

SPRING 2025 ISSUE

CRUSADER CONNECTION

Notre Dame High School's
Alumni Newsletter

2025 LENTEN PROJECT



Senior Zoey McClelland

For Christians, Lent refers to a 40-day period during which they traditionally focus on three pillars: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving (charity), which are practices intended to deepen their faith and prepare for Easter. The pillar focused on charity involves giving to those in need, whether through donations, volunteering, or acts of kindness, reflecting compassion and concern for others.

Head of School, **Bernadette (Robinson '84) McClelland**, had learned of a local family whose wife/mother recently left her family, leaving her husband to care for their five children. A NYS Correctional Officer, the father was struggling financially following the recent CO strike and the loss of a second income in the family. With three children under the age of four, his plate was full. In keeping with the Notre Dame tradition of almsgiving during the Lenten season, the 2025 Lenten Project was announced at Ash Wednesday services, and the ND community was invited to join students in addressing the immediate needs of this local family.

Each high school grade level was assigned to specific needs of each of the children, middle school students were asked to contribute diapers, laundry supplies, and toiletries, and faculty/staff purchased gift cards for Wegmans, pizza delivery, etc.

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*Lent is a time of giving,
not just denying*

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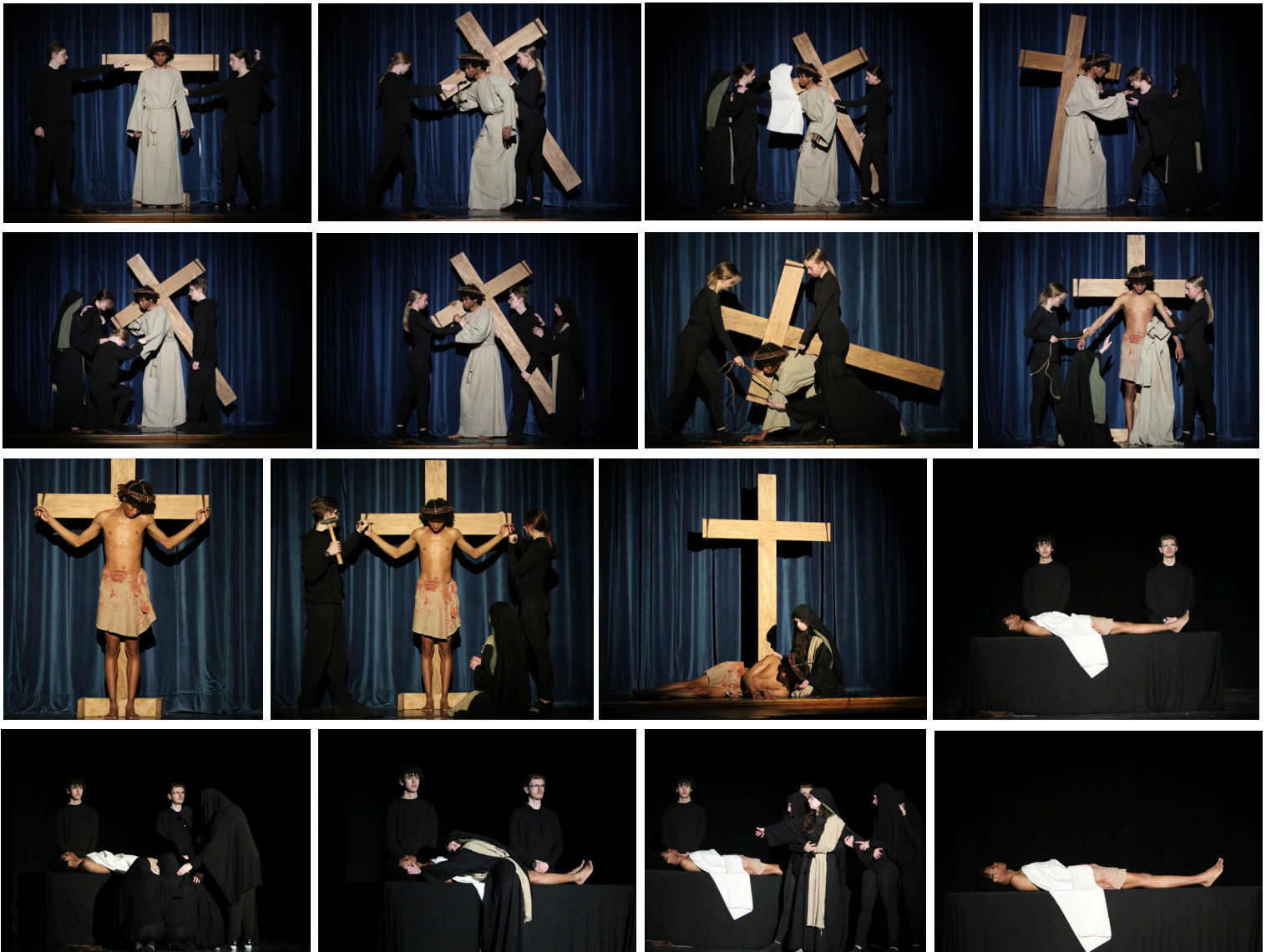
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2025 LENTEN PROJECT (continued from page 1)

Working with ND's Campus Minister, Marie McCaig, senior Zoey McClelland (the Project Coordinator) and the ND family got to work. Typically, the Lenten Project extends the entire 40 days of Lent, but due to the immediate needs of the family, the collection timeline was shortened to 21 days. The generosity and compassion were evident in the outpouring of donations for this family in need. Zoey collected and delivered the donations to the appreciative family in early April. The ND community continues to serve in the tradition of Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy.

LIVING STATIONS OF THE CROSS

The Notre Dame community gathered for a compelling presentation of the Living Stations of the Cross presented by the senior class. The deeply moving performance summoned all in attendance to prayerfully remember the Lord's suffering and sacrifice for all.



UNITED BY COLOR

On March 20, 2024, Notre Dame hosted the 1st Annual United by Color 3k Run/Walk, an Ernie Davis Awareness Color Run Fundraiser. Organized by senior Makenna Keough (daughter of alumna **Tifanie (Lamb '99) Keough**), the event was part of her service project for the Ernie Davis Memorial Scholarship. The community event was introduced to raise awareness of the

life and legacy of Ernie Davis, to recognize the exceptional character qualities with which he led his life, and to unite against racial discrimination. With 100+ people in attendance, the event brought alumni, current students and families, and members of the community to the ND campus. All monies raised through the event were donated to the Ernie Davis Community Center.

In conjunction with the Color Run, Makenna also established the ND Ernie Davis Varsity Club, a club designed to encourage ND varsity athletes to follow Ernie's example, according to the following principles: be a change leader, live with integrity always, practice humility often, show kindness to everyone, and be courageous when facing adversity. The club meets monthly, hosting guest speakers and working on various community service projects.

For more information on Makenna's project, please visit: <https://unitedbycolor4ernie.com>



Event Founder & Organizer
senior Makenna Keough



Jon & Tifanie (Lamb '99)
Keough

ALUMNI CORNER



by Eileen Ruppenthal '81, Alumni Relations Director

Spring at Notre Dame is a season of anticipation and reflection. As flowers bloom and the weather warms, students often feel a renewed energy, especially seniors as they recognize that graduation is fast approaching and they begin to make decisions on their future. The air is filled with a mixture of excitement and nostalgia, as the focus on solidifying friendships and making memories intensifies.

As alumni, memories of Notre Dame are often vivid and sentimental accounts of experiences that range from favorite classes and teachers, clubs and athletic teams, and of course, friendships. These memories are often recalled “as if they happened yesterday”, yet we are cognizant of the rapid passage of time. Preserving our school memories and traditions creates a lasting legacy that inspires and unites alumni with both current and future students.

Notre Dame memorabilia is an important piece of our shared memories. With “spring cleaning” in full swing, if you uncover any ND memorabilia that you would like to part with, please consider donating it to our ND Alumni Archive. For any questions, please email ruppenthale@notredamehighschool.com



Keeping Track

This newsletter is meant to inform fellow alumni of the great things you are doing, but we need your help in order to do so! Fill us in on your travels, life experiences, accomplishments, careers, volunteer work, etc. so that we can share your news with your classmates!

You may submit news directly to Eileen Ruppenthal '81 at ruppenthale@notredamehighschool.com or to ndalumni@notredamehighschool.com

We hope to hear from you soon! Thank you!

Planning your reunion?

If your class has a reunion coming up, please contact Eileen Ruppenthal '81 at ndalumni@notredamehighschool.com to share your plans, schedule a school tour, request a class list, or for any other assistance you may need.

ALUMNI CHRONICLES



by Elena Cambio '86

Since graduating from Notre Dame High School in 1986, my life has taken several twists and turns, but a throughline for me has always been my creative work. I was encouraged to use my gifts in writing and drama at ND – as editor of the *Maryleaf* and through my participation in theater – and with that came the confidence to pursue my dreams.

Two Notre Dame teachers in particular were instrumental in my pursuit of creative and language arts: Mr. Tony Pucci, who taught my AP English class, and Sr. Edwina Butler, RSM, with her infectious love of French language and culture. I later became a teacher in no small part due to the influence of these two great educators.

Along the way, I've picked up a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Imaging Arts (filmmaking) from the Rochester Institute of Technology and a Master of Arts (MA) in Linguistics from Ohio University. I have worked for the last thirty years as a freelance writer, and the last two years as a staff writer at the *Catholic Courier*, the news outlet for the Diocese of Rochester. I've also been fortunate to teach in many colleges, universities, and schools over the years – including Hanyang University in Seoul, South Korea.

I was delighted to screen my short film, *SOULED*, in Elmira this past April 13th, and am very grateful for the support from our Notre Dame alumni network. It was a successful screening, and the culmination of several years of work on the script, shooting on location, and the lengthy post-production process. It amazes most people to learn how much work goes into even a ten-minute film!

As we head into the summer of 2025, I'm editing a documentary film about my spiritual pilgrimage to South Korea in 2024. After previously working in South Korea, it was my dream to return to make a pilgrimage to the sites of the Korean Catholic martyrs and to film that experience. My work on this documentary is supported by a generous grant from the Genesee Valley Council on the Arts.



*Haemi International Sanctuary
Seosan, South Korea*



*Myeongdong Cathedral
Seoul, South Korea*



*Saenamto Catholic Holy Place
of the Martyrs, Seoul, South Korea*

ALUMNI CHRONICLES (continued from page 5)

I am also blessed to be working with the World Youth Day Seoul 2027 newsletter team, writing about young saints such as the soon-to-be canonized Carlo Acutis, as well as Korean saints, including the first Korean priest, St. Andrew Kim Taegon.

As any artist, writer or musician can attest to, it can be challenging to stay true to your process and your vision – and your faith. Toward this end, I'm associated with other Catholic creatives in the Rochester area who support one another in our pursuits.

My hope is for Catholic creatives everywhere to express the truth, goodness, and beauty of God's love for us. This is something we are called to, and it's something that first took root in me during my years at Notre Dame.

You can keep up with the work on my documentary film, *Korea Dreambus*, here:
<https://koreadreambusdocumentary.blogspot.com>



REMEMBERING JOEL STEPHENS AND MIKE D'ALOISIO

Notre Dame teacher and alumni parent, Jessica Ryan, introduced two guest speakers to her Death & Dying class. With class discussions focused on celebrating the lives of those who have passed, a conversation remembering alumni Joel Stephens '95 and legendary ND coach and former teacher/administrator Mike D'Aloisio was the perfect excuse to hold class outside on a beautiful spring day. Former Notre Dame teachers, John Olisky and Anthony Pucci, spoke to the class, sharing their memories of Joel and Mike, highlighting not only their athletic accomplishments but also their integrity, compassion, selflessness, and humor.

Spending some time in both Joel Stephens Park and also in Coach's Corner, the students will surely remember this day for years to come.



Alumni News



Juan Carlos Escobosa '83, who was an exchange student from Mexico, stopped by for a visit and a school tour while in town for a reunion with his former host family, including **Jenny Roberts-O'Brien '87**. Juan currently lives in Mexico.

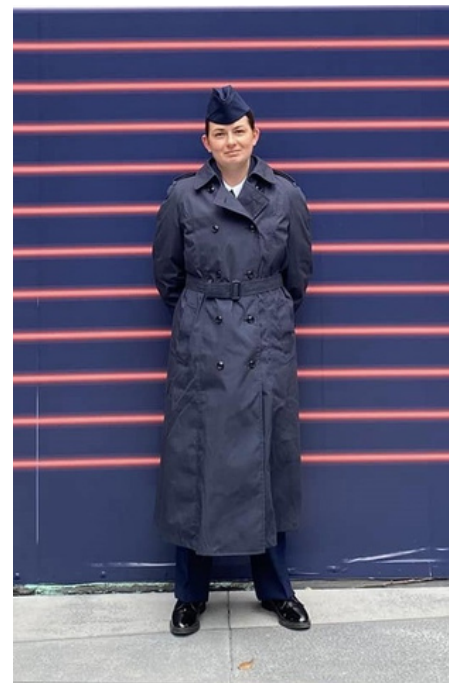


Congratulations to **Tamara (Wright) '86 Acosta** who co-produced the Grammy Award-winning album in the Best Classical Solo Vocal Album category. The album, *Beyond the Years: Unpublished Songs of Florence Price*, and Price's music have helped to raise the profiles of black women artists. Tamara is an Assistant Professor of Voice at Ithaca College and is the co-founder of ONEcomposer, an organization that celebrates musicians whose contributions have been historically excluded.



Brittany Huffner '07 was named the Chemung County 911 Dispatcher of the Year at the Chemung County Sheriff's Office Annual Banquet. Brittany received a plaque as the 2024 Susan Olthof Communications Operator of the Year.
Congratulations to Brittany!

Airman Basic **Ireland Munley '20** graduated Air Force basic military training in February 2025.
Congratulations, Ireland!





Makenzy Runyon '22, a junior at Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA, completed the first part of her practicum at Notre Dame in March 2025. Working with Art teacher Sue LaVelle, she observed the various art classes and taught the 8th grade art class. Makenzy is majoring in Visual Arts Education.



Jose Marcotti Neto '24

(pictured with Director of International Recruiting & Student Services Kristie Crossley) came home to ND during his spring break from Central Michigan University.



Alexis Becker '24, a freshman at Marywood University, was selected by her professors to receive the Foundation Studio I Award, with the motivation: "continues dedication to the search and demonstration of the fundamental principles of design + architecture". Following this recognition, she was asked to submit a PDF board of her best work (pictured left) to the Marywood University School of Architecture Student Gallery Feature



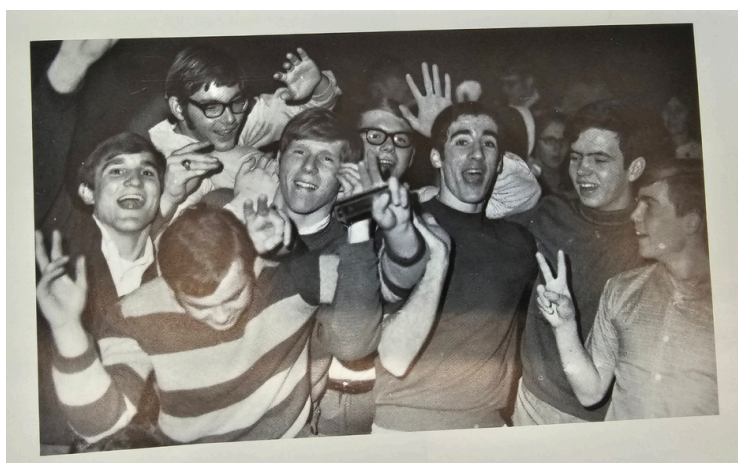
David Ferriol Bermejo '24

(pictured with Director of International Recruiting & Student Services Kristie Crossley) spent Easter with the Crossley family and stopped at ND to say hello. David is studying marketing in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.



The National Interscholastic Athletic Administration Association (NIAAA) announced that Corning-Painted Post Athletic Director **Rebecca (Saggiomo '12) Gentile** was recognized as a Certified Athletic Administrator. To earn this distinction, Becca demonstrated the highest level of knowledge and expertise in the field of interscholastic athletic administration. The certification process includes an evaluation of the candidate's educational background, experience, and professional contributions, as well as a rigorous, comprehensive written exam. Becca is one of an elite group of interscholastic athletic administrators nationwide to attain this level of professionalism. Congratulations, Becca!

Nick Viselli '20 has joined the Mercyhurst University Strength & Conditioning program as a Strength & Conditioning Intern. Nick is a junior at Mercyhurst, majoring in Exercise Science. Nick has played hockey since the age of 4 and also played lacrosse at Notre Dame. Currently, Nick is a member of the Mercyhurst Club Hockey Team.



Throwback 1970

Are you on Facebook?

Join the Notre Dame High School
Elmira, NY - Alumni Facebook page
[here](#)

Keeping Track

1973**Maureen (McPherson) Swift**

Made the move to South Carolina! After 17 years on the left coast, decided to come back East to get away from the wildfire smoke and to be closer to family.

1986**Elena Cambio**

Recently screened her short film, *Souled*, at The Park Church in Elmira, in partnership with Community Arts of Elmira. For more on Elena, please read "Alumni Chronicles" on page 5 of this edition of the *Crusader Connection*.

1986**Michael Johnston**

Was named Section IV Class AAA Boys Coach of the Year by the Basketball Coaches Association of New York (BCANY). Mike is the Varsity Coach at Corning High School.

1993**A'Don Allen**

Was named Section IV Class AAA Girls Coach of the Year by the Basketball Coaches Association of New York (BCANY). A'Don is the Varsity Coach at Elmira High School.

2012**Brian & Bernadette (Gublo) Brown**

Welcomed their first child, Natalie Maria, in February 2025. The family lives in Rhode Island.

2016**Yvie Monlingou**

Completed her Master of Library & Information Science (MLIS) degree at Syracuse University and is working as a Veterinary Curricular Engagement Librarian at Cornell University.

2018**Christopher Johnston**

Received a Sheriff Commendation and a Meritorious Achievement recognition at the Chemung County Sheriff's Office Annual Banquet. Chris works as a dispatcher in the E911 Communications Center.

2019**Emma Vakiener**

Traveled to Fort Worth, Texas to participate in the 2025 National Trumpet Competition (NTC), representing the University of Kentucky. Emma's trumpet ensemble was an NTC semi-finalist, placing in the top 6 in the nation in the large trumpet ensemble division.

2021**Josephine Becker**

Was named to Hartwick College's Fall 2024 Dean's List. Josie is pursuing a major in History and Anthropology.

2024**Olivia Haluska**

A freshman in the nursing program at Elmira College, will spend the fall 2025 semester in Ireland.

2024**Jeremiah Parker**

Was a recipient of the Runway for a Cause scholarship award. Jeremiah is a freshman in the fashion program at Mercyhurst University. The Runway for a Cause scholarship is awarded to students who are in pursuit of furthering their education in the creative arts field, and demonstrate a desire to better oneself and their community by volunteering, mentoring, or completing community service.

We love to hear from our alumni!!

Please continue to submit your news & pictures
to ndalumni@notredamehighschool.com

PRAYERS FOR OUR DECEASED ALUMNI 2025

January

- 10 Anne (Michalke '52) Karski
19 John Myhalyk '70

February

- 12 J. Peter Fennell '49
17 Thomas Falkenberg, MD '79

March

- 3 Joseph Dispenza '75
3 Marietta (Joseph '57) Kimball
9 Daniel Troy '63
12 Austin Hassett '64
20 Bonnie Stetz '63

April

- 17 Theodore Reidy '69
22 Vincent A'Brunzo '54



IN MEMORIAM

The Notre Dame family was sad to receive the news that Sister Patricia Switzer (Sister Joseph Mary) was called home to God on March 6, 2025. Sister Joseph Mary taught at ND in the English Department from 1973 - 1977. Our condolences go out to her family, friends, and to the Sisters of Mercy. To view her obituary, please visit [here](#).

UPCOMING CLASS REUNIONS

Class of 1963 80th Birthyear Celebration September 12 - 14, 2025

Please join & follow our
private Facebook group at
[https://www.facebook.com/
groups/NDHS.Class.of.1963](https://www.facebook.com/groups/NDHS.Class.of.1963)
for the latest class news



Notre Dame High School Class of 1963
80th Birthyear Celebration Weekend
Friday September 12th, 2025 through Sunday September 14th, 2025

- ▶ **Friday Welcome Reception:** Judy's Place 6pm, casual diner, beer, wine, soda, Rossi Bakery treat.
Prepaid reservations required.
- ▶ **Saturday Golf:** contact Marty O'Donnell modonnell@htva.net 607-546-8274
- ▶ **Saturday Mass for our Deceased Classmates:** St. Mary's Church 4-5pm
- ▶ **Saturday 80th Birthyear Dinner:** Tanino's Ristoranti Italiano 6-10pm, grand buffet, cash bar.
Prepaid reservations required.
- ▶ **Saturday After-Party:** Judy's Place 10pm, leftover B&F
- ▶ **Sunday Farewell Breakfast:** Clarion Inn 9-11am, order from menu, pay as you go. Reservations required
- ▶ **Hotel Reservation:** Clarion Inn. Rooms blocked until Aug 1st for \$99(Fri)/\$118(Sat) (plus 12% tax). 607-734-4211 Use Group Account 4990603 "Notre Dame '63 HS Reunion"
Clarion Inn reservation problems? Call 607-734-4211 Bethany Johnston, Manager

Judy's Place 510 W. Gray Street Park at McNerny's FH Sep 12 th 6pm	St. Mary's Church 224 Franklin Street Southside Elmira Sep 13 th 4-5pm	Tanino's Ristoranti 1-3 Old Ithaca Road off Hanover Sq. Hhds Sep 13 th 6-10pm	Judy's Place 510 W. Gray Street Park at McNerny's FH Sep 13 th 10pm	Clarion Inn 760 E. Water Street Downtown Elmira Sep 14 th 9-11am
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Please RSVP long before August 1, 2025

Classmate: _____ Phone: _____

Guest(s): _____ E-mail: _____

	Number	Amount
Friday night Reception: Judy's Place @ \$30 per person	_____	_____
Saturday night Birthday Dinner: Tanino's @ \$50 per person	_____	_____
Sunday morning Farewell Breakfast: Clarion Inn. Pay as you go.	_____	_____
Clarion Inn hotel reservation	_____	_____
Total		_____

Please make your check payable to Jim Mockler ND '63 and mail to 12729 McCartysville Place, Saratoga, CA 95070-3847 or PayPal/Venmo funds to jim.mockler@gmail.com. Regrets to jim.mockler@gmail.com

UPCOMING CLASS REUNIONS

CLASS OF 1970 55TH REUNION

AUGUST 30, 2025

Ancient Order of Hibernians
701 Kinyon Street, Elmira
6:00 pm
Cash Bar

Contact Tom Eagen with questions
tgarvey6@gmail.com

CLASS OF 1975 50TH REUNION

OCTOBER 11, 2025

2:00 Tour of Notre Dame High School
4:00 Mass at St. Mary's Southside
in memory of deceased classmates
6:00 Celebration at Ill Eagle Taphouse
200 East Church Street, Elmira, NY

Please join the class Facebook page [here](#)

CLASS OF 1981 GET TOGETHER

**MAY 17, 2025
1:00 PM**

O'Ryans Sports Bar & Grill
159 Prescott Avenue
Elmira Heights, NY 14903

Questions and/or RSVP
please text
Tom Lepkowski 607-738-5565
Bill Seymour 607-331-1737

UPCOMING CLASS REUNIONS

**CLASS OF 1985
40TH REUNION**

**SAVE THE DATE
JULY 25 - 26, 2025**

**PLANS ARE UNDERWAY!
DETAILS TO FOLLOW**



ND CLASS OF 2005 REUNION WEEKEND

Friday, August 15th

7 PM - Welcome Drinks (cash bar) at Ill Eagle Taphouse
200 E Church St, Elmira

Saturday, August 16th

2 PM - Tour of NDHS (families welcome)
1400 Maple Ave, Elmira

6-9 PM - Reunion at Hill Top Inn Tiki Deck (cash bar);
Tickets required: \$50/person includes hors d'oeuvres
171 Jerusalem Hill Rd, Elmira

Significant others are welcome to join the weekend festivities!

**Please venmo Liz (Lynough) Zehr
by July 31st**



Scan this code to pay

UPCOMING EVENTS



The poster features a green grass background. On the right is a large blue and gold Notre Dame Crusader head logo with 'ND' in large blue letters with white outlines. A golf ball on a tee is in the bottom right corner with the text 'Rain or Shine!!' inside it.

Notre Dame High School
2025
ANNUAL
CRUSADER
CLASSIC
TOURNAMENT

Captain and Crew

JUNE 1, 2025
12 NOON
SHOTGUN START

MARK TWAIN GOLF COURSE

SILENT AUCTION
RAFFLES
50/50
AND
MORE!!!!

AGENDA

10:30 - 11:30	Check in, Mulligans, Skins, 50/50 Raffles
12 Noon	Shotgun Start
At the turn	Hot Dog, Chips, and Drink
5:00	Dinner, Awards, Silent Auction, 50/50 and MORE!!

Sponsor and Register
Now

Linn - 607-481-3949 redderl@notredamehighschool.com

UPCOMING EVENTS



Notre Dame High School will mark 70 years in September 2025!

To celebrate this significant milestone, ND will host a variety of events throughout the 2025-26 school year. To ensure we include events of interest to our alumni, we are looking for your input on the types of events you would like to attend.

If you have not yet completed the 70th anniversary survey, please take a minute to share your thoughts. The survey can be found [here](#).

STUDENT LIFE

INTERNATIONAL EXPO

Notre Dame students, faculty, & staff, along with 5th & 6th graders from St. Mary Our Mother School in Horseheads, NY, enjoyed the 1st annual International Expo, coordinated by the ND Language Department and the

National Chinese Honor Society. The Expo included native presenters from China, Taiwan, Thailand, the Philippines, Vietnam, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Brazil, and Mexico. Several teachers were presenters, along with many of the students in ND's international program. Each country had a presentation board to introduce their culture, food, festivals, as well as some giveaways and snacks. Students received a passport to collect stamps and stickers as they visited each country. A fun day for all!



.....

Aaron Ranque joined Notre Dame in September 2024 through a teacher exchange program, providing students in his science classes a wonderful opportunity to learn about the Philippines. In conjunction with the International Expo, he shared an engaging presentation about Filipino culture, geography, traditions, and values. He also created a student exchange between ND students and students in the Philippines. Questions from the ND students and responses from the Filipino student's were relayed via video.



THEATER

The Notre Dame Spotlighters' spring musical, *Grease*, was performed in the Charles & Mary Crossed Auditorium on April 4-5, 2025. The crowd favorite is a nostalgic look at 1950's high school life, music, and culture. Diner-style concessions, provided by parent volunteers, were available at The Burger Palace in the lobby, adding to the experience for theatergoers. Bravo to the cast and crew!!



CRUSADER ATHLETICS

IAC SOUTH LARGE SCHOOL DIVISION BOYS BASKETBALL

MVP

Gabe Patterson, senior

1ST TEAM ALL STARS

Finn Schweizer, sophomore

2ND TEAM ALL-STARS

Luke Richards, senior

Max O'Connor, junior

Menelik "Scoon" Jenkins, junior

IAC SOUTH LARGE SCHOOL DIVISION GIRLS BASKETBALL

1ST TEAM ALL STARS

Kalysta DeMark, junior

2ND TEAM ALL-STARS

Payton Sutryk, junior

HONORABLE MENTION

Leah O'Connell, senior

Jhamiarah Maxwell, junior

***CONGRATULATIONS
CRUSADERS!!***



SOUTHERN TIER SPORTS REPORT BOYS BASKETBALL

ALL REGION 2ND TEAM

Gabe Patterson, senior

ALL REGION NEWCOMER

Landon English, sophomore

Max O'Connor, junior

Rocco Sayers, sophomore

SOUTHERN TIER SPORTS REPORT GIRLS BASKETBALL

ALL REGION 1ST TEAM

Payton Sutryk, junior

ALL REGION 2ND TEAM

Kalysta DeMark, junior

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT EMERITA



by Sister Mary Walter Hickey, RSM

With the advent of Spring comes the urge to clean out and spruce up. I began my cleanup by going through drawers – finding items to save, to give away or to throw out. In emptying out one drawer, I found a yellow post-it note with the quote:

"Friendship is like a light in a window on a dark night."

I have no idea who the author is but felt compelled to hold on to that post-it note as it reminded me of the faithful friendships formed and cemented at Notre Dame High School.

We continue to witness lasting bonds of Notre Dame friendship between and among students, students and faculty, parents and teachers, and parents and other parents. Memories are alive at reunions, weddings, informal gatherings, anniversaries, and even funerals. These friendships are strong, life-giving, comforting and hope-filled. They truly are a light that gives life, hope, and love. The Notre Dame Family is like that light in a window.



SPONSOR A STUDENT

Are you interested in sponsoring a Notre Dame student?

Your financial support can cover a student's tuition, sports fees, graduation fees, lunch payments, exam fees, or Mercy Online tuition fees.

If you are interested in supporting a Notre Dame student, please contact Eileen Ruppenthal '81 at ruppenthale@notredamehighschool.com

Thank you!!