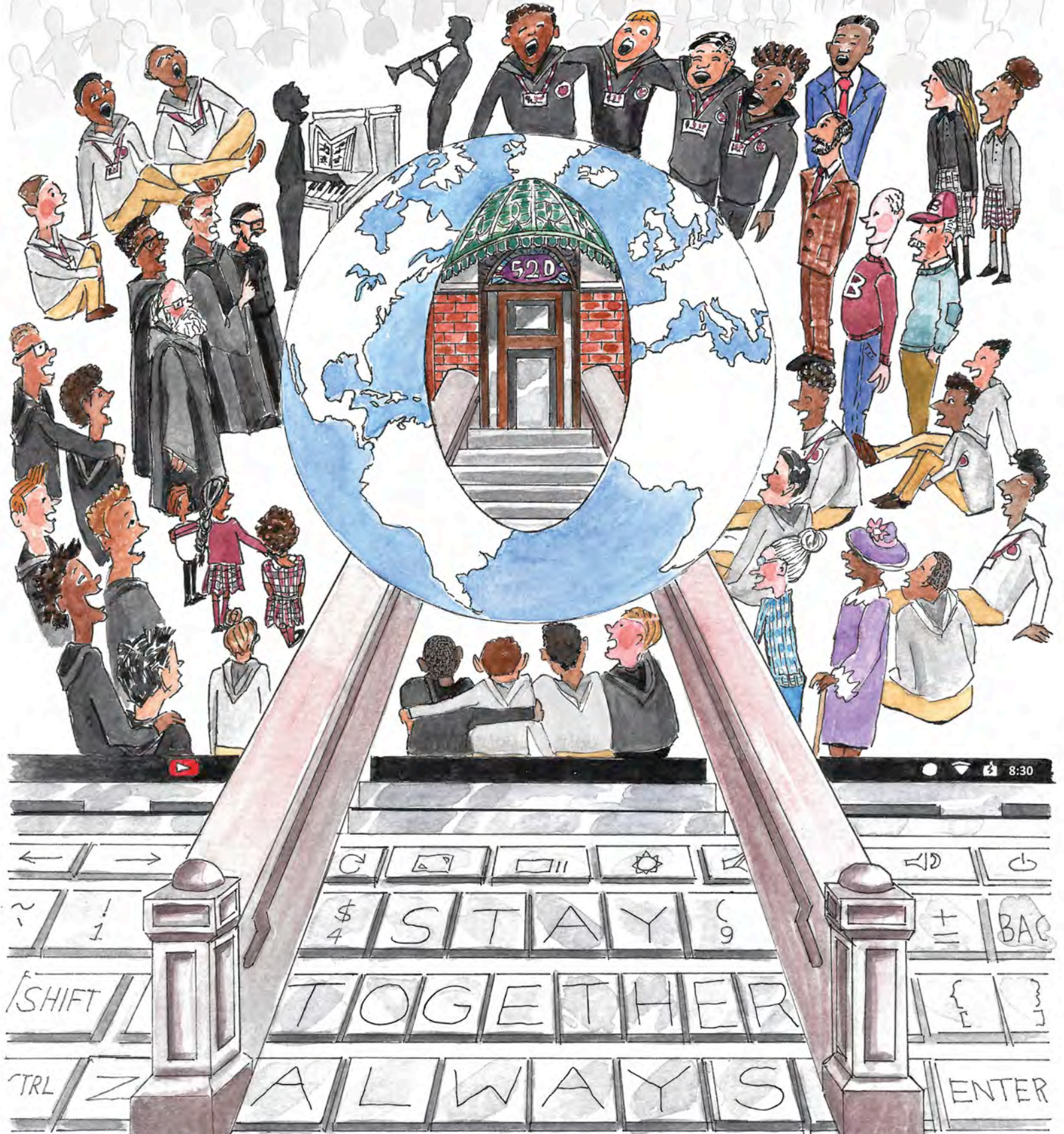




# St. Benedict's

## PREPARATORY SCHOOL



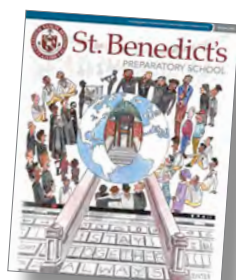




The rite of passage continues. Though Summer Phase was held virtually, in small groups, freshmen came to the Property twice a week during July to begin earning their place at St. Benedict's Prep. Boola! Boola!

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"Stay Together Always," a depiction of the St. Benedict's Prep community remaining together while apart, was illustrated by Chair of the Fine Arts Department Pam Wye-Hunsinger H'18.



**St. Benedict's**  
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

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## **"Stay Together" Takes On New Meaning**

For nearly half a century, we've been telling Gray Bees to "Stay Together!" Fr. Mark Payne, O.S.B. '69 first coined that phrase to build brotherhood among students as they faced the challenges of The Trail. Fr. Mark was a smart guy, but he never could have foreseen spring 2020.

Today, "Stay Together!" has a deeper meaning that transcends this school. As a nation, we're

simultaneously battling a pandemic and the fallout from generations of systemic racism in our society. As a school community, we're facing both of these challenges, while making sure that our kids are safe and keeping their education on track. What's become apparent to me is that, even when we feel isolated — because of the COVID-19 virus or racial injustice — God's grace is very present in our lives.

When the pandemic hit in March, we switched quickly to virtual learning, wondering how our kids would adjust to interacting online. Does everyone have access to a computer? Will they show up to class? Is the computer screen a barrier to sharing with teachers and classmates? Soon, we realized that we shouldn't have worried. These are Benedict's kids, and they were up to the challenge. While we provided the platform, our kids taught us about a whole new way to think about education. They stayed engaged in class, started an online Investment Club, staged a Drama Guild virtual performance and launched a new blog to chronicle the educational, social and emotional effects of COVID-19. We've always taught them to take responsibility for this school, and a pandemic couldn't change that.

Alumni also took what they learned at The Hive to heart. Many of our guys were on the front lines of the COVID-19 battle as medical personnel and first responders, real-world proof that Benedict's Hates a Quitter. They also reached out to support St. Benedict's Prep and our kids. Some mornings, we had more than 60 alumni attending Virtual Convocation. A lot of the guys who couldn't make it on time when they were students actually showed up early!

Times were difficult financially for so many people, yet hundreds of donors stepped up to participate in our Day of Giving on April 23. I'm grateful to the 830 people who contributed \$646,337 that day, an extraordinary response. I'm also thankful for all of the donors who have supported St. Benedict's Prep this year.

All of this is proof that when times get tough, the Benedict's community stays together. The connectedness of this School raises people up to accomplish extraordinary things under the most difficult circumstances. This pandemic isn't over, but The Hive has weathered the crisis because of the resilience of our community.

Moving forward, we still face a lot of challenges, here at St. Benedict's and in the larger community. This school year will certainly look different in a lot of ways. To keep our kids safe, we decided to hold Summer Phase in a virtual format and started three weeks early to maintain academic continuity with the spring semester. With the spread of the virus still so uncertain, we've worked hard to ensure that we're ready for anything a new outbreak can throw at us.

**"Maybe this is where God wants us to be right now: Off balance. Questioning. Tearing things down so we can rebuild even stronger than before."**

For the first time this year, St. Benedict's will have a separate Girls Prep Division, composed primarily of girls from two schools that have closed. In this issue, you'll read about the generous donor — the wife of a late St. Benedict's alumnus — who was so happy with this decision that she immediately pledged \$500,000, to be divided evenly between the Girls and Boys Prep divisions.

We expect to be leading conversations about building educational communities during uncertain times through our Vox Institute, and have planned a remote conference to share best practices with schools around the nation. Conversations will also be continuing at St. Benedict's and in many other places, amplifying black and brown voices to root out the racism that is ingrained in our society.

In the midst of great crisis, great things are happening at The Hive. A season that started out as dire now fills me with hope for the future of our School and our world. Maybe this is where God wants us to be right now: Off balance. Questioning. Tearing things down so we can rebuild even stronger than before. It will take courage and a willingness to set our own needs aside and listen to others who may look different. Yet, if we stay together, we'll all emerge from this in a much better place.

If that's not God's grace in action, I don't know what is.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edwin D. Leahy O.S.B. '63". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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





## Summer Phase Starts Early

"So, today, you – GO – and CONQUER!" Four weeks after the school year ended, another began with the first Virtual Convocation of the 2020-2021 academic year held on July 6. St. Benedict's Prep began its Summer Phase three weeks early to ensure structure and continuity for Gray Bees during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The decision to begin Summer Phase/First Term was made on the recommendation of the Tuesday Think Tank, a committee of faculty and students that formed during the pandemic to make determinations about school operations and traditions. Summer Phase/First Term was held virtually. Gray Bees adhered to the same schedule St. Benedict's adopted when the quarantine began in March, synchronous classes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and asynchronous work on Tuesday and Thursday. The term ended on August 7 and Fall Term will begin on September 8.

## CLASS OF 2020 HONORED AT 146TH COMMENCEMENT



St. Benedict's Prep conferred diplomas to 134 Gray Bees on June 7 in a moving 146th Commencement, held virtually to honor the Class of 2020. "We'll be telling stories about you for as long as we live," Headmaster Fr. Edwin Leahy, O.S.B. '63 told the graduating class.

The ceremony kept many St. Benedict's traditions including Convocation songs, a sendoff from the graduating class Freshman Leader Eric Conklin '17, introduction of the 50th reunion class, and the Valedictorian address delivered by two valedictorians

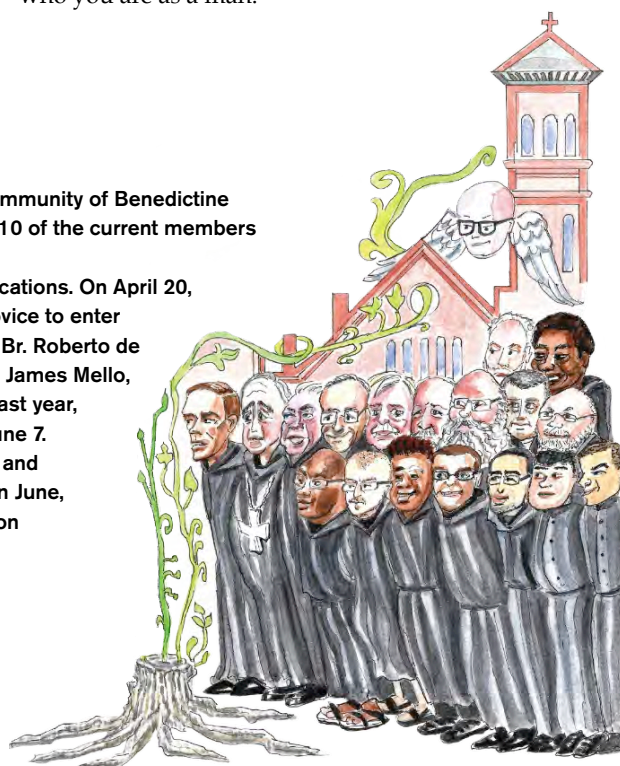
this year, Kevin Calle '20 and Adrian Yanez '20. There were even some silver linings to be found in the virtual ceremony. Cameron Bernard Jones '06, a professional actor and singer in London, recorded a stirring rendition of "Lift Every Voice and Sing." He also served as Commencement Speaker, and reminded The Hive's newest alumni that the School's credo, "Whatever hurts my brother, hurts me," carries more weight than ever. "You will carry it well into adulthood. Hopefully that motto will be the core of who you are as a man."

## NEWARK ABBEY KEEPS GROWING

God has smiled on Newark Abbey once again. In 2016, the community of Benedictine monks guiding St. Benedict's Prep was 11. Today, it's 19, and 10 of the current members of the community are under the age of 40.

The resurgence is mainly due to an increased interest in vocations. On April 20, Br. Rafael González-Cervantes, O.S.B., became the second novice to enter Newark Abbey during the 2019-20 academic year. He follows Br. Roberto de Moslemas Islas, O.S.B., who began Novitiate in October 2019. James Mello, a Benedictine Volunteer who taught history at The Hive this past year, decided to discern his vocation and became a postulant on June 7.

The growth of the monastic community requires more time and attention from Formation Director Fr. Albert Holtz, O.S.B. '60. In June, he retired from teaching duties at The Hive to guide the men on discernment, monastic life and The Rule of Saint Benedict.





## Senior 7 is Now Senior 8

Say hello to the Senior Group Leaders leading the Boys Prep Division for the 2020-2021 academic year. Senior leadership instituted a new role, Community Standards, to ensure greater attention to issues surrounding lateness, dress code, dismissal and more. The eight Gray Bees appointed to senior leadership positions pictured clockwise from top left: Sunil Das '21 (Senior Group Leader), Akhir Crenshaw '21 (Freshman Leader), Sekou Diabate '21 (Community Standards Leader), Rafael Jaquez '21 (White Section Leader), Eric Duarte '21 (Maroon Section Leader), Reuben Kadushin '21 (Transfer Leader), Samuel Pineda '21 (Blue Section Leader) and Giuseppe Loiacono '21 (Gray Section Leader).

### NEW FRESHMAN WRITING SEMINAR FOR FALL TERM

In the age of text and LOL, developing writing fundamentals is more essential than ever. The importance of teaching students became evident to Kitta MacPherson when she taught journalism to undergraduates at Rutgers-Newark, and later, to students at St. Benedict's Prep. "It's a national issue," she stated. "Diagramming sentences is not second nature to kids today, even though they are plenty smart."

Ms. MacPherson approached Associate Headmaster for Academics Michelle Tuorto, Ph.D. H'16, and in 2019, introduced a grammar and composition class for juniors and seniors. The evidence-based curriculum integrated grammar lessons within the context of writing, a strategy that helps students elevate their thinking and communicate more effectively.

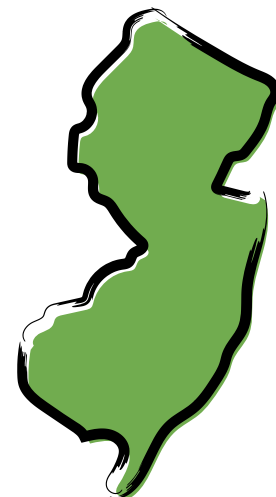
To better prepare Gray Bees for the demands of upper level courses, English Department faculty decided to emphasize writing fundamentals

earlier. Work on a new Freshman Writing Seminar began before the quarantine. When St. Benedict's transitioned to distance learning, faculty continued to collaborate virtually until all the details were finalized. The seminar is slated to start this fall. Since existing faculty members will teach sections in the fall and spring, the curriculum enhancement can be introduced without any new hires.

"We have put so much thought into this and so many good minds on it, our kids are going to be in for something really great," Ms. MacPherson emphasized. "The goal is to be the place that teaches writing so well, people come and want to learn our secrets."



**"Diagramming sentences is not second nature to kids today, even though they are plenty smart."**



### HEADMASTER NAMED A NEW JERSEY ICON

St. Benedict's Prep Headmaster Fr. Edwin Leahy, O.S.B. '63 was named to the 2020 class of Icon Awards Winners by *NJBIZ* in July. The annual award, now in its fourth year, honors New Jersey leaders over the age of 60 who have helped, and continue to, grow and encourage the business community in the state.

Fr. Ed was recognized as a champion of education, specifically, transforming St. Benedict's into a national model of excellence in urban education. The nomination for the icon award noted, "The high rate of student success is a direct result of St. Benedict's core educational practices – student leadership, experiential learning, counseling and community – that Fr. Edwin has championed since the School's re-opening in 1973."

*NJBIZ* celebrated the 2020 Icon Awards at an online ceremony on August 18.





# STAY TOGETHER ALWAYS

The Hive remained resilient as the days and weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic turned into months. Classes transitioned to distance learning seamlessly. Student writing flourished and the Drama Guild created online productions. Even new clubs and initiatives grew while Gray Bees were apart, because we remembered the admonition of the late Fr. Mark Payne, O.S.B. '69 to always "Stay Together."





Senior Writers Night, held remotely on May 13

## WORDS MATTER

As the nation's schools began to shut down in mid-March in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, student-writers at St. Benedict's Prep were just getting started. On March 13, the day Headmaster Fr. Edwin Leahy, O.S.B. '63 announced The Hive's transition to distance learning, *The Benedict News* launched *Going Viral*, a blog that chronicled the educational, social and emotional impacts of coronavirus on the St. Benedict's community.

"The quarantine has absolutely produced a ferment of literary creativity," said Kitta MacPherson, journalism and writing teacher and adviser to *The Benedict News*. "The kids have had the time and lack of distractions to produce some really beautiful works."

While longstanding programs like *Kayrix*, the School's literary journal, the Drama Guild and *The Benedict News* provide the framework for robust writing, new initiatives were also introduced this year. In the fall of 2019, St. Benedict's opened the Writing Center, an after-school resource students can use to get help with everything from academic papers to creative writing. They can even join a book club moderated by biology teacher Danielle Laube. "The center was started to help inculcate a culture of good writing," Ms. MacPherson explained. Its mission to nurture promising writers was made possible by the efforts of Liz Lodato, English and social studies teacher, Br. Mark Dilone, O.S.B., history teacher, Noreen Connolly H'11, managing editor of advancement publications, and Ms. MacPherson.

The caliber of student writing was apparent to

anyone who watched Senior Writers Night, an online event hosted by the Writing Center on May 13. Members of the panel — Angel Bustillo '20, Aurie Briscoe '20, Kevin Calle '20, Jonathan Dulce '20, Kevin Jackson '20, Malcolm James '20, Reuben Kadushin '21 and David Rahamin '20 — talked about their writing, the influences behind their work, and how documenting the repercussions of the coronavirus pandemic helped them process the unprecedented event.

The motivations and mediums of these talented Gray Bee writers vary. Kevin Calle, editor-in-chief of *The Benedict News*, is a self-described numbers guy who plans to major in accounting and business administration at NJIT. "What I like about

news writing is that you are always straightforward and you've got to get to the point," he said. Kevin sees writing, and *Going Viral*, as a way to pay tribute to significant events like the first Virtual Convo, which was covered in the blog. "It's important to keep a public record of that."

*Kayrix* editor-in-chief David Rahamin discovered an affinity for writing in the late Bill Petrick's freshman English class and soon joined the literary journal. "I submitted my own work, got to edit other kids' work and they edited mine. That's what got me into writing," recalled David, who will study secondary education with a concentration in English at St. Vincent College and play soccer.

Kevin Jackson, who is also headed to St. Vincent College to study philosophy, is drawn to issues of social justice. His powerful essay, "Toward a Land of the Free," on racial injustice in America, garnered attention and praise after publication in *The Benedict News*. "I think a lot of my motivation [for writing] is paying homage to people," Kevin explained. "It was illegal for people who look like me to read and write in this country, so I think I would be doing a disservice if I don't speak my truth or speak for people who can't speak for themselves."

Justin Ross, Chair of the English Department, applauded the panel for their talent and impressive body of work that will inspire more up and coming writers at The Hive.

"Your words matter," Mr. Ross told the graduating seniors. "You are leaving behind a legacy of good writing for future students."



The monks of Newark Abbey are a consistent presence at Virtual Convo during the coronavirus pandemic. Br. Robert Islas, O.S.B., and Br. Thomas Aquinas Hall, O.S.B. '06 share a moment before the livestream Convo.

## #HOMEWITHGOD

The faithful of St. Mary's Church may have been isolated during the COVID-19 quarantine, but they were never alone. The monks of Newark Abbey made sure of that by ramping up their virtual presence to provide pastoral care to the community.

With the technical help of Br. Asiel Rodriguez, O.S.B., and Benedictine Volunteers Kevin Lamb and James Mello, who became a postulant in June, the monks livestreamed Holy Mass on the Newark Abbey YouTube channel. On social media, they offered prayers using hashtags #LifeintheMonastery and #HomeWithGod, and spiritual guidance on living through troubled times via *Downtown Monks*, the blog authored by Fr. Albert Holtz, O.S.B. '60.

The monastic community also widened its outreach in May when it debuted a new blog in Spanish, *Monjes en la Ciudad (Monks in the City)*. The posts feature weekly reflections of Biblical text and other Church readings. Contributors have included Br. Asiel, and two novices, Br. Roberto de Moslemas Islas, O.S.B., and Br. Rafael González-Cervantes, O.S.B.



### WASTING TIME TOGETHER

Director of the Vox Institute Glenn Cassidy, Ed.D. '90 is used to having kids drop by for impromptu discussions. It's a tradition that began with the late Fr. Mark Payne, O.S.B. '69, who was a big proponent of students and faculty, "wasting time together."

When St. Benedict's Prep moved to distance learning because of COVID-19, Dr. Cassidy looked for ways to keep adults and students connected. Tuesdays with Cass was soon born. Since March 31, students, faculty and staff drop in on Zoom for weekly discussions moderated by Dr. Cassidy. "At its heart, it's a weekly discussion about anything," he said. "I use current events and social justice issues as the basis for conversation, but it really could be about anything."

Topics have ranged from coping with social distancing to systemic racism and what it means to be a Benedict's man. Dr. Cassidy planned to suspend the weekly discussion during final exam week, but then the country exploded after the brutal killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Approximately 20 kids and adults discussed the death of Mr. Floyd and the fight for racial justice, which Dr. Cassidy called, "A fantastic forum. No one was shut out of sharing." And instead of the adults taking over, St. Benedict's kids did most of the talking.

Tuesdays with Cass continued when Summer Phase began online on July 6. "I'd like to see this grow," said Dr. Cassidy. "I'd like to find ways to continue it when we're back on the Property."

## STILL SHOWING UP, READY TO TALK



This mural painted by Angel Cruz '14, hangs in the entrance to the Steven M. Grossman Counseling Center.

Despite the many challenges of providing therapy from a distance throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Dean of Counseling Sinclair Davis, Psy.D., found plenty of encouraging signs. On most days, it wasn't unusual for the psychologist to log onto a session and find a student waiting to be let in, five minutes before the appointment was scheduled to begin. "Students show up, they're available and they are willing to talk," said Dr. Davis, who has led the Steven M. Grossman Counseling Center at St. Benedict's Prep since 2018. "The accountability and responsibility the kids are showing is very impressive. They are owning their word."

Given the extensive services provided by the Grossman Counseling Center, Dr. Davis knew the transition to distance learning would present barriers. It's hard to make yourself vulnerable if there's a lack of privacy at home or distractions from younger siblings. Guys in Unknown Sons, Blue Man Group or Alateen have difficulty talking about the adults in their lives when everyone is quarantined at home. "It's been a major adjustment for everyone," Dr. Davis said. "We can't replicate counseling 100 percent online," but the counseling team has gotten very close.

In April, more than 60 students were participating in individual sessions on Google Meet or by phone. By May, the number climbed to 70, and the Center was preparing to serve

approximately 100 students by the start of Summer Phase. Dr. Davis believes the Center's visible presence in the School prior to the pandemic helped. "Kids know us, having that familiarity has been key." Gray Bees also asked the Grossman Counseling Center to check in on their brothers. "I didn't expect the client referrals," Dr. Davis noted. "Guys haven't forgotten about each other and continue to show compassion and care for each other. Teachers too have been amazing, bringing issues to our virtual desk. If they weren't as attentive, kids would have slipped through the cracks."

**"Guys haven't forgotten about each other and continue to show compassion and care for each other. Teachers too have been amazing, bringing issues to our virtual desk. If they weren't as attentive, kids would have slipped through the cracks."**

In addition to individual and group therapy, the Grossman Counseling Center also had to reimagine how to conduct assessments virtually over the summer. "It's our evolving that keeps us sharp," Dr. Davis said. "We're all coming to the table with ideas and as strange as it is to say, it's an exciting time in terms of creativity. I'm always excited about a new opportunity to transform services to serve the community."

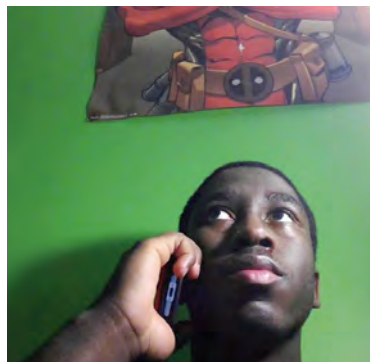




## CLASS OF 2020 FINDS THE BEST FIT

Mid-march, college acceptances were rolling in for the Class of 2020, but the work of the College Guidance team wasn't nearly done. Once St. Benedict's Prep transitioned to virtual learning due to COVID-19, Dean of College Guidance/Seniors Didier Jean-Baptiste '86 and College Placement Counselor Jacob Drill split the senior class in half and began checking in with guys. "There were lots and lots of Google Meets," said Mr. Jean-Baptiste, noting that the team typically reviews acceptances and financial assistance packages to help graduating seniors make the smartest college decision. "[Before the pandemic], we were working so closely. Guys knew they were almost there, and continued the relationships they built and relied upon to see it through to the end."

St. Benedict's graduated 134 seniors in June, the largest class since the School re-opened in 1973. "We are confident that our seniors have landed at schools that are both a good academic fit and affordable, so that they will be challenged, but successful academically," Mr. Jean-Baptiste said. This fall, Gray Bees will begin their higher education careers at a range of colleges and universities that include Bowdoin College, Caldwell University, Columbia University, Cornell University, Georgetown University, George Washington University, Haverford College, Lehigh University, Morehouse College, NJIT, Rutgers-New Brunswick, Rutgers-Newark, Saint John's University, University of Notre Dame and Wesleyan University.



Sekou Diabate '21, Wisnor Abbot '21, Sergio Almeida '20 and David Decker '21.

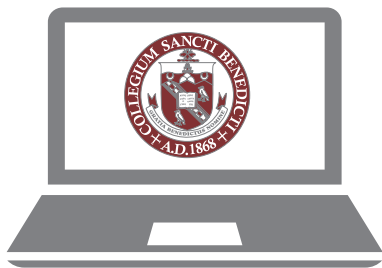
### GRAY BEES CONNECT

How do you replicate the connections kids forge by practicing spirituality and service in the online environment? Gray Bee Ministry found a way — actually, many ways — during the COVID-19 pandemic. Groups of students met for prayer every day on Google Meet, participated in interfaith dialogues with students from Jewish and Muslim schools and held a virtual community service competition.

Religion Teacher and Director of Gray Bee Ministry Stephen Aduabato and Annual Giving Officer Candace Bradsher H'99 collaborated on outreach efforts to check on elder Gray Bees during the quarantine. The project was timed for Spring Phase, when many students choose a community service intensive.

"Twenty-five kids signed up for the project," reported Mr. Aduabato. Each volunteer was assigned five alumni, who mostly represented the Classes of 1945-1955. "There were some really nice conversations. It was a great opportunity to forge connections between the different generations of Gray Bees."





## RISING TO THE OCCASION

It takes more than technology to create a robust virtual learning environment that works for students. Associate Headmaster for Academics Michelle Tuorto H'16 attributes St. Benedict's Prep's nearly perfect attendance rate and many other successes in the virtual realm to principles of faith and community that were decades in the making. "Our pivot to distance learning wouldn't have worked as well as it did without the strength of this community that buys into the values of St. Benedict's," she stated.

Before COVID-19, remote learning was a great unknown in K-12 education at St. Benedict's. "We knew we would have to flex further than ever before," said Mrs. Tuorto. But the Associate Headmaster also knew that St. Benedict's plan to provide three days of synchronous learning and two days of asynchronous learning was more than most schools were planning. "What was there to lose?" she asked rhetorically. "We knew we would all be doing it together. We knew that there would be mistakes and that anything that needed to change could change."

When Summer Phase began virtually on July 6, faculty and kids got quickly back into the groove. "Our returning students know what's expected," said Mrs. Tuorto. "They've risen to the occasion as much as the adults." Translating The Hive's high standards to the virtual realm and sustaining them has also made it easier for incoming students to acclimate.

Even clubs and activities — a big part of the Summer Phase experience — were able to continue remotely. In addition to regular teaching duties, Mrs. Tuorto asked every faculty member to offer a virtual activity. "The creativity of our faculty has been incredible to watch," she said. "The depths people are willing to go, outside of class, on behalf of our kids is nothing short of amazing."



The cast and crew of *American Night: The Ballad of San José* pose for a photo after learning the March 13 opening would be cancelled. Center stage is Angel Bastillo '20, cast as the lead, San José. "The role was tailor-made for Angel," said Drama Guild Director Patricia Flynn H'95. "It would have been a *tour de force*."

## THE SHOW MUST GO ONLINE

Hours before the opening of *American Night: The Ballad of San José*, Drama Guild members began dismantling the sets they'd worked so hard to build. It was March 12, the day before opening, and Drama Guild Director Patricia Flynn H'95 had just delivered the disappointing news: The Richard Montoya play actors and stage production crew had spent months rehearsing, couldn't go on due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

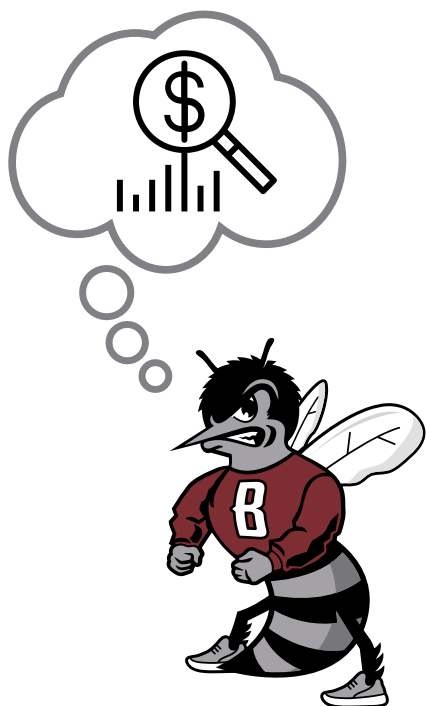
"It was heartbreaking," Ms. Flynn recalled. "The kids were so good about it. They went right to work and took the sets apart." The company could have wallowed in their loss. Instead, they found another way to channel their theatric talents, and six weeks later, *Live From The Hive Online: The Drama Guild Revived!* debuted. The half hour production of comedic sketches, song, dance and jokes was the result of nearly daily Zoom meetings among nine cast members and writers that included two Saint Vincent Academy students. Students created, rehearsed and recorded original material that included a serialized comedy, *La Historia de Los Ladrones*, by Israel Small '21, and "Bee-Kend Update" a news segment inspired by "Weekend Update" on *Saturday Night Live*. Latin Teacher and Drama Guild alumnus Danny Kane '03, English and Social Studies Teacher Liz Lodato, Jonathan Hyppolite '05, a professional actor

and comedian, along with Ms. Flynn, coached students through the ideas, rewrites and online rehearsals. "We are learning and discovering new ways of working every day," said Ms. Flynn, who organized a series of virtual seminars with theater professionals during the quarantine.

Drama Guild alumni representing an array of professions that encompassed acting, production, videography, filmmaking, and more, shared insights, advice and their own struggles navigating careers in the performing arts. The guest speakers included Albert Ihde '62, Greg Thornton '67, Charles Bordogna '64, Ralph Maffongelli '64, Cedric Hill '90, Michael C. Weekes '91, Cameron Bernard Jones '06, and Elliot Hyppolite '09. Two members of IATSE (International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employee,) Brian Collins (husband of Michelle Tuorto H'16) and Matt Vieira, also joined the seminars.

"No one said no," said Ms. Flynn. "They all came so prepared. It was obvious these working professionals thought hard about how they got to this point in their careers. For our students who love theater but may think it's an iffy career, Drama Guild alumni and friends showed them what's possible. They are all making a living, doing what they love."





**“We want kids to come out of this with the confidence that finance is a world they belong in, and the belief that they can build capital and wealth for family and the future.”**

### FINANCE IS A WORLD WHERE GRAY BEES BELONG

Before COVID-19, organizing an Investment Club meeting to expose Gray Bees to the world of finance was nearly impossible. As Dean of Administration Michael Scanlan H'97 explained, kids' schedules are packed and alumni in finance have a hard time getting to 520 MLK Boulevard to meet with interested students. The quarantine and move to distance learning presented an opportunity.

“Time opened up,” said Mr. Scanlan, and by week two of virtual learning, the St. Benedict's Prep Investment Club was up and running. Mr. Scanlan reached out to Robert J. DiQuollo '65, Chairman of the Board of Trustees and Senior Managing Director at Mariner Wealth Advisors, to serve as professional advisor. “I know enough to be a coordinator; I don't claim to be an authority. Bob keeps the conversations very knowledge-based.”

The group met every Tuesday online. Students got to test their investment acumen by setting up simulated \$25,000 portfolios. Throughout the spring, they worked in teams to analyze the market, purchase stocks, and provide rationales for their decisions.

In addition to learning the basics, perspectives about navigating Wall Street as a man of color and saving to start your own business were provided by Ahmad Ismail '08, an investment grade debt underwriter at SMBC Nikko Securities America, Inc., Naeem Boucher '08, a successful real estate investor, and other alumni. “We want kids to come out of this with the confidence that finance is a world they belong in, and the belief that they can build capital and wealth for family and the future,” Mr. Scanlan noted.

The Investment Club proved so successful online, it is continuing in this format for the 2020-21 academic year. Gray Bees with backgrounds in finance or entrepreneurship interested in participating, contact [mscanlan@sbp.org](mailto:mscanlan@sbp.org) for more information. **B**

### REIMAGINING FRESHMAN YEAR



While Summer Phase was held virtually, small groups of freshmen came to the Property twice a week for live interactions and to begin the work of building community.

COVID-19 doesn't care if the Class of 2024 begins the essential work of building community, but The Hive does. Since the pandemic began, teams of faculty, students, alumni and even former Navy SEALs put together plans for a workable Freshman Overnight that evolved into a reimagined freshman year.

It started last spring, when Director of Admissions Mario Gallo initiated regular online meetings for incoming freshmen in the Boys Prep Division. “That was a stroke of brilliance,” said Executive Director of the Vox Institute Glenn Cassidy, Ed.D. '90, noting that freshmen were doing the work of creating community in a virtual environment. In a typical year, freshmen meet for the first time at

the Overnight in July. Now, they were getting to know one another, attending Virtual Convo, meeting Director of Freshman Formation Craig White '04 and senior group leaders, months before Summer Phase was scheduled to commence.

“It showed us that it's not about that one week anymore,” Dr. Cassidy said. “There's a lot of things we could be doing to strengthen Freshman Orientation. It's a trying time, but it's also created opportunity for us — as a world and at St. Benedict's — to rethink other things we can be doing.” The shift in thinking has augmented the rites of passage, the Overnight and The Trail, that defined how freshmen earned their place in the St. Benedict's community. For the 2020-21 academic year, those two traditions will just be part of that experience.

Zoom “fireside chats” expose the freshmen to as many faces of people within the community as possible during their most formative weeks. “It has been a lot of fun to sit back and listen to stories from alumni, coaches, families and friends of St. Benedict's over the last three weeks. We will continue to hold these evening talks throughout the remainder of the summer term,” commented Mr. White.

Planning for Fall Term was still underway when *St. Benedict's Prep* magazine went to press, but the same process applies. “Lots of people are working very hard with the intent to protect what we know as the Benedict's community,” Dr. Cassidy said. “We're moving forward in a good way.”



## AFTERCLASS I

DEXTER LOPINA '98 AND  
DENNIS LANSANG, M.D. H'18



### THE FORCES BEHIND DISTANCE LEARNING AT THE HIVE



In the space of 72 hours, St. Benedict's Prep took classes and daily traditions like Convocation onto Zoom and Google Classroom in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Director of Technology Dexter Lopina '98 and Science Department Chair Dennis Lansang, M.D. H'18, were the unseen forces behind a monumental technical effort to keep Gray Bees on track and the community connected.

**How prepared was St. Benedict's to transition to distance learning when COVID-19 hit, and in what areas did the School need to get up to speed really fast?**

**Mr. Lopina:** We had to do a hard pivot. A lot of the teachers are already set up with Google Classroom, Google Drive and Google Docs, so I would say we were 90 percent there. A lot of our students already had their own devices. All of the teachers had Chromebooks or Windows laptops. The important piece was making sure we could get our teachers' faces and voices out to the students.

As a school, the speed that we went to remote learning was just great. Michelle Tuorto (Associate Headmaster for Academics) was so willing to go. A lot of public schools were afraid to make a move, they were scared of it not being perfect at the start. Michelle and our administration said, 'Let's do it.' Our last day on the Property was Friday, March 13. The Monday before, I sent a survey to students asking what type of internet and device they had at home. By Wednesday, I was testing Google Meet and Zoom, and Thursday to Friday, we were testing really hard. On Friday, we held a faculty meeting and told everyone how we were going to do distance learning.

**Dr. Lansang:** I remember very clearly there was a lot of apprehension at that meeting about how distance learning would work, but very quickly everybody became comfortable. Dex was able to get us online, working smoothly, in less than a weekend. It was incredible.

Initially, I was apprehensive about managing classroom behavior online. After the first day, I knew my fears that kids would be rude to each other or inappropriate were completely unfounded. The kids were 100 percent, and took to it very naturally. They are Benedict's guys and I should not have doubted them.

### 3 Reasons to Attend Virtual Convo

1.



Reconnect with your brothers. Plenty of alumni turn up for Virtual Convo, held Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 8:30 a.m. sharp. That doesn't include the many alumni who teach at The Hive, so you're going to see familiar names and faces.



**Both of you worked very hard to keep the community together through Virtual Convo, held three times a week on Zoom. What exactly was involved?**

**Dr. Lansang:** If you remember the first week of Virtual Convo, I was on the Property to play the music. But the presence of outsiders was putting the monastery at risk, and so my role of singing at Convocation would have to be done from home. We wanted to have music at Convocation, but doing it on Zoom or Google Meet is problematic, because the software prevents the music from being continuous.

Then I remembered this free software, Open Broadcaster Software®(OBS), that some of our kids use to broadcast their screens when they are playing video games. They showed it to me last fall, and intrigued, I started playing around with it. When social distancing hit, I told Dex about it. After the first week of distance learning, we met every night to figure out how to send the piano signal and vocals through OBS, while everyone is attending Convo on Zoom, and not crash. When we were finally able to broadcast music the way we wanted, it was like, 'Wow.' I really have to credit the kids for getting me interested in OBS.

**Mr. Lopina:** Dennis always has a way of filling in a hole or gap when he needs to make something work. I had never heard of OBS, Dennis is the reason music at Convo started working remotely. I have no idea how he juggles playing the piano, singing and running the broadcast at the same time. It amazes me every day.

I'm very process-oriented. I worked on the back end, trying to make each broadcast cleaner and bit more efficient, by getting assignments out to students ahead of time and organizing the outline so it functioned like teleprompter. Then I started on quality control. Every single time we did Convo, I would watch it two or three times and make notes on how we could make it better the next time. And we've been getting there. Every time we broadcast Convo, it's just a little bit better.

**You both put a great deal of thought and effort into Virtual Convo, as well as the Town Halls with Fr. Ed and end-of-year traditions like Commencement. In planning and producing remote events, what did you want the community to come away with?**

**Mr. Lopina:** When we were planning the Senior Writers Night, I kept telling the kids who were going to be on a live broadcast to


talk about their writing: 'Listen, this is for you guys. Relax. Our goal is to honor you and all the work you've done.' So that's my goal for all our students. To make them look as good as we can, because they put so much into everything.

**Dr. Lansang:** As much as we love this technology, it does not replace the idea behind community. Eventually there will be a face-to-face graduation for the Class of 2020 and a Presidential Award Dinner. This is just to tide us over until we can be together again. That's what I want to keep reminding the kids, and they've been reminding us too.

**What else has the experience of learning together while apart taught you?**

**Dr. Lansang:** One thing it's taught me is that the energy of Convocation comes from the kids, responding to a prayer, or in my case, singing. It's also a completely different feeling to try and generate the energy of the classroom when you are not in the same physical space as the kids. It's made me value even more the community I miss so dearly and taught me to never take for granted our ability to create genuine community when we're together.

**Mr. Lopina:** For me, there's a lot of things learned outside of technical skills. My son is going to be a freshman. I watched the meetings Mario Gallo (Director of Admissions) held with incoming freshmen every day, and my son already knows a lot of the classmates who will be there with him at St. Benedict's. My wife watches Convo every day with my other children. She knows the Convo songs and so do my kids.

Virtual Convo has made us more available to people. When I do the alumni check at 8:49 a.m., and we read out the names of 60 guys who graduated anywhere in the past 60 years, it's amazing. For the students to hear all these names of people they don't know, that they are connected to because of this place, it's made our community tighter in a different way. 

*Dexter Lopina '98 and Dennis Lansang, M.D. H'18 resumed their respective roles at the first Virtual Convo of the 2020-2021 academic year on July 6. When the St. Benedict's community can be back on the Property, both men say live streaming of Convocation will continue on a regular basis. They also plan to transition production and broadcasting responsibilities for live streaming over to the students.*

2.



Add some positivity to your day. The prayers, singing and rituals of Convo are a source of strength to keep your courage and spirit up through difficult times.

3.



Were you late to Convo as a St. Benedict's kid? Show up on time and you're likely to get a special callout from Fr. Ed, who has an ironclad memory of past transgressions.



## AFTERCLASS II

KAREN CALLES '21 AND ERIC DUARTE '21  
GIRLS AND BOYS PREP DIVISIONS



# Moving Forward With Open Minds

Three days into Summer Phase, Karen Calles '21 and Eric Duarte '21 shared their perspectives on the new Girls Prep Division that formed after the closure of Benedictine Academy (BA), and their hopes for the year ahead.

**St. Benedict's Prep and Benedictine Academy (BA) were brother and sister schools for some time. How did student-leaders from the two schools work together before BA announced it would close?**

**Karen:** The first major thing that we worked on together was BA's Fall Fest last year. And our Benedictine Leadership Team (BLTs) worked with St. Benedict's on their Black History Month event. But we always had a friendly dynamic. So, it was really easy for us to

come to the boys for help when BA was going to close. They never made us feel like we were girls, they made us feel like we were people. It has been really easy for us to work with them throughout the years.

**Eric:** My grandma is an alumna of BA. My sister was accepted to BA when I was in 8th grade, too. I went to a few of their dances, Halloween events and stuff like that. I became Maroon Section



Leader the last day of school, so I wasn't part of the conversations concerning the Girls Division, but I was very excited about it. It was about time that we had more involvement with our sister school. It was just so needed for a larger connection.

### **Was that excitement shared?**

**Eric:** Amongst a few students sadly, there was the common thought that maybe the girls couldn't lead as strongly as the guys could. There's that thought, 'Are they really as powerful as we are?' Obviously, the girls can be just as powerful. They are, and they will show you. They may even perform better than we do.

### **As committed as the BLTs were to continuing their Benedictine education at St. Benedict's, was there any hesitancy or concerns?**

**Karen:** The hesitancy came from the student body; it wasn't really the girls leadership team. After we heard the school was closing, I guess a lot of the girls had a hard time trusting. It's definitely understandable. But for the BLTs, it was never really an issue. We just wanted to do it. It took a lot of nonstop recruiting in the middle of the pandemic to get the girls and their families to commit, but we got it done.

### **What are your hopes for your respective divisions or communities for the new academic year?**

**Eric:** May I insist, it's not separate communities. It's one community.

### **Yes, thank you for the correction. One community. What are your hopes for your respective divisions then?**

**Karen:** I just want to see everyone work well together. It's going to take a lot of adjusting, and I think there may be more adjusting from the boys than the girls. I hope everyone can adapt and adjust their thinking to where we're coming from, and to understand the purpose of what we're doing and continuing to do. I hope that everyone keeps an open mind.

**Eric:** I do hope more people will be able to see the true purpose — one community moving and merging into another one. We want the same goals, and a similar structure, it's all just happening under different ceilings. Because we are really one community with different ceilings, except for when the whole community comes together, and we have Convo with the Elementary, Middle and Prep divisions.

### **There's been a lot of support for the new Girls Division, but also some skepticism. What do you want those who question the decision to know?**

**Karen:** With everything that's happening in the world right now, it's even more important to understand that we lost our home. We looked for a new one and found it. We have been given a big voice at St. Benedict's, perhaps more than at BA. So, now that we're at a

school where the students actually have a say, we now have a voice. Everything we've done is for the greater good. This wasn't done to be selfish.


**Eric:** This is a different day. Alumni may be sensitive about what school traditions will look like in the future, which is understandable. But these are completely different divisions. Traditions like the Freshman Overnight and The Trail, will still take place in the Boys Division. The Girls Division will have their own traditions. Maybe they'll be similar to what the boys do. Maybe not. I'm so glad to see it. It's a new, beautiful beginning that's going to be so big.

### **Both of you are seniors. What would you like to accomplish this year for yourselves?**

**Karen:** I hope that we can get a good Group System in place. We are going to have to be creative. For myself, I've had a lot of opportunities through St. Benedict's. I was a fellow for The Vox Institute and now I'm a fellow for Teach for America. I'm glad I was able to have those two opportunities, and I get to put them on my college applications. I hope there's more of that. After high school I want to pursue business.

**Eric:** It's going to be a really hard school year, because we're online right now. But I really want the girls to have as great a start to school as they can. I want them to have fun, too. St. Benedict's is a fun place to be.

I'm looking forward to the booths [in the cafeteria], it's a privilege that seniors have. You can sit on comfy seats during lunch, like the booths in a restaurant, only not the center one, that's reserved for Fr. Ed. It doesn't seem like comfy seats are such a privilege, but I can't wait to sit in the booths. And I, of course, want a very successful senior year. I'm looking into the biological sciences for college. It's my favorite subject.

**Karen:** I guess I'm just a little scared for all the responsibilities because there's a lot of expectation and there are people expecting us to fail. It's a lot of weight and it's a lot of pressure, but I'm also excited. The way we're going to earn our membership is going to be a lot faster than the boys do, because we can't have leaders wearing gray polos. So, I guess I'm just trying to prepare myself because it's only going to get harder from here. 

*Eric Duarte '21 is the Maroon Section Leader. Karen Calles '21 was a member of the BLT's at BA who helped spearhead the Girls Prep Division at St. Benedict's Prep. Appointment of the female leadership team was slated for the conclusion of Summer Phase, after St. Benedict's Prep magazine went to press.*



# A Belief in Our Kids

**In June, St. Benedict's Prep announced the Golden Dome Foundation would invest \$500,000 in the Boys Prep Division and the new Girls Prep Division. The story of the major gift began 60 years ago when a St. Benedict's boy met a Benedictine Academy girl.**



Like many enduring marriages, the courtship between **Robert Harris, Ph.D. '64** and Mary Ellen Fay Harris '65 started when he was a student at St. Benedict's Prep, and she attended Benedictine Academy (BA). "A very good friend of mine was dating a St. Benedict's boy," said Mrs. Harris, recalling how she and the late Dr. Harris met as teenagers. "Her boyfriend couldn't visit without bringing a friend, so that's how Bob and

I first met. We went to dances, got to know each other's graduating classes, and stayed together when he went to Notre Dame."

The couple married in 1966. Dr. Harris was still an undergraduate chemistry major at The University of Notre Dame and Mrs. Harris worked at a bank in South Bend, Ind. They had their first child, and Benedict's classmate Pete Connell '64, who also attended Notre Dame, would sometimes babysit.

As the family grew so did Dr. Harris' career as a leading research scientist at Warner-Lambert and then American Home Products, two pharmaceutical companies that were later acquired by Pfizer. Along the way, the St. Benedict's alumnus earned a doctorate in biochemistry from Rutgers University, and held posts with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), National Institutes for Health (NIH), and the

Department of Physiology and Biophysics at Georgetown University Medical Center.

Over the years, the family moved from South Bend, to New Jersey, then on to Virginia and back to the Garden State. When American Home Products announced a relocation to Collegeville, Pa., Mrs. Harris told her husband, "That's wonderful. I'm not going." Instead, she encouraged Dr. Harris to start his own company, Harris FRC Corp. Dr. Harris parlayed his expertise in research, development, safety testing and regulatory affairs into advising companies on the development of drugs, medical devices, dietary supplements and cosmetics.

A big breakthrough came when Dr. Harris found a compound developed by researchers at the University of Houston that could potentially be developed to treat epilepsy. Mrs. Harris provided the seed money to purchase the compound. "Bob went right to work on it," she recalled. "He was a brilliant scientist and working by himself, he turned the compound into a drug."

Harris FRC later licensed the drug to Schwarz Pharma AG, which was acquired by UCB Brussels. Today, VIMPAT® is a widely prescribed medication used to treat epileptic seizures in more than 50 countries. "It's been incredibly successful," said Mrs. Harris, who loved her husband's sense of humor as much as his genius. As a Gray Bee, Dr. Harris was once kicked out of chemistry class for placing rocks in a fish tank.

Until the success of VIMPAT®, "We never had much at all, but we were very happy," said Mrs. Harris. The couple established the Golden Dome Foundation, named in honor of Dr. Harris' *alma mater*, and devoted themselves to philanthropy.



**The fifth annual Giving Day, *Drive for The Hive*, was the biggest and best yet. On April 23, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Gray Bee community rallied to raise more than \$646,000 from 830 donors in 24 hours. "It's a record day in the middle of a pandemic," said Headmaster Fr. Edwin Leahy, O.S.B. '63 in a thank you to donors. "The connectedness of this community is unbelievable, you are all tremendous. I'm grateful to you, the kids are grateful to you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!"**

In 2015, the Harris' underwrote the construction of the Harris Family Track and Field Stadium at Notre Dame. The foundation also supports The Seeing Eye, a nonprofit guide dog school in Morristown, as well as Catholic schools and churches near their home in Monmouth County.

When Dr. Harris passed away in 2017, Mrs. Harris, who serves as president of Golden Dome, continued to support major philanthropic initiatives in her husband's memory. Recent gifts include the Dr. Robert H. Harris Emergency Care Center at Bayshore Medical Center in Holmdel, and a chapel named for the scientist at Trinity Hall, an all-girl Catholic high school. "Bob is still very present in my life," she explained. "I like supporting institutions that have significance in his life."

Mrs. Harris was a loyal supporter of BA. The announced closure of the school, and the establishment of a separate Girls Prep Division at St. Benedict's Prep, presented a new opportunity to do good, while sustaining the Benedictine education that meant so much to both Harris. In June, St. Benedict's announced a \$500,000 gift from the Golden Dome Foundation; \$250,000 for the Girls Prep Division and \$250,000 for the Boys Prep Division. The investment will be used to support scholarships for financially needy students, especially for her sisters who came from BA.

"It's an absolutely perfect opportunity," said Mrs. Harris. "We want to see the kids get a good education. They can't do it on their own without people believing in them." The BA alumna has met many of the female students and is impressed by their tenacity. "They are gung ho and have no fear," she said. She even predicted that if the two divisions were to compete, "The girls are going to give the boys a run for their money."

Dr. Harris would certainly approve of the gift to support both boy and girl divisions, though the friendly rivalry between the two would remain. "Bob would say that St. Benedict's would best the BA girls," she laughed. "I would tell him, 'They will not.'" **B**

## Board of Trustees Has New Leadership William H. Connolly, Jr. H'91 Retires



Robert J. DiQuollo '65

**Robert J. DiQuollo '65** began the role of Chairman of the Board of Trustees at St. Benedict's Prep on July 1. A trustee for 15 years who served as Vice Chair, Mr. DiQuollo succeeds longtime **Chairman William H. Connolly, Jr. H'91**, who led the board for 12 years.

"I am honored to be elected as Chairman of the Board. As a proud graduate and long serving Board member, I hope to build upon the

successes that Bill and other past Chairmen achieved," said Mr. DiQuollo, Senior Managing Director at Mariner Wealth Advisors in Madison, N.J.

Mr. DiQuollo also noted that his predecessor is a hard act to follow. Mr. Connolly didn't attend St. Benedict's, but was well-acquainted with The Hive and Newark through the stories of his father, **William H. Connolly '34**, who served on the board from 1977 until his death in 1986. The younger Mr. Connolly joined the board soon after, and with 34 years of continuous service, holds the distinction of longest-serving trustee.

"St. Benedict's owes so much of its present day success to Bill Connolly," said Headmaster **Fr. Edwin Leahy, O.S.B. '63**. "He stepped up at a time when we really needed him. And he's not the kind of guy who is interested in taking credit, but people should know that his counsel, leadership and generosity over the course of more than 30 years were instrumental in turning us into the institution we are today"



William H. Connolly, Jr. H'91

# 830 Donors

including alumni, parents, faculty and staff, friends and the Board of Trustees

# \$646,000+

Gifts, sponsorships and pledges raised in 24 hours

## ✓ Gifts Matched

Challenge gifts — \$25,000 from Prudential Financial, \$25,000 from Chubb and \$120,000 from two members of the Board of Trustees — were met thanks to your support!

## ✓ Top Comment

"Thank you SBP" and other forms of thanks expressed to St. Benedict's, statements that humble us because we couldn't do this work without our donor community.

## ✓ Top Team

The Class of 1970 raised \$65,603 in honor of their 50th graduation year from St. Benedict's Prep.





### 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](mailto:graybee@sbp.org).

## 1962

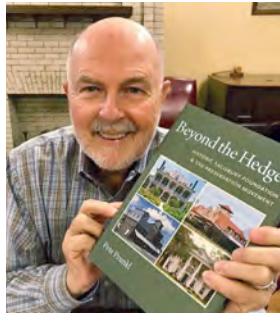
**Edwin William (Bill) Jamieson** was recently inducted into the Newark Athletic Hall of Fame, recognizing him as one of Newark's premier athletes.

At The Hive, Bill was an exceptional baseball player, and as Captain of the team garnered All City, All County and All State honors in 1961-62. He was also an outstanding running back and Co-captain of the 1961 football team, which beat a previously undefeated Seton Hall team, 21-20, in City Stadium before 5,400 fans.

A Presidential Award winner, Bill went on to pursue his academic and athletic development at The University of Notre Dame, graduating in 1966. He and his wife, Meg, live in Florida and in Spring Lake, N.J.

## 1963

In June, Historic Salisbury Foundation published *Beyond the Hedges: Historic Salisbury Foundation and the Preservation Movement* by **Pete Prunkle**. In hardcover with over 100 photos and 26 appendices, the book traces the origin and development of the local historic preservation organization. Pete is a freelance writer in Salisbury, N.C.



## 1968

**Charlie Truncale** and his wife, Sheila, moved from Jacksonville, Fla., to West Melbourne in March. West Melbourne is about 30 minutes south of Cape Canaveral. This move puts them near their only grandson, who is nearly two years old, and their first granddaughter, who is due this summer. Charlie can be reached by cell phone at (904) 673-7412 or by email at [clt\\_law@live.com](mailto:clt_law@live.com). He is a criminal defense lawyer practicing mostly in federal court after a long career as a federal prosecutor.

## 1970

**Daniel Quinn** has just released a new book entitled *American Phantasmagoria*. Amazon wrote: "The three plays that form *American Phantasmagoria* were created from actual events, or nightmare imagery. These are all intended as elaborations of reality, and extensions of the imagination. Any theatre of escapism is avoided, but

instead a humanist one creates Theatricalism for Century 21."

## 1971

**Ben Kulper, M.D., COL MC USAR**, wrote, "I have been a retiree recalled to active duty from the Army Reserve for COVID-19 support to Ft. Wainwright, Alaska, for 179 days."

**Mike Nugent** recently completed the second book in his Jersey Shore noir series, *Money Like Sand*, and it's now on Amazon, [amazon.com/author/pmugent](https://amazon.com/author/pmugent). Mike is donating all profits from sales of his books on Amazon until the end of August to the John DiDomenico '71 Scholarship Fund for a St. Benedict's student in the performing arts. Mike wrote, "It's your chance to wallow in the dark splendor of the Jersey Shore while contributing to a good cause."

**Pat Romano, Ph.D.**, is a Research and Information Specialist with Flometric Diagnostics and a Professor with the Baruch S. Blumberg Institute, the nonprofit research arm of the Pennsylvania Biotechnology Center in Buckingham, Pa. Pat is working with Flometric to look for antibodies against the COVID-19 virus.

## 1972

**Bill Hector** wrote, "My son, Brennan Hector, will be an incoming freshman at University of Scranton this fall. He is planning to major in Environmental Science and Sustainability."

## 1981

**Mario Fuentes** is an Evangelical Catholic living in Bradenton, Fla., with his wife of 27 years, Betsy. He serves as an Ambassador for Dynamic Catholic and a Parish Champion. He and Betsy have two children, Chloe Marie, 13, and Eli Mario, 7.

## 1987

**David Morgan** welcomed his third grandchild, Cairo, in May. David, an EMT, was featured in a St. Benedict's web story about Gray Bees on the front lines fighting the coronavirus pandemic.

## 1991

**Joseph Almeida H'91** wrote that his grandson won the 10 and under age group national championship tournament in fencing (foil).

## 1995

In January, **Mike Williams** was promoted to Regional Director of Education for Alternative Paths Training School in Fredericksburg, Va. "We are a private day school serving students with special needs from ages 5-22. My title would be equal to the principal in a public school setting. October 2020 will mark my fifth year with the school!"

## 1996

**Nii Darko, D.O., M.B.A., FACS**, has been hosting a podcast, "Docs Outside the Box – Ordinary Doctors Talking About Extraordinary Things" since 2016. In his current episode, "Bullets Go Deeper Than You Think," he interviews two trauma surgeons about the outside of the box ways they're connecting with their communities. "We're focusing on how violence is a public health issue and the long-lasting effects it has on communities."

## 1997

**Michael O'Hara** wrote about the highs and lows of 2019. "In July 2019, my father, James (Jim) O'Hara, died suddenly. My family has set up a scholarship in his name at St. Benedict's. In August, I started my new job as a Social Worker with the Veteran's Administration in New Orleans working with our most vulnerable veterans." We reported in the spring issue on the birth of Therese Marie Sarang O'Hara. Michael reports that his son, Leo, is an amazing big brother. In May, Leo finished pre-K at Lycee Francais.



## 1998

**Andy Desormes**, a Physical Therapist, has been working in The Actors Fund Home, a longterm care facility in Englewood, N.J. Andy is married to Jessica Saez Desormes and is stepfather to freshman Gabriel Martinez.



## 2002

**Kehinde Togun's** article, "The America My Son Deserves," was published on June 4 in the *New York Daily News*. Kehinde is on the board of the Center for Racial Justice in Education. He is also a Truman National Security Fellow and a term member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

## 2005

**Duarte Aguiar LCPC, NCC** is now a licensed Clinical Professional Counselor.

**Mike Gormally, M.D., Ph.D.**, a resident physician at Yale-New Haven hospital, is working with a team of physician-scientists on the frontlines on the use of convalescent plasma to treat COVID-19. He says convalescent plasma "has huge therapeutic and investigational potential and we're very excited to see where this goes...I hope the notion that donation of one person's plasma may be lifesaving and can stimulate hope and altruism in this challenging time. Now more

than ever, donate blood and plasma to the American Red Cross. Together, we can all make a difference."



## 2007

**Joseph Downar** was named Historian of Newark St. Patrick's Day Parade.

*The Washington Post* published an article, "Around the World, The U.S. has Long Been A Symbol of Anti-Black Racism," by **Nana Osei-Opore**, an Assistant Professor of African & Cold War History at Fordham University in New York City.

## 2009

**Jared Pietz**, a fireman for nine years and an EMT for six-and-a-half years with the Roselle Park Fire Department, said that the one square mile town had eight COVID-19 deaths this spring.

Whenever a call comes in that there is a possible COVID-19 case, the Fire Department is contacted and he, as an EMT officer with the department, responds. Jared is also a candidate for mayor in Elizabeth.



## 2010

**Walter Jean-Jacques** wrote: "I am proud to be a first-gen college graduate from Columbia University in the City of New York, first-gen graduate school graduate from the University of Pennsylvania and now a first-gen law school graduate from Notre Dame Law School. Not only am I graduating from law school, but I will be a Civil Rights Lawyer at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund through a Notre Dame Public Interest Fellowship at LDF's DC Office beginning this September." After his fellowship in 2022, Walter will begin a Federal Judicial Clerkship at the U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut.

**Philip V. McHarris** is a doctoral student at Yale University focusing on race, housing and policing. His opinion piece, "No More Money for the Police," co-authored with Thenjiwe McHarris, was published May 30 in *The New York Times* and leads with, "The only way we're going to stop these endless cycles of police violence is by creating alternatives to policing. Because even in a pandemic where black people have been disproportionately killed by the coronavirus, the police are still murdering us."

## 2011

**Darren St. Ange**, who graduated last year from Seton Hall University School of Law, where he served as President of the Student Bar Association, is completing his year as a Judicial Law Clerk in the

Appellate Division of the New Jersey Superior Court.

**Frantz Soiro** is a Master of Public Health Candidate at Morehouse School of Medicine. He has completed a contact tracing training course that "expanded my efforts of what I can do to slow the spread of COVID-19. I was able to identify and align many of the existing disease surveillance systems, programs and trainings used at Morehouse School of Medicine and The Georgia Department of Public Health to help monitor public health."

## 2015

**Tyler Hayes** and **Richard Diaz** have graduated from the United States Naval Academy. Tyler will report to San Diego as an officer on the USS Fitzgerald. Richard will report to Virginia Beach, Va., to be an officer on the USS Whidbey Island.



## ENGAGEMENTS

## 2012

**Akeem Miller** got engaged in January to Kaveena Bullock. Akeem earned a B.A. at Kean University, graduating with honors in international political science.

His fiancée earned her master's degree in English and writing studies. "Together, we both went on to teach and travel throughout Asia. On January 31, 2020, I proposed to her in Bali, Indonesia."



## BIRTHS

## 2000

Perla and **Jared Heady** welcomed a son, Sebastian William Heady.

## 2003

**Sam Lebreault** and his wife, Cristina, welcomed their son, Eli Cacimar Lebreault, on May 24.



## 2008

**Stephen Downar** welcomed a new baby daughter, Gianna Sky Downar.



# Legacy of Love



Julie Cawley (seated front, right) welcomed Gray Bees to her home in Maine every summer.

The affection **Julie P. Cawley** had for St. Benedict's Prep and its students is infused in every corner of the School. Wife of one of The Hive's most generous benefactors, the late **Charles M. Cawley '58**, Mrs. Cawley shared her husband's belief that the mission of St. Benedict's has the power to change lives. She passed away peacefully on May 29 in Wilmington, Del., surrounded by her family.

A recipient of the Medal of St. Benedict's in 2013, Mrs. Cawley once noted that she and her husband "fell in love with the students of St. Benedict's. We have gotten so much from them." She went on to say, "Our friend gave me a purple heart on our wedding anniversary... I'm wearing that to remind me of the incredible work the faculty and staff of St. Benedict's does 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to improve the lives of students — the scholars and gentlemen of tomorrow."

The Cawleys took that sentiment to heart and turned it into action. For almost three decades, Mrs. Cawley and her husband funded

significant physical improvements to the School's grounds, including Cawley Hall and Leahy House. The couple also provided important financial support for St. Benedict's students to attend the School. Sometimes, the Cawleys went a step further, providing college scholarships for promising St. Benedict's graduates.

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., Mrs. Cawley earned a bachelor's degree from Dunbarton College of the Holy Cross in Washington, D.C., and later a master's degree from Towson University. For many years, she served as a special education teacher in Towson, Md. Education was important to the Cawleys, and they especially enjoyed personally mentoring students and alumni from St. Benedict's. For almost a decade, Mrs. Cawley hosted current Gray Bees at her home in Maine, a tradition that started before her husband's passing in 2015. During these gatherings, she enjoyed interacting with students, discussing their dreams for the future and sharing her love of photography with them.

Chief Advancement Officer Michael Fazio recalled, "Generations of Benedict's alumni have benefited from Julie's presence and interest in their lives. In every conversation I had with her, she would pepper me with questions about our guys and what's going on at St. Benedict's: 'How is so-and-so? Where is so-and-so going to college? What trips are the students taking?' Because of the Cawleys, the spaces our students learn, live and play in, as well as the School's financial health, were all dramatically transformed. Today, everyone in this community continues to benefit from their care and concern about St. Benedict's."

Several days after Mrs. Cawley's passing, Headmaster Fr. Edwin D. Leahy, O.S.B. '63 said, "I took a walk around the grounds today and it was impossible not to see and feel Julie and Charlie everywhere, from the residence hall, business and advancement buildings, flag poles and plazas — I could continue. An era has come to an end here at Benedict's."

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

### ALUMNI

Edward J. Begley '39  
Eugene J. Farrell '44  
James V. Phalon '44  
Frederick C. Braun, Jr. '47  
John D. Dougherty '47  
George J. Lister '47  
Rev. Rembert J. Reilly, O.S.B. '48  
Daniel O'Connell '49  
Kenneth O'Neil '49  
Joseph A. Manfredi '52  
Robert R. Giacobbe '53

Francis Falter '55  
Joseph F. Kelly, Jr. '55  
Charles P. Drew '56  
Patrick J. McDonald '58  
Robert C. Juster '59  
Roger H. Cook '61  
Br. Jonathan Hunt, O.S.B. '61  
James C. Welsh '63  
Robert F. Gist, Jr. '65  
Michael F. Pasquale '65  
Kenneth T. Marion '67  
Patrick J. McCarthy '67

Thomas C. Prendergast '68  
Mike O'Neill '69  
Brian Hester '82  
Wallace Snow '92  
Tyquan McAllister '02

### COMMUNITY

Albert L. Calloway  
Father of A.J. '93  
James A. Caruso, Jr.  
Father of Anthony '71 and James '77  
Julie Cawley  
Spouse of Charles '58†

Zandra Chambers  
Mother-in-Law of Anthony Ballard '91  
Peter J. Cooney  
Son of Robert '55  
Yolanda Curry  
Mother of Naji '09  
Joan Dalton  
Wife of Jack '44†, Mother of Tim '81  
Marie D'Arcy Vanderveer  
Sister of Andy '89, Aunt of Andrew '22  
Dorothy Mae Dobbins  
Grandmother of Tyquan McAllister '02



### Architect of Change

At the heart of the plan to reopen St. Benedict's Prep in 1973 was an unassuming, reserved alumnus named **Roger Cook '61**, who passed away on March 18. Mr. Cook developed the roadmap detailing the steps needed for a strong foundation for the reborn School: strategic planning, communications, fundraising and outreach to alumni and friends.

When the effort began, Mr. Cook was just 29 and a newly minted M.B.A. from Northwestern University. A roll-up-your-sleeves kind of guy, Mr. Cook got to work immediately. First, he tapped his father, **J. Franklin Cook H'80**, a retired Investment Banker, along with ADP Executive **Carl Quick H'79** for their business know-how. Then, he reached out to a talented team of alumni, eventually establishing a group that became the School's Advisory Board, which Mr. Cook led for seven years beginning in 1973.

To establish a firm financial base for the new St. Benedict's, Mr. Cook enlisted the support of loyal Gray Bees, starting with his own Class of 1961, which today is still one of The Hive's leading classes for giving. Later, he broadened his efforts to generate support from friends of the School and corporate donors. Mr. Cook went on to a successful career in business with Morgan Guaranty Trust Company of New York, J.P. Morgan Securities, Inc., Louis Dreyfus Energy Corp., and Heating Oil Partners, L.P., a firm he co-founded in 1995.

Headmaster Fr. Edwin D. Leahy, O.S.B. '63 credits Mr. Cook with laying much of the groundwork for the rebirth of St. Benedict's: "Roger's steadfastness in all things financial, academic and moral moved this community forward."



### Icon in the Stands

**Joan Dalton** never taught at St. Benedict's Prep, but to generations of Gray Bees, she was the School's biggest cheerleader. Mrs. Dalton, who passed away on March 28, was the wife of legendary history teacher and Hall of Fame basketball Coach **Jack Dalton '44**. During the 1950s, Mrs. Dalton was a familiar face in the stands of Shanley Gymnasium, urging the Gray Bees on to victory.

Several decades later, Mrs. Dalton planted the seed for Mr. Dalton's return to The Hive. Like other St. Benedict's educators, Mr. Dalton was out of a job when the School announced that it was closing in 1972. He found a coaching and teaching position in Roselle Park, but St. Benedict's was never far from his mind.

Eight years later, Mrs. Dalton set the wheels in motion with a simple request. Headmaster Fr. Edwin D. Leahy, O.S.B. '63 recalled that the Daltons' son, **Tim Dalton '81**, was ready to enter his freshman year at The Hive: "I will never forget the day, in what was then the library, Joan said to me, 'Why don't you ask Jack to come back?' I did, and Jack's presence changed everything." In his book *The Miracle on High Street*, Tom McCabe wrote that Mr. Dalton's return somehow meant that "Benedict's was back."

A mother of six, Mrs. Dalton was an alumna of Elizabeth General Hospital School of Nursing, graduating as a registered nurse. She later earned bachelor's, master's, and doctoral-equivalent degrees from New Jersey City University, and enjoyed a long career as a nurse and health educator. **B**

by Paul Thornton '63

Darryl Gibbs  
*Father of Farad Lowther '10*  
Claude Gonzaga  
*Father of Grace Lenahan (Faculty),  
Grandfather of Kieran '11*  
Destry Harris  
*Brother of Mark Alston '80*  
Kevin Jackson  
*Father of Kevin '20*

Samuel Kurus  
*Brother of William '93*  
Jeanette Lara  
*Mother of Richard Lopez '09*  
Emmitt McAllister  
*Grandfather of Tyquan '02†*  
Edwina L. McCarthy  
*Wife of Richard*  
Rufus McClendon  
*Father of Alexander '83*

Alice Moore  
*Friend of Newark Abbey*  
John Morgan  
*Father of David '87*  
Mary Alice Morrison  
*Mother of Harold,  
Former Board Member*  
Patricia Notchey  
*Grandmother of Matt Jensen '09*  
Ken Poku  
*Grandfather of Princeton Addo '20*

Daniel, Ramos  
*Brother of John '95*  
Rocio Roldan  
*Mother of John Paul Solorzano '23*  
Ethan Stahl  
*Son of Harry '61*  
Mary E. Thornton  
*Father of Paul '63, Greg '67,  
Grandmother of Matthew '92*  
Paul Chavis Woolridge  
*Cousin of A.J. Calloway '93*



# COVID-19: A New and Worthy Challenge

by Reuben Kadushin '21

Rummaging through small piles of garbage, clothes and books, as my roommates and I were packing our clothes a few months early, one of them said to me, "If Benedict's is closing down, this virus stuff must be serious; we don't shut down for nothing!" Usually at 9 p.m. in the Leahy House you could find an odd assortment of kids either studying, cleaning and playing — or failing to do all at once — but all I could find that night were seniors from Brazil to New York and Texas solemnly saying goodbye to each other for what felt like would be the last time. The following morning, during what would be the last live Convocation of the year, in his stern, all-knowing — yet equally humorous — tone, Fr. Ed told the community, "Yes, we're going to be learning from home, but I'm only shutting this down because I'm more worried for your grandparents' health than yours." He told us that this virus is something bigger than us — very serious and out of our control — and should not be taken as an annoyance, but rather another adversity for the community to overcome: Another thing to not quit.


St. Benedict's faced the fact that the pandemic was here to stay during its transition to distance learning and then steadfastly worked around that idea as a community. By accepting that COVID-19 has no postpone button, the School decided that its ambitions of connectedness would not have one either. Undeterred by the sudden lack of shared experiences that are integral to its sense of community, St. Benedict's made every effort to simulate what happened on the Property onto our screens.

For example, to make up for lost time, my calculus and physics office hours became a place for faculty and students to check up on each other. And from online morning group, student-led Virtual Convo, the "Tuesdays with Cass" weekly discussions among faculty, alumni and students

about current events and social justice issues, senior and group leadership interviews and student blogging for *The Benedict News*, any opportunity for student leadership was taken. Even with regard to future plans, the decision to move Summer Phase to early July would not have been made had the students, using the online semester as a precedent, hypothetically disagreed with the faculty. Students also contributed to the planning for the Fall Term. The sense that students still had their voice as the faculty handled the pandemic's unpleasant logistics gave many students — though not all — a needed sense of connectedness with their community while facing this adversity. By almost forcing itself to run normally and encouraging full student body participation, St. Benedict's put itself in a situation where it could transition back to in-person learning and leadership almost seamlessly.

Though most students maintained a similar performance between their virtual and in-person semesters according to Math Department Chair Craig White '04, the attempt at connectedness did fail at times. Students who benefit from the constant encouragement of their peers' leadership were at risk of suffering academically and personally. A group leader I spoke to noticed a significant decline in morale and focus among members of his group, and because of the distance between their screens, could not bolster them in the ways in which he usually did. However, these issues are not unseen. And instead of accepting them as a downside to Benedict's virtual experience, in student think tanks many are working with faculty to address these issues directly for next fall, so the community can provide the academic and emotional support its students can't do without.

What other institutions can learn from St. Benedict's about online learning is that it should be approached as a collaborative, persistent, possible process between students and adults. Neither the teacher nor the student understands how to simulate the in-person class experience, and the only way around or under that wall is through intensive dialogue. Both sides of the screen cannot be discouraged by an initial decline in academic quality if there is not just compromise, but creativity. The same idea goes for maintaining a sense of a community: It has to be emphasized that the entire School — faculty and students — is undergoing adversity as a collective, and every step that can be taken to alleviate whatever chaos our peers will be going through must be taken, or morale will dwindle. The pandemic must not be seen as a lost cause, but rather, a new, worthy challenge.

*Reuben Kadushin '21 wrote for The Benedict News, was a varsity wrestler, Academic Dean of Leahy House and member of the National Honor Society during the 2019-2020 academic year. He will do a postgraduate year at St. Benedict's in order to write a novella and serve as Transfer Leader. *





***"Forward, ever forward, everywhere forward.  
We cannot be held back by...the difficulties of the times....  
Man's adversity is God's opportunity."***

**Abbot Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B.  
Founder St. Mary's Abbey, Newark**

# THANK YOU

**Despite the unprecedented trials of 2020,  
you have made it an extraordinary year for The Hive.**

***AND NOW WE MOVE FORWARD.***

**To go forward with us, please visit [SBP.ORG/FORWARD](https://sbp.org/forward).**



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due to Covid-19 restrictions.

# 2020 GRAY BEE GOLF OUTING

**Monday, September 21**

Spring Lake Golf Club  
[sbp.org/graybeegolfouting](http://sbp.org/graybeegolfouting)



**HALL OF FAME  
INDUCTION DINNER**

**Wednesday, October 21**

Nanina's in the Park  
[sbp.org/hof](http://sbp.org/hof)



For more information, please contact Mary Hauck at [mhauck@sbp.org](mailto:mhauck@sbp.org) or (973) 792-5776.