

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOLS ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

CARDINAL CONNECTION

"St. Mary's Catholic Schools strive for a united community of academic excellence and stewardship by embracing the Gospel and carrying the light of Christ."



FALL 2025
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SOUTH DAKOTA HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

The third St. Mary's alumnus was inducted into the South Dakota High School Basketball Hall of Fame. In this issue, we will acknowledge those three hall of famers.

JIM SCHMIDT - 1941 GRAD - INDUCTED 2017



James "Sunny Jim" Schmidt, (12/4/1921 - 7/18/2010), excelled in basketball for St. Mary's, averaging 13 points per game over 114 games and earning all-tournament honors all four years of high school. In his senior year, the team had a 31-2 record and participated in the National Catholic Tournament.

Schmidt went on to South Dakota State University, where he was an all-conference player before enlisting in the Marines. He played for Northwestern University and Penn State, leading as a scorer and MVP. Schmidt played with the Minneapolis Lakers of the fledgling NBA, and various AAU teams, including the national champion, Peoria Caterpillars. He was called back into the Marines during the Korean Conflict where he played and helped Coach Quantico to the All-Marine Championship in 1952. He was also inducted into the South Dakota Sports Hall of Fame in 2010.

JERRY EVEN - 1964 GRAD - INDUCTED 2020

Jerry Even scored 2,032 points over his career. Averaging 23 points and 17 rebounds as a junior and 26 points and 14 rebounds as a senior. The Cardinals participated in the State Catholic tournament all four years. During the 1963 tourney, Even scored 108 points in four games, averaging 27 points per game. Standing 6-foot-3½, he played both forward and center. Coached by '41 Jim Schmidt and later Dennis Sudbeck, Even earned all-state honors as a junior and senior, a notable achievement for a parochial school player. He was nominated for the Catholic All-America Team after graduating in 1964. Besides basketball, Even excelled in track and field and played baseball. He later joined the University of South Dakota's basketball program and is now retired, living in Sioux Falls with his wife Judy. One of their daughters Jayne, has also been inducted into the SD Basketball Hall of Fame.



COLBY FITZGERALD - 2004 GRAD - INDUCTED 2025



Colby Fitzgerald, was pivotal in the team's rise during the early 2000s. He led the Cardinals to a perfect 25-0 season and their first Class B State Championship in 2004. A four-year varsity starter, Fitzgerald earned numerous accolades, including First Team All-Dakota Valley Conference honors and the Argus Leader Player of the Year. He scored 2,294 career points, ranking eighth on the state's all-time list at graduation.

Fitzgerald helped the team achieve three consecutive state tournament appearances, culminating in their championship win. After playing at the University of South Dakota and Dakota Wesleyan University, he has returned as head boys basketball coach, coaching the next generation of Cardinals in our community.



THANKFUL AND BLESSED

By Mrs. Deb Kallhoff, Pre-K - 6 Principal, Curriculum Director

It's hard to believe that we are once again at the end of our second quarter of school! The time has gone quickly, and we have been busy - and blessed - at St. Mary's.

We started the year with new opportunities. Debbie Jorgensen (8th - 12th Math), in addition to her math responsibilities, is now offering Physics! This is a great opportunity for our students to take an upper-level course they could not before.

We continue on our Institute of Catholic Liberal Education (ICLE) journey, adding training each year for our staff on things such as Socratic Seminar, Picture Studies, and Inquiry, as well as ways to integrate these strategies into every part of our curriculum. ICLE aligns perfectly with our mission to form every student in mind, body, and spirit. Our teachers have all embraced the new techniques and love being able to strengthen and share their love of Jesus with our students in the classroom.

We are thankful for all who support our school, our students, and our mission. We look forward to great things to come in our future!



FR. BILL HAMAK

Parochial Vicar for Queen of Peace Pastorate

My name is Fr. Bill Hamak. I am one of the priests here in Queen of Peace Pastorate. I live in Flandreau, but I travel between the four parishes. Slowly, I am becoming familiar with each as I carry out my priestly duties.

I grew up on a small farm as the third oldest, with four brothers and a sister near Aberdeen. In addition to helping with family chores, I worked for local farmers, on construction sites, and in a number of other odd jobs. I began thinking of the

priesthood after I encountered God's love in a deep personal way. Despite my dislike of school and doubts about my academic abilities, I enrolled at Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio. After graduating, I entered Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD, and was ordained in 1992. Since ordination, I have served in parishes throughout the Sioux Falls Diocese. When time allows, I enjoy gardening, cooking, camping, fishing, kayaking, and hunting.

Since beginning this new assignment this past July, I have enjoyed seeing the students at some of their school events. It is a delight to see Catholic formation in action. I hope all you alumni recognize the blessings of your years of Catholic education. The benefits can be forever.

I look forward to more opportunities throughout this coming school year to get to know the students and faculty. Please keep them all in your prayers. And if our paths should cross, please introduce yourself.



FR. ERNEST ABUGRI

Parochial Vicar for Queen of Peace Pastorate

I would like to share a few personal observations about the students of St. Mary's Catholic School, Dell Rapids. It is important to draw their attention to the things they are doing well and encourage them to continue things in that direction. Some of the things I am very happy to see they are hardworking, respectful, disciplined, honest and friendly.

They often exhibit these commendable qualities in the classroom, at sports, on the playground, in the church, especially during the celebration of the sacraments. Their ability to stay calm, silent, and well composed in church and the classroom is always beautiful. They should be made to know, they are appreciated for being good and trying to be better. With the appreciation of each of us, they may be encouraged to keep up the good work and grow in greater virtue.

For the times I interacted with them, I can tell they are happy students and would be happier if they continue to obey God through their school authorities, parents, and superiors. They have so much light for the world, and I am confident this light will not be put out by anything or anyone and will even shine brighter for better things to happen to them and those they encounter.

CARDINAL GOLFERS SHOOT FOR THE STARS



By Mr. Blaine Bacon, 8-12 Science Teacher, Golf & Jr. High Football Coach

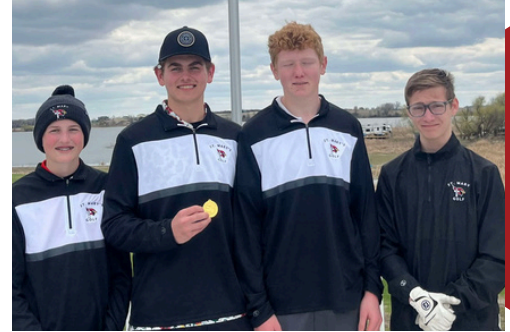
The 2025 golf season was one to remember for the St. Mary's Cardinal teams, highlighted by the girls capturing their first-ever state championship and Coach Blaine Bacon being named Dakota Valley Girls Coach of the Year.

The Cardinal girls dominated throughout the season, winning nine tournaments. Their season included a commanding performance at the Dakota Valley Conference Tournament, where the team posted a score of 245—57 strokes ahead of second-place Colman-Egan.

On the boys side, the team took sixth place overall at the conference tournament with a score of 277. Trevon Beckman led the boys individually, placing fifth with an 87, while Jonah McNaughton (94), Paxton Beckman (96), and Lukas Gaul (128) rounded out the scoring.

The Cardinals continued their strong performance at the Region 3B meet at Rocky Run Golf Course on May 22nd. The girls captured the regional title, while the boys placed fourth, just one shot shy of qualifying the full team for state. Top performers for the girls included Isabella McNaughton (2nd, 88), Allie Hansen (3rd, 88), Sophie McNaughton (5th, 91), and Carley Roiger (7th, 95). For the boys, Trevon Beckman (7th, 81) and Paxton Beckman (11th, 83) earned state qualification.

The season's crowning achievement came at the 2025 South Dakota State B Girls Golf Tournament in Watertown. The Cardinal girls won their first state championship, posting a team score of 501—eight shots ahead of second-place Miller. Isabella McNaughton placed fourth individually (159), Allie Hansen tied for seventh (170), Sophie McNaughton finished in tenth with 172, and Carley Roiger placed 26th (187). Trevon Beckman led the Cardinal boys at the state tournament with a two-day score of 161 (81, 80), while Paxton Beckman finished with 184. The 2025 St. Mary's Cardinal golf teams showed skill, determination, and teamwork throughout the season, with the girls achieving an unforgettable milestone for the program.



A SEASON "ON FIRE": AN INCREDIBLE YEAR OF CHEER



By Mrs. Cami Bacon, 3rd Grade Teacher and Cheer Coach

From the first practice to the final competition, our team showed remarkable growth, determination, and heart. This year, our team returned to a coach-choreographed routine and introduced a theme for the very first time: "On Fire." Not only did this bold theme highlight the strength, confidence, and fearlessness of our athletes, but it also served as a powerful representation of the Holy Spirit—present with our team each time they stepped onto the mat.

With 24 athletes, our largest team in school history, we were led by six outstanding seniors and supported by seven first-year cheerleaders who embraced every challenge with enthusiasm.

Their dedication paid off in a big way. At the state competition, the team earned the highest score ever recorded in school history and proudly brought home the third-place trophy. This team truly was "On Fire," and their accomplishments will be remembered for years to come.

CARDINALS IN MOTION

Both our Cross-Country teams had great seasons. In his third season, Coach Mitchell Roemen was selected as the Boys Cross Country Dakota Valley Conference Coach of the Year. The boys' team won the Conference Meet for the fourth time in school history.

Roemen also coaches our Lady Cardinals. They won the Region Championship Meet for the second time in school history, and went on to finish 8th at the State Meet.



20 SEASONS MARCHING STRONG By Mrs. Joni Smith, K-12 Music & Band

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the St. Mary's School Marching Band, and it proved to be one of the program's most successful seasons yet. Practices kicked off in August, with students in grades 7–12 coming together to begin preparing their 2025 show, featuring the energetic classic "Land of a Thousand Dances."

The band launched its competition season in September by traveling to Parker, SD. With 53 members, St. Mary's was the largest band in attendance and competed in Class A—where they earned an impressive 1st place finish. The momentum continued into Homecoming Week, when the band traveled to Arlington for a competition classified by school enrollment. Performing in Class B, the band placed 4th and received valuable feedback from judges, which they used to refine their routine ahead of their final contest. They rounded out the month by performing at home in the annual Homecoming Parade, where they showcased their progress to the local community.



In October, the band wrapped up its season at the Lake Area Marching Band Competition in Chester. Competing in Class C—again determined by school enrollment—the Cardinals faced tough competition, ultimately earning a strong 2nd place finish. Throughout the season, with each performance and every set of judges' notes, the band continued to grow, strengthen their skills, and elevate their show. The 2025 season was a memorable and rewarding milestone for the St. Mary's Marching Band, highlighting two decades of dedication, teamwork, and musical excellence.

FAITH, GRIT, AND GLORY: CARDINALS FINISH AS FOOTBALL 9B STATE CHAMPIONS

The 2025 SMCS Football team had an extraordinary year, achieving their first undefeated season in school history, alongside winning the 9B State Football Championship. Notably, two of our coaches received accolades at the state level: Junior High Coach Blaine Bacon was honored as the 9-man Junior High Coach of the Year, leading the Junior High Cardinals to an impressive 10-0 undefeated record this season. Head Football Coach Ross Flemmer was recognized as the DVC and State 9B Coach of the Year by the SD Football Coaches Association. With an overall record of 181-75, Coach Flemmer has led five different teams to the Championship game during his 26 years at St. Mary's.

Multiple standouts received many accolades from the season, including:

- **Lincoln LeBrun:** All-Conference, (RB) All-State, State Most Outstanding Back, Joe Robbie MVP, Sioux Falls Live Top 25
- **Trimmier Hanson:** All-Conference, (DB) All-State, 9B All-American, Sioux Falls Live Top 25
- **Alex Lindeman:** All-Conference, (OL) All-State, Most Outstanding Lineman
- **Jaxon Buamberger:** All-Conference, (DB) All-State,
- **Carlo Pica:** All-Conference Honorable Mention, (DL) All-State,
- **Logan Bauer:** All-Conference Honorable Mention, (ATH) All-State
- **Gavin Pica:** (OL) All-State

Congratulations to our team and coaches for a phenomenal season filled with achievements and accolades!



BIRTHS

Reed Hudson Hemmer: son of '16 Marryn (Brown) and Jake.

Walker Herman Tracy: son of Bridget and Chris, grandson of '80 Dave and Loretta Redder.

Halle Ann Velhusen: daughter of Becca and Kooper, granddaughter of '89 Jason Klein, great-granddaughter of '62 Jerry Klein.

Myles Christopher Michel: son of Jess and Shelby, grandson of '83 Paul and '84 Susan (Elsinger) Michel, great-grandson of '59 Gerald and '59 Sharon (Bunkers) Elsinger.

Odin Dean Hoekstra: son of Whitney and Caleb, grandson of '76 Moe and '76 Grace (Schnieders) Lickteig.

Wesley Gene and Asher Joseph Frantzen: twin sons of Riley and Alexis, grandsons of '85 Joe and Amy Frantzen, great-grandsons of '55 Sylvester and Barb Frantzen.

Henry Joseph Linke: son of Jeanette and Jonathan, grandson of '86 Joe and Nicole Klein, great-grandson of '62 Jerry Klein.

Bexley Ann Bares: daughter of '18 Seth and Myranda, granddaughter of '89 Mark and Helen Bares.

Saige Elaine Kriens: daughter of Ryan and Jenna, granddaughter of '76 Larry and Tina Hauglid.

Stockten Mark Berg: son of '15 Macey (Kriens) and Jess, grandson of '83 Mark and Alice Berg, great-grandson of '51 Erma (Hansen) Berg.

Blair Inez Schuett: daughter of '12 Maddison (Brown) and Kyle.

Kyler William Murphy: son of '15 Kaitlyn (Vortherms) and Nick, grandson of '86 John and Laura Vortherms.

Elroy Stephen Sudbeck: son of '14 Anna (Wolles) and Jackson, grandson of '83 Tim and Stephanie Wolles, great-grandson of '53 Rog Wolles.

Tate Richard Hubers: son of Kelli and Tim, grandson of '77 Ron and Jan Siemonsma.

Jett Thomas Kolbeck: son of Matt and Courtney, grandson of '82 Tom and '84 Pam (Hoffman) Kolbeck.

Barrett Gene Glazier: son of Greg and Lindsay, grandson of '81 Barb (Welbig) Glazier.

Evelyn Grace Eining: daughter of '14 Ted and McKenna.

Waylon Charles Hetherington: son of Brittnay and Will, grandson of '84 Jim and Heidi Welbig.

Graham Joseph Carpenter: son of Deni and Matt, grandson of '80 Dennis and Dondi Ahlers, great-grandson of '58 Arnie and '59 Bonnie (Ellis) Ahlers.

Andrew Frederick Ardis: son of '17 Christina (Vogel) and Eric.

William Howard Wolles: son of Matt and Emily, grandson of '79 Joan (Fiegen) and Tom Wolles.

Brynlee Mae Michel: daughter of Kyle and Karlie, granddaughter of '83 Paul and '84 Susan (Elsinger) Michel, great-granddaughter of '59 Gerald and '59 Sharon (Bunkers) Elsinger.

The following children were born to/adopted by alumni or have grandparents or great-grandparents who are St. Mary's alumni.

Brynne Elizabeth & Clare Anne Fiegen: Twin daughters of Dr. Tony and Katie Fiegen, granddaughters of '81 Ed Fiegen, great-granddaughters of '51 Jim and Phyllis Fiegen.

Myles Aaron Welbig: son of '08 Josh and Carrissa, grandson of '80 Dan Welbig.

Joanna Kay Johnson: daughter of '15 Brandi (Wolles) and Thad, granddaughter of '81 Mike and Sherri Wolles, great-granddaughter of '61 Roseann (Klein) and John Mousel and '53 Rog Wolles.

Rose Ellen Klein: daughter of '14 Nathan and Jennifer, granddaughter of '86 Dennis and Lori Klein, great-granddaughter of '59 Dick Klein.

Dawson Daniel Fiegen: son of '10 Scott and Jen, grandson of '76 Rog and '74 Judy (Siemonsma) Fiegen, great-grandson of '49 Dolores (Heinemann) Fiegen.

Skylar Sue Brown: daughter of '09 Jordan and Sarah.

Dean Donald Hansen: son of Gregory and Nicole, grandson of '69 Greg Hansen and great-grandson '66 Greg Hauglid.

Cora Rose Heinrich: daughter of '15 Wes and Kaylee, granddaughter of '88 Trish (Pederson) and Noel Heinrich, great-granddaughter of '61 Ray Pederson.

Jayden James Vortherms: son of Derrick and Mallory, grandson of '86 John and Laura Vortherms.

Ezra Alejandro Geraets Garcia: son of '19 Courtney and Alejandro, grandson of '88 Paul and Amy Geraets, great-grandson of '65 Mike and Kathy Geraets.

Caroline Renae Olson: daughter of '17 Lexi (Klein) and Blaine, granddaughter of '92 Mark and Renae Klein, great-granddaughter of '60 Bill and Gayle Klein, and '57 Vera (Penning) and Bernard Burggraff.

Maverick Wayne Siemonsma: son of '04 Justin and Andrea.

Walton Manfull: son of Shelby and Riley, great-grandson '66 Greg Hauglid.

Henry Anthony Reams: son of '15 Riley (Wolles) and Adam, grandson of '87 Tony and Brenda Wolles, great-grandson of '61 Jim and '62 Shirley (Bunkers) Wolles.

Shepherd Merlin Dinkel: son of Melissa and Nicholas, grandson of '79 Marvin Fiegen, great-grandson of '49 Dolores (Heinemann) Fiegen.

Harper Grace Fiegen: daughter of Alex and McKenna, granddaughter of '78 Tim and Kristi Fiegen.

Mackenzie Elizabeth Kraning: daughter of Brynn and Zachary, granddaughter of '83 Alan and Ronda Roemen.

Willa Mae Hall: daughter of Laura and Levi, granddaughter of '79 Joan (Fiegen) and Tom Wolles.

Caeli Lucia Kleve: daughter of '14 Kiley and Alex, granddaughter of '93 Mike and Jennifer Reecy, great-granddaughter of '61 Tom and Kaye Reecy.

Gianna Melissa Roemen: daughter of '14 Mitchell and Mariah, granddaughter of '86 Mark and Christy Roemen.

Beau Dominik Namken: son of '15 Ally (Mullaney) and Dominik, great-grandson of '61 Roseann (Klein) and John Mousel.

Alaina Ann Hillman: daughter of '15 Nicole (Brown) and Landen.

PERMANENT VOWS OF LOVE

The following alumni, or relation to alumni, were united in marriage.

Peityn Roemen and Jacob Rogers: May 17, 2025. Peityn is the daughter of '88 Dan and Renee Roemen, granddaughter of '65 Denny and Kathy Hansen.

Peter Klein and Kaley DeCou: May 23, 2025. Peter is the son of '76 Jerry and Jean Klein.

Mitchell Geraets and Samantha Price: June 7, 2025. Mitchell is the son of '96 Aaron and Kari Geraets, grandson of '72 Doug and '73 Nancy (Fiegen) Geraets and '66 Greg Hauglid, great-grandson of '49 Dolores (Heinemann) Fiegen.

'21 Noah Dennis and Hannah Warmbrand: June 12, 2025.

'22 April Hof and Ricky Ricardo Espada: June 18, 2025.

Taylor Benson and Jake Hemmer: June 20, 2025. Taylor is the daughter of '95 Lisa (Klein) and Mike Benson, granddaughter of '60 Bill and Gayle Klein.

'16 Abigail Burkhart and Jordan Munk: August 2, 2025.

Mason Hollaren and Kayley Randby: August 20, 2025. Mason is the grandson of '61 Bob and Carol Mergen.

'21 Karlie Klein and Colton Pulscher: August 23, 2025. Karlie is the daughter of '92 Mark and Renae Klein, granddaughter of '60 Bill and Gayle Klein, and '57 Vera (Penning) and Bernard Burggraff.

Justin Schnieders and Sarah Menking: September 6, 2025. Justin is the son of '77 Kevin and Jeannine Schnieders, grandson of '45 Darlene (Pierret) Schnieders.

Andrew Scherff and Hannah Elsinger: September 19, 2025. Andrew is the son of '88 Brad Scherff.

'15 Lindsey Wolles and Dylan Herr: September 27, 2025. Lindsey is the daughter of '83 Deb (Klein) and '80 Dave Wolles, granddaughter of '59 Dick Klein and '53 Rog Wolles.

Jackson Geraets and Abigail Cullen: September 27, 2025. Jackson is the son of '96 Louis Geraets, grandson of '65 Mike and Kathy Geraets.

'17 Dalton Houska and Adriana Dyson: October 4, 2025.

Ethan Hollaren and Elissa Oyen: October 18, 2025. Ethan is the grandson of '61 Bob and Carol Mergen.

Evelyn Klein and Derek Fiege: October 11, 2025. Evelyn is the daughter of '86 Joe and Nicole Klein, granddaughter of '62 Jerry Klein.

'10 Juliana Everist and Jordan Hermanson: October 25, 2025.

REMEMBRANCES

The following alumni, or relation to alumni, have passed away.

'75 Carol Theresa (Gengler) Yost: February 22, 2025. Survived by husband Rod; siblings '66 Kathleen, '68 Mitz (Allen) Heine, '71 Jerry (Pat), Linda (Freddie) Allison, and '74 Mary (Doug) Anderson.

Leroy A. Nielsen: March 28, 2025. Survived by children '67 James (Karen), '68 Sue (Don) Hilmo, '70 Paul ('73 Rosalie), and '76 Terry (Renae).

Duaine Schmidt: March 30, 2025. Survived by wife Gail; daughters Grace and Gina.

'45 Ellen Grace Sweeney (Burley) Merrigan: April 4, 2025. Survived by children Gaylord (Shirley), Dotti (Gary) Burley, Debbie (Dean) Landreth Bertsch, Steve, Grace (Tom) Wilson, and Diane (Cory) Miller.

Deacon Mike Huntington: April 28, 2025. Deacon Mike taught 5th grade at St. Mary's Catholic School (1970-1971). Deacon Mike is survived by wife, Donna; son, Chad (Jill) Huntington.

'67 Denny Gaspar: April 29, 2025. Survived by wife Kate; daughters Meghan (Paul) Goldammer and Kelly (Tor) Instad.

'51 Joyce Ann (Heinemann) Lerdal: May 18, 2025. Survived by children Debra (Peter) Hoeger, Donald (Dara), Michael (Apidee), Patty (Steve) Van Aartsen, and Peter (Jill); sisters '53 Virginia (Heinemann) (Richard) Mergen and '60 Ruby (Heinemann) (Richard) Nelson.

'08 Caleb Glenn Michel: May 20, 2025. Survived by wife Lacey; parent '80 Kevin Michel; siblings Josh (Tonya) Pitts and Nicole (Terrill) Reiners.

Dean Helton: May 22, 2025. Survived by wife '66 Sandra (Kroger) Helton.

'49 Arlene Mary (Heinemann) McFarlane: June 27, 2025. Survived by children Terry (Deb), Sue King, Tom (Jodi) and Teresa (Al) Jones; sisters '53 Ethel (Heinemann) Ketelsleger and '56 Janice (Heinemann) Kritzer.

Lynette (Haugen) Klein: July 2, 2025. Survived by husband '66 Vince Klein; children Brian, Amy (Folkerts), Andrea (Knox) and Bradley.

Mary (Foren) Fox: July 8, 2025. Survived by husband Jerry; children '88 Jeff (Malissa), '89 Monica, '92 Kristi and '96 Jason (Heather).

Brady James Plucker: July 19, 2025. Survived by wife Brittany; children Keegan, Harper, and Maverick; mother '89 Laura (Bittner) (Kelly) Knodel.

Ann Mary Kuper: July 22, 2025. Survived by husband '78 Jeff and son '07 Ben.

Mary Jo (Lamberty) Hild: August 3, 2025. Survived by husband Bill; children Kim (Greg) Hanson and Bill Jr; siblings '54 Ron (Shar) Lamberty, Gary (Renae) Lamberty and Sheila Terry.

'75 Larry Yaroch: August 7, 2025. Survived by children Terah and Shane; mother Dee Yaroch; siblings Tony (Kim), Julie (Jerry) Baustian, Jimi (Deb), '78 Mary Green, '80 Eddie (Linda), '82 Lisa (Dan) Ward and '83 John.

Deloris "Dee" Yaroch: August 9, 2025. Survived by children Tony (Kim), Julie (Jerry) Baustian, Jimi (Deb), '78 Mary Green, '80 Eddie (Linda), '82 Lisa (Dan) Ward and '83 John.

'54 Ron L. Lamberty: September 27, 2025. Survived by wife Shar; children Kelli, Ron (Lori), Greg (Laurie), Kerri (Don) Bosch, Todd, Chris (Katharine) and Steve (Nicole).

REMEMBRANCES CONT.

The following alumni, or relation to alumni, have passed away.

'72 Kathryn (Van Dam) Benning: October 10, 2025. Survived by husband Jerry; children Jason (Gail), Jamie (Stacy), Kari (Jason) Bridged; siblings '66 Bobbi (Dick) Christensen, '69 Doug (Nedra), '70 Jeanette (Gene) Arnold, '74 Laurie Arbes, '76 Shelly Burh, '77 Kristi (Dean) Madison, '78 Monica (Dale) Vensand, '78 Marilyn (Rick) Williams, '79 Marsha (David) Schlueter, Diane Van Dam, Tracy (John) Van Dam, Robert Jr.

Clara Schreier: October 23, 2025. Survived by children '76 Patrick, '78 Noreen (Jerry) Abrahamson, '81 Jim (Christine), '86 Tim (Paula) and '89 Jeff (Jodie).

'69 Dennis Gannon: October 23, 2025. Survived by his wife Mary; children Melissa (Chad) Fletcher, Denise Johnson, and Tara Gannon; siblings '67 John (Mary Jo) and '71 Mark (Gail).

ALUMNI NEWSMAKERS

'16 Abigail Burkhart received her Master's in Medicine Master of Biomedical Sciences from the University of South Dakota Sanford School.

'21 Nick Wolles was part of the 2025 SDSU College of Engineering of NASA Gateways to Blue Skies Team. Their project "Soil Testing and Plant Leaf Extraction Drone" secured 1st Place in the Palmdale, California competition.

'61 Jim and '62 Shirley (Bunkers) Wolles celebrated 60 years of marriage. They have 8 children, 15 grandchildren and 1 great-grandson.

'61 Roseann (Klein) and John Mousel celebrated 60 years of marriage. They have 5 children, 18 grandchildren, and 17 great-grandchildren.

'50 Bob and '51 Ethel (Wolles) Schmidt celebrated 70 years of marriage. They have 3 children, 6 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.

'18 Emma Nelson received her Juris Doctorate from the University of St. Thomas School of Law, Minneapolis, MN.

'64 Carolyn (Schwebach) Drew was named the "2025 Dell Rapids Citizen of the Year".

'09 Jason Lee participated in the half Ironman in Boulder CO.

'18 Sydney Cook received her Physician Assistant degree from USD, Vermillion, SD.

'57 Joe and '57 Charlotte (Platt) Weinacht celebrated 65 years of marriage. They have 4 children and 3 grandchildren.

'17 Jackie Wolles received her Masters in Business from LSU, Shreveport, LA.

Dick and '53 Virginia (Heinemann) Mergen celebrated 70 years of marriage. They have 9 children, 29 grandchildren, 42 great-grandchildren and 3 great-great-grandchildren.

CLASS REUNIONS

CLASS OF 1962

A two-week notice was all it took to get 14 classmates together from the Class of 1962. They enjoyed a day with Pizza Ranch, a St. Mary's School tour, and fun times a backyard BBQ at Jerry Klein's. As The Dells Tribune used to print, "A fun time was had by all."

Back Row LtoR: Jerry Klein, Helen (Ginsbach) Thullner, Judy (LeBrun) Thompson, Harry Evans, Carol (Sward) Foster, Mary (Reecy) Fitzgerald, Ron Welbig, and Dennis Pierret. Front row LtoR: Marlene (Geraets) Reynolds, Charles Schmidt, Gerald Hanisch, Donna (Geraets) Althoff, Ron Boyda, and Jan Fiegen.



CLASS OF 1970

The Class of 1970 got together June 28th and June 29th. Some met at Mark Mergen's building downtown on Saturday to watch the Quarry Day parade. That evening they went to the Ollerich Building for snacks and visiting. On Sunday, they walked through the school and went to Mark Mergen's for potluck supper and watched the fireworks and enjoyed visiting.

Front Row LtoR: Karen (LeBrun) Weiland, Grace Schmidt, Rita (Eulberg) Mavity, Patti (Miller) O'Connor, and Darrell Majeres. Back Row LtoR: Roger Baumberger, Mike Klein, Butch Klein, Pat Weinacht, Mike McEneaney, Paul Nielsen, Steve Weelborg, Dan Weiland, and Mark Mergen.

CLASS REUNIONS CONT.

CLASS OF 1975

Members of the Class of 1975 celebrated their 50th class reunion on June 20th, beginning with social time at the Prohibition Pub. Saturday activities included golfing, tours of the Dell Rapids Quarry and the new St. Mary's School, and attending Mass. The culmination of the evening was a catered meal at the Dell Rapids Museum. The weekend was well attended with plenty of conversation and reminiscing plentiful. A special thanks to all who made the effort to attend!

Guardian Angel Statue photo LtoR: Larry Yaroach, John Even, Ray Schmidt, Jack Fitzgerald, Jim Kuper, Terry Majeres, Cathy Evans Kautz, Bill Hansen, Paul Park, Margaret Schmidt Amundson, Tom Scholten, and Jeff Geraets.

Dell Rapids Museum Photo: Back LtoR: Rex Hagg, Terry Majeres, Larry Yaroach, Jim Kuper, Margaret Schmidt Amundson, Jeff Geraets, Donna Roemen, John Even, Cathy Evans Kautz, and Ray Schmidt. Front LtoR: Steve Klein, Jack Fitzgerald, Bill Hansen, Tom Scholten, Paul Park, and Tony Becker.



CLASS OF 1985

The Class of 1985 met at the Rocky Run Golf course on September 20. They enjoyed an evening of fellowship and reminiscing.

Front Row LtoR: Dan Klein, Cheryl (Ahlers) Miller, Dan Schmidt, Darin Kolbeck, Joe Frantzen, Dale Tomes, Ray Schmidt, and Wayne Elsinger. Back Row LtoR: Ronda (Reiff) Golden, Diane (Wolles) Thomas, Wendy (Pederson) Brown, and Cathy (Wolles) Cunningham.

CLASS OF 2015

The Class of 2015 met on August 20th at Nick and Rochelle (Klein) Hoffman's for a potluck, games and socializing.

Front Row LtoR: Kaitlyn (Vorthers) Murphy, Macey (Kriens) Berg, Lindsey Wolles, Rochelle (Klein) Hoffman, and Claudia (Schwebach) Meyer. Back Row LtoR: Ryan Welbig, Nicole (Brown) Hillman, Ally (Mullaney) Namken, Brandi (Wolles) Johnson, and Mitch Brown.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Our committee loves to receive updates to include in the Cardinal Connection. A vast majority of information we share has been found. Sending us these updates helps save us time and effort. New job? Address Change? Recently married? New baby? Big accomplishment? We want to hear from you!

Send your information to:
St. Mary's Catholic School c/o Cardinal Connection
812 N State Avenue Dell Rapids, SD 57022
or email updates to communications@stmarydellrapids.org.

CARDINALS PROTECTING THE NEST CELEBRATING OUR VETERAN ALUMNI

As we look ahead to our nation's 250th anniversary, we want to take a moment to recognize St. Mary's alumni who have served in the United States Military. After inviting veterans to share their stories in our spring issue, we were honored to receive more than 50 responses. While this list does not capture every alumnus who has served, we are thankful for each and every one.

ARMY

'51 James "Jim" Fiegen

2 Years - Corporal

Jim completed his Basic training at Fort Leonardwood, MO. His schooling was for an Engineer Supply Specialist in Fort Belvoir, VA. Jim was stationed in Okinawa, Japan for 17 months. He just completed a Midwest Honor Flight on 9/23/25, with his daughter '84 Patti (Fiegen) Anderson.

'53 Gerald "Buzz" Huwe

2 years - Private and then Corporal

He operated heavy equipment while active. Buzz served in Alaska during the Korean War. He built an airstrip in Anchorage. Buzz also hitchhiked from Alaska to Seattle for his twin sister's wedding.

ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

'60 Dave Heinemann

18 months - Private

A radio control operator and jeep driver. He was active duty in Fort Sill, OK for training due to the Cuban Missile Crisis, but was never deployed.

'66 Greg Hauglid

6 years - E5

He went to Fort Campbell, KY for basic training and Fort Sill, OK, for Radio Tech Training. He spent his military career as a Radio Technician. Greg was activated in 1972 to the Rapid City flood for search and rescue.

'70 Butch Klein

6 years - Rank: E-4

Butch served as a wireman in the service.

'86 Joe Klein

8 years - E-5

Joe served as a Medic.

The following men of Battery B 1st Howitzer Battalion 147th Field Artillery were activated into Federal Service at Flandreau, SD on October 1, 1961 and served during the Berlin Crisis until August 11, 1962.

'59 Dick Klein - 6 years, Corporal E4, Artillery

'60 Bill Klein - 4 years, Corporal E4, Artillery

'60 Jim Mergen

'61 Art Klein - 7 years, EO retired at E6, Cook/Baker

'61 Tom Reecy

5 years - F-5 Sergeant

Tom was a Platoon Leader, deployed to Vietnam for 8 months and 7 days. Was in the Reserve after returning.

'83 Steve Scholten

4 years - Spec 4

His job was 63G fuel electronics systems repair and he was able to spend one year in Korea.

'99 Kelly Mergen

6 years - Sergeant E-5

Sergeant (E-5) UH-60 Black Hawk mechanic/crew. He was deployed to Kosovo and Iraq. Decorated with 2 Air Medals, Presidential Unit Citation, Army Commendation/Achievement medals, various other ribbons and badges.

'89 Jason Klein

15 years - Captain in Medical Services

Started out in the field artillery and transferred to medical unit when he became an RN in 1994. Basic training was the most memorable part for him. His parents' discipline growing up made drill sergeants seem like teddy bears.

'83 Jeff Ahlers

5 Years - E-4

Stationed in Madison, Lead, and Rapid City - all with the 109th Engineers Group. Training was 12B which is a Combat Engineer. Jeff did his Basic Training and AIT at Ft. Leonard Wood, MO.

'15 Katie Eining

8 years - Specialist (SPC/E4) - Military policy (31B) for 5 years and a medic (68W) for 3 years.

Part of her time in service included a 10-month deployment to Africa (Djibouti) (2020-2021) with the 196th MEB.

AIR NATIONAL GUARD

'62 Jerry Klein

6 Years - Airman 1st Class "E4"

Trained in a supply warehouse.

'63 Pat Geraets

6 years, Airman 1st Class

Supplied the tool room, and ordered parts.

'65 Mike Geraets

6 years - Airman First Class training for firefighting and pilot rescue.

A highlight for Mike was one day when he formed the runway, a fighter pilot in an F1-O2 fighter plane was experiencing low hydraulic pressure and wasn't sure his landing gear would stay in the locked position. Everything stayed locked, and he made a safe landing.

'68 Leonard Schmidt

6 years - Spec-4

Leonard served as a Cook and was activated to the Rapid City flood.

'69 Dave LeBrun

6 Years - Staff Sergeant

His position was a NDI Specialist.

'96 Matthew Geraets

24 years - Senior Master Sergeant.

I worked in Finance my entire career.

'99 Brian LeBrun

1999 - Present, Master Sergeant

Brian works as a Civil Engineer and has been deployed many times around the world.

'01 Josh LeBrun

2001-2013 - Tech Sergeant

Josh worked in the Munitions department.

Continued on the next page.

AIR NATIONAL GUARD CONTINUED

'01 Brian Siemonsma

23 years - Lieutenant Colonel (O-5)
Enlisted Airman in IT Communications before earning a commission in 2008 as a Medical Service Corps Officer. His core duties within the medical group involved the oversight of operational readiness and administrative functions. The most defining mission of his career was the seven-month deployment in 2021 to Jordan for Operation Inherent Resolve during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. He was responsible for the complex logistical challenge of delivering the vaccine program. This involved managing the distribution and strict cold chain requirements for three different COVID-19 vaccines simultaneously, ensuring timely and safe delivery to over 2,500 military members across multiple, dispersed locations.

'04 Scott LeBrun

20 years, Master Sergeant
He worked in the weapons maintenance department throughout his career.

AIR FORCE

'62 Dennis Pierret

4 Years - E-4
Dennis served as a heating and air conditioning specialist. He spent 2 years in Alaska at Ft. Yukon and Fairbanks.

'62 Ronald Boyda

25 years - Senior Master Sergeant
He had multiple assignments in the administrative field. Ronald was deployed to Vietnam, England (x2), North Dakota, Germany, Nebraska, and New Mexico throughout his career. In 1965, he received his draft card. The next day he went to Sioux Falls to see the Army Recruiter. There was nobody in the office, so he went next door to the Air Force Recruiter and asked the man what he needed to do. The recruiter asked him to come on in and take an Air Force test, and the rest is history.

'77 Maria (Redder) Nichols

28 Years - E-8 Senior Master Sergeant
Maria was an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Specialist.

'80 Dave Redder

20 years - E-7
Dave loaded different aircrafts throughout different deployments, including F4E/G, F 106A/B, A-10, A-7 and F-16. He has been stationed throughout the Midwest, the Philippines, and Korea.

MARINES

'14 Jared Scholten

4 years - Corporal
Jared worked with the small arms repair and was in charge of the armory.

NAVY & AIR NATIONAL GUARD

'56 Milton Ellis

2 Years Navy - 3rd Class - Machine Accountant
5 Years Air National Guard - Staff Sergeant

US ARMY RESERVE & US AIR FORCE

'04 Jeremy Klein

2004 - 2006 US Army Reserve - Served in Iraq
2006 to present US Air Force - Major
Jeremy currently serves as a Nurse Practitioner in the Air Force clinic in Del Rio, TX.

'04 Chanda (Siemonsma) Rave

20 years - E-7 (Master Sergeant)
Chanda was in Force Support-which means she did anything from food, mortuary, search and recover, fitness, and lodging. What stood out the most to her were the people she met over the years. Chanda is thankful for the men and women who served before her.

'14 Jonah Longville

12 years - TSgt Aircraft Armament System Specialist (Weapons Loader).

Jonah's highlights are deployments to Afghanistan and Japan.

'14 Ethan Schmidt

2014 - Present - Master Sergeant (MSgt) in the AMMO shop. They store, inspect, test, assemble, and deliver the bombs, missiles, and countermeasures for the F-16s. Previously, he served as a production supervisor leading hands-on and classroom training of new troops on drill weekends, but is transitioning to be a drill status/part-time supervisor of the storage element. He has been deployed to Afghanistan, Japan, and South Korea.

'87 Jeff Klein

21 years - Retired as a "Fighter Pilot" with a Rank of LT-COL. Presently, a Flight Instructor for the Air Force

'89 Susan (Reecy) Wingfield

4.5 years - 1st Lieutenant
Susan was a telecommunications Officer, served her entire time at the Pentagon in Washington D.C.

'10 Andrew Fiegen

2014 - Present - Major
Currently a student at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs. After graduation in May 2026, he will be a Commander of a Squadron of Cadets at the United States Air Force Academy for 2 years. Then he will return to his core career field as an Aircraft Maintenance Officer. Andrew has commanded aircraft maintenance organizations (ranging 100 to 400 personnel) in Idaho, Utah, Nevada, and most recently, Ellsworth AFB South Dakota. Platforms in the organizations included the F-15E, F-35A, and B-1B with deployments to United Arab Emirates and Jordan. Plus, many temporary duties across the globe (Israel, Japan, Switzerland, etc). "It's been a lot of fun, rewarding, and I'd highly recommend to anyone contemplating the option." Fiegen Said.

ARMY NAT. GUARD & AIR NAT. GUARD

'97 Jake Klein

8 Years Army Nat. Guard & 4 Years Air Nat. Guard - E-6
He served as a Medical Tech and worked in the Finance Office.

US MARINE CORP & ARMY RESERVE

'69 Jeff Schnieders

4 Years - USMC & 22 Years USAR - Major
Jeff was an Infantryman & Platoon Radio Operator, also a Chaplain Assistant. He served deployments to Okinawa, Parris Island, Germany, and North Carolina. Jeff continued civil service at Ft. Bragg until retirement.

'92 Josh Klein

4 Years USMC & 4 years USAR - E4 Corporal
Josh was trained as a Combat Engineer. Highlights include being stationed in Okinawa (1995) and deployed to Somalia (1993).

NAVY

'62 Ron Welbig

2 years active & 4 years reserved

Ron served as Seaman during the Vietnam War. He was a storekeeper for the naval hospital in Davao City, Vietnam.

'64 Michael Schmidt

3 Years - Second Class Petty Officer - ASH 2

Mechanic on the Flight Deck of an Aircraft Carrier.

'76 Steve Nemmers

1976 - E-6 - First Class Petty Officer

Steve was an electronics technician, assigned to the USS Gallery FFG 26, where he served as the Lead Petty Officer of the electronic division, in charge of approximately 18 other sailors. His division maintained all of the radars, radios, navigation, and communications equipment on the ship. Steve's Navy training led to a career in technology. He started working for RCA, building spacecraft and working on TV camera systems for the Space Shuttle.

'80 Vicki Schwebach

20 years - 05 or Commander

She served as a jet mechanic in Corpus Christi, Texas for four years. For the next 16 years, she flew the E2 Hawkeye, the C2A Greyhound, and the C9B. The greatest achievement was taking off and landing both day and night on five different aircraft carriers.

'01 Ryan Heinemann

8 years - E6/ Petty Officer First Class

Ryan served as a Nuclear Electrician's Mate.

'03 Katie (Burkhart) Clay

2007 - 2014 US Navy - LCDR/O-4 - Lieutenant Commander

2014 - 2017 US Navy Reserves

Katie now works as a civilian for the U.S. Coast Guard.

AIR FORCE & NATIONAL GUARD

'67 John (Jack) D. Majeres

35 Years - Lt. Colonel

Jack started out in Base Supply as an enlisted airman and worked his way to a full-time position as Chief of Supply. He then accepted the position of Aircraft Maintenance Commander for 3 years and was appointed as the Base Comptroller (Head Finance Officer).

'95 Eric Majeres

Retired - MSgt.

Eric worked as a Munitions Systems Specialist (AMMO).

'99 Jessica (Majeres) Meyers

Retired - CMSgt

Jessica worked as a Munitions Systems Specialist (AMMO).

'03 Amy (Majeres) Bailey

Active - MSgt.

Amy is an Aerospace Ground Equipment Mechanic.

'00 Joe Thornell Jr.

7 - Years Active - E5

Joe works as a F16 Fuel System Mechanic.



'62 Jerry Klein



'04 Scott LeBrun -
2025 Veterans Day
Program Guest Speaker



'67 Jack Majeres



2024-2025 ALUMNI APPEAL

\$46,300

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support for important needs during the past fiscal year, July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025.

BENEFACTORS \$5,000 AND ABOVE

Bill & Gayle Klein
Dave & Deb Wolles
Jack & Alice Majeres
Jerome & LaVonne Geraets
Mark & Helen LeBrun
Mike & Kathy Geraets

ST. MARY'S SPONSORS \$1,000 - \$4,999

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Chuck & Jane Turner
Dennis Jorgensen
Doris Singer
Mary Jane Nelson

IN MEMORIAM

Ron Smith in Memory of
Peggy (Huntimer) Smith

Please prayerfully consider a donation to the alumni appeal this year.
Your support helps us to continue the tradition of excellence in
education we take pride in!

CORRECTION FROM 2025 SPRING ISSUE:

'45 Darlene (Pierret) Schnieders is the daughter of Dagny & Victor Pierret.

CARDINAL CONNECTION COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS

Connie Fitzgerald, '83 Deb (Klein) Wolles, '83 Tammy (Vorthers) Michel, Lili Schulte

We hope you enjoyed this edition of the Cardinal Connection. We do our best to keep up with all of the alumni happenings. Please feel free to submit any information, stories, or updates to any of the committee members or contact the Parish Office.