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O F F I C I A L A Q U I N A S A L U M N I N E W S L E T T E R

## MARIETTA SCHOOL TORN DOWN — MEMORIAL CONSTRUCTED

Marietta High School graduated 205 students during its 37-year existence. A number of those graduates plus those who attended grade school there have now paid it forward by helping to create a permanent memorial to their alma mater. Using contributions, a brick and granite tribute, to what was once the smallest accredited school in the U.S., was recently completed on the parish grounds of Presentation Catholic Church five miles east of Bellwood along Highway 64. St. Mary's School, later known as Marietta (meaning "Little Mary"), opened in 1898. Following construction of a new

three-story brick school building in 1917, high school level classes were added in 1924. Marietta's final high school class graduated in 1961, and the elementary school closed in 1970. The school building stood vacant until it was razed in August 2016 due to its deteriorated condition. At a 2015 reunion of Marietta alumni, the parish pastor at the time, Father Joseph Steele, suggested

parish hall and grotto. "We had a feeling that people would donate to the thing, and they did. It worked out the way we hoped it would," Hain said. Final work was completed on Nov. 17. Beringer, who designed the memorial to roughly resemble



the school building's outline, said he wanted to give back to Marietta in gratitude for the education it provided him, and which later led him to pursue a 40

-year career that some means of memorializing the history of Marietta be considered and a school memorial committee was soon formed. Alums Bernard "Butch" Hain of Octavia, a 1960 graduate, and Dave Beringer of Omaha, Class of 1961, found themselves in the forefront of finalizing plans for a fairly large memorial as it came to be envisioned. Hain, a retired farmer, and Beringer, a retired architect, eventually agreed that any memorial should be located near the former site of the school building, between the

as a professional architect in the Omaha area. Beringer said the school provided a course in trigonometry he needed to enter the Notre Dame School of Architecture at South Bend, Ind. The school didn't normally offer the course, but he received one-on-one lessons during the summer by one of the school nuns. "I found that Marietta provided the education that I needed in order to compete (at Notre Dame). Beringer's design incorporated several key elements saved from the building: A

galvanized tin cross from the cupola, the school bell from the cupola, the school cornerstone and a limestone sign from above the main entry. The committee also included informational panels containing images and information about the school, along with lists of the priests, sisters and lay teachers who served there. The time capsule also contains 1917 era newspapers and coins recovered from the school's time capsule, as well as a letter from a Cardinals letter jacket, representing the school's basketball and football teams. Images on the memorial include a copy of a painting by the late Gerald Mick from Bellwood. It shows the Marietta students and nuns marching as a body from the school to the church in order to attend daily Mass. Butch Hain said a formal dedication will take place August 11, 2018 at the alumni reunion. "We hope it brings back good memories of the school and the teachers who were here," Butch said. "Or for strangers to know what this place was about." The committee is grateful for all donations received from Marietta Alumni and students. (Taken from article in the Banner Press written by Jim '74 and Shari Reisdorff)

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Aquinas Alumni,

Happy Easter! I trust that you all had a prayerful and holy Lent, and are now rejoicing in our Lord's glorious Resurrection. It is hard to believe that we are nearing the end of this school year already. It has been a tremendous semester, and I remember it getting off to a great start when we celebrated Catholic Schools Week during the last week in January.

We kicked off Catholic Schools Week with Bishop James Conley celebrating the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass at St. Mary's Church, with all of our

students from kindergarten through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The seminarians from St. Gregory the Great in Seward, who regularly visit our classrooms, talked about their vocation, as did some other special visitors, the Christ the King Sisters from Lincoln. High school students made wooden hearts with the words "You are loved" written on them, and distributed them to the residents of St. Joseph Villa and David Place. Middle school students wrote thank you cards to our retired priests and religious, our troops serving overseas, as well as making knot

fleece blankets for all hospital patients and nursing home residents. The blankets had short poems and Bible verses embroidered on them too. We have awesome students and they love to give back to our community! Our Catholic schools are a blessing, and we were grateful to share those blessings with others.

Our Annual Appeal is growing every day! We are currently only **\$17,000** short of our **\$125,000** goal! People have been very supportive of this annual drive through the Alumni Phone-a-Thon and the Parish Appeal. If you have

not yet donated, would you please consider doing so? Between our local parish assessments, endowment fund, and the tuition that parents pay, we have still have a budget gap of **\$125,000** that needs to be filled this year by our Annual Appeal. Any donation you make will help.

Thank you.

Yours in Christ,



Chief Administrative Officer

## FROM THE DEVELOPMENT / ALUMNI OFFICE

Dear Alumni,

I just never know what exciting things might happen in the Alumni Office on any given day, and I recently had one of those exciting days. I received a call from Fran Oborny Pachta SM '61 regarding a quilt that had been made for the 1987 production of the "Quilters" here at Aquinas. A very large quilt—16'X16' to be exact. It seemed that quilt was in need of a permanent home and this extraordinary quilt came with a very interesting story.

If you go to the 1988 Aquinas yearbook on page

28, you will find the story about the fall play that was done that year as well as a picture of this huge quilt.

Fast-forward to 2018 and a day in February where this quilt, that was made for a play production here at Aquinas, was presented to the International Quilt Museum at the University of Nebraska by Olga Lehr (one of the original St. Joseph's Quilters who worked on the quilt. Two others still living; Shirley Peters and Maxine Aerts), Melissa Taylor Yindrick '88 (one of the actresses in the play) and Fran Oborny Pachta (sister of drama instructor, the late Joe Oborny) in the very

gym where the play was originally performed.

The quilt is more well-traveled than most people, having gone over-seas three times to be the backdrop for this play. For many years, Shirley Peters provided storage for the quilt and helped to get it shipped to where it needed to go.

Please turn to **page 6** to read more about this quilt created for an Aquinas play production and how it finally has a permanent home where it can be displayed and appreciated. We were so excited to be able to have the presentation of the quilt

to UNL right here at Aquinas.

In Christ,  
*Deb Suec*  
Alumni Director



Melissa Taylor Yindrick '89 (representing the cast members), Fran Oborny Pachta SM '61 (representing Joe Oborny), and Olga Lehr (representing the St. Joseph quilters) pose for a picture with the quilt before it was handed over to the museum.

# GUARDIAN ANGEL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Aquinas High School opened its doors in September of 1961 to serve the families of this area. From 1961 until 1994, families who sent their children to Aquinas, paid a nominal book bill but no tuition. The bulk of the budget fell on the shoulders of the parishes in the David City Deanery. Tuition was added in 1995 to help ease the burden of the parishes. Since that time, small increases have been made to the tuition but nothing that would compare to many Catholic schools in the state. Times have changed, population has shifted and Aquinas and St. Mary's Catholic Schools is now a Pre-K-12 grade school system educating students of our area. The 13 parishes in the David City Deanery continue to support the school system by providing 59% of the budget. To round out that budget, 18% comes from tuition, 12% from fundraising and 11% from the Endowment Fund. Each of the parishes sees over 80% of their income go to the schools. Two years ago, our schools participated in a Strategic Plan that included finances. That committee



has been working hard to come up with a plan that will help balance the budget and ease the burden on our parishes. This plan calls for an increase in tuition paid by our families. This increase we know, will also increase the need for tuition assistance. Because of this, we are calling on benefactors, including alumni, who received the benefits of a Catholic education to consider making an investment in the Guardian Angel Scholarship Fund to help out families who are currently in our schools. We already have alumni and benefactors who have created Guardian Angel Named Funds within our Endowment that provide scholarships each year. Continued gifts to these named funds will help us to award more

scholarships. Here are some other ideas of ways you could help a student to receive the same quality education that you received:

- Donate the value of full yearly tuition at Aquinas High School (\$2,066), Aquinas Middle School (\$1,685) or St. Mary's (\$1,264) for one student.
- Donate half the value of tuition at Aquinas or St. Mary's

The Phone-a-thon for the Annual Appeal will always be the major fund-raiser for the schools that is supported by the alumni. However, if you have been blessed and have the ability to also provide scholarship assistance for one or more of our students, we would love to invite you to be a part of this effort. Please contact fr.sean-timmerman@cdolinc.net or deb-svec@cdolinc.net or call 402-367-3175 if you would like more information. **Donations can be mailed with the slip below to: Aquinas & St. Mary's Guardian Angel Scholarship Fund, PO Box 149, David City, NE**

**YES, I'd like to contribute to the Guardian Angel Scholarship Fund!**

Please accept my donation for a full year's tuition at \_\_\_\_\_ Aquinas High School (\$2,066)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Aquinas Middle School (\$1,685) \_\_\_\_\_ St. Mary's (\$1,264)

Please accept my donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to be invested in the Guardian Angel Scholarship Named Fund in the Aquinas Endowment Fund.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Aquinas & St. Mary's  
  
 Guardian Angel  
 Scholarship Fund

## B A B Y M O N A R C H S

Jake '07 and Sara Miriovsky, a daughter, Maren Marie, born May 2, 2017  
 Adam Karpisek '06 and Lacey, a daughter Elissia, born June 23, 2017  
 Nathan '05 and Michelle Dinkelman '08 Jakub, a daughter, Scarlett Isabel, born July 28, 2017  
 Aaron Kobza '00 and Danielle, a son, Augustin Jacob, born September 17, 2017  
 Sarah Smith Nedrig '04 and Dave Nedrig, a son, Joshua Wayne, born September 20, 2017  
 Seara Petska Johnson '06 and Eric Johnson, a son, Beckham Eugene, born September 22, 2017  
 Tony '04 and Lisa Schmit '04 Meister, a son, Clayton Anthony, born October 9, 2017  
 Andrew '00 and Vanessa Karpisek, a daughter, Sawyer, born October 13, 2017  
 Brad '99 and Michele Smith, a daughter, Tessa Lynn, born October 13, 2017  
 Bryan '03 and Jennifer Hein, a daughter, Kinsley Marie, born November 7, 2017  
 Katie Svec Sieck '09 and Weston Sieck, a son, Clayton Blaise, born November 21, 2017  
 Craig Nickolite '06 and Taeja Shore '07, a son, Elston Thomas, born December 3, 2017  
 Kaitlyn Eller '17 and Jake Hernbloom, a son, David Raymond, born December 16, 2017  
 Emily Kobza Adams '11 and Taylor Adams, a son, Ezekiel Ardean, born January 18, 2018  
 Scott '00 and Connie Pohl '97 Samek, a son, Slade Thomas, born February 9, 2018  
 Carmen (former teacher) and Brent Melliger, a son, Jonathon Ambrose, born February 14, 2018  
 Nick '03 and Sarah Romshek, a son, Brooks William, born January 18, 2018  
 Scott '02 and Michelle Stara, a Daughter, Bridget Irene, born March 13, 2018  
 Matt '07 and Chelsie Croghan, a son, Cooper Thadeus, born March 14, 2018



"Mini Monarch" Bibs available for sale in the alumni office for \$6.00

## M A R R I A G E S



Ariana Meysenburg '12 to Jake McCain, July 15, 2017  
 Brooke Hough '12 to Dan Proskocil, August 12, 2017  
 Matt Moravec '99 to Audra Peterson, October 14, 2017  
 Demi Bartunek '07 to Mason Samek, November 11, 2017  
 Andrew Buresh '11 to Anne Slater, November 18, 2017  
 Candice Lukassen '01 to Brian Sullivan, November 18, 2017  
 Tony Birkel '11 to Tess Johnson, November 24, 2017  
 Lindsey Stara '03 to Toby Konopasek, December 2, 2017  
 Kelsa Mills '13 to Matthew DeGarmo, December 16, 2017  
 Katie Smith '88 to Dave Lembas, January 6, 2018

Please let us know if you have births, marriage or news to share! We love to hear from you and want to share your good news with other alumni!

# 2018 Class Reunions

## When and Where.....

Class of 1963—55 years—July 7th, Northside Café. Contact wkobza@windstream.net or bhilger@neb.com

Class of 1968—50 years—June 30th, Mass at 4pm at Aquinas followed by dinner at Klein Center in Brainard.

Class of 1973—45 years—July 14th, Mass at 4pm at Aquinas followed by dinner at Oak Creek Sporting Club. Contact Bill at wzegers55@gmail.com or Dennis at dkrizl@neb.rr.com for more information

Class of 1978—40 years—July 21st, Mass at 4pm followed by tour of school. Dinner and socializing at Par IV Golf Course. Contact Cathy Stara McCawley at 402-641-3919 for more information.

Class of 1983—35 years—July 21st at the home of Mike & Pam Siroky in David City.

Class of 1988—30 years—July 19-22. Join FB group AHS Class of 1988 to RSVP or email Bob at bpachta@hotmail.com for more information.

Class of 1993—25 years—July 28th, Oak Creek Sporting Club

Class of 1998—20 years—June 9th, Par IV in David City. Contact Laura Daro at lauradaro@yahoo.com for more information.

Class of 2003—15 years—June 2nd, Par IV in David City. Contact Mindy Svoboda Stock at mindy.stock@yahoo.com for more information.

Class of 2008—10 years—July 27 & 28, 2018. Location TBD.

Class of 2013— 5 years—July 28th, 2018. Contact Marissa DeWispelare for more information. 402-350-5574

Marietta All Class Reunion—August 11, at Marietta. Mass, Dinner and Dedication of School Monument. Contact Butch Hain for more information at 402-367-8085



## ALUMNI GIVING BACK

**Judy Kosch Dworak SM '58** and her husband Don were given the 2017 Distinguished Philanthropist Award. The award was given to the



Columbus residents for their financial support of Catholic churches in the area, Scotus Central Catholic High School and the Columbus Community Hospital.

Still, Judy Dworak showed humility after receiving the honor. "It's a big surprise, it was to us and still is, I just think there's lots of other people here that also would and should be getting this award," says Judy Dworak. The couple were both born and raised in David City, eventually ended up in Columbus in 1968. Once in town, they started a business, raised a family and stayed involved in a wide variety of activities throughout Columbus. They said that the reason they were able to contribute so much, was because the city has given a lot in return. "Columbus was very, very good to us too. It's a matter of give and take and so we received a lot and we were able to give some," says Don Dworak. The award was given to the Dworaks by the Columbus Area Philanthropy Council.

**Victoria Whitmore '17** helped build a Habitat for Humanity house with the Notre Dame University students during the fall break 2017.



**Judy Kallenbach Vandenberg '77**, began making cassocks for the seminarians 13 years ago in 2004. Vandenberg has been making them ever since. Making the cassocks is a very time-consuming process, which Vandenberg said can take her anywhere from 20 to 25 hours. The steps include cutting the fabric, sewing the garment most of the way, and then making time for fitting and making alterations before she adds the buttons and extra details. Mary Hrnicek, SM '58 helps Vandenberg and presses the garments while she sews them.

The number of cassocks needed every year varies, as seminarians can receive cassocks as gifts from their parishes, families, or from men who leave the seminary. While Vandenberg typically averages eight or nine cassocks each year, this year's class only requires two. When she isn't working on completing cassocks, Vandenberg may be sewing for any one of the other religious orders for which she now makes garments. When Vandenberg was the secretary and bookkeeper at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Seward, Mother Joan Paul C.K. asked her if she would be willing to sew habits for the Christ the King Sisters. Now, Vandenberg also makes habits for the Marian Sisters, the Knights of the Holy Eucharist and for the Ad Gentes Missionaries, a religious missionary community of brothers



and sisters based in Nigeria and the U.S. that Father Vitalus Anyanike of the Omaha Archdiocese founded in 2003.

Vandenberg was also responsible for making chasubles for all of the priests in the diocese so that they have vestments to wear for special events when they all celebrate together, such as the Christ Mass or ordinations.

Four years ago, Vandenberg quit her job at St. Vincent's to sew full time. "I never imagined that I would be sewing as much as I am for the Church," she said. "When I see someone put on a garment that I've made, they're putting on Christ, and that's very humbling."

**Mike Adamy '68** retired from his life long career of accounting but continues to share his talent for numbers by offering his services with family budget planning for Aquinas and St. Mary's families who want help in managing their budget with the new tuition increases coming in the next couple of years. Thank you Mike for giving back to your Alma Mater in this way!

**Russ '77 and Diane (Kush) '78 Moravec** along with their sons have been serving as auctioneers and committee members for the school's annual fundraiser called Gold Rush for 20 years this year! The original idea for the event came from the couple and the success has grown each year. Thank you Russ, Diane and sons (Matt '99, Jon '01 (RIP) and Trev '06) for giving back to Aquinas.

## QUILT FROM 1987 PLAY FINDS HOME IN MUSEUM

In July of 1987, drama instructor, the late Joe Oborny '76, asked the St. Joseph's Quilters of David City if they would make a 16' X16' quilt to serve as a backdrop for a musical Aquinas would be performing called "Quilters". The ladies said yes and had it done in time for the October performance. Since that time, the quilt has traveled to Russia twice and Germany once and several places in the U.S. to serve as a backdrop. The quilt was stored

in the homes of different quilters over the years. Fran recently contacted the International Quilt Museum at the University of Nebraska Lincoln and on February 22, the quilt was handed over to them for safe-keeping where it will be displayed, studied and stored.

Olga Lehr, one of three surviving St. Joseph's quilters, and

Melissa Taylor Yindrick '89, one of the Aquinas students who played a quilter in the play, were on hand for the

presentation to the museum.

The play was an all female cast that included: Deni Hilger Krueger,

Cori Meysenburg Martin, Patty Pachta Romshek, Mary Terrell Miller, Tina Plasek Hiitz, Julie Hladky Rickels,



Cindy Kovar Backameyer, Katie Smith Lembas and Melissa Taylor Yindrick. There was also a teacher, Jodie Leiss and a community member, Margaret Fox, in the play. With so many community members, students and faculty members involved in the production, Mr. Oborny was quoted in the 1988 year book as saying, "it brought the whole community together." A cut from the play was also performed in the State One-Act competition and placed second in the state in 1987.

## AQUINAS ALUMNI INDUCTED INTO NEBRASKA HALL OF FAME

A passion for music over four decades resulted in the Kovar Brothers' induction into the Nebraska Music Hall of Fame in late November. Tim '76 and Mick '79 Kovar performed at the River's Edge Music Festival in Columbus during the induction event. Tim and Mick started their career with humble beginnings. Their first paying job was singing at a wedding shower in Brainard, Nebraska, where they literally worked for peanuts; two jars, in fact. Though these budding musicians started out by singing to records and strumming their prop guitars, the two brothers were soon on their way to a lifetime of playing music.

Finally, they were ready for their first public performance, playing for the Annual Feeders & Breeders Banquet, at the David City Auditorium. From that first job, the Kovar Boys began filling their weekends playing for many wedding dances in David City and surrounding areas. It was during this time that the brothers were featured in a national publication as "Polka Teens of the Week".

In 1977, realizing they wanted a



Tim Kovar '76



Mick Kovar '79

bigger sound than what just two could provide, the Kovar boys decided to ask their parents to join the band. Little sister, Cindy Backemeyer '88, even joined in on the vocals by adding a few country female hits to the song mix. Eventually, cousin Cliff Kovar '81 joined the group, adding some vocals and playing rhythm guitar. Around 1989, Tim and Mick became interested in taking the band in a new direction. The technology of midi systems and playing live along with tracks that Mick created gave them a wider variety of sounds and music styles. Joni Kerns, a Grammy-nominated singer, who worked with Mick, joined Tim and Mick on stage and the group became *Kovar & Kerns*. Years later when Joni moved to Florida to pursue a solo career, the female vocals

position was taken over by Darci Hatfield-Fuller, a long-time friend, and fellow musician, and the band became known as *Bordertown*. *Bordertown* continued to play together, entertaining crowds well into the millennium. As the first decade of 2000 was drawing nearer, Tim and Mick decided to slow things down to spend more time with family and continue just playing themselves for a few more years, until their last gig at the Lincoln Eagles Club in 2013. After 47 years of sharing music together, the Kovar Brothers closed the door on the duo. Tim continued sitting in with bands for years and Mick turned his music interests to his recording studio and d.j. services.

Both continue to support the music of others and feel very humbled by the honor of being inducted into the Nebraska Music Hall of Fame.



Back row right: Michelle Yindrick '83 and Bill Yindrick '87 accept the award on behalf of their father, Joseph Yindrick, MA '58 post-humously. Front row far right: Bill Anadel, MA '58

Bill Anadel, a 1958 Marietta graduate, and Joseph Yindrick (post-humously) who was also a 1958 Marietta graduate were inducted into the Musicians Hall of Fame during the 19th annual ceremony. They were honored for their dedication

to preservation of Czech music.

Bill Anadel started his musical career in 1960. Anadel played saxophone and clarinet with many groups, some which include Bud Comte, Allen Valish, Mark Vyhldal, The Czechlanders, Ernie Kucera and Mike Brecka. Anadel was a vocalist with many of these groups. Anadel is a charter member of the American Czech Brass Band which was formed in the mid 1970's as an 18 piece brass band. Anadel and Joseph Yindrick Sr. were vocalists for the brass band. When Bob Palensky, founder and leader of the American Czech Brass Band, died in 1998 Anadel stepped up to run and lead the group. Anadel was inducted into the Omaha Sokol Polka Hall of Fame in 2006. In more recent years, Anadel has continued his involvement

in music by playing button accordion with his own group The Bill Anadel Trio.

At the age of 15, Yindrick was encouraged by the priest at Marietta School to play the tuba. Some of the other groups Yindrick played with were Ernie Kucera, Mike Brecka, The Bill Anadel Trio, Country with a Touch of Brass, Lonnie Pitz and the Dean Hansen Band. Yindrick's years with the American Czech Brass Band were his favorite. Yindrick and his lifelong friend Bill Anadel were a popular duo with the band. Yindrick and Anadel not only vocalized together but performed comedic routines and skits. They incorporated popular songs and characters into their acts. Their wives created their costumes which they wore for their skits. Many acts included the duo speaking in both the Czech and English languages.

## IN MEMORY OF...



**Kenneth J. "Kenny" Pohl**, 78, of David City died Tuesday, September

12, 2017 at St. Joseph's Villa in David City. Ken was born on September 1, 1939 at Bruno, Nebraska to John and Elsie (Zeleny) Pohl. He was the first graduating class of **St. Mary's High School in 1957**. He entered the U S Air Force in 1958, serving his country proudly until his discharge in 1964. Kenny worked as a self-employed construction contractor for many years. He married Rita Kabourek on November 7, 1965 and five children were born to this union. They later divorced and Kenny kept active by researching genealogy and was very active in the Boston Studio File Research. He drove for Busy Wheel and loved spending time at the Senior Center. He also enjoyed time attending his grandchildren's activities, deer hunting and spent countless hours on jig saw puzzles.

**Libbie A. Policky**, 84, of Bee, passed away October 8, 2017. Born October 20, 1932, she was a member of Wenceslaus Catholic Church, Bee and a **1950 graduate of Assumption High School**. Libbie was employed at Seward Memorial Hospital and then with Walker Manufacturing (now Tenneco) for 23 years before retiring. After her retirement she worked at the Corner Café in Seward. Libbie was a member of Altar Society. She was a willing helper

with funeral lunches, Bee Chicken Dinners and the Bee Consignment Sales.

**Marquita Vrbka Hanzl**, 72, of Dodge, died Monday, May 15, 2017 at Bryan Medical Center in Lincoln. Marquita Rose Hanzl was



born on December 1, 1944 to Vaclav and Rose (Samek) Vrbka in David City and was raised on the family farm near Brainard in Butler County. She attended Holy Trinity Elementary School and graduated from **Aquinas in 1963**. On October 16, 1965, Marquita married Ronald Hanzl at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Brainard. The couple took up farming northwest of Dodge, becoming the third generation of Hanzls to occupy the farm. After Ron's sudden death in 1993, Marquita moved to Dodge in where she worked at the Parkview Nursing Home. After her retirement, she continued to volunteer at Parkview. Marquita was a member of St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church and Christian Mothers. Some of her favorite hobbies were making quilts and other crafts. Marquita could be found in her flower garden or playing cards with her card club.

**Glenn Kelch**, died May 21, 2017. Parents, John and Theresa E (Becker) Kelch. Graduate of **Marietta High School 1961**. Served in the US Army, February 1964 and honorably discharged February 1966 after being wounded in the Viet Nam Conflict. He married Carol Slonecker on April 8, 1967 in David City. Preced-

ed in death by wife, Carol; parents, John and Theresa Kelch; Glenn is survived by sisters, Sheila (Robert) Smith, Delores Kelch, Kathleen (Richard) Drapal all of Lincoln, Marcia Bobbert of Dorchester, and Marilyn Bobert of Columbus and nieces and nephews.

**Mary Lou Lavicky Novacek** was born

on July 15, 1935 in Dwight, NE to John and Georgia Lavicky. She graduated from



**Dwight Assumption in 1953**. She was an RN, graduating from St. Elizabeth School of Nursing in Lincoln. She was preceded in death by her parents. She is survived by her husband of 61 years, Chuck; three children: Dale Novacek (Lori), Kay Barmettler (Greg), and Alan Novacek; eight grandchildren: Beth (Novacek) Carr, Brian Novacek, Kimberly and Nicolle Barmettler, Taylor, Carly, Lauren and Will Novacek; one great-grandchild, June Carr; brother, John Lavicky (Dorothy); sister, Jean Coufal (Lee). Mary Lou loved to travel, dance, golf, and play cards. She enjoyed the time she spent with her many friends. She was deeply devoted to her husband and family; for Mary Lou, "Family is forever."

**Mary K. Roh Lee**, 69, of San Francisco, passed away on November 12, 2017. Mary was born on September 28, 1948 to Leonard and Leona (Frank) Roh in



David City, Nebraska. She graduated from **Aquinas Catholic High School in 1966**, then graduated from Creighton University with a Masters Degree. Mary moved to California and taught special education for 35+ years for the State of California. She loved the arts, going to symphonies and museums, and traveling the world. Mary is survived by her siblings: Msgr. Robert Roh, of Falls City, NE, James Roh, of Playa del Ray, CA, Carolyn Simodynes, of Omaha, NE, and Jerry (Tammy) Roh, of Abie, NE. **Gerald F. "Jerry" Vap**, 77, passed away Sunday, December 10, 2017, at Mary Lanning Healthcare, Hastings, Nebraska. Jerry was born May 11, 1940, in Hastings, Nebraska, to Frank and Cecilia (Karmazin) Vap. He graduated from St. Cecilia Catholic School. He loved the Catholic Church and spent his life in service to his church and community. He taught at **Aquinas High School** for almost three decades. On June 13, 2003, he married Pam Svoboda in Kearney, Nebraska. In his retirement, he enjoyed almost daily trips to the Hastings Library and swimming at the YMCA. Music was important to him; he sang and played his guitar at every opportunity. Jerry enjoyed being a member of the Barbershop Harmony Society in Kearney and Papillion, and most recently, as a member of the Hastings Chorus of the Plains. He was a big supporter of Hasting College Broncos and St. Cecilia Bluehawks. He deeply cherished his family, including his many nieces and



nephews.

**Valerian Eugene ("Val Gene") Lavicky, 76**, of Dwight, died Friday, December 22, 2017 at Bryan East Hospital in Lincoln. Val was born September 4, 1941, to Ludvik ("Dudley") and Agnes (Cech) Lavicky. He was a graduate of **Assumption High School in 1958**. Val served in the Navy from June 29, 1959 to August, 29, 1962 as a Fire Control Technician on the U.S. John W. Thomason ship and transferred to the reserves. He received an honorable discharge on June 28, 1965. Val was united in marriage to Melissa Rea on October 21, 1977, in Schuyler. Val was a member of the Assumption Catholic Church, Dwight Vol. Fire Department, Dwight Rural Fire Board, Plum Creek Township, and the Dwight American Legion Post 110. He enjoyed spending time with his grandkids, family, and friends. Val's passion was farming and enjoyed spending time outside. His hobbies included playing cards, spending time with friends, and causing trouble.



**Leonard Hotovy** was born on June 22, 1930 in Dwight, Nebraska, the son of Ludvik and Rose Hotovy and passed away on December 29, 2017 in Seward, Nebraska at the age of 87 years, 6 months, 7 days. Leonard grew up in the Dwight area where he graduated from **Assumption Catholic School in 1948**. On September 24,



1951, Leonard was united in marriage to Donna Pelan at St. Mary's Catholic Church in David City. He enlisted into the U.S. Navy in 1951. Leonard was assigned to the U.S.S. Greenlet, where he repaired, maintained and monitored submarines at Pearl Harbor. He was honorably discharged in 1955. Upon his return he continued his career in farming, raising cattle and hogs. When the Hotovy cattle arrived at the Omaha Stockyard, that's the cattle everyone wanted. Leonard loved raising livestock. He was an avid Husker football fan. Leonard was a member of the Dwight American Legion #110, V.F.W. Post #4755, Butler County Pork Producers and a lifelong member of Assumption Catholic Church. **Michael K. Bender** died peacefully on January 4, 2018 in Columbus. He was born June 13, 1965 in Lincoln, Nebraska to Kenneth G. and Betty L. (Shanley) Bender. He attended St. Mary's Catholic School and graduated from Aquinas High School in 1984 and was the Class Speaker for his Senior Class at graduation. Mike's speech received a standing ovation. Mike was an outstanding athlete and student. He excelled in football, playing the quarterback position. He also threw the discus in the state competition as a freshman and competed in the Jr. Olympics. Following graduation Mike served in the U.S. Army until being honorably discharged. He worked in the Columbus area at various jobs such as Behlen Manufacturing and most recently at Camaco. Mike was a friend to every body who met him. He be-



lieved there was good in all people.

**Norbert F. "Knobby" Meysenburg** died January 6, 2018 in Omaha. He was a **1954 graduate of Marietta**



**High School**. Knobby was born in Bellwood, NE as the third son of Eva and Paul Meysenburg. He was the baby brother to Jerry and Jack spending his childhood raising pet pigs and doing chores on the family farm outside Bellwood. A new calling for service to youth came to Knobby when he found his way to Boys Town in the latter half of 1954. He was hired as a counselor in Cottage 27. Knobby developed a reputation that would follow him throughout his entire career and life. A man who led by example and truly believed that second chances and helping people learn from their own mistakes were some of the best ways to shape a young man or woman. His service to the youth of Boys Town was briefly interrupted when he was called to serve his country in the U.S. Army. After his discharge from the Army, Knobby returned to the Boys Town campus and continued his work as a head counselor, coach, mentor, and father figure to generations of youth. In 1976, Knobby's service turned a couple hundred miles north to Lake Okoboji when he took on the new role of camp director at Boys Town Camp. Here he spent the next sixteen years of his career making sure the youth of Boys

Town had ample opportunity to experience new challenges in and on the water. After 16 years working at the camp, Knobby transitioned to his final job as the director of the Boys Town Alumni Association until his retirement in 2000.

One other life that was changed through trips to Okoboji was that of a single mother of three children (Steve, Diane, and Mark) named Betty Frantz. Working as a family teacher for Boys Town, she brought her family up to the camp and soon struck up conversations with what appeared to be a committed bachelor of 40 plus years. A good friendship blossomed and Betty's trips up to Okoboji in the summer increased in frequency. Eventually the relationship evolved into something greater. That "something greater" took a few years to become permanent when Knobby and Betty married on November 8, 1985. He is survived by his wife Betty, step-children and grandchildren.

**Marie Josephine (Kopecky) Johnson** passed away on January 22<sup>nd</sup> in Fremont, NE. Marie was 95-years old. Marie was born on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1922 to Bohumil and Anna (Justyn) Kopecky and grew up on a farm outside of Octavia, NE. Marie attended **Marietta Catholic School and graduated in 1940**. She then attended nursing school at St. Catherine's in Omaha, graduating in 1943 before enlisting in the United States Army. She went through basic training in Santa Anna, CA before being called upon to serve in WWII in the Army Nurse Corp. Marie was stationed in both Guam and Tokyo and

would speak about caring for the wounded soldiers and “how much those kids suffered” with no acknowledgement of the fact that she was just a kid herself. Marie completed her service in 1946 as a First Lieutenant. Marie met her husband, Harry John Johnson, at a dance in Schuyler. They married on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1948 at Presentation Marietta Catholic Church outside of Bellwood, NE. They then opened Johnson Farm Equipment in North Bend, NE in 1950 and bought a house there just before Christmas in 1951. It was in this house that they raised their four children, Galen Lee, Rodney Allen, Thomas Jeffrey and Rita Marie. Harry passed away on April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1980. Marie was a long-time member of St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in North Bend, a member of the Veterans of Foreign War and honored as a 50-year member of the American Legion. She has received special recognition from the Chamber of Commerce, St. Catherine’s School of Nursing and was recently featured in *Forever Heroes*, a book written by Joyce Winfield that

shared WWII stories from Nebraska Veterans.

**Ernest Vampola** was born November 26, 1928 on a farm near Garland, Nebraska, the son of Joseph and Anna (Vodicka) Vampola and passed away January 11, 2018 in Sun City West, Arizona, at the age of 89. Ernest grew up in Bee, Nebraska, attended **Assumption High School and graduated in 1946**. He served in the Army from 1951 to 1953 where he was a Radio Operator stationed in Germany. He was honorably discharged in 1957. On September 7, 1954 Ernest was united in marriage to Beverly Rejda at Saint Wenceslaus Catholic Church in Bee, Nebraska, where he served on the village and school boards, farmed and owned the Vampola General Store. He moved to Lincoln in 1967 and managed Nash Finch’s Warehouse Market. He retired to Brainard, Nebraska, where he served on the Village Board and as Mayor. He then moved to Grand Prairie, Texas, for a few years before moving



to Sun City West, Arizona, to reside near his sisters and brothers-in-law. Ernest will be remembered most for his love of history and his incredible recall of people and events

**Patricia Martin**, age 68, of Lincoln, passed away in the early morning of Monday, February 26, 2018, at St. Elizabeth hospital. Pat was an aunt, sister, sister-in-law, daughter, great aunt and partner, and was a friend to everyone fortunate enough to encounter her in life. Born in David City on March 17, 1949, to Louis and Kathleen Martin, Pat was a **1967 graduate of Aquinas** and then the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. Pat shared her wisdom, laughter, strength and love with countless students for 26 years at the Raymond, Ceresco and Valparaiso elementary schools, followed by a second career as a banker at Great Western Bank for 16 years before her retire-



ment in 2014. Pat’s life revolved around kids; to the younger siblings that she helped to raise, to hundreds of students, to 16 nieces and nephews, 18 great-nieces and great-nephews, and many “adopted” kids along the way, Pat was the source of support, guidance, fun, and unconditional love. Pat gave of herself, her time, her compassion and her heart to everyone she knew. Pat never missed a sporting event, concert, dance recital, or any other chance to see and cheer on one of her many, many kids. In her well-earned retirement years, Pat joined the Goodyear Recreation Center, where she made lots of new friends, and where she met her partner, Ken Howell. Ken adored Pat, and gave her the kindness and love that she had always deserved. Although her golden years were cut far too short, they were filled with the company and love of the people that Pat cherished.

May the souls of the faithfully departed rest in peace.  
Amen.

We will remember all of our deceased alumni, students, faculty and staff at our Annual All Souls Day Mass in November.

Aquinas alumni both near and far, have been stepping forward and helping out their alma mater in a special way by honoring the memory of their parents who supported Catholic education. In the past year, we have had four different alumni families come forward to create named funds within the Aquinas Endowment fund in memory of their parents. These gifts become perpetual as they are invested and provide income for the schools each and every year. As one alumni said, “*My parents made great sacrifices to send my siblings and I to a Catholic school. Now we want to honor their memory by making sure that Aquinas is around for generations to come.*”

AQUINAS ENDOWMENT FUND

YOUR LEGACY  
THEIR FUTURE



# NEWS AND NOTES



**Amy McMahon Masek '96**, is the new mental health therapist for Blue Valley Behavior Health. She works from both David City and Wahoo.

**Sarah Smith Nedrig '04** attained her Masters Degree in Music Education from UNK. She has been teaching music at Howard Elementary School in Grand Island for nine years.

**Nolan DeWispelare '04** was named the Lincoln Tennis Associations High School coach of the Year.



**Ed Chmelka '70**, was grateful to have a chance to travel to Washington DC on the Nebraska Vietnam Veteran Honor Flight. "I served in Vietnam from 1971 to 1972 and retired with over 25 years in the U.S. Navy. Thanks to my fellow Veterans for their service and to Patriotic Productions for making this trip possible."

**Lane Napier '17** was named First Team All-GPAC after his freshman season playing football for the Concordia Bulldogs.



**Eric De Wispelare '99** has

been recognized by the Butler County Health Care Center as a 2017 Caring Kind Recipient. DeWispelare began his employment at Butler County Health Care Center in March 2015 as Wellness Director. He also is a USAW Sports Performance Coach and Diabetes Prevention Program Lifestyle Coach. DeWispelare was nominated by his peers because of his enthusiasm to help co-workers, patients and community organizations.

**Joni Rerucha Ebel '95**, was recognized as an Award of Excellence winner by the Nebraska Department of Education. Joni is a mathematics teacher at Columbus Middle School and has been teaching there for 17 years.

**Jackson H. Witter '17**, U.S. Air Force National Guard Airman 1st Class, graduated from basic military training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland. The airman completed an intensive, eight-week program that included training in military discipline and studies, Air Force core values, physical fitness and basic warfare principles and skills.



**Don Hilger '69 and Larry Sabata '68** were at Aquinas recently to present Aquinas students with

awards for essays written for a competition sponsored by the local Veterans Association.



**Erin Hotovy '93** was installed as the new Butler County Chamber of Commerce President at the Annual Banquet held in January. Erin is also the manager of the Ace Hardware Store in David City.



**James Plasek '70** was named the American Saler Association Commercial Breeder of the Year at the National Western Stock Show held in Denver, CO for his innovative use of Salers cattle and DNA testing.



**Tony Kobza '98** has been hired as the new head football coach for North Star High School in Lincoln.

**Private 1st Class Isaiah Jones '17**, one of the US Marine Corps newest graduates stopped by Aquinas for a visit. He is currently taking part in additional training in the desert.



**John Miriovsky '68** received the Outstanding Service award from the Nebraska School Activities Association for his outstanding service to Basketball in the state of Nebraska.

If you have any interesting news or notes concerning Aquinas alumni, please consider contacting me for inclusion in future newsletters. Please include as much information as you can as well as contact information. If you would like to send me information or if you need to contact me, I can be reached at:

E-mail: [deb-svec@cdolinc.net](mailto:deb-svec@cdolinc.net) Phone: (402) 367-3175

Address: Aquinas, P.O. Box 149, David City, NE 68632 c/o Deb Svec

Please also check us out on the web:

[www.aquinas-catholic.com](http://www.aquinas-catholic.com) or find us on Facebook by searching for Aquinas High School Alumni



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Keep up with what is going on with Aquinas and Aquinas Alumni through our Facebook page. Look for us at:

<https://www.facebook.com/Aquinas-High-School-Alumni-134378903298894/>



*The Aquinas Class of 2018—  
the 57th graduating class,  
will graduate on Sunday,  
**May 20th at 4:30 p.m.***

**\*\*Please note this is a change in time\*\***

Phone-a-thon 2017 pledges have come in quickly and as of the printing of this newsletter, we have received just under \$57,000.00.

Remember: You have until June 30, 2018, to send in your pledge.

Or you can give using a credit card online at:

[aquinas-catholic.com](http://aquinas-catholic.com)

Thank you for your support!

**Phone-a-thon 2017**

