

# Five Star Message

*Authored by Darryl Covington '98*

## The Five Stars of Brookfield Academy: A Journey Into Purpose

When I first walked onto the campus of Brookfield Academy as a freshman, I had no idea what the Five Stars truly meant. I saw them every day, on the walls, in the halls, on the uniforms, but I still didn't understand their weight. It wasn't until I graduated in 1998 and began defining my life through purpose that I realized how deeply those Stars had shaped me.

Recently, I had the unique opportunity to display my gratitude and service to the students and staff at Brookfield Academy's Five Star Seminar. My goal was to have a lasting impact on the people I was serving. You see, purpose is not just a simple seven-letter word to me. It is the foundation of who I am and the work I do to serve others. And that purpose might have remained dormant if I had never attended Brookfield Academy or faced the obstacles that came with it.

I will never forget walking into school late on the first day of freshman year, anxious, scared, and completely out of place. My bus had been extremely late, and by the time I arrived, the entire school was already gathered in assembly. I walked in feeling alone, every eye on me, feeling exposed and overwhelmed. At least, that is how it seemed from my eyes. But, then I heard the calm, reassuring voice of Principal Daniel Davis: "Welcome, come on in, we have seats right over there." That moment changed everything. His warmth, the kindness of the students, and the support of the faculty showed me what a purpose-driven community looks like. That day taught me that purpose begins with serving others, with creating space, offering grace, and extending a hand.

My purpose has carried me through a career in the nonprofit, financial, and technology sectors. My career has taught me that success is not defined solely by titles or achievements, but the impact we make on the people we serve. Through every chapter, I discovered that integrity, service, and hard work were not just values to admire, they were principles to live by. My purpose is people. And just as I learned to lead on the basketball court, learned from the Class of '98, and learned from the faculty who poured into me, I continue to carry that torch today.

I want to thank Brookfield Academy, its students, its faculty, and especially Dr. Robert Solsrud, Dr. Daniel Davis, Mr. Brian Wolf, and Mr. Doug Ricci. Whether it was attending my first Marquette basketball game, being coached for four years, or having someone listen during difficult moments, each of you left an imprint on my life that will never fade. Purpose is to serve others. My hope for the future students, faculty, and alumni of Brookfield Academy is simple: that we continue to serve, even in the smallest ways, because service is where purpose begins.