



# Alumni Newsletter

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## SAINT PATRICK'S ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

NOV 2018

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Dear St. Patrick Alumni,

This past July, I replaced Fr. Steve Willard as pastor of St. Patrick's in Washington. Fr. Willard was transferred to St. Vincent de Paul in Peoria. Previously, I was serving as Pastor of St. Mary's in El Paso and as Chaplain at the St. John Paul II Catholic Newman Center at Illinois State University. I am thrilled to return to St. Patrick's in Washington as this was my very first assignment as a priest. From June 2012 to June 2014, I served as Parochial Vicar at St. Patrick's under Msgr. John Prendergast the first year and Fr. Willard the second.

My first impressions of St. Patrick's elementary school were that the St. Patrick's school families were committed and involved in the mission of Catholic education; and as I have returned six years later, I still see that same commitment in our students, our families, our faculty, staff, coaches, and school principal. We are very blessed to have such a vibrant parochial school.

I am grateful to Fr. Willard for passing on to me a Catholic school that has such a clear and devoted Catholic identity. In addition to receiving quality education from our very talented teaching staff, we have a student body that is growing in their Catholic faith. After all, our mission is not just to prepare students for their high school careers and beyond, but to prepare them for a life lived in Christ. There are many economic, political, and environmental challenges we face in our world, but none are so eternally important as the challenges that confront the human soul.

A Catholic education is at its very best when it teaches our children to integrate the affairs of the world with a life of faith and an experiential knowledge of a loving Savior.

As alumni of St. Patrick's, I thank you for the interest and contributions that you continue to make to our school; and I ask that you continue to pray for us as we strive to provide the very best Catholic education and formation we can.

In Christ,  
Fr. John Steffen

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Hello Alumni!

Welcome 2018-2019 school year! We are 251 strong with healthy numbers of students at each grade level this year. Our preschool 3- and 4-year-olds total 38 students. Most of our classes have 24 students with 6<sup>th</sup> grade being the largest at 31 students and 7<sup>th</sup> grade the smallest at 15 students. All the other grades are in the mid-twenties.

Our school theme this year is:

***“Change: Think, Change, and Grow”***  
***“Believe the incredible and you can do the impossible.”***  
***--Venerable Archbishop Sheen***

We have had a number of changes already not only in personnel, but also in curricular and extra-curricular programs. However, our “change” theme has more to do with each of us in our growth personally including growth spiritually and becoming fully the person God wants us to be.

We welcome our new pastor, Fr. John Steffen. Fr. John was with us a few years ago as parochial vicar and now is back as the Pastor. This is his first time he has had a school included as a part of his assignment. We look forward to working with Fr. John as we continue to move our school forward. Fr. Stephen Willard has moved on to St. Vincent de Paul parish in Peoria. He is missed, and we thank him greatly for being an integral part of building up our faith formation especially in the upper grades.

We also welcome the new teachers that were hired. Miss Cari O’Dea, alumnus, joined our team as a kindergarten teacher; and Miss Abby Brancaleon came onboard for first grade. We have two classes of kindergarten and first grade this year. Mrs. Cassandra Zidrich joined our team as the new fourth grade teacher as Mrs. Shannon Hughes moved from the 4<sup>th</sup> grade position to take on our 4-yr- old pre-school position since Mrs. Monica Borrowman’s family was transferred out of state. Mrs. Cagle, who retired in May, came back to be with us for another year to teach 1<sup>st</sup> grade as Mrs. Stefanie Hedden moved on to another position.

We continue to upgrade our curriculum. This year the big change was purchasing a new reading program for first through fourth grades. Kindergarten’s program was purchased last year. The program has been well-received by our faculty and is very highly rated. Skills taught in kindergarten are built on each year. The series includes considerable nonfiction, social studies, writing, language, and reading skills. We have upgraded our second grade sacramental curriculum, and now we are reviewing a new math series for all grades next year.

*Continued on back page*

# WHO'S WHERE, DOING WHAT NOW?

## David McKloskey, 1959

### Fondest Memories:

- School picnics at Detweiler Park
- Playing baseball across the street in Sullivan's Field
- Sister Mary Jane – I think I had her three times
- Being a member of the first class to attend all 8 grades at St. Pat's

### Doing Now:

- Living with my spouse in South Carolina
- Playing golf 2-3 times a week
- Boating and fishing
- Singing in Choir and Community Chorus
- Acting in a local theater group

### Parents/Siblings Info:

- My sister Judy (1960) lives in Kansas City.
- Brother Mike, father Ambrose and mother Rosemary are all deceased.
- My wife Carol and I have 5 children and 11 grandchildren.

Alumni may contact me at:  
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Thank You. I enjoy the newsletters.

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## Alissa Mall – Simmons, 1973 (45 years ago! Now doesn't that make me feel old.)

We moved to Washington from Peoria when I was in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. With 6 little girls sitting in church on Sunday, we must have turned a lot of heads. I remember working on the chicken dinners and slipping into the tent to get a sip of beer from my dad. I also remember the school plays and basketball games and church choir. It was a great feeling of community.

I moved to San Diego in 1980. My husband, Ron, and I have a blended family of four sons which brings, at this age, girlfriends and lots of other friends with it. We started 'Family Night Dinner' when the boys were in high school to make sure we had at least one meal a week together as their schedules got busier. Almost 10 years later and we're still doing it on a regular basis and you never know who's going to show up.

I work at Briggs Nursery and Tree Co in Vista, California, as their sales manager. I took a vocational class in high school, driving to Pekin each day, and am lucky enough to be able to do what I've always loved - dealing with plants. I get to work with nature and help people select something that makes them happy and makes their home space more beautiful.

My sisters are all doing well. Lora is in Wisconsin; Mary in Coeur d' Alene, Idaho; Angela and Maureen in the Rockford area. Leah passed away in 1995. Ron and I are planning our retirement and are looking at relocating near Milwaukee in the next year. We're looking forward to the change of seasons and being closer to our families.

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## *Did you know...*

In March 2018, Kerry (Ford) Kelley (1976) retired after 32 years of civilian service at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska. She held a position at the highest civilian rank within the U.S. government. One of the most challenging moments Kelley recalled was her move in 2010 to being the Director of Command and Control Communications Cyber/Computer Systems. In that position, she also served as Chief Information Officer (CIO) and Director of the Joint Cyber Center.

Congratulations to Adrienne (Schlack) Wilson, 2001, on her new role this school year as vice principal at Corpus Christi Catholic School in Bloomington, IL.

Longtime friends John Thieme (son to John, 1970, and sister Emily, 1996) and Zach Weber (son to Diane Karcher-Weber, 1971) captured their 2nd consecutive National Bass Anglers Association National Championship team tournament in April this year winning the grand prize of a \$30,000 Ranger boat two years in a row! As for the boats, the two sold last year's and split the profits. They plan to do the same this year.

## *Did you know continued.....*

Mr. Michael Mullin (father to Michelle, 2006) was one of 105 semifinalists from an original field of more than 30,000 entrants from 141 countries at the Toastmasters International Convention in Chicago this past August. This was billed as the world's largest speech contest. He has only been competing since 2016.

Washington Community High School has broken ground for a three-part construction project...a new band and choir addition is going up on the northwest corner of the high school building; the old band and choir space will be configured into five classrooms; and sections of the football bleachers will be repaired and/or replaced. Currently, 1,380 students are enrolled at WCHS.

Beth (Gangloff) Seuferer, 1984, has been the "on-call" chef for the Bishop of the Des Moines Diocese. She routinely cooks for the Bishop's gatherings...up to 100 guests...from formal sit-down events to casual appetizers. Prior to this, she was the chef for the Governor of Iowa. She gave up her 20-year career as an actuary to follow her passion. If you do a google search on her, you'll find many recipes she's submitted over the years.

Washington Community High School has a new Hall of Fame, and its inaugural induction class was recently honored. Selected faculty members include former athletics director and three-sport coach Mr. Jack Stromberger (father of John, 1984; Tami, 1985; & Mark, 1988); Mr. Ray Torry (father to Ron & Don, 1974 and Mike 1981) for his 20 years of service as superintendent and principal. Coaches being inducted include Mr. John Venturi (father to Nick, 1995), who was 147-60 in 20 years as head football coach and led the Panthers to the 1985 Class 4A state championship. Individuals inducted for being a friend of the school include Jim Linsley (1964) for his 20 years of working with the 12th Man football booster club. Teams inducted include the 1977 Girls Softball Team, the 1985 Football Team, and the 2007 Boys Baseball Team.

St. Pat's has a new youth group leader. Her name is Kristy Gorsage, wife of Zack Gorsage (1997). She has 10 to 20 high schoolers every other Sunday evening, and they meet in the school basement (aka Social Room). They are planning on attending a pro-life rally this winter.

Former student & WCHS basketball standout Doug Lee was Washington's keynote speaker at the 17th Annual 9/11 event. Doug was a student at St. Pat's and a WCHS basketball star who went on to play in college, the NBA, and overseas. Doug is a business owner & community leader in Las Vegas and a sought-after motivational speaker. His older siblings include Pat "Susie" (1965), Benjie (1967), David (1968), Lisa (1973), John, and Mark & Bill (both deceased).

Another former St. Pat's student and a WCHS football standout athlete is Colton Underwood. He is the nephew of 1965 St. Pat's graduate Roger Underwood and has recently had a leading role on TV in the "The Bachelor" and "The Bachelorette" series. Before his recent television roles, he played college and professional football.

The Annual Theresa Tracy Trot was held on Saturday, Nov. 3, 2018, at the East Peoria Riverfront Park. It is in memory of Theresa Tracy, mother of alumna Nia Tracy (2011), who at the young age of 44 passed away from pancreatic cancer. In 2013, a group of family and friends formed the all-volunteer, non-profit organization called the Theresa Tracy Strive to Survive in memory of Theresa to bring awareness to one of the deadliest forms of cancer. Since the very first Theresa Tracy Trot — the group's annual run/walk and the largest of many fundraisers it holds each year — the organization has raised \$230,000. The money has been split between research and the Peoria-based Illinois CancerCare, which treated her. The donations have allowed CancerCare to start two new genetic screening programs for pancreatic cancer. These two programs are 100 percent funded by this Theresa Tracy organization. Without their funding, neither research program would be available. Alumni Tim Junk (1974), Mr. Don Evans (father to Kristen-1989, Jill-1990, and Patrick), and Mr. Henry Pratt (father to Jim-1991, Maureen-1992, Chris-1994, and Missy-1999) have also passed away from pancreatic cancer. Mr. Evans and Mr. Pratt were a part of the Knights of Columbus. The KC's hold annual fundraisers for this organization as well. Many of our St. Patrick parishioners and alumni have become involved in one way or another with this disease and the fight to cure it.

A very happy birthday is wished to Mrs. Frances Thomas! She turned 104 on Oct 29th. She is the mother of Jeanette (Thomas) Blackman, 1956.

Last April, the Priests Pedaling for Prayers arrived by bicycle and visited with our students. All along their 275-mile bicycle journey, they visited schools and talked about how they knew God was calling them to the priesthood.

Correction from last newsletter: The crucifix in the church was given to St. Patrick Church as a memorial for Francis Marion McCann. He was the father of alumni Hank (1954), Nancy (1957), Patrick (1959), and Mike (1961). Apologies for the error.

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If you have had an address change, please complete and return this form to St. Pat's School, 100 Harvey, Washington, IL 61571.  
You may also email the information to: [alumni@stpatswashington.com](mailto:alumni@stpatswashington.com).

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**ALUMNI  
NEWSLETTER  
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*Continued from front page....*

Our summer was busy preparing for this new school year with a number of changes. One big project was remodeling the kitchen in the concession area of the Social Room. The Athletic Committee purchased a new commercial refrigerator and popcorn popper. The foyer of the school was repainted, new light fixtures installed, and a new entryway carpet mat placed to make the entrance of our school more inviting. There were several classroom moves to accommodate the two kindergartens and two first grades.

Much is happening with girls basketball in full swing, boys preparing for their basketball season, Lego/Robotics League growing, Spanish Club, Jr. High Choir concert, etc. The band and cheerleaders marched with the township schools all together in the WCHS homecoming parade. Class visits to Peoria Notre Dame are taking place. We had a successful Literacy Night with our House groups facilitating the activities for the younger students. This was a great St. Pat's family event. Soon we will be preparing for the Annual Christmas Concert which is held at Five Points.

Mrs. Doreen M. Shipman, Principal

~~A welcome return to Fr. John Steffen! He has returned to St. Patrick's filling the Pastor position with the transfer of Fr. Stephen Williard this summer. Fr. John, 46, has been called a "mid-life" priest. He converted to Catholicism from Apostolic Christian as an adult. His new religion, he said, struck a chord he couldn't ignore. Before entering the seminary, he taught English for five years at Streator Township High School and worked as a lawyer at a Pontiac law firm. We are happy to have him back.~~

~~The St. Patrick church building is celebrating 50 years on Saturday, November 17, 2018. You are invited to 4:30 p.m. Mass and an old-fashioned chicken dinner to follow at Countryside Banquet Center in Washington. Cost is only \$10 per person. Please call the church office at 309-444-3524 if interested. Tickets will not be sold at the door.~~

~~The St. Patrick Parish Pot O' Gold is scheduled for Saturday, March 16, 2019, at Countryside Banquet Center. There will be entertainment, dinner & drinks as well as live and silent auction items. If you'd like to join us or donate items, please call Brian Barron (St. Pat's graduate 1993) at 309-303-8039 or call the school office at 309-444-4534.~~

Please keep in your prayers those who have recently died: Mr. Virgil Volk, Dr. Robert Sullivan, Mrs. Marie Godar, Mr. Darrell Tiesman, Mr. Tom Hranka, Mr. Henry Pratt, Mrs. Laverna Darrow, Mrs. Charlotte Mosher, Mr. Jerry Kastl, Mrs. Mary Rose Kelly, Mr. John Dailey, Patricia (Seipel) Pope (1961), and Stephany White (daughter to Tom White, 1961). May these families find peace in God's grace.