

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."

SPRING 2025
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Jeff Covering Super Bowl LVII in February

IT ALL STARTED AT ST. MARY'S!

AN INTERVIEW WITH '74 JEFF NELSON A STATISTICIAN WITH FOX SPORTS

Jeff Nelson was born and raised in Dell Rapids and graduated from St. Mary's Catholic Schools (SMCS) in 1974. The oldest of eight children who all graduated from SMCS, '76 Dean, '77 Scott, '79 Brad, '79 Bette, '82 John, '83 Phyllis and '86 Matt. He is the son of Roger and '48 Darlene (Hansen). The Nelsons lived on the family farm northeast of Dell Rapids. Jeff currently resides in Indiana.

What are a couple favorite memories of St. Mary's school?

I was a student manager for the basketball team, and we were pretty successful, especially my junior and senior years, so there were some great wins. I also was in a couple of plays, lectored and served Mass often, was involved with Student Council (President my senior year), and was fortunate to be sent to Boys State. There are many memories of excellent lay and religious teachers.

What is your job title?

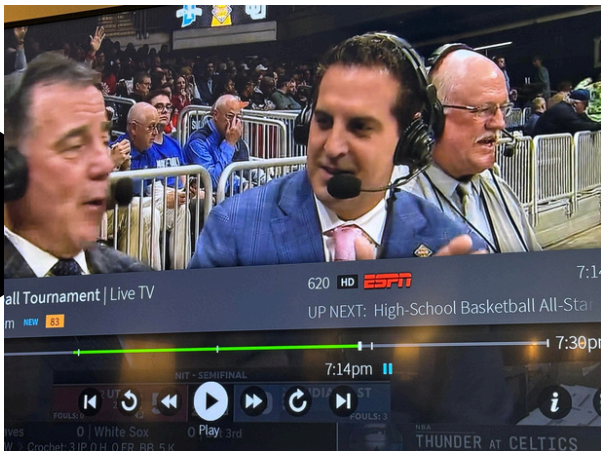
I work in sports television as a statistician. I currently work with the FOX A crew, so I work every week with Kevin Burkhardt and Tom Brady. There are some other jobs that I get hired to do as an independent contractor.

Can you tell us about your path to how you evolved in your career today?

It actually started at SMCS! I did stats for the basketball team and wrote stories for the Dell Rapids Tribune. When I went to South Dakota State University (SDSU), I went to work for the Sports Information Department, covering games and doing stats. That got me exposed to helping Norm Hilson and WNAX radio covering the Jacks. When I moved to Indiana, I was able to get involved with college and pro sports. Networking got me farther and farther and in 2000, I landed with Fox Sports.



Jeff Covering the Summit League Championships



Jeff Getting Some TV Time During a Game

What does a week look like in your profession?

The week really starts on Tuesday, as we start getting updated stats and team information. There are releases from the teams, the leagues and the networks. There can also be a conference call or Zoom from Tuesday through Thursday. I travel to my NFL city usually on Saturday morning (sometimes Friday night). We have a production meeting on Saturday night, go to the stadium fairly early Sunday morning and cover the game. Then it is usually a dash to the airport to fly back to Indiana, but there are some days we head back to the hotel and fly back Monday. Late or night games always means Monday travel. That means Monday is like the end of the week, and we start over on Tuesday. I also cover a lot of college, high school and occasional pro games during the week, so it's normal to cover a few games between weekend football.

JEFF'S STORY CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

CONTINUED: IT ALL STARTED AT ST. MARY'S!

AN INTERVIEW WITH '74 JEFF NELSON A STATISTICIAN WITH FOX SPORTS



Jeff Received an award for 30 years of service with his local Softball Organization.

What do you have to do to prepare for a game?

The first thing to do is lots and lots of reading, whether it is hard copies or online documents. There is also some watching of games from earlier weeks. I spend a good part of a day preparing my work charts and sheets. They are stats charts that I use tracking game stats during the broadcast. My job during the game is to get stats and records to the announcers and production truck as quickly as possible. The announcers will also have questions during the broadcast to look up.

The Super Bowl would be hard to beat, but do you have any other dreams to accomplish before retirement?

I've actually done two Super Bowls for Fox, and have been fortunate to do a lot of Final Fours, many Indianapolis 500 races, many great college games and covered a couple local teams winning state championships. I have not covered an Olympics, and they are in Los Angeles in 2028, so maybe there is a chance there.

What are some of your favorite memories on crew?

Any time one of my announcers mentions my name, or once in a while the booth crew gets to be on TV, those are fun moments. There was one time in an NFL playoff game a couple years ago, my announcers didn't know why a team called a timeout. I pointed it out to them that the team had too many players on the field, and they were very complimentary to me. When we went to commercial, one of the announcers said "I mentioned your name because if it was wrong, the world was going to know you gave me bad info." That was very funny.

Any other interesting information you would like to share with the alumni?

I don't know how interesting, but I can't emphasize enough how important my St. Mary's background and experience has been for me. I got the chance to do an amazing number of things at SMCS that have helped shape me throughout my life. Even little things like serving Mass – I attend daily Mass whenever I'm in Crawfordsville, and get to serve a couple days every week. I'm also a backup lector. I've had some of the most amazing experiences. I've been to London five times to cover NFL football, and covered Super Bowls. I've covered every level of the NCAA playoffs, and worked at about 40 basketball conference or playoff games just in the last month. I'm working UFL games (spring football) and there have been many, many other opportunities. There have been NBA games, countless high school games and I've been able to write a lot of feature stories about wonderful student athletes and coaches. As I tell everyone – I'm a guy who grew up on a dairy farm in eastern South Dakota, and went to a tiny high school, and I'm getting paid to travel to and cover some of the biggest and best sporting events in the nation. I'm the luckiest guy on the planet. And it all started at St. Mary's!

THE YEAR OF HOPE

By Fr. Shane D. Stevens, Pastor & Superintendent

2025 is the Jubilee Holy Year, the 2,025th anniversary of the Incarnation of our Lord, an "event of great spiritual, ecclesial, and social significance in the life of the Church." The concept of "Jubilee" has its origins in the Book of Leviticus (Chapter 25) as a special year of reconciliation, pilgrimage, and coming home. Pope Francis designated the 2025 Holy Year as a time to renew ourselves as "Pilgrims of Hope", and at St. Mary's School, there are many reasons for hope.

For generations, folks have endeavored to build and sustain Catholic education's mission. Catholic education, particularly St. Mary's, is a sign of hope in our world. It is a school that strives for more than academic or activity excellence, but to be a place where Christ is made known, his pattern of life and example become our source of joy and hope. Let's face it, there are many unhappy, searching, and hurting people in our world. Christ will always be the source of our hope and jubilee!

For this great mission to continue I ask for your financial support, either by supporting our Alumni Appeal or by contributing to our Generations-to-Generations Campaign. Every gift is needed, and welcomed! Where will St. Mary's School be in 25 years? I don't know for sure, but I have hope that with your help, new generations will receive what so many already have, an educational opportunity centered on Christ.

Forward, Always Forward! - Fr. Shane D. Stevens



SCAN QR CODE

A GIFT FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

The Generations to Generations Campaign still needs your generous participation. Now more than ever we are asking for your help to provide quality Catholic education to children for generations to come. To donate scan this QR Code, send a check to our office, or drop it in the collection plate at mass. Thank you!



UPGRADES TO THE ST. MARY'S GYM

By Mr. Casey Michel

Last fall, the St. Mary's gymnasium received a major upgrade with the addition of a video board and new scoreboard with side panels. The new boards were installed in October of 2024 and provided an immediate enhancement to the St. Mary's school and athletic programs. The video board is located on the east (stage) wall. It is nearly 8' tall by 12' wide and has full display. During games it is displayed as a scoreboard, but when the ball isn't in play it can be used for all kinds of different things. Starting lineup cards, hype videos, stat recognitions, and all kinds of other additional display items were used before and during games. Videos of our proud sponsors are played during pre-game and timeouts. Special occasions were recognized, such as volleyball's "Dig Pink" night where our girls displayed who they played for in solidarity with those battling cancer.

The video board isn't just used for games, though. It has been used for multiple occasions throughout the year already. Our State Basketball sendoffs had videos and games to share. While Father Stevens was on sabbatical, our PK-6 students were able to Zoom with him on the video board. During Catholic Schools Week our entire student body gathered together to enjoy a movie in the gym. It will be used for senior videos for coronation and graduation, our Veteran's Day video that recognizes those who served, and to display items that were for sale at our annual carnival and auction.

The scoreboard with side panels is located on the west (concessions) wall. The scoreboard itself is the same size as the previous scoreboard, but the addition of the side panels allow stats to be displayed during games, such as points and fouls for basketball games and aces and kills for volleyball games. It also replaced the static "HOME" and "GUEST" panels with LED display panels, so team names can be proudly displayed.



Videoboard being used to facetime Fr. Stevens in Rome!



Fr. Miller getting pie in the face for a "No on G" fundraiser this fall!

This project would not have been possible without the incredible generosity of our Business Partners. St. Mary's entered into a partnership with these businesses to display their logos and advertisements in our gym for 5 years, and in return their sponsorship dollars would pay for the project. We want to send a huge thank you to our Anchor Partners (First National Bank, Ace Hardware, Dells Electric, and L.G. Everist Inc.), as well as our Founding Partners (County Fair, Schwebach Realty, Roemen Automotive, Adam Jones Plumbing, and United Rentals)! Make sure to keep these businesses in mind the next time you need the services they offer.

THANK YOU SPONSORS!



CARDINALS TAKE ON THE State B's!

For the first time in school history, both the girls' and boys' basketball teams advanced to the state tournament in the same season! Both teams had great seasons with the girls finishing 14-6 and the boys 19-1 in regular season play. They finished in 4th place and 3rd place respectively at the state tournaments, which is quite an accomplishment! Named to the All-Tournament teams were Madala Hanson for the girls team and Maverick LeBrun and Trevon Beckman for the boys. Congratulations to all our athletes and coaches! We are Cardinal proud!



GIRL'S RUN TO THE B'S

Regular Season.....14-6

Region

Chester.....W 52-47

Ethan.....W 54-44

SODAK 16

Northwestern.....W 34-29

State Tournament

Harding County.....W 61-50

Sanborn Central/Woonsocket.....L 43-45

Centerville.....L 50-65

Back Row Standing L to R: Head Coach Ed Gustafson, Harper Werdel, Sophia McNaughton, Reagan Griffin, Emersyn Herber, Lucy Vargas, Stephenie Geraets, Jenna Miller, Madelyn Klein, Maddyn LeBrun, Student Mgr. Sydney Carlson, Asst. Coaches, Trey Pottratz and Matt Hanson.

Front Row L to R: Cheerleaders Molly Meyer and Londyn LaFortune, Layla Hanson, Student Mgr. Allie Hansen, Megan Geraets, Madala Hanson, Brianna Griffin, Addison Libis, Jodie Klein, Cheerleaders Lilly Becker, Aubryelle Evers, and Ellie Carlson.



BOYS RUN TO THE B'S

Regular Season.....19-1

Region

Sioux Falls Lutheran.....W 73-43

Colman-Egan.....W 69-59

SODAK 16

Waverly-South Shore.....80-50

State Tournament

Aberdeen Christian.....W 66-45

Viborg-Hurley.....L 49-56

Wessington Springs.....W 71-54

Back Row Standing L to R: Asst. Coach Alan Hough, Jake Heinitz, Asst. Coach Scott LeBrun, Jacob Flemmer, Jake Kopsas, Lincoln LeBrun, Walker Warwick, Trimmier Hanson, Maverick LeBrun, Trevon Beckman, Keaton Hansen, Peyton Lamb, Jaxon Baumberger, Carlo Pica, Videographer Jacob Geraets, Student Mgr. Sean Miller, Assistant Coach Nathan Beckman, Water Boy Cooper Libis, Head Coach Colby Fitzgerald, and Water Boy Cooper Bacon.

Middle Row L to R : Water Boys Paxton Beckman and Paxton LeBrun, Kade Lutt, Logan Bauer, Josh Liebl, Gavin Pica.

Front Row L to R: Cheerleaders Lilly Becker, Ellie Carlson, Molly Meyers, Aubryelle Evers, Londyn LaFortune.

1000 POINT CLUB

This basketball season was not only successful for the girls' and boys' teams as a whole. Three individual team members were also honored after hitting their 1,000th career point, no easy accomplishment! Trevon Beckman nailed his 1,000th point at home against O-R-R on January 16th. Madala Hanson and Maverick LeBrun both hit their 1000th point in the double-header games on the road against Arlington on February 10th. In addition to joining the 1,000 Point Club, these three seniors have been highly recognized at the state level, where they were selected onto the State B All-Tournament Team, Class B All-State First Team, and received invites to showcase their talents in various all-star games. Congratulations to Madala, Trevon, and Maverick on all these accomplishments.



With three new 1,000 point scorers from St. Mary's, we decided to compile a list of previous Cardinal athletes who have achieved this honor. And we are looking for any others we are not aware of. If you or someone you know has hit 1,000 points, please contact the school with this information so we can add you to the list! These are the former players we know have scored 1,000 or 2,000 points.

Girls 1,000 Point Scorers & Graduating Years

Julie (Fiegen) Price - 1982
Jessica (Klein) List - 2002
Kellie Cunningham - 2004
Kelly (Michel) Berg - 2014
Ella Heinitz - 2021
Ella Griffin - 2023
Madala Hanson - 2025

Boys 1,000 Point Scorers & Graduating Years

Tom Even - 1973
Paul Park - 1975
Justin Siemonsma - 2004
Eric Mergen - 2004
Trevon Beckman - 2025
Maverick LeBrun - 2025

2,000 Point Scorers

Jerry Even - 1964
Colby Fitzgerald - 2004
Connor Libis - 2021

FIRST COMMUNION

Second Graders had a big year. They received their First Reconciliation in the Fall and on April 27th they received their First Communion.

Pictured Front Row L to R: Milo Vargas, Aryia Grib, Annabelle Meyers, Lexa Kaulkman, Fr. Stevens, Melah Lambert, Cora Brown, Henry Bunkers.

Second Row L to R: Lincoln Mathis, Sadie Nedved, Brianna Soulek, Paisley LeBrun, Dallas Geraets, Isaac Heinemann, Sawyer Grav, Saige Grav, Brook Geraets, Kain Rausch.

Back Row L to R: Bridger Schwebach, Arlo Brown, Chase Shellum, Liam Deranleau, Luke Reiff, Kayson Hettinger, Paxton Davis, Cade Gauthier.



CONFIRMATION



On January 18th, St. Mary's students, along with other parishioners from the Queen of Peace Pastorate, received the sacrament of Confirmation from Bishop DeGrood.

Pictured Back Row L to R: Andrew Mullaney, Seth Eining, Alex Lindemann, Gavin Pica, Kaden Smith, Mikhail Grib, Nolan Moksness, Logan Bauer, Jaxon Baumberger, Rhyder Behnke, Ben Hofer, Asher Moore, Joshua Liebl, Bryson LeBrun, Charlie Becker, Chase Klein, Jake Heintz, Matthew Heinemann, Jace Brende, Cooper Cuny, Jacob Austin, Paxton Davis.

Middle Row L to R: Jacob Flemmer, Kade Lutt, Joseph Bares, Andrew Buresh, Thomas LaVoy, Hayden Garcia, Hailey Voelker, Anya Hemmer, Miesha Pedraza-Felix, Jillian Knippling, Nora Hamilton, Alexis Scherff, Carley Roiger, Fr. Scott Miller.

Front Row L to R: Fr. Shane Stevens, Amelia Pieper, Emersyn Herber, Rylee Klein, Paige Geraets, Khloe LeBrun, NA, Rilyn Groos, Bishop Donald DeGrood, Reagan Griffin, NA, Lily Harkema, Isabel Kulm, Londyn Lafortune, Haedyn Painter, Fr. Timothy Smith.

GRADUATION

Congratulations to the St. Mary's Graduating Class of 2025.

Pictured Back Row L to R: Levi Gaul, Aston Carter, Jake Kopsas, Megan Geraets, Maddie Reiff, Maverick LeBrun, Keaton Hansen, Trevon Beckman.

Middle Row L to R: Lilly Becker, Izzy McNaughton, Addison Libis, Jodie Klein, Sophia Lack, Ellie Carlson, Madala Hansen, Hayden Bowers.

Front Row L to R: Rachel Heinemann, Rebecca Heinemann, Danika Dueter, Brianna Griffin, Aubry Evers.



Please pray for all our students from St. Mary's and our Pastorate who have received these sacraments or reached these milestones the last few months.



STATE ONE-ACT

This year's performance of "Badger" received a Superior Rating at the State Competition. First time in school history!

Pictured Back Row L to R: Theo Miller, Eli Meyers, Kade Lutt, Wyatt Baumberger, Megan Geraets, Ellie Deranleau, Harper Werdel.

Middle Row L to R: Director Amanda Geraets, Maddisyn Klein, Ryleigh Ahlers, Maddi Bacon, Rebecca Heinemann, Phoebe Vargas, Rachel Heinemann, Molly Meyers.

Front Row L to R: Bronc Geraets, Sofia Duran-Garcia, Lilly Becker, Clara Geraets, Lucy Vargas.

CARDINAL CHATTER

The **Girls and Boys Cross Country Teams** competed in the 2024 State B Cross Country Meet in Rapid City. The girl's team placed 16th and the boy's team had a 15th place finish. Cami Wolles, Lucy Vargas, Paige Deuter, Elizabeth Vogel, and Madison Reiff ran for the girls. Cooper Libis, Camden Tebay, Matthew Heinemann, and Levi Gaul ran for the boys.

The **St. Mary's Choir Students** participated in the Region Vocal Contest at Augustana University. Students receiving Superior for their Solo were Rachel Heinemann, Rebecca Heinemann, Carly Roiger, Wyatt Baumberger, and Megan Geraets. Rachel and Rebecca received a Superior for their Duet; Molly Meyers and Ellie Deranleau received Excellent for their Duet; and Makyla Buchholz and Londyn LaFortune received a Good rating for their Duet.

Congratulations **Megan Geraets** on receiving a Superior at State Oral Interp in Sturgis with the Humorous Category - "Let's Pretend This Never Happened!"

Coach **Ross Flemmer** was selected as the Dakota Valley Conference (DVC) Football Co-Coach of the Year. Flemmer completed his 25th season with a 9-2 record, including 4-0 against DVC opponents. He led the Cardinals to the semifinals for the 7th time in school history and 170th career win.

The **Cardinal Marching Band** placed 2nd at the Arlington Competition and 1st place at the Chester Competition for the 2024 season.

St. Mary's All-State Quartet participated in the All-State Choir Concert in Sioux Falls. Megan Geraets received a 5-Year All-State Choir Award, and Rachel Heinemann and Rebecca Heinemann received a 4-Year All-State Choir Award.

Rachel and Rebecca Heinemann were selected to sing the National Anthem during the Girl's and Boy's State B Tournament.

ALUMNI NEWSMAKERS

'24 **Lucas Flemmer** had a extraordinary start to his freshman track season with the Jackrabbits at South Dakota State University (SDSU). At the Iowa State Invite, Lucas finished 2nd in the 400M with his personal best indoor time. During the season, Flemmer was also part of the 4x400M relay team which set a new record for the Jackrabbits while recording the 6th fastest 400M time of all time for SDSU!

In December, '80 **Eddie Yaro** spent 2 weeks southwest of Paris, France at the Chateau de Bouthonvilliers as one of eight Artists In Residence. There he adapted a novel about striking French coal miners into a play about striking Pennsylvania coal miners in 1902 which was inspired by Mother Jones.

Congratulations to Coach '04 **Colby Fitzgerald** on recording his 100th win as boy's basketball head coach in the '24-'25 season.



CLASS OF 1984 - 40TH REUNION

The Class of 1984 met on October 26, 2024. They attended mass, followed by a tour of the school, and dinner at Jon and Wendy Brown's home. Everyone had a fun evening reminiscing.

Pictured Back Row L to R: Tad Fiegen, Mike Brown, Jim Welbig and Chris Mergen.

Front Row L to R: Jim Borns, Jon Brown, Susan (Elsinger) Michel, Michelle (Heinemann) Brown and Lisa (Wolles) Buechler.

BIRTHS

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

Kayson Dean Bromwich: son of '07 Diana (Fiegen) and Justin, grandson of '76 Roger and '74 Judy (Siemonsma) Fiegen, great grandson of '49 Dolores (Heinemann) Fiegen.

Ace Michael Kahler: son of Meg and Nic, grandson of '89 Sheri (Pederson) Dearduff, great grandson of '61 Ray Pederson.

Lyla Mae Leighton: daughter of '12 Ellie (Everist) and Kutler.

Bennett Daniel Hoffman: son of '15 Rochelle (Klein) and Nick, grandson of '85 Dan and Shelli Klein, great-grandson of '59 Dick Klein.

Laramie Rose Johnson: daughter of '12 Brooke (Wolles) and Carl, granddaughter of '81 Mike and Sherri Wolles, great granddaughter of '61 Roseanne (Klein) and John Mousel and '53 Roger Wolles.

Saint Matthew Phillips: son of Savannah Klein and Willie Matthew Phillips, grandson of '87 Jeff and Sara Klein, great grandson of '62 Jerry Klein.

Anthony Douglas Baumberger: son of '10 Mariah (Mergen) and Jake, grandson of '77 Doug and '81 Deb (Mersch) Mergen, great grandson of '52 Virginia (Heinemann) and Dick Mergen.

Tobias Andrew Lacey: son of Andy and Allison Lacey, grandson of '71 Ted and Bev Lacey.

Walker John Laible: son of '14 Abby (Siemonsma) and Landon, grandson of '76 Mike and Karla Siemonsma.

Colt Gary Bunkers: son of '11 Colby and Kaitlin, grandson of '79 Kim (Gannon) and '79 John, great grandson of '59 Rosalie (Van Dam) Gannon.

Wyatt Alan Hoffman: son of '12 Lee and Kelcey Blair, grandson of '81 Kurt and Mary Hoffman.

PERMANENT VOWS OF LOVE

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

'20 Eli Longville and Genevieve Dinges: October 19, 2024.

'15 Riley Wolles and Adam Reams: October 25, 2025. Riley is the daughter of '87 Tony and Brenda Wolles, granddaughter of '61 Jim and '62 Shirley (Bunkers) Wolles.

'20 Weston Geraets and Gabriella Rus: November 9, 2024. Weston is the son of '95 Jeff and Amanda Geraets, grandson of '63 Pat Geraets.

'17 Evan Brown and Hannah Sundal: November 9, 2024. Evan is the son of '84 Mike and Angie Brown.

Ryan Peichel and Katie Thompson: December 22, 2024. Ryan is the son of '87 Cory and Bobbie Peichel.

'09 Jordan Brown and Sarah Springman: February 15, 2025.

REMEMBRANCES

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

'62 James Geraets: October 27, 2024. Survived by his wife Connie; children Raphael, Stephen, David, James Jr, Matthew, Mary, Daniel and Joseph.

'72 Rita Siemonsma: November 2, 2024. Survived by her daughter Stacey (Scott) Butch; siblings '67 Lois (Tom) Flannery, '68 Tom (Becky), '71 Ken (Marcia), '74 Judy (Roger) Fiegen, '75 Mike (Karla) and '77 Ron (Jan).

'54 Terry Hansen: November 12, 2024. Survived by his wife Alice; sons '81 Patrick (Nancy), '82 Bob (Connie) and '89 Daniel (Michelle); siblings '51 Erma (Hansen) and '59 David (Diane).

'70 Mari Margaret (Baum) Ginsbach: November 23, 2024. Survived by her husband '67 Paul; children Joni (David) Griebel, '95 Kendra (Anthony) Siemonsma, Nathan (Jill) and '01 Samantha (Derek) Davis; siblings Bob (Carol) Baum Jr, '72 Don (Kim) Baum, '75 Marty (Tracy) Baum, Carl (Shelli) Baum and '81 Anne (Gordon Fossum) Douglas.

'56 Mary Ann (Elsinger) Nelson: November 29, 2024. Survived by her brother '59 Gerald (Sharon) Elsinger.

Henry G. Zwart: December 31, 2024. Survived by his children '75 Regina Allor, '77 Rebecca Zwart, '78 Henry Jr, '79 Roger, Rick, Roberta, Bob, Tony, Dan, Chris, Victoria Hanson and Sandra Sever.

'55 Cecelia "Sis" (Fiegen) Bunkers: January 25, 2025. Survived by her husband '54 Bob; children Scott, Brian, Lane, Mary, Angela, Todd and Kathryn; brother '60 Charles Fiegen.

'55 Lois (Tichota) Lundin: March 8, 2025. Survived by her sister '47 Wilma Schreurs.

80 YEARS OF MEMORIES: DARLENE SCHNIEDERS' JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

It has been 80 years since the Class of 1945 walked the halls of St. Mary's School. Those remaining from this class are Roger Eulberg, Violet (Gilmore) Reiners, Ellen (Sweeney) Merrigan and Darlene (Pierret) Schnieders. We got in touch with Darlene and she shared her memories from long ago.

Darlene was one of nine children born to Danny and Victoria Pierret. They lived on a farm north and east of Dell Rapids. Her earlier years of school were at Hart School, a rural school 6 miles east of Dell Rapids. There was no electricity or running water, and the school was heated with a large coal-burning heater. Most of the time, they walked nearly 2 miles to school, except during the winter, when they went to school via sled with horses.

She attended St. Mary's Academy during 4th grade and then again as a sophomore in high school until she graduated. To get to school, she rode the bus which was an Old Home bread truck that had been converted. When reflecting on her time at St. Mary's, she specifically remembered Sister Pauline as a young, happy go-lucky, and understanding teacher.



Because she graduated during WWII, activities were limited. There were no big parties, yearbook, or even photos. However, they did have journalism class where they wrote news which was published in the Dell Rapids Newspaper. Many things were rationed, including fuel and food. Some of the boys from her class went into the military.

The class went to Sioux Falls for Senior Skip Day to view different businesses, including an ice cream parlor, and the state penitentiary. There was no valedictorian and salutatorian at graduation since a car load of students failed to sign in returning from their skip day. There was a late freeze that year, so there were limited flowers for prom and graduation.

The summer after her high school graduation, Darlene attended General Beadle College in Madison, SD for teacher training. Due to a shortage of teachers, because of the war, she could go to college 1 or 2 semesters and then take a certification test to teach in rural schools. Darlene's first teaching job had 21 students ranging from 1st to 8th grade. She was also responsible for janitorial work, keeping the fire going during the winter, and pumping water from the well.

Families went to town every Wednesday and Saturday night to take cream and eggs to the Worthmore Station. While parents got shopping done, drank a beer and visited with friends at the Pub, children cruised Main Street. This was walking up and down and looking in all the windows to admire the new products. They sometimes bought a bag of popcorn on the corner or went to the movie and later got a doubled ice cream cone at Worthmore for a dime. On Sundays, they would go walking or biking around the park and Dell Rapids.

Darlene met her husband-to-be after cruising Main Street. She and her friends stopped in for a coke at the Dells Cafe where Donald Schnieders and other veterans who just came home were also at. Don's sister, Dorothy, was a classmate and friend of Darlene's. Don and Darlene were married in June 1949. She will forever cherish their nights dancing at the Dells Pavilion and The Arkota Ballroom (Sioux Falls, SD). Together they raised nine children, '69 Jeff, Gary (deceased), '71 Deb, Darla, Donna, Greg, '77 Kevin, '79 Mark, and '83 Denise.

Thank you Darlene for sharing your memories with us. The Committee was unable to contact Violet, Ellen, and Roger.

CALLING ALL VETERANS!



We are doing an issue focused on our veterans or those actively serving in our military.

Please send in your name, graduation year, branch, rank, and job/training to communications@queenofpeacesd.org or call 605-428-3990 and ask for Lili. Thank you for your cooperation! We want to include as many alumni as possible.

LEADING LADIES ON CAPITOL HILL



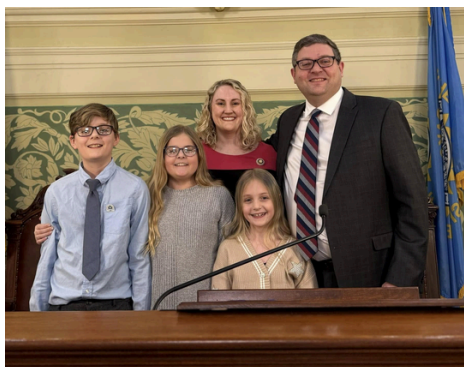
(‘03) SARA VENHUIZEN & LT. GOVERNOR TONY VENHUIZEN

(‘03) Sara (Daugaard) and Tony Venhuizen have been married for over 20 years and have three children: Henry (12), Elizabeth (10), and Madeleine (8). Sara studied electrical engineering at South Dakota State University and is now the Director of Engineering Programs at Aerostar, working on stratospheric balloon flights for various missions.

Tony's political interest began with his grandfather, Henry Poppen, a state senator. His first summer job in college was working on the campaign of then-underdog Mike Rounds. Rounds chose Sara's dad to be his running mate which led to her working on the campaign and meeting Tony. He worked for Gov. Rounds, Gov. Daugaard, and Gov. Noem before the family moved to Sioux Falls where Tony worked at a private law practice. He was elected to the State House and while serving his second term Gov. Noem became DHS secretary, Lt. Gov. Rhoden succeeded to the governor's office, and asked Tony to be his Lieutenant Governor.

The family celebrated Tony's confirmation, which included heartfelt testimonies and a unanimous vote in his favor. Each child had a chance to participate in Senate activities, including banging the gavel.

A humorous moment occurred when they kept his appointment a secret from the kids. - Henry made a comment that he was pretty sure it wouldn't be Dad (Tony), because Governor Rhoden would have already talked to him. Elizabeth followed up with, "How do you know he HASN'T? Mom and Dad would never tell us because Madeleine is a huge blabbermouth." And of course, she was right on the money.



The Venhuizen Family

(‘05) SHEILA HANSEN & SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE JON HANSEN

On January 14, 2025, Jon Hansen, husband to (‘05) Sheila (Geraets) was sworn in as the Speaker of the House for the 100th Legislative Session in South Dakota. Jon has been serving the legislature for ten years now, where he has been Chair of the Judiciary Committee for six of those years.

The Hansen's have six children; William (13), Garret (12), Lily (9), Jude (6), Hope (4), and Samuel (1). Those who are school age attend St. Mary's.

Jon chose Fr. Stevens to say the session's opening prayer. The Hansen family said, "It really meant a lot and we're so grateful for his presence and the time he took to be with us."

Jon felt honored to be elected by his colleagues to be Speaker. Some of his daily duties include assigning committee members, and bills to committees, along with running a fair House floor debate. Also, after Lt. Governor, The Speaker of the House is the "next in line" to be governor.

The Hansen family is happy to be back in Dell Rapids with their St. Mary's community. They are thankful for the SMCS teachers and staff who made the transition smooth for their students during this time.



The Hansen Family

We are looking for Alumni who keep updated address lists of their classmates.

Please send this list to the parish office by emailing, office@queenofpeacesd.org

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOLS FIELD TRIP TO PIERRE

By Mrs. Cami Bacon - 3rd Grade Teacher

St. Mary's 3rd, 4th & 5th graders enjoyed a field trip to the Capitol building in Pierre, SD on February 11, 2025. The South Dakota legislature was celebrating their 100th anniversary. To help celebrate, the classes were given a special guided tour of the capitol building while learning about the history of our state government. Their day also included visits with local representatives Sen. Tom Pischke and Rep. Leslie Heinemann, along with Speaker of the House Jon Hansen. Students enjoyed exploring the grounds around the Capitol, along with being welcomed on the floor during the Senate and House of Representative sessions.



Pictured: **Row 1 LtoR:** Emerie LaVoy, Londyn LeBrun, Korbin Klein, Carter Bacon, Cullen Ahlers, Lily Hansen, Tori Fiegen, Henry Olinger, Kian Bowers. **Row 2 LtoR:** Emma Duran-Garcia, Abel Johnson, Ioannis Skliris, Kate Klein, Erica Hough, Sen. Tom Pishke. **Row 3 LtoR:** Rep. Jon Hansen, Alex Meyers, McKenna Abel, Hazel Vargas, Liam Mathis, Kate Burgard. **Row 4 LtoR:** Rep. Les Heinemann, Brady Geraets, Lane Roemen, Sam Liebl, Tate Huebner, John Heinemann. **Row 5 LtoR:** Kinzleigh Geraets, Reese Rindels, Willow Werdel, Joshua Bryan, Max Geraets, Miss Rilee Rowse (4th Grade Teacher). **Row 6 LtoR:** Mrs. Kari Hettinger (5th Grade Teacher), Keira Allen, Lennyx Klein, Sylvia Miller, Tia Rausch, Aiden Hubers. **Row 7 Lto R:** Mrs. Cami Bacon (3rd Grade Teacher), Cooper Bacon, Blake Hettinger, Henry Vostad, Brecken Grav, Boston LeBrun, Boden LeBrun.

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.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK 2025



2024 - 2025 ALUMNI APPEAL UPDATE

Current financial support amount during the past fiscal year, July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025.

\$46,300

raised to date

No envelope? No problem! You can donate to the Alumni Appeal by visiting giving.parishsoft.com/app/giving/st606120 and choosing Alumni Fund.

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.