



ST. FRANCIS HIGH SCHOOL
Hall of Honor Ceremony
Saturday, January 11, 2025

St. Francis High School

HALL of HONOR

Order of Events

Master of Ceremony: Frank Murnane

- 5:00 p.m. Cocktail Reception
- 5:30 p.m. Welcome
- 5:45 p.m. Dinner
- 6:00 p.m. Award Presentation

1973 Chess Team
State Champions

1991 Girls Volleyball Team
State Champions

1992 Girls Volleyball Team
State Champions

Jim Russell '82
Pole Vault State Champion

Jeff Dawson '05
Tennis State Champion

Brother Pius
Friend of St. Francis

Mike Webb '72
Distinguished Alumni Award

Pete Kinsella '75
Distinguished Alumni Award

- 7:00 p.m. Conclusion
- 7:30 p.m. Tours to see the new
 Hall of Honor
 interactive wall

HALL OF HONOR COMMITTEE

Adam Ferguson '00

Anne Murray '73 Harazin

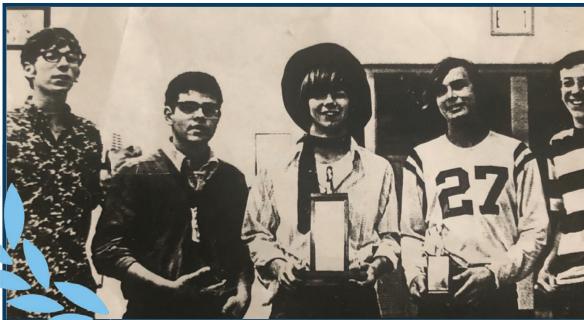
Dan Hardwick, Athletic Director

Maribeth Treis '77 Kerr

Mark Sawko '75

Todd Shaw '89, Alumni Relations

*We are looking to grow the Hall of Honor nominating committee.
Please contact Todd Shaw '89, Alumni Relations at tshaw@sfhscollegeprep.org
for more information.*



1973 State Chess Champions

As remembered by Henry Antolak '73

When I was a senior at St. Francis High School in 1973, I wasn't a model student. One day, Vice Principal George Craver called me into his office and he asked me, "How many days of attendance are necessary to graduate?" Of course, I didn't know. He then informed me that if I was to attend every day until the end of the school year, which was unlikely, I still wouldn't have enough days. I was a good student academically – mostly As and Bs – and tested very well on the ACT and SAT (Top 5 in my class). Due to a host of personal and family problems, there was no way I could stay another year in high school. He could tell I was very concerned. So I asked him what we could do and figured I'd be sweeping floors or something.

Mr. Craver was an avid chess player and coached the SFHS team for many years, but they were mediocre. I played endless hours of chess with my best friend, Mike Murphy (aka Murph), and we thought we were pretty good, but neither of us had time to be on what we thought was "the nerdy chess team." Occasionally, we'd play a few games at their meetings to show them up and Mr. Craver would watch us. Mr. Craver said his goal was to win the State Championship and that I was going to accomplish that for him. Now, SFHS had never been to the State Championship, and Murph and I were probably the only two who had played in a 'real' tournament, so the mountain seemed high. So I told him OK, but I would pick the team and make all the decisions. Surprisingly, he was delighted and said yes.

A couple of months later, my handpicked team of Murph, Rog (another friend), me, and two kids from the original Chess team, John and Frank, made it to the State Tournament. We were the last seed because no one had heard of us. We drew the #1 seed, Loyola. They showed up in matching jackets and ties. We showed up in matching tie-dyed t-shirts. They laughed at us – big mistake! Now we had something to prove to these guys. I put our least experienced player on Board 1, where usually your best player goes. Then, I put our best player on down on Boards 2, 3, 4, and 5. Since we only had to win 3 out of 5, I thought this would give us our best chances. About an hour into our first round, our 3 and 4 boards posted a win. Our 1st board had a draw which gave us 2 and a half points (a tie). I immediately offered my opponent a draw and since we both thought I was winning, he accepted. We had 3 points – we won the first day of the tournament! Mr. Craver was in and out of the hall all day. His wife was about to give birth but he didn't leave the tournament. I remember he ate hot dogs all day - he must have eaten 20 the first day! The rest of the two-day tournament, we were rock stars. We went on to win the 1973 Illinois State Championship, which at the time was run by a chess club and a USCF-rated tournament.

Standing on that stage with that trophy changed my life, and I think Mr. Craver knew it would or at least I give him credit for it. Maybe he also just wanted the trophy, which he took home right away. Later, he told us he didn't put it in the school trophy case because we would steal it; he knew us well! The thing is, it was a Win-Win, before I had ever heard the term. Mr. Craver could have punished me but the team got the trophy and I graduated and it was a great experience for both of us. An elegant solution, brilliant. (Mr. Craver's wife delivered the day after the tournament ended, by the way.) It's been 40 years now and he is still one of my heroes. It took that long to realize how amazing Mr. Craver was and what it meant to my life.And where is that trophy now?

St. Francis High School

HALL of HONOR



'91 Girls Volleyball Team

State Champions

The Spartans finished the season with an amazing record of 40-2, setting a record for wins in a season and capturing the school's second Volleyball State Championship. They finished the year ranked 3rd in the Nation. Their only losses came to Sweet Home, out of New York, and Belleville West, in Illinois, who finished the number one and two teams in the nation, respectively.

Eight seniors went on to play Division 1 volleyball. Jennie Driscoll and Laura Horvath attended the University of Pittsburgh. Sara Skryd attended Long Beach State University. Kerry Krystosek attended DePaul University. Jeanne Paultlitz attended Marquette University. Caroline Hill attended Ohio State University. Erin Rooney attended Michigan State University. Heather Brewster attended Eastern Illinois University. Also, junior Amie Lotarski attended Saint Louis University.

Coach Peg Kopec calls them the original "Dream Team, comprised of highly competitive, highly successful, one hundred percent focused, goal-oriented individuals, and when they entered the locker room were wholly focused on the task at hand."



'92 Girls Volleyball Team

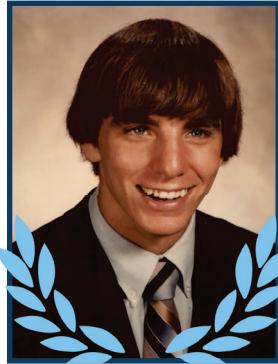
State Champions

This was supposed to be a rebuilding year. With only two returning players, who saw limited action from the previous year's State Championship, expectations were not high for a return trip to Redbird Stadium. An early season upset win over rival Immaculate Conception opened some eyes. But IC avenged that loss on October 21 by beating the Spartans at the Slantdome. This was the Spartans' first loss at home in several years.

This lit the fire for their run back down state. The Spartans, again, met up with IC, the favorite, to advance to the state tournament. After beating their rival they faced Mendota, whom they had lost to earlier in the year. Digging deep they were able to beat Mendota to complete the first ever Back-to-Back State Champions in the history of Class A.

According to Amy Serra, "We had the game plan in mind. If we didn't win it would be ok. We proved to be a great team. But each and every one of us could taste a victory." The Spartans finished the year on an amazing 10-game winning streak. The team's overall record was 36-8, 9-1 in conference play, Co-Champs of the Suburban Catholic Conference.

HALL of HONOR



Jim Russell '82

Pole Vault State Champion

Jim Russell was the 1982 Illinois Class A State Pole Vault Champion. One of his most cherished achievements was winning the state championship on a successful final attempt that set the state record and beat the 1981 state champion.

Like Bob Hudetz '80, 1980 State Heavy Wrestling Champion, Jim attributes much of his success to his teacher, coach and friend Pete Mastandrea. Coach Mastandrea somehow found out during Jim's freshman year that he once pole vaulted in 8th grade and asked Jim to compete in the conference track meet. Jim competed and fell in love with the sport.

Jim credits his development and success in pole vaulting to the St. Francis community and his supportive family. The SFHS community included his teachers – especially Fr. Riva, his coaches, teammates and the parents of St. Francis High School – particularly life-long mentor Bill Dixon. His parents Jim and Marianne and his sisters Stacy '80 and Susan '83 were also incredibly supportive of Jim's entire pole-vaulting career.

Jim went on to compete for the University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign Track Team. Jim also competed for Athletes In Action in international meets throughout Europe and Scandinavia.

Jim currently resides in St. Charles, Illinois with his wife Katie and five children. Jim started his first business in 1991 and successfully grew that business until he sold it in 2006. Since then, Jim has applied his entrepreneurial passion to start and run businesses in packaging, retail, and real estate development, construction, and management.



Jeff Dawson '05

Tennis State Champion

Jeff Dawson was the 2005 Illinois State Tennis Champion. At the time, the state had only one division for all schools. His senior season he compiled a record of 32-1, including a redemption victory in the finals of the state tournament against Connor Roth of Benet Academy. Jeff specifically remembers his semi-final match win against a fellow senior from New Trier, PJ Rose, 7-6, 7-6 which included an arsenal of one-handed backhand, dipping passing shots to close out each tie-break set.

Señora Illia was yelling “vamos Jefe” on the sidelines, Mrs. Kustak was calculating formulas for triumph, and classmates were lighting sparklers on the sidelines (a true embodiment of St. Francis community and spirit). He attributes much of his success to his parents (Jeff Sr. and Barbara) and Coach Marcia Bussey, who were amazingly positive and supportive of his goals, along with his brother Connor, one year Jeff’s junior, who pushed him every day at practice and was a best friend.

Jeff went on to captain the varsity tennis team at Yale University, playing #1 singles and #2 doubles. While at Yale, Jeff earned Academic All-Ivy honors, was a National ITA Scholar Athlete, and won the prestigious Thomas W. Ford Student Athlete Community Outreach Award given to one Yale student athlete for their philanthropic efforts, which for Jeff included the co-founding of New Hytes, an after-school tennis and academic enrichment program for disadvantaged youth. Currently he is a board member of this 501 (c) (3) organization which has grown over the years and most recently purchased land to build a campus, undergoing a \$4M capital campaign.

After college, Jeff played on the tennis professional tour at the futures level where he gained status as a ranked world professional. He went on to found RHABIT with his brothers, an online tennis education platform taught by the world’s finest coaches/players, from Olympians, to Grand Slam champions, college coaches and more. Currently, Jeff has built a career in real estate development while continuing to work key accounts for his father’s food ingredient brokerage business.

Most importantly, Jeff is still living his wedded bliss, happily married to the love of his life, Whitney, 10 years later. They are most in love with their 3.99 children; Charley-girl (6), Tripper-dipper (4), Graham-bam (2), and their 4th due any day now.

St. Francis High School

HALL of HONOR



Brother Pius

Friend of St. Francis High School

Brother Pius Kamphefner, FSC, was a pivotal figure in the early years of St. Francis High School. From 1957 to 1962, he was a dedicated faculty member, teaching a diverse range of subjects including Religion, History, English, Sociology, and Public Speaking. Beyond the classroom, he served as the school's first Athletic Director and championed the establishment of the football program.

To build a top-notch athletic program, Brother Pius went above and beyond. He fundraised to install bleachers and lights, set up locker rooms and training facilities, and even personally graded the field to ensure optimal playing conditions. With the help of a donation from Art Armbrust, he secured the essential materials (plumbing pipes) to construct the first set of goalposts.

His introduction to SFHS was when he attended the groundbreaking ceremony in 1956. He was a teacher and Band Director at St. Mel's High School in Chicago and brought their band to perform at the ceremony. He was assigned by the Christian Brothers to teach at the school shortly after. He returned to SFHS in 2002 for the Class of 1962 reunion. Reflecting on his time at the school in a 2003 interview, he shared, "It was part of my growing up. It was a life-building experience."

Brother Pius was a De La Salle Christian Brother for 66 years. He graduated from the LaSalle Institute in 1946 and earned his bachelor's degree in education from St. Mary's College in Winona, Minnesota, in 1950, followed by a master's degree in 1960. Throughout his career, he taught at numerous high schools in the Chicago and St. Louis areas, served as principal at Christian Brothers High School (Quincy) and De La Salle High School (Kansas City), and worked as a houseparent at Mercy Home for Boys and Girls in Chicago from 1979 to 1991.

Brother Pius was born on December 22, 1929, in Platte City, Missouri, and passed away on October 8, 2012. His legacy as a dedicated educator, visionary athletic director, and compassionate mentor lives on at St. Francis High School.



Ensuring our Future Auction

St. Francis High School

MARDI GRAS

Masquerade Ball

Please join us for our
Annual Auction on

March 1, 2025

Spyglass Athletic Center
at St. Francis High School



sfhscollegeprep.org/raffle

Ensuring Our Future Raffle

**1ST PLACE: \$7,500 cash or
2025-26 Semester Tuition Credit**

2ND PLACE: \$2,000

3RD PLACE: \$500

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI



Pete Kinsella '75

Distinguished Alumni Award

Pete Kinsella is a dedicated community leader and seasoned professional with a deep commitment to service and volunteerism. A 1975 graduate of St. Francis High School, Pete has spent decades making a positive impact through his work in both the nonprofit and corporate sectors.

Currently, Pete serves as a volunteer with Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet, where he assists with the kitchen and pantry operations at Daybreak

Shelter, supports the Mobile Food Pantries, and helps provide food and supplies for those in need. Pete serves as a volunteer with the Aurora Area Interfaith Food Pantry, where he assists with food distribution and is a driver for the Pantry2Go program. His dedication to helping others extends to his past roles as a board member with Catholic Charities and the Diocese of Joliet Affordable Housing Corporation, and as a member of various church committees, including finance and religious education.

Pete's professional career spans over four decades in banking, having worked at BMO Harris Bank, where he held senior roles, including Vice President/Senior Relationship Manager in Business Banking and Senior Vice President/Senior Loan Officer. His leadership in banking was marked by his ability to foster new business relationships and manage portfolios, while always ensuring clients received exceptional service.

In the nonprofit sector, Pete has played a vital role in growing donor relationships, managing fundraising efforts, and overseeing programs that serve the greater community. He previously held roles at Catholic Charities, including Senior Development Officer and Parish Relations and Board of Young Professionals Coordinator, where he helped drive key partnerships and community engagement.

Pete holds an MBA from Keller Graduate School of Management and a BA in Business Administration with an Accounting major from North Central College. His strong foundation in both business and community service, coupled with his ongoing volunteer efforts, has made him a valuable asset to many organizations.

In recognition of his extraordinary contributions, Pete Kinsella '75 has been named a Distinguished Alumni by St. Francis High School, where his legacy of leadership, service, and compassion continues to inspire others.



Mike Webb '72

Distinguished Alumni Award

Mike Webb '72 grew up in Joliet, where he attended the Cathedral of St. Raymond and served as an altar boy. In 5th grade, his family moved to Winfield, where he attended St. John the Baptist Catholic School before going on to St. Francis High School. At St. Francis, Mike was deeply involved in sports, playing football in his freshman year, baseball in his senior year, and basketball throughout all four years. His coach, Bob Hoppenstedt '63, left a lasting impression on him at SFHS that has stayed with him throughout his life. Mike briefly attended Benedictine College in Kansas but ultimately decided to return home to start his career and be closer to his girlfriend, Margie. The greatest thing to ever happen to Mike was meeting his wife, Margie Hudetz '74 Webb, at St. Francis. The two began dating during Mike's senior year and Margie's sophomore year. Mike often recalls the moment he first saw Margie riding her bike and immediately knew she was the one. Their connection was instant, and they made plans to marry, which they did in 1976.

Mike was passionate about the car business, so much so that his second date with Margie involved getting pizza and driving around looking at car dealerships. In 1980, Mike became a Ford dealer in Highland, Indiana. Over the years, he expanded his business across Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana, growing to 7 franchises and nearly 400 employees. Margie was incredibly supportive of Mike's career and focused on raising their three children. A devout Catholic, she became a covenant member with the Franciscan Sisters in Wheaton. Together, Mike and Margie enjoyed raising their children, building the family business, and traveling the world. After nearly 43 years of marriage, Margie passed away in 2019 at the age of 62 after battling early-onset Alzheimer's. Their children, Kelly, Jackie, and Brian, have followed in Mike's footsteps and all work at Webb Automotive Group. Mike's work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit remain strong, as he continues to grow the business. Those who know Mike would describe him as having an electric personality with the ability to inspire and motivate others. He is a natural-born leader, a loyal friend, and a generous man who supports causes such as the Catholic Church, the Alzheimer's Association, and Making Strides Against Breast Cancer through the American Cancer Society. Mike now resides in Northwest Indiana but loves spending time at his second home in Naples, Florida, with his children and seven grandchildren.

In recognition of his extraordinary contributions, Mike Webb '72 has been named a Distinguished Alumni by St. Francis High School, where his legacy where his legacy of leadership, vivacity and compassion continues to inspire others.



S T . F R A N C I S H I G H S C H O O L College Preparatory

We look back on over 65 years of St. Francis High School educating and promoting spiritual, academic, physical, and social development in students. The school was founded in 1956 by a group of individuals from seven local parishes who were looking for a co-institutional Catholic high school.

The first classes were held for 390 students in 1957.

Today, St. Francis High School serves the same mission its founders dreamed it would: to educate the young men and women of neighboring towns and Catholic parishes while nurturing their spiritual growth. With the deep dedication of families, alumni, teachers, staff, coaches, and donors, the school continues to develop and thrive.

We thank you for joining us on this continuing journey!



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St. Francis High School