ST. MARY’S SCHOOL

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

St. Mary's School has established the Distinguished Alumni Award to recognize graduates with outstanding post-elementary achievements. Annually, the St. Mary’s Board of Education nominates an individual for this award.

The National Catholic Education Association provides criteria and a framework to enable individual Catholic elementary schools to nominate for national recognition, graduates who have made a significant contribution to the Catholic Church and to the United States.

The following graduates of St. Mary’s School are past recipients of the Distinguished Alumni Award:

- **2017 – Joe Finken**
  - Member of St. Mary’s Parish
  - Served on the Melrose City Council
  - Serves as Mayor of the City of Melrose
  - Serves as a member of the Melrose Fire Department and serves as Department chaplain
  - Involved in the St. Mary’s Parish and serves as lector and usher
  - Is a role model for our community

- **2016 – Craig Maus**
  - Member of St. Mary’s Parish
  - Serves on the Parish Council
  - Serves as Police Chief of the City of Melrose
  - Serves as a member of the Melrose Fire Department
  - Involved in the St. Mary’s Parish and community
  - Is a role model for our community

- **2015 – Father Benjamin (Ben) Kociemba**
  - Former member of St. Mary’s Parish
  - Served as a Boy Scout and earned the Eagle Scout award
  - Serves as a priest in the St. Cloud Diocese
  - Serves as full time Chaplain at St. Cloud Cathedral High School
  - Serves as Chaplain for the Scouts of the St. Cloud Diocese
  - Is a role model for our community and the St. Cloud Diocese

- **2014 – Jennifer Ellering**
  - Member of St. Mary’s Parish
  - Serves on the St. Mary’s Board of Education
  - Serves on the Area Parish Cluster Board
  - Serves as a Eucharistic Minister
  - Serves as a volunteer teacher for the St. Mary’s Art Masterpiece Program
  - Serves on the St. Mary’s Dinner/Auction for Education Committee
  - Very involved in the St. Mary’s Parish, St, Mary’s School and community

- **2013 – Amanda (Thieschafer) Smock**
  - Former member of St. Mary’s Parish
  - Very active in current parish community
- Serves as ambassador for Catholic Education
- Serves as a positive role model for children
- Represented our country in the 2012 Summer Olympics

- **2012 – Jean Ritter**
  - Member of St. Mary’s Parish
  - Parish Administrative Assistant for St. Mary’s
  - Eucharistic minister for St. Mary’s
  - Served on the Liturgy Committee
  - Served on the Religious Education Committee
  - Served as a Lector
  - Very involved in the St. Mary’s Parish

- **2011 – James Athmann**
  - Member of St. Mary’s Parish
  - Serves as a mass server and usher for St. Mary’s
  - Involved in the St. Mary’s Parish and community
  - Served our country during the Vietnam War
  - Very active in the VFW Schanhaar Otte Post # 7050

- **2010 – Ernest Kociemba**
  - Member of St. Mary’s Parish
  - Serves as Deacon for St. Mary’s
  - Very involved in the St. Mary’s Parish and community
  - Owns Ernie’s Family Foods in Melrose
  - Member of the Chamber of Commerce
  - Very supportive of St. Mary’s Parish and St. Mary’s School

- **2009 – Carol Moormann**
  - Member of St. Mary’s Parish
  - Serves as a Lector for St. Mary’s
  - Very active in the community
  - Involved in the St. Mary’s Parish and community
  - Reporter/feature editor for a weekly newspaper

- **2008 – Melvin Roehrl**
  - Member of St. Mary’s Parish
  - Serves on the Maintenance Committee for St. Mary’s
  - Very supportive of St. Mary’s Parish and St. Mary’s School
  - Very active in the community
  - Served on various organizations in the community

- **2007 – Bernard Hollermann**
  - Member of St. Mary’s Parish
  - Owned and operated Hollermann Manufacturing; giving time and talent to many parish and school communities
  - Supported Catholic Education
  - Supported school and parish with his handyman talents

- **2006 – Lucille Orth**
  - President of the St. Mary’s Mission Society
  - Member of MCCL
  - Member of St. Elizabeth’s/St. Bernard’s Society
  - Member of the Christian Mothers/Women
  - Member of St. Mary’s Adult Choir
- Very involved in her political party
- Performed in the musical “Nunsense”
- Active in the community

- **2005 – Fr. Julius Beckermann OSB**
  - Entered St. Johns Abbey as a brother candidate in 1962 and made his first profession of vows March 21, 1964
  - Worked in maintenance, building, grounds, and plant management at St. John’s Abbey
  - Served 20 years at St. Mary’s Mission in Red Lake, MN during which time he learned the Ojibwe language
  - Served as pastoral minister to Native Americans
  - Is the first member of St. John’s Abby to become a permanent Deacon (Ordained June 2, 2000)
  - Was ordained in to the priesthood June 6, 2003

- **2004 – Alan Wiechmann**
  - Member of St. Mary’s Parish
  - Served on the St. Mary’s Board of Education
  - Served on the Stewardship Committee
  - Involved in the St. Mary’s Parish and community

- **2003 – Jim Matchinsky**
  - Member of St. Mary’s Parish
  - Very supportive of St. Mary’s Parish and St. Mary’s School
  - Very supportive to the St. Mary’s Education Endowment Fund
  - Supportive of the community
  - Successful businessman

- **2002 – Judith (Hollermann) Kluempke**
  - Member of St. Mary’s Parish
  - Administrative Assistant St. Mary’s School
  - Sponsor couple for married couples
  - Mass server scheduler
  - Eucharistic minister for St. Mary’s
  - Member of the Christian Mothers/Women
  - Coordinator of the art masterpiece program at St. Mary’s School

- **2001 – Raymond Maus**
  - Member of St. Mary’s Parish
  - Very involved in the St. Mary’s Parish and community
  - Was businessman in Melrose for many years
  - All six of his children graduated from St. Mary’s Catholic School
  - Served on various organizations in the community

- **2000 – John Kociemba**
  - Member of St. Mary’s Parish
  - Serves as an usher for St. Mary’s
  - Served as chair of the St. Mary’s Finance Committee
  - Owns Snyder V & S Variety in Melrose
  - Member of the Chamber of Commerce
  - Involved in the St. Mary’s Parish and community

- **1999 – David H. Sieben**
  - Member of St. Mary’s Parish
  - Graduate of St. John’s University
Taught social and served as football coach
Athletic Director of the Melrose Area Public Schools
Served as Army Major in the Reserves
Supportive of Catholic School Education
Involved in the St. Mary’s Parish and community

1998 – Steven J. Borgerding
- Member of St. Mary’s Parish
- Very involved in the Boys Scouts and served as Scoutmaster
- Served on the Melrose City Council
- Draftsman for a lumber company

1997 – Sister Ephrem (Rita) Hollermann, OSB
- Entered St. Benedict’s Monastery in 1961 and made final profession in 1967
- Served the community as a junior high teacher of English and religion
- Served as director on novices and initial formation at St. Benedict’s Monastery
- Served as doctoral student in historical theology
- Served as associate professor of theology at the College of St. Benedict and St. John’s University
- In 1995, was elected the 14th prioress of the St. Benedict’s Monastery

1996 – Gail Schlicht
- Member of St. Mary’s Parish
- Member of St. Mary’s Adult Choir
- Served as Trustee for St. Mary’s Parish
- Involved in the St. Mary’s Parish and community

1995 – Al Westendorf
- Member of St. Mary’s Parish
- Served on the St. Mary’s Education Endowment Committee
- Member of the Melrose Knights of Columbus
- Member of the St. Bernard’s Society
- Former Melrose City Clerk-Treasurer
- Involved in the St. Mary’s Parish and community

1994 - William G. Meyer
- Member of St. Mary’s Parish
- Served on the St. Mary’s Education Endowment Committee
- Member of St. Mary’s Adult Choir
- Owned a law firm in Melrose
- Involved in the St. Mary’s Parish and community

1993 - Julia Westendorf
- Member of St. Mary’s Parish
- Administrator of the Melrose Hospital
- Involved in the St. Mary’s Parish and community
- Member of the Chamber of Commerce

1992 - Gary Walz
- Member of St. Mary’s Parish
- Eucharistic minister for St. Mary’s
- Graduate of St. John’s University
- Melrose Economic Development Coordinator
- Involved in the St. Mary’s Parish and community
- Member of the Chamber of Commerce