

THE MAGAZINE OF MERION MERCY ACADEMY

# Mater Matters

SPRING 2012



## From the Principal



**“The joys of my state are many, and I feel the most lively gratitude.”** This sentiment expressed by Catherine McAuley says much about my thoughts and feelings for Merion Mercy.

As the school year draws to a close, I am proud to say that student achievements came in all forms – academic, extracurricular, the arts, and athletics. Yet, perhaps I am biased. This is why the objective feedback from our Middle States Accreditation proved incredibly validating to the work we do at MMA. In sum, the Middle States reaccreditation process went extremely well. The evaluation team gave us high praise for our standards, strategic plan, and the objectives we set for the future. The lead member of the visiting team even shared that their “findings affirm that Merion Mercy Academy is a community of educators who clearly and passionately live the mission of the school each day.”

Equally as inspiring, these achievements take place in a school that many refer to as “a second home.” The familial environment that pervades the classrooms, offices, and hallways is a constant. Mercy is our middle name. The faces may change, but that spirit of Mercy and those values of hospitality remain.

I recently had the chance to reflect on much of this as I celebrated my 40th high school reunion right on campus in May. Visiting with so many MMA alums – shining examples of what we all hope a Merion graduate will become – it is evident that graduates should move “upward and onward” with the comforting knowledge that they can always “keep sweet Mercy near.”

This edition explores the importance of branching out while maintaining roots. Features on the alumnae’s new LinkedIn initiative, the Meri-union, and the MMA swim team show that a Merion education provides boundless opportunities. Yet, the Mercy spirit infuses graduates with values and connection that often last a lifetime.

I am proud to be a part of this ever-growing and dynamic community and forever appreciative for the Mercy traditions I am able to revisit again and again. 🍷

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sister Barbara Buckley '72". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Sister Barbara Buckley '72**  
*Principal*

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 PLEASE RECYCLE THIS MAGAZINE



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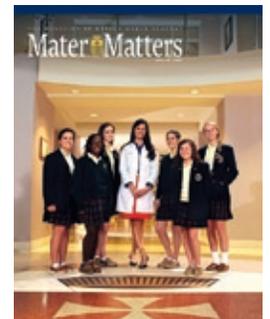
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**ON THE COVER**



Dr. Kristin Cam '98 (center) attended the Science Fair and the Science National Honor Society Induction as the guest speaker. Taking time after the ceremony to pose in the school's foyer are l. to r. Elizabeth Dierkes '13, Shianen Watson '12, Christine Hill '13, Dr. Kristin Cam '98, Grace Rothrock '12, Julie Bevilacqua '15, and Martha Zeller '13. Hundreds of alumnae return to MMA each year -- some to visit and to attend events and reunions and others to give back in some way, such as participating in a service project, mentoring, and presiding over a school-sponsored ceremony. This issue includes features on alumnae, branching out while maintaining their roots...making a difference at MMA.

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**OPENING COMMENTS**

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# SCHOOL Happenings



## Ring Mass *and* Dinner

Juniors pose after receiving their rings. There is a Ring Mass in the evening in the Motherhouse Chapel with a reception and dinner at school. Posing with their new rings are members from the class of 2013. First row: Mary Kate Donahue and Marina Tsikouras; second row: Emma Campbell and Maura Murphy; third row: Katherine Riga and Maura Dougherty; and fourth row: Erin Snyder and Shelsy Tity.

## Father Daughter Dinner Dance

Led by alumna dad Emanuel DelPizzo, the eight-piece band Del's Groove has provided the music for this event for several years. L. to r. Emanuel DelPizzo and Michael Fine.



Emily '15 and Steven Acito enjoy the 60th annual Father Daughter Dinner Dance.



## MMA Mathletes Adding Up District Wins

Merion Mercy Academy Mathletes placed first in their league finals in 2012. MMA senior Kelly Lee captured the first place overall spot. This is the fifth time since 2006

that the MMA Mathletes claimed a first-place victory in their league. Varsity Mathletes pose l. to r. Olivia Gallagher-Kowitz '13, Anna Pappas '13, Clare Brabson '12, Cassidy Giordano

'13, Julianne D'Orazio '13, Kelly Lee '12, Alyssia LaMonaca '13, Shannon Dixon '12, Christine Hill '13, Hye In Kim '12, Maura Dougherty '13, and Megan Kurtz '12.



## SERVICE

As one of their spring service initiatives, the Community Service Corps and Student Action held a very successful food drive for Mercy Neighborhood Ministries and its clients. Students gathered to help fill the van with groceries for drop off. Front l. to r. Elizabeth Backe '14, Deanna Heany '14, Gabrielle Squilla '14, Paige Pecora '14, and Madeline Juliano '14. Back l. to r. Mary Kate Quinn '13, Bridget Manion '14, Molly McInerney '14, Audrey Cooney '14, and Clarissa Cooney '14.



## BRAVO

Merion Mercy Music Theater (MMMT) produced another phenomenal show, *42nd Street*. Congratulations to the cast, crew, moderators, orchestra, and volunteers!



MMA'S  
*35th Sip 'n Bid*

“SPRINGTIME IN PARIS”



Alumna parents Betsy and Bill Wechsler pose with “window models” Casey Robinson '15 and Audrey Rake '15.

More than 300 guests attended Merion Mercy Academy's 35th Sip 'n Bid dinner and auction. This year's theme was “Springtime in Paris.”

The decorating committee graciously transformed the school into the magnificent city of Paris, complete with an Eiffel Tower. The event has been held in November for 34 years, so this was an exciting change for the event.

Cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and silent auction preceded a lavish buffet dinner and the ever-exciting loud auction. Guests bid on countless gift certificates and dining experiences, many one-of-a-kind items, such as a school flag, overnight and weekly stays at the Jersey shore, golf packages, Diamond Club seats for Phillies games, and various trips to places such as Naples, Florida.

All proceeds from the event directly benefit students at the academy.



MMA'S  
35th Sip 'n Bid

(Top left) Parents Francis and Patricia Downey and Robert and Annette Young enjoy the festivities.

(Top right) Sister Anna Saltzman and Sister Beth Flannery help provide the props for the exciting Loud Auction.

(Middle right) Volunteers prepare for Sip 'n Bid 2012. L. to r. Gabrielle Mangan, Andrea DiFabio, Roseann Nunno, and Nancy Sutter.

(Bottom) Event chairs l. to r. Michael Farrell, Lisa Nicolella Farrell '78, Bernadette Milani Sweeney '78, and Joseph Sweeney join principal Sister Barbara Buckley '72 to welcome guests to "Springtime in Paris."





# Link g

*the PAST,*  
**PRESENT,**  
*and FUTURE*

*By: Kristina Stanton Cawley '90*

Since its revitalization more than a decade ago, Merion Mercy's growing Alumnae Association expressed a clear desire to form a career and mentoring program to both provide networking opportunities for alumnae of all ages and career advice and opportunities for alumnae and current students. Over the years,

many talented women worked hard to both find a platform for this program and ways to keep contact and career information as current as possible. "It was so exciting to have a great alum response to mentoring opportunities, yet we quickly learned the challenges of harnessing all of the information and maintaining the updates. Keeping

the ever-evolving information of alumnae up-to-date and connecting alumnae for the purpose of networking was a huge task," explained Linda Quinlan D'Orazio '96 who served as Alumnae Association President for two years. "We knew the importance and value of student and peer mentoring. We also thought that we as alumna 'sisters' could help one another advance in a multitude of ways. We needed a forum where alumnae could easily connect and update their own information. At the time, this independent medium did not exist."

Director of Development Services Patricia McAleer added, "There has always been great enthusiasm for a program such as this, yet we found that matching the women became incredibly labor intensive, and, often times, when someone volunteered to be a mentor we would not have a request for her services until some months later. As a consequence, the volunteer may have changed jobs, left the workforce to obtain an advanced degree or raise children, and/or moved. The conclusion a few years back was that the dynamic alumnae of MMA moved faster than many of the best practices of the time."

Then came LinkedIn. "A few years ago, Maria Jose Morinigo '90 urged us to get MMA on LinkedIn, and within a few months we realized what incredible prospects this method of social media held," said Mrs. McAleer. At the Alumnae Association meeting in the fall of 2011, a trio from the class of 2000, Anne Doyle Maloney, Maureen Brogan Roberts, and Clare Tracy, approached the Alumnae Executive Board with a willingness to invest time into revisiting methods to enhance

career guidance, networking, and overall mentoring.

“There are many things about mentoring that appeal to me. For instance, I think current students would benefit from the connection to alumnae who have gone to certain universities, work in professions they are interested in, and could even provide possible internships or shadowing opportunities,” said Maureen Brogan Roberts ’00. “As for college-age alumnae and alums in general, it is smart and logical to have a platform where we could all network. I am in a position where I am able to hire and/or refer at all levels – from entry to management. It would be exciting to try to match an MMA graduate with a job that could offer them professional advancement.”

Talking to almost a dozen alumnae, the sentiment is clear: the Development Office has always been eager to match alumnae, set up mentoring opportunities, encourage networking, and, even in some cases, help to set in motion internships and ultimately jobs. “Even after years of facilitating opportunities for alumnae to mentor and connect with one another I really felt that ‘light bulb moment’ when I suggested LinkedIn as the vehicle,” stated Mrs. McAleer. “As the Development Office prepares to commemorate its twenty-fifth year this summer, I am still incredibly energized by each new project...helping to create this platform and knowing it will provide a perpetual one is inspiring.”

With a real passion for this venture, a small committee formed at that fall meeting, and they whole-heartedly agreed that LinkedIn would be a great way to reintroduce the official Career and



**Members of the Alumnae Association Career and Mentoring Committee pose before a meeting. L. to r. Claire Brennan Sereni ’74, Anne Doyle Maloney ’00, Clare Tracy ’00, Maureen Brogan Roberts ’00, Lauren Daley ’06, and Barbara Colantuono Harrison ’82. Often times, alumnae representing the 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s, and 00s attend.**

Mentoring Committee. As a great ironic twist, alumna Emilie Choi ’96 works as the Director of Corporate Development at LinkedIn, and she has offered to share resources and her expertise.

With great enthusiasm, the committee held its first meeting in February. They identified the primary objectives to begin this project: give MMA’s LinkedIn page a makeover, reestablish a Career and Mentoring subcommittee for the Alumnae Association with a Career and

Mentoring Officer, develop a mission statement, and begin to plan an event or two that would connect alums for networking purposes.

Three of these goals have been met with the support of committee members who represent graduating classes of the 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s, and 00s. With the leadership of Clare Tracy ’00 and the Development Office, the LinkedIn site is ready. There is a Merion Mercy Academy page

and a group within the page just for alumnae. Mrs. McAleer proclaimed “Clare’s insight into this project was evident from the beginning. She was an obvious choice for the executive position for this committee. We are thrilled to have her onboard.”

and promising program. Whether an alumna is looking for some guidance or excited to mentor, there are opportunities to make positive connections with other alumnae. “I am new to the social media piece of this,” said Fran McElroy ’64. “Yet, it

Doyle Maloney ’00, is now discussing events that will serve two purposes: to launch the official Career and Mentoring program and to bring MMA alumnae together. “Initially, we hope to host an event in the Philadelphia area in late summer 2012,



**“A few years ago, Maria Jose Morinigo ’90, URGED US TO GET MMA ON LINKEDIN, and within a few months we realized what incredible prospects this method of social media held.”**

With the platform in place, the mission statement was finalized and reads that the primary goal of this initiative is “To provide a resource and forum for MMA alumnae and current students to network, mentor, and/or give professional advice to help inform and advance the women of the MMA community.”

These are some of the first steps that should lead to a vital

is incredibly exciting to know that I could offer some of my experiences and expertise in my field to my Merion ‘sisters.’ The possibilities are seemingly endless and there seems to be great interest from alumnae, ranging from my peers to the alumnae of the millennium.”

The Alumnae Association Executive Board, led by Kristina Stanton Cawley ’90, along with Anne

so stay tuned for updates,” explained Mrs. Maloney. “This would include alumnae from classes, starting with the class of 2008. It should serve as a fun alumnae cocktail party with an eye to some networking and mentoring opportunities. We look forward to an exciting, inaugural event and the others to come, which may range from alum speakers on campus to gatherings in various locales.”



**As an added bonus,** LinkedIn should help with a long-term goal of the Development Office to form national alumnae groups in areas such as Chicago, Washington, D.C., and New York City. “The various forms of social media have helped us stay connected with alumnae in ways that we couldn’t in the past,” said Mrs. McAleer. “So, whether you live just miles away from MMA or across the country, be sure to join us on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter and/or send MMA your most current email address. These are great ways for all alumnae to keep up-to-date with MMA.”

**SCAN THIS CODE** now with your mobile phone’s QR reader to visit Merion Mercy’s homepage for the direct links to our social media, or visit [www.merion-mercy.com](http://www.merion-mercy.com) at your convenience. Links to the school’s LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter groups are at the bottom of the page.



# The *(Mercy)* Girl Effect

By: Kristina Stanton Cawley '90



MMA leaders of the “Mercy Girl Effect” pose with Beth Karuhanga '10. L. to r. seniors Julia Gallagher, Moira Pannepacker, Beth Karuhanga, Kerry Candeloro, and Sarah Gloninger.

The Mercy Leadership Conference held annually at Gwynedd-Mercy College gives Merion Mercy students a chance to connect with specific objectives in mind and to sharpen their leadership skills in preparation for college and beyond. MMA organizes the event, and each year 12 - 15 Mercy schools participate. One objective is to select a cause that the Mercy schools will support during the school year. In collaboration with the other Mercy schools, Merion Mercy has raised close to \$100,000 for women and children in need throughout the world in the last five years. The efforts have been dubbed the “Mercy Girl Effect.” This year’s outreach will focus on educating children in third world countries in collaboration with the group The Girl Effect.



The sophomores, led by graderoom moderator Mr. Paul Clementi, cheer on fellow “Olympians.”

In order to raise awareness and provide their portion of the donation, Merion Mercy staged an impressive “Olympic-style” field day. Each graderoom raised money to compete and/or enjoy special events, such as a kick ball tournament, relay races, art stations, and jewelry making. They each represented a country where Sisters of Mercy work and serve.



L. to r. freshmen Cara Heany, Katherine Hock, Thu-Anh Le, Clare Hegarty, Kristina Leuzzi, Jolie Jemmott, and Kyra Hopkins take a minute to pose.



Juniors participate in one of the outdoor competitions.

The fundraising kicked off two months prior to the field day with a presentation from Beth Karuhanga '10 who immigrated to the United States from Uganda. Her talk addressed the importance of educating young women in third world countries. Beth’s first-hand accounts resonated with the current student body.

In addition to a fantastic, spirited day for students, the students raised \$5,000 for their cause. 🍀

# MMA PLANTED *the* SERVICE SEED

By: Alexandra Ondik '09



**M**y four year journey through Merion planted the seed for me to become the “woman of mercy” that I proudly call myself today. Every day I would hear words such as solidarity and global responsibility. With time, I started to understand. Soon after, I started to care. Eventually, I started to act. It was in Merion’s classrooms, and even on Merion’s fields, where I started talking about topics that really mattered, with people who really cared

about me. I owe so much to MMA. Merion challenged me each day and cultivated a passion for service that continues to grow at Villanova.

One day in freshman year, I walked into Villanova’s Campus Ministry office without any idea of what I was looking for, but knew I was in the right place. One hour later, I was in a van on my way to St. Francis soup kitchen. One year later, I was driving that same van as an official student service site leader. There is something

about St. Francis that hooked me from day one. Over the many afternoons I spent there, I grew very close to two guests, Jim and Billy. I will never forget last Valentine’s Day, when Billy bought me flowers, or the time I told Jim my grandfather had passed away and he greeted me the following week with a hug and bouquet of roses. To see those with so much need give so selflessly will inspire me for a lifetime. Later in freshman year, I walked, curiously, to our Hunger and



Alexandra Ondik '09 is currently a junior Marketing and Spanish double major at Villanova University. She is pictured here working on a Habitat for Humanity project in Mobile, Alabama.

Homelessness Awareness Week's Sleep Out event. This year, I was the head student chair of that event.

In addition to volunteering weekly for St. Francis and leading H.H.A.W. Sleep Out, I have kept myself busy in the Campus Ministry community. I volunteered for two Spring Break service trips with Habitat for Humanity, recently led a week long mission trip to Tohatchi, New Mexico, and I will be leading another mission trip in the fall. I am also a Catholic Relief Service Student Ambassador, specializing in food security, and a member of Service Council. I spend more time in Campus Ministry than my own apartment, and my roommates often question when I have time to do my homework. Yet, I would not have it any other way. Service is what I love; it is where I find great joy. There is something special about walking into Campus Ministry on a rainy day to have a warm cup of coffee and see my friends' faces light up as they talk about ideas they have

Every day I would hear words such as solidarity and global responsibility. With time, I started to understand. Soon after, I started to care. *Eventually, I started to act.*

for advocacy events on campus. It is not my 8:30 a.m. accounting class that makes me jump out of bed on a Monday morning, but rather my trip to St. Francis or my Catholic Relief Service meeting that afternoon.

I spent this semester in Seville, Spain. What an amazing experience! Yet, I am excited to return as a senior because I plan to start my own service club: Sunflower Solutions. Inspired by Mother

Teresa and "the little way" of St. Therese, the group will focus on small acts of kindness for the less fortunate: give a flower, share a sandwich, flash a smile, start a conversation. As Mother Teresa said, "Never worry about numbers. Help one person at a time, and always start with the person nearest you." In essence, reaching out is essential, and altruism is key; those kernels of knowledge I gathered at MMA. 🍷



The Fathers' Club held its third annual Father/Daughter Service Project to benefit Aid for Friends, a local non-profit organization whose volunteers deliver free (ready to heat and eat) meals to home-bound people throughout the Philadelphia area. The dads and daughters prepared 1,200 dinners and brought them to Aid for Friends for distribution.

# “Girls *Will Be* Girls, *but* Merion Girls *Will Be...*”

By: Alexandra DiFabio '12

*As someone who has been carrying her passion to enter the medical field with her since age four, Dr. Eileen Everly '91 has proven that through perseverance and dedication one can accomplish even the most challenging of dreams.*



Growing up in Springfield, Dr. Everly attended Merion Mercy Academy for both grade school and high school. During her time at Merion she had a packed schedule with various activities ranging from music theater to French club. She appeared on the stage in many Merion productions, such as *Guys*

and *Dolls*, played tennis all four years, and undertook AP Biology and Physiology classes with Mrs. McClennen. Dr. Everly said she “had found great mentors” among her MMA teachers and has since utilized what she learned from them

into her professional career. She still appreciates her time at Merion and shared, “I loved every second of it.”

Tracing her interest in the medical field not only back to her classes and instructors at Merion, but also to a more personal context, she explained, “I first decided I wanted to be a doctor when I was four years old. Over the years I never wavered. I had migraines from the age of six, and I became very interested in neurology from the time I spent at CHOP as a patient. However, a lot of why I wanted to become a doctor came from my relationship with my Pop Pop.” Eileen and her grandfather were very close; watching him battle leukemia was especially difficult for her. She admired the doctors who treated her Pop Pop, and came to realize she, “wanted to become a doctor to help others, just as his doctors helped him.”

After she graduated from Merion in 1991, she attended the University of Pennsylvania where she continued to pursue her interests in French, theater, and neurological science. Fondly remembering her four years in college she expounded, “Penn is a magical place. I tried so many new things during my time in college, from continuing to explore theater to delving more deeply into my passion for science. It prepared me for medical school by reinforcing my work ethic and study techniques, while still exposing me to more than simply academics. It really gave me an appreciation that there was more than just one side to me; more than just my brain.”

parents find their own paths, she said, “Do not apologize for doing what you need to do in order to be a good parent in your own eyes. Spending time with your child, giving him or her a bath, reading a story, or kissing goodnight: that is just as important to your child as anything you do in your career is to your boss.” Expertly balancing her personal and professional life, she urges mothers not to undervalue parenting because, “There may be someone else who can do your job as well as you, but no one can mother your child as well as you can.”

Dr. Everly also volunteers time to be the Medical Director of Frankie’s World, which is a medical daycare for children

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**Dr. Everly said she “had found great mentors” among her MMA teachers and has since utilized what she learned from them into her professional career.**

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Because she still possessed the dream of becoming a doctor, she decided to attend the University of Pittsburgh for medical school: “I went to Pitt largely because they had surgical observation domes, like those in *Grey’s Anatomy*, and a highly accomplished neurosurgeon whom I admired and with whom I wanted to study.” Initially, she did not want to work with children out of fear of seeing them sick and dying; however, she soon found her calling in the pediatric ward. She found the kids engaging and fun and recalled, “I was truly interested in learning about what was wrong with them and listening to their perspectives.” From the moment one of her young patients looked excitedly at her in the office and said, “That’s my doctor, mommy! Hi Dr. Everly,” there was no looking back.

Aside from working with children, she also takes immense pride in working with new mothers. She screens women for postpartum depression and does lactation consulting. As a mother of two herself, she shares that her proudest moments as a career woman go hand in hand with her highlights of being a mother. One of these parental accomplishments was breastfeeding both of her daughters. When looking back on that process Eileen shared, “I bonded with my babies in an amazing way.” Noting that all

with special needs who often come from disadvantaged families. It is this same passion for service, instilled in her during her time at Merion through Kate’s Girls and the Ministry Team, which has helped shape her career today. Practicing in West Philadelphia, Eileen often works with underserved children. These children, just like her autistic patients, humble her and she added, “I really enjoy the privilege of taking care of them.”

When she is not treating her patients, Dr. Everly spends most of her free time with her family. She and her husband enjoy visiting vineyards and learning about wines of specific regions. They have also explored light houses around the country. The accomplished MMA grad also sets aside time every day to knit, which is a hobby she has had since kindergarten. Eileen donates most of the pieces she creates to charity. She makes time to read, and finishes two or three books a week.

Dr. Everly encourages current MMA students and fellow alumnae to “Be yourself. Pay attention and really learn who you are as an individual. Once you know, be that person. And never say ‘I can’t.’ As you make your way in the world, there will be plenty of people who tell you ‘You can’t.’ Never be one of them!” 🍷

# swiMMAs

By: Kristina Stanton Cawley '90



Elizabeth Manning '12

It is 6 a.m. on a balmy summer morning, and Merion athletes stand on the deck ready to swim laps and practice for three hours. They do this five to six days a week, almost all summer. Fast forward six months. It is after school on a freezing January afternoon, and the same young ladies prepare for a three hour practice after spending the day in classes and participating in other extracurricular activities. This is the level of commitment required to compete at a high level. Two senior standouts, Caroline Kelly and Elizabeth Manning, view this as a labor of love.

“People have called us crazy for putting so much time into a sport, and, to be honest, we sometimes call ourselves crazy as well. However, we have developed a love and dedication for the sport, so simply quitting has never been an option. Being a swiMMA (a member of the Merion Mercy Academy swim team) has been one of the best parts of my time here at Merion. The team bonding, scavenger hunts, trivia games, and, of course, practices and meets have made the commitment to the sport much easier,” said Caroline Kelly '12.

Swimming became a varsity sport at MMA in 1996 and the swiMMAs have met with significant success, including a banner year in 2002 when the team qualified four girls for PIAA State Championships. This year’s team members have earned recognition over the years, with their relays placing in the top five at Districts. Individual members achieved impressive results as well. Kelly and Manning both qualified and took first place in individual events and finished in the top ten individually at PIAA State Championships. “We have accomplished some incredible goals,

developed a love and dedication for the sport, as well as a drive to succeed, and created lifelong friendships,” said Manning. “We spend more time with each other than we do with our own sisters!”

And, for this duo, sisters are a big part of the picture. Both Kelly and Manning have sisters who swam for MMA (and Genevieve Manning '15 who still does!) and went on to swim in college. Emily Kelly '08 attends Fairfield University and Alexandra Manning '11 attends Boston College.



Elizabeth Manning '12 and Caroline Kelly '12 pose with MMA swimming coach Phil Berardinelli.

Next year, Kelly will swim for Middlebury College and Manning for Boston College or Georgetown University. “It is hard to imagine being on separate teams next year,” confided Manning. “We know, though, that the deep friendship we have developed, thanks to swimming, will last forever.”

# LACROSSE TEAM CLINCHES AACAA TITLE

The Merion Mercy Academy lacrosse squad clinched the Athletic Association of Catholic Academies (AACAA) regular-season title with a 12-7 win against Mount St. Joseph. This is the fourth, consecutive league title for MMA lacrosse.

Caili Guilday '12 was a standout in goal with 15 saves and Julianne D'Orazio '13 had five goals and an assist

as a visiting Merion Mercy emerged victorious in a key Catholic Academies game. Bonnie McShane '12 dished five assists for Merion and Caroline Corzel '15 had two goals and an assist. This win kept the MMA Golden Bears atop the league standing at 10-0 (12-1 overall) in regular-season play.

The AACAA title provided graduating



After a strong finish in regular season, Julianne D'Orazio '13 scored her 100th career goal for the Golden Bears in post season play against Nazareth Academy.



The team gathers poised to take home another AACAA championship.

seniors with four years as number one in their league.

Three of those championships came under head coach Danielle Hannigan, who is on maternity leave this year, and her staff. Acting head coach John Geary (with the support of assistant coach Lauren Fisher and JV coach Lauren Goane) carried on the winning traditions of MMA lacrosse with this incredibly talented team.

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## MMA Crew Coach Named Coach of the Year



Coach Michael Brown poses with his family (including his two alumnae daughters) l. to r. his daughter Kara Brown '08, his mother Marie Brown, his daughter Megan Brown '06, and his wife Barbara Brown.

Merion Mercy Academy crew coach Michael Brown was presented with the Schuylkill Navy Coach of the Year award at the Schuylkill Navy

Banquet on Boat House Row. Brown helped launch the school's rowing program in 2005 as head coach, and under his direction the program has won 13 Philadelphia City Championship medals (six gold, five silver, and two bronze); two Stotesbury Cup medals (both silver) and four Scholastic National Championship medals (one gold, two silver, and two bronze).

Merion Mercy Academy finished second in the Philadelphia Scholastic Rowing Association point trophy in four consecutive seasons (2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011). Last season was one of Merion Mercy Academy's most successful years, as the Varsity 4 was undefeated during the regular season, winning gold in Miami, Mercer, and at the City Championships. At the 2011 Stotesbury Cup, Merion Mercy Academy placed second and was the first U.S. crew to place. Merion Mercy avenged their lone loss of the season by besting E.L. Crossley of Canada at the Scholastic National Championships on Memorial Day; they then defeated the Ladies Hollis School of England for the Groton Cup at Henley's Women's Regatta on Father's Day.

# class notes



## Share Your News!

Merion Mercy Academy encourages all alumnae to share news in the Class Notes section of *Mater Matters*. To contribute, send your news to [kcawley@merion-mercy.com](mailto:kcawley@merion-mercy.com) or write to: Kristina Stanton Cawley '90, Alumnae News, 511 Montgomery Ave., Merion Station, PA 19066.

*(Class Notes may be edited for length, grammar, and content.)*

## The Thirties

**Eleanore Smith Lajoie-Vinmont '31** celebrated her 100th birthday with family and friends in Delray Beach, Florida in March 2012. Her sister **Mary Smith Stuart '42** flew down to celebrate with her. Unfortunately, they also buried their sister, **Cathryn Smith Fisher '34**, the day before the party. The Smith sisters have stayed connected to MMA over the decades; Mary attended Meri-union and looks forward to visiting campus this summer for the Alumnae Tea.

## The Fifties

After attending MMTT's production of *42nd Street*, **Jane Loughran Young '55** wrote in, "Wow, we were impressed! I took my two daughters, daughter-in-law, and four granddaughters to the show today. What a great performance. Congratulations to the entire cast and crew. I was encouraged to participate through the (alumnae email blast)..."

## The Sixties

**Barbara McCormick Atkins '63** sent this message with her annual giving gift, "I'm looking forward to working with others on our 50th reunion in 2013. We had a great class and a lot of fun!"

## The Seventies

**Helen Centofanti Peatross '72** shared, "**Marie (Centofanti Haas '72)** and I lost our father, Joseph Centofanti, on October 31, 2012 (our mom's birthday) at

93 years-old. He worked part time until about two years ago in his tailor shop in Ardmore." Helen worked alongside her dad at Centofanti Tailors & Shirtmakers.

**Jacqueline Tucker Mulligan '75** published her second historic novel, *A Square of Apples*, which is now available at online bookstores.

**Mary Margaret Polley-Kuhn '78** sadly reported, "**Katherine Miller Polley-Kleppin '64**, my sister-in-law, succumbed to cancer. Please pray for her immortal soul, her three children and three grandchildren."

## The Eighties

**Yvette Sharon Mabry '84** works for the Department of Homeland Security Notice and lives in Virginia. She reported on the passing of her dad Richard W. Mabry on January 17, 2012. Services will be held, she shared, "I remember Dad and his support of me at MMA...whether attending Father/Daughter Dinner Dances or Sip 'n Bid auctions. Daddy was the proud father and enjoyed (Merion events and the ways he could help)."

## The Nineties

**Jennifer Jones Iannucci '93** reported the latest addition to her family, "Carter Michael Iannucci was born on September 8, 2011, weighing 8lbs 10z and was 22 inches long! He was welcomed into our family by my husband, Michael, big sister, Isabella, and me. He is such a sweet, happy and loving baby and he brings so much joy to our family!"



**Helen "Nell" Travascio Stetser '85** was recently named Principal of Waldron Mercy Academy.

It has been almost 25 years since Waldron Academy for Boys and the elementary division of Merion Mercy Academy merged. At that point, MMA became an all-girls high school; WMA formed a co-educational elementary school. In those years, both schools have grown and thrived on their shared Merion Station campus, each earning U.S. Department of Education recognition as Blue Ribbon Schools and accreditation by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. In addition to academic accolades, MMA and WMA boast strong athletic programs, multitudes of extracurricular activities, and, of course, outstanding service programs (as our shared middle name heralds) that proudly showcase our Mercy values. The Academies operate independently, but value the same Mercy charism.

**Stefanie Pinto Godfrey '94** lives in Marmora, NJ with her husband and two sons, ages four and five. She is the Vice President of Gone Native Communications, the company she and her husband founded in 2009. They publish Ocean City Magazine and the Welcome to Ocean City hardback guidebook. Gone Native also specializes in graphic design. "Follow us on facebook at [www.facebook.com/oceancitymagazine](http://www.facebook.com/oceancitymagazine) or [www.facebook.com/welcometoocceancity](http://www.facebook.com/welcometoocceancity)."

# class notes

**Jennifer Corbett '99** is a TV writer in Los Angeles, working on the drama series "Breakout Kings." She wrote, "Upon graduating from the University of Maine with a degree in Public Management and Criminology, I was commissioned as an officer in the US Navy. I credit growing up in a house with three older brothers as what best prepared me for life onboard a Naval ship, where I was one of only two female officers amongst a crew of 400. Four years, several countries, and thousands of nautical miles later, I left the military and attended Graduate School at Boston University, earning an MFA in Screenwriting. In 2009, during the BU in LA program, I interned at 20th Century Fox as the researcher for an upcoming drama series, 'Breakout Kings.' I was brought on as the show's writer's assistant for Season One. In Season Two, I was bumped up to a staff writer." The first episode aired on March 25; it regularly airs on A&E, Sundays at 10 pm. "Breakout Kings" follows an unconventional partnership between the U.S. Marshals' office and a group of convicts as they work to catch fugitives on the run.

## The 00s

**Maureen Brogan Roberts '00** and her husband, Trae, will journey to Africa in June for the 2012 Put Foot Rally. The purpose is to promote and enhance global awareness of suffering children without shoes in Sub-Saharan Africa. They hope to make a sustainable change in the lives of school-aged children. They will donate monies raised to purchase new shoes for children in Africa. To read more about Maureen and Trae's new project, visit [www.bettertheglobe.com](http://www.bettertheglobe.com).

**Catherine Farley Laborde '01** married Michael Laborde on September 24, 2011. She was pleased to share her day with some special MMA alumnae. She added, "**Leanne Grimes '01** was my maid of honor and **Beatrice D'Angelo '99** was a bridesmaid!"

**Nina Mirarchi Balsamo '02** works at UCSF Medical Center as a Clinical Social Worker, Hematology/Oncology. She earned a bachelor's degree from the

University of Pennsylvania in 2006. She went on to complete a Master of Social Work and Master of Law and Social Policy from Bryn Mawr College Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research. Nina is on the Board of Directors for Charlotte Maxwell Complementary Clinic. The clinic's mission is supporting low-income women with cancer by providing free access to compassionate, integrative care.

**Susanne Johnson MMA '03** shared, "After completing my second-degree in Nursing at UPenn last year, I am currently working as an RN at the Hospital of the University of PA on a medical unit specializing in the care of Cystic Fibrosis patients. I am working on my MSN at UPenn in Family Health Nurse Practitioner and hope to continue on toward a Ph.D. I am also part of an organization at HUP called Penn Pals which is a newly formed global nursing organization, focusing on the creation of relationships with nurses across the globe to provide support and foster exchange of ideas, education, and best practices. At the moment, we are working on integrating

ourselves with the UPenn-Botswana Partnership via the Penn School of Medicine to provide educational in-services to nurses in southern Africa. Global health nursing has given me great pleasure as it allows me to combine my interests from first degree in Anthropology with my passion for providing comprehensive health care. I have been glad to get to bump into to quite a few MMA graduates in the nursing world at both HUP and CHOP."

**Bernadette Mason '04** MMA graduated with a Masters in Health Science from Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine's Physician Assistant Studies program in July 2011. "I am currently working as a Certified Physician Assistant for an Orthopedic Spinal Surgery Group in Mt. Laurel, NJ."

**Mariel Boyd '05** recently moved to New York City where she is working at Mount Sinai Medical Center in the Recanati/Miller Transplantation Institute. She is a Clinical Research Coordinator working on multiple clinical trials that are exploring new therapies to improve



● **Meredith Amole Dougherty '00** married Daniel Dougherty on October 8, 2011 at Annunciation BVM church in Havertown, PA. The couple met at Melinda Richards McCann's '00 wedding in 2007. Meredith's bridal party consisted of all Merion girls! Front l. to r. "MMA Hopeful" Natalie Bruce (junior bridesmaid), Meredith Amole Dougherty '00, and Meredith's sister Allison Amole '04 (maid of honor). Back l. to r. Jackie O'Pella '00, Meredith's sister-in-law Elizabeth Sansoni Amole '02, Melinda Richards McCann '00, and Amy McHugh '00.



● Classmates from 2006 pose at the McChesney-McKenna wedding. L. to r. Vicky Mahoney, Devon McChesney McKenna, and Sarah Sanchez.

the quality of life for patients before and after transplant. Her main focus is in the department of Pediatrics.

**Emily Benton '05** has recently been promoted to Senior Analyst at Hamilton Lane, an independent firm providing private equity investment management. Emily has been with the company since August 2010. Emily is attending Saint Joseph's University where she is pursuing her MBA in International Marketing and is also a certified Spin instructor at several Philadelphia fitness clubs.

**Devon McChesney McKenna '06** married Kevin McKenna in January, 2012. Devon shared, "Kevin acted in four MMA plays while in high school, but we met as freshmen at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC - shockingly not at MMA. I am a nurse working in the Emergency Department at a hospital near DC, and Kevin works for the Navy while finishing his graduate degree in Information Assurance. At our wedding were MMA grads **Vicky Mahoney '06, Sarah Sanchez '06, Erin McKenna, Esq. '03** (sister of the groom), and Kim McChesney, MMA faculty (cousin of the bride).

**Kaitlin Votta '11** shared, "Hope everything is going well at MMA! It's so hard to believe how fast this semester is going. I wanted to share that the MVP trip to Arizona helped me to get picked for another service trip for

this summer. It's a three week program for any ACC athletes. Through the program, we coach a sport and teach a class in Vietnam! For the application, I wrote about my experiences working with kids and other cultures in Arizona."

## Arrivals

**Michael and Jennifer Jones Iannucci '93**, a son, Carter Michael



● Carter Michael

**Scott and Susan Strittmatter Spangenberg '97**, a daughter, Emma Grace

**Dennis and Mary Beth Otto Morgan '98**, twin sons, Dennis and Peter

**Matthew and Colleen Fullerton Salandria '98**, a daughter, Emma Rose

**Mark and Catherine (Katie) DiSipio Avitabile '99**, a son, Charles Anthony



● Stephen Edward

**Steve and Bridget Timby Comly '99**, a son, Stephen Edward

**Jon and Natalie Sucharski Gregory '01**, a daughter, Emma Davina

**Kevin and Cara DiGiovanni McLaughlin '01**, a son, Jack Joseph

**Mark and Ana Mattioli Smith '01**, a son, Colt John



● John Robert

**John and Danielle McCaffrey Hannigan, MMA Faculty**, a son, John Robert

**Brian and Marianne Connolly Lauber, MMA Former Faculty**, a daughter, Grace Marianne



● Grace Marianne

## Weddings

**Megan David '89** to **Ben Garcia** on February 11, 2012

**Courtney Wootten '98** to **Gabriel Gliwa** on December 9, 2011

**Colleen Ruane '99** to **Erik Unger** on March 24, 2012

**Meredith Amole '00** to **Daniel Dougherty** on October 8, 2011

**Anne Doyle '00** to **Kevin Maloney** on March 24, 2012

**Catherine Farley '01** to **Michael Laborde** on September 24, 2011

**Devon McChesney '06** to **Kevin McKenna** on January 6, 2012



# IN MEMORIAM

*Merion Mercy Academy expresses its condolences to the family and friends of the following members of our community. Please keep their families in your prayers.*

**Catherine M. Berens**, mother of **Connie Berens Purcell '75**

**Francis Catterall**, grandfather of **Elizabeth McDonald '01**, father of **Maureen McDonald, MMA faculty**

**Joseph Centofanti**, father of **Marie Centofanti Hass '72** and **Helen Centofanti Peatross '72**

**Jesse B. Clark**, father of **Cynthia Clark '82**

**Constance Clementi**, mother of **Paul Clementi, MMA Faculty**

**Ann LeNoir Cotton**, mother of **Kathleen Cotton Kelley '68** and **Ann Cotton '75**

**Peggy Duffey Crocco**, sister of **Colleen Duffey Giambalvo '89**

**Diana Wright Englehart '92**

**Carmella Ferrante**, mother of **Roseann Ferrante Murray '70** and **Carol Ferrante '77**, grandmother of **Nicole Ferrante Leuzzi '04**

**Cathryn Smith Fisher '34**, sister of **Eleanore Smith Lajoie-Vinmont '31** and **Mary Smith Stuart '42**

**James J. Gilhool**, husband of **Barbara Ronan Gilhool '56**, brother of **Felicia Gilhool Hayes '56** and **Marianne Gihool Sheehy '57**

**David Hannan**, son of **Patricia Augusterfer Brown-Miller '61**

**Helen Mary Vieira Hess**, grandmother of **Caitlin '06** and **Christina '13 O'Shea**

**Elizabeth L. Justi**, grandmother of **Susan Kelly O'Neill '96**, **Alicia Kelly Miller '04**, and **Laura Kelly '11**

**Richard W. Mabry**, father of **Yvette Sharon Mabry '84**

**Mary Marincola**, grandmother of **Crystal Marincola '99**

**Robert Pelicata, D.O.**, father of **Ann Pelicata '02**

**Katherine Miller Polley-Kleppin '64**, sister in law of **Mary Margaret Polley-Kuhn '78**

**William P. Reilly**, husband of **Margery Stroup Reilly '56**

**Dorothy Dolan Rodgers '66**

**Debra Furia Scalpato '74, MMA Faculty**, mother of **Lauren Scalpato Ruggieri '00** and **Allison Scalpato**

**Gaetano Smedile**, grandfather of **Christa '02, Rita '05, and Stephanie Smedile '10**

**David E. Sucharski**, father of **Natalie Sucharski Gregory '01**, **Caroline '05** and **Lisa Sucharski '09**

**Joanne Sullivan**, mother of **Michele Sullivan '90**

**John (Jack) G. Taylor**, grandfather of **Emily '04, Carolyn '07, and Julia Smith '09**

**Florence Wilson**, grandmother of **Crystal Marincola '99**

## Debra Furia Scalpato '74, Lifelong Learner and Teacher



**Debra (Debbie) Furia Scalpato '74** passed away on March 12, 2012 surrounded by loved ones. Survived by her husband of 33 years, Dr. Anthony M. Scalpato, her daughters Lauren Scalpato Ruggieri '00 (Stephen) and Allison Scalpato, and her grandchildren Cara, Charlie, and Ryan.

Debbie brought a palpable energy to all that she did. Throughout her life, Debbie pursued a range of interests. A high school science and mathematics teacher by vocation, she also possessed a great love of and talents in the arts. Debbie was able to draw, sing, and play the piano beautifully. Her innate talents, confidence, and strong work ethic made her a natural leader in many areas, yet family and friends point to her zest for life as the thing they admire most about her.

"My mom approached everything she did with passion and great spirit," said her older daughter, Mrs. Ruggieri. "She had a beautiful voice, and we often laughed as a family about how she had a song for every occasion. Her energy permeated our home and our lives."

Continued her younger daughter, Miss Scalpato, "One of my strongest childhood memories is of our trips to my gymnastics practices. Our half an hour commute was spent singing duets together, usually from a Disney movie. She always let me choose to be my favorite character. We reminisced about the enjoyment of those rides for years."

Debbie graduated from MMA in 1974, where she eventually worked for more than 15 years as a highly-regarded teacher. While in high school, she met her husband. They were set up on a blind date to the school's Harvest Moon dance; the rest is history. They both went on to Villanova University. They graduated in 1978 and were married just a month later at the St. Thomas of Villanova Church. They were parishioners at that same parish for many years. Debbie's belief in God and the encouragement of her faith communities (both at Merion Mercy Academy and St. Thomas of Villanova Church) sustained her. She deeply appreciated the unyielding support of friends and coworkers throughout her journey.

Debbie found true joy in spending time with her family and friends. Despite the difficulties that her illness brought, she devoted her energy to loved ones. "This summer, even though her treatments proved a challenge, my mom was always ready to do something productive" said Mrs. Ruggieri "If we were near the water, she would love to swim. She taught my five-year-old daughter how to swim this past summer. She also taught her how to read. (What a gift!) My mom loved to play with and teach us as children as well. She was a beautiful woman who enjoyed dressing up, yet she was not afraid to get her 'hands dirty' when it came to hard work of any kind and good fun."

Debbie's studies and profession as a teacher relied a great deal on facts and practicality, yet it was her passion for life, generous spirit, unyielding faith, and true beauty that define her legacy. The intellectual side of her that had a logical answer to most questions and that family and friends counted on for sage advice proved the perfect complement to a woman whose passions were unable to be quantified.

"To know her was to love her. Debbie's smile could light up a room, and her enthusiasm was contagious," said Merion Mercy colleague and high school friend Lori Zeller Lesutis '75. "The mark Debbie left on all of us who knew and loved her has made an impression that will last a lifetime."

# MERI UNION

*Meri-union 2012 brought more than 300 alumnae/current and former faculty and staff to campus May 5. Mass in the Motherhouse Chapel preceded the reception and reunion dinner in the school.*



The Williamson family has had almost 40 uninterrupted years of students enrolled in MMA. Four members of the Williamson clan, representing three decades, pose at the reunion. L. to r. Nicole McCreight '07, Amy Williamson DiTrolio '82, Lizanne Williamson McCreight '77, and Katie McCreight '02.



Alumna Virginia Bohem McCarty '33 (center) had time to chat with student volunteers Erin Donnelly '15, Samantha Fioravanti '14, and Caitlin Harrison '14 before the Mass.

## Alumnae Association

**Thank you to the current Officers of the Alumnae Association,** Kristina Stanton Cawley '90 (President), Maureen McShane Chrest '01 (Secretary), and Maureen Brennan Kozak '82 (Treasurer) for the talent and leadership they have brought to the group during their term. The new slate of officers is: Barbara Colantuono Harrison '82 (President), Claire Brennan Sereni '74 (Secretary), and Lauren Daley '06 (Treasurer). The officers will be confirmed at the Alumnae Association meeting on June 19, 2012 and will begin their term in September, 2012.



Ladies from the class of 2002 Courtney Laws, Alicia Prince, Mayla Henderson Jackson, Maureen Owston, and Jessica Hearn celebrate their 10 year reunion.



## Members of the Class of 1962 Gather After the Mass

At the liturgy, these women were inducted into the Golden Circle of Mercy and received medals. Front l. to r. Helen Fiorello Donoghue, Nancy McCullough Wudyka, Janet Cordivari Vigliarolo, Denise Brennan Mattia, Mary Ellen Martin Donnelly, Jeanne Lane, Anne McManus McGeough, Rita DiSciascio Morley, Barbara Reddy Hoar, and Sister Maria DiBello.

Back l. to r. Sister Ann O'Connell, Kathleen O'Sullivan Hinckle, Elizabeth McCarron, Louise Drinkhouse Grude, Margaret MacAllister Flynn, Mary Jo Perkins Williams, Bernadette Naughton DeArmond, Mary (Judy) McNamara McAnally, Kathleen McNichol Trainer, and Carole Shell Watters.



Alumnae came from far and wide to attend. Pictured here l. to r. Theresa Cunningham Hennessey '92 (who came from California), Sister Rita Small, and Michele Calabrese Piercy '92 (who came from Maryland).

## SAVE THE DATE MERI-UNION 2013

Classes ending in **3** and **8**  
2013 is your reunion year!

Come celebrate with classmates at  
the Alumnae Mass, Reception, and  
Reunion Dinner on May 4, 2013.

All alumnae and current and former faculty  
are invited to the Mass and Reception.

Contact Director of Development Services,  
Patricia McAleer, at 610-664-6655, x103 or  
[pmcaleer@merion-mercy.com](mailto:pmcaleer@merion-mercy.com), if you would  
like to be a class representative.

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United, Faithful, and True.”*

~ALMA MATER

Honor our Merion Mercy traditions and invest in our dynamic future by making a gift to the 2011-12 Annual Fund by June 30.

Give online at [www.merion-mercy.com](http://www.merion-mercy.com), click Supporting MMA,  
or please use the enclosed gift envelope.