

The Lance

St. Mary's High School • Lancaster, NY
Summer/Fall 2023



The Academies at SMHS Gear Up for Year Two

At the beginning of last school year, The Academies at St. Mary's High School were launched as a new academic initiative. The Academies give students the opportunity to participate in one of ten focused areas of study, similar to college majors.

Students registered online for one of the Academies, just like college students register for their own classes. Freshmen were automatically enrolled in The Academy of the First Year, which focused on study skills and "the ways of St. Mary's," giving them a great foundation to succeed throughout high school.

The Academies ran twice a week for 60-minute sessions from September to March. This new program coexists with St. Mary's NYS Regents curriculum and the Lancer Life Curriculum, which includes classes like public speaking, leadership skills, and personal finance. Each Academy was taught by a team of St. Mary's faculty and staff members, and all Academies were overseen by Dean of Academics, Keith Junik.

The first year of The Academies at St. Mary's High School was largely a success. As with any new program, some fine-tuning is necessary to continually improve this new initiative for the students. Some of those improvements in year two will include having students choose one Academy per semester (two per year), adding two new Academies and dissolving two, naming only one or two teachers to lead an Academy, moving the time of day the Academies will take place, allowing freshmen to choose one Academy, and requiring seniors to take the College Prep Academy to end their high school careers.

"We believe that The Academies at St. Mary's High School is the way of the future," said Dean of Academics, Keith Junik. "As a private school, we have to offer something unique to our students and families - something that will give them a competitive edge going forward. The Academies allow us to do just that," he concluded.

There were so many highlights from the first year of The Academies at St. Mary's High School. So let's check them out!

Read more about The Academies at SMHS on pages 2-3

➤ Education



Alex Walter '23 (left) teaches English to a group of students, and Daniel Pokornowski '25 (right) teaches his group a Math lesson at St. Mary's Elementary.

After partnering with our neighbors at St. Mary's Elementary School in December, members of this Academy were shuttled over to SME to actually be in the classrooms and work directly with the amazing teachers at the school. Every member of the Education Academy has been able to gain experience teaching different grade levels and subject areas to really hone in on their passions and interests.

The St. Mary's families working together and enhancing each other's academic programs is such a wonderful thing!

➤ Business/Entrepreneurship/ Finance

OnCore Golf co-founder Bret Blakely (below) spoke with members of this Academy about his experience getting OnCore Golf off the ground in 2011.

He said it takes a great idea, lots of hard work, great people, and a little bit of luck to have a successful company. OnCore Golf is now one of the biggest names in the sport, and to have that type of company homegrown in Buffalo, NY, is inspiring for our entrepreneurship students. Bret gave some great business tips to our students.



The Academies at SMHS - 2023

Finance

Education

Engineering

Media Marketing

Global Citizenship

Health Science

Professionals

Hospitality/Event Planning

Content Creation

Law

Criminal Justice

Entrepreneurship

➤ Global Citizenship

Nya Ricks '25 and Vanessa Bolla '25 design the Academy patch at Stitch Buffalo

The International Relations & Global Citizenship Academy welcomed Dawne Hoeg, the Founder and Executive Director of Stitch Buffalo, to speak to students about the organization and its mission this past November. Stitch Buffalo is a textile art center committed to empowering refugee and immigrant women through the sale of their handcrafted goods, inspiring creativity and inclusion through community education, and stewarding the environment through the re-use of textile supplies.

The students in the Academy had an idea to collaborate with the ladies of Stitch Buffalo, as well as Ms. Hoeg, on a Global Citizenship patch for the Academy. Stitch Buffalo has a workshop and storefront on Niagara Street in Buffalo where they produce many products, including pins, clothing, ornaments, and jewelry. The Academy viewed the handiwork of these amazing women and worked to design the Academy patch with the help of these women.

On the final day of the Academies, students received their patches. Students learned about and participated in the full product development process and created something that spans borders and cultures through multi-lingual collaboration.



The completed patch

Ava Evoniuk '24 poses with the finished patch



➤ Marketing & Journalism

The Marketing and Journalism Academy published several pieces, contributed to the school's social media accounts and yearbook, and heard from several guest speakers throughout the year.

The Academy also set up a mock press conference with Buffalo Sabres General Manager, Kevyn Adams (*right*). Kevyn is also a proud Lancer Dad of sophomore, Jackson Adams. Students prepared questions, covering everything from the trade process to some of the hardest parts of Kevyn's job and how to evaluate talent to put the best roster on the ice. This type of exercise helps students get a feel for sports journalism and media in general.



In December, St. Mary's alumnus and anchor at News 4 WIVB Buffalo, Chris Horvatits '09 (*left*), also spoke with the Academy about his experiences in the news industry. Chris studied Broadcasting and Mass Communications at SUNY Oswego. He then began his reporting career in Watertown before taking a job as a reporter at WHEC-TV in Rochester where he eventually became the noon anchor. He has been back in the 716 for the past few years at News 4 WIVB Buffalo and is so happy to share the stories that make Buffalo the amazing city that it is.



Katie Kawa '06 (*right*) came to speak to the Academy about her job at Rosen Publishing. A Canisius College graduate with degrees in English and Communications, Katie realized through an internship opportunity that journalism was not the path for her and found a way to pursue her love of writing and editing in the world of book publishing. This journey mirrors what The Academies at St. Mary's High School are all about - try as many different things as you can now before you get to college and have to lock yourself into a major. Katie has written over 250 books throughout her 12 years with Rosen Publishing and has edited hundreds more.



➤ Hospitality/Event Planning

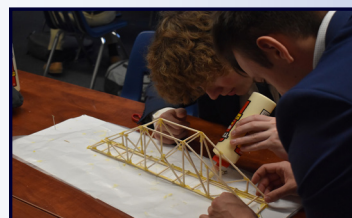
The Hospitality and Event Planning Academy was responsible for the behind-the-scenes work for several school events, including the Homecoming Dance (*first right*) and Alumni Easter Liturgy.

The Academy was also able to go on some field trips and hear from guest speakers in the industry, including a tour of Russell's Steaks, Chops, & More to see what life is like in the world of fine dining here in Buffalo. The Academy learned about the art of service, food prep, and even got to check out the kitchen. (*second right*)



➤ Engineering

The Engineering and Experimental Design Academy worked on projects throughout the year, like building model bridges, and completed many labs to get a feel for what these types of classes will be like at the next level. As a guest speaker, Mike Fattey '01 spoke with the Academy about his experience in the field, working for Moog in the Space & Defense Group for 14 years and now for Elbit Systems of America as a Sr. Staff Algorithm Engineer.



Ryan Morcio '23 (left) and Tyler Herrscher '23 (right) build their bridge



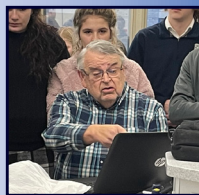
Mike Fattey '01 speaks to the Academy about his experience as an engineer

➤ Law & Criminal Justice

The Law & Criminal Justice Academy welcomed CDFR Haji Shareef (*right*), a US Navy veteran, to speak with students about his role in the military, his work with Mercy Flight, and training his canines. CDFR Shareef is the founder of Musketeer Canine LLC and PTSDogs 4 VETs, where he specializes in training service dogs for assistance with PTSD.



The Academy also welcomed a very special guest speaker, Stephen Kasper (*right*). Kasper is a world renowned consultant on fingerprinting and latent evidence and is even a published author on those topics. He retired from the Amherst Police Department, Lee County Sheriffs, and Florida Department of Law Enforcement and taught at Edison College.



With our students, he discussed the different types of fingerprints and what causes them to be left behind, showed them how to dust for fingerprints and lift them, and showed them how to chemically process fingerprints taken off of pop bottles and cans.

Owen Dernbach '23 lifts a fingerprint



➤ Performing Arts

The Performing Arts Academy welcomed award-winning voice actor, Len Tobin ("Robin Leonard"), to speak with students and do some vocal acting exercises for radio and television commercials. Students learned the nuances of timing and inflection and explored some of the more unconventional and behind-the-scenes opportunities available in show business.



Luis Bermudez '23 works with voice actor, Len Tobin

➤ Health & Human Services

The Health and Human Services Academy covered doctors and nurses to social workers and everything in between. These students completed several labs, mental health evaluations, and heard from guest speakers from all different fields of medicine.



Kristin Pronobis '23 (back) and Claire DeAngelis '23 (front) dissect a lamb

➤ Visual Arts

Members of the Visual Arts Academy worked with different media throughout the year - paint, photography, graphite, sculpture, digital media, even fashion.

The Academy completed The Memory Project, which links children together all over the world through art. St. Mary's was linked with a group of children in Nigeria. Our students completed portraits of these Nigerian children, allowing them to truly see each other, regardless of any cultural, religious, or circumstantial differences. The portraits were then sent to the Nigerian children for them to keep forever (*above*).



A Message from Head of School, Kevin Kelleher '89

St. Mary's Family,



On the brink of the start to another school year, we reflect back on the past 365 days and all we accomplished in the classroom, on the athletic fields and stage, and in the community. We also look forward to the potential each new school year brings to accomplish even more.

Last year saw the introduction of **The Academies at St. Mary's High School**. This new academic initiative took years of planning to come to fruition. We are thrilled to enter year two as we continue to develop this program into an academic tradition of unparalleled excellence. You can read more about The Academies at St. Mary's High School in this edition of "The Lance."

Our graduates continue to move onto the best universities in the country. Our athletes continue to win championships and earn accolades for their play as well as their work in the classroom. Our performers continue to wow audiences with their talent. Our students continue to serve their community at local events, food drives, summer camps, fundraisers, and more.

Enrollment continues to be a source of pride here at St. Mary's, as we will begin the school year with **over 400 students**. We continue to welcome the best students and families to St. Mary's, so we must, in turn, provide them with an exceptional student experience. We have made several capital improvements throughout the building, including **enhancements to our stage, technology upgrades in all classrooms, and perhaps most notably, a new cafeteria**.

While we have accomplished so much, there is still so much work left to be done. I am motivated by the truly exceptional men and women I work alongside and serve each and every day to make our alumni and supporters proud.

Enjoy this look into all of the great things happening here at St. Mary's, and please **make a donation**, if you're so inclined, by scanning the code below or using the envelope found inside this edition to help us continue on this amazing path for our students.

Keep safe. Keep the faith.

K. Kelleher

Kevin Kelleher '89
Head of School



Scan here with
your phone's
camera to make a
donation! 3

Be Part of The Academies at SMHS!

Do you work in one of the industries represented by The Academies at SMHS? Are you a retired doctor, lawyer, or performer? We'd love to have you guest speak to one of our Academies about your experience! Contact Amy Kawa at akawa@smhlancers.org for more information.

School News

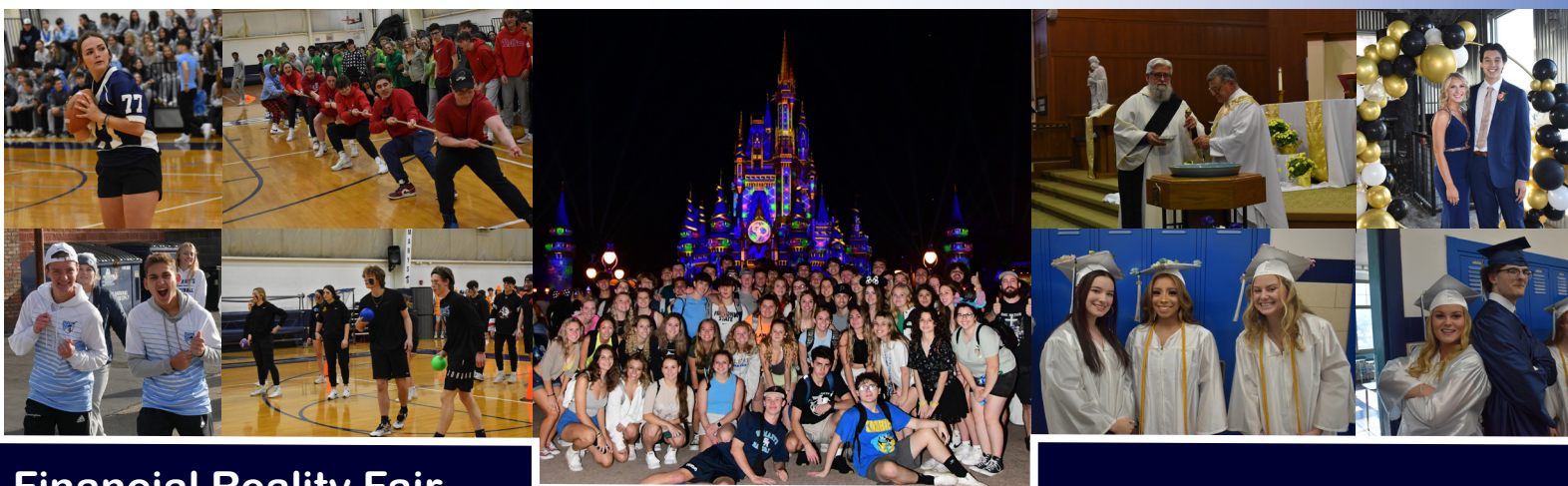
2022-23 School Year Feels Like Home Again

There's no question that the world is a different place than it was a few years ago, but our ever-amazing faculty and administration not only weathered the storm and changes that came with it, but they helped St. Mary's thrive during that time. We're stronger now than we were before the pandemic in so many ways. St. Mary's has always been a family, and one which you can't really describe unless you have been blessed to be a part of it. That sense of togetherness, that family, has never felt stronger than it does in 2023.

This past school year felt like a wonderful homecoming - a return back to all of the things that make St. Mary's such a special place to be. We enjoyed liturgies, dances, assemblies, clubs, and service opportunities to simply come together as a school community.

The Fall brought the return to school, Homecoming Week, Fall Play, NHS Induction Ceremony, Halloween, freshmen and sophomore retreats, and the senior trip to Walt Disney World. Winter brought with it more snow (and the storm of the century), St. Mary's Nights in the Village, Christmas Show, and Spirit Week. Spring promised nicer weather (eventually) as well as the musical, junior retreat, Easter break, Evening of Fine Arts, senior portfolios, prom, graduation, final exams, Gala, and Reunion Weekend. You can see some of these highlights below.

It's hard to believe we're just a few weeks away from starting the fun all over again. Here's to a great school year ahead!



Financial Reality Fair Comes to St. Mary's

St. Mary's juniors and seniors got a dose of reality thanks to Bank on Buffalo. Bank on Buffalo started financial reality fairs a couple of years ago for schools across the area. As stated on Bank on Buffalo's website, "The fair is an immersive experience of tangible financial scenarios, allowing students to go through a simulation of real-life experiences related to spending, saving, and budgeting."

Prior to the event, students chose the career they will most likely pursue and were then given an entry-level salary to go through the exercise with. Students challenged their assumed lifestyle, making financial decisions like where to live, what kind of car to buy, choosing health insurance plans, cell phone plans, and streaming platforms, spinning the "Whammy Wheel," and more.

"Our students really bought into this Financial Reality Fair," Dean of Academics, Keith Junik said. "They were engaged the whole time, rotating from station to station, and I think they were surprised to see that life after graduation, even with a solid career, might not be as easy as they thought. There are so many factors to consider, and it's important for us, as an educational institution, to be able to provide our students with opportunities to be in those real-world situations, so they gain that invaluable experience."



Students learn about car insurance options



Students get the lowdown on rent and housing options



Bridget Barr '23 spins the "Whammy Wheel"

Seniors Visit Buffalo Churches

As part of their senior portfolio project, the Class of 2023 visited two of the most ornate, historical, and beautiful churches in the city of Buffalo. The seniors visited Corpus Christi and St. Louis churches and learned from the wonderful staff the historical significance of each church and about many of the amazing details in these holy spaces.

After the tours, the class enjoyed a delicious lunch at Illo DiPaolo's. This day has become a great tradition for our seniors.



St. Mary's Names Associate Deans of Academics & Student Life

Lindsey DiGiacomo '02



As one of two new Associate Deans, DiGiacomo will focus on the school's ACE and DEI programs, school safety measures, and student services. She takes on the Associate Dean role after having served as the Assistant Director of Admissions for the past three years.

"I am excited to step into this new role because a great Associate Dean is someone who is passionate about making a difference in the lives of students and in their school," DiGiacomo said. "That is exactly how I feel about St. Mary's - passionate. It is my home and has been for over 20 years. Making St. Mary's the best that it can be is something that I could not be more dedicated to, and I am more than willing to take on the responsibility of being in a leadership position here at our school."

DiGiacomo has Master's Degrees in Literacy and Psychology with a concentration in Education. She was a classroom teacher for eight years and worked in the Lancaster District for years before coming back home to St. Mary's.

Cleo Weiss



As the second Associate Dean, Weiss will take on the school's dress code, attendance matters, information services, and discipline policies and the enforcement of those policies. She steps into the Associate Dean role after working with the Dean of Academics and Dean of Admissions in various roles at the school over the past eight years.

"St. Mary's has been a huge part of my life for the past 20 years," Weiss said. "My oldest son, Zach, started school here in '02, and the rest of my children, Jake '10, Regan '17, and Josh '19 followed suit. So, I have always had a lot invested in this school and have stepped up to fill many big roles here over the past eight years. This feels like the perfect fit to apply everything I have learned from those roles to shape the policies of this great school for the students we serve in a clear and consistent way as the Associate Dean."

Weiss also runs her own business, The Learning Garden, a childcare center, and operates two locations five days a week.

St. Mary's Graduates Accepted Into Top Universities

The Class of 2023 at St. Mary's High School amassed over \$14 million in scholarships and was accepted into over 80 different colleges throughout the United States.

The 119th Commencement Ceremonies were held right here, on campus, May 25, 2023. We wish our seniors all the best of luck as they head off to the next step in their journeys this Fall.



Commencement Speaker Mrs. Mary Wilson

"Never underestimate the power of your actions, no matter how small they may seem. A kind word, a smile, or a helping hand, can brighten someone's day, boost their confidence, or even change the trajectory of their life. Be the person who lifts others up, who sees the potential in everyone, and who makes a positive difference wherever you go." - Mary Wilson

St. Mary's was honored to welcome Mrs. Mary Wilson as the Commencement Speaker for our 119th Commencement Ceremonies. Mrs. Wilson is good friends with former Athletic Trainer of the Buffalo Bills, Bud Carpenter. Bud's daughter, Sarah, graduated from St. Mary's High School this year. Mrs. Wilson and Sarah are pictured together (right).



Mrs. Wilson is extremely supportive of many different Buffalo organizations. She currently serves as one of the three Life Trustees appointed to guide the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, a grantmaking organization established by her late husband, Ralph Wilson. Mrs. Wilson has been an outspoken champion for the city of Buffalo ever since Ralph Wilson first brought her to the city in 1990 for the Bills' home opener.

Mrs. Wilson holds a degree in physical education from Trinity University. She established the Western New York Girls in Sports Program in 2006 and is a former board member of the USTA Tennis Foundation, playing in the Wimbledon Championships in 1976. Mrs. Wilson was also a past President of the National Senior Women's Tennis Association, playing in many international events and became ranked number one in the 60 and over division.

Athletics

Women's Soccer Goes Back-to-Back

Back in November, St. Mary's Women's Soccer Team defeated Nichols 4-3 in OT for the Monsignor Martin High School Championship (*right*). The championship marks the second in a row for the Women's Soccer Program. Junior Kristin Middaugh scored three goals in the match and was named the championship MVP. Senior captain Claire DeAngelis assisted on all three of the goals. Middaugh '24 has committed to Providence College, while DeAngelis '23 will continue her playing career at Charleston Southern University this Fall.

After winning the MMHSAA title, the Lancers moved onto the State Championship downstate. St. Mary's beat Staten Island's St. Joseph Hill Academy 1-0 in the semifinals, with DeAngelis scoring the lone goal and goalie Caprianna Vendetti '24 recording the shutout. In the finals, the Lancers ran into a buzz-saw, St. Anthony's, and came up just short. St. Mary's has a young squad and only lost three seniors to graduation, so they'll be back at it again in a few weeks looking for the three-peat.

Freshman Panella Selected to US National Team

Freshman defender Michaela (KK) Panella was selected by the U-15 US Youth National Team to travel overseas this past Spring and earn her first National Team cap. She represented Team USA vs the Netherlands and Germany.



Women's Volleyball Captures 19th State Title

#19 seems to be a lucky one for St. Mary's Volleyball. After winning their 19th straight Monsignor Martin Championship (35th overall) in straight sets against Sacred Heart, the team captured its 19th State Title in program history in thrilling fashion on their home court.

After a long day of volleyball, Xaverian of Brooklyn took the Lancers to five sets, but St. Mary's came out victorious. St. Mary's rallied from down 21-17 to win the opening set 25-23 behind some key points from junior tri-captain Gwen McCarthy and classmate Sarah Barnum. The Lancers rolled that momentum into a 25-10 win in the second set to take a 2-0 lead. But Xaverian then won 25-14 and 25-21 in sets three and four to send the match into a decisive fifth set.



Tied at 14-14, an overpass block by McCarthy sparked a closing 11-5 run that included four kills from junior tri-captain Carson Tyler. For the tournament, Tyler finished with 36 kills, 41 digs, and 11 aces, while McCarthy added 23 kills and 62 digs. Senior Gianna Blair (Eastern Tennessee State University) totaled 17 kills and nine blocks, and Sarah Barnum was key with 21 kills and 11 aces. Sophomore setter Madison Keem, the granddaughter of longtime coach Don Pieczynski, dished out 117 assists. Sophomore libero Lauren Payne finished with 59 total digs.

Men's Soccer Gets Quality Wins

The Men's Soccer Team put up one of its best seasons in years with wins against the likes of St. Joe's and Canisius. The team ranked as high as third in a mid-season *Buffalo News* poll.

The 10 seniors on this team really made the difference and made St. Mary's Soccer a force to be reckoned with, and we are so appreciative of their hard work and commitment to the program. Three of those seniors, Alex Bonuito, Braden Callahan, and Tyler Warmington, will keep the team chemistry going as they all head to Nazareth College this Fall to continue their education and soccer careers. The other seniors on the team included Vinny Bargnesi, Kyle Norton, Owen Dernbach, Max Laistner, Liam Keyes, and Andrew Carlson.



The team poses after their 3-0 win over Canisius

Golf Wins All-Catholic Tournament

The Lancers tied Canisius High School 203-203 in The Monsignor Martin All-Catholic Team Championship in an epic battle at Harvest Hill Golf Course this past October.

Senior Jacob Dantonio medaled amongst all players with a -2 (34). Freshman Cole Jones shot a +2 (38), and first-year golfer Nate Johnson came through in the clutch to post a 44 to secure the tie.

Seven Lancers qualified to move on to the State Championships this past June. Dantonio will continue his academic and golf careers at Canisius College this Fall.



Football - Anthony Zito

St. Mary's High School has named Anthony Zito as the school's new Head Football Coach. Zito (*far left in photo*) took over the team after Matt Ard officially stepped down from the head coaching position this spring. Zito brings a wealth of experience to the job, serving as the Defensive Coordinator for the Lancers for the past four seasons. He has also spent the past nine years with Lancaster Youth Football, coaching at all levels, including Pee-Wee, Freshmen, JV, and Varsity.



Coach Zito is looking forward to the opportunity in front of him. "I am very blessed to have the opportunity to be the Head Football Coach at St. Mary's High School," Zito said. "I will continue to build on what Coach Matt Ard started four years ago."

Zito's son, Owen, graduated in 2023, and his daughter, Scarlett, is going to be a sophomore this year.

As a player, Zito graduated from Lancaster High School in 1990 where he was a First Team All-NYS and All-WNY linebacker. He was also a *USA Today* High School All-American and Division I Defensive Player of the Year. Zito was also awarded the Shane Conlin Award, which is given to the best linebacker in WNY. He then went onto Buffalo State College where he was an All-American and was named to the All-Decade Team (1990's, First Team).

Men's Basketball - Frank Propis '18

St. Mary's alumnus, Frank Propis '18, has been named the Head Coach of the Men's Basketball Team. He accepted the head coaching job after four years of coaching at St. Mary's, two years at the freshmen basketball level and two years at the junior varsity basketball level. The junior varsity team went 30-11 during his two seasons as head coach. Propis also served as an assistant coach on the St. Mary's varsity team during those four years.



Propis knows there's no place like home. "Being a St. Mary's graduate, I wouldn't want to coach anywhere else," Propis said. "The culture here is something so unique and something I'm so excited to continue to be a part of and grow even further."

Propis was part of the St. Mary's Basketball Team that won the Class B Manhattan Cup in 2017 before heading off to Hilbert College where he graduated with a degree in Communications. He is currently pursuing his Masters in Education.

St. Mary's Athletic Director Zach Weiss knew Propis was the right fit for the job. "Frank has been an instrumental part of the Men's Basketball Program for really the past decade – first as a player and now as a coach," Weiss said. "Our players will continue to respond well to that type of first-hand experience and the energy Frank brings."

Women's Hockey Gets Historic Win

The St. Mary's Women's Hockey Team started their season with a thrilling 4-3 OT victory against the Monsignor Martin Athletic Association Team to mark their first official win in program history.



The win was monumental for many reasons. It was not only the team's first win, but it also came against the team made up of players from across the Monsignor Martin Athletic Association - the team that these girls would find themselves a part of if St. Mary's didn't have a team of its own.

The Women's Hockey Team finished the season in eighth place in the WNY Girls Varsity Ice Hockey Federation and looks forward to building on this success next season.

Men's Hockey Makes It to Semis

The Men's Hockey Team finished with a 13-3-5-1 overall record this season. There was a great deal of parity in the Monsignor Martin this season. St. Mary's tied the likes of St. Joe's, St. Francis (twice), and Canisius.

To start the post-season, St. Mary's defeated Canisius in the quarterfinals 5-0. The team then came up just short in the semifinals, losing to St. Francis 1-0.

Women's Basketball Looks Forward to Next Season

The St. Mary's Women's Basketball Team had some quality wins this season, but ultimately came up just short against buzzsaw and traditional league power, Cardinal O'Hara, in the playoffs. After graduating only three seniors and no starters, this young team looks to build momentum heading into the 2023-24 season.

Freshman McDonald Has Instant Impact

It didn't take long for freshman Emily McDonald to prove she is other-worldly on the court. She averaged 14 PPG, 6.9 RPG, and 5.4 APG with a season high 28 points against Clarence.

Emily was named First Team All-Catholic and Second Team All-WNY. She already has offers from Purdue, Dayton, Cleveland State, St. Bonaventure University, and the University at Buffalo, among others. We're certainly excited to see what the future has in store for this amazing talent.



Sophomore Williams Hits 100 Points

Sophomore Taydan Williams is the first St. Mary's Men's Lacrosse player to record 100 points. Williams accomplished the feat in just 25 games. The team captain also earned Second Team All-Catholic honors finishing the season leading the team in points (73) and assists (46).



Taydan is pictured (*right*) with his father and St. Mary's Athletic Trainer, Tim Williams, after recording his 100th point on May 15, 2023.

Impressive Showings on the Mat

Nine wrestlers went on to qualify for the CHSAA State Meet including Andrew Carlson '23, Tanner Hartwig '24, Marcus Johnson '24, Sheldon Cunningham '24, Louisa Martin '24, Alex Filozof '26, Quinn Martin '26, Brady Baker '26, and David Rhodes '25 (right).



Sheldon Cunningham '24 placed fourth at the 285-pound weight class, while freshman Quinn Martin took sixth at 110 pounds at the CHSAA State Meet.

Louisa Martin '24 also took first place in the Intersectional Women's Wrestling Championships.

Wrestling Hosts All-Catholics

After hosting last year's State Tournament, St. Mary's found themselves at the center of the WNY wrestling world yet again this season when they hosted the All-Catholic Tournament in January.

Softball Makes It to the Finals... Again!

The Lancers Softball Team has been quite dominant over the past several seasons, racking up regular season and playoff championships. This year, they checked off the regular season championship, but came up just short in the deciding game of a best-of-three series against the Nardin Gators.

Alex Packard '24 was named MMHSAA Pitcher of the Year, NYS Class C Player of the Year, and First Team All-WNY. Ella Dovey '25, Katie Pyszczyk '23, Lauren Payne '25, and Bella Becker '23 earned First Team All-Catholic honors, and Lauren Henrich '24 was named to the Second Team.

The Lancers lost six seniors to graduation but keep a solid core in tact and will look to reclaim the league title next season.



The Lancers pose with the runner-up plaque after losing to Nardin in Game 3 of the MMHSAA Championship.

Cross Country Sends Four to States

St. Mary's Cross Country Team had one of its most successful seasons in recent memory, as four runners went downstate to compete in the State Federation Championships - freshman Victoria Mineo and juniors Isabella Prospero, Casey Black, and Mya Nazzarett (from left to right).



At the All-Catholic Meet, the girls team finished in second place overall. Mya Nazzarett '24 and Victoria Mineo '26 earned First Team All-Catholic honors with Isabella Prospero '24 earning Second Team honors. The boys team came in fifth place overall, and Casey Black '24 finished in second place with an amazing time of 17:26.81. This time earned him First Team All-Catholic honors.

The Cross Country Team also had a 96.89 overall team GPA.

Track and Field Sends Two to States

On the Track and Field side of the running coin, sophomore Ruby Nowak took sixth place in the Division II discus final, breaking her own school record with a throw of 109'2" at the Track and Field NYSPHSAA State Championships. Junior Cash Pawli competed in the 110m hurdles and recorded a personal best of 16.2 seconds.



8 Pawli (L) and Nowak (R) at States

Senior Signings

The Class of 2023 boasts 11 members who will be continuing their academic and athletic careers at different universities across the country.

Division I

			
			
Gianna Blair Eastern Tennessee State University Volleyball	Jacob Dantonio Canisius University Golf	Claire DeAngelis Charleston Southern University Soccer	Emalee Szablewski Akron University Soccer

Division II




Bella Becker
Edinboro University
Softball




Tyler Vohwinkel
D'Youville University
Lacrosse

Division III

		
		
David Argentieri St. John Fisher Cross Country	Alex Bonuito Nazareth College Soccer	Braden Callahan Nazareth College Soccer

	
	
Katie Pyszczyk Buffalo State Softball	Tyler Warmington Nazareth College Soccer

“The Wizard of Oz” Dazzles Audiences

Performing Arts

The Performing Arts Department at St. Mary's High School was abuzz ever since the announcement was made that the classic, *The Wizard of Oz*, would be this year's spring musical.

The show ran to sell-out crowds March 9-11th. The shows were so packed that 100 extra tickets had to be released for the closing night performance. After months of rehearsing, the cast and crew put on an amazing show reminding audiences that there truly is no place like home.

Starring

Dorothy Gale.....Amelia Fontaine '23
 Scarecrow.....Alex Walter '23
 Tinman.....Alex Sylvester '23
 Lion.....Nick Cox '24
 Wicked Witch of the West.....Maddi Davidson '23
 Glinda.....Lizzy Jankowski '23
 The Wizard/Professor.....Tyler Nowicki '23
 Aunt Em.....Bridget Barr '23
 Uncle Henry/Oz Guard.....Jase May '25
 Hickory.....Cierra Williams '23
 Hunk.....Lindsay Luksch '23
 Zeke.....Natalie Wargo '25
 Almira Gulch.....Ashley Black '25
 Nikko.....Hope Jerackas '25

Ensemble

Giuliana Bishouty '26, Lieschen Burkhardt '25, Caitlin Cone '25, Gabby DeMarco '26, Annabelle Lewis '26, Logan May '26, Daniel Pokornowski '25, Ella Pomietlasz '25, Bailey Roberson '26, Thomas Schroeder '25, Ashley Switalski '25, Lillian Tanski '26, Emily Ward '26

Tech Crew

Luis Bermudez '23, Shoya Hill '25, Charlie Kasinski '26, Mya Maher '23, Ethan Bookmiller '25, Brody Carlson '26, Maddy Bonnes '25, Adrianna Robinson '25, Grace Monheim '22



The entire cast of *The Wizard of Oz* / Photo credit: Kelly Tanski



Aunt Em embraces Dorothy
 “There’s no place like home.”



Beware of the Jitterbugs!



Glinda the Good Witch
 says hello to Toto



The Winkies patrol
 the castle



“We’re off to see
 the Wizard!”



The Wicked Witch thinks
 up her evil plot

Performing Arts Department Adds New Directors

After decades of directing the fall plays and spring musicals at St. Mary's, **Heather Ruhland '01**, decided it was time to step away and take some time to enjoy other things in life. No one could put on a show like Ms. Ru, and we're so thankful that she shared her time and talents with so many Lancers over the years, and she will continue to teach Dance and be an invaluable part of the English Department.

With big shoes to fill, St. Mary's welcomed Molly Conrad and Jen VanDuzer-Kerns to take the reigns of the fall play and spring musical alongside Music Director and St. Mary's music teacher, Ryan Kaminski.



Molly Conrad (left) directed this year's Fall Play, *Almost Maine*. She received her B.A. in Theatre as well as Public Relations at St. Ambrose University, where she studied acting and directing. She served as a directing apprentice at Riverside Theatre in Iowa City and taught acting classes to students at the Davenport Junior

Theatre. Her directing credits include *Proof*, *Snow White and the*

Seven Dwarfs, *Almost, Maine*, and *Actor's Nightmare* as well as numerous assistant directing experiences, her favorites being *Hamlet* and *Into the Woods*. Conrad also enjoys the performing side of the arts, having acted in numerous productions around the Midwest as well as touring the U.S. and western Europe with her original music.

She spent a few years in Nashville recording and promoting her albums before meeting her Buffalo-born husband at a writer's night. After spending a year in Minneapolis working at the Old Log Theatre and Fringe Festival, Conrad made the move to Buffalo, thrilled to discover all the warmth and talent in the area.

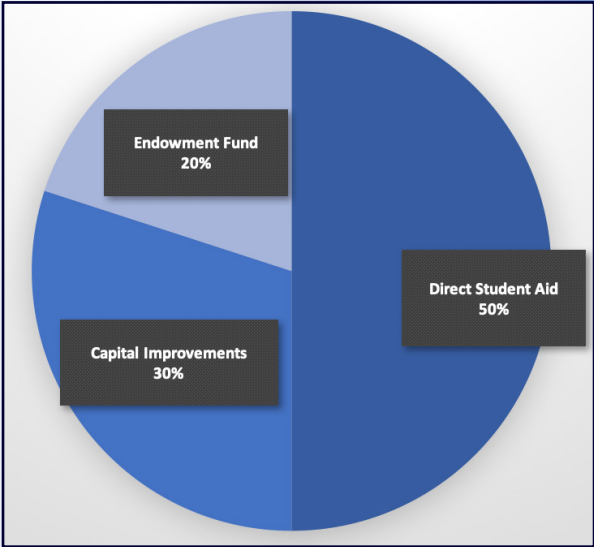


Jen VanDuzer-Kerns (left) took over the Spring Musical. She is the owner of Performing Arts Music in Depew, where she teaches Voice and Piano and is the Director of the summer musicals. VanDuzer-Kerns has added multiple programs and tripled the student size in the six years of owning the business.

She graduated with a Bachelor of Music Degree from Buffalo State College in May 2015, specializing in Voice. She has always had a passion for teaching music and motivating students to show their talents on the stage.

Where Is My Money Going?

That is the question our Advancement Team hears most when talking to our generous donors, so we decided to make a little chart that shows where most general donations end up. Of course, you can always designate your donation to go towards a specific academic program, like the Health & Science Professionals Academy, or a specific team, like the Baseball Team, or the Performing Arts Department. You can also designate your gift to go towards capital improvements around campus or to scholarships and financial aid for students most in need. Our Endowment Fund is also a popular choice for donations to ensure the financial stability of St. Mary's High School for decades to come.



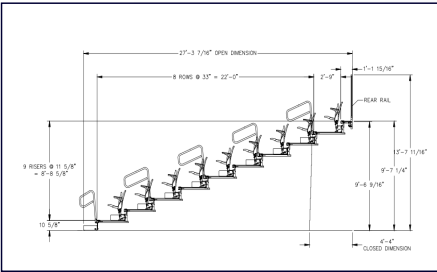
Major Capital Improvements Take Shape

The Gus Galasso Auditorium & Liturgical Center

Thanks to a grant award from Erie County sponsored by Erie County Legislator Frank J. Todaro, "The Gus" has started to see some major renovations.

The front of the stage was completely rebuilt, raising it up so that there is no longer a bad seat in the house. More renovations are in store for this space, including enhancements to the lighting and sound, different seating (*below*), a new paint job, making the entire space more handicap accessible, and more.

Over the past couple of years, St. Mary's has welcomed community groups to use our spaces to rehearse and perform their shows, including Inclusive Theater of WNY, Performing Arts Music, and Frank Rossi's Acting School.



Partnering with these organizations has allowed St. Mary's to apply for a wider variety of grant funding, which allows us to help both these community groups as well as our own student body.

The Cafeteria

The cafeteria has also begun its own transformation into the Henry Even Student Union.

With new flooring, furnishings, and some fresh coats of paint, the cafeteria will be transformed into more than just a place for students to eat lunches. It will become a meeting space for clubs and outside organizations as well as a place for students to study before or after school.

The kitchen itself will also be upgraded with new appliances and tools for our cafeteria team to utilize as well as our students in the Hospitality and Event Planning Academy.



Meet the New Alumni Relations Team

Beck O'Connor



After serving the past eight years as the Dean of Students at St. Mary's, O'Connor will take over the Director of Development position.

O'Connor has been part of the St. Mary's family since 2015 and has worked in various roles throughout his 25 years in education. He also had two daughters, Becca '20 and Molly '22, graduate from St. Mary's.

"I am thrilled to take on this new position and really contribute to helping St. Mary's continue to grow in a financial sense. It's an exciting time here at the school, and I'm excited to work with our alumni and benefactors to better St. Mary's for our current students and future generations of Lancers," O'Connor said.

Amy Kawa '11



Kawa has been the Director of Marketing & Communications at St. Mary's since 2017 and will now add Director of Alumni Relations to her title. She has also been a member of the Advancement Team and served in several other roles throughout her time at the school.

Kawa graduated from St. Mary's in 2011 and knows first-hand what makes St. Mary's such a special place to be. She played sports, was on Student Senate, went to every school dance, enjoyed Brunch for Lunch, went to Mrs. Tytko's AP Stats review sessions, and was even class Valedictorian.

There is also a long family history of St. Mary's ties. She is the sister of Katie Kawa '06 and cousin to Chris '01 and Nick Kieser '01, Adam Hudymiak '01, Emma '20 and Eric Ridolfi '23, and Courtney Kurkowiak '22.

"Since I started working at St. Mary's, it has truly felt like I came back home," Kawa said. "I am blessed to be tied to St. Mary's in a few different ways, so I am excited to reconnect with school-mates, learn more about the accomplishments of alumni who came before me, and share the stories of our younger alums who already have so much to offer this world."

Alumni Spotlights

Colonel Louis Seelig '60

Col. Seelig was born in a small town in Pennsylvania to first-generation immigrant parents and raised as the oldest boy of nine children from a modest family. Through his upbringing, he learned the values of humility and determination, which would serve him well in his life's journey. Louis attended St. Mary's High School and graduated as a member of the Class of 1960. He was a star wrestler for the Lancers, going undefeated in his three years on the team.



He went on to serve in the Vietnam War. As a platoon leader in Vietnam, he was awarded a Purple Heart and Bronze Star for his courage, which further strengthened his resolve to overcome obstacles. He then pursued higher education and went on to become the Comptroller for President Reagan's Missile Defense Program, otherwise known as "Star Wars," a position of great responsibility that really challenged him.

During his time as a Senior Fellow at the National Defense University, he wrote a controversial book that predicted Desert Storm four years before it actually happened, which was a testament to his foresight and expertise.

Now, Col. Seelig is enjoying retirement with his wife of nearly 60 years, Jean. The couple lives outside a small town in Virginia, where they spend as much time as possible with their four grandchildren, traveling, and experiencing the world.

Col. Seelig is also a published author. His book, *Need to Succeed*, tells the story of four intertwined families, Louis's ancestors and family, as they traversed continents and braved the treacherous journeys to America, forsaking their homelands in search of hope amidst adversity. Their indomitable spirit and unwavering determination echo through time, and ultimately, were handed down to Col. Seelig himself.

Col. Seelig was inducted into the St. Mary's Athletic Hall of Fame this past June for his prowess on the wrestling mat. He joined us for the induction ceremony as well as our Scholars Brunch and offered some words of wisdom for those in attendance about the amazing life he has led.

Julia Soluri '18

After graduating from St. Mary's in 2018, Julia Soluri went onto SUNY Fredonia to study Psychology. After her freshman year, Soluri transferred to Buffalo State College and a year later, decided to pivot into the world of communications and changed her major as well.



In 2022, Soluri graduated from Buffalo State with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication and Media Studies. She graduated Summa Cum Laude and was a part of Lambda Pi Eta National Communication Association Honors Society.

Upon graduating, Soluri landed a job at WKBW - 7 News as a Real-Time Editor. Essentially, she's a digital journalist during the week and an assignment editor on the weekends. She writes web articles, makes social media content, and she recently launched a new segment, "7 Things," which airs on the Friday morning and afternoon editions of the news on television. The "7 Things" highlights all of the fun and exciting things to do in WNY on the weekend. She researches these events and then tells the viewers on air all they need to know to join in the fun.

Throughout her year with 7 News, she's had several memorable stories to work on, including going on top of the Seneca One Tower, going to a "Linda Convention," and going to store/restaurant openings. She recently went to the Erie County Fair to pre-view/taste-test new menu items.

Julia is thankful for the relationships she made with the students and faculty of St. Mary's High School and has always felt supported by the people at St. Mary's.

Alumni News

- Barbara (Kocher) Astri '66

became a great grandma in February 2022. She and her husband, Paul, are now the great-grandparents to Remi Rose.

Barb and Paul are pictured here (*right*).



- Julie (Haefner) Duggan '88

recently left New York behind and moved to the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains in southwest Virginia with her husband, Chuck. She now works from home in Business Intelligence for Motion. Her son, CJ, earned his degree in Mechanical Engineering and is currently finishing his MBA, and her younger son, Patrick, is attending the US Air Force Academy.

- After working in education for nearly 40 years and in skilled nursing for nine more years, Thora (Blackwood) Perkins '64

retired in 2017. She then had the time to give back to her Connecticut town of New Fairfield. Her family has lived in New Fairfield since 1989, and every day, she says they realize how fortunate they are to be there. In November, 2020, she was elected to the Board of Finance of the city. In July, 2022, she was able to visit Israel for 11 days on a religious journey. She followed the path of Christ's public life through Galilee and then into Old Jerusalem (*above*).



- Mary (Dobbins) Fleischmann '63

moved to Cincinnati, OH, over 12 years ago to be closer to her son, Kevin, and his family.

Mary, and several of her classmates from the Class of 1963, returned to St. Mary's this past June for their 60th class reunion.

- In July, Cody Klink '12

and his wife, Alyssa, welcomed their first child. Teddy Griffin Klink (*right*) made his debut into the world at 8 pounds 6 ounces. Congratulations to the new parents!



Alumni News

- **Robert Steck '74** retired in December of 2022 after 13 years with The Infant-Parent Institute, Inc., where he served most recently as Associate Director of Finance. He is currently living in Chicago and spends the winters in Puerto Vallarta with his husband of 23 years, Louis.

- **Andrea Seeloff '17** married Christian Archilla in September 2022 (right). Together, they bought a house in Attica in May of 2022. They now run Andrea's business, Seeloff Photography, offering videography and photography services.



- **Emily Gibson '12** completed a graduate certificate in Human Resources Law from the University of Pittsburgh in June of 2023. She currently works for the University of Rochester as an HR Administrator.

- **Katie (Kapanek) Wasielewski '08** welcomed her second child, Jonathan, on January 6, 2023. Katie and her husband, Dan, also have a two-year-old daughter, Madeline.

- **David Saeva '70** is retiring from Giving Home Health Care in August of this year where he has been an RN. The RN position is actually the second career David retired from. In 1995, he retired from the U.S. Air Force. David and his wife, Charlene, now live in Las Vegas, NV and have raised three wonderful children, Daniel (46), Garrett (45), and Samantha (41). They are also blessed with a whole host of grandchildren. You can see their beautiful family in the photo below on a recent trip to Salt Lake City, UT.



12

Alumni Spotlights

Melissa Bochenski '06

Melissa graduated from Canisius College with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and a minor in Business Management in 2010.

While at St. Mary's, she actually took part in the Career Exploration Internship Program (CEIP) and interned for then-Assemblyman Mark Schroeder. Melissa then landed her first college internship at the Erie County Democratic Committee (ECDC) in '09. Then, five months later, she was brought on staff at the ECDC as an Aide before being promoted to Office Manager. In this position, she helped manage the day-to-day operations of the County Party Office, petition processes, fundraising, Chairman's schedule, and coordinated with multiple campaigns.



In 2011, Melissa began her career with Kathy Hochul as an Executive Assistant to then-Congresswoman Hochul assisting with scheduling, the Service Academy nomination process, constituent work, and staffing. Melissa then moved to the private sector with Hochul to work for her as a Strategic Relations Analyst in Government Relations at M&T Bank.

Melissa returned to politics on the "Hochul for Lt. Governor Campaign" in 2014. After Hochul's historic win, Melissa became Deputy Chief of Staff to Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul from January '15 to August '21, overseeing the day-to-day operations of the office, state-wide scheduling, and maintaining relationships with elected officials, community organizations, and constituents for over 50 counties across the state.

In August 2021, after Hochul became Governor, Melissa transitioned to serve the State of NY as the Deputy Chief of Staff to the Governor, continuing most of her duties as well as coordinating with senior staff, the communications team, state operations, and briefings team.

On the job, Melissa has experienced moments her younger self would only have dreamed of. She has met leaders like Presidents Biden and Clinton, Vice President Harris, Secretary Clinton, and many more. She has also played key roles in organizing major events like the Governor's historic Inauguration in '23 and has explored every corner of the state.

Melissa regularly participates in major policy proposals with tangible impacts that make people's lives better, improving things like schools and infrastructure. She's been with the Governor to respond to emergencies, like extreme weather or train derailments, and visited heart-broken communities to share prayers after the unthinkable has happened. Through it all, what's meaningful to Melissa is putting people first and creating better communities and futures for all of the state's residents.

At St. Mary's, Melissa learned what she was interested in and good at, and she followed that path to the highest office in New York State.

Asia Alexander '17

In 2021, Asia graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English with a minor in Comparative Women's Studies from Spelman College, where she also earned the honors designation, Magna Cum Laude. Throughout her four years, Asia was involved with several community and campus organizations, including Sisters Keeping It Real Through Service Inc., the National Council of Negro Women, and the Ethel Waddel Githi Honors Program.



Asia was a Youth Leadership Buffalo alumna during her time at St. Mary's. She also served as the Marketing Coordinator and Administrative Assistant at Leadership Buffalo in '22-'23, working towards making Buffalo a better place. Asia has also worked at Buffalo Collegiate Charter School and Hodgson Russ LLP.

Just this month, Asia was accepted into the University at Buffalo School of Law. She is passionate about education reform and advocacy and will turn these passions into an incredible law career, continuing to affect change on a massive scale, bettering the communities she serves.

In Memoriam

2023 has been a difficult year for the Lancer Family. Families rich in the Lancer tradition have suffered great losses, and we will continue to honor the lives listed below as well as the many others whose time on this earth was cut too short.

Frank Swiatek '61

A wonderful St. Mary's Family, the Swiateks, lost Frank Swiatek of the Class of 1961. Frank was the dear husband of 57 years to his wife, Elizabeth. Together, they had three children, all SMHS alumni - Jeff Swiatek '84, Jennifer (Swiatek) McPeake '85, and Jason Swiatek '91. Frank's pride and joy were also his nine grandchildren, and two of his grandsons, Matthew Swiatek '18 and Maxwell Swiatek '20, are also St. Mary's alums.



Collin Tytko '17

There are no words to describe the feelings of loss, sadness, and grief so many people have felt after learning that Collin Tytko, Class of 2017, passed away.

Collin is the son of longtime St. Mary's math teacher, Mrs. Lynn Tytko, nephew of longtime St. Mary's gym teacher, Mr. Mark Rzemek '79, and the brother to three other SMHS grads - Brandon '11, Katilin '15, and Ryan '18.



Collin embodied everything we hope a St. Mary's student can be. A true scholar athlete, he ranked in the top 10 of his class academically and was a four-sport athlete playing soccer, basketball, baseball, and running track. He was also admired by his classmates, as he was a Marian Award nominee, further acknowledging his strength of character and dedication to serving those around him. An RIT alum, Collin went on to work for Lockheed Martin.

In just his short time on this earth, Collin created quite the legacy and was a true example of how to live a life for others. Here at St. Mary's, we will ensure that legacy lives on so future generations of Lancers will know how special Collin Tytko was and can try to emulate his kindness, drive, and talent.

Evelyn Skalski

The St. Mary's community lost an absolute legend this year. Mrs. Evelyn Skalski was a pillar of St. Mary's High School for 42 years. For every single one of those years, you could find her in the cafeteria doing what she loved - cooking for all of her kids at St. Mary's. To Mrs. Skalski, that's how she saw all of her students, as her own, and just as much as she loved them, her students returned that sentiment in droves. Mrs. Skalski became the honorary mother and grandmother to decades of Lancers. She became the trusted confidant, smiling face, and consistent presence so many students felt, appreciated, and loved.

Mrs. Skalski was one of those people that everyone thought would just live to be 200 years old. Her exuberant personality and sharp mind never faded, even as her physical health did. She certainly had an impact on thousands and thousands of lives, and what better legacy can you leave in this world?

Mrs. Skalski and her husband, Frank, also had eight children of their own graduate from St. Mary's - Ann Marie '76, Sharon (Thompson) '77, John '79, Tim '81 (1962-2017), Tom '84, Mary (Hess) '85, Pam '87, and Linda (Shaughnessy) '89. Now, that is the ultimate Lancer Family.

Thank you for your service to St. Mary's, Mrs. Skalski. The cafeteria will forever be your home. We'll miss those turkey dinners, Brunch for Lunch, Taco Tuesdays, and goulash.



Alumni News

- **Rosalie Marszalek '63** has always been quite the busy bee! She taught grades Pre-K - six for over 30 years, was the principal at St. Rose of Lima School for six years, received a degree in Social Work, and was the Case Manager at Holy Family Adult Care for nine years until it closed. After she retired, she became more active in her Church, Blessed Sacrament in Tonawanda, and now serves as the Corresponding Secretary of the very active Altar & Rosary Society. She also volunteers at Oishei Children's Hospital in the gift shop and is a member of the Women's Auxiliary of the Gift Shop. She enjoys meeting and listening to the parents, children, and grandparents that come into the shop. Her sisters, Gertrude (Marszalek) Dedman '62 and Anna Mae (Marszalek) Miller '65, both developed lung cancer and passed away in 2023 and 2021 respectively.

Congratulations, Adam!

Adam Page '10 was inducted into the Greater Buffalo Sports Hall of Fame this year.



Page is a three-time gold medalist for the Team USA Paralympic Sled Hockey Team. He is also the co-founder of the Sled Hockey Foundation, which provides individuals with impairments the opportunity to take part in para ice hockey.

Page joined Buffalo Bills greats, Eric Moulds and Bobby Chandler, and former Sabres captain and GM, Gerry Meehan, among many others in the Greater Buffalo Sports Hall of Fame's Class of 2023.

Congratulations, Doug!

Former Director of Development & Alumni Relations, Doug Buczak '94, has accepted a new position as an Associate Director of Advancement at the University at Buffalo.



Buczak still plans on being very active at St. Mary's and will remain on as a consultant for special projects at the school.

Your entire Lancer Family wishes you the best of luck at UB!

Event Recaps

Ciao Italia Returns Home... The Chopped Edition!

On Saturday, October 29, 2022, St. Mary's hosted a very special event - Ciao Italia with Mary Ann Esposito Returns Home - The Chopped Edition! It was a wonderful night filled with St. Mary's alumni, friends, and supporters, including Mary Ann and her husband, Dr. Guy Esposito from the Class of 1960 and our celebrity sous chefs who faced off in the ultimate battle royale, Fr. Joe Rogliano '75 and Msgr. David LiPuma '78.

Fr. Joe paired up with Chef Chris Daigler, most recently the owner and Executive Chef of Oscar's, while Msgr. David teamed up with Chef Shea Zappia, Culinary Specialist at Sysco. After the panel of celebrity guest judges, including Joanna Pasceri, Mary Beth Billitier, and Fr. Peter Karalus '87, tasted each team's dishes, and our auditors from the Business, Finance, and Entrepreneurship Academy tallied the results, Team Zappia and LiPuma took home the crown!

Ciao Italia with Mary Ann Esposito Returns Home - The Chopped Edition was not only a night to remember, it was also a night full of good works.

Through the Mary Ann Esposito Foundation, Mary Ann and her husband, Dr. Guy Esposito, made a \$5,000 donation to the Hospitality & Event Planning Academy at St. Mary's High School. Future Lancers will now have access to the resources they need to follow in Mary Ann's footsteps. Because of this donation, the Academy will be renamed in Mary Ann and Guy's honor.

St. Mary's High School also made \$1,000 donations to OLV Charities and St. Mark School on behalf of our celebrity sous chefs and SMHS alumni, Msgr. David LiPuma '87 and Fr. Joe Rogliano '85 and the ministries they serve.

A night of family, friends, and service - doesn't get any better than that! Thank you again to all who were involved in making this such a special evening.



The battle of the decade!



Mary Ann (middle) looks over Msgr. LiPuma (left) and Chef Zappia (right)



Fr. Rogliano (left) and Chef Daigler (right) come up with a game plan



Guest judges (from L to R) Joanna Pasceri, Mary Beth Billitier, and Fr. Peter Karalus



Braden Callahan '23 and Ciara Dunne '23 are student servers



Chef Mary Ann Esposito and her husband, Dr. Guy Esposito, present a check for \$5,000 to the heads of the Hospitality & Event Planning Academy, Mrs. Tytko and Mrs. Junik

Lancers Reunite In Tampa/St. Pete

The St. Mary's Alumni Team hit the road and headed south to the Tampa/St. Petersburg area this past February. It was a beautiful afternoon at the Vinoy, as these Lancers reminisced about their days at St. Mary's.



Beth Anne Prindville, Tanya Repka, David Repka '84, Paul Danner '62, Bob Prindville '84, Barbara Brueckl '84, and Jared Repka '87



Kay Danner & Beverley (Reid) Repka from the Class of 1963



Dan Saracki '78 and his wife, Paula, Selene (Matuzewski) Partridge '90, Jill (Schilling) Hampton '75

The Lancers will be back in the Tampa/St. Pete area to cheer on the St. Mary's Volleyball Team September 1st and 2nd in the Nike Tournament of Champions at Wiregrass Ranch Sports Campus in Wesley Chapel.

So join us for our next meet-up:

When: Saturday, Sept. 2nd, at 6pm

Location: Saddlebrook Resort

5700 Saddlebrook Way, Wesley Chapel, FL 33543

Lancer Gala Stars the Buffalo Sabres

On June 23, 2023, St. Mary's held its annual Lancer Gala. Thank you so much to everyone who came out that night as a guest, to volunteer, who bid on some amazing silent auction items from afar, and just everyone who helped make the night a success! The Gala raised just over \$80,000 for St. Mary's students and programs.

A special thank you goes out to our Gala chaircouples of the Buffalo Sabres and Buffalo Sabres Alumni Association Brian & Harvest Gionta, Kevyn & Stacey Adams, and Matt & Jen Ellis (below) for their hard work throughout the entire planning process. A former Sabre, Brian Gionta is also a member of the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame; Kevyn Adams is the current General Manager of the Sabres; Matt Ellis is currently an Assistant Coach with the Sabres and former player as well.



Reunion Weekend Welcomes Lancers Back Home

Reunion Weekend welcomed back alumni young and... not so young... to St. Mary's High School. Held June 23-26 2023, Reunion Weekend was inclusive of The Lancer Gala (recap on p. 14), Scholars Brunch, Performing Arts Hall of Fame Induction, Athletics Hall of Fame Induction, Reunion Celebration, and Golf Tournament.

New Scholars Brunch Bridges Generation Gap

On Saturday, June 24th, St. Mary's held the annual Scholars Brunch. This year's brunch bridged the gap between the present and the past, as current scholarship winners were able to meet alumni donors who fund these named scholarships, helping them to experience all of the joys of a St. Mary's education. The Scholars Brunch also welcomes back former class valedictorians and salutatorians, Marian Award winners, as well as class and Senate officers. It is always a highlight of Reunion Weekend!



Athletics Hall of Fame Inducts Newest Members

The Athletics Hall of Fame welcomed five new inductees: Col. Louis Seelig '60, Coach Angelo Sciandra, Kevin Burns '00, Don Pieczynski, and the 2001 Women's Volleyball Team.

Col. Louis Seelig '60 was a member of the first-ever SMHS Wrestling Team and went undefeated in his three-year high school career. You can read more about Col. Seelig on page 11.

Angelo Sciandra is the all-time winningest Head Football Coach in St. Mary's history with 51 wins from 1986-1999. He led the Lancers to league championships in '93 and '95. He also coached the Wrestling Team from 1991 to 1997 and the Baseball Team from 1992 to 1996. Coach Sciandra is known for mentoring other coaches and investing in his student athletes.

Kevin Burns '00 was a three-year varsity starter on the Football Team, playing QB, RB, and LB. He led the team in tackles for three years and led the MMHSAA in scoring and rushing as a senior. He was named to the US Navy Scholastic All-America First Team, was a Connolly Cup Finalist, and was chosen to play in the Kensington Lions Club All-Star High School Football Classic. Burns earned a full scholarship to play football at the University of Pennsylvania. He was also a member of the Track and Field Team and was a two-time Cleve-Hill Powerlifting Tournament Champion.

Don Pieczynski has been the Head Coach of the Women's Volleyball Team since 2007. He was an Assistant Coach with the team prior to that, beginning in 1999. Pieczynski's all-time match record is 629-102 (.870). He stands undefeated in MMHSAA league play at 182-0 and has won 15 league championships and 9 NYS titles as a Head Coach. Pieczynski is also the father of two Lancer alums, Kelly (Pieczynski) Keem '99 and Traci (Pieczynski) Vinz '02.

The 2001 Women's Volleyball Team had an overall record of 22-2 and went 15-0 in the MMHSAA. They beat Nardin for their

Event Recaps

Reunion Night Celebrates Milestones

The big Reunion Celebration took place on Saturday, June 24th. The Reunion allows alumni from all class years to come back home, but we really spotlight the milestone reunion years, which included class years ending in 3s and 8s. We had great turnouts from the classes of 1963 and 1973, and a whole host of other class years were represented from 1960 to 2020. There was delicious food from Frank's Grille, activities for the whole family, and live music from Michael Bly-Santa Maria '92.



The 60th Reunion NHS members keep the kids entertained Michael Bly-Santa Maria '92 Food for all!

Golf Tournament Hindered by Rain

Unfortunately, the annual St. Mary's Golf Tournament, which was held on June 26th, was hampered by a little rain, and then a lot of rain. The early morning tee times were able to play their full rounds, but the afternoon groups didn't have so much luck. It was still a great half-day on the golf course, and we're so thankful for those who came out to support St. Mary's and waited it out through some adverse conditions, and thank you to Lancaster Country Club for a great day as well!

Generation of Wojs.
Rick Wojciechowski '73 (furthest right) is pictured with is family for their annual golf outing.



eleventh straight championship and went onto capture their seventh State Title. The members of the team include Elizabeth Schaller '02, Kaitlin Burns '02, Lindsey Fattey (Captain) '02, Holly Buczek '03, Kelly Wagner '02, Traci Pieczynski (Captain) '02, Colleen Helak '03, Sara Kornacki '02, Theresa Rosati '02, Hilary Peacock '03, Melanie Gacek '03, and Katie Schaller '04; coached by Rebecca (Baker) Kranz and Don Pieczynski.

Performing Arts Hall of Fame Welcomes Cast of Fiddler on the Roof

The cast, crew, and orchestra of the 1976 performance of *Fiddler on the Roof* took their place among the best of the best in the St. Mary's Performing Arts Hall of Fame.

Many former members of this production came back to reminisce about their days up on the St. Mary's stage.

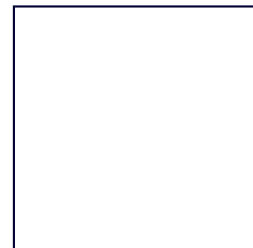




St. Mary's High School

Lancaster, NY

142 Laverack Avenue
Lancaster, NY 14086



Alumni & Friends Events

Fall

Sat. 9/23 - *Homecoming Game*
Honoring the '83 Football Team
AND
Aquino Family Foundation
Concert

Sat. 10/28 - *Bash for Cash*

Scan
here



for
tickets

Fri. 11/3 & Sat. 11/4 - *Fall Play*

Winter

Thurs. 12/7 and 12/14 - *St. Mary's*
Nights in the Village

Fri. 12/15 - *Christmas Show*

MUSIC FESTIVAL

SEPTEMBER 23, 2023 FROM 4:00 PM TO MIDNIGHT

PRESENTED BY
Aquino Family
Foundation

Admission \$25

FOOD & DRINKS AVAILABLE
CHINESE AUCTIONS
SPLIT CLUBS
TABLES & SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE

LIVE PERFORMANCES

HIT N RUN - FROM 9 PM - 11 PM

HIT N RUN

the RiG FROM 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM

BADLANDS FROM 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
the music of bruce springsteen

To Benefit **SAVE THE MICHAELS**
St. Mary's High School • 142 Laverack Ave • Lancaster NY
Buy Tickets at www.AquinoFamilyFoundation.com

MUST BE 21 TO ENTER

Spring

Thurs. 3/7 - Sat. 3/9 -
Spring Musical

Sat. 3/16 - *Lancer Gala*

Thurs. 4/25 -
Evening of Fine Arts

Sat. 6/29 - *Reunion Celebration*

Mon. 7/1 -
Golf Tournament

*A Call to Inspire,
Invest & Ignite*
THE CAMPAIGN FOR
St. Mary's High School



*Give
Now!*

Stay tuned to our social media accounts and smhlancers.org for updates!

We want to hear from you!

Reconnect with former classmates, be part of The Academies at SMHS, tell us how we can better engage with our alumni base. We're here to listen.

Contact Amy Kawa - Dir. of Marketing & Alumni Relations at akawa@smhlancers.org.