

HALL OF FAME



Mount Michael Benedictine
HALL OF FAME
Coach John Gathje
For his exceptional contributions
to the achievements and prestige of
Mount Michael Athletics
November 15th, 2024
+
"That in all things, God may be glorified."



Mount Michael Benedictine
HALL OF FAME
Alumnus of the Year
Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, S.J., Ph.D. '89
For his exceptional contributions to
the achievements and prestige of
Mount Michael Benedictine Abbey and School.
November 15th, 2024
+
"That in all things, God may be glorified."



Mount Michael
HALL OF FAME
**Alumni Association
Appreciation Award**
With Our Sincere Appreciation
We Honor Present
David Spenner '63
Thank you for your many years of
commitment and dedication to the
Mount Michael community.
November 15th, 2024
+
"That in all things, God may be glorified."

Michaeleen

FALL
2024

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Fame

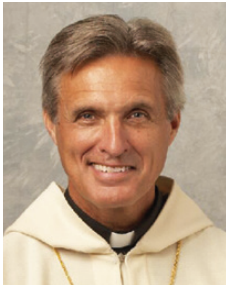
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Letter from the Abbot



In the middle two weeks of September, I traveled to Rome for the 2024 Congress of Abbots. St Benedict founded his first monastery at Monte Cassino in 529 AD. Followers of St Benedict spread monasticism across Europe and beyond in the centuries that followed. Each Benedictine monastery was an entity unto itself, a characteristic at the same time advantageous and detrimental. There was no global organization. In 1893, Pope Leo XIII established the Benedictine confederation, an affiliation of all the Benedictine monasteries in the Catholic church. At the same time, Pope Leo gave property to the Benedictines on the Aventine Hill which became the monastery of Sant'Anselmo (after Saint Anselm, Benedictine monk and archbishop of Canterbury, famous for his philosophical argument for the existence of God). The pope also created the office of abbot primate to serve the Benedictine community as its liaison to the Vatican, to promote unity among the various autonomous Benedictine communities and congregations, and to represent the order at religious gatherings around the world. Since the time of Pope Leo, abbots from monasteries around the world have come every four years to Sant'Anselmo for a congress, to address matters affecting monasteries, and when necessary to elect an abbot primate.

At the 2016 congress, Abbot Gregory Polan (a theology classmate of mine) from Conception Abbey in Missouri had been elected abbot primate. His term expired this year, so the principal business of the congress was to elect a new abbot primate. On September 14, Abbot Jeremias Schroder of St Ottilien Archabbey in Germany was elected. As abbot primate, Abbot Jeremias becomes the head of the world's 6000 Benedictine monks. Over the years, Abbot Jeremias has served as assistant novice master, abbot's secretary, and has held numerous leadership roles. He is fluent in German, Italian, French, Spanish and English. With his experience, he is uniquely skilled to lead Benedictines world-wide.

In addition to the election of the abbot primate, the congress included keynote speeches, reports and workshops. Among the speakers were Abbot Gregory Polan who addressed issues facing Benedictines in the future; and cardinal-elect Dominican father, Timothy Radcliffe who expressed confidence that the



centuries of Benedictine tradition will continue to shine brightly in a world torn by divisions both political and religious.

The reports included updates on the financial status of both the monastery and the college at Sant'Anselmo. Additional topics included interreligious monastic dialog, an international congress of Benedictine oblates, synodality, and academic funds designed to support Sant'Anselmo.

The workshops touched on a variety of concerns; creating community in an individualistic world (think cell phones), formation until solemn vows, mutual support among monasteries, ongoing education and formation for abbots and superiors. Perhaps the most interesting topic was brothers as superiors. Until recently, only someone ordained could be elected to be abbot of a Benedictine community. That bit of canon law was recently revised to make it possible for a non-ordained member of a community to be chosen as abbot. The change creates interesting challenges. Among minor concerns are should a brother who is elected abbot use a miter and a crozier. There are several questions that will need resolution, but they require some thoughtful deliberation.

On Wednesday of the second week of the congress, all the abbots traveled to Saint Peter's square for a general audience with Pope Francis who had just returned from a trip to Asia. Though in a wheelchair, Pope Francis looked well, especially given the demands of international travel. At the end of the audience, he took time to pose for pictures in front of St Peter's with all the gathered abbots.

I had been asked many times after I returned from the congress if the trip was enjoyable. After all, not everyone gets an opportunity to travel to Rome. Time at the congress is mostly devoted to meetings and to prayers. But it is hard to argue with the food and the wine. On more than one occasion we were able to enjoy some uniquely Italian cuisine. A tour in the area where St Benedict lived while in Rome included medieval frescoes painted by Pietro Cavallini in the nave of Saint Cecilia in Trastevere. A personal excursion was a visit to the Borghese gallery which houses paintings by Titian, Raphael, Caravaggio and Rubens. Several sculptures by Bernini are part of the collection. I also managed quick stops at the Pantheon, the Trevi fountain, the Piazza Navona, and the Spanish steps. Perhaps a way to say that a trip to Rome is a blessing under nearly any circumstances.

J Michael Liebl, OSB



UPCOMING EVENTS

WINTER FORMAL
January 18th, 2025

MOM PROM
February 23rd, 2025

NIGHT OF KNIGHTS
March 29th, 2025

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Mount Michael Benedictine School



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Mount Michael Benedictine



FROM THE HEAD OF ● SCHOOL ●

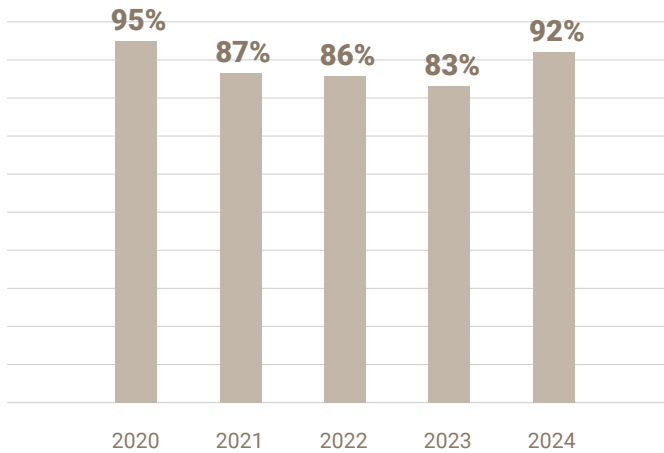
Mount Michael's regular curriculum provides students with challenging academics and an outstanding base for their future education and career choices. For years, Mount Michael has offered a variety of AP (Advanced Placement) courses. These courses are rigorous, follow a College Board approved syllabus, and can result in potential college credit based upon the results of a standardized exam given in the spring of the school year. Students can earn college credit by scoring, out of a scale of 1 through 5, a three, four or five. Colleges and universities determine what the pass score is, but typically it is three or above. It is never below three.

This school year ('24-'25) we are offering the following Advanced Placement Courses here at Mount Michael:

- AP AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES
- AP BIOLOGY
- AP CALCULUS I
- AP CHEMISTRY
- AP COMPUTER SCIENCE A
- AP COMPUTER SCIENCE PRINCIPLES
- AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE
- AP ENGLISH LITERATURE
- AP MUSIC THEORY
- AP PHYSICS
- AP STATISTICS
- AP U.S. GOVERNMENT
- AP U.S. HISTORY

To the right is a graph of data from our past five years in taking AP exams. This last year we had 91 individual students who took 170 different tests. Of those 91 students, 84 students scored 3 or above. That is a pass rate of 92.31%. The average pass rate (scoring a 3 or higher) for all the students taking the AP exams locally, nationally, and internationally is 60%. AP classes offer students a way to experience and adjust to a college level environment while still benefiting from the supportive structure at Mount Michael.

PERCENT OF TOTAL AP STUDENTS WITH SCORES 3+



SCHOOL SUMMARY

	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023
Total AP Students	76	83	85	72	91
Number of Exams	172	189	184	145	170
AP Students with Scores 3+	72	72	73	60	84
% of Total AP Students with Scores 3+	94.74	86.75	85.88	83.33	92.31

Mount Michael also offers another way to help students get a jump on college credits through Dual Enrollment. At Mount Michael, students can take a class that earns them college credit from a specific college or university. These students do not take a standardized exam, like with AP, to get credit for the course. Here they earn a specific grade just like any other course. These credits can transfer to a variety of other colleges and universities. Students should always check with the colleges or universities they are applying to, to get an idea of what credits the institutions will accept. Last year we offered four dual enrollment courses. This year we expanded this list to twelve. We are quite excited about this expansion and the diversity of options offered.

DUAL ENROLLMENT COURSE OFFERINGS:

Course, Instructor, College/University

HONORS PHYSICS
Abbot Michael
Creighton University

AP ENGLISH LIT
Eileen Sullivan
Nebraska Wesleyan

AP ENGLISH LANG
Eileen Sullivan
Nebraska Wesleyan

AP US HISTORY
John Roshone
University of Nebraska at Omaha

AP AFRICAN/AMERICAN STUDIES
John Roshone
University of Nebraska at Omaha

AP BIOLOGY
Dr. Randy Crnkovich
University of Nebraska at Omaha

AP PHYSICS
Michael Williams
University of Nebraska at Omaha

AP CALCULUS I
Michael Williams
University of Nebraska at Omaha

HONORS CALCULUS II
Michael Williams
University of Nebraska at Omaha

HONORS CALCULUS III
Michael Williams
University of Nebraska at Omaha

AP MUSIC THEORY
Emily Nolan
University of Nebraska at Omaha (equivalent to Music Fundamentals)

AP STATISTICS
Nick Joslin (online)
University of Nebraska at Omaha

There is always a question as to what is better, AP or Dual Enrollment. The answer is that it really depends on what the attending college or university will accept. Students should do the research as they go through the college admissions process. It is not unusual for our graduates to get a semester, a year or a year and a half of college credit before they even step foot into college.

We have found that providing AP and Dual enrollment courses puts Mount Michael in a position that truly makes us a college preparatory school. Offering these courses opens more doors and opportunities for our students.



David J. Peters, Ed.D
Head of School





ADMISSIONS

As we continue to focus on the growth and strength of our Mount Michael community, I am excited to share with you the latest developments in our recruitment and retention efforts. The fall semester has been an active one, with many exciting milestones for both current and prospective students. I am pleased to report that our efforts to welcome new students and retain the exceptional young men who already call Mount Michael home are progressing well.

STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY

A key part of our recruitment strategy has always been the unique, close-knit community at Mount Michael. This year, we've continued to emphasize the importance of fostering relationships between students, faculty, and families. Our visitors often express how impressed they are with the brotherhood and personal connections they see throughout the campus. For prospective families, the opportunity for their son to be known individually in a smaller, more intimate setting is a driving factor in choosing Mount Michael. It's this sense of belonging that truly sets us apart.

ENROLLMENT GROWTH AND EXCITING INITIATIVES

Looking ahead, we've made great strides in our outreach efforts. We recently hosted a successful Open House, welcoming many families to experience a day in the life of a Mount Michael student. Additionally, our shadow program continues to provide prospective students with a firsthand experience of our academic and extracurricular offerings. By spending the day or an overnight visit with current students, they gain a deeper understanding of what makes our school so special.

This year, we've introduced an incentive program offering \$500 off tuition for students who shadow and are accepted into Mount Michael. This initiative has already sparked interest and has proven to be an effective tool in connecting with future Knights.

RETENTION: SUPPORTING EVERY STUDENT'S JOURNEY

In terms of retention, we continue to focus on ensuring that our current students feel supported throughout their journey at Mount Michael. We are committed to providing

personalized attention to each student, helping them navigate challenges and celebrate their successes. Our ongoing efforts to engage students through clubs, athletics, and spiritual activities contribute to their sense of belonging and growth, which plays a critical role in their continued success and happiness at Mount Michael.

LOOKING AHEAD

As we prepare for the upcoming year, we are excited about the future of Mount Michael and the direction in which we are heading. We are fortunate to have a dedicated team of faculty, staff, and alumni who are passionate about supporting our students and advancing the mission of Mount Michael. Together, we will continue to attract bright, motivated young men who will flourish within our community and carry the Mount Michael legacy forward.

Thank you for your continued support in making Mount Michael Benedictine a place where every student can succeed, grow, and truly belong.



Sincerely,

Tim Carlson '10
Director of Enrollment

ADVANCEMENT

We are delighted to announce that **John Von Dollen**, a 2012 alumnus of Mount Michael, has been promoted to **Director of Advancement for Mount Michael Benedictine Abbey and School**. John has served in the advancement office for six years, most recently as **Director of Alumni Relations and Communications**.



In his new role, John will continue to strengthen ties with the Mount Michael community, including alumni, parents, friends, oblates, and supporters, while leading initiatives that advance the mission of both the Abbey and the School.

Abbot Michael shared, "In the Rule, St. Benedict wrote with distaste about monks who roamed the countryside begging. He expected monks to work, to embrace an apostolate. At Mount Michael Abbey, the monastic community has been principally dedicated to education. It's a challenge to maintain a quality education at an affordable price, so we rely on fundraising to support the monastery and assist families who want to send a son to Mount Michael. John, as both an alumnus and dedicated team member, has a heart for the mission and is a natural fit to lead our advancement efforts."

Please join us in congratulating John on this well-deserved achievement and supporting him in his continued efforts to advance Mount Michael's mission.

HALL OF FAME

The Mount Michael Alumni Association hosted the third annual Hall of Fame Night on November 19, 2024.

The 2024 Hall of Fame inductees included:



ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME
Coach John Gathje

ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR
Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson '89, SJ, PhD

ALUMNI APPRECIATION AWARD
David Spenner '63

To view the photos from this event and to watch the honoree videos, scan the QR code.





MISSION & MINISTRY

Written By: Amanda Schleimer -Director of Mission and Ministry

In the late afternoon, a vibrant scene unfolds in Mr. Sullivan's strength and conditioning class, where a lively group of students gathers with enthusiasm and determination. The weight room, perched on the stage above "The Palace," Mount Michael Benedictine School's infamous gym, serves as the backdrop for their shared pursuit of physical strength. As you step inside, you're immediately greeted by the sight of high school boys clad in gym shorts and t-shirts, energetically lifting weights. The air buzzes with a blend of laughter, the clanging of metal against metal, and the faint yet unmistakable scent of sweat. There is an electric energy in the room as they challenge one another to lift heavier weights, their camaraderie shining through every playful jab and encouraging shout. Whether it's during the structured strength and conditioning class, team workouts for football, or simply a group of friends seeking a good workout, the weight room has evolved into a somewhat sacred space at Mount Michael—a sanctuary of growth and fellowship.

Recently, this beloved space has undergone a transformation. At the conclusion of the 2023-2024 school year, the weight room made its move to the gym stage, but this relocation is just the beginning of the notable changes. Bob Sullivan, the dedicated physical education and health teacher, has enriched the environment by adding a series of inspiring posters that highlight the school's five

core Benedictine values: service, community, hospitality, moderation, and integrity. Each poster thoughtfully connects these values to the activities taking place in the weight room. One poster champions the principle of integrity by emphasizing the importance of respecting shared space and equipment, while another promotes moderation, encouraging students to find balance in their workouts. These seemingly simple yet profound reminders serve to intertwine a deeply rooted Benedictine tradition with the daily lives of our students.

The mission of Mount Michael Benedictine School is to ground students in the principles of Benedictine values, nurturing them into young men who are committed to excellence spiritually, intellectually, and socially. These values are designed to permeate every aspect of life at the school. By featuring them prominently in the weight room, we are actively reinforcing our mission and empowering students to embody these ideals in all their endeavors. Through strength training and conditioning, they not only build their physical capabilities but also cultivate character and a sense of community that will resonate throughout their lives. In this way, the weight room becomes more than just a place for physical exercise; it transforms into a dynamic space for personal growth and the embodiment of the Benedictine spirit.



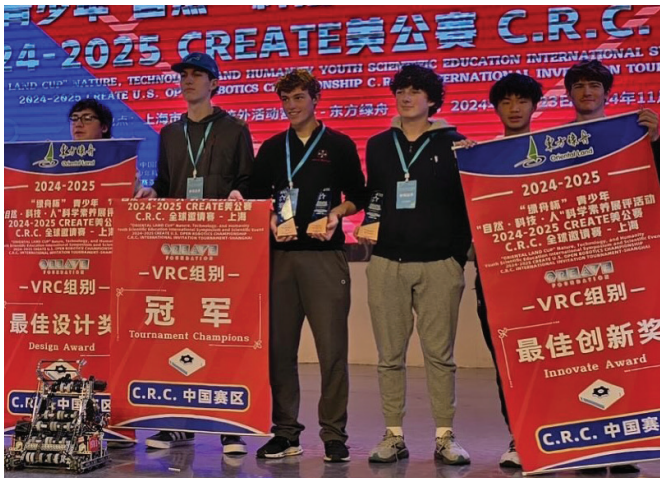
STUDENT NEWS

ROBOTICS TEAM

Two of Mount Michael's Robotics teams recently travelled to Shanghai, China where they competed in a tournament this past weekend.

T1970X was tournament champion as well as the winner of the Design Award. T1970P won the Innovate Award!

Congratulations to our students and their coach, Mr. Mike Williams!



Clemens Pavlish

Connor Smith

Cole Storch

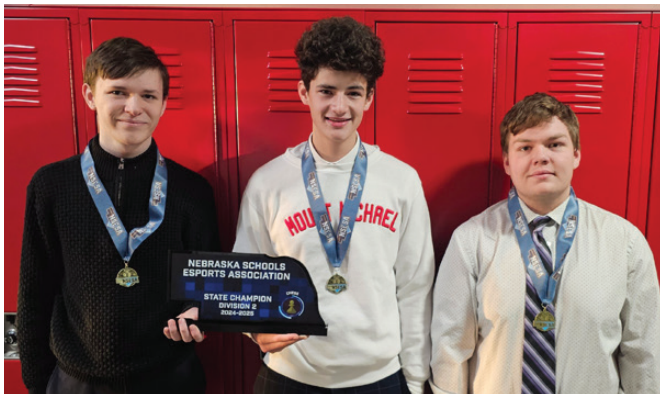


National Merit Semi-Finalists

NATIONAL MERIT SEMIFINALIST

Clemens Pavlish, Connor Smith, and Cole Storch have earned National Merit Semifinalist status! This prestigious honor places them in the top 1% of all high school seniors nationwide. Out of approximately 1.6 million students who took the PSAT last October, only 16,000 advanced to semifinalist status—an incredible achievement!

SPORTS COMMITMENTS



ESPORTS CHESS TEAM

Congratulations to our eSports Chess team of Holden Kutash, Jaxson Pigg, and Grant Snyder, who won the state eSports Chess competition!



Kyle Oldehoeft
committed to Doane College to play baseball.



Grant Rademacher
committed to Colorado Christian University to play baseball.



Jack Carda
committed to the University of Dubuque to run track.

2024 CLASS B BOYS TENNIS

STATE CHAMPIONS

MOUNT MICHAEL BENEDICTINE



2024 NSAA CLASS B BOYS STATE TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS

INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONS



IAN SCOTT
#1 SINGLES - MT. MICHAEL



**PATRICK KILLEEN
NOAH STRICKLETT**
#1 DOUBLES - MT. MICHAEL



ROYCE KLUCAS
#2 SINGLES - WAVERLY



**DOMINIC BENINATO
PETER KILLEEN**
#2 DOUBLES - MT. MICHAEL



Images courtesy of NSAA

TENNIS TEAM

In the past 10 years, The Mount Michael Tennis Team has accomplished:

- 4 State Championships**
- 2 State Runner-Ups**
- 9 Conference Championships**
- 1 State Dual Championship**

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

ANDREW (DAVID) SPENNER '63

Written by: '63 Classmates and other Friends

John Pachta '63, reflects "The Lord puts certain people in your life that touch your heart and make you a better person... and for me that would be Andy Spenner. "Andy" and I (never called him Andrew) first met on Labor Day, September 1, 1959, when we arrived at St. John Vianney Seminary. Andy was from Dodge, NE (address Rt#2) about 50 miles from school. I was from Belleville, KS (address Rt#1) about 200 miles from home. So, we were both young farm boys just fourteen years of age. We both came from large families (I had 8 siblings; Andy 16). We both had lost our dads as young kids, so there was a certain bond that brought us together for many years.

Andy was a very likable young man. He was very consistent, hardworking, and always on time, whether for classes, chapel, or just whatever. He was just there to get the job done, and he did it well and on time.

The memories of every Saturday night in the seminary come to mind. It might have been part of the farm culture we both grew up in – Saturday night was a time to relax; the week's work was done. We had a full-length movie in the gym each week (2nd runs, because the films were loaned out to the school by movie theaters when they started their 1st runs). So, after supper, we would end up going to "mail call" to see if we got any letters from home and this was in the "candy store" as we called it. Andy usually didn't spend any money, but a sack of popcorn or an ice cream cone was in order for the movie. He always especially dressed up that night – his hair swept back, his shirt cuffs were never buttoned but folded back if it was a long-sleeved shirt. If a short-sleeved

shirt, they were rolled up a couple times and he was ready. The movie was a big deal for all of us. To me, he was a cool kid, a cool dude!

I always thought it was a privilege to sit at his table for a meal in our dining room. We ate family-style and stayed at the same table for a week at a time. Everyone had to shift tables weekly.

We graduated from St. John's on Ascension Thursday, May 23, 1963. Andy went on to be a Benedictine Brother; always admired him for that. We used to renew old memories when I and my wife Fran and kids would meet him at the Fall Festivals. Some great memories to be sure!"

For our classmate Vern Rempe '63, the sense of community and family at St. John Vianney left a lasting impression. "My lasting memories of my four years of schooling at St. John Vianney Seminary were more than just four years of high school. I remember it felt like living and growing up in a large family with MANY brothers. In families, we don't always get along perfectly with all our family members, but to live with these "brothers" seven days a week for nine months a year over four years took a certain amount of tolerance and acceptance. However, one member of our class who required

the least amount of tolerance was Andy (David) Spenner. He was like the favorite neighbor next door, who was always there if you needed a helping hand or a patient listening ear. He always seemed to see the positive in everyone and every situation. While I remember very few situations or stories to relate, I am filled with many warm thoughts when I think of those four years with such outstanding classmates such as David."

“ The Lord puts certain people in your life that touch your heart and make you a better person...and for me that would be Andy Spenner. ”

Larry Heine '63 says "as soon as I think of Andy (David), I see the biggest smile on his face. He was always so nice to everyone. He was tall and lanky, and he came from a very large family, his dad died when he was young, and his mother had to raise sixteen children by herself, but with all the kids helping and cooperating. He grew up on a large farm with crops and animals, so there was lots of work bailing hay, herding cattle, and all the many other things day and night it takes to survive and make a living as a farmer/rancher.

David was very religious, not in a pious or phony way, but with a devotion to God. I remember we would walk from the school up and down the hills to the county road and back (about 30 minutes) and visit with the Lord for a while on the way. Everyone in the school (both high school and the two years of college back then) attended Mass every day. We

also gathered in the chapel three times each day for prayers: Prime in the morning, Vespers in the afternoon, Compline at night.

I'm sure the current students at Mount Michael Benedictine who do not live nearby (don't commute to school) and so live with other classmates day and night for many days can relate to the following. We would start school right after Labor Day and the first time we would next see our parents would be at the Fall Festival (if they could travel there). We were only given a few "Visiting Sundays" after that when we could travel home, or our parents were allowed to visit us at the school – maybe four or five days in the whole school year and we only had maybe five to six hours for the visit. Otherwise, we had a break at Thanksgiving, and a longer break at Christmas, and a break at Easter. The only time everyone could go home and be with their family was during the 3 months of summer when the school closed. One of the most important things you learn for your whole life after high school when you live so close and for so long with a lot of "brothers" (fellow students) is how to live in community and appreciate each other in many and different ways."

Fr Charles (Eugene) Zach '63, pastor in the Archdiocese of Portland, OR, recalls "Andy" (affectionately known as "Springer" to me and other classmates) was such a congenial and prized friend to me. He was always such a hard-working student when studies were a challenge at times (Mt. Michael Benedictine Students take notice – you may feel challenged too). He always exhibited a joyful spirit and smile. He was called in his senior year to join the Benedictine community as a postulant (sort of a "try out the monastic life for a short while") and lived in the monastery until he graduated in 1963. He then began his one-year novitiate (sort of a "boot camp" to see if you really have what it takes to be a Benedictine monk). He was followed by two of his classmates (Harry Bognich '63 and Eugene Zach) who had completed first- and second-year college at St. John's and entered the novitiate as Frater Gregory and Frater Charles, since you take on a new name for your new life. His prayer life was always important to him.

Andy, now named Brother David, eventually gravitated to the very challenging task of Kitchen Master for both the abbey and the school. He excelled because of his work ethic, devotion, and dedication, while also excelling in providing for so many nutritious meals over the years, besides the Fall Festival booths and related picnics and many other events. I was head of school from 1978 to 2002, so I relied so much on him. Most importantly, I always considered him a great friend, and still do."

Fellow Benedictine Monks, Fr. John Hagemann '67 and Brother Jerome Kmiecik '62 also shared memories. "David recalled high school being somewhat like what we would call pioneer days. He spoke of the days when there was no gym (the gym was built during his high school days, but it was

nonexistent at first). He spoke of playing soccer a lot, but basically in what were cornfields. He said it was often in wet weather or cold weather soccer went on – mud, snow, and ice – we still played soccer. His favorite sport was baseball. He also enjoyed being in the glee club and was a good singer.



Harry Bognich '63, David Spenner '63, Vernon Remppe '63

A few years after David joined the monastery, Abbot Raphael approached David and asked if he would think about taking over the food service. The previous monk doing the job was leaving and Abbot Raphael needed someone to take charge. He told David it would be just for a while, but "for a while" ended up being 40 years!! Thanks to a generous gift from a benefactor, David received a scholarship to attend the prestigious Culinary Institute of America (New Haven, CT) for about nine months. This was how he became and still is a talented chef who knew how to prepare meals for huge crowds (300 – 500). To put in twelve to fourteen-hour days in the kitchen was often common. In the early days, when Mt. Michael was still St. John's Seminary, David had to prepare over 300 meals – 3 times a day – no small task. In those days, the position was called Kitchen Master and he lived in the back room of the kitchen, so he never got out of the kitchen!! David was extremely organized, and the kitchen was always clean - immaculate from top to bottom. At some point, David learned how to make ice sculptures and would create them to be a Christmas centerpiece on a banquet table.

Other than for about three years after leaving the monastery, David returned and was Kitchen Master again until he retired. He also resumed driving the tractor to mow the grass around the school and abbey. Even nowadays, he comes out to the Mount to visit and see how things are going and provide a helpful hand."

A recent biography from the 2024 Hall of Fame night where David was honored with the Alumni Appreciation Award reiterates some of these stories. Dave Spenner ran the Mount Michael School and Abbey kitchens. Dave joined the monastery after his graduation in 1963 and was assigned to work in the kitchen to oversee operations. He left the monastery only to return in the 1980's to work in the kitchen again and was given the title Kitchen Master. As Kitchen Master he would often work 12–14-hour days to make sure all of the students and monastic community members had food. In addition to the long days, Dave had a very lean budget so he had to be creative and organized to provide all the food necessary for the Mount Michael Community. As many alumni know, preparing and keeping everyone satisfied can be challenging. Dave not only kept the Mount Michael kitchen running for over 40 years, but he was always pleasant, open-minded, and willing to change things to help make others happy. Upon retirement from the kitchen Dave continued to assist with the Fall Festival and mowing the grounds at Mount Michael. He is someone who truly gave their life to Mount Michael and was recently awarded the Alumni Appreciation Award at the Hall of Fame night.

Classmate Harry Bognich says “I was very fortunate to know Andy Spenner as a classmate for four years of high school. We did not really “pal around” together much, probably because I was a kid from the big urban city of Omaha and Andy was a kid from a small rural town. I had one sibling and Andy had sixteen, so not much in common there either. Andy was interested in woodwork (and very good at it) and I’m not artistic. Andy was an excellent singer; I liked to play the piano and organ but was told never to sing loudly. And yet, I enjoyed his company very much; he was always pleasant and cheerful, and I felt like he was a good friend with whom I could easily talk about anything. Later, I got to know him better when I also joined Mount Michael Abbey for a few years and we were both doing much more similar things together whether at prayer, at work... It very often happens that the person who is tremendously different from you becomes a very good friend when you simply get to know that person.

Speaking of becoming better friends, my best friend in high school became Barrie Althoff '63, who lived at first in Greenville, SC and then in Rapid City, SD, both of which were quite far from Elkhorn. For all the current students at Mount Michael Benedictine who live near it (who commute to school or can more regularly go home at times), I recommend that you get to know one (or more) classmates who live at Mount Michael and cannot go home so you can invite the person(s) to come with you to your home at times (provided you and they receive any permissions from the school to do so). I

used to invite Barrie to come home with me and visit my family and he appreciated that very much to be able to leave the school grounds, and all of us got to know each other even better.



Class of 1963 55-Year Reunion

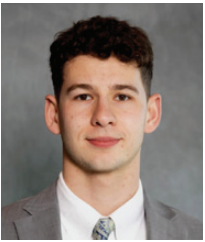
Front: Dave Spenner, Harry Bognich; Back: Thomas Beaty, Vernon Rempe, Leo Parks

While shining the spotlight on Andrew (David) Spenner, I was struck that he seems to be exactly like one of the twelve apostles that Jesus carefully chose. Whether you believe Jesus is God, or is one of God’s greatest prophets, or someone who made a tremendous difference for all history starting with his public life, Jesus could have chosen ANYONE living then to be his apostle. He chose one person to be that apostle and yet the entire New Testament mentions this apostle only FOUR times (three times as Bartholomew in the early Synoptic Gospels and one time as Nathanael in the later Gospel of John). Interesting that this apostle has TWO names in the New Testament and about all we know about him is that he dedicated his life to spreading the Gospel (Good News) and gave his life for it. In so many ways, Andrew (David) Spenner with his two names is an Apostle, a person sent out on a special mission ---- “Feed the Hungry.””

Alumni News



Colten Venteicher '08 is being awarded the Outstanding Young Lawyer Award from the Nebraska State Bar.



Joseph Johansen '20 has accepted a full-time position as an Assurance Associate at RSM. He is currently completing his studies in

accounting at Creighton University's Heider College of Business and will begin his new role upon graduation.



Jacob Idra '18 has been selected to be an Obama Foundation Scholar at Columbia University. This program gives rising leaders

from around the world who are already making a difference in their communities the opportunity to take their work to the next level.

Jacob says, "I'll be joining a group of exceptional Founders and community world leaders from all across the globe. We will address global issues while advancing the impact of our service, which for me includes continuing to uplift my people and addressing micro, practical matters we face (eg, food insecurities, poverty, racism, access to education, barriers to financial capital). Furthermore, I'll be focused on implementing strategies for building cross-sectoral partnerships to enhance our work and extend opportunities to our South Sudanese community. "



Elijah Buckhold '14 recently completed his Master's of Fine Arts in English and Creative Writing at the University of

Nebraska-Omaha. He is beginning his career working for the Springfield Illinois school district.



John Boeck '08 has been promoted to Varsity Assistant Coach for the Millard South Girls Basketball team. Previously,

he served as the Head JV Coach, when the team won a state championship two years ago. In addition to his coaching success, John is currently completing his Master's degree in Physical Education at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.



Mike Miller '91 was appointed as a Senior Vice President of SCS Engineers in November of 2023 and was recently promoted

to the role of Environmental Market Leader for the company. In this new role, Mike will oversee the strategic direction, growth, and performance of the company's environmental service market where he will support more than 1400 staff in 70 offices throughout the United States. Mike joined the firm in 2005 when he established their Omaha office. He subsequently established the Des Moines office in 2012, maintained responsible charge of their environmental activities throughout the Central U.S., and oversaw the National Due Diligence Practice.



MINNEAPOLIS ALUMNI GATHERING

Zach Voller '99, Lukas Buehler '12, Andy Lanik '92, Mike Collins '96, Andrew Nigro '18, John Von Dollen '12, Max McCoy '23

Alumni News



Mark Sojka '80 is starting a new position as Regional Sales Manager, Major Accounts at Zscaler.



Dash Wedergren '18 has been promoted to Senior Associate at EY-Parthenon Software Strategy Group in NYC.



Archbishop Lucas has appointed **Fr. Ryan Lewis '91** as the newest Pastor of St. Robert Bellarmine Catholic Church. Fr. Lewis was

previously Pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seaton and has recently celebrated his 25th anniversary as a priest.



Ben Murray '17 was promoted to Assurance Senior at EY in Nashville, TN.

WEDDINGS



Nicholas Orr '18 married Mary Laura Zeringue on November 9th, 2024 in Thibodaux, LA.



CHICAGO ALUMNI GATHERING

Colin Lakeman '18, Christopher Ramacciotti '99, Andrew Tomka '01, Dylan Spicka '98, John Von Dollen '12, Dan Gard '04, Ben Swiniarski '04



Dan Kamppinen '12 married Mary Range on September 28th, 2024 in Ishpeming, MI.

BIRTHS



John Pieper '04 married Susanne Martie on September 7th, 2024 in Colorado Springs, CO.



Kenny Batenhorst '12 married Brenna Clark on July 27th, 2024 in Omaha, NE.



Tony Swanson '06 and his wife Carly welcomed their son, Roland James Swanson, on December 8th, 2024.



Chris Gamm '04 and his wife Elizabeth welcomed their daughter, Lucile Jane Gamm, on October 24th, 2024.



Sean Murphy '10 and his wife Tiffany welcomed their son, Myles Joe Murphy, on August 26th, 2024.



Matt Lingo '13 and his wife Amanda welcomed their son, Warden James Lingo, on August 16th, 2024.



Tyler Knott '06 and his wife Brooke welcomed their son, Dax Thomas Knott, on July 29th, 2024.

If you would like to include an announcement in an upcoming issue of the Michaelen, please contact:

John Von Dollen '12 | 402-238-1447 | jvondollen@mountmichael.org



JOIN US FOR THE 36TH ANNUAL
NIGHT OF KNIGHTS

SATURDAY, MARCH 29, 2025

GENERAL CHAIRS

**Beth & Charlie Boone
(Will, Class of '26)**

VICE CHAIRS

**Beth & Dan Gard '04
(Joe, Class of '28)**

ALUMNI CHAIRS

**Lori & Dr. Bernard 'B.J.' Wilson '84
(Andrew '19)**

All proceeds from Night of Knights go towards Mount Michael Benedictine School's operating budget. Your support makes it possible for our students to grow into spiritual, intellectual, and moral leaders.

Email events@mountmichael.org or visit nightofknights.org to find out more information on how to support NOK 2025!

IN REMEMBRANCE

Mass Information

If you find that your pastor is unable to conveniently take care of Masses you wish to have celebrated for your particular intentions, Mount Michael Abbey welcomes the requests for such intentions. We will see to it that the Masses are celebrated as promptly as possible.

The offering you make should correspond with that suggested by the diocese in which you reside. Your pastor will be able to inform you of what the stipend of a particular diocese may be.

Mass Intentions: \$10.00

Please address such requests to:
Mass Intentions
Development Office
Mount Michael Benedictine Abbey
22520 Mount Michael Road
Elkhorn, NE 68022

Memorial & Tribute Information

Often, inquiries are made about our memorials and tributes for relatives and friends, living or deceased. At Mount Michael one can enroll families or friends in our memorial and tribute foundation. This consists of daily remembrance at the Eucharist and the Divine Office by the monks of Mount Michael Abbey. Upon enrollment, we will notify the family with a card.

The suggested offering for this memorial enrollment is:

INDIVIDUAL

One Year \$50
Five Years \$100
Lifetime \$250

FAMILY

One Year \$100
Five Years \$200
Lifetime \$500

Marjorie "Marge" Kozal friend of Mount Michael

Deborah Pink grandmother of Evan Pink ('14)

Betty "Betsy" Bender mother of alumni Jon ('02) and Jimmy ('07) Bender

David Spicka father of alumni Dylan ('98) and Colin ('01) Spicka

Karen Reed friend of Mount Michael

James "Jim" Kuchar (SJS)

Barbara Lampman mother-in-law of Kent Sullivan ('81)

Elnora Dougherty grandmother of Paul Dougherty ('16)

Nancy Klenke cousin of Abbot Michael Liebl

Allen Rounph uncle of Eric Rounph ('99)

James Bush grandfather of Will ('25) and Grant ('27) Snyder

Marvin Pick grandfather of Matt ('95), Michael ('04), and Pat ('07) Pick

Patrick "Pat" Michaelsen uncle of Fr. Louis; and uncle of Matt ('79), Mark ('80) and John ('85) Sojka; and uncle of Tony ('02), Adam ('05), and Joe ('05) Michaelsen

Lucien Kicken father of David Kicken and grandfather of Levi ('19) and Liam ('27) Kicken

J. Joseph "Joe" McQuillan father of Matthew McQuillan ('94)

Mike O'Neill father of Brian O'Neill ('96)

Fr. Daniel Juelfs (SJS)

Timothy "Tim" Spitzenberger ('90)

Charles "Charlie" Lubischer uncle of Brian O'Neill ('96)

Joseph "Joe" Engelbert grandfather of Peter ('22), Andrew ('24), and Anthony ('27) Gates

Donald Flaxbeard grandfather of Jack Flaxbeard ('16)

Dominick Zappia, Jr. father of Dominick ('88) and Anthony Zappia

Eli Rohweder son of Zach ('08) and Amy Rohweder

Margaret Baumann great-grandmother of Jackson ('25) and Max ('27) Teetor

"Frank" John McKenny great grandfather of Rylan Pearson ('27)

Keah Paljor brother of Chop Paljor ('23)

Richard "Rick" France brother of former staff member Judy Kline

Please let us know if a loved one passes. It is Mount Michael Benedictine Abbey's custom to remember for two weeks those who have died in our concluding litany at Midday Prayer. The Abbey also includes your loved one in our All Souls Remembrance service. While someone from the Abbey may try to attend the funeral of a loved one, we are grateful for your understanding that our availability is limited by our community numbers and by our commitments. Our thoughts and prayers are certainly with you! Blessings.

MOUNT MICHAEL

BENEDICTINE ABBEY AND SCHOOL

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Michaeleen

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Fr. Louis Sojka, OSB'81
Mr. Bob Van Haute
Mr. Colten Venteicher'08

Mount Michael Directory

Mount Michael Chapel
Visitors are always welcome
Daily Mass 7:15am | Sunday Mass 9:30am | Saturday 8:00am

Liturgy of the Hours (Monday-Saturday)
Morning Praise 6:30am | Noon Day Prayer 11:45am
Vespers 5:15pm | Night Prayer (In the Abbey) 7:00pm

St. Benedict Guest House
Gift Shop/Lunches/Teas/Dessert | Day Retreats
Brother Jerome Kmiecik, O.S.B., 402-206-2069

Vocation Ministry
For information about monastic life:
Brother August Schaefer, O.S.B., vocations@mountmichael.org

Oblates of St. Benedict Director
Brother Jerome Kmiecik, O.S.B., 402-206-2069

Alumni Association
For information about meetings/events or to report news:
John Von Dollen, 402-238-1447, alumni@mountmichael.org

School Admissions
Tim Carlson, 402-238-1457, admissions@mountmichael.org

Advancement Office
John Von Dollen, 402-238-1447, jvondollen@mountmichael.org

Caskets & Urns
Fr. John Hagemann, O.S.B, 402-270-9026

