



The Halo

A NEWSLETTER OF THE
SOUTHEAST CATHOLIC · BISHOP NEUMANN · ST. MARIA GORETTI · ST. JOHN NEUMANN
SS. JOHN NEUMANN AND MARIA GORETTI HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

VOLUME III ISSUE I

NOVEMBER 2023

In Memoriam Ralph Grasso 1953 - 2023

Ralph Grasso, Bishop Neumann Class of 1971, passed away. At the time of his passing, Ralph was President of The Millay Club and served on Neumann-Goretti's Board of Trustees.



Ralph Grasso

Ralph, a Villanova University graduate, began his career as an Intermediate School Teacher, then migrated into the financial world. Ultimately, Ralph's true passion was with the Arts. He created costumes for singers and dancers and crafted set designs. He previously owned and operated Albrecht's, a floral and greenhouse shop in Lower Merion Township for several years and participated in the Philadelphia Flower

see GRASSO, page 4

Fun Memories of Life in a Big School

By Cathy Gandolfo '67

Nearly 3000 strong, give or take.

That's just about how many young women filled the halls of St. Maria Goretti High School in my time there between 1963 and 1967.

When people ask me how many were in my high school class, they are shocked at the numbers. I love that it gives me the opportunity to brag about the almost military style precision with which the school ran while keeping everyone safe.

Let me start with traffic control. Some stairs were designated up or down only. Student council members stood with ropes in the center of the hallways, separating the girls going in opposite directions -

kind of like the yellow line on a highway.

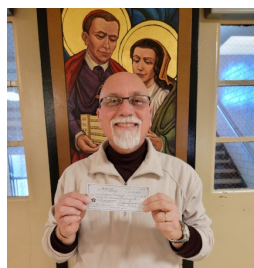
Next up was feeding the masses during four packed lunch periods. The earliest was 3rd period which meant eating lunch at about 10:30. Unlike today where cafeterias sport a variety of food, ours had a very limited menu: hot dogs and white bread sandwiches as I recall. Most of us brought our lunches; however, potato chips and mustard was a staple. The mustard was in a bowl and a little watery, but that made it easier to paint the chips in the bag with soft brushes...YUM! No one I know today quite understands that one - I suppose you have to be a Goretti Girl to appreciate tasty potato chips and mustard! Cafeteria tables were long and bolted to

see MEMORIES, page 4

50/50 Fundraiser Raffle

By Liz Farley '67

Congratulations to Calogero Paraninfo, Class of 1982, on winning the Grand Prize of \$32,500 in The Millay Club's 2022 50/50



Calogero Paraninfo '82

Raffle. The Grand Prize drawing was held on December 4, 2022, at the Annual Communion Mass and Breakfast.

The 50/50 raffle is the major Scholarship Fundraiser for The Millay Club Alumni Association. The proceeds from this fundraiser have allowed many students in need of financial aid to attend Neumann-Goretti High School, providing them with a premier college preparatory education in a faith-based Catholic environment.

see RAFFLE, page 4

Give the "Gift of Life"

John DeRenzi, St. John Neumann Class of '87 and Millay Board Vice-President, is in need of a kidney and we are asking the Millay Club community for help. John is the father of four kids who all have or are attending Neumann-Goretti. He is a lifelong resident of South Philadelphia and a great friend to many in the area.



John DeRenzi

Unfortunately, John's kidneys are failing, and he needs your help to find a living kidney donor. A living kidney donation will last longer and has a better chance of giving him the wonderful gift of leading a longer, healthier, and more normal life. A kidney donor doesn't have to be a relative. Unrelated donors are matched up with recipients every day. Testing can be done anonymously, and John's insurance covers the costs. For more information in helping our friend John, please visit.

www.friendsofderenzi.com

In This Issue

In Memoriam	1
Fun Memories of Life in a Big School	1
50/50 Fundraiser Raffle	1
Give the "Gift of Life"	1
Memorial Communion Mass and Breakfast	2
Alumna Wins \$1000 by Becoming an Active Member	2
Neumann Basketball Graduate Shows it's Never Too Late to Achieve a Goal	3
Alumnus Honored at Neumann-Goretti Veterans Prayer Service	3

Rev. George Feider O. Praem. Memorial Communion Mass and Breakfast

By Eileen Kelly-Kazelskis '67

After a two-year hiatus because of the pandemic, on December 4, 2022, our annual Communion Breakfast was once again held in person. This was the 85th annual alumni meeting and was truly wonderful to have everyone back in person! A proud tradition of Neumann Gorette's Alumni Association, the annual Communion Breakfast, which is sponsored by The Millay Club, was attended by 150 Alumni from Southeast-Catholic, Bishop Neumann, St. Maria Gorette, St. John Neumann and Neumann-Gorette.

Mass was celebrated by Rev. James E. Dalton, OSFS. Our Concelebrant was Abbot Richard Antonucci, O. Praem. '63.

During the breakfast, Award for Alumnus of the Year was presented to Joseph Messina, Sr. '85, as well as the Abbot Pennings Award to Roseann O'Neill '66 and Joseph Kirlin '65, founders of the Katie Kirlin Fund.

In addition to mass and awards, the 2022 guest speaker was Bernie Parent, award winning goalie and ambassador for the Philadelphia Flyers.

Positive feedback of a very nice gathering and enjoyable time was shared by all who attended.

This year, our traditional Mass and breakfast, along with our 50/50 raffle drawing, will be held on Sunday, December 3rd 2023, at the IATSE Ballroom in South Philadelphia beginning at 9 AM.

Our guest speaker will be Bob Kelly of the FOX 29 news team. Our 2023 Alumna of the Year award will be presented to Linda Crusco '71, Millay Club Board President. Maureen Josaphouitch Smith '89, Founder of Think Pink for Pat, a charitable organization in memory of Patricia Maloney Josaphouitch '65 will be the recipient of this year's Abbot Pennings Award. The entire event concludes by Noon – home in time to watch the Eagles! Please plan on joining us on December 3rd! Please contact The Millay Club office for tickets (\$45 per person) at 215 389 0925. Tickets will not be sold at the door.



Bob Kelly

50/50 Raffle Grand Prize
\$28,200+

Tickets can be purchased by
phone only. Call 215-389-0925
by November 27, 2023.



The Millay Club

Newsletter Committee

Ciarra Bianculli '13, Editor
Linda M. Crusco '71
Michael Gargano '95
Dominic J. Ricciuti '75

Contributors

Linda Crusco '71
Liz Farley '67
Cathy Gandolfo '67
Mia Messina '21
Dominic J. Ricciuti '75

THE MILLAY CLUB
Neumann-Gorette High School
Room 112
1736 S. 10th St.
Philadelphia, PA 19148

215-389-0925

1-800-7-MILLAY

millayclub@gmail.com

www.themillayclub.org

www.facebook.com/TheMillayClub

www.instagram.com/the_millay_club

© 2023 The Millay Club

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

For permission to reproduce any
article in this newsletter, send an
email to

newsletters@themillayclub.org

Alumna wins \$1,000 by Becoming an Active Member

By Dominic J. Ricciuti '75

The winner of our 2023 Active Membership drawing was Lori Bradley from the Class of 1983.

The Millay Club plays an important role in sustaining our alma mater, Ss. John Neumann and Maria Gorette High School. The Active Membership fee is \$25.00. The membership fee helps us to pay expenses for the alumni office, promote the Annual Communion Breakfast and All Class Reunion, and assist with the planning of class reunions.

The Millay Club also sponsors events including underwriting the annual Millay Scholars and Alumni Achievers Banquet and the annual Varsity Hall of Fame Inductions & Neumann-Gorette Senior



Lori Bradley '83

Letter Banquet,

We also bequeath a substantial endowment to the school each year to provide tuition for need based students.

Your Active Membership Fee can be paid in three ways:

- By Mail: Send your check made payable to The Millay Club with your name, graduation year, address, phone number, and email address to The Millay Club, Neumann-Gorette HS, Room 112, 1736 S 10th St., Philadelphia PA 19148.
- By Phone: Call the Alumni office at 215-389-0925 to pay with a credit or debit card.
- Online: Visit www.themillayclub.org and select Pay Membership Fee on the Home page. Payment may be made using PayPal, Venmo, or a credit/debit card.

We thank you for your continued loyalty and support.



NG Alumni • Neumann • Gorette SPORTSWEAR APPAREL

Long & Short Tees • Hooded Sweatshirts
Sweatshirts • Sweatpants • Shorts • Caps

Men's • Women's • Youth

All designs are available in multiple colors.

Order by Wednesday, November 22, 2023 at 11:59 pm.

www.kampusklothes.chippily.com/neumanngorettialum

Neumann Basketball Graduate Shows it's Never Too Late to Achieve a Goal

By Mia Messina '21

Rashid Bey of Saint Joseph's University Class of 2022 arrived on campus in the fall of 1994 unsure of what to expect. A native of Philadelphia, he was the first person in his family to attend college.

At Saint John Neumann High School in South Philly, Bey had had a standout basketball career, years later earning a place in the school's Varsity Hall of Fame. But in 1994, he was focused on his college career and the spot he'd landed as a guard on the St. Joe's men's basketball team.

Bey eventually found a support system in his coaches, teammates and others at the university, while calling on his own ability to adapt to change.

"I had to learn how to communicate and interact with people that I didn't know and that I was not accustomed to being around," Bey said. "It was a huge transformation in my whole development."

Bey played for the Hawks from 1994-98 under Head Coaches John Griffin and Phil Martelli. He was the first St. Joe's basketball player to earn the Big 5 MVP for back-to-back seasons in '97 and '98. In 2005, he was inducted into the St. Joe's Men's Basketball Hall of Fame and in 2011, he was inducted into the Big 5 Hall of Fame.

"He was a person that didn't say a lot, but what he did say, he meant, and he could back up everything that he said with his play," Griffin said. "He could lead by example, and I think that was really what impacted the other players on the team."

It was Bey's skill on the court that gave him the opportunity to play overseas in

1998. Less than a semester away from graduating, he said he was assured that he would be unenrolled from his current courses and could return to finish them at a later date.

Bey left St. Joe's in 1998 to play for the BK Inter Bratislava in Slovakia. He continued his career overseas for 12 years, playing in Poland, Switzerland, France, Belgium and Turkey.

"It wasn't something that I aspired to do," Bey said. "It just happened."

But when Bey returned to St. Joe's in 2006, instead of having the withdrawals on his transcript that he was promised, he was met with Fs instead.

"I was angry at the whole process," Bey said. "Instead of just getting over it and getting through it, I was stuck on that."

Bey stayed stuck for well over a decade. In the years after he returned from overseas, he received multiple coaching job offers that would have allowed him to finish his degree at a different school. But Bey said his anger at the situation and his desire to finish his degree at St. Joe's prevented him from accepting any of these positions. He tried to return to St. Joe's to finish his degree three times before finally returning in the summer of 2021.

"I had to be in the right space mentally," Bey said. "That's a lesson too for people who let anger and maybe small things prevent them from doing something great."

But Bey also was determined to finish what he had started in 1994.

"It was something that I always wanted to do, to finish my degree," Bey said. "And I definitely wanted to do it at St. Joe's."

Bey's decision to return ultimately came down to family. After his grandmother, Alma Bey, passed away suddenly, it put into perspective how fast life can pass by. Now, his mother, Leslie Atkins, is sick as well and asked him to finish his degree before she passed away, giving him a final push toward completing his studies. Soon after his conversation with his mother, Bey ran into current men's basketball Head Coach, Billy Lange, who also brought up Bey's unfinished degree. After sharing the promise that Bey made to his mother with him, Lange helped him to take the final steps toward his return to St. Joe's, with his family — his mother and his two children, ages 12 and 6 — at the forefront of his motivation.

"They're Team Rashid," Bey said. "I did not think it would be a big deal after 20-something years to get my degree for everyone, but it turns out that they are so proud."

Don DiJulia of the Saint Joseph's University Class of 1967, the St. Joe's

see **GRADUATE**, page 4

Alumnus Honored at Neumann-Goretti Veterans Prayer Service



Neumann-Goretti's 2023 Veterans Prayer Service was extra special for Timothy Luko, Jr. of the Bishop Neumann Class of 1994. During the mass, Timothy was awarded the Neumann-Goretti Veteran Alumni Award for his service to our county. Tim will also serve as the Chair of the Veterans Committee at the school.

SAINTS **NG** VS **RAMS**
NEUMANN-GORETTI SOUTHERN HIGH

THANKSGIVING DAY

THE TRADITION CONTINUES

Thanksgiving Day
November 22, 2023
10:00 am
\$10 admission
Supersite
10th & Bigler Sts.
Basket Raffle with 12 wonderful prizes
FREE Photo Booth opportunity with NG background and school mascot, Duke
Neumann vs. Southern
T-shirts on sale for \$15

GRASSO

continued from page 1

Show, winning "Best in Show" five times. Ralph provided floral designs for events such as the 6ABC Thanksgiving Day Parade, the 4th of July Parade and the opening of the Constitution Center in Philadelphia. He provided holiday displays for private residences, galas, weddings, charitable fundraisers, and other social events.

For 40 years, Ralph was a long-standing committee member of the Republican Committee of Lower Merion and Narbeth, holding positions such as executive officer and chair of annual fundraising events. Additionally, he was the former President of the Merion Civic Association, Federation of the Lower Merion/Narberth Civics, and former Chair of the Lower Merion Environmental Advisory Council.

Ralph was involved with many other developmental organizations, including Waldron Mercy Academy, The Pennsylvania Ballet, Episcopal Academy, The Academy of Music, and the Philadelphia Boys Choir.

He leaves behind Diane, his wife of 48 years, his son, Stacey, his mother, Elizabeth Grasso, and his siblings, Bettyann and Mark.

The Millay Club is eternally grateful for all his work and dedication to The Millay Club and Neumann-Goretti High School. Ralph will be forever missed.

*Linda Crusco '71
President*

RAFFLE

continued from page 1

This year's 50/50 raffle grand prize will be drawn on December 3, 2023 at the Annual Communion Mass and Breakfast. Tickets have gone out in the mail. The donation for a ticket is \$25. New this year: if you buy or sell 4 tickets, the 5th ticket is free! In addition to the grand prize drawing, weekly prize drawings will take place are ongoing for all who have purchased raffle tickets (winning tickets will be re-entered for the grand prize drawing). If you do not receive tickets in the mail, please call The Millay Club office at 215-389-0925 and tickets will be sent to you.



MEMORIES

continued from page 1

the floor with little swivel seats. The lunchtime ritual required that everyone had two napkins, one for the table and one for the lap. When all were finished eating, the girl at one end, known as the Cafeteria Hostess, would retrieve a wet paper towel and a dry one from the ladies room.

Starting at one end of the table to the other, each girl wiped and dried the surface in front of her place, passing the towels along to the next girl until they reached the end of the table and were then thrown away. The result was a nice clean table for the next invasion of hungry students.

I remember well attended basketball games and the cheers and ear splitting screams in support of the team. Oftentimes numerous packed buses took us to away games; the bus tickets were only 50 cents to ride.

I could go on about life in a large school for girls but space is limited. I'm sure those of you who read this have your own recollections of life at 10th and Moore.

The numbers that filled that building will never be seen again; but, for those of us who were there in those days, it is fun to think about the thousands of fresh faced teenage girls that filled those halls, talking and laughing and making memories and plans for the future.

GRADUATE

continued from page 3

athletic director during the time Bey played basketball at the university, said he admired how Bey's desire to complete his degree remained unwavering throughout the process.

"He committed to his family and himself that he was going to get a college degree," DiJulia said. "It speaks to a high level of character, which we knew from day one."

In the summer of 2022, Bey officially completed his degree in criminal justice from St. Joe's, which he said has meant more to him than any of his athletic achievements.

"This thing going back for the last 20 years has been a journey," Bey said. "I'm glad that I was able to continue this journey where I started, at St. Joe's."

Griffin said Bey's determination to finish his degree matches his style of play.

"He was never afraid to take a big shot. He was never afraid to make a difference," Griffin said. "He did anything that was required to help the team succeed."

With this chapter of his life finally behind him, Bey is looking toward the future to see what he can focus on next. He said he has not thought about whether he will participate in commencement exercises in the spring. For now, he's focused on his next move.

"I'm trying to put together a youth program for at-risk youth," Bey said. "We're going to use sports as a tool to get kids involved, but it's really going to deal with mental health."

**THE MILLAY CLUB
86TH ANNUAL MEETING
AND**

**FR. GEORGE FEIDER, O. PRAEM.
COMMUNION BREAKFAST**

SUNDAY, DEC. 3, 2023

**MASS: 9:00 AM
BREAKFAST TO FOLLOW**

\$45.00 PER PERSON

**IATSE BALLROOM
2401 S. SWANSON ST.
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19148**

**GUEST SPEAKER:
BOB KELLY, FOX 29 NEWS**

**CALL 215-389-0925 FOR
TICKETS BY NOV. 22, 2023**

WRITER'S WANTED

**The Millay Club
is looking for alumni to
volunteer to write
articles for "The Halo"
newsletter.**

**Alumni who are interested,
should send an email to
"The Halo" editor,
Ciarra Bianculli at
ciarrabianculli@gmail.com**

