

IRISH

spring 2012

8

Walt Szymanski

NDHS grad ('72) returns to the Motor City for jazz fest; talks about his music, his mentor and his high school

plus:

Emily Kutil

Greg Stempin

Nick Giacona

Fr. Champagne

Don Kolke

Irish news

Alumni notes

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IRISH

IRISH is a magazine devoted to the alumni and friends of Notre Dame Preparatory, Notre Dame, Oakland Catholic, Pontiac Catholic, St. Michael and St. Frederick schools. It is distributed free of charge. For more information, please see the alumni section of Notre Dame Prep's web site at www.ndpma.org/alumni.

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ON THE COVER: Walt Szymanski '72 (NDHS) has played with jazz luminaries J.C. Heard, Clark Terry and Dizzy Gillespie.

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A WORD FROM YOUR ALUMNI DIRECTOR



There are many things that make Notre Dame an extraordinary place, from its rigorous academics led by dedicated faculty to its Christ-centered mission and devotion to our Blessed Mother. One important thing that distinguishes us from other schools in our area, of which we are most proud, is our growing network of alumni volunteers. The readiness and enthusiasm of Notre Dame's alumni to give of their time, talents and treasure is something Notre Dame celebrates. Though our alumni association in its current state is young – having been established as a full-service and full-time effort on our campus just four years ago – we've been able to develop a wide range of programming to keep alumni connected to our alma mater through the help of volunteers. Continued and increased volunteer efforts are critical to the long-term health of our school.

In October, we honored Jim Gammicchia '99 (NDP) as our alumni volunteer of the year, recognizing Jim's service as president of the alumni board of directors since 2009. While Jim was happy to receive this honor, he said that he doesn't serve Notre Dame to be applauded; he serves Notre Dame because he cares about the long-term success of the school and its alumni association. We hear the same sentiment from other alumni volunteers along with our alumni-parent, current-parent and student volunteers again and again – "we volunteer because we care."

Consider the efforts of alumni volunteers throughout the year – they help with hosting our grand homecoming celebrations, planning class reunions, and organizing alumni activities like the Detroit Tigers outing, business networking breakfasts, Traveling Irish Dinners, art show and others. They have a presence on our campus – speaking to students about their careers, talking with incoming families at open houses, and attending Irish sporting events and liturgies.

To all of our alumni who give their valuable time, I wish to express my sincere appreciation. And to all alumni who might consider getting involved this year, I invite you to join us in any capacity that feels right for you—whether that's volunteering or simply becoming active in our alumni association. The good work you do for Notre Dame will help preserve and promote its mission, traditions and community for years to come.

Irish blessings,

Rachel (Alexander) Miller '00 (NDP)
Director of Alumni Relations

YOU ARE INVITED!

Annual Alumni Meeting – Tuesday, May 8, 2012
6:00 p.m. at NDPMA, Pontiac

Election of new members to the board of directors will be held. Volunteer committees for various alumni events will be formed.
RSVP to miller@ndpma.org.

GET INVOLVED!

Serve on the board

Consider serving on the alumni board of directors, a dynamic group of alumni that meets once each month. To nominate yourself to the ballot, visit www.ndpma.org/alumniboard. Nominations for new board members are welcomed through April 30. The election will take place at the annual meeting on May 8.

Join a committee

We are seeking committee members for the following 2012-2013 alumni events. Committees can set their own schedules and meet as frequently as they determine necessary.

- Homecoming
- Traveling Irish Dinners
- Art Show
- Hockey Tournament
- Night at the Palace of Auburn Hills
- Alumni Irish Games
- Softball Tournament
- Alumni Professionals Networking Group
- Detroit Tigers Outing

Become a Class Captain

Were you a leader in your class while in high school? Become a class captain and help your alumni classmates stay connected to the alumni association. For more information, visit www.ndpma.org/classcaps.

Attend an event

See calendar of events on page 14.

Get the e-newsletter

The monthly alumni e-newsletter has a fresh new format and is the best way to keep up with alumni association news. Update your e-mail address to ensure you are receiving it, and be sure that your spam filter allows incoming communications from the Notre Dame Alumni Office.



Over 100 attend alumni art show reception

More than 100 people turned out on Jan. 26 for the opening reception of the annual alumni art show hosted by the Notre Dame Alumni Association. Twenty-one artists, including alumni from Notre Dame Prep and Notre Dame High School, exhibited art in media ranging from oil and watercolor to photography and sculpture.



NDHS '82 alum artist Bryan Ureel, left, with Duane Holmes, who taught Ureel at NDHS, at the alumni art show reception. Holmes currently works in the NDPMA athletic department.

NDPMA's Betty Wroubel named athletic director of the year

Michigan's professional organization of



school athletic directors, the Michigan Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (MIAAA), has selected Betty Wroubel of Notre Dame Preparatory School as regional Athletic Director of the Year.

One of only fourteen administrators state wide to be honored by the MIAAA, Betty will be presented the award in Traverse City on Mar. 17, 2012, at the annual MIAAA Mid-

Winter Conference, in which over 500 athletic directors participate. (Source: MIAAA)

NDP senior reaches 1,000 career points

Notre Dame Prep senior Kellen McCormick reached the 1,000-point milestone Jan. 20 as the Fighting Irish defeated the previously unbeaten Ventures of Bishop Foley, 67-60, in a Catholic League division showdown.

Needing 18 points to reach the 1K high-school career mark coming into the game, McCormick, who signed with Western Michigan University, put in 21 for the night. It's the first time a basketball player from NDP—boy or girl—has attained 1,000 points in a high school career.

McCormick also has been nominated as a 2012 McDonald's Basketball All-American, one of only six boys from Michigan.



NDP ACT score goes from great to 'greater'

Notre Dame Preparatory School's 2011 graduates posted a school-record ACT average composite score of 26.58, which is higher than any average composite score earned by the school since it opened in 1994.

Last year's graduating class posted a 26.25 score that also exceeded all previous NDP scores and far exceeded state averages for that year. This year, the American College Testing Program (ACT) said the Michigan average was 20.0 and the national average 21.1.

Scores are on a scale of 1 to 36, with 36 being the highest.

It also is noteworthy that in each of the past three years, Notre Dame has had a student earn a perfect individual (student) ACT

score. Less than one-tenth of one percent of individual test takers nationwide score a 36.

Two of nine class B scholar-athletes from NDP

Sara Barron and Nathaniel Gaynor, two seniors at Notre Dame Prep, earned scholarships through the Michigan High School Athletic Association Scholar-Athlete Award

program. Barron and Gaynor, who is the son of Paul Gaynor '84 (NDHS) and grandson of the late Ray Gaynor '58 (NDHS), had two of the nine total scholarships awarded in class B in the state.



Sara Marie Barron: Expects to graduate with nine varsity letters, including four each in track and field and cross country. Will attend Vanderbilt University and study business and pre-law.

Nathaniel P. Gaynor: Planning to play his second season of varsity lacrosse this spring and also played two varsity seasons of soccer. Served as a captain in both sports; his soccer team was a Catholic League finalist in the fall, and his lacrosse team was an MHSAA Semifinalist last spring. Will attend the University of Michigan and study journalism.

United divisions: ND's Jr.-K through 5th grade to move

Head of School Fr. Leon Olszamowski, s.m., announced in early January that Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy's board of trustees approved a proposal to move the school's lower division from Waterford to property adjacent to its main campus in northeast Pontiac. The lower division, which is known as Notre Dame Marist Academy, enrolls children in junior kindergarten through fifth grade. School officials say it could be as early as fall 2012 that lower-division students would join Notre Dame's middle and upper divisions at its Pontiac campus on Giddings Road.

Olszamowski says that bringing all three divisions together in one location has been a long-time goal. "Our school was meant to be one school with three divisions, but that hasn't necessarily been the case due to the distance," he said. Currently, the lower division uses a building that formerly housed St. Benedict's Catholic School on 60 S. Lynn Road, about five miles from Notre Dame's Pontiac facility.

Students collect and donate over 900 gifts for the needy

During the week before Christmas, about 925 gifts collected from students and staff of NDPMA were delivered to the needy at the Whitmer Human Resource Center and Baldwin Center in Pontiac.

The presents were collected and placed under a Christmas tree in the school's main lobby as part of "The Great Give," which was sponsored by the campus ministry department.

"The final tally for the Great Give includes \$5,678 collected during the Thanksgiving Food Drive and over 925 gifts collected during the Christmas Giving Tree portion of the Great Give," said Cathy Zucarro of Campus Ministry. "The stu-



dents, faculty and staff did an awesome job. In addition we adopted 15 students from WHRC and delivered their gifts, too! We have 699 students in the high school — we were hoping for 100% participation — we definitely exceeded that!”

Alum named one of nation's 30 Lowe's Senior CLASS Award candidates



Central Michigan's Molly Coldren, who graduated from Notre Dame Prep in 2008, is one of 30 student-athletes selected for the Lowe's Senior CLASS Award. Coldren, who plays softball for the Chippewas, currently

has a 3.52 GPA and in 2011 was named to the Capital One Academic All-District IV third team and was on the Academic All-MAC team.

Senior stars with DSO Civic Jazz Orchestra

NDP senior Michael Klepp performed at the Max M. Fisher Music Center on Jan. 6 as part of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Civic Jazz Orchestra. Klepp's trombone work also led to significant solo opportunities for him as the band played jazz hits such as "Fireshaker" by Maynard Ferguson.



For this performance, the group of young musicians was led by noted Detroit jazz mentor and drummer Sean Dobbins.

ND teacher/coach named one of CHSL's greatest athletes

Notre Dame Prep alumna, coach and teacher Bobbie (Bieszki) Hall has been honored as one of the best athletes in the history of the



Catholic High School League. Hall is one of 39 female athletes named to the CHSL list, which also includes Pontiac Catholic athletes Mary Haslinger '83, Vicki Morrow '83 and Bridget Syron '82.

Hall, who graduated from NDP in 2000, currently coaches JV basketball and assists in softball, and teaches English and health/PE in NDPMA's upper and middle divisions. A three-sport standout who earned

all-state recognition in basketball, volleyball and softball, she was NDP's first Division-1 athlete to sign a National Letter of Intent. She owns the following school records in basketball: assists in a career (316); three-pointers in a game (6); second all-time in assists in a season (104); and second all-time in career steals (187).

NDP senior is a state Heisman winner

NDP senior Sara Barron has been named the winner of the Wendy's High School Heisman Award, the first for a Notre Dame Prep student. The award is given to exemplary high school seniors with high GPAs who have earned a varsity letter prior to their senior year and are leaders in their community. Barron and Joe Mancinotti are the 2011-2012 "school" winners for NDP.



Only one girl and one boy from each state and the District of Columbia are chosen as winners of this award.

Alumni 'Night at the Palace'

Alumni from Notre Dame High School and Notre Dame Preparatory School, along with their guests, watched the University of Michigan Wolverines beat the Oakland University Grizzlies in basketball at the Palace of Auburn Hills on Saturday, Dec. 10, 2011. The annual event, which is generally a Detroit Pistons game, was hosted by the Notre Dame Alumni Association Board of Directors. Special thanks to Julie Kherker '01 (NDP) and Trent Thiry '00 (NDP) for their help in organizing this enjoyable evening.

Notre Dame Prep wins CHSL Prep Bowl

Notre Dame Prep defeated Ann Arbor Gabriel Richard 38-7 in the Catholic High School League Prep Bowl at Ford Field. The Irish (9-0 at the time) finished its regular season undefeated, the first time in school history.



Fr. Leon Olszawowski and Br. Louis Plourde celebrate the Irish Prep Bowl victory with the Notre Dame Prep team at Ford Field on Oct. 22, 2011.

NDP also earned Prep Bowl championships in 2006 and 2007. The team finished the season 10-1 during the state playoffs.

ND Prep's Zimmerman is coach of the year



Kyle Zimmerman, who led Notre Dame Prep's varsity football team to an undefeated regular season and a CHSL Prep Bowl championship, was named Coach of the Year in Oakland County. Zimmerman took the team (10-1) to the state regionals and ended up with the most wins for a season in school history.

"He's really building something special at Notre Dame Prep and very deserving of this honor," said Oakland Press sportswriter Keith Dunlap.

Alumni donors honored at St. Peter Chanel dinner

Thirteen alumni were honored on Wednesday, Oct. 26, at the St. Peter Chanel donor appreciation dinner, which was held at the Lafayette Grande in Pontiac. These alumni, along with over one hundred other friends of the school, are members of the exclusive St. Peter Chanel Society, which honors individuals whose support of NDPMA and enthusiasm for its role in private, Catholic education is exceptional.

Through their contributions of leadership gifts to the 2010-2011 Annual Fund (gifts of \$1,000 or more), these alumni demonstrated a deep and genuine concern for the school and contributed substantially to support its continued excellence and fiscal soundness. St. Peter Chanel Society members' gifts to the 2010-2011 Annual Fund ranged from \$1,000 to \$25,000.

Among alumni especially recognized for their contributions were

Tony Cervone '81 (NDHS), Patrice D'Agostini (wife of the late Edigio "Gino" D'Agostini '64 (NDHS)), Paul Gaynor '84 (NDHS), Andrew Guest '84 (NDHS), Patrick Haddad '81 (NDHS), Michael Housey '84 (NDHS), Paul Housey '88 (NDHS), Joseph Kotzan '70 (NDHS), Frank Migliazzo '69 (NDHS), Kristopher Powell '75 (NDHS), Joseph Rumph '01 (NDP), Peter Sullivan '82 (NDHS) and Lloyd Vaughn '84 (NDHS).

NDP senior, Nathaniel Gaynor, who is the son of Paul Gaynor '84 (NDHS) and the grandson of the late Raymond Gaynor '58 (NDHS), gave a speech about the many "hats" he wears within the school community.

Tom Strasz '68 (NDHS) ordained as deacon for the Archdiocese of Detroit

On Sat., Oct. 1, 2011, Tom Strasz '68 (NDHS) was ordained by Detroit Archbishop Allen Vigneron as a permanent deacon for the Archdiocese of Detroit. He has been assigned to St. Joan of Arc Parish in St. Clair Shores. Strasz is the brother of NDP Assistant Principal and Religion Chair, Fr. Jim Strasz '70 (NDHS) and the father of Thomas Strasz '97 (NDHS).



Alumna has article published in USA Today

Amanda Bokshan '11 (NDP) is a freshman at the University of Michigan and writes for The Odyssey, a fraternity and sorority weekly newspaper that is rather unique on campuses across the U.S. Her article titled, "Opinion: Why College Athletes Should Not Be Paid," was published in the college edition of USA Today. Amanda is a member of Sigma Kappa studying sports management.

St. Fred's all-class reunion draws nearly 200 graduates

The 2011 St. Frederick All Class Reunion took place on Sun., Sept. 11, 2011. That morning, alumni from class years ranging from 1933 to 1971 had an opportunity to tour the old school building on Whittemore St. in Pontiac, which was home to St. Frederick School from 1927 through 1969. The building is now occupied by Great Lakes Academy, a charter school. It was a nostalgic morning, as alumni



walked the hallowed halls of their alma mater and reminisced about their school days spent in the classrooms. There were lots of stories being told about the sisters who taught the students, and about what their schooling was like 50+ years ago.

Mass was held at St. Vincent de Paul in Pontiac and a luncheon followed at Santia Hall in Keego Harbor.

Jeanette (DeClerk) DeConick '47 and Joyce Santana '51 were presented with the Lawrence Dusenbury '38 Award, honoring their service to the alumni association. DeConick has served as secretary for the alumni association and has been a strong supporter of the restoration efforts at St. Vincent de Paul in Pontiac. Santana has served the alumni association in a variety of ways including coordinating the golf outing, Dream Cruise festivities and fish fry events.

Thank you to Patty Dean Phillips '52 (SF), Jim Russell '55 (SF) and the entire reunion committee for organizing a wonderful event again this year. To view more photos, visit www.ndpma.org/stfrederickphotos.

Alumna to direct NDP play, "Our Town"

Meredith Gifford '02 (NDP) will direct Notre Dame Prep Players' spring play, "Our Town," which will run Mar. 30 through Apr. 1 at Avondale High School's auditorium in Auburn Hills.

Gifford is experienced on the stage, having majored in music and theatre while a student at Viterbo University. After graduation, Gifford spent three years in South Korea acting in live shows that helped teach Korean children the English language. She currently is involved with Meadow Brook Theatre in Rochester Hills, where she has been part of productions including "Something Wicked This Way Comes," "A Christmas Carol," and "Mary Stuart." For information on purchasing tickets to see "Our Town," visit www.ndpma.org.



Coulier stars in web series

Dave Coulier '77 (NDHS) reunited with his "Full House" co-star, Jodie Sweetin (Stephanie Tanner) in a new web series that premiered at the end of Oct. 2011. The series, "Can't Get Arrested," featured Coulier and Sweetin playing themselves as they encounter an unexpected chance to re-ignite their careers. Other stars in the show include Dennis Haskins (Mr. Belding) from "Saved by the Bell" and the infamous O.J. Simpson



house guest, Kato Kaelin. Coulier also continues to tour as a stand-up comedian, and recently opened the 2011 Blue Water Film Festival in Port Huron, Mich. Episodes of his web show can be accessed at cantgetarrestedshow.com. Coulier will be performing on May 12 at Notre Dame Prep in Pontiac to benefit the Fr. John Bryson, s.m., Scholarship Fund. Go to ndpma.org for more information and tickets.

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Architect-in-the-making is building a big future

Emily Kutil '07 (NDP) is currently working on her master's degree in architecture at the University of Michigan. She graduated from the University of Cincinnati in 2011, receiving a BS degree in architecture. While at UC, Kutil was fortunate enough to work in three different co-op jobs in three different cities. She says that experience was invaluable not only in what she learned about her field but for how it helped with her self confidence. Kutil spoke with IRISH about these experiences and about her time at Notre Dame.

IRISH: Why did you choose the University of Cincinnati for college?

KUTIL: I decided to go to UC for a few reasons. I wanted to study architecture and they had one of the best programs around. UC is a co-op school (which means you alternate work and school every other quarter). And I wanted to travel, so co-op sounded great to me. Also, when I visited the school, there were life-sized robots made of junk all over the building that the first year architecture students had made. Who doesn't want to make junk robots?!

IRISH: Were you involved in your college? Did/do you hold any special office?

KUTIL: Architecture is kind of a funny major in that you spend probably 80% of your life inside the studio. It's a very communal environment—kind of like being in a fraternity or sorority, a sports team, and a study group all at once. Because of the extremely long hours, there wasn't a whole lot of time to do many extracurricular activities (although I did know some people who did). I really had a lot of fun getting involved within the architecture school, though. I was a teaching assistant, I always got very involved in the group work in my studios, and I worked for one of my professors for six months, helping her with her book.

Oh, I also was on the UC waterski team for a year and a half, before co-op made it too difficult. They were a club team that competed nationally. That was a pretty great experience. Collegiate waterskiing tournaments are a blast.

IRISH: Tell us about your co-ops.

KUTIL: I had three co-ops (three-month internships) while I was in school. My first

job was working for an architecture and graphics firm called M1/dtw in downtown Detroit. There were only two people in the firm at the time, and it was a fantastic place to be introduced to architectural practice. The people were wonderful, the work was really interesting, and I had a great time exploring the city of Detroit.

My second job was in Los Angeles, working for another architecture and graphics firm called Osborn Architects. This firm was quite a bit larger (25 people), and I had a lot of responsibilities. I was terrified at first, but I came out of the experience a much more self-confident designer.

My third job was for Black River Design Architects in Montpelier, Vermont. I was working in an entirely different sphere of architecture than what I had done at Osborn, so again it was a great learning experience.

My co-ops really changed the way I thought about my abilities as a designer (and as a kid alone in a new city). Even though it was pretty stressful to find jobs and to move every three months, I am definitely a more mature and self-assured person for having gone through the program.

IRISH: What about your post-graduate plans?

KUTIL: I am going to grad school at the University of Michigan. It's also a great architecture school, and I was looking for a program that was a little stronger academically than UC's program was. U of M's architecture school is full of energy—I'm excited about all of the opportunities there are here to do really interesting work. To become a licensed architect, you have to get your professional degree (which at most schools mean a master's degree).

IRISH: What are your goals in terms of a career?

KUTIL: I am kind of all over the place,



Emily Kutil '07 (NDP) is currently at U of M in a master's program for architecture. Upper left, Kutil stands in front of a design she created for a new Catholic church.

honestly. I want to do something with design. I want to become a licensed architect, because it gives you freedom to do just about anything professionally. I might want to teach architecture. Lately, I've been thinking I'd really like to get involved with museum exhibition.

IRISH: Is there any advice you'd offer to current NDP students who may be thinking of pursuing a career in architecture?

KUTIL: I guess the first thing I would say is, it's not engineering, and it's not art. It's something totally different from either of those things. It's sort of a major where you do a little bit of everything. You are allowed to be intensely creative and intensely pragmatic at the same time. The best way to know if you'd like it is to go to an architecture school and talk to the students.

Also, be prepared to work really, really

Please see Architect, page 25

Michael Paletta '75 (NDHS) volunteered for active duty in Iraq in 2007 and trained Iraqi doctors in aerospace medicine at an airbase in Baghdad.



Doctor on a mission

ALUM PHYSICIAN AND VETERAN DEVOTES HIS CAREER TO HOSPICE

Notre Dame High School graduate Michael Paletta, MD, '75 is the Vice President of Medical Affairs for Hospice of Michigan and the executive director of the Maggie Allesee Center for Quality of Life. As VPMA at HOM, he oversees 10 physicians across the state who deliver care to more than 900 patients each day. Paletta is involved in the policies, procedures, and day-to-day decision-making related to patient care. Since joining Hospice of Michigan in 1997, he has been at the forefront of the dramatic shift in acceptance of hospice and palliative care as an important benefit for patients with life-limiting illnesses.

Though hospice care is frequently misunderstood, Paletta believes it is a vital and wonderful service.

"Hospice takes care of patients and families who are facing end of life decisions and issues," Paletta said. "These people are dealing with serious illnesses and are trying to tie up the loose pieces of their lives. We try to help them have a peaceful, controlled and dignified last chapter of their life on Earth."

In a recent news article, Paletta was quoted as saying that hospice care is not about giving up, it's about changing tactics. "It's about identifying pain symptoms and making loved ones as comfortable as possible. This allows those in the final stages of life to focus on family and friends, to express and share their love and have meaningful healing conversations."

He notes that multidisciplinary teams from HOM come into the home or wherever the patients reside. These teams, which could include doctors, nurses, social workers, spiritual advisors and religious clergy, have a structured approach and plan. "It includes pain control, of course, and symptom management so that dying persons and their families can more easily go through the healing process that often occurs at the end of life," he said. "And with all of the chaos that could be occurring then—medical insurance problems, financial issues, family issues—we try to bring a semblance of real order and make it much easier to deal with."

Training quarterbacks

Paletta's professional role with HOM, which is one of the largest

independent nonprofit hospice organizations in the country, is not only to help the organization's leadership set policies and procedures from a medical standpoint, it is to recruit and train physicians across the state who can serve as "quarterbacks" for these care teams. He says it's critically important that in all the major cities in the state where Hospice of Michigan operates, the organization has good physician leaders who specialize in end-of-life care.

In addition, Paletta, through the Maggie Allesee Center, is involved with research and education to look for new and better ways to enhance care for patients and families at this late but important time of life.

"For example," he said, "Recently after a meeting I had with my team of physicians in Grand Rapids, I visited a veterans' care facility in Muskegon. We've developed a specific program that focuses on care for veterans of WWII and Korea, who are now in their 80s and 90s and facing end-of-life issues, along with, in some cases, long-lingering problems left over from their combat experiences, such as post-traumatic stress syndrome, which may have been dormant for many years, but are now coming out as they face the end of life."

Early experience with geriatric medicine led to hospice work

Paletta is a graduate of Wayne State University School of Medicine in Detroit. He completed his residency at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak and is board certified in internal medicine. He was awarded a fellowship in geriatric medicine at the University of Michigan and earned a Certificate of Added Qualifications (CAQ) in geriatrics. In addition, he received certification under the American Board of Hospice and Palliative Medicine, and re-certification under the American Board of Medical Specialties. He also is a distinguished fellow of the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine. Paletta is married (Cheryl) with two sons, Matt and Jeff, and lives in Northville Township.

As to what led Paletta to take on his current career track in hospice, he says that after a residency in internal medicine, he did a fellowship and post-doctoral training in geriatric medicine at U of M and then practiced geriatrics at Henry Ford Hospital for about nine years. He quickly realized that as many of his patients entered the fi-

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ND GRAD ('72) RETURNS TO THE MOTOR CITY FOR JAZZ FEST; TALKS ABOUT HIS MUSIC, HIS MENTOR AND HIS HIGH SCHOOL

jazz man

On Sunday, Sept. 4, at the 2011 Detroit Jazz Festival, Walt Szymanski '72 (NDHS), a noted trumpeter and band leader who has traveled the globe playing with such jazz luminaries as Clark Terry, Thad Jones, Dizzy Gillespie and the Duke Ellington Orchestra, directed the J.C. Heard Orchestra in a rousing tribute to the late drummer Heard.

Szymanski's ties with Heard go back to the late 70s when he signed on as music director and arranger with the legendary jazz drummer after Heard caught a gig by the young musician at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island. Szymanski went on to tour extensively around the world with Heard until the drummer's passing in 1988. Eric Heard, J.C. Heard's son, says Szymanski played a significant role in his father's orchestra. "Yes, he was one of the three trumpet players in the orchestra but more importantly, he was my father's musical director, responsible for writing most of his big band arrangements. He helped my father bring his musical vision to life."

Since then, Szymanski, who counts NYC as his home base, has been extremely busy with projects ranging from the Mingus Big Band and the Jazz Composers Orchestra to serving as official Jazz Ambassador for the U.S. State Department and the Kennedy Center. He also served as principal music arranger at President Barack Obama's 2009 inaugural event. He currently is in South America for a teaching stint at a prestigious university in Ecuador.

Szymanski began his musical career at the age of seven when he was a soprano soloist in St. Raymond's parish choir in Detroit. As a student at Notre Dame in Harper Woods, under the tutelage of band director Larry Egan, Szymanski quickly changed his focus from vocalizing to playing the trumpet and soon captured first chair in wind ensemble and then lead trumpet in the jazz big band and school pit orchestra. In his senior year at ND, Szymanski earned the Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia award for the "Best Jazz Trumpet" in Michigan. After graduating from Notre Dame in 1972, he went on to study jazz at the University of Michigan and Oakland University.

Contacted in Ecuador recently, he spent some time with IRISH to discuss his career, including his formative years at NDHS.

IRISH: What specifically are your current responsibilities as professor of jazz studies at the college in Ecuador?

SZYMANSKI: My current responsibilities at USFQ-IMC (Universidad San Francisco de Quito - Instituto de Música Contemporánea) include Professor of Brasswinds (department head and private studio instructor), Director of Jazz Big Band and Mini Big Band, Lecturer in Arranging and Composition, and Instructor of Vocal Jazz Improvisation. Additionally, I write arrangements for the big band, mini ensemble and vocal jazz improv group. So it's private lessons, big and mini big band rehearsals, jazz vocal improv classes and finally arranging and composition classroom along with office hours.

Although the program is an affiliate of Berklee College of Music in Boston, my being here at the university has nothing to do with my Berklee associations. In 2006, Marvin "Doc" Holladay, who founded and headed the Afram Jazz Program at Oakland University, retired to Ecuador. He subsequently invited me to visit in January 2007 to per-

form a series of concerts in Quito and Guayaquil. The musicians were excellent and we became instant "brothers." I fell in love with the country, the people, the vibe, et al. At that point I began to make bi-annual trips of two to three months to Quito and became as my friends here say "a name brand." Fast forwarding to 2010 finds me hired for a three-month residency as "Maestro" of the Teatro Sucre Nacional, where I conducted the Nacional Sinfonica and Jazz Orchestras. This position was offered to me on a permanent basis, however, a failed coup d'etat



The legendary jazz drummer J.C. Heard was an important influence on Walt Szymanski '72 (NDHS) and his career. Szymanski was Heard's music director and arranger for many years. Heard died in 1988 at the age of 71.

put an end to that and put me back in NYC for the winter—first time in four years. I was then hired as a music writer/arranger/orchestrator for American Idol. I also had been working for Ray Chew at B.E.T. and when he got the American Idol show, he brought me on board. So between that and other creative projects, I was kind of grooving back in New York and then out of the blue I got a call from the dean of the IMC program asking if I'd be interested in joining the faculty at USFQ - IMC. The university is the largest private university in Ecuador and has state-of-the-art facilities and resources, so I negotiated a contract during that

phone call and made my way back to Ecuador immediately following the Detroit Jazz Festival. It is an awesome experience as part of the artist cycle to have mentors when you are young and then to become one myself in later years. I am now completing that cycle.

IRISH: How long will you be in Ecuador?

SZYMANSKI: I will be returning to my position for the winter semester and my hope is to make this my new base of operations. I love the university, the students and the creative life that it affords me to pursue. Plus we are in a sub-tropical climate at 8,000 feet, so the weather is perfect! 75°-80° every day, 55°-60° at night, low humidity and brilliant sunshine, right on the equator.

IRISH: Sounds awesome! Will you be playing any shows anywhere in the meantime? Any in the U.S.?

SZYMANSKI: I have already done five major shows here in Quito over the past three months and we have a faculty group at the school that performs regularly. And of course when I am back in the states, I will be doing various performances and gigs.

IRISH: We loved your appearance in Detroit on Labor Day weekend 2011. What does it mean to you when you do such shows?

SZYMANSKI: Thank you. J.C. was one of my most important mentors, he taught me how to be a man in the music business and to manage musicians and clients. He had lived through the golden age and the most important era of American music history. The amount of knowledge he possessed was staggering.

Please see Jazz Man, page 23

A ROYAL AFFAIR

Walt Szymanski has played music all over the world. He says that years ago he played a show he'll never forget.

"I was working at my computer one day at home in New York and got a phone call around 11 a.m. 'Walt, this is (so and so), is your passport good?' I said yes, of course, why? 'Be at JFK at 4 p.m. We're going to Morocco to play a party for the king!'"

Sixteen hours later a driver is taking Szymanski to a five-star resort on the Atlantic coast of the north-African country. The next day, he was driven to the king's winter palace in an oasis outside of Agadir and he says the rest of day and evening was like a page out of Aladdin's "One Thousand and One Nights."

"Many presidents and heads of state from all over Africa and the Middle East were in attendance," he recalled. "Mountains of food—all



Szymanski played a Miles Davis tribute show in December at the Diva Nicotina club in Guayaquil, Ecuador. Szymanski says his professorship at the university keeps him very busy, but he still finds time to play with fellow musicians and students.

kinds of beasts being cooked on open spits. . . This is the closest I've felt to my life being like a movie!"

There were numerous other interesting gigs, he said, especially when traveling as jazz ambassador for the U.S. State Department throughout the Balkans after their civil war. He also has fond memories of traveling to the Far East and South China Sea to play in Japan, Papua New Guinea, Australia and Fiji.

traveling troubadour

THE HOLY LAND AMONG SINGING ALUM'S WORLD TRAVEL STOPS

Nick Giacona '03 (NDP) says that much like high school, he never excelled at any one thing in college. But that could be because he was involved in so many different pursuits at one time at Michigan State University. He received a BS from MSU in psychology and during some of his undergrad years, he was a research assistant for an MSU ADHD study. He also was a youth advocate with the Adolescent Diversion Project and a member of the MSU Men's Glee Club as well as president of the 12-member a cappella subset, "The Spartan Dischords."

"Leading up to my college graduation, the extent of my travel had been conversion-van tours of Michigan with my family and a budget-conscious high-school spring break trip on an off-brand cruise line," he said. "But nearing graduation from MSU, I was offered an opportunity to perform in a quartet called "The Voice Males" aboard Celebrity Cruises with three of my best friends. What was meant to be a six-month gap year before returning to graduate school to pursue a PhD in clinical psychology became a three-year world tour. Only after exhausting every itinerary Celebrity had to offer did The Voice Males ('always a pun!') decide to pursue our separate paths."

On the ship, Giacona and his friends may have had the least critical job to do compared to other cruise employees. "My buddies and I sang, danced (sort of) and joked. Most of our repertoire (doo wop, Motown, barbershop) was performed a cappella, but we did perform a Jersey Boys revue (among others) with the Celebrity orchestra."

While they consistently rehearsed, arranged new music and wrote new material, their time cards indicated only about 20 hours of work per month. They only performed when the ship was at sea and usually only in the evenings. And when the ship was docked, it was like being on vacation, he said.

To date, Giacona has been to over 65 different countries. He spent

two summers hiking in Alaska, went swimming with sharks in Bora Bora and has climbed the pyramids in Egypt. While Hawaii, Australia and Greece rank high among his favorite vacations spots, he emphatically says that none managed to affect him as much as the time he spent in the Holy Land.

"When we first pursued work with Celebrity," Giacona says, "the dream had always been to cruise the Mediterranean. A combination of ill-timed requests and high demand among vocal quartets made this a difficult though not impossible dream to fulfill. Only after completing seven successful contracts elsewhere was my dream fulfilled during my eighth and final contract with Celebrity: a summer in the Mediterranean with my final six weeks spent cruising the Holy Land (Italy, Turkey, Greece, Egypt and Israel.)"

When he got to Israel, Giacona was chosen to be a ship ambassador for the land tours. This position paired him with an Israeli rabbi to escort ship guests to historical and religious sites. While technically he was meant to wait on guest demands, requests and concerns, he nonetheless remained glued to the hip of the rabbi, who was an expert in theology and Giacona's own personal encyclopedia for all matters Israeli.

"Our tours in Israel took us to the manger site in Bethlehem, Mary and Joseph's home in Nazareth, the River Jordan where Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, the Sea of Galilee where Jesus walked on water and fed the multitudes, the Mount of the Beatitudes in Tabgha and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, which houses the sites of the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus." He said the list truly went on and on and on. While there were significant religious sites in each of the five countries on this itinerary, none compared, though, to his experience in Israel.

Giacona made several trips to Jerusalem during his initial six-week Holy Land stay and had gone on countless tours with the rabbi there, but he made his final trip to Jerusalem alone. He walked the actual Stations of the Cross (in reverse order) from the site of the resurrection downhill to the Western Wall and courtyard where Pontius Pilate sentenced Jesus to death. He says that after three years of guided tours, walking alone down the streets of old town felt strangely like both the end and the beginning.

Despite the extensive travel and busy performance regimen, Giacona still had time to evaluate his goals and where life was to take him next.

"Let's be honest, I had three years in which to make an informed decision and we all felt that the time had come for the group to disband and go our separate ways."



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Scan the QR code or visit www.facebook.com/notredamealumniasociation.

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Text "follow NDAApontiacmi" to 40404.

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Join the alumni association's networking group on LinkedIn. Visit www.linkedin.com and search Notre Dame Alumni Networking in Pontiac.

UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

Send your new mailing address, e-mail and phone number to the alumni office to ensure you receive communications about reunions and the alumni association. Visit www.ndpma.org/update.

NDAA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Notre Dame Alumni Association board of directors represents the alumni of Notre Dame Prep, Notre Dame High School Oakland Catholic, Pontiac Catholic, St. Michael and St. Frederick schools. Board members meet once monthly to discuss and plan special events, to advance the Marist mission, and to ensure our alumni have a positive connection to their school.

The board is comprised of a minimum of six and maximum of 15 member at-large positions (including the president, vice president, secretary and treasurer). Current members are:

Executive board:

President: 2009-2012 Jim Gammicchia '99 (NDP)

Vice President: 2011-2012 Daniel Marchese '02 (NDHS)

Treasurer: 2010-2013 Trent Thiry '00 (NDP)

Secretary: 2010-2013 Gina (Coppola) Cereska '00 (NDP)

Members-at large:

2010-2013 Jane Dika '02 (NDP)

2010-2013 Scott Lockhart '98 (NDP)

2010-2012 Victoria Sidor '01 (NDP)

2010-2012 Mark McGreevy '76 (NDHS)

2011-2013 Frank Coppola '73 (NDHS)

2011-2012 Michael Bray '02 (NDP)

2011-2014 Sarah Fredin '09 (NDP)

2011-2014 Keaton Curran '10 (NDP)

Director of Alumni Relations Rachel (Alexander) Miller '00 (NDP)

Consider serving on the alumni board of directors, a dynamic group of alumni that meets once each month. To nominate yourself to the ballot, visit www.ndpma.org/alumniboard. Nominations for new board members are welcomed through April 30. The election will take place at the annual meeting on May 8.

FUTURE NOTRE DAMERS

Alumni are invited to consider NDPMA for their child's education. Students and families interested in learning about the school are invited to see it "in action." Contact Dean of Admissions and Diversity Gregory Simon '89 (NDHS) at 248-373-5300 or gsimon@ndpma.org. Children of alumni receive a \$1,000 discount on annual tuition.



NDP alum Nick Giacona '03 in front of the city of Jerusalem. Background photo: Giacona at the entrance to the Western Wall in Jerusalem.

He returned to graduate school but his interests have shifted from psychology to human resources. "I am back in East Lansing for my master's degree in human resources and labor relations. Now in the second semester of the program, I currently work for Michigan Works, helping dislocated workers find employment." He plans to spend the upcoming summer in Seattle as a member of the HR Trax program at Microsoft.

Giacona, who is the brother of NDMA teacher Emily Giacona '01 (NDP) and the son of NDHS grad Gerard (Jerry) Giacona ('77), also commented on his high school years at Notre Dame Prep.

"I keep a full plate now but could NEVER manage all my commitments without all the practice I had at NDP," he said. "The breadth of experiences, both academic and extracurricular, demanded that I acquire time management skills early on. Also, I got my start with music at NDP, writing goofy student council jingles with Jimmy Higgins (now a serious recording artist himself) and his brother, Bill.

"I think this is my favorite thing about NDP: students are encouraged to pursue new things and the school has the outlets to do so."

He says NDP has consistently generated diverse, ambitious young adults "who, no surprise, become successful and interesting adults. It's a beautiful community and is always a thrill to see where they are now."

Regarding former teachers, Giacona says he doesn't like to play favorites but said he could not possibly express enough thanks to Greg Simon, Dave Fazzini and the late Bev Williams for their encouragement and support.

Summing up his still-young-but well-traveled life thus far, Giacona said he will never stop traveling, but also believes that novel experiences can exist even in our own backyards. "Perhaps more profoundly put by American novelist Henry Miller, 'One's destination is never a place, but a new way of seeing things.' I try to seek out the novelty of each moment and relationship. My lens is eternally changed. For this, I am blessed." ■

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

March

29 Alumni prof. networking breakfast
30,31 NDP play, "Our Town"

April

1 NDP Play, "Our Town"
10 Alumni board meeting
25 Admissions coffee at Notre Dame Prep (upper division, Pontiac)

26 Alumni prof. networking breakfast

May

2 Admissions coffee at ND Marist Academy (lower division, Waterford)
8 Alumni annual meeting
12 Dave Coulier "LIVE"
16 Admissions coffee at ND Marist Academy (middle division, Pontiac)
20 NDP Baccalaureate
31 Alumni prof. networking breakfast

June

4 Golf outing
8 Concert on the Hill
12 Alumni board meeting
28 Alumni prof. networking breakfast

July

10 Alumni board meeting
26 Alumni professionals networking breakfast

August

14 Alumni board meeting
30 Alumni prof. networking breakfast

GOLF OUTING AT WYNDGATE

Alumni and friends are invited to join us for Notre Dame's annual golf outing on Monday, June 4, 2012. This year's golf outing will be held at the Eastwynd, the Wyndgate Country Club's private course in Rochester, Mich. In addition to players for the golf outing, the parents club is looking for: lunch, dinner or beverage cart sponsorships; hole sponsorships; donations of items to the silent auction or raffle. Contact Rick Sutkiewicz at 248-207-9788.

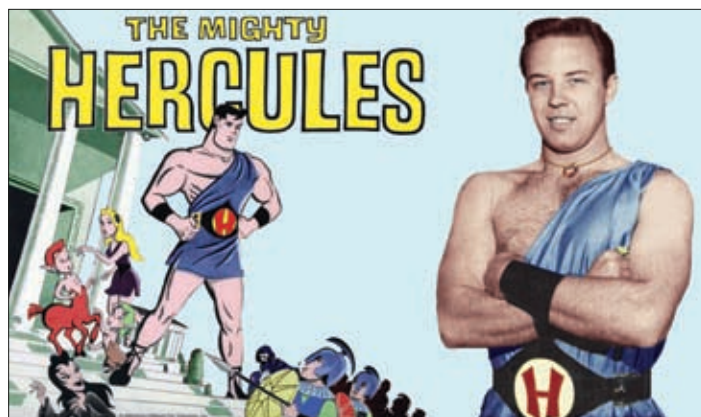
CONCERT ON THE HILL

Notre Dame presents "Concert on the Hill," Friday, June 8, 7-10 p.m., on the Pontiac campus. Professional musicians and over 40 student performers. Live music at its finest. Bring a chair or blanket. It's just like Pine Knob, er, DTE Music Theater! For more information: ndpma.org or 248-373-5300.

ND graduate

GRAD WHO SCORED ND'S FIRST TOUCHDOWN

After graduating from the University of Detroit in 1962 and after stints at TV Guide and Seventeen magazines and appearing on various Detroit shows such as "Bill Kennedy at the Movies," Rita Bell's "Prize Movie," and "Lady of Charm" with Edythe Fern Melrose, Don Kolke '58 (NDHS) took up what was to become his "signature" work in TV: "The Mighty Hercules." Kolke was the writer, producer and the "real-life" Hercules who hosted the cartoons and film shorts for kids on CKLW-TV.



Don Kolke '58 (NDHS) hosted the popular kids animated show, "The Mighty Hercules" in 1963 and 1964.

Not only did he star in the show, he helped design the set and worked on scheduling guests, storyboarding and many other details that go into such an endeavor. Along with the animated portion of the show, Hercules featured stories from Greek mythology, physical fitness exercises (primarily calisthenics from his football days at ND and U of D) and included comic relief from Hercules' alter ego Newton, a centaur that sometimes appeared in the Hercules cartoons.

Hercules premiered on CKLW (Channel 9) on September 16, 1963, running Monday through Friday, from 4:30 to 5:00 p.m. It led into the "Larry and Jerry Show" for about six months, then "Popeye and Pals" (with Captain Jolly) for the rest of its run. The show was rated number one in its time slot for 46 of the 52 weeks it was on the air. The show also featured a weekly guest—the head of the Greater Detroit Safety Council—who gave Hercules' young viewers advice on safety.

After leaving Hercules, Kolke sold advertising in metro Detroit for a number of media outlets before going to work for the Ross Roy and Campbell-Ewald ad agencies. He retired in 2000 from the business world and currently enjoys participating in various sports, such as senior tennis, softball, pickleball and golf with his "most beautiful and wonderful" and equally active wife Judy. He also enjoys the time he gets to spend with their five children and spouses along with ten grandchildren.

Kolke, who scored the first recorded touchdown for Notre Dame High School in 1954, recently attended the Notre Dame Prep home-

coming football game in the fall and said he thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Later, he was kind enough to answer a few questions for IRISH magazine.

IRISH: Have you always lived in the Detroit area? Where do you now live?

KOLKE: I've always lived and worked in Metro Detroit and have lived in Fraser for 46 years with my

wife Judy where we raised our family of five children.

IRISH: Can you perhaps recall an interesting or funny story or anecdote from your career as Hercules, something perhaps people don't already know?

KOLKE: There are many, but one of my favorites is a letter I received from a young girl who wrote that she enjoyed the show and the physical fitness exercises that I encouraged the youngsters to do with me during the show. She commented that she used to hate exercises, but had to do them because she was physically handicapped. Doing them with Hercules, she went on, made exercising fun, and she did them every day. I really felt that if I were to never do anything worthwhile in my life in the future, I had done at least one thing of which I could be proud.

IRISH: When you scored the first recorded touchdown for NDHS, do you recall what team you were playing when that happened?

was TV superhero

TALKS ABOUT HIS TIME ON TELEVISION AND HIS HIGH SCHOOL DAYS

And if ND won the game?

KOLKE: It was in our freshman year 1954 and our schedule consisted of any other freshman team that would play us. I don't remember the name of the team, but it was the first game that ND ever played. I do remember that there was a little blurb in The Detroit News or Free Press reporting that the new school, following in the footsteps of its university namesake won its first game. The article went on to mention that Don Kolke scored the first TD in Notre Dame High School's first game. The article was pinned up for a time on the bulletin board that covered the wall on the left near the office as one walked in the front door of Notre Dame. I regret that I didn't have the foresight to save a copy of this little one-column-by-two-inch blurb!

IRISH: Who was your football coach at Notre Dame?

KOLKE: Lou Martilotta was our first football coach followed shortly thereafter by Tom Kelly. I also played football and baseball for Coach Kelly at St. Veronica grade school. As coach he took us to the CYO football championship when I was in the eighth grade. He also took us to the Catholic High School Soup Bowl in our senior year at Notre Dame. Both games were at the University of Detroit stadium (a parking lot now) on McNichols and Livernois. I also played baseball for Tom Kelly at Notre Dame.

IRISH: Recalling your four years at ND, can you name any influential teachers, coaches or administrators and perhaps why they were influential?

KOLKE: It seems all of them were influential, but I particularly remember Fr. Graham as a best friend, as a teacher and a man. He was always up-

beat and encouraging. He taught English and was my most respected teacher. In fact, Judy and I had him fly in from the Marist home in Framingham, Massachusetts, to officiate at our wedding on December 26, 1964, at Gesu church. Also influential were priests such as Fr. Verow (our first principal), Fr. Champagne ("sparkling and bubbling" - his words), Fr. Frechette, Fr. Kiley and Fr. Bryson, and coach-

es such as Mr. Martilotta, Mr. Haddas, Mr. Klosik and Mr. Kelly. I learned so much from all of them on how to work hard and be a part of a team as well as perseverance in accomplishing any goal that you set for yourself. I have tried to pass this on to my family (children and grandchildren).

IRISH: Besides football and baseball, were you involved in any other extracurriculars at ND?

KOLKE: I was a member of the Varsity Club, and co-captain of the football team for three years. I was in the ND theater group, and was an editor for a couple of NDHS yearbooks and a reporter/columnist for the Notre Dame student newspaper.

IRISH: Do you keep in touch with any former classmates or teachers?

KOLKE: Fr. Graham and I mailed back and forth for awhile and, in fact, Judy and I and our children visited him in Framingham. He most graciously acted as our tour guide,

showing us all of the highlights around Boston including the House of Seven Gables as well as the various cemeteries in which some of our great American writers were buried.

IRISH: What was your reaction to the news of NDHS closing?

KOLKE: I was, of course, disappointed, but, as I understood it they only had about 200 students—about the size of our first graduating class. Financially, it couldn't survive with so few students. I am thankful for the chance I had to attend and be part of Notre Dame, but am not bitter about it closing.



Kolke, left, with his wife Judy and 1973 NDHS grad Frank Coppola at the Notre Dame Prep homecoming football game last fall.

IRISH: What advice can you give current high school students on career decisions, etc., especially those considering broadcasting, or advertising and marketing?

KOLKE: I am glad that I am retired during this economy. I'd advise high school students—most of whom, if they are like I was, have no definite idea what they want to do in the future—to investigate with your high school counselor possible "interest tests" and take them. It seems nowadays either a trade school degree or a college degree is a minimum requirement to even interview for a job. I majored in communication arts at the University of Detroit and minored in English and became a promotion director/TV show producer/host/media salesman and a media buyer/supervisor. I'm not sure how my education fit into those jobs, but do know that it got me interviews. Most of all, once you decide on what you want to do, go after it "whole-hog" and persevere. Research it and talk to people who are currently in the business and ask for their insights and opinions. ■



Kolke, left, is pictured with fellow TV personalities Captain Jolly, middle, and Poopdeck Paul.



still bubbly

NOTRE DAME H.S. FOUNDING 'FATHER' GOING STRONG AT 89

Fr. Robert Champagne, s.m., was one of the founding "Fathers" who began at Notre Dame High School in Harper Woods when the school first opened in 1954. He had been at Cathedral Central High School in Detroit until he got the call to help open a new school in Harper Woods. He served at Notre Dame until the end of the 1963 school year when he was transferred to another Marist ministry in Maine.

Those eight years at Notre Dame were "wonderful," according to Champagne, full of great memories.



Fr. Robert Champagne, s.m., at his home in Waltham, Massachusetts.

Now in Massachusetts, he is retired from active ministry. In this past year, he saw many changes in his life in addition to the move from Framingham to a different Marist residence in Waltham, including the loss of his driver's license because of failing eyesight. While he can no longer celebrate public masses, he is able to offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation to several groups.

Fr. Champagne, who will turn 90 years old in September, was kind enough to speak to IRISH from Waltham recently on what he's been up to lately and about his time at Notre Dame.

On what he's been doing since retiring from active ministry:

I've been doing very nicely, thank you. As mentioned, I retired from active ministry, but still help out the pastor, Monsignor Francis Strahan, occasionally at my parish in Framingham, St. Bridget's, where I've served since 1991. Although I'm legally blind and can't drive or say mass, I still am able to hear confessions at St. Bridget's twice a month. To get there and back, I use what is called "the Ride," a senior and incapacitated person ride service in the Boston area that transports us wherever and whenever around town. After putting some money into the service on a monthly basis, it only costs \$2.00 each way no matter where it takes us. It is subsidized by the state.

Also, the other services the state has available for the blind are unbelievable! I love to read, and since I can't read normally anymore, I get any book I want on tape and they even give you the player for the tapes. The state provides magnifiers, too. I enjoy it very much! And I can still see the TV and watch the games, especially the Patriots and the Red Sox.

Additionally, there is a home nearby that the Marist Missionary Sisters live in. I help with the sisters once a month and hear confessions or counsel them. All in all, as they say, I am retired, but not on the shelf yet! Very, very happy that I'm still able to be active in my ministry. I'm sad I can't drive anymore, but very happy that the Ride is available so I can continue to get around and visit family and friends. I also help out at the retreat house here on the grounds of my retirement house in Waltham.

On what he did immediately after leaving Notre Dame:

Before leaving, I actually thought I was going to be the next principal at Notre Dame, but instead was sent to a public school in Van Buren, Maine, to be principal. The Van Buren school used to be a Catholic school run by the Marists. But the local governments decided to make it a district school serving four nearby towns. Since I had experience successfully starting up schools, they thought I could help with this new school, which was eventually called Van Buren District High School. I remember that when President Kennedy was shot, I had to call the superintendent's office as principal to ask if it was okay to have the student body say a prayer for the president.

After my time in Maine, I moved to Syracuse, New York, to serve at a high school, followed by parish ministry in Connecticut, and finally back to Massachusetts for hospital ministry.



Fr. Champagne with NDHS seniors at a retreat during the 1958 school year.



On the current Marist ministry in the Detroit area:

They really have done a very, very good job with Notre Dame in Pontiac. I get the IRISH magazine so I keep up with things, and I make regular contributions. And just the other day I spoke to (Fr.) Jim Strasz (dean of students at Notre Dame Prep). I heard the elementary school was moving to Pontiac. It's a good thing! And it's a great thing that Notre Dame in Pontiac is doing very, very well, in spite of the fact that we don't have too many Marists there. But that's the way things are now all over.

On the closure of NDHS in 2005:

I was in Framingham at the time. But I remember going back to the school for the 50th anniversary and the bishop said how wonderful we all were and hoped that we would be there for 50 more years. And then they closed it. I was shocked, and it was too bad the financial arrangements some people were making fell through. I heard that after awhile, the windows were being broken and the Marist residence was being broken into. I just cried like a baby. All the damage. . .you know when we first started ND, it was really something! So to hear of this damage was very sad for me. I am glad it is now back as a school (Chandler Park Academy).

On NDHS memories and former students:

Oh, many, many memories! The first (graduating) class especially. I still see and hear from many of the former students. Bob Bendzinski, Frank Spezia, John Ureel and Paul Nows, to name a few. I was missioned for awhile down in Florida, and I used to go down there to a retirement village near Tampa where I had family. Used to go down there all the time from Thanksgiving to Memorial Day to take care of all the snow birds. It was a ministry that I had for about 25 years. So some of the Notre Dame guys have their winter homes down there, in Ft. Myers, Port Charlotte and other towns around Tampa and Orlando, all within the area I was near. I used to visit my family there and the ND guys would pick me up and we would have meals together. It was wonderful! I hear from them still. I was just talking recently with Frank Spezia and Paul Nows, who were heading to Florida once again after visiting family north for the holidays. Bob Bendzinski, too. They still keep in touch with me.

I also remember well some of the teachers from then. Conrad Vachon, Larry Egan, and many others. I also remember the very, very good families at the school. I was in charge of the Mothers Guild the whole time I was at Notre Dame. That kept me in touch with all of the families -- still hear from some of them. I went back for the 50th reunion of the class of '58, but couldn't make the 50th for the class of 1960. There is one (class of 1962) planned for this summer at Notre Dame in Pontiac, so I would love to go. If I feel the way I do now, I'm going to be there! ■

The Notre Dame Alumni Association presents
Dave Coulier's All-Ages Comedy Show
Sat., May 12, 2012
8:00 p.m.
Notre Dame Preparatory School

Adult: \$25 Student/Senior: \$15
VIP Meet and Greet: \$50

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit:
ndpma.org/davecoulier.

Proceeds to benefit
the Fr. John Bryson, s.m.,
Memorial Scholarship Fund

COMEDY CENTER

"can do..."

During his inauguration speech in 1961, President John F. Kennedy recited arguably one of the most famous lines in American history. "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country."

Few people know that this was actually a rewrite of a speech given in 1916 in Chicago, Illinois, by Warren G. Harding. In the 1916 speech, President Harding said, "in the great fulfillment, we must have a citizenship less concerned about what the government can do for it, and more anxious about what it can do for the nation." Both presidents were sending a similar message. They were speaking of hope and a "can do" attitude. They believed in getting involved, volunteering, and helping make America a better place. They felt that each citizen of our country had an obligation to do what they could to improve our nation.



This is exactly the message we would like to send to our alumni. Notre Dame is not a perfect school, but we are a pretty good one, striving to be better every day. We have one of the strongest academic reputations in the state as evidenced by our strong ACT scores (26.58 average), challenging IB curriculum (only authorized Catholic school in Michigan) and college acceptance rates (100%). In 2010, we were named an Exemplary Athletic Program by the MHSAA and the MIAAA, becoming the first Catholic school to ever receive the award. This, is in addition to our award-winning band, arts and 2011 state-champion robotics team.

Our ability to survive long-term is directly dependent on our ability to attract support from every possible constituency, including alumni. This support can come in many ways. Consider volunteering your time as an officer or member of our alumni board or helping out at alumni events. Keep us up to date with your contact information and what is going on in your life. Support our annual fund. Even small donations can be very powerful in showing that you care. Come visit us when you are in town. We offer tours to all alumni even if you did not graduate from this location. Speak favorably of the school in meetings and dealings with other alumni and friends. And finally, consider sending your children or grandchildren to Notre Dame. We are one of the best Catholic schools in the country, but our continued success depends largely on you...as alumni of this institution.

There are many great things happening at the school, including plans to move our lower division to the main campus in Pontiac, build a track and field and incorporate a stronger alumni presence and history more visibly in our halls. These will all require help and support from our alumni to make this happen. In line with the famous messages from our two presidents, our request is simple. Are you doing everything you can to make Notre Dame as strong as possible? Our mission to form "Christian persons, outstanding citizens and academic scholars" depends on your support.

Sincerely,

Andy Guest '84 (NDHS)
Vice President for Advancement

THE TRAVELING ALUMNI

Alumni from six decades gather for Grand Rapids Traveling Irish Dinner

Alumni from Notre Dame High School and Notre Dame Preparatory gathered for a Traveling Irish Dinner in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on Monday, Nov. 28, 2011. In attendance were 25 alumni from class years of every decade between 1960 and 2011. There was much reminiscing about our high school days at Notre Dame. The event was held at Bobarino's restaurant at "The B.O.B." A great time was had by all!



Grand Rapids

Go blue! Go green!

The Traveling Irish Dinner series continued with concurrent stops in the towns of the Wolverines and Spartans on Friday, Feb. 10, 2012. More than 50 alums and guests gathered for dinner at the Pizza House in Ann Arbor, and Harper's Restaurant in East Lansing. Next stop, Chicago!



Ann Arbor



East Lansing

Traveling Irish Dinners

The alumni association hosts Traveling Irish Dinners across Michigan throughout the year. This year, we also will be traveling to Chicago and hope to see many of our alumni living in the "Windy City." To view the schedule and RSVP for an upcoming dinner, visit www.ndpma.org/irishdinners.

Be smart. Be cool.



Be Notre Dame.

ndpma.org



nothing but net

'97 GRAD CONTINUES BASKETBALL CAREER OVERSEAS

Greg Stempin '97 (NDHS) has been called one of the best basketball players to come out of Notre Dame High School in Harper Woods. He led the team to the Central Division title twice and helped power the Irish to three district titles during his high school career. He averaged 29.8 points and 12.6 rebounds per game in his senior season at NDHS and finished as the school's all-time scoring leader with 1,704 total points.

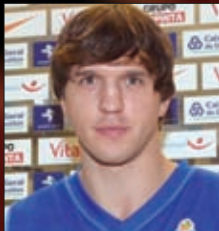
A stellar college career followed at the University of Toledo. From UT's sports information department: "One of the most athletic big men in UT basketball history, the 6'-8" Greg Stempin is one of only four Rockets to earn first-team All-MAC honors three times. Stempin ranks fourth all-time at UT in scoring with 1,705 points and is tied for sixth in rebounds with 836. Thanks to Stempin's dominating play, the Rockets were 74-45 in his four seasons and made it to the NIT three times. He led the team in scoring and rebounding as a sophomore (15.3 ppg, 7.4 rpg), junior (15.7, 8.1) and senior (18.3, 8.2). He also made the Academic All-MAC team twice."

Rocket fans saw many highlights from Stempin, including numerous rim-rattling dunks and highlight wins over Ohio State and Cincinnati.

"My two favorite games were beating Ohio State as a sophomore and then Cincinnati," he said in an earlier news account during his UT playing days. And until recently, Stempin was the only UT player to record double-digit rebound totals in three straight contests.

Now 32, he lives in Portugal, playing professional ball for FC Porto, a team based in the coastal city of Porto. Currently averaging nearly 19 ppg in year three of a five-year contract with FC Porto, he also played one season in Spain and has played professionally in both Korea and Venezuela.

His two brothers, Ron '91 and Kevin '94, also are alums of Notre Dame High School.



Contacted in Portugal recently, Stempin answered a few questions from IRISH:

IRISH: What's it like living in Portugal and how often do you get back to Michigan?

STEMPIN: I have been living in Portugal now for the last six and a half years. The basketball seasons are a little over nine months long, but I spend the summers back home in Macomb Township, Mich. Playing over here is nice but it definitely took some getting used to. The lifestyle is a lot more laid back here and more simple than in the states. The people on average don't make nearly the amount of wages Americans do yet they find a way to enjoy life with less stress. I enjoy my time here but will absolutely be moving back to the states when my career is over.

IRISH: What about your professional career in the U.S.?

STEMPIN: Out of college, I was drafted by the Fayetteville Patriots of the NBDL (National Basketball Development League) and played with them for one season. Played the second season for the Columbus Riverdragons. Then I signed a contract with the Milwaukee Bucks in the NBA after that season but was released after 10 preseason games.

IRISH: What was your experience like playing college ball at Toledo?

STEMPIN: Playing at the University of Toledo was great. We had great teams there but unfortunately never made it to the NCAA tournament. We did, however, make it to the NIT three years. It was nice to stay close to home so my family and friends could make many of the games.

IRISH: What are some of your memories from Notre Dame High School, basketball or otherwise?

STEMPIN: I have many wonderful memories from my time at Notre Dame. Winning

the Catholic League and district titles was awesome. I believe we restored basketball at a school that had not won a district title in many years. I will always remember my teammates and the times we spent together, specifically at the Traverse City Christmas Tournament.

IRISH: We remember some of the epic battles vs. Detroit Country Day in the state tournament. What can you say about those matchups, and have you kept in touch with Shane Battier (DCD) at all since then?

STEMPIN: Of course I remember the battles with Country Day. They beat us three years in a row in the regional finals of the state tournament and I believe went on to win the state championship each year. They had a great team with four D-1 college players, including Shane, on that team. I used to play with him during the summers when he was at Duke. I ran in to him a few times when I was with the Milwaukee Bucks. He is a class act and has deserved everything he has achieved. I continue to follow his career (currently with the Miami Heat) and pull for him.

IRISH: Which teachers and coaches at NDHS do you remember as making a positive impact on you?

STEMPIN: My time spent at Notre Dame was amazing! My dad always used to tell me that high school is one of the most enjoyable stages of your life and it goes by very fast. He was so right. I wouldn't have changed a thing. I will forever remember my friends and my teachers. They all impacted my life in one way or another. Coach Mike Maltese was such a great influence on all of us. And I loved classes with Mr. Vachon, Mr. Lynch and Fr. Kiselica, just to name a few. I also remember Fr. Bryson and Fr. Martin, two great men who loved sports and always cheered us on. ■

nal chapters of their lives, he didn't necessarily have the right training or knowledge to assist them with the kind of care they needed. After undergoing additional training with hospice at Henry Ford, he was offered a full-time position with HOM and made the jump.

"The work appealed to me," he said. "The idea of working with people at a stage of illness that many doctors give up on was a challenge to me. I wanted to be the guy to help when no one else was willing to do so. And I did like the spiritual aspect—you must be comfortable enough to discuss these spiritual and metaphysical issues that often come up as the patients near the end of life.

"Many doctors are only interested in the science of medicine and don't subscribe to the idea that he or she can be huge source of help and comfort to people with nothing much to look forward to except the end of life."

Paletta says he doesn't regret getting into end-of-life care. "People sometime will ask me how I could do this all the time. 'It must be so depressing,' they say. I usually respond by saying that for me it is incredibly uplifting and rewarding work. To come into a family situation that is chaotic, with much suffering, and then bring some order, comfort, relief and dignity to that situation—that's pretty rewarding stuff! You realize that you are making a difference for families in a real and positive way."

Service to country is "what we do"

Early in his medical career, Paletta also trained at the U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine and earned his wings and an aeronautical rating of chief flight surgeon. He logged operational flying hours in a variety of fighter and attack aircraft, and has commanded military medical detachments in Europe and Central America. He served for 12 years as surgeon general for the Michigan Air National Guard, headquartered in Lansing, and most recently was assigned to the Air Force Reserve.

While his choice to go into hospice care may have been more evolutionary than pre-ordained, Paletta's time in the military was definitely not. Growing up in his family in the Mt. Clemens area, he said the idea of serving his country was expected of family members. It is "what we do in this family." His grandfather, who immigrated to the U.S. from Italy, was a doughboy in World War I. His father was an Air Force officer during the Korean War. "In my family," he says, "we believed it was an obligation to serve and it's the price you pay for enjoying all we have in this country."

It was during medical school that he got into aerospace medicine with the Air National Guard. The Air Force sent him for special aerospace training, which he thought was great.

"I loved the idea of flying jets. I was assigned to the Selfridge base in southeast Michigan as a flight surgeon, supporting a squadron of fighter pilots and because of this position, I traveled the world."

He stayed active in the ANG for many years and in 2007, as "a grizzled, old veteran," he volunteered for a medical command in Iraq. His official role was as Chief of Aviation Medicine for the Coalition forces in Baghdad, helping with med-evacs, trauma and patient care. His unit also operated medical clinics for local Iraqis.

He also helped train Iraqi air force doctors in aerospace medicine in a special school set up at the air base in Baghdad. Paletta retired in February 2012 after 30 years of military service. Among his achievements and honors earned while on active duty, Paletta was awarded the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Force Achievement Award, the Iraq Campaign Ribbon with combat device and the National Defense Ribbon. He is a graduate of the USAF Air War College.

Notre Dame a big part of who he is today

Paletta knew way back in high school that he wanted to take a shot at medical school. And he says he was academically successful enough to be competitive in a strong college program, such as the one he attended at Albion College, which in the mid-70s had a reputation as having a strong pre-med program. After graduating from Albion, Paletta went on to medical school at Wayne State University.

He said there is no doubt in his mind that his undergrad experience at Albion and his medical school experience at Wayne State were much better because of the academic discipline at Notre Dame.

"During my time as a student and as a professional, as I got to know more and more people and could compare my reading skills, my research skills, my writing ability to what others struggled with, I think that the discipline of a Cass Cosky, a Conrad Vachon, a Hal Rice, a Bill Schram—I mean those guys made you better scholars, more thorough researchers, better writers, more critical thinkers!"

He says he firmly believes that the environment at ND helped him academically, but perhaps more importantly, it also helped in terms of citizenship and seeing the value of giving back to the community.

"It certainly was instrumental in my choosing a vocation where I can be of service to others. No doubt!"

Advice to med students: take five

When asked if he had any advice for high school students aspiring to be physicians, Paletta says students should go into medicine only if they really want to do it, not to please someone else or because a family member is a physician.

"If there truly is no fire in the belly [for a medical career], it won't be enough to sustain someone successfully through medical school, residency, or professional life," he said. "To do it to please your parents or because you think you're going to make a lot of money and have a house in Bel Air is not enough."

He says total commitment and realistic expectations of earning power is key to a successful medical career. "You must go into it for all the right reasons."

Getting through medical school is hard, hard work, and you must really apply yourself, according to Paletta. But he says it's also important not to burn out.

"Most successful med-school graduates find that it's important to have some other interests while in school, whether it be sports, running, exercise—healthy, non-medical activities with non-medical friends," he said.

"Something you have to do is tear your brain out of the books for an hour or two or a day. The students who burn out are usually those who can't let it go, not even for a day," he said. "It's important to relax and get away when possible, even though it seems the pressure to succeed, to get a good residency, is non-stop. I remember those times very well." ■



Dr. Michael Paletta '75 (NDHS), right, with Notre Dame alumni director Rachel (Alexander) Miller '00 (NDP)

Weddings

Greg Langlois '05 (NDHS) and Meghan Tyk on Mar. 10, 2012.

Chelsea Grozenski '03 (NDP) and Andy Barriga on June 25, 2011, in Chicago, IL. Fellow '03 graduate Caroline Lang was a bridesmaid in the wedding. Many '05 grads were in attendance, including Eric Grozenski, Ricky Bieszki, Keith Kampe and Marcel Kern.

Greg Strzalka '03 (NDP) and **Cari Naborczyk '03 (NDP)** on Sept. 28, 2011.

Kimberly (Majewski) Miller '02 (NDP) and Justin Miller in June 2011.

Daniel Marchese '02 (NDHS) and Anna Dudek on Dec. 28, 2012. The couple lives in Rochester Hills, Mich.

Benjamin Blackwell '00 (NDHS) and **Malissa Glush '98 (NDP)** on Oct. 28, 2011.

Brad Mitchell '02 (NDP) and Katie Demongey on Sept. 17, 2011. The ceremony was held at St. Lawrence Church in Utica, Mich., followed by a reception at Villa Penna. In attendance were fellow graduates John Adams '02 (NDP) and Paul Wezner '02 (NDP). The couple lives in Royal Oak, Mich.

Brad Burton '99 (NDP) and Julie Cameron on Sept. 10, 2011.

Births

Morgan Marie DeWulf, born Mar. 18, 2011. Proud parents: Stephanie (Brinker) DeWulf '04 (NDP) and David DeWulf.

Noah Michael Lindemann, born June 30, 2011. Proud parents: Alex Lindemann '04 (NDP) and Amanda Lindemann.

Ava Madilyn Gehringer, born Apr. 21, 2011. Proud parents: Kellie (Skalnek) Gehringer '01 (NDP) and Brett Gehringer. Proud uncle is Ryan Skalnek '02 (NDP).

Addison Theresia Smith, born July 28, 2011. Proud parents: Megan (Schneider) Smith '01 (NDP) and Christopher Smith.

Braden James Logan, born Jan. 22, 2011. Proud parents: Tracy (Carey) Logan '00 (NDP) and Tim Logan.

Anthony Mark Ostrowski, born Oct. 7, 2011. Proud parents: Tony Ostrowski '00 (NDP) and Sandra Ostrowski.

David Robert Hindelang, born Oct. 24, 2011. Proud parents: Emily (Kesek) Hindelang '00 (NDP) and Matthew Hindelang '00 (NDHS).

MacKenzie Marie Van Drie, born Nov. 6, 2011. Proud parents: Cheryl (Bowman) Van Drie '98 (NDP) and Matthew Van Drie.

Jackson Carmelo McCaughey, born Dec. 3, 2011. Proud parents: Chessa (Rosario) McCaughey '98 (NDP) and Tom McCaughey. Joins big brother James, 3 years old.

Grace Kelly Cichy, born Aug. 10, 2011. Proud parents: Jennifer (Cole) Cichy '97 (NDP) and Stephen Cichy.

Max Milton Knight, born Aug. 26, 2011. Proud parents: Megan (Thiry) Knight '99 (NDP) and Greg Knight. Proud uncle: Trent Thiry '00 (NDP).

Marley Grace Jiles, born Oct. 11, 2011. Proud parents: Scott Jiles '00 (NDHS) and Rebecca Jiles.

Lucy Marion Guest, born Jan. 10, 2012. Proud parents: Michael Guest '95 (NDHS) and Michelle Guest. Proud uncles are David Guest '78 (NDHS), Stanley Guest '80 (NDHS), Alan Guest '81 (NDHS) and Andrew Guest '84 (NDHS).

Alumni/staff/faculty rest in peace

David Jackson, former teacher and coach at NDHS; recently retired as principal of L'Anse Creuse North HS. 2-12-2012

Bob LaPointe, taught social studies and physical education at NDHS and was head football coach from 1984-1991. Bob had

a 42-year career as a football coach and teacher at schools including NDHS, Dearborn Divine Child, and Belleville High Schools, and Eastern Michigan University. 1-31-2012

Thomas Quinlan '58 (NDHS). 1-26-2012

Raymond Trzcinski '84 (PC), brother of Brian Trzcinski '87 (PC) and Megan Elizabeth (Trzcinski) Hoogerhyde '89 (OC). Son of long-time PC/OC/NDP coach, bus driver and game statistician, Vince Trzcinski. 1-25-2012

Donald Klucha '63 (NDHS). 1-11-2012

Helen Kozara, worked at Notre Dame High School in the business office from 1964 to 1977. Passed away at the age of 96. 1-11-2012

Melvin "Pete" Vollmer '59 (NDHS). 12-31-2011

Frederick Belz '62 (NDHS), survived by his loving wife, Georgene; his father, Raymond Belz; his sisters and brother; and many nieces and nephews. 12-23-2011

Brian Laux '80 (NDHS), brother of Daniel '75, Michael '75, and Timothy '78. 12-10-2011

Thomas Hindelang '61 (NDHS), brother of Ronald '59 (NDHS), Robert '64 (NDHS) and Fr. Joseph Hindelang '68 (NDHS), principal of Notre Dame Preparatory. Sisters include Mary Hindelang and Ann Noble. 12-8-11

Raymond James Etrych '71 (NDHS). 12-5-2011

Joseph Caporale '76 (NDHS), brother of Anthony '79 (NDHS) and Vincent '83 (NDHS). 12-5-2011

Sister Fredrika (Mary Catherine Beda), CSJ, whose teaching career brought her to several schools in the Archdiocese of Detroit, including St. Michael in Pontiac. Passed away at age 89. 11-21-2011

Daniel Szarama '05 (NDP), brother of Katherine Szarama '04 (NDP). 11-18-2011

Jay DiFranco '86 (NDHS) 11-12-2011

Daniel Hughes '07 (NDP) 11-4-2011

Emily Kempa '37 (St. Frederick). 10-17-2011

John Kaminske '59 (NDHS). 10-7-2011

Emmett Harrington '63 (NDHS). 10-4-2011

Henry "Hank" Michael '60 (NDHS). 9-20-2011

Salvatore LaFata '63 (NDHS). 9-11-2011

Robert Manor '62 (NDHS). 8-16-2011

Michael W. Nehra '66 (NDHS). 08-07-2011

NOTE: For a complete list, see ndpma.org/prayers.

May their souls, and the souls of all the Faithful Departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

DETROIT TIGERS OUTING

Join the alumni association for its annual Detroit Tigers Outing at Comerica Park. Tuesday, August 7, at 7:05 p.m., vs. the New York Yankees. All alumni and guests are welcome. For ticket information, visit www.ndpma.org/tigersouting.



Jazz Man, from page 10

IRISH: Can you provide any background on your arranging job at Obama's inauguration?

SZYMANSKI: This job came to me through Ray Chew (American Idol) who also is the music director for B.E.T. He was awarded the contract to prepare and perform the music for president's inauguration and my assignment was to arrange the song "At Last," which was sung by Beyoncé for the first couple's first dance.

IRISH: How much was rock or pop music a part of your musical upbringing? Did you go to the ND Bryson dances back in the day?

SZYMANSKI: Well, my musical scope has always been huge and inclusive. I love Motown, the Beatles, the Stones, Jimi Hendrix, so it was huge. But I started my musical journey at a young age. I was singing Gregorian chant at the six a.m. mass every morning at St Raymond (I was seven years old). We had an awesome program, directed by John H.

Andrews, and we were singing all of the classic masses of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Handel, etc. That's what ultimately turned me onto the trumpet. Went to some of Fr. Bryson's dances, and we



PHOTO BY ARA-HOVRANI

Walt Szymanski '72 (NDHS) performs with the J.C. Heard Orchestra at the 2011 Detroit International Jazz Festival on Labor Day Weekend.

also had a very popular rock band at ND called "Bland Allison," which played a lot of dances and proms (back when they still had live bands!).

IRISH: Can you update us on your family, immediate and otherwise? Any in the Detroit area still?

SZYMANSKI: My four sisters all still live in the Detroit area and are beautiful and vital!

IRISH: How much of an influence was (band director) Larry Egan at Notre Dame High School on your musical career?

SZYMANSKI: Larry was an immense influence in my life; he was my second huge musical mentor and my first real trumpet teacher. I had been basically self taught on the trumpet and Larry showed me how to play and practice. We were very fortunate to have Larry Egan at ND. He was a real musician, and was out there playing and performing, not simply an educator. He instilled a real sense of professionalism in all of us and made sure we had many performance opportunities. And he treated us like men!

IRISH: Recalling your four years at ND, other than Egan, can you name any other influential teachers, coaches or administrators and perhaps why?

SZYMANSKI: I'd have to say Hal Rice and Conrad Vachon; they taught me about seriousness. And Fr. Bryson of course, because he was, well, Fr. Bryson!

IRISH: Besides band and music, were you involved in any other extra-curriculars at ND?

SZYMANSKI: Was in theater also, so if I wasn't onstage, I was in the orchestra pit. Also tried out for hockey and baseball but to no avail.

IRISH: Do you keep in touch with any former NDHS classmates?

SZYMANSKI: I've stayed in contact through all of these years with Dave Jarvis '72, Mike DeLaura '72, Ron Mack '72 and Ken Murphy '71. Also, Paul Finazzo '75, Jack Accardo '73 and Gerry Mattei '73.

IRISH: Are you considering attending your 40-year reunion?

SZYMANSKI: If it does not conflict with my duties here in Ecuador and the airfare doesn't cost a month's salary, I will definitely be there.

IRISH: What was your reaction to the news of Notre Dame in Harper

Woods closing?

SZYMANSKI: It was like losing a dear friend. We all left a bit of our hearts and souls at NDHS.

IRISH: What advice can you give current high-school students on career decisions, etc., especially those considering music?

SZYMANSKI: The most important thing is to listen to your heart! You cannot live someone else's life. Find your passion in life and live it; it trumps any kind of monetary success a thousand fold! Personally I have always been true to my muse and have not wavered, and the universe has rewarded me with an incredibly fulfilled life of travel, adventures, friends and family. Time is the most important asset that we have so we must live without regret. That means grasp each day and shake the life out of it. One of the worst things is to grow old and look back on one's life and say, "If only I had done this or that..." Life is about the JOURNEY; it is not about DESTINATIONS!

When I was a young musician just starting in the business an older trumpet player used to tell me, "Walter, music is a great life, but you have to have something to fall back on." My response to him was that human nature is such that if one has something to fall back on, he will! So I was determined to explore and become an expert in every aspect of music: composing, arranging, conducting, producing, mixing and of course, performing. My success is based on working without a net, so to speak. The saying that as one door closes another door opens is very true. One must embrace change as it is the only constant through life. My mantra has always been, "When you truly desire something, all the universe conspires to help you achieve it!" I am actual living proof of this statement.

IRISH: Wondering if during any upcoming visits to the Detroit area, you would be willing to speak to students at Notre Dame in Pontiac? They have a phenomenal music program.

SZYMANSKI: Yes of course, I would love to do that! ■

DAVE COULIER COMEDY SHOW AT NDPMA – MAY 12

Dave Coulier, who graduated from Notre Dame High School in 1977, will take the stage Saturday, May 12, at NDPMA in a special fundraiser to benefit the Fr. John Bryson, s.m., Memorial Scholarship Fund. Bryson was a Marist priest who taught and served at Notre Dame High School in Harper Woods for nearly 45 years. He died in May of last year at the age of 87. Coulier has been a regular face on television, first starring as Joey Gladstone in the ABC-TV sitcom "Full House" from 1987 through 1995. He also had a stint hosting "America's Funniest Videos." In between, he's acted in movies and continues a successful standup comedy routine at colleges and clubs around the country. Presented by the Notre Dame Alumni Assoc., the comedy show is for all ages and starts at 8:00 p.m. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$15 for students and seniors (under 18 and over 65). Premium tickets are available for \$50, which also admit you to a private "Meet & Greet" afterglow reception with Coulier. All tickets are general admission seating. For more info or to purchase your tickets, visit www.ndpma.org/davecoulrier. ■



NOTRE DAME PREP ALUMNI

Dalton Tolliver '11 (NDP) was named player and rookie of the week by AmericaEast Volleyball for her career-high 17 kills for a match playing for University of Maryland.

Julie Ramus '11 (NDP) visited NDPMA's Pontiac campus in December. She is a freshman at University of Michigan, working toward declaring her major and minoring in German. Ramus' two sisters also attend U of M: Courtney is a sophomore and Elizabeth is in grad school.

Christopher Burns '10 (NDP) attends the United States Naval Academy, as a member of the class of 2014.

Joshua Jeszke '10 (NDP) is a sophomore at Aquinas College in Grand Rapids, Mich., studying environmental business.

Jonathan Sheperd '10 (NDP) is a sophomore at University of Notre Dame and was accepted into the Notre Dame International Study Program in Cambridge (UK) for the 2012-2013 academic year with plans to study mathematics.

Mary Bammer '09 (NDP) is a junior at Michigan State University, studying to be a field biologist. As part of two internships she completed, Mary went scuba diving in Saginaw Bay to gather data about the symbiotic relationship between zebra mussels and algae. And during the summer of 2011, she camped all over Michigan, collecting ticks from small mammals and birds to see if Lyme disease is prevalent in Michigan.

Ryan Aquilina '09 (NDP) is a senior at University of Miami, looking forward to graduating this May – a full year ahead of schedule – with an honors degree double majoring in communications, with emphasis on motion pictures, and political science. He recently completed a semester at Queen Mary, University of London, England.

Emily Gray '09 (NDP) is a junior at Kalamazoo College studying humanities. She is also a member of Kalamazoo College's women's soccer team.

Patricia McCormick '08 (NDP) is a senior at the University of Michigan, studying materials science and engineering. Patty recently spent three months at Peking University in Beijing, China, as part of U of M's REU Program (Research Experience for Undergraduates). There, she completed research involved with producing artificial bone scaffolds for transplant in patients, with the hope of eliminating the risk of organ rejection. Patty also studied in Pontlevoy, France, and in Salamanca, Spain, during her sophomore year. After graduation this spring, Patty will be working as a Technology Analyst for Accenture, a global consulting company, in their Southfield, Mich., office.

Robert Healy '08 (NDP) is in his senior year at University of Michigan and plays on U of M's division-1 lacrosse team. On Feb. 12, 2012, Healy played against four of his fellow NDP alumni when the University of Detroit Titans hosted the Wolverines in the first division-1 game in the history of the

Alumni Notes & Info

Notre Dame Prep: **(NDP)**; Notre Dame High School: **(NDHS)**; Pontiac Catholic: **(PC)**; Oakland Catholic: **(OC)**; St. Frederick: **(SF)**; St. Michael: **(SM)**

U of M program. Playing for U of D-Mercy were Brandon Beauregard '11 (NDP), Tim Robertson '10 (NDP), Joe Gifford '11 (NDP) and Nick Garippa '10 (NDP).

Jeffrey Gunderson '08 (NDP) is a senior at Columbia College Chicago, studying television writing and producing. Jeffrey has plans to move to Los Angeles within the year to pursue a career in television.

Sydney Terenzi '08 (NDP) is a senior at Michigan State University with plans to attend law school next year. Sydney earned acceptance and full tuition scholarships to four Michigan law schools.

Matt Stelmach '08 (NDP) visited NDPMA's Pontiac campus on November 21 to discuss with interested juniors and seniors his experiences in the U.S. Naval Academy as well as ROTC programs that may be available to them.

Chris Maltese '08 (NDP) is in his fourth year of studies in Wayne State University's "MedStart" program, which combines traditional pre-med with medical school in a complete eight-year program.

Sarah Burns '07 (NDP) graduated in May 2011 from the United States Naval Academy and was Commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps. She is now at Officer Basic school in Quantico, Va. Five fellow NDP alumni made the trip to Annapolis, Md., to see Sarah graduate: Chris Brademeyer '07, Elizabeth Ramus '07, Monica Majewski '07, Annie Stevens '07 and brother Chris Burns '10. Sarah's brother Chris, United States Naval Academy Class of 2014, was out on summer duty and surprised Sarah by coming in the middle of the night to be her first salute, which she made Chris hold for several minutes. As Chris says, he "will always be saluting his sister; she most likely will always outrank me."

Elizabeth Ramus '07 (NDP) is a senior at the University of Michigan School of Social Work and will be graduating in May 2012.

Megan McFarland '07 (NDP) visited NDPMA in September and is working for an engineering firm. Megan is planning to attend graduate school, where she will study speech pathology and gerontology. She looks forward to a career helping elderly persons with their speech.

Aileen Bammer '07 (NDP) is in her last year of Elementary Education Certification at Aquinas College in Grand Rapids, Mich. Aileen completed student teaching over the winter.

Shawn Cencer '07 (NDP) is an architecture student at Carnegie Mellon University. In Dec. 2011, Shawn was featured in the NY Times for his participation in an architecture project to design a performing arts center at Ground Zero.

Thomas Gartner '07 (NDP) works for McDonald's as a customer hospitality manager in Traverse City, Mich.

Benjamin Derico '07 (NDP) graduated in the spring of 2011 from Loyola University Chicago with a degree in film production and international relations. Ben currently is living in Madrid, Spain, working part-time as

a high school English teacher and part-time as a videographer in a small marketing firm on the city's north side. In July 2012, Ben will travel to Uganda for three weeks filming a documentary about a not-for-profit group based in Chicago called Pangea Educational Development, which supports Uganda schools. To raise money to cover the cost of his travel, Ben will be biking 200 miles from his home in Madrid to Valencia, a city on the Mediterranean Sea.

Joshua Roberson '06 (NDP) is attending Kuyper College in Grand Rapids, studying Bible and theology, with aspiration to become a sports chaplain. Josh completed his undergraduate degree at Grand Valley State University, where he also played basketball.

Domenic Terenzi '06 (NDP) is in his first year of studies at the Wayne State University School of Medicine.

Raquel Sebastian '05 (NDP) graduated from University of Detroit Mercy School of Dentistry in May 2011. In June 2011, she began a one-year residency at the John Dingell VA Hospital in Detroit. This summer Raquel will begin a 27-month specialty program at Ohio State University's College of Dentistry Division of Endodontics.

Troy Leonard '04 (NDP) recently accepted a junior partner position at a boutique financial firm in Wisconsin called Cornerstone Financial. Troy works in financial planning, asset management, 401(k) administration and estate planning.

Justin Bammer '04 (NDP) is in his fourth year of study at the Wayne State University School of Medicine. In October 2011, Justin was in the middle of a rotation in emergency medicine, his preferred specialty, at the University of Chicago.

Jessica Wilde '04 (NDP) graduated from law school and passed the New York State Bar exam.

Krysten Aquilina-Raumpz '04 (NDP) is working for Meijer, Inc., corporate offices in marketing.

Daniel Hollenkamp '03 (NDP) works for worldwide design and manufacturing company, Jabil Circuit, in Auburn Hills, Mich.

Meredith Gifford '02 (NDP) recently moved home to Rochester after performing in South Korea for three years. Meredith is doing an acting internship at Meadow Brook Theatre in Rochester Hills through June 2012, where she has performed or been involved in stage productions including "Something Wicked This Way Comes," "A Christmas Carol" and "Mary Stuart." Meredith also is directing NDP's spring play, "Our Town," which opens in Mar. 2012, and she is enjoying being back on campus.

Bradley Mitchell '02 (NDP) graduated from Central Michigan University with a degree in computer science information technology and is currently a computer engineer for MGM Hotel and Casino Detroit. Brad says, "Come on down and make a donation to my place of employment!" Brad married Katie Demongey in Sept. 2011.

Stephen Skok '02 (NDP) works for certified public accounting and consulting firm, Doeren Mayhew, in Troy, Mich. On Jan.

26, 2012, Stephen spoke to incoming Notre Dame Prep freshmen about leadership and scholarship at NDPMA's Scholars Reception. **Samual Gales '02 (NDP)** visited NDPMA in Oct. 2011 while in town from his home in Seattle, Wash. Samual works full-time as an inspector of airplane parts. He also is earning his bachelor's degree from Washington State University, studying psychology and sociology with plans to graduate in Dec. 2012. Samual is married and has two children: Evelyn (2 years old), and Samual Jr. (6 months).

Amanda Sweeney '02 (NDP) lives on Mackinac Island every April through October, working as a wedding coordinator for Mission Pointe Resort. From November through March she lives in Berkley, Mich. **Brooke Kaltz '02 (NDP)** is living in New York, working for Mercedes Benz USA in the International Procurement Services Network for the Americas and South Africa.

Kimberly (Majewski) Miller '02 (NDP) was married in June 2011 and is living in Clearwater, Florida. Kimberly completed her master's degree in educational leadership in May 2011. She is the assistant principal at Safety Harbor Middle School.

Joseph Rumph '01 (NDP) is living in Chicago earning his masters at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

Bobbie (Bieszki) Hall '00 (NDP) was honored as one of the best athletes in the history of the Catholic High School League. Hall is one of 39 female athletes named to the CHSL list. She currently coaches JV basketball and assists in softball, and teaches English and health/PE in NDPMA's upper and middle divisions. Bobbie lives with her husband, Jeff, and one-year-old son, Logan, in Rochester Hills, Mich.

Tracy (Carey) Logan '00 (NDP) welcomed her first baby, son Braden James, in Jan. 2011 with husband, Tim. Tracy is a nurse and is finishing her master's at Oakland University to become a nurse practitioner.

Taylor (Enmark) Jackson '00 (NDP) is working as a business specialist for Computware Corporation in Detroit.

Michael Rome '00 (NDP) works for United States Steel Corporation as a HDQ Consolidation and Financial Analyst. Michael and wife Jennifer (Fecek) Rome '00 (NDP) are living in Pittsburgh, Pa.

Laura Tisdell '00 (NDP) recently became a full editor at Reagan Arthur Books in New York City. Laura and her husband, Matthew Burton, live part-time in New York and part-time in Washington D.C. Laura was featured in an article from her hometown (Rochester Hills, Mich.) newspaper, which discusses her career in the book world.

Erin Nolan '00 (NDP) is teaching 6th, 7th and 8th grade math at a Catholic school in the Chicago area.

Kelly (Cole) Patterson '99 (NDP) is enjoying teaching Language A and Humanities at Notre Dame Marist Academy middle division. Kelly transitioned back to the classroom after proudly serving as the alumni director at ND for three years. Recently, she received her master's degree in educational leadership from Oakland University. Kelly's husband, Bob, teaches 3rd grade at Notre Dame Marist Academy

We'd love to hear from you! Send a note to let us know what you're up to: e-mail Rachel (Alexander) Miller '00 (NDP) at rmiller@ndpma.org, or visit ndpma.org/update.

See Alumni Notes, page 26

Dear fellow alumni,

As I settle into the second half of my first year as Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy's annual fund director, I am excited about the increased alumni support of the Notre Dame Annual Fund. As I opened the mail each day at the end of December, I was delighted to see many people making gifts to NDPMA for the first time, some of whom are Notre Dame High School alumni making their first gifts supporting a Marist education since their school closed in 2005. Each and every gift we receive is a vote of confidence in a Catholic, Marist, and college-preparatory education.

Even though we are happy for the increased support, we still hope that more alumni from all schools represented by the Notre Dame Alumni Association can find it in their hearts to support our school's important mission. The three most common reasons I hear from alumni who do not support NDPMA are: 1) I did not attend Notre Dame Prep, 2) I can't afford it, and 3) I'm too young. In my recent solicitation letter, I attempted to answer those and other reasons.

Our hope as an institution is that everyone participates in our annual fund drive, making a gift to the best of their ability. For some, it may be a few dollars. For others, it may be \$50, \$100, \$500, or more. Some of our donors are only eighteen years old and some are now grandparents. Together, all of our alumni donors—new grads and 50-year alumni, from NDP and otherwise—make a big difference.



I was saddened when Notre Dame High School, my alma mater, closed. I look back on my all-male, Marist, college-preparatory education with great joy. Even so, I am happy the Marist Fathers preside over a top-notch education at Notre Dame Prep. It's a place where my school traditions are alive, including Irish Week and the Notre Dame Victory March. With so many similarities between the high school and the prep, I suggest that NDPMA is worthy of your philanthropic dollars so that the young people of today and tomorrow can emerge from our halls well-prepared with the knowledge and skills to face an ever-changing world.

All of us experienced an education that was financially buttressed by the generosity of those who came before us. Isn't it incumbent upon all of us to do the same for the coming generations?

With best wishes for a happy spring and summer,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frank Castronova".

Frank Castronova '89 (NDHS)
Annual Fund Director

Note: You may use the envelope in the center of this magazine to make your gift today.

Architect, from page 8

hard. But also be prepared to have a great time. You might spend 72 straight hours in studio gluing together little sticks of wood and drawing pictures. But you get to make stuff and call it a profession. You become great friends with the people in your studio. And you get to take a lot of pride in your work. And sometimes you get to build life-size robots out of junk.

IRISH: Do you feel that Notre Dame Prep prepared you for life after high school?

KUTIL: I think NDP prepared me well for college. I definitely felt like I had the study

skills to do well at UC. I had to work pretty hard in high school and so I think I was ready for the intensity of architecture school. I also was really lucky to have a supportive base of people (family, teachers, etc.) that kept me grounded when I went off on my own.

IRISH: Do you recall any teachers at NDP who may have had a particularly strong impact on you?

KUTIL: I had two teachers at NDPMA who were really important to me: Señora (Ellen) Tessada and Mr. (Matthew) McGuire. Mr. McGuire was my first real art

teacher, and he always looked out for me and supported me. He remained an important part of my life all throughout high school. I really appreciate everything that he did to encourage my aspirations and interests. I think that his support was a huge factor in my decision to study design. Señora Tessada was another really important person for me at Notre Dame. She made me feel like such a special person, and also played a huge role in encouraging me to pursue my interests in design and language. I can only hope to one day be as inspirational to a younger person as these two people were to me. ■

ALUMNI NETWORKING PROFESSIONALS BREAKFASTS

There is no better way to help stimulate Detroit's economy than to support Notre Dame alumni-owned businesses and professionals in our area! Due to popular demand, the Notre Dame Alumni Association presents a new series of morning networking sessions. The goal of these sessions is three-fold: 1) to provide a networking opportunity for alumni - business owners and professionals, young and experienced; 2) to increase awareness and encourage referrals of alumni-owned businesses; and 3) to allow for alum-to-alum mentoring and career connections.

The first session will take place on Thursday, March 29, 2012, at the Stuffed Bun, a restaurant owned by an alumni family, located at 603 East Walton Blvd, Pontiac, MI 48340. Future sessions will take

place the last Thursday of each month at 7:00 AM. Locations will vary each month.

Sessions will be up to one-and-a-half hours in length, beginning with an opportunity for informal networking, followed by brief presentations from each attendee before the group, during which alumni can discuss their business or services. All alumni are encouraged to bring business cards, pamphlets and special discounts to circulate. Business attire. Breakfast is purchased on a pay-your-own-way basis.

Space is limited, so please RSVP to Daniel Marchese '02 (NDHS), Vice President of the Alumni Board of Directors, at danojm@umich.edu. Kindly RSVP two or more days ahead of each session.

Visit www.ndpma.org/networking for the schedule of events and locations.

lower division. Kelly and Bob live in Sterling Heights, Mich.

Carol Evola '99 (NDP) attended NDP's homecoming in September and wrote, "Just wanted to say that the alumni tent and food at the game was very nice. I had such a nice time and really like the new coffee mug! Thanks for all your hard work!"

Erin Bonnavier '99 (NDP) is the founder and CEO of SwaggerBids.com, a new auction website that launched in November 2011. The site features exclusive deals on high-end designer merchandise to those who sign up as members.

Jackie Joy '97 (NDP) and her fiancé, Michael, own an entertainment company, Knotty Bits, LLC, which performs family-friendly sideshow and cirque acts to a large list of corporate, business and private clients. Jackie also teaches aerial acrobatics to adults and (soon) children, through her own company Aerial4me.

Cheryl (Bowman) Van Drie '98 (NDP) and her husband, Matthew, have been married five years and currently reside in Rochester Hills, Mich., where they run a computer repair business, Canyonero Consulting (www.canyonero.org). In Nov. 2011, the couple welcomed their first child, daughter Mackenzie Marie.

Robert Lesnau '98 (NDP) attended NDP's homecoming in September and wrote, "Great job on the homecoming event, it was good to see a lot of people I haven't seen in a while."

NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI

Stephen Kuclio '03 (NDHS) won the 2011 Mr. USA Bodybuilding Championship.

Benjamin Blackwell '00 (NDHS) married Malissa Glush '98 (NDP) on Oct. 2011. Ben recently authored an article for Boat Magazine, a new British literary magazine that twice a year chooses what the editors call a "complicated city" to live in for a month or so and write about it. Blackwell's article, called "Things We Left in the Fire," recounts when his mother's Detroit house caught fire and how difficult it was sorting through what remained afterward. Erin Spens, Boat's editor-in-chief, says the article among other things discusses "the impressions of his feet in the cement sidewalk as a little baby and the baseball cards he left in the attic."

John Keillor '97 (NDHS) lives in Grand Rapids, Mich. and works as a firefighter.

Vito Ciaravino '97 (NDHS) is a licensed patent attorney and lives in Rockford, Mich.

Brian Jones '96 (NDHS) recently moved to Fort Lauderdale, Fla. for a new job opportunity. Brian is the associate administrator and director of business development for Florida Medical Center.

Timothy Slowik '94 (NDHS) wrote, "upon graduation from Notre Dame High School in 1994, I attended Siena Heights University where I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in criminal justice in 1998. After graduation from Siena Heights University, I attended the University of Detroit-Mercy where I completed a Master of Science degree with a concentration in security administration in 2000. From 2000 to 2005 I was employed by two different private security companies (Pinkerton Security then Securitex) in which I held upper management positions. From 2005

to present, I have worked for the State of Michigan as a parole agent. As a parole agent, I supervise newly released offenders from Michigan prisons. In 2009, I began work on my Doctor of Education degree with a cognate in justice administration at St. Thomas University in Miami Gardens, Fla. I will complete my doctoral degree by 2014, after which, I hope to teach criminal justice courses in a university setting."

Paul Housey '88 (NDHS) wrote, "Dear friends, I hope that you will indulge me for a moment to brag about my wife Amber. I am excited and proud to announce that she is now a published author! Amber has a huge heart and a God-given ability to connect with children. She has combined these gifts to publish 'Just Because,' the first book in a series of 'Flip Side Stories™.' To Amber, 'Just Because' and 'Flip Side Stories™' are about far more than selling books. She is hoping to inspire children and families and create sparks that will change the way people live their daily lives. She is hoping that her work will get people to 'look at the Flip Side' every day. In a way you have never seen before, 'Flip Side Stories™' teach children (and adults too) about empathy and the importance of seeing another persons' point of view. Your kids will love these stories and I am quite sure you will too!" Visit www.theflipsidestories.com for more information.

Ronald Wade '87 (NDHS) is the director of marketing for the Detroit Tigers. He represented the Tigers and their charity, the Detroit Tigers Foundation, on the MLB Network's "Baseball IQ" quiz show in Feb. 2012.

Todd Grzelewski '84 (NDHS) wrote, "I wanted to send my best wishes to the school and more specifically to the football team for their state playoff game. What a great season your school has had. I'm very happy and proud of the young men and their accomplishments thus far. May the good Lord continue to bless the IRISH."

Jerry Nehr '84 (NDHS) played the role of traveling salesman Charlie Cowell in the Grosse Pointe Theatre adaptation of the Broadway hit, "The Music Man," which ran Sept.-Oct. 2011. Nehr also recently played a part in GPT's production of "The Scarlet Pimpernel."

Mark Stefani '78 (NDHS) is the director of optometry for Fraser Optical and Hearing Aids. Dr. Stefani is now a member of our Notre Dame Alumni Business Directory and plans to donate 15% of any new business from alumni customers to Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy.

Philip Jeszke '76 (NDHS) is working for Ascend Performance Materials out of his home in Oakland Twp., Mich. Phil has two sons: Joshua, who graduated from Notre Dame Prep in 2010 and is now attending Aquinas College, and Jacob, who is a sophomore at Notre Dame Prep. Phil's wife, Dawn, works for Sodexo in Notre Dame Prep's cafeteria.

Michael Paletta '75 (NDHS) is the vice president of medical affairs for Hospice of Michigan and the executive director of the Maggie Allesee Center for Quality of Life. Full article on Paletta – see pg. 9.

Kris Powell '75 (NDHS) is the president and CEO of Benepro, a benefits management company he started in 1990. He also started Admin Pro in the 90s and looks forward to launching a new company, HR Pro, this

year. Kris serves as vice chair of the Board of Trustees for NDPMA, member of the Board of Directors of Red Run Golf Club, and is a member of the Workplace Leadership Council with the Troy Chamber of Commerce. Kris lives in Troy with his wife, Jennifer, and daughter, Lauren, who attends Notre Dame Marist Academy and will begin high school at Notre Dame Preparatory next year.

Jim Denys '74 (NDHS) attended NDP's homecoming game and wrote, "I wanted to thank you and the entire Notre Dame living community for a spectacular evening. The evening was very special and I must say that I continue to be very proud of my association with Notre Dame. Thanks to your efforts, the current administration, and of course the many wonderful families that value everything Notre Dame means to the past, present, and future. I hope to not wait another 38 years before I visit again." Jim later wrote to us regarding nominations for the Catholic High School League's greatest all-time athletes: "If I'd have to give some props, they would go out to Big Bad John Vertalka, who I had the honor to share the defensive line with in 1973. John was as strong as an OX and it took a team of them to move him. John never gave up his ground as a defensive tackle and teams always went around him because there was no way you could move him out of the way. Consequently, John's efforts were recognized by being named to the all-district team and he later played for Albion. John was a soft-spoken guy who let his play on the field do the talking for him. My most cherished memory was in 1972, with a couple of blemishes on our record going into the Brother Rice game. Brother Rice coached by the legendary Al Fracassa was the toughest obstacle on the schedule year in and year out. The night was your typical late October fall weather, cold, damp, wet, and drizzle playing away at the favored 5-0 Brother Rice. Notre Dame played with a lot of pride and character on the sloppy Brother Rice field that night. The defense fought every inch giving up just one Brother Rice TD that evening. Brother Rice failed to convert on the extra point and led 6-0. The tenacious Notre Dame offense struggled in the slop the entire evening but put together one drive that would end up in the Brother Rice end zone and in the memories of every player on that team. Notre Dame converted on the extra point and won 7-6. It wasn't pretty but we beat Brother Rice on their home turf—something ND had not done since 1968 and only once after that, winning in 1976, 7-6. The next week we played Detroit Catholic Central, a sleepy team with a 4-2 record, which at the time had a moose playing fullback and a middle linebacker by the name of Paul Rudzinski. Rudzinski was a 6'-1", 220-pound chiseled junior who took an army to bring down. At fullback he played like Larry Csonka of the Dolphins, and at linebacker played like Dick Butkus of the Bears. Well, we lost to them the next week after playing Brother Rice, and they lost to Brother Rice the following week. With a 5-3 record we would be the 1972 Co-Champs in our Catholic League Division with Detroit Catholic Central who finished at 5-4. Oh, by the way, Paul Rudzinski went on to play for Michigan State and later played for the Green Bay Packers. Please give Coach Zimmerman and his team a big congrats!"

Thomas Shannon '72 (NDHS) lives in Grosse Pointe, Mich., and is an attorney at the Law Offices of Thomas Shannon & Associates.

Walter Kempski '69 (NDHS) displayed three of his oil paintings in the alumni art show at NDPMA. His studio, Walt Kempski Graphics, is located in St. Clair Shores, Mich.

Daryl Rollins '68 (NDHS) is the owner and CPA of Rosenbaum, Rollins & Olah, P.C. Daryl lives in Farmington Hills, Mich., with his wife, Rosanne.

Robert Lantz '64 (NDHS) announced his retirement after 41 football seasons as head coach at Utica Eisenhower and a 304-116 overall record. Over his career as the Eagles coach, Lantz led Eisenhower to 13 league, six district and seven regional titles, and his teams went to the final four seven times.

Michael Reilly '63 (NDHS) visited NDPMA's Pontiac campus in November while in town from his home in Cadillac, Mich. Michael is a retired teacher, having worked 27 years for Cadillac public schools, teaching children in grades 6-12. Mike now works part-time as an environmental technician for EPA and Forest Service. He also is a township supervisor.

Thomas Hooks '62 (NDHS) is retired and living in Olympia, Wash., with his wife, Anna Marie.

Gerald Baloski '60 (NDHS) lives in Thousand Palms, California. Gerald is a photographer and artist for Thinkwide.

Donald Kolke '58 (NDHS) attended NDP's homecoming game in September and wrote, "Just a note to thank the alumni committee for the great time that my wife, Judy, and I had at the homecoming football game which ended with a victory for NDPMA. You made us feel very welcome and allowed me to re-live some of the good times at Notre Dame High School. I must say that you made an Old Guy feel very happy and humbled by the display board and the announcement over the loudspeaker at the game. Thankfully I've had many highs in my life, and I will count this among them." Don sent another note later, regarding NDP's first state playoff football game: "Although Judy and I have a grandchild's 1-year birthday to attend this Saturday and won't be able to attend the playoff game for NDPMA, we do want to wish the players and coaches good luck with the game. I hope they are aware that, although there were no state playoffs at the time that we played for Notre Dame, our 1957 team did play in "The Soup Bowl" for the Catholic League Championship leading up to the final (The Goodfellow Game: Catholic vs. public school champions.) Alas, we lost in The Soup Bowl. NDPMA has already surpassed our first NDHS football team by winning the Catholic League Championship. From afar we'll be rooting for the NDPMA football team this Saturday and that they continue to, and through, the state championship to win the state title. No matter the outcome of the upcoming game(s), we of the first NDHS class and all the following classes are very proud of the NDPMA team for their great accomplishments."

PONTIAC CATHOLIC ALUMNI

Michelle Dumeah '84 (PC) attended Homecoming with her daughter, Lauren, who enjoyed meeting Lauren's former coach and longtime athletic director, Betty Wroubel.

Michelle wrote, "Lauren keeps referencing her friend "Betty." I won't tell her how hard (Wroubel) drove us in high school. :)"

Ann Schulte '82 (PC) visited NDPMA's Pontiac campus with a group of former classmates from Pontiac Catholic, whose 30-year reunion was held that week at the Crowne Plaza, Auburn Hills. Ann's daughter, Megan, who is a junior at Notre Dame Prep, showed the group around campus. Ann's other daughter, Erica, graduated from NDP in 2009. Ann also volunteered as a helper in the alumni tent at NDP's homecoming in Sept. 2011.

Don Larson '72 (PC) is a manager at Deauville Plaza Apartments in Pompano Beach, Fla. In September, Don visited NDPMA's Pontiac campus and afterward wrote, "Thank you for taking the time to walk me through the hallowed halls of Pontiac Catholic/Notre Dame! You have no idea how much I enjoyed it and the memories it brought back. Back then in 1968-1972, the school was brand new and just glistened with fresh paint and the smell of new construction! The trees on the property were mere saplings, only to grow and prosper as the school has done, which was so obvious to me on my visit. Giddings Road was an old dirt road filled with potholes and ruts in the winter! The classrooms were staffed mostly by the Sisters of the IHM, Dominican, Sisters of St Joseph, along with several priests as well. Several of the nuns still wore the old-fashioned habits and veils of an era gone by. As I drove home after our visit, so many great memories

passed through my head of the old days at PCHS. As I look back, those years of 68-72 were truly the best years of my life. Thank you once again for the trip down memory lane! Sincerely, Don Larson, Pontiac Catholic HS Class of '72." Five of Don's brothers and sisters attended Pontiac Catholic in the 1970s, and three of Don's sisters and his 93-year old mother, Virginia, attended St. Frederick School between 1933 and 1966. The family also had many cousins (the Leh family) who attended Pontiac Catholic. **Daniel Leh '72 (PC)** visited and toured NDPMA's Pontiac campus in Dec. 2011 while in town from Chicago, Ill. Daniel is a regional vice president of sales for Hyatt Hotels & Resorts.

ST. FREDERICK ALUMNI

Patricia Scully-Strong '64 (SF) attended the St. Frederick All Class Reunion in September 2011. Patricia wrote afterward, "Great picture of the alumni at the St. Frederick Alumni Reunion (in the e-newsletter). One comment I heard was that when we were younger and attending St. Frederick School, it was HUGE. Walking through it today seemed more like walking through a doll house. Still, a great tour. Those halls are filled with memories and stories. What a perfect time to share all of that at our reunion that same day." ■

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- Average ACT in 2011: 26.58
- 41 students in the Class of 2011 with 30+ on the ACT



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Bridget Maher

Alumna of Notre Dame Preparatory School and Harvard University



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CLASS REUNIONS

NOTRE DAME PREPARATORY

Class of 2007 5-year reunion. Sat., June 16, 2012, at Rochester Mills Beer Co. in Rochester, Mich. Visit www.ndpma.org/classof2007 for more info. Reunion contacts: Marie Tashjian, marietashjian@gmail.com; Steve Cox, Coxstev2@msu.edu.

Class of 2006 6-year reunion. Sat., June 9, 2012, at Rochester Mills Beer Co. in Rochester, Mich. Reunion contact: Maria Carnago, maricarnago@gmail.com, 248-227-6127.

Class of 2002 10-year reunion is in the early planning stages. Reunion committee: Steve Skok, stskok@gmail.com; Bill Higgins, wbhiggins@gmail.com; Teresa Elliott, Teresa.Elliott@microsoft.com; Jane Dika, jane-dika@hotmail.com.

NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL

Class of 1962 50-year reunion. Thurs., Aug. 16, 2012, at Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy in Pontiac, Mich. Reunion committee: Jerry Lesperance, jerrylesperance@yahoo.com; Jerry Alderman, trottinhorse@myway.com; Tom Lueck, TJLUECK@aol.com.

Class of 1963 50-year reunion weekend is being planned for Sept. 2013. Tentative plans include a Saturday night dinner at Greektown Casino, a Sunday morning mass and a Detroit Tigers game. Reunion committee: John McCabe, 586-822-5153; Don Herman, 586-781-0220.

Class of 1965 50-year reunion is being planned for 2015. The committee is looking to update e-mail addresses and contact information. Reunion committee: Dennis Berger, dennisaberger@aol.com, 909-223-4483; Fr. Leon Olszawowski, lolszawowski@ndpma.org.

Class of 1972 40-year reunion is in the early planning stages. Reunion committee: John Berra, 949-357-3926, jmberra2003@yahoo.com; Terry Cirocco, 313-884-7748, tjcirocco@mckeenassociates.com; Michael Montpetit, 734-433-2399, mcmont1954365@aol.com.

Class of 1986 30-year reunion being planned for 2016. Reunion committee: John Kaminski, jkaminski1700@yahoo.com, 612-822-4759 home, 952-261-5546 cell; Dan O'Brien, 248-840-8391, dobrien734@comcast.net; Paul Arnone, paul.c.arnone@gm.com; Stephen Schultz, stephen2000_fl@yahoo.com; Jonathan Zaidan, jkmzc@sbcglobal.net.

Class of 1987 25-year reunion is being planned. Reunion committee: John Childs, john.childs@delphi.com or swarthydog@yahoo.com, 248-787-0616; John Vermiglio, jvermig1@comcast.net, 586-212-4763.

PONTIAC CATHOLIC

Class of 1972 40-year reunion. Fri., Aug. 3, 2012, at Kennedy's in Waterford, Mich. 7:00 PM. Reunion picnic scheduled for Sat., Aug. 4, 2012 on White Lake — exact location TBD. For more information and to RSVP please contact Maureen Horton-Phillips, 231-233-6113, phillips@jackpine.com, or Joanne Walters-Malito at 773-520-7454.

Class of 1977 35-year reunion. Sat., Aug. 11, 2012, at Santia Hall in Keego Harbor, Mich. Reunion committee: Paula, Frank, Bridget, Chuck, Liz and Mary.

ST. MICHAEL

Class of 1962 50-year reunion. Sat., May 5, 2012, at Canterbury Village's King's Court Castle in Lake Orion, Mich. A reunion email "hotline" has been established for any questions, stmikespontiac62@yahoo.com. Reunion contact: Dick Stevens, dickstevens1@yahoo.com.

INTERESTED IN PLANNING A REUNION FOR YOUR CLASS?

E-mail Rachel (Alexander) Miller '00 (NDP), director of alumni relations, at rmiller@ndpma.org.

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