

Teachers, staff distinguish the Catholic School

"Catholic Education must give a soul to the world." Pope Francis

"The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires." William Arthur Ward

"A teacher affects eternity; you can never tell where the influence stops." Henry Adams.

Call me a teacher wannabe!

Give me 7-10 students for about an hour and a half a week and I think teaching would be a great vocation; unless I had to teach Math, Science or Chemistry! Give me 20-30 kids per class for seven hours a day and I'm not sure my vocation would last one week!

Our teachers are really a gift to our students. They inspire me. And I had plenty of interactive opportunities to watch them in action at our sites. I kidded at our grandparent celebrations that they're also a lot like grandparents. They love seeing those kids come in that door at 8am, but they also love seeing those parents pulling into their school parking lot every afternoon.

So many of our faculty and staff are committed. You see it in their interaction and their dedication to excellence. We have groups set up to raise the academic bar, some volunteer for extracurriculars and others spend the summer coming up with new and better ways to "sharpen the saw."

Who doesn't have a memory of a favorite teacher?

That's not to say that every teacher is a good fit for every child. We have the same conflicts in our classrooms that you have in your families. Most of these incidences in the higher grades can be used as teachable moments. Students will have relational issues throughout their life with family members, co-workers, managers, bosses and just people. None of us want to be remembered by our less than stellar moments as parents, friends or employees, but teachers have to react every day to a variety of relational situations. It takes a special type of person.

This was an unusual year that we lost an incredible fab five of commitment and service to well deserved retirements.

First, if you really want to drive someone to the brink, go from being the Dean of Students to Athletic Director at the High School. The Dean's office is constantly dealing with issues around fairness and justice and the athletic position requires weekend commitments to bingo in addition to the details of setting up and managing the sports program, which involves about half of Catholic High's student body. So we appreciate David Blanford's 43 years of service to our children. Sherri Orth (37 years) and Martha Luckett (31 years) retired from the religion department, Sherri as the chair. The additional responsibilities that come with retreats, days of recollection, liturgies and events are numerous. And the stories I've heard of how impactful they were through some student's darkest hour are too numerous to mention. They are going

to be a difficult act to follow. Josie Hagan has served Marilyn Pace in the library for 34 years. Josie was a model of service and joy for the students who asked for help each day. She was a quiet source of strength and support. And Wayne Payne's service to the system for the last 21 years has kept pipes from leaking, circuits from blowing and roofs intact. He's built buildings and can do just about anything with what's in his toolbox. I tell people that Wayne could build a nuclear power plant with bailing wire, duct tape and chewing gum.

These are remarkable commitments of time and energy to the Catholic Church and to our community. We owe them, and all who choose to teach in our system, a debt of gratitude.