

THE HALO

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

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

By: Linda Crusco, '71

It is hard to believe that another school year will soon be ending. A lot has happened during the year.

September of 2024 marked the 20th anniversary of the merging of St. John Neumann High School with St. Maria Goretti High School. A Gala will be held at the school on Sunday, November 9, 2025, to celebrate this milestone. More information will follow.

Check our new website at www.millayclub.org which was launched a few months ago.

On March 30, 2025, we held our sold-out All Class Reunion at Miller's Ale House. Details regarding the date and new venue for our 2026 All Class Reunion will follow. A special thanks to Johnny Looch who kept the crowd dancing all afternoon, and to everyone who attended.

The annual Senior Breakfast, sponsored by the Millay Club, was held at the school on Wednesday, June 4, 2025.

On June 5, 2025, I was honored to induct the Class of 2025 into the Millay Club during the Baccalaureate Mass held at the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul. During the Mass, we also honored the 1975 graduates of Bishop Neumann and St. Maria Goretti as they celebrated their 50th anniversary. Congratulations to both the Classes of 2025 and 1975!

The ribbon cutting of The John M. Connolly Center for Business & Entrepreneurship will be held on June 11, 2025. This center could not have happened if it was not for the generous donations from John Connolly '70 and his wife Kathy.

Mark your calendars for Saturday, August 2nd for Saints at the Shore to be held once again at Keenan's in North Wildwood, NJ. Johnny Looch will be the DJ for this event. Please check the school's website for tickets.

In our last issue of The Halo, we expressed the need for a kidney for John DeRenzi '87 our Millay Club Vice President. The good news is that John did receive a kidney in April and is doing well.

On a sad note, we lost a very dedicated and valuable member of our Millay family. Dom Riccuitti, Class of 1975, passed away suddenly on December 7, 2024. Dom was the administrator of our social media including our website, facebook and Instagram pages. Dom also put together the video that is shown during our annual Communion Breakfast.

Hope everyone has a nice and safe summer.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF JOSEPH F. MARINO

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Joseph F. Marino who was the Board Chair on June 11th. Along with serving on the Board at Neumann Goretti, Joe was a board representative for Councilmember Mark Squilla, President of the East Passyunk Community Center Board (where he was affectionately known as the "Mayor of East Passyunk"), co-founder of the East Passyunk Civic Association, and proud owner of the Passyunk Post. Joe will be remembered for his vibrant personality, his commitment to local education and youth, and his tireless efforts to help his South Philadelphia community.



SAVE THE DATE!

The 88th Annual Alumni Meeting and Rev. George Feider O.Praem. Memorial Communion Mass and Breakfast will be held on Sunday, November 30, 2025 at the IATSE Ballroom in South Philadelphia with Mass beginning at 9 a.m.

In keeping with our tradition, the winner of our annual 50/50 Drawing will be selected following the breakfast. The entire event concludes by Noon so you'll be home in plenty of time to watch the football games. **Note:** Our Eagles are scheduled to play on Black Friday, November 28, 2025, this year!

Plan on joining us on November 30th. Please contact The Millay Club office for tickets (\$50 per person) at 215 389 0925.

JOHN DERENZI '87 RECEIVES THE GIFT OF LIFE

On February 22, Board Member John DeRenzi '87 received the gift of life with a kidney transplant. DeRenzi was on the transplant list waiting for a kidney for nearly two years when he saw a Facebook post about the tragic and sudden passing of Caleb Duffy, an organ donor. Duffy's cousin, Ryan Coleman '26 is a member of the Neumann Goretti baseball team. DeRenzi reached out to Joe Messina '85 about the post, and Messina connected the two families within an hour. DeRenzi had found his match, and two days later he was going into surgery to receive his kidney. Duffy saved five lives, donating both kidneys, his heart, his lungs, and his liver.



BUSINESS, LEGACY, AND SOUTH PHILLY PRIDE: CONNOLLY CENTER OPENS AT NG

By: Nikki Kane, '08

On the evening of June 11, 2025, Saints John Neumann and Maria Goretti High School marked a transformative moment in its history with the grand opening and ribbon cutting of The John M. Connolly Center for Business & Entrepreneurship.

Guests arrived to an elegant atmosphere catered by IATSE with butlered hors d'oeuvres served throughout the halls during a smart, casual cocktail hour. A talented student band performed a lineup of easy classic rock favorites, setting the perfect backdrop for conversation, connection, and celebration.

The evening's program began in the school gymnasium with opening remarks by Saints Neumann Goretti President Tim Cairry '94, followed by an Opening Blessing from Rev. Father Richard Antonucci '63. Their words set a hopeful tone, quickly followed by an energizing address from Jay DeFrusco, CEO of the Office of Catholic Education, whose remarks sparked excitement about the center's possibilities.

The highlight of the evening came as John M. Connolly '70—founder and managing director of Eaglehead Capital and senior advisor to the Goldman Sachs Growth Group—took the stage to share his inspiration behind founding and funding the Connolly Center with his \$500,000 donation. In an emotional and personal speech, Connolly reflected on the values instilled in him during his time at Bishop Neumann, and the role South Philadelphia played in his life and career.

"It was an opportunity to come back to my roots here in South Philadelphia," Connolly said, "and to give back to a school that had a profound effect on my life." It was at this moment that John spoke about the importance of philanthropy in his journey. The crowd was silent throughout John's address, in which he reminded us that the center is only the beginning of what's to come for NG.

Shortly after, in South Philly fashion—SWOOP, the Philadelphia Eagles mascot, led the Avalon String Band into the halls, surging through the crowd. Guests followed the music to the front of the Connolly Center, where Connolly, joined by his wife, Kathy, and the Neumann Goretti Cheerleaders, stood beside a 30-foot-long red ribbon. With giant ceremonial scissors in hand and cameras flashing, John cut the ribbon to a round of cheers—officially opening a new era of innovation and entrepreneurial learning at NG.

The crowd then flooded into the newly opened space, where Mr. Cairry welcomed guests to tour the state-of-the-art facility. The center's main classroom, outfitted with an LED stock ticker, towering smart TVs, and executive swivel chairs, left many speechless. It was a space that wouldn't be out of place in the pages of *Fortune* magazine—designed to inspire the next generation of business leaders, thanks to VCG Construction and Emerald Business Supply.

Attendees explored the new donor wall, honoring the many who made the Connolly Center possible. Among the names were Connolly's sister Sara Canuso '69 and her husband Vito, as well as his close classmates and lifelong friends Dennis Esposito '70, Anthony Casasanto '70, and Ernie Farina '70. The wall also proudly displayed the contribution of The Millay Club, whose \$20,000 gift helped link this future-facing initiative to our school's tradition and legacy.

MILLAY CLUB HALL OF FAME BANQUET

By: Joe Messina, '85

On Tuesday May 13, 2025, the Millay Club Hall of Fame Banquet was held to recognize the student athletes of the 2025 Senior class. One of the highest honors awarded is The Millay Award bestowed to a male and female who has contributed in a significant and unique way to the athletic program of the school. These seniors exemplify what it means to be a Saint.

This year's winners were Richie Rosati and Alivia Leuzzi. These students were the perfect example of what the award represents. Both Richie and Alivia excel in the classroom. They are graduating with the highest honors.

Richie is a two times All Catholic and State Champion for the Baseball team and Alivia was awarded the Mini Max winner by the Maxwell Football Club for her prowess in Girls Flag Football. She was also a member of the volleyball team. Richie will be headed to Rutgers University-Camden where he will play Baseball, and Alivia will be attending St. Joseph's University.

We had the pleasure of asking them a few questions about their experiences at NG before they become part of the Millay family.

1. What did winning the Millay award mean to you in receiving this highest recognition?

RICHIE: Winning the Millay Award was a true honor! It means a lot to me because it shows others that I exemplify what it means to be a Neumann Goretti Saint both on the baseball field and in the classroom.

ALIVIA: Winning the Millay award meant a lot to me because I know that the people who awarded it to me recognized my commitment



and dedication not only to volleyball and flag football, but also to my academics.

2. How has NG made an impact on you in these last 4 years that will shape you as you move on to the next phase of your life?

RICHIE NG has impacted me in many ways, not only by playing baseball, but because of the faculty, staff, and students I was surrounded by! They constantly pushed me to be my best and supported me through every challenge I encountered. I'm leaving with not just a great education, but a community that I'll treasure for the rest of my life.

Alivia NG has impacted my life in so many ways. I have been presented with so many opportunities during my time at NG and could not have imagined myself anywhere else! I have truly been blessed during my time spent at NG and will be grateful forever.

3. What do you say to current 8th graders who are deciding on NG as a school?

RICHIE Neumann Goretti should definitely be your number one option! During my four years, I have made tons of memories, built lifelong friendships, and grown both academically and personally. The upperclassmen, staff, and teachers made it super easy to feel comfortable as soon as you stepped in the doors!

Alivia: I would say make NG your decision. I have so many fun memories and made lifelong friends over the past four years that I would not have been able to have if I went to any other school!

continued on next page

JOHN M. CONNOLLY, '70 2024 ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

Growing up, John was a member of St. Monica's Parish and attended St. Monica's Grade School. He then attended Bishop Neumann High School, where he served as Senior Class President. Following graduation, he attended St. Norbert College located in DePere, Wisconsin, where he majored in Liberal Arts.

John and his wife, Kathy, have recently donated \$300,000 to Ss. John Neumann and Maria Goretti High School, earmarked for the creation of The John M. Connolly Center for Business and Entrepreneurship.

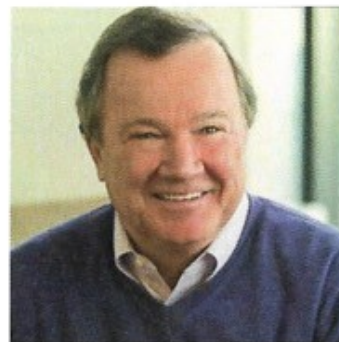
In making this generous gift, John stated: "This innovative center will not only serve students interested in pursuing all areas of business, finance, and marketing to help them become the leaders of tomorrow, but it will also provide an opportunity for the local business community to utilize the facility for conferences, seminars, and board meetings." He then contributed an additional \$50,000 towards the creation of the center if the funds could be matched through private donations. The matching goal was met within 28 days!

He also made a gift in honor of his sister, Sara Connolly Canuso '69, and his brother-in-law, Vito, to provide tuition assistance through the funding of a scholarship in the amount of \$50,000.

John and Kathy have now donated a total of \$400,000 to Neumann Goretti High School across all of these grants to our school.

John has a 30+ year proven track record of innovation and execution in creating successful business through his experience as CEO of five different companies and founder of two companies. He has served on more than 50 Boards of Directors, and has been Chairman and Non-Executive Chairman. John focuses on partnering with CEOs and management teams to address strategic and operational issues/opportunities associated with growth.

John founded two companies, Course Technology and Mainspring. Course Technology, founded in



1988, was the first Educational Technology Company in America and was acquired by Thomson/Reuters 30 months after its inception. John went on to become the CEO of International Thomson Media Corporation.

Mainspring, the first e-business strategy company in the U.S., founded in 1996, grew from a startup to a publicly traded company under John's leadership, and was then purchased by IBM in June of 2001. As part of the IBM acquisition, John was appointed General Manager of the IBM Strategy Group. John's vision for Mainspring was that the Internet was going to change the way companies do business and how people would communicate with one another.

John then went on to become Managing Director of Bain Capital as Head of the Operating Group. John was also CEO of Institutional Shareholders Services (ISS), The Princeton Review, and MC Communications.

Presently, John is the Founder and Managing Director of Eaglehead Capital, a Growth Fund that is dedicated to making investments in Growth Companies here in the U.S. In addition, John also serves as the Lead Operating Advisor of the Value Accelerator of the Goldman Sachs Fund, a \$5 billion Growth Fund investing in Growth-Stage Companies.

John and Kathy have lived on the North Shore of Boston, MA since January of 1985. They have two daughters, Caitlin and Lauren, who both have two children each. Both daughters and their families live within one mile of them.