

JOTTINGS

The AIC / MHA Alumnae Newsletter | SUMMER 2024



From the Board

In a world often overshadowed by challenges, it is crucial to pause and reflect on the guiding lights that have illuminated our paths. As we prepare for our next reunion, let us take a moment to acknowledge and express our deepest gratitude to the Sisters who raised us to be leaders and empowered us to stand up for what is right.

The Sisters were instrumental in nurturing our sense of empowerment, compassion, determination, and resilience. They challenged us, pushed us beyond our comfort zones, and encouraged us to embrace our full potential. They have reminded us that our voices matter and that we have the power to foster meaningful change in our communities and beyond.

The Sisters have been our champions of justice and equality throughout our lives. They taught us the importance of standing up for what is right, even in the face of adversity. They showed us that courage is not the absence of fear but the willingness to act in spite of it. Through their words and actions, they inspired us to be advocates for justice, equity, and inclusion.

As we honor the legacy of our Sisters this year, let us not only express our gratitude but also commit ourselves to carrying forward their legacy of leadership and empowerment. Let us strive to be the women we needed when we were younger — to uplift, support, and empower each other in our journey towards a more just and equitable world.

To all the Sisters who shaped us into the leaders we are today, we thank you. Thank you for your love, your guidance, and your unwavering belief in our potential. Your impact on our lives is immeasurable, and we are forever grateful for the role you have played in shaping our paths.

We welcome you all to the 2024 Reunion on September 28-29 for a weekend of empowerment, leadership, laughter, and love.

Alumnae Board

Kristi Bonilla

President, Class of 1990

Amy Lawson

Vice President, Class of 1993

Mary Ellen Espy McCoy

Secretary, Class of 1992

Sister Pat McGuire

Class of 1960

Sister Anna O'Connor

Class of 1969

Falisha Pierce

Class of 1990

Veronica Marcos

Class of 1990

Sonya Lackey

Class of 1989

Jennifer Gazda DeHenes

Class of 1992

Elaine Robertson

Class of 1980

Tina Dalton

Class of 1982

Elaine Baumgart

Class of 1959

Mary Stickler

Class of 1982

Nicole Beck Beavin

Class of 1970

Susie Schafer

Faculty 1986-1999

Dear Alumnae,

I hope that this issue of “Jottings” finds you well and enjoying spring!

When I heard that the theme of this issue was focused on leadership, I immediately thought of the sign that was hung on Madonna Hall for the Academy’s 150th anniversary: “Educating Women for Leadership.” While that may not always have been articulated, I truly believe that each young woman who came to the Academy left with leadership skills which could serve her no matter where life led.

Through our education and experience at the Academy, each one of us learned who we were and how we could share our strengths and grow through our weaknesses. In reality, that is the true definition of humility — one of the main principles in St. Benedict’s Rule: to recognize and use the gifts God has given us and to work through and grow during times of failure and challenge.

We sisters continue to do the same, striving to respond to the needs surrounding us and to put our gifts to use for the glory of God and the betterment of all people. Last fall, we made a commitment to partner with Family Scholar House in building its first Family Scholar House in Indiana on the Ivy Tech Community College campus in Sellersburg, Indiana. Family Scholar House works to end the cycle of poverty by empowering single-parent families to succeed in education and achieve life-long self-sufficiency. We are excited to partner with them in bringing this endeavor to Indiana.

In addition, earlier this year we approved a project to bring geothermal energy to campus. In the coming months, wells will be dug to provide geothermal energy for our buildings. Doing so lessens our utility bills and also helps to reduce our carbon footprint. Other building repair projects continue, including making needed upgrades and repairs to St. Benedict Hall, last fully renovated in 1995.

As we move into the summer months, I hope that some of you will be able to come for a visit. It’s always a pleasure to welcome you back to campus, and we encourage you to walk the grounds, visit the church, and inquire about some of your teachers. I look forward to seeing many of you this fall for the annual reunion.

Know that you are always in our prayers. God bless you!

Sister Anita Louise Lowe, OSB

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Prioress



Alumnae Reunion 2023

Thank you to all the Alumnae, Sisters, faculty and their guests who joined us for last year’s reunion. All the images you’ll see throughout this issue were taken from that weekend. We can’t wait to share even more memories with you at this year’s reunion in September.

Be sure to fill out and send in the registration form that you can find at the back of this issue, or submit it quicker by completing and paying online.



If there has been any recent changes to your contact information, please take this moment to update any and all information online by visiting thedome.org/update-your-info. If you are unable to access the online form, please email memoriesoftheacademy@gmail.com.

The Lasting Impact of the Academy

Written by Niki, daughter of Jane Hemmer



Growing up, I often heard my mom talk about her years in the Academy, and the time after as she contemplated taking orders. We would tease one another about it — after all, if she'd taken orders, I wouldn't be here. But her stories about the Academy and the convent contained a powerful message that I have returned to again and again.

My mom entered the Academy carrying a heavy set of expectations from her family and from herself. Her sister had taken orders, and her mother expected my mom to do the same. Her path had been laid out for her. In her year of discernment after the Academy, though, my mom came to understand that she wanted something different, and made the difficult choice to set aside other people's expectations to pursue her own path.

She chose, in many ways, the harder option. Though she went straight to work, she could only scrape together enough money for a few years of college before she had to leave university and take up a full-time job. (She would return to college nearly four decades later to finish her degree.) But in the years that followed, she built the life that she had dreamt of when she left the convent.

I've always believed that it was her time at the Academy that empowered her to make that choice. Standing at a crossroads in her life, she knew enough about who she was and what she was capable of to step into the unknown. Her courage and commitment in that moment have inspired me every time I have been at a crossroads in my own life — which means I owe a debt of gratitude to the Academy as well.





New pretzel flavor debuts at Gift Shop.



The Sisters are always looking for new ways to tantalize your taste buds. So we're delighted to introduce the newest addition to our Prayerful Pretzels lineup. Brand new Ranch Prayerful Pretzels are fresh from the monastery bakery and ready to be enjoyed. Our Prayerful Pretzels are the perfect gourmet snack, whether you choose our 6-oz bags as a grab-and-go snack for backpacks and car rides or our 12-oz packages for sharing. Snag all our delicious varieties today at the Gift Shop or online at monasterygiftshop.org!



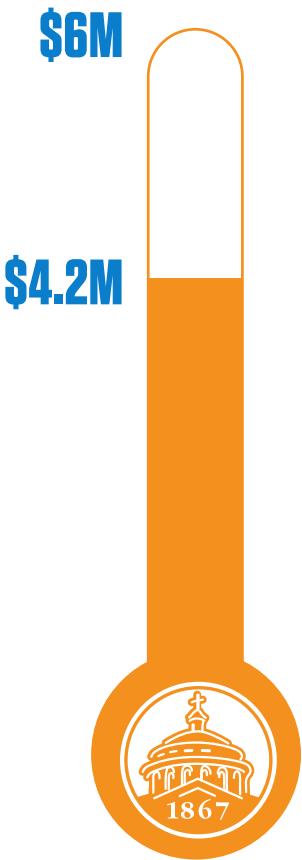
Help us reach our final goal.

In the hearts of alumnae of Academy Immaculate Conception and Marian Heights Academy, the Monastery Immaculate Conception church often holds a special place. For many, it was and remains the center of life at the monastery, and any visit here includes stepping through those church doors to once again feel its serene beauty.

The Endowment for Our Sacred Space will ensure that the church will continue to serve as the center of our religious community and of the larger community far into the future, without placing an undue financial burden on the ministries and members of the Sisters of St. Benedict. Thanks to the generous gifts from fellow Alumnae who have contributed to the campaign, we are close to reaching our \$6 million goal.

If you want to help preserve our church and leave a lasting legacy, visit thedome.org/alumnae-endowment to start giving today and learn more. If you aren't sure how you want to give, contact our Mission Advancement office for assistance.

Kerri Cokeley
kcokeley@thedome.org
(812) 367-1411 x 2630



Made by the Sisters.

Are you an Amazon shopper? Did you know that Amazon has items handmade by the Sisters? From art and home decor to scarves and jewelry, you'll find a variety of items made by hand. Scan the QR code at right with your smartphone or go to Amazon and search for Prayerfully Created to see it all!



SNAP & SHOP
Scan this code with your phone to see what's waiting on Amazon



Bake bread with us!

Let our talented Bakery Manager, Kris Lasher, walk you through the process of baking spent grain bread. (Spent grain is a leftover from the beer brewing process.) In this video workshop, a virtual version of our popular in-person class, you'll bake two beautiful loaves of your own delicious spent grain bread. Simply register online, and you'll receive an email with a link to the video, and a PDF file of the recipe you can download. Just visit thedome.org/events.



A Hidden Passion

Kathleen “Kathy” Schnepf originally had no aspirations to work in the newspaper industry. Her dream was to attend law school and become a successful civil rights, environmental, or government attorney. However, her perspective changed when she realized that attorneys sometimes have to defend individuals they know are guilty.

She grew up in a small city in Illinois and attended Marian Heights Academy in Ferdinand, Indiana. During her time there, she fell in love with the area and eventually married Ferdinand native Richard "Digger" Tretter. After working in various jobs, including writing travel brochures, she decided to settle down and work as an ad representative for a local radio station when she had children. Eventually, she was offered a position as advertising manager for a newspaper in Washington, Indiana, where she learned about the newspaper business.

In 1990, Kathy convinced her husband, her sister-in-law Miriam, and her husband Paul Ash to purchase *The Ferdinand News*, a community newspaper that had been in the same family since 1906. They also acquired *The Dale News*, which later became the *Spencer County Leader*. “I loved the community. They deserved a hometown newspaper,” she recalls. Kathy became the editor of both papers and worked to improve their journalistic standards. Over the years, both newspapers have received numerous awards for excellence in writing, photography, advertising, graphics, and design.



Kathy served as co-publisher alongside her husband until he retired in 2016. She continued as the sole publisher and has personally won awards for her comprehensive stories on several social issues. She is also actively involved in various boards and charities, holding leadership positions and making a significant impact in her community.

Kathy has served as a mentor to her staff and has managed to keep both newspapers thriving, even during the challenges of a global pandemic. Despite the decline of newspapers in the digital age, circulation figures for both papers continue to grow.

Apart from her dedication to journalism, Kathy has a passion for history and is a member of multiple historical societies. She and her husband purchased the historic Wollenmann House, restored it, and donated it to the Ferdinand Historical Society.

Kathy's accomplishments have been recognized internationally, as she is a member of the prestigious International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors. In 2023, she was elected to their board of directors.

Outside of work, Kathy prioritizes her family, having raised three successful children and spending time with her five beloved grandchildren. She has also formed close bonds with several elderly women, ensuring they have the support and assistance they need.

Throughout her journey, Kathy has demonstrated her resilience, passion, and leadership skills, leaving a lasting impact on the newspaper industry and her community.





May They Rest In Peace

ALUMNAE

Patricia Hollinden, 1952
Phyllis Ann Huber, 1954
Sister Mary George Kissel, 1941
Carol Roach (Stemle), 1966
Clara Bradley, 1954
Kristine Ann (Jackie) Harpenau, 1967
Barbara May-Schaeffer, 1967
Trish Zinkan Delaney, 1967

FACULTY & STAFF

Lenny Knust



Register Today for the 2024 Alumnae Reunion

Online registration: thedome.org/reunion2024

Name_____

Address_____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Class of _____ Phone _____

Email_____

- Please check all that apply:**
- ☐ I will attend the Saturday picnic dinner.
(Please bring a side dish to share.)
 - ☐ I will bring _____ guest(s).
 - ☐ I will attend the Sunday dinner.
 - ☐ I will bring _____ guest(s).
 - ☐ _____ # of meat meals
 - ☐ _____ # of vegetarian meals

Alumnae registration and dinners\$50
Guest at dinner on Sunday\$15

Total amount enclosed: \$_____

Mail in registration: send this form & your check to:
Sisters of St. Benedict
802 E. 10th Street • Ferdinand, IN 47532

Please complete the registration form even if paying in-person. This will provide us with more accurate numbers when confirming with the caterers.

☐ **Pay in-person upon arrival:** cash or check only

2024 Alumnae Reunion September 28 - 29

- **Don't forget cash or your checkbook** for Raffle Tickets.
- Guided tours of the academic building are on Saturday, September 28 at 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m.
- Reserve a hotel room before they're gone.

Hotels with Room Blocks & Special Rates:

| | |
|---|---|
| Holiday Inn Express 2000 Hospitality Drive Jasper, IN 47546 (812) 482-3344 ** MHA/AIC Reunion * | Comfort Inn 123 Scenic Hills Court Ferdinand, IN 47532 (812) 817-0484 MHA/AIC Reunion * |
| Hampton Inn 355 3rd Ave Jasper, IN 47546 (812) 481-1888 MHA/AIC Reunion * | Comfort Inn 1970 Hospitality Drive Jasper, IN 47546 (812) 556-2888 MHA/AIC Reunion * |

* Reservation Code for our discount.
** Must call the Holiday Inn Express directly.

EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION
To be entered into a special drawing,
register before **August 3, 2024!**

Registration Deadline: September 8



JOTTINGS

AIC/MHA Alumnae Association

802 E. 10th Street • Ferdinand, Indiana 47532-9239

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