



**WE ARE**



# **BOYS TOWN NATION**

**BOYS TOWN NATIONAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION®**  
Spring 2026 eNewsletter

## **Inside**

- Leadership Message
- Alumni Office Happenings
- Veteran's Memorial Project
- Fr. Flanagan Declared Venerable
- Sports Hall of Fame
- Profile, Tom Vaineo, '67
- Profile, Tiffany Colbert, '00
- Where Are They Now?
- Education Center Turns Four
- Alumni In the News
- Senior Welcome Lunch
- First Alumni Newsletter
- Boys Town Memories
- Remembering Father Flanagan
- In Memoriam



## **Class of 2026 Welcomed**

Class of 2026 welcomed as new Alumni

## **Upcoming Events**

July 11, 2026  
Founder's Birthday Picnic  
September 25, 2026  
Homecoming Game & Tailgate

## **Alumni Profiles**

Tom Vaineo, '67  
Tiffany Colbert, '00

## From the President **Building Our Future**



Jeff James, D'83  
President

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It has been a busy time since the reunion this past summer. Your new board of directors is working hard to address longstanding issues contributing to declining membership and participation in our Alumni Association. To this end your board has made a commitment to address the concerns head-on and begin to bring the Association back to the original purpose for which it was founded. To do this we will be reaching out to you for your input and your active involvement. I ask that you consider, positively, the opportunity to help our Association move forward into the future as we look to engage our younger generation of alumni and those yet to become alumni.

You will note that we have a new banner on our newsletter. This has been done to coincide with our transition from our old website to a new website provider. Your board has been hard at work making this transition brought about by the rising cost of retaining and maintaining our old website that has served us well for the last nine years. It is time that we made the change to a more prudent financial arrangement and access to newer technology that was not available nine years ago. We may experience some "construction" work with the new website as we, together, learn more about using all of the features available to us. If you have any suggestions we will be happy to take them.

May 2nd was a red-letter day for the graduating Class of 2026. Your BTNAA, the Omaha Chapter, and the Alumni Office hosted a steak luncheon as we welcomed our newest alumni into the Association. Many thanks to board members, Matt Valenzuela, John Soby-Cooke, April Ascheman, and board member and Alumni Director, Tony Jones for hosting this very successful event.

## From the Treasurer **Finances in Good Shape**



Rich Tapio, D'67  
Treasurer

To My Fellow Alumni

I'd like to report that your Alumni Association remains on strong financial footing as we move forward. The Lifetime Membership Fund has grown well and is providing us with a sound investment strategy that keeps our Association solvent. A generous bequest from our late Boys Town brother, Donald Farmer, '55, has given us additional funding to begin to work to grow our Association into the future.

One of the benefits of having the financial resources available is being able to take the load off the Alumni Office in funding our website. Moving to the new website will cost about two-thirds less than the \$12,000/year we were paying that was shared with the Alumni Office and the Scholarship Fund. With the Scholarship Fund we are covering 100% of the cost of our website. Another benefit will be the ability to host, along with the Omaha Chapter and the Alumni Office, our first Founder's Birthday Celebration picnic this coming July 11th at Boys Town.

We have consolidated all of our banking operations with Chase Bank and are finding them very responsive to our needs. Our investments are in good hands with UBS whose offices are just across Dodge Street from Boys Town.

I encourage you to get engaged with your Alumni Association. The future is bright and it is the commitment of the current board of directors to make the Association work for you.

I look forward to our next gathering in July and hope to meet many of you as we celebrate the birthday of our founder, the Venerable Father Flanagan.

# From the Alumni Office **Here to Help**



Tony Jones, '88  
Senior VP Successful Futures  
Alumni Director

TO MY ALUMNI BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

What a busy year this has been! We are graduating another class and adding them to our Successful Futures program where they will be mentored as they transition from residential care to independent living.

Our office support for alumni continues, as before, with the very professional assistance of Gail Page handling much of the day-to-day operations of the BTNAA. We count on her expertise each and every day.

We were excited to kick off the return of the Senior Welcome Lunch on May 2nd. It was a well attended event with most of the seniors in attendance. Some were participating in a track meet and a few had off campus jobs that they were committed to. I commend the BTNAA and the Omaha Chapter for underwriting the cost of the steak dinners for the graduating seniors.

I have been in touch with Boys Town's Maintenance Department to get a sense of the cost of the Veteran's Memorial Bench project and will have that information available as soon as their analysis is completed. This is a worthwhile project and I encourage everyone to support it financially when the time comes.

Mark your calendar for the July 11th Founder's Birthday Picnic to be hosted by the BTNAA, the Omaha Chapter and our office. Watch for more information and the RSVP form coming to your email.



Gail Page  
Alumni Support Specialist

Gail Page is well known to many alumni and has been a steady hand answering phone calls and emails for more than 20 years. She continues her duties in her new role as an Alumni Support Specialist. Her organizational skills have been a key element in the success of Alumni Reunions. We are most grateful for Gail's commitment, compassion and friendly smile.

Leadership Message.....2  
 Alumni Office.....3  
 Veteran's Memorial Project 2027.....4  
 Father Flanagan Declared Venerable.....5  
 Alumni Profile, Tom Vaineo, '67.....6  
 Where Are They Now?.....7  
 BTNAA Scholarship Fund Recipients.....8  
 Flanagan View Pavers.....8  
 From The Past.....8  
 BT Education Center Passes Four Year Mark.....9  
 Senior Welcome Lunch A Success.....9  
 News About Alumni.....10  
 Alumni Profile, Tiffany Colbert, '00.....11  
 Sports Hall of Fame Inductees.....12-15  
 Front Page - First Alumni Newsletter - 1951.....16  
 Photo Collage - Boys Town Memories.....17  
 Remembering Father Flanagan - Anniversary of Death.....18  
 In Memoriam.....19



## EDITOR'S NOTE:

- The editor has, at times, used AI assistance in cleaning up and restoring photos, in creating appealing layout options, and less frequently, assistance in editing text.
- Photo credits to Hall of History Archives and individual photographers.
- Some information used in the newsletter was gathered from public sources.

# Veteran's Memorial Project



The Board of Directors, at their April 2026 meeting, discussed the issues with seating at our Veteran's Memorial. For the past number of years, the Boys Town staff, with the help of alumni volunteers had to scramble around finding and moving chairs from the Music Hall to the Memorial and then back again after the completion of the ceremony. Our Memorial is an often visited site and an area on campus where visitors and youth alike may come to contemplate the sacrifice our alumni made in the defense of our nation. Boys Town has suggested that we consider using left over granite steps and slabs from campus renovations to build bench seating to accommodate up to 100 people.

## Veteran's Memorial Project - Phase III

At our January 2026 meeting the board authorized Tony Jones, '88, Sr. VP for Successful Futures and Alumni Director/Board Member to work with Boys Town to develop a cost estimate to use in a fundraising effort. The notional layout for seating is shown to the right. The current plan is to determine the cost of each individual bench installed and make each one available for sponsorship by individuals or groups of individuals to honor classmates, family, and friends.



## Memorial Day 2026

Inscribed on the bronze plaques are the names of more than 160 alumni who gave their lives in combat or who died while serving in the uniforms of our country's military services during war and peace. Their sacrifice is permanently honored at the Alumni Veteran's Memorial and at each of our Boys Town Alumni Biennial Family Reunions. This memorial was made possible with the generous contributions of many alumni over the years. Let us not forget our fallen alumni this Memorial Day.

For a list of those honored on the memorial, click below.

[List of Veterans](#)



## Father Flanagan Declared Venerable

Father Flanagan and the Road to Sainthood (Excerpt from Boys Town Website)

Father Edward J. Flanagan, founder of Boys Town, lived a life defined by faith, compassion, and courage. Born prematurely in 1886 in a stone cottage in Ireland, he was not expected to survive the night. With the warmth and prayers of his grandfather, he did, and this set the stage for a life devoted to serving the forgotten.

From early on, young Eddie felt called to the priesthood. Despite chronic health problems that forced him to leave seminary once, he returned and eventually was ordained. In 1917, he established Boys Town in Nebraska, creating a safe haven for at-risk boys. His unwavering belief that "There's no such thing as a bad boy" guided his mission, even when critics challenged his approach. He welcomed children of every race, religion, and background, standing firm in his convictions at a time when few others would. After World War II, President Harry Truman asked Father Flanagan to advise on the care of war orphans overseas. While carrying out that mission in Germany, Father Flanagan passed away in 1948, still serving the children he loved so deeply.

### A Major Step Forward: Father Flanagan Declared Venerable

On March 23, 2026, Pope Leo XIV declared Father Edward Flanagan Venerable, officially recognizing his heroic virtue and advancing his cause for sainthood. The decree was signed during an audience with Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, prefect of the Vatican Dicastery for the Causes of Saints.

This important milestone grants Father Flanagan the title "Venerable." For his cause to move forward, the Church now seeks confirmation of two miracles attributed to his intercession, one required for beatification and another required for canonization.

This recognition affirms what generations of Boys Town youth, staff, and supporters have long known: Father Flanagan lived a life of extraordinary holiness, courage, and love.

### Understanding the Path to Sainthood

The Catholic Church's canonization process is a rigorous, multi-stage journey. Today, Father Flanagan has successfully reached the following stages: Pre-Diocesan Phase | Diocesan Phase | Roman Phase | Venerable (declared March 23, 2026)

### Next Steps

Beatification which requires one approved miracle and Canonization which requires a second approved miracle.

### His Legacy Continues

Father Flanagan was a true visionary whose belief in the potential of every child still shapes Boys Town today. His newly recognized heroic virtue offers renewed inspiration and hope to all who look to his life as a model of compassion, justice, and steady faith.



## Father Flanagan League Society of Devotion

The cause for canonization is at the Vatican in Rome for further review and investigation. This journey, which began as an effort of the BTNAA in 1999, is far from over. Much prayer, investigation, and hard work have gone into the effort thus far. Much remains to be done to raise awareness and evidence of The Venerable Father Flanagan's heroic virtue. We need to keep praying, spreading the word, and supporting the cause financially. Consider making a contribution by clicking the button below.

[Donate Now](#)

# Alumni Profile

Tom Vaineo  
Class of 1967



*"Boys Town gave me a sense of purpose in my life to strive to be the best person you can be."*

## Personal

Tom met his wife Wendy at work in August 1970. They married on February 20, 1971, and have been married for 55 years. Of his family, Tom says; "We had our 1st daughter Nikohl in 1980, our son Michael in 1986, and another daughter Julianna in 1990. Nikohl & Larry have two children. Their son graduated from Texas Tech with a Mechanical Engineering degree and works at the NASA, Johnson Space center. Their daughter graduated from the University of Texas in December 2025 with a degree in Advertising. Michael and his wife Amber have two sons, Marcus and Roman, fifteen and five. Michael is a maintenance engineer for automated equipment for ARUP Laboratories of Utah. Daughter Julianna is married to Jessie and she's a published author of the Kings of Muraine series."

Boys Town gave Tom the skills to find his own way in the world and he has prospered. He is a lifetime member of the BTNAA.

## Boys Town Days

Tom Vaineo arrived at Boys Town in January of 1965 after being placed here by his Social Worker due to some trouble he had gotten into. The toughest part of the transition for Tom was "leaving family and home for a strange place and unfamiliar people".

Upon arrival he first met Dwite Pedersen during orientation. It was then that Pedersen informed Tom, he wanted him in his cottage. It was a great fit for Tom, and he prospered during his stay in the cottage.

Recalling his education Tom says, "The trade school in Electronics with Mr. Ralph Forke was great, I learned so much. I had 1700 certified hours in it. Electronics helped me throughout my life, especially when computers came out in the 90's. I would build my own machines that worked great. Sports were great too I competed in Track and Gymnastics. I learned a lot of discipline from sports. When asked about his Boys Town experience Tom shared this, "Boys Town gave me a sense of purpose in my life, to strive to be the best person you can be at work, marriage, socially."

## Life After Boys Town

After Boys Town Tom describes his life journey in this manner: "I was sort of an entrepreneur. I worked as a cook when I moved to Omaha. It was at this point that I moved to Chicago and began work at Illinois Bell Telephone. I was the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers union steward...the youngest to be one at that time. Needing to make more money I then decided to move into retail sales and increased my earnings by 75%. I was salesman of the year in 1971 out of a total of 17,000 sales personal. I won the company Oscar and was promoted to Assistant Manager, then Floor Manager six months later and General Manager one year later. I left the company to improve myself. While in Chicago, I owned Standardbred racehorses racing in Chicago's sulky circuit. It was exciting and lucrative till I sold the horses."

After Chicago, Tom and his wife Wendy moved to Wyoming where he operated a machine shop in his home and worked in sales, selling coin operated game machines throughout the country. He and Wendy left Wyoming in 2021, retiring to Conroe, Texas to be closer to their oldest daughter.

Boys Town gave Tom the skills to find his own way in the world and he has prospered.

He is a Lifetime Member of the Boys Town National Alumni Association.

## Beginning - 1960s



Mike Trevino, '58

Mike lives in Kansas City, MO and is Vice President of the BTNAA Scholarship fund. He has served numerous times on the BTNAA board. He is a Lifetime Member.



Mel Hamilton, '66

Mel and his family live in Lake City, South Carolina. He is a retired educator and enjoys spending time with his grand kids. Mel is a Lifetime Member.



Stan Struble, '68

Stan lives in Omaha and is an internationally published author of adventure novels. He is retired from Boys Town and teaches classes at the local Community College. Stan is a Lifetime Member.



Rich Heafey, '69

Rich has retired from Mutual of Omaha and he and his wife Betty live in Omaha. They are proud parents and enjoy spending time with their family. Rich is a Lifetime Member.

## 1970s - 1980s



Bill Bryant, '74

Bill served as a member of Boys Town's National Board of Trustees and is a Lifetime Member. He is an educator and lives in Lincoln, Nebraska. Bill is a Lifetime Member.



Ray Alexander, '76

Ray recently retired from his work at the Omaha Airport where he met many alumni flying in and out of Omaha. He is in a local band, Front Ro.



Matt Valenzuela, '85

Matt lives in Plattsmouth, Nebraska and works at Lyman-Richey. He is Vice President of the BTNAA and a Lifetime Member.



Dr. Rebecca Aleck, '88

Rebecca has her medical practice in Bentonville, Arkansas. She is a Lifetime Member.

## 1990s - Today



Billy Brown, '90

Billy is retired from the U.S. Department of the Interior and is a Navy veteran. He lives in Des Moines, Iowa.



Sarah Wright, '00

Sarah lives in Andover, Kansas and recently visited Boys Town. She is a nurse and will be traveling to South Africa in May with Nurses with a Purpose to help those in need.



Mary Carter, '03

Mary recently retired from the Air Force after 22+ years of service. She lives in Alaska and is a member of the board of the BTNAA Scholarship Fund. She is a Lifetime Member.



Zack Blanchard, '05

Zack and his family live in Louisiana where he is the CEO of Superior Contract Cleaning performing facility restoration services across the country. He is a Lifetime Member.



## Boys Town National Alumni Association Scholarship Fund

"Serving the educational needs of Boys Town Alumni since 1965"

The BTNAA Scholarship Fund met in April and awarded six scholarships to graduating seniors and one to an alumnus attending Nursing School. The following awards were made:

### Graduating Seniors

- Alfred Witcofski Vocational Scholarship - \$2000 - Collin
- Edwin Novotny Vocational Scholarship - \$2000 - Madison
- Monsignor Francis Schmitt Fine Arts Scholarship - \$2000 - Gavin
- Pfeifer-Palrang Scholar Athlete - \$1000 - Male - Daniel
- Pfeifer-Palrang Scholar Athlete - \$1000 - Female - Bexley
- Bucher-Baker Cash Award - \$500 - Crystal

### Regular Scholarship Application

Keishawn Rennix - \$4000

The deadlines for scholarship applications are **April 15th, July 1st, and December 1st**. If you are interested and in need of scholarship assistance please fill out the application by clicking on the link below.

[Scholarship Application](#)

## Alumni Pavers - Dedicate One!

*Memories*



**8" x 8"**

IN MEMORY OF  
RAY KEELE 1959  
MY FRIEND  
PETE LORENZ 60

**\$100**

*A Lasting Tribute*

*Friends*



**4" x 8"**

ED NOVOTNY 43  
MENTOR-TEACHER

**\$50**

*Let your friends know you remember them*

A TRUE FRIEND DANNY SHIELDS 78"	FR FLANAGAN KEN NEWCOMB 1936-1937	FREYSONKE GUIDING WORDS 1953	HEE 194
BONNE BORGUM YEARS OF DEDICATION TO BOYS TOWN	MSGR F SCHMITT HE CARED JIM AND JAY NEWBERGER 55	ED NOVOTNY 43 MENTOR-TEACHER FRIEND S STRUBLE 68	LEY JOHN WILLIA PATRIC
GLENN A CURTIN STNAA AUX PRES AND BENEFACTOR SHE IS MISSED	VERY GRATEFUL FRANK JOHNSON CLASS OF 1942 LT COL USAF	W A NE CLASS 10AUG MISS	

Honor someone with a special paver. Click on a link below to order. Once you have paid for your order, [download](#) and fill out the dedication form and email it to [gail.page@boystown.org](mailto:gail.page@boystown.org)

[8"x8" Paver - \\$100](#)

[Dedication Form](#)

[4"x8" Paver - \\$50](#)

## From the Past 45 Years Ago



## Happy Grad

Senior Ed Flanagan, great nephew of Boys Town founder Father Edward J. Flanagan, has a wide smile as he receives his degree from Father Hupp, Boys Town Executive Director.

## 35 Years Ago



Tears of joy and hugs from his brother, Carl, welcome Marine Lance Cpl. Ron Dennis, '88, home upon his safe return from Operation Desert Storm. Also sharing in the moment is Ron's Boys Town family, the Hugunins.

## 15 Years Ago



## Grapplers Win State Medals

The Boys Town Cowboys wrestlers came home from the Nebraska State Wrestling Tournament with some "heavy medal." The team returned with five state medals. The Cowboys earned two second-place medals, two third-place medals and one sixth-place medal.

## BT Education Center Graduates 3rd Class of Seniors

Sited on the location of the old Boys Town High School, the Boys Town Education Center is providing 21st century education in a building designed to enhance education and learning for Boys Town youth. The facility houses both the high school and the middle school. During the recent 2025 Alumni Family Reunion, many alumni were treated to a fantastic tour of this state-of-the-art school. The comments ranged from, "Wow" to "I wish I was back in high school again". This facility will serve our future alumni brothers and sisters well and will prepare them for their lives after Boys Town.



The original high school constructed in the late 1940s and early 1950s. It served us well through the years.

**The Class of 2026  
is welcomed to the  
Alumni Association.**

Saturday May 2nd was a red-letter day for our newest alumni. Hosted by the BTNAA, the Omaha Chapter and the Alumni Office a warm and enjoyable lunch was enjoyed by all. Msgr. Gilg opened the luncheon with an invocation and a delicious steak dinner was provided by the Great Hall Staff. By all accounts it was a very successful day. Thanks to the following alumni for joining in this outstanding event: Tony Jones, '88, Pat Garcia, '85, Matt Valenzuela, '85, John Soby-Cooke, '95, and April Ascherman, '93. A special shout out to Gail Page, the Great Hall and the Print Shop for their tremendous support.

**Tony Jones listens intently.**

**2026 seniors enjoying the luncheon.**

**Matt Valenzuela, '85, Vice President, BTNAA welcomes the new alumni.**

**Tony Jones, '88, Sr. VP, Successful Futures/Alumni Director shares alumni association membership card.**

**Omaha Alumni Chapter President, John Soby-Cooke presents lifetime membership to current Boys Town Mayor and Vice Mayor.**



# News About Alumni

## Lanise Hutcherson-Pitts '90



Lanise was profiled in March in Appleton, Wisconsin by the Caring Hearts Women's and Children's Home during Women's History Month.

**Meet Lanise Pitts** Secretary of Caring Hearts. First-Grade Teacher. Community Advocate. Family Support Leader.

Lanise Pitts is a dedicated educator and advocate committed to supporting children and families. As a first-grade teacher, she brings compassion, patience, and leadership into the classroom every day.

Lanise serves on the Board of Directors for Ebb & Flow Connections Cooperative and volunteers with People of Progression, helping support programs that strengthen community connections and uplift underserved populations.

She also provides respite services for children with autism and earned her Master's degree in Autism Spectrum Disorders in 2025, further strengthening her commitment to helping children and families thrive.

Lanise is passionate about creating safe, supportive spaces where children and families can grow, feel supported, and reach their full potential.

Caring Hearts is grateful for Lanise's dedication, compassion, and leadership as she helps guide our mission.

Proud of our Lanise! (Credit: Facebook)

## Pat Garcia, '85



In September of 2025 Pat was named the Executive Director of the Boys Town Home Campus where he oversees all the residential youth care programs for the

Home. His journey started as a youth at Boys Town, a Family-Teacher, and lately, the Executive Director of Boys Town of Iowa.

Pat is also active as the President of the Boys Town National Alumni Association Scholarship Fund. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Human Development and the Family from the University of Nebraska-Omaha and a Master of Science Degree in Human Services from Bellevue University. He also volunteers with Epworth Village, Inc. to introduce scouting to their residential youth.

Pat and his wife Lisa reside in Treynor, Iowa.

## Diane Cederdahl McPherson, '94



Diane ran a tough campaign for a seat on the Forney, Texas, City Council. Her campaign focused on bringing her community together. While she came up short after the vote counting was done she ran an honest campaign to be a caring voice in her community.

Diane's brother and sister alumni are proud of the tremendous effort she made in the goals she set to better her community.

## Chris Butler, '95



Chris was honored by Nebraska Realty with a top 25 Sales Achievement Award for the year 2025.

Way to go Chris! (Credit: Facebook)

## Jim Williams, D '65



Jim's story was profiled in the Veteran's Affairs website in the Fall of 2025. Click to the left to read the full article. Last July, Jim attended our reunion and was ever present taking tons of photos.

[Jim's Story](#)



## Share Your Story

We would like to share your story with your alumni classmates and friends. This is a great way to reconnect with your housemates and all the people you were living with at Boys Town. The format is easy to use, and it doesn't take much time on your part. All you need to do is click on the button below, add your story, and forward it to us when you are done.

[CLICK HERE](#)



He had a story - Tell us yours!

*"I know when the idea of a boys' home grew in my mind, I never thought of anything remarkable about taking in all races and all of the creeds. To me, they are all God's children. They are my brothers. They are children of God. I must protect them to the best of my ability."*

*- Father Edward J. Flanagan*



## TIFFANY COLBERT CLASS OF 2000



*"Boys Town taught me that not everything will be perfect all the time but anything worth having is worth putting in the time and working or fighting for."*

### Personal

"I have 8 children, ages 25, 24, 23, 19, 18, 18, 11, 8, 6, 5, and 4. My 25 year old is my God daughter Nicole, she has 2 babies, Jeremiah and Nayeli. My 24 year old Arionna went home to be with God when she was 6 weeks old. Then I have Jasmine and Brooklynn. Bella is my 18 year old, prior foster daughter but she is still in our lives. My youngest daughter will graduate high school and is planning to attend Wayne State this fall. My youngest three are all adopted, Demetrius, Olajuwan. We fostered them through Boys Town before we were able to officially make them ours for good. We are planning on fostering as long as we can to help give back to a place that helped me and have recently brought Landon, Elijah and Eliot into our home to help children who need the love and support of parents.

For relaxation, my family and I like to travel, especially on cruises. We mostly go to New York and Florida every year. We enjoy movies in our home theater and hanging around our swimming pool on hot summer days. I enjoy spending time with my grandkids when I am able to see them, and I love our daily Facetime chats. I am also a total Marching Band mom. I enjoyed the games and watching my daughter on the field with her band performing. We also have lots of pets to spoil!"

### Boys Town Days

"I came to Boys Town as a troubled girl from a very dysfunctional house. My mom was a drug addict and my dad was an alcoholic, both of them had mental health issues along with it. My mom knew I was headed down the wrong path, hanging out with the wrong crowd, getting into trouble at school and at home.

For me, being away from the two people that I loved most and could trust was very hard. I didn't like to be away from my dad and my best friend Katrina. I was able to talk to them about anything. I struggled with not being able to talk to them whenever I wanted. I also struggled with the structure of Boys Town. I was used to doing whatever I wanted, whenever I wanted. I couldn't do that at Boys Town. I was also held accountable for the things that I did. At home my behaviors were ignored.

There were a few people that motivated me the most while I was at Boys Town. In the early years, my dad motivated me to work hard and then I'd be able to come home. Father Peter was a major person who motivated me when I was at Boys Town. I was one of the lucky kids to be able to form a strong bond with him while I was there. He helped me understand the importance of a good prayer and to never be afraid to tell God what's on my heart. My Family Teachers motivated me to do good by their words and actions. They genuinely believed I could be better.

Boys Town showed me that there is a way in life that can be good. They showed me what a "normal" family is supposed to look like. I was prepared, for the very important task my husband and I have been entrusted with...with other people's children. I have continued to use the SODAS method of problem solving. I've taught my children and several other people how to do them. Boys Town taught me that not everything will be perfect all the time but anything worth having is worth putting in the time and working or fighting for."

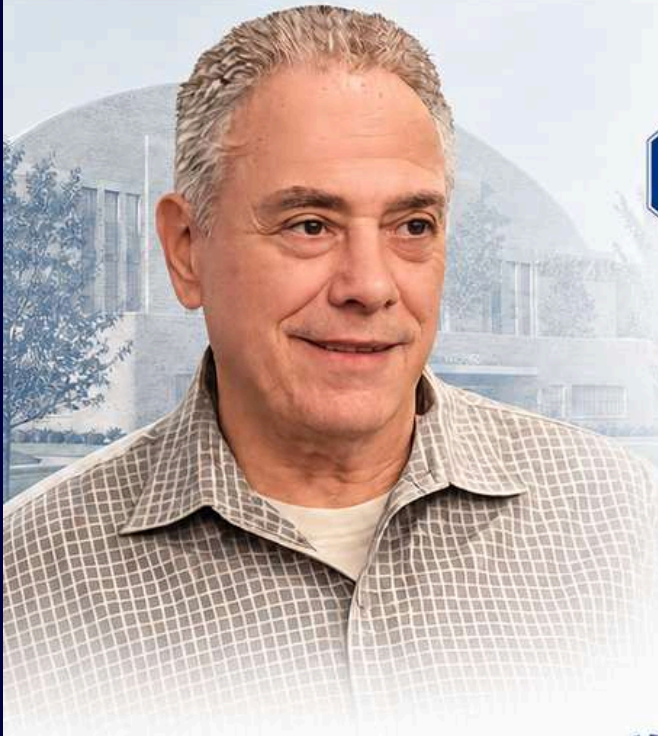
### Life After Boys Town

"After Boys Town I worked as a CNA in many different medical settings. That later turned into working in the Emergency room and ICU. I went to school and earned my associate's degree in Occupational Studies in Medical Specialties. I did my internship with Walgreens in the pharmacy. I later went to school to get my Emergency Medical Technician - Basic but after completion I decided to stay at home and raise my children for a while. That was short lived. I was then called to be a substitute preschool teacher for the church preschool of the church we attended. I worked as a preschool teacher for the rest of the year and then became a permanent substitute Sunday school teacher for our church.

For nearly six years, I have worked for The American Red Cross. I started in the Apheresis donor room as a Collections Specialist 2 (phlebotomist) for four years and for the past year I have been the Biomedical Equipment Technician-2, I am the person overseeing and in charge of the maintenance and repair of all the equipment used by our blood collection staff. As for the future, I plan on staying at my current job and taking care of my ever-growing family."

2026 BOYS TOWN

# BOOSTER BANQUET



# GENE CONKLIN

★ CLASS OF 1974 ★



## SPORTS HALL OF FAME

INDUCTED MAY 7, 2026

A respected leader. A fierce competitor.

A dedicated public servant.

Gene Conklin's legacy of excellence at Boys Town and beyond reflects the Cowboy spirit at its best.



### WRESTLING ACHIEVEMENTS

- ★ Omaha City Champion – 1970
- ★ Junior High Conference Champion – 1971
- ★ Member of the "Little Big Three" with Carlos Gonzalez and Danny Williams – BT wrestling standouts
- ★ Won numerous tournaments including:
  - South High School Invite – Freshman & Sophomore years
  - BT Invitational – Junior & Senior years
  - Burke Invitational – Junior & Senior years
- ★ Intercity Conference Champion – 1972
- ★ Metro Championships – 2nd place Junior & Senior years
- ★ Metro Conference All Star Champion – Senior year
- ★ 3-time State Qualifier
- ★ District Champion – 1974
- ★ State Tournament – 2nd place Senior year
- ★ Finished Senior Season with a 28-4 record

### A LIFE OF SERVICE

After Boys Town, Gene attended the University of Nebraska at Omaha on scholarship for one year. He then proudly served in the U.S. Air Force for six years as a radar technician.

Following his military service, he built a distinguished career with the Federal Aviation Administration. In total, Gene served forty three years in military and federal service.

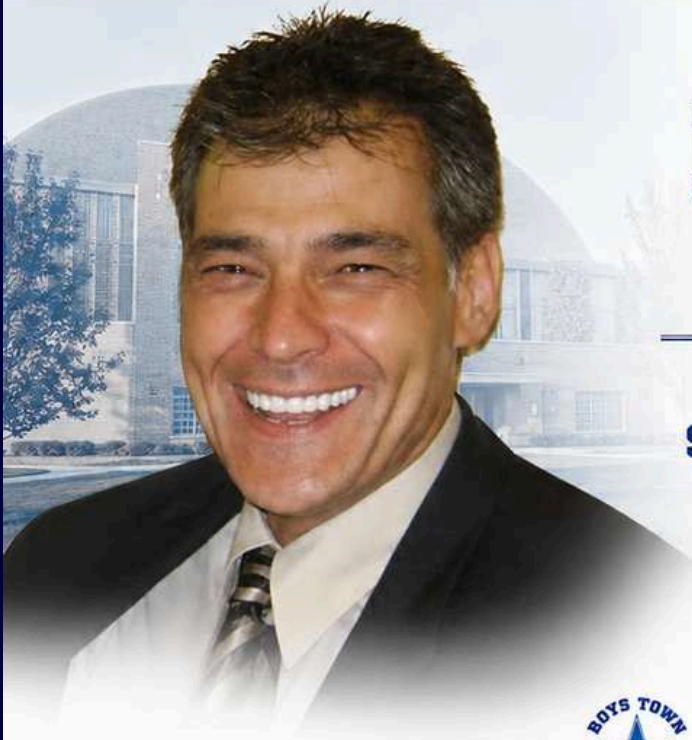
He and his wife Donna, a former ER and trauma room nurse, have been married for forty years and are the proud parents of four children – 2 boys and 2 girls – and three grandchildren. They reside in Temecula, California.

Gene gives back to his community by volunteering as a coach and enjoys working on cars and motorcycles.



2026 BOYS TOWN

# BOOSTER BANQUET



# SAMMY LARATTA

★ CLASS OF 1979 ★



## SPORTS HALL OF FAME

INDUCTED MAY 7, 2026

Relentless on the field of play.

Disciplined work ethic. Award winner.

Role model for team mates.

Sammy Laratta exhibited his leadership qualities at Boys Town and in life.



### ATHLETIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Sam Laratta arrived at Boys Town from Denver, Colorado in 1973. He was a dominant competitor and true multi-sport standout.

Laratta distinguished himself as one of the premier athletes of his era at Boys Town High School. He was undefeated in dual meets throughout his wrestling career and won the BT Invitational several times. His senior season wrestling campaign stands among the finest in school history. He was the Metro Conference and District Champion his junior and senior years. Laratta captured the Nebraska State Championship in his senior year while compiling a flawless 32-0 record.

While wrestling provided the defining highlight of his career, Sam's athletic impact extended well beyond the mat. He earned multiple varsity letters in wrestling, football, and baseball during all four years of high school — a rare accomplishment that underscored both his versatility and durability as a three-sport athlete.

Sam won numerous awards his senior year, including the B Club outstanding Wrestler Award, Outstanding Baseball Player Award, and the Skip Palrang Award. Sam Laratta's combination of championship performance, multi-sport achievement, and unwavering dedication make him a proud and deserving inductee into the Boys Town High School Sports Hall of Fame.

### A LIFE OF SERVICE

Sammy attended the University of Nebraska at Lincoln for one year on the Skip Palrang Scholarship, then subsequently joined the Marines in 1981 where he achieved the rank of sergeant.

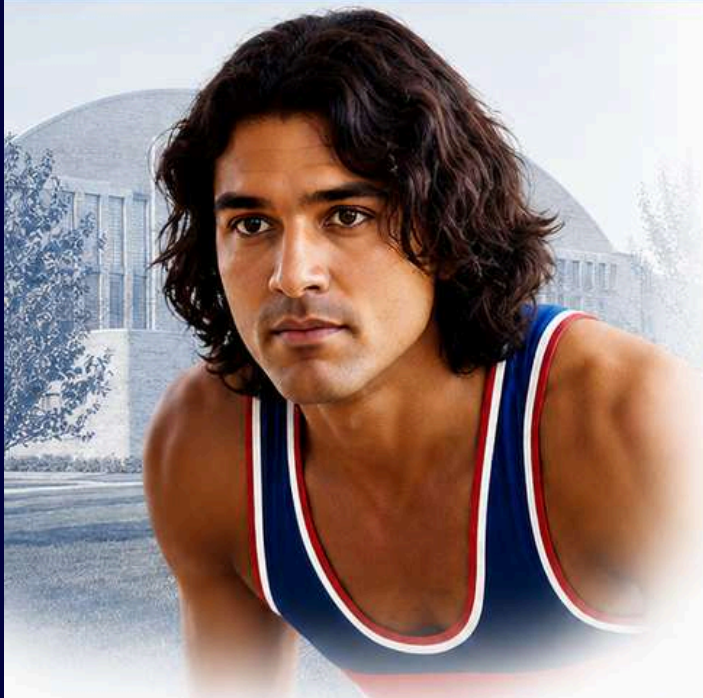
He met his wife in San Diego, and they raised four boys together.

He was discharged from the Marines in 1991 and returned to Denver where he joined his brother John in a successful real estate career in the Denver metro area.



2026 BOYS TOWN

# BOOSTER BANQUET



# DAVID CLARK

★ CLASS OF 1980 ★



## SPORTS HALL OF FAME

INDUCTED MAY 7, 2026

*Inducted Posthumously*

International competitor. Nebraska champion.

Intense commitment his mantra.

Dave Clark filled his life with success and became a role model for others.



### ATHLETIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Dave Clark came to Boys Town as a day student in 1974. He started his wrestling journey in the 7th grade before becoming a wrestling legend. Along with Carlos Gonzalez and Kevin Barrett, he won a total of three state championships during his career. Dave's Father, Scott Clark, was a very famous wrestling coach and educator at Boys Town. His mother Mary was a long-time religion instructor at the high school. Dave amassed a remarkable record. His freshman year he finished fourth at the State Championships. Clark went undefeated his sophomore and junior seasons. He was District Champion his sophomore, junior and senior seasons and a State Champion his sophomore, junior and senior years. His sophomore and junior years he was never taken down. Clark transferred to Millard South his senior year to wrestle Class 'A'. He won a State Championship that year. During his senior season, Clark earned a remarkable 30-1 record. He is the only Boys Town wrestler to have been invited three years in a row by the AAU to attend international training and competitions in West Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Clark earned a scholarship to wrestle at the University of Nebraska at Omaha where he wrestled for one year. He worked as the assistant coach at South High under the head coach Greg Wilcox, who went to the Junior Olympics with Dave in Germany. Dave wrestled at the Cornhusker Games every year in Lincoln. In 1988 he tried out for the Olympics and finished eleventh.

### A LIFE OF SERVICE

Clark Married Sandy Meehan in 1983. They have three children: Art, Nicky, and Ruben. Art presently serves as the head wrestling coach at Omaha South High School. Dave and Sandy have five grandchildren.

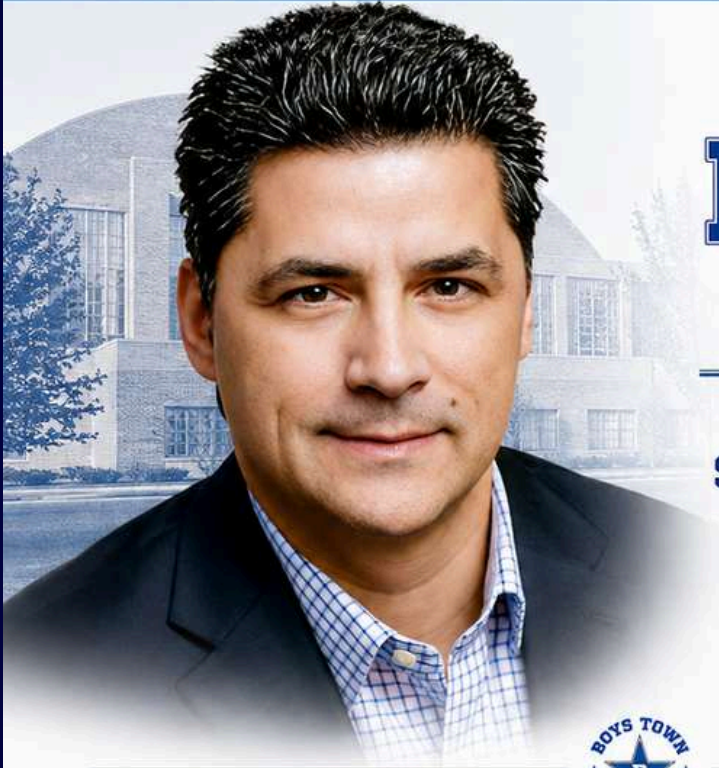
Clark was a long-time employee at the Omaha Housing Authority before moving to Loziers in North Omaha before his death in 2009 in a motorcycle accident.

Dave was a long-time volunteer coach at the Sherman Challengers Wrestling Club in North Omaha. Sandy reports that he was a very hard-working man and a wonderful father.



2026 BOYS TOWN

# BOOSTER BANQUET



# JOHN LARATTA

★ CLASS OF 1984 ★



## SPORTS HALL OF FAME

INDUCTED MAY 7, 2026

Recognized leader. Intense competitor.

Multi-sport athlete, talented singer.

John Laratta took the many opportunities at Boys Town to expand his horizons to build a bright future for himself.



### ATHLETIC ACHIEVEMENTS

John Laratta came to Boys Town in 1978 from Denver, Colorado. John was an outstanding wrestler at Boys Town High School. He developed a profile as an achiever as he performed at a very high level throughout his wrestling career.

As a freshman, Laratta won the 1981 Class B State Championship at 98 pounds. In 1982 he finished 4th at 105 pounds, and in 1983 he earned 3rd place at 126 pounds -- an extraordinary achievement capturing a total of four medals in four different weight classes.

John was undefeated in dual meets throughout his time at Boys Town. He concluded his wrestling career in 1984 as the 138-pound State Runner-up. John was a 4-time Conference Champion and was undefeated in conference tournament competition. He was also a 4-time District Medalist. Winning the championship three times and placing as Runner-Up once. John was only one of two wrestlers in the state tournament that year competing for a fourth career state medal.

John received the Tom Clarke Memorial Champion Award in 1981. He also was awarded the Gene Blake Memorial Award in 1981 & 1984 as the Most Outstanding Wrestler, the Booster Club Award as the Most Dedicated Wrestler in 1982 & 1983, and he was a four-year Varsity letterman and the Senior Team Captain.

Laratta was also a multi-sport athlete in football and baseball was a seven year member of Boys Town's famous Concert Choir. He was chosen to attend Nebraska Boys State in 1984.

### A LIFE OF SERVICE

Upon his graduation from Boys Town, Laratta was awarded a Msgr. Nicholas Wegner Scholarship for academic excellence, leadership, and character.

He subsequently earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of Denver and enjoyed a distinguished real estate career in the Denver area that spanned four decades.

He and his wife Anna have been married thirty five years and have four children and four grandchildren.



# THE ALUMNI NEWS

A SUPPLEMENT OF THE BOYS TOWN TIMES

Issue No. 1

Published by Members of the Boys Town Alumni Association

September 14, 1951

## An Appeal To The Alumni In Illinois, Michigan and California

We list below the available names and addresses of the alumni in Illinois, Michigan and California, and we urge them to get together and form a chapter of the alumni association. It will be well if you set a time and place for your meeting, elect your officers, and send the names and addresses in to the National Office. The following article from the constitution tells how a charter may be obtained.

**ARTICLE III. Section 3.** The association shall, upon evidence of the gathering of five or more members of the Boys Town Alumni Association, for the purpose stated in the Preamble, issue a charter, certifying that certain qualified members at some given place have complied with the requirements of the laws, for the organization and institution of a Boys Town Alumni Chapter.

Listed below are names and addresses of former boys in Saginaw, Michigan.

Ben E. Jankowski, 119 No. Fayette, Saginaw.  
John R. Kelley, 2416 Perkins, Saginaw.  
Joe W. Kerby, 1201 No. Webster, Saginaw.  
Vincent Carr, 310 N. Granger, Saginaw.  
Arthur W. Czerney, 221 So. Harrison, Saginaw.

Listed below are names and addresses of former boys in Detroit and surrounding areas. Let's get the Detroit Chapter started, fellows.

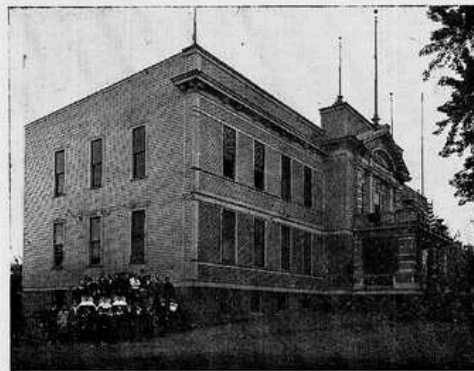
John A. Gutowski, 3315 West Euclid, Detroit 6.  
Henry E. Bezner, 1740 Mt. Elliott Ave, Detroit 7.  
William F. Roy, 2576 Hurlbut, Detroit 14.  
Anthony Darga, 9258 Herkimer St., Detroit.  
James M. Stafford, 750 Blaine, Detroit.  
George R. Farrell, 908 Calvert St., Detroit.  
Brother Vianney, St. Bonaventure, Detroit 7.  
Ed May 14630 Riverside Dr., Detroit.  
Keith J. Bates, 21393 Majestic Ave., Ferndale 20.  
Richard O'Brien, 63 Kelly Ave., Battle Creek.  
Merlyn L. Carney, 922 West Frant St., Monroe.  
Richard DeVolder, R. F. D. 1, Crystal Falls.  
Chester Reese, 2681 Evaline, Hamtramck.  
Gerald Tucker, 1010 N. Burdick St., Kalamazoo.  
Robert Lane, R-3730 Gratiot St., Flint.  
Frank Roli, 311 E. 3rd St., Monroe.  
Carl Green, S 1-c, U. S. C. G. Base, Charlevoix.  
Gordon E. Russell, 112 E. Pickard, Mt. Pleasant.  
Robert C. Whitehead, 407 Bidwell St., St. Albion.

Listed below are the names and addresses of some of the alumni residing in Chicago, Illinois.

Henry J. Eng, 244 Alexander St., Chicago 16.  
William J. King, 2214 West Thome, Chicago 45.  
Stanley C. Lee, 5820 West Roosevelt Road, Chicago 50.  
Matthew Rodak, 3622 S. Wood, Chicago 9.  
Ray Adams, 1848 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago.  
Roy Baldwin, c-o Mrs. Harper Baldwin, 2749 Archer Ave., Chicago.  
Pasquale J. Becastro, 2024 Lamont St., Chicago 39.  
George Burton, 2757 S. Parkway, Chicago.  
Mike Christopoulos, 1939 West Ohio St., Chicago.  
William Davis, 137 East 55th St., Apt. 419, Chicago.  
Tony Martinez, 447 N. Carpenter, Chicago.  
James F. MacDonald, The Chicago Area Project, 907 South Wolcott Ave., Chicago 12.  
R. Lowry, 2655 Fulton, Chicago 12.  
Richard Peterson 1237 Greenleaf, Chicago 25.  
Bob Quillin, 5001 S. Ashland, Chicago.  
Floyd A. Reducka, 102 East Oak St., Chicago.  
Ralph Ward, c-o Employees Cafeteria, Stephens Hotel, Chicago.  
Harold J. Wahert, 3352 Walnut St., Chicago.

Listed below are names and addresses of alumni living in the California area.

Charles K. Kossow, 316 North Union Ave., Los Angeles 26.  
Robert Mitchell, U. S. M. C., Camp Del Mar, Oceanside.  
James C. Richards, First Division, USS Samuel N. Moore, DD 747, San Francisco.  
Tony P. Villone, 10125 Washington Blvd., Culver City.  
Pfc. Ralph Pawlak, (1162216), Trac. Vn. Crewmen Co. B, Sup. Arms Training Bn. Camp Del Mar C. J. H. P., Oceanside.  
Alex Woodall, Box A 6472, San Quentin.  
George Henry Morris, 8121 Antwerp, Los Angeles.  
Pvt. Ray Aleman, (1199638), U. S. M. C., Plt. 188 2nd Rec. Trng. Bn. M. C. R. D. San Diego.  
Warren J. Baker, Seamans Unit, Rincon Annex, San Francisco.  
Pfc. Robert Bayless, Tank Vehicle Crewman Co. A Training and Replacement Command Supporting Arms Training Bn., Camp Del Mar C. J. H. P., Oceanside.  
Henry Bethel, 810 S. 4th St. Alhambra.  
Erwin E. Blanc, 409 Taylor St., Fairfield.  
SR. Arthur Casillas, Co. 620 Reg I, U. S. N. T. C., San Diego.  
Alfred J. Castiglia, 901 1/2 Via Wanda, Long Beach, 5.  
Willard Chan, c-o Mr. Thomas Chan, 1125 Jackson St., San Francisco.  
John C. Chennault, 996 Valencia, San Francisco.  
Weston Chiasson, 1540 Osborn Road, San Bernardino.  
Walter Clark, 6715 Flora Ave., Bell.  
Keith Copeland, 739 W. Kelso St., Inglewood.  
George DeLine, 4238 South Hoover, Los Angeles.  
Thomas L. Duhig, 3257-22nd Ave., Sacramento.  
Robert Franman, c-o Mr. T. J. Farnan, 1834 Ninth St., Alameda.  
Norvell Freeman, 3175 Valle Ave., San Diego 13.  
Charles H. Gebhart, CSI, USN, U. S. Naval Station, Long Beach.  
John Gough, 3617 W. 62nd St., Los Angeles 43.  
Jack W. Graham, 1149 West 84th Place, Los Angeles 44.  
Wilbur Gustin, 6012 A. S. U., Operations Replacement Center Detachment, Camp Stoneman.  
Pvt. Frank Hescock, 1154172, U. S. M. C. 1st recruit Trng. Battalion Plt. 84th M. C. R. O., San Diego 40.  
Pvt. Robert Howard, 1199386, Plt. 199 2nd Recruiting Bn. M. C. R. D., San Diego 40.  
Rudy Papaline, 1421 Valley Heart Drive, Burbank.  
Leo A. Pisarczyk, 1632 Skatta, Los Angeles.  
Dick Porter, 1821 16th St., Bakersfield.  
Robert Reeder, P. O. Box 773, Hollywood.  
Sgt. Charles J. Rizzo, 99th Ave., Sr. (M) Travis A. F. E., Fairfield.  
Joseph P. Robedeau, 2411 Maple St., Concord.  
Joe Rohlinger, 1923 Carnegie Lane, Redondo Beach.  
James P. Ross, 4705 Willowbrook Ave., Los Angeles 29.  
Patrick Ryan, 1302 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles 15.  
S-A Glen Sienop, 3402262, U. S. N. A. S., Monterey.  
Jimmy Skiles, 1430 S. Cochrans, Los Angeles.  
Claude W. Smith, 3732 1/2 Keystone, Los Angeles 34.



Remember the old days down at the German Home on South 13th Street? Here is a picture of the German Home when Father Flanagan had his home there after moving from the first home at 25th and Dodge, and before moving to Overlook Farm, with the entire population of the home grouped alongside the building.

## A Letter From The President

Dear Fellow-Alumni:

On behalf of all here at Boys Town, and the members of the Omaha Chapter, I welcome you into our association which is developing rapidly.

We have over two hundred applications in our files, and we hope that this number will increase by leaps and bounds.

About six hundred applications have not been returned. We would appreciate having everyone return his application as soon as possible. This will enable us to get more chapters organized throughout the country.

If you have not heard from us, there is a possibility that we do not have your current address on file, so if you will send us a note you will receive an application blank "pronto."

The printing of the membership cards is finished, and you will receive yours as soon as your membership dues are sent in. The dues are three dollars for the first year and one dollar for each following year. Please order your cards now. A picture of the card appears in this paper.

They tell me, fellows, that the beginning of anything is always pretty rough. You can help us very much by your cooperation.

Best wishes to all, and may God bless you and your families.

Let us hear from you soon.

Sincerely yours,  
Samuel J. Brecci  
President B. T. A. A.

Harland Smith, 269 12th St., Richmond.  
Leroy J. Smith, Sgt. 1-c, A. S. U. 6513, P. O. C. Fort MacArthur, San Pedro.  
Vincent Smith, 7181 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood.  
Homer A. Snyder, 8 Fremont Ave., Pasadena.  
Frank Spidel, 80 Ord. Co. Benicia Arsenal, Benicia.  
Dean Thomas, 3740 W. 108th St., Inglewood.  
Pfc. Louis Veciel, Reproduction Div. Depot Supplies, 100 Harrison St., San Francisco.  
Bill Walters, 4938 W. 98th St., Inglewood.  
Herbert Werner, Div. Adj. Sect., 1st Marine Div., F. M. F., Oceanside.  
Thomas A. Hughes, 123 Ottawa St., San Mateo.  
John A. Lapham, 418-81-79, Co. 50-545, U. S. N. T. C., San Diego.

These alumni have expressed interest in forming a local chapter. Those in their vicinity should contact these men for further information.

Tony P. Villone  
18125 Washington Blvd.  
Culver City, California

Alfred Castiglia  
901 1/2 Via Wanda  
Long Beach 5, California

John Gutowski  
3315 West Euclid  
Detroit, Michigan

## A Message From Father Wegner

One of the most interesting and worthwhile traditions of any school is an Alumni Association, active and energetic. To all at Boys Town it is most gratifying that this tradition is taking strong root, and its growth in the future seems very assuring and hopeful. The auspicious beginning of our Alumni Association foretells God's blessings upon it in the days to come.

The officers of the National Alumni Association of Boys Town have been very busy contacting former boys, and the replies received convey their words of enthusiasm and one hundred percent cooperation. That is the help we want and need to promote the Alumni Association. We are hoping that all former boys and graduates will become members, and thereby enjoy closer contacts with their former home, and school pals.

As we grow older our memory oftentimes takes us back to our school days and those who were with us in school. We reminisce about those days and years during which we got our real start in life, oftentimes not realized and appreciated until later years. Belonging to the Alumni Association will turn our mind back to those days and give us renewed courage and added incentive to push ahead, especially when the tasks of life may be difficult and somewhat rough. Let's not forego this fine opportunity of becoming members of the Boys Town Alumni Association which needs you and which you need.

Robert Lizama, 33 Elm St., Vallejo.  
Nick G. Loncaric, 5445 Rugh Ave., Oakland.  
Paul Lyons, 550 West Valley, El Monte.  
Pvt. Joseph Maleck, 560654 MSG-CTR Co., 16th Sig. OPN BN, Camp Cooke.  
Brian McGoldrick, 2002 North Los Robles, Pasadena.  
Tom Meager, 5763 Clemson, Los Angeles 16.  
William Meyers c-o Gen Do Mentory Co., Marina.  
Jim Mitchell, U. S. N. T. C., San Diego 33.  
George Morris, 8121 Antwerp, Los Angeles.  
David P. Nelson, Co. 51-585, U. S. N. T. C., San Diego 33.  
Pfc. Carl J. Owen, 891129, Motor Transport Company, Hd. Bn. Marine Barracks, Area 12, Camp Peneleton, Oceanside.

## Introducing Officers Of The B. T. A. A.

President: Samuel J. Brecci

Mr. Brecci came to Boys Town in November of 1935 and remained until June of 1941. While at Boys Town, he served several terms as city commissioner, and was Mayor from Jan. to June of 1941. Upon his graduation from the Boys Town High School, Mr. Brecci worked in the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Washington as a finger print searcher and classifier in the identification division.

During World War II, Sam served with the Second Infantry Division Engineers for twenty-six months of which sixteen months were spent in England France, Belgium, Germany and Czechoslovakia. He was awarded five battle stars and the Presidential Unit Citation.

While in the service, Sam married Miss Doris Brown of Greenville, N. C., whom he met at the F. B. I. Bureau where she was also employed.

Upon his discharge from the service, Sam returned to work as a counselor at Boys Town, and he enrolled in the Creighton Law School at Omaha where he will finish his law course in January of 1952. At that time, Sam plans to return to the F. B. I.

Sam has two children: Michael Gene, age 3 and one-half years, and Kathleen Joyce, 1 year. An addition to the family is expected in a few weeks.

Vice-President: Anthony Savorelli

Mr. Savorelli came to Boys Town in May of 1918 and remained until June of 1919. He is the owner of Tuckers Cafe in North Platte, Nebraska.

More information concerning Tony can be found in the article "Thumb Nail Sketches."

Secretary: Rev. William Benedict Martin

Father Martin came to Boys Town in 1938 from Little Rock, Arkansas. He remained at Boys Town until 1942 at which time he went away to begin his studies for the priesthood. He attended St. Louis Preparatory Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, and Kenrick Major Seminary. Father Martin was ordained in May of last year. At the present time he is an assistant at the Sacred Heart Parish in Omaha.

Treasurer: Charlie Mitchell

Mr. Mitchell who succeeds Mr. Brady as treasurer, came to Boys Town in 1939 and remained until 1943. He served thirty-four months in the service during World War II. Seventeen months were spent in New Guinea, the Admiralty Islands, the Philippines and Australia. Ribbons and citations awarded "Chuck" were the Asiatic Pacific, Philippine Liberation, American Theatre of War, American Area, and the Victory Medal.

In April of this year Charlie married Miss Florence Lutwitz of Templeton, Iowa. He is employed as a printer at Boys Town.

Former treasurer: Michael Brady

Mr. Brady came to Boys Town in 1934 and remained until 1940. During World War II, Mike served as a paratrooper four years and spent twenty-one months in the South Pacific. He was wounded in action. Upon his discharge from service, he taught English in the Boys Town High School, and matriculated at Creighton University where he obtained his Master of Science Degree in Education.

Mike is married and has four children: Mary Louise, five years old; Charles Michael, 2; Judith Marie and Mary Theresa, 7 months of age.

The Alumni News, a supplement of the Boys Town Times, is mailed only to alumni of Father Flanagan's Boys' Home, Boys Town, Nebraska.

# Boys Town Memories



Click on photo to enlarge



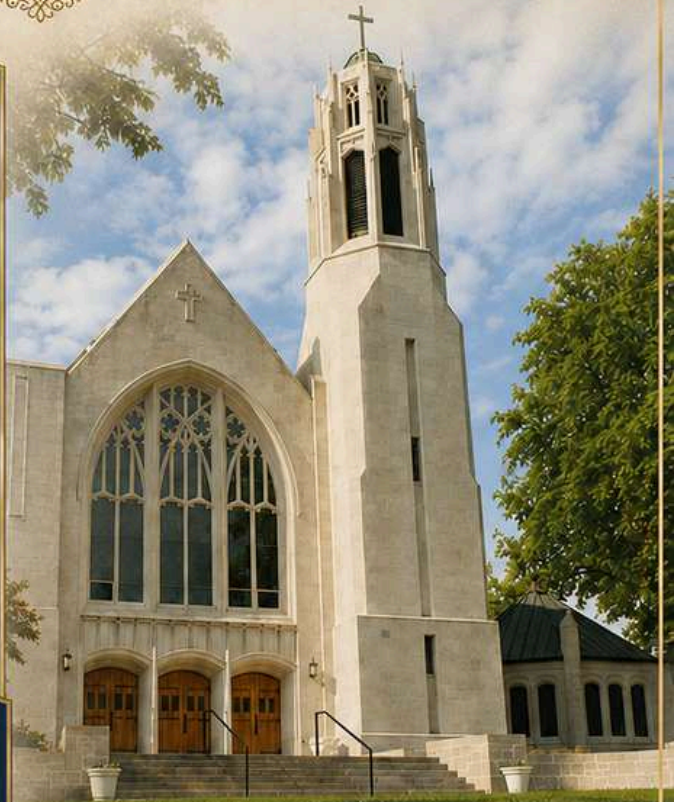
IN REMEMBRANCE OF

# FATHER FLANAGAN

*His Vision. His Courage. His Legacy.*



*The Venerable*  
**FATHER EDWARD J. FLANAGAN**  
*Founder*  
July 13, 1886–May 15, 1948



Boys Town alumni remember our founder  
on this day of his passing.

Without his passion for helping youth and his courage in standing up  
against those who would have stopped him, we would not have had  
the opportunities given to us by our fortunate stay at Boys Town.

# In Memoriam



Christopher R. Stargel, Former Family Teacher	April 26, 2026
Arthur T. "Tom" Bonin, '68	April 25, 2026
Robert W. Aldenhoff, '63	April 9, 2026
Joseph L. Boswell, Former Family Teacher	March 28, 2026
Evan M. Damewood, '24	March 24, 2026
Gordon H. Morris, '70	March 8, 2026
Angela R. Frederick, '92	February 25, 2026
Daniel M. Banz, '57	February 25, 2026
Michael J. Millea, Former Counselor	January 26, 2026
Earl C. Farnum, '57	January 21, 2026
Julius K. James, '14	December 10, 2025
Robert J. Curtin, '58	September 28, 2025
Glenn F. Diaz, D'80	August 24, 2025
Vincent S. Tucker, '84	August 7, 2025
David B. Alexander, '60	March 1, 2025
Charles E. Bushey, '56	March 30, 2022

## REQUIESCAT IN PACE

\* Hover cursor over names to read available obituaries

### Prayer Petitions

*"Pray, For Prayer  
Can Work Miracles."*

*The Venerable Fr. Flanagan*



Click on the link below to complete your online prayer petition with the Father Flanagan League. Your petition will be placed in the petition book beside The Venerable Fr. Flanagan's tomb and prayer groups will offer your intentions in prayer.

[Prayer Petition](#)



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Photo by Jimmy Harmon, D '86

