

XAVIER

Arthur M. Kohs Tribute p. 22

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MAGAZINE

THE GOAL IS TO MEET THE
SPIRITUAL, SOCIAL AND
PHYSICAL NEEDS
OF MEN, WOMEN AND
CHILDREN, ITS MISSION
IS "TO OFFER **HELP, HOPE**
AND THE LIFE-GIVING
MESSAGE OF **GOD'S LOVE**
THROUGH JESUS CHRIST TO THE
POOR, NEEDY AND HOMELESS

MENTORS MATTER

THE MOTTO IS "**GOD'S WILL.**
HIS WORKS. OUR HANDS."

Reverend Gregg Woods '73 Executive Director Of Hartford Rescue Mission p. 10



Extraordinary



Performance

This Is **XAVIER**



LETTER FROM THE Headmaster

Dear members of the Xavier community,

Greetings from Randolph Road!

I continue to be inspired and amazed when I read the stories in our magazine each year. The incredible diversity of our alumni base, students and faculty continue to provide Xavier with a learning environment that is the best. The Fundamental Principles of the Xaverian Brothers tell us: *“You are called to a life of constant searching. Let the developments and changes of your times be a source both of confidence and challenge to you.”*

Xavier is truly a living, breathing and changing school on a yearly basis.

Over the past three years coming out of the COVID pandemic, we have refocused our energy around the five Xaverian Values. This school year we have embraced the value of **Trust**. *“Through trust, and in imitation of Theodore James Ryken, we are joined together in our faith and efforts to build our community, comforted and inspired by the understanding that ‘in harmony, small things grow.’”*

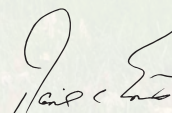
If you recall my letter from last year, we had just completed the replacement of the original boilers in the school. This year, I am happy to report we have now replaced all of the control systems in the school with a new digital control system that will allow us to heat and cool the building with much more efficiency. Combined with our solar project from five years ago, Xavier is considered one of the “greenest” schools not only in the state, but also in New England.

Over the past six years, we have made infrastructure and building maintenance a major part of our master plan. A commitment of dollars today will lead to a continuation of Xavier for years to come. To all of our donors that have helped with these upgrades, I say thank you for helping Xavier maintain its legacy in Middletown as we move into to our 60th year of operation.

This spring, with the graduation of the Class of 2023, we celebrate the 10,000th graduate of Xavier. A truly wonderful milestone in the legacy of our school.

Congratulations to the Class of 1972, who celebrated their 50th Reunion with us here on campus back in October. I sincerely hope that all of you who are alumni will continue to reach out and visit us whenever possible. We would love to see you at athletic events, music performances, a tour of school or just coming by Randolph Road to say hello!

Sincerely,



Dave Eustis
Xavier High School Headmaster

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FEATURES

LESSONS FROM THE PAST

IF THERE WAS A XAVIER BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS, WHAT WOULD IT INCLUDE?

What steps would be highlighted to get Xavier alums from Point A to Point B? Since 1963, our alumni have chased their passions in so many different ways. But the one connection between every era is the line of support from the community. Mentorship matters, and many of the stories you will read in this year's magazine will touch on those that not only lead us but inspire us. **Pages 8-35**

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What We Carry With Us:

In the spring of 1969, **Mike Garemko '67** traveled to Vietnam as an aerial photo interpreter in the Intelligence Corps. By the time he returned home, his experiences in the War had profoundly changed his life. **Pages 8-9**

Impact Player: The motto of **Rev. Gregg Woods '73** and his Hartford Rescue Mission is "God's Will. His Works. Our Hands." Since his days at Xavier, where he was one of the best running backs in school history, Woods has experienced plenty, but he's always kept that same compassion for others front and center. **Pages 10-11**

Behind The Bench: **John Moore '71** started his professional career as a teacher at Northwest Catholic. He now spends his time as one of the state's Superior Court Judges in Litchfield. What led him to make a career change? That's only part of Moore's fascinating life story. **Pages 12-13**



XAVIER TODAY

A Closer Look At The Moments And People That Left A Mark

Whether it was right here on Randolph Road or all the way down in the heart of horse racing country, Xavier had a busy year with plenty of exciting headlines. Here's a glance at all the moments that made the past 12 months. As well, we wrap up this edition of the magazine with some gifts from another era. **Pages 44-59**

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- 47. Will Levis '18
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- 50-51. Athletic News
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- 58. Value of the Year
- 59. Three Lessons from Artie

The Gift Of Mentorship:

Peter Mondani '75 is a longtime donor of money, time, and talent to places he believes in. Why has he always felt so compelled to give back? Well, it all started at Xavier, and what he learned from Brother Houlihan, C.F.X. **Pages 14-15**

A Xavier Collaboration: Last year, **Chris Beaudoin '22** graduated as one of the most talented art students Xavier has seen in recent memory, but this past summer, he worked with a different kind of canvas. In July, he became the youngest participant at the legendary Lake Placid Triathlon. Who trained him? Another Xavier leader. **Page 19**

And More...

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- 18. Ethan Pitney '15 & Abhishek Gupta '16
- 20. Shane Wilcox '12
- 21. Joe Perrelli '11



LEADERSHIP

Last year, Xavier lost an icon when the school's first Athletic Director, Artie Kohs, passed. To call Kohs "The founder of Xavier Athletics" is accurate but it only scratches the surface of his impact. For seven decades, the man we called "King" not only paved the way at Xavier - he showed us how to live a full and meaningful life. In the middle of this magazine, we pay tribute to Kohs and six others who have led the way with their diverse personalities.



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- 22-27. Artie Kohs
- 28-29. Tom Aiello
- 30-31. Terry and Tom Pierce
- 32-33. Andrea Hoisl
- 34-35. Terrance Tyler

ENDLESS AMBITION

Every Student plays a part in the Xavier experience. Some just have a few more roles than others. As we started to put together our annual student profiles, we recognized one common trait that drove these eight and so many more: *Xavier leaders have no problem taking on a full plate of responsibilities.* **Pages 36-43**

- 36. Aidan Driscoll '23
- 37. Vincent Scilleppi '23
- 38. Henry Stearns '23
- 39. Tristan Schemmerling '23
- 40-41. Matt Whitaker '23 & Sam Enes '23
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- 44-45. Influencers



WELCOME TO XAVIER MAGAZINE 20 $\frac{22}{23}$

At some point in your life, you have probably been asked to name your favorite teachers.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

Two, three seconds? For most people, they know their reply before the question is completed, but for years I didn't have an answer.

A friend or a student would ask me, and I would sit there struggling to come up with something – anything. Sure, I had teachers I liked and enjoyed, and coaches I had grown close with over the years. But that special type of influence and impact that the greatest educators provide to their pupils? That was a different ballgame.

I could never spit out an answer.


Then I came here ...

At a school like Xavier, you can't help but take a stroll through the halls, or a walk on the sidelines, and see the quiet act of mentorship at work. There are influential and impactful people everywhere. No matter the day, no matter the time, there is usually some sort of advising going on. And we're not talking about the scene-stealing stuff of famous inspirational teacher movies, like *Dead Poets Society* (although I would take Charles Flowers over John Keating any day, and I think our students would, too).

I'm talking about the quiet moments that go unnoticed in the day-to-day flow of everyday high school life. At Xavier, they happen all around us. It can be a moment of pastoral advising, a school counselor or a staff member finding out something new about a student's interests, or a coach checking in with an athlete about grades or life at home.

Over the last five years or so, I have come to believe in these small moments and what they mean to the Xavier experience.

Talk to an alumni and you're going to hear all sorts of stories about yesteryear. Some of the stories we can't print here, and others remain the stuff of legend, but most of the time the stories that really register are small and personal.



As we began to brainstorm ideas for the Magazine you currently hold in your hands, I couldn't get these stories out of my head. They were everywhere. And although nothing was decided, an idea was starting to emerge.

What does mentorship mean at Xavier?

Since 1963, Xavier students have been pushed to dream big, wild dreams, and to pursue their passions no matter how crazy or far-fetched they seemed. And so many have –traveling the world, living wonderfully full lives because of the support they got once upon a time on Randolph Road.

At Xavier, there is one quintessential agreement you make when you walk through the doors. From the time you open your locker on that first day of classes to the moment you walk across the stage at graduation, you're going to be challenged to find your voice and use your gifts in a way that brings out the best in you and others.

In last year's Xavier Magazine, we started telling some of those stories, looking at all the amazing careers Xavier graduates go on to pursue.

This year, we wanted to continue telling those stories, but we also wanted to shine a light on those who inspire us, and those who mentor us to do more. And make no mistake – not a day goes by at Xavier, where some student is not being pushed or motivated to test themselves by not just their teachers, but also their peers and those around them.

Throughout the next 54 pages, you will read stories about those who have been inspired and those who have done the inspiring in the Xavier community. Not every story you will read will include this theme. However, a year after we lost a Xavier icon, one of the most essential figures in our school's history, we thought it was fitting to highlight one of his greatest skills: mentorship.





To know Artie Kohs was to love him. He was an administrator, a teacher, a coach, an official, a storyteller, a jokester, a fan, a legend, a mentor, and to so many, an example of how to do things the right way.

If Artie had a style, it was this – do what you love, do it with joy and pass on that spirit to others. And at Xavier, that spirit was passed on tenfold. When Artie died in March 2022, the stories kept coming. Everyone had their own and once again we can't possibly share them all (see pages 22-27, and page 59 for some of the ones we collected), but I would be remiss to not tell my own personal one.

As a new hire in 2017, I had heard all the tales, and of course his nickname. And if I'm being fair, I expected to hear plenty about the glory days in those first few meetings with the King. But, I didn't.

I spent our first meeting answering questions from the King himself, and that would continue every time I saw him the next five years. He would share stories of course, but most of the time those meetings were about checking in with me and getting to know me. And that always struck me. But it shouldn't have. He was just following the Xavier way, which he helped to create all those years back.

Small, enduring personal moments. Support always.

For nearly 60 years, the willingness of teachers, coaches, staff members and everyone in the community to step into a student's world and push them to find their own voice has helped define Xavier for generations of families.

As well, that commitment to others has taught me plenty about the true meaning of mentoring, not to mention help me find an answer to that favorite teacher question.

Not surprisingly, that favorite "teacher" is a Xavier graduate.

I may have never had him as a real teacher in some classroom, and he never instructed me on a field or track, but for nearly 15 years, I was lucky to learn from Jeff Otterbein '72. First at The Courant, where he served as a

sports editor for three decades and I was one of his green reporters; and later at Xavier, where he was our Associate Director of Communications for five years (Jeff stopped working at Xavier in July 2022).



Matt coaches the Mercy High School Track and Field Team

At The Courant, Jeff shared a close bond with his reporters, listening intently to all sorts of issues and stewarding the type of journalism you do not see that much anymore. He was a special kind of boss. One of my colleagues at The Courant once called him a "pin-cushion." He could absorb any bit of pressure or ego and he knew how to make a team really work. And that writer was right. Jeff displayed a certain type of decency that seems to be out of style these days, and in many ways, reminds me of some of the Xavier greats. But it wasn't until he came to Xavier for a second career, where I finally got to see his true skill at work, and I was lucky to find my own mentor for a few years.

After leaving The Courant in 2017, I was hired at Xavier as the Director of Communications. It was a dream gig. A year later, I got the dream teammate. Jeff was looking for a second career and we were able to bring him in to help with the Magazine, alumni relations and other communications tasks. And he killed it, working tirelessly as he always did turning out great idea after great idea.

It is not often you get a second chance to work with your former boss in a different capacity, but I cherished it. Every day provided its own lesson, but ultimately, the biggest lesson was the same one Artie Kohs was providing 50 years ago and Tony Jaskot '69 after him, and so many more.

How do you be a good teammate? Or more importantly, how do you help someone else grow?

For 60 years, Xavier has not only answered that question, it has set the template on how to motivate others.

In this magazine, we wanted to share all the different mentoring stories that can happen in a community like Xavier. Whether it be Reverend Gregg Woods '73, who has gone from the brightest lights of football stardom to helping those in need with the Hartford Rescue Mission, to Terrance Tyler, a source of comfort and support for so many Xavier students, this community is filled with mentors and those that push us to be our best. And in the end that makes Xavier a uniquely special place no matter the decade.

As always, thank you for reading. I remain forever grateful to be a part of this Xavier community and to those that continue to inspire us.

We hope you enjoy this magazine.

Matthew Conyers

Director of Communications



Right: Matthew Conyers; left: Jeff Otterbein '72

All Those Lives Unlived



The Steep And Profound Cost Of The Vietnam War

THE LATE '60s were unsettling times, with the Vietnam War raging and thousands of young men being drafted into the military.

Mike Garemko, part of Xavier's first graduating class in 1967, found himself at Syracuse University in the fall of that year, but academic issues meant he could not return in the fall of 1968. It also meant he no longer was deferred from the draft.

Garemko has been writing a memoir for his grandchildren, reliving those days.

"This was not a good time to be out of school," Garemko said. "That fall they were taking 60,000 inductees a month, and The Selective Service began the process of selecting me. By October, I had made the decision to join the Army to avoid the draft. The bargain was to sign up for three years (rather than be drafted for two and almost certainly end up in the infantry in Vietnam). You could choose your specialty if you qualified, and thanks to my Xavier High School education I literally qualified for every enlisted job in the Army."

Garemko became an aerial photo interpreter in the Intelligence Corps. Garemko went from Basic Training to Advanced Training, doing very well along the way. His reward: Vietnam. He flew out of Travis Air Force Base in May, 1969. He was 19. He was scared.

In the late fall of 1969, he was serving as an Aerial Imagery Interpreter in the 1st Military Intelligence Battalion Aerial Reconnaissance Support (1st MiBars).

"We worked 12 hours a day, 7 days a week, staring through stereoscopes and magnifying glasses trying to give our field commanders a warning of undetected troop buildups," Garemko said. "The fear was that the NVA [North Vietnamese Army] and VC [Viet Cong] would once again sneak up on our forces as they had in the Tet Offensive of 1968 a year earlier."

The Tet Offensive, in which there were heavy losses on all sides, helped weaken public support in the U.S. for the war.

Despite the seven-day grind in which Garemko found himself, he considered it fortunate not to have been assigned to infantry or artillery. Death was never far away there. But soon it would find a friend in a devastating way, something he cannot forget to this day.

Garemko was asked to take a vehicle over to the motor pool for maintenance. He was in the middle of writing a letter back home to his then-girlfriend and now wife (Emily Jeanette, Mercy '67). Paul Benoit was sent instead. Paul Benoit never came back. On his way to bringing the vehicle, Benoit was in the wrong place at the wrong time and shot by a U.S. soldier.

"In the performance of duty," the mortuary report stated, "at approximately 0830 hours 29 November 1969, SP4 Paul B. Benoit was driving a truck in East Da Nang, RVN. He was en route to the Transportation Motor Pool, 80th General Support Group, for the purpose of conducting [maintenance] on the vehicle he was driving when he was stopped and shot with a rifle by a U.S. soldier [who had hailed the vehicle] approximately 150 meters south of China Beach Intersection. The same individual shot another U.S. soldier approximately 20 minutes earlier in the same area."

Benoit was immediately taken to the hospital where he was pronounced dead on arrival. An Article 32 investigation recommended that the U.S. soldier who shot Benoit stand trial. The U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division report states that while in confinement the soldier was examined by three psychiatrists and judged to be "insane at the time of the offense and during the examinations." He was sent to a hospital for psychiatric treatment.

"Paul and I arrived together, and we shared the same DEROS [Date Eligible for Return From Overseas] ... Now he was dead, and in this senseless way," Garemko said. "I was dumbfounded."

And growing despondent. It was monsoon season. The amount of aerial missions was limited. He was assigned to other duties, not as meaningful or satisfying to him.

“And it struck me ... I had an epiphany. ‘If Jesus were alive in this moment, would he be on this truck with me or down in that village with those people seeking relief and comfort?’ This question was forged in my soul as a result of the teaching of Brother Mark Collins, who was our spiritual leader among some of the first Brothers who staffed Xavier. It was he who taught us to side with the broken. It was from him that I came to understand the injustice in the world, and how his teaching resonated in my head.” ~ Mike Garemko '67

“And then one morning there was this glorious sunrise as I was riding in from night duty, tired, exhausted really, and just wanting to get to breakfast and then to sleep,” Garemko said. “I was listening to ‘Good Morning Starshine’ on my transistor radio as the sky lit up with beautiful oranges and purples. It was the most amazing sunrise I had ever experienced, and to this day I have never seen an equal.”

Da Nang, said Garemko, had been a city of about 500,000 before the war, but had swollen to around two million as refugees flooded in from the highlands seeking protection from the Viet Cong.

“As we drove by the resettlement villages, looking down the rows of shanties I could see the Vietnamese waking up and slowly walking to the public water spigots for morning ablutions,” Garemko said. “And it struck me ... I had an epiphany. ‘If Jesus were alive in this moment, would he be on this truck with me or down in that village with those people seeking relief and comfort?’ This question was forged in my soul as a result of the teaching of Brother Mark Collins, who was our spiritual leader among some of the first Brothers who staffed Xavier. It was he who taught us to side with the broken. It was from him that I came to understand the injustice in the world and now his teaching resonated in my head. I thought of Father Oulette, ‘The Selma Priest,’ who spoke to us when I was a sophomore and called us to serve in the cause of righteousness when we saw wrong. The only way out of this sinful mess I was participating in was to find some way to do good.”

“I went back to the chapel by the beach, and for the first time I noticed that right next door there was an orphanage. I walked in and asked the woman who was staffing it if there was anything I could do to be of help? I wanted to serve. I wanted the little kids to know that there were Americans who could do more than just drop bombs on their parents and burn down their villages. She led me out into the sandy playground courtyard, and I got to meet and play with a bunch of those wonderful little children, and my heart was touched by them profoundly.”

Because the aerial missions were fewer than normal due to weather, he asked his commanding officer if he and others could work with the orphanage on expanding the dining area “to accommodate the increasing flow of kids as the war raged on. We enlisted the aid of a SeeBee unit that we were friendly with from a time when we were building our own rocket bunker. They were willing to help us obtain lumber, roofing, and other supplies, and they provided invaluable advice on how to build it right. It was like a modern-day Habitat for Humanity project. By the time we were done, the weather was breaking, and we were no longer able to free up the time away from our mission.”

Then one day his commanding officer told Garemko that a directive had come from Saigon headquarters to “disengage from all civic action projects with orphanages because it was thought that this was encouraging child abandonment. Like their parents would give up their beautiful little kids so they could go live in an orphanage.”

He was pleased he got the opportunity to show the orphanage another side of Americans, what he termed “part of the spirit of Xavier High School and St. Francis Xavier working for the Christian mission of being ‘the light of the world’ at work in that place, and in that time, a half a world away from Randolph Road.”



Garemko would return home in 1970 and serve the final 18 months of duty in Germany. He then built a career in facilities management and a family in the U.S., working for many years at Aetna.

All the while asking questions of himself. If it had been Garemko, and not Benoit, in the vehicle, would he have stopped when he was hailed by the man? Would he even have arrived in that place at that same time? Would there even have been a choice to make?

Yet it very well could have been Garemko killed that day, performing that simple task of bringing in a vehicle for servicing.

Years later, in 2008, he would visit the Vietnam Veteran Memorial in Washington, D.C., as part of a 1st MiBars reunion.

“I had been there one night years before and in private I had apologized to [Paul] for worming out of the detail, but going with so many of our buddies hit me and others very hard. It was a time of serious introspection ... we all had to question whether we had done enough with our lives to justify the cost so graphically displayed on those awful black panels. All those lives un-lived, and all they would have given to this world undone,” Garemko said. **X**



Dishing Out Hope

FOOTBALL WAS HIS GAME, AND HE DOMINATED, BUT HIS PURPOSE WAS ALWAYS SOMETHING GREATER

REVEREND GREGG WOODS '73 catches himself the first time he feels the emotions coming up like a wave, but a few minutes later he is in trouble once again.

His high school football coach's name – the name of the man who gave him so much – has been brought up, and all the memories and lessons are swirling around in his head.

"Oh boy, I'm going to bust up now," Woods said as a disclaimer.

The mere mention of Larry McHugh, the legendary Xavier Football coach, has gotten Woods' gears turning. However, it is not just McHugh that set Woods down the path he is on now.

Bill McKenna and Brother James Boyle, two more pillars of the golden age of Xavier, are mentioned right after McHugh. Memories of Xavier are rushing back.

"There are certain men in my life – Larry and those guys – they pushed you further," Woods said. "They made you find a greater potential in yourself and asked you to do more. Even now with the Mission, there are even greater things we can do and we're going to do. It is a way of life and you make it a way of life."

When Woods left Xavier in 1973, he was arguably the best football player the school had ever seen. On Xavier's Mount Rushmore of football, Woods has positioned himself among the greatest of all-time for

nearly five decades. But this story – Wood's story – is not really about football. It is about the life he chose to embrace because of football.

After playing for the University of Kentucky and taking a run at the Canadian Football League, Woods shifted his life and purpose to giving back and giving others a chance.

Nearly 56 years since he started absorbing Xavier's message, Woods is busy living out the mission these days as the Executive Director of the Hartford Rescue Mission, a Christian ministry serving the Greater Hartford Community.

"A lot of the things I learned back then I still carry with me today and it has helped me," Woods said. "Xavier gave me the bigger picture. I was surrounded by good people. I respected them and they believed in me. ... They pointed me to Christ – they pointed me to the Lord."

Following in the footsteps of his father, Rev. Lorenzo Woods, who was a Baptist minister at Shiloh Baptist Church in Middletown, Woods spends his days sharing the Gospel, while meeting the "spiritual, social and physical needs of men, women and children in need."



Photo by Cloe Poitsson



“A lot of the things I learned back then I still carry with me today and it has helped me. Xavier gave me the bigger picture. I was surrounded by good people. I respected them and they believed in me. ... They pointed me to Christ – they pointed me to the Lord.”

– Rev. Gregg Woods

As he reflects on things today with the same intensity he once showed on the football field, Woods is quick to return to the origin of everything: 181 Randolph Road.

“My parents said ‘we’re going to have Gregg go to Xavier, and here we are,’” Woods said. “Things were put in motion and it paved the way. In retrospect, I can say that God had his hands on this whole thing.”



Growing up in Middletown on East Street (“I can still remember to this day, raking rocks in that yard,” Woods said), Woods was a tremendous youth football player.

He had speed, but more importantly he had that trait that every great football coach wanted.

He never gave up. And that mentality was perfect for Larry McHugh as he started building a football powerhouse.

“We weren’t these big major guys, but we learned to hit and take a hit,” Woods said. “[McHugh] would say ‘We might be small, but we sting like bees until they go down. We’re going to tire them out.’”

Woods was hooked from the first moment.

“I really liked the structure and the leadership,” Woods said.

The football was great, but in McHugh, he found something he needed.

“He would do anything in the world for you,” Woods said. “He was tough, but he really cared about you, too. He took pride in you. And he really loved us to tell you the truth.”

That love was paid back in wins and complete commitment.

With Woods in the back field as the team’s starting running back, the Falcons dominated, winning 34 straight games between 1970 and 1973.

“My senior year we were dusting people off and we knew we were going to win every game,” Woods said. “When you believe in yourself, you can always do more, and no one can stop you.”

Woods finished his senior year with 1,585 yards and 27 touchdowns, but he kept that belief in college.

After turning down a four-year scholarship offer to Notre Dame, he became a four-year starter for Kentucky.

In Lexington, Woods remained an unstoppable force, leading the Wildcats to a Peach Bowl title as MVP in 1976. It was the program’s first bowl game since 1952 and one of the great seasons in program history.

This past fall, another Xavier great stopped by the school on the same day Woods was visiting.

What made Woods truly unique as a player and person?

Tony Jaskot ’69 sums it up.

“He started a legacy – a tradition,” Jaskot said.

Jaskot has seen a lot of football as a player, coach, athletic director and fan. But the greatest run at any level that he has ever seen? Well ... let him tell the story.

“I was at Southern at the time, but I went to a game at Quigley in West Haven, where Xavier was playing Notre Dame-West Haven, and we had to make a two-point conversion,” Jaskot said. “Larry McHugh exaggerates and says this man [pointing to Woods] broke eight tackles, but it was legitimately six tackles behind the line of scrimmage.”

Woods’ determination has not diminished.



He’s just in a different arena now, but doing what he believes he does best: helping others.

The motto for the mission he founded in 2005? “God’s Will. His Work. Our Hands.”

After playing for the Ottawa Rough Riders for one year in the CFL, Woods turned his attention to service, graduating from the Seminary in 1990. Now at the Hartford Rescue Mission, he looks to provide the help, hope and life that he got at Xavier. With the help of volunteers and the contributions of area churches, businesses, community groups and donors, the mission gives relief to the needy through meals and mentorship.

“I can’t change the world, but I can deal with my peripheral and my right here,” Woods said.

The group also gives out bibles, clothing and shoes, small household furniture, bed linens, bus passes, gift cards and whatever they can to spread the feeling of community and connection.

For Woods, the goal is simple.

He wants the people of his mission to know he believes in them.

It is a lesson he learned from Xavier legends.

“It is about all of us,” Woods said. “I want to embrace the group. We’re different parts of the same body.” X



A Fair Fight

Following In The Footsteps Of Xavier Mentors

At one of the first retreats he attended with Xavier, John Moore '71 was given a powerful bit of advice.

"I was sitting there thinking what do I have to offer, and Rich Cardarelli '69 said to me: *'what you have to offer is to listen,'*" Moore said. "It was a very important lesson that Xavier taught me. You have to listen with your heart to other people."

In his 43 years as a judge and lawyer, Moore has not only remembered those words - he has lived them. Whether it was early on in his law career, or now as one of Connecticut's Superior Court Judges, Moore remains forever grateful for his Xavier experience and the lessons that helped set him down the path to becoming a judge.

"I think Xavier was the place where I was formed, especially academically and spiritually," Moore said. "I think about people like Brother John Collins, Jim Connelly, Jim Hamilton, lay people like Rich Feitel and Bill McKenna, Brother Kerr, Brother James Boyle - these people were stalwart human beings who cared about their students becoming the best possible people they could, and I think role models for how I would like to live and help people around me be the best people we could be."

Sitting in his office in Litchfield this past Fall, Moore, who grew up a short walk from Palmer Field, can quickly conjure up a Xavier story or 10 in a minute's notice.



Moore enjoys a humorous exchange with George Raymond. 1971 Yearbook photo

As a sophomore, Moore and his classmates were shown a video during another Xavier retreat.

"I'll never forget it," Moore said. "They showed us a film of allied soldiers coming into a concentration camp to stir up our empathy. I can remember the emotion of watching these poor people that had been



"I think the judiciary is the branch of government that is the shining beacon and where people try to do the right thing, try to do the fair thing and try to do the legal thing."

starved to death and looked like skeletons walking around in these loose-fitting pajamas."

Moore didn't know it at the time, but the lessons and the words of his teachers and classmates would follow him from Randolph Road to a career in law.

However, there were a few stops along the way.

After graduating Xavier as the Class of 1971 Salutatorian, Moore was still unsure of what he wanted to do next, but he didn't have to look too far for his next school.

"I was driving down High Street with my father one day when I was probably eight or 10 and I remember looking at the beautiful brownstone buildings on college row at Wesleyan and my father said 'Johnny, did you realize Wesleyan is one of the top 20 schools in the country?' And I said 'It is?' ... I realized kids were coming to Wesleyan from all over the world and I just really wanted to go there."

Moore spent the next four years studying English and Religion Studies at Wesleyan - Shakespeare and the Old Testament.

"As I neared the end of my college career, I sort of wanted to go to law school, but then I saw the movie *'The Paper Chase'* and I said 'if Law School is like that I don't know if I want to do that,'" Moore said.

Instead, he went into teaching when a position teaching religion and English opened up at Northwest Catholic in the summer of 1975.

"It was kind of funny, I didn't really have any teaching training at all," Moore said. "I think I was probably a pretty lousy teacher in my first year."



Despite the lack of training, it didn't take him long to realize you needed some structure and control in the classroom.

"I also realized that people learned in different ways," Moore said.

Almost from the start, Moore loved it. He came up with games and different reviews, and he had a ball doing it. And when Xavier played Northwest Catholic in football his first-year teaching, he made sure to showcase one of his Xaverian values: humility.

"One freshman and one senior said 'hey you went to Xavier why don't you take an egg in the face if Xavier loses - I'm thinking there's no way Xavier is going to lose,'" Moore said.

Sure enough, the Falcons lost by two and Moore had to face the music on a Monday morning news broadcast the school did.

"I had to figure out how to take an egg in the face and still hold some shred of dignity," Moore said.

Not only did he do that, but in the process, he won the respect of the school. Still, he knew his time was limited at Northwest Catholic. In 1979, he got into UConn Law and was ready for his next challenge.

"It was the combination of my love of words and the ensuring of a fair fight because of the rules of law that drove me into law school," Moore said.

With law school, Moore was able to get both passions at once. And he enjoyed every minute of it, graduating in 1983.



"Being a teacher was a fantastic preparation for being a trial lawyer because as a high school teacher I would have 150 kids in front of me every day and I had to try and find a way to persuade them or teach them or get some learning into their brain," Moore said. "You always have to make some sort of presentation."

Earlier on in his law career, Moore also benefited from a special mentorship.

"I clerked with Judge [Emmett] Clarie in Federal Court in Hartford from 1983 to 1984," Moore said. "Judge Clarie turned 70 right before I got there, which meant he took senior status and after senior status you have just one clerk. Even though I had double the work load, I had Judge Clarie to myself which was a very special thing."

Under Clarie's stewardship, Moore got a firsthand view of the law and life.

"He actually mentored me in work-life balance, even though he worked really hard he had the ability to leave it behind when he went home," Moore said.

He also gave him plenty of lessons.

"[Judge Clarie] would say 'if it doesn't make sense, it is not good law,' and he was also very calm on the bench," Moore said.

After clerking with Clarie, Moore went on to work for Halloran and Sage, where he met another great mentor, Joe Lynch.

"His great line that I will never forget was: the only purpose of money is to make other people happy - he was such a generous man," Moore said.

At Halloran and Sage, Moore was able to try cases and see how the trial process worked and once again he felt like he was in the right place. But he also wanted to be a father and raise a family [he would later have two sons, Jack and Carlos], which led him to make another job change.

In 1990, he left Halloran and Sage and became an associate group general counsel with the Travelers Special Liability Group, where he would stay until 2014.

Still, there was something missing.

"I started to really want to be a judge in the early to mid 1990s," Moore said. "I applied for a job as a U.S. Magistrate Judge in 1995 and got interviewed, but I didn't get it."

Moore put in an application with the Judicial Selection Commission and got on the Governors' appointment list in 1999. And it was there his name sat until 2014, when he finally got appointed by Governor Dannel Malloy.

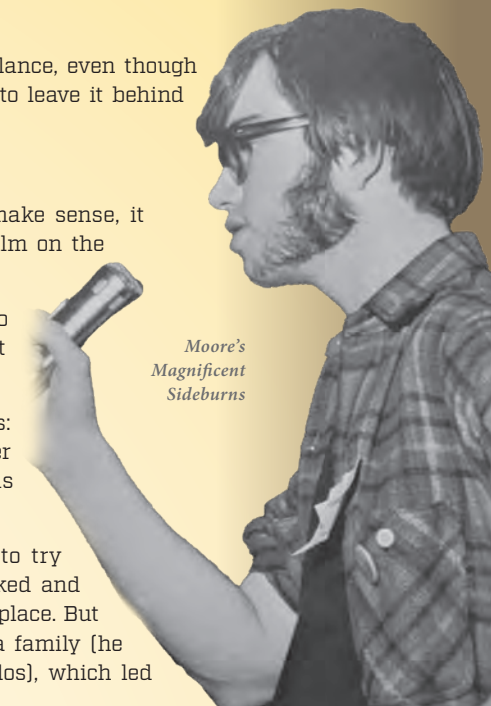
"It was a long time to wait - it felt like catching lightning in a bottle," Moore said. "It was this rare thing."

In nine years, Moore hasn't lost the joy he felt when he first got appointed. Despite the weight of the position and the pressure of the job, Moore remains grateful for the responsibility.

"I just feel like this is the best job I could possibly have," Moore said. "It represents a tremendous opportunity to do the right thing and do good for people. ... I think the judiciary is the branch of government that is the shining beacon and where people try to do the right thing, try to do the fair thing, and try to do the legal thing."

As a judge, Moore spends his days a variety of ways [on the day we visited he had three civil pre-trials and three family pre-trials] but no matter what he is working on, he tries to always remember the lessons he learned at Xavier.

"As a judge, I think I have the ability to have people listen to me and trust me and volunteer stuff to me that helps me understand where they are coming from so I can help bring them together with the other side," Moore said. "I think my style is to try and engage people and be a good listener." **X**



Driving Force

**More Than 48 Years
After Graduating, Mondani
Still Follows The Lessons
Of Mentorship That
Xavier Taught Him**



PETER MONDANI'S home golf course is Hyannisport Golf Club, and can you really have a bad day on that par-71 layout that measures 6,443 yards from the championship tees?

After all, every hole on this ocean course has a view of the water and is never far from a tidal marsh.

Look at it, just don't land in it.

Mondani, a member of the Class of 1975, has always stayed active, pursuing countless passions. He is a skier, a fisherman, a runner, and since his days at Xavier and later at Holy Cross, a competitive golfer. Whether running marathons (he has completed 10, including six Boston Marathons) or hitting the slopes at Jackson Hole, Mondani is never far from a challenge or afraid to take a risk when it comes to something he believes in.

When asked what it is about the game of golf that attracted him, he says, "The competition, and the opportunity to conquer a very difficult sport that is never achievable."

People have been trying forever around the world and since 1897 at Hyannisport, one of the top-ranked golf courses in New England.

"It's also a sport you can play for a long time," Mondani said. "I still play competitively in Mass state events and club tournaments. I also love playing with my boys."

Sons Mark '10 and PJ '06 are Xavier graduates. Pete and his wife Donna have been married nearly 40 years and met on Cape Cod. They have been members of Hyannisport GC since 2009 and have lived full-time on the Cape since selling their Connecticut home a few years ago.

“I believe mentorship is a key ingredient to help people navigate throughout life,” Mondani said. “I have had many mentors – at GE, Holy Cross, Stevens Tech – who helped me like Brother Houlihan at Xavier.”

That sense of service, of giving back, came early in his Xavier days and never left. By his senior year he was president of MYARC, the club started by Brother J. Robert Houlihan, C.F.X., to help those with physical and mental difficulties. Mercy and Xavier students came together as one in this effort.

“This was a great opportunity to provide service to others, and to help individuals who needed some help and support,” Mondani said. “Brother Houlihan was caring, selfless. He wanted to help others, and that’s what we did.”

Mondani started a similar club when he went off to Massachusetts for college at Holy Cross, and then he became involved in a program developed by the city of Worcester. The Respite House was a place parents could bring their children so the parents could go to a movie, out to dinner, spend time together.

“We would care for the children,” Mondani said, “and I usually stayed overnight once a week as some of the kids would spend the night.”

He wasn’t done yet. After getting his BA from Holy Cross, Mondani earned an MS from Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, N.J. Two Sundays a month, Mondani would take the train from New Jersey to the Bronx to join Brother Houlihan at a program Brother had started in 1966. Despite being at Xavier, Brother Houlihan continued the program in the Bronx, traveling from Middletown for 41 years on those Sundays.

“Brother Houlihan probably had the biggest impact on me at Xavier,” Mondani said, “and the selflessness, the compassion, the giving back is what stayed with me the longest.”

Nearly 50 years removed from Xavier, it is not the individual classes or any singular moments that Mondani remembers in detail. It is those larger lessons.

That’s why being Chairman of the Board at Xavier is meaningful to him.

“We need to continue to build on what we have,” Mondani said. “The foundation, the curriculum, the faculty is tremendous, so we have to continue that same process, that same focus and energy and passion. I think the mission, service to others and developing boys into men, is absolutely critical around the umbrella of a Xaverian and Catholic identity.”

Mondani spent about 38 years at General Electric, all of it in Human Resources, and in many of the GE businesses.

He is not one to forget his roots.

At Holy Cross, he is still involved with lecturing for the school’s business program in leadership and a course in Supply Chain. He also is part of the football 90-wide program that mentors its athletes. But it doesn’t stop there. Over the years, Mondani has spotted many young leaders, invested his time and energy in their growth and helped them take the next step.

Mondani is not one to just play and leave until his next tee time. He is President and on the Board of Directors at Hyannisport. And it is like that at Xavier, too. He is a longtime donor of money, time, and talent. Last July, he officially became the Chairman of the Board of Directors at Xavier.

“Whether it is time, talent or money, it is about helping others,” Mondani said.

“I believe mentorship is a key ingredient to help people navigate throughout life,” Mondani said. “I have had many mentors – at GE, Holy Cross,

Stevens Tech – who helped me like Brother Houlihan.”

Mentoring, says Mondani, is just another way of giving back and has always been important to him.

“At GE, I worked closely with Holy Cross providing coaching and mentorship for all students who were interested in the business world,” Mondani said. “Many did join GE and have been quite successful in their careers. Additionally, I work with the football players providing coaching, leadership, mentorship, and connections to the business world.”

About half his career at GE was in Corporate, where he was Vice President for Human Resources, supporting the Vice Chairman and CFO.

“It was all about building relationships, working with people, facilitating, communicating, helping talent grow, recruiting talent, helping processes to retain talent,” Mondani said.

“I worked in Corporate for a long time and traveled the world. I grew up in Deep River, a town of 2,000 people, and spent about 40 percent of my time traveling globally in Europe, Asia, South America and Africa. I got to see everything, and I learned that people are the same wherever you are in the world. They want to learn, they want to grow, they want to develop, they want to take care of their families, whether you’re in China, Japan, London, Africa ... anywhere. People are the same.

“And I look at it all starting at Xavier, from that foundation that allowed me to grow and develop, and deal with situations.”

All roads lead back to Randolph Road.

Part of the Xavier experience happens after the 2:26 p.m. end of school. Whether it was golf, football or MYARC or something else, Mondani would be here sometimes until early evening. Rather than have his parents come up from Deep River all the time, he and others might get up on Route 9 and hitchhike home.

“You had your ties on, so they all knew who you were,” Mondani said with a laugh. “Sometimes the State Police would pick us up. ‘Come on, guys, what exits do we have tonight?’ It’s a different world, you couldn’t do it today.”

Different for sure.

Sticking a thumb out for a ride is from another era, but helping others, giving back, recognizing the humanity in all of us, those earn the thumbs up in any era. And since his days at Xavier, where he learned from Brother Houlihan, Larry McHugh and so many others, Mondani has never hesitated to lend a helping hand whatever the situation may be, and search for the humanity in anyone.

Today, those lessons of mentorship remain as significant as they did back when he left his small town of Deep River to come to Randolph Road. X





RENAISSANCE MAN

Adrian Kowalski '09 Has Followed His Passions To One of The Most Beautiful And Remote Places In The United States To Help Serve Its Citizens

“I USED TO THINK I WAS THE GUY THAT WOULD BE IN THE BACKGROUND BUT I HAVE REALIZED THAT I’M SOMEONE THAT FLOURISHES WHEN I FOLLOW MY PASSION – THAT’S WHEN I’M ALIVE.”

A FEW MINUTES INTO A 90-MINUTE CONVERSATION, Adrian Kowalski '09 has to stop himself.

After recalling memories and lessons from his four years at Xavier, Kowalski pauses for what feels like an eternity. Six seconds pass and he is talking again.

“I just remember pushing boundaries in a lot of good ways, and that has me smiling right now,” Kowalski said.

Wind River, Wyoming might not be the first place you expect to find a Connecticut native with a degree in Marine Sciences, but Kowalski has never stopped pursuing his passions since those days on Randolph Road.

Whether it is an archaeological dig in Armenia, a sailboat adventure on the Great Lakes, or a career as a Deputy County Attorney in the wide open spaces of Wyoming, Kowalski has lived the type of life his teachers challenged him to live years ago.

“I remember there were a lot of different clubs at Xavier and you were able to experiment with different interest and hobbies,” Kowalski said. “I realized it was OK to want to explore all the opportunities in front of you. I kind of carried that with me into college and in life.”

More than 2,130 miles from Middletown, Kowalski is still exploring.

As a Deputy County Attorney in Sublette County, Wyo. he continues to hone his biggest life passion – the law – in one of the most breathtaking areas of the country, the Wind River Mountain Range.

“I don’t think it is necessarily for everybody, but it is very easy to fall in love with the area,” Kowalski said.

Sublette County has a population of just 8,728 and comprises an area bigger than the state of Connecticut, but despite the remoteness, Kowalski has taken to his new home state. He currently lives in Pinedale, which has a population of 2,262 and is a gateway to the Jackson Hole area. When he is not practicing law, he is busy finding adventure, somewhere in the outdoors.

“I was very blessed to find a job here because being here is exactly what I wanted,” Kowalski said. “Everywhere is public land and you can always see the stars and there is no fast food except for Subway. It is gorgeous here and the people are very good. I figured this was a chance to do what I want to do, have some fun moments and see where life would take me.”

In 2018, Kowalski moved to Wyoming after getting his law degree from the University of Iowa. He then spent the next two years as an Assistant Attorney General in Cheyenne, serving in the Tort Litigation Unit. And before long he was hooked, confirming a desire he first felt at Xavier. A few years later, he moved to Pinedale, where he currently prosecutes felonies and misdemeanors and participates in juvenile proceedings.



Map: Gary L. Hilder - stock.adobe.com

"I always knew I wanted to be a public servant – I knew that for sure," Kowalski said. "I love public service and I loved the idea of helping the community and really serving in any way I could."

However, he did take a few detours along the way.

After graduating from Xavier, Kowalski wanted to study law, but he also wanted to keep his options open.

"Xavier taught me that there are so many different paths to explore, and to keep all pots to a boil," Kowalski said. "Xavier really teaches you that you can be a Renaissance Man and it is OK to have different interests and really explore everything you want to be and really own your passion for different fields."

So he went exploring at UConn. He enrolled in the Marine Sciences program and got a minor in anthropology. And along the way, he found himself taking trips to the Great Lakes and Armenia with programs that explored Marine archeology and anthropology, respectively. But soon enough, Kowalski felt the pull of the law, which he was still studying as part of a Pre-Law program.

"I didn't love the idea of being in a lab all the time – I loved working with people and resolving problems that seem very practical to me and things that I could wrap my arms or mind around," Kowalski said. "At that point, I kind of decided that I liked oceanography a lot but law was a better choice because law is so broad and I love working with people and I love the analysis of law."

Once he graduated from UConn, Kowalski was accepted into the University of Iowa Law School.

"The first year I was pretty nervous, but I started making friends and I really studied hard," Kowalski said. "I definitely worked pretty hard. I was pretty proud and it worked out. I knew it was the right area for me. It kind of clicked."

When asked why it worked, Kowalski brings up the game of chess. He loves the game and considers himself a fanatic.

"In many ways, litigation [and the law] is like a big chessboard," Kowalski said. "You're trying to understand the best outcome possible. You're not going to win every match but it is really about playing the best game you can with the pieces that you have."

As a young boy, Kowalski would spend the summer in Poland with his family (he was born there). He recalls many rainy days learning the game of chess from his grandfather, Alfred.

"He had this old board made out of cardboard and he had these pieces made out of I don't even know what – maybe wood," Kowalski said. "He would give me all these pointers. I couldn't do this and I had to do this. He would always say this is the honorable move."

In chess and life, Kowalski has always done his best to follow his grandfather's advice.

"The criminal justice system is not perfect but you can make a lot of positive change in peoples' lives and really use it to help others," Kowalski said. "It is like being able to play chess, but for a good cause."

So what piece on the board is Kowalski?

"I'm probably still a pawn right now, but I'm hoping I can claim to be a knight in the next few years," Kowalski said.

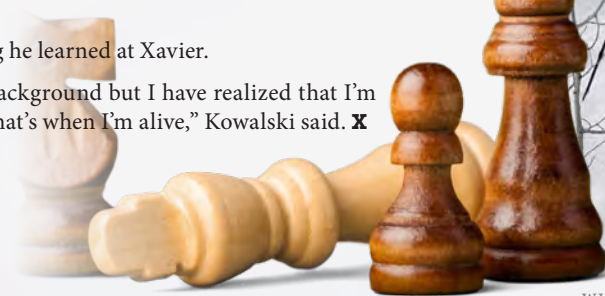
Based on his resume, he's selling himself short.

From 2018 on, Kowalski has worked tirelessly to serve the state of Wyoming and its residents in a variety of ways. Civil litigation, criminal litigation. You name it, he's done it.

"I loved being on the front lines and trying to fight for justice and make a difference in people's lives," Kowalski said.

That desire to make a difference is just one more thing he learned at Xavier.

"I used to think I was the guy that would be in the background but I have realized that I'm someone that flourishes when I follow my passion – that's when I'm alive," Kowalski said. ✕



A Greater Purpose

Ethan Pitney '15 And Abhishek Gupta '16 Were Not Classmates At Xavier, But As Medical Students They Have Bonded Over A Shared Pursuit: A Career In Medicine

When Ethan Pitney '15 and Abhishek Gupta '16 returned to Xavier High School this past summer, the pair were hit with a flood of memories.

A few minutes after arriving back on Randolph Road, Pitney and Gupta were busy recalling the names of classes and teachers. And soon enough, they were wondering if anyone was in the building.

"Is Mr. Flowers here?" Gupta asked.

At Xavier, Pitney and Gupta took their first steps toward becoming doctors.

However, the spark they needed to pursue a career in medicine didn't come from just their science courses, or science teachers. Instead, Pitney and Gupta found the same push in the most surprising of places – the English department.

As talented students, Pitney and Gupta were already taking the type of challenging science courses that signaled success, but it was the words and lessons of English teachers Charles Flowers and Kyle St. George that gave them purpose.

"Flowers was fundamental to my developmental," Gupta said. "There's something incredibly powerful about the classes I took with him because they expanded my horizons. They extended the perspective of not only how I saw myself but how I saw the world."

Pitney had a similar reaction to St. George's instruction.

"He wanted us to be well-rounded and think in a different way – he challenged us to think outside the box," Pitney said.

Now headed into their third year of medical school at UConn, where the acceptance rate is 2.6 percent, Pitney and Gupta have taken their Xavier lessons and applied them to a shared goal – studying medicine.

"We are both Xavier men – I think that is obvious to anybody that meets us," Pitney said. "We have strong fundamental values that we share and we have that well-rounded background. We're not just

focused on one thing; we're focused on being a well-rounded person and people that want to transcend those interpersonal relationships. We want to understand what it means to be a healer and not just a doctor."

In high school, Pitney and Gupta took the same Spanish class and went on a Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools retreat together, but they weren't close.

Still, they remained connected through social media. And after graduating from Franciscan University of Steubenville, Pitney reached out to Gupta, who had just finished his undergraduate degree at UConn, about the process of applying for medical school.

"We knew we were both Xavier alums and that seed was planted at Xavier that allowed us to be able to reconnect," Pitney said.

Before they knew it, they were meeting for lunch and offering each other study ideas.

"We talked that whole summer before we got into medical school," Gupta said. "It is such a difficult process that it is nice having someone to sit down and chat stuff through with."

For the last three years, Pitney and Gupta have been exactly that to each other – a sounding board.

"We've been able to bounce things off each other and be there for each other," Pitney said.

Despite the overwhelming nature of medical school, whether it be the rigorous work or the time commitments, both Pitney and Gupta know they are in the right place because they both believe the profession gives them a purpose.

"I just want to become the best possible version of myself so I can give back to others in a very real way," Pitney said.

As a student, Gupta realized he wanted that type of purpose when he listened to Xavier faculty talk about service.

"There became a question around the junior year of high school in my mind – what am I doing this for? What is the purpose of all this knowledge that I'm acquiring?" Gupta said. "That prompted me to start asking questions about whether I wanted just a job, or did I want a calling. ... I could see a tangible way to contribute not only to other people's lives but my life."

After realizing the medical field could give him what he wanted, Gupta started searching for a way to put himself through medical school.



“We’re not just focused on one thing, we’re focused on being a well-rounded person and people that want to transcend those interpersonal relationships. We want to understand what it means to be a healer and not just a doctor.”

~ ETHAN PITNEY '15

“I spent a lot of time googling and searching and then I found the Nutmeg Scholarship at UConn,” Gupta said. “I went to [the School Counseling office] and I was like ‘I found this scholarship; I really want it. How do I get it?’”

His drive paid off. Gupta got the Nutmeg Scholarship and a full ride to Storrs.

“It was a game-changer – I was given a gold ticket,” Gupta said. “That cemented that I was going to be a doctor.”

Although they both decided they wanted to study medicine at Xavier, it took a little longer for Pitney to fully believe in the idea. At Franciscan as undergraduate, Pitney started off in nursing but switched to Pre-Med after being urged by his teachers. Still, the why didn’t hit home until a visit to Ecuador.

“My junior year I spent some time in Ecuador on a medical mission trip,” Pitney said. “We interacted with the Ecuadorian people and were able to provide simple medications and simple antibiotics and they were so grateful. It confirmed I wanted to do medicine.”

Both Pitney and Gupta have some time to decide what field of medicine they want to go into after UConn, but that doesn’t stop them from thinking about it. Pitney is currently looking at orthopedics, neurosurgery, and diagnostic radiology. Gupta has discovered a passion for working with the pediatric population but he said is nowhere a decision. Still, the process has given them a closer look at who they have become the last few years.

“I’ve learned a lot about what type of person I want to be and what I value the most in terms of my future life,” Gupta said. I’m trying to learn how to exist in this world that creates a benefit to not only my community but myself.”

In the last three years, the pair have discovered plenty about who they are.

Since getting into medical school, Pitney has gotten married and watched his wife have their first child. It was a whirlwind 36 months, but he wouldn’t change it.

He knows what is at the finish line. And he knows he will have another Xavier man right by his side.

“I feel like once we graduate, we’re actually crossing the starting line,” Pitney said. “It is so exciting. That is when we really get to start on this crazy journey of medicine and we’re always going to be learning. That is the beauty of the field. There is always more to learn and different ways to learn how to treat people.” **X**



Chris Beaudoin '22

The ART of Mentoring

With Help From A Fellow Xavier Graduate, Chris Beaudoin Became The Youngest Finisher At Last Year’s Lake Placid Ironman Competition

As a student, Chris Beaudoin '22 was one of most talented visual artists that Xavier High School has seen in the last few decades. But after graduating, he was ready to trade one canvas for another.

After receiving coaching from fellow Xavier graduate Tom Cartelli '82, Beaudoin completed the annual Ironman Triathlon in Lake Placid, N.Y., in a time of 14:13.23 last July.

At 18, Beaudoin, who ran for the cross country and track and field teams while at Xavier, was the youngest finisher in the field of 2,273.

In the lead-up to the event, Beaudoin connected with Cartelli, who also serves as a swim coach for Xavier. Cartelli primarily helped with Beaudoin’s swimming



training and prepared him for the demanding and relentless competition in North Country, N.Y.

The course takes athletes on a 2.4 mile swim, a 112-mile bike ride through the Adirondacks and on 26.2 mile run through the city center then back to Mirror Lake, where the athletes had previously swam. It all ends at the Olympic Oval.

Beaudoin finished 22nd in his division (18-24) and 1,005th overall.

Before traveling to Lake Placid, Beaudoin completed the Patriot Half Triathlon in East Freetown, Mass., where he placed first in his age group. **X**



ABOVE AND BEYOND

A CAREER THAT REACHES FOR THE SKY

Shane Wilcox '12 spent six years working at SpaceX, so there are so many moments that stand out. But one he won't ever forget occurred on May 30, 2020.

"The first astronaut launch by SpaceX," Wilcox said recently. "I was an intern in the summer of 2015 while I was still going to UConn. And that was always the big goal, to get astronauts flying on the Falcon 9 and in the Dragon capsule to the Space Station."

NASA astronauts Bob Behnken and Doug Hurley were launched into orbit on their way to the International Space Station as SpaceX became the first private company to build a spacecraft to carry astronauts into space.

The Falcon 9 rocket made history, and Wilcox was a part of it all. He began his SpaceX career as a manufacturing engineer and eventually became supervisor of Falcon 9 Stage 2 Integration & Test.

In 2022, he took on a new challenge ... at a new company. Wilcox started working for Terran Orbital as the company's first manufacturing engineer. Terran makes micro and nano satellites for customers.

As he said on a LinkedIn post: "I'll be using my expertise to help build out a revolutionary SmallSat production operation from the ground up. Excited for the opportunity!"

Not that leaving SpaceX was easy.

"SpaceX was demanding, but very much worth it," Wilcox said. "I learned a ton there and am very grateful for my time there. It gave me a very solid start to my career and engineering in general."

When we first talked with Wilcox during his SpaceX days, he said that if he "traveled back in time and had to do it all over knowing what I know now, I would once again attend Xavier in a heartbeat."

A little reflection on the past from someone whose career is focused on the future. So what might be happening 50 years down the road. Wilcox sees regular travel to Mars.

"The possibility of getting people to Mars was something growing up, going to college, that I never really envisioned, but that has been one of SpaceX's major goals with the Starship program," Wilcox said. "And I never really envisioned the reality of what that would look like until I started working there."

He says he enjoys pushing the boundaries of science and engineering and being a part of the cutting edge.

"I really like working at places where I believe in the product, and what the company is actually doing, and also that feeling of contributing to something larger than myself," Wilcox said.



Wilcox graduated from UConn in 2016 with a degree in mechanical engineering. He had an internship at Sikorsky Aircraft after his freshman year, then one at UTC Aerospace Systems (now Collins Aerospace) after his sophomore year. When he was applying for internships to pursue in the summer of his junior year his parents encouraged him to shoot for the stars, so to speak, and take a shot at SpaceX.

He did, and after graduating in 2016 he was hired full-time by SpaceX.

Wilcox grew up dirt bike racing and played soccer for three years with Coach Brian Fitzgerald at Xavier. He was a captain as a senior.

"The academic challenges and the character development that Xavier provides are 100 percent worth it," Wilcox said. "Xavier prepared me for college extremely well and taught me to work hard but also find life balance. I was balancing my academics with playing soccer for both the Xavier team in the fall and the rest of the year for an outside organization, FSA/SoccerPlus."

Xavier had to win its final game of that 2011 season to make the state tournament. The Falcons did and came in as the 29th seed. No big deal. The team upset fourth-seeded South Windsor in the first round before losing their second-round game to Guilford.

In the Messages to the Graduates section of the 2012 Xavier yearbook, Wilcox's parents sent him off with this: "You have the power to make a difference ... to change the world ... Pave your own path, follow your dreams, and enjoy the ride."

A ride that has taken him and others on quite the journey. **X**



"I REALLY LIKE WORKING AT PLACES WHERE I BELIEVE IN THE PRODUCT, AND WHAT THE COMPANY IS ACTUALLY DOING, AND ALSO THAT FEELING OF CONTRIBUTING TO SOMETHING LARGER THAN MYSELF."

CALL OF THE

Wild

From Yellowstone To California, Joe Perrelli '11 Has Worked On Projects Large And Small In The American West

JOE PERRELLI '11 grew up surrounded by extended family.

"Lots of aunts, uncles and cousins," Perrelli said. "It was awesome and I wouldn't change it one bit. That being said I wanted to try something new that would push my comfort zone. In the third grade, we went on a family trip to Yellowstone Park, and I remember being totally enamored by the scenery. I was hooked and had to go back."

Perrelli would get his chance.

One day at Xavier, he was walking through the hallway to the guidance department. On a bulletin board, there were many college advertisements as there still is today.

"There were so many that they covered the ones behind them," Perrelli said. "I caught a glimpse of a mountain, pulled a few other posters loose and saw Lone Peak at Big Sky Resort covered in snow. It said 'Mountains and Minds' across the landscape. I took that poster home (I still have it to this day!), showed it to my parents, and the next thing I knew we were flying to check it out. I remember landing at night, going to the hotel room, and waking up the next morning to see the Bridger Mountains outside. After a day snowboarding at Big Sky Resort and another Snowmobiling in West Yellowstone, I don't think I even needed to see the university campus to know this was the place for me."

A decade later, Montana is not just the place he went to college. It is his home.

Since graduating, Perrelli, who majored in Construction Engineering Technology with a minor in Business Administration, hasn't wasted any of his time getting to explore the state.



"Montana is the perfect place for people who love the outdoors and wide-open spaces. We like to work hard and play hard. When I am not working, you can find me hunting in the mountains, fishing in the valleys, dirt biking and mountain biking, or flying between small airports sightseeing across the state."

Take his first week on the job with Martel Construction, Inc.

Perrelli graduated from Montana State University on a Saturday in 2015 and drove down to Yellowstone National Park the following Monday to begin work.

So much for taking time off.

While most of us back East are dodging traffic on the way to work, numbed by the routine, Perrelli's journey for his first project with Martel Construction Inc., was much different. It's a zoo out there took on a different meaning.

Perrelli traveled from Bozeman, MT, to Yellowstone National Park on a weekly basis to work on the Canyon Lodging Redevelopment project.

"I still remember driving down to the Canyon the first morning at about 3:30 a.m.," Perrelli said. "Leaving Bozeman I bet I had to stop to avoid at least a dozen deer and elk in the Paradise Valley en route to the north entrance in Gardiner and then a few herds of bison once in the park. This turned into a normal aspect of the drive every week for the entire season."

In other words, keep your eyes open.



"Once I arrived, I vividly recall thinking what the heck did I get myself into ... there were more than a few occasions that I contemplated turning right around," Perrelli said. "Here I was the new guy surrounded by a crew of more than 150 guys from various trades, and I didn't even know a single one of them."

Last year he was a groomsman in a wedding for one of those workers who became a friend.

"I remember having that same feeling once before; it was my first day at Xavier," Perrelli said. "I hardly knew anyone, but left having had an incredible experience, many friends, and countless life skills for the future. ... Xavier was the most challenging school I ever attended. Engineering classes in college were difficult, but I still tell people that Xavier challenged me more. That was because the teachers, peers, counselors, and coaches challenged me in all aspects, not just education. It was always about being better each and every time as well as giving 100 percent effort no matter what you were doing."

The Canyon Lodging Redevelopment project consisted of five large hotel buildings built over three construction seasons (roughly April through November). Perrelli joined the team in season two where three buildings were completed

Joe Perrelli '11



by mid-summer and turned over to the park concessions company. That season they laid the foundations for the last two buildings.

"The unique challenges for this project were logistics (about two hours drive from anywhere with services) and weather (high altitude, roughly 7,500 feet above sea level)," Perrelli said. "To combat the short schedule, the main structure of the buildings were prefabricated off site in modular units (the rooms were fully painted, trimmed, etc.) and hoisted into place. After foundations were in, the modulators would be stacked in under two weeks. Then the architectural elements were added to the exterior."

In June 2022, historic floods caused property and environmental damage to Yellowstone. Parts of the park reopened two weeks later, but the damage will linger for years.

"It's a reminder to all of us that Mother Nature is still undefeated," Perrelli said.

In just seven years at Martel Construction, Perrelli has managed more than 20 projects in Montana, Wyoming, and California, ranging from small tenant improvements to \$25 million-dollar private residences.

One that stood out was a custom home in Napa, CA, where the owners lost their home in the 2017 Atlas Peak Fire.

"As a company we have completed several projects in California, but this was my first opportunity to manage remotely and fly to the site on a monthly basis," Perrelli said. "That was pretty cool when it started in 2019, but when COVID hit it made a challenging project even more complex. With the level of uncertainty in the world at the time we shut down for a month to figure out the best way to move forward safely. I wasn't able to visit the project for almost nine months. That really helped me to learn how to implement technology and other resources to manage remotely."

"There were definitely some benefits to this project as well. My wife and I married in September 2020. There weren't many flying destinations available at the time for a honeymoon, so we drove down to the Napa Valley. My wife never fails to point out that I also found a way to pull a trailer load of cabinets from our Missoula wood shop down to the project site ... but that's a minor detail. I may have been accused of being a workaholic, but I thought it was pretty efficient."

The project allowed him to know the homeowners. As Perrelli said, the fire that destroyed their previous home meant they lost a lifetime of memories in a matter of minutes.

"It was an emotional process, but turning over the keys at the end so they can build new memories has been a defining moment in my career," Perrelli said. X



Just Be **KOHS**



A Special Tribute To The Unforgettable Arthur M. Kohs

April 29, 1937 ~ March 20, 2022



Robin Jeavitt Photo

A Legendary Family Man

Artie Kohs graduated from Hale-Ray High School in Moodus. He also coached the Hale-Ray boys soccer team to back-to-back state titles in 1961 and 1962. You might say his teams made plenty of noise, and that is fitting for a school in Moodus.

The name Moodus comes from the Native American name "Machimoodus," which translates to "place of noises." The Native Americans called it that because of the noises they heard, which later would be identified as earthquakes.

There is this take on it, though, by Rich Magner, Class of 1969, who played basketball for and coached basketball with Kohs at Xavier: "I always thought the Moodus Noises was just Artie talking. Had nothing to do with geological factors."

Yes, Artie could talk. The man who is most closely identified with athletics at Xavier - he started the program in 1963 -- was much more than that, so we'll let others do the talking in honor of Mr. Kohs, who died in March 2022.

He was a mentor, a teacher, a coach, a referee, an administrator, a friend, a neighbor, a church member. And nicknamed The King by his family. That started with his wife, Carolyn. King Arthur, she said. It stuck.

Fran Pawlowski, Class of 1967: "I first met Mr./Coach Kohs when I was a freshman at Xavier High School in September 1963. Mr. Kohs was my biology teacher and also my soccer and basketball coach. It was during one of our basketball practices that I 'suffered' a temper tantrum. Coach K told me to go sit against the gym wall for 15 minutes. When my time was up, I rejoined my teammates, the practice continued, and I learned a lesson in life from that experience. Coach did not yell at me, he did not punish me, he did not embarrass me in front of my teammates.



"In that brief encounter, Coach K taught me what it meant to be a man. I will never forget that life lesson and

FOR 60 YEARS,
FAMILY & XAVIER
WERE THE PILLARS
OF ARTIE KOHS'
REMARKABLY
FULL LIFE

will always remember who taught it to me. He was one of the best teachers and coaches I have experienced in my lifetime."

Dot Woel and her husband went to school with Artie and Carolyn at Hale-Ray in Moodus: "My husband and Artie were in the same class, I was a year younger, and Carolyn a year younger than me. It was a small town

- my class was 39 - and so we all knew each other pretty well ... My husband and I dated all through school and Carolyn and Artie were pretty much together the whole time. I can remember Artie in basketball and Carolyn in cheerleading, and going to the games. ... they were just good people, enjoying school, enjoying life. None of us had that much, but we were all happy."

As happens, they drifted apart after school, staying in touch once in a while.

"And then Xavier came into play, where my son [and two grandsons] went, so we connected again through the school. What a wonderful family, the Kohs."

Mike Papale, Class of 1979, who became the school's first 1,000-point scorer. He is fourth on the all-time career scoring list with 1,227: "Coach Kohs was a great basketball coach and an even better person. He was like a second father to me. My mom had passed in '78. I was so fortunate to be around a person like coach Kohs at that time in my life. He was one of a kind, he cared so much about all of his students. I will cherish all of my memories with coach Kohs and his wonderful wife, Carolyn. And I will never forget the sport coat flying into the stands against East Catholic. He was upset over a call, and the next thing you know the coat is hanging off one of the side baskets. Love you coach. RIP."





Ken Champion, Class of 1975:

“Coach Kohs was a wonderful husband, father and man of character and role model with a passion for athletic competition. I admired that as athletic director he planned and assembled the best coaching staff and program roadmap for Xavier students. He made hard work out of practice, developed our

critical understanding of the importance of teamwork, dedication to excellence, and good sportsmanship. I clearly remember his practice sessions were always tougher than the games were!

“And most important, Coach always had a great sense of humor. The memory we shared the most was a halftime in 1975. He was a frustrated coach laying into us for lack of intensity and our many mistakes with a weaker team. He shouted out, ‘It’s Like Dunkirk out there! They’re running all over us!’ He stormed out to get composure; the message was clear.

“We straightened matters out, won and got on the bus back to Xavier. It was a very quiet ride until our point guard said, ‘Where the hell is Dunkirk anyway?’ [Coach] looked over his shoulder and shared his priceless smile with us.”

Michael Fraulino, Class of 1967: “I recall Mr. Kohs serving a number of roles during Xavier’s earliest years. As the school’s first athletic



director he did all the scheduling in all sports, while he taught a full schedule of classes that included biology and physical education. Also, he coached soccer, basketball, and baseball. I had him for Phys. Ed. in my junior year. I found Mr. Kohs to be a very likable and effective teacher whose friendly manner made his students feel comfortable and ready to learn. Many years later, I joined him

as a lector at St. Pius X Church; so, I was privileged to know him as an adult as well. Despite his physical challenges later on in life, he continued to lector at the 9 a.m. Mass where every now and then we’d talk briefly as we headed toward the parking lot. When I’d ask him how he was doing, he’d always reply optimistically. Then, when he’d seen any other members of our ‘67 class, he’d share the news.

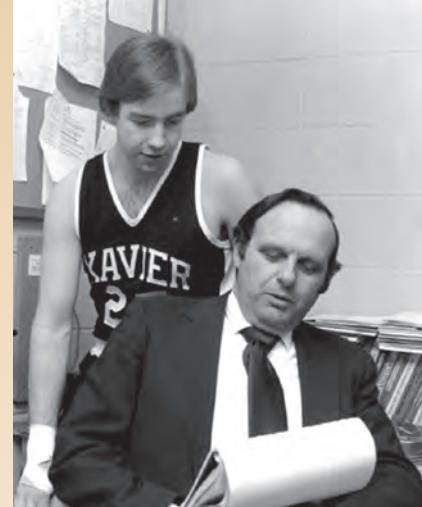
“I could never call him ‘Artie’, though. He was always ‘Mr. Kohs’ to me. He’d made such a special impression on me during my high school years that I felt uncomfortable referring to him by any other name.”

Bob and Sue Delvecchio, were next door neighbors in Higganum for about 40 years: Bob is asked what kind of neighbor Artie was. The first thing he does is laugh. “Oh, boy, you know Art. He was a great neighbor, he was helpful, and whenever you wanted a laugh you could go over there ... Loud ... I could go on and on, and could probably write a book on the guy.

“We never had a disagreement in 40 years. I don’t think you could ask for a better neighbor. He was family to us and we were family to him. Our families were close, and Caroline was a jewel. I think she was Art’s highlight. Although Art was the loud one, Caroline was the glue that held everything together for a lot of people. And like I said,

it went beyond neighbors, more like family. If they had a problem, they’d call, and if we had a problem, we’d call.”

Bob said the family moved to the Higganum home from their previous home seeking a certain amount of solitude. He laughs. “So our intention of moving was to find a little more property and not hear out neighbors all the time,” Bob says, “and I end up moving next to Art, which is the total opposite of the intention.”



Bob and Artie were opposites in many ways. Artie was a Republican and Bob a Democrat. Bob didn’t care so much for sports and that was a big part of Artie’s life. But none of that could change the dynamic of the relationship. And as we stayed on the phone talking more and more stories came out.

» *“His golf was important to him. ... I didn’t golf with him. He wouldn’t golf with me because he said I didn’t know how to golf.”*

» *“He bought a boat and had no idea how to operate it.”*

» *“I was taking down my deck, a large deck we had out back that sat 10 feet in the air. I was taking it down piece by piece and cutting it up with a friend. Art comes over and says what are you doing. Taking down the deck, I said. He grabs it and the whole thing comes down. I had to pull everyone away. But you couldn’t get mad at him if you tried.”*

» *“He once had a truck with a plow on it, and I had a stone driveway. He said he’d plow it, and he plowed half the stone away.”*

» *“He was the life of the party; even if he thought he wasn’t, he was ... you know what I mean. Caroline did the cooking and he did the talking.”*

» *“He’d yell from his deck. ‘You’re making too much noise’ or he would join in on the conversation. ‘You’re wrong, Bob, you’re wrong.’ ... I think he did Xavier good, and he lived a good life. He lived it the Art Kohs way.”*

Tom Malin, former athletic director at East Catholic High School in Manchester: “I knew Artie AD to AD, obviously, but more importantly

friend to friend. And I always had a great admiration for Artie and his family. We were together through a lot of conference affiliations, and he was the great scheduler. He did almost all of the scheduling for the leagues he was involved with. He was very precise and accurate, and he did a great job with it all. He was an icon, knew the ropes, and he helped get me involved with the CIAC on various committees. But you know what I really remember about Artie. Whenever I had a conversation with him about a postponement or rescheduling a game, always at the end of the conversation, and this I think is missing in today’s world with all the technology going around where people don’t talk to each other as much, I always remember Artie saying, ‘Tommy, how’s your family doing.’ He always stressed the importance of family. We both had beautiful wives who let us do our jobs, and they took over the rearing of the children. As you know, being an AD is not a 9 to 5 job. It consumes a lot of



Artie Kohs Tribute

“He was like a second father to me. My mom had passed in '78. I was so fortunate to be around a person like coach Kohs at that time in my life.”

– Mike Papale '79, the first 1,000-point scorer in Xavier basketball history



“I’ll always remember Artie asking, ‘Tommy, how’s your family doing.’ That encompasses what Artie was all about.”

– Tom Malin, former East Catholic athletic director and longtime friend

“We never had a disagreement in 40 years. I don’t think you could ask for a better neighbor. He was family to us and we were family to him.”

– Bob Delvecchio, longtime next door neighbor in Higganum

time, but I’ll always remember Artie asking, ‘Tommy, how’s your family doing.’ That encompasses what Artie was all about.”

So does all this that follows.

“He was always there for you. If I needed help he was a phone call away, and if I called him he’d give me good, solid advice on how to do things or handle certain situations. He was great at that, and I also learned not to sit next to him at meetings. He had the sharpest elbows of anybody. If something came up, he’d give you a right elbow to the ribs. ‘Hey, Tommy, what did you think of that? Hey, Tommy, I don’t think we should vote that way’ ... So I got to know that when I walked in a meeting I’d better sit someplace else. It was all done in fun. Just a lovely guy.”

Malin on golfing with Artie: He invited me to play at Clinton CC. I am not a long hitter, but Artie could really smack the ball. It was a par 5 hole, and he’s the one that probably started off calling me Tommy all the time, and he says, ‘Tommy, you have one job. Just put the ball in play,’ so I hit it and got it onto the fairway. He then smacks the ball, gets on in two, and rolled in a putt for an eagle. We go to the awards ceremony and the eagle wins the prize on that hole and we finished first or second, not due to me, more to Artie, and we won \$300. I went to the pro shop to find something for my wife.”

Father John Gallagher, OFM Cap, the former pastor at St. Pius X from 2011-2020: “He was a very faithful lector in my nine years there, always willing to sign up.” When Artie was hired in 1963 by Brother Robert Sullivan, C.F.X., Xavier’s first principal, the interview was at St. Pius because construction was ongoing at Xavier. His funeral was at St. Pius. In a way, life had come full circle.

Brother Lawrence Harvey, C.F.X., former principal at Xavier: “The first thing that comes to mind when I think of Artie is one of his ‘truisms’ which I think also epitomizes him. He would say, ‘There are two types of people in the world, givers and takers.’ There is no doubt in my mind that Art Kohs was a true giver.



Brother Larry on Artie’s role in helping form the SCC, to this day one of the most powerful conferences in CT high school athletics: “Artie also had sage advice and I could rely on his council on many matters. I trusted Art implicitly. He was instrumental in our putting together the SCC when the ACC was coming apart. Artie was a skilled negotiator in gaining the confidence of the athletic directors and principals of many of the public districts as well as the Catholic schools.



Brother Larry on playing a prank on Artie: “I could tell many stories about Artie, but one time we pulled Artie’s leg was during the baseball strike [in 1994]. Rich Magner, myself and a few others had Artie convinced that the Dodgers wanted Rich to come back as a fill-in player. It was tough to keep a straight face as I called Artie in to my office and told him Rich was going to take a leave of absence. He was so excited -- maybe more at the prospect that he’d have to step in and coach basketball again when Rich went to training!”

Tony Jaskot '69, who took over from Artie as athletic director, speaking at his funeral. Jaskot opened with this: “After God created

Artie, it was evident that God broke the mold. Artie surely was one of a kind. Artie loved life and loved people; his laugh was contagious and tears shed were genuine and from the heart. Artie loved trading barbs with his co-workers at Xavier, which he often did. One of my favorites was when a staff member called him old and Artie’s response was, I quote, ‘I’m like fine wine, I get older with age.’ The staff member’s response: ‘Artie, we all get older with age.’ Artie let out a big, hearty laugh! Misquoted adages like that became known as Artie-isms and would be posted weekly on the faculty room bulletin board.” And Jaskot closed with this: “Yes, Artie, you were like fine wine, but I must say that you not only got older with age, you got better with age! ... Rest in peace, Artie!” X





A ROYAL RESUME

His Family Called Him The King, And He Surely Had A Lot Of Crowning Achievements

TIMELINE

1955: Graduates from Nathan Hale Ray High School in Moodus

1959: Earns Bachelor of Science degree from Springfield College

1960: Earns Master of Science degree from the University of Oregon. Then begins teaching career at Hanover Park High School in New Jersey

1961: Returns to Hale Ray as athletic director, head coach of soccer, basketball, and baseball

1961-1962: His soccer teams win back-to-back Class S state titles, 5-1 over Newtown in '61 and 3-0 over Thomaston in '62

1963: First hire at Xavier as athletic director, physical education teacher and coach of multiple sports. Chose the school colors, black and white, because he liked the way the colors looked on Providence players. Chose the nickname, Falcons, because of the Air Force Falcons, and he did not know of any state high school team with that nickname

1963-1979: Head basketball coach with more than 200 wins and two state semifinal appearances

1963-1997: Serves as athletic director and instrumental in the formation of both the All-Connecticut Conference; and in 1994, the Southern Connecticut Conference of which Xavier is a member today

1997: The gym is named in his honor at a retirement dinner. It is the Arthur M. Kohs Gymnasium

2004: Arthur M. Kohs Classic, a holiday basketball tournament, starts. All proceeds go to the Arthur M. Kohs Scholarship Fund at Xavier

Other Professional Experience

Served as a soccer official for 25 years for the Central Connecticut Soccer Officials Association and the Connecticut State Soccer Officials Association, working numerous state championship games, and was also past president of both organizations.

Served on numerous committees for the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference, Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors, and the Connecticut High School Coaches Association.

Co-owned the Fundamental Basketball Camp located first in Moodus, then at Mitchell College in New London, for over 25 years with longtime friends and legendary fellow coaches Jake Salafia of Cromwell and Wally Camp of Coginchaug.

Southern Connecticut Conference scheduling coordinator.

Awards & Honors

- » Central Connecticut Soccer Officials Distinguished Service Award
- » Central Connecticut Board of Basketball Officials Commissioners Award
- » National Interscholastic Athletic Administration Association State Award of Merit
- » Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors Distinguished Service Award
- » Connecticut High School Coaches Association Dedicated Service to Youth Award
- » Inducted into Xavier Hall of Honors in 1988
- » Inducted into Nathan Hale-Ray Sports Hall of Fame in 1993
- » Inducted into Middletown Sports Hall of Fame in 2003 along with his daughter Paula
- » Inducted posthumously into CAS-CIAC Hall of Honor in 2022 (Class of 2020)
- » Eight former players went on to become head basketball coaches

Personal

Predeceased by Carolyn Kohs, wife of 55 years, and infant son Thomas.

Sons Todd, Mike, and Tim each graduated from Xavier. Daughter Paula Kohs Drake graduated from Mercy and Stonehill College, where she scored more than 2,000 points. ... Nine grandchildren.

Mike, a math teacher, has more than 350 wins as Xavier basketball coach. Tim has won two state titles as Mercy girls basketball coach and is the school's athletic director.



THE HEART OF AN EDUCATOR

Tom Aiello Was A Perpetual Source Of Support To Students And Staff During His Time At Xavier



Andrew Gargano was mentored by Aiello

EVERY TIME Helen Aiello drives by Xavier High School, she can't help but turn her gaze to that old office window or parking spot that belonged to her husband Tom Aiello.

"I still think about our lives being wrapped around this school," Helen Aiello said. "It just touches me. So much went on here. It just has a very warm place in my heart."

For nearly 28 years, Xavier was the center of everything for Helen, Tom and their sons, Liam and Gavin.

Christmas parties ... graduations ... sporting events.

Xavier might have been Tom Aiello's calling, but it was his family's home. And from the moment he was hired as a mathematics teacher, leaving behind one Xaverian school for another, Tom Aiello and his family were all in on what Xavier represented.

"Tom really believed in the Xaverian Charism [of humility, trust, compassion, simplicity and zeal]," Helen said. "I used to say he could have been a Brother."

That passion for Xavier and its values was obvious during Aiello's career as a teacher and administrator. Not only did he lead in the classroom and the front office, but he helped mentor so many members of the staff and faculty with his special brand of intelligence and kindness. And more than 15 years since he died of cancer, his impact remains as strong as it did the day he left teaching.

When a recent email went out asking about important mentors that have changed the school, Aiello's name was the first to be mentioned. Xavier Principal Brendan Donohue, former Academic Dean and current Math Teacher Andrew Gargano and longtime Administrative Assistant and Jack of All Trades Lisa Keereweer all list Aiello as one of their biggest mentors.

"I wouldn't call Tom necessarily a scholar, but he was very scholarly in his approach to how he worked with teachers and students," Helen said. "He read a lot of books focused on how you can be a better administrator, how you can be a better teacher and how you can involve more people. He enjoyed mentoring people. He wasn't just doing it as part of the job."

For Aiello, it was never just about the job.

He cared deeply, and his peers and all his students saw that. At his first teaching job in the 70s at Weaver High School, his wife remembers something another teacher said about Tom.

“The people he worked with thought he took to teaching like a duck takes to water,” Helen said.

In 2002, the Xavier Yearbook was dedicated to him.

The description, which follows the dedication, is brief, but in a few short lines it strikes at the core of Aiello’s style.

It reads: “His gentle manner and love of students has made him a most approachable educator. He is known for his sensitivity, wisdom, and insight into not only how to teach difficult math concepts but also how, in the most understanding way, to help students learn to deal with all those things that affect their lives. Mr. Aiello has been a loyal friend to Xavier. He is best known for his love of teaching and especially for his guidance, both of students and faculty alike.”

“He always wanted it to be a learning moment for students ... It came from a place in his heart where this negative experience could be turned into a positive experience.”
— Helen Aiello

Aiello and the school were a perfect fit from the start. But for those that knew him, it wasn’t the biggest surprise. Before Xavier, he had worked at Malden Catholic for three years and taken to the Xaverian way of education. Tom had gotten his EdD in mathematics education from Boston University in 1978 before Malden Catholic.

However, the Aiellos, who met as undergraduate students at the University of Rhode Island and married later, were ready to leave Boston after a few years and return to Connecticut, where Helen had grown up in New Britain. Tom was originally from Rhode Island.

In 1981, Helen first got a job at Wesleyan. Soon enough, Tom discovered an opening for a math position down the road at Xavier.

“It was the most serendipitous thing that Xavier right down the street had a position in mathematics open,” Helen said. “Tom literally stepped right into it. It was just perfect.”

From that moment on, Xavier was connected to the Aiellos and the Aiellos to Xavier. And he kept trying to get better as an educator. His



wife remembers him always reading early in the morning, especially on the weekends.

“I would come down and he would be reading in this chair we had in the living room,” Helen said. “He would be reading these books and trying to expand this vision on what he should be as an administrator and a teacher.”

Tom and Helen had their first child Liam in 1983 and their next Gavin in 1986. Both Liam and Gavin went to Xavier and had the fun distinction of being related to an administrator. Still, both boys made Xavier their own. Now when she drives by Xavier to volunteer at the Middlesex Hospital or visit her sister, Helen is always thinking back to those moments on Randolph Road.

When the boys were young, Helen recalls a special community.

“There was an aura to the Xaverian education then and all the teachers and staff believed in it and lived it,” Helen said. “That whole group clicked. There was a closeness and a warmth you felt with the people working there.”

Tom was always at Xavier, helping in some way. And he always put himself second.

Take a famous “Tom” moment from a graduation decades ago.

Before heading over to the school, Tom was watering the lawn. When he went to wrap up the hose he was using, the hose snapped back and hit him on the mouth. He started bleeding, but he figured it would stop.

It didn’t.

When he arrived at Xavier for the ceremony, he was still bleeding, and the Brothers were concerned so they sent him to the hospital. But Tom wasn’t going to miss graduation.

Bleeding lip or not.

So shortly after he checked into the hospital, he was back to Xavier and ready to go for the commencement ceremony with the bleeding under control.

“I keep thinking about that moment – that was typical Tom,” Helen said.

Over a career that spanned nearly 30 years, there were so many “Tom” moments. But the defining theme of them all? That steadfast dedication to his school and his students.

After being hired as a teacher, Tom quickly moved into the administration as a Dean of Discipline and later as an Academic Dean, but his identity as a teacher never left him. He was always trying to get the best out of his students.

“He always wanted it to be a learning moment for the students,” Helen said. “It came from a place in his heart where this negative experience could be turned into a positive experience.”

As the yearbook said in 2002, Tom was a loyal friend to Xavier. Always. And when he was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a form of cancer, he did his best to stay in the classroom.



However, the cancer stopped him from teaching in his final years. After moving back to the classroom in the fall of 2002, Tom left Xavier because of his health in 2008.

Still, he remained as committed to being a strong father and husband as he always had been.

As he was dying, Tom kept journals.

“He would keep notebooks about how he felt and how his feelings impacted others, specifically me and the boys,” Helen said. “He was a very thoughtful person. He was very concerned about his family, very concerned about his children, very concerned about me.”



In the last years of her husband’s life, the couple took a trip to Provence, France.

“I’m sure he was having trouble traveling, but this is typical of Tom – he decided to go along with it. And it was just so lovely [during that trip],” Helen said.

That was their last trip together.

Tom died in October 2009.

His legacy of kindness and generosity lives on at Xavier, but also stretches long past Randolph Road. At Xavier, his messages continue to be passed on by Gargano and others still working. There is a scholarship in his name, and for years one of the old crew boats was named for him. And when it comes to his family, his wife doesn’t have to look too far for his impact today.

When she sees her sons with her three grandchildren, she sees her husband.

“He was totally unconditional in his care for his sons, and I think they both recognized this and they are sharing it with their own children,” Helen said. **X**



The Right Chemistry

Terry And Tom Pierce Were the Perfect Fit For Each Other And Xavier High School

same field as me,” Terry said. “It was funny though because he was my department chair, but we rarely had much time together. He was in charge and my job was to be teacher. I was very grateful for it.”

Still to this day, Terry is quick to give the spotlight to her husband.

“He was so sensitive and aware of other people,” Terry said. “He was always trying to help other people and he just accepted everybody.”

Both Terry and Tom knew they were also lucky.

Before Tom started at Xavier, the pair met at Purdue University, looking to start new chapters in their lives.

Tom had just finished three years as a Xaverian Brother in Kenya and Terry was only a year removed from being a Nun.

In need of a life change, they found each other.

“I think God works in strange ways and we have to accept that most of the time it works out,” Terry said.

A few years later they were in Connecticut and not just teaching, but thriving at Xavier.

Tom, who had gone to Xaverian High School in Westwood and served as a Brother before Purdue, got the school and the mission, and his wife quickly got on board, too. The pair clicked with the administration and the Brothers.



The pair were famous for their home-cooked dinners and picnics.

Even those not in the department knew about their ability to cook.

When asked about the couple last fall, current Xavier teacher Mike Kohs '84 smiled, and replied: “great cooks.”

“We enjoyed it,” Terry said. “We used to raffle off a dinner and people could chose the menu and Tom and I would prepare a six-course meal.”

Now more than 16 years since Tom stopped teaching at Xavier, their legacy lives on.

TERRY PIERCE has no problem remembering the day she met her husband.

“He spent the whole time talking about another girl,” Terry Pierce said with a laugh. “We always joked about it.”

The couple’s first meeting might not have gone that well, but for nearly 40 years, Terry and Thomas Pierce were the perfect pair.

As a husband and wife duo; as parents to Mercy graduates, Stacey and Michelle; and as longtime Xavier Science teachers, they were always united.

“YOU JUST HOPE THAT YOU TEACH YOUR STUDENTS THAT THEY CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD AND THEY CAN BE THAT DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT FIELD YOU'RE IN IF YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN SOMEONE'S LIFE.”

— Terry Pierce

“We were two opposites, but we hit it off,” Terry said. “He accepted me for who I was with my good points and my bad points. I just loved being with him.”

That devotion and love was obvious in anything they did. From their home, where they hosted popular department dinners and potlucks, to the classroom, where they helped develop the science curriculum, Terry and Tom put their heart into everything.

When Tom retired in 2007 after 40 years at Xavier, including 20 as the Science Department chair, the Yearbook described him as an “institution.”

It is a touching tribute, but it’s also missing an important part of the picture – Tom’s other half, Terry. For over half of those years, Terry was with him, every day, following his lead.

“I always liked teaching and I think I was very lucky to have a husband be in the

“Brother Kelly was phenomenal – his top priority was our students,” Terry said. “Anything he could do to help our teachers become better teachers, he was ready to do. I think it was from the top down. Our aim was to be good educators and help the students prepare for the future.”

With the freedom to try new things, the Pierces flourished, taking the science department to a new level. Whether it was new labs, summer courses, or the development of an AP curriculum, the department worked hard to be at the forefront of the field.

“We were always ahead of the game,” Terry said. “The science department was always the first department to have all the technology and Tom was always on top of that.”

It also helped that the Pierces and the rest of the department made an effort to be close.

“We were a department and we always worked together,” Terry said. “It was kind of like a second family.”





Mentors Of The Xavier Science Department

David Applegate '98 and James Markham '99, now lead the science department

Former students David Applegate '98 and James Markham '99 are now helping to lead the department.

"It is wonderful to see," Terry said. "They're special boys."

For Terry and Tom, science was always a big part of the puzzle, but it wasn't the only part.

The couple also supported the campus ministry program for years, and were famous for their pasta dinners on Sophomore Saturdays. However, that was far from it. Tom also coached volleyball and baseball, moderated the student council, managed the school bookstore, and organized the annual Red Cross Blue Drive.

"Besides being a good educator and trying to always do the best for his students, he was also a very warm person," Terry said. "He loved his students. I think they were very comfortable with him. He was a person people could respect."

That warmth translated over to their home life, too.

In a marriage that spanned 38 years, Tom easily made up for that first meeting at graduate school. Birthdays, Valentine's Day ... you name a holiday, Tom was always there with something. He never forgot anything. And Terry has her stories.

"The first year we were married, he sent me a rose on the 18th day of every month," Terry said. "At the end of the year, he joked 'this is going to get pretty expensive.'"

It was a kindness that never disappeared, even when Tom was diagnosed with cancer.

"When he was sick and dying, the first thing he thought about was the people who came to visit us and had lunch, and if they were OK," Terry said. "He was just that kind of guy."

In the hospital, it was the same.

"We had his birthday in the hospital and they gave him a cake and he said 'take it back to the other nurses,'" Terry said. "When we went home, he said 'make sure you get a gift basket and send it to the nurses.'"

The cancer took over quickly, and Tom died on Sept. 16, 2008, only a year after he retired from Xavier. He was 68.

"After he died, I would get all these emails from students about him being a father figure for them and how much they loved him," Pierce said. "I thought 'Yup, that's the way he was.'"

More than 15 years since his death, Pierce can't help but think of her husband and miss him, but she knows what he would say.

"He would tell me: 'Pierce let it go,'" Terry said.

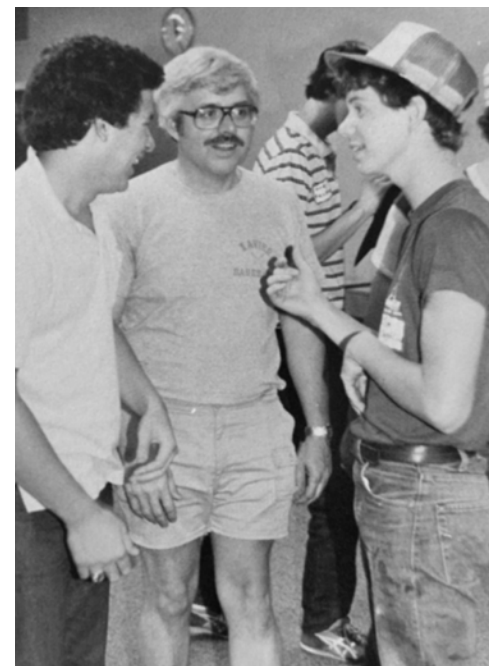
For 40 years, the Pierces not only got to pursue their dreams together – they helped Xavier students chase their own.

It was a good life.

"You just hope that you teach your students that they can make a difference in the world and they can be that difference in the world," Terry said. "It doesn't matter what field you're in if you can make a difference in someone's life." **X**



The Pierces dancing to their hearts delight - as they did with everything at Xavier.





A Historic Figure

The First Female Hire In The History Of The Religion Department Left An Indelible Mark



A few weeks after she started at Xavier, Andrea Hoisl was given her first assignment from the Headmaster at the time, Brother James Kelly, C.F.X.

“He calls me in that July right after I started and he says ‘you need to go to XLI [Xavier Leadership Institute],’” Hoisl said. “I was like ‘I haven’t even taught. I don’t even know a soul. I’ve met no one and I know nothing.’ He was like ‘this is not a question. You will be there.’”

Hoisl’s introduction to Xavier came quickly, but it did not take her long to understand and appreciate the Xavier community. At just 24, Hoisl jumped right into the Xavier experience, and never looked back, creating a bond with so many in the community.

“I grew up here,” Hoisl said. “My time at Xavier was life-changing.”

Her students and her peers would agree.

In her nearly 30-year career on Randolph Road, Hoisl, held many different roles, including head of the religion department and the longtime Director of Campus Ministry.

However, it’s Hoisl’s impact as a mentor to students and faculty that continues to be on display inside the building and outside it. Religion teacher Jeremy Fowler ’93, Science teacher David Applegate ’98 and Dean of Students Nicholas Cerreta ’01 were all peer ministers for Hoisl during her time at the school, and teachers like Paul Kieda continue to preach the messages she once shared.

“They are all bringing back their gifts and talents to make Xavier a better place. What is a better example for a teacher,” Hoisl said. “As a teacher, you plant seeds and you never see [what happens later], but seeing them come back and in a lot of ways stretching themselves and going outside their comfort zones to be in the roles they are in and do what they do – it doesn’t get any better than that. It is very humbling.”



It is a feeling that Hoisl might not have felt if her original plan had worked out.

Growing up, she only wanted to be a nurse, but as a student at Salve Regina she was faced with a tough reality – she was not meant for the job.

“I had straight A’s my freshman and sophomore year, but I didn’t go into a hospital until junior year,” Hoisl said. “The first time [in the hospital] was a Cesarean and I fainted on the spot within seconds. I just went down. The second one, they were doing a nose job, and I had to watch. Again, I went down. I was out. They called me in and they were like ‘this might not be your thing.’”

After years of dreaming about being a nurse, Hoisl had to push restart on her dreams.

“I ended up turning my minor into a major, and my minor was Theology,” Hoisl said.

Hoisl had studied Theology because she liked the courses, but that side interest quickly became something more. With a degree in Theology and Religion Studies, Hoisl got a job at the Archdiocese, and soon enough she got a call to work at South Catholic High School in Hartford, teaching religion.

“I knew when I started that it was what I was being called to do,” Hoisl said.

Three years later South Catholic was closed and Hoisl was hired to teach in the religion department at Xavier.

“I was the first woman hired in the department and there has never been one since,” Hoisl said.

It was a job she didn’t want at first.

“I was all of 24 and I was like ‘I don’t want to teach at an all-boys school,’” Hoisl said. “I looked like I was 12 and I didn’t think I could do it.”

Brother James Kelly, C.F.X., disagreed.

“After he hired me, he asked me if I had questions for him,” Hoisl said. “I said ‘I have one question for you – why would you want a 24-year-old female to teach sexuality in an all-boys school?’ He said: ‘there’s plenty of male influence in this building. I think this is the one area where our boys need a female voice and some female perspective.’”

When Hoisl heard that response, she knew she was in the right place.

“It kind of solidified for me that he had a good handle on things,” Hoisl said.

To this day, Hoisl calls Kelly one of the best leaders she has ever been around.

“He was firm and fierce, but he also apologized,” Hoisl said. “He had an Irish temper. He would go off but he would come back the next day or a couple hours later and say ‘I’m really sorry.’ He wasn’t perfect but he knew in his imperfection that he needed to come clean when he had to.”

During those early years at Xavier, Hoisl soaked up whatever she could from the Brothers.



Above: Paul Kieda follows Hoisl's lead today



“In those days, we were lucky because the Xavier community was the Brothers, and the teachers and their families,” Hoisl said. “They really welcomed everyone into their circles. Learning about the charisma or talking about the values, we didn’t do that back then because we saw it. All of it was real. We were really blessed to have them show us – not tell us.”



“In those days, we were lucky because the Xavier community was the Brothers, and the teachers and their families,” Hoisl said. “They really welcomed everyone into their circles. Learning about the charisma or talking about the values, we didn’t do that back then because we saw it. All of it was real. We were really blessed to have them show us – not tell us.”

Hoisl credits so many of the people she worked with as being so influential in her work and ultimately the reason she took the Director of Campus Ministry job in the 90s. Brother Thomas Ryan, Brother Kelly, Brother Harold Pry – they all played a huge part in her decision to stay at Xavier for nearly three decades.

“I didn’t want to give up on the community,” Hoisl said. “That was really what it was. It was such a supportive community I worked with.”

That community also allowed her to take chances and make changes.

Take her relationship with former Athletic Director Tony Jaskot '69. Over the years, the pair bonded and helped connect the athletic department and the campus ministry department.

“[Jaskot] was an alum from here and he knew that the spirituality side and the retreats were really meaningful,” Hoisl said. “I met with [Jaskot] and I was like ‘listen, sports are important and [retreats] are important so we need to find a way to not be each other’s competition because we both lose. You lose because I’m mandatory and I lose because the coaches are upset and hate me because they don’t want to do anything with campus ministry.”

Nobody lost with Jaskot and Hoisl working together.

The pair not only figured out how to make the retreats work for athletes, they also got sports captains to be peer ministers, and they established a weekend-long workshop at Xavier for coaches and athletic directors from the entire XBSS network called ‘Sports and Spirituality.’

“It was a really good blending of all sides of Xavier,” Hoisl said.

Under Hoisl’s leadership, the Campus Ministry Department flourished. But looking back on it now, she is quick to avoid any praise.

“It is just about allowing people to have the confidence to use their own gifts and step out of their own comfort zone,” Hoisl said. “That was really a big part of campus ministry for me. If

you’re comfortable you’re not growing and that’s not a good thing. You should be looking at more. It goes back to us as Catholics. We’re called to more.”

In 2016, Hoisl needed more.

After nearly 30 years at Xavier, it was time to move on.

“My time at Xavier was great, I feel like all my life experiences took place here with the support of the Xavier community, the faculty, the staff and the Brothers,” Hoisl said.

Shortly after leaving Xavier, Hoisl, who has three children (Matthew, Rebecca and Sarah), started a new chapter as the Office of Faith Events Director for the Diocese of Norwich.

“The new chapter was that adult formation piece and taking some of the stuff I do with kids and reformatting it for adults,” Hoisl said.

She has also been able to invest more time in her side hustle, Twilight Wish Connecticut, which focuses on granting wishes for seniors, who are struggling, ill or living in a convalescent home. Hoisl saw a story on TV about a woman that was flown from California to have a reunion with her sister and knew she wanted to volunteer two years ago.

“Anyone who knows me knows I have a love for the elderly, so it starts there,” Hoisl said.

She took part in her first wish last January and said she participates in about two wishes a month.

“It is just a win-win for everyone involved,” Hoisl said.

Whether at Xavier, the Diocese, or through her foundation, Hoisl has always kept the focus on others and leaving them with something more.

“The key to mentorship is to let people be who they are and not try to change them but try to help them grow into the people they are supposed to be,” Hoisl said. “A good mentor allows you to see what you can’t see for yourself.” 🌸





KINDNESS IS KEY

Terrence Tyler's Job Title Might Say Custodian, But To Hundreds Of Xavier Students And Alumni He Unlocks The Doors To So Much More

When Terrance Tyler started as a custodian at Xavier High School in 2007, he was honest about the opportunity.

"I was going for the paycheck – that was all," Tyler said. "I figured I would do my job and just go home."

More than 15 years later, Xavier is a lot more than a job.

It's his home.

For Tyler, who has gone from a self-described "hard-headed man" to a leader of young men, Xavier has given him an opportunity he will always cherish.

"Working here started pushing me," Tyler said. "This place is definitely home to me. My wife tells me I spend more time here than I spend at home."

Tyler arrived at Xavier not expecting much, but soon enough, he struck up a friendship with the former Athletic Director Tony Jaskot '69 and his wife Donna Jaskot, the Assistant to the Headmaster and the Principal, and that meant everything.

"Starting with Mrs. Jaskot and Tony, it became a family-type of feeling," Tyler said. "I didn't interact with a lot of teachers at first, but then things started to change. ... I'm involved with every teacher now and I have a different conversation with every person in this building."

As Tyler got more comfortable with the faculty and staff, he became comfortable with the students.

"It happened naturally," Tyler said. "The area I was cleaning was the locker room and I encountered all the kids going through the locker room. A simple 'hello' or a 'how is your day going' can change somebody's day. I just try and engage kids in a simple way and make their day a little better."

Over the years, those simple greetings have taken on a bigger meaning.

“ I try to give these kids confidence,” Tyler said. “I tell them about my experiences and I think sometimes if they hear it from me instead of teachers or administrators it might come across a little differently.” ”



Tyler now checks in with teachers and staff as he looks out for students he has gotten to know. In his role as custodian, he gets to see kids in a different light. He can be blunt with them, but they can also be blunt back.

“I try to give these kids confidence,” Tyler said. “I tell them about my experiences and I think sometimes if they hear it from me instead of teachers or administrators it might come across a little differently.”

Playing the role of mentor for so many has also given Tyler confidence he didn’t know he had.

“I’m a dad, I’m a friend, I’m a mentor – I’m definitely not who I was back then,” Tyler said.

At the start, Tyler, who graduated from Vinal Tech in 1998, kept to himself as planned. But as he became a father, he started to see a change in his own goals and behavior. Now, he’s engaged in everything, whether it be a Xavier sporting event or helping

Director of Enrollment Management Matt McCaffrey deliver signs to new families.

He credits parenthood for helping him step out of his own comfort zone.

“It definitely changed me,” Tyler said about becoming a father to Viviana (17), Olivia (7) and Chase (6).

Two years ago, Tyler also took on the role of mentor for Raekwon Shabazz ’24 when Xavier Wrestling Coach Mike Cunningham came to him with a question.

“[Cunningham] asked me if he could work with me during the summer,” Tyler said. “Right from the start, we got along.”

It didn’t hurt that Raekwon had already won Tyler over with his charisma months before Cunningham reached out to Tyler.

“Before I even knew him, I would see him in the hallways and he was like ‘what’s up brother man?’” Tyler said. “I was like ‘OK. I like you – you’ve got a lot of spunk.’”

Shabazz is certainly not short on personality.

Tyler jokes that the junior (a talented wrestler, who won the State Open championship in the 106 weight class this year) keeps him busy and on his toes. But the thing he didn’t expect at the start was how much Shabazz would provide Tyler with different parenting lessons.

“He is just like my son Chase,” Tyler said. “Once I started working with [Shabazz] I saw similarities with my own son and he helped me as a parent. I can go home now and understand Chase a little bit better.”

When asked what Shabazz gives him, Tyler cuts to the chase.

“Inspiration,” Tyler said. “He gives me a sense of hope. He helps me in so many ways, and he doesn’t even know it.”

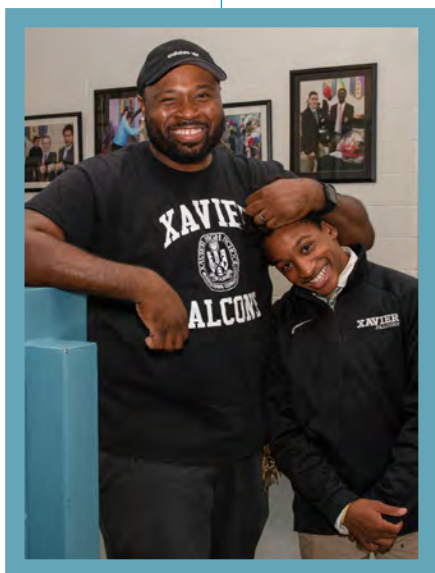
Shabazz isn’t the only junior that Tyler has grown close with over the years. He has also built a bond with Julian Shaw ’24, a football player and track and field athlete..

“I feel like I can stay on the level with all kids,” Tyler said.

Those bonds made it tough last spring when

Tyler made the decision to leave Xavier for a job at a school in Tucson, Ari.

“That was really tough,” Tyler said. “I had kids calling me and telling me to come back.”



Tyler knew he had to take the opportunity, but he quickly realized the spot was not right for his family.

“It was supposed to be the same setting but just in a hotter destination, but it wasn’t,” Tyler said. “I would get morning messages from [Shabazz] and [others] that would uplift me because I was dragging.”

Still, he kept at it and when he needed help, he reached out to Xavier people like Director of Physical Plant Andy Wyzkowski.

“[Wyzkowski] always took my call,” Tyler said. “I was always getting help from him and that really showed me what people are like at Xavier. Those people are hard to find.”

After a few months, Tyler and his wife made the difficult decision to return to Connecticut. And he admits it was tough at first to say it didn’t work out, but the Xavier community was there for him.

“I feel like it all worked out,” Tyler said. “I have enough confidence to say I tried it and it didn’t work out.”

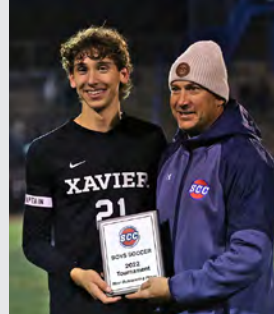
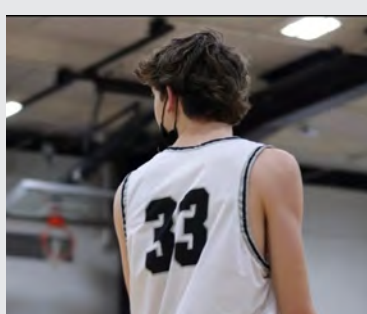
That idea of confidence is important to Tyler, who was raised by a single mother and his grandparents.

In the hallways of Xavier, he is always trying to build up confidence through support. And sometimes, he will reach out to alumni for help with different students and put them in touch. Bottomline, he wants to provide opportunities he didn’t get growing up.

“I have a bunch of alumni that I can call up and they will pick up,” Tyler said. “That just speaks volumes – I’m just a custodian. ... Xavier is a family and a brotherhood.”

His title might say custodian, but for so many alumni that have come through the hallways of Xavier since 2007, Tyler owns a much more important role. He’s a leader. And that opportunity is not lost on him.

“This is where I’m supposed to be,” Tyler said. “I’m going to do whatever I can to help. ... The picture is clear now.” 🌟



MAN IN THE MIDDLE

FROM THE FIRST MOMENT HE ARRIVED, AIDAN DRISCOLL '23 HAS BEEN AT THE CENTER OF ALL ACTIVITY AT XAVIER

WHEN AIDAN DRISCOLL '23 WAS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL, he was diagnosed with osteochondritis dissecans in his left knee after months of playing soccer, volleyball and lacrosse. "It was from a lot of overuse and stress on my knee," Driscoll said. "It ended up getting so swollen that the blood supply got cut off to the femur and there was this little capsule in the femur that started decaying so the bone was actually dying. [The doctors] had to go up into the knee and drill up through it to create channels for the blood to actually seem back down. It worked but, it was a long process."

After such extensive surgery and rehabilitation, most kids Driscoll's age would have changed their approach and make a choice, limiting themselves to a more focused or specialized routine. Two sports, OK, but three? No way.

However, Driscoll is not like most kids.

Nine months after he was told he was putting too much stress on his knee, Driscoll was back on the soccer field for Xavier Soccer. And a year later, he was back to a three sport diet of soccer, lacrosse and basketball.

"I've always been that kid that wants to try everything," Driscoll said. "My parents encourage it. They have always told me to dip my feet in as many pools as I can."

At Xavier, Driscoll has not just dipped his toe in a few pools.

He has taken the plunge headfirst into many. Over the last four years, Driscoll has loaded his schedule with one team or club after another.

Along with his sports resume, where he is a rare three-sport captain for Soccer, Basketball and Lacrosse, Driscoll has a hand in nearly everything going on the school.

He is the Student Activities Council President. He is a Peer Minister and member of the National Honor Society. He is a part of the Empower Leadership Club, the Ambassadors Club and the Ryken Service Society. And up until his junior year, he was in the band, where he played alto saxophone.

"I was excited to get involved the minute I got to Xavier because it wasn't like that at my public school, where it was kind of like you get there at 7:30 [a.m.] and leave at 2 [p.m.]," Driscoll said. "[At Xavier], I don't think I've left at 2 p.m. since my freshman year."

“Xavier has definitely felt like home since the day I stepped on campus ... Everything it has offered me and everything it has done for me, whether through a support system or a development system, it has been like nothing I could've ever asked for.”

In a world that has become more and more specialized for the sake of individual success, Driscoll is the opposite. He is driven not by the need to work on his own individual skills, but those of the team or group.

"I love being part of a team because that is how I was raised," Driscoll said. "I do a lot of things to help form me as a leader."

As a freshman, Driscoll arrived excited to explore all of the

different options available, never thinking he would stick with everything. But the more he became part of a team or an experience, he refused to give it up.

"I have found a joy or a passion in almost everything I have gotten involved in so I kind of stuck with everything," Driscoll said.

Still, it can be a lot to handle. So he has learned ways to deal with it.

In his room, Driscoll keeps a schedule of the next four months attached to the wall behind his desk.

"It is filled in with all the college visits, the games, the events, the club meetings – everything I do," Driscoll said. "I have to update it every day."

Bottom line, the organization helps.

"I think it has definitely helped me to develop as a person and an athlete," Driscoll said. "You always hear "well-rounded" thrown around. Colleges want a kid that is well-rounded. I think it was beneficial for me."

Driscoll admits he wonders what would have been if he did just one sport – would be playing it in college? But he doesn't linger on the idea long.

"I owe a lot of what I do to Xavier," Driscoll said. "I have been able to blossom so much because of the opportunities Xavier has given me. I feel like it is part of my identity."

Driscoll hopes to study biology in college and follow in the footsteps of his parents Jon and Jenna, who are both in the medical field (dad is an orthopedic surgeon and mom is a physical therapist). But wherever he ends up next, and whatever he ends up doing, Driscoll knows he will have plenty of experiences to call on.

"In one of my college interviews, the woman asked me if I were a puzzle piece: would I be a corner piece or a center piece? I had to think about it for a couple of seconds."

At Xavier, there is no doubt what type of piece Driscoll was for the last four years. Since the moment, he arrived, he's been connected to everything, and everyone.

"Xavier has definitely felt like home since the day I stepped on campus," Driscoll said. "Everything it has offered me and everything it has done for me, whether through a support system or a development system, it has been like nothing I could've ever asked for." X



SLICE-O-LIFE

At Xavier, Vinnie Scileppi '23 Has Emerged As A Leader By Following The Same Principles That He Learned From His Father And The Family Business



“I wake up every morning ready to come to school ... I’m not tired in the morning. ... I’m ready to learn and see my friends. Xavier has really pushed me.”



GROWING UP, Vinnie Scileppi '23 had all the inspiration he needed right in front of him.

His father and namesake, Vinnie Scileppi, was always leading by example as the owner of the Middletown institution, Illiano's Ristorante & Pizzeria on South Main Street.

“My dad is my biggest role model,” the younger Scileppi said. “I have always seen him work hard – so I have worked hard. If I do not work hard, then what is the point in what am I doing?”

Whether it is on the football field, wrestling mat, or in the classroom, Scileppi has made a name for himself at Xavier by incorporating all the values he learned from his parents and the family restaurant.

Friendly, attentive and dependable.

It is the Illiano's way. But at Xavier, those principles have also separated Scileppi and allowed him to leave a mark on his class and his community as a leader.

“This is my home,” Scileppi said about Xavier. “I get here at about 7:45 a.m. every morning and I do not leave until like 7:30 p.m. at night, whether it is football season or during wrestling season. Sometimes I am here longer. ... I spend a lot of time here. But this is my second family and it has made me a better person.”

During those long days on Randolph Road, Scileppi has tried his best to utilize everything he learned from the family business, where he has bussed tables and taken orders since he was 12. But maybe the most important skill that has transferred over to high school, where he is a two-sport captain for wrestling and football, is his ability to listen to others.

“It just comes from watching my dad. He is the same way as me – he will talk to anyone,” Scileppi said.

Only a few miles from Xavier, Illiano's is known not just for its pizza and Italian food, but its hospitality. You could be a regular or a first time customer, but when you walk into the restaurant you're usually greeted with a smile and the same question – you want a snack?

Most of the time, that snack is a little slice of one of the many pizzas on display, but for younger Scileppi, who started helping out when he was 10 years old, the message was simple.

“At a restaurant you're talking to thousands of different people,” Scileppi said. “There are a few of the same people, but it is such a big business that always has new people coming in. ... I like talking to people. It is all about customer service.”

That willingness to pay attention and talk to anyone has helped Scileppi as captain of both the football and wrestling teams, but it is far from the only leadership skill he has shown during his time at Xavier.

When COVID struck, the older Scileppi delivered hundreds of pizzas to all the essential workers at Middlesex Hospital.

Wanting to do his part, too, Vinnie, Jr., a sophomore at the time, came up with his own idea: Pizza 4 Pals.

Together, Scileppi and his friend Aleia, a sophomore at Haddam-Killingworth, raised enough money to make over 750 frozen pizzas for families at McDonough Elementary



and Spencer Elementary in Middletown, where the majority of students get free lunch.

With remote learning limiting their access to a free meal every day, Scileppi knew he needed to do something so they did not go without food.

Asked what inspired him to help, Scileppi cuts right to the chase.

“I don't like watching people suffer – I get that from my dad,” Scileppi said.

In the classroom, his drive to keep improving comes from his mother, Christina.

Over the last four years, he has gone from College Preparatory classes to Advanced Placement, with his mother watching every step of the way, and never letting him get complacent.

“She will start yelling at me if I don't work hard, she's worse than my dad,” Scileppi jokes.

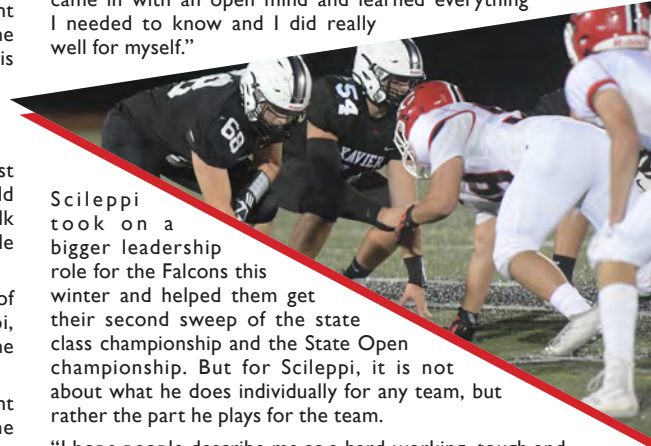
Tackling an opponent or a tough test, it is the same mindset.

“The key to Xavier is to just take in everything that is offered and make sure you pay attention,” Scileppi said. “Hard work is everything. You got to push through the hard times and you got to be willing to learn.”

With the wrestling team, Scileppi has seen that extra focus pay off.

As a junior and senior, he helped the Falcons complete two of the best seasons in state history when they won the SCC, Class L and State Open championships.

“I was never serious with wrestling [in seventh and eighth grade], then I came here,” Scileppi said. “I didn't like it at first, but then I really started to like it. Junior year, I came in with an open mind and learned everything I needed to know and I did really well for myself.”



Scileppi took on a bigger leadership role for the Falcons this winter and helped them get their second sweep of the state class championship and the State Open championship. But for Scileppi, it is not about what he does individually for any team, but rather the part he plays for the team.

“I hope people describe me as a hard-working, tough and respectful,” Scileppi said. “I always tried to play [football] or wrestle like it could be my last time doing it.”

At Xavier, there has never been a doubt.

Following the example of his dad, Scileppi has made the most of every day. He will attend the Coast Guard Academy after Xavier.



“I wake up every morning ready to come to school,” Scileppi said. “I'm not tired in the morning. I have no problem going to school. I look forward to coming to school every morning. I wake up and I'm ready to learn and see my friends. Xavier has really pushed me.” X



“Staying where you think you’re supposed to be and with things that you’re comfortable with, sometimes won’t help you grow. I think I have grown in so many different ways by doing different things.”

~ HENRY STEARNS '23

ENGINEERING POSSIBILITIES

Henry Stearns '23 Has Spent The Last Four Years Discovering New Passions And Taking On New Roles He Never Saw Coming

As a kid, Henry Stearns '23 heard plenty of stories about Xavier.

With his dad, Eric, and his four uncles, all Xavier alum, he could not avoid them, but it was not until his junior year that Stearns got his own idea of the full Xavier experience.

Inspired to give back and pursue a service project called “Project Beisbol,” Stearns saw firsthand the Xavier that his father and his uncles had always told him about when he was younger.

“I had heard all these little things about the tradition that I didn’t really understand and then when I came here I was like ‘oh this is what they were talking about,’” Stearns said.

Since coming to Xavier, Stearns has searched for his own version of the stories he heard at home. And although his own chapter has featured some surprise twists, he has found the experience he always wanted.

“I think the best thing to do here is to go for it,” Stearns said. “If you’re interested in something you just need to go for it. What’s the worst thing that could happen? That was the mindset I had coming to Xavier.”

Four years ago, Stearns arrived on Randolph Road with baseball dreams after playing the sport his whole life. However, he quickly realized he had interests beyond the baseball diamond.

After some prodding from his friend Rithik Kurup '23, Stearns joined the engineering team and helped the team win a state championship and finish top five in the country.

“I really took that step out and that’s when everything else started to unravel – it was like here’s this opportunity and this opportunity,” Stearns said. “Staying where you think you’re supposed to be and with things that you’re comfortable with, sometimes won’t help you grow.

I think I have grown in so many different ways by doing different things.”

For Stearns, the move to engineering caused him to leave the baseball team as an underclassman, but he has no regrets.

Last summer, he spent 18 days at the National Student Leadership Conference at Georgia Tech, where he was selected to participate in the Engineering Intensive program. Together with 100 engineering students

from across the country, Stearns worked on multiple projects, attended guest lectures and completed daily labs.

The conference also gave him another opportunity to work on his leadership skills.

“What I’m always chasing is the idea that I can do more, and how I can be better,” Stearns said. “The conference really dove into understanding what type of leader you are. It was a big lesson for me.”

During his junior year, Stearns discovered “Project Beisbol,” a non-profit organization that sends baseball equipment and support to underserved youth in Latin America.

With the help of his Spanish teacher Mrs. Marta Castro-Maguder and Xavier baseball coach Nick Cerreta, Stearns collected equipment and apparel to send to young players in Colombia, and helped set up a series of Zoom calls, where students from Xavier and Colombia worked on speaking in Spanish and English.

“If I had tried to do that somewhere else, I have no idea how that would have gone,” Stearns said. “That was just another example of Xavier bringing something into the light for me. I had an idea and Xavier brought that to life.”

Another step in Stearn’s leadership has been a willingness to challenge himself.

Take his experience wrestling.

As a junior, he decided to trade in his baseball cleats for wrestling shoes.

“I fell in love with it,” Stearns said about joining the wrestling team. “There were a lot of struggles and setbacks, but doing that made me realize that once you go beyond your comfort zone that is when you grow. That team picked me up. I only grew from that.”

As the young brother of two motivated sisters, Stearns has always been fortunate to have good mentors right by his side pushing him along.

His older sister Jocelyn, who graduated Mercy in 2018, attended West Point and his younger sister, Ava, who graduated in 2019, is already in law school.

“They have always helped me with everything. To be able to look up to them is great – it is humbling,” Stearns said. “Both of my sisters have been huge role models in my life. I was like ‘I want to do what they do.’”

With his sisters’ help and all the lessons he has learned from Xavier, Stearns is ready for the next chapter of his story whatever it may be.

“I realize I love trying new things and finding new things that I love,” Stearns said. “You’re going to be humbled, but you’re going to learn so much. I have felt myself improve as a person because of it and I’m not going to leave this place wondering if I could’ve done something more or with any regrets.” X





Striving For More

Driven By A Passion To Serve, Tristan Schemmerling '23 Is Pushing Beyond His Limits

Sitting in the tall grass of Alabama, with his hands swollen and sweat dripping down his face, Tristan Schemmerling '23 needed a moment.

As part of an exercise at the Extreme Military Challenge in Battleground, Alabama, he had just crawled nearly two miles with a heavy pack on his back and he did not know if he could keep going.

"I asked myself - should I quit or not," Schemmerling said. "What I kept coming back to is if I quit it would be a huge waste of my time and my willpower."

With his family in the back of his mind, especially his father, Schemmerling pushed on.

"I think the greatest takeaway from everything I've done is that if you really want something bad enough you can do it ... I'm dealing with sometimes seven different things a week but this has been my goal for four years. I've put so much work into it and there is no turning back."

Three weeks in the intense Alabama heat participating in military exercises does not sound like a vacation to most high school students, but this past July, Schemmerling paid for the opportunity to be part of the challenging program, which is

designed to test and develop leadership, teamwork and self-reliance.

If you are thinking this sounds a lot like boot camp, or Ranger school, you're not wrong. That is exactly the aim of the program that takes place in Camp Liberty, Ala. And in the end, Schemmerling was awarded for his perseverance and determination with special distinctions like a Cadet Ranger Tab and a Cadet Ranger Beret. But that is not why he traveled down south to be tested more than he had ever been in his life.

"Looking back it is not about the wool beret or the patch on your shoulder [you may get it], it is about the lessons you learn and the experiences you have because that is going to help you grow and make you a better leader," Schemmerling said. "I have a passion for service and a passion

to lead others."

Since a young age, Schemmerling has always been motivated to do more, but at Xavier, he has seen that desire emerge even more.

"Whenever I do something, I try to do it to the best of my ability," Schemmerling said. "Sometimes it becomes a fatal flaw of mine,

where I try too hard sometimes, but Xavier really drives you to try your best in all aspects, including homework, classwork and extracurricular activities."

At Xavier, Schemmerling has loaded his resume with academic accolades, which include being a National Honor Society member and a Brother Celestine Award Recipient for straight A's, while also juggling plenty outside of the classroom.

This past school year as he was making honor roll and upholding his responsibilities as a varsity track and field athlete, Schemmerling was studying to be a pilot, working on his Eagle Scout project, and organizing functions for the club he co-founded, the Xavier Cycling Club.

"I always strive for that feeling of accomplishment," Schemmerling said.

For his Eagle Scout project, Schemmerling raised enough money to erect a flagpole in honor of veterans that served in foreign wars from his hometown of Killingworth.

Schemmerling remembers watching military movies with his dad, Kurt, and wanting to carry on his father's goals of one day serving in the military.

"My dad always looked up to the Navy Seals. It was always his dream to go into the military and fly as a naval aviator since he saw Top Gun," Schemmerling said. "Now I'm kind of continuing his passion."

The elder Schemmerling never had the chance to fly as a naval aviator, but his son has carried on that passion for military service and aviation.

Since his sophomore year, Schemmerling has been traveling to Chester Airport working toward obtaining his pilot license. Last summer, the confidence he gained from flying, and other activities, pushed him to travel to Alabama for the Extreme Military Challenge.



"Since my sophomore year, it really has been my dream, and goal to attend a service academy," Schemmerling said.

At the challenge, Schemmerling got a real taste for what lies ahead, completing the Ranger 1 and the Advanced Ranger Courses at EMC.

"It was one of the proudest moments of my life - it was the greatest feeling," Schemmerling said. "The stuff I did and the people I met was just mind-blowing when I look back on it."

Last summer, Schemmerling was busy not just in Alabama. He also went to three other camps for rowing, flying and youth leadership in Maryland, New Jersey and Connecticut.

With so much on his plate, Schemmerling cannot help but feel pressure from time to time, but he says he turns to rowing and track and field for a release.

He currently does crew outside of school in hopes of competing in college. "Athletics in general helps me relieve stress," Schemmerling said.

Schemmerling also constantly reminds himself that time management skills will come in handy with what comes next - military service.

"I think the greatest takeaway from everything I've done is that if you really want something bad enough you can do it," Schemmerling said. "I'm dealing with sometimes seven different things a week but this has been my goal for four years. I've put so much work into it and there is no turning back." X



“ He was a brother to everyone,” Whitaker said about Mitchell Wollen '22. “He genuinely cared about everyone.” ”

Deckmates

A Year After He Left Xavier For West Point, Mitch Wollen '22 Still Shares A Close Bond With Two Xavier Leaders: Sam Enes '23 & Matthew Whitaker '23

As members of the Xavier Swim team the last four years, Sam Enes '23 and Matthew Whitaker '23 are no strangers to adversity.

Whether it be canceled state championships, random sicknesses or yearly coaching changes, the pair have seen it all. But despite all the obstacles along the way, Enes and Whitaker are graduating from Xavier as not only two of the most decorated swimmers in the program's history but as perfect representatives of the school and its mission. And they have a teammate to thank for some guidance.

Over the last four years, another Xavier swimming great, Mitchell Wollen '22 has been a mentor to the duo in every facet.

Academics, athletics, service, leadership – you name it, Wollen has been there for his teammates and friends as they navigate the same road he set out on first.

“[Wollen] has been able to lead the team not only through athletics, but as a role model,” Whitaker said. “I would describe Mitch as one of the finest individuals I've met. He cares about people beyond what most people do. He goes out of his way to find ways to help other people.”

The impact Wollen had in the pool with his teammates is easy to see. Inspired and coached along by their older teammate, Whitaker and Enes leave Xavier with a collection of milestones, records and titles. But it is what they have taken from Wollen outside of the pool that has made the biggest impact in their lives.

During COVID, Wollen stepped up big time, creating wooden thank you signs shaped in the figure of a heart for essential workers across the state. But he didn't stop there. Throughout his Xavier career, he was always helping out. And by the time he graduated last spring, he was awarded the Loyalty and Service Award, considered by many in the school to be the most prestigious honor a current student can receive at graduation.

“I couldn't think of anyone that deserved that more than him,” Enes said. “I definitely aspire to be like him.”

He didn't just aspire. Enes followed Wollen's lead his final years at Xavier with his own service projects, including last year when he made car magnets in tribute to the children and adults who were killed at the Uvalde, Texas, school shooting. All the proceeds raised went to the families.





Watching all the efforts Wollen made motivated Enes do his part and get more involved.

"I would love to see someone that makes as much of an impact as he did. That motivated me to get more involved in my community," Enes said.

Before his sophomore year, Enes wasn't that involved. He described himself as an '8:14 a.m. to 2:25 p.m.' When the bell rang at Xavier, he was gone. He was a swimmer and that was about it. But a spark clicked when he saw how much Wollen cared about the community and doing his part.

"During my freshman year, I was caring about what only I could do," Enes said. "Now, I'm caring about what others can do and how I can help them."

Enes is not afraid to credit Wollen for mentoring him when he needed it most. And neither is Whitaker.

As a leader, Whitaker says he has taken so much from Wollen.

"He was a brother to everyone," Whitaker said. "He genuinely cared about everyone."

Throughout their time on the team together, Whitaker and Wollen talked a lot.

"We would have talks about mental health in swimming," Whitaker said. "We had dialogues that I couldn't have with other people. I want to be as caring as he is."

That mentorship hasn't stopped either.

In his first year as a Cadet at the United States Military Academy, Wollen is still in touch and helping his friends any way possible.

Take the college search.

As Wollen and Whitaker became more interested in the service

academics and going that route, Wollen was right there. Both considered service academies throughout the college search.

"I think they saw what I was going through and knew they wanted it," Wollen said. "I tried to do my best to give the most thoughtful and helpful answers as possible."

Wollen is not surprised they wanted to go into service.

"They are both swimmers and been swimmers their whole life," Wollen said. "One of the things, the sport teaches you is self-discipline. You have to be very self-disciplined. Time management is huge. And you have that in the service academies."

As much as Whitaker and Enes credit their former teammate with helping them on their Xavier journey, they have also proven incredibly determined themselves.

"These are great guys and I know wherever they end up they are going to be successful," Wollen said.

Both Enes and Whitaker are strong students, among the top in their class, just like Wollen.

And in the pool?

Xavier would be lucky to have two swimmers like them every season.

Enes is part of two school relay records with Wollen (200 medley relay and 400 relay), another relay without him (200 free relay), and has individual schools records, which he set this year in the 50 free (21.49) and 100 fly (51.36). In his final two individual races at the State Open this year, Enes set the two records. And that came just a few days after he won the Class M title in the 50 free and was second in the 100 fly. Whitaker is also one of most the talented

swimmers the program has seen in the last 25 years. However, he has had to deal with his fair share of disappointments at the state meets. After having the state championships canceled his first two seasons, he was unable to swim the past two years because of health issues. Last year, Enes was also not able to swim at the Open championship. But as they learned from their former teammate, it is how you handle adversity that defines you (Xavier has had three different swimming coaches during their time).

"You got to love the process," Whitaker said. "It is not always about the end result. Integrity and how you present yourself to other people is one of the biggest things

I've learned through swimming and Xavier."

It is also something they hope to pass on just like Wollen did with them – Enes' brother is a junior on the team and one of the top swimmers. As Enes remembers from an old Xavier commercial, you can always change and grow into the right leader.

"When I was in eighth grade, I discovered the Xavier YouTube channel and guys getting interviewed in a video and saying they came out of their shell," Enes said. "I was like 'OK, that is ridiculous. They are reading off a script.' But I really did come out of my shell. It was a complete change of character. And I couldn't be happier. It wasn't a script." **X**



WELL VERSED

As A Tutor For Many Xavier Students, Soti Paul '23 Has Learned A Lot About Himself And What It Means To Be A Mentor

In seventh grade, Soti Paul '23 got his first job as a tutor.

"During middle school, I was called down to a seventh grade study hall to help students with math," Paul said.

Soon enough, a few classmates turned into a whole group and Paul was a full-blown middle school math tutor at the ripe old age of 12, answering questions and helping with homework.

"It kind of sparked an interest in helping people with math," Paul said. That spark is now a fire.

Six years since he took that first tutoring assignment, Paul, a highly skilled math student, leaves Xavier as a bona fide mentor of his peers. Over his time at Xavier, he has not only helped countless students improve in math, but he has developed relationships as a leader and learned plenty about his classmates.

"I think a big part of mentorship that is not often recognized is an interpersonal connection between people," Paul said. "To be a true mentor, you have to learn how people feel, how they understand things, and how they work."

With Paul, it has never just been about the final answer. Instead, he would rather focus on how he gets there.

Take his Xavier experience.

Already a strong student on Day 1, Paul, has grown beyond the classroom, too.

"When I was younger in elementary school and middle school, I was very shy and introverted," Paul said. "I really wanted to force myself to come out of my comfort zone and make new friends. I knew if I did that I would find success at Xavier."

After four years, it is safe to say he has found that success in all areas.

Paul was one of the top students in the senior class, a leader for the tennis team and math team, a distinguished scholar, a skilled pianist, and an active member of several clubs.

"Over the years, I don't want to say I've become extroverted, I'm still quite introverted, but I've become more outgoing and I've learned to talk with more people and make new friends," Paul said.

A few months away from graduating, Paul speaks strongly about the bonds he has made as a student.

"The friends I have here at Xavier are amazing," Paul said. "They have made my life so much better and they have made me better."

Along the way, he has also done his part to make other students better.

Going into his junior year, Paul, who has received A's in all but two classes and outstripped Xavier's own math classes, started helping out with the summer math courses.

"I was anxious about getting service hours so I asked [Math Teacher] Mr. [Andrew] Gargano if I could come in during the summer and be a teacher's assistant during summer courses or help tutor someone," Paul said. "It was very much a learning experience. It introduced me to the true teaching experience."

During the second week, Gargano asked Paul to teach a lesson in an Algebra 1 enrichment class.

"I walked up, my voice was quivering, I was shaking, I was completely nervous," Paul said. "I tried to explain as best as I could. It was a good experience to not only refresh my math, but to learn what education is about and what being a teacher is about."

When he was done helping out with the summer courses, Director of School Counseling Nicholas Grasso '05 connected Paul with more students to tutor in math.

"It feels good to just have an impact," Paul said. "You get to understand different ways of thinking and that's something that is really important. The more people I help and the more people I tutor allows me to see the different ways people understand math. It is very eye-opening. Math is not as one-dimensional as people say. The way the brain works in respect to math is different. It is very fascinating for me."

Paul's interest in math started when he was in middle school and his mom sent him to the Russian School of Math.

"I understand Math better than other subjects," Paul said. "It comes naturally to me. By the end of the middle school, I was two classes ahead of what the regular level is."

As he has grown at Xavier, Paul has noticed plenty of connections with math in other classes and disciplines.

For example, in music, where Paul played piano for the Jazz Band.

"The way harmonies and music interact is perfectly mathematical," Paul said. "You can dive into the philosophical aspect of that, but I'm sure there is some connection subconsciously with music and math."

Paul's ability to toggle between mathematician and musician is impressive, but maybe more noticeable is his passion for what he is doing.

"I make music for the feeling," Paul said. "It is soul-filling and truly something that is part of me."

Paul said he gets his musical talents from his dad, David, and his passion for math from his mom, Hrisanthi. And he credits both for helping mold him into the person he is now. But he is also thankful for two Xavier leaders, specifically: Director of Campus Ministry and tennis Coach Peter Lyons and Gargano.

"They helped me to develop who I am," Paul said. "Mr. Lyons is a great mentor in general. He is able to connect to students and able get his point across. He is a very likeable person and a very spiritual person. ... Mr. Gargano, I kind of owe him. He was one of the first teachers I met at Xavier. I was a nervous freshman, kind of quivering in my boots, and he was really nice to me. He was the first person to show I would be supported at Xavier."

At Xavier, Paul, who plans to study either science, mathematics or engineering in college, was not just supported – he was pushed to support others, too.

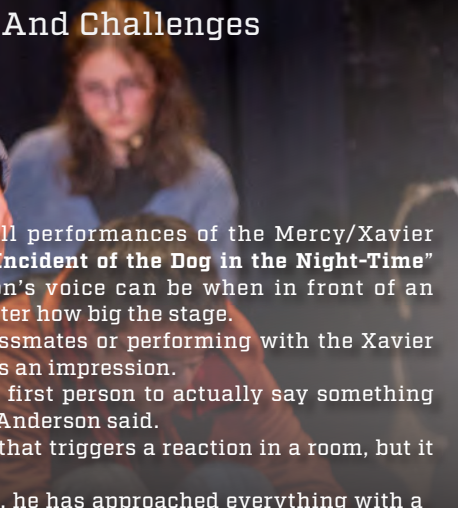
"The thing that drew me to Xavier at first sight was the atmosphere that the students create," Paul said. "I have said this in all my essays and at XLI with all my reflections – it is such a comfortable atmosphere for me. If you have any passion at all, Xavier will do a good job of enriching those passions or help you discover a new passion." X

"I think a big part of mentorship that is not often recognized is an interpersonal connection between people ... To be a true mentor, you have to learn how people feel, how they understand things, and how they work."



LOUD & CLEAR!

After Transferring To Xavier As A Sophomore, Luke Anderson '23 Has Confidently Taken On New Roles And Challenges



ANYONE that caught one of the two fall performances of the Mercy/Xavier Theater Production of *"The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time"* knows how commanding Luke Anderson's voice can be when in front of an audience, but for Anderson, it does not matter how big the stage.

Whether he is just talking with his classmates or performing with the Xavier choir at a concert, his powerful voice leaves an impression.

"Brother [Thomas] Ryan, C.F.X. was the first person to actually say something about it - he said I had a 'booming voice,'" Anderson said.

Anderson's voice may be the first thing that triggers a reaction in a room, but it is far from the only thing.

Since arriving at Xavier as a sophomore, he has approached everything with a new urgency and perspective. And has it paid off.

Over the last three years, the transfer has announced his presence on the stage and in the classroom as a formidable leader, tackling tougher roles and courses than he would have ever imagined before changing schools.

"I think coming to Xavier is the best decision of my life," Anderson said. "I tell everyone that [Xavier] changed me, and the way I look at other things."

He has also stepped up as a leader.

Last year, he attended the Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools Junior Retreat as one of the six representatives from Xavier.

"It had an impact on me because I felt like I had an impact on the school," Anderson said.

This past fall, Anderson made an impression on the stage, too, starring in *"The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time"* as Ed, a stern father figure, who must reckon with the way he treats his son.

Four years ago, the idea acting in front of audience was not even a consideration for Anderson.

"Honestly, a lot of it has to do with getting a fresh start," Anderson said. "In past years, it didn't spark me - I just did not have an interest in it. But coming to Xavier, part of the draw was trying new things, meeting new people."

Anderson has dove into the full experience at Xavier.

He is currently the senior class president and a member of the Xavier choir. He can also be seen at any Xavier event showing support. But it was not always that way.

Before Xavier, Anderson had friends, but he was struggling.

As a freshman at Haddam-Killingworth, he said was not taking anything seriously.

"I was disappointed with my grades and I knew I could be doing better," Anderson said. "I didn't do well on my final exams and I had a serious conversation with my mom. It wasn't the environment I wanted to be in anymore."



So with a little push, Anderson decided to give Xavier a shot.

Soon after he started as a sophomore, he realized the competitive approach to academics was exactly what he needed.

"It was almost like a competition here, and I loved that," Anderson said. "I never would've thought freshman year I would love anything like that but I was actually striving to get good grades."

Anderson credits plenty of Xavier mentors with providing encouragement and motivation, but especially Brother Ryan.

"He just introduced me to a completely new mindset," Anderson said. "Now, I feel like I have a strict mindset toward life."

It might be a stricter mindset, but he has also been willing to try new things and take risks.

"I think coming to Xavier is the best decision of my life," Anderson said. **"I tell everyone that [Xavier] changed me, and the way I look at other things."**

Case in point: acting.

Growing up, Anderson loved to breakdance and sing, but at Xavier, he has forced himself out of his comfort zone, and picked up acting.

Still, singing remains No. 1 in his heart.

"It just gives me freedom," Anderson said.

Anderson, who sang bass in the Xavier choir, said he has been singing since he was young. He can remember stepping up to the stage in sixth grade and singing Guns N' Roses' *'Sweet Child O'Mine'* in front of his school, and later at his Aunt's 50th Birthday party he sang he *'Escape [The Pina Colada song]'* in front of 300 people.

"Music is absolutely my favorite thing," Anderson said. "Every type of emotion you experience can be found in music. It is something that has brought me joy and hope that I didn't think I could have."

In the classroom, his music teacher, Tyler Lucey, witnessed Anderson's passion for singing.

"Luke has developed a mature singing tone and is consistently reliable," Lucey said. "He has always been a respectful and positive presence in class. I will remember Luke for his dedication to the music program and sense of humor."

At Xavier, the chance to use his talented voice in new ways has given Anderson not only plenty of happiness, but it has also provided lessons that he will use long after he graduates this spring.

"You have to listen to yourself," Anderson said. "That is what I did by coming to Xavier." **X**



INFLUENCERS

Impacting Lives In & Out Of The Classroom

Long before the term “influencer” became associated with social media, as in those who can persuade people into purchasing a product or service, teachers and coaches were associated with the term. They could influence a life, change a life. And that has been the case at Xavier for nearly 60 years, as has been the overall high school experience that can impact students for years to come. Here’s what a few people in the Xavier community say:



Michael Paterno, Class of 1997, sharing an excerpt from a letter he wrote to Robert Michalski for Michalski’s retirement in 2004: I heard from Tim O’Brien (1997) that you are retiring from Xavier this year. Having known you as both a coach and a friend, let me tell you that Xavier High School and the entire State of Connecticut are losing a terrific coach and person. You always taught and coached with the utmost moral standards. At a school with classes taught by men of the cloth under a motto of “Be a Man” it was you who helped me to realize my potential and to know what responsibility is.

You, Mr. Michalski, were the one person in my life who taught me to “Be a Man,” and I thank you for your dedication. My four years running for you were the most influential years of my life. Till this day, I look back on your program as the one outstanding thing that has shaped me into the person I am today. Because of your “no excuses” approach to coaching/teaching, I learned what I am capable of as a person both mentally and physically.

The truth is I don’t think I ever loved running. It was a lot of work. But after just one season with you as my coach, I respected you too much to walk away. That may sound like a ridiculous reason to stay with running, but it was that fear of disappointing you that helped me understand that I have a responsibility to more than just myself and that a responsible person finishes what he starts. Also, for the first time in my life, I was part of a winning team [I was a winner!] and that was amazing.



Phil Zachary, Class of 1972, one of the team managers in football: I was very close to **Larry McHugh**. I mean, you spend the better part of nine months a year with someone, day in and day out, and you can’t help but feel close to them. He was the first great leader I ever knew, besides my Dad, and much of what propelled me through my career I learned from him. People still talk about those state championships in football, but few truly understand the conviction and attention to detail that went into those extraordinary seasons. Everybody involved—coaches, managers, players and parents—were dialed in, and the end results were the organic byproduct of that amazing commitment. I can’t tell you how many times I’ve summoned Coach McHugh’s work ethic, philosophies, and determination in the course of my professional career.

Karl Van Bibber, Class of 1968 valedictorian: Without any question, **Mr. Richard Boucher**, my geometry teacher my first year at Xavier [which was my sophomore year] was the single most important person in getting me focused on my studies. All the Xavier faculty were amazing, without exception, but Mr. Boucher played a truly singular role in my life, and we have been good friends since 1965, and up until recently still exchanged emails and Christmas cards. I saw him at our 50th in 2018, and he hadn’t changed a bit, the same offbeat sense of humor.”

Carl Pitruzzello, Class of 1986: Freshman year, algebra, I was struggling and I had **Mr. Boucher**, and he said come see me after school. I was a little hesitant at first but I went once, and twice, and by the time the fourth quarter came around I had an A in his class. Going from struggling my first few weeks in class to getting an A was, ‘I can do this,’ and my kids have heard me tell that story a million times. ‘I know. I know,’ they say. But it just stands out as one of those things – ‘I can do this’ – that so many times in the future, in high school, then college, and even to this day I think about. That I can do it. How do I break it down, spend extra time, get the help.





Liam Sheely, Class of 2022: I have formed relationships with so many of my teachers who have been influential in some way; it would take far too long to list all of them. But if I absolutely had to highlight just one in particular it would be **Mr. Passavant**, since he has been a part of Xavier for me starting freshman year. During his time as my crew coach, he constantly inspired me to push myself to improve. I decided to try out for Ultimate Frisbee largely because he told me he was going to start coaching. Coach P. helped me discover a love of a sport I'd never tried before. In addition, the wisdom he shared from his experience with his own college decision helped me keep an objective perspective and avoid being swayed solely by the prestige of an Ivy League when choosing between Dartmouth and Boston College. It was his advice that impressed upon me the importance of choosing the school where I'll be happiest [Sheely chose BC].

I'd say I'm more eager to branch out and experience new things than I was in my freshman year. If I had not gone to Xavier, I certainly would not have had access to crew or Ultimate Frisbee. I probably would not have joined chorus or auditioned for theater, both of which left me with some of my favorite memories over the last four years. Being at Xavier not only gave me the chance to have these new experiences, but more importantly the supportive community gave me a confidence to pursue them that I may not have had otherwise. And now that I'm going off to college, I'm ready to continue exploring!



Brett Bucheri, Class of 2007, on Xavier Wrestling Coach Mike Cunningham: "Growing up with a single mother, he was a great role model to me. He taught me what it took to be a man and he showed me through his actions and the way he carried himself on the mat and off the mat what it means to be a good human being."

Dot Wocl, whose son [Nick Wocl '77] and two grandsons [Sean Lowe '13, Connor Dwyer '19] graduated from Xavier: Sean's father passed when Sean was quite young, and he had quite a bit of difficulty with that. ... **Mr. Cerreta** ... is my angel, I will tell you. He kept his fingers around Sean's collar, and now my grandson is married and has two children and is going to college through the Army. We just had to hold on to him at the right time, and Xavier was it. And my youngest grandson, Connor Dwyer, he just absolutely can't talk enough about Xavier, and my son ... my son says that it's the best four years he's had. I love it when they're talking about it and you can see it in their faces and hear it in their voice; then you know as a mom and dad we really did something good."



Joe Perrelli, Class of 2011: The atmosphere at Xavier pushed me out of my comfort zone, which is key for growth. All of the fun, exciting, challenging, and defining moments I have had so far seem to start with being uncomfortable. I never thought I would be a peer minister, but after XLI that happened too! The importance of faith, relationships, how you carry yourself, the words you speak, and so much more were developed at Randolph Road. Senior year was definitely when things started to click (just ask **Mr. Cerreta** how many days I spent in detention compared to senior year)."



Ethan Salsbury, Class of 2019, in an email to Business teacher Mr. Michael Kohs: "I hope this email reaches you well. I was just scrolling through the staff directory to see who is still working at Xavier and came across the send email button under your name. I am sitting next to Dan McCormack '19 in Individual Tax class right now thinking back to the times in class our senior year. I am in my last year of college now at Bryant University and am working part time for Whittlesey Advising, an accounting firm in Hartford, and I have already signed a full time offer for May of 2023. I would love to grab lunch sometime, you are one of the reasons I ended up in accounting today."





Compliments To The Chefs!

New England Runs On Dunkin', Now Xavier Runs On Lino's!!

Shortly after 7 a.m. on a random Thursday morning in October, the text came in with that familiar "bing."

"Hello Matthew. I just want to let you know I'm making eggplant today - not for students but for faculty and our kitchen staff. It'll be ready for noon. We can make it into a sub or just a slice either way. I know you like eggplant."

At the start of the 2022-2023 school year, Lino and Kim Aparo left one beloved institution, and started what we have to believe is a new one: Lino's Café at Xavier High School.

After running the incredibly popular Lino's Italian Market in Durham, the Aparos made the decision to sell the business and take over the catering and food duties for the school, where two of their sons had already graduated and another one is currently a student.

If we call it a game-changer for the students and faculty, we're probably underselling the significance of the move.

From the moment the pair and their always attentive and kind staff arrived on Randolph Road, high school lunches were changed forever (we're being serious).

A quick review of a random daily lunch menu at the time of this writing looked like this ...

Monday: Cheese and Chicken Quesadilla

Tuesday: Lino's Chicken Rice Bowls

Wednesday: Breaded Tangy Golden Chicken Sandwich with bacon and cheddar cheese

Thursday: Buffalo and Garlic Parm Wings

Friday: Pulled Pork Mac and Cheese Sandwich



And that's just the regular menu on a random week.

Throughout the school year, Lino and Kim do their best to make sure the menu is constantly changing and being updated, and they're always making special additions for holidays.

Not to mention every week the Aparos provide a Pasta Station, which includes everything from ziti with meatballs to penne with vodka sauce.

The only staple that usually carries over from week-to-week is the Chicken Rice Bowl, which you smell every Tuesday morning as Lino starts to grill up the chicken with a special little kick.

At Falcon Blast last August, the students got their first taste of the new fare. And it is safe to say, it was a hit from the beginning. But the Café has continued to hit all the right notes. Before Thanksgiving, the couple sold pies to faculty and staff (we tried the Pistachio Cream and Ricotta Pie). Then at Christmas, there were more specialty orders. And as we get closer to the summer, Lino and Kim promise more, like burger orders.

Still as great as the food has been, and our waistlines can prove it, that's not the main reason we are so grateful for the Aparo family. As the message at the start of the story proves, Lino and Kim are a cut above. Together, they represent the five values that are written in bold letters on five banners in the Dining Hall.

Simplicity, Humility, Compassion, Zeal, and Trust.

The Aparos embrace those traits completely. And not a day goes by, where their generosity and kindness is not on display. It may be the first school year with them in the building, but the way they have blended into the daily fold of Xavier life feels like they've been with us forever. And we're not just saying that because they make the best eggplant grinders next to our mom's.

We're saying it because they are real and genuine. And they're Xavier.

If you needed more proof, we've got the numbers to prove it, too.

When we posted on Facebook about Lino's Café opening at Xavier, the post became our biggest post in the history of the account. As of the magazine's printing, the post has been on 35,899 screens and reached 32,480 people.

Here are some of the best comments from that short story posted on August 31, 2022 ...

- **Swan Swanson III:** "I think that Xavier is going to have to enlarge their parking."
- **Maria Lane:** "Can't get better than Lino's, not only is their cooking the best they are truly a wonderful family. Lino goes above and beyond."
- **Joseph Monarca:** "Good luck to Lino and Kim! It's like XHS won the lottery on this one."
- **John Rajpolt:** "Can alumni come by and get take out??? Congratulations and good luck!"
- **Adam Horelik:** "That's awesome! Wish every high school had this type of cafeteria set-up."
- **Jane Saville:** "Wow! Can we come back to school? These boys will not want to go home for supper! Congrats and good job!"
- **Lois Baxter Musso:** "Wow, that's really stepping up their game!"
- **Alex Goldenberg:** "Congratulations! What about Mercy? My daughter is jealous..."

Yum!



From Mayonnaise In Coffee To SEC Football, Will Levis '18 Has Conquered Everything In Front Of Him And He Is Not Done Yet

A Will To Succeed

Forget all the projections, mock drafts, and clips of Mel Kiper, Jr. raving about his football play.

For a brief moment last year, Will Levis '18 – formerly QB 1 at the University of Kentucky – was in the spotlight for a decision he made not on the football field, but at the annual SEC Football Media Day.

In a video clip, that has more than 3.6 million views on Twitter, Levis squeezes not one, not two, not three, but four drops of Hellman Mayonnaise into his coffee and then goes in for a drink.

Whether you think the choice is appetizing or appalling, you cannot help but have a reaction. And many did. For a few weeks, the decision to add this unique “sweetener” to his Morning Joe was all anyone wanted to talk about or see when it came to Will Levis, the starting quarterback of Kentucky.

Soon enough though, the focus and the spotlight, as it always does, returned to the field and everything Levis can do for his team.

In his second season in Louisville, Levis once again sparked the attention of the Big Blue nation and beyond, passing for 2,406 yards and 19 touchdowns to lead the Wildcats to a 7-4 record. With the biggest lights on him, Levis not only performed – he confirmed what Kiper has been saying for some time: Levis is a future NFL quarterback.

As we prepared for Levis to go in this year’s draft (stay tuned for the big story in next year’s Xavier Magazine on where Levis was drafted and what is next), we figured it was about time to catch you up with what the former Xavier Falcons quarterback has been doing these last few years.

“From viral video clips to gutsy performances on the gridiron, it has been an entertaining two years following the exploits of Levis and his quest to be the first Xavier Football quarterback selected in the NFL Draft in school history. And if his time at Kentucky is any indication, that spotlight is not going anywhere.”

Fall 2022

Levis gets back to doing what he does best, playing the game of football with an intensity Xavier fans can remember well (anyone recall that North Haven game his senior Year?). The Wildcats open the season with four straight wins, where Levis passes for 1,185 yards and 10 touchdowns. Kentucky loses two of the next three to Ole Miss and Tennessee, but Levis has shown everyone watching that he is ready to be one of the top picks in the NFL draft. He plays his final game for the Big Blue on Nov. 26. It is a 26-13 victory of rival Louisville. He passes for two touchdowns.

Winter 2023

With his college football days behind him, Levis, who threw for a combined 5,232 yards and 43 touchdowns in two seasons, rockets up the draft boards. Scouts and analysts praise his ‘build, toughness, arm strength and mentality.’ Through the winter months, he is commonly compared to current NFL quarterbacks like Josh Allen of the Buffalo Bills and Matt Stafford of the Los Angeles Rams. In January, Levis lands at No. 1 on Mel Kiper’s draft big board, placing him above Heisman Trophy winner Bryce Young from Alabama. Kiper goes on ESPN and argues with Stephen A. Smith on First Take saying: “In terms of the number one quarterback for me, the guy that looks the part and played like a big timer when he got some help was Will Levis from Kentucky.” He later says: “I think the skill set is there, the attitude is there, the want to is there for Will Levis to be a franchise quarterback.”

From viral video clips to gutsy performances on the gridiron, it has been an entertaining two years following the exploits of Levis and his quest to be the first Xavier Football quarterback selected in the NFL Draft in school history. And if his time at Kentucky is any indication, that spotlight is not going anywhere.

Here is a sampling of the last 24 months for the future NFL quarterback...

Spring 2021

After graduating with a Bachelor’s Degree in finance from Penn State, Levis transfers to the University of Kentucky, where he completed his eligibility.

August 2021

Levis takes a bite out of a banana and it is the bite heard round the internet. The TikTok clip, which shows Levis eating the banana, peel included, goes viral automatically. He captions the clip by saying: “I don’t fear the brown spots on bananas. They fear me. #MenancetoSociety. A few weeks later, he takes a bite out of the University of Louisiana Monroe defense, passing for 367 and four touchdowns in his first game in the Kentucky Blue. He goes on to start all 13 games for the Wildcats that first season.

Jan 1, 2022

Levis caps off his first season with Kentucky by leading them to a 20-17 victory over Iowa to help the Wildcats end the season 10-3 for the best record in in years. During the postgame celebration, he takes a hearty bite out of an orange, reminding fans that he always gets the necessary fruit intake in his diet.

July 20, 2022

The king of the viral clip is back. Levis goes where few have gone before – he takes his coffee with a side of mayo. He opens the infamous coffee with mayo clip by saying: “Will Levis, quarterback at the University of Kentucky, and I have been known to put mayonnaise in my coffee sometimes.”



Photo by Jacob Noger | UK Athletics

NHRegister - Christian Abraham, Hearst Connecticut Media

Academic Achievements & School Leaders

NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

COMMENDED STUDENTS

Each year about 1.5 million students enter the National Merit Scholarship program by taking their PSAT in their junior year. Of those students, about 34,000 are recognized nationally as commended students for their exceptional academic promise. Although they will not continue in the 2023 competition for National Merit Scholarship awards, commended students placed among the top 50,000 students who entered the competition by taking the 2021 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying test.

Last year, Aidan Higgins '22, who is currently Yale, was named a finalist.

This school year, the list of commended students included 10 from the Class of 2023: Maximilian Diamond, Aedan Frazer, Tyler Keithan, Rithik Kurup, Samuel Matt, Sotirios Paul, Alex Ruimerman, Nicolas Russo, Henry Stearns and Matthew Whitaker.

ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS

These were awarded to those students who earned the highest grade point average (GPA) in their class in the 2021-2022 school year.

Class of 2023: Matthew Whitaker

Class of 2024: Kyle Levesque

Class of 2023: Charles Lechowicz, Joseph Lechowicz and Petros Paul

The **Brother Robert Sullivan Academic Scholarship** honors the memory of Br. Robert Sullivan, the first principal of Xavier High School and is awarded to the member of the Class of 2026 who scored in the 99th percentile and achieved the highest raw score on the entrance exam. The recipient this year is Patrick Manning.

CELESTINE AWARDS

Each year the **BROTHER CELESTINE MEDAL** is awarded to students who, upon the completion of the past academic year, have an overall final average of A with no final average grade less than an A- in their major subjects. This prestigious award, which a student can receive only once during his four years at Xavier, is the highest academic tribute that the school bestows. The award is named after Brother Celestine Killigrew who taught history and religion, coached the freshmen soccer team, and ran the bookstore at Xavier in the early 1960s. Brother Celestine died at the age of 25 as a result of injuries sustained in an automobile accident. The Brother Celestine Award was created to honor this beloved teacher's memory.



Peer Ministers

2022-2023 OFFICERS & PEER MINISTERS

STUDENT ACTIVITIES COUNCIL

President: Aidan Driscoll

Vice President: Owen Lelko

Secretary: Brendan Peary

Treasurer: Ryan Chrostowski

Senior Class President/Vice President:

Luke Anderson/Patrick Mitchell

Junior Class President/Vice President:

Nico LaRosa/Chris Seymour

Sophomore Class President/Vice President:

Bruno Massaro/Lucien Delaney

NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY

President: Ryan Chrostowski

First Vice President: Owen Lelko

Second Vice President: Matthew Whitaker

Secretary: Samir Santos

Treasurer: Justin Caulfield

Chapter Historians: Dom Cusano; Henry Stearns; Brendan Peary

PEER MINISTRY TEAM

Luke Anderson; Zach Bulkovitch; Justin Caulfield; Ryan Chrostowski; Kai Craft; Dom Cusano; Aidan Driscoll; Dan Drumski; Sam Enes; Will Epright; Jack Flynn; Jack Fry; Daniel Gargano; Jacob Greco; John Kozdroy; Owen Lelko; Dom Liquori; Lucas Lomuntad; Sam Matt; Nick Miano; Patrick Mitchell; Andre Montoya; Peter O'Brien; Wesley Ong; Soti Paul; Brendan Peary; Max Quan; Vincent Salamone; RJ Smith; Ben Snow; Owen Sotero; Henry Stearns



THE RECIPIENTS OF THE 2021-2022 BROTHER CELESTINE AWARD ARE:

Class of 2023: Jilin Feng, Ethan Gernhardt, David Houle, Christian Motto, Easton Patz

Class of 2024: Noah Barnhart, Thomas Collison, Simon Cordes, Benjamin Cozean, Peter DeRita, Samuel Forte, Ryan Hassett, Louis McRiley, Zachary Mendelson

Class of 2025: Jake Anastasiades, Elijah Barnhart, Jakob Beck, Aanay Chandra, Benjamin DiAngelo, Maxwell Enes, Ronan Finnegan, Noah Garcia, Samuel Jeamel, Owen Jones, Charles Lechowicz, Joseph Lechowicz, Jake Marino, Mateo Michalewski, Evan O'Connor, Aidan Patton, Petros Paul, Gavin Peterson, Ryan Quinn, Joshua Raj, Jeffrey Savini, Ian Schmeelk, Aiden Sesta, Jaycek Simko, Oliver Snow, Maxwell Zajac

AP SCHOLARS, CLASS OF 2023

Each year the college board recognizes students who perform exceptionally well on multiple college-level Advanced Placement exams. The following students have been recognized by college board for their outstanding performance through the 2021-2022 school year:

AP SCHOLARS

Graded to student who receive scores of 3 or higher on three or more AP exams:

Zachary Bulkovitch, Maximilian Diamond, Aedan Frazer, Wesley Ong, Wyatt Pestka, Zachary Potter, Nicolas Russo, Allen Vidallon

AP SCHOLARS WITH HONOR

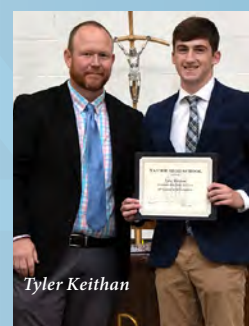
Granted to students who receive an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams.

Chase Costello, Owen Lelko, Vincent Salamone, Henry Stearns

AP SCHOLARS WITH DISTINCTION

Granted to students who receive an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams.

Ryan Chrostowski, Tyler Keithan, Sotirios Paul, Robert Quan, Matthew Whitaker



Tyler Keithan

In Service To Others

Service continues to be one of the greatest components of a Xavier High School education. See the need, fill the need.

The first Friday of every month is known as “Be A Man, Bring A Can” day. The monthly collection is for the Amazing Grace Food Pantry in Middletown. But every month there are more initiatives, most by groups, some through the impetus of one individual.

This is a sampling of that activity from 2021-2022:

450 books: Collected at Xavier in October for the NICU at Connecticut Children’s Hospital in Hartford through an effort organized by Aedan Frazer ’23. In December the hospital announced its first book cart in the NICU thanks to those donations.

\$4,600: Raised in December through an effort organized by the National Honor Society for St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, surpassing its goal of \$3,000 by \$1,600.

\$3,700: Raised by the Classic Car Club at the annual EJK Car Show for the Eric J. Kalber Scholarship Fund. Kalber ’04 died in a car accident in 2005. About 90 cars and trucks of all vintages were at the show.

Thousands of sandwiches: Made for the St. Vincent de Paul Soup Kitchen during four Sophomore Saturdays, a faculty & staff retreat, and by the Pro-Life Club.

2,938 food items: Brought in during a March Madness campaign for the Amazing Grace Food Pantry in Middletown.

75 blankets: The money from a Xavier apparel day, which raised about \$2,000, was used to buy material. Then Mercy and Xavier National Honor Society officers made the blankets for St. Vincent de Paul.

Hundreds of pairs of socks: Brought in during a drive associated with Three Kings Days as socks are one of the greatest needs of shelters during the winter months.

2,450 toiletries: In March the Outreach Program at St. Sebastian Church in Middletown reached out to Xavier and the community responded. From 732 toothbrushes to 160 razors, from 286 tissues/wipes to 201 hand soaps, boxes filled up. The freshman class brought in more than 1,000 items.

\$1,855: During Catholic Schools Week an apparel day brought in nearly \$2,000 for St. John Paul II Catholic School in Middletown.

400 Keurig cups for coffee, 30 gifts cards to Walmart for \$10 each, \$200 in cash, 8 packs of bottled water: Delivered to the Veterans Home and Hospital in Rocky Hill by Mitchell Wollen ’22, now a freshman at West Point. Previously he had donated \$500 to the Navy Seals. He raised the money by selling \$5 firewood bundles.

\$2,477.78: Raised for Xavier’s annual Pink Baseball Game in May. That included two apparel days, where nearly \$1,600 came in, to fight cancer.

SERVING HOPE

Every Year, Xavier Delivers Food Items To The Amazing Grace Food Pantry. But What Happens With The Items And What Happens At The Amazing Grace Food Pantry? We Spent A Day Learning More ...

Some years as much as 10,000 food items are collected at Xavier in its monthly drive for the Amazing Grace Food Pantry in Middletown.

Bringing in canned goods and boxed items on the first Friday of the month has almost become second nature, routine if you will. They go into the bins, and many might not think about it again until the next month.

But there is nothing routine about the impact. About 800 families in Middletown use the Food Pantry regularly.

On this day as we walk through the food pantry, people are picking out what they need with a volunteer by their side, guiding them in what is in effect a mini-market. In the backroom, volunteers are unpacking and organizing.

“Without the support from the community we would not be able to do any of this,” said Peter Keast, the development and marketing director for St. Vincent de Paul, whose outreach programs includes the food pantry which operates with two paid staff and 40 volunteers.

The transitory nature of feeding those in need is that over time people come and go. Some eventually will no longer need the pantry, but they will be replaced in equal numbers by those who do.

“Half the people we serve have mental illness or a disability, or their social security checks, which is their sole income, does not provide enough,” Keast said.

Earlier, we had stopped at St. Vincent de Paul as lunch was ending. A typical day might be serving 70 for breakfast, 120 for the main meal at lunch, and then providing some brown bags and takeout as needed. What did not seem typical was a salad bar.

But times have changed, and so has the philosophy of feeding those in need.

“Instead of surviving foods, we are focusing on thriving foods,” Keast said.

That applied to both the meals and the food pantry, thus the salad bar with fresh vegetables and strips of chicken. And the fresh fruit and vegetables and gluten free products on the shelves of the food pantry.

“We are trying to get people to understand that when you provide food to people, if the food is things that are extremely rich in calories and sugar and salt and fat, we are not making their lives better. It can all lead to health problems,” Keast said.

Beyond the dining area, in the kitchen at St. Vincent de Paul, we run into the chef. He was prepping four large trays of chicken breasts for the next day. He’s worked in many restaurants but now calls this Main Street establishment home.

“You’re working for half the pay,” Keast says with a smile.

“But there’s also half the aggravation,” the chef said.

And seemingly twice the amount of fulfillment.

When COVID first started to change lives in 2020, a call came in to Keast. The woman was fearful that her elderly neighbor, who could not leave her house because of the pandemic, did not have enough food. Sure enough, supplies were low. That situation was taken care of but led to the thought: how many others might need groceries delivered? At that point the food pantry was delivering to 20-30 people; that number hit 280 as COVID became a way of life. Again, volunteers stepped up. Masked, gloved, socially distant, they packed boxes and delivered them. The City of Middletown would go to Stop & Shop early in the morning to obtain cardboard boxes because the organization was going through 400-600 a week.

The whole process proved to Keast: “We can meet the needs as they come up.”

The needs are always there. So, too, are the stories.

“I had a social worker call up and say a Venezuelan family is moving in with someone you know,” Keast said. “Two years ago you provided food for them.”

It was a woman and two children from Brooklyn; she was escaping a domestic violence situation and had a distant relative in Middletown.

“Long story short, with support from our organization and others in the community, she is now a para-professional in a public school and owns a home and is taking in a family. ... Fundamentally we only handle the food side of things, but we are relatively good at referring families to agencies that provide other kinds of support.”

In the 2021-2022 school year, Xavier collected thousands of food items, with 2,938 coming from the March Madness program in which homerooms compete against each other. Mr. Braychak’s junior homeroom collected 1,609. The student body also contributed 2,450 toiletries in 12 categories ranging from toothbrushes to deodorant in a drive that originated at St. Sebastian Church in Middletown to benefit St. Vincent de Paul. The Mercy and Xavier National Honor Society officers made about 75 blankets for St. Vincent de Paul.

“Sourcing the fabric, putting them together, working as a team, it was really touching,” Keast said.

Yet not surprising. Both schools have long been supporters.

Keast is familiar with Xavier beyond the school’s efforts on behalf St. Vincent de Paul. His son Peter is a 2000 graduate. MaryEllen Shuckerow, the executive director of the organization, is a former nun in the Sisters of Mercy order. The Sisters of Mercy helped start St. Vincent de Paul in 1980.

At times Xavier students have gone to St. Vincent de Paul to help serve a meal, or help out anyway they can. Once again, it comes back to a simple, but profound goal.

Service in action.

“*Instead of surviving foods, we are focusing on thriving foods.*”

~ PETER KEAST



The FALCONS' Nest

From 2021-2022, The Falcons Delivered One Of Their Best Collective Efforts In School History

Xavier wrestling coach Mike Cunningham will never forget the 2021-2022 school year. But he's not the only one.

After enduring canceled championships, empty gymnasiums and constant interruptions the previous two years, Xavier teams finally got the chance to make up for lost time. And they didn't let the moment slip by.

Led by one of the best wrestling seasons in state history, Xavier won four state championships in wrestling, indoor track and field and cross country to finish second in the state behind Darien, Greenwich and New Canaan, which had five state titles.

The four state titles tied Hall High School of West Hartford for the most boys championships won last year by any school.

"From the moment the school year started to our final team competition, our student athletes represented Xavier proudly in every competition," Xavier Athletic Director Dan DeConti '01 said. "Early on it became clear how determined all of our teams were to leave an impact on their programs and against their competition. As a school, we're so proud of the legacy they left behind."



Three weeks later, the wrestling team capped off one of the most dominant seasons in state history by winning the State Open title, its second in history and first since 2012. The win completed a sweep of the Class L championship and the SCC Championship for Cunningham's wrestlers. But it wasn't just that the team swept the championships, it was how they did it.



On top of the championships, the Falcons also reached the state semifinals in soccer and the quarterfinals in baseball with arguably their best seasons in years. Soccer, Cross Country, Wrestling and Indoor Track and Field all won SCC titles.

"Our teams want to compete against the best and want to be challenged, and it was obvious last year," DeConti said. "Whether it was in league competition, or at practice, not a day went by where our coaches and athletes weren't working hard to get better."

In the winter, all that worked paid off as wrestling and track and field brought home three titles.



Xavier scored 264 points to win the SCC title, breaking the conference record by 31 points. At the Class L championships, the Falcons piled up 318.5 points, breaking a state record set by Danbury (311.5, Class LL, 2015). In the State Open, Xavier had 204 points with Danbury well behind with 145 points. Jackson Heslin '25 (now at Green Farms Academy) and Thomas Lunt '22 each had a trifecta: winning SCC, Class L and State Open titles.



Cunningham is not one for much fanfare surrounding what he does in the sport. But recognition of the highest order came to him in May as he was surrounded by family, friends, co-workers, his wrestlers when he was inducted into the Connecticut Chapter of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame.

"It's about making a difference in kids' lives," Cunningham said. You're out there to



educate kids on being better people, making them accountable, being on time, all the little things to be successful and better people when they leave you."

Cunningham has coached Xavier since 2002 and during that time the team has won 10 SCC titles, four state championships at the Class level (2011, 2012, 2020, 2022) and two State Open titles (2012, 2022). Making it even more special: his father was there to see his son inducted. Jim Cunningham, the former longtime coach at Holy Cross in Waterbury, was inducted in 2010.

Here are some more of the headlines from the 2021-2022 school year.

FALL 2021

Cross Country: Led by one of the largest and most decorated classes in program history, the Falcons won a third straight Class L title and a sixth consecutive SCC championship. Four days after the state championship (21st Class title in history), the team finished second in State Open to Ridgefield. In the Class L championship Xavier had two runners in the top five and five runners in the top 17. Eamon Burke '22 led the way, finishing third in 16:10.

Soccer: Xavier and Cheshire went through two halves, two overtime periods, and two rounds of penalty kicks in the Class LL boys soccer semifinal before the Falcons (19-1-2) lost, a game shy of their first appearance in a CIAC boys soccer championship game since winning



their only state title in 1995. Four-year varsity player Brady Stevenson '22 was named to the All-New England team at the end of the year. **Football:** Xavier finished 6-4, its final win a 42-11 rout of Glastonbury in which Drew Kron '22 threw four touchdown passes and DJ Wright '22 scored twice on the ground. After being unable to play in 2021, it was the team's best finish since 2016.

WINTER 2022

Basketball: The team finished 12-10, at one point, winning five in a row. The Falcons lost in the first round of the Division I tournament to No. 14 Westhill.



Anchored by a senior-laden squad, the fastest 4x200-meter relay team in school history and senior leader Eamon Burke '22, who is running for Syracuse now, the track and field team got things started by winning the program's second class title in four years.

Looking Closer At A Historic 2021-2022 for Xavier Athletics



Hockey: The Falcons finished 14-8-1 after advancing to the Division I semifinals for the third time since 2018. The defeat to six-seeded Darien ended the Falcons' attempt to make the championship for the first time in program history. A few weeks earlier, Xavier played in its first SCC championship game, losing to Notre Dame-West Haven.

Indoor Track & Track Field: Xavier won the Class L indoor title, finishing with 86.5 points and easily outdistancing Hillhouse by more than 30 points. It was the program's 14th indoor track and field title. At the State Open, Eamon Burke '22 won the 1000 meters (2:33.67), finished fifth in the 3200 (9:31.55) and led the SMR (seniors Owen Pestka, Owen Miller, Chase Vitale and Burke to a championship in 3:39.78. The relay team of seniors Owen Pestka, Owen Miller, Eamon Conneely and Chase Vitale also ran 1:32.92 for a school record



at the Eastern States Championship.

Rifle: Xavier finished fourth in the state championships.

Swimming: Mitchell Wollen '22 won the 200-yard IM, set a school record in the 100 backstroke, and also was part of a school record in the 400 freestyle relay as Xavier finished fourth as a team in the CIAC Class L swimming championships. Noah San Vicente '22 had two second-place finishes and was part of that record-setting relay team, which also included Nikita Zuev '22 and Max Enes '25. Their time in the 400 was 3:13.07. At the State Open, Wollen was second in the 100 backstroke with a school record time of 50.52 and Noah San Vicente '22 finished in the top six in both the 200 free and 500 free.



SPRING 2022

Baseball: After one of the best regular seasons in team history, the Falcons entered the Class LL tournament as the top overall seed. The team eventually lost in the Class LL quarterfinals to Danbury and finished the year, 22-4. Drew Kron '22 (UConn) and Tyley Hartley '22 (Marist) each made the All-State team, chosen by the CHSCA. They were among five Xavier players on the All-SCC first or second team.



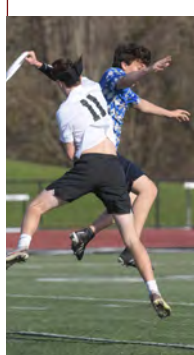
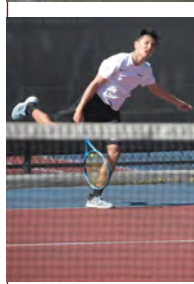
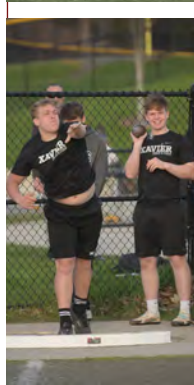
Golf: Led by John Thompson '23 and



John Carrozzella '22, the team ended the year playing some of its best golf to finish fourth in the Division I championships.

Lacrosse: Finished the season with a record 9-9 after losing to No. 1 Cheshire in the first round of the Class M tournament.

Outdoor Track & Field: The Falcons were led all season by one of the best distance runners in school history, Eamon Burke '22, who set the SCC championship meet record in the 1600, and was second in the 3200 at the State Open.



Tennis: Matt Fuffo made the Round of 16 in the boys invitational tournament.

Ultimate Frisbee: Xavier finished 16-9 with Eamon Conneely '22 and Simon Cordes '22 being named CTUL All-Stars.

Volleyball: After winning five matches in 2021, the 2022 team had a comeback season to remember, making it to the Class M semifinals and finishing with 16 wins. Half of the starting lineup (Rory McCormack '22, Joe O'Brien '22, and Peter O'Brien '23) made the All-SCC first team and the team was one of the most exciting stories of the school year with several players playing volleyball for the first time.

CAS-CIAC SCHOLAR ATHLETES

Colin Loria '22 and Sam Rector '22, were recipients of the CAS-CIAC Scholar Athlete Award. Loria is attending Yale, and Rector is at Boston College. In the Class M quarterfinals, the Falcons rallied to pull off a stunning victory over fifth-seeded Cheshire.

COLLEGE SIGNINGS

More than 20 Xavier student-athletes from the Class of 2022 signed to play sports in college.

DIVISION I

Baseball: Drew Kron, UConn; Tyley Hartley, Marist

Cross country/ track & field: Eamon Burke, Syracuse; Josh Lesniak, University of New Hampshire; Brody Santagata, Siena College

Soccer: Jack Polke, Bryant University; Parker Vasic, Northern Kentucky

Division II, III

Baseball: Jacob Kucharski: University of Saint Joseph; Kyle Noska: Castleton University

Football: Owen Miller: Salve Regina University; Alec Pawlowicz: Bates College; DJ Wright: Union College

Soccer: Ryan Gerry: Endicott College; Ollie Klimas: Emmanuel College; John Milardo: Nichols College; Brady Stevenson: Nichols College

Lacrosse: Nathan Pulvirenti: Nichols College; Luke Solomon: Christopher Newport University

Swimming: William Schneider: Norwich University; Nikita Zuev: WPI

Tennis: Chris Jacy: Assumption University
Wrestling: Thomas Lunt: John Carroll University



RETIRED JERSEYS OF BAGWELL, JASKOT IN GYM

A recent addition to the Xavier high school gymnasium are the retired jerseys of Baseball Hall of Famer Jeff Bagwell (9), and Tony Jaskot (28). Jaskot carries about every label imaginable: student, athlete, teacher, coach, and athletic director.

SCC PLAYERS AND COACHES OF THE YEAR

It was another strong year for Xavier athletes and coaches in the SCC. Once again, several Xavier leaders were recognized. Here's the list:

RUNNER/PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Cross Country: Eamon Burke '22
Hockey (Div. I): Dylan Reynolds '22
Soccer: Brady Stevenson '22

COACHES OF THE YEAR

Hockey (Div. I): Karl Sundquist
Indoor Track & Field: Chris Stonier
Swimming (Div. I): Bill Evison
Volleyball: Stefanie Reay
Wrestling: Mike Cunningham



The Rev. David Choquette '90 was the celebrant of the 2022 Baccalaureate Mass on Friday evening, May 20, 2022.



At the end of night, after the presentation of many awards, the soon-to-be graduates and any alumni in the crowd, are asked to sing the Alma Mater, a part of which is:

“Alma Mater, we your sons, pledge our loyalty. For your fond concern for us thankful we shall be. Values of what's good and true, beautiful and right, These

you taught us faithfully, therein is your might ...”

The Class of 2022 FOREVER FALCONS

After Four Unpredictable Years, The Class Of 2022 Graduated Last May As One Of The Most Decorated Classes In School History

Before they had even walked through the doors at Xavier High School for Day 1, the members of the Class of 2022 were generating excitement.

Not only was the class - 197 strong on the first day of freshman year - one of the biggest in years, it was filled with personality and character that was obvious from the start. And they carried with them lofty goals and expectations.

To their soon-to-be-teachers and coaches, it was not a matter of what they would do, but rather how they would they do it.

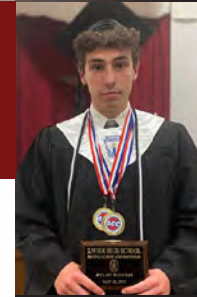
Four years later, as it prepared to go on its own way on a warm Memorial Day weekend in May, the class had not just fulfilled that early promise - it was leaving Xavier behind with its own unique legacy.

Whether it was in the classroom, where they earned some of the highest distinctions in recent memory, or in the athletic arena, where they walked away with four state championships, the class had flourished academically, athletically, socially, and spiritually. And they had done it with so many potential interruptions looming over their heads for nearly two years. But how?

Quite simply, they had endured - *together*.

After four years, of COVID-disrupted life, this group of young men, some heading to places like Harvard and West Point, had taught us an important Xaverian lesson that feels as significant today as it did when the first Xavier class walked across the stage 56 years ago.

No obstacle is too big, no disappointment too overwhelming, no challenge too daunting when you're with people you can trust.



One of the alums in the crowd was Jeffrey Misenti, Class of 1986. His son Dylan would graduate the next day. And on this night Dylan earned a special honor, the Principal's Academic Achievement Award.

This award is given annually to a graduating senior in the College Prep or Accelerated programs who has embraced the full Xavier experience, consistently worked to his potential in and out of the classroom, steadily improved his GPA over four years, and exemplified what the school demands of each of student - to simply do his best day in and day out.

Misenti earned his way into five different honor societies, was an XLI participant and served as a valued Big Falcon for the freshmen. He volunteered his time at his local church delivering food to those in need and serving as a summer camp counselor. Misenti also was captain of the soccer team that won the SCC Championship and went to the Class L state semifinals in the fall of 2021. Dylan is attending Bryant University.





LEGACY MEDALS

Then & Now

Xavier presented a special award to the 19 alumni fathers, grandfathers, and guardians of graduating seniors in the Class of 2022. The younger graduate received a ribbon on which hangs a medal of the Xavier seal. He then placed the medal on the shoulders of the older graduate. Engraved on the back of the medal are the names of both grads as well as their years of graduation.

Mr. Thomas Belzek, Class of 1987, and his son **Ethan**, Class of 2022.

Mr. Matthew Collins, Class of 1991, and his son **Simon**, Class of 2022.

Mr. Aaron Egidio, Class of 1987, and his son **Kyle**, Class of 2022.

Mr. Brandon Hinckley, Class of 1998, and his son **Ronan**, Class of 2022.

Mr. Gregg Lallier, Class of 1990, and his son **Joseph**, Class of 2022.

Mr. Joseph Lane Sr., Class of 1995, and his son **Joseph Jr.**, Class of 2022.

Mr. Brendon Levesque, Class of 1989, and his son **Jacob**, Class of 2022.

Mr. David Lowry, Class of 1982, and his son **Nathaniel**, Class of 2022.

Mr. John Milardo, Class of 1987, and his son **John**, Class of 2022.

Mr. Jeffrey Misenti, Class of 1986, and his son **Dylan**, Class of 2022.

Mr. Carl Pitruzzello, Class of 1986, and his sons **Benjamin** and **Michael**, Class of 2022.

Mr. Manuel Quintana, Class of 1984, and his son **Andrew**, Class of 2022.

Mr. Thomas Hutton, Class of 1983, who is the guardian of his nephew **Gabriel Rivera**, Class of 2022.

Mr. John Rumberger, Class of 1989, and his son **Patrick**, Class of 2022.

Mr. Brian Selfors, Class of 1983, and his son **Conor**, Class of 2022.

Lt. Col. Stephen Simko, Class of 1991, and his son **Lukas**, Class of 2022.

Mr. Hans Fjellman, Class of 1967, and his grandson, **Matthew Stevens**, Class of 2022.

Mr. Drew Stevenson, Class of 1983, and his son **Brady**, Class of 2022.

Mr. James Truscinski, Class of 1988, and his son **Keegan**, Class of 2022.

COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES

Xavier graduated 182 students on Saturday, May 21, at its 56th commencement exercises with the Most Reverend Michael R. Cote, Bishop of The Diocese of Norwich, among those addressing the students. He challenged the graduates to go out and do good in this world, during these unsettling times as the war in Ukraine continued to rage.

Headmaster Dave Eustis noted that 36 grads would be attending Catholic schools; 25 were headed to state's flagship university, UConn; one to the U.S. Military Academy and one to the U.S. Air Force Academy; and two each to Yale and Harvard.

"And I am proud to say that the Class of 2022 has earned \$2.2 million in scholarships next year and \$8.5 million over the next four years," Eustis said.

He then urged the graduates "to take what you have learned and use the five Xaverian values to do your part to settle our world."

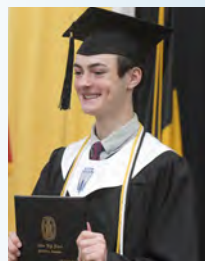
This year Xavier surpassed the 10,000 mark in alumni. The 2022 graduating class brought that number to 9,893.

It was also the first time Xavier had held the Commencement Ceremony inside since 2019.

The major awards of the day:

VALEDICTORIAN:

Aidan Higgins of Rockfall, who went to Harvard to major in English Literature. Aidan had a 4.32 GPA, was editor of the school newspaper and founded Xavier's chapter of the Surfrider Club.



SALUTATORIAN:

Matthew O'Connor of Cromwell, who went to UConn as the recipient of the STEM Presidential Scholarship to study Actuarial Science. He was a National Merit Commended Student among many other academic honors, and captain of the robotic teams.



LOYALTY AND SERVICE AWARD:

Mitchell Wollen of Wallingford, who earned an appointment at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Among his many service initiatives, Wollen and his family raised \$15,000 for charity during the pandemic by making and selling "thank you" signs that recognized essential workers. He also holds school records in the 100 backstroke, the 200 medley relay, and the 400 free relay for the swim team.



FALCON ACHIEVEMENT AWARD:

Drew Kron of Hebron, who by the end of his sophomore year had decided to attend UConn as a Division I scholarship baseball player. Kron had a GPA approaching 4.00, was an integral part of the Student Activities Council, and an outstanding quarterback in football and center fielder in baseball, two sports in which he was a captain.



SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Brother Thomas Ryan, C.F.X., was honored for his 25 years at Xavier. Whether it was teaching an English class or a Civics course, he kept his students engaged. "While your lessons on diagramming sentences and Supreme Court cases will remain ingrained in your students for years to come," Principal Brendan Donohue said, "it is your lessons to all of us on how to live life for others that will stay with us long after the classroom lessons have faded. Thank you, Brother Ryan for your love, your devotion, your friendship, and your example of how to Be a Man, a Man like Christ."

Business Manager **Dan Cizauskas** was honored for his 25 years at Xavier. Before coming to Xavier, Mr. Cizauskas served as a Petty Officer on the aircraft carrier USS John F. Kennedy. He oversaw a squadron of A-6 Intruders during Operation Desert Storm which led to a letter of commendation.



A Special Thank You To All Our Donors

We Proudly Present Our Honor Roll of Major Donors

The list reflects donations of \$5,000 or more made from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022

Saint Francis Xavier Founders Society

Gifts of \$25,000 and up

2021 Mercy/Xavier Walk-A-Thon
Anonymous Donor
Benevity Community Impact Fund
Cristina and Kevin DiGenova '03
Falcon Giving Day
Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
Jenn and Samuel Foisie '09
Jeanmarie and Michael Foisie
Mary and George Keithan, Jr. '81
Tricia and Neil Mitchell '93
Raytheon Company Matching Gifts for Education Program
Xavier Alumni Golf Classic 2021
Xavier Home & School Association

Saint Francis Xavier Leaders Society

Gifts of \$15,000 to \$24,999

Douglas Bowen
Estate of Michael Golia*
Debbie and Jack Gastler '74
Sandra A. Piontek
The Ray H. and Pauline Sullivan Foundation
*Deceased

Saint Francis Xavier Associates Society

Gifts of \$10,000 to \$14,999

American Endowment Foundation
J. Edward Brymer & Gerri Roberts
Community Foundation of Sarasota County
Consulting Engineering Services, Inc.
Todd Darling '85
Del Favero Family Fund
Patricia and John Del Favero
Patricia and Maurice Dinneen
Mary Ellen and Robert Guere '81
Independent Charitable Giving Fund
Donna and Peter Mondani Sr '75
Eluned and Edward Russell Charitable Foundation
Patricia and Lawrence Smith

Saint Francis Xavier Stewards Society

Gifts of \$5,000 to \$9,999

Colter Abely Achievement Fund
Chaleen and Brian Abely
Always Best Care of Greater Bristol
Monica and Geoffrey Astle '02
Katherine M. Fagerburg and Vernon G. Baker
Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Inc.
Buckley, Wynne & Parese
Patricia and John Buckley, Jr.
Community Foundation of Middlesex County, Inc.
John Custy Jr. '70
John Custy Fund
Brenda and Richard Downey
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Feitel
GoFast Solutions LLC
Raquel Rivera and Thomas Hutton '83
Kohs Basketball Tournament
Liberty Limousine Service
Patty and Lawrence McHugh
MWH Associates LLC
Jody and Michael Picard '83
Jamie and David Prinz
Elizabeth and Richard Saks '83
Christina and Vincent Scileppi
Emily and Christopher Smith '76
Joanne and David Tellerico

To see the complete list of donors to Xavier for the 2020-2021 fiscal year, go to www.xavierhighschool.org and click on Alumni & Giving, then Honor Roll of Donors.



2021-22 Annual Report

School Income

Tuition & Fees:	\$9,984,158
Dividends & Interest:	\$17,867
Diocesan Subsidy:	\$60,000
Bookstore (net):	\$27,555
Other Sources:	\$95,669
Advancement Activities:	\$648,442
Total Income	10,833,691

School Expenses

Instruction & Student Activities:	\$7,014,363
General Administration:	\$1,001,429
Plant Operations & Maintenance:	\$820,014
Faculty & Staff Benefits:	\$1,327,405
Construction Debt Service:	\$474,895
Total Expenses	\$10,638,106

Minus Restricted Endowment Contributions: ... -\$240,392
Transfer From Endowment For Scholarships:..... \$152,400
Unrestricted Net Surplus **\$107,784**

HELPING HANDS

\$1,402,771 Financial Aid Awarded In 2021-2022
\$424,166 Scholarship Dollars Awarded in 2021-2022
\$11,405,276 Endowment Value As Of June 30, 2022
\$4,855 Average Financial Aid Award In 2021-2022

“ WHY DO WE GIVE? ”

Everett Rutan '70: “Why contribute to Xavier? There are opportunities at Xavier that students will not get anywhere else. It is a great school, it is a great organization, and you just meet a lot of people that make a difference in your life. I encourage you to be part of it.”

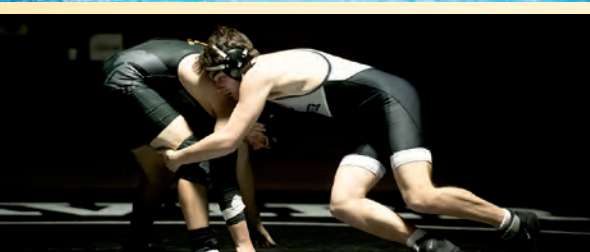
BILL NADEAU '94: “No. 1, my character was developed at this institution. No. 2, academics. The academic rigor allowed me to live and chose the life I have today. No. 3, athletics. I unlocked opportunities for friendships that I still carry with me today. Think about the why and why giving back to this institution is important to you.”

Ellen Ciampi P '17: “There are many reasons to give to Xavier. Our family gives to Xavier due to sheer gratitude for the excellent Xavier education that our family has received, and to make this education accessible for future Falcons.”

David Vance P '92 & '94: “My sons and I realized that many would love to attend Xavier but do not have the financial resources so we felt called to establish an endowed scholarship to assist in others in their own journey to ‘Be A Man.’”

WAYS TO GIVE:

Your support changes lives. There is no better way to put it. After nearly 60 years and generations of leaders, Xavier continues to do what it has done since the doors of the building first opened way back in 1963. Every single day, our young men are challenged to discover the best version of themselves and prepare for the future. This could not happen without the generosity of so many. As you have read already in this Xavier Magazine, the lessons and mentorship provide here last a lifetime. We hope you enjoy the stories and we hope you know that we're so thankful for your place in this community. We remain forever grateful for everything you do to keep Xavier a place that makes a difference. To support Xavier and the current student body, please go to our website (www.xavierhighschool.org) and click on the “Give” button under “Find It Fast” in the upper right-hand corner or the “Give Now” button.



ALUMNI Briefs



RICK MURRAY '85, a three-time .400 hitter in high school who played college baseball and **DAVE PIERSON '68**, who played soccer and baseball in high school before making his mark as an umpire highlighted the Xavier alums that made the Middletown Hall of Fame in 2022. Members of the 1968 American Legion Post 75 baseball team also entered the Hall. Players with Xavier ties on that Post 75 team included Joe Jaskot '68, who won six games as a top pitcher; former Director of Guidance Rich Magner '69, who hit .359; and Scott Cichon '70, winning pitcher in the state title game who pitched in the Mets' farm system; Mike McMahon '68, P.J. Daniels '69, Rich Riordan '69, and Joe McCabe '69.

DEREK PUORRO '91, was promoted to Lieutenant in the Middletown Police Department.



NEIL MITCHELL '93 was part of the team from Raytheon Technologies that rang the closing bell on Wall Street in April 2022. He is the Chief Financial Officer and an Executive Vice President at Raytheon.

TIMOTHY O'BRIEN '97, graduated from the Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Residency at UCONN School of Medicine.



DAVID APPLGATE '98 was selected as a Claes Nobel Educator of Distinction by the National Society of High School Scholars in 2022. The award honors educators that have made an impact and remain dedicated to making a difference in their profession. Applegate was nominated by Vincent Salamone '23 for the award for being a role

model, a source of inspiration and a leader to Xavier students.

MICHAEL NICHOLS '01, has taken the position of Downtown Boston Business Improvement District after a successful five-year stint as Executive Director of Boston's Esplanade Association.



JOE WITKOWSKI '06, the frontman for Joey Wit & The Definition, was busy, touring in England and the U.S this past year.

ZACHARY FLYNN '07, graduated Magna Cum Laude from Fordham University with his master's Degree in Law, LCSW last May.

LIAM LYNCH '12, was sworn in as a Newington Police Officer.

CONNOR MILONE '14 accepted an anesthesia residency at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in New Hampshire, which began in 2022.



TIMOTHY BROUGH '15, who was a 2020 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, graduated from the Naval Nuclear Power School in Charleston, S.C. He was assigned as a Naval Officer to serve on the Nuclear Ballistic Submarine USS Maine out of Bremerton, Wash. Brough also earned his Wilderness EMT and Wilderness First Responder Certification from the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) in Lander, Wy. Before being assigned to Washington this past spring, Brough had spent his previous two summers mountaineering and climbing Mt. Denali in Alaska.

ALEXANDER BATES '18 was part of a top 10 finish in the Marketing Communications Competitive Team event for Stonehill College at the International Career Development Conference (ICDC) in Baltimore in April 2022. Sixteen Stonehill students from the Meehan School of Business competed against over 100 schools in events designed to prepare them to become leaders and entrepreneurs in marketing, accounting, finance, hospitality and management.

GAVIN O'CONNELL '18 graduated in May 2022 Magna Cum Laude from the University of Rhode Island with a double major in International Relations and French. Gavin was also recognized before graduation with an Academic Excellence Award, which is presented each year

to fewer than 80 graduating seniors who have proven to be exceptional students.

A.J. KLECZKOWSKI '18, recently started a financial planning practice in West Hartford with Northwestern Mutual. He graduated from Salve Regina University last May, where he played baseball. Andrew was a sports statistician there, and was a member of the Enactus Club. He participated in two major projects with Enactus. One was a curriculum and school supplies building project for African schools. The other was a Vietnam Veterans market and fundraising Memorial Wall funded through marketing and social media outreach. The club raised 1.3 million dollars, and broke ground on a memorial wall in 2020.

BRENDAN DONOHUE JR. '19 was part of the University of Notre Dame Gaelic football team that won the title in the National Collegiate Gaelic Athletic Association Hurling and Football Nationals in Orlando, Fla. He is the son of Xavier Principal Brendan Donohue. Donohue Jr. is majoring in Political Science with a minor in Irish Studies. He studied abroad at UCD in Dublin last school year.



Class of 2019 Salutatorian **PIER BOS '19** was a flagbearer for Game 1 of the New York Yankees and Cleveland Indians American League Divisional Series last fall. Bos is currently enrolled at The U.S. Military Academy at West Point.



SEAN MAHON '20 spent the summer as sports photography intern for the New Britain Bees. Mahon is a sports management and marketing major at Merrimack College.

COLBY DAHL '21 earned his private pilot's license and is continuing his education at Liberty University toward a degree in Aeronautics.

SAM BAKER '21 received the Joseph E. Sheerin Merit Prize in the Study of Classical Languages and Literatures as Assumption University honored 84 students with academic awards at the school's 2022 spring Honors Convocation.

ALUMNI GOLF CLASSIC & WALK-A-THON FUNDRAISER



Two Events. One Goal. Fall Is A Busy Time For Xavier Fundraising

When fall rolls around, Associate Director of Advancement Greg Jaskot '00 is a busy man.

In the span of less than two months, Jaskot is the person in charge of the two biggest fundraising efforts of the school year. And don't forget, you can find him on the football sidelines as Xavier's longtime Offensive Coordinator every day during that same time period. But like a great quarterback (Jaskot has coached a few in his day - check out the story on Will Levis '18 on page 47), Jaskot is cool under pressure.

JUST CHECK OUT THE RESULTS.

On Sept. 8, 2022 the 40th annual Alumni Golf Classic raised over \$145,007, the most in tournament history. Then a month and a half later on Oct. 21, he spearheaded the Mercy/Xavier Walk-A-Thon, which netted \$120,946 for Xavier High School.

Jaskot is not alone in his efforts. Rich Feitel and the Alumni Golf Committee are dedicated to the tournament's growth and its importance to the community. And so many students, staff members and parents help out with both and make the events such a success. But without Jaskot's efforts, both events/days wouldn't be what they are. In a few short years as Associate Director of Advancement, he has revitalized both the golf tournament and Walk-A-Thon and helped remind Xavier and Mercy about the strength of community.

Thank you, Greg!

www.XavierHighSchool.org

IF THESE WALLS COULD TALK

This Spring Marks A Milestone For Xavier. So We Decided To Let The Building Speak For Itself

On the occasion of my 60th birthday this year, I'm here to tell you I'm feeling pretty good about myself.

The two-story lobby with a limestone and marble motif has stood up well, looking as inviting and ornate as it did when the doors first opened. The high ceilings; the welcoming message from my kinfolk, the Xaverian Brothers, engraved in green marble; the flags; they speak to who I am. And it's nice of you to remember all the Brothers who were principals and headmasters through the years. I like that you saw fit to have their photos on my walls. After all, they roamed within these walls for years, helping to shape boys into men.

If these walls could only talk. They'd mention the time we sent invitations with 5 cent stamps when I was to be dedicated on Sept. 7, 1963. Bishop Hines blessed me. Gov. Dempsey spoke. The flag out front came all the way from the U.S. Capitol over which it had flown. All sorts of cars pulled up, some with fins and hood ornaments and chrome. We offered a special menu that had sandwiches costing 25 or 35 cents.

And here we are now with stamps that cost 12 times that and SUV's with rubber bumpers. Not to mention that a slice or two of meat costs what those entire sandwiches did.

While we're at it, what about that new furniture I see in the lobby? Looks comfy, but I'm told there are holes in it already, but these holes are OK. Something about USB ports to plug in your computer or your phone. Computers? Where's the old typing room? Cell phones? Where's the old payphone that used to be in the hallway?

And the old bubblers? Now we're filling water bottles. Guess it's more sanitary. OK, OK, I'm showing my age.

Not that I'm unable to adapt at this ripe old age of 60.

You've taken care of me very well, even if my girth has expanded. But that's what new additions will do. And I can't thank you enough for the fresh coats of paint, and stripping, washing, and polishing my floors each summer. At the beginning of the year, you could eat off them.

But don't try it kids. You'll get a JUG. See that, some things don't change. Serving a JUG has been around for years. I'm not the only old one here.

One thing that took me a while to become accustomed to was what you call a Xavier Apparel Day. Back when I was a kid, Xavier apparel meant one thing: students roamed my hallways in sport coat, shirt, tie, dress pants, and shoes. We've had skinny ties and wide ties, straight-leg trousers and bell bottoms, short hair and long hair, sideburns and no facial hair. I've seen it all.

Someone told me a big seller is a quarter zip. Sounds like something doesn't work correctly if you can't zip it all the way up. Oh, well. I hear a lot of these so-called dress down days are a result of raising charitable dollars. Helping others. Serving others. And that never grows old.

Neither do all those alumni success stories. Doctors, lawyers, engineers, accountants, business owners, men of the cloth, men of every walk of life.

I went looking for a part of me the other day, the All Purpose Room. When my doors first opened that was a big deal.

Heck, Rich Magner, a Xavier legend, met his wife Joanne, a Mercy graduate, in that room. He wouldn't have been the only one. No AP room, but I did find the dining hall (couldn't miss the smell of French Fries) and the Tony Jaskot Fitness Room. But like I said, I'm still in pretty good shape for being 60. And Jaskot doesn't seem to weigh any more than when he was the quarterback here, and I was just a kid.

Back then the late Artie Kohs, the first hire who would go on to help build the culture, was stomping around that gym floor. Now his name is on it, and his son Mike does the stomping. And those

banners that line the wall ... we're over 100 state or New England titles. The poor things. They're constantly being raised and lowered so new years can be added. But updates are a good thing.

For me, too. There was St. Joseph Hall, the new labs, the art room, the music suite that looks out over the football field named for that guy who walked in here when I first opened. Larry McHugh, that's it. Larry Legend.

Now, I'm told, the plan one day is for a STEM-type area, an innovation lab of sorts, named after Brother J. Robert Houlihan. Of course, I needed someone to tell me what STEM stood for, but I know what Brother Houlihan stood for. Helping those less fortunate. And I know whatever stems from this project can only be good. He also was a passionate teacher of science and caretaker of the building and grounds.

As such he'd be proud that we have LED lights, solar panels, state-of-the-art boilers, and a new control system for heating and cooling, all of which helps me reduce my carbon footprint. Didn't mean to send all those greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, but who knew anything about that 60 years ago.

Those trees out front? A stiff wind might have snapped them back in '63 and now the five of them rise well over the height of the building. They stand tall, like Xavier men. The tulips that come up every year under those trees let me know spring is here and another class will be gone soon. Summer will fade into fall, and a new class will be starting. Keeps you young.

A facelift here and there isn't such a bad thing. The chapel, still striking in its beauty and simplicity and peacefulness, just received one. New lights, new paint. Sometimes a simple facelift won't do. The plan soon is for new desks in my classrooms, something befitting the times we're in. Those old desks were painful to look at, never mind sit in.

So, turning the big 6-0 is no big deal as long as you count your blessings, and not your wrinkles, as the saying goes. And adjust to the times.

*Yours truly,
Xavier High School*

We have LED lights, solar panels, state-of-the-art boilers, and a new control system for heating and cooling, all of which helps me reduce my carbon footprint. Didn't mean to send all those greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, but who knew anything about that 60 years ago.

A TALE TO BE TOLD

Science Project? No, A Creative Writing Exercise... We Follow The Trail To A Wild Story From The Past

OUT BEHIND THE SCHOOL, BEYOND THE FOOTBALL AND BASEBALL FIELDS, LIES THE STREAM, WHICH APPEARS TO BE PART OF PROUT BROOK, THOUGH FEW WOULD KNOW IT BY NAME.

It is just a narrow stream, its volume of water dependent on how much rain falls. As we explored the stream one day last June, we heard a lot of rustling in a thicket of trees.

Ghosts of Raccoon Days past? No, just a good-sized deer.

The description of what transpired on Raccoon Day sounds like something that might have been associated with a science class, but the idea arose out of the freshman English curriculum that included creative writing.

“The day was designed to give the students food for thought,” Brother David Wiggin, C.F.X., said. “It was Brother Brian Casey who designed the exercise.”

Creative writing demands a creative exercise, and Raccoon Day appeared to be all of that.

“It was definitely different,” said Marc Levin ’80.

Pretending you’re a raccoon and then writing about it. Yes, that classifies as different. The 1980 yearbook says the day “grew into a legend,” and the small blurb was headlined, “Lurking Beasts Prey On Annual Raccoon Day.”

“A real raccoon is a furry animal with bushy ringed tail and a band of black hair around its eyes,” read part of the description of the day. “The Xavier raccoon, who prowls the campus waterway only one spring day a year, is usually a small blindfolded freshman with fingers taped who hunts for old socks and sliced towels representing fish.”

It probably should come as no surprise that Brother Casey came up with the idea to spur creative writing. His creative writing, in the form of poetry, appeared in many yearbooks in the ’70s.

Longtime Science teacher Linda Charpentier, who at Xavier for 45 years

beginning in 1974, said: “Raccoon Day, from what I remember, was an activity devised for the freshmen to experience first-hand the sensations experienced by the raccoon in its search for food. The frosh would wear their gym clothes for the activity, and have his thumbs taped to their other fingers in sort of a Vulcan “V” configuration to represent a raccoon’s lack of an opposable thumb on their paws [a raccoon can’t grasp an object with one paw]. In the days following this activity, they had to write about their experience from the perspective of the raccoon.”

Bizarre as it might have been, Raccoon Day was also a treat.

“The day became a freshmen field day of sorts, and a chance for the students to substitute sitting in the classroom for that class,” Charpentier said. “Later in my Xavier career, I became very familiar with that same unnamed stream, as I would take my environmental science students there to collect insect larvae in order to discern its water quality ... perhaps it should be called Raccoon Brook.”



“

The Xavier Raccoon, who prowls the campus waterway only one spring day a year, is usually a small blindfolded freshman with fingers taped who hunts for old socks and sliced towels representing fish.”

Trust in THE Lord

*with all your heart and
lean not on your own
understanding.*

PROVERBS 3:5-6

YOU NEVER KNOW when something you do or say will profoundly affect another human being. You might not have given it a second thought, however, to the recipient, it made a significant difference. Even the simple gesture of a smile can powerfully impact someones day or perhaps ~ life. For me, the message came in the form of a perfectly timed word delivered by a stranger.

I'm a Xavier Mom. I proudly claim the title although it's been over four years since my son graduated. It was important to my husband, Edmond '72 and I that our youngest child, Nicolas '19, attend Xavier, not only because my husband is an Alumnus, but we knew there were significant differences at Xavier and Mercy compared to other schools. I witnessed first-hand the positive influence Xavier had on Edmond as a loving husband and father.

“A perfectly timed word delivered by a stranger.”

Initially, I worried about how we could financially afford sending our son to a private Catholic high school on our income. Purchasing school uniforms, shoes that met a code of standards, textbooks, sports and activity fees, among other expenses we weren't accustomed to while he attended public school. Confident it was the right decision, we trusted that God had a plan and that everything would work out.

With the tendency to become anxious in unfamiliar situations, I'd reached a tipping point when Nick revealed a long list of materials he needed to obtain by the second day of school. By this time it was late evening so we headed to our local CVS. Checking out at the cashier, the clerk behind the counter must have observed how overwhelmed I was, and delivered that single word which shattered the wave of immense uncertainty I was experiencing. She looked at me intently and spoke the word, "TRUST." As soon as it reached my ears, I felt a sense of calm and peace. As we left, I thanked her knowing she had no idea the profound affect her word of wisdom had on me. I believe God sent this stranger as a messenger of encouragement.

Xavier is indeed different ~ prayer is recited upon arrival, at the beginning of class, before lunch, prior to sporting events and at dismissal. Incorporating religious education and Mass at school, the presence of the Holy Spirit permeates the Xavier campus. Students develop their spiritual-self, lay a firm foundation of faith, fortified by an excellent academic curriculum. They graduate with the tools necessary for cultivating a fruitful life.

It is evident in the practices of each staff member that their dedication to the students is extraordinary. Each takes on an additional position of coach, mentor, club/activity director, tutor or somehow participates in a role beyond their professional title or outside a job description.

For example, when the time came for Nicolas to learn to drive, he was instructed by Mr. William Braychak, whose bio reads: Fine Arts, Physical Education & Business Department Chair, Social Studies Teacher, Photography Club Director, and Esports Co-Moderator. One might wonder if he has time for anything else. I must note, since the start of the pandemic, drivers education is no longer offered through the school.

Another instructor prayerfully macraméd a rosary which currently dangles from Nicks rear-view mirror. A creative and thoughtful gift of faith with a long-lasting sentiment and prayer for protection.

I began working as a freelance graphic designer for Xavier several years ago when I was invited to create a banner for prospective student visits. I never could have imagined that initial assignment would lead to numerous projects including developing the XFalcon logo, Viewbooks, brochures, and other marketing materials, including this magazine. I consider it a blessing to be collaborating with the Xaverian community. Over the years, I trusted and I learned that God provides everything we could possibly need according to His timing and purpose. I am ever so grateful for this lesson on Trust. ☸

“TRUST is the meeting place of mind and heart, faith and courage. Trust in God forged the Xaverian charism as the Brothers learned to respond in faith and courage to the enormous difficulties encountered in establishing their first schools. It is the spirit of the Lord who encourages, enlightens and inspires all believers especially those engaged in the demanding mission of evangelization and the ministry of educating and forming young people. ”

FROM THE SPIRITUAL VALUES OF THE XAVERIAN CHARISM



The Gioielli's - Cheryl, Nicolas '19, and Edmond '72

The ART of LIVING

The Legacy Of The Legendary Artie Kohs Promises To Live On Through His Work And His Lessons

As kids, Mike Kohs '84 and Tim Kohs '85 knew all the secrets of Xavier High School.

"No one even knows this, but in the gym there's a tunnel," Mike said. "You pick up a grate, you go underneath and you go down the left side and about midcourt there's a tunnel across to the other side. We were little enough to get down there and we would crawl around."

The hidden passages of Xavier weren't the only things their father, the legendary athletic director, shared with his sons all those years on Randolph Road. From the time they started playing sports till last March, the elder Kohs was always leading by example. In honor of that legacy of mentorship and leadership, we figured the best way to end this year's magazine was with a few lessons from Artie. And who better to talk to us about his wisdom than two of his sons, who have followed in his trade. So earlier this school year, we sat down with Mike, the longtime Xavier teacher and Xavier Basketball coach, and Tim, the Mercy Athletic Director and Basketball coach, to discuss what remains with them after a lifetime full of Artie.

Have Passion And Make Life Memorable

When the brothers were growing up, Artie coached both of them on the town little league team. And although the memories have faded over the years, a few familiar tenants of the Kohs experience stood out even then.

"It was just like when he was the coach at Xavier," Mike said. "It didn't matter that we were nine or 10 years old. He was passionate. He had energy. He worked you hard and he made sure every kid got an opportunity. ... I can remember he made sure every kid got a chance to bat and play in the field. He made a point of it."

It was not just about the experience on the field either. Both brothers remember the rides back and forth to the game as well as any advice on the practice field. In the world of Artie Kohs, every practice, game or trip to the field or the gym was a moment to be shared with people you cared about, and of course a potential story.

"It was a blue pick-up truck, and we would hop in the back and ride to the field," Tim said. "We would have 10 kids in the back of this pick-up truck. It was fun. ... He always stressed the importance of playing sports and being part of something."

Take A Chance

If you have ever been to a Mercy basketball game, it is nearly impossible to think about anyone else on the sidelines other than Tim Kohs. But 30 years and three state titles ago, he needed a little direction from his father when the girls position became available down the street.

Artie's message? Go for it.

"He gave me a big push and said 'go get the head job,'" Tim said. "He said: 'You can always go back to the boys if you want, but it is important to be a head coach.'"

Artie couldn't have predicted the amazing run his son would make at the school, and neither could Tim. But that wasn't the point. After 30 years as an athletic director, Artie recognized an opportunity and knew that sometimes you just got to seize an opportunity. He saw that at Mercy for his third son. And at Xavier, Artie was never afraid to take a chance, either.

Whether it was the now iconic colors, or the hiring of iconic coaches like Bob Michalski or Larry McHugh, Kohs always pulled the trigger on something he believed in. Michalski had never coached cross country and he didn't want to do it.

But Kohs talked him into it. Now, there's no way to think about cross country and track and field in the state of Connecticut without thinking of Michalski. Kohs was great at seeing opportunity and potential.

Love What You Do

After graduating from UConn, Mike Kohs thought he knew what he wanted.

"I had visions of making the big dollars in the business world and that's all I wanted to do," Mike said.

Soon enough though, he realized he was thinking back to the days he worked as a coach at the fundamental basketball summer camp with his father and some of the state's best basketball coaches.

"Once I started working in business, I realized it wasn't what my passion was. It wasn't something I liked," Mike said.

As his father often told him, you have to love what you do and you have to love the people you do it with. At Xavier, Artie loved his job and loved building relationships.

"It comes down to this – you got to love what you do. That was one of the big takeaways from my father," Mike said. "He loved Xavier more than anything but his family. I can remember him saying to me so many times 'if I had to do it again, I wouldn't change a thing.' He loved what he did."

Mike spent five years in the business world, but it wasn't right. So when the moment arrived at Xavier to take a long-term substitute teaching position, he took it. And the rest is history.

As the cliché goes: life is too short not to be happy. And when it came to the man with the nickname King, he was happiest when he was doing what he loved. ✕

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In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech.

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