



St. Benedict's

PREPARATORY SCHOOL



IT'S ABOUT OPPORTUNITY

Why America needs to rethink the
achievement gap.

Community in the Time of Coronavirus

Nothing it seems — not even a global pandemic — can stop the St. Benedict's Prep community. On March 16, The Hive held its first ever virtual Convocation on YouTube Live. The live stream is keeping Gray Bees connected to one another during the move to remote learning as a result of COVID-19. More than 500 students, faculty, staff and alumni joined the first virtual Convo.

Headmaster Fr. Edwin Leahy, O.S.B. '61 reminded students to "Stay Together" and to continue to work together and support one another from a distance. "It's very, very, very important that you focus all the time on this task," he stressed.

The School plans to continue virtual Convo on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 8:30 a.m. sharp! You can find the streams on our website, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts.



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GREETINGS



Putting Kids First

This issue of *St. Benedict's Prep* magazine is being published during the most extraordinary of circumstances. On March 16, The Hive began online learning due to COVID-19. Our day to day operations may have changed, but our fidelity to "Benedict's

Hates a Quitter," has never been stronger.

We continue to do what St. Benedict's has always done best: put kids first.

Faculty are using technology in very intentional ways to keep Gray Bees on track, counseling groups like Unknown Sons are meeting online, and we plan to live stream Convocation every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Join us! The solidarity of our Gray Bee community can be a great source of solace and comfort in this time of anxiety and uncertainty.

I also encourage you to read this spring edition — we have a lot of great news and progress to share. Our cover story, in particular, reports on the success of St. Benedict's and why schools around the country are adapting our model to systematically change education for the better.

Our music program is enriched with the introduction of Jazz@SBP and the Doolin Learning Center is providing kids with the confidence-producing attention and resources they need to persevere and succeed. Group leadership has also expanded, and we are now 38 kids, from grade 2 all the way to 12, who have a voice in how this school is run. You can read what some of our youngest group leaders have to say about that in After Class.

Sadly, you'll also read about the passing of Spencer Vespoli '09 and Bill Petrick, two esteemed faculty members who always put Gray Bees first. In the aftermath of this devastating loss, reading our guy's remembrances of Spence and Petrick — and the recognition of what these amazing teachers did for them — gives me strength. Once again, I'm reminded that kids are a great source of hope when we pay attention to them and prioritize their needs. Especially now.

Peace,

Edwin D. Leahy

Fr. Edwin D. Leahy, O.S.B. '63
Headmaster



St. Benedict's
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

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On the cover: Faces of St. Benedict's students, K-12

Follow us on     



The Power of Hope

Mike DiPiano H'82 inspired family, friends and even strangers when he rode the Donate Life Float at the 131st Rose Bowl Parade in Pasadena, Calif., on January 1. The esteemed former Head Wrestling Coach and Director of Athletics at St. Benedict's Prep received a kidney-pancreas transplant in 1998 and has championed organ donation ever since.

The theme of this year's Donate Life Float was "The Power of Hope." Mr. DiPiano described the ride along the seven-mile parade route as "a once in a lifetime experience" to Tap Into Nutley. "I'll never forget this day," he said. "I'm so grateful to have participated."

An estimated 37 million viewers watch the annual Rose Bowl Parade, according to the most recent statistics from The Nielsen Company.

A DRAMA GUILD ORIGINAL

Student-created play offers a powerful look at the modern immigration experience



Drama Guild members can add another title to their resume: playwright. That's because kids wrote, staged and performed *The Immigrant Play* last fall, an original production that examines the modern immigration experience through anonymous family histories. The play is the second in Drama Guild history written by students.

"Allowing the kids to create their own work shows them that they have a voice as artists and also a responsibility as artists to reflect what's happening in society," said Drama Guild Director Patricia Flynn H'95.

Students developed the manuscript from interviews they conducted with family members and others. Even though the immigrant stories spanned the early 20th century to the present day and represented 20 different countries across five continents, similar themes emerged: Fleeing one's home country because of a crisis or unsafe conditions. Survivor's guilt over those left behind. And hope that future generations will have a better life.

"The power of the piece is its relevance," Ms. Flynn said. "The audience is getting a private conversation with an ordinary person. It's a powerful reminder that people don't come to this country to be destructive. They're looking for opportunity and a place to thrive."

After the show concluded its run in Conlin Auditorium, the Drama Guild staged a one-night performance for alumni and friends at The Playroom Theater in New York. The theater group also performed *The Immigrant Play* at the Whitney Houston Academy in East Orange.

Students will continue to explore immigration, and in particular, the growing presence of the Hispanic community, at The Hive through this year's Interdisciplinary Project theme, "Celebrating 50 Years of Latino Culture." An academic hallmark at St. Benedict's Prep, the research-based projects will encompass drama, music, art and other subjects. Look for more coverage of the Interdisciplinary Projects in the summer edition of *St. Benedict's Prep*.



REMEMBERING THE HIVE'S FIRST SENIOR GROUP LEADER

When he was 14 years old, Ricky Lee Bailey '78 thought his mother's insistence that he attend St. Benedict's Prep "was the worst idea in the world." As it turned out, coming to The Hive was one of the best

things that happened to Mr. Bailey, who passed away on December 3, 2019.

In 1977, he was asked to be the School's first Senior Group Leader, a role he defined for future generations of Gray Bees. Passionate about history and tradition, Mr. Bailey revived St. Benedict's anthems like "Boola! Boola!" and

"Garnet & Gray," which became staples of the Freshman Overnight. "I thank Benedict's for so much," he said in a 2018 interview for the School's 150th anniversary. "The Hive constantly challenged you to do things outside of your comfort zone. It taught me not to be intimidated by opportunity."

A graduate of Monmouth University, Mr. Bailey worked in central operations for Xerox for 20 years. He also served as a transition counselor and later, board member, of Onesimus Ministries, a nonprofit in Norfolk, Va., dedicated to the successful integration of convicted felons back into society. Awarded the Medal of St. Benedict's in 2004, Mr. Bailey visited The Hive on numerous occasions, including the Class of 1978 40th Reunion in 2018. "I'm happy to see that the School is alive and growing and that the tradition goes on," he said. "It's amazing."



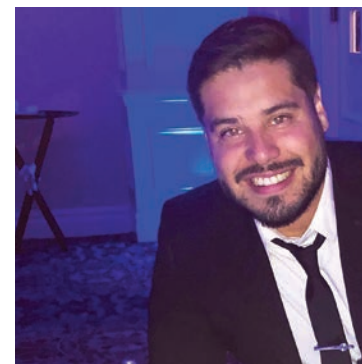
Our Resilient Benedictine Community

Three years ago, two novices first appeared on the pages of this magazine. On March 21, Br. Simon-Peter Clayton, O.S.B. '08, and Br. Asiel Rodriguez, O.S.B., professed Solemn Vows. Under normal circumstances, the occasion brings family, friends and members of the St. Benedict's Prep community together to witness the monks' definitive commitment to the community of Newark Abbey and to monastic life. Amidst the COVID-19 crisis, the event still went on with only the Benedictine monks and God as witnesses.

The event demonstrated the resilience of the Benedictine community and their growing presence

at St. Benedict's. Br. Asiel teaches religion and ESL at The Hive and Br. Simon serves as Director of Leahy House. Br. Mark Martin Dilone, O.S.B., who is completing studies for the priesthood at Immaculate Conception Seminary at Seton Hall University, is now teaching history at St. Benedict's. Two more novices are also discerning vocations: Br. Robert Islas, O.S.B., who entered the novitiate last fall, and Br. José Pablo Gonzalez, O.S.B., who was received into the monastic community in February.

To watch the full ceremony or view photographs, please visit sbp.org/2020SolemnVows.



VELVET ROPE ALUM TAKES OVER

The new Velvet Rope counselor knows what he's doing. That's because Giovanni Bonilla '08, who took the helm of the Velvet Rope in February, is one of seven original members of the behavior modification program housed in Leahy House. "I do feel like I have a unique perspective to make a connection with teens," said Mr. Bonilla, who went through the program twice as a St. Benedict's Prep student. "What you learn follows you through life. It taught me that if something went wrong, I could start again and think of a new approach."

Mr. Bonilla currently oversees the program that encompasses individual and group counseling, as well as making sure that kids follow a prescribed set of rules. "It's an intensive program that works," he said. "Kids learn to change their habits by earning privileges."

Prior to his return to The Hive, Mr. Bonilla was a Division Coordinator for Las Casa De Don Pedro, a nonprofit in Newark. He holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from The University of Phoenix and a certification in family development from Rutgers University.

A decade of national education policy has failed kids. Through the Vox Institute, St. Benedict's Prep is reframing the achievement gap and helping schools across the country empower students for success.

RETHINKING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

It's been more than a decade since the nation invested billions of education dollars in the No Child Left Behind Act and Common Core standards to close the achievement gap. According to recent reporting from *The New York Times*, the effort has made little to no difference.

Two reports released in 2019 point to lackluster results in the push to transform American education. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) report card, only one-third of American fourth and eighth graders can be considered proficient readers. Reading scores also declined over the last two years in nearly every percentile. Though modest gains have been achieved since 1992, there is virtually no improvement in the lowest quintile, the most vulnerable student group education policies like No Child Left Behind were intended to help.

Little progress is seen on an international scale, as well. According to the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) results, a worldwide system that measures educational systems, the average reading literacy score of 15-year-olds in the U.S. showed no measurable difference from 2000 to 2018.

In the midst of all the noise surrounding national testing data and the achievement gap, the Vox Institute is doing the actual work to impact educational performance by helping schools across the country adapt mindsets and practices that empower disadvantaged students for success.

THE PROBLEM WITH HIGH STAKES TESTING

Established in 2016, the Vox Institute is a response to the expressed interest of schools, school leaders and education programs nationwide to understand the St. Benedict's Prep model. Reframing the very notion of the achievement gap is a critical first step, according to the Institute's Executive Director Glenn Cassidy, Ed.D., '90. "I think we measure education the wrong way in this country," he said. "We know the concept of high stakes testing just is not effective, and it doesn't tell the full story. If we only focus on outcomes, which high stakes testing does, we miss all the inputs."

Inputs, according to Dr. Cassidy, can be students' households, their neighborhoods, issues affecting society as a whole and even, "What a child faces when they walk to school each day or when they go home each night." When legislators and schools frame the disparities in educational performance as an achievement gap, they are missing the larger picture. "What we focus on at St. Benedict's is thinking about the opportunity gap," Dr. Cassidy continued. "How can we create opportunities for students to feel empowered? How can students feel like their voice matters? How can they feel like they have control over something? Addressing these and other issues that are holding kids back, that's what opens up the opportunity for better outcomes."

ADAPTING THE ST. BENEDICT'S MODEL

At a school more than 1,300 miles away from Newark, a hand goes up and 100 young men instantly quiet. It's morning Convocation at Crossover Preparatory Academy in Tulsa, Okla. The motto is different. Crossover Prep kids say, "I am my brother's keeper," rather than "Whatever hurts my brother, hurts me," and student leadership is built upon teams, not groups, but much of the structure and principles of this Christian college preparatory school are adapted from the St. Benedict's model.

In the midst of all the noise surrounding national testing data and the achievement gap, the Vox Institute is doing the actual work to impact educational performance by helping schools across the country adapt mindsets and practices that empower disadvantaged students for success.

"I was blown away by St. Benedict's Prep," said Pastor Philip Abode, executive director of Crossover Prep. The school's relationship with The Hive pre-dates the Vox Institute. In 2015, the pastor watched *The Rule*, the award-winning documentary about the monks of Newark Abbey that posed the question, "Want Inner City Schools to Finally Succeed?" Pastor Abode was intrigued by the student leadership he saw on film, college readiness and an educational model that encompassed seventh and eighth grades. "As soon as we could, we scheduled a trip," he recalled. "Seeing St. Benedict's Prep in person was better than the documentary. I was sold that this was what we needed to do."

Crossover Prep opened in Fall 2017 with just 27 seventh graders. After developing their own version of Convocation and the Group



At Crossover Preparatory Academy in Tulsa, the motto, "I am my brother's keeper," is used to build community and a brotherhood similar to the St. Benedict's Prep model.



Morning Convocation at Crossover Prep. A student hand goes up and 100 students fall silent.

The Vox Institute's service to schools incorporates four core tenets: community, student leadership, counseling and experiential education.

System, they continued to partner with St. Benedict's through the Vox Institute. The school, which is majority African-American, doubled in size, and now serves sixth to ninth grades, with plans to graduate its first high school class in 2023. A team from the Vox Institute, including Gray Bees known as Vox Fellows, visited Crossover Prep last year for an assessment. "When we got there, one of our seniors on the trip said, 'I feel like I never left Benedict's,'" Dr. Cassidy recalled. "Now remember, there were only seventh and eighth graders at the school at the time. We could definitely feel that they took a lot of inspiration from what they had seen and experienced at St. Benedict's."

"I'm really encouraged by the progress we've made so far," said Pastor Abode. The seventh graders who started the school in 2017 are now high school freshmen. "We're seeing these kids help their classmates meet school expectations. They're encouraging other guys and starting to step up as leaders and embrace the culture." The full impact of adapting St. Benedict's model, however, won't be known for a few years. "[Ninth grade] is a big transition year to become a full member of the community and cross over into manhood," Pastor Abode explained. "We won't know how well it's working until students are passing on the school culture to other students."

WHAT DO THE KIDS NEED?

Since its inception, the Vox Institute has worked with a host of private, public and charter schools nationwide. Its service to schools encompasses four core tenets of St. Benedict's: community, student leadership, counseling and experiential education.

The tenets evolved from a simple, yet radical idea the monks of Newark Abbey applied in late 1972 when they decided to open a school after the closure of St. Benedict's. "We didn't start out with a philosophy," remembered Fr. Albert Holtz, O.S.B. '60, who had just completed a master's degree in philosophy and education at Columbia University at the time. "We started out by saying, 'What do the kids need? What's best for the kids?'"

That single question drove the St. Benedict's model that others look to emulate today. Much of what schools seek to adapt are elements of what Fr. Albert refers to as St. Benedict's hidden curriculum. "Schools don't call up the Vox Institute and ask, 'How do you teach social studies or geometry?'" he noted. "They ask, 'How do you do what you're doing in community?'"

"We hold kids to high standards, but a lot of people do that," Fr. Albert pointed out. "One of the things we did early on, was figure out that if we wanted to raise the bar, we'd better teach kids how to jump higher. It's easy just to make higher demands on kids. But kids will just stand there looking at the bar. It takes extra work. It takes devotion, as well as teaching and motivating kids to show them *how* to jump higher."

According to Dr. Cassidy, schools and education nonprofits are referred to the Vox Institute in a variety of ways. Some saw the *60 Minutes* broadcast on The Hive in 2016. Others connect after hearing Headmaster Fr. Edwin Leahy, O.S.B. '63 or Assistant Headmaster for Student Life Ivan Lamourt, Psy.D., '82 speak at conferences and events. The Institute also partners with Transcend Education and the New School Venture Fund, national nonprofits working to reimagine mainstream education in this country, as well as the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) at the University of Notre Dame. Gregory O'Donnell, Associate Director, Leadership Programs has accompanied cohorts of school leaders on visits to St. Benedict's for two ACE initiatives, the Center for Transformational Educational Leadership and the Mary Ann Remick Leadership Program. "St. Benedict's is unique," Mr. O'Donnell said. "One of the things we're looking at when we visit is trying to help our leaders see how they can drive change and build collective ownership of the culture."

Dr. Cassidy and the Institute's Program Director Louis Lainé '12 established a blueprint for school partnerships. Schools or groups make an introductory visit to The Hive, which is often followed by a full-day workshop. When Dr. Cassidy and Mr. Lainé go out to observe interested schools, they bring Vox Fellows to provide firsthand accounts of how the Group System and The Trail develop leadership and responsibility in kids. These visits are also an opportunity for the Vox Institute to gauge the extent, if at all, St. Benedict's mindsets and practices can be adopted into the school's environment, and the parameters of a longer-term partnership.

"We've been very clear with people," Dr. Cassidy emphasized. "We don't want to be the next reform effort in your school. What we're talking about, the idea of building community, student leadership, counseling or experiential education, is going to take years to fully implement and change mindsets. You can't go into it with the idea of 'try it for a year and see what happens.'"

PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Newer schools have formed some of the most productive partnerships with the Vox Institute. Kingdom Prep Lutheran School, for instance, is a recently established, all-male secondary serving young men in Milwaukee County, Wisconsin. Recounting the story of how St. Benedict's reopened in 1973 on an EdChoice podcast, Kingdom Prep Founder and Principal Kevin Festerling said, "We've largely taken a lot of [the St. Benedict's] playbook and brought it here to Milwaukee."

Flexibility for any partner school is key. "We're implementing the things that work for our school," said Sydney Giovinazzo, a founding teacher at Kingdom Prep who became well acquainted with The Hive when

she taught Summer Phase in 2017. Kingdom Prep opened in 2018 with 60 freshmen and will graduate its first class in 2022. To build student leadership from the ground up, the school modified St. Benedict's Groups to Packs, which are composed of seven to eight students and one adult advisor. Kingdom Prep students have responsibilities like attendance, holding each other accountable and adhering to the four pillars of faith, service, experience and excellence. Vox Fellows also conducted leadership training with the school's first freshman class.

Not everything worked according to plan. The school introduced a wilderness expedition modeled on the Backpacking Project that it will likely not repeat next year. "It wasn't fulfilling the purpose of building community in the way we would like," noted Ms. Giovinazzo. Still, the ongoing relationship with St. Benedict's is "giving us a view of what is possible and a vision of a school that is still adapting."

Mr. O'Donnell too, wants the next generation of transformational leaders in Catholic education to see what's possible. "In today's day and age of high stakes accountability, we need to recognize that one of the biggest things that Catholic schools — and St. Benedict's in particular — do really well is taking time to be together in community," he said. "St. Benedict's students know they are there for one another, and while they all need to individually succeed, that alone is not enough unless they're supporting each other. At the end of the day, these are the things that are just good for society."

Who are the Vox Fellows and how do they share the St. Benedict's model? Read the online extra, "Meet the Vox Fellows," at sbp.org/VoxFellows.

THE VOX INSTITUTE ADVISES SCHOOLS NATIONWIDE

In addition to the schools and groups mentioned in this story, the Institute has relationships with the following institutions:

Baltimore Collegiate School for Boys (Baltimore, Md.)

Bluford Drew Jemison STEM Academy (Baltimore, Md.)

Dayton Early College Academy (Dayton, Ohio)

Girls' Leadership Academy of Wilmington (Wilmington, N.C.)

KIPP NYC College Prep (Bronx, N.Y.)

Marin's Community School (San Rafael, Calif.)

Marion P. Thomas Success Academy (Newark, N.J.)

Northstar Academy (Newark, N.J.)

Spring Branch Independent School District (Houston, Texas)

St. Martin De Porres School (Cleveland, Ohio)

University High School (Newark, N.J.)

Young Men's Leadership Academy (San Antonio, Texas)

A TRACK RECORD THAT INSPIRES SCHOOLS TO ADOPT THE ST. BENEDICT'S MODEL

97%

of St. Benedict's Prep graduates matriculated to college, trade school or entered the military in 2019.



74%

of college freshmen nationally, persist from their first to second year of higher education.

87%

of St. Benedict's graduates persist from their first to second year of higher education.*

* St. Benedict's Class of 2017.

82%

of St. Benedict's graduates complete college or are on track to complete college.



AFTERCLASS

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE DIVISION LEADERS



2019–20 group leaders from the Prep, Middle and Elementary divisions. Student leadership now spans second to twelfth grade at The Hive.



Middle Division Leader Pablo Hernandez '24, Elementary Division Co-Leader Sophia DeMatas and Elementary Division Co-Leader Nigel Williams.

Student leadership is starting earlier at The Hive. With group leadership firmly instituted in the Elementary and Middle divisions, After Class sat down with Sophia DeMatas, Nigel Williams and Pablo Hernandez '24 to discuss their responsibilities and challenges, as well as what they find most gratifying about leading their respective divisions at St. Benedict's Prep.

Sophia and Nigel, how does it feel to be the first Co-Leaders of the Elementary Division?

Sophia: It's a good opportunity because most of the teachers rely on you and your opinion about stuff.

Nigel: For me, it's fun. I get to show my leadership skills and I get to try and help the grownups. I get to be myself and try to step up to the next level.

What are your responsibilities?

Sophia: So, sometimes you do attendance. During Convo you stand with the kids to make sure they are singing correctly and have more confidence. Sometimes we plan events like the Black History Month assembly.

Nigel: When you're going down to lunch or other classes, we stand out of the line and make sure that the line is nice and straight for our class. There are also Grade Leaders from second grade to sixth grade and they also help with maintaining the line. And like Sophia said, at Convocation we make sure the kids are confident when they speak.

Pablo, the Middle Division has had student-leaders for some time.

Pablo: I'm the third Middle Division Leader. There were two before me.

What are your responsibilities as Middle Division Leader?

We go to Convo in the morning, and on Fridays we join with the Prep Division. So I make sure everyone gets there. And during attendance, I keep track of who's not there and am prepared in case Fr. Ed might ask me. And then, we just go on with our day.

What would the three of you say is the best part of being a student-leader in your respective divisions?

Sophia: I would say having the younger kids look up to us and say, "I need help with something." Or when they need counseling. I will talk to them and relate — not about their situation — but about their feelings. To help them through their feelings, that's my favorite part.

Nigel: The best part for me is some of what Sophia said about helping the younger kids. Being there when the teacher needs you to step up and to help out. It's also good that the teachers see me as someone with responsibility to take on this task.

Pablo: Not that people look up to me, but [I like the fact] that kids feel comfortable, and everyone trusts me enough to come and talk to me in private whenever they need to.

What is the hardest part about being a student-leader?

Pablo: Probably all the pressure. Fr. Ed comes to our Convo and asks me for attendance and other stuff. But the teachers are there for me, especially the ones who came here when they were students and are teachers now, so they understand how it is.

Nigel: The hardest part for me is...you have friends. And sometimes you get caught up playing with them. And you have to remind them of what they are supposed to be doing. And your friends can sort of get mad at you. So, it's a balancing out of being a Group Leader and being a good friend.

Sophia: For me, the hardest part is what Nigel said. You do have friends. And they don't always understand the point about keeping the job [of Group Leader] because you can easily lose it. Fr. Ed and the teachers say we have responsibility and have to be mature about it. If a teacher asks me who is talking [during class] my friend might say, "Don't tell them." But at the same time, you have to tell them and remember that they're my friend. You might have to lose their trust, but gain it at the same time. So, that's the hardest part for me.

What is the most important thing you have learned from being a student-leader?


Sophia: Trust. I mostly don't trust a lot of people since I've gone through a lot of bullying and bounced around a few schools. But I definitely have learned to trust teachers, kids and what they say, because I know they mean it. I've learned trust from this school.

Nigel: What I've learned from being a Group Leader is how to step up and knowing when it's time to get serious and when it's time to play around.

Pablo: Probably listening to others instead of just listening to yourself. Sometimes I might be wrong about something, and then the group members might say something, and I'll think that's actually true. So, that's why I listen to their opinions before I go on with something.

Many alumni didn't have leadership opportunities in the Elementary and Middle divisions. What do you want Gray Bees to know about student leadership at The Hive today?

Nigel: I would like them to know that even though we are kids of 11 and 12, we have opinions and we can make a big difference, and we can be trusted.

Sophia: I would like them to know that yes, we are kids and we still like to have fun while having the trusted role as Group Leader. We can still have fun while still being serious, so I want them to put that trust in us to know that we'll do what's right at the end of the day. 

Sophia DeMatas (6A) came to St. Benedict's Prep in 2019; she resides in Jersey City. Nigel Williams (6B) began St. Benedict's in kindergarten; he lives in Newark. Both students will move on to the Middle Division next year. Pablo Hernandez will be a member of St. Benedict's Class of 2024; he resides in Newark.

BENEDICT'S HATES A



The Power of Perseverance

James Barnes-Hawkins, Esq. '87, arrived at St. Benedict's with a chip on his shoulder. The Newark kid had pulled out all the stops to attend the School — including sending a personal letter to the late Fr. Mark Payne, O.S.B. '69 — but now, he had second thoughts. The first thing he noticed was the banner in the gym: "I remember thinking, 'Who is this guy Benedict and why does he hate a quitter?'" Soon, he learned just how much that phrase applied to him.

Mr. Barnes-Hawkins failed every class freshman year, except gym and lunch. Yet, Headmaster Fr. Edwin Leahy, O.S.B. '63, wouldn't hear of him transferring to public school. That summer, he repeated freshman year: "Fr. Ed made me face my demons."

During his junior year, Mr. Barnes-Hawkins finally found a home on the cross country and track teams. He excelled, becoming a state champion and All-American at 800 and 1600 meters. His grades improved, too. Still, it was evident that he needed to mature. Paul E. Thornton '63, consultant to the Advancement Office, suggested a transitional year after graduation at the Northfield Mount Hermon School, an elite prep school in Massachusetts. Later, he attended Temple University and Seton Hall Law School.

Today, Mr. Barnes-Hawkins is an Immigration Attorney and Principal at Blackwell Immigration Consulting, taking on the tough cases other firms consider hopeless. He and his wife, Ayesha Blackwell-Hawkins, Esq., also provide a STEM scholarship in memory of Mrs. Blackwell-Hawkins' late mother, Regina L. Blackwell H'10, a beloved school nurse at The Hive.

Recently, Mr. Barnes-Hawkins found an encouraging letter Mr. Thornton wrote to him at Northfield. "I broke down in tears," Mr. Barnes-Hawkins said. "All these years later, I finally understand how lucky I was. Benedict's never gave up on me. And I said, 'Thank you, Lord, for St. Benedict's.'"

Wizard of Wall Street

As a junior high kid, Carl Blake '80 hung out with the wrong crowd in his East Orange neighborhood. He desperately needed discipline, but that's not what brought him to St. Benedict's Prep. The street fighter wanted to join the wrestling team. "I only wanted to fight," Mr. Blake recalled. "I was an unmotivated kid with no direction—a troublemaker."

Soon, he realized he lacked the discipline required for a varsity sport. Yet, at the same time, he was slowly starting to respond to The Hive's supportive, structured environment. The stage was set for another remarkable St. Benedict's transformation.

During Mr. Blake's sophomore year, a family financial crisis spurred him to get a job to help pay his high school tuition. Now personally invested in his education, he redirected his energy into schoolwork, studying in the library late into the night. His competitive nature, along with hard work, led to Mr. Blake earning the highest average in the School by junior year.

Since then, a tremendous work ethic has marked Mr. Blake's career and life. A graduate of Bowdoin College and the Virginia Darden School of Business, he often put in 100-hour workweeks during a successful career on Wall Street. Retired at 45, Mr. Blake is now an independent investment management professional who is dedicated to his two kids and to helping others through several nonprofits.

"In high school, I never thought much about 'Benedict's Hates a Quitter,'" he said. "But now, it's a message in the back of my head. It's not in my DNA to give up. All of the things that I wasn't when I first went to high school, I became: Focused. Ambitious. Disciplined. That evolution began at St. Benedict's."

QUITTER

A banner hangs in Shanley Gymnasium amid the many championship banners earned by athletic teams. It simply states, “Benedict’s Hates a Quitter.” That credo is at the core of the School’s power to change lives.



Never Quit

As a youngster, Richard C. Zellars, M.D., '82 always felt like a fish out of water. He was one of only three black kids at his Catholic school in East Orange. At St. Benedict's, he struggled to fit in at first: "I was nailing it academically, but socially, it was tough." Eventually he met a small group of friends, but he still needed to be challenged academically. The answer: a special program offered through the Turrell Fund, which sent him to board at the Lawrenceville School for his last two years of high school.

"Talk about not fitting in," Dr. Zellars chuckled. Feeling like an outsider yet again, Dr. Zellars thought of the banner in the gym that had now become a part of his soul. "I leaned on that quote heavily at Lawrenceville," he recalled.

Two years later, he proudly graduated from Lawrenceville, but returned to The Hive to also graduate with his Benedict's classmates. Dr. Zellars went on to Bowdoin College, and then the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. Today, he's the William A. Mitchell Professor and Chairman of the Department of Radiation Oncology at Indiana University School of Medicine, as well as Physician-in-Chief of Cancer Services for Indiana University Health and Associate Director of Clinical Affairs for the Indiana University Simon Cancer Center.

Dr. Zellars attributes his professional success to his parents, Bob and Carol Rankin, and to St. Benedict's. Now, he provides financial support to The Hive to help current Gray Bees succeed. When he sees photos of today's St. Benedict's students, he sometimes chokes up. He understands teenage struggles — especially for urban kids — better than most: "I see myself in those young boys. I know how hard life can be. Like me, they're learning something very powerful about themselves. Benedict's men are gut driven to do our best and never quit."

Strength from Adversity

St. Benedict's Prep is ingrained in the Hall family's DNA. All three sons are graduates, and mom Jill Hall has been a volunteer counselor at Leahy House for years. A studious kid, middle son Timothy was an academic leader who also excelled in the pool on The Hive's swimming and water polo teams — until he was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Suddenly, books and sports practices were replaced with cancer treatments. "Benedict's Hates a Quitter" took on a whole new meaning for Timothy. "That phrase really affected me as I approached the challenges of undergoing cancer treatment," he recalled. Through the tough times, he received tremendous support from the Benedict's community.

Today, Timothy Hall is Brother Thomas Aquinas Hall, O.S.B. '06, a Benedictine monk who resides at Newark Abbey. Br. Thomas was called to his vocation while studying psychology at Caldwell University. One of his teachers, a nun, noticed his St. Benedict's hoodie and asked if he had thought about joining the Abbey. "I didn't know what that meant, but I figured I would look into it after I graduated," recalled Br. Thomas. He volunteered at St. Benedict's following graduation, spending lots of time in the monastery talking to the monks.

Br. Thomas professed his solemn vows in 2016 and is now a familiar face to current Gray Bees. He knows that "Benedict's Hates a Quitter" holds tremendous power, for himself and his students. "That phrase has helped me overcome challenges in my adult life by reminding me of where I am and what I do," he said. "Instilling the power of this phrase into today's students is something I need to do to get more people to come back and continue what this school has already started — a tradition of helping people." **B**



Jazz@SBP

JAZZ IS GOING PLACES

Jazz@SBP represents a lot more than a snazzy new logo. The initiative is harnessing talent, resources and enthusiasm to build a nationally recognized jazz program at St. Benedict's Prep.


The program was introduced in January, thanks to the collaborative efforts of three men: Jeremy Fletcher, D.M.A., Director of Music, William Doan, a generous donor and friend to The Hive, and renowned jazz pianist Garry Dial '72, who believed his *alma mater* could be as widely known for music as it is for athletics.

Mr. Doan, who established the Doan Scholars after the *60 Minutes* broadcast on St. Benedict's in 2016, is a lead donor for Jazz@SBP, which includes dedicated instruction, a new curriculum and scholarships for talented music students who want to study jazz at St. Benedict's. "I am not going to be happy until we are in the finals of a national jazz competition," said Mr. Doan, the retired President and CEO of the technology firm SICOM. He provided half of the annual budget for the first year and another significant donor, coupled with other donors to the music program, have raised the other half. Mr. Doan has committed to continue his support of Jazz@SBP into the future.

Dr. Fletcher and Mr. Dial, a former faculty member at the Manhattan School of Music, designed the Prep jazz curriculum. Jazz@SBP students will take a core group of classes, with four to

five electives including jazz history, jazz theory, jazz arranging, improvisation, piano skills and computer music skills. They will also practice five days a week for two hours after school and receive private lessons with outside professionals. Dr. Fletcher expects the program to "morph in unexpected ways until it is something that is an institutional point of pride."

The addition of a new music teacher, Josh Mauldin, provides the necessary personnel to elevate music instruction at The Hive. Mr. Mauldin is teaching general music, pull-out piano lessons for the Middle Division and chorus for the Prep Division. This frees up Dr. Fletcher's schedule to give small group private instrument lessons to elementary students and create a feeder program for the Prep Division.

Dr. Fletcher and Mr. Dial have also been networking with their many contacts in the jazz world to publicize and gain support for their effort. The proponents behind Jazz@SBP say students will carry larger lessons from the program — discipline, responsibility, persistence or teamwork — whether they become professional musicians or pursue another field. "For the rest of their lives, they will have this," said Dr. Fletcher. "Excelling at this music will always bring them tremendous joy." 



DRAMA GUILD REMEMBERS FRANK TOROK



Two things happened when Frank S. Torok came to St. Benedict's Prep in 1961 to direct the newly formed Drama Guild. The theater group quickly assumed a prominent place in school life and the quality of the student performances staged in Conlin Auditorium rivaled those of community theater groups and off-Broadway productions.

"It takes vision and hard work to make a theater come alive," said Drama Guild Director Patricia Flynn H'95. "Gathering a troupe of young actors and technicians, he transformed novices into artists by believing in them and, more importantly, by inspiring in them a belief in themselves. One need only look at the roster of professionals produced over the years to recognize the success of what Frank established."

Actor, director and playwright Greg Thornton '67 is one of those professionals. "Frank would often tell us, 'If you want to be treated as a professional, you have to act like one,'" he recalled. "This was something I have never forgotten and something I have tried to live by."

Mr. Torok served as Drama Guild director until 1967. He joined Yale Repertory Theatre and taught drama, stage production and direction at Yale University for many years. Fittingly, the memorial followed a matinee performance of the spring Drama Guild production *American Night: The Ballad of Juan José*. After dinner in the cafeteria, Guild alums gathered in Conlin to share photos and stories of the beloved director.

The Drama Guild will celebrate its 60th anniversary in 2021. "Theater continues to thrive at The Hive," said Ms. Flynn. "Those of us who work here today are the beneficiaries of Frank Torok's vision for what Conlin could be. He was our Joe Kasberger; our Prof. Blood. May Frank rest in peace and may we, who have inherited his mission, continue to uphold and enrich the traditions and standards he created in 1961."

The Frank S. Torok Drama Guild Endowment fund was established in memory of Mr. Torok. To make a gift, please visit www.sbp.org/give and type "Torok" in the comment section. Plans are underway for a celebration of Frank's life organized by Drama Guild alumni.



Gray Bees Reclaim Basketball Title

St. Benedict's won its seventh State Prep A Championship in the last nine years on February 20 with a thrilling 68-66 victory over defending champion Blair Academy before an overflow crowd in Dalton Gymnasium. St. Benedict's wrapped up the season with a 30-4 record, the sixth of the last nine seasons with at least 30 victories.



Tom Fierro '20, Matt Ryan PG'20, Damon Wright '19 PG'20 and Ibrahim Mendheim '20.

St. Benedict's Crowns Four All-Americans at National Prep Championships

Tom Fierro '20 (132 pounds), Matt Ryan PG'20 (138 pounds), Damon Wright '19 PG'20 (152 pounds) and Ibrahim Mendheim '20 (160 pounds) each placed in the top 8 to earn distinction as All-Americans at the 85th National Prep Wrestling Championships in late February at Lehigh University.



Ensuring Futures

Charitable gift of life insurance supports Doolin Learning Center

The Doolin Family visits The Hive. (L to R): Ibrahim Mendheim '20, Fr. Max Buonocore, O.S.B., Liz Lodato, Philip McCarthy, Sekou Diabate '21, Mary Doolin McCarthy, Edward Doolin, M.D., Fr. Edwin Leahy, O.S.B. '63, Grant Parker '22 and Tyler Olivero '22.

John H. Doolin '45 was many things. A U.S. Army veteran. An industrious mechanical engineer who enjoyed a 40-plus year career at a single firm and held several patents in pump design. An advocate for literacy who, in retirement, volunteered at Recording for the Blind and Dyslexia in Princeton, and Literacy Volunteers of America. Most notably, the late Mr. Doolin was a dedicated family man, who passed on his faith and lived principles of hard work, resilience, kindness and integrity to his children and grandchildren.

When the St. Benedict's Prep alumnus passed away in 2016, the Doolin family discovered a unique giving vehicle to honor his life and legacy: a life insurance policy. A charitable gift of life insurance isn't on the radar of most donors. The Doolin family, however, found the multiplying effect of a policy allowed them to make a greater impact;

the premium payments made by family members in the present will create a much larger benefit for St. Benedict's in the future. Charitable life insurance gifts also allow multiple contributors, which was extremely important to the family.

"It's really ideal," said the Doolin children when they visited The Hive on February 28. "Our extended family can participate, while assuring the amount of the life insurance policy to the School." To date, 16 members of the Doolin family have made regular contributions toward the policy premiums, including Mr. Doolin's wife, Joan Marie, his children and grandchildren.

His grandchildren recall that he was the best possible role model with unwavering moral standards and acutely aware of his daily blessings. John Doolin lost his father at age 11 and the Gray Bee

shouldered financial responsibility for his mother and sister at a young age.

In keeping with John Doolin's devotion to literacy initiatives and lifelong commitment to providing opportunity to others, the family's collective generosity is supporting the Doolin Learning Center.

HOW THE DOOLIN LEARNING CENTER BEGAN

The origins of the Doolin Learning Center date back to 1994, when Fr. Maximilian Buonocore, O.S.B., started an afterschool tutoring program in Radel Library. Tutoring was provided mostly by volunteers, but Fr. Max's ultimate goal was to formalize the program and offer comprehensive services to address skill deficiencies among students who were struggling or falling behind. The program received a boost in 2015 when Fr. Demetrius Thomas, O.S.B., a Benedictine monk of St. Mary's Abbey in Morristown, worked with Fr. Max to establish specialized classes in social studies and language arts. When the Abbey assigned Fr. Demetrius back to the Delbarton School in 2017, Liz Lodato took over the specialized English and social studies classes. "It's a humanities program in a much smaller class," she explained. "There's more individualized attention and guidance. I move at the students' pace rather than the students having to keep up with me."

Students who may benefit from individualized instruction are identified freshman year. "The earlier we can get them, the better," said Ms. Lodato, who prior to St. Benedict's, taught reading skills to thousands of children through the Institute for Reading Development. Teaching academic skills like crafting a critical essay, for instance, is a carefully paced process to ensure students gain proficiency every step of the way, from outline to research, first draft and rewrites. The small class environment also means that kids can't hide. "They all have to participate," Ms. Lodato continued. "Once they realize they have something to say about the material, they really start to open up."

Since learning disabilities are often associated with anxiety and depression, the Doolin Learning Center coordinates closely with the Steven M. Grossman Counseling Center, as well as faculty, since the goal is to build confidence and skills, so students can rematriculate to general classes. Students might spend a semester in the program, while others need a year or longer.

FROM FAILING GRADES TO HONOR ROLL

"I think it's incredible to have the resources to do this," Ms. Lodato said. "For kids who just need an extra boost, it's incredibly beneficial." Fr. Max, who serves as director of the Doolin Learning Center, has witnessed an even longer-term impact. "They go from kids who are failing to making the School's honor roll," said Fr. Max. "When kids make it through the program, they are better equipped intellectually, socially and emotionally for success in college and career."

Gray Bees who benefitted from the program met with members of the Doolin family during their February visit.



English and Social Studies Teacher Liz Lodato provides differentiated instruction to students in the Doolin Learning Center.

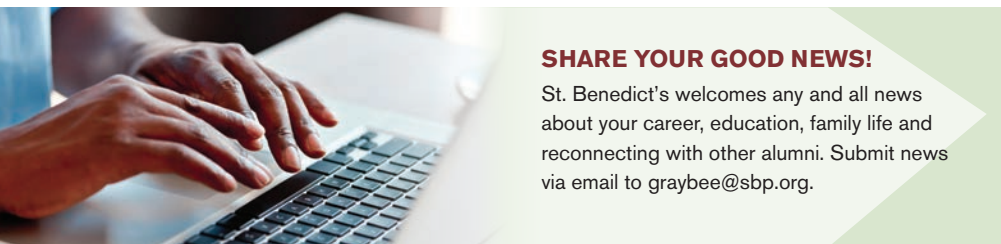
Ibrahim Mendheim '20 described the challenges he experienced in larger classes and how the Doolin Learning Center helped turn things around. Before the specialized classes, he struggled to compose an essay and at the end of last year, published an essay in the School's literary journal *Kayrix*. Sekou Diabate '21, too, published an essay in *Kayrix* and he spoke about some of the program's larger advantages. "This gives us skills," he emphasized. "We work on ourselves, so we know what to expect and do when we walk into a classroom or job interview or other situation."

After listening to these experiences, the family was asked, "What would John Doolin think about these kids and their stories?" "Tremendous," all responded. "That was his whole mantra. Our father's rule was integrity. There was no wavering from what is right. If you're struggling, you just keep at it until you get it and move forward as best you can. The School epitomizes what he believed in. That's the real strength of it." **B**

If you would like to make a gift to the Doolin Learning Center, visit www.sbp.org/Doolin. Or, if you would like to learn how to multiply your giving and impact with a charitable gift of life insurance, contact Michael Fazio, Chief Advancement Officer at (973) 792-5777 or mfazio@sbp.org.

Venmo  **Cash App** 

Alumni and friends are now able to make donations to St. Benedict's Prep using the mobile apps Venmo and Cash App. Downloading the apps to your mobile phone is free. Just remember to put in your full name and class year when you make a gift to The Hive. TRY IT NOW!



SHARE YOUR GOOD NEWS!

St. Benedict's welcomes any and all news about your career, education, family life and reconnecting with other alumni. Submit news via email to graybee@sbp.org.

1963

Donna and **John Meade** celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. They have seven grandchildren and one on the way.

1964

Mike Bertelli has taken up painting after sculpture. This painting emerged from different ideas, including the Dylan song "When the Ship Comes In." Some of Mike's works were on exhibit at the Clifton Arts Center through The Tuesday Painters, a co-op of local New Jersey and New York artists.



Hackensack Meridian Health Bayshore Medical Center Foundation announced that the new Emergency Care Center at Bayshore Medical Center in Holmdel will be called the Dr. Robert H. Harris Emergency Care Center in memory of the late **Robert H. Harris, M.D.**

1965

Vincent Menzel participated this past September at the New Jersey Senior Olympics in Woodbridge. He took a gold

medal in Singles Racquetball in the 70-74 age group; a basketball enthusiast, he ranked fourth in the state in foul shooting.

1968

Chris Allgeier retired last June after a mere 46 years in the engineering/construction industry. He and Linda have moved to Wellfleet, Cape Cod just a few hours from their children and grandsons. Chris's brother, **Peter Allgeier '65**, lives nearby in Orleans. "It's almost like riding the DeCamp #145 again."

1969

Mary Caruso, mother of **Thomas Caruso**, turned 100 on January 31.

1971

Some of the members of the Class of '71 reunion committee prepared for their 50th anniversary in 2021. Seated, left to right: **Frank Kreidler H'71, Bill Holloran, Al Esposito, Don Gulbicki and Greg Duffy**. Standing, left to right: Big **Jim Scanlon**, even bigger **Jimmy Waldron** and **Michael Hondo Farrell**.



1972

William Brown III placed second in the 60-69 age group in the UNCF/KAT Foundation 5K Walk/Run.

2002

New America Foundation and Diversity in National Security Network named **Kehinde Togun** as one of 2020's next generation of Black American foreign policy leaders. He wrote, "I was honored to be on the list and I'm excited for the work that remains to be done in this space – both in terms of creating progressive foreign policy and expanding the number of people of color who see foreign policy as a chosen career."

2009

Santiago Naranjo will defend the thesis for his Ph.D. from M.I.T. on April 30. He wrote: "I'm studying lung cancer in the laboratory of Dr. Tyler Jacks at M.I.T. My thesis project focuses on using organoid (mini organs grown in dish) technology to develop improved models of lung cancer." Santiago's work provides information that can be used to identify biomarkers for early detection of lung cancer or targets for therapeutic intervention. "The late **Robert Peace '98** taught me biology and got me really excited about science; we

discussed what scientists actually do in the laboratory and the potential there was to really make a difference."

2010

Dr. Paul Oyefesobi earned his PharmD, RPh degree from The Ohio State University College of Pharmacy and is now a licensed pharmacist.



2013

Stephon Frasier (McDonald) stopped by with his five-month-old son, Stephon, Jr.



2016

Andrew Sosanya, a senior double majoring in physics and government at Dartmouth College, was recently featured in the admissions magazine for his research with International Relations Professor William Wohlforth. Andrew is doing research on the effect of militarized artificial intelligence and international security (arms control primarily): "It's a nice cross of my interests, as I'm planning for a career in the technology space."



ENGAGEMENTS

Matthew Achariam '07 and Jamie Kwai became engaged in December 2019 in Paris.



Matt Aaron '10 is engaged to Christian Brown.



MARRIAGES

Chidi Asoluka '01 married Ofunne Edoziem in Anambra State, Nigeria, in March 2019. He was promoted to Class of 2023 Dean at Horace Mann School, and he started Asoluka Company, a social justice-focused education consulting firm.



BIRTHS

Leena and **Michael O'Hara '97** welcomed their second child, Therese Marie Sarang O'Hara, on January 2.



Cullen Jones '02 welcomed the birth of his son, Avyn Cullen Jones, in July 2019.

FROM BEANTOWN TO THE PEACH STATE

THE HIVE VISITS BEANTOWN

The Brae Burn Country Club in West Newton, Mass., was once again the site of the annual Boston reception, thanks to our gracious host, **Art Meehan '53**. The brunch reception was held on Saturday, November 2, 2019. Headmaster **Fr. Edwin Leahy, O.S.B. '63** was on hand to give an update on everything related to The Hive and had a Q&A with all of the attendees.



Chris Allgeier '68 (left) and **Peter Allgeier '65**, both Cape Cod residents now, talked with Judith Mayo at the Boston area reception.

HEADMASTER'S RECEPTION

More than 100 alumni and friends from our Monte Cassino Society, along with other loyal supporters of St. Benedict's Prep, attended our Headmaster's Reception on Thursday, November 21, 2019, at Mayfair Farms in West Orange, N.J.



Jennifer Scott, Julius Scott '01, Ian Frankoski '00 and Omar Crespo '05.

ALUMNI CELEBRATE AT CHRISTMAS PARTY

The St. Benedict's Alumni Christmas Party took place on December 6, 2019 at the newly renovated Adega Grill and Lounge. It was a great evening, filled with the holiday spirit, brotherhood and good food.



Reginald Baskerville H'19, Jared Pietz '09, Farad Lowther '10, Peter Elias '90, Kaia DePaula '12, and Telmo DeMoraes '12.

CATCHING UP IN ATLANTA

Jerry Froelich '61 hosted a reunion at Biltong Bar on January 16.



Jordan Ruffin '18, Fr. Edwin Leahy, O.S.B. '63, Dick Higgins '49, Ian Joseph '18 and Jerry Froelich '61. Mr. Ruffin and Mr. Joseph are students at Morehouse College in Atlanta.

VISITS TO THE SUNSHINE STATE

Tampa

Paul Hannan '56 hosted a gathering of alumni and guests at The Rusty Pelican on February 11.



Front Row: Paul Schultz '96, Fr. Edwin Leahy, O.S.B. '63, Bob Covino '65 and Rev. John Juliano '57
Back Row: Ed Bendokas, Mario Fuentes '81, Brian Jennings '70, Michael Falivena '59, Mary Lou Falivena, Lucille Covino, Carole Hannan, Paul Hannan '56, Joe Barbieri '57 and Mike Fazio.

Bonita Springs

Gene O'Hara '55 hosted 27 alumni and guests at the Bonita Bay Club on February 12.



The Hive Remembers

In a matter of weeks, The Hive lost two beloved faculty members. History teacher and Head Water Polo Coach Spencer George Vespole '09 succumbed to cancer on December 13, 2019 and English and Latin teacher William "Bill" Petrick passed away suddenly on January 23, 2020. The outpouring of remembrances that followed their deaths revealed the depth of love, respect and admiration for these two giants, and just how much they are missed by the St. Benedict's Prep community.

In many ways, **Spencer George Vespole '09** was just getting started as a teacher and coach. The Gray Bee joined the faculty in 2013 after graduation from Bowdoin College and being named an All-American water polo player two years in a row. **Pamela Wye-Hunsinger H'18** knew him as a freshman from Introduction to Art, and later, as a colleague. "His incisive intellect was always put at the service of our students," she wrote. "His sharp mind was matched by a deep empathy for his students. He never lost his understanding of what it was like to be a ninth grader at St. Benedict's."

Jiquwil Wilkis '20 benefited from that understanding. "I first met Spence during my freshman year here at Benedict's," he wrote. Jiquwil sought out Mr. Vespole's help on a research paper "and he wasted no time assisting me with it." Over time, the teacher's influence was immense. "He was a kind, caring, honorable man who truly made a difference in my life and it pains me that future Benedict's students won't be able to experience what I have from him."



Spencer George Vespole '09

Mr. Vespole was the 2018 recipient of the Raymond J. Sachs '25 Memorial Award for Distinguished Teaching. The Sachs Award is presented to faculty members nominated by their peers for outstanding work with students, both in the classroom and beyond. Water polo coaches from schools across the country pointed to his many gifts as a coach. "[Spencer] was always an incredible advocate of the sport and true believer in the power of athletics as an avenue to help kids grow," said Michael Koziol, Germantown Academy Water Polo Coach.

Matthew Meles '21 credits Mr. Vespole with introducing him to water polo and becoming a trusted figure in his life. "We (the varsity water polo team) walked into states being one of the lowest ranked

We have received word that these members of the St. Benedict's community or members of their families have died.

ALUMNI

Joseph T. Walsh '37
Joseph T. Smith, Jr. '39
Michael J. Nittoli '41
Donald F. Byron '44
Rev. Frederick Hegarty '44
Joseph F. Cunningham '45
F. Walter Brannagan '47
William A. Doyle '47
Henry Lawrence '48
Abbot Brian H. Clarke, O.S.B. '49
Carl A. Fehrenbach '49

Thomas F. McCarthy, Jr. '49
Maynard P. Fletcher '50
Adam M. Stanislawczyk '50
James M. McLoughlin '51
Andrew M. Guarriello '54
Ernest J. Hahn '54
Gilbert W. Riley '54
Charles E. Churchill '55
William F. Harty '55
Jack L. Sayer '55
John J. Ripak '56
Michael J. Degnan '57

Franklin J. McDonald '57
J. David Schardien '58
Paul J. Crann '59
Peter F. McCabe '59
John W. McGrath, Sr. '59
Dennis A. Joyce '61
Joseph De Masi '62
Samuel V. Iorio, Jr. '70
Carl M. Anglesea '72
Mark Carney '72
Michael Ruane '72
Ricky Lee Bailey '78

Barry A. McPhail '82
Scott Walker '83
Gary N. Pope '89
Thad H. Givens IV '99
Martrel Howard '07
Kendall D. Cook '08
Spencer Vespole '09

COMMUNITY

Michael Barber
Son of Joseph '44
Marylane T. Burry
Friend of St. Benedict's

Stella Byrnes
Grandmother of Chris Hodge '06
Pedro Crespo
Father of Justin '22
Margaret H. Cundari
Mother of Richard '60 & Frank '66
Edward Del Priore
Father of Laurence & Marc '97
Aazim Drinkard
Brother of Nicholas '12




William "Bill" Petrick

teams," he wrote. The team persevered, defeating the number one team and ultimately placed second. "It aggravated me that we didn't win for the man that has put everything on the line for us," Matthew continued. "I dedicate my next and final season of water polo to the man who inspired me to play the sport that I love. Spence, I promise to bring home the championship trophy for you."

William "Bill" Petrick was very clear on the kind of teacher he wanted to be. "Students are my curriculum. Each needs to be understood with depth and meaning as an individual learner in a particular place, and at a specific stage of development," he shared on his LinkedIn profile.

His students understood this, as well. **Roberto Fuentes '23** recalled, "Mr. Petrick once said, 'Every time you come into this classroom it's my job to make sure you know something you didn't know before you came in.' And that will stick with me forever. He really had such a positive impact on my life, and he will stay in my heart forever."

Mr. Petrick began his teaching career at St. Benedict's. He went on to teach in public schools, assuming leadership positions of Principal and Superintendent in several school districts before returning to The Hive in 2015. "His return to teach with us was a tremendous gift," said consultant to the Advancement Office **Paul Thornton '63**. "He brought with him all the enthusiasm of a new teacher with the experience and insights that all his years in many roles in many schools had given him. Colleagues and students alike benefited every day from his dedication and commitment — above all to the nurturing and development of all our students."

A master teacher, Mr. Petrick had a special gift for drawing out students who flew under the radar. That's how **Malachi Little '20** described himself freshman year. "Mr. Petrick really changed my life," he said. His students had to keep a journal "and he didn't care if you liked to write or not. He made me feel that a notebook and pen is one of the most powerful things you can put together." When Mr. Petrick asked to publish Malachi's stories in the School's literary journal, *Kayrix*, Malachi gave his consent, but preferred to remain anonymous. "Fast forward a little, Petrick put my name with my stories," he said. "I feel like that meant something. It means that I have a voice and everything I do and say, I should always feel comfortable to own it and take pride in it. You never know what your words and/or actions can do to someone." 

Veronica Nonyelum Edogwo
Mother of Fr. Linus
Ella Falana
Grandmother of Radale '05
Michael J. Kerr
Father of Mike '81, Chris '84
Kinday McKoy
Mother of Malachi '19
Mamie Moody
Mother of Kenneth '83
Valerie Mosley
Daughter of Blanche H'89,

Sister of Mike '75,
Theodore '80
James O'Hara
Father of Michael '97
Thomas Petrick
Father of William (Faculty)†
William Petrick
St. Benedict's Faculty
Peter P. Pranis, Jr.
Friend of St. Benedict's
Maria Reiter
Mother of Edward '60

Brian M. Rogers
Son of Michael '70
Muhammed Salaam
Father of Khalid '19
Joseph Seals
Father of Adrian '22
Frank S. Torok
Friend of St. Benedict's

† – Deceased

A sympathy card has been sent to each bereaved family in the name of the St. Benedict's family — alumni, students, faculty, staff and monks — promising our prayers and a special remembrance at the monks' daily conventual Mass.

An American Hero

A tragic event in our region hit close to home on December 10, 2019. The St. Benedict's community mourned Det. Joseph Seals, who was killed while investigating a murder in Jersey City. Det. Seals was the father of **Adrian Junco-Seals '22**, who described his father as "a great man in and out of work. He will forever be remembered as an American hero."



Why We Have to Try

Before St. Benedict's Prep became the leading model of urban education in this country, the School was just a set of ideas, handwritten on loose-leaf paper. Preserved in the archives of Newark Abbey, the founding document, dated November 13, 1972, began on a cautionary note. Fr. Albert Holtz, O.S.B. '60 wrote, "A long job ahead tonight," on the cover page, but immediately went on to state why the monks of Newark Abbey had to try and open a school. "We are aware of a real need around us for schools that treat kids as human," he wrote. "We cannot very well leave without attempting some solutions, in terms of our own capabilities, to the needs we see around us."

Three of the four core tenets that St. Benedict's shares with other schools through the Vox Institute — community, student leadership, and experiential education — are recorded in the archived notes. "We started out saying, 'What do the kids need?'" said Fr. Albert, in a recent interview for the cover story (see page 4). "And we've never changed that." To view more pages from the founding document, visit www.sbp.org/try.

Why we have to try something

We are here. We are nowhere else. We are aware of a real need around us for schools that treat kids as human. We cannot ~~as~~ very well leave without attempting some solutions, in terms of our own capabilities, to the needs we see around us.

We are here. That must say something to us as Christians. Maybe we'll find out that we don't fit in here. Maybe "here" will have no use for us, or will be uncomfortable for us. But somehow there must be that religious conviction dimension to what we are as men here and now.

Is ours a hopeless situation? I.e., is there no way that we can give what we have to offer to those around us? It seems that the needs are so basic that we ought to be able to meet them IF WE REALLY WANT TO! We may not be very adept at how, but maybe we can find ourselves willing to learn.

To not even attempt an answer to such basic needs would be pretty callow of us. God is really roping us into this!!!

Join us for the MOST IMPORTANT
thing we do at The Hive!



VIRTUAL
CONVO

Every Monday, Wednesday,
and Friday at 8:30 a.m.

youtube.com/c/StBenedictsPrepNJ



St. Benedict's
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Office of Advancement
520 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard
Newark, NJ 07102
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