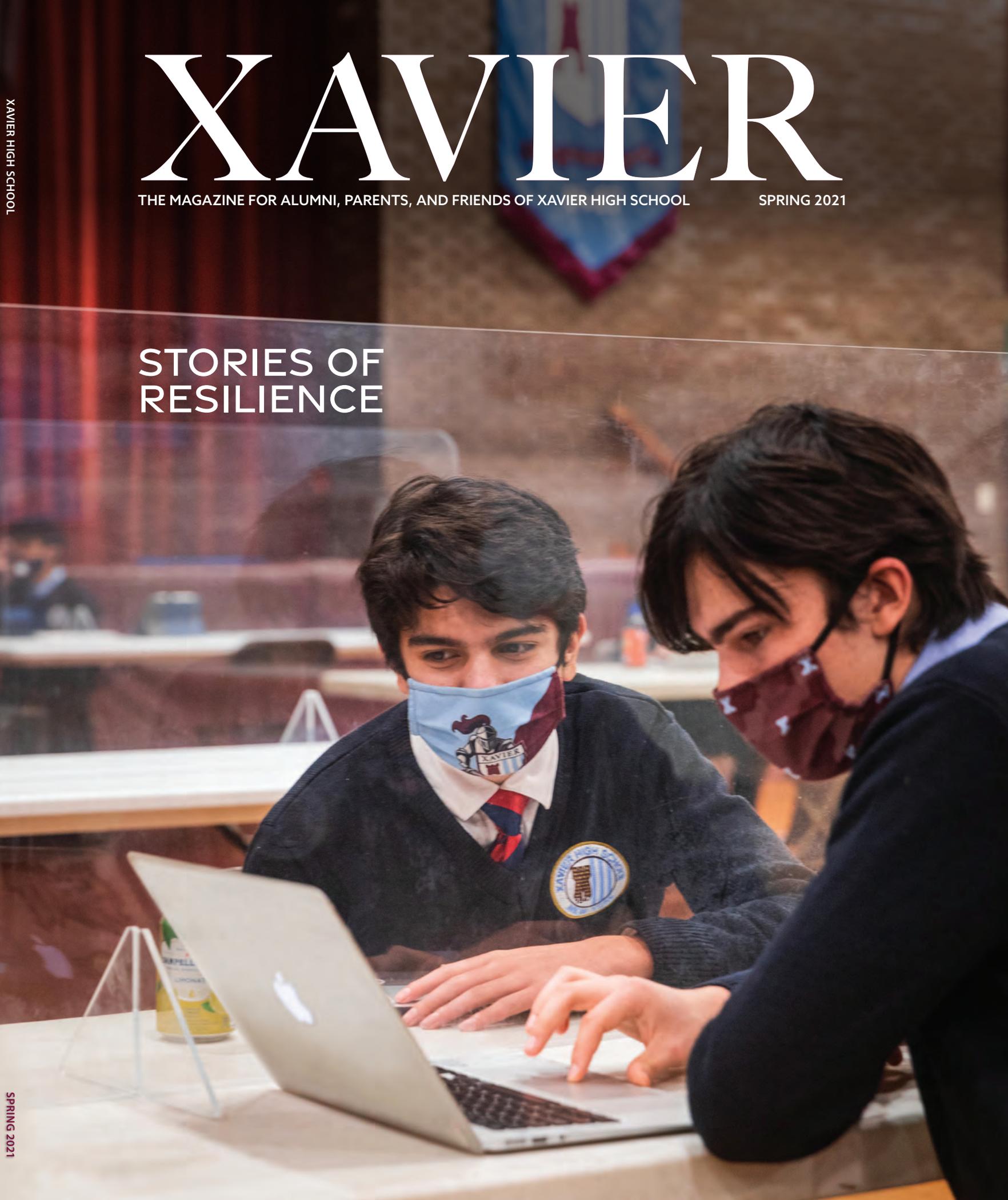


# XAVIER

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI, PARENTS, AND FRIENDS OF XAVIER HIGH SCHOOL

SPRING 2021

## STORIES OF RESILIENCE



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#### Xavier's Mission

Founded in 1847, Xavier High School is an academically rigorous, Catholic, Jesuit, college preparatory school in New York City that educates intelligent, motivated young men of diverse backgrounds and means. Xavier teaches students to take responsibility for their lives, to lead with integrity, to act justly in service of others, to pursue excellence in every endeavor and to deepen their relationship with God. Ultimately, Xavier forms young men who will go forth to transform the world for God's greater glory.

#### On the Cover

Student resilience in the face of a once-unthinkable "new normal" infused the school year. CJ Marlin '23 and Iden Ottmann '23, pictured in the gym after eating lunch separated by Plexiglass, numbered among Xavier's intrepid hybrid learners.



### Featured in This Issue

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- 18. Unsung Heroes
- 22. A Teacher at Heart

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Throughout the year, Xavier's student-athletes showed perseverance and grit in a time of great uncertainty. Here, members of the Xavier football team practice in the gym over February break in hopes of a city-approved spring season (which unfortunately never materialized).

**“Let him easter in us, be a dayspring to the dimness of us, be a crimson-cressed east...”**

*Gerard Manley Hopkins  
The Wreck of the Deutschland*



Dear Parents, Guardians, Friends and Sons of Xavier:

In the midst of Lent, I journeyed to Rhinebeck, New York with 15 students and faculty members for a Magis retreat at the Linwood Spiritual Center. Linwood sits on the east bank of the Hudson River, a few miles north of the old Jesuit novitiate, St. Andrew-on-Hudson.

Magis has always been a favorite of mine. Magis, the brainchild of **Fr. Lou Garaventa, S.J.** and **Bob Reinhart '69 P'94 '99**, is a retreat about the retreatant and God. The retreat is anchored in the certainty that God speaks and listens to us, and it is an invitation to our students to do the same with God. What a gift, and what a gift to watch God and our students work together.

Retreats are as essential to a Xavier education as are factoring and differentiations, declensions and conjugations or Shakespeare and sonnets, so it was with great joy that I received the news that our Kairos and Magis retreats would take place this year. The campus ministry team secured a new site for Kairos at Immaculate Conception Seminary in Huntington. Magis is taking place at Linwood and at Loyola in Morristown. There were COVID adjustments for sure, but the spirit of God easily works with COVID adjustments!

Within this magazine there are dozens of stories chronicling our journey through COVID, and the resiliency of our community. There should be no doubt that there were and remain difficulties: isolation, anxiety, fear, food insecurity for some families, eviction for others, job loss, illness, death, academic challenges, and dreams deferred. The difficulties, however, are not the end of the story.

We are journeying through the great season of Easter once again: the triumph of light over darkness, the victory of life over death. This

is an Easter magazine, a story of Xavier on the road, much like Cleopas and his companion encountering the Risen Christ: adjusting for sure, while engaging, encountering, moving forward and feeding on one another.

Even in the midst of the COVID pandemic, hearts are on fire on 16th Street. Faculty model creativity; students and faculty discuss and debate the events and ideas that have shaped our world, work together to produce plays, engage in service and bring activities to life.

The work of our maintenance and technology staffs is highlighted. The picture of the maintenance staff jumped out at me. Their faces are largely unseen behind their masks. Xavier thrives because of the often unseen work of so many—staff members in maintenance, technology and offices; parents, family and friends. Celebrating the maintenance and technology staffs is a reminder to give thanks for the unseen efforts on 16th Street, in homes and other places across the city that allow Xavier to thrive. Our class notes feature an expanded section on former faculty and staff members. Their work is now unseen on 16th Street yet their impact on Xavier's Sons will last a lifetime, and we will always be grateful.

We also pay tribute to **Mike LiVigni P'21** as he concludes his tenure as our headmaster. What I have most enjoyed over the years is Mr. LiVigni's addresses to our students. His stories of growing up in Brooklyn, studying in Buffalo and sitting with Mrs. Lerner have taught us important lessons. Ultimately, the work of the headmaster is to ensure that Xavier teaches important lessons to all our students. By word and deed, Mr. LiVigni has done that with diligence and care. I am most grateful. *Sto lat*, Mr. LiVigni.

Students of Gerard Manley Hopkins will recognize that the quote that begins this letter is drawn from his poem memorializing five Franciscan nuns who drowned in a shipwreck on December 7, 1875. The shipwreck propelled Hopkins's return to writing poetry. The poem is a memorial witnessing to lives lost. This magazine is a witness to our response to the COVID-19 pandemic and to the resiliency that carries us forward. We can be resilient because “he indeed easters in us.”

As this Easter season draws to a close, may our prayers echo the words of Hopkins:

**“Let him easter in us, be a dayspring to the dimness of us, be a crimson-cressed east...”**

If so, our resilience is assured.

You are in my prayers.

Jack Raslowsky P'16  
President

# News from 16th Street



In March, after an extensive nationwide search, Xavier announced the appointment of **Kim Smith** as its 55th headmaster. She will begin her tenure on 16th Street in July.

Smith comes to Xavier from Boston College High School, where she has taught English for the past 20 years and currently serves as academic vice principal. A graduate of Boston College and the University of Denver, she will be the first female headmaster in Xavier's 174-year history.

“I am honored and delighted to be joining the Xavier community as the next headmaster. I have found much joy and purpose in working in Jesuit schools for the past 20 years; I am also of the mind that there has not been a more exciting or relevant time to be in the work of Catholic education,” Smith said. “The world needs young people of intellect, care, and concern who are eager to serve, to solve, and to lead us through the 21st century. I feel privileged to be part of that formative process.”

# NOT THROWING AWAY OUR SHOT

On January 8, New York State announced that educators would count among Group 1B in the phased distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine, making Xavier teachers, administrators, and staff members some of the earliest New Yorkers eligible to be inoculated.

With millions of residents vying for limited appointments and vaccine arrivals hampered by winter storms, securing a shot proved no easy feat at first. But aided by regular, informative missives from COVID-19 Response Coordinator and Assistant to the President **Bill Ford** and colleagues who generously shared information and tips about finding appointments, 80% of the Xavier faculty and staff had been fully vaccinated by early April.



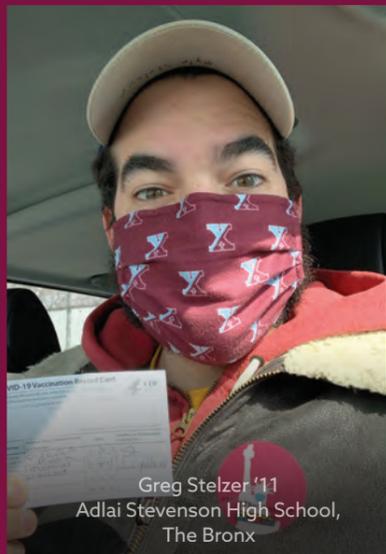
Greg Dolan '89 P'21  
Westchester County Center



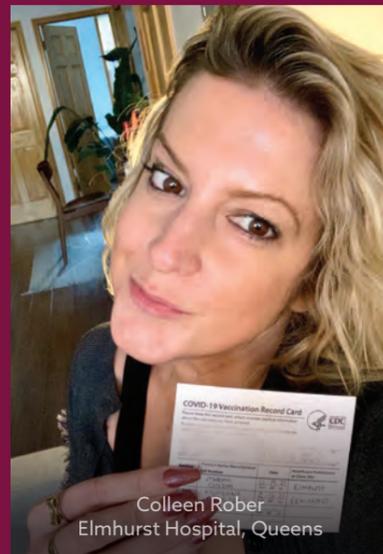
Julie Teller  
NYC Health + Hospitals/Woodhull, Brooklyn



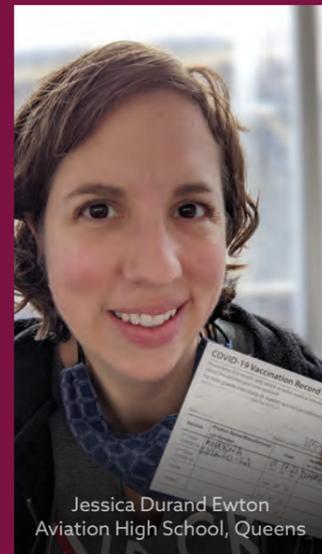
Kaija DeWitt-Allen  
Lincoln Hospital, The Bronx



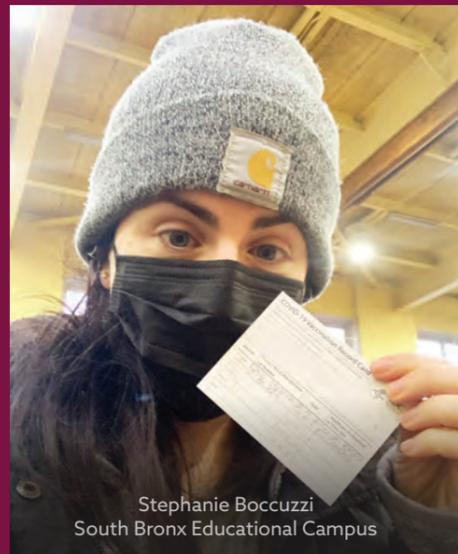
Greg Stelzer '11  
Adlai Stevenson High School,  
The Bronx



Colleen Rober  
Elmhurst Hospital, Queens



Jessica Durand Ewton  
Aviation High School, Queens



Stephanie Boccuzzi  
South Bronx Educational Campus



Mollie Quinn  
Harlem Hospital



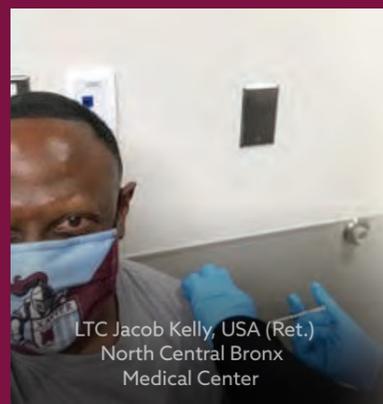
Sara Robinson and her husband, John Bacsik  
Port Richmond High School, Staten Island



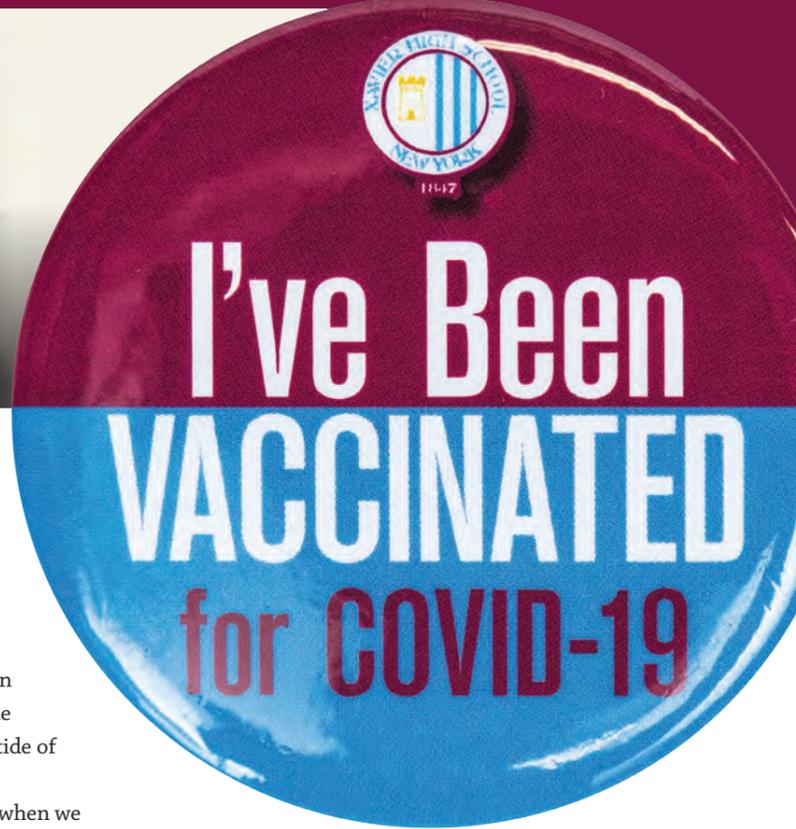
Sean McDonough '03  
Javits Center



Claudia Tierney P'20  
Cure Urgent Care, Manhattan



LTC Jacob Kelly, USA (Ret.)  
North Central Bronx  
Medical Center



A pin given to members of the Xavier faculty and staff upon receiving their final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.



The USA East Province presidents with Dr. Fauci in January.

## Province Presidents Welcome Dr. Fauci

At the dawn of the COVID-19 pandemic, President **Jack Raslowsky P'16** began convening weekly Zoom meetings of his fellow Jesuit high school presidents from across the USA East Province. Ranging geographically from Cheverus High School in Portland, Maine, to Cristo Rey Atlanta Jesuit High School, the province presidents have jointly navigated remote learning, lockdowns, reopenings, the CARES Act, social unrest, vaccinations, and much more since their first virtual meeting on March 18, 2020.

“There are always opportunities for COVID updates and questions, but we do other work, too,” Raslowsky said. “Before Thanksgiving, we did a sharing of graces. Before Christmas, we looked at consolations of the year. The meetings have been a great source of consolation for the presidents. There’s a sense of sharing the work, and sharing the work of leadership.”

In January, the province presidents welcomed a special guest—2002 Xavier Commencement speaker Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of

Allergy and Infectious Diseases and a member of the Regis High School Class of 1958. He continued his Jesuit education at the College of the Holy Cross before attending medical school at Cornell University.

Dr. Fauci took questions from the province presidents and spoke about the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines and consequences for schools. He recalled being a child during New York City’s 1947 smallpox vaccination campaign, when city health commissioner Dr. Israel Weinstein oversaw the inoculation of six million New Yorkers in a single month—stemming the tide of an outbreak.

“As a child he saw firsthand the power of vaccines, the ability we have when we put our mind to something, and the good that does for public health,” Raslowsky said. “The effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccines available now is very high. Yet he was always prudent, reminding us to stay the course, wear masks, social distance, wash our hands vigorously. If we do all of that, we can turn the corner.”

# Choosing Creativity



Billy Maloney '01



Denise Iacovone



Jonathan Ratheram-Browne



Mei Eng



Megan Stevens

## AMID THE PANDEMIC, FACULTY AND STAFF PRIORITIZE CREATIVE OUTLETS *By* SHAWNA GALLAGHER VEGA

In an era of forced isolation, art teacher **Billy Maloney '01** settled into a frenetic productivity.

Over the past year, he's completed nearly 50 paintings—acrylic, watercolor, and airbrush—and a dozen wood sculptures. With enough creations to fill an art portfolio, he successfully applied to a graduate program in art education that he plans to start this fall. "Every day that I have free, I'm working on two or three paintings at a time," he said.

Last spring's lockdown and transition to remote learning hit him hard, and art became his outlet. "I was right in the middle of rugby season. We were two weeks away from our first game," said Maloney, who coaches freshman rugby. "It reminded me of when I got injured in high school. If I didn't have sports, I leaned hard on art. I always tell the guys, 'Don't be one-dimensional.' I always push the Renaissance man idea."

Like Maloney, many other members of the faculty and staff also pursued creative outlets and hobbies to help them process a stressful, uncertain time.

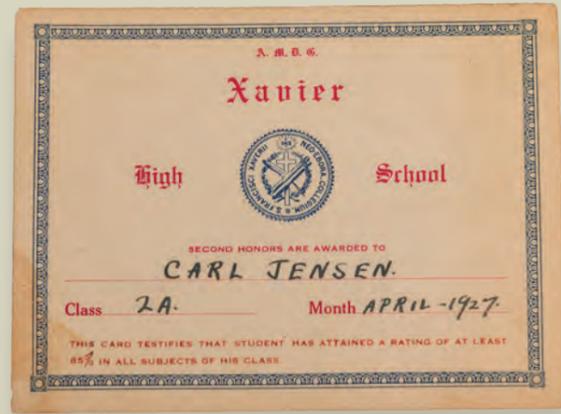
English teacher **Mary-Grace Gannon P'03 '07** devoted herself to writing more poetry, and *River Heron Review* selected her poem "Consonance"—a rumination on pre-pandemic New York City subways—for publication. "I've become more conscientious about sending my poems out for consideration, so I was excited to hear that one was accepted," she said. "Isolation can make us more desirous of contact and connection with others, perhaps."

Fine arts department chair **Denise Iacovone** and her husband, retired Xavier music teacher **Rocco Iacovone '62**, decided to learn something new—the language of their forebears. "In March 2020, we started Rosetta Stone Italian together," Denise Iacovone said. "We sit together every night for a short lesson of 20-30 minutes. It's fun because we do it together, and it really works!"

Secretary **Mei Eng**, known on 16th Street for her baking, whipped up cookies in her Brooklyn kitchen after the completion of a mid-pandemic home reconstruction. With the help of YouTube videos, she also taught herself to knit. History teacher **Megan Stevens**, a longtime crafter, worked on multiple projects while distancing, including several pieces of art that now hang in her classroom. One timely painting reads, "We can endure much more than we think we can."

English teacher **Matt Thomas** and his daughter Maddalena tackled a particularly vexing 1,500-piece puzzle, later framing it to commemorate the effort. "We set to work on it during the early days of COVID, aware of a challenge but pleasantly confident in its face, I, Don Quixote to her Sancho Panza," Thomas recalled of the effort. "My daughter demonstrated her superior intelligence by abandoning the activity, leaving me to an Ahab-like solitary pursuit. In the end, when it mercifully released its grip on me, I ordered a special adhesive backing and centered it perfectly in a frame, hanging it for all to see the last puzzle I will ever willingly do."

In another testament to patience and attention to detail, science department chair **Jonathan Ratheram-Browne** crafted his own chess set, even hand-carving a few pieces. "With vaccines becoming more available and the restrictions of lockdowns finally drawing to a close," he said, "I am hopeful that the completion of this chess set marks the end of what has been a difficult and at times sorrowful year."



## Want to make your mark (literally) on Xavier's 175th anniversary?

If you have a talent for graphic design, we invite you to enter our dodransbicentennial logo competition. Submissions should be sent to [news@xavierhs.org](mailto:news@xavierhs.org) by **June 15, 2021**.

Logos may be submitted electronically as .PDF, .SVG, .AI, .EPS, or high-resolution .JPEG files.

The winning entry will be selected over the summer and featured in all 175th anniversary communications.



# Xavier at 175

**Page 8:** A second honors certificate from 1927; a class ring from 1947, Xavier's centennial. **Page 9:** A perpetual calendar souvenir that marked Xavier's 100th anniversary. **Both pages:** A photo from a 1952 student trip to the U.S. Capitol. COL Donald Cook, USMC '52+, standing third from left in the back row, later became a prisoner of war and died in Vietnam. He was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

As Xavier prepares to kick off a year of dodransbicentennial celebrations on December 3, the Feast of St. Francis Xavier, we invite the community at large to help us gather artifacts and memories.

Alumni and friends are invited to donate or temporarily loan memorabilia to Xavier for display throughout our 175th anniversary year. To begin this process, please email **Mary Kinahan-Ockay**, Xavier's archivist, at [archivist@xavierhs.org](mailto:archivist@xavierhs.org).

We also invite members of the community to share their favorite memories of Xavier in written form. Submissions of up to 500 words may be emailed to [news@xavierhs.org](mailto:news@xavierhs.org) for possible publication.





1. Lou Orlando '21 leads a virtual tour of Xavier. 2. Fordham Prep President Chris Devron, S.J. and Xavier President Jack Raslowsky P'16 introduce the Virtual Turkey Bowl. 3. Science teacher Mary Anne Woody.

## News and Notes



On October 17, Xavier's Admissions Office hosted the school's first-ever Virtual Open House for prospective families. Close to 850 registrants learned about a Xavier education via Zoom panels and meetings. A guided virtual tour of 16th Street led by **Lou Orlando '21** was a highlight of the event.



Despite the cancellation of the fall football season due to the coronavirus pandemic, Xavier and Fordham Prep found a way to face off for the 98th time in the Virtual Turkey Bowl last November. Xavier President **Jack Raslowsky P'16**, varsity football coach **Chris Stevens '83**, and Fordham Prep President Chris Devron, S.J. counted among the players on the virtual Madden NFL field. While the Rams emerged victorious, 21-14, the Knights took home Turkey Bowl Giving Challenge honors, 410-373. The challenged pitted young alumni from the Classes of 2001-20 at both institutions against each other in a giving competition.



On December 5, the Xavier Dramatics Society staged *The Apocalypse Project*, its first-ever livestreamed production. The play, authored by Briandaniel Oglesby, explores a world where adults have disappeared and children must carry on after disasters they did not create.



Xavier's Advancement Office hosted "Race and the Catholic/Christian Conscience," the first webinar in its "Different Uniforms, Same Cloth" racial justice series, on December 9. Br. Tyrone Davis, C.F.C., executive director of

the Archdiocese of New York's Office of Black Ministry, moderated a conversation that included Fr. Paddy Gilger, S.J., Fr. Rudy Casals, S.J., and Br. Ricardo Perkins, S.J.



Xavier's esports team defeated Carmel High School in the North America Scholastic Esports Federation Eastern Division Overwatch finals in a dominant 3-0 sweep in December. They came in sixth at the national championships in February.



On February 6, Xavier's Philosophy and Ethics Club—moderated by religion teacher **Dr. Robert Cortegiano** and led by co-presidents **Conor Guilfoyle '23** and **Isaac Pierre '23**—participated in the online New York, New Jersey, and Long Island Ethics Bowl, which brought 38 high schools together for a day of team-based discussion, collaboration, and analysis of a range of contemporary moral questions. With topics ranging from the ethics of dining out during a pandemic to the moral dimensions of "cancel culture," Xavier's team of seven students enjoyed an exciting and enlightening day of critical and respectful discourse with their peers from top schools across the area. It was the club's third year participating in the Ethics Bowl.



Last summer, computer science and technology department chair **Michael Chiafulio P'23** devoted himself to learning Rhino 6, a 3D modeling software, in order to teach Xavier's new Architectural Design and 3D Modeling class. Forty-six juniors and seniors participate in the elective, which is designed to teach students how to use computer-aided design and drafting

tools to design and model structures and objects. Students also learn how to model existing structures and redesign them for future needs as well as build prototypes by 3D printing and assembling their designs.



Arabic teacher **Caroline Haidar** was recently invited to serve as a guest speaker for students in the New York University Abu Dhabi program. Her *Levantine Arabic Made Easier* podcast is ranked #2 in Albania and among the Top 200 language podcasts in the U.S.—a huge achievement in a podcast landscape dominated by English, Spanish, French, and Chinese language instruction.



English, French, and Spanish teacher **Deena Sellers**, chair of Xavier's Community Life and Inclusion Council, and Director of Alumni Relations **Zane Massey '96 P'22**, a fellow member of the Council, each completed Cornell University's Diversity and Inclusion certificate program in 2020. Massey earned his certificate in August, and Sellers earned hers in December.



Science teacher **Mary Anne Woody** will travel to Vietnam this year as a participant in the 2020-21 Fulbright Distinguished Award in Teaching Short Term (DAST) Program. Sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Fulbright DAST sends expert U.S. K-12 educators to participating countries to support projects in schools, teacher training colleges, government ministries, or educational nongovernmental organizations. Woody is one of 12 U.S. citizens who will travel to six countries with Fulbright DAST in 2021.

# Conquering Tech Challenges

By SHAWNA GALLAGHER VEGA



As Americans transitioned to working and learning from home last spring, few organizations faced bigger operational challenges than schools. On 16th Street, Xavier's technology department bore the burden—in extraordinarily short order—of equipping teachers and students with the necessary tools to succeed.

Director of Technology **Hernando Avila P'23** said the immediate work he and Assistant Director of Technology **Freddy Nowbath** faced ran the gamut from preparing and delivering 25 Chromebooks to teachers and students lacking appropriate devices at home to helping the community adapt to video conferencing platforms like Google Meet and Zoom.

The demand to stream Masses and events soared. To offer opportunities for prayer during the worst days of the pandemic, for instance, President **Jack Raslowsky P'16** began using his iPhone or iPad—whatever was available—to stream weekly Mass from the Student Chapel. From his Staten Island home, Avila guided him through what was then a very novel process of creating a Zoom webinar and streaming it to YouTube.

Navigating a steep, community-wide technological learning curve didn't curtail the department's normal day-to-day workload, which is busy at the best of times. But Avila, who has a son and nephew enrolled at Xavier, said the work was well worth it: "We did a good job transitioning to all-remote learning."

Preparing for the 2020-21 school year presented a new set of trials. Avila recognized that if Xavier reopened, it would be in a hybrid model, and closures due to new lockdowns or outbreaks were likely—so he had to equip classrooms with cameras and give teachers "grab-and-go" technological tools.

Avila purchased Surface Pro 7s for all teachers and outfitted each classroom with a Meeting Owl Pro—a

360-degree camera, microphone, and speaker with an automatic zoom function that responds to who's speaking. He also tripled Xavier's bandwidth in anticipation of unprecedented video needs.

Preparing Xavier's campus for hybrid learning took the entire summer, and with shipping delays due to a majority of the nation's schools ordering tools for remote learning, Xavier was lucky to get it done. "God was with me," Avila said, noting that he ordered the Owls from a beach while vacationing on July 1. "I ordered everything just in time for it to get to us and make sure we had enough time to roll it out. If I had ordered the Owls a day later, we wouldn't have gotten them in time." He hired consultants to get all the Owls, Surface Pro 7s, and docking stations in place in time to open school, and he added a new full-time staff member, **Michelle Poulaille**, to help address increased technological needs.

"You try to make calculations, you do the math, and you figure things out," Avila reflected. "Thankfully, Xavier committed the resources, because it was not cheap. **Jack Raslowsky** and **Mike LiVigni** and the Board get a lot of credit because they definitely put the resources in, and not just this year. We had already shored up our backbone between all the floors where the Internet comes into the building. We had just replaced all the switches and fiber between the closets between each floor. If you have the infrastructure in place, that gives you a lot more flexibility."

Avila said that while the past year has been the most stressful and challenging of his career, "what's new is becoming the norm," and his days are getting more predictable. He's grateful for the faculty's adaptability in any situation, including a day-long Internet and phone outage that struck the neighborhood in March.

"I'm proud of everybody else in the building," he said. "The teachers, the students, the administration."



To prepare for the 2020-21 school year, Xavier's technology department unboxed, inventoried, and installed or imaged

65 Owls

65 Docking stations

92 Surface Pro 7s

# A FULL TEAM EFFORT

By NICK BARONE '16

**O**n March 11, 2020, I lost my senior year of college. Believing a few weeks of lockdowns would stop the spread of the coronavirus, students were met with the promise of an April 20 return-to-school date. We didn't get that. We didn't get senior week. We didn't get graduation. We didn't get a make-up graduation. We didn't get any of our "lasts." It was easy to be mad—it's still easy to be mad. I look back now, a year after my college's closure, and ask myself, "What could have been done?" The answer—nothing. At least, nothing for the time being.

Much like me, Xavier's Class of 2020 didn't get many of their "lasts." No prom, no senior week, no in-person Baccalaureate Mass. But Xavier undertook a remarkable effort to care for its quarantined seniors, with faculty and staff traveling across five states to deliver them gifts and cheer. That effort culminated in a distanced but in-person graduation at St. Patrick's Cathedral on July 31, the Feast of St. Ignatius Loyola.

And Xavier continues to engage in an impressive effort to truly care for its students now, in the midst of a still-raging global pandemic.

*Barone is an alumni fellow assigned to communications and alumni relations. He is a 2020 graduate of the University of Scranton.*

**A**t the time of my writing, students roam the halls of Xavier, reconnecting with their brothers, playing sports, and attending meetings of their favorite clubs. Faculty are in their classrooms, teaching and making memories with students. Administrators are in their offices, supporting the community. These feats would have been impossible a year ago. None of this would be possible now if not for the full team effort that has gone into reopening Xavier.

From clubs and activities to sports and retreats, Xavier has continued to encourage students to pursue excellence in every endeavor, no matter what's going on in the world around them.

"At the beginning of the year, I stressed the importance of hosting club and activity meetings at least twice a month so students have a way to stay connected to each other

while doing something they're passionate about," Director of Student Activities **Alicia Psillos** told *Xavier Magazine*.

This year, many new clubs—such as the Culinary Club—have emerged, allowing students to do something fun, learn something new, and socialize with their peers and faculty members. Existing competition clubs like

During an AP 2-D Design class in February, fine arts department chair **Denise Iacovone** and **James Murray '21** displayed Murray's digitally painted self-portrait for students at home. Each student in AP 2-D Design selects a topic to delve into visually over the course of the year. Murray chose "a 21st century teenager," working primarily on his iPad with a program called Pro-Create.



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.

1. Juniors sign a banner on Kairos 150 in February.
2. Sophomores play ping-pong during their March rally day.
3. Members of the Xavier Dramatics Society perform in their livestreamed fall play, *The Apocalypse Project*.
4. Guidance counselor Jordan Temkin hands a Christmas stocking to Ryan Wong '21 during Christmas at Xavier.
5. Lorenzo Reetz '22 performs demolition work during the CFX winter break service trip to East Patchogue, Long Island.
6. Seniors pray at a socially distanced Christmas at Xavier.

Speech and Debate, Model United Nations, the Philosophy and Ethics Club, and the esports team have competed more often than usual this year due to the virtual nature of events.

“We know there are many challenges that come with putting together in-person activities and events this year,” Psillos said. “When planning any in-person events, we took all the necessary precautions and followed all safety protocols while also giving students options to partake in these events remotely.”

With the help of her fellow faculty and staff members, Psillos has also organized community rally days for each grade, inviting individual classes to 16th Street to participate in fun, collaborative activities and bond as a group—a difficult feat given Xavier’s hybrid learning model, which separates classes into two cohorts to maintain appropriate social distancing.

Rally day activities have included baking

in the school cafeteria, karaoke and improv contests, trivia, debates and discussions, esports games, Scattergories, art and music sessions, Netflix parties, and other socially distanced events. Scores of teachers and faculty members have volunteered to moderate these activities, both in person and virtually.

For seniors, their class rally day came in the form of Christmas at Xavier, a longstanding school tradition that looked very different this year. (Since the entire school cannot fit into the Church of St. Francis Xavier under social distancing guidelines, seniors were given priority.) While the event was exclusive to masked, distanced members of the Class of 2021, it turned into an unforgettable reminder of how Xavier *really* feels. Seniors were invited to participate in a beautiful Christmas Mass, enjoy lively activities and homeroom hangout sessions, and unpack stockings prepared for them by faculty and staff members.

During the days preceding Christmas at Xavier, faculty and staff members also hosted spirit days for the entire student body, featuring competitions for the most unique Christmas hats, masks, ties, sweaters, and more.

It brought cheer to the final week of school in 2020, which had been disrupted by a temporary transition to all-remote learning.

**A**t a time when students need opportunities for expression more than ever, Xavier’s fine arts department has devoted countless hours to ensuring students can pour their creative energies into a number of outlets.

“In March, no one knew how long this would last,” fine arts department chair **Denise Iacovone** reflected. “We left so quickly that none of the boys had art supplies at home. We had to make do with pencils, markers,

and Xerox paper! In May, I realized that going forward we wouldn’t be able to share materials in the art department at all.”

This realization led to a great deal of creative thinking on the department’s part. In order to return to school in the fall, they had to find a way to give each student materials for remote and in-person learning.

“We ordered hundreds of items, types of erasers, types of pencils, markers, brushes, papers, canvases, easels, and much more. We have over 300 art students across all years,” Iacovone said. “We searched Amazon and our art supply houses to find art sets, drawing sets, small pads, brushes, small easels, paint sets, markers, colored pencils, and more. Then we ordered color-coordinated book bags for each year and hand-packed the 310 bags with all the supplies by year level. It was daunting, but now everyone has art supplies for home and some in their locker. We had to be flexible, let some

things go while embracing others, but we are making scholarship-level work again.”

This artistic perseverance is present on stage as well. With social distancing measures and mask-wearing protocols in place, can the show still go on? The short answer is yes—yes, it can.

“The Xavier Dramatics Society has grown so much over my tenure here, but the one thing that has not changed is the dramatics community,” said drama teacher **Nicole DiMarco**. “Theater is, by nature, collaborative, and COVID has been the antithesis of creative collaboration in many ways, but especially with regards to live theater and performance. During times like these, I believe that we need art and creative outlets the most. It was for this reason that I vowed to do some kind of show this year, even if there was no live audience.”

The success of *The Apocalypse Project*, the

livestreamed fall play, was a testament to the resilience of Xavier’s students and to the strength of the XDS community.

“These young men and women were hungry to create, and it showed in their dedication and ability. Yes, our time together was limited—only two rehearsals a week as opposed to four or five—and I ran rehearsals differently, following all protocols and guidelines, but we were able to successfully produce and perform a live show, and that was pretty miraculous,” DiMarco said. “It was quite obvious the students were both grateful and overjoyed to have been a part of it.”

**D**espite myriad obstacles, Xavier’s Athletic Department has been able to keep student-athletes engaged and active this year as well. Coaches have been hard at work making sure students stay active and keep pushing

***Students roam the halls of Xavier, reconnecting with their brothers, playing sports, and attending meetings of their favorite clubs. Faculty are in their classrooms, teaching and making memories with students. Administrators are in their offices, supporting the community. These feats would have been impossible a year ago. None of this would be possible now if not for the full team effort that has gone into reopening Xavier.***

themselves to their physical limits.

“It has been a full team effort with all of our coaches to safely return our teams to practice and competition,” said Director of Athletics **Andrew Gheraldi**. “We are hopeful of providing more opportunities for students to connect to Xavier athletics this spring.”

It’s been difficult to navigate sports this year, to say the least. Unexpected closures combined with limitations imposed by the New York State Department of Health have forced the Athletic Department to adapt constantly. The department—and Xavier’s athletes—have persevered through it all.

The fall trimester saw the varsity, junior varsity, and freshman cross country teams shine, and varsity and JV soccer returned to play, too. Varsity and JV bowling also got off the ground, with the program headquartered at Astoria Bowl during the winter trimester. This year also marked the birth of Xavier’s fencing team, which trained through the winter at Fencers Club in Chelsea.

Indoor track was rebranded as “winter track,” with runners competing outside due to COVID-19 regulations. Meets have been hosted at Icahn Stadium on Randall’s Island and at Ocean Breeze Track and Field Complex on Staten Island throughout winter and spring.

The swimming and diving team enjoyed a successful season, while the wrestling team conducted at-home workouts twice a week to build team unity in anticipation of competition.

And the athletic program doesn’t only involve Xavier’s athletes. All freshmen not currently involved with an athletic team

participate in at-home athletic development sessions, which allow them to exercise and prepare for spring sports—which city health officials finally approved to kick off in April.

**H**opeful anticipation has been a key theme at Xavier since the beginning of the pandemic. Students, faculty, and staff remained hopeful about attending retreats and service trips at the end of the 2019-20 school year—but those opportunities, including Kairos retreats and senior Christian service, were stripped away by the early days of COVID-19.

Planning for retreats and service trips in the 2020-21 school year seemed like an impossible task—except it was quite the opposite.

This year’s service opportunities, while limited, have allowed students, faculty, and staff to be men and women for others during a time those qualities are needed most. Over February break and again during Easter break, Director of Ignatian Service Programs **Greg Stelzer ’11** and groups of juniors and seniors embarked on CFX Habitat—trips to East Patchogue, Long Island, that saw the groups partner with Habitat for Humanity. Stelzer and the students worked to provide a safe and affordable home for a Habitat family.

Campus Ministry searched and found a bigger, safer retreat space at the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception in Huntington, Long Island. They discovered new service and immersion opportunities that required

minimal travel within the state. They found new ways to make students experience Ignatian traditions that wouldn’t have been possible at the beginning of the pandemic.

“I am enormously proud of the work we’ve done in Campus Ministry to ensure that our Kairos and Magis retreats continued to happen safely,” Director of Campus Ministry **Kaija DeWitt-Allen** reflected. “I am so thankful to the faculty, staff, and administrators who committed to leading retreats while adjusting to new protocols and altered activities. And I’m particularly impressed with our senior retreat leaders who carved out time for even more Google Meet planning sessions to ensure that our retreats were a success. Offering our students opportunities to experience prayer, reflection, companionship, and God’s love and forgiveness while on retreat remains the cornerstone of what we do.”

**E**fforts to keep the Xavier community engaged have also extended beyond the student body. Alumni have had various opportunities to reunite—albeit virtually—with fellow Sons and other members of the Xavier community.

“This has been a particularly challenging year for our nation and for the Xavier community,” said Director of Alumni Relations **Zane Massey ’96 P’22**. “While it’s been challenging to continue programming in this environment, I am grateful for all of our alumni and to the Jesuit community. Despite obstacles, we’ve been able to provide

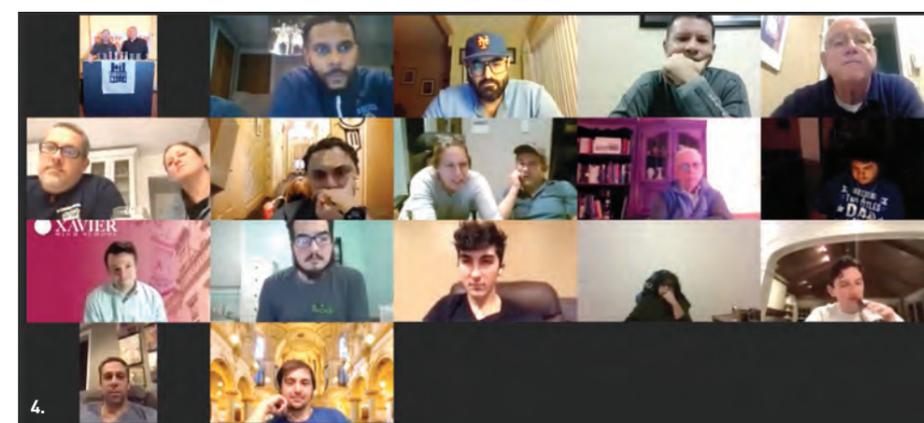
programming covering a wide range of topics.”

Along with members of Xavier’s advancement staff, Massey has hosted virtual events ranging from beer tastings to career development sessions to conversations about race relations—not to mention the traditional Beefsteak Dinner and reunions—that have provided important socialization opportunities for alumni.

“We’ve been able to share fun moments like our Oktoberfest program, but we’ve also been able to cover deeper topics such as the Catholic and Christian conscience and what that means for us as people,” Massey said. “I am convinced that as long as we all stick together, there is nothing we can’t accomplish as a community and as a people.”

**A**ll of this only scratches the surface of the lengths Xavier has gone to in order to keep its community strong and united. Just over one year ago, we all ventured into a great unknown, not knowing how to move forward. Xavier has taken important steps into that great unknown—steps that are leading us closer to the light.

From my perspective, to see Xavier doing what it’s doing is pretty breathtaking. Losing the end of my senior year of college made me think a lot about what could have been done to give us a chance to have those final, memorable experiences, and I can easily say Xavier has gone above and beyond those expectations for the boys, the faculty, the staff, the alumni, and even for me.



1. Students on CFX in East Patchogue in February. 2. Seniors attend a Magis retreat at the Linwood Spiritual Center in Rhinebeck, New York, in February. 3. Panayoti Athineos ’21 speaks to juniors on Kairos in December. 4. A virtual alumni Oktoberfest.

# Unsung Heroes

"IT'S JUST THE JOB THAT WE'RE CALLED TO DO. WE ARE THE HEARTBEAT OF XAVIER." *By* SHAWNA GALLAGHER VEGA



Kevin Reinhart '99, Marcelino Luna, Ernesto Nuñez, Leticia Melchior, Mario Mejia, Frank Leahy P'10, Jose Sanchez, Francis Leahy '10, and Yamilka Santos. Not Pictured: Javier Aguilar, Rudolph Bentley, Randy Fernandez '99, and Hildo Palencia.



It's February break at Xavier, and with students and teachers away, 16th Street is silent save for the cacophony of hissing walkie-talkies reverberating in Keenan Commons.

It's rare for the entire maintenance staff to assemble in one place, and rarer still for night and day crews to intermingle. They're together today to take the group photo that opens this article—but a security guard at the front desk is trying to reach one of them, and he's persistent.

It's not an urgent request, so one after another, members of the maintenance crew politely reply that they're in Keenan Commons, that they'll get right back to him. Undaunted, the guard then calls **Frank Leahy P'10**, Director of the Physical Plant.

"Sorry, I'm in the middle of a photo shoot," he answers breezily. "Call my agent."

The team erupts in laughter. It's a moment indicative of their collective character and the unrelenting absurdity of the past year. Through it all, with little fanfare, the maintenance crew has dutifully—and joyfully—tackled the tasks before them.

After Xavier suspended in-person learning on March 12, 2020, the maintenance staff continued working for one more week. Then the New York State on PAUSE executive order directed all non-essential employees to stay home, effectively shutting down the state.

Days after transitioning to distance learning, as the staggering economic ramifications of the virus began to reveal themselves, Xavier made a public commitment that no student would be asked to leave Xavier for financial reasons related to COVID-19. The school also promised to keep every member of the faculty and staff employed, including the maintenance staff.

"Thank God they were all paid," Leahy said. "It's great that Xavier was able to do that."

He and his son, **Francis Leahy '10**, continued traveling to Xavier daily, making them the only people in the building save Jack Raslowsky, Raslowsky's son, John, and whoever staffed the front desk. Most often,

***The true story of the Herculean logistics involved in reopening Xavier for hybrid learning will probably never be effectively communicated. You just had to be there. And the maintenance crew was, day after day—Xavier's most loyal front-line workers.***

that was **James Glass '18** ("the hero Xavier deserves," in Francis Leahy's words), who was home from college and volunteered to work when no one else was available.

The Leahys arrived at Xavier each day between 6:30 and 7 a.m. and stayed until 11 a.m., with their normally lengthy commute to and from Riverdale reduced to 15-20 minutes each way.

"Driving into the city, I felt like I was in one of those movies after an apocalypse," Frank Leahy said. "Many times when we left Xavier, there was not a soul on the street and not even another car."

While on 16th Street, they checked to make sure the building's mechanical systems were functioning properly, took out the trash for the Xavier Jesuit Community, and made sure its residents, some of whom are elderly, had everything they needed.

After the May 25 death of George Floyd sparked nationwide protests and chaos in Union Square, neighborhood buildings suddenly boarded up, compounding the apocalyptic scenes. Xavier emerged unscathed except for graffiti sprayed on the Old Stone Building's limestone façade one night.

The next day, the Leahys power-washed the graffiti relentlessly until it disappeared.

Throughout the statewide lockdown, Frank Leahy's staff texted him frequently, asking when they could return to work. Most came back the second week of June, taking public transportation from as far away as Long Island and the Poconos.

Commuting on buses and subways amid a global pandemic sparked some anxiety, but it didn't stop the team from returning to Xavier. "It was a good feeling to come back," said **Yamilka Santos**.

Added **Kevin Reinhart '99**: "I think everybody was concerned in some way, shape, or form, but we all wanted to come in. We wanted to get out of the house!"

And then the real work began.

The true story of the Herculean logistics involved in reopening Xavier for hybrid learning will probably never be effectively communicated. You just had to be there. And the maintenance crew was, day after day—Xavier's most loyal front-line workers.

Along with **Bill Ford**, Xavier's COVID-19 Response Coordinator and Assistant to the President, Frank Leahy painstakingly measured each classroom to ensure proper distancing between students and teachers, then marked the floors appropriately. After identifying a moving company and a sufficiently large offsite storage facility, Leahy and his crew removed more than 600 desks and countless other pieces of classroom furniture to maximize space.

Over the summer, the team converted all toilets, urinals, and sinks to hands-free units; installed eight hand-washing stations and 48 hand sanitizer dispensers throughout the buildings; raised partitions at cafeteria tables and in bathrooms between sinks; shut off all water fountains to encourage the use of automatic bottle fillers; transformed a conference room on the first floor of Fernandez-Duminuco Hall into an isolation room; and helped Director of Technology **Hernando Avila P'23** install cameras in classrooms. They did all of this on top of their regular summer workload, such as painting and lighting repairs.

Frank Leahy ordered enough disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer to stock every classroom and office for the year. He purchased electrostatic sprayers in June, but due to extraordinary shipping delays caused by increased demand, the sprayers didn't arrive until mid-October. So he pivoted and ordered more readily available disinfecting devices to ensure daily deep cleanings until the electrostatic sprayers arrived.

By the time school opened in mid-September, Leahy said, "I felt very confident that we had done all that we could possibly do. We left no stone unturned."

COVID-19 precautions have reigned supreme throughout Xavier's 174th academic year. After each lunch period, a member of the maintenance team uses one of the coveted electrostatic sprayers to clean Hurtado Hall and the gym (now an overflow lunch area). And at the end of every school day, every touch point in the building is disinfected again.

Ensuring the safety of more than 1,200 people can be overwhelming, so Frank Leahy makes a point to check in on his staff's well-being. His top priority now is making sure everyone gets vaccinated.

"Everyone is fine. Thank God no one has been infected by the virus," he said. "They come to work each day and do their job. They're not stressed about it. Once everybody started to get a handle on it, you accept it, and you do it."

"I'm proud of what we were able to accomplish in a short amount of time," Reinhart added. "We just followed the protocols. This is our job. We signed up for this. Whatever we can do to support the students, we'll do."

His fellow Son of Xavier, Francis Leahy, agreed.

"It's just the job that we're called to do. We are the heartbeat of Xavier," he said. "Without a foundation, other things don't run successfully. If we don't do our job, these kids don't get to come back. And it's not Xavier without them."

Bill Ford, who worked closely with the maintenance team throughout the year, agreed—and he captured Xavier's gratitude.

"Like many other organizations, Xavier has been reminded during this pandemic about how much our core work of education and faith formation depends on the unheralded service of a few. In our case, it has been the men and women of our maintenance staff," he said. "They were among the first departments to return on a regular basis after the shutdown last spring. They are the first to arrive each morning and often the last to leave at night. Through months of a public health crisis where the only constants have been uncertainty and anxiety, they have quite simply persisted. Each day, with quiet courage and dedication, they have remade Xavier anew as a clean, well-lighted, and safe place for the rest of us to do our work with and for our young men. Thanks be to each and all of our maintenance team."

*Shawna Gallagher Vega is Xavier's Director of Communications. She is a graduate of Boston College.*



# A TEACHER AT HEART

By ERIC KREBS '17



After 15 years in the role, Michael LiVigni P'21 will conclude his tenure as headmaster in June.

**N**ew York has seen a lot in the last 15 years: two mayors, four presidents, four governors; the addition of a few dozen new skyscrapers to its skyline; a financial crisis that cost the city 140,000 jobs; a superstorm that inflicted \$19 billion in damages; and, now, a pandemic that has thus far claimed the lives of 28,000 of its residents.

Through it all, Xavier High School has had one headmaster: **Michael LiVigni P'21**.

But to everything there is a season, and after 15 summers, autumns, winters, and springs, LiVigni—who became headmaster in 2006—is stepping down from his post. From his tenure, he leaves a legacy of commitment to holistic education, a contagious strive towards self-actualization, a delicate balance of friendship and leadership, and, above all, an unbridled, unashamed love for the craft of teaching.

Teaching—and a little fate—is what brought LiVigni to Xavier in the first place. After six years as a history teacher at Canisius High School in Buffalo, LiVigni returned to New York City, where he grew up, to complete a master's degree in educational administration at Fordham University.

The spring before his matriculation, then-Headmaster **David Ciancimino, S.J. '77**—who had previously worked with LiVigni when he served as principal of Canisius—notification of an emergency opening left by a history teacher who had abandoned his post mid-year, an opening that LiVigni could fill. “I say a prayer of thanksgiving for him almost every day,” said LiVigni. “Because of him I got a job at Xavier.”

Though LiVigni was a fresh face in the Xavier department known for the enduring nature of its lineup, with six years of teaching under his belt, he was by no means a rookie. “My first impression of Mike was of someone who was well-steeped in Jesuit education, super-well prepared, and an excellent teacher,” said **Ed Young P'22**, a fellow history teacher and current department chair.

“You looked in his classroom, and he had stacks of binders filled with lectures, research, and lesson plans—one of the best-prepared teachers I’ve ever met,” reflected history teacher **Chris Stevens '83**, who, at the time, was the department chair and one of LiVigni’s interviewers for the position.

After three years on the faculty, LiVigni joined the administration as assistant headmaster. And after three years in that role, he rose to the position of headmaster.

Though his rise to headmaster was meteoric—his tenure in the position has been nearly three times the length of both of his prior roles combined—he would never forget his years as assistant headmaster and as a member of the faculty. In fact, those experiences directly shaped his



After receiving a *Bene Merenti* Medal for 20 years of service to Xavier, LiVigni gave the Commencement Address to the Class of 2020 last July.

approach to the headmaster position.

In fact, one of his early priorities as headmaster was to get rid of his old position. “Having been the assistant headmaster, I thought it was an impossible job,” said LiVigni, “so I asked to divide that position in half and made it the Dean of Faculty and the Dean of Academics.” Creating the additional post meant that now the jobs of investing in the school’s curriculum and students’ success, as well as the job of developing and advising the school’s faculty, could be given the specialized attention both had long demanded.

In retrospect, this seemingly technical decision is emblematic of LiVigni’s central goal: a dual commitment to delivering the best possible holistic, Jesuit academic experience to students, and doing so by recruiting and developing a faculty wholeheartedly committed to—and adequately trained for—the task.

One early initiative was to overhaul Xavier’s admissions process, which, until that point, had relied solely on entrance exam scores to determine admissions. “That didn’t seem right to me for a whole host of reasons. First of all, I thought it was a terrible exam. Second of all, that’s not what Jesuit education is about,” said LiVigni. Developing a more holistic admissions process which came to incorporate written essays, letters of recommendation, and a deliberative council, LiVigni believes, allowed the school to start looking not only at numbers, but to consider “the people we wanted here.”

As the experience for prospective Xavier students changed, so did the experience for those already enrolled. The last 15 years have seen increased programming in the arts, the introduction of a computer science department, a complete overhaul of the school’s schedule, and increased support for students who find themselves stumbling.

“I think what Mr. LiVigni has been able to do is retain a strong commitment to academic excellence and at the same time continue to facilitate the development of relationships between students and faculty,” said Young. “That happens not just through the academic



1. LiVigni on a CFX Mexico trip in 2017. 2. Teaching AP U.S. Government and Politics in 2016. 3. Reading *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* at Christmas at Xavier in 2020. 4. At the 2013 Turkey Bowl. 5. At Xavier's Breakfast with Santa celebration in 2016.

1. LiVigni with his son, Matthew '21, at Maroon and Blue Day in 2019. 2. Delivering care packages to seniors in 2020. 3. Participating in the Ice Bucket Challenge in 2014.

excellence, but through taking time for the community to have days like Maroon and Blue Day, through his ongoing support of service trips and retreats that put students and faculty in shared experiences in faith and service ... he's really tried to instill in the faculty-student relationships a genuine care for their well-being."

Of course, LiVigni did none of this alone—and purposefully so. "When I took the Dean of Academics position, I had just finished a job as principal of a middle school, and I came from a community where the principal could do no wrong," said Luciano Lovallo, LiVigni's one-time student at Canisius, who has served as dean since 2010. "And Mike has helped me become a better servant-leader for both the parents, student body, and faculty. We can push each to be better, we can disagree and agree to disagree, but out in front always be in lockstep."

Fundamentally, LiVigni's investment in Xavier students has always worked as a function of investment in faculty. Over his tenure, he has prioritized the recruitment of top-tier teachers to the school alongside the continued professional development of Xavier's longtime faculty. This development, in one sense, was technical: ensuring that every teacher had a master's degree in their subject area, reexamining the curriculum and methods used in the classroom. But it was always personal, too.

"I took the job of headmaster when I was very young ... and when I was dealing with a faculty who has not only taught at the school longer than I have, but has taught at Xavier longer than I've been alive, you have to deal with that delicately," said LiVigni. And while most administrators would view a faculty full of veterans—especially in a place as attentive to tradition as Xavier—as an obstacle to reform, LiVigni found it an asset: "Part of the job of a high school administrator is to convince the teachers in the building why your way is the way

that we should go, and really what it did was it forced me to be able to articulate for and to justify to myself what I was going to ask them to do."

"In my heart, I'm a teacher," LiVigni admitted. But not only in his heart. Throughout his tenure as headmaster, he has remained in the classroom. "I used to always tell him he was nuts for teaching a class. It's really hard to do that as an administrator," said Eileen Carty, former Xavier history department chair and current Dean of Students at Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School in Pennsylvania. "But he used to say, 'You never really know what's going on at your school unless you're in the classroom.' And it's so true."

Even now, 15 years later, with LiVigni having hired most of the faculty in the building, that sense of obligation—to the faculty's expertise, to the craft of teaching, and to the students—has not faded. "He's a teacher's teacher. You know he knows what he's talking about, and you know when he gives you an evaluation that he is your ally," said Stevens.

"Mike was able to push us forward in regards to updating and re-imagining curriculum," reflected Margaret Gonzalez P'24, who has taught English at Xavier since 1993. "He sees the wonderful potential for this space while keeping the foundations intact."

One form of potential LiVigni recognized early on—and has realized over his tenure—was the opportunity, and need, to bring gender balance to the Xavier faculty. In 2006, 26% of the Xavier faculty were women. Today, that number is 39%. "I thought it was important for our students to see women in roles of leadership and teaching them," said LiVigni. "And I think I've hired some pretty excellent female teachers ... all amazing individuals who are good role models for our guys to follow."

As in all things, bringing gender parity was not a solitary

accomplishment, and LiVigni makes his gratitude for the tenacity and expertise of the daughters of Xavier, faculty and staff alike, well-known. "Any committee I served on, any task force I sat on, Mike always made sure that there were female voices," said Carty, who became Xavier's first female history teacher when she arrived on 16th Street in 2003. "I was the only woman in the department ... and there was no tolerance for the 'boys will be boys' concept. That enables women to speak up, and that came from the top. As a professional, I found my voice at Xavier."

A friend and a mentor, a teacher and an administrator, LiVigni has managed to balance his responsibility to his colleagues and love for his friends. That doesn't mean it's been easy. "The most difficult thing is to say no to people you respect, or to correct people you really like," said LiVigni. "There's nothing easy about it but it's part of the job, and I like to think that when it happens, they understand. I don't know if that's true, but I like to believe it is." In the Ignatian spirit, LiVigni has learned a lot about himself from the position—and especially its struggles. For one, he has an "absolute lack of indifference."

"And I'm not terribly patient," he laughed with a tinge of embarrassment, "particularly when I don't think people are living up to the standards they should be." That lack of patience comes with a flip side, a ceaseless commitment to doing "whatever I have to do to help someone to get to those standards."

As an introvert—a historian by training who loves government and art—the public nature of the headmaster's pulpit hasn't always been easy, either. "I can't tell you how many times Margaret Gonzalez has come up to me and said, 'If you're not smiling, no one is smiling, so do something about that,'" he laughed. LiVigni, still, after 15 years at Xavier's helm, doesn't quite understand why people look to him for cues, for guidance. But they do, in almost every circumstance.

"He cares for the faculty so deeply and our happiness means a great deal to him," reflected Colleen Rober, a Spanish teacher at Xavier since 2010. "Mike is always, and I do mean always, available to us when we need him, whether the issue at hand is related to our vocation or not. He has been a source of comfort to me through several trying moments and also a dear friend during times of celebration."

So much of Mike LiVigni's legacy is his desire to listen, to have an open-door policy and mean it. But he also knows how to talk. "There is not a more passionate, better public speaker that I know," said Stevens, thinking specifically of this year's Ignatian Scholars reception night. "Mike goes through the five points of the Grad at Grad, and that can be sleepy stuff, but by the end of his speech, I was ready to go to war."

"He always knew the right words. He could always capture the moment, he could connect with teachers and students alike, and that doesn't happen everywhere," said Carty.

The passion LiVigni emanates, for generations of Xavier students and faculty alike, has brought life to receptions, assembly meetings, and services; that passion, for LiVigni, can also be tongue-tying. "Sometimes I look out and think, 'There is nothing I could ever tell this group of people that could ever communicate to them how important they are not just to me, but to the world.'"

But even when words fail, actions prevail. Mike LiVigni, for 20 years, has shown Xavier exactly how much it means to him. "Perhaps 'loving' is the word that describes Mr. LiVigni more than anything else. He loves his family, he loves his colleagues, and he loves Xavier," said Rober.

"And I know that I can say, proudly and without hesitation, that Xavier will always love Mike LiVigni."

*Eric Krebs '17 is a writer and rising senior at Yale University.*



# SONS OF XAVIER

## 1944

📷 **Dr. Tom Draper** continues to be active in public health. He is currently collaborating with the Newtown (Connecticut) Health District in the establishment of clinics for COVID-19 vaccination. He is in regular contact with **Leo Gafney '54**, **Dr. Gerry Foye '56**, and **Dr. John McGrade '57**.

After retiring from the New York Fire Department, the late **Thomas McMahon†** moved to California where he had a second career teaching. He also enjoyed surfing in the Pacific and motorcycling up and down the coast. He then retired to the fishing village of Shelter Cove in Northern California where he was able to add motorboating to his motorcycling activities until this past year. With his wife, Kathryn, he was content to watch the bird life with views of the Pacific from his home.

**Dr. Charles Westhoff** is a retired emeritus professor of demography at Princeton University. He has become skilled at acrylic painting and now devotes much of his leisure time to painting pictures of birds. Some of his finer paintings are soon to be collected in book form.

## 1945

**George Camisa** lives in Palos Verdes, California, with views of the Pacific. He retired from a career with the Gallo and Heublein Corporations. Until five years ago, he was an avid skier enjoying the slopes in Italy, Germany, and California. He now enjoys hiking along the Pacific shore and is looking forward to volunteering at the Battleship USS Iowa Museum when the COVID-19 pandemic is controlled.

**Bill Hourigan** is living at Harrogate in Toms River, New Jersey. He retired from the insurance business and enjoyed the life of an avid golfer. He currently enjoys visits from his nearby children and grandchildren.

**John McGoldrick** lives in Brevard, North Carolina, where he enjoys golf and frequent visits with

Xavier neighbors **Tom McGohey '43** and **Joe Gerardi '46**.

Retired surgeon **Dr. Joe Schanno** lives in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, where he breeds betta fish in his home aquarium and enjoys watching classic movies on TV.

## 1948

**Vincent Vella** is "alive and well" in Westfield, Indiana. "I'm looking forward to a spring bear hunt in Northern Canada," he writes. "Wish me luck."

## 1949

📷 **Dr. Tom O'Brien** and his wife, Nancy, celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary with a January trip to George Town, Great Exuma, Bahamas, a place they first visited in 1976.

## 1952

"Recently I was poking around on the Internet looking for an expert on home construction to get some advice regarding a problem with my beach cottage in New Jersey," **Robert Coughlin** writes. "By chance I came across such an expert who identified himself as a Xavier alumnus, **Charles Lachner '79**. He teaches construction science at a local New Jersey college and previously operated a construction company he founded and passed on to his sons. After we exchanged reminiscences and pleasantries online Charles gave me helpful advice based on some photos I emailed him. An instance of the 'old school tie' in the digital age. Go Xavier."

**Dr. Chester Schmidt** writes that he is finally retired but able to continue teaching at Johns Hopkins over Zoom.

**Frank Sherry** and his wife, Barbara, hope to see old friends and classmates at Xavier when in-person events are held again.

## 1955

**Chris Arvani** lives in Michigan. He has been retired for 20 years after a successful career financing the construction of power plants for DTE Energy Company.

**Daniel Cuoco** writes that he is "sitting in complete boredom in Princeton, New Jersey." He splits his time between Princeton and Hobe Sound, Florida.

**Jim O'Connell** writes, "Pauline and I are doing well and grateful that we live in a continuing care campus that kept us safe. We have received both doses of the Pfizer vaccination. May God bless and keep everyone safe."

## 1956

**Dr. Frank Heelan** has published a book, *Stations of the Risen Christ: Resurrection Meditations*, to inspire people to pray and meditate on the Scriptural passages relating to Jesus Christ rising from the dead and his subsequent appearances to more than 500 disciples for 40 days. "By praying the Stations of the Risen Christ during the Easter season to complement the Stations of the Cross for Lent, we are witnessing to our belief in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and the hope that Christ will clothe us in a resurrected body in the days to come," he writes. "Stations may be found on the website [www.the-risenchrist.com](http://www.the-risenchrist.com) and may be purchased at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) or [barnesandnoble.com](http://barnesandnoble.com)."

This summer, Christian Faith Publishing will release *Wisdom for Millennials and Others*, a booklet written by **Dr. Frank Perroni** to help educators, parents, and graduates gain a positive outlook and aim high.

After more than 55 years of practice, **Dr. William Piro** retired from dentistry and is enjoying life playing golf and spending time with his seven grandchildren. "Angel and I hope all is well with my classmates," he writes. "Thank you Xavier for all you have done for me."

## 1957

**Joseph Juhasz** lives in Boulder, Colorado. "In all the insanities of the moment—knock on my wooden head—I am in excellent physical health," he writes. "Beyond confusion otherwise. I am finding myself reassessing so many



1. Dr. Tom Draper '44 at a COVID-19 vaccination clinic he helps oversee in Newtown, Connecticut.

2. Dr. Tom O'Brien '49 and his wife, Nancy, in the Bahamas.



1. Fr. Daniel Gatti, S.J. '59, a skilled woodworker, recently restored and refinished these rocking chairs.  
2. The Class of 1961 reunites on Zoom.  
3. Bobby Grant '68, Edward Grant '62, and Ken Grant '64 with their late brother Kelly Grant, left.



things I used to think were just unquestioned and unquestionable.”

**Kevin Morrissey** writes “with greetings to all my surviving classmates and great appreciation for our stellar education together. And warm thoughts back to so many of our wonderful teachers, among whom I mention: **Fr. Matthews, Edward Stevens, Mr. Thompson, Fr. Hareiss,** and our physics teacher whose name I can't just now recall.”

**Richard Paula** writes, “My wife, Esther, and I both received our second Pfizer shot. Thankfully no bad side effects. We are retired and live in Safety Harbor, Florida, a suburb of Tampa/St Petersburg. I would love to hear from members of the class of 1957.” He can be reached at [rlp1204@yahoo.com](mailto:rlp1204@yahoo.com).

### 1958

**Barry Ryan** writes that the Class of 1958 held its first-ever Zoom reunion on January 19. “Using a very incomplete email list, 18 classmates were in on the call and a good time was had by all. We encourage all members of our class to join in the fun. Please send your email address to **Brian Smith** at [smithb@ripn.edu](mailto:smithb@ripn.edu).”

### 1959

In recent years, **Drew Bauman** was inducted into the St. Peter's University Athletic Hall of Fame, awarded an honorary Alpha Sigma Nu membership, and in 2017 was awarded an honorary

degree from St. Peter's. Two years ago, he received the New Jersey Supreme Court Pro Bono Award. His daughter, Moriah, graduated from Boston College in 2015, worked as a Jesuit Volunteer at a homeless shelter in Oakland, California, then interned for Pencil of Promise in Laos. She is now enrolled in a joint MBA/MPH program at Boston University.

**Fr. Daniel Gatti, S.J.** has been assisting at Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal in Point Lookout, Long Island, since last September. He's also found time for some woodworking, recently restoring and refinishing two Troutman Chair Co. rockers belonging to a Point Lookout neighbor.

### 1960

**Dr. Stephen de Angelis** plans to give a series of five lectures on Russian imperial history in St. Petersburg and Moscow from August 28 through September 12. The lectures had previously been delayed due to COVID-19.

Using his experience in restorative justice and restorative practices, **Bob Stump** has recently helped organize and lead groups to discuss racial healing. Two groups are made up of his 1960 classmates and three include members of his parish. He also served on a working group that created a strategic plan to bring restorative practices to the legal system, the schools, and community groups in

his local county in Virginia. Xavier invited him to give the keynote address to the Class of 2021 on St. Peter Claver Day in January.

### 1961

Since their 50th reunion, members of the Class of 1961 have been gathering twice a year—in Quogue in the summer and at a pre-Christmas lunch in New York City. “Participation varies, but we average between 18-25 of us and it tends to be those of us in the metro New York area,” writes **Jack Galbraith**. “Because of COVID, we had a Zoom gathering so distance wasn't an issue. We had over 30 of us that signed up originally and ended up about 27 that actually figured out the technology and dialed in!”

### 1962

**Edward Grant** shared the sad news that Kelly Grant, youngest of the Grant sons (including **Kenneth Grant '64** and **Robert Grant '68**), died on January 29. “Our littlest brother...was a giant in our eyes,” he said.

### 1963

“Undeterred by the virus, a few members of the 4B class, who graduated in 1963, conducted their annual get-together via Zoom,” **Bill Porter** writes. “Normally we gather on Arthur Avenue, but Zoom allowed us to call in from not only NYC, but also Massachusetts, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, Florida, and Ohio.” In addition to Porter, in attendance were

## LASTING LESSONS

JOE “BUDDY” O’NEILL ’41  
BY NICK BARONE '16

*“IT CHANGED MY LIFE—THAT’S THE OBJECTIVE OF XAVIER. IT GAVE ME THE CHOICE I WANTED AT THAT TIME AND STARTED MY LIFE IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.”*

If Xavier’s mascot wasn’t the beloved knight, it would be Joe “Buddy” O’Neill ’41.

Xavier meant a lot to O’Neill—more than a high school would to anyone else. “It changed my life—that’s the objective of Xavier,” he reflected. “It gave me the choice I wanted at that time and started my life in the right direction.”

“To say that he is a proud alum is an understatement,” said O’Neill’s son, John. “His experience at Xavier changed his life—it taught him to be the respectful man he is. He was so proud when he was invited to graduation in 2016 [to represent the 75th reunion class]. We went out to dinner after the ceremony and he was treated like a superstar when the boys and their families saw him.”

O’Neill’s older brother, **Jack O’Neill ’39†**, also attended Xavier and eventually served in the Air Force.

“My fondest memories of Xavier have to be the St. Patrick’s Day parade. My brother and I loved it. JROTC was such a big part of my Xavier experience. We used to love seeing members of the military there,” O’Neill said.

O’Neill entered the Army at age 19 and fought in World War II. After coming home, he attended Fordham University and went on to marry and have seven kids—five daughters, two sons.

His son, John, reflected on some of the obstacles his father had to overcome in the early days of supporting his family.

“For the time being, he lived in a cold water apartment,” John O’Neill said. “He and his wife heated the apartment using coal and eventually kerosene. The bedrooms were close to the kitchen for heat. He only had a bathtub, and there was no shower. There was a single lead pipe that ran from the water to the tub. He got his degree in five years while he was here, which speaks to the type of man he is.”

Soon after, O’Neill became the director of systems and computer services at Fortune Brands, formerly known as American Tobacco, doing all he could to support his large family.

Now in retirement, O’Neill resides in Delray Beach, Florida. Life has looked a little different in O’Neill’s paradise because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Between the pool, the beach,



the restaurants, and of course, golf, O’Neill has long been able to keep himself moving. He unfortunately stopped golfing at age 93, but he still enjoys his time doing all that he loves to do, albeit at a limited capacity.

He is now fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and is, unsurprisingly, feeling as strong and healthy as ever.

“If my dad can survive a depression, a world war, a Cold War, and a pandemic, among other things, you can, too. Xavier has prepared you for many things. Consider it your rock,” O’Neill’s son, John, told the author of this article—who graduated from Xavier the same year Joe “Buddy” O’Neill represented the 75th reunion class. “It is my hope you’ll be able to attend the Xavier graduation of 2091!”



Above: Buddy O’Neill representing the 75th reunion class at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in June 2016; returning to Kennedy Airport after an Honor Flight to Washington in 2017; in his 1941 Xavier yearbook photo.

# Xavier's Reception Tour GOES VIRTUAL

## Florida Reception



## New England Reception



## Virtual Beefsteak Dinner



## West Coast Reception



Xavier brings alumni together annually at receptions across the country, but with COVID-19 precautions in place nationwide and a holiday surge in cases threatening public health, the 2020-21 tour went virtual to ensure the community's safety. Sons of Xavier in Florida, on the West Coast, and across New England socialized and listened to updates from Xavier's Advancement Office via Zoom in February. And the annual Beefsteak tradition continued in virtual format, with a dinner package available for pickup by local alumni and recorded cooking demonstrations featuring Director of Alumni Relations **Zane Massey '96 P'22** and former president **Jim Keenan, S.J.**



1. A Class of 1963 Zoom meeting.  
2. Tommy Dwyer '66 and Patrick O'Brien '66 in Florida.

**John Draghi P'04, Pete Flannery, Bob Gaffoglio, Rev. Frank Herrmann, S.J., Tom Keaveney, Rev. John LaRocca, S.J., Tom Lydon, and Rev. Dan Fitzpatrick, S.J.** "Fr. Fitzpatrick (then Mr. Fitzpatrick) was our class teacher in our sophomore year, instructing us in Latin and English, and later marrying many of us, and baptizing many of our children and grandchildren."

**Dr. John Yoegel** lives in Greenwich, Connecticut. The fourth edition of his book, *Real Estate License Exams for Dummies*, was released in November 2020. He reports that he misses his live real estate classes but embraces the challenge of distance teaching.

**1964**  
**Dr. Francis J. Bremer** retired from the history department of Millersville University of Pennsylvania in 2011. He has been continuing his scholarly study of Puritanism in the early Atlantic world and is now serving as coordinator of New England Beginnings, a partnership of institutions and individuals working to commemorate the cultures (English, Native, and Black) that shaped New England 400 years ago. Last year, on the 400th anniversary of the sailing of the Mayflower, he delivered many virtual lectures to audiences in England, the Netherlands, and the United States. Bremer recently co-edited William Bradford's *Of Plimoth Plantation, the 400th Anniversary Edition*. He

also published *One Small Candle: The Plymouth Puritans and the Beginnings of English New England*.

**Paul McLoughlin** lives in Boulder, Colorado. He was the 14th member of the McSweeney/McLoughlin families to graduate from Xavier. He recently wrote an article, "Another Time, Another Plague!" about his grandfather, Charles O'Malley, for a family newsletter. The story details O'Malley's parents' journey from Ireland to Scotland after the Irish famine. There, after the Crimean War of 1854-56, returning British soldiers brought the Bubonic Plague to Glasgow. O'Malley's parents lost seven children in three weeks, then returned to Ireland in hopes of safeguarding their remaining children.

**1966**  
**John Meditz**, a current Board member of the Hackensack Meridian Health Network and Chair of the HMH at Palisades Foundation, will join the newly formed Board of the HMH Network Foundation.

**Andy Mihalick** and his wife, Kathy, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on January 16 with a small dinner party attended by their children and grandchildren.

📍 In January, while in Estero, Florida on a consulting project for Hertz, **Patrick O'Brien** took a Sunday off and drove a couple of hours to the Tampa/St. Petersburg

area to meet up with **Tommy Dwyer**, his Xavier and Manhattan College classmate. "We hadn't seen each other in over 50 years but had no difficulty recognizing each other," O'Brien said. "Spent over two-and-a-half hours laughing and reminiscing over good times with classmates from both institutions. Tommy took care of the check, insisting it was his treat since I was visiting (thanks again, Tommy!). We will do this again soon, I'm sure, since there were hours of stories and history left on the table, so to speak!"

**1968**  
**Peter Cuneo** lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He writes that he's "hanging in there, retired nine years. Still playing chess and still flying."

**1969**  
On January 29, **Lenny Alfano** retired from the New York Department of Education, where he served as a middle school business manager.

**1970**  
**John Molino** recently published his third suspense novel, *From a Distance*. His first two books were *Murder Gets Even* and *Death in the Dune*. All of his books are available in print and as Kindle e-books on Amazon.

**1971**  
**Anthony Flood '71** ghost-wrote *Six Popes: A Son of the Church Remembers*, by Monsignor

# Loyal Sons and True

By SHAWNA GALLAGHER VEGA



Hank Michels '16 and Nick Barone '16

Since the birth of the Xavier alumni fellowship program nine years ago, 24 Sons of Xavier have returned to 16th Street to jumpstart their careers while providing critical service to their alma mater.

Four fellowship veterans count among the Xavier faculty and staff today—college counselor **Jimmy Buckley '13**, Dean of Students **Mike Fiore '10**, advancement associate **Rory Harris '08**, and Director of Ignatian Service Programs **Greg Stelzer '11**.

Harris, one of the original three fellows, had been interested in entering the Jesuit Volunteer Corps but jumped at the chance to return to 16th Street. “I loved my time at Xavier and wanted to give back to the institution that had given me so much,” said Harris, who served as the admissions alumni fellow in 2012-13. “My time as a fellow reaffirmed my love for and belief in Xavier, which is essential for any positive work life.”

Buckley, who also served in admissions, said the fellowship helped him develop great transferable skills. “Having to present to parents and prospective students while giving tours and information sessions allowed me to become more comfortable with public speaking, and doing so reinforced the need to be both professional and personable,” he said. “It also translated well to counseling. Hearing the desires and questions from prospective parents and students about what they wanted in a high school allowed me to actively listen and provide my thoughts and advocate for future Sons of Xavier.”

Other fellows have gone on to careers in law, business, and academia, among other fields. The program’s networking opportunities have been particularly valuable, both among fellows and with the alumni community at large.

**Nick Byrne '11**, a senior account executive at the digital marketing agency NPACcel, served as the communications and alumni relations fellow in 2015-16. After learning about the fellowship from program alumnus **Peter Barbieri '10**, he returned to Xavier and immersed himself in school life, coaching rugby and football and leading Kairos. When he met that year’s Career Day keynote speaker, **Tom Lee '92**—a

senior partner at a Boston-based marketing agency—Byrne expressed an interest in advertising, and the rest is history.

“I’ve always cherished my Xavier experience, but having the opportunity to relive that experience as a staff member gave me a greater appreciation for the process,” he said. “The pursuit of excellence in every endeavor has always resonated with me, but revisiting that mission as a 22-year-old looking to jumpstart my career really struck me.”

This year’s alumni fellows, **Nick Barone '16** and **Hank Michels '16**, have similarly immersed themselves in school life. Despite social distancing protocols, they are familiar faces in the hallways, leading retreats, creating entertaining videos, and providing support across the institution.

After walking past Xavier at the height of the pandemic, Barone said he felt called back to 16th Street. When his best friend sent him the fellowship application a few days later, he “saw it as a sign to come back and help in any way I can during a time where the best thing we could do as people is be there for each other, or as I was taught so long ago, be a man for others.”

Barone hopes to one day work in communications and social media, so his role as a fellow in communications and alumni relations has equipped him with a valuable set of skills. “I learned to take accountability for myself and how to work with a team of people with such diverse skill sets. I also learned how to be the world’s best multitasker, especially on *E-News* days,” said the University of Scranton alum. “My main responsibilities have been writing the *E-News* and organizing alumni and advancement events. That only scratches the surface, though. I’ve been able to explore so many avenues and complete so many different projects that aren’t even in the job description. Everything I’ve done here has helped me grow.”

Michels, the admissions alumni fellow, also aspires to a career in media. A Fordham graduate, he initially heard about the program from Barone. “Not only have I been able to make connections, I’ve learned a lot of skills, giving tours and helping with videos for Xavier,” he said. “I always considered myself a pretty good public speaker, but the difference between my first tour and the last one I gave is really noticeable. I’ve become really comfortable talking to new people.”

Along with Barone, Michels has contributed to Xavier’s frequent video communications, assembling videos as diverse as a virtual tour of Xavier featuring **Lou Orlando '21** and the complex Virtual Turkey Bowl, which featured four quarters of a Madden NFL video game competition.

“This is the perfect year for me to be doing this, not just because it’s something good for me to be doing, but because I’m able to help with Xavier’s transition to digital,” Michels said. “The stars really aligned.”

## Support Xavier’s students with a gift of any size.

Last March, we made a commitment that no student would be asked to leave Xavier for financial reasons related to COVID-19. With your help, we will honor that commitment.

[www.xavierhs.org/give](http://www.xavierhs.org/give)

## Add some maroon and blue to your life.



Visit the Xavier Knight Shop online at [campusstore.xavierhs.org](http://campusstore.xavierhs.org)

Use code **XHS2021** to save 20% on all non-uniform items purchased through June 30, 2021.



1. Neal Miranda '73, Charlie Butera '73, Frank Comerford '73, and Bob Fitzsimmons '73 in Delray Beach, Florida.

2. Dr. Patrick Connolly '73 with his family.

3. Dr. Victor Vallo '73.



Hilary C. Franco. It will be published on May 25 and can be pre-ordered on Amazon.

**John N. Frank** was named 2020 Midwest Volunteer of the Year by Mended Hearts, a national peer-to-peer support group for heart patients. He also was named to the Marquis Who's Who in America for his work with Mended Hearts and with his theater, the Evanston 2nd Act Players.

**Eric Hoffmeyer** writes that he is "still building, fixing, machining, and welding stuff. Trailer modification is the latest project." He and his wife, Bridget, continue to enjoy living in Kentucky and wish their Xavier family the best.

## 1972

**Dr. Franklin Caesar P'00** writes that his classmate, **Donald Gross P'03**, retired from Xavier last year after 30 years teaching math on 16th Street. "During the last decade, at least, Don has been our class president. He even ushered us into the 'new normal' by hosting Zoom meetings for '72 Sons when the pandemic didn't allow us to go out to dinner or just go to a Xavier athletic contest with fellow classmates. He has allowed us to 'see' each other and keep in touch. We are all waiting with bated breath for our golden anniversary in 2022. We all thank you, Don, for your tireless effort in keeping the Sons of '72 connected to each other and to our blessed alma mater. It is because of Don

Gross that the Class of 1972 continues to keep marching."

## 1973

**Charlie Butera** writes that he recently had dinner with his Xavier brothers **Frank Comerford, Bob Fitzsimmons, Bob Maguire, and Neal Miranda** in Delray Beach, Florida.

"After four years at the U.S. Department of the Interior, I am looking for another venue to stay involved in natural resource and environmental policy in Washington, D.C. and continue making a contribution to society," **Scott Cameron** writes. "I also really enjoy interacting with Xavier classmates in our Facebook group. Tech is a great enabler."

**Dr. Patrick Connolly** serves as professor of orthopaedic surgery and chief of the spine surgery division in the Department of Orthopaedics at the University of Massachusetts. He has been married to Deborah, whom he met at a Xavier dance, for 45 years. They have four grown children and eight grandchildren.

**Dr. Victor Vallo** recently accepted the position of adjunct instructor of music at LeMoyné College, a Catholic, Jesuit college in Syracuse.

## 1974

After 35 years in the IT industry, **Guillermo Bautista** has spent the past four years as a financial advisor with First Harbor Financial



Services at Raymond James. His wife recently celebrated 37 years with Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, where she focuses on cancer research. Their son, a law partner, specializes in privacy and cybersecurity while their daughter, an oncology nurse at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, is a critical nurse specialist focused on hospital process re-engineering and more recently on the proper use of PPE by hospital personnel.

**Paul Brickfield** has been an attorney for almost 40 years and continues to enjoy practicing criminal defense in the federal, state, and municipal courts of Northern New Jersey. He recently ran into **Patrick O'Connor** at an event near Albany.

## 1976

**Mike Butler** recently came out of retirement to accept the role of managing director and chief human resources officer for ProShares, an asset management firm based in Bethesda, Maryland. He is also currently enrolled in a program jointly sponsored by the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago and the London School of Economics. He expects to complete the program in December, when he will earn an MA in health policy from UChicago and an MS in health economics from LSE. Butler plans to combine this training with his business and legal experience to play a role in bringing badly needed reforms to the U.S. health care system. While COVID-19

has interrupted his endeavors as a competitive masters rower, he hopes to be back on the water and participating in races again this spring or summer. He and his wife Ginny recently celebrated their 36th wedding anniversary. They have three grown children.

**Ben Massa** is based in Wilmington, North Carolina. He is a senior director with the North Carolina State Ports Authority.

## 1977

**Glen Corsello** writes, "Hard to believe I am on the verge of retirement! With that I am putting the finishing touches on a house in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Soon the New York winters will be in the rear view mirror! I'm very excited and invite any classmates in the Myrtle Beach area to reach out." He can be contacted at [bigglen1@aol.com](mailto:bigglen1@aol.com).

**Mark Costello** is retiring after 25 years as an Ernst & Young partner. He looks forward to the next chapter of his career.

## 1978

After retiring last July after 38 years in the commercial air conditioning industry, **Kevin McNamara** took on a new role as chief operating officer of The Climate Control Group based in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. "We employ 1,200 workers with six factories designing, engineering, and manufacturing world-class products that address the issues of energy efficiency, health, and safety as well as providing sustainable environmental systems for buildings and facilities of all shapes and sizes across North America," he said. "I guess retirement can wait with all the challenges we have today."

## 1979

**Chris Doyle** is in his 19th year of teaching social studies at Bronxville High School, following 13 years at Fordham Prep. He is married to Notre Dame School English teacher Lydie Kane. "My two daughters Kelly and Kristin work at Partnerships

for Parks and CBS Viacom, respectively," he writes.

"Thanks to **Mark Reeth** our class has a snazzy Facebook page and a number of us have been reconnecting," **Ted Hynes** writes. "Our class is homing in on our 60th birthdays. Everyone looks and sounds exactly as bright and sharp as when they were walking down 16th Street back in the '70s. It's been great hearing updates and news from our classmates. If you're not on, please join! Search for Xavier High School Class of 1979 on Facebook. Hope everyone is well!"

**Eugene Tong** writes that he is "still alive and kicking!"

## 1981

**Kent Oz** writes that his daughter, Josi, is now a freshman at Fordham University.

## 1983

**Jim McElenev** is living in St. Petersburg Beach, Florida. He recently joined a national property management firm after selling a franchise business he owned. He welcomes fellow Sons of Xavier to reach out if they're in the Tampa Bay area. His email address is [mcelenev2093@gmail.com](mailto:mcelenev2093@gmail.com).

## 1985

**CMDR John Pucciarelli, USN (Ret.)** was recently awarded the Department of the Navy Civilian Service Commendation Medal for his efforts during the coronavirus pandemic. He is the Deputy Director, Bureau of Naval Personnel, responsible for military correctional facilities throughout the United States, Europe, and the Far East.

## 1986

**Patrick Tansey P'21** writes, "Congratulations to my son **John Xavier Tansey '21**, who will be graduating and joining the ranks of the Xavier alumni this spring."

## 1987

After spending nearly three decades as a senior vice president at Wells Fargo Advisors and



Morgan Stanley, **Peter Heidt** was appointed a managing director at Ameriprise Financial. He works from the Boca Raton, Florida branch.

Brooklyn Writers Press has published **Stephan Silich's** second book of collected poems, *tonight will be the longest night of them all*. This follows the publication of his first collection, *the silence between what I think and what I say*. All proceeds from book sales are donated back to Brooklyn Writers Press in an effort to support its mission of publishing unknown and independent authors. Books are available at all online retailers and stores in hardcover, paperback, and e-book

1. Ben Massa '76.

2. Glen Corsello '77 and his wife in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.



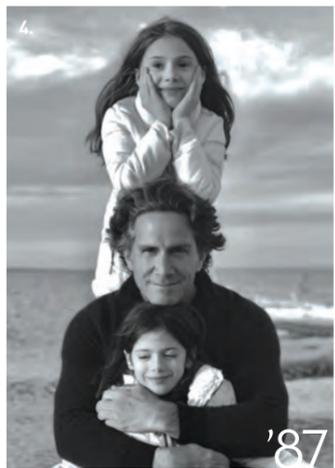
1. Michael Gargiulo '77 interviews Charles Messina '89 on Today in New York.



2. Christopher Spataro '89.



3. Frankie Gonzalez '90.



4. Stephan Silich '87 with his daughters, Emma and Mia.



5. Dan Sheehan '89 and a likeness of him in the Pfizer U.S. Sales Hall of Fame.

formats. To preview original words and photographs, visit Silich's Instagram account: @stephan\_silich. Silich currently works for Mount Sinai Health System in Manhattan as the senior vice president and chief administrative officer. He lives in Manhattan and East Hampton with his two daughters, Emma and Mia.

**1988**  
Dan Sheehan was recently inducted into Pfizer's U.S. Sales Hall of Fame. He is celebrating 25 years of the company that introduced the world's first COVID-19 vaccine.

**1989**  
Last year, Charles Messina created the web series *The Honeyzoomers*, which revolves around a brother and sister quarantining together in New York City during the COVID-19 pandemic. The popular series was covered on NBC, WPIX, FOX, and in publications such as the *New York Daily News* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

On January 1, Christopher Spataro was sworn in as the new judge of Elkhart Superior Court No. 5 in Elkhart, Indiana.

**1990**  
Frankie Gonzalez owns and operates two businesses based out of Miami. "My investment brokerage, Guardian Global Group, is dedicated to asset management using the capital markets. I create and maintain investment/insurance strategies for domestic and international investors," he writes. "I also help

borrowers manage liabilities by accessing the credit markets through my mortgage brokerage, Guardian Capital Lenders. I welcome all opportunities to help my fellow Sons of Xavier. Keep marching on to victory."

**John McNally** and his wife, Aurora, recently launched an Italian artisanal food import business. Specialty products include handmade sweets, pasta, olives, and more sold a la carte, in bulk volume, and in gift baskets. Orders can be customized and corporate orders are welcome. Members of the Xavier community can enjoy a 20% discount by visiting [www.AuroraAmore.com](http://www.AuroraAmore.com) and using the code XAVIER20.

**1991**  
LTC John C. Giordano, USA (Ret.) recently returned to the world of national defense, but this time as a government civilian. He is now serving as a senior strategic advisor to Cyber National Mission Force at Ft. Meade, Maryland.

**Brandon Tierney** just started his ninth year hosting *Tiki and Tierney*, which airs from 3-6 p.m. EST Monday-Friday on 150+ affiliates nationwide, including national TV simulcast on the CBS Sports Network. He continues to cover St. John's basketball games in addition to hosting *The Red Storm Report*, a weekly magazine show chronicling the program and the Big East, on MSG+. He just started writing his first book, which he hopes to release in late 2021 or early 2022, and hosted *Man vs. Bear* on the Discovery Channel in late 2019. Tierney lives in North

Caldwell, New Jersey, with his wife, Jen, 6-year-old son, Colton, and 4-year-old daughter, Kinsley. He also coaches Little League baseball.

**1992**  
Sean O'Mara is an executive officer in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. He is pleased to announce that he and his spouse, A. Magee, QC, have recently been approved to adopt a baby boy they have taken care of since he was 6 months old.

**1993**  
Kerwyn Phillip lives in Virginia with his wife, Denise, and three children, Menkuara, Khefera, and Kush. He is a corporate trainer who devotes his spare time to young people in his community. He co-founded the Youth Business Exchange, a nonprofit organization that supports and promotes youth entrepreneurship through popular events that routinely attract hundreds of participants. He is also the founder and CEO of KHUFU Enterprises, LLC, an organization that teaches leadership, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy to youth in underserved communities. A hip-hop historian, he teaches hip-hop youth empowerment workshops and even made time to write a book, *Malik's First Job*, about a young man going on his first job interview. The book is available on Amazon and at [www.MaliksFirstJob.com](http://www.MaliksFirstJob.com).

**1994**  
On July 22, 2020, the state of Parana, Brazil, awarded Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) Special Agent **Adrian Diaz** the Coronel Sarmento medal, the Policia

# ALWAYS A SON OF XAVIER

DR. BILL O'BRIEN '49  
BY SHAWNA GALLAGHER VEGA

OVER THE DECADES, RICH O'BRIEN SAID, HIS FATHER ALWAYS MENTIONED XAVIER'S INFLUENCE ON HIS LIFE.

As Rich O'Brien and his five siblings planned their dad's 90th birthday celebration, they knew one thing—Xavier had to be part of it.

Dr. Bill O'Brien '49 arrived at Xavier in September 1945, days after the end of the Second World War. He commuted to 16th Street from Carnegie Avenue in East Orange, New Jersey, and he can still retrace his footsteps nearly 76 years later. He walked a mile to the train, took the Lackawanna Railroad from East Orange to Hoboken, then chose the ferry or the Hudson and Manhattan Railroad (now known as PATH) to complete his journey to Manhattan.

When he arrived at school each morning, members of the Regiment assembled for inspection and announcements. A deep seriousness imbued the air at Xavier, then a military school that had just sent countless Sons to war. O'Brien's senior yearbook featured a tribute to the "Xavier man," detailing the ways Xavier shaped its students for the responsibilities of Catholic manhood.

O'Brien remembers taking "quite a language load" at Xavier—four years of English, four years of Latin, and two



years each of French, German, and Greek. Among his most memorable teachers were Timothy O'Dwyer, S.J.† for religion, Joseph DeSiot† for German, and Frederick "Fritz" Frohnhoefer, S.J.† for chemistry and physics.

"It was a full-time occupation going to Xavier," he remembered. "There was also a lot of learning outside Xavier's classrooms." The discipline he learned in high school served him well at the Stevens Institute of Technology, where he earned a degree in mechanical engineering in 1953, and at The Ohio State University, where he later earned an MBA and Ph.D. in management and finance.

Shortly after he was commissioned as an Air Force officer in 1954, he married his late wife, Paula. They began raising a family in northwestern Ohio, then lived in Europe (where he served as chief of the mathematics and computer division at the SHAPE Technical Center in the Netherlands and as NATO's chief engineer for the Airborne Warning and Control System Program in Brussels) for eight years before returning to the States, where they settled in Baltimore. Bill O'Brien taught at the University of

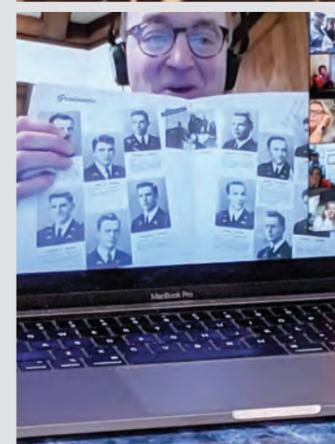
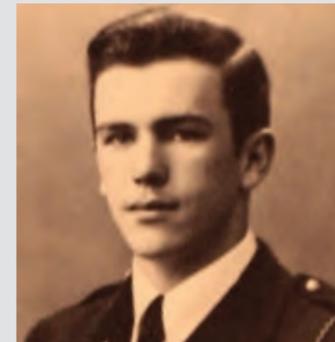
Baltimore before founding his own financial planning firm, where he was active for nearly two decades. (His daughter, Mary Dubyoski, called him a "jack of all trades, master of all.")

Over the decades, Rich O'Brien said, his father always mentioned Xavier's influence on his life—so he called the school in November to ask if a member of the administration would join his father's virtual 90th birthday celebration. President Jack Raslowsky P'16 gladly accepted that invitation.

"It was a very joyful celebration," said Dubyoski, with whom O'Brien resides in Maryland. Pork tenderloin and homemade chocolate cake were on the menu, and her father was surprised and moved when Raslowsky appeared among family members on screen.

The O'Brien children joined from various locations, thrilled to celebrate their father despite social distancing measures. Throughout the evening, they remembered Paula O'Brien, who passed away in 2017, and marveled at their father.

"His perspective is that when you turn 100, then you join the ranks of the elderly," Dubyoski said.



Above: Bill O'Brien displaying some of his favorite gifts at his 90th birthday celebration; O'Brien in his 1949 yearbook photo; Jack Raslowsky sending birthday greetings via Zoom.



1997

**Alexander Anastasiades P'24** and his wife, **Danielle Anastasiades P'24**, are the proud parents of **Alexander Jr.**, who is a Xavier freshman. Alexander and Danielle are both completing their 17th year of service in law enforcement.

**Fr. Jared Brogan** was appointed president of DePaul Catholic High School in Wayne, New Jersey, on July 1, 2020.

**Jordan Castro** will publish his sophomore novel, *The Great Silent Roar*, this spring. The novel follows fired magazine writer Jaxton Bello from his lowest point of hanging off the George Washington Bridge to being embedded with the NYPD during summer protests that devolved into riots to his ascent into literary immortality. In between those peaks and valleys, he takes an Odyssean journey through a New York City shutdown due to COVID-19 and through his own fractured consciousness and past relationships. Part *The Odyssey*, part *The Catcher in the Rye*, the novel is a reflection of 2020 New York in the mold of F. Scott Fitzgerald's legendary reflection 100 years prior.

2000

**John Khinda** recently updated his website, *JohnKhinda.com*, with links to his top performances which can all be viewed at *JohnKhinda.com/about/2/*. "As always," he writes, "you can support your classmate and future Academy Award winner by subscribing to his YouTube Channel at *YouTube.com/JohnKhinda*."

2002

**Eric Gutierrez** is now the director of alumni relations at Bank Street College in New York City.

**San Iswara** was recently named a managing director at Rockefeller Capital Management. He is currently the deputy chief operating officer and lives in New York City with his wife and two sons, Winston and Wyatt.

2004

**Tom Palmieri** is the director of counseling services at Central Penn College in Summerdale, Pennsylvania. He recently started coursework for his doctorate of education degree in counselor education and supervision. He and his fiancé, Stephen, live in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

2005

**Dr. Michael Krzyzak, MPH** has been promoted to medical site director at Staten Island University Hospital's Eastern campus, a newly created hospital to treat COVID-19 patients.

2007

**Seamus Campbell** recently graduated from The George Washington University with a master's degree in political management.

**Michael Chiaia** recently transitioned from the active duty Army and relocated to Arlington, Virginia, where he is a national security consultant supporting strategic programs for the Department of Defense and other government agencies.

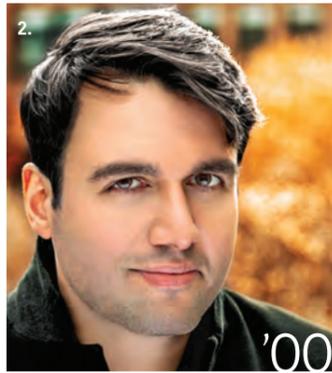
**Dr. Jason Kondrat** graduated from medical school in May 2020 and started as a first-year resident in emergency medicine at Staten Island University Hospital during the most challenging time in modern medicine. Prior to medical school, he was a research assistant at the Icahn School of Medicine Cardiovascular Research Center and received a master's degree in medical science at Boston University.

2008

**Tom Reilly** recently joined K2 Integrity as a manager in its financial crimes risk management practice after five years of service as an Assistant District Attorney in Staten Island.

2009

**Dylan Kitts** and his girlfriend, Devin, recently rescued Teddy, a lovable 2-year-old pitbull-boxer mix. Dylan recently



Militar's highest award, for his partnership in combating transnational crime in the tri-border region in Parana. For three years, Diaz served as an assistant regional security officer-investigator at the U.S. Consulate in São Paulo, Brazil, where he worked with Polícia Militar and other law enforcement organizations to investigate, deter, and dismantle transnational criminal organizations operating in the region. In addition to his investigative work, Diaz spearheaded multiple training missions with Brazilian authorities to help tighten security in the tri-border region.

1996

Cornerstone Government Affairs announced the addition of **CMDBR Christian Lee, USCG (Ret.)** to its national security team in July 2020. Lee most recently served as a professional staff member on the Senate Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security.

In December 2019, Firefighter **Vin Seminara** rescued a woman from drowning in the Harlem River. His brother, **Joseph Seminara '99**, is a member of the NYPD and was recently promoted to inspector. On his way home from work in November 2018, Joe Seminara saved a woman trapped in a burning SUV on a Brooklyn highway.

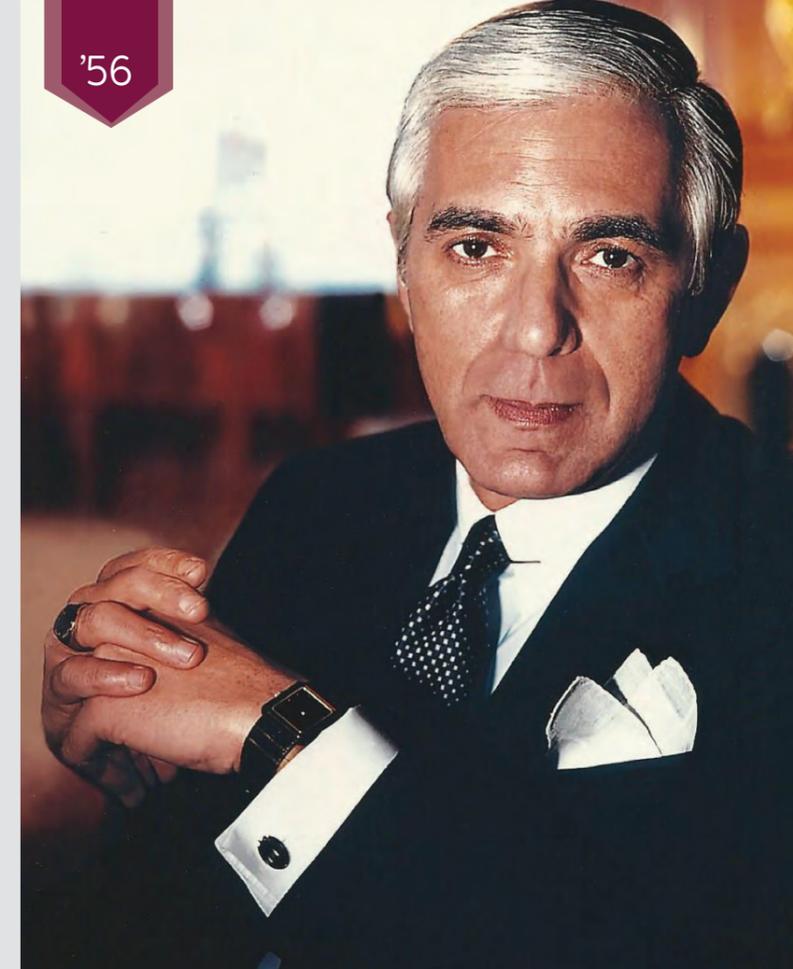


1. Kerwyn Phillip '93.

2. John Khinda '00.

3. Dr. Jason Kondrat '07.

'56



## THE POWER OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

ANTHONY TERRACCIANO '56

BY ERIC KREBS '17

OVER THE COURSE OF HIS CAREER, TERRACCIANO GAINED A REPUTATION AS SOMETHING OF A "TURNAROUND GUY," SOMEONE WITH A PENCHANT FOR PARACHUTING INTO A TROUBLED FIRM, IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM, AND FIXING THINGS.

Had a bus driver from Bayonne played a different set of lottery numbers one afternoon in 1951, some major banks—Mellon Bank, Bancorp, and Sallie Mae, to name a few—might not exist today. That is to say, **Anthony Terracciano '56** would have never gone to Xavier.

Terracciano's family used the money his father's luck brought them to send him to 16th Street. The commute was an hour each way by bus, and frequent delays in the Holland Tunnel meant that JUG was a regular occurrence. Academically, it wasn't easy, but early stumbles proved fruitful: "By the time I got to my senior year, I had forced myself to learn how to study," he recalled.

The work ethic Terracciano cultivated at Xavier brought him smooth sailing through St. Peter's College (now St. Peter's University); a deep-seated love for the humanities brought him to graduate studies in philosophy at Fordham University; and a two-year obligation from an ROTC scholarship brought him to the

Army. Thereafter, a wife, a child, and another on the way brought him to a realization: "I had to find a job."

Terracciano started at Chase Manhattan Bank in 1964. While corporate banking's cold, number-crunching calculus seems like the furthest thing from philosophy at first glance, Terracciano found a through-line. "Philosophy has the same relationship to the individual sciences as banking does to the individual industries," he said. Both are concerned with meta-analysis of sorts, whether of industries or disciplines.

There are two skills that are important in any corporate discipline. The first, according to Terracciano, is to find answers to any question through rigorous analysis. And while he spent much of his early time at Chase poring over balance sheets and disclosures, there were plenty of people at the bank who could run numbers. Where Terracciano excelled—and what he believes his Jesuit education truly prepared him for—was the second skill:

the ability to ask the right question.

Over the course of his career, Terracciano gained a reputation as somewhat of a "turnaround guy," someone with a penchant for parachuting into a troubled firm, identifying the problem, and fixing things. From the 1980s to the eve of the Great Recession, he helped turn around a half-dozen of America's largest financial institutions. His greatest accomplishment—aside from raising two sons with his wife of 57 years, Rita, until her death this past March—came in 1980, when he completely restructured Chase Bank on a prediction that then-Chairman of the Federal Reserve Paul Volcker would raise interest rates at an unprecedented speed to curb the nation's runaway inflation. Terracciano's hunch proved true, and the bank survived.

Of course, no career is without mistakes. His biggest errors came from "being wrong about people."

"Your biggest mistakes, and your biggest successes ultimately, come

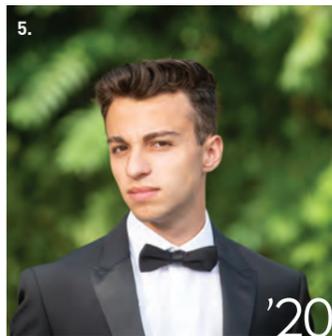
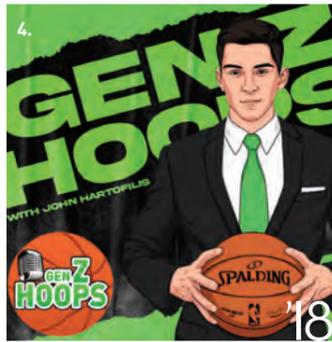
back to the people—judgments you make," Terracciano reflected.

One mistake in particular, however, sticks out like it happened yesterday. After his promotion to Executive Vice President at Chase, he found himself at lunch with David Rockefeller, the Chairman of the Bank at the time. During their meal, Rockefeller began to marvel at Terracciano's life path—from son of a bus driver to vice president of one of America's largest banks—and that he was a testament to the power of the American Dream. In response, Terracciano quipped: "David, when my grandfather came to this country in 1904, he worked for Standard Oil in Bayonne. So, my grandfather worked for your grandfather, and I work for you. So, in one way, not a hell of a lot has changed."

"It was a stupid thing to do," he laughs. Luckily, Rockefeller got the joke.

"I bet your grandfather never had lunch with my grandfather, though," he replied. And that was true.

But Tony did.



- 1. CPT Kieran McMahon, USA '11, right.
- 2. Bo Kendrick-Holmes '16.
- 3. Justin Westbrook-Lowery '16.
- 4. Artwork promoting *Gen Z Hoops*, a podcast featuring John Hartofilis '18.
- 5. Salvatore Genovese '20.

started a new job as program director at Lawfordable, a start-up that provides legal plans and other benefits to unions.

**2010**  
**Matthew Hickey** is now a registered architect in New York and has obtained his NCARB certification. He is looking to connect with other Knights in the field on LinkedIn for insight into the profession and fields surrounding it. He currently works at FSI Architecture on restoring building façades throughout New York City.

**Euroy Smith** recently began a new role at Raytheon Missiles & Defense.

**2011**  
**CPT Kieran McMahon, USA** graduated from the Field Artillery Captains Career Course on December 18, 2020.

**Patrick Steffens** was recently named a Top Young Professional by the *Commercial Observer*, a major real estate publication.

**2012**  
**James Kondrat** graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, where he majored in environmental economics. He is a three-time national rugby champion and All-American. His continued success as a project developer for Borrego Solar brought him from San Francisco to Connecticut in May to build large solar installations in the Northeast, a sign of his commitment to his lifelong goal of protecting the environment.

**David Pangilinan** serves as manager, creative strategy and cultural intelligence at ViacomCBS. He is a recipient of the Cynopsis Rising Star Award, representing Velocity and ViacomCBS.

**2015**  
**Matthew Rienzi** is finishing an MBA in executive management at SJC Brooklyn and working to get signed overseas for a European professional baseball team. He will become a college baseball coach this fall.

**2016**  
**Bo Kendrick-Holmes** graduated from the United States Naval Academy in May 2020 and moved to Monterey, California, where he is currently enjoying the local golf courses and getting a master's degree at the Naval Postgraduate School. After he graduates in June, he will head to Charleston, South Carolina, for Navy nuclear power training.

**Justin Westbrook-Lowery** was elected to serve as the Democratic Male District Leader for the 87th Assembly District with 55% of the vote. "I represent the Democrats in the Southeast Bronx neighborhoods of Parkchester, Castle Hill, and West Farms on the Bronx Democratic Party's Executive Committee," he writes. "I am the youngest person to serve in this capacity and one of the only LGBTQ individuals to serve in that capacity."

**2018**  
**Francis Corrado** completed his undergraduate coursework at the University of Michigan in

three years. He will remain at the University of Michigan to begin graduate school in pursuit of a Doctor of Pharmacy degree.

**John Hartofilis** recently launched the Gen Z Podcast Network. "The network expands on my current show, *Gen Z Hoops*, that I started during the pandemic, recording over 50 episodes with high-profile NBA players, coaches, and executives," he writes.

**2019**  
**Christian Deem** will begin an internship at Reckitt Benckiser in Montvale, New Jersey, this summer.

**2020**  
**Salvatore Genovese** is a freshman at Tufts University, where he is studying cognitive and brain science. He works as a paralegal aide at Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP and plans to pursue a career in law.

## FINDING HIS WAY

ANTHONY OBAS '16  
BY NICK BARONE '16

LIKE MANY, HE HAS TAKEN TIME TO REFLECT—NOT ONLY AS A RECENT COLLEGE GRADUATE, BUT ALSO AS A PERSON WHO WANTS TO BETTER HIMSELF.

If the COVID-19 pandemic has shown **Anthony Obas '16** anything, it's that people really need support right now.

Working in the College Guidance Department at Cristo Rey New York High School—a Catholic, co-ed college prep school in East Harlem that educates students from underserved communities—has made it particularly apparent to him that high school students have never needed more support. The students with whom he works are experiencing a very different high school education than the one he enjoyed on 16th Street.

"Being under lockdown, attending school from home, and having the restrictions they have now are things these kids shouldn't be going through—no one should be," Obas reflected.

After graduating from Syracuse University last spring, he began his role as a college counselor determined to

bring light to students' lives. Obas is part of Cristo Rey's full-time residential volunteer program, a two-year commitment that brings young people together to live in community and serve Cristo Rey in a variety of roles.

By providing some fun and stability to students moving through a very unstable world, he hopes to show them they can emerge from the pandemic healthy and happy—the way he recalls his experience and that of his Xavier brothers during high school.

"The only thing I can offer them is joy," he said. "I can't offer them my own madness because they already have their own that they have to deal with! If I can give them my joy, then I'm doing something right."

This past year has surely been an interesting one for Obas. Like many, he has taken time to reflect—not only as a recent college graduate, but also as a person who wants to better himself.

For most of his first 22 years, for instance, he never knew he liked animation, writing, and gaming. Finding new lanes and discovering hobbies has allowed him to realize what brings him joy.

Obas wrote *Volume 1: Shifting Your Music Into A Career—A Guide for Independent Artists to be Full Time Artists* in 2019. His intention with the book was to help emerging artists and musicians take the art they make, create an income, and perhaps even make art a full-time job.

"People are struggling right now, and I think this is a tool they can use to discover what they can do with their passions, just like me," he said.

For now, Obas continues his work at Cristo Rey, fighting the good fight and ensuring students come out of this pandemic ready to go forth and set the world on fire—just like him.



Above: Anthony Obas at Xavier in February; in his 2016 graduation photo.

# Former Faculty Notes



**Dennis Baker, S.J.**

After five years in Micronesia as President of Xavier High School in Chuuk, Dennis Baker, S.J. will return to the 16th Street Xavier this summer. "I'll take an administrative position there, working closely with Mr. Raslowsky," he said. "I'm looking forward to being back."



Campbell with Chris Pagan '09

**LTC Roy Campbell, USA (Ret.)**

After playing such an influential role in Xavier's JROTC program for 12 years, Roy Campbell continued his work changing the lives of young students while teaching Army JROTC at Herbert Hoover High School in California.

Campbell taught at Herbert Hoover for three years until retiring in 2020. Following his retirement, he plans to move to the East Coast, around Washington, D.C.

Despite being away from Xavier, Campbell has made countless efforts to remain connected to the place he once called home.

"I recently had dinner with **Dillon Burke '13** and **David Rogers '15** and I even enjoyed lunch along the Pacific Ocean last summer. **Noel Shu '10** hosted me to dinner at one of his Manhattan restaurants," exclaimed Campbell. "I've really enjoyed keeping in touch with Xavier alumni around the country."

Clearly, he has been doing just that. Campbell not only has kept in touch with fellow Sons, he has remained a mentor and most importantly a friend to them.

"I really enjoy following the careers of all of the Xavier alumni, and I especially enjoy mentoring Xavier graduates who are serving in our Armed Forces—**Tom O'Keefe '11**, **Giancarlo Rindone '09**, and **Stefan D'Urso '09**—are only a few to name. I had the great joy of visiting CPT D'Urso's Field Artillery Battery at Ft. Campbell this fall."

And these aren't the only Sons Campbell has supported. He still continues his work with some more recent friends from 16th Street.

"**Shane Lavin '03** and I enjoyed meeting college alumni in Arizona on an advancement trip together [last year]. I look forward to attending more Beefsteak Dinners and more West Point and Annapolis graduations to honor fellow Sons of Xavier. Xavier continues to graduate amazing young men, and it is simply a joy to watch everyone do such remarkable things in their lives!"



**Rocco J. Iacovone '62**

Since Rocco Iacovone's retirement from Xavier in 2007, he has kept busy performing at many venues in New York City and surrounding areas. He has recorded original works for several record companies and even took time to

return to Xavier in recent years to assist with the jazz ensemble until the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Music gigs dried up very quickly," Iacovone stated. "Some virtual gigs popped up now and then, but far and few in-between. Too dangerous to get together and play, there was an urgent need to find new ways to create. And we did. For recording, I would write a piece, develop it, and send it to the next musician. He would listen until he 'got' it, then record his part and send both tracks to the next band member."

As a result of the pandemic, Iacovone was forced to find new and creative ways to play so he and his fellow musicians can remain safe.

"As far as jamming together, we found a platform with very little latency or lag. Certain equipment is needed, but Jamkazam helps us to play together during this pandemic."

Iacovone also wrote and recorded two CDs of original music and recorded a third as a sideman in 2020.

"One was recorded virtually, but two required us to be live. We had to figure out how to do this safely. With the help of my wife, Denise, we constructed a bag, literally a laundry bag, to put the entire sax in, cut out spaces for my hands and the neck of the instruments, made needed collars so the keys would open and close freely. We also wore masks, hung plastic dividers, used air filters in each room and communicated via headphones. We got it done! Happily, I've added the bass clarinet, a very intricate and great sounding instrument, to my toolkit, too!"

On top of all of his music, Iacovone and his wife studied Italian during the pandemic. "We sit every night for a short lesson. It's fun because we do it together, and it's very effective!"

*Out of the Maelstrom* was released on February 18 by Unseen Rain Records. *Synchronics* will be released this spring by Woodshedd Records. *And I Became of the Dark* was released in April on the ESP label. For more information, visit [roccojohnmusic.com](http://roccojohnmusic.com) and [unseenrainrecords.com](http://unseenrainrecords.com).

**Jayne Lee P'92 '93 '96**

"Since leaving Xavier in June of 2002, the theme of my life has been moving," writes Jayne Lee.

As a member of the faculty at Stella Maris High School, she was a guidance counselor to young women. In 2005, she left to work



alongside her husband and his partner as a paralegal in the law firm of Lee & Kane.

"Yes, I have left the workforce, but I still try to share what I've learned working in education. For a year or so, I volunteered at Kingsborough Community College in the program, All Access, as a counselor and recorder for students with special needs. Along the way, I have advised several high school students on the college application process."

During this time, she and her husband moved from their home in Belle Harbor.

"This is the wonderful community where my Tom and I met in 1966. Our young grandchildren love it here, six granddaughters and two grandsons. Though they live hours away, they have managed to become Rockaway Beach bums, like their dads."

She and her husband have traveled to Ireland, Italy, Paradise Island, St. Lucia, and cruised to Honduras and Mexico.

"We fulfilled a lifetime dream by renting an RV and spending a month seeing our breathtaking country. Of course, we spend a lot of our time traveling to and sharing life events with **Thomas '92**, **Christian '93**, and **Michael '96**. Their wives and families are the light of my life, my dreams come true."

Lee and her husband witnessed Hurricane Sandy in 2012, seeing minimal damage done to their home.

"I am proud to say there were many times we saw Xavier men assisting our neighbors."

Lee and her husband also celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in New Orleans, just before the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

"I pray that all of you are healthy and weathering this storm. We have witnessed too many tragedies in our times. You are and will always be in my prayers."



**Bill Martino**

Martino recently purchased a home in West Hartford, Connecticut. He continues to work at Kingswood Oxford, where he teaches sophomore English, AP Language and Composition, and the Literature of New York City for seniors—a crossover from his Xavier days.

His daughter, Lizzie, 6, is in first grade and his sons, Frankie, Will, and Mac, are 3. Each is healthy and thriving—meeting all of their milestones.

"It's hard to imagine I've been away from Xavier for nearly three years," Martino writes. "Xavier still takes up lots of space in my heart, not only for the countless memories: the trips to Europe, Maroon and Blue Days, Christmas at Xavier, and the overwhelming sense of pride to be a part of a true Catholic (and New York) institution, but also for the outpouring of love, prayers, and support we received from colleagues, parents, and students when the triplets were in the NICU. I think of Xavier nearly every day, and I'm anxious to get back. I definitely see a Beefsteak or reunion in the near future...Keep marching!"

Former students and colleagues can contact Bill Martino at [william.martino@gmail.com](mailto:william.martino@gmail.com).

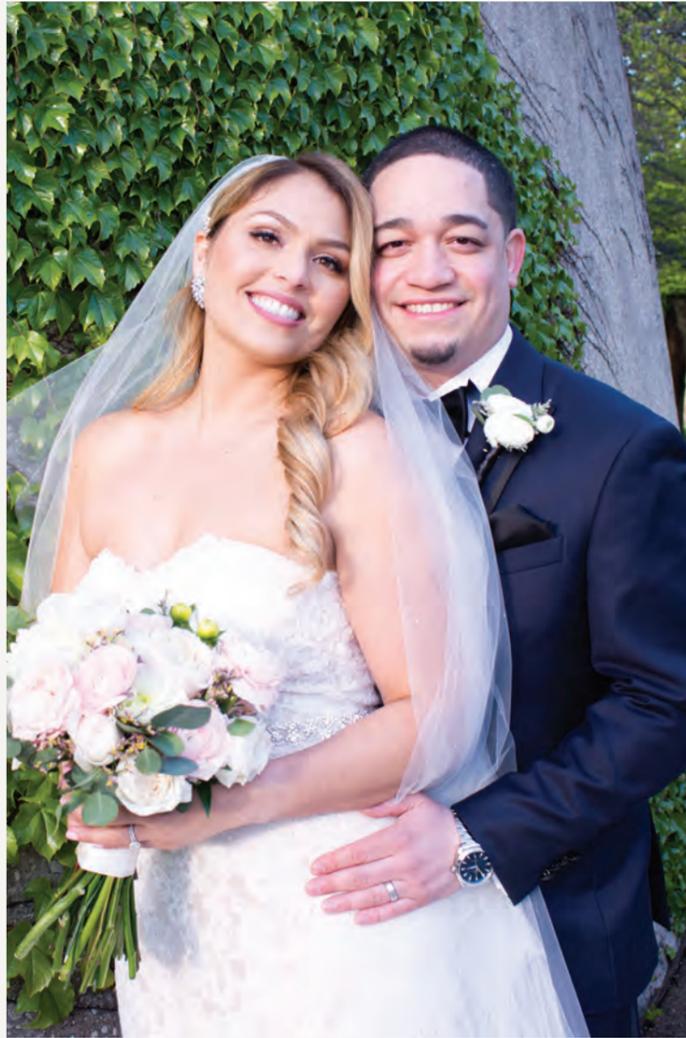
**Chris Napolitano**

Napolitano taught religion at Xavier from 1996 until 2017. He writes, "After 22 years of spending my teaching career and young adult life at Xavier, I made the extraordinarily



difficult decision that it was time for a change, not knowing at the time exactly what that change was going to be. I still reside in the Yorkville section of Manhattan and after some months to myself I started working for Catapult Learning which provides instruction in literacy and math to struggling and at-risk students. I was assigned to St. Joseph's Catholic Academy in Astoria last academic year as the Title 1 math instructor for grades K-8. Religion to math, not exactly the change I expected. I remain with Catapult this academic year, unfortunately part-time because of the pandemic. I offer remote instruction in math once again to students at St. Joe's. Xavier continues to be part of my identity and fond memory. Know that you are missed and loved!"

# Milestones



Judith and David Lopez '04

## MARRIAGES

📍 **Edward Fox '72** and Lori Belair were joined in holy matrimony at the Cathedral of St. Paul in St. Paul, Minnesota, on June 12, 2020. The ceremony was presided over by the Rev. Kevin McDonough, the older brother of former Obama Chief of Staff and newly appointed Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough.

📍 **David Lopez '04** married his wife, Judith, at Holy Family Catholic Church in Chicago, Illinois, on May 10, 2019. Xavier alumni in attendance included **Jimmy Cepeda '05**, **Jonathan**

**Rivera '06**, and **Anthony Traverzo '04**.

📍 **James Kondrat '12** married Julie Crowell in Malibu, California, on February 7, 2020.

## BIRTHS

📍 In October, **Jim Mantle '68** welcomed the birth of his granddaughter, Raelynn Theresa. **Danny Mantle '66** is her great-uncle.

**Joseph Fama '75** welcomed his second grandson, a boy named Xavier, on September 15, 2020. Xavier's parents are Joseph's



Anthony Traverzo '04, Jonathan Rivera '06, David Lopez '04, and Jimmy Cepeda '05



Edward Fox '72 and Lori Belair



James Kondrat '12 and Julie Crowell

daughter, Jessica, and son-in-law, Adrian.

📍 **Richard Wefer '75** and his wife, Susan, became first-time grandparents on November 12, 2020. Claire Christine Ryan was born that day to their daughter, Allison, and her husband, Matthew Ryan.

**Brian O'Neill '76** and his wife, Kim, recently celebrated the births of their sixth and seventh grandchildren.

**Patrick Forde '99** and his wife, Shannon Donohue, welcomed a son, Finn Forde, on May 5, 2019.

📍 **Mike Benigno '00** and his wife, Ellen, welcomed their daughter, Leah Angeline Benigno, on December 1, 2019. The Benignos live in Rockaway Beach.

📍 **Patrick Sezen '04** and his wife, Caroline, welcomed their first child, Brooke Setenay Elizabeth Sezen, on November 3, 2020.

📍 **Ricardo Castillo Cano '06** and his wife, Rebecca, welcomed their first son, Daniel Alejandro, on October 16, 2020.

📍 **Kevin Fox '08** and his wife welcomed their first child, Vera Mae Fox, on July 17, 2020.



Raelynn Theresa, granddaughter of Jim Mantle '68



Richard Wefer '75, his wife, Susan, and their granddaughter Claire Christine



Mike Benigno '00 and his daughter, Leah Angeline



Brooke Setenay Elizabeth Sezen



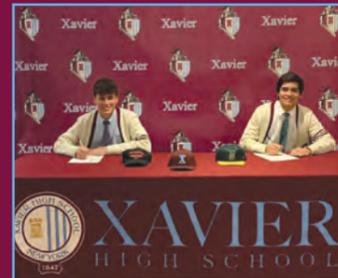
Vera Mae Fox



Ricardo Castillo Cano '06 with his wife, Rebecca, and their son, Daniel Alejandro



# STAY CONNECTED to 16th Street.



[www.xavierhs.org](http://www.xavierhs.org)

# Jack Curran, S.J. '46



The son of John Curran and Florence Moriarty Curran, **John F. "Jack" Curran, S.J. '46** was born in New York City on October 15, 1929. He crossed paths with the Society of Jesus early when he was baptized at St. Ignatius Loyola Church on the Upper East Side.

After graduating from Xavier in 1946, he entered the Jesuits at St. Andrew-on-Hudson in Poughkeepsie. In 1950, Fr. Curran went to Woodstock College in Maryland to begin his philosophical studies, and in 1952 he and many of his classmates moved to Bellarmine College in Plattsburgh, New York, to complete those studies.

In 1953, he took his first journey to the Pacific, to Chuuk in the Caroline Islands, where he taught freshman Latin and English and served as dean of discipline at Xavier High School. Fr. Curran returned to the United States three years later to study theology at Woodstock College in Maryland. Francis Cardinal Spellman ordained him to the priesthood on June 20, 1959, at Fordham University Church.

In 1960, Fr. Curran traveled to Münster, Germany, for his

tertianship year. He then spent two years at the Gregorian University in Rome studying Church history and canon law.

In 1963, Fr. Curran returned to the Pacific, to Pohnpei in the Caroline Islands, where he pursued language studies before becoming a pastoral minister in the local parish. He returned to Xavier High School in Chuuk in 1967, and for the next six years he served as superior, dean of students, and an English and religion teacher.

He returned to Pohnpei in 1973 to serve as superior of the mission and to do pastoral work. From 1975 to 1978, Fr. Curran lived in Manila in the Philippines, where he served as executive secretary for the East Asian Jesuit Education Conference for two years and as president pro-tem for the East Asian Assistancy Conference of Major Superiors for one year.

Fr. Curran returned to the Caroline Islands in 1978 to serve as superior of the Jesuit community in Chuuk. In 1980, he returned to Pohnpei, where he was superior of the community, judicial vicar, then vicar general and chancellor of the Diocese of the Caroline Islands. He remained in Pohnpei until 1995, except for the time he spent as director of St. Ignatius Residence in Guam in 1986-87 and a sabbatical year from 1987-88.

In 1995, Fr. Curran returned to Xavier Chuuk as superior of the community while continuing to serve as Vicar General and Chancellor of the Diocese. Except for the three years he served as Coordinator of Church in Pohnpei (2001-04), Fr. Curran remained in Chuuk until 2011. That year, he moved to Murray-Weigel Hall in the Bronx.

Fr. Curran died on January 4, 2021, at the age of 91.

# In Memoriam

## Alumni

- John Moynahan '40**, brother of Bernard Moynahan '30†, 1/10/20
- Thomas Casey '44**, 1/20/21
- Thomas McMahon '44**, 2/14/21
- John Mulligan '45**, 9/21/20
- Joseph Morris '47**, 2/4/21
- Walter O'Hara '48**, 7/29/20
- Dr. Allan J. Ahearne '50**, 1/10/21
- Dante Viano '50**, 1/30/21
- Michael Driscoll '51**, 12/31/20
- Lawrence McCrory '51**, grandfather of Dennis Dier '01 and Michael Dier '09, 2/23/21
- Joseph Vrindten '51**, 11/12/20
- William Kennedy '53**, 8/18/20
- John Moylett '53**, 7/13/19
- Dr. John Sweeney '53**, 12/29/20
- John Hutton '54 P'86 '96 '98**, father of Thomas Hutton '86, John Hutton '96, and Joseph Hutton '98, 11/14/20
- Harold Murphy '54**, 12/27/18
- W. Foster Wollen '54**, brother of A. Ross Wollen '61, 8/28/20
- Ronald "JP" Lesko '55**
- John Daly '56**, 1/13/18
- Paul Marto '56**, 6/20/20
- Dominic Verrastro '56**, 2/1/21
- Ronald Como '57**, 8/3/20
- Harry Hasselmann '59**, brother of James Hasselmann '62†, 7/3/20
- Joseph Nee '60**, brother of Gerard Nee '57 and Richard Nee '64, 2/27/21
- John Scott '60**, 2/2/21
- David Smigelskis '60**, 6/20/20
- Peter Toja '60**, 11/11/20
- James Ryan '61**, 1/14/21
- James Faulkner, Jr., Esq. '62**, 10/13/20
- Eugene Gaughan '63**, 3/21/21
- Bernard Beirne '64**, brother of Anthony Beirne '66, 10/8/20
- Kevin Regan '68**, 1/26/21
- David Posteraro, Esq. '70**, brother of Anthony Posteraro, Jr. '63 and Robert Posteraro '65 and son of Anthony Posteraro '34†, 12/30/20
- Jorge Guttlein, Esq. '71 P'02**, father of Juan-Carlos Guttlein '02, 12/23/19
- Martin O'Shea, Esq. '71**, brother of Patrick O'Shea '61, 11/6/20
- Michael Verdon '71**, 11/11/20
- William McDonnell '72**, 12/12/20
- Dr. Michael Del Terzo '77**, 9/11/20

- Paul Guglielmo '77**, 4/21/20
- Richard Schilling '82**, brother of Andrew Schilling '84, 8/18/20
- William McPadden '86**, 12/16/20
- James Keane '00**, 10/22/20
- Enrique Gonzalez '01**, 12/3/20
- Alexander Durante '11**, 2/27/21

## Parents

- Denise Puglisi P'68**, mother of Michael Puglisi '68, 1/28/21
- Mary Robotti P'71**, mother of Bob Robotti '71, 2/11/21
- Mario Antonio Fernandez P'72**, father of Mike Fernandez '72, 7/23/20
- Guerrino Razza P'72**, father of John Razza '72, 10/19/20
- James O'Neill P'73**, father of Michael O'Neill '73
- Isabel Bautista P'74**, mother of Guillermo S. Bautista, Jr. '74, 8/22/20
- Patricia McDonnell P'76 '77 '78 '80**, wife of John P. McDonnell, Sr. '50† and mother of John P. McDonnell, Jr. '76, Bryan E. McDonnell '77, Kevin J. McDonnell '78, and Laurence G. McDonnell '80, 10/19/20
- Mary Kelly P'77**, mother of Joseph G. Kelly '77, 10/18/20
- Mirella A. Young P'77 '79 '83**, mother of John Young '77, Christopher Young '79, and Peter Young '83, 11/9/19
- Joseph Ottati P'78**, father of Anthony Ottati '78, 11/8/20
- John Barbieri P'80**, father of Michael Barbieri '80 P'10, grandfather of Peter Barbieri '10, and father-in-law of receptionist Carmela Barbieri P'10, 1/6/21
- Marguerite Moran P'81**, mother of Daniel Moran '81 P'15 and grandmother of Daniel Moran '15, 2/23/21
- Joan DePrizio P'82**, mother of Robert DePrizio '82, 11/16/20
- Richard Dimler P'83**, father of Rich Dimler '83, 12/15/20
- Ed Greason P'83**, father of Michael Greason '83, 11/28/20
- Patrick Cancilla P'84**, father of Patrick Cancilla '84, 8/25/20
- Rose Cancilla P'84**, mother of Patrick Cancilla '84, 1/30/21
- Amelia Malchiodis P'85**, mother of Giancarlo Malchiodis '85, 12/1/20
- John "Jack" Hennigan P'89 '97**, father of Christopher Hennigan '89 P'21 and Kevin Hennigan '97 and grandfather of Jack Hennigan '21, 4/2/20
- Michael Scally P'92**, father of Robert Scally '92, 11/19/20

- Tomas Cabrera P'93**, father of Jose Cabrera '93 P'21 and grandfather of Tomas Cabrera '21, 2/26/21
- Claridilia Baez P'01**, mother of Dion Baez '01, 9/17/20
- Warren Pusz P'09**, father of John Pusz '09, 10/14/20
- Thomas Harkins P'13**, father of Tom Harkins '13, 12/10/20
- Edward Lopata P'14**, father of Ed Lopata '14, 10/14/20
- Gail Ronaldson-D'Albero P'13**, mother of Jeffery "JJ" Ronaldson-D'Albero '13, 11/13/20
- Patrick G. Heaney P'18**, father of Patrick Heaney '18, 9/17/20
- Dina Chapman P'20**, mother of Daniel Chapman '20, 9/11/20
- Robert Posio P'21**, father of Robert Posio '21, 11/19/20
- James Kaplan P'22**, father of Justin Kaplan '22, 1/7/21

## Spouses

- Joyce Flood**, wife of Raymond Flood, Jr. '58, 8/17/20
- Margaret "Peggy" Gildea**, wife of James Gildea '70, 11/5/20
- Inez Keller**, wife of Stephen Keller '80, 11/26/20
- Kathleen McGuth**, wife of COL Bill McGuth, USA (Ret.) '52, 12/11/20
- Mary Ann McLaughlin**, wife of Martin McLaughlin, Jr. '54, 10/1/20

## Children

- Justin Laurie**, son of Ed Laurie '64, 11/22/20
- Catherine Schlapman**, daughter of Mark Delaney '53, 5/28/18

## Faculty/Family

- Rev. Joseph Kamiensky, S.J.**, Xavier faculty member from 1970-74, 3/1/21
- Jane Maconaghy Nugent**, mother-in-law of religion department chair Jon Dwyer, 12/3/20
- John Martin**, father of math teacher Rob Martin, 12/3/20
- Paul Orlando**, brother-in-law of English teacher Jennifer Kennedy-Orlando P'21 and uncle of Lou Orlando '21, 1/20/21
- Aurelio Segovia Delgado**, father of school nurse Francine Delgado, 1/23/21



## Grateful for the Opportunity

By MICHAEL LIVIGNI P'21

The life of a high school principal is not an easy one. Don't get me wrong—it isn't like we make life-or-death decisions every day. We don't run into burning buildings to save lives. We don't put on Kevlar vests (well, not all of us) to protect our fellow citizens. But I have often thought during my 18 years as an administrator that what we are asked to do on a daily basis vacillates between impossible and absurd. It is one of the reasons I have loved being Xavier's headmaster so much. I won't bore you with the platitudes of "I always embraced a challenge," because that wouldn't be true. Like the vast majority of humanity, I would *prefer* that things remained predictable and relatively easy. But also like the vast majority of humanity, my experience tells me this is simply not the case.

I arrived at Xavier in 2000 and became headmaster in 2006. Xavier was my second teaching job, and much of what I learned about the Society of Jesus I learned at Canisius High School in Buffalo, where I began my career. Canisius and Xavier are eerily similar and wildly different at the same time. I have found that true of virtually every Jesuit school I have visited. We speak the same Ignatian language, have the same goals, but approach it all very differently. (I think God is probably pleased with that; we are one body with different faces.) Canisius gave me many gifts: dear friends, the restoration of my Catholic faith, and an introduction to a way of teaching I have embraced with my whole heart.

The gifts Canisius gave me came into full use here on 16th Street. Over the years I have tried to guide Xavier to be the best Catholic and Jesuit school it could be. I think I got it right many times, and I think other times I failed miserably. Although I am not a "math person" (as

### BACK STORY

the entire Xavier math department will surely agree), if I do the math in this instance, I think I got things right more often than I got them wrong. If you are reading this and I got it wrong in your particular situation, then I pray that you will accept my apology now.

I have seen the role of headmaster as having two main components: to offer support to teachers and to ensure that an environment is created that allows young men in our care to learn and grow. What that means in real terms has run the gamut.

As a teacher, I comforted my students on 9/11 and grieved with our community over the profound losses we suffered that horrible day. I had the opportunity to serve our community as we recovered from the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, proudly working beside students and colleagues in that effort. I have been swept up in overwhelming joy for my colleagues and former students as they married, had children, and celebrated the good things in life. I have wept at the death of three dear colleagues and two students and watched God's grace shine forth in our community through our collective grief and sorrow. And most recently, I have struggled to care for a community in a world filled with civil strife amidst a global pandemic where every decision is questioned, not just by the wider community, but by me as well.

The opportunity to share stories at Beefsteak Dinners, to listen attentively as colleagues and students share struggles or life-altering decisions, to lift glasses in a toast to the good work of friends as they retired, the hilarious discussions at the breakfast table in Spinello Lounge every morning, the meals shared, the embraces of hope and sadness, and the opportunity to care for those in need—all these things speak to a job and a place that has given me more than I have ever given it. God has shown himself to me time and time again in the faces of my students, in the words of my friends, on retreats, in service, in the classroom, and in so many more places that to think of them becomes overwhelming.

I have been asked what my legacy at Xavier will be. I have not responded to that question because to think about a legacy is a foolish, human endeavor. A legacy is fleeting and anything I have done in my time as headmaster is changeable, as it should be. Stewards don't leave legacies. The only legacy I see is the face of my son, **Matthew**, a member of the Class of 2021 and a proud Son of Xavier.

Instead, if I am asked what I hope to have accomplished over these years, the answer to that is simple. If I taught one student one thing, then I have accomplished the task that every teacher hopes to accomplish. If I have helped one person recognize how truly alive God is in their life, then I have accomplished the task that every Catholic school teacher hopes to accomplish. If I have served one person and made their burdens easier, then I have accomplished the task that every Ignatian educator hopes to accomplish. If I have served God just once in this job, then I am grateful for the opportunity to have done so.

*A graduate of the University at Buffalo and Fordham University, Michael LiVigni P'21 will conclude his time as Xavier's 54th headmaster in June. He is pictured in the Headmaster's Office with his son, Matthew LiVigni '21.*

# 1947

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## From the Archives

On Xavier's 100th anniversary in 1947, members of the Class of 1912 gathered at the Seventh Regiment Armory on Park Avenue for their 35th reunion dinner. **Daniel Francis Xavier Riordan 1912†** saved his reunion photo as a keepsake along with one from his school days in 1911 (inset). "He, like many of his classmates, went on to serve in World War I," said his grandson, **Kieran Wilhelm '01**, who recently unearthed both photos. Riordan's Xavier legacy also lives on in his other grandsons, **Matthew Wilhelm '87** and **Damian Wilhelm '92**, and his great-grandson, **Nathanael Wilhelm '23**.



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Community is the lifeblood of Xavier. Faculty, staff, and students worked together to carry on school traditions—like Christmas at Xavier, seen here—in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.