

# ORA ET LABORA



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

Fall 2020

## THE BENEDICTINE ORDER OF CLEVELAND ANNOUNCES **CENTENNIAL CAMPAIGN** *A PRESENT AND FUTURE COMMUNITY OF FAITH*



*Proposed new BHS main  
entrance from north parking lot*



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**Benedictine High School**  
and **Saint Andrew Abbey**

**Fall 2020**

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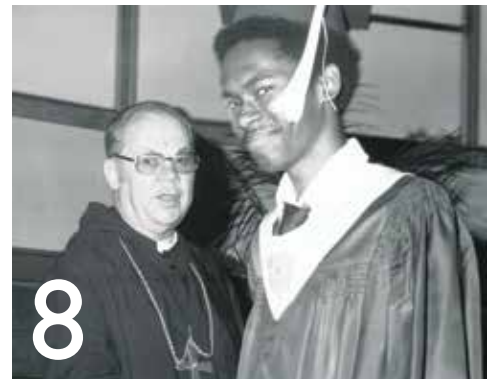
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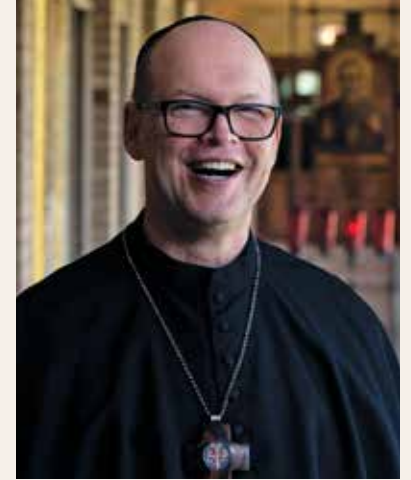
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# Faith During Pandemic

How is COVID-19 affecting your spiritual life at present? How engaged are you with your faith on your own? As we struggle through this pandemic, hopefully our faith will be strengthened. Look back at the months since the pandemic came about, how have you grown and changed in your faith? People were forced to rethink their faith during these challenging times and how they were going to live it, as a response to Jesus' call as his disciples.

Through the last number of months, we needed to make an effort to stay connected to God; the comfortableness that we had with the church being open was no longer there. In talking with friends, I have found that everyone's experiences have been different on how they have felt and reacted. One friend felt despair that their family could not attend church and it brought them to tears. They said that it took more effort to watch it on YouTube then to actually go there. When asking another how their prayer life has changed due to the pandemic, they spoke of how they found comfort in increased prayer. They had more time to connect with God through nature and the quietness of their yard. They simply had more time to pray.

Was this how the apostles felt when Jesus died? The community that Jesus built was shattered and the teacher they followed was gone in the blink of eye. The Holy Spirit guided the apostles to rally together and build the church on the FAITH that was given through Jesus and his resurrection. The pandemic has also shattered our way of connecting to Jesus. We can no longer just "go to" church. **WE MUST ALSO REBUILD OUR FAITH!** We must discover how we can be like the apostles and create a deeper connection with the Lord. We must follow the example of the apostles and not give up. In Matthew 21:21-22, "And Jesus answered them...but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown



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

into the sea,' it will be done. Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive."

So with the everyday unknown let us stand strong in our Faith and continue to spread the good news. Our Lord will get us through this stronger than ever.

PEACE,

*Abbat Gary OSB*



# Monks Keep Busy While Staying Safe

Monks are men of routine. They live by a rule written by Saint Benedict in the 6th century. Everyday monks throughout the world get up before dawn and chant praise to God through the psalms and the celebration of the Eucharist. The rest of the monastic day is punctuated by times of work and prayer (*Ora et Labora*).

So when the monks of Saint Andrew Abbey emerged from the statewide shutdown for the COVID-19 virus in May, they looked ahead to a summer without many of the events they were used to such as the annual alumni reunion, summer classes at John Carroll University, visits to confreres at Regina Health Center, full Masses at weekend parish assignments, community outings, the Slovak pilgrimage in honor of Saints Ann and Joachim in Euclid, and even the festivities in nearby Little Italy for the feast of the Assumption.

Even vacation plans were altered such as the inability for **Brother Gabriel Balazovic, OSB** to visit his relatives in Toronto with **Brother Peter Ansell, OSB**. And, **Fr. Michael Brunovsky, OSB** sadly watched a pilgrimage to Europe with his priest brother Fr. Steven Brunovsky of St. Hilary's Parish in Fairlawn cancelled. But monks are also good at practicing detachment and adapting to new circumstances. **Fr. Michael** organized a three-day drive with new abbey postulant **Seamus Coyne** and **Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB '71** in July to the "Land of the Cross-Tipped Churches" in western Ohio. This unique spot in the state is overwhelmingly Catholic. Faith-filled German Catholic immigrant farmers 160 years ago in Auglaize and Mercer counties built churches every five miles to make sure they would be able to attend Mass in bad weather. The monks visited 32 of the 35 churches which are always open to visitors and pilgrims. They are all active parishes with good weekly attendance and in beautiful condition....

**Fr. Finbar Ramsak, OSB** was able to get away and head south to visit relatives in Mississippi before BHS varsity soccer practice started for which he serves as an assistant coach....**Fr. Thomas Sanders, OSB** participated in a virtual graduation from John Carroll University in June during which he received his master's degree in education with a specialization in biology. **Abbot Gary Hoover, OSB '74** and some of his confreres joined him for the ceremony in the Advancement Office lounge and applauded as he donned his academic hood. The festivities ended with pizza for all. The new "master" has joined the BHS science department this fall (see photo)....**Fr. Thomas** and **Fr. Louis Carey, OSB '88**, associate pastor at Assumption Parish in Broadview Heights, participated in a four-day seminar on "Scripture and the Sacred" from July 13-16 at Oglebay Park Conference Center in Wheeling, West Virginia. Later that month they took their masks with them for a little different experience at Cedar Point. This summer Abbot Gary appointed **Fr. Conrad Wald, OSB** as assistant to the abbey business manager Ms. Terri Wysocki. Fr. Conrad continues to take education classes through John Carroll University. The abbot also announced that, in addition to his work in general maintenance, **Bro. Simon Corrigan, OSB** will be the new sacristan succeeding **Bro. Gabriel Balazovic, OSB** who has faithfully served in that position for over 20 years....Yet, most of the monks of the abbey were still able to travel to Loyola Retreat House in Clinton, Ohio for their annual retreat (with proper social distance seating) from June 8-11 which



After his virtual graduation from JCU, Fr. Thomas is congratulated by Abbot Gary.



Fr. Conrad



Bro. Simon

was preached by **Fr. Nathanael Polinski, OSB**, a scripture scholar from St. Vincent's Archabbey and Seminary. His theme was overcoming fear with the confidence of faith, an appropriate topic for a summer of fear and uncertainty.

# Fr. Michael on a Mission of Beauty

If you ever visit Benedictine's campus, a familiar sight is to see Fr. Michael Brunovsky, OSB in his 2004 Benedictine State Championship hat, trimming the many hedges that line Benedictine's walkways and roadways, maintaining the abbey gardens, and generally keeping things beautiful!

For anyone fortunate enough to see the abbey courtyard, the brilliant blue planter right in the middle is certainly eye catching. When asked about it, in true Fr. Michael fashion, he is able to tell you the history of that planter as he knows it.

"It's been here for a long time, at least as long as I've been here. It was cast by some company in Dayton, Ohio, but doesn't say the year!" he exclaims, wishing he knew. "There's a little plate on the bottom and when we were able to get the stuff off of it, we could read it. It has got to be over 100 years old."

"It's cast iron, with about seven coats of paint and the rust was coming through. So I said, during the winter time, I'm going to redo it. I started that particular project with paint remover and that took all winter long, off and on, to get to the base. So we got it down, and Seamus Coyne, the postulant, was very helpful with that. You have to grind the stuff off, so we got it down as close to the original metal as possible. Then, we primed it, and then we used the blue Rust-Oleum."

"Some people ask me, why that shade of blue? Well, last summer I was in Russia and Russians like bright colors like that and that's partly because the growing season is so short there. In October it's already snowing. That blue is all over the place and gold is on a lot of church roofs. If you go to the top of Broadview Hill, you'll see St. Sergius Russian Orthodox Church with its blue dome with gold stars which symbolize the Blessed Mother. So that's the reason why those colors are there."



*Fr. Michael tending to his plants in the restored planter*

Fr. Michael can tell you about the plants all over the grounds at Benedictine. He is especially excited about the flowers in front of the walkway to the Abbey Church.

"These are begonias, and I love begonias because they do well in direct sun. We've got red, with a copper leaf, and then white and pink with a green leaf, which makes a beautiful contrast."

"Then, we've got hydrangeas, otherwise known as a snowball bush, and then these are some of my favorites, these are called vincas and this magenta color is just eye popping, I just love it."

"The begonias I have to plant every year and this year I have them planted in a striated form, so when they grow big and form one bush, it'll look like neapolitan ice cream."

Fr. Michael also has some plans to create a tiered garden behind the Marian grotto.



*Fr. Michael weeds the garden around the front circle*

Fr. Michael has always been involved in the landscaping, but has taken a more active role in the last five years in maintaining and developing the grounds at Benedictine. Fr. Michael revealed that he and his brother Steven (now pastor of St. Hilary's Parish in Fairlawn) learned gardening while helping their father Paul Brunovsky with their family vegetable garden. Fr. Michael has long range plans for his campus flowerbeds. After all, his father still maintains a garden and he just celebrated his 90th birthday this month.

# Saint Andrew Abbey Benefit...at Home

Abbot Gary and the monks of Saint Andrew Abbey are very grateful for the many contributions that have been made to the 2020 Abbey Benefit which went “virtual” this month due to the state restrictions on group gatherings because of Covid-19. Although the monks also missed celebrating their annual monastic fundraiser in person and enjoying the food, the music, and the fellowship, they are hopeful that a “live” benefit will be possible next fall. The proceeds from the annual Abbey Benefit are vital for meeting the ordinary and extraordinary expenses involved in supporting the lives of 26 monks as well as for maintaining the monastery building and property. All benefactors whose generosity has made this year’s unusual benefit a success will be remembered throughout the year in the Masses and prayers of the monks.



Our monks gather for one of our “Pre-Covid 19” monthly visits to our confreres who reside at Regina Health Center in Richfield, Ohio. Seated (l-r): Fr. Joachim Pastirik (resident), Fr. Dominic Mondzelewski (resident), Prior Timothy Buyansky, Abbot Gary Hoover, Abbot Clement Zeleznik (resident), Abbot Christopher Schwartz (resident), Fr. Michael Brunovsky. Standing (l-r): Fr. Gerard Gonda, Bro. Philip Petrow, Fr. Dismas Boeff, Fr. Bede Kotlinski, Fr. Louis Carey, Fr. Anselm Zupka, Subprior Peter Ancell, Fr. Paschal Petcavage, Fr. Thomas Sanders, Fr. Justin Dyrwal, Bro. Mario Parisi, Fr. Finbar Ramsak, Fr. Conrad Wald, Bro. Gabriel Balazovic. **Not present for this photo:** Bishop Roger Gries, Fr. Kenneth Katricak, Bro. Nicholas Spisak, Bro. Simon Corrigan, and Postulant Seamus Coyne.

## Thank You!

# Our Tradition, Adapted

If you haven't been back to 2900 MLK Jr. Dr. recently, our hallways are adorned with the Benedictine Hallmarks. Words like "Hospitality," "Prayer," and "Humility" hang from the ceiling as reminders for our young men of the cornerstones of a 1,500 year tradition of education. Amidst the confusion and uncertainty unleashed by COVID-19 last March, the Hallmark of "Listening" was critical when it came to our planning and execution of the remainder of the second semester. For 93 years, Benedictine High School has delivered a top-flight education to over 10,000 young men in the Greater Cleveland area in-person. But for the first time, our faculty and staff were charged with the task of delivering instruction in a remote fashion.



*Freshmen students begin orientation with a class Mass in the Abbey Church.*



*Mr. Ryzner '95 and Mrs. Szabados discuss plans for the new school year.*

How did our faculty and staff react? We listened. We listened to each other as professional educators. We listened to governing bodies at the world, national, state, local, and diocesan levels. We listened to our students and parents in order to deepen our partnerships with them. And once we had curated a satisfactory amount of information, we acted. Swiftly, creatively, and efficiently. In under 18 hours, we constructed an on-line learning environment that was the envy of our peers, many of which sacrificed rigor for the sake of ease. It was not perfect, but what it did was provide some semblance of certainty where there was none. We modeled for our young men what critical thinkers do when presented with obstacles. But most importantly, we deepened our sense of community at a time when many were faced with loneliness, detachment, and a longing to be together. We know now more than ever that if we can persevere in these conditions, we can continue to employ our unique blend of grit and grace to accomplish great things together. None of our success would have been possible, our goals could not have been clearly defined and achieved, if we had skipped that essential step of listening.



*Mr. Ryan Ryzner '95*

For those who are graduates and grew up with BHS, we're still listening to hear how you and your families are doing. We're listening to hear how your Benedictine experiences helped shape you into the men you have become. For those who are just joining us, we're listening to hear your fresh and creative suggestions on how we can best evolve as a community to most effectively and compassionately meet the ever changing needs of our young men. For those who continue to support our mission, we are listening to your kind and inspirational words as you enable us to continue this tradition of brotherhood, and we are so grateful.

People are talking about the exciting things that are happening at Benedictine High School these days. And we like what we hear.

Year 94 and counting...

Blessings to you and your families,

Ryan M. Ryzner '95  
President-Principal  
Benedictine High School

# Remaining in the Neighborhood – the Decision of 1979

by Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB '71

It began on a Sunday morning in August. Two social communities in the Buckeye neighborhood of Cleveland had been slinging verbal insults at each other for weeks. Finally, a pistol was brandished and police were called from their nearby district headquarters to disperse the crowd before anyone was seriously injured. The police remained on high alert for the rest of the month after several more riots broke out.

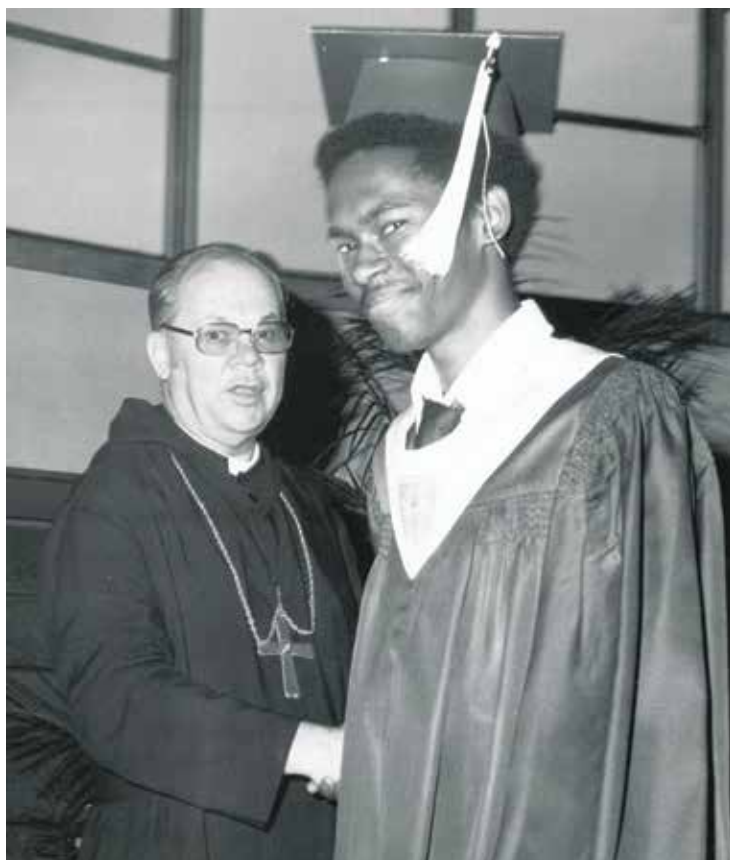
Are we talking about the 2020 “**Summer of Discontent**” that originated with the shocking death of George Floyd in Minneapolis and which soon spread riots throughout the country with the theme of racism? No, the riots described above took place in the Buckeye neighborhood in Cleveland in the summer of 1891 as Slovak and Hungarian immigrants verbally and physically fought over control of St. Ladislaus Church on Holton Avenue. Hard feelings carried over the ocean from national hostilities in Europe.

Thirty years later in 1922, Slovak Benedictine monks from Chicago arrived in Cleveland to establish a secondary school that would move to the Buckeye neighborhood five years later to serve the sons of Slovak immigrants. However, from the day it opened its doors in 1927, Benedictine High School reflected the **Benedictine Hallmark of Hospitality** and welcomed students of all nationalities and races. Ironically, the first graduate to receive a diploma in the first graduation class in 1931 was Hungarian – Edward Bartko from St. Elizabeth’s Parish – who actually spoke at the 2002 BHS Commencement Ceremony at St. John’s Cathedral.



*Robert Derritt of the Class of 1938, first African-American graduate of BHS.*

Very early in its 93-year history, Benedictine High School was racially integrated. In 1934, **Robert Derritt** became the first African-American student to enroll and graduate from BHS. He ranked academically 8th out of his class of 32 students in 1938. Two years later, **Stanford Berry** and his brother **Leon** would enroll from Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Elementary School. Stanford became a U.S. Customs Inspector and Leon went on to become a professional singer who several times performed at Carnegie Hall in New York City.



*Abbot Jerome and an unidentified National Honor Society graduate from the 1970s.*

Yet, until the late 1960s when “white flight” hit the City of Cleveland and especially the Buckeye neighborhood, Benedictine High School, though racially integrated, claimed a majority white student population with many coming from nearby Slovak, Hungarian, and Italian parish schools. However, panic set in when the total enrollment suddenly dropped from 914 in 1966 to 402 a decade later in 1976. The Hough riots in 1966 caused many ethnic neighborhoods in Cleveland to collapse along with their parish schools.

Many BHS alumni and benefactors urged the monks to move the high school and monastery to the suburbs which were growing with the influx of white families fleeing the riot-torn city. There was even a division of opinion within the monastic community with fears that the high school would be forced to close if the enrollment continued to fall.



A headline for a story in the *Cleveland Press* on April 16, 1975 read **“Benedictine to remain open with enrollment and cash woes.”** The adjacent photo and story was about long-time rival Cathedral Latin High School on East 107th Street. At a meeting attended by 500 parents and students, the Cathedral Latin school president announced that the Marianist religious order had decided to close the school because of a similar drop in enrollment.

**Abbot Jerome Koval, OSB** was quoted in the Benedictine story as stating that BHS would not close, “If we run into a financial squeeze our men (the 25 teaching monks at the time) may have to make a bigger sacrifice than they make already.” Principal **Fr. Roger Gries, OSB ’54**, said in the same article, “There is no question of us moving.....we will just have to find more students because it’s unlikely that parents can pay much more than the \$600 a year tuition.”

Benedictine did find more students by expanding bus service from one route in the eastern suburbs to nine routes by 1980. **Fr. Norbert Ozimek, OSB** learned to repair the buses and vans to save money and was also named Recruitment Director. The enrollment began to grow by 1977 when it reached 460 students.

Ironically, Benedictine saved its life by promoting racial integration facilitated by voluntary busing at the exact time that court-ordered racial desegregation of public schools by forced busing was ordered in major cities in the United States. In the 1970s, forced busing of public school students started with Boston and reached Cleveland by 1979 amid great controversy and often violence. Yet, at exactly the same time, white suburban students started freely coming into the city on buses to attend a racially integrated Benedictine. With God all things are possible!

Abbot Jerome called the monastic community to commit to a year of prayerful discernment in 1978 concerning the question of whether the abbey and high school should move to a suburban location. In addition to special prayers, community discussions took place during that year, some with outside presenters.

At the annual celebration of the feast of Saint Benedict, on **March 21, 1979**, in the presence of Cleveland Bishop James Hickey and over 200 priests, Abbot Jerome announced that the Benedictines would remain in the Buckeye neighborhood as a sign of the special Benedictine vow of *Stability*. He also pointed out that the monks saw a sign of God’s will in the steady increase in enrollment for BHS over the past five years to a high of 505 students with 186 freshmen.

And while 15 other Benedictine monasteries experienced declines in membership as high as 40% between 1966 and 1976, Saint Andrew Abbey actually grew from 64 monks in 1966 to 65 monks in 1976 despite 11 deaths during that decade. This was also considered a sign.

A new mission statement for BHS released that day stated, “We believe that by committing ourselves, within the City of Cleveland and Diocese of Cleveland, to the education of young



Alumnus Charles Reynolds '56 became BHS principal in 1994 and the first African-American Catholic high school principal in the Diocese of Cleveland.



Cleveland Press article from April 16, 1975 expressed concern whether Benedictine could stay open after Cathedral Latin said it would close.

men who demonstrate the desire and academic potential for college studies, Benedictine High School will provide experiences which will heighten the awareness of these young men in the areas of community stability, social justice, cultural diversity, and evangelization while respecting and acknowledging religious diversity.”

Four decades later, that prophetic decision in 1979 still finds the Home of Champions open and working effectively to help students of different races, ethnicities, economic levels, and neighborhoods to recognize that they are all children of God. It is not an easy task and over the years there have been tensions, but overall Benedictine has become known as a welcoming community, and an island of understanding in a city often torn by division and fear. And with God’s continued help and the support of alumni and friends, this miracle can endure.



*Proposed new main entrance to BHS looking from the large parking lot connecting the current science building (left) with the current main classroom building (right).*

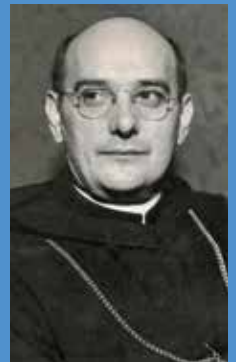
## THE BENEDICTINE ORDER OF CLEVELAND ANNOUNCES CENTENNIAL CAMPAIGN

On February 5, 1922, Fr. Stanislaus Gmuca, OSB, a Benedictine monk of St. Procopius Abbey in Chicago, arrived in Cleveland and was installed as pastor of St. Andrew's Parish on Superior Avenue and East 52nd Street. By the end of the year two more Benedictine priests, Fr. Celestine Drexler, OSB, and Fr. Leo Rehak, OSB, would be sent from St. Procopius Abbey to assist Fr. Stanislaus. The actual originator of the idea of a Slovak Benedictine monastery in Cleveland, Fr. Gregory Vaniscek, OSB, would not be able to come from Chicago until 1928.

This was the first step in the establishment of St. Andrew Abbey as an independent monastery dedicated to the pastoral care of Slovak immigrants in Cleveland. In 1924, Fr. George Luba, OSB, would arrive and begin planning the opening of Benedictine High School in 1927.

### FR. STANISLAUS GMUCA, OSB

- 1894 – Born in Johnstown, Pennsylvania
- 1912 – Joins St. Procopius Abbey near Chicago
- 1922 – First Benedictine monk sent to Cleveland
- 1934 – Elected first abbot of St. Andrew Abbey
- 1940 – Builds new Benedictine High School
- 1946 – Resigns as abbot and becomes a pastor



Thus the year 2022 will mark the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the first Benedictine monks in Cleveland. Looking ahead in 2016, the Board of Trustees of Benedictine High School and the monks of St. Andrew Abbey began planning for an appropriate and prudent way to both celebrate the accomplishments of the past century and to look with confidence to the future.

A strategic plan was developed based on the Benedictine Hallmarks of Hospitality, Stewardship, Conversion of Life, Stability, and Love of Christ and Neighbor. This was followed by a professionally-directed feasibility study and the formation of a Steering Committee to launch *The Benedictine Centennial Campaign: A Present and Future Community of Faith*.

Additional input from stakeholders and modifications to this strategic plan followed until a final multi-phase plan for the future was finalized. The first phase includes these major goals:

- Unifying the abbey and the high school in a tangible way through the creation of a landscaped courtyard that would extend the natural beauty of the beloved 1954 Marian grotto replacing the faculty parking lot, and bordered by the science building, the Trueman Fieldhouse, the abbey church, and the main classroom building.
- The upgrading of all current facilities including the replacement of the roof of the abbey church which was built in 1984, the construction of a new entrance to BHS which would face the large parking lot uniting the main classroom building and the science building, and modernization of the science labs and cafeteria which also date to 1984.



See page 13 for entire courtyard vision

After these goals are met, attention will be given to strengthening the funding available for the health care and education of the monks of the abbey and strengthening the student tuition scholarship endowment.

“In the past century, the Benedictine Order of Cleveland and Benedictine High School have only had four capital improvement campaigns: in 1961 for the new gymnasium, in 1984 for the new abbey guest wing and church and science labs, in 2001 for the remodeling of all the classrooms and growth of the BHS endowment, and in 2009 for the construction of the Bossu Athletic Field. In other words, we have been prudent with the generosity of our many friends and alumni,” explained

**JOE RUFUS (1918-1996)**

- 1945 – Became BHS football, basketball, and baseball head coach
- 1948 – Won city championships in all three sports
- Highest BHS football winning percentage of .782
- Established BHS as “Home of Champions”
- Served as athletic director from 1954 – 87



Abbot Gary Hoover, OSB '74. “These practical improvements have brought us to this point in our history of celebrating our centennial with a view to the future.”

As faculty and students returned in late August after the summer break and prior three month Covid-19 shutdown, preparations were underway for the transformation of the faculty parking lot behind the main classroom building into a college-like green courtyard dedicated to the memory of the late coach, athletic director and teacher, Joe Rufus, who arrived at Benedictine in 1945 and transformed the sports program, setting the bar high with a championship spirit that would carry through the next 75 years to the present. The new landscaped mall will include a special elevated gathering area for special presentations and alumni events. A memorial to Joe Rufus will be located there. Mr. Rufus retired in 1987 and passed away in 1996.

“As Benedictines,” Abbot Gary reflected, “we are called to be stewards of God’s beautiful earth. The Rufus Courtyard with its natural landscaping unites the abbey and school in a setting that will provide peace and tranquility for the monks, students, staff and really for all who enter this special space. It will unite and introduce one to the grotto area, a sacred space with the statue of our Blessed Virgin Mary, the patroness of Benedictine High School.”

Approximately \$2.8 million of the \$4 million initial phase of *The Benedictine Centennial Campaign* has already been raised in cash and pledges. The courtyard renovation should be completed during this school year and in the spring ground should be broken for the new entrance atrium structure that will connect the main classroom building to the science building.

When the current main building was opened in 1940, most students walked to school or took a city bus which would drop them off in front of the school. In those days, the front doors under the entrance arch were used to enter and exit the building. Later, in the 1960s as students were dropped off in the abbey circle by their parents, the side entrance doors along the main driveway provided a popular entrance location. But in recent decades, as more and more students drive to school, the corner back door leading to the large parking lot has become the real entrance for most students and visitors.



*In 1968, anxious students rush in through the side bookstore entrance.*

Benedictine's president and principal, Mr. Ryan Ryzner '95, observed, "Not only will this new entrance improve our campus aesthetically, but it will also serve as an additional area for student and staff collaboration. Additionally, it will allow us to hold moderate-sized social events and gatherings. Finally, it will assist us in providing a warm and safe welcome to all those who enter our building."

Much has transpired in the area of science and technology since the current BHS science labs were installed as part of the 1984 capital campaign. The Centennial Campaign will renovate and update all the science department classrooms and labs to meet current and future standards for science curriculum incorporating technology and data analysis. These needed improvements will augment the contemporary emphasis on

science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) that have caused more students to pursue these careers.

The highest structure on the Benedictine campus since 1986 has been the dramatic, slanted roof of the abbey church crowned with the distinctive arched belfry. This dominant edifice symbolizes that the primary mission of both the abbey and the high school is to give glory to God. Yet, because its initial design included skylight windows, the abbey church roof has been plagued with periodic leaks over the past four decades. Continued patching has been the temporary solution. The replacement of the roof has become a priority capital project for the abbey.

***The Centennial Campaign: A Present and Future Community of Faith*** invites your participation to help the Cleveland Benedictines, as well as our current students and future Men of Benedictine prepare for their second century of prayer and work. Vice-President of Institutional Advancement Mr. Christopher Lorber '04 points out that "The vision for the near future has been extremely exciting to strategically plan and assist to develop with our steering committee. We are so grateful for all of our alumni, friends, and like-minded philanthropists who provided leadership gifts during the silent phase of the campaign that have put us in the position to announce to the public."

"We're thrilled to be at this point, but know that we need the Benedictine community's full support to assist and secure the remaining monies necessary for the multiple projects and improvements to become complete," commented Mr. Lorber. "During the silent phase of this campaign, we were gratified that gifts and pledges made by our generous alumni and friends were supplemented with support from an outside source, The Lozick Family Foundation, which saw value in our plans and gifted us a \$500,000 grant. That same foundation is now offering BHS an additional \$500,000 matching gift challenge for the Centennial Campaign for years '21 and '22. Importantly, new leadership gifts and support today allow for this match to become secured and doubled! It is our hope that the generosity of the monks of St. Andrew Abbey over the past 100 years will be matched by the generosity of those they have served so well."

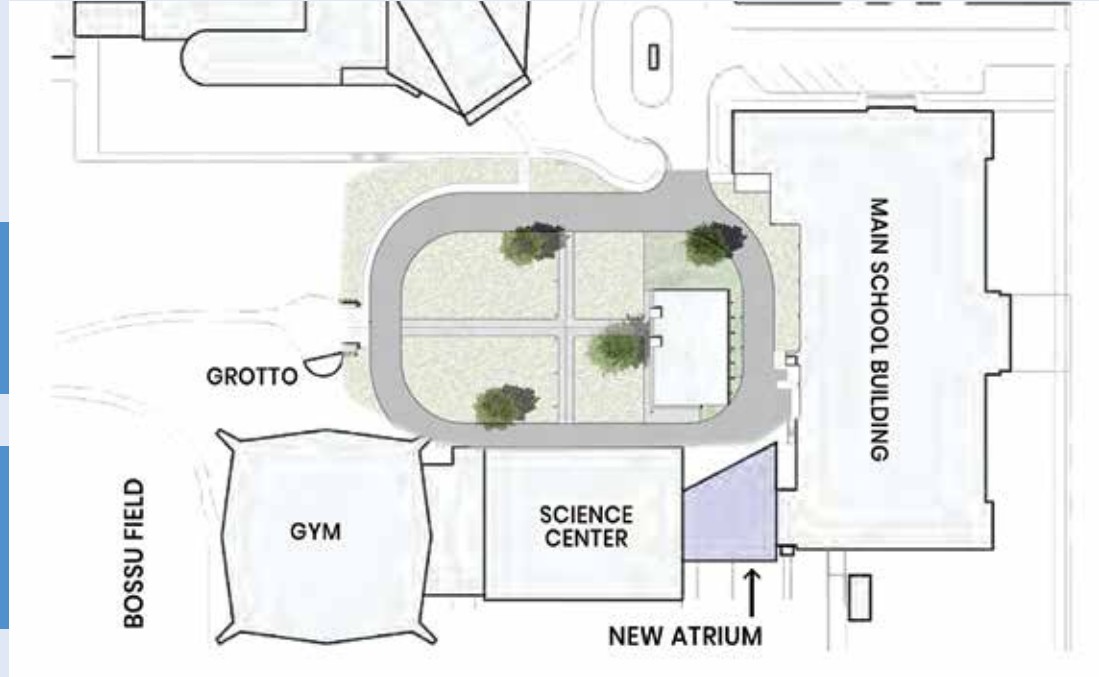


*Rendering of the view from inside the atrium to the new Rufus Courtyard.*

# PHASE ONE AND TWO: AT A GLANCE

PHASE ONE: BEAUTIFYING THE CAMPUS – THE COURTYARD AND COMMONS

PHASE TWO: THE NEW ATRIUM REPLACING THE ABBEY ROOF AND OTHER CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS



## THE NEW ATRIUM



< Current Exterior – North



< Current Exterior – South

> Exterior View – North Entrance



> Exterior View – South Entrance



**CENTENNIAL CAMPAIGN**

For questions or interest to assist in the support and funding of these special projects, please contact Vice President of Advancement Mr. Chris Lorber at [lorber@cbhs.edu](mailto:lorber@cbhs.edu) or 216-421-2080 ext. 246.

# New BHS staff members assume their duties

With the start of the new academic year, new faces were welcomed to the faculty and staff, while some familiar faces changed responsibilities.



**Liz Backowski** is the new BHS art teacher. She received her degree in Art Education from Kent State University. She has taught in Cleveland Catholic schools for seven

years, most recently at St. Anthony of Padua School. In addition to teaching art, she headed up the school's art club, helped direct musicals, and orchestrated art shows. Welcome, Liz. She is married to Anthony Backowski, the BHS Spanish teacher. They have a daughter, Theresa, and just welcomed their son, Anthony, this spring.



**Brian Devers** is the new Director of Media and Communications. Brian is a 2008 graduate of Benedictine High School and owner of Endeavors Productions, a video

production and media company located in Cleveland, Ohio. Brian is a veteran camera operator and director with credits including the documentary film, *A Murder in the Park*, which can be streamed on Netflix. Brian has also produced a number of videos for Benedictine over the last several years.

Brian is excited to return full-time to Benedictine and continue to develop the media program and produce new content for the Home of Champions.



**Nick Formica** is the new Benedictine High School Director of Admissions. For the last 13 years he worked at his alma mater, Notre Dame College of Ohio, in a number of

positions including associate admissions director. He recently completed his MBA at John Carroll University.



**John Gojevic '95** will join the Mathematics Department. After graduating from the Home of Champions, he received his undergraduate degree

from John Carroll University and a master's degree from Ohio University. He has completed 15 years of successful teaching in traditional and online settings. John lives in Wickliffe with his wife, Danijela, and children Antonio, Juliana, Mariana, and Mihovil.



**Reagan Leatherman** is the new Director of Development and Special Events. Reagan joins the Benedictine Community after spending the last four years as the Manager

of Events and Marketing for the Greater Cleveland Partnership. In her role with GCP, Reagan was responsible for managing 170 annual events for their 12,000 member companies. GCP is focused on driving the economic vitality through building a strong and thriving climate for the community by partnering with small, middle-market, and large corporations.

Previous to the Greater Cleveland Partnership, Reagan spent two years at the Chagrin Valley Country Club as the Director of Membership and Events successfully executing a \$1.5M membership drive, as well as obtaining over \$2M a year in sales.

Reagan resides in Cleveland Heights with her husband, Scott, and daughter, Abby. Abby attends Beaumont and is a member of the BHS marching band.



**Rachel Robson** joins the Science Department as the chemistry teacher. She received both her undergraduate degree in Integrated Science and her graduate degree in

Leadership in Technology from Baldwin Wallace University. She spent the last eight years at St. Edward High School in the Science Department and assisted in delivering professional development to colleagues in the area of educational technology.



**Fr. Thomas Sanders, OSB, M.Ed.** also has joined the Science Department after completing his master of education degree with a specialization in biology

at John Carroll University this spring. Fr. Thomas graduated from Brookside High School and then earned a bachelor's degree in life sciences (biology and chemistry) from Otterbein College in Columbus in 2003. He joined St. Andrew Abbey in 2008 and was ordained as a priest by Bishop Roger Gries, OSB '54 in 2016. He also serves as vocation director of the abbey and as one of the community organists.



**Ursula Szabados**, while not new to the staff, will be moving to the position of Executive Assistant. She will be the point of contact in numerous capacities that will

facilitate the day-to-day functioning of the school, the communications and operations of the office of the President, and the maintenance of the school website.

**FOOTBALL**

The Varsity Football team is coming off a 12 game season with much experience returning. With 6 seniors on the squad last year, Coach Goode is looking for underclassmen to step up and fill big shoes in some of the skilled positions.



*Junior Christian Cora*

and All-State Junior Christian Cora. Coach Miguel Cora is looking to turn some heads this Fall on the soccer field.

**SOCCER**

The Varsity Soccer team will be led by Seniors Samir Gonzalez, Devin Jackson, Jordan Myers, Daniel Nagle, Gabe Roberto, Tyler Gummo,



*The Bengals practice under the lights on a warm summer night.*

**CROSS COUNTRY**

The Varsity Cross Country team was hit hard by graduation. The squad has a handful of underclassmen runners ready to step up this season.

**GOLF**

Our Varsity Golf team is young with seniors Corey Misconish and Ryan Plisko this year; however, some freshmen and sophomores played throughout last season and are promising.

**SUMMER CAMPS:**

*Jerome Baker appears on Good Morning Football on the NFL Network.*

**Jerome Baker '15 Backpack Giveaway**

Jerome Baker '15 returned to the Home of Champions to interact with over 70 young attendees. Attendees were given a backpack with school supplies and gift cards and each one got an opportunity to speak with Jerome and take a photograph.

Jerome later appeared on Good Morning Football on the NFL network. Video of the Benedictine campus was nationally broadcast as Jerome talked about the joy he gets from giving back to the community that helped form him. Jerome also made time to attend the lighting ceremony for the late Michael O'Neill '82, as the O'Neill family got to see the new Mike O'Neill Lights illuminating Bossu Field in honor of Mike.



*Campers arrive for the Najee Goode '07 Football Camp.*

**Najee Goode '07 Football Camp**

Football and Track State Champion and Super Bowl Champion Najee Goode '07 returned to Bossu Field August 22nd and 23rd to conduct his football camp with grade school students of all ages. It was an incredible success, with many hopeful future Bengals learning the ropes from current players and coaches Jarritt Goode '95, Wakeem Goode '05 and Najee '07. Many got to catch some passes from the former Bengal quarterback as well!



# 2020: A Graduation to Remember

Benedictine High School's 90th graduation certainly was different due to COVID-19 but the annual Awards Assembly, Baccalaureate Mass, and commencement exercises did take place with some creative planning.

The Baccalaureate Mass for the graduating seniors and their families was celebrated by Abbot Gary Hoover, OSB '74 in the abbey church without a congregation and the video was posted online for viewing on Thursday, May 21. Fr. Michael Brunovsky, OSB was the organist and vocalist.

The Awards Assembly was videotaped in advance and **Stephen Zachlin** was announced as the valedictorian with an accumulative grade point average of 4.612. **Andrew Boothe** was the salutatorian with an accumulative grade point average of 4.435.

## HIGHEST GRADE POINT AVERAGE

Stephen Zachlin (Senior Class), Patrick Hurst (Junior Class), William Kehres (Sophomore Class), Gabriel Beltavski (Freshman Class)

## THE CHRISTIAN WITNESS AWARDS (12 APOSTLES)

Thaddeus Stary (Senior), Matthew Stauffer (Senior), Nicholas Pietrzycki (Senior), Patrick Hurst (Junior), John Hannan (Junior), John DiNovo (Junior), Andrew Joyce (Sophomore), Bryce Brand (Sophomore), Frank McDonnell (Sophomore), Jacob Dolan (Freshman), Gabriel Beltavski (Freshman), Roman DiNovo (Freshman)

## THE FR. DONALD AWARD FOR JOURNALISM

Patrick Hurst (Junior)

## THE FR. STEPHEN AWARD FOR SPEECH AND DEBATE

Michael Kenny (Junior)

## THE JACK T. HEARNS, SR. MUSIC AWARD

Luke Karboski (Senior)

## THE FR. TIMOTHY AWARD FOR PERFORMING ARTS

Thaddeus Stary (Senior)

## VEALE FOUNDATION ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARD

Matthew Stauffer (Senior) and Ronnie Schultz (Junior)

## FR. RAPHAEL HONORS BIOLOGY AWARD

Mason Adrine and Gabriel Beltavski (Freshmen)

## FR. ROBERT BUSINESS AWARD

Matthew Stauffer (Senior)

## GILDER HISTORY PRIZE

Patrick Hurst (Junior)

## TIM BARTOSZEK AWARD

Marco Kaiser (Junior)

## SERVICE AWARD

Gehrig Stanley (Senior)

## ALBERT SANTILLI SCIENCE AWARD

Ryan Plisko (Junior)



## Senior Matthew Stauffer

was announced as "Mr. Benedictine." His speech to the senior class and student body was taped earlier. Fr. Michael read a tribute to **Ms. Barbara Shannon** who was retiring

after 22 years of directing the art department at BHS. He also announced that the 2020 yearbook will be dedicated to her.



Benedictine held its commencement ceremony in the large parking lot on Wednesday, May 27. A special stage was erected by John Zappola that even featured the script form of "Benedictine" in lights above the stage. The seniors were in full cap and gown with their families in cars parked in front of the stage. Audio was streamed through the cars' FM radio frequency. A large Jumbotron screen was on stage.

Most of the ceremony was videotaped earlier and shown on the large screen. The student speakers were salutatorian **Andrew Boothe**, valedictorian **Stephen Zachlin** and "Mr. Benedictine" **Matt Stauffer** with a different version of the speech he gave for the Awards Assembly. After the speeches, each graduate was called on stage to receive his diploma from Mr. Ryzner and then to pose for a photo with Abbot Gary and Dr. Bossu.

As each student walked from his car to the stage, his accomplishments for the past four years were announced by Mr. Jakab as they were posted on the large screen along with his picture. Fr. Michael led the singing of the Alma Mater to conclude the unique ceremony.



# SAVE THE DATE!

## REUNION WEEKEND 2021

### JUNE 18-20, 2021

*Celebrating classes ending in '0, '1, '5 and '6*

**2015/16**

5 YEAR REUNION

**1975/76**

45 YEAR REUNION

**2010/11**

10 YEAR REUNION

**1970/71**

**50 YEAR REUNION  
GOLDEN YEAR!**

**2005/06**

15 YEAR REUNION

**1965/66**

55 YEAR REUNION

**2000/01**

20 YEAR REUNION

**1960/61**

60 YEAR REUNION

**1995/96**

25 YEAR REUNION

**1955/56**

65 YEAR REUNION

**1990/91**

30 YEAR REUNION

**1950/51**

70 YEAR REUNION

**1985/86**

35 YEAR REUNION

**1945/46**

75 YEAR REUNION

**1980/81**

40 YEAR REUNION

**1940/41**

80 YEAR REUNION

## 2021 Reunion Weekend Dates

**STAG  
NIGHT**

**FRIDAY  
JUNE 18, 2021**

**CLASS  
PLANNED  
ACTIVITIES**

**SATURDAY  
JUNE 19, 2021**

**REUNION  
MASS**

**SUNDAY  
JUNE 20, 2021**

## REUNION 2021

We are looking for class leaders and ambassadors from the above classes to help get the best out of the celebration of your reunion milestone during Reunion Weekend 2021.

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

## Class of 1956



Congratulations to **Ray Hudiak** and his wife, **Marilyn**, who celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on August 6, 2020 with a Mass at Our Lady of Peace Church. Ray and Marilyn were married at Our Lady of Peace Church on August 6, 1960. They have five children: Ken, Karen, Kathy, Kristine, and Kevin; and six grandchildren. Mel Smolik, Tom Rini, and Steve Palenchar, teammates from the 1955 undefeated Bengals, were in the original wedding party along with Al Blazenyak '54.

## Class of 1960

**Robert Troha** has been a retired mechanical engineer since 2006. He and his wife, Marilyn, have been married since 1964 and reside in Mentor, OH. Troha wants people to know that he donates to Benedictine because of the great education he received and the personal friendships that he made. He wants to help make sure that continues.

## Class of 1961

**George Benko** and his wife, Kathy, are reporting that they have recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

**Daniel Lavigne** reports that he and his wife, Belandina, celebrated their 51st wedding anniversary last October.

## Class of 1970

**Patrick Burns** is a recently retired Sandusky Fire Captain EMT-P. He has 7 children, 6 grandchildren and has been married to his wife, Mary, for over 40 years.

**Bernie Dietzel** reports that he retired on February 27, 2020 and resides in Concord Township, OH.

**Florindo Del Sangro** is the owner of Boulevard Bar & Grille in Las Vegas with his brother and 1957 grad Joe Del Sangro. While Florindo has reached his 50-year milestone of graduating from BHS, the two brothers are celebrating the 20th anniversary of their business.

Congratulations to **George Gulas** who was recently elected to the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) Officiating Hall of Fame. Gulas was elected for his work with softball, baseball, and basketball.

## Class of 1971

**Stephen Andrassy** will be retiring on New Year's Eve 2020 after 20 years of service to Dengensha America. Most recently he was the national sales manager.

**Daniel Gibbons** reports that he became a first-time grandpa in 2019 and was able to retire in 2020.

**Steve LaBonte** and his wife Ellen have a blended family of 7 children and 13 grandchildren. In 2015 he retired as a detective for the University Heights Police Department. Currently, he is working as a bailiff for the Shaker Heights Municipal Court.



The 9th annual summer golf outing for the Class of 1971 was held on Saturday, August 1, 2020 at Manakiki golf course in Willoughby Hills. The winning scramble score of 72 was posted by the team of Joe Mancuso (Mr. Eagle), Tony DiVincenzo, and Jack Siemen. The rain held up long enough to get the groups back to the patio for some refreshments and conversation. Classmate Fr. Gerard, OSB led a prayer for the late Coach Dan O'Shaughnessy and provided updates on the school especially the new lights that allow for evening football practice on Bossu Field. For next year's 50th reunion weekend, the general BHS for all classes will be Friday night, June 18, 2021 and the next day will be the Class of '71 golf outing (possibly with the Class of '70 who could not have their 50th this year). Contact Jack Siemen for more information: 440-799-1535

Back row (l-r): Fr. Gerard Gonda, Tony DiVincenzo, Paul Sobczyk, Steve Andrassy, Wally Mieskoski, Rich Gentile. Front row (l-r): Joe Gambatese, Mike Andrako, Dan Gibbons, Joe Mancuso (from Florida), Lou DeMarco, Tim Malinak (from Tennessee), Tom Armelli, Steve Barath, and Jack Siemen.

## Class of 1977

**Mayor Ben Holbert** and his wife, Joyce, appeared on the front cover of the *Boomer and Beyond* magazine. They talked about their work in the Woodmere Village area, where he is the mayor. Holbert discussed the obstacles of governing during a pandemic and how he's working to connect with the residents and businesses in the community.

## Class of 1992

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Congratulations to **Dan Winterich** for winning the Ohio Association of Two-Year Colleges (OATYC) John Fallon Early Teaching Award for outstanding work in the classroom. Winterich is an assistant professor of criminal justice and uses his many years of extensive law enforcement experience combined with creative and innovative techniques when teaching his students. He was also a recipient of Lakeland's 2019 Excellence in Teaching Award for Full-time Faculty.

## Class of 2006

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Congratulations to **Jeff Kuerbitz** for graduating from the University of Cincinnati Medical School. He reports that after almost 30 years of living in Ohio, he will be moving to Texas to start his residency in child neurology at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

## Class of 2007

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**Chris Frato** married Riley Carpenter on September 14, 2019 at Divine Word Catholic Church in Kirtland. Chris is a member of the City of Euclid Police Department.

## Class of 2008

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**Anthony DiGeronimo** reports that he is the Call Center Coordinator at John Carroll University. Along with working the call center, he also is an assistant girls' basketball coach at Cornerstone Christian Academy and an assistant baseball coach at Villa Angela-St. Joseph High School.

## Class of 2011

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**Dan Kuerbitz** is now an official naval helicopter pilot, reports his brother, Jeff. Dan was deployed in the Pacific in May. Thank you for your service!

**Stephen Grushetsky** and his wife, Anne, had a son in the summer of 2019. The baby Bengal's name is Cyril Anthony.

## Class of 2014

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**Matthew Zyle** reports that he graduated from Case Western Reserve University in 2018 with his bachelors in Computer Engineering. He has been working at Walt Disney World in Florida ever since. He began with an internship with Workforce Management that involved data and reporting for their labor systems. Since January of 2020, Zyle has been working as a full time analyst for Walt Disney World's onsite transportation system. His team helps with forecasting and planning, specifically for the bus operations using data analytics to plan how many buses they'll need, which trips need planning, etc. While not much different than a metro system, he says the difference is that they plan for multiple theme parks, water parks, a shopping/dining complex and resort hotels.



## Class of 2016

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Congratulations to **Terrell Mitchell** who was among just 10 graduates named as 2020 Outstanding Seniors at Baldwin Wallace University. Mitchell was chosen for the coveted Outstanding Senior Award, which is based on overall excellence, including academics, leadership, service, and involvement on campus and in the community.

## Class of 2019

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**Kevin Hurst** spent his summer off from Ohio State University working as a counselor at the Catholic Youth Summer Camp in Knox County. Due to the coronavirus, the camp was a combination of virtual and in-person activities that sought to build friendships and experiences of faith with students from middle school through high school. Kevin commented, "It was an amazing experience to share the richness of the Catholic faith with so many younger kids and walk with them as they learned about who they are in Christ and His desire to know them."

## RECENTLY DECEASED

The following members of our Benedictine Community have gone on to Eternal Rest between November 1, 2019 and September 1, 2020. May they all Rest in Peace.

Class	Name	Deceased Date
1946	Bart L. Lanchman	4/16/2020
1947	Robert J. Bagaria	11/4/2019
1947	Francis P. Bortnick	1/31/2020
1948	Thomas J. Lusoski	11/24/2019
1950	Gerald J. Martin	12/16/2019
1952	Bernard A. Sens	12/27/2019
1952	Leo Minter	7/4/2020
1953	Gene L. Krajnak	3/14/2020
1954	William J. Sassano	11/11/2019
1954	Joseph R. Kralovic	3/4/2020
1955	Edward S. Polgar	5/2/2020
1956	Joseph S. Dulka	10/16/2019
1956	George J. Marik	11/12/2019
1957	Robert W. Kwiatkowski	10/21/2019
1957	Ronald J. Bodziony	11/26/2019
1957	Henry A. Putre	3/18/2020
1957	Nicholas Nero	5/19/2020
1958	Thomas R. Kuchta	2/12/2020
1958	Kenneth A. Cliffl	3/11/2020
1958	Robert J. Anderle	5/24/2020
1960	John P. Strauss	5/5/2020
1960	Severin P. Fedor	5/29/2020
1960	Joseph Hocevar	6/5/2020
1961	Daniel O'Shaughnessy	4/29/2020
1961	Richard A. Kestner	7/17/2020
1961	William G. Szaraz	1/11/2020
1961	David Nekvinda	7/7/2020
1962	Robert J. Zion	3/1/2020
1962	Martin C. Marcoguiseppe	3/16/2020
1962	Anthony Minkunas	8/10/2020
1962	George Safranek	8/10/2020
1963	Paul W. Beskid	12/11/2019
1963	Thomas J. Pajk	2/3/2020
1966	Timothy S. Kunicki	11/11/2019
1966	Aurelio A. DiPaola	12/31/2019
1969	Joseph A. Sidoti	1/2/2020
1969	Robert J. Penko	4/1/2020
1970	Reginald Kern	3/9/2020
1997	Patrick Luskin	2/16/2020
2001	Stephen J. D'Amato	2/3/2020
	Marilyn K. Wagner	12/11/2019
	Sophia M. Hudak	12/27/2019
	Douglas Scholle	2/2/2020
	Robert Horne	2/20/2020
	Josefina Martinez	2/20/2020
	Kathleen Kobylinski	6/4/2020
	Robert Vozar	6/5/2020
	Rose Sevcik	6/25/2020
	Steve F. Spisak	7/13/2020

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

## In Memoriam

of Benedictine High School and friends of Saint Andrew Abbey



**Leo (Choo-Choo) Minter '52**, 87, was a pioneering halfback as the first African-American football player at Benedictine who helped engineer the Bengals drive toward the East Senate Co-Championship in the 1951 football season. Minter died in Cleveland on July 4, 2020.

He was inducted into the Benedictine Athletic Hall of Fame on April 30, 2000. In part, his Hall of Fame plaque reads: "The small but mighty Minter (5-6, 145 pounds) holds the distinction of being the first Black football player at Benedictine." Finishing his career with 72 points on 12 touchdowns, Minter was tied for fifth place on the all-time scoring list at the time of his graduation.

At the time of his Benedictine Hall of Fame induction, Minter was a member of St. Wenceslas Church in Maple Heights and a member of the Knights of Columbus. Leo's son, Michael (Benedictine Class of 1972), was a halfback on the Bengals last two Cleveland City Championship teams in 1970 and 1971.



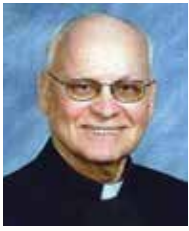
**Steve Palenchar '56**, BHS Hall of Famer, died May 10, 2020 in Sacramento, California. Nicknamed "The Rock," Palenchar was a tough, hard-hitting linebacker, Steve was a member of the 1955 Bengals that had a 9-0 season capped by a resounding 47-6 victory over St. Ignatius in the annual Charity Game before a crowd of

21,029. Steve went on to star at the University of Dayton where he earned national honors and served as team captain. He returned to teach and coach at BHS in the early 1960s and took similar jobs at a number of high schools in Ohio and Florida until retiring from teaching in 1976.



**Rick Kestner '61**, 77, passed away July 16, 2020 at his residence in Concord Township. He was the captain and played guard and linebacker on the 1960 Bengals football team that should be considered as one of the toughest in Benedictine history. He was inducted into the Benedictine Athletic Hall of Fame in 2009. Rick and his

brother Ken '56 are one of only a few brother combinations who are members of the Benedictine Athletic Hall of Fame. In addition, his brother Jim is a 1959 BHS grad and his nephew Art Kestner is a 1969 Bengals grad. He had the distinction of being named Most Valuable Player of the 1960 city championship Charity Game even though Benedictine lost 6-0 to John Marshall before 31,545 fans at the stadium. Kestner earned his bachelor's degrees and master's degrees and made education his career as a teacher.



**Fr. John Bryk, 92**, of the Class of 1946 passed away on August 16, 2020. He was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Cleveland in 1953 and served as pastor of St. Casimir's Parish (1971-73) and later as pastor of St. Hedwig's Parish (1973 – 2007). From 1982-86 he was the National Chaplain of the Union of Poles of America.



**Robert Vozar, 94**, died on June 5, 2020 and Abbot Gary celebrated his funeral Mass in Saint Andrew Abbey Church. He was the father of Robin '78, Laurel, and Christine. Bob was an affable and hard-working member of the Benedictine Parent-Boosters Club, notably working the Lenten fish fries and Bingo for many years.



**Lois St. John, 82**, died November 26, 2019. She was the wife of Chuck '54 for 63 years and mother of Tom '75, Chris '77, Bill '78, Mary Ellen, Julie Ann, Sue, Eddie '84, and Tony '86 and grandmother of Colin '09, Nick '09, and Ben '11. She was the

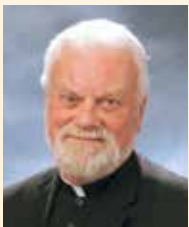
sister of Jim Flowers '59, the sister-in-law of Jack St. John '49 and Jim St. John '50 and the aunt of David St. John '85 and Patrick St. John '88 and mother-in-law of Dr. Gary Grosel '81.

Whether assisting Chuck with the operation of the family funeral business or volunteering for countless BHS Parent-Boosters Club events, Lois always provided quiet, yet cheerful support.

Lois was the manager of the Benedictine Bookstore in the 1980s. In 1998 when Chuck was inducted to the Benedictine Hall of Honors, Lois was presented with a plaque naming her as the first and only "Honorary Alumna" of BHS. She gave a genuine witness of her Catholic faith and values to her children and grandchildren. Chuck's classmate Bishop Roger Gries, OSB '54 was the principal celebrant of her funeral Mass at St. Mary's Church in Bedford.



**Fr. Thomas Lusoski, 90**, of the Class of 1948 died on November 11, 2019. He was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Cleveland in 1957. He served as pastor of Nativity BVM Parish in Cleveland from 1973-77 and of Saint Margaret Mary Parish in South Euclid from 1978-99.



**Fr. Thomas Pajk, 74**, of the Class of 1963 died on February 3, 2020. He was a U.S. army veteran who was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Cleveland in 1987. He served at eight parishes as the parochial vicar, the most recent being St. Joseph's Church in Avon Lake before he was granted early retirement for health reasons in 2016.



**Steve Spisak, 90**, father of Brother Nicholas, OSB, Edward '83, Fr. Stephen Spisak of St. Mary's Parish in Chardon, and Richard, died on June 30, 2020. He was married to Eleanore for 64 years and was a Bronze Star recipient from the Korean War.



**Marilyn Wagner, 64**, passed away on December 11, 2019. She was the beloved wife of Coach Don Wagner who began the Benedictine swimming program in 2005 and who has served as a member of the BHS Board of Trustees and Endowment Committee. Their sons Victor '09 and Matthew '12 are graduates of BHS. Marilyn worked closely with Don in providing social events for the swimmers and their parents over the years. She was buried from St. John of the Cross Parish in Richmond Heights.



**Rose Sevcik, 93**, died on June 22, 2020 and Abbot Gary celebrated her funeral Mass in Saint Andrew Abbey Church. She was the widow of the late Joseph Sevcik of the Class of 1945, sister-in-law of the late Fr. Lawrence Sevcik, OSB '44, and mother of Roseann and Susan. Susan worked as the receptionist at the abbey from 1970 to 2002, a total of 32 years.



**Lt. Col. (retired) Edward Szeman, 80**, of the Class of 1957 died August 2, 2020 at his home in Harker Heights, Texas. In college, he served as drum major of the Dayton Flyer Marching Band. He taught music to countless elementary school students and performed in local music groups. He served as an armor officer with multiple combat commands in the U.S. army including two volunteer tours of duty in Vietnam. He retired with the rank of lieutenant colonel and was active in many ministries at St. Paul Chong Hasang Catholic Parish in Harker Heights, Texas.



**Anthony Minkunas, 86**, of the Class of 1952 died on August 17, 2020. He was a pillar of the Cleveland Catholic Lithuanian community. He worked as a civil engineer in Greenland for the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and later in Cleveland he worked for the Ohio Department of Transportation supervising the construction of various highway and bridge projects including I-77 and I-480.

# Coach Dan O'Shaughnessy (1942-2020)

by Wally Mieskoski '71 and Fr. Gerard Gonda, OSB '71



The Benedictine Family lost one of its legendary figures when former long-time teacher and coach Dan O'Shaughnessy died on Wednesday, April 29, 2020 from complications of the coronavirus which he caught while in rehabilitation for an unrelated infection that had been successfully treated earlier.

Dan was a member of the BHS Class of 1961 of which he was also elected to the highest honor of "Mr. Benedictine." His favorite sport at Benedictine was basketball. As a Bengal athlete, O'Shaughnessy had a career-high game of 19 points in a win over John Hay as a senior. He also reached 16 points three times in his career (vs. Glenville in the 1959-60 season and vs. Glenville and St. Ignatius in the 1960-61 season).

After graduating from BHS, Dan continued his education at Fenn College (now Cleveland State University). He taught for one year at the former St. Stephen's High School on Cleveland's west side before returning to join the faculty at Benedictine in 1967. He would remain a popular member of the teaching and coaching staff for the next 39 years until his retirement in 2006. He taught algebra, economics, and business law. In 2000, the senior class dedicated their yearbook to him.

Generations of Benedictine athletes first encountered Coach O'Shaughnessy (affectionately known as "Daddy O") when they had him as their coach for freshman football. Dan molded the freshmen teams from 1970 until 1994. For the first decade he was assisted by now retired Cleveland Auxiliary Bishop Roger Gries, OSB '54. Dan was exceptionally good at motivating the freshmen with his "enhanced" stories before the game invoking some actual Bengal legends of the past like "Little Joe" Oriti of the Class of '71 and other characters who were victorious against insurmountable odds.

However, Coach O's first love was basketball and he coached the varsity basketball team at BHS for 19 seasons beginning in 1968-69 until the 1986-87 season. When he stepped down, he had the longest tenure and won more games than any coach in school history. He won 170 games and lost 189 games. Many of those losses came early in his coaching career while the Bengals were playing in the tough East Senate where teams regularly made appearances in the state's basketball final four.

And that's why one of his signature career victories came in his first year as head coach when he led the Bengals to a stunning 91-83 upset victory over East Tech.

O'Shaughnessy's best season came in 1980-81 when the Bengals finished with a 14-6 record. He also had seasons of 13-5 in 1979-80, 13-7 in 1973-74, 12-7 in 1971-72, 12-9 in 1984-85, 11-8 in 1972-73 and in 1978-79.



Benedictine hockey coaches Jim '90 and Bob '91 Kehres were so impressed with Coach O during their time at the school, that they named an award in honor of Coach O. The award is the Coach Dan O'Shaughnessy Leadership Award which goes to the senior hockey player who demonstrates the qualities of leadership through hard work and an unselfish attitude both on and off the ice.



Coach O'Shaughnessy was a private man who valued and practiced his Catholic faith all his life. He made it a personal practice to attend the funeral Masses of every Benedictine monk who died from St. Andrew's Abbey. He had a personal admiration for the late Fr. Robert Wilkes, OSB for whom an annual award is given to the best BHS business student. For many years, Coach O'Shaughnessy provided an anonymous \$100 stipend to go along with that award.

A lifelong bachelor, Coach O'Shaughnessy is survived by nieces and nephews. Because of the restrictions on churches, a memorial Mass will be planned and announced later. Please remember this dedicated and hard-working Man of Benedictine in your prayers.



Chris Lorber '04

## Coming Together as a Community

Saint Benedict's twelve Hallmarks are prominent throughout the campus of Benedictine High School. They makeup portions of the curriculum, are highlighted and showcased within the school's marketing materials, and you can even see large individual signs on each floor of the high school reminding our young men of St. Benedict's teachings, and how we are to live our life.

Although each individual has their own favorite Hallmark whether it be Love of God & Neighbor, Prayer & Worship, Listening, Discipline, Spiritual Development, Hospitality, Stewardship, Humility, Obedience, Work, or Conversion, we can all agree that the Hallmark of **Community** is what makes Benedictine such a special place.

During these recent months and through these unprecedented times, the Hallmark of **Community** was more evident than ever. There are hundreds of examples to illustrate the impact, but I have identified three inspiring examples of how our **Community** came together for the overall growth of the place so dear to our hearts.

### Coming Home...

By maintaining social distance and keeping in mind the health and safety of our guests, Benedictine High School graduates and current NFL stars **Jerome Baker '15** and **Najee Goode '07** hosted a backpack giveaway and youth camp to prospective families at beautiful Bossu Field. These graduates and catalysts within the **Community** shared that "Benedictine is Home, and we want to continue to support the school and the next generation as it provided us with so much."

### In Memory Of...

Through a private ceremony, Abbot Gary Hoover, OSB '74 led a prayer service and blessing of the field lights named in memory of **Michael O'Neill '82**. The O'Neill Family provided a generous gift in Michael's memory for field lights surrounding Bossu Field. Michael's legacy remains strong as these lights allow for our students to continue to be developed into the evening and for future students and **Community** partners to have the opportunity to use the school's facility that much more.

### Providing Support for our students...

It has been so humbling to see the number of calls and emails received from our **Community** asking how they (you) can assist during these unusual times. With 97% of our students receiving some type of financial assistance to help offset the \$12,500 tuition, providing our students with the aid necessary to obtain a Benedictine education is our most important need. "Someone paid for my tuition when I attended BHS, so it's time to do the same for a student today" or "What you do for the **Community**, and who you develop to be our next leaders is impactful... I'd like to invest in these young men's education" are common testimonials from our graduates and friends. Your support assists to continue our mission and for that we are extremely grateful.

I look forward to upcoming events where our **Community** can celebrate in person, and I am excited to continue to share stories and examples of how our beloved school is continuing to do great things. It's your help and vow to the **Community** that allows for these experiences to be a reality.

Please reach out for how you might be interested in aiding in our **Community's** growth, or how you would like to aid in the development of our young men at 216-421-2080 ext. 246 or [lorber@cbhs.edu](mailto:lorber@cbhs.edu).

Yours in St. Benedict,

Mr. Chris Lorber '04  
Vice President of Advancement



Members of the O'Neill family attend the Bossu Field light dedication ceremony.

# ORA ET LABORA

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