskin, OSB** was a familiar figure in the 1960's with his characteristic reflex of striking his chest as if to clear his lungs. **Brother Benedict Klucas, OSB (Brother Ben)** would come up from the abbey kitchen to chat with students during lunch periods. In later years, **Brother Patrick**



Before



During



After



Ryan, OSB (Brother Pat) would enjoy his "angels" who would frequent his snack stand near the front door of the cafeteria as he dispensed hot dogs, chips, ice cream bars and doses of everyday wisdom. At times a faculty member would be assigned cafeteria supervision and most principals and disciplinarians made it a point to walk through the cafeteria to remind students that certain behavior was expected of them even during lunch. At times some faculty members chose to eat their lunch with the students at tables near the inner wall. Some, like veteran math teacher, **Mr. Rick DiGeronimo**, would offer tutoring during lunch.

Now, a new experience is being provided for students in the venerable dining hall. In October, the new **Student Commons** welcomed students for lunch after a period of substantial renovation. The essence of the "heart of the school" remains as a place of welcome, encounter, friendship, and celebration. Key features include:

- Modern, flexible seating that supports everything from small group work to large events.
- Warm, natural materials that create a sense of comfort and welcome.
- Updated food service areas that reflect contemporary dining needs while preserving the tradition of shared meals.
- Community-centered design, including display areas for student art, digital screens for school news, and space for pop-up events or performances.
- A new porch for outdoor eating and new booths along the inner wall as an alternative to the traditional lunch tables.

The renovation of the new Student Commons is an initial step in preparing the Benedictine student body, as well as the faculty and staff, for the approaching centennial celebration of BHS in 2027.

Benedictine Pathways Update

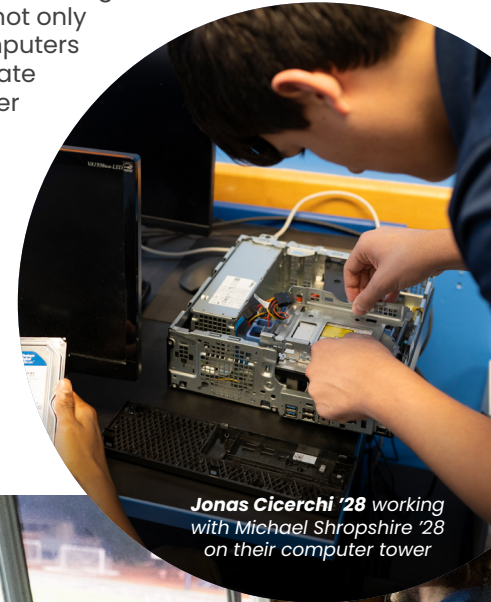
COMPUTER REPAIR

This year, Benedictine High School is proud to be able to offer our first Career Pathway course in our Computer Repair class. This course is designed to engage the students in real world experiences to prepare them for possible careers in information technology. Students who complete the course will earn a CompTIA A+ certification that qualifies them for entry level IT positions as a full time career right after high school or simply a way to earn money during summers while in college. The students currently enrolled in the course not only learn how to troubleshoot and repair computers but also how to professionally communicate with members of a team and the customer base that they support.

Once fully trained, students may be assigned to support tasks within the school. They will also have an opportunity to work with partner organizations to help prepare donated computers for deployment at grade schools, non-profit organizations and families in need. The students have been excited to learn these new skills and are ready to give back to the community!



Michael Shropshire '28 working on his computer tower



Jonas Cicerchi '28 working with Michael Shropshire '28 on their computer tower

MEDIA

The Benedictine Media Pathways Program has continued to make strides this year with many students taking advantage of the opportunities to tell our story.

Good Morning Benedictine has resumed production as a class, with students reporting, writing, shooting, and editing episodes weekly to watch on Friday. The crew of six Bengals includes **Terence Johnson '26, Adan Rosales '26, Patrick Lloyd '27, Maurquise Norman '27 Juelz Bryant '28, and Jalon Goode '28**. All of these guys have been on camera and worked behind the scenes to produce good work. Some highlights include in-depth reporting on our new Student Commons, some entertaining Man on the Street interviews, and some quality sports coverage.

Our Benedictine Sports Broadcasting Network (BSBN) was hard at work this fall, producing 10 Varsity Football Broadcasts, 8 of which appeared on Rock Entertainment Sports Network (RESN) which goes over-the-air on channel 22.1 and on Spectrum Channel 979. The BSBN added instant replay this year which greatly enhanced the experience for the viewer at home.



The "Control Room" of BSBN at Shula Stadium, including **Dresden Washington '28** (middle) operating the Roland Instant Replay for the broadcast.



Luca Bucci, Analyst, calling the game with Patrick Lloyd (Photo Credit: HSLD)



Jonathan Queener operating Camera 2 (Photo Credit HSLD)



Terence Johnson (left) and **Jalon Goode** (right) deliver the news on Good Morning Benedictine.



Image Caption

A Benedictine Hero and a Reunion in Eternity

by Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB '71

On this past October 6, 2025, Mayor Ron Van Kirk of Brooklyn, Ohio announced the start of construction of major renovations for the **James P. Brock Playground and Park** located at the intersection of Vandalia Avenue and Ridge Road. The playground will be closed all winter as it undergoes \$500,000 in renovations and upgrading of equipment.



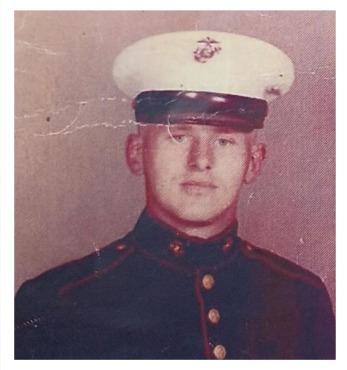
James Brock, BHS Class of 1960

I don't think many Men of Benedictine know that **James Patrick Brock**, for whom this park was dedicated on Memorial Day in 1966, was a 1960 graduate of the Home of Champions who can indeed be considered a champion and a hero as the **first military casualty of the Vietnam war from the greater Cleveland area, the first of over 500**. This December 10 marks the 60th anniversary of Jim Brock's death and affords the Benedictine family a time to reflect on his life and ultimate sacrifice.

One of Jim's closest friends from the **BHS Class of 1960 was John (JC) Sullivan** who died last September 22, 2024 at the age of 81. John was a well-known figure in the Cleveland Irish community who was the co-host of the Gerry Quinn Irish Radio Program on Sunday mornings and a prolific writer. Several years ago, I was given the text of a talk that John Sullivan gave on **Sunday, July 27, 2008** at the re-dedication of the James P. Brock Playground. It was very personal and profound as only a close friend could compose. By a strange, if not providential series of recent events, I came across that article in early September this year by accident and noticed that the 60th anniversary of James Brock's death would be this December when our next issue of the ORA et LABORA would be published. So, I decided to research and write this article.

An on-line search for members of the Brock family provided the obituary of **Mrs. Katherine Brock** from 2003. Apart

from James, three other children were listed including a daughter Eileen who was a member of the **Little Sisters of the Poor** who operated a well-known nursing home on Richmond Road in Cleveland for over a century. My mother spent her final year of life there. Eileen's religious name was **Sister Julienne**.



Corporal James Brock USMC

I immediately felt a strange inner urge to find out if Sister Julienne was still around to provide me with more information about her brother the Marine hero. I mailed a letter to the Mother Superior of the Little Sisters of the Poor in Baltimore and within a week I received an e-mail from Mother Jeanne Mary with the rather astonishing news that Sister Julienne had just passed away three days before my letter arrived at the age of 87 at the Little Sisters' home in Pittsburgh.

Mother Jeanne Mary explained that Sister Julienne was very devoted to her brother's memory. After her death

the other sisters were talking about the emotional cross she bore because she was not permitted to attend his funeral in 1965 because of the rules of the order at that time. Mother Jeanne Mary observed, **“Receiving his picture (with the letter) today was like she sent us a message telling us she was now united with Jim and all is well.”**

Within a week, I was able to obtain photos and more news stories about our alumnus James Brock that showed him to be a very well-loved and popular son, brother, friend, and Man of Benedictine. His cousin, **Jo-Anne Curry of Westlake**, said that “Everybody loved Jim. He was very special and a lot of fun and he really enjoyed his four years at Benedictine.”

She explained that Jim’s Irish family first lived in East Cleveland and then moved to Brooklyn where he attended St. Thomas More Parish and grade school. His father James, a native of Ireland, served as the custodian at the parish. The family experienced suffering early when Jim’s younger brother Tom died at the age of 5.

Jim joined the Marines after his 1960 graduation from Benedictine. Before he deployed overseas, he went to New York to visit with his sister Eileen with whom he was very close. She was already in the convent and known as Sister Julienne. In an emotional exchange, he gave her his Marine pin from his uniform. She later revealed that at that moment she knew in her heart that she would never see him again. She wore that Marine pin until her recent death.

Sister Julienne’s ominous premonition came true on December 10, 1965. As recounted in a January 22, 1966 letter from **U.S. Marine Corps Captain Richard Theer** to Jim’s parents:

“On 10 December at 6:00 PM our Company was engaged in a large scale operation against the Viet Cong a few miles south of Que Son. Company “E” was assisting another unit which was pinned down by heavy enemy fire. While engaged with the enemy, Jim’s squad leader became a casualty. Jim took over the squad and continued to assault the enemy. As his squad advanced toward the enemy, his position was struck by several enemy mortar rounds. Corporal Brock was wounded mortally by the mortar fragments and died immediately. Jim received the Last Rites of the Church by Father J.J. Glynn, Lieutenant, Chaplain Corps, U.S. Navy. It may comfort you to know that a Memorial Mass was held in our Company area and was attended by all of Jim’s many friends. Jim was one of the finest young noncommissioned officers I have ever served with in the field.”



Sister Julienne Brock in 1965 and in 2025

Jim’s cousin Jo-Anne was 17 years old and a student at Regina High School when the tragic news reached the relatives in Cleveland. She remembers that Jim’s body, in full Marine dress uniform in a glass covered casket, was returned to Cleveland shortly before Christmas accompanied by another Marine from Ohio. Before his funeral, an all-school Mass was held at Benedictine for Jimmy attended by his family.

Jo-Anne was there and said it was “Incredibly beautiful and a great comfort for the family.”

In his 2008 eulogy at the re-dedication of the James Brock Memorial Playground in Brooklyn, Jimmy’s BHS classmate JC Sullivan recalled the funeral which was held on New Year’s Eve:

“December 31, 1965 dawned in typical Cleveland winter fashion – extremely cold with a gusty wind blowing off Lake Erie. After a Requiem Mass at St. Thomas More Church, over 100 cars drove to Calvary Cemetery on the East Side. A Marine firing squad commanded by Staff Sergeant Louis Minter saluted their fallen comrade with a rifle volley that startled most of those present. It was followed by the haunting reverie of Taps from a hidden bugler....clutching the tri-folded U.S. flag that she was presented, Corporal Brock’s mother threw herself over the gray casket and sobbed, ‘Oh, Jim!’ My heart was wrenched from my chest; I tasted the salt of my own tears.”

The following Memorial Day in Brooklyn, a bronze plaque donated by the local American Legion was unveiled at the dedication of the **“Corporal James P. Brock Memorial Playground.”** There was a parade and a large crowd with representatives of city government and the military. Some years later, **Jim’s younger brother John** joined the Marine Corps and surprisingly was also sent to Vietnam. Knowing of Jim’s sacrifice, he was kept in Saigon and out of battle. He died in 2011 at the age of 60.

I am still amazed at all the “coincidences” that became part of the writing of this story. It was as if the heavenly reunion of a brother and sister who both laid down their lives in service of others received Divine permission to send a reminder to those of us below to honor their memory and legacy by also living lives of sacrifice in imitation of Jesus Christ. If you happen to drive by the James Brock Memorial Playground in Brooklyn during this Christmas season, say a prayer of thanksgiving for the short, but significant life of a true hero and Man of Benedictine.

FALL SPORTS

RECAP

Football

The Bengals finished their regular season 8-2 with a ton of memorable moments. They opened with a tough win over Gilmour, 21-19, avenged their playoff loss to Padua 7-0, went to NDCL and won 28-14 with their opponents sporting Cathedral Latin Purple throwback jerseys. Along with beating Lutheran East and West, St. Vincent-St. Mary, and Erie Prep, a very memorable moment had to be defeating St. Ignatius, 16-14, at Don Shula Stadium as the visiting team at our current home stadium.

Losses to a hard nosed Lake Catholic 6-3 and the tough and talented VASJ Vikings 33-22 were the only blemishes on this regular season. The Bengals fell to Akron East in the first round of the OHSAA Playoffs on October 31st.

Corde Blair '27 on his way to the endzone vs Gilmour Academy (Photo: Chinja Scott '27)



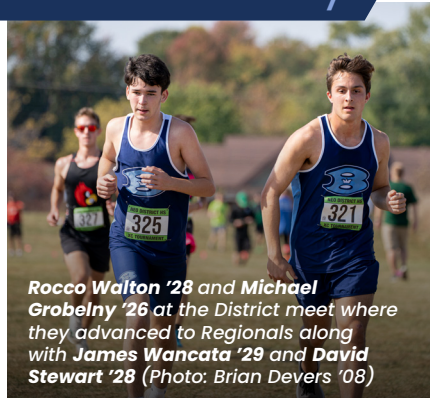
Soccer

The Bengals finished the year 1-15-1 with a young team that shows a lot of promise despite what their record said. There were many freshmen and sophomores who played quite a bit on Varsity and with most of the team returning, they should improve their record next year under Head Coach Remi Niewiarowski. Their final game was a 2-0 loss to Elyria Catholic in the OHSAA playoffs, an outcome that promises good things to come for this young team. Thanks to seniors **Elliot Traben '26** and **Jordan Grove '26** for your contributions to Benedictine Soccer.

Dresden Washington '28 congratulates David Mujiza '27 after Mujiza's goal vs VASJ (Photo: Brian Devers '08)



Cross Country



Rocco Walton '28 and Michael Grobelny '26 at the District meet where they advanced to Regionals along with James Wancata '29 and David Stewart '28 (Photo: Brian Devers '08)

The Cross Country team made good strides this year and advanced 4 runners to the Regional Meet for the first time in several years. Freshmen **James Wancata '29** tended to lead the Bengals in finishes this year and finished

at Regionals with a time of 18:58, followed by **Michael Grobelny '26** (19:35), **David Stewart '28** (19:55), and **Rocco Walton '28** (19:56). Coach Jill Thein has done well with this group in her 2nd year after the program took a one year hiatus. Many thanks should go as well to Michael Grobelny for his leadership on this team.

Golf

The Benedictine Golf Team had a quality year including some nice results in their first year in the North Coast Conference. Senior **Ryan Winterich '26** earned 2nd-Team All-Conference when he shot an 83 in the NCC Tournament. The Bengals held a great senior night with many memorable moments and although they didn't advance out of OHSAA Sectionals at Quail Hollow, they played well under Head Coach Dr. Martin Lindway and will return good players next year. Thanks to seniors **Winterich, Luca Bucci '26,** and **Cameron Huggins '26.**



Coach Lindway, President Schroder '90, Luca Bucci '26, Ryan Winterich '26, Cameron Huggins '26, and Principal Dominic Fanelli on Senior Night (Photo: Brian Devers '08)



BENEDICTINE HIGH SCHOOL
Scholarship Granting Organization



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To estimate how much you might owe the state in taxes, review line 8C on the 1040 form you filed for the previous year.



Make Your Contribution

Give securely on our website or by check to the "BengalSGO" to benefit our students in transforming to Men of Benedictine.



Claim Your Ohio Tax Credit

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"My husband and I are big believers in Catholic high schools and want that education to be available to all students. The BengalSGO is the easiest and most cost effective way to do it. We contribute to the SGO and get a full Ohio tax credit for the donation."

Mary Ann Henderson

"I have used the SGO the past 2 years. It is easy, simple and doesn't cost you a dime... the money comes from the state of Ohio. You can donate up to \$750 per person, \$1,500 for joint filing of your tax liability and you get reimbursed from the State of Ohio. Your tax dollars go to BHS. Go Bengals!"

Tony Delguyd '74

"Giving through the BengalSGO is such a simple way to make a real difference. I do it because I want today's students to have the same opportunity and formation I was fortunate to receive at Benedictine. It's good to know that my support is directly helping families and strengthening the Benedictine Community."

Peter Blazunas '05

Give today or to find out more at:

cbhs.edu/bengalsgo

BengalSGO contributions can be mailed to

Benedictine High School
Attn: Advancement Office
2900 MLK Jr. Dr.
Cleveland, OH 44104.

When contributing by check, the check must be made out to **BengalSGO**.

For more information or details of how to participate, please contact **Mr. Chris Lorber '04** at 216-421-2080 ext. 246 or lorber@cbhs.edu.

By The Numbers

TOTAL FUNDS RAISED

\$6,699,644.26

Gifts from 7/1/2024 through 6/30/2025

ANNUAL FUND



1,134

Total Annual Fund Benefactors



694

Alumni Benefactors



Donors from

36

States

Funds Raised Through The 2024-2025 Annual Fund

\$1,439,328.29

BengalSGO

BENEDICTINE HIGH SCHOOL
Scholarship Granting Organization

138 Donors raised

\$122,005

DAY of GIVING

264 Donors raised

\$131,143.99

Blue & White

GALA

35 Sponsors
560 Attendees

\$767,081

SAVE THE DATE

Reunion Weekend 2026

June 12-13, 2026

We look forward to celebrating the 1's and 6's at **Stag Night** on **Friday, June 12**. To assist in the planning for your respective class, please contact alumni@cbhs.edu

2021

2016

2011

2006

2001

1996

1991

1986

1981

1976

1971

1966

1961

1956

1951

1946

Class of 1954



Chuck St. John '54 celebrated his 50th anniversary working as a member of the sideline chain gang this fall. St. John was a Bengals quarterback who played on two city championship teams in 1952 & 1953. Chuck has been actively involved at the school since graduation through volunteer work, philanthropic support, and continuing the strong St. John legacy by sending sons and grandsons to Benedictine.

Class of 1967

Donald Caserta '67 is pictured here with two of his grandsons, Charlie Koppitch, class of 2025, and Stephen Zachlin, class of 2020. Donald loves that they continued the Benedictine tradition and especially proud they were both valedictorian of their class!



Class of 1981 and 1982



The 1980 Division III State Champions gathered together for their 45th reunion on Friday, October 17 vs. VASJ at John Carroll University. The Bengals defeated Hamilton Badin, 9-3 to secure the school's 3rd football state championship. Joining the teammates at their 45th reunion were the wives and family members of deceased teammates, Tim Lang and Greg Roscoe.

Class of 1981



Congratulations to **Jim Peck '81** on ringing the Opening Bell at the New York Stock Exchange and officially becoming a public company on July 23, 2025. Jim serves as the CEO of NIQ, the world's leading consumer intelligence company!

Class of 2006

Frank Mercurio '06 lives in Shreveport, LA and is stationed at Barksdale Air Force base. Earlier this year, he was appointed Lieutenant Colonel. Frank and his wife, Elizabeth, have a four year old daughter and are expecting their second daughter in November.



Class of 2009

Jarred Wilhite '09 met NASA astronaut Suni Williams at a meet-and-greet event at his workplace, NASA's Glenn Research Center. This was a special moment for Jarred as he got to meet a NASA astronaut with roots in Euclid, Ohio, who has set many records in her spacewalks and missions to the International Space Station.



Class of 2016

Ron Moner '16 married Emma Johnson on October 19, 2024 at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Gates Mills, Ohio. The pastor of St. Francis, Fr. Steven Flynn, a friend of the Moner family, witnessed their vows.

Class of 2017

Nick Moner '17 married Jessica Lynne Taylor on December 14, 2024 at St. Brendan the Navigator Parish in Hilliard, Ohio. Fr. Michael Brunovsky, OSB drove down from Cleveland to celebrate the nuptial Mass. Nick ended his seven years of service in the U.S. Army in November of 2024. He has been working as an accountant at Preformed Line Products Company in Mayfield for the past three years. He has also been working on another degree in Accounting at Cleveland State University. In his free time, he has been officiating hockey after obtaining a USA Hockey certification. He and Jess are expecting their first child in February of 2026.



Class of 2020

Christopher Moner '20 and Maria Johnston became engaged this past May, 2025. They met at West Virginia University during their undergrad studies. They are both still at WVU working on their masters degrees. They are looking toward a November 2, 2026 wedding.

Class of 2023

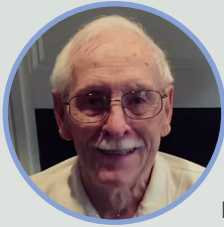


Sam Ali II '23, was married on August 16, 2025 to Atayvia Minter. Groomsmen at the wedding were Nathan Lazare '23,

Rodney Washington '23, and Dawson Williams '23. Sam also recently joined the Cleveland Clinic Police Department and announces that he and his wife will be expecting a baby girl later this year!

In Memoriam

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



Leonard Wisniewski, 99, of the Class of 1944, died on July 8, 2025 in Cranberry Township, Pennsylvania. He was preceded in death by his wife of 51 years, Emily. Together they raised four children: Dennis, Michael, Maryann, and Terese. After graduating from BHS, Leonard served in World War II stationed at Pearl Harbor. He worked for 30 years for U.S. Steel Corporation in business management as a pioneer of data processing. After retiring, he and Emily operated a stationary and office supply shop in Bellevue, Pennsylvania. Leonard was an active charter parishioner of St. John Neumann Parish in Wexford, Pennsylvania. He was very proud of his Polish heritage.

Francis Dinda, 92, of the Class of 1951, passed away on August 18, 2025. He was married for 50 years to his late wife Jane. He is survived by his children Chris Dinda and Ann Dinda. After starting as a bank examiner with the Federal Reserve, Frank had a long career as a Vice-President with National City Bank. He was a U.S. Army Veteran and a Fourth Degree member of the Knights of Columbus. He served on the financial advisory board of the abbey. He most valued his Catholic faith and was involved in retreat and evangelization efforts and was an active member of Assumption Parish in Broadview Heights where his funeral Mass was celebrated.



James Marvin, 72, of the Class of 1971, passed away on August 2, 2025. He was preceded in death by his wife Karen. He is survived by his two sons who were also graduates of BHS: Paul '01 and Nick '08. He was a man who knew how to fix anything and had all the tools and parts to do so. He valued his seven grandchildren.

James Piskura, 70, of the Class of 1972, died on July 3, 2025 after a long illness. He was a member of a large Benedictine family with brothers Chuck '64, Andrew '67, and Thomas '69, and uncle of Kevin '02. He worked for over 50 years for Heinen's grocery stores. He was a devout Catholic and served in numerous capacities at St. Martin of Tours Parish in Maple Heights including PSR and RCIA teacher, Eucharistic minister, and member of the parish council.



Norbert Roglin, 92, of the Class of 1951, passed away on September 6, 2025. After graduating from Benedictine, he joined the United States Air Force. He retired from a career working in the Navy Finance Center in Cleveland. He was active in many Catholic and civic groups including the Knights of Columbus, the St. Rose Drama Club, the Cayoma Club, and singing with the Cleveland Civic Light Opera and many other choirs. He was also active with the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) camp in North Madison. His funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Richard's Church in North Olmsted.

Louis Aliberti, 85, of the Class of 1957, died on July 20, 2025. He was the beloved husband of 57 years to his late wife Charlotte with whom he raised four sons: Philip, Louis, Mark, and Gregory. After graduating from Benedictine, Louis earned a degree in electrical engineering from Case Institute of Technology. He later served as an officer in the U.S. Air Force. He had a long and accomplished professional career spanning more than 55 years as an electrical and sales engineer and later as a real estate agent. He was active in many organizations. His funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Noel's Church in Willoughby Hills.



RECENTLY DECEASED

The following members of our Benedictine Community have gone on to Eternal Rest between July 1, 2025 and August 31, 2025. May they rest in peace.

Class Of	Name	Deceased
1944	Leonard C. Wisniewski	7/8/2025
1948	Edward J. Zambory	7/1/2025
1951	Francis A. Dinda	8/18/2025
1951	Norbert L. Roglin	9/6/2025
1953	James P. Molnar	9/3/2025
1954	Robert J. Popovic, Sr.	7/28/2025
1957	Louis J. Aliberti	7/20/2025
1963	Joseph M. Kavalecz	7/21/2025
1967	Daniel G. Lawson	7/16/2025
1971	Alan L. Adoryan	8/26/2025
1971	James I. Marvin	8/2/2025
1972	James P. Piskura	7/3/2025
1973	Michael K. Taylor	7/10/2025
BHS Friend	Kim A. Paduano	8/28/2025

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.

Dear Alumni & Friends,

As we embrace the joy and reflection that the Christmas season brings, we are filled with profound gratitude for the alumni, families, and friends who continue to support the mission of Benedictine High School and St. Andrew Abbey. Your generosity fuels not only the education of our young men, but also the spiritual and monastic life that has shaped generations.

Thanks to your continued support, our students benefit from academic rigor, spiritual guidance, and meaningful mentorship rooted in our Benedictine values. Each gift, whether of time, talent, or treasure, makes a lasting difference.

As we look ahead to a new year, we warmly invite you to deepen your connection with our community. Here are a few ways you can continue to make an impact:

- » **Visit Campus** – Share your story and career path with students through experiential learning opportunities and classroom visits.
- » **Give to the Annual Fund** – Every gift strengthens our programs and supports the next generation of Benedictine leaders. The lifeblood of a Benedictine education, the Annual Fund, provides support to scholarships, operations, athletics, retreats, and programmatic initiatives.
- » **Attend the Blue & White Gala** – Join us on **March 14, 2026**, for an evening of celebration and support. We identify the Gala as our best way to tell the Benedictine story. See it firsthand and bring others who have never attended – you'll be impressed!
- » **Celebrate Reunion Weekend** – Reconnect with classmates and faculty on **June 12, 2026** at our annual Stag Night. If you're a graduate of a class ending in '1 or '6, this is your respective milestone year. We'll help you identify class contact information to spread the word to your classmates.
- » **Support through the BengalSGO** – Participate in this scholarship opportunity that can redirect your state tax dollars to help our students. The article enclosed in this issue shares just how simple and effective this offering is!
- » **Plan a Legacy** – Consider including Benedictine or St. Andrew Abbey in your estate plans to ensure your values live on. Think about your legacy, how you would like to be remembered, and how either of these two institutions (Benedictine High School and/or St. Andrew Abbey) can benefit for years to come.

Please reach out with any questions on any of the bullet points above. We are here to help! Feel free to contact me directly at lorber@cbhs.edu.

This season, may you feel the warmth of our gratitude and the blessings of your generosity. Thank you for being a vital part of our Benedictine family!

*Wishing you a joyful Christmas and
a blessed New Year.*

Chi L '04

Mr. Chris Lorber '04
Chief Operating Officer



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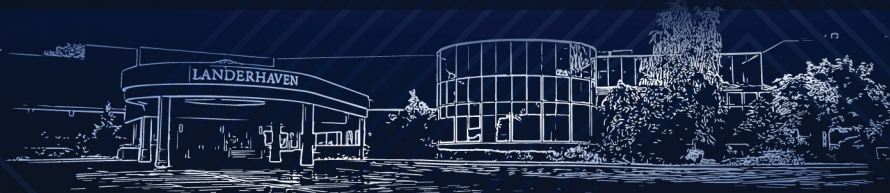
Blue & White

GALA

SATURDAY 03/14

6 PM

LANDERHAVEN
6111 Landerhaven Dr.
Mayfield Heights, OH 44124



BEFORE, BETWEEN, AND BEYOND