

Michaeleen

WINTER
2024-25

PAGE
10 Lectio and
Oblates

PAGE
12 Night of
Knights

PAGE
16 Alumni
Spotlight



MOUNT + MICHAEL
BENEDICTINE ABBEY AND SCHOOL



Letter from the Abbot

Fr. John Hagemann's 50th Anniversary

When I first arrived at Mount Michael, St. John Seminary – a minor seminary with four years of high school and two years of college – there were about 250 seminarians. The collegians and seniors lived in semi-private rooms. The remainder lived in two large dorms. We slept in double bunk army cots and kept our few belongings in a locker room. When we first arrived, everything was arranged alphabetically in the dorm, in the locker rooms and in the classrooms. One of the first classmates I met was Bob Hagemann because his bunk bed was near mine. Later I learned that Bob had an older brother John who was a sophomore at the time.

Mixing with upper classmen often first happened by way of athletics. Cross country was a fall sport. Both Bob and John ran cross country, so I thought I should try also. I gave up on that project when a senior lapped me one afternoon during a mile training session. Bob did not stay in the seminary past his sophomore year, but his brother John did. John continued to star in cross country and during the track season was a member of a two-mile relay championship team.

Some years later when I came to the monastery as a novice, John was a year ahead of me. He professed simple vows shortly after I arrived. For a short while, there were five of us – novices and junior monks – living in a dorm room all together. One evening when Br. James and Fr. John (then still Br. John) and I were giggling late into the night over National Lampoon's yearbook, our novice master Abbot Theodore (at that time not yet abbot) came steaming into the room to tell us to be quiet and to get to bed.

After my novitiate year, Fr. John and I drove into Creighton daily to finish our college education. We also worked in our summer camp together, acting as counselors for the campers. Camp required endless energy – riflery, archery, swimming, horseback riding, camping out – but it was always fun. During this time that I first came to appreciate how willing Fr. John was to work hard.

After I finished my degree at Creighton, I joined Fr. John for theology at St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota. As Fr. John already had spent a couple of years at St. John's he made the transition there for me easy and enjoyable. More importantly, Fr. John was among the first group of theology students from St. John's to spend a spring semester in the Holy Land. That group embraced a pioneering challenge. They lived in what had been a Franciscan residence next to the birthplace of St. John the Baptist in Ein Kerem, a suburb of Jerusalem. Few books were there when they arrived. No real kitchen. No washer and dryer. No way of easily reproducing papers. No typewriters. But what an adventure. An opportunity to see and experience places spoken of in the Scriptures. A chance to walk about on the Temple Mount where Jesus himself would have walked. A chance to see the Church of the Holy Sepulcher where Christ was crucified, died, and was buried. I also had the opportunity to enjoy that wonderful odyssey because of Fr. John. Those of us who had the great good fortune to spend a semester in the Holy Land have never forgotten it.



After I returned from theology and was ordained, I joined Fr. John as an instructor in the school. He was already an admired and impactful literature teacher. So many students still remember some of the wonderful literature they absorbed thanks to Fr. John. Just to name a few books that Fr. John would have students read, there was Chaim Potok's *The Promise and The Chosen*, John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, Graham Greene's *The Power and The Glory*, Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and James Michener's *Centennial*. Many of Fr. John's students would become proficient writers because of the skills they learned from him. Some have made attempts at literature themselves.

Fr. John's younger brother Alan graduated from Mount Michael. He was a member of the school's 1982 state championship football team. I also need to include John, Mike, Rob Noble and Pete, Dennis, and Phil Hoppe. All nephews of Fr. John, all wonderful students and outstanding athletes.

Aside from classroom hours teaching literature, Fr. John devoted enormous time and energy to choir and band. Fr. John has a beautiful voice which continues to benefit the abbey today. Under his direction, many feast days featured students playing instruments or singing at the Eucharist. The choir and band also performed for parents and guests and spring and winter concerts. But in my estimation, the musicals he staged with the students were ranked among the most impressive achievements of our students. There was *Paint Your Wagon* and *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*. But I most vividly remember *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. One year I had just returned from summer studies in New York. Time there allowed me to see a few shows on Broadway. When I saw Mount Michael's production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, I thought I was back on Broadway. I marvel at the ability with which Fr. John drew so much dynamism from young and amateur talent. Students involved have never forgotten that wonderful experience.

I have hardly touched on the liturgical labors Fr. John has provided through the years. He has served in parishes across the Omaha archdiocese and beyond substituting when pastors needed help. He has celebrated baptisms, weddings, and funerals for family, for alumni and for friends of Mount Michael. He has served as vocation director for the monastery.

After our carpenter, Br. Andrew, died, Fr. John took charge of the caskets that Br. Andrew had made first for the monks, and then later for others. Thanks to the efforts of first of Fr. John's cousin Paul Dohmen and then of Randy Hellerich,

the monastery continued to offer people simple but elegant caskets. That apostolate continues because of the diligence of Fr. John.

If you know Fr. John at all, you know that he treasured his roots in Albion. The parishes in that part of Nebraska were served for many years by Franciscans. Fr. John had a great uncle whom he greatly admired who was a Franciscan. We all know that St. Francis was famous for his connection to nature – Brother Sun and Sister Moon. Fr. John embraced that connection to nature on the family farm. It expresses itself to this day in the work he does in the garden. For many years he has nurtured a garden which benefitted the monastery, the school, and friends of Mount Michael. His garden was a massive project and he loved seeing his labor bear fruit in flowers, in corn, in tomatoes and a host of other vegetables. His flowers appeared at numerous events in town. I have to add parenthetically that the deer and the racoons loved to see his garden bloom too. Bit of an endless war against critters. Fr. John had a farmer's market on the weekends at which people could come to buy some of his produce. It was always a hit at the Fall Festival too.



Fr. John will be celebrating his fiftieth anniversary of ordination in August of this year.

This brief letter hardly does justice to Fr. John's dedicated life at Mount Michael Abbey. He will be celebrating his fiftieth anniversary of ordination in August of this year. I know that there must be readers of the *Michaeleen* who may have memories of Fr. John to share. If you would like, please send me a note either via mail or email. We would like to put them all together and present them to him. Perhaps only a small tribute, an expression of deep appreciation for all that he has done for many of us.

Michael Liebl, OSB



UPCOMING EVENTS

**HONORING
NATE LAFAVE†**
MARCH 28

NIGHT OF KNIGHTS
MARCH 29

**ESTATE PLANNING
SEMINAR**
APRIL 2

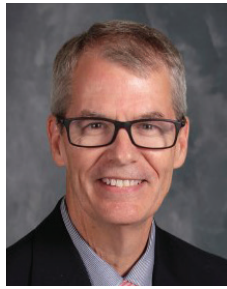
GRADUATION
MAY 10

**DENVER ALUMNI
GATHERING**
MAY 14

**LAST DAY
OF SCHOOL**
MAY 22

**ALUMNI GOLF
CLASSIC**
JUNE 6

ALUMNI REUNION
JUNE 7



FROM THE
**HEAD OF
SCHOOL**

Traditions are important. They help define who we are and what things are important to us. On March 29th, 2025, Mount Michael Benedictine School will host the 36th annual Night of Knights dinner and auction.

This event has been a tradition since 1989. Night of Knights serves dual purposes – practical and Benedictine values centric. On a practical level, it is an important event helping fund the annual operational budget. Night of Knights also is about community, keeping many of our alumni and parents, current and past, in touch with each other and engaged as active members of the incredible family we call Mount Michael!

Many alumni have stories of working at the event, helping set up, greeting patrons as they entered, serving as waiters (anyone remembering those cummerbunds and bow ties?!), serving as bid runners when the silent auction cards were on paper, helping clean up and making sure everything flows smoothly. If you talk to those attending the event, they will mention how impressed they were with our young men as they welcomed them and exhibited the proper manners in making them feel welcome. The Night of Knights has become an important annual event and continues to be a wonderful memory for all involved.

The event is always late winter or early spring, but choosing that perfect Saturday to balance attendance and school activities can be challenging! Again, this year Night of Knights is March 29th. We will be back at A View at West Shores in Waterloo. In



Some of our past and current Night of Knights event chairs.

addition to the beautiful lake views, the wide-open space allows for dinner and both live and silent auctions to be together in one large space. Over the years, the venue has changed locations. We hosted it on campus, both in the gym/Armory and in a big tent, the Dome at the old Mutual of Omaha building, Peony Park, the SAC Museum in Ashland, and The Relevant Center.

Night of Knights raises dollars for the operating budget in multiple ways in addition to the dinner/auction itself. Among other things, there are event sponsorships and advertisers, the annual raffle, Raise-the-Paddle, smaller pre-event activities, and other buy-it-now sales options. Participation in helps raise money for Mount Michael Benedictine School.

The event's success is directly related to our dedicated volunteers and chairs. These parents, alumni, and Mount Michael supporters are really the ones behind this fund-raising event. I cannot be more thankful for their ideas, leadership, time, and support. Our Advancement team brought past and current Night of Knights event chairs, including one of the event's founders, together for an inspiring evening of reconnection and idea-sharing. This meaningful gathering highlighted the legacy of leadership and dedication that makes our Mount Michael community so special. Past chairs shared invaluable insights, and this year's chairs gained inspiration to carry the event forward.

Each year our chairs and advancement staff select a theme around which the event is centered. This year the theme is All Knight Long!. This is in reference to the 1980s and the songs that made that decade so memorable. Looking back, here are some themes of the past. How many do you remember?

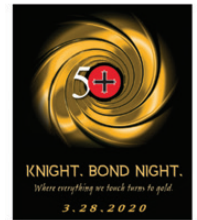
I hope we will see many of you at Night of Knights 2025 this year. Over the years hundreds of people have worked to make these dinner/auctions possible. Hundreds more have participated and given their support. It is through your dedication and support that we are able to offer the greatest college prep education to young men. Thank you for your continued support of all things Mount Michael!

God bless and Go Knights!

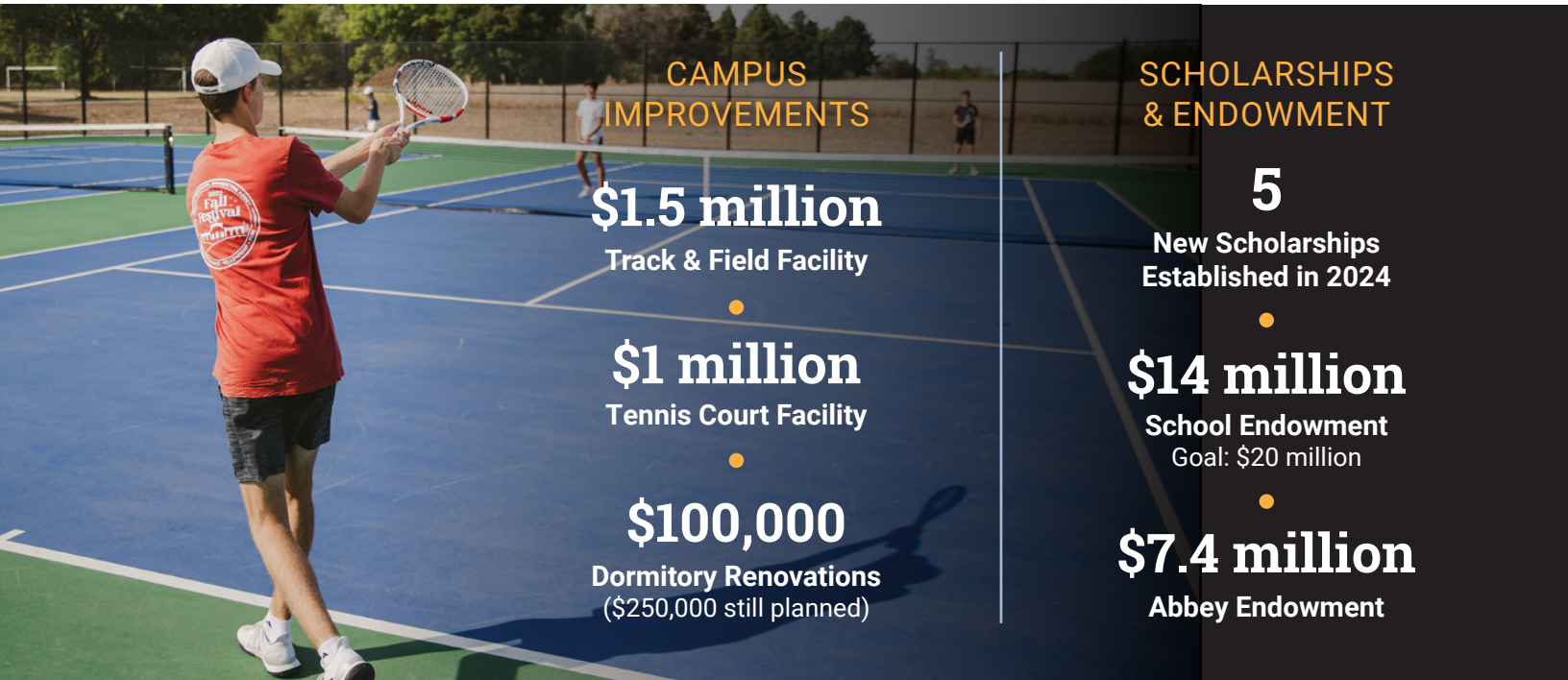


David J. Peters, Ed.D
Head of School

- All Knight Long '25*
- Mount Madness '24*
- Saturday Knight Live '23*
- Deuces Wild '22*
- Monopoly '21*
- Knight. Bond Knight '20*
- Knights on the Fairway '19*
- Talladega Knights '18*
- Knights and Beyond '17*
- It's a Wonderful Knight Life '16*
- Superhero Knights '15*
- Knights in Flight '14*
- A Knight to Remember '13*
- Knights on the Boardwalk '12*
- Knights in Tuscany '11*
- Knights around the World '10*
- Knights in Emerald City '09*
- Aloha Knights '08*
- Knight at the Oscars '07*
- Knights in Rio '06,*
- Knights on Broadway '05*
- Groovy Knights '04*
- Starry Starry Knight '03*
- Knightclub '02*
- Twelfth Knight '01*
- Saturday Knight Fever '00*
- Hollywood Knights '99*
- Cruise the Knight Away '98*
- Knight of Magic '97*
- A Knight of Excellence '93*
- A Knight of Harvest '92*



RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS & INITIATIVES



CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS

\$1.5 million

Track & Field Facility

\$1 million

Tennis Court Facility

\$100,000

Dormitory Renovations
(\$250,000 still planned)

SCHOLARSHIPS & ENDOWMENT

5

New Scholarships
Established in 2024

\$14 million

School Endowment
Goal: \$20 million

\$7.4 million

Abbey Endowment

FUNDING OVERVIEW

GIFT ALLOCATIONS



KNIGHT FUND



SCHOLARSHIPS



MONASTIC SUPPORT



FACILITY RENOVATIONS



PASSION PROJECTS

CONTRIBUTION BREAKDOWN 2024

	ALUMNI PARENTS	CURRENT PARENTS	FRIENDS	GRAND-PARENTS	ALUMNI
Total Households	988	94	2,097	599	1,909
Households that Gave	297	62	292	133	306
Percentage that Gave	30%	66%	14%	22%	16%
	\$524,781 TOTAL	\$144,207 TOTAL	\$132,771 TOTAL	\$132,161 TOTAL	\$128,454 TOTAL

5,534 total households in our Mount Michael database.

1,025 of those households donated in 2024 (to any fund).

* Mass requests, memorials, and bequests are not included in these numbers.
* Totals may not add up exactly because some households have multiple categories or codes.



John Von Dollen '12
Director of Advancement

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jvondollen@mountmichael.org



HOW TO GIVE
mountmichael.com/donate/

ADMISSIONS



Brotherhood in Bloom

Spring at Mount Michael is a season of growth and transition. As the campus comes alive with warmer days and longer evenings, our seniors prepare to take their next steps beyond the Mount, while a new group of students prepare to begin their Mount Michael journey. The incoming Class of 2029 has already started forming bonds with their future classmates, getting a firsthand look at what it means to be a Knight.

Over the past few months, these young men have visited campus, shadowed current students, and participated in Jr. Knights athletics. Some joined us for after-school visits, stepping into the daily life of a Mount Michael student, while others attended our entrance exam bootcamp, eager to challenge themselves academically. The decision to become a Knight is about more than academics or extracurriculars - it's about finding a place where they belong, a community that values brotherhood, excellence, and tradition.

Meanwhile, our current students continue to make the most of the season. Baseball, soccer, golf, and track and field will soon be in full swing, with our athletes competing with the same drive and discipline that define Mount Michael. Beyond the fields, service remains at the heart of our mission, as students engage in volunteer work and annual projects that strengthen their connection to both the school and the broader community.

The spirit of growth and ambition extends beyond the classroom and athletics. Our robotics team, fresh off their

world championship victory in Shanghai, is already preparing for new challenges. Summer brings another exciting tradition - Camp Mount Michael - where many future Knights will get their first taste of life on campus.

As spring unfolds, it is clear that the tradition of excellence at Mount Michael is alive and well. Whether preparing for graduation or just beginning their journey, our students continue to embody the values that make this place so special.

To the Class of 2029 - welcome to Mount Michael. Your journey is just beginning!



Sincerely,

Tim Carlson '10
Director of Enrollment



A Benedictine with Franciscan Background

Written by: Fr. John Hagemann O.S.B.

I imagine that as one ages in religious life, it is common to wonder what one's life would have been like if a different path had been chosen from the very beginning. I admit that this thought has occurred to me quite often in the past few years.

Those who know me very well and not even so well, know that I really wanted to be a Franciscan at a very early age in life. I must also admit that the Franciscan in me has always been an itch. What if I had pursued that way? Where would I be today? Where would that path have led me?

One of the main reasons I thought of being a Franciscan was because I had a relative who was a Franciscan. Actually, I had numerous relatives who were Franciscan, but I was most attracted to the life because of my maternal grandfather's brother, Brother Adrian Borer OFM. When Br. Adrain came to my mother's home to visit, he often would take off his habit because it was in the summer's hot months. My mother would be the first to clothe herself in his robes. Even though that was years before I came into existence, just maybe that very thing did something to me!

Br. Adrain spent most of his religious life in St. Antonio, Texas. His work took him to the missions there, particularly San Jose. He was famous for his cooking and baking skills. Everyone loved his homemade bread. And he became a hero of the poor of that area. He never turned a begging hand away from the Friary's door. Br. Adrian was the epitome of simplicity. He and his work was so Franciscan and attractive.

I also come from an area in Nebraska that, in a way, could be called the Franciscan capital of Nebraska - Humphrey, Columbus, Madison, and Raeville. The churches and monasteries of these areas are incredible monuments of Franciscan Spirituality. I was very attracted to all of that as a young boy and thought it would be a wonderful thing to remain in this area of Nebraska, close to home and my family.

Then the pastor of my home parish thought I really needed to give some consideration to the seminary in the archdiocese to which I belonged - St. John Vianney Seminary in Elkhorn, Nebraska in the Omaha Archdiocese. The seminary was operated by the Benedictines of Conception Abbey. I entered the seminary there in Elkhorn to study for the priesthood. I remained an independent student and did not claim any diocese or religious community. I became involved in the young community growing there and over time the Franciscan thoughts became fainter and fainter. Furthermore, in the 1960s as things began to change in religious life, the Franciscans began to pull many of their members away from the Franciscan capital of Nebraska. In a few years, all Franciscan parishes and monasteries would be turned over to the archdiocese.

So, I settled in at Elkhorn and decided to join the Benedictines. In many ways, Benedictine spirituality is compatible with Franciscan spirituality. Really, there are many similarities. I dug in and gave over 50 years of my life to the Benedictines and the apostolates of my abbey, Mount Michael of Elkhorn, Ne.

However, in the spring of 2022, when I saw an opportunity to live at my home place and try to live a solitary way of Franciscan life, I jumped at the chance to do so. I spent several months on the farm where I grew up, giving Franciscan spirituality a chance. What did I discover?

I discovered you can't go back in time. There are still wonderful monuments and churches, bearing witness to this spirituality, but they all lack one thing. There are no communities. There are no Franciscans. I kept asking myself if there was a way I could live a type of Franciscan spirituality within my own Benedictine community.

I spent lots of time with the hymn that is attributed to St. Francis – ALL CREATURES OF GOD AND KING. The hymn is based on Francis' poem Canticle of the Sun. When I came to the fourth verse, I realized I could be a Franciscan in a Benedictine community.

*And even you, most gentle death,
Waiting to hush our final breath, O praise him! Alleluia
You lead back home the child of God,
For Christ our Lord that way has trod, O praise him! Alleluia
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia*

Reflection on death is close to my heart because I have been involved in the casket ministry of Mount Michael Abbey. I realized that this ministry is, in many ways, as Franciscan as it is Benedictine. It was right in front of me all the while. I realized that there were many ways that I was already living Franciscan Spirituality through what I was doing at Mount Michael, but particularly with the casket ministry.

Simple pine caskets, how much more Franciscan can it get? So simple pine caskets are again available at Mount Michael Abbey and Franciscan simplicity is still very much alive and well.

I look forward to more aspects of my work at Mount Michael to express Franciscan Spirituality in what is already there.

Contact Fr. John Hagemann, OSB
jhagemann@mountmichael.org
or the abbey website for more information.



Lectio and Monks and Oblates of this House

Written by: Bro. Jerome Kmiecik O.S.B.

Over the past year and especially during Catholic Schools Week, the Mount Michael community has been hearing more from alumni of Mount Michael and St. John Seminary during the morning chapel talks. Alumni were invited to give short presentations on their individual experiences of attending St. John Seminary/Mount Michael or the Benedictine values.

Many of them begin their presentation by expressing gratitude for being invited to speak. It is obvious that they feel strongly about what they want to say and welcome the opportunity to do so.

One common theme that runs through most of their presentations is experiencing hospitality and the brotherhood of the community. The living component is usually the avenue through which these experiences happen.

Many chose concrete examples about life in school to be clear about what they are saying. A good number of them say that choosing to attend Mount Michael was the best decision they made in their life, even if at first, they did not know a single soul in the school.

I must admit that I listen very carefully to what each former student has to say. I suppose that I am wondering what sticks with them after they have left us. Do they really remember anything about Benedictine spirituality and what makes Mount Michael different from any other Catholic high school? Do they grasp what we are all about?

A few years ago, I introduced a monastic way of praying to the Mount Michael students. It is called Lectio. Since I have been Director of the Oblates and I use the method of Lectio with the adult oblates, I thought it would be good to do the same with the students. I thought the silent periods and listening would be a good thing for teenagers as well as for adults. The method involves slow reading of a Scripture passage three times, silence, and then expressing aloud what the passage might be saying personally to those who

participate. At first it was a bit difficult to get the students to express anything, but now it comes very easily, and it really seems natural to them. This year's seniors, the class of 2025, have been leaders at Lectio and an example to the other students. They have been very faithful and serious about this method of praying, even if there are sporting events the night Lectio is scheduled.

It is amazing how more students want to be a participant of this type of prayer. And what is most heart-warming is to hear some of these alumni who come back and say that Lectio was particularly important to them when they were here as a student. Quite honestly, it made me wonder if we monks should be offering such an opportunity to the alumni as well. Perhaps you alumni out there could let us know if that would be something that you would like us to continue for you. Maybe we can arrange a time for such - like once a month.

I would also like to mention that some years ago, Fr. John suggested that I open a chapter for student oblates. When Fr. John was here as a student (of course, it was St. John's Seminary then) there as a possibility for students to become Oblates of St. Benedict. So, I decided that it might be a great idea. That was approximately 10 years ago. Would you

believe we now have over 50 students who are oblates! Each year there is more interest.

Oblates are lay people of any faith who try to live Benedictine spirituality the best they can wherever they are. You do not have to be a Catholic to be an oblate. Many people and our students are attracted because of that very fact.

There is information on both the school and abbey website about Oblates. On the school website, there is a button under spirituality which explains much more. If you have trouble finding the information, just contact me. Jkmiecik@mountmichael.org

It seems obvious that our students find much more than only a chance to get a good education or play sports here at Mount Michael. Spirituality is also a lot of what Mount Michael is all about. Each Monday morning the students and community pray the Prayer for Vocations. The monks pray this prayer daily after our evening meal. Although the monastery doors are not being broken down by men who want to be monks, our prayer for vocations is truly being answered by many students and others who want to be oblates.

St. Michael, the Archangel, Prince of the heavenly host of angels and patron saint of our community, intercede for us before the throne of God, in seeking God as monks and oblates of this house. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen





JOIN US FOR THE 36TH ANNUAL NIGHT OF KNIGHTS

Saturday, March 29, 2025
A View West Shores

110 S 243RD ST, WATERLOO, NE 68069

- 4:30 PM Mass in the Chapel on Mount Michael's Campus
- 5:00 PM Cocktail Reception & Silent Auction
- 7:00 PM Dinner & Program
- 8:15 PM Live Auction, Raise the Paddle & Raffle Drawing
- 9:30 PM Social Hour with Live Band Performing '80s Hits

TICKET PRICES

- \$150 Individual Ticket
- \$100 Young Alumni Ticket (2016-2024)
- \$100 Young Alumni Guest Ticket (Limit One)
- \$3,000+ Corporate Tables (8 Guests / Table)

RESERVATIONS

Scan the QR code



Or go to nightofknights.org

Email events@mountmichael.org or visit nightofknights.org to purchase your tickets and find out how you can support Night of Knights.

Attire: Rock your best '80s look or keep it classy in cocktail attire!

ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS GIVE BACK to Greater Community

Written by: Easton Crouse '25

Mount Michael's architecture program, taught by Mrs. Shanna Sedlacek, continues to set itself apart as one of the school's most unique electives. Offering students an introduction to the architecture and engineering worlds, the program gives its students hands-on experience in design and construction, which are skills rarely taught in high school.

This year, seniors in the fourth year of the program took on a special project. They spent the first semester designing, building, and finishing their own unique benches, which were then donated to the Nebraska Humane Society. These benches will be used in outdoor spaces where visitors interact with dogs up for adoption, providing a lasting impact for the shelter.

"I feel that building the benches was a great way to learn basic woodworking while making an impact on the community,"

Connor Smith said. This sentiment highlights the project, which combines learning new skills with service, a Benedictine values.

The assignment was not limited to only construction. Students were also required to document their work by creating step-by-step instruction manuals for their designs. These manuals included a list of the materials and resources used to construct the benches. The goal was to ensure the project used the student's problem-solving skills while teaching the importance of a thought-out design.

Seniors Quinn Wamsley, Jak Kosierowski, Connor Smith, and Blaze Bosilevac each constructed their own unique benches. The semester tested their attention to detail while giving back to the community in a meaningful way. "The hardest part was figuring out all the angles on the side parts of my bench," Wamsley said.

Through projects like these, Mount Michael's architecture program not only introduces technical skills but also instills a sense of community. By combining education with real-world applications, students leave the program better prepared for their futures and more aware of the positive impact they can make.



Previously published in the student publication "The Mount"

STUDENT NEWS

ACADEMIC DECATHLON

The Mount Michael Knights are Nebraska's 2025 Academic Decathlon Overall State Champions! In addition to receiving a number of other personal and team awards, the team also gets to represent Nebraska at Nationals in Des Moines, IA this May.



Left to right: **Brady Becker**, **Timur Guliev**, **Cole Storch**, **Holden Kutash**, **Clemens Pavlish**, **Blase Bosilevac**, **Connor Smith**, **Rylan Pearson**, **Michael Freilich**, **Nathan Mullin**, **Jaxson Pigg**, **Cole Poutre**, **Coach Dave Cormier**, **John Kelly**.

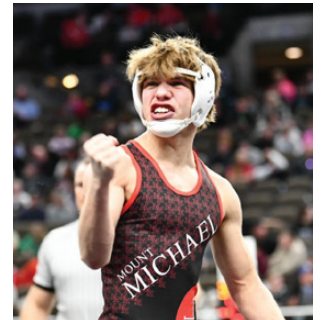
WRESTLING

Two Class B state wrestling medalists. Freshman **Kaleb Griffith** places 4th in the 150 lbs weigh class and sophomore **Liam Moline** placed 5th in the 120 lbs weigh class.



Kaleb Griffith

Kaleb Griffith sets a new school record for wrestling with 42 wins and 173 takedowns this season.



Liam Moline

SWIMMING

The Swim Team consisting of **Easton Crouse**, **Blasé Bosilevac**, **Caleb Courtney**, **Holden Kutash**, and **Patrick Johansen** finished 7th overall at the state swim meet.

Easton Crouse placed second in diving at the state meet.



MOUNT MICHAEL
KNIGHTS



Easton Crouse



Blasé Bosilevac



Caleb Courtney



Holden Kutash



Patrick Johansen

ACADEMIC ALL-STATE AWARD

The Nebraska School Activities Association has announced the Academic All-State award recipients. These students were nominated for their recognizable excellence in academics, leadership, and contributions to their respective sports.



David Barkmeier
CROSS COUNTRY



Mesach Nkurubujango
CROSS COUNTRY



Jack Dewhurst
FOOTBALL



Brady Quinlavin
FOOTBALL



Peter Killeen
TENNIS



Dominic Beninato
TENNIS

BASKETBALL

Kyle Oldehoeft sets a new school record for basketball with 23 rebounds in a single game.



Kyle Oldehoeft

FALL SCHOLAR ATHLETE

Peter Killeen was honored by the Greater Omaha Sports Committee as one of the 2024-2025 Fall Scholar Athletes for tennis.



Get the latest updates on Mount Michael!



Mount Michael
Benedictine School



@Mount_Michael



Mount Michael
Benedictine

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

COLTEN VENTEICHER '08

Written by: Michael Boeck '08

"VISUALIZING THE RUN"

Twenty years ago, Colten Venteicher made the deliberate decision to attend Mount Michael Benedictine High School where he found himself surrounded by fields of opportunities.

The St. Stephen the Martyr product was instantly captivated by the recruiting Knights who visited, exuding confidence. "When I was listening to high school recruit visits and the Mount Michael guys would visit, they had their suits on and were articulate. I thought that's who I want to be; somebody who carries himself with confidence, someone people can look up to."

The allure of attending a school with a profound academic legacy and the chance to partake in athletics made his decision simple.

"The impression Colten had of Mount Michael was that it was a high academic place for kids who really want to learn and better themselves. Colten embraced that. He wanted to uphold the tradition and it was a big deal to him," says teacher and coach John Gathje.

"PREPARING FOR OUTSIDE FACTORS"

Colten attributes his focused determination to the unwavering support of his parents and his Uncle John. They provided him with first-hand experience in the values of hard work, sacrifice, and perseverance. "We had seven kids in my family, and as a police officer, my dad worked 70-80 hours a week. To send us to Catholic schools, my mom would go to work at 4-5 am at Children's Hospital (a phlebotomist, retired now) and my dad would get us to school. My dad would then go to work at 2:30 pm, basically passing my mom on the interstate. My mom would pick us up from school. My dad would work till 2 am. These are the sacrifices my parents made to put us in a position to improve our situation. I always went into unique positions thinking 'I am not going to ruin this opportunity.' My internal drive was the philosophy of 'I want to be good.' I wanted to stand out, and I wanted to take advantage of everything."

When Colten arrived at the Mount and cross-country began, he was the first to admit cross-country came more naturally to several of his '08 classmates, but he never wavered. He became determined to adjust and prioritize taking the extra steps, seeking feedback to improve. As you can imagine, waking up freshman year on your own to get breakfast can be a struggle. So, when I woke up to see my classmate finishing an early morning run with the Assistant Cross Country Coach, I knew Colten was built differently. His work ethic made him stand out, and as a result, it paid dividends.

The steps it took and the pace he set to get to the Mount, mirrored his legendary days as a talented cross-country and track runner. As he neared the end of his freshman cross-country season, while competing on the JV team at the conference meet, Colten discovered the potential of his internal drive for success. "I knew I had been working hard,

doing the right things and when I passed Nick Hall in the homestretch to win the race, I was hooked!" Inspired by Mount Michael's steadfast tradition in cross-country, he became a natural leader, leading by example to make the team better. Fast forward to his final race of his high school career at the state track meet, where the top eight runners would receive medals. "If you looked at the field ahead of time, he wasn't expected to be one of those guys." said Mr. Gathje. Yet, he concluded his accomplished cross-country and track career with a remarkable sixth-place finish. This milestone moment marked the culmination of a distinguished cross-country and track career. Additionally, he caught the eye of Brian Bonsall, the coach at UNK, who offered a position on his track team.

“ He is a good example of what happens when you have a good work ethic and dedicate yourself to something. I never questioned his work ethic. If anything, I had to curtail it. Sometimes he overworked himself. That’s part of what makes Colten successful, ” says Gathje.

Colten excelled not only on the track but also in the classroom throughout his tenure at the Mount. He immersed himself in a variety of extracurriculars: journalism, theater, the yearbook, mock trial, choir, tutoring, a year of baseball, and playing basketball while running cross-country and track all four years. He was fully invested in maximizing his Mount Michael experience and everything it had to offer. Honestly, going all-in is the only way he operates.

Colten going all-in shouldn't surprise you at this point. Working while pursuing his education would be a constant theme as he worked his way through high school and college. He began his career at UNL, but after his first semester he decided to recommit himself to structure and a higher standard for his college ambitions. "I was getting straight B's which isn't terrible, but thought to myself, what's my plan for life?" After reaching out to UNK'S Cross Country/Track Coach Brady Bonsall to see if the offer to join the team was still on the table, Bonsall's response was "Absolutely"!

TRANSFERRING TO KEARNEY WAS SET IN MOTION

"I went out there, I didn't know anybody in Kearney, and it was one of the best things that ever happened to me. I joined

the team, it is a smaller state school, so I had more focus on education, and I joined the honors program." Some coaches may not realize the effect they have on their student athletes, but during moments of uncertainty, the character of both Coach Gathje and Coach Brady Bonsall were influential to Colton's high school and college career. "I was lucky because those guys were phenomenal. Gathje was so instrumental just as I was coming of age, helping me set a standard for myself for how I act and how I go about doing things. Bonsall taught me, 'It's not about you,' which was a constant lesson about life. This mentality has always stuck with me from his perspective, and I've carried it through with me to all the nonprofits and activities I do."

While at UNK, he received his degree in Criminal Studies, minored in French, and ultimately, completed his MBA. During his time there, he initially felt a calling to join the Marine Corps. He met the physical requirements, but life led him on a different path. He took the necessary steps and decided on a career in law.

In addition to realizing his call to law, he met Tabitha, his "person" and future wife who helped him get on the right track. "I have been the most fortunate person to have found the right partner in life. Tab and I didn't know when we were



young (in college) what the future held for us, but we knew our values and approach to life were aligned. It equipped us to go with the punches when we received them: whether it was me making a quick change in law schools and transferring or deciding whether we were going to have kids right away or moving out to Gothenburg. I am the luckiest man in the world to have found Tab. She is my balance. She is the exact opposite personality of me. She's super low-key. Where I have to have a plan, she's 'go with the flow.'"

While Tab finished her last year at UNK, Colten had a successful first year at University of Denver's- Sturm College of Law, ranking 17th out of 300 students. He landed a nice scholarship and an internship at a top law firm in downtown Denver, which represented the Broncos. During his time there, he was reminded of a dream he had envisioned for his family - a home where he could spend quality time with his children, a career that empowered him and allowed him to make a positive impact on his community.

As the summer drew to a close, while attending Tab's brother's wedding in Gothenburg, he spoke with her uncle, who had a law practice specializing in economic development, among other business and real estate practices. This conversation sparked a realization in him—that the big city wasn't necessary for pursuing future business opportunities, and he was grateful to have family nearby. With this newfound perspective, he and Tab decided that their future lay in Gothenburg after law school.

THE PACE OF HIS JOURNEY TOOK AN UNEXPECTED TURN, YET AGAIN.

"I called Creighton, requesting to transfer. I was accepted and received a nice scholarship, and within a week I had completely changed the trajectory of my life and career from being in a big city in Denver (probably work at a big firm) to Omaha, with plans to settle in Gothenburg," said Colten.

While attending Creighton Law School, he also worked full time at his uncle's storage and U-Haul facility. "Being competitive, I strove to be the best and that is why I loved law school. I took it as a full-time job. I'm going to own this mentality. I carried the same drive to my practice, and as a result, it's been very fruitful for me," said Colten.

Before he graduated Summa Cum laude, finished top three in his class in 2016, he was excited to welcome his first daughter, June.



NEXT DESTINATION, GOTHENBURG

As Colten's young family and new career took off, he committed himself to the agricultural community and the economic development law practice he joined. This practice encompassed real estate, estate planning, and a title company among other business ventures. Through his hard work and dedication, he earned the trust of both new and old clients while also supporting the practice's backend administrative duties. In 2019, his determination and commitment led to fulfilling his goal of becoming partner!

Immersing himself in the Gothenburg community, Colten gradually became a catalyst for numerous necessary community improvements. The first of many included replacing the local newspaper, owned by a group in Texas, who were not providing accurate legal notices and informative news the residents longed for. Colten's entrepreneurial mindset kicked in, leading him and a partner, a local grown resident, to create the Gothenburg Leader in 2019, a publication dedicated to quality local news, which expanded over time with the addition of Callaway, Cozad, and Minden for financial sustainability. By 2022, they included Husker Illustrated in their collective!

"It's totally a community service," Colten says. "It's pretty cool to give back to those communities and to make sure they have a strong representation!"

While life continued to present new opportunities, Colten kept accepting them. He was still able to manage the various non-profits he's established over the years, coaching his kid's sports teams, and managing a newspaper publication. All the while, still being able to make it home for dinner with his family.

Last year, Colton was honored by a nomination and won the "2024 Outstanding Young Lawyer Award" by the Nebraska State Bar Association! Being recognized for this prestigious award is not lost on Colten; "Anyone can become a lawyer and just do the law. I believe I'm pretty good at what I do. Regardless of whatever I do, I try to be as good as possible at it, proving fruitful for me. But, what set me apart was the community involvement and using my skillset towards improving other people's lives. People recognize that."

Over the course of his 20-year career, Colten has come full circle, foreshadowed by the profound moment, which impacted his life. As a young man, drawn to the Knights of Mount Michael after a captivating recruitment presentation, he would later become a recruiter for the Mount, inspiring future Knights to attend as well. Colten's journey from a young man drawn to become a successful lawyer and community advocate is a testament to his dedication, hard work, and selfless commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of others. He models our Benedictine Values of Service, Community, and Hospitality.

On this fateful Saturday morning, reminiscing on high school experiences and exciting events coming to fruition, he prepares for a presentation for a donor dinner. The purpose of the dinner is to urge attendees to donate to the \$15 million Gothenburg Impact Center Project, a seven-year-long campaign that has been no small feat.

This initiative started back in 2018 for Colten, when an Omaha non-profit, spearheaded by John Levy '99, came to Gothenburg to discuss providing sustainable childcare. Colten immediately inserted himself in the project. His enthusiasm led to Colten creating the Gothenburg Early Childhood Learning Coalition and recognizing the significance of quality childcare within the surrounding community. From there, Colten partnered with the city, the local school system, numerous associations in Omaha and Lincoln, private and public donors, businesses, and banks to commit yearly contributions and generous donations to support the conference, event reception, sports training, and childcare facilities! The childcare program supports up to 300 kids and provides the staff livable wages. Although the initial \$11 million campaign rose to \$15 million during the Covid-19 pandemic, and despite individuals expressing doubts about its financial feasibility, Colten, at times struggling to sleep, would meticulously map out formulas and strategies to achieve his remarkable goal. "We're about \$400k short but I'm feeling good about this \$15 million dollar project almost being fully funded. I hope to raise the rest by summer."

“ I get emotional about it because I can look back now and think about what we've done. I can take pride in knowing if I don't do anything else successful in my life, this is something that will impact kids and families positively for generations. What an unbelievable thing to do with the skills that God gave me! ”

Joining the Board of Directors at Mount Michael seven months ago, he's now able to share his influence on future Knights. Colten is excited for the recent addition of Tim Carlson, as Director of Enrollment, and the continued progress of the international program will be beneficial to the growth and success of Mount Michael's future!

"Students receive such a unique and irreplaceable experience from their international classmates who share their culture and upbringing, which you can't get anywhere else.

If I hadn't had the opportunity to go to Mount Michael, I would not be on the path to do what I am doing now. What an unbelievable opportunity Mount Michael gave me. It's pretty cool."

The once B-Team baller with a chip on his shoulder, from St. Stephen's, driving his 1994 Chrysler LeBaron down Mount Michael Road as a freshman, can be assured of the mark he will leave behind. Beyond the fields of opportunities and the dusty roads of uncertainty, filled with personal records and achievements, Colten will be destined to bring impactful, life-changing, and sustainable results for the communities he serves for generations to come.

Alumni News

ALUMNI BASKETBALL

We had a great turnout of young alumni for this year's Alumni Basketball tournament. Many were able to join from being away at school across the country. They enjoyed the opportunity to reconnect with one another, revisit campus, and watch a home varsity basketball game.



Champions:
Matthew Collins, Aaron Karnish, Daniel Collins, Andrew Nigro



Front row: **Matthew Collins '21, Daniel Collins '24, Will Ernst '14, Garrison Emsick '14, Kevin Jewell '14, Mathew Mumby '17, Keylan Beller '17**; Row 2: **Colton Cordes '20, Preston Hendricks '14, AJ Atayi '23, Sebastian Santa-Maria '23, Rocco Zimmerman '24**; Row 3: **Andrew Nigro '18, Aaron Karnish '21, Keaton Stec '20, Joe Bazata '20, Harper Held '23, Hunter Miller '23, Jack Huber '23, Jack Roland '23, Nolan Beller '23**; Back row: **Andrew Fink '23, Will Benson '23**

David Uwinganji Gatete '14 has begun a new role as Senior Engineer at Ebmeier Engineering, LLC in Glenwood, IA.



Patrick Schmidt '88 is leaving sales and starting a new position as Senior Director of Advancement - Midwest Region at Relevant Radio in the Twin Cities of Minnesota.



Jack Straka '17 was promoted to Senior Financial Analyst with Kiewit in the Bridge and Marine Division in Seattle, WA.



Colin Lakeman '18 will be starting a new opportunity in New York City as a Growth Provider for Aligned Marketplace. He will be relocating from Chicago.



Michael Block '04 was promoted to Personal Systems Management Team Lead at HDR in Omaha.



Nathan Sprunk '10 has been promoted to Area Sales Manager, leading strategy and execution while brand building Lionel Messi's new hydration drink, MAS+ by Messi, in his regions of CO/NM.



Wade Kim '09 has been promoted to Senior Manager at Warren Equity Partners in NYC.



Casey McCullen '09 was promoted to Shareholder at Bernstein Shur in Portland, Maine.



Matt Core '04 has been promoted to Captain of the Sarpy County Sheriff's Office.



Scott Ching '17 is starting a new position as Software Engineer 2 at SafetyCulture in Sydney, Australia.



Dr. Ryan Hendrickson '87 has been named President of St. Francis University in Joliet, IL.



Alumni News

At the start of the school week, the Mount Michael community gathers for morning Chapel, and throughout the school year, students and staff heard from alumni guest speakers about how Mount Michael has shaped their friendships, professional lives, and faith. This year, several alumni returned to share their experiences

Thank you to these alums for inspiring the next generation of Knights. Once a Knight, always a Knight!



Jack Avilla '18



Sawyer Thompson '22



Joe Hoeschen '04



Justin Lytle '14



Michael Roshone '01



Alex Payne '20



Pat Flood '82



**David Uwinganji
Gatete '14**



**Guest Celebrant
Fr. Norm Hunke 'SJS**

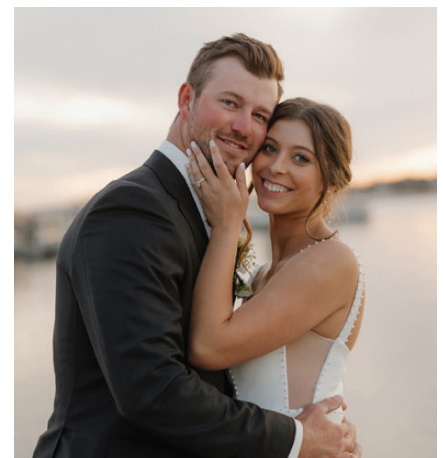
WEDDINGS



Dakota Boisen '12 married Nicole Samuelson on November 9th, 2024.



Sean Anderson '12 married Kelsey Wood on November 2nd, 2024.



Keylan Beller '17 married Sara Kmiecik on October 26th, 2024.

Alumni News

BIRTHS

Zach Murphy '12 and his wife Jenny welcomed their daughter, Macy Jantina Murphy, on December 18th, 2024.



Ray Dorsey '16 and his wife Jada welcomed their son, Kalon Joseph Dorsey, on January 9th, 2025.



Nate Evans '10 and his wife Sarah welcomed their daughter, Lily Monroe Evans, on December 24th, 2024.



Joey Bastian '12 and his wife Cassie welcomed their daughter, Sophia Francisca Bastian, on January 16th, 2025.



Andy Huss '04 and his wife Carolyn welcomed their son, Thomas Andrew Huss, on December 29th, 2024.



Randy Speer '13 and his wife Liana welcomed their son, Walden "Wally" Francis Speer, on January 9th, 2025.



Tommy Maliszewski '13 and his wife Claire welcomed their son, Wayne Arthur Maliszewski, on January 4th, 2025.



Wade Kim '09 and his wife Mihyun Lee welcomed their son, Raymond Taejoo Kim, on December 10th, 2024.



Zach Loeffelholz '11 and his wife Jori welcomed their daughter, Olivia ("Livvy") Jane Loeffelholz, on January 12th, 2025.

Davis Wilson '14 and his wife Amanda welcomed their daughter, Marguerite "Margot" Marie Wilson, on January 5th, 2025.



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

IN REMEMBRANCE

Albert Sleddens, grandfather of Will Sleddens ('14)

Ted Mikulicz, Jr., grandfather of John ('14), Joe, and Christian ('18) Mikulicz

Teresa McFayden, wife of Jim McFayden ('83)

Dolores McCawley, mother of former staff member Lynn Brannen

Dr. Michael "Mike" Liebenritt, father of Matthew ('90) and Nicholas ('93) Liebenritt

James "Jim" Kantor, brother-in-law of Peggy Sokol

Gerard "Jerry" Bender, uncle of Jon ('02) and Jimmy ('07) Bender

John "Jack" Regner, friend of Bro. William

Margaret "Maggie" Collins, mother of Dr. Charles ('85), Dr. Michael ('96), and Andrew ('01) Collins; grandmother of Michael ('12), Jonathan ('15), Patrick ('18), Matthew ('21); and Daniel ('24) Collins; and Christopher Wolf ('22)

Dr. Eileen Burke-Sullivan, brother of Brian Burke ('75)

Brad McGill, alumnus ('77)

Louise Franco, grandmother of John ('99) and Dr. Dave ('02) Levy; of Vince ('11), Nate ('12), Sam ('16), Luke ('18), and Drew ('23) VanHaute

Patrice Peterson, sister of Rob Elworth ('85)

Kazimiera Ostrowski, great-grandmother of Matt Adam ('24)

Allan Rohrig, grandfather of the late Joe Rohrig ('10)

Harley Swanson, father of Thomas ('01) and Anthony ('06); father of former staff member Michele Whitaker; grandfather of Daniel ('09), Andrew ('15), Tommy ('18) and Ryan Whitaker

Martina "Sue" Polk, grandmother of Josh Fedde ('08); wife of Bud Polk, who was a Board member

Ronald "Ron" Gentzler, uncle of Greg ('89) and Dr. Daniel ('91) Beninato; great-uncle of Dominic ('25) and Samuel ('25) Beninato

Mary Agnes "Aggie" Robson, aunt of Jon Eades ('00)

Shirley Kenney, mother of Dr. Sean Kenney ('84)

Fred Bender, father of Jon ('02) and Jimmy ('07) Bender

Janelle McTaggart, grandmother of Will McTaggart ('26)

Kathryn Sojka, aunt of Fr. Louis and of Matt ('79), Mark ('80) and John ('85) Sojka

Diana John, wife of Mitch John ('76)

Joseph "Joe" Paladino, father of Jason and Luke Paladino ('96)

John Liebl, cousin of Abbot Michael

Eric "Ric" Ortmeier, grandfather of Eric Ortmeier ('25)

Rita Wolfe, Oblate

Edward Snawerdt, Sr., uncle of Peter "Rocky" Snawerdt, III ('82)

Anton "Tony" Wewel, grandfather of Thaden ('24) and Miles ('27) Wewel

Robert "Bob" Hegemann, uncle of Leo Fendrick ('66), uncle of Norman Fendrick ('69), uncle of Gilbert Fendrick ('72), great-uncle of Craig Hegemann ('95), great-uncle of Sean Krueger ('12), great-uncle of Finn Murphy ('24), grandfather of Barrett Hegemann ('27).

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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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:
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

