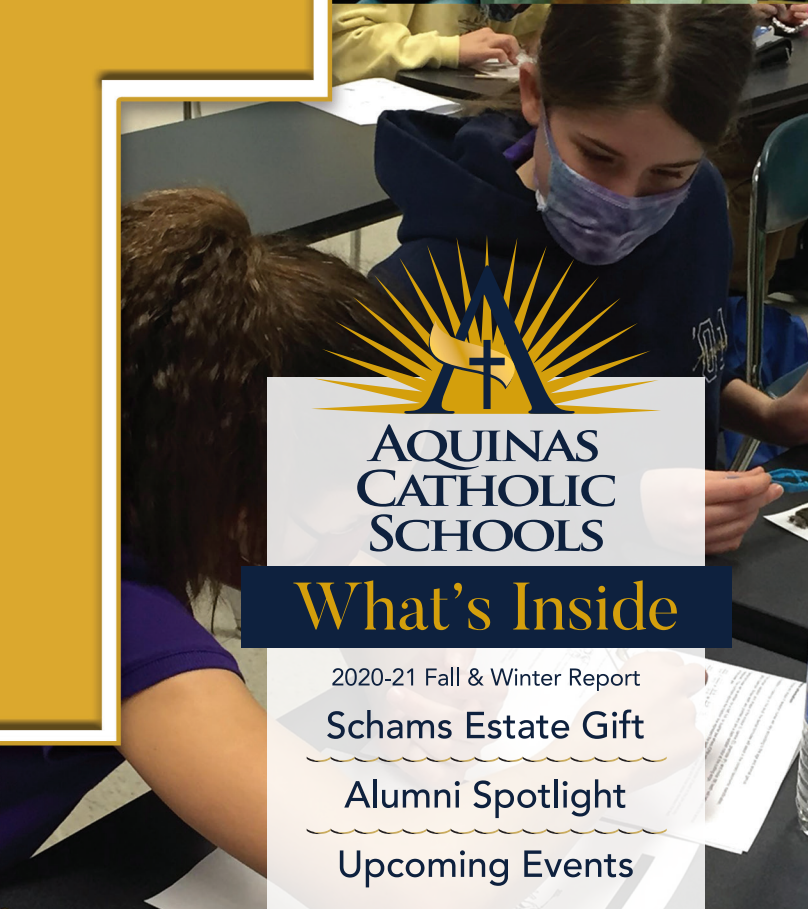


# THE AQUINAS REPORT

Aquinas Catholic Schools Magazine for Families, Friends & Alumni



**AQUINAS  
CATHOLIC  
SCHOOLS**

**What's Inside**

2020-21 Fall & Winter Report  
Schams Estate Gift  
Alumni Spotlight  
Upcoming Events

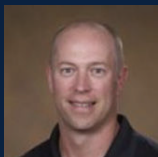


*The Aquinas Catholic Schools Foundation is an independent entity that exists to support Aquinas Catholic Schools in its mission to change lives through an affordable, accessible and high-quality Catholic Education.*

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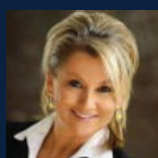
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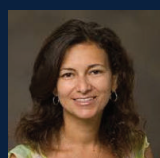
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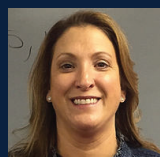
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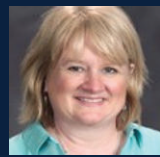
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# THE AQUINAS REPORT

2020-21 Fall & Winter Report

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## A Thank You to Aquinas Report Volunteers

Kathy Keppel

## Aquinas Report Publication

The Aquinas Report is published twice a year. Every effort is made to ensure accuracy of the information published.



## Report from the Dean



*Dear Alumni, Benefactors and Members of the Aquinas Family,*

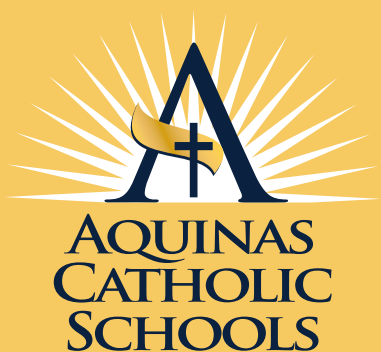
In 1851, Governor Dewey and Edward Ryan designed the state seal and motto in one afternoon. The motto FORWARD was chosen. The selection of the motto was to express “Wisconsin’s continuous drive to be a national leader.” We, at Aquinas, can truly be proud of our administration and our teachers during this past year. As many in the nation’s schools shut down and students became stagnant our doors were open and our classes were in session. Our students didn’t become stagnant but moved forward, living up to our state motto. Although it didn’t come easy, or without sacrifice and even having some tense moments, in the end FORWARD did we move.

Luke 9:62 reminds us, “no one who puts their hand to the plowshare and looks back is fit for the kingdom of heaven.” Our schools put their hands to the plowshares and with common sense didn’t look back, but moved forward.

I am a proud member of the Aquinas family and prouder to help support the efforts our teachers and administrators make to keep our students moving forward in the educational, physical, psychological and spiritual areas of their lives.

Very Rev Msgr. Steven J. Kachel  
Dean of La Crosse

## What’s Inside



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# Report from our President

*Dear Alumni and Friends of Aquinas Schools,*

In finishing my fourth year as President (29th at Aquinas) of the Aquinas Catholic School System, I have never been prouder of a group of people than I am of our roughly 250 3P–12th grade faculty, paraprofessionals, maintenance staff, office staff, coaches, and administrators than I am right now. We have accomplished so much in the last 14 months since our state went to a mandated “shelter in place” in March of 2020.

Our schools reopened in the fall of 2020 with full in-person education for all 3P–8th grade students and every other day hybrid (virtual/in person) instruction for our high school students. Our schools also provided an added opportunity for students to stay home and join their classmates virtually. The Coulee Region saw 8,000 school age children go without face-to-face instruction over a 12-month period. Aquinas was proud to be able to join our local private schools and provide in-person instruction during this period. Our students were able to participate in their sports in all three seasons and we were able to host spring concerts and prom! It would not be fair if I did not also acknowledge our students and our parents who partnered with us to establish COVID-19 protocols and allowed us to enforce them throughout the year. When a school, students, and parents are on the same page, great things will happen.

This year will mark the end of service to four long-standing faculty members; Jackie Czeiska (20 years) from Cathedral, Jean Bottelberghe (29 years) from St. Patrick and Linda Bechly (38 years) from St. Patrick. We wish them well in their retirement. This year will also be the last for Kay Berra, who will be leaving Blessed Sacrament after 35 years (31 as principal) to join the teacher preparation program at Viterbo University. Mrs. Berra is considered the Gold Standard in excellence for our schools. Did you know Blessed Sacrament has had only two principals (Sister Cathryn Meyer and Mrs. Kay Berra) since 1963? That was 58 years ago!

I hope that you enjoy this issue of the Aquinas Report. We are blessed to have so many generous alumni and friends. Thank you all for your ongoing support of our mission. As people begin to travel again, please stop by Aquinas the next time you are in La Crosse. I would enjoy visiting with you and showing you our great school.

God Bless,



Ted Knutson ('80)  
President, Aquinas Catholic Schools



## Our Mission Statement

*Aquinas Catholic Schools  
is a Christ-centered family  
devoted to nurturing students  
of all faiths through  
educational excellence in  
its vibrant Catholic tradition.*

## Our Core Values

**Faith**  
Serving Jesus and His Church

**Integrity**  
Cultivating moral character

**Excellence**  
Pursuing daily improvement  
through life-long learning

**Leadership**  
Inspiring achievement and  
stewardship

**Dignity**  
Respecting God, others, and self



Ted Knutson



# Report from our Foundation President

## Aquinas Catholic Schools Foundation Mission Statement

*The Aquinas Catholic Schools Foundation is an independent entity that exists to support Aquinas Catholic Schools in its mission to change lives through an affordable, accessible and high-quality Catholic Education.*

*Dear Alumni and Friends of the ACS Foundation,*

It is with both excitement and a sense of humility that I now step into the role of President of the ACS Foundation. Our family, like so many others, has a long history with Aquinas Catholic Schools. My wife Karen (Walsh) and I are both 1977 graduates of Aquinas HS. Our fathers (James Walsh and Robert Ritter) were both 1949 graduates and our sons Tom (2010) and Nolan (2013), as well as many brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and cousins, round out our three generations of Aquinas Alumni.

Our family has benefited greatly from the education we received at Aquinas and that is why, as President, I am committed to promoting the Vision of the Foundation at all times. That vision includes “ensuring that Aquinas Catholic Schools remain financially self-sustainable and accessible to students of all faiths that desire a high-quality Catholic Education.” With the help of all our donors who have always been so generous, I am confident that we can continue to realize that vision now and into the future.

I could have never imagined assuming this responsibility when I walked out the Cameron Street doors for the final time as a student in May of 1977. I am grateful to all our ACS Foundation supporters and to our Board of Directors for placing their confidence in me in this new role. I look forward to working with all the wonderful people who support our schools, our mission, and our values.

Regards, Mark Ritter  
ACS Foundation - President



Mark Ritter, left, pictured with his wife, Karen and sons, Tom and Nolan.



## Corporate Support Sparks Aquinas Fund Growth

Every year Aquinas Catholic Schools turns to our alumni, families, private foundations, and the business community to support the day-to-day needs of our students and staff by way of The Aquinas Fund. The Aquinas Fund provides much needed philanthropic income to fill the gap between the actual cost to educate a student and the income generated by tuition dollars and parish support. We appreciate every member of the Aquinas family who participates in this annual effort.

For the 2020-21 school year, with Aquinas’ sights set on opening for in-person education during the pandemic, the success of the Aquinas Fund was more important than ever. Our alumni, families and friends, stepped up in support. For an added boost to help with additional Covid-related expenses, we turned to the business community for their aid, and they answered. We would like to express our gratitude to these partners, along with each individual donor, for their generous support of the 2020-21 Aquinas Fund!



For more information on how you can support the Aquinas Fund visit [aquinascatholicschools.org/Aquinas-fund](https://aquinascatholicschools.org/Aquinas-fund)



Balduzzi  
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Automotive

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# SCHOOL REPORT

Cathedral Elementary School has truly been a hub of happiness, energy, and kindness this year. Students have comfortably adapted to the new world of hand sanitizing, mask wearing, social distancing from friends, “smiling with our eyes,” elbow bumps and air hugs. Families have been trusting, supportive, and patient as we work through the bumps and unknowns that the months and seasons have brought us. Faculty and staff have been resilient and determined to make our classrooms safe for all. We have been able to keep our in-person instruction in place since starting school in August – due to the

efforts of students, families, faculty and staff. What a testament to the human spirit combined with our Catholic faith!

In reviewing the past months, the generosity and selflessness of our Cathedral family shines bright. We were able to collect and donate items and gift cards to Catholic Charities during the Advent season. During Lent we raised over \$1,000 for our adopted friend, Mischell, at Casa Hogar and over \$1,000 for Mischell’s family as well. Children saved and donated over \$600 to the Diocesan Lenten Mite Box project. Our monthly “Children Feeding Children” food collection provides food for those in our community who are struggling. Our 2nd grade students have received First Reconciliation and First Communion. Camp Cathedral continues to provide summer options for families.

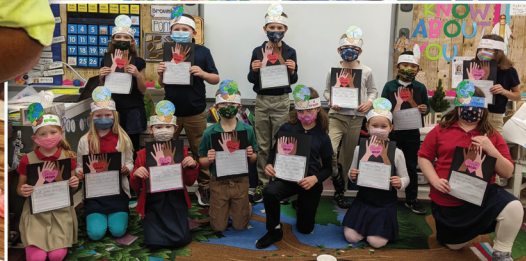
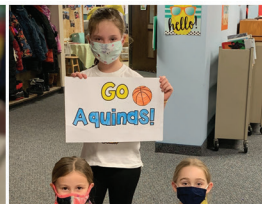
As we work through May, the last month of the school year and the month of Mary, we continue to

keep Mary and Joseph in our hearts. Mary and Joseph are the model of love and selflessness. In closing out the year, I extend a thank you to Mrs. Jackie Czeiska, Physical Education teacher, for her 20-year commitment to Catholic Schools. Mrs. Czeiska is retiring at the end of the school year!

My daily prayer to Mary and St. Joseph continues, asking for help in finding the courage and strength that we need to persevere safely on behalf of our children. In addition, a prayer goes to all those who have suffered tragedy and loss from the pandemic along with a prayer of gratitude for all that we have been blessed with this school year. I ask you to please continue your prayers for our Cathedral and Aquinas Catholic Schools’ families – past and present.

In service of your children,

*Patty Gallagher-Kosmatka, '79*  
Principal







## SCHOOL REPORT

It is with great excitement that I share St. Patrick School was able to provide in-person learning the entire 2020-21 school year. This is definitely something to celebrate as the year started off with a lot of unknowns. Students, teachers, parents, and staff are so grateful that we were able to provide a full year of Catholic in-person education to our students.

During the month of February, we celebrated Catholic Schools Week. Students had fun dressing up in Western attire, participating in school-wide bingo over the intercom, making valentines for healthcare workers, creating a thank-you video for Monsignor Steve, Deacon Frank, and Father Becker, and, lastly, being able to participate in our annual Bible bowl, spelling bee, and geography bee that we livestreamed for parents and grandparents to watch at home.

The month of March brought the celebration of First Communion for our 2nd grade students.

Parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles all gathered on March 14th to celebrate this beautiful sacrament. It was a blessing that students were able to invite their close family members and friends to share in this perfect day. Students also participated in the Stations of the Cross that were led by our 3rd-6th grade classes during Lent. One new experience students in grades 2nd-6th participated in was watching the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra virtually rather than in person. It was extra special because it featured one of our former St. Patrick School students on the piano.

During the month of April, our 5th and 6th grade students were able to go bowling at Coulee Golf Bowl as they finished their unit in Gym class. It was quite evident by the excitement that they had a great time.

The month of May will be extremely busy as we finish up the 2020-21 school year. We will have our annual May crowning, and our 2nd grade students will have the opportunity to visit The Shrine of our Lady of Guadalupe. Our 3P and K4 classes

will take a trip to Old Hickory Park, K5 will take a cruise on the La Crosse Queen, while our 1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders will go to Norskedalen. Our 4th graders will take a bike trip to Trempealeau, and our 5th and 6th graders will participate in the ACS track meet. We will celebrate 6th grade graduation with parents and family on May 27th.

Throughout the school year, our students completed several service learning projects. Some of these included twice monthly meals to the Warming Center, non-perishable food collections for area food pantries, providing needed personal care items for those who visited The Warming Center, making cards each month for healthcare workers, and supporting our sponsored child Jhon from the Casa Hogar orphanage.

The St. Patrick School students and staff are very thankful for the support of our parents, parishes, and the Aquinas community.

*Angela Koblitz, '92*  
Principal







# Blessed Sacrament Elementary SCHOOL REPORT

We have been very fortunate to continue the 2020-21 School Year with in-person instruction each day. Even with all the protocols that we follow, we have been able to find the joy in teaching, learning, and being together. Since October 2020, we have had at least eight students join our school in classrooms that had a seat available, for a total of 194 students in grades 3rd-6th.

We started the school year with only one grade attending Mass at the Church each week and the others participated back at school via livestream. We are grateful to Tom Kratt and Jennifer Kulzer for making the livestream opportunity happen. Within the last few weeks, we have added back music, servers, and offertory gifts. It is such a joy to praise God together as a school family again.

Blessed Sacrament School has enjoyed having several of the deanery pastors at school Masses. Fr. Aaron Becker, Associate at St. Patrick Parish, has been celebrating the Thursday Masses and then coming into the school classrooms to add another dimension

to faith instruction. Fr. Becker also enjoys a good game of kickball with the students as well!

Our students and teachers enjoyed the celebration of Catholic Schools Week. Congratulations to Geography Bee Champion Isaac Smith (5th grade); School Spelling Bee Champion Cullen Jorgensen and Runner-up Sam Bakalars (both 6th graders); and our school Religion Quiz Bowl Champions Isaac McGovern (3rd grade), Ella Krejchik (4th grade), Lydia Hale (5th grade), and Adela Piggush (6th grade). Cullen and Sam went on to participate in the online CESA #4 District Spelling Bee. Sam Bakalars placed 5th and qualified for the Wisconsin State Bee. Sam is the first student to do so from Blessed Sacrament School! All of these events are organized and run by our terrific teachers!

During Catholic Schools Week, each homeroom also wrote letters and put together a "care" package for a member of the military with ties to Aquinas Catholic Schools Family. The boxes were shipped to California, Hawaii, Kuwait, the Horn of Africa, New Mexico, and Georgia! Our students really enjoyed the project and most

rooms received back either a letter, personal visits, or video chats with the military service personnel!

We began marking the season of Lent with our traditional prayer service to burn the palms in preparation for Ash Wednesday. During Lent, our students collected and delivered over 1000 pounds of non-perishable food to WAFER; collected \$1000 to support our child, Nicole, at Casa Hogar through raffles and jeans days; and used their Mite boxes for almsgiving to support the Holy Childhood Association in connection with the Diocesan Mission Office. A highlight of Lent was the portrayal of The Living Stations of the Cross by our 6th grade students. Each homeroom walked 1.5 miles through our surrounding neighborhood and listened and prayed with the story of Jesus' path to Calvary.

Plans are being made to have our traditional May Crowning Service on May 7 as well as the Graduation Mass for 6th grade students on May 27. Our school year will draw to a close on Friday, May 28. We thank you for your continued prayers and support!

*Kay Berra*  
Principal







# Aquinas Middle SCHOOL REPORT

Aquinas Middle School has been full time, in-person with a virtual option for learning all school year. We have weathered COVID-19, endured sports seasons, and adapted curriculum to make all learning possible!

Two students, Matthew Rabindra (8th grade) and Lydia Theodoropoulou (7th grade), won our in-house spelling bee and competed in our regional spelling competition that was all virtual this year.

Students have used Chromebooks more than ever to correspond with teachers, do EdPuzzles, and use Google Classroom to keep up with school, a good preparation for high school. We have students who are in Physical Science again this year as 8th graders, who will transition to biology freshman year in high school. Last year was the first time this has happened. Those students are doing well in biology, even though it is one of those well-known high school classes that requires a lot of work!

The art students in AMS listened to the high school choir music and drew what they were thinking about. Those pictures were displayed during the AHS Choral Concert and were enjoyed by many.

We are looking forward to a great end of year with as much normalcy as COVID-19 protocols will allow for us!

*Denise Ring*  
Principal







# SCHOOL REPORT

After spending much of the 2020-21 school year in hybrid instruction, students at Aquinas High School returned to in-person learning mid-March! With masks on and still distanced as much as possible, we are starting to feel back to normal. We have used every ounce of creativity to safely deliver instruction and give students some of what would be normal for this school year.

All of our sports teams have been able to have, at a minimum, an abbreviated season. Prom was held for the juniors and seniors in May. Aquinas hosted Baccalaureate on a smaller scale, and graduation was held at the La Crosse Center! Our Band and Choral Spring Concerts were split this year to limit the number of attendees, but was as beautiful as ever!

Our senior class has shown great leadership this year and academically persevered through a pandemic with

a blended delivery for the first three quarters!

Excelling in academics and showing incredible leadership were our five valedictorians: Matthew Reuteman, Sophia Cowgill, Greta Moseng, Seth Capelli and Ella Reichenbacher. Congratulations on your exceptional academic success. Eight-thousandths of a point below them, our 2021 Salutatorian, Monica Bowen, has also made her mark academically, musically, and in community service with a plethora of volunteer hours.

We wish our seniors the best of luck in their educational and work endeavors beyond Aquinas. We always keep the doors open to our Alumni and expect updates! *Bonne Chance!*

*Denise Ring*  
Principal



# SAVE THE DATE

# Gold Gala

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2021**

Join us in-person at Aquinas High School  
or virtually at [www.AquinasCatholicSchools.org/gold-gala](http://www.AquinasCatholicSchools.org/gold-gala)

## YOUR HOSTS



DAN SKEMP  
Class of 1986



YVE ROJAS  
Class of 1987



## AQUINAS CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

an Aquinas Catholic Schools Foundation event

Since 2015, the Gold Gala has raised over \$375,000 for our Catholic Schools







Donald and Louise with Saint Pope John Paul II



Donald (4th Degree Knight) & Louise  
Knights of Columbus Involvement

## Aquinas Catholic Schools Foundation Receives Major Gift from Schams Family

by Emily Pyrek

The Aquinas Catholic Schools Foundation has received a transformational gift of \$1,010,000 from the estate of Donald M. & Louise F. (Paul) Schams, both alumni of Aquinas High School.

These funds will be used to establish the Donald M. Schams and Louise F. (Paul) Schams Scholarship Endowment Fund, in honor of the late local couple known for their volunteer efforts, involvement in their church and support of Catholic education. Strong faith runs throughout their extended families, with Louise's brother John J. Paul a Bishop of the La Crosse Diocese before his passing.

"I continue to be amazed at the ongoing kindness of the

Aquinas High School alumni. The establishment of the Donald M. Schams and Louise F. (Paul) Schams Scholarship Endowment Fund will guarantee children in the greater La Crosse area have the opportunity to attend Aquinas. This generous scholarship will be life changing for many area youth," said Ted Knutson, President of Aquinas Catholic Schools.

The new scholarship fund will provide annual need-based tuition assistance at Aquinas High School, as well as multiple annual scholarships for graduating Aquinas seniors who enroll at Viterbo University, which will help cover freshman year tuition.

"Viterbo University is proud to partner with Aquinas Catholic Schools to offer a seamless educational experience for

Aquinas graduates wishing to continue their educational journey at a neighboring Catholic institution," said Michelle Kronfeld, Vice President of Enrollment Management at Viterbo. "Viterbo and Aquinas share a common mission of providing students with a premier education that empowers them to make a difference in the world by serving one another and their community. We are deeply appreciative of the Schams family as this gift will make a Viterbo education even more affordable for Aquinas graduates."

Prior to the passing of Louise in 2007 and Donald in 2019, the couple were longtime proponents of faith-enhanced learning and bettering the world

around them. Donald attended St. Joseph Elementary School, while Louise went to Cathedral Elementary School.

Both were Aquinas graduates, in 1944 and 1945, respectively, and during her high school years Louise was active in orchestra, operetta, pep club and the Christmas Cantata.

The couple married in 1947 in La Crosse. Donald, who grew up on a dairy farm, operated a rural milk route in Coon Valley, while Louise was a stay-at-home mom to their daughters, Mary Sue King, Kathleen Munday, Joan Moren and Jean Borodaj, and son, Donald Schams Jr. Though Louise didn't have an outside career, she "lived a life of service to others" and was a strong and intelligent woman.

"It seems and reads that Mother was a traditional mother and housewife," says Mary. "That is not really so. She was the backbone for Dad and our family. She was the organizer and financial guru."

In addition to Wisconsin, the family for periods of time lived in California, where Donald worked for Rohr Aircraft, Arkansas and Illinois. In every place they lived, the Schams made an

impact on their churches, their children's schools and their communities.

While in California, Kathy recalls being at recess and spotting her father exiting the convent at a parish.

"I was stunned," Kathy says. "What was he doing in the convent? As it turned out, he had built bookcases for the nuns and was installing them."

In Arkansas, Louise was a dedicated helper at St. Mary's Hospital in Bella Vista, awarded a lifetime volunteer pin, and at St. Bernard's Parish she washed, ironed and returned the vestments used by the priests, as well as the altar linens, Kathy says.

Donald was a member of the Knights of Columbus, in total for 65 years, and following the 9/11 attacks he and Louise invited two first responders, a firefighter and a police officer, to speak at a Knights of Columbus event at their church, covering their airfare and hotel expenses.

Donald served as a scribe at St. Bernard's, and was also a member of the Bella Vista Fly Tyers, an environmentally active group of men who cleaned along the shorelines, kept grassy areas maintained, sunk discarded Christmas trees in area lakes for fish habitats and operated a recycling center.

***I continue to be amazed at the ongoing kindness of the Aquinas High School alumni. The establishment of the Donald M. Schams and Louise F. (Paul) Schams Scholarship Endowment Fund will guarantee children in the greater La Crosse area have the opportunity to attend Aquinas. This generous scholarship will be life changing for many area youth.***

**Ted Knutson**  
President of Aquinas Catholic Schools

Also while living in Arkansas, the Schams helped construct a gymnasium/cafeteria in a Catholic grade school, and became good friends with local Bishop Francis Malone, whom they invited on family cruises, offering to pay his way.

During their years in the Coulee Region, Louise and Donald operated a beef farm in the West Salem area, and helped construct a bell tower at St. Leo the Great Church,





one of many church construction projects they participated in over the decades.

Donald worked as a land developer and built custom homes, and Louise was active in music at St. Mary's in Coon Valley, a talented organist, and a volunteer in the library of Onalaska's St. Patrick School.

While they lived many places, Aquinas remained dear to their hearts, and they worked on several renovation projects at the school. Raising their children to be people of faith was important to the couple, and their religious education continues to resonate with and inspire the now-grown siblings.

“At the time I didn’t really appreciate the efforts of our parents to have a Catholic education,” Jean says. “Now I realize how my values and life choices have been shaped by my Catholic upbringing.”

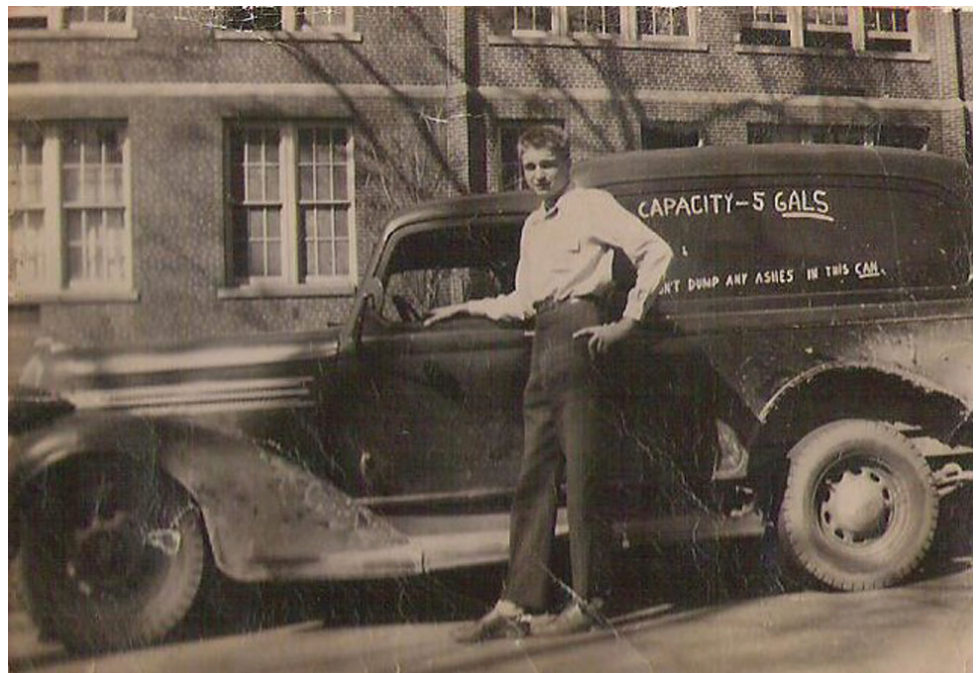
The Donald M. Schams and Louise F. (Paul) Schams Scholarship Endowment Fund will now provide this gift to others.

Starting in the 2021-22 school year, five or six incoming Aquinas students will be awarded \$3,000 to \$6,000 a year toward their tuition, with the ability to reapply each of the subsequent three years. Applicants must have a GPA of higher than 2.0 and not otherwise have the financial means to attend Aquinas.

Two or three Aquinas seniors enrolled to be full-time undergraduate freshman students at Viterbo University will be eligible to apply for a one-time tuition scholarship of \$4,000 to \$8,000. The first scholarships will be awarded to students in the graduating class of 2021.

Applicants for either scholarship should be Catholic or have a passion for faith-based education, and preference will be given to students from a rural or farm family or those not receiving any other scholarships.

General Aquinas scholarship information can be found at <https://www.aquinascatholicschools.org/scholarships>



Donald Schams in front of AHS. He used this truck to transport students from St. Joseph's Ridge to Aquinas for school.



Save the Date  
**WED. JULY 7 2021**  
 THE GOLF CLUB AT CEDAR CREEK



*Date*

Wednesday,  
 July 7, 2021

*Place*



The Golf Club at Cedar Creek  
 2600 Cedar Creek Ln., Onalaska

The 32nd annual Aquinas Golf Scramble is a great way to have fun with friends in support of Aquinas Catholic Schools. Year after year, golfers have a great time generating \$20,000 for need-based tuition assistance benefiting families at all of our Aquinas Catholic Schools.

For more information on how you can play, sponsor, or volunteer at the Aquinas Golf Scramble please contact Brad Reinhart at [brad.reinhart@aquinasschools.org](mailto:brad.reinhart@aquinasschools.org) or call 608.784.0707.

**FEES**

\$120 per person \$360 per three-person team  
*Special pricing is available if combined with a hole sponsorship. Fee includes greens fees, practice range, motorized cart, participant gift item, catered lunch, drink tickets, and more.*

**SCHEDULE**

**11:00AM** Check-in & Gift Pick-up  
**11:00AM – 11:45AM** Lunch Served  
**NOON** Shotgun Start  
*19th Hole Social & Awards to Follow*

**GOLF**

Format will be a flighted 3 person scramble (best shot). Prizes will be available on every hole.

[www.aquinascatholicschools.org/golf-scramble](http://www.aquinascatholicschools.org/golf-scramble)





# Founder's Day 2020-21

The Aquinas Catholic Schools Foundation typically hosts its annual Founder's Day celebration on the Sunday after Easter. As with many events over the past year, the Covid-19 pandemic caused cancellations or format changes. In 2020, the Foundation was set to honor a terrific lineup of deserving award recipients. As the event drew near, it became evident that we would need to postpone. This spring, the timing was still not quite right for a large banquet-style gathering. Feeling compelled to honor the recipients rather than delaying, we determined that each person would be honored in a more intimate setting. Each award presentation was filmed and is available to be viewed on our website at [aquinascatholicschools.org/founders-day](http://aquinascatholicschools.org/founders-day).

The Aquinas Catholic Schools Foundation would like to congratulate and recognize the following recipients:



## **Bishop John Paul Distinguished Alumni Award** **Mark Schneider, Class of 1986**

This award is presented to a graduate of Aquinas who has distinguished themselves in their community, demonstrated support for Aquinas, and has seen significant achievement in their chosen field and practice the Catholic faith.



## **St. Thomas Aquinas Award** **Kevin Roop**

This award is given to a person who has made a significant contribution of time, talent and/or treasure in assisting the students of the Aquinas Schools.



## **St. Francis Staff Award** **Sharon Tempke**

This award is presented to an Aquinas Catholic Schools staff member of long standing or who made a significant impact on the students of Aquinas.



## **St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Award** **Morrison & Associates, S.C.**

This award is given to a business or organization that demonstrates a history of partnership with and support of Aquinas Catholic Schools and the Aquinas Catholic Schools Foundation.



## Bishop John Paul Distinguished Alumni Award

### Past Recipients:

- 1991 Phil Quillin
- 1992 Frank Uhler, Jr.
- 1993 Steve & Marian Pavela
- 1994 Mary Blaschke, Paul Noelke
- 1995 Robert & Anita Funke, Robert & Marie Daley
- 1996 Roger Ferris, Ed & Sally Sullivan
- 1997 Sr. Mary Ann Gschwind, Robert Skemp
- 1998 Robert Kreutz, John Bissen
- 1999 Fr. Bernard McGarty, Sr. Rita Rathburn
- 2000 Paul Poehling
- 2001 Bishop John Paul, Anita Froegel
- 2002 Fr. Robert J. Cook
- 2003 John Kerrigan, Robert Gilbert
- 2004 John & Barb Marie Leinfelder
- 2005 Don Gallagher
- 2006 Dr. Steve Pavela
- 2007 Michael Weissenberger
- 2008 James Maney
- 2009 Paul Schams
- 2010 Fr. Steven Kachel & Ernest Tremmel
- 2011 & 2012 Not awarded
- 2013 Pat Gantert
- 2014 Steve Doll
- 2015 Not awarded
- 2016 Bob Halaska
- 2017 Kathryn Keppel
- 2018 Anthony Binsfeld
- 2019 Tim Murphy

## St. Thomas Aquinas Award

### Past Recipients:

- 1999 Ralph & Joyce Clason
- 2000 Richard J. Campbell
- 2001 Marjorie Reinhart
- 2002 George E. Smith
- 2003 John & Donna Hansen Family
- 2004 William Kerrigan
- 2005 Dr. Art Barbier
- 2006 Larry Lee
- 2007 Ken Morrison
- 2008 Henry Funk
- 2009 Joe Poehling
- 2010 Dr. George & Margaret Ellenz
- 2011 Bruce Simones
- 2012 James Kiffe
- 2013 Bob & Cindy Klar
- 2014 Jim & Kathy McGettigan
- 2015 Not awarded
- 2016 Mike & Denise Kachel
- 2017 Thomas "Tiny" Poellinger
- 2018 Michael Quillin
- 2019 Barbara & Dr. James Murphy

## St. Francis Staff Award

### Past Recipients:

- 1999 Fr. Robert Altmann, Sr. Althea Meierotto, Sr. Lucille Kleinheinz, Lee Gilbert
- 2000 Fr. Charles A. Blecha
- 2001 Phil Hahn
- 2002 Kathleen Forslund, Sr. Celine Schumacher
- 2003 Jack Nockels
- 2004 Sr. Celestine Cephress, John Michuta
- 2005 Sr. Geneva Kneer
- 2006 Sr. Judine Kranc
- 2007 Sr. Margaret Mary Conway, Margaret Grelle
- 2008 David Reinders
- 2009 Mary Kroner
- 2010 Therese Dobson
- 2011 David English
- 2012 Charles Schmidt
- 2013 Mike Desmond
- 2014 Margaret Dineen
- 2015 Not awarded
- 2016 James Vail
- 2017 Michael Drake
- 2018 John Stellflue
- 2019 Joe Gaspard





# Let's Celebrate!

## Class Gatherings

### *Class of 1947*

Meets the 2nd Monday of each month at 8:00am at The La Crosse Family Restaurant, 2120 Rose Street, La Crosse

### *Class of 1954*

Meets the 1st Saturday of each month at 9:00am at King Street Kitchen, on the corner of 7th & King Street, La Crosse  
Contact: Donna (Sellmer) Puent - 608-788-4137

### *Class of 1955*

Meets the 2nd Tuesday of February, May, August, and November at 9:00am at King Street Kitchen, on the corner of 7th & King Street, La Crosse  
Contact: Grace Binner Smith - gracemi80@gmail.com

### *Class of 1957*

Meets the 2nd Monday of February, April, June, August, October, and December at 9:00am at King Street Kitchen, on the corner of 7th & King Street, La Crosse. Contact: Charlotte (Farrel) Baier - 608-781-7395 or James Schams - 608-784-3316

### *Class of 1960*

Meets the 4th Tuesday of each month  
Contact: Micki (Bicha) Banasik - 608-788-2817 - for location and time

### *Class of 1961*

Meets the 1st Friday of each month at 11:30am at Ardie's on Lang Drive, La Crosse. Contact: Mary Gokey momladygokey@gmail.com - 608-723-8073

### *Class of 1964*

Meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month  
Contact: Sue King - smack\_suzanne@aol.com or Joann LaFleur - 608-779-9355

### *Class of 1975*

Meets the 1st day of each month at 12:00pm at Schmidy's Restaurant, La Crosse  
Contact: John Dvorak - 608-526-6090

## Class Reunions

### Class of 1960

#### **61st Class Reunion • August 20, 2021**

At the Freighthouse Restaurant in La Crosse with cocktail hour from at 5:00-6:00pm and dinner off the menu at 6:00pm. Contact: George Skemp - skempgn@hotmail.com or Micki Banasik - thebanasiks@centurytel.net

### Class of 1970

#### **51st Class Reunion • August 20, 2021**

Meet & greet gathering will be held at The Recovery Room in La Crosse from 5:00-9:00pm. **August 21, 2021** - Reunion celebration at the Freighthouse Restaurant in La Crosse from 5:00-9:00pm. Cost is \$25. Additional information at [www.aquinas70.com](http://www.aquinas70.com) or on the Class Facebook Page. Contact: Francis Formanek - dcformanek@yahoo.com

### Class of 1975

#### **46th Reunion • July 31, 2021**

The Freighthouse Hiawatha Room, La Crosse starting at 6:00pm. A Class Picture will be taken at 6:30pm. Dinner to follow. Cost: \$35 each. Check out our Facebook page: Aquinas Class of 1975  
Contacts: Pam (Galstad) Brose - pamjohnbrose@gmail.com  
Nancy (La Fleur) Colgan - ncolgan121556@gmail.com  
Jill (Clason) Doll - jilldoll@clasonbuickgmc.com - 608-769-0896  
Reservation requested by July 10, 2021.

### Class of 1996

#### **25th Class Reunion • August 7, 2021**

The Recovery Room, La Crosse starting at 7:00pm. Contact: Marty Kirchner - martykirchner@gmail.com

## Aquinas High School 1967-1972 Wrestlers' Reunion

**August 19, 2021**

At the Aquinas High School Gym from 5pm to 10pm

For Reservations email [denglish831@hotmail.com](mailto:denglish831@hotmail.com), call, or text 608-780-2349

*If you would like your class reunion to be added here or to begin your planning process, please contact Brad Reinhart at 608-784-0707 or email [brad.reinhart@aquinasschools.org](mailto:brad.reinhart@aquinasschools.org).*



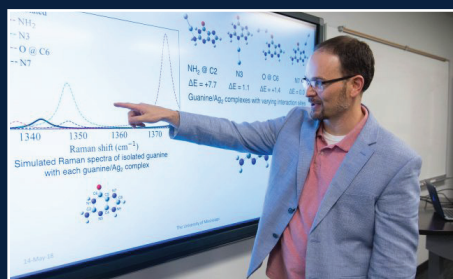
# Alumni Anecdotes



*Avrie Schott* ('94) has been promoted as the first-ever female captain for the City of La Crosse Police Department. Captain Schott has been with the LCPD for over 20 years, serving in various roles including Patrol Officer, DARE/GREAT Officer, School Resource Officer, Sergeant and Lieutenant, Negotiator with the Emergency Response Team, Honor Guard, Crisis Intervention Trainer and Mental Health First Aid Coordinator and Trainer. As head of the Professional Standards and Community Service Bureau, Captain Schott is in charge of improving the relationship between the community and the police. She'll run the DARE program, staff accreditation, and the school resource officer program.

*"It is a special day to see her as the first female captain of police with the La Crosse Police Department but it's also really no surprise. Everyone that's ever worked in our department and within this community knows how capable she is at being a leader."* – Chief Shawn Kudron

*"I have been given the opportunities to train and be challenged and to grow as an individual and a department member throughout my career. I'm just really excited to be able to continue to give back to my hometown."* – Captain Avrie Schott



*Greg Tschumper* ('91), professor and chair of chemistry and biochemistry at the University of Mississippi, has been honored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science for his cutting-edge work in computational chemistry. Tschumper and his research team study the subtle interactions between molecules, especially those involving water, using quantum physics, mathematics and high-performance computing instead of traditional laboratory experiments.

*"My path to chemistry was significantly influenced by two amazing chemistry teachers in high school. I distinctly remember a conversation with one of them about why water forms drops and beads up on most surfaces instead of spreading out like oil. Interestingly, part of my current research program is dedicated to studying the phenomena responsible for that behavior. I certainly would not be where I am today without my parents, Bob and Pat Tschumper, who instilled the importance of hard work and perseverance in me at an early age. There is also a long list of teachers and mentors I'd like to thank, going back to my chemistry teachers at Aquinas High School in La Crosse, Wisconsin."*  
– Greg Tschumper



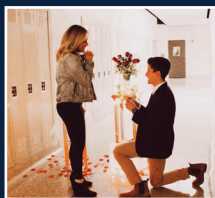
*Tony Holinka* ('03) was promoted to Fire Chief for the Town of Shelby (WI). Tony has been a member of the Shelby Fire Department for 18 years.



*Courtney Becker* ('20) completed her freshman basketball season for Drake University. The former Aquinas state champion was named to the All-Freshman team for the Missouri Valley Conference for her performance this season.



After a season wiped away by COVID, *Rudy Rott* ('15) has completed his second MiLB spring training camp with the Philadelphia Phillies in Clearwater Florida. Rudy is currently playing for the High-A Jersey Shore Blue Claws.



*Rachel Seidel* ('16) and *Kellen Doberstein* ('16) got engaged at Aquinas High School during the Fall of 2020. Kellen surprised Rachel by popping the question in the freshman hallway in front of the same locker where he asked her out on their first date while attending Aquinas.



Congratulations to Cathedral School Principal *Patty Gallagher-Kozmatka* ('79) on being named the Diocese of La Crosse Administrator of the Year.



*Lexi Donarski* ('20) finished her freshman basketball season for Iowa State University. The all-time leading scorer for the Blugolds was named to the All-Freshman team for the Big XII Conference and was the unanimous selection for Big XII Freshman of the Year. Lexi was also invited to tryout for the USA Basketball U19 Women's National team in May.





# PAUL CONNELL

*Class of 1990*



Earlier this year, Aquinas alum Paul Connell, who served as Deputy Attorney General at the Wisconsin Department of Justice, became Cozen O'Connor's first Midwest-based attorney in the firm's nationally-recognized State Attorneys General Group.

In his new role, he splits his time between Cozen O'Connor's Chicago and Washington, D.C. offices. "I now work with 16 other attorneys, mostly based in Washington D.C., serving clients across the country who find themselves navigating investigations, regulations and lawsuits involving state and federal agencies," relayed Connell in a recent interview with the Chicago Daily Law Bulletin.

Though AG offices are nonpartisan operations, their elected officeholders have embraced their power to sue the federal government and advocate on charged political issues, Connell explains. He predicts that the Biden

administration, coupled with states beginning to investigate issues surrounding COVID-19 and the allocation of relief funds by Congress in 2020, will bring in an unprecedented workload for elite practices like his Cozen O'Connor group. He added, "Given the ineffectiveness of Congress to deal with the problems facing the country, State Attorneys General now routinely fill this regulatory void and act as de facto guardrails on the economy. This presents enormous risk for companies as well as opportunities in the coming years. My practice helps clients identify these oncoming regulatory and economic pitfalls and position them accordingly."

In addition, Connell said that State AGs often have widely differing views on regulation around vaccines, data privacy, antitrust, health care and consumer protection laws generally. He firmly believes state AGs will become policy leaders at the forefront of these issues as the economy quickly re-opens in 2021 and

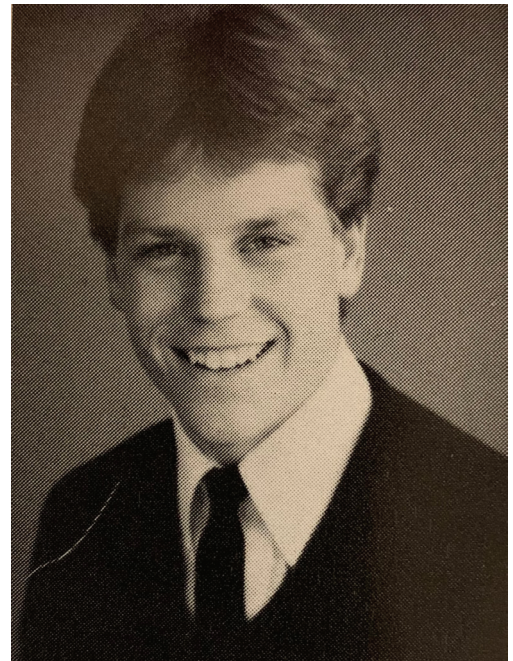
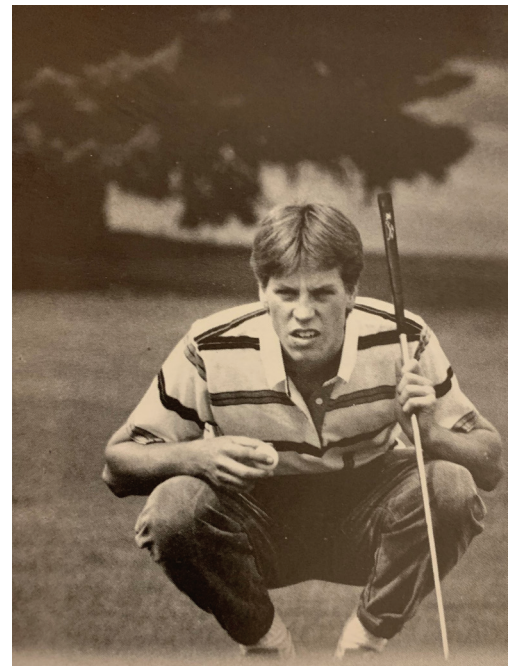
that this will lead to an increase in litigation, especially with respect to issues arising from the fallout of the pandemic.

Connell served as Deputy Attorney General and Senior Counsel to former Wisconsin Attorney General Brad Schimel from 2015-19. In that position, he directed legal strategy in all the state's significant multistate consumer protection cases and advised state agencies and the Office of Governor Scott Walker. As the primary legal advisor to Attorney General Schimel, Connell developed and executed significant policy initiatives that profoundly and positively impacted all aspects of Wisconsin's economy.

Before serving as Deputy Attorney General, Connell spent 12 years as a federal prosecutor with the United States Department of Justice in the Western District of Wisconsin, where he was recognized by law enforcement for leading significant drug trafficking investigations,

tried complex fraud cases and argued dozens of cases on appeal before the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. In 2004, Connell led the prosecution of James Perry, a notorious child sex predator whose crime spree spanned multiple states over the course of a decade. Perry's capture, prosecution and sentence of 180 years in prison was featured on Nightline, 20/20 and The Oprah Winfrey Show.

Connell earned his B.A. (*cum laude* - 1994) from the University of Wisconsin, Parkside, and his J.D. (*magna cum laude* - 1998) from the Marquette University Law School, where he was the executive editor of the *Marquette Law Review*. Connell is the son of longtime La Crosse residents Joe Connell and Pauline Connell and currently resides in Middleton, Wisconsin with his wife Andrea and their two children.





# Our Recently Deceased

## Alumni & Friends

**1934**

Beatrice (Opitz) Renner

**1938**

George Stuber  
Constance (Pierce) Zielke

**1939**

Edward Banasik

**1940**

Mary (Bissen) Larsen  
William Welch

**1943**

Tom Flynn

**1945**

Kathleen (Lepsch) Michel  
Patricia (Pitz) Crowley  
James Knothe

**1947**

Alfred Graf  
Evelyn (Kerska) Kerber  
Norbert Hegenbarth  
James Lepsch  
Joan (Zeimentz) Blenka

**1948**

Virginia (Marcotte) Larkin  
Doris (Fries) Handrickson

**1949**

Richard Johnson  
Dorothy (Cibulka) Johnson

**1950**

Joseph Hengel  
William Servais  
Marion (Pretasky) Pahs  
Joan (Schedivy) Urbanek

**1951**

Jeanne (Yost) Norby  
Nancy (Larson) Netzer  
William Dunn  
Barbara (Held) Nelson  
Edward Hale  
Nancy (Baum) Padesky  
Edward Hale  
Charles Cunningham

**1952**

Lawrence Holzer  
John Finley  
Mary (Halaska) Germann  
John Wagner  
Joan (McKee) Burge

**1953**

Henry Hahn  
William Finn  
Thomas Besl Sr.

**1954**

Patricia (Kramer) Lydon  
Paul Chrisan  
Richard Sheehan

**1955**

Mary (Huber) Brown  
James Lonkoski  
Tom Koelbl  
Dean Limberg  
Richard Lee

**1956**

Duane Calkins  
David Skemp  
Dolores (Weiland) Patros  
David Platz  
Ronald Hess

**1957**

Margaret (Buehler) Foellmi  
Rosemary (Tschumper) Doyle  
Eugene Gerke  
Elaine (Pedretti) Kubiak

**1958**

Albert Holfeld  
Mary Jane (Riley) Jacobs  
Glen Bakalars

**1959**

Carl Potaracke  
Sarah Hundt  
Sandy (Kubiak) Quillin

**1960**

Sharon (Waldera) Park  
Michael Hansen  
Patrick Pralle

**1961**

Walter Marshall  
Joann (Vehrenkamp) Pyle  
Maureen Shannon  
Dennis Wohlhoefe  
Dan Holy

**1962**

Joan (Schwabebauer) Stegen  
Paul Theisen

**1963**

Daniel Wilder  
Edward Bicha

**1964**

James Finn

**1965**

Cynthia (Greener) Haag  
Mary (Fuchsteiner) Nelson  
Alice Bilskemper

**1966**

Robert Oldenburg

**1967**

Michael Bruha

**1968**

Eileen (Steinhoff) Burkhart  
Jane (McConaghy) Elton  
Mary (Meyers) Lampert

**1969**

Zita (Grabinski) Clack  
James Cahill

**1970**

Steve Jahimiak

**1971**

James Amsrud  
Franz Fredricks

**1973**

Paul Boarman

**1974**

Jeanne (Newburg) Kroner

**1980**

Dan Durall

**1982**

Thomas Noelke

**1991**

Hans Erickson

**1993**

Charles Hauser

**1997**

Mike Knothe



## Friends of Aquinas

---

Philomena Doran

John Pedace Sr.

Margaret Artz

Dolores Sinniger

James Hofer

Allen Nelson

Fr. Albert Sonnberger

Audre Lang

Jerome Gundersen Sr.

Nancy Kaiser

Levina Hauser

Winora Orcutt

James Calloway

James Malin

Barbara Walsh

Arlene Schmidt

James Pickett

Vincent Feehan

Lucille Petersen

Mike Kearns

La Vonne Nelson

Judith Schmidt

Evelyn Gallagher

*But those who hope in the  
Lord will renew their strength.  
They will soar on wings like  
eagles, they will run and not  
grow weary, they will walk  
and not be faint.*

*Isaiah 40.31*





# St. Thomas Aquinas

## SOCIETY OF PLANNED GIFTS

**In appreciation of those generous donors whose legacy will live on through their planned gifts to the Aquinas Catholic Schools Foundation, which help to ensure current and future generations of excellence at Aquinas Catholic Schools.**

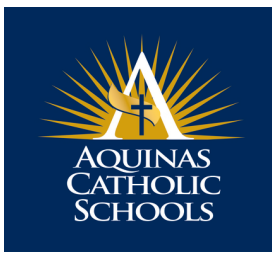
Marcella (Cleary '41) Amundson  
Frances M. Balduzzi  
Theodore P. Banasik '55  
James F. Boschert '49  
Marvin & Ruth (Troyanek '39) Bossler  
John Bissen '36  
Lydia Brophy  
Richard Carter  
Vernon F. Dale  
Frank Daley  
Henry C. Eden  
Dr. Robert & Carole Edland  
Ellen (McGarly) Flynn '41  
Ruth M. Gallagher  
Lorraine F. Gay  
Don Gilbert '51  
Eleanore Hackner  
Marian Hammes '34  
John B. Janis  
Lorraine F. Johnson  
James Jungen '55  
James L. Kiffe '42  
Agnes (Ott '35) Kimpel  
Robert H. Klein '37  
Celia Koll  
Joseph E. Kratt  
John G. LaFleur '62  
Patricia McCabe '52

Kenneth McQuillen '47  
Norman L. Meir '38  
Marie Meyer  
Patricia A. ('50) & Jerry W. Morrison  
Erma May (Thimmesch '40) Mosser  
Joseph G. Nekola '35  
Richard G. Nekola '36  
Carl B. Noelke '55  
Ione R. Olson  
Janet A. Olson '54  
Francis D. Papenfuss '59  
Bishop John Paul '35  
Constance Picazo '53  
Edward W. & Ella J. Poehling  
Cody Rickaway '07  
Lois Riepel '52  
Mary Roudebush  
William E. Scanlon '46  
Donald & Louise Schams '44  
Leo Schneider  
Mary A. Sexauer  
Elvena W. (Barry '34) Slattery  
Stephen R. Stilp  
Joseph Sweeney '38  
William F. Wagner '57  
Cleo Weber  
Harry & Charlotte Woods  
Francis (Wais '37) Zahn



**To learn more about how you can join the St. Thomas Aquinas Society for Legacy & Planned Gifts, please visit [aquinasschools.giftlegacy.com](http://aquinasschools.giftlegacy.com), or contact Brad Reinhart at (608) 784-0707 [brad.reinhart@aquinasschools.org](mailto:brad.reinhart@aquinasschools.org)**





Aquinas Catholic Schools Foundation  
315 S. 11th Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601  
608-784-0707  
brad.reinhart@aquinasschools.org  
aquinasschools.giftlegacy.com



## An IRA Charitable Rollover Gift:



May satisfy your annual required minimum distribution, or RMD, up to the amount of your gift



Allows you to give from pre-tax assets and your distribution is excluded from taxable income



Helps avoid limits on charitable deductions and prevents you from being pushed into a higher tax bracket



Simplifies the giving process. It's easy to do—just notify your IRA custodian



Minimizes the effect your giving has on your cash flow. The gift is from your assets, not your checkbook

- 70½ or older
- Direct up to \$100,000

# Reduce Your Tax Burden

*even if you don't itemize*

Do you own an IRA or other qualified retirement plan? Are you looking for a tax-wise strategy to make gifts to support our mission? If so, consider making an **IRA charitable rollover gift**.

At your direction, the custodian or trustee of your IRA can transfer money from your IRA directly to a qualified public charity, like ours, so that you can support the causes that matter most to you. This gift is a qualified charitable distribution (QCD), also called an IRA charitable rollover gift.

An IRA rollover has several significant tax advantages. It allows you to give from pre-tax assets. If you do not itemize or are subject to charitable deduction limits, the IRA rollover still allows you to give while receiving tax benefits. An IRA rollover gift could also help you avoid income that could push you into a higher tax bracket.

Call or email us for a complimentary no-obligation look at the tools and strategies we have to help you reach your goals.







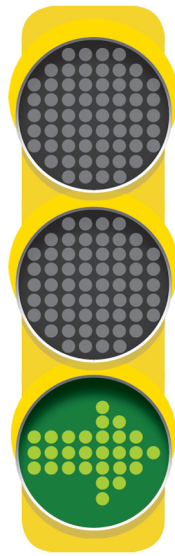
Aquinas Catholic Schools Foundation  
315 S. 11th Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601  
608-784-0707  
brad.reinhart@aquinasschools.org  
aquinasschools.giftlegacy.com



## Inspire Others with Your Journey

It's never too early in life's journey to think about the future. Anyone who has property and a family should have an estate plan. A charitable gift can be an important part of that plan.

Contact us and begin exploring customized gift planning options created just for you and your circumstances. With a little research and some planning, you will be able to leave a legacy that inspires others for years to come.



# Take a Turn in the Right Direction

Begin your Philanthropic Journey

Would you like to get involved and support ACS cause in exciting ways? You may be surprised to discover that there are many options available with gift planning. Let us help you make a turn in the right direction with a plan that's customized for you and your goals, so that giving to the causes you care about becomes possible today.

## » Charitable Bequest

Creating a will is an important step in your life journey. It's your opportunity to plan how you will benefit your family, friends and charitable organizations after your lifetime. Including a gift in your will, often called a bequest, is a great way to support the future of our organization without giving away any of your assets today. A bequest is a gift that can be changed at any time, if your circumstances change.

## » Make Plans for the Road Ahead!

Here are some of the ways you can support our cause with a charitable bequest:

- Make a gift of a specific dollar amount
- Gift us an asset such as a vehicle or artwork
- Make a gift of a percentage of your estate
- Leave us the remainder of your estate after you have provided for your heirs

This information is not intended as tax, legal or financial advice. Gift results may vary. Consult your personal financial advisor for information specific to your situation.

The names and images shown here are representative of typical donors and may or may not be actual donors to the organization. Under federal rules your benefits may be different from this example. Please contact us for your specific benefits.

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## Cross Country

It was a bizarre season, one that hopefully will never again be repeated. Earlier in March of 2020, sports had been canceled as coronavirus spread, shutting down schools and society. The summer running program could not be formally started; coaches were forbidden to have organized practice or be present when their athletes were training. Nonetheless, on their own initiative, Aquinas cross country gathered on June 22, the established start for summer running, and began training. Depending on the status of the virus surge, coaches joined on and off for the eight weeks of the foundational training for the season that officially began August 17. In past seasons, Aquinas competed in 10 meets, mostly large Invitationals consisting of 10-50 schools or more, prior to conference. This season, Aquinas competed in only five, all restricted to no more than three other conference teams competing. It was not until six weeks into the 11-week season that the WIAA determined it was possible to conduct post season competition. In 2019, 408 schools competed; in 2020, there would be only 335. The majority of schools missing were the schools with the largest enrollments. The WIAA reclassified schools to make up for the loss of the largest schools. Aquinas was moved up to D2 (schools between the largest and smallest enrollment) from D3 (schools with the smallest enrollment). Aquinas, with an enrollment of 303 students, would now be competing against schools with enrollments of over 500 students. Sectionals, consisting of 18 schools, were conducted with first a Sub-Sectional competition with nine schools competing in each Sub-Sectional. The top two teams from each Sub-Sectional then competed four days later against each other. Aquinas boys would win their Sub-Sectionals, then Sectionals, their 12th in 20 years.



Aquinas girls won their Sub-Sectionals, then qualified for State with a 2nd place finish at Sectionals. The State meet, with 12 teams competing, was structured so teams competed against each other in groups of four, each group racing and departing after 2 hours and 45 minutes on site. Times were then compared at the completion of competition to determine team standing. Aquinas, running 2nd in the 3 groups, would depart at 2 PM with the announcement of the team standings scheduled for 3 hours later. On a bus, within a few blocks of Aquinas, the team would learn via a live Facebook telecast that the Aquinas boys had won their 3rd consecutive State title, 4th overall, and their first in D2. The Aquinas girls would finish 10th in their first appearance at State since 2017.

**Head Coach:** Geoff Wilhelmy

**Team Championships:** Girls JV Conference, Boys JV Conference, Boys Sectional Champions, Boys State Champions

## Girls Golf

The Lady Blugold golf team had a successful season and each golfer improved! The 2020 golf team: Payton Kudron, Alexis Smith, Mary Riley, Lizzie Wintheiser, Emma Miller, Amina Rabindra and Alaina Bagniefski. Lead by senior, Payton Kudron the team had fewer competitions but were still able to compete in the MVC during the pandemic. Many of the golfers made great strokes in their scores and managed to have some fun while enduring all of the adversity throughout the season. Juniors Alexis Smith and Mary Riley met their goal in reaching sectionals; Alexis was able to card her career best score! The 2021 girls golf season has a lot of promise with all but one golfer returning.

**Head Coach:** Andy Foley





## Fall Sports



### Boys Soccer

The Boys soccer program continued to show signs of improvement from previous years. After finishing last year 1-21, the boys improved to a record of 3-6 in a pandemic shortened season. The highlight of the season proved to be a 3-1 victory over Tomah, which ended a 41 consecutive game losing streak against conference opponents. Offensively the team was led by sophomore Andrew Sutton (11 goals and 5 assists) and senior Garrett Butler (5 goals and 3 assists), while defensively the team was led by senior Nathan Koch and junior JB Wieser. The program says goodbye and good luck to seven seniors, but also looks forward to the future of the upcoming season.

**Head Coach:** Ryan Capwell

### Football

The Theme of the 2020 Football Season: E+R=O  
Event plus response equals outcome.

We were slated to begin our first season in the Coulee Conference after state-wide realignment, but that league had all but two of our opponents opt out of the fall season, so we did not have a conference. All of our games were on the road, since we did not have a home field due to UW-L closing their stadium. Our fans were limited (and sometimes not allowed) at each game, so many students and family members were unable to watch our team play in person. How would we respond?

The Blugolds started 3-0 and used depth and special teams to wear down Viroqua, Westby and Mauston in convincing wins. Injuries and the quality of our opponents evened our record at 3-3, and, to some, we appeared to be limping into the postseason as we were seeded 4th out of the 4 teams in our bracket. We went to play the #1 seed Darlington, who had only lost one game all season, and beat them 34-25. Our reward for winning that game was to head to tradition-rich #2 seed Lancaster on a short week, whom we convincingly beat 42-8. That two-game postseason run resulted in Aquinas ending the season ranked #6 by wissports.com. We look to build upon our success as we return many key contributors for the 2021 season.

**Head Coach:** Tom Lee

### Girls Tennis

The Aquinas Girls Tennis Team had a year of success. The team's seniors were Amelia Topolski, Morgan Thill, Fiona O'Flaherty, Ella Reichenbacher, Elsa Benson, and McKenzie Scholze. The team placed second in sectionals, JUST behind Edgewood. This did not hold back the girls when it came to state. The state qualifiers were Fiona O'Flaherty at one singles, Danica Silcox at two singles, Amelia Topolski and Morgan Thill at one doubles, and Ella Reichenbacher and Charlie Gauger at two doubles. The highest placers were Fiona at 7th place and Amelia and Morgan at 6th. We hope to continue this success next year!

**Head Coach:** Kaylin Kalk





## Volleyball

The Aquinas Varsity Volleyball Team had another successful year, even with the obstacles put upon them due to the pandemic. Their success can be attributed to off-season preparation, focused work during the season and the desire to uphold the tradition of winning within our program. Unfortunately, the team was only able to play in eleven matches this season, with seven wins and four losses. There were only three conference teams that competed this fall, so there was no opportunity to vie for another conference championship. Due to limited teams participating in the fall, Aquinas was moved up to Division 2 once tournament play began. This group took on an undefeated West Salem team in the Regional Final and brought home yet another Regional Championship plaque. The season ended in the section semi-final match against a very talented Platteville team.

The amount of pride I have for this year's team is indescribable. Due to the pandemic, we rarely had an entire roster at practice or in a match. They had to be extremely flexible and made the most of every opportunity given to them. They played and practiced each day with positivity and grace. We were led by an incredible group of seniors who gave everything they had both on and off the court. Thank you, Victoria Nolte, Amelia Fortner, Ella Sans Crainte and Nora Blank! This was a special year and you are a special group, we wish you nothing but the best as you move beyond high school!

Congratulations to the players who received recognition for their efforts! Senior Victoria Nolte was awarded All-Tribune Honorable Mention. Junior Jacy Weisbrod was awarded All-State Honorable Mention and First Team All-Tribune honors, and sophomore Macy Donarski was awarded both First Team All-State and All-Tribune honors. Thanks to everyone for the online support this year, and to the Booster Club for streaming our matches so that our fans had the opportunity to watch our ladies compete!

**Head Coach:** Nellie George

## Girls Swimming

The Aquinas-Holmen-Onalaska-GET Girls Swim Team participated in the alternate spring swimming season this past year. Instead of the usual fall competition from August to October, the season was moved to February to April. This alternate season allowed many new girls to try swimming this year. Aquinas had 7 new girls on the team. Overall, Aquinas contributed 8 of the 32 girls who were on the team. They all had a great season with weekly improvements of their times. They had a 6-1 dual meet record and finished 2nd at this years' sectional meet.

**Head Coach:** Kaija Sysimaki





## Winter Sports



### Girls Hockey

Girls from Onalaska, West Salem, Holmen, Bangor and Aquinas (Grace Butler and Lydia Walz) make up the Hilltoppers Girls Hockey Coop. This year they faced a shortened season by the WIAA and by several area school districts not allowing the girls to participate in extra circular activities while in a virtual learning mode. Our first practice was on Wednesday, December 16th and our first game was on Friday, January 8th with our regular season consisting of 8 games not including the playoffs. Our regular season record was 3–5 and we were 1–1 in the playoffs. While the season may not have gone the way we had anticipated or had hoped for, the girls held true to their team covenants of being accountable, coachable, committed, focused and all the while having fun. We were able to complete our season without any stoppage due to Covid and we'll consider that a great victory!

**Head Coach:** Mark Thorn



### Wrestling

The Aquinas wrestling team was 31 members strong this year and made the most of its shortened competition season. The team peaked at the right time and once again claimed a regional championship, qualifying 10 wrestlers to sectionals, the most of any team in the section. Of those ten wrestlers, Junior Joe Penchi (145), Sophomore Robert “Tate” Flege (126) and Freshmen David Malin (160) and Jake Fitzpatrick (106) qualified themselves for the state tournament. All four had an outstanding state tournament and earned spots on the podium (Joe Penchi-4th, Tate Flege-3rd, David Malin-4th and Jake Fitzpatrick-4th.) This was the first time since Aquinas has joined the WIAA that we have had 4 wrestlers on the podium at the state meet.

The wrestling team returns 28 of their rostered wrestlers and we should have around 8–10 freshmen joining us next season, which could make for our largest roster ever. We also look forward to bringing back 13 of our 14 starters, along with five state qualifiers (four from last season, and Calvin Hargrove (injury) from 2020), and should be highly competitive on the state level next season if we wrestle well. We were grateful that we had a season and thank our AD and administration for supporting us and allowing us to compete this year.

**Head Coach:** Deke Stanek



### Dance Team

The Aquinas Dance Team had an outstanding season this year and pushed through all of the challenges and adversity with grace. The team competed in 5 competitions this year, including the first ever MVC Dance competition. They took first place at all 5 competitions for both their pom and jazz dance, including being crowned MVC champions for both dances! They also were Central Regionals champions for D5 Pom and D3 jazz and took second at the Virtual State Competition for both dances. The team had excellent leadership this year with all 5 of our captains making the WACPC All-State team. Including: Sophie Cowgill: First Team, Delaney Seidel, Greta Moseng, and Liv Tobin: Second Team, and Liv Belland Honorable Mention. We wish our seniors best of luck and look forward to improving and getting stronger for next season.

**Head Coach:** Jennifer Cambio





## Boys Hockey

The Avalanche Coop hockey team consists of boys from Aquinas, Holmen, G-E-T, C-F-C, Onalaska Luther, and Coulee Christian school. In a normal season it takes a lot for these young to come together as one team and compete. Factoring in a pandemic made it even harder but these young men came together even better than expected and exceeded expectations. The very young team finished with a 5-11 record. This season exceeded expectations and has provided a solid base for the program to build upon in the coming years.

**Head Coach:** Charlie Marshall

## Girls Basketball

The 2020-21 girls basketball season was a time of transition with the graduation of 4 starters from a year ago and a Covid-19 shortened season creating challenges for this year's squad. However, like all great teams who face adversity throughout the year, it simply made the girls chemistry even stronger. The relatively inexperienced team won 17 straight regular season games, were ranked #1 in both Division 4 and, as a realignment occurred, the Blugolds were then ranked #1 in Division 3. The Blugolds' schedule was loaded with powerhouse programs like Lake Mills, Madison Edgewood, Assumption, and Prairie Du Chien to help prepare them for post season success. The Blugolds took their undefeated regular season record into the post season where, due to Covid related issues throughout the state, the Blugolds were moved up to Division 3 for their playoff run.

The postseason resulted in 5 additional wins and landed them in a state championship game in Oshkosh versus a familiar foe in Lake Mills. After a convincing win in the semifinal game vs. Westfield (69 – 45) and Jacy Weisbord connecting on a state record seven 3pt FG's and a team high 31 points, the Blugolds faced off against a senior dominated Lake Mills team that same evening. It was a hard-fought battle but Lake Mills pulled out a win 78-67 over the Blugolds who found their season ending with a state runner-up finish. The senior leadership of Bri Bahr, Fiona O'Flaherty, and Victoria Nolte propelled this team to a 5th straight trip to the state championship game. Two members of the Blugolds team, Jacy Weisbrod and Macy Donarski, were recognized as Division 4 All-State performers.

**Head Coach:** Dave Donarski

## Boys Basketball

The boys basketball team found a taste of late season success in 2019-20 by capturing a D4 regional championship that left this year's team hungry for more and ready to rise. Due to Covid, the offseason training program was choppy, summer league didn't happen, and only 1 summer tournament was played. Despite all the disruptions, by the time open gyms were allowed the guys were eager to hit the ground running. In the condensed season filled with cancellations, schedule additions and a mid-season bump up to division 3, the Blugolds eventually posted their best overall record since the 2013 state championship season by going 14-6. Along the way, the boys picked up quality wins versus state-ranked teams Port Edwards, West Salem, Poynette, and Richland Center. While there wasn't an official conference season, in limited games the team defeated Holmen, Logan and Sparta. The boys were a #1 seed in their new Division 3 pod, earning a second consecutive regional championship with wins over Mondovi and Prescott. The coaches and players would like to thank our seniors Joseph Savoldelli, Matthew Reuteman, Andrew Skemp, Nathan Koch, Camden Gregg, and Aiden Lee for their contributions, leadership, and energy. The underclassmen – including returning starters Quinn Miskowski, Chris Wilson, and Jackson Flottmeyer – and the varsity reserve and junior varsity teams experienced much success, and are already hard at work preparing for the 2021-22 season.

**Head Coach:** Brad Reinhart





# Winter Sports



## Gymnastics

The West Salem Co-op Gymnastics team had a short but sweet season. The season started virtually and we completed zoom workouts together as a team. The team was only able to compete in 5 competitions and placed 3rd in the Coulee Conference. Sophomore Taliya Michlig qualified for the state tournament on bars and placed 12th. We had 7 gymnasts earn Academic All-State Honors, including Alex Roupe and Claire Erickson from Aquinas. We also had 4 earn All-State Athletic Honors including Alex Roupe, who earned honorable mention on Bars. This season was a blessing and, through everything, we would look for the silver lining. The girls' ability to find the positive in every situation was the highlight of the season. We say goodbye to our senior captain, Sydney Hammes. The West Salem Co-op Gymnastics team has a bright future ahead.

**Head Coach:** Carrie O'Hearn

## Boys Swimming

The OHA Boys Swim Team had an incredible year. We competed in four dual meets and one invitational this year. We finished this season with a 2-2 dual meet record. Our team also saw a lot of improvement this year, which was showcased very nicely at our section meet. This season, OHA finished 6th out of 10 teams at sections in points and also was the most improved team from their seed times. This season, we sent one swimmer, Jude Thrush, to state. He swam very well in both the 50 and 100 freestyle. The season finished on a very high note and we are very excited to continue improving next year.

**Head Coach:** Andrew Lind



## Aquinas Ski and Snowboard Team

The 2020-21 ski and snowboard season was shortened to the 2021 season. Like all high school sports, it was a very trying year, but a very rewarding year for all of our racers. The AOWS (Aquinas, Onalaska, West Salem Co-op) team skied very fast again this year. The boys' team won the conference and qualified for the state meets held at Mt. La Crosse. The girls' team placed second in the conference and also qualified for the state meet. The girls team was led by Elsa Benson for the fourth year in a row. Elsa won all of the league races. The team had two freshmen girls that really contributed to the team's success, and two juniors that will lead us next season. The following girls earned a letter and qualified for the state meet. Senior Elsa Benson, juniors Alexis Smith and Lizzie Wintheiser, freshmen Emily Bakalars and Greta Griffith. Elsa was 3rd at the state meet in the Slalom, which earned her All-State Honors. Elsa will be missed next season. The boys' team was led by Caleb Bennett, a senior, Lars Gundersen, a sophomore, and Nathan Wintheiser, a freshman. All three were letter winners and made the state team. Lars ended up in the top 30 at state out of 170 racers. We look forward to Lars doing even more next season. We only had 1 snowboarder for AOWS, letter winner Gabe Schelfhout. Gabe always brought a positive attitude to the team. In summary, it was just great to have a season for all of our Aquinas athletes, parents and coaches.

**Head Coach:** Steve Mikkelson





# AQUINAS BOOSTER CLUB NEWS

## Auction

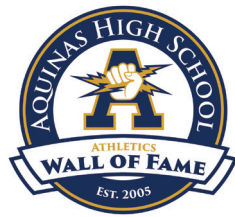
The Aquinas Booster Club auction held on April 24, 2021, was a huge success, raising over \$50,000 to support Aquinas student-athletes and co-curricular activities. Thank you to everyone who donated or underwrote food, beverages and auction items, who purchased our first-ever Golden Ticket raffle tickets, and who provided financial support by buying auction items and making cash donations to the Coaches' Wish Lists and the general fund. Most important, thank you to all the volunteers who made the event happen this year. We truly appreciate your support!

## Chicken Q

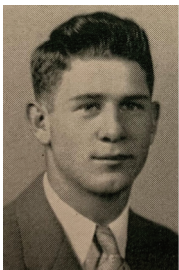
Thank you to everyone who supported the annual Chicken Q on April 28, 2021. Special thanks to everyone who provided your time and expertise in cooking and preparing the food, and to chairperson Bob Klar and his team of volunteers who worked from early morning until evening to produce delicious chicken dinners. The event raised over \$9,700.

## Join Us!

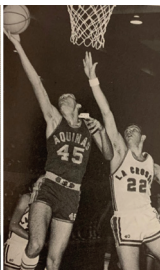
The Aquinas Booster Club provides financial assistance for co-curricular activities at Aquinas Catholic Schools through fundraising, donations and community support. Funds are raised through the Auction, Chicken Q, Scoreboard Sponsorships, the Midwest Players Classic, Digital Marketing, Concessions, Can Collection and other opportunities as they arise. If you have a family member in Aquinas Catholic Schools, are an alum who benefited from Booster Club support during your time as a Blugold, or simply are interested in supporting this generation of Aquinas students, please join us. The Booster Club meets the second Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. at Aquinas High School.



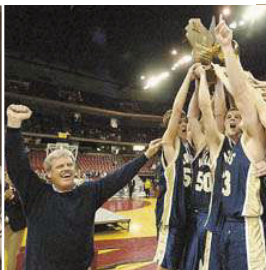
**The Aquinas Wall of Fame Committee is proud to announce  
the 2021 Aquinas Wall of Fame Inductees:**



**Lloyd "Red"  
Wuensch '48**



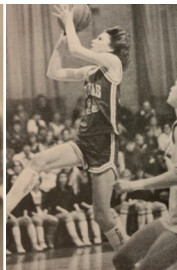
**Bob  
Petry '69**



**Coach  
Mike Desmond '71**



**Bill  
Beranek '75**



**Kathy  
O'Leary '81**



**The 1983-84 Girls  
Basketball Team**



**Mike  
Kearns**

The Induction Ceremony for the 2021 Class will be held on Saturday, September 11th at Aquinas High School in the Reinhart Athletic Complex. There will be a social hour at 5:00, followed by dinner at 6:00 and the recognition program to follow. Attendance is open to the public with a reservation. Please watch for announcements on Aquinas social media this summer for information on how to secure your reservation for this special event honoring these legendary Blugolds.





# Save the Date



## Aquinas Alumni & Friends Gathering

**Brewers vs. Twins at Target Field**  
**Sunday, August 29th 1:10pm Game Time**

Aquinas, Viterbo, and the Boys & Girls Club are partnering to host a social gathering for alumni and friends in Minneapolis. Game tickets are \$31 each. Tickets are in left field, section 229, and are immediately adjacent to the social space in the Goose Island Pub. This event is intended for both alumni and friends in the Twin Cities metro area to join us and, if there is interest, to fill a bus with fans from the La Crosse area. If you would like to be placed on a contact list for more information regarding the event and ticket availability please email [brad.reinhart@aquinasschools.org](mailto:brad.reinhart@aquinasschools.org).



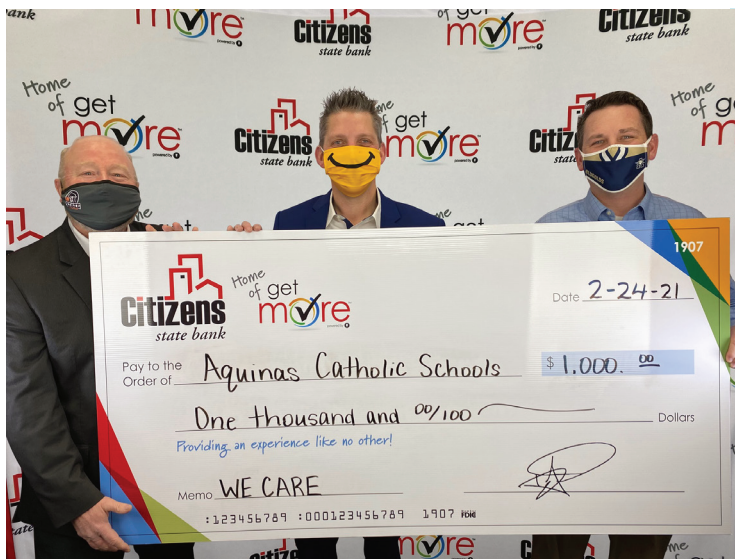
### Alumni Directory

Aquinas would like to thank the thousands of alumni who took time to respond to our outreach for the 2020 Alumni Directory project. Thanks to your cooperation we can better engage you with school updates, serve your class leaders when it comes time to plan events, and provide for the needs of our students and staff for years to come. The end result of this project is the production of a hardbound Alumni Directory, as well as a digital e-directory. If you missed out on your chance to purchase, Aquinas has extra copies and licenses available for purchase.

Hardbound Directory: \$100 | Digital Directory: \$50

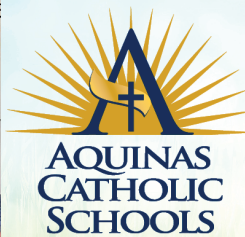
### We want to hear from you!

If you wish to update your contact information, mailing preferences, and degree or work information, please contact the development office at 608-784-0707 or email [holly.gerling@aquinasschools.org](mailto:holly.gerling@aquinasschools.org)



### How can you give back to your community?

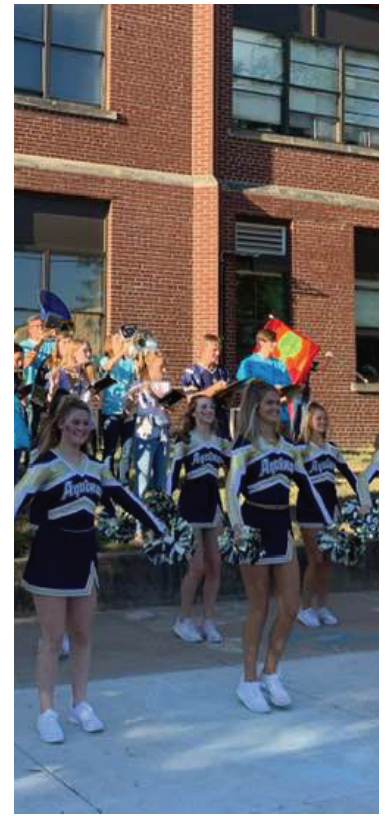
1. Simply open a **WE CARE Charitable Money Market Account** with Citizens State Bank
2. Choose **Aquinas** as your participating non-profit
3. Citizens will make a donation to Aquinas at year end



[www.citizensstatebank.us](http://www.citizensstatebank.us)
 Clayton | Eau Claire | La Crosse | Onalaska |







# 44<sup>TH</sup> • ANNUAL Aquinas Fest ..... 2021

*44th Annual Aquinas Fest*  
**Friday, September 10th 3:00-8:00pm**  
*Aquinas High School*

*Featuring:*

Annual Aquinas Fest Sweepstakes - Drawing at 7:00pm

Grand Prize: **\$15,000 MSRP discount** on purchase at Clason Buick GMC or **\$10,000 cash**



Block Party Fun, Pork Feed, Food, Beverages & Live Music in the Beer Garden

*Fun for the kids:*

Carnival Games, Inflatables, Kiddie Train, Kids Cornhole Tournament,  
 Face Painting, Basketball Contest







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or email [info@aquinasschools.org](mailto:info@aquinasschools.org)

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St. Patrick Elementary • Blessed Sacrament Elementary • Cathedral Elementary**

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*



**Our Mission Statement**

*Aquinas Catholic Schools is a Christ-centered family devoted to nurturing students of all faiths through educational excellence in its vibrant Catholic tradition.*