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NEW DIRECTOR OF ANNUAL FUND  
OUR GROWING ENDOWMENT**

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**W I N T E R 2 0 0 8**

**R E P O R T**

**DEAR FELLOW ALUMNI, PARENTS AND FRIENDS,**



**THE WIDE RANGES OF READINESS FOR OUR COLLEGE PREP CURRICULUM COMPEL US TO OFFER MUCH GREATER FLEXIBILITY OF CLASS WORK...**

**W**e've always thought that the start of a new school year gives us a fresh chance to make some worthwhile changes in a host of areas. One of the largest this year is our effort to re-think what we offer our youngest students – those who enter in seventh grade to prepare for the challenges of our college prep curriculum in ninth grade. A bit of history: we began what we have called our “lower division” in 1980, in response to parental requests that we should allow students caught in some ineffective middle school and junior high school structures to benefit from our overall approaches. Our all-male environment, the preponderance of male faculty, and the general strength of our curriculum were seen as advantages that could benefit these younger students.

Our desire to re-think and re-new our lower division stems in part from our sense that it had become often too separate from the broader school community in ways that were unhelpful. So one of our aims is to provide for better integration with the rest of the school. We soon realized that this probably should mean expanding the “lower division”

by incorporating our ninth graders. Some of the intense orientation we have traditionally given ninth graders has real benefit for all our new students. The wide ranges of readiness for our college prep curriculum compel us to offer much greater flexibility of class work to improve the transition for all our new students. More flexible scheduling can allow for meaningful adaptation of class times to this younger age group: we can offer some longer classes while permitting supervised in-class assignments to take the place of “homework.” It can also allow for some more open-ended time for out-of-classroom projects.

Our new approaches are being devised by a faculty team, self-selected for their eagerness to see the new program as a special professional development challenge.

It's too early of course to see how this is working out in the larger scheme. But there is great benefit already from the intense focus on what's working and what is not, and a strong sense that we must change in some basic ways to be more

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# Cullen Jones

Some of the life lessons I learned  
came directly from this place...

CULLEN JONES

*Olympic gold medallist Cullen Jones '02 spent many hours with students when he visited in October, answering questions, signing autographs and even practicing with the water polo team.*

As an Olympic champion who has soared to celebrity status, Cullen Jones '02 could have easily forgotten where he came from.

But he can't.

"This is the place where I learned how to be who I am today," said Cullen, who made his first trip back to St. Benedict's since winning Olympic Gold in Beijing.

Before a standing-room-only crowd and to chants of "U-S-A" and "Cullen," he was on hand in October to give a little piece of himself back to his alma mater and the students who came to admire

his accomplishments – and his Gold Medal.

"It's insane," Cullen said of all the attention he received prior to entering Conlin Auditorium for an assembly in his honor. "I just want them (students) to know that I was one of them not too long ago and make them realize nothing is impossible."

The 24-year-old, who helped the United States 4x100-meter relay team win gold medal and shatter the world record in one of the most memorable events in Summer Olympics history in Beijing, told the students at every turn to "Dream Big," which has become his own personal motto since graduating from St. Benedict's in 2002.

Despite being tugged on and pulled in every direction and signing autographs from the time he stepped into the school in the morning until he left in the early evening, Cullen remained as humble as the day he left the Hive. He even joined the water polo team in the pool for a late afternoon practice.

"Some of the life lessons I learned came directly from this place and they'll stick with me forever," Cullen said.

"St. Benedict's is as much a part of my success as anything I've done," he said. "Sure, there were 16 years of training and endless hours in the pool, but anything I ever accomplished is in one way or another related to this place." Fr. Edwin made a point of



*Cullen's former coaches at the Hive, Sheriff Upton 91 (left) and Glenn Cassidy 90, celebrated his Olympic victory when he visited the school.*



## Michael Liddy: New Director of Annual Fund

Although Michael Liddy, the new Director of Annual Fund, is not a St. Benedict's alumnus (he admits to attending a prep school in West Orange that shall remain unnamed here) he does boast strong connections to the Hive and to Newark.

Mike's maternal grandfather graduated from Benedict's; his great uncles, the twins Gene and Frank Groome, were stars of the 1936 Graybee basketball team; his father attended for a year in the late 40s, and cousins graduated in the 1960s. His grandfather, Joseph A. Liddy, was Director of Physical Education, Parks and Recreation for Newark, a West Side High School football coach and great friends with Joe Kasberger.

Mike saw a *New York Times* ad for the development office position and knew that he wanted this job. A graduate of Providence College, he had worked as Director of Development at Seton Hall Prep for four years and also had a brief stint in technology sales. But raising money for Catholic schools was a passion. He had

*In other schools, a large part of the budget can come from fundraising, but the need is much greater here.*

attended high school on a scholarship himself and always wanted to give back.

Persuading others to give back is the heart of his job now. The school must raise \$5 million annually, about 50 percent of the yearly budget, just to operate.

"In other schools, a large part of the budget can come from tuition, but the need is much greater here," Mike said.

Given the economic downturn, one could think that fundraising is a very difficult, if not impossible job now, but Mike says that historically people actually increase their giving when the economy is bad. However, those donors reduce the number of organizations they support. So Mike convinces alumni and old and new friends of the school to keep Benedict's on their list

"My job is to make sure we are in the top three," he said. "And besides, we can't close the school until the economy comes back."

Mike enjoys being here; he is impressed with the kids and the teachers and he tells that to donors. For him the most challenging part of the job is that he is not an alumnus. But he is more than willing to make up for that in dedication and energy. "I really have a passion for this work and this place," Mike said. "I want to be doing it for a long time."

mentioning that Cullen's father, Ron, and mother, Debra, had as much to do with the molding of their son's disposition as anyone. Ron Jones died of cancer when his son was only 16.

Cullen signed his autograph with the number 41 underneath. It's a tribute to his father, an avid basketball player who wore the number during his playing days. His former coach, Glenn Cassidy, Director of Student Services, was beaming with pride leading his former pupil from one function to another - including numerous television and print interviews. At water polo practice late in the long day, Cullen told the kids, "Listen to Cass. He knows what he's talking about. I'm proof."

# Growing Endowment at St. Benedict's:

## A constant goal and a key to our future

One of the most common features of most respected, established schools (or universities) is a strong and growing endowment. A few years ago, one of our consultants observed that the modest St. Benedict's endowment, growing slowly over the years, had to work much harder than most because the funds it generates sustain the day to day life of our school. The income yielded by our school's endowment goes to essentials, not the extras, as might be the case elsewhere.

All endowments chiefly grow through special gifts, most of all through planned gifts. Most often these are bequests, specific gifts provided in a will; they also come from trusts or charitable gift annuities, as well as through major gifts.

We have been blessed to see the St. Benedict's endowment grow from virtually nothing soon after our school reopened to a significant amount when it peaked last year at just over \$30 million dollars. The constant

challenge of endowment stewardship, of course, is that, even when expertly invested, funds rise or fall depending on a mix of investments. Our endowment, despite wise oversight from our Board's finance committee and fine management from three firms selected by them to handle these funds, has experienced such fluctuations, especially in the turbulent financial atmosphere we're experiencing now.

In recent years our endowment has grown from scholarship funds given in memory of loved ones, including some very familiar persons in St. Benedict's history, such as the Bernard M. Shanley Scholarship, established by partners of his former law firm and Shanley family members. An endowment with special meaning for the monks of Newark Abbey is the scholarship fund established by the Esselman family, relatives of the late Msgr. Thomas Carey, who was pastor of Queen of Angels Church in Newark, the oldest Catholic parish serving African-Americans in this area. Fr. Tom was a key stabilizing presence in the

Central Ward of Newark in the 1960s. Not an alumnus, he expressed great admiration for the monks' decision to stay in Newark and continue their educational mission to young men from the city.

Several other families, most recently the Lynn, Lobo, and Durkin families have developed such scholarship funds. All continue to add meaningful resources to the school's total endowment. Other specific endowment gifts have gone for teacher support, including professional development. The Mildred and J.F. Cook Family, including our former Board Chairman, Roger Cook '61, have established an endowment for special programs to enhance teaching approaches for students with particular learning difficulties.

Boosting our endowment is a key to our future. About that we have no doubt. A major thrust of all of development efforts now and in the future will go to sowing the seeds of interest in planned gifts of all kinds to generate the growing funds for endowment that will ensure our school's service for decades and generations of young men to come.



# Manny Alvarez

*He did the kind of job so that we didn't really know everything he did until he stopped doing it.*

**M**anny Alvarez, our much loved head of maintenance, died Nov. 13 at Raritan Bay Hospital.

Head of maintenance barely begins to describe the work Manny did at St. Benedict's Prep and Newark Abbey. He came to us in March 1992 through a connection with the Frankoski family and worked day in and day out sorting out just about any problem anywhere on the property. If something was broken – from doorstops to boilers, Manny could fix it. And if he couldn't, he could find someone who could – and always for a price that was well below what the contractor thought he should get.

Assistant headmaster Mike Scanlan, who worked with Manny for many years overseeing every aspect of the physical plant, said, "He did the kind of job so that we didn't really

know everything he did until he stopped doing it. That speaks to how many little things he just did because they needed to be done. He was very good at staying on the myriad of little things."

Manny was also an invaluable part of the renovation planning eight years ago; he planned and made the arrangements with contractors for big jobs like roof repairs. He kept on top of the numerous working parts of our facility to see to it that they were fixed before they had a major breakdown.

Taking care of everything about the physical plant was Manny's passion, but so was taking care of whatever we – his friends and colleagues – needed. That meant he jumped our cars when we had a dead battery, opened our rooms when we got locked out, made our keys (and remade them when we lost them). When anything broke or didn't work, the first words out of our mouths were, "Call Manny."

Former student and current teacher, David Rodriguez, was the cause of many calls to Manny. "During my four years as a student here, I gave Manny plenty of work to do – from replacing broken glass in the HAB, to stopping the water flow from broken

water pipes," he said. "From the minute he met me, obviously because I had broken something, he gave me the nickname 'Revoltoso', which in Spanish means menace."

The two had a special bond, not just because David broke so many things but also because Manny, like David, was a "Gallego" (someone who came from Galicia in northwest Spain) who knew David's father from living or socializing in the old Ironbound section.

Manny's skill at his work and his willingness to take on even the messiest task, were not only what made him such a beloved person here. Manny was a gentleman. He was calm and courtly and treated everyone with respect and kindness. If he was angry or impatient, he never showed it to any of us.

It seemed as if he didn't know how to complain. After he was diagnosed with cancer about two years ago, he underwent chemotherapy and he still would show up here and greet you with a tip of his baseball cap and a big smile.

Jim McKerry, who like Mike, spent many hours of the day working with Manny, said Manny is irreplaceable. "I just miss him – he was good friend." And he indicated that he and Manny shared a special language. "You know," he said in his unmistakable Scottish burr, "sometimes people didn't understand Manny or understand me but we always understood each other." Turning to one of the students, Jim said, "Say a wee prayer for Manny."

We know that Manny is now at peace with his creator. And his family – his wife and daughters and grandchildren and his family here at St. Benedict's – are left to mourn him. But perhaps now is the time to yet again "call Manny" and ask him to "say a wee prayer" for us.

*by Noreen Connolly*



# Brian Doherty

## MEMORIAL CLASSIC

The Brian Doherty Memorial Basketball Classic will be held this season at the new Prudential Center January 24. Off school grounds for the first time, the tournament has expanded to include a 12-team field. The out-of-state teams scheduled to play in the showcase at “The Rock” are Whitney Young of Chicago, Lincoln of Brooklyn (tentative), Pinewood Prep of North Carolina, Neuman Goretti of Philadelphia and John LaFlore of Alabama. The New Jersey schools, other than the Gray Bees, are St. Anthony, Don Bosco, Union, St. Peter’s and the girls’ teams from Shabazz and Bloomfield Tech. Seven of the

boys teams are ranked in ESPN’s preseason national poll. The new site of the tournament was made available through St. Benedict’s Board member Jeff Vanderbeek, Chairman and Managing Partner of the New Jersey Devils.

Alumni interested in catching the hoop team out-of-state have plenty of opportunities. Coach Dan Hurley’s club, which is listed as the No. 4 rated team in the preseason by ESPN, opened the season on Dec. 5-6 at the Marshall City Hoopfest in Benton, Ky. Over the Christmas break, the team will travel to the Kreul Classic in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. from Dec. 19-23 before heading to San Juan, Puerto Rico Dec. 27-30 to compete in the Nike Invitational. They will also compete in the Nike Extravaganza against No. 3 Mater Dei High School on Feb. 7 in Santa Ana, California. There are also stops in Harrisburg, Pa. (Jan. 10); Springfield, Mass. (Jan. 19); Allentown, Pa. (Jan. 25); Islip, N.Y. (Feb. 16) and Pittsburgh (Feb. 22). There’s also a possibility that the Gray Bees may be involved in a national postseason tournament in Washington D.C. on April 3-4. Check the St. Benedict’s website ([www.sbp.org](http://www.sbp.org)) for roster, schedule and any further information as it becomes available.

## Football Reunion Dinner

**R**eacting to popular demand, we are organizing a Football Reunion Dinner in Dalton Gymnasium on Thursday evening, April 23. All St. Benedict’s football players, coaches and managers are invited to attend.

Jack Sobocinski 45 has contributed \$10,000 to the Kasberger Endowment which is being established in conjunction with this very special event. The endowment will fund our athletic program in perpetuity, and we are asking all former Gray Bee athletes and supporters to make a personally meaningful contribution to it. Gifts to the Kasberger Endowment can be made over a five-year time frame and/or can be made as part of an estate plan.

## Garden State Coaches Clinic

Some of the nation's top college basketball coaches joined the legendary Hubie Brown in putting together another memorable Garden State Coaches Clinic before a capacity crowd St. Benedict's Prep's Dalton Gym on Sept. 26. The Fourth Annual Clinic drew over 500 coaches from as far away as California and the National Team of India to be part of the action in the HAB Gym. The guest speakers/clinicians, besides Brown, a Hall of Famer, included coaches Rick Barnes of Texas, Bob Huggins of West Virginia, Vance Walberg of UMass and Bill Self, coach of the reigning NCAA champion Kansas.



## Rick Jacobs 500 Victories

Rick Jacobs, already the winningest soccer coach in America, reached 500 victories for his career on Oct. 29 when the Gray Bees beat Hun, 2-1 in the state Prep A tournament. The victory made Jacobs the seventh coach in New Jersey to reach 500 career victories and lifted his 24-year career mark to 500-25-13. His team finished the year with two more victories in coming away with its 20th straight state championship to finish the season 20-1.

The soccer team also hosted the 16th Newark International Cup. This year's event, besides St. Benedict's, the six-time National champion, included the Under-18 programs from Chelsea FC (England), and the National Teams from Mexico and Trinidad & Tobago. Mexico wound up winning the championship with a perfect, 4-0, record.

## Cross Country Runners – State Prep Champs

The cross-country team, once again spurred on by a strong underclass effort coupled with a superb effort from one of its senior leaders in Matt Jensen, won its fourth successive state Prep A championship. What was supposed to be rebuilding effort for coach Marty Hannon's club after the graduation of All-American Brandon Jarrett (now at Harvard), actually turned out to be more rewarding than expected due to the efforts of a number of underclassman, led by newcomer Jared Mason.



## GRAY BEES GATHER IN BOSTON



**B**rae Burn Country Club in West Newton, Mass, was the attractive setting for the late October reunion of Benedict's alumni and friends in the greater Boston area. Generously hosted for us again by Art Meehan '53, the event drew more than 30 alumni and friends. A chance to renew acquaintances and make new ones and to hear Fr. Edwin and Board member Don Laurie '60 comment more personally on the current life of the school, the gathering was one of our best ever in the Boston area. A fine range of classes was represented, from Art Meehan and classmate, Dr. Bart Cilento, to four men, Achille Dossekou, Kevin Hall,

Tom Holt and Dan Sheehan, from '08 and now freshmen at Boston College.

One bona fide area celebrity joined us – Kevin O'Connor '86, host of *This Old House* for the past several years, who brought along classmate, Kevin Booker, now in the dean's office at Morehouse, who was in Boston for a conference. The gathering was also weighty on the technology side with two long-time MIT men attending – Jerry O'Leary '59 and Henry "Hank" Smith '54. We noted that Hank was named in the past year to the National Academy of Arts and Sciences, to our knowledge the first Benedict's man ever accorded that honor.

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effective for more students.

One by-product is our sense of the need to tighten up in some areas of general deportment, which I've taken to calling in short-hand, a St. Benedict's of the "strict observance." By that we mean more attention to courtesy and consideration of one another, more consistency about the "small things" like our dress code that can have big impact on the quality of community life.

The chance to make a fresh start on so many of the aspects of life together really does make us look forward to the beginning of another new school year. You can feel the difference in the positive energy around the school as our new leaders have begun to take charge of the ways our life together can be improved.

*Edwin O. Leary, ab.*



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