



# Generosity keeps SMC strong

## Century of Hope Endowment Campaign to boost funds

How does the only parish K-12 school in the state keep its doors open when so many other parishes have closed their high schools and in some cases their grade schools? The answer is simple: through the generosity of alumni, parents, and parishioners who value

Catholic education and the mission of St. Mary's-Colgan schools.

So how does our future look? Our future is bright! Classes will be held in the new grade school next fall, and the new gymnasium will open soon thereafter. Our students continually excel on state tests. Sports programs continue to set records, and fine arts programs are stepping up with an upcoming production of "Fiddler on

the Roof."

But most importantly, our school continues to produce fine, young Catholic men and women who are well educated in their faith. It is for that reason that we are at St. Mary's-Colgan.

However, an ongoing challenge yesterday, today, and tomorrow is *funding*. To achieve excellence we must have adequate

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## Battling a rare disease

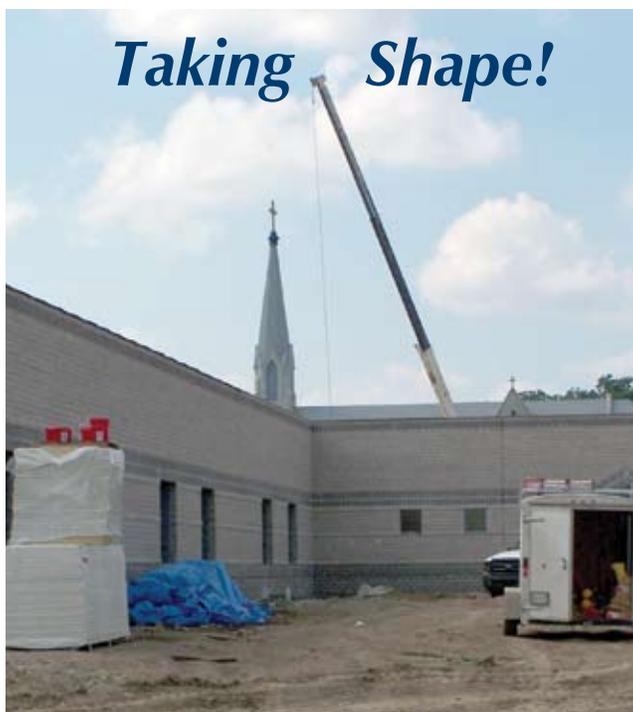
### Benelli tames marathon despite loss of vision

Six days a week for more than 30 weeks I had to tell myself to "get those old bones moving." I am Jeff Benelli, St. Mary's-Colgan Class of '84, and I recently competed in the Okanagan International Marathon in early October in Kelowna, British Columbia.

My sister, Krista (Benelli) Thomas ('89), and I committed to putting our bodies through the necessary training in order to complete the long distance race. It was our first marathon and, we both agree, our last marathon. The reason for our marathon run was to raise funds and awareness for a life-changing retinal degenerative disease we both carry called Choroideremia (core-oid-uh-reme-ee-ah).

Choroideremia is an X-linked genetic disorder that causes affected males to lose over 95% of their vision before the age of 40, en route to total blindness in the few years to follow. Fortunately, most

See Benelli, page 6



Construction of the new grade school and gymnasium continues in the shadow of Our Lady of Lourdes' steeple. The school is scheduled to open in fall 2006. See related article on pages 4-5.

## Like a rope, our bonds are mighty

My son brought home a piece of rope from Boy Scout camp this summer. His troop had made it by twisting together smaller pieces of twine. As I was pondering the articles for this newsletter, the rope came to be as an analogy for our Church, parish, and school. It is often difficult to separate Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Parish community and St. Mary's-Colgan schools. Like the twine, they twist together to form an even stronger rope.

Each one of us plays a part in the formation of the rope: the past parishioners who have provided us such a rich history and foundation, current parishioners who help support the school spiritually, physically and financially, alumni both near and far who realize the importance of a Catholic education, and current students and parents who make the sacrifices to be a part of our system. We must work together and remember that we are all a part of something special at Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Mary's-Colgan. Our rope is strong.

— Chris (Wilbert) Flood, '85

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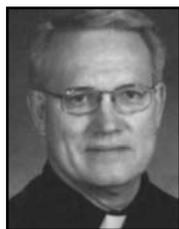
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# SMC community extends to you

You contribute to the greater good no matter where you are

I am writing this article the week of Homecoming at Pittsburg State University. The sights and sounds (Pittsburg High School band practicing at Hutchinson Field – wind is out of the north), and articles and inserts in *The Morning Sun* all add to the festivities and celebration.

It is truly a celebration of pride and tradition not only for Pittsburg State University but for the Pittsburg community as well. The city of Pittsburg is blessed with such a fine institution of higher education. It is a diamond in the rough. Sounds like I am promoting PSU. Yes, I am, because I am at the same time promoting the city of Pittsburg.



Fr. Stroot

## Pastor

I have often said to our people that we need to see our parish and schools as an integral part of the community. We need to help and support one another. As the city goes so goes our parish, and as the parish goes it has an effect on the community.

The new construction of the elementary school and the gymnasium adds to the beauty of the community and is attractive to someone considering relocation to the city of Pittsburg. Often we are a drawing card for families planning to relocate.

As I thought about the PSU Homecoming, I realized that there are a lot of similarities for us at St. Mary's-Colgan and Our Lady of Lourdes parish. It's just on a much smaller scale. Obviously, we don't have the numbers – students on campus as well as alumni. But we have the pride and the tradition.

And just as PSU alumni go to the ends

of the Earth and contribute to other communities, so have you, the alumni of our schools. We are proud of you and thank you for the ways in which you are giving or have given of yourselves in your own parish communities and in your civic communities. I can readily say that many SMC alumni contribute as leaders in our own Pittsburg community and at Pitt State.

I hope that these newsletters help you rekindle the pride and tradition that we share and encourage you to reach out in your own faith and civic communities. As you receive more information on the All School Reunion on October 13-15, 2006, I hope you will plan to come back and experience our 2006 SMC Homecoming weekend as well as the All-School Alumni Homecoming/reunion.

We pray the Lord will bless you and your loved ones abundantly. Mary, Queen of Peace, intercede for us before your Son, Jesus.

– Fr. Tom Stroot

## Alumni share details of grotto's history

Time capsule with information from Class of '64 buried there

In the preceding newsletter, we asked if anyone could give us information on the origination of the beautiful grotto in front of the high school. Thank you to everyone who took the time to write!

The grotto was a Sodality project built by the class of 1964 with the help of Martin Schallo.

"Sister Eustachia was our homeroom teacher and she headed up the project with great vigor," according to David Herman ('64). "We transported decorative rocks and shells from my parents' yard using Mr. Schallo's truck and, with his direction, built the grotto."

Darrell Delamaide ('66) recalled that there was

concern that the top, the actual grotto part, would collapse. According to David, if the grotto were taken down, a time capsule could be found containing messages from all of the graduates of the class of 1964.

At one time the May crowning took place at the grotto. Nancy (Hoff) Scott ('67) remembers being the first May Queen to crown Mary there.

More recently the class of 2003 left money to repair the grotto. The repairs were completed in the summer of 2004.

We are fortunate that the Class of 1964 took on this project and left us with a beautiful tribute to our Mother, Mary, that still stands proudly at the entrance to our school.

– Kari (Emerson) Spiers, '86



Sister Eustachia headed up the project to build the grotto in front of the high school in 1964.

## Plan to attend 2006 SMC All-School Reunion

Make plans now to attend the 2006 SMC All-School Reunion. The reunion will be the weekend of Colgan football homecoming, Oct. 13-15. If you are interested in helping with the preparations for this big event, contact Jeff Wilbert ('71) at 620-231-0752 or Patty Horgan ('65) at 620-231-4211.

### Anyone affected by hurricanes?

If you or your family were directly affected by hurricanes Katrina or Rita, let

us share your story. Contact Chris Flood, 6664 NE Liberty Road, Weir, KS 66781, or [ctflood@ckt.net](mailto:ctflood@ckt.net).

### Information available online

You can keep up to date on all SMC activities by logging on to the school's Web page at [www.stmarys-colgan.org](http://www.stmarys-colgan.org) and clicking on the SMC Newsnotes link. You will be given access to the school's monthly newsletters and calendar of events. Log in regularly and stay informed.

### St. Mary's-Colgan Alumni

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## Fine Arts Program gives students many outlets for creativity

The St Mary's-Colgan Fine Arts Program helps to provide our students with a well-rounded education. Some of their recent accomplishments include:

- Allocated monies to art, library, yearbook, debate, forensics, and theater.
- Donated \$1,000 toward a new pottery kiln for art class.
- Donated \$1,000 for 2004-05 Accelerated Reader material for library
- Received over \$6,000 Prichett Grant for a new sound system in theater.
- Began "It's A Wonderful Holiday Show & Sale" to help organizations raise funds. We are now in our third year and still growing!
- Started SMC Talent Show to showcase talented students with \$100 for first place for both high school and grade school and a \$75 People's Choice Award.

### 2005-2006 events

- *Fiddler on the Roof* – December 2-3, curtain at 7:30 p.m.; December 4, curtain at 3:30 p.m.
- Holiday show and sale – December 11, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Field Trip to Branson – *Broadway, A Star-Spangled Celebration*
- Costume sale – Great retro clothing at cheap prices, (tba)
- Spring, one-act play

Do you have wonderful memories of being a part of the Fine Arts Program at SMC? Please help support the future by filling out the form below and mailing your contribution today.

### Support SMC Fine Arts

- \_\_\_ \$15 Supporting/1 show ticket
- \_\_\_ \$25 Associate/2 show tickets
- \_\_\_ \$40 Benefactor/3 show tickets
- \_\_\_ \$100 Star/4 show tickets

All patrons will receive first call for ticket seats. Please print your name as you would like it to appear in our programs.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Return along with payment to: St. Mary's-Colgan High School, Attn: Fine Art's Committee/Amanda Minton, P.O. Box 266, Pittsburg, KS 66762

# Ryczek leaves a lasting legacy through library

Mr. William G. Ryczek had been visiting St. Mary's-Colgan High School for more than 10 years with a smile on his face, a twinkle in his eye, and always a reminder that his generous contributions should go to the library and not to buy helmets for the football team.

This kind and generous man passed away on Monday, September 26. His presence will be truly missed.

According to the 1942 Marion, St. Mary's high school yearbook, Mr. Ryczek's nickname was "Einstein" and his ambition was "to smash an atom." He had great things in mind for his future and great things he did.

In the early 1950s, while working in the engineering department at Nordberg Manufacturing Co., he frequented a branch of the Milwaukee Public Library. A girl named Marie was the library's true attraction. Bill and Marie married and moved to the Kansas City area where Marie worked at the Kansas City Public Library for a time and then the Liberty High School for 20 years.

On Bill's visits to St. Mary's-Colgan, he would always mention the fine qualities of this creative, energetic woman who had a love for learning. After Marie's death in 1993, Bill

## Would you like to make a difference?

If you would like to make a memorial contribution to St. Mary's-Colgan Schools, please send your check payable to the Memorial Fund, Our Lady of Lourdes, 916 N. Locust, Pittsburg, KS 66762.

decided to carry on her legacy by providing the joy of reading and learning to others.

He established a trust that gives an annual donation to the libraries of Divine Savior Holy Angels High School in Milwaukee and St. Mary's-Colgan High School. If you were to pull a book off the shelves of either school's library, chances are high that you would find a donation label noting that the book was purchased "in memory of Marie Schiffler Ryczek who helped children love books for more than 40 years."

Mr. Ryczek's unselfish vision and his devotion to his wife are an inspiration to us all. Please remember him in your prayers.

– SMC Librarian Bev Mitchelson

## Cast set for *Fiddler on the Roof*

Mark your calendars to attend the SMC Fine Arts production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Show times and dates are December 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7:30 p.m. and December 4<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m. in the SMC Auditorium. Call the high school office to purchase tickets (620-231-4690). Tickets are \$8 for adults, \$5 for students and seniors, and children 3 and under are free.

**Cast for Fiddler on the Roof:** Tevye, Matt Pommier; Golde, Nichole Woods; Tzeitel, Kylie Klenke; Hodel, Alicia Kranker; Chava, Grace Miller; Sphrintze, Katie Sanders; Bielke, Maggie Stuckey; Yente, Bethany Pommier; Motel, Michael Hayes; Perchik, Keegan Holmes; Lazar Wolfe, Eric Berry; Mordcha, Gabe Greer; Avram, Daniel Sellmeyer; Rabbi, Isaac Gouvion; Mendel, Ben Mazurek; Nachum, David Patterson;

Grandma Tzeitel, Hilary Cole; Fruma Sarah, Emily Wishall; Constable, Zach Compton; Fyedka, Josh Patterson; Shaindel, Erin Fox; Sasha, Brett Norris; Yussel, Ellie Landrith; The Fiddler, Gabe Greer

**Villagers:** Alisa Gouvion, Lindsey Laderer, Pilar Castenda, Jordan Boler, Janelle Kranker, Meaghan Dayton, Katie Evans, Molly Cichon, Lauren Zagorski, Kirsten King, Jayme King

**Russians:** Brett Norris, Zach Compton, David Patterson, Daniel Sellmeyer, Meaghan Dayton, Jordan Boler

**Children's Chorus:** Jonathon Wolfe, Aaron Gouvion, Jared Mazurek, Mary Farmer, Hannah Gouvion, Jack Bertoncino, McKenzie Lewis, Elizabeth Hayes, Katelyn Flood, Kathryn Smith, Kelly Smith, Madison Lewis, Hannah Maus, Hannah Landrith

# Watco supports SMC, local community

SMC is very fortunate to have many businesses that provide support for our schools. One such business is Watco (watcocompanies.com). Founded by Dick Webb on July 1, 1963, with eight employees, Watco has grown to 1,400 employees and spans 26 states.

Watco Companies consists of 15 short-line railroads, 12 contract switching locations, 3 major car repair shops, 2 major locomotive repair shops, and 8 mobile car repair locations. Watco is the definition of a family business with Dick Webb as Chairman of the Board, son Rick as CEO and son-in-law Gary Lundy as Executive Vice President.

In addition to providing a good work environment, Watco is also very involved in the community. According to Kay Lynne Webb, "If you have something, give it back. Try to share whatever you have." This was the way she was raised and Kay Lynne and Dick have passed this philosophy on to



their family.

Here are a few of the ways Pittsburg has benefited from the Webb/Lundy family and Watco's support:

- **Immigrant Park** – The Webb/Lundy family donated land for the Park located at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Broadway in Pittsburg. Kay Lynne Webb has served as coordinator for the project. Almost \$1 million dollars has been raised to provide this memorial to railroaders and miners of the area. This park will help the community and children of the area better understand and appreciate our history and heritage.

- **Train Rides** – Over the years, Watco Companies has provided train rides for various festivals, including Little Balkans Days in Pittsburg, Dalton Days in Coffeyville and Riverfest in Wichita.

- **Hutchinson Field** – Watco and particularly Rick and Gary have greatly helped with recent improvements and upgrade of facilities at the football field.

- **Megan Mallett Activity Center** – Watco is providing support for the building of this new Gymnasium/Activity Center on

the campus of Pittsburg High School.

St. Mary's Colgan Schools have also benefited greatly from the Webb/Lundy family/Watco Companies connection. In the past they have helped provide air conditioning in the grade school, new uniforms for the junior high girls' basketball team, as well as TVs and VCRs for the classrooms.

Gary Lundy and Brad Snow were original planners on what has become a very successful annual fundraiser dance. So far, funds have been raised to provide equipment for the new weight room and also much needed text books.

In another form of support, the basement of the Watco building has been used for large school functions, after-game parties, and even Christmas parties for the faculty.

This family-owned business believes that everyone in the company and the areas they serve are part of the family. It is no wonder that Watco Companies was honored by the Governor of Kansas as the top business in the state for 2005.

– *Chris (Wilbert) Flood, '85*

## Benelli *Continued from page 1*

affected females carry the disease with little if any symptoms.

I lost about 95% of my vision between the ages of 27 and 35. This sudden vision loss has forced me to give up what I refer to as, "selfish pleasures" like driving, playing sports, enjoying movies, and walking unassisted in crowded or unfamiliar surroundings.

Though these things are difficult to lose, the hardest thing to accept is how it affects the things I cannot and will not be able to do with my two boys, ages 3 and 5. It's hard not to have some low points knowing you will never know what your own kids look like as teenagers.

Though the female carriers do not suffer the effects, their male children have a 50/50 chance of having the disease. Krista has a 6-year-old boy who has that coin flip in his future. It is not known yet whether he is affected or not.

The Choroideremia Research Foundation (CRF) is committed to finding a cure for this disease. The good news is that researchers know

exactly what causes this disease, which I am told makes it a very good candidate for possible cures. The bad news is because Choroideremia is so very rare, and affects so few people, funding is quite low. CRF funding for the fiscal year 2004 was a mere \$30,000.

Along with my family, including my wife, Julie, my parents, Buddy ('57) and Peggy Benelli, brother Curtis ('82) and his spouse, Kara, sister Krista and her husband, David, we sent many requests for sponsorship for our marathon run. The response was wonderful, both financially and emotionally.

The biggest win is the "lives touching lives" that has happened. I've contacted and been contacted by so many people.

If you would like to support the cause, please send a check payable to: Choroideremia Research Foundation; note: please write **Okanagan Marathon** in the memo field; mailing address: Jeff Benelli, 11216 W. 116<sup>th</sup> Terr., Overland Park, Kansas 66210.

– *Jeff Benelli, '84*

## Alumni Update

**Paul Martin** (1993) and his wife Kara have announced the arrival of their baby girl, Maia Grace. Maia was born on October 10, 2004 in South Korea. She was escorted to Tulsa, Oklahoma, to meet her new adoptive parents on May 4, 2005. She was welcomed to her home in Fort Scott, Kansas by her three brothers, Drew (8), Luke (5), and Noah (2). She is the granddaughter of Mike and Anita Moore (Bixby, Oklahoma) and Ed and Terry Martin (Pittsburg).

\* \* \*

**Becky (Gorman) Downing** (1984) resides in Olathe, Kansas, with her husband, Jon, and son, Jake (6). Becky has completed 17 years of teaching (all first grade), with the past 14 years spent in the Olathe School District. She has taught the last eight years at Cedar Creek Elementary.

\* \* \*

**Agnes (Diller) Harrington** (1956) retired in May 2005 after 45 years in higher education as a faculty member and associate dean at North Dakota State University. She has three children, Anne, Ryan, and Mark. Agnes and her husband, Ryan, live in Fargo, North Dakota.

\* \* \*

**Jeanne (Krumsick) Miller** (1951) lives in Fort Collins, Colorado, along with her husband, Don. She is a retired Arabian horse breeder. Jeanne has three children, Mike, Kathe, and Kristin.

# New SMC Principals

## High School (interim): Dr. Bill Dickey

**Personal history:** I was born in Muskogee, Okla., and was raised in Oklahoma and Kansas. I've been married to Dee for 48 years. Our family includes – daughter: Kathy, Norfolk, Va., whose husband, Scott, is a naval commander, and they have two children (A.J., Ashlee); son: Steven, Salt Lake City, Utah, who has one daughter (Alexa); and son: Mike, Pittsburg, who with wife, Audrey, has four children (Zac, Hillary, Emily, Billy)

**Education history:** B.S. in Education, 1959 – Emporia State University; Master of Science in Education, 1960 – Emporia State University; specialist hours: Oklahoma State University; Doctorate, 1966 – University of Arkansas

**Favorite childhood memories:** Hunting with my dad and learning to play ball (any kind)

**Favorite memories in education:** Coaching freshman basketball at Oklahoma State University under Mr. Henry Iba; working for Mr. Frank Broyles at the University of Arkansas

**Turning points in education:** When I determined that I would not play baseball as a career; when I decided to enter higher education administration and no longer pursue a career in coaching

**Why did you become an educator:** I decided to become a teacher or coach and make one or the other a career. Plus, I have always enjoyed being around young people.

**Why did you want to serve as a principal at SMC:** I love the tradition, the standards, and the faith-based education. Also, I know a lot of the families, so many of my former students are involved here, my son's wife, Audrey, teaches here, their children are students here, and who could resist Father Stroot's request?

**Who inspired you to become an educator:** Parents, teachers, coaches – there were so many people along the way that it's difficult to identify any one individual.

**Favorite quotes:** "Make your life be full of experience, not one year of the same experience throughout your life." "If they say you have potential more than about twice, you're probably a failure."

**Expectations of teachers, staff, and students:** That they approach whatever they do with passion, intensity, and integrity, whether it involves academics, athletics, or any other aspect of their lives.

**What sets this school apart from others:** The standards, the faith-based approach to life, and the general respect shown for every aspect of the system. The people associated with this school not only talk support, *they live it!*



## Grade School: Mike Martin

**Personal history:** I was born in Parsons, Kan. I attended elementary school in Parsons and moved to Coffeyville, Kan., when I was in junior high. I graduated from high school in Coffeyville. My wife's name is Donna. We have three children: Drew (age 9), Luke (age 6), and Anne Marie (2 months).

**Favorite childhood memories:** Being the youngest of four boys, much of my childhood was spent going to school events and activities. Watching my brothers participate in athletic events sparked an interest for me to continue later. I still enjoy sporting events today.

**Education history:** Field Kindley High School (Coffeyville); Coffeyville Community College; Pittsburg State University (BSED and MS); teaching experience: Fort Scott High School (7 years) and Girard High School (7 years).

**Favorite memories in education:** Creating and maintaining an environment where teaching and learning are exciting and the well being of students is fostered have been important to me. It is an awesome responsibility to develop students as individuals and productive citizens of tomorrow.

**Why did you want to serve as a principal at SMC:** SMC is a Catholic school rich in tradition. At SMC, people offer strength and support to each other. This parish community supports personal growth to everyone and is a good place to learn, to work, to be. The tradition of this Catholic school, the success in academics and athletics, and the family nature of the school attracted me to this position.

**Who inspired you to become an educator:** My parents inspired me to become an educator. My father was a teacher, coach, and principal for many years. Being around him and other educators motivated this interest.

**Favorite quotes:** "No act of kindness, no matter how small . . . is ever wasted." – Aesop; "Together we can make a difference."

**Primary responsibilities as principal:** As K-6 principal of St. Mary's Elementary, I aspire to grow the faith of our students, help our students excel academically, and make them successful citizens.

**Expectations of teachers, staff, and students:** SMC teachers and staff will do their best to help each child experience academic, social, and spiritual growth. The staff will emulate strong Catholic values and be good role models for our youth. SMC students are expected to respect the traditions of the school. SMC students will grow as learners and strive to become productive citizens to reach their full potential.



The new principals at SMC, Dr. Bill Dickey, left and center, and Mike Martin, right, enjoy their newfound responsibilities of overseeing the education and religious formation of students. (Photos courtesy of the Colgan High School yearbook staff)

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## **Strong** *Continued from page 1*

facilities, up-to-date textbooks, and competitive teacher salaries. This excellence comes at a price.

Our Lady of Lourdes parishioners are some of the best givers per capita in the Wichita Diocese, which has a reputation as being one of the top giving dioceses in the country. With only 1,200 families we take in approximately \$30,000 per week in the Sunday collection. Sixty percent of this revenue is expended on our schools. The balance of our school budget – approximately \$600,000 per year – comes from the Memorial Fund.

We are blessed that Father Steinberger and the late John B. Towner had the vision to establish a Memorial Fund in the early 1970s. This endowment was their way of ensuring SMC schools would remain open when other systems were closing. The Memorial Fund has been funded over the years through three primary sources: 1) large initial private donations, 2) memorial contributions upon someone's death, and 3) large donations from estates.

### **The Memorial Fund: Our Future**

Unfortunately we are continually using the fund's capital to supplement the schools' budgets. At the rate we are going, the fund will be depleted in three to four years. We must do something now.

We have a plan to secure the future of our parish schools for the next 10 years! This winter the parish will embark on a multimillion dollar Century of Hope Endowment Campaign to build up the Memorial Fund. In addition, we are creating a function within the parish to develop annual funding programs.

Parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes will continue to be invited to respond to God's call to Discipleship through Stewardship (giving of their time, talent and treasure), and many will give to the Century of Hope Endowment Campaign. However, this will not be enough to fund the schools. We will need the assistance of businesses, foundations, alumni, and friends of the schools.

*We have a plan to secure the future of our parish schools for the next 10 years! This winter the parish will embark on a multimillion dollar Century of Hope Endowment Campaign to build up the Memorial Fund.*

In future publications you will be hearing more about our school funding plans and the development office. Until then, please be thinking about:

- Making St. Mary's-Colgan schools a part of your estate.
- Securing a life insurance policy with SMC as beneficiary.
- Making an annual contribution to the schools.
- Attending the fall 2006 Alumni Reunion.
- Referring the schools to a foundation on which you serve or about which you know.
- Adding SMC to your prayer intentions.

We as alumni are proud members of a very unique group. Our alma mater has survived the elimination of many Catholic schools, provided Catholic education to more than 1,500 students, played an integral role in our own formation, and now in 2005 is making plans for our children's children. It's an exciting time in the history of St. Mary's-Colgan. You are an integral part of our past. Please play a role in our future!

*– Joe Dellasega, '79*