



STARS SHINE AT JP II GALA

Pope John Paul II High School hosted its 2014 Gala and Auction on Saturday, Feb. 22, at the Nashville Airport Marriott. The theme of this year's Gala, which drew a capacity crowd, was "The Golden Age of Cinema." The honoree for the evening, which included silent and live auctions, dinner and dancing, was Jennifer Dye, right, the chair of the school's science department and one of the founding members of the faculty. Pat Kyriakidis, below, the mother of twin freshmen Annie and Seth, checks out one of the silent auction items.



A KNIGHT'S TALE



JP II ALUMNI PAGE



ATHLETICS



SCHOOL



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FOUR STUDENTS NAMED NATIONAL MERIT FINALISTS

Four seniors at Pope John Paul II High School have been named as National Merit finalists.

The students – Raina Devrai, Katie Swaringen, Emily McRen and Susannah Edwards – started the process toward earning designation as National Merit Finalists with about 1.5 million students across the country who took the P-SAT their junior year. Out of those 1.5 million, about 16,000 were selected as National Merit Semifinalists based on their test scores. Semifinalists must fulfill several requirements to advance and about 15,000 students across the country, representing less than 1 percent of U.S. high school seniors, are designated as finalists.

National Merit finalists can earn up to \$2,500 in scholarships through the National Merit Scholarship Program and numerous

colleges and universities offer additional scholarships to attract National Merit finalists.



Four seniors have been named National Merit finalists: (L-R) Katie Swaringen, Susannah Edwards, Emily McRen and Raina Devrai.

View Points

HELPING STUDENTS FULFILL THEIR POTENTIAL

The car pulled up to where I was directing traffic onto campus for homecoming and the driver rolled down the window: “Mr. Connolly! Remember me? It’s great to see you!” said a young man, sticking out his hand in greeting.

“Nick! Of course! Where are you now? What are you doing?” I asked. His story quickly came tumbling out: Bucknell on a football scholarship and now law school at the University of Louisville. He had driven straight down after classes to make it to JPII’s homecoming. He wouldn’t miss it.

Nick turned to go park, and I stood there with a big satisfied smile on my face. I can tell you exactly where Nick sat in my classroom where he read and studied *Antigone* and *Julius Caesar* in English 10 ... and how I asked him one day after class if he was interested in moving up to Advanced for junior year. Nick was conscientious and thorough in all his work, and clearly wanted to learn. He had succeeded in expanding his writing and analytical reading skills beyond those of his immediate peers.



Patrick Connolly

I laughed to myself: Nick had succeeded because of ... me! No, no, no, of course not. But I did know that I wasn’t the only one who had seen Nick’s potential when he was at JPII, that Nick’s story of very positive associations with his teachers was not unusual, and that the school as a whole had helped guide and nurture Nick into young adulthood.

There is a wonderfully enriching religious component to “Faith leads us beyond ourselves” that benefits everyone who walks the school’s halls, but I have often thought that the “faith” also applies to the reciprocal relationship that develops between teacher and student, too.

Students know their teachers care for them and about them, and the students respond in kind. I have honestly never toiled alongside a group of people so sincere in the work entrusted to them than here at Pope John Paul II High School. My peers and I want our students to succeed, to learn and grow “beyond ourselves.” Complacency and the status quo are not options! And these young men and women do learn and grow, in all sorts of ways. When they graduate and go off to Bucknell or UT-Knoxville or Davidson, they take a little bit of all of us with them.

And if and when they circle back, for homecoming or just to say hello, we remember who they were and marvel at who they have become.

Patrick Connolly has been at JPII since 2004 and teaches English 12 Advanced, AP Literature and Composition, and Shakespeare Seminar. He also sponsors National Honor Society and co-sponsors Film Club.

DR. AMY-JILL LEVINE, NEW TESTAMENT EXPERT, TO SPEAK AT JPII

Dr. Amy-Jill Levine, one of the nation’s leading scholars on Judaism and the New Testament and a professor at the Vanderbilt University Divinity School, will be the guest speaker for the Pope John Paul II High School Distinguished Lecturer Series on Thursday, March 27.

“Dr. Levine is a powerful speaker,” said Dr. Brad Peper, a theology teacher at JPII, the organizer of the Distinguished Lecturer Series, and a former student of Dr. Levine. Besides her well-respected academic work, she has been a frequent guest on a variety of television programs, Dr. Peper said. Dr. Levine is committed to reaching out to the world beyond academia, he added. “She’s very involved in the community.”

The high school established the Distinguished Lecturer Series in 2010 to honor its namesake, Blessed John Paul II, whose papacy proved to be historically transformative for both the church and the world.

This year, the Distinguished Lecturer Series has been looking at interfaith dialogue, one of the pope’s signature issues during his long papacy. In the fall, the school hosted speakers addressing the relationship between Christianity and Islam.

Dr. Levine’s presentation, “Bearing False Witness: How and Why Jews and Christians Misunderstand Each Other?” will focus on the historical roots of religious discord between Christianity and Judaism as well as how an understanding of the “Jewishness” of Jesus can facilitate deeper inter-religious dialogue.

Dr. Levine comes to her study of the New Testament from her Jewish background, Dr. Peper said. “What she does is put Jesus in the context of Second Temple Judaism. ... We have to look at the context and locate Jesus in that to better understand Judaism and better understand ourselves and better understand Jesus,” he said. “She has a broader goal of forming better Jewish-Christian relations.”

“Unless we Jews understand the beliefs and practices and histories of our Christian neighbors and unless Christians understand Jews and Judaism – we’ll never achieve the shalom (“peace”) that the children of Abraham (including Muslims) all claim to be seeking,” Dr. Levine wrote in the introduction of her book “The Misunderstood Jew.”

“Thus I write not as an academic who teaches New Testament in a predominantly Protestant divinity school but also as a Jew – and a member of an Orthodox synagogue – who recognizes the beauty of the Christian tradition, the harm that has been perpetrated in its name, and the several means by which its basic, important messages of justice and peace can be heard anew,” she added. “Further, I am convinced that interfaith conversation is essential if we are to break down the prejudices that have kept synagogue and church in enmity, or at best tolerance, for the past two millennia.”

Dr. Levine will present her talk at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 27, in the Monroe and Ann Carell Auditorium at JPII High School. The lecture is free and open to the public.

JPII WELCOMES HOME SUPER BOWL VICTOR

JPII recently welcomed home its conquering hero, Golden Tate, a 2007 JPII grad and a member of the Super Bowl champion Seattle Seahawks. Golden visited with students, faculty and friends at JPII answering questions about life in the NFL and playing in the Super Bowl.

The JPII community had been following Golden and the Seahawks on their march to the Super Bowl. During Coming Home Week just before the Super Bowl was played, that Friday was originally scheduled to be “Blue and Gold Day.” Instead, the school celebrated “Blue and Golden Tate Day.”

Golden’s former teachers, current students, football players and coaches, and members of the chorus, which was one of the activities he participated in as a student at JPII, sent him messages via social media in the run-up to the Super Bowl.

Among those watching most closely were JPII alums and former teammates of Golden’s, Jay Wilson and Josh Lovett.

“He keeps in touch with everybody in our class” as well as other friends from JPII, Wilson said. “He supports us and we support him in everything he does.” In fact, Wilson and Lovett got to talk to Golden in the week before the big game, and they and fellow JPII alums Edwin Faggins and Nick McLeod have visited Golden and attended Seahawk games in the past.

On Media Day before this year’s game, Golden attached a video camera to the bill of his hat and wore a pair of Google Glass to record all the activities. “I told him I want to see all the footage,” Lovett said.

“It’s pretty surreal” to realize his friend would be playing on the NFL’s biggest stage, Lovett said before the game. “It’s awesome.”

After Golden visited JPII, he was honored by the Hendersonville



Golden Tate, fresh off winning the Super Bowl, recently visited JPII where he talked to students and signed autographs.

Board of Mayor and Aldermen. Mayor Scott Foster declared Feb. 24, Golden H. Tate III Day in Hendersonville, where Golden lived before heading off to star at the University of Notre Dame and the NFL. He received a standing ovation from city employees, officials, family members and former coaches at the city meeting as he thanked the Hendersonville community for its support.

Golden will be heading closer to home now that he has signed a free-agent contract with the Detroit Lions.

STUDENT-ATHLETES ACCEPT COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP OFFERS

Two football players from Pope John Paul II High Schools recently accepted scholarship offers to continue their athletic careers in college. Reginald Marshall and Jocquise Upton, have signed to play football at Bethel University in McKenzie, Tenn.

Marshall, the son of Reginald and Felicia Marshall, was a two-year starter as an offensive and defensive lineman for the Knights. “His time, discipline and preparation for the game was equally balanced with his commitment to the rigorous demand of his academics,” said his coaches. “Reggie is a contributing member of the school newspaper and



Reggie Marshall

an active participant in JPII clubs. His school-wide involvement earns him the respect of both peers and teachers.”

Upton, the son of James Upton, also was a two-year starter in football for the Knights, playing wide receiver and defensive back. He also runs track for JPII. “His dedication to the sport is apparent by his consistent preparation displayed on the field,” his coaches said. “Jocquise balanced his athletic abilities with his commitment to academic achievement and JPII student involvement. His awareness of competition continues to raise his level of achievement both on and off the field.”



Jocquise Upton

HAND IN HAND STUDENTS DEBUT ORIGINAL SONG AT WRITERS CAFÉ

Students in the JPII Hand in Hand program unveiled the new song they wrote – with the help of professional songwriters Tammy Vice and Les Kerr – at this year’s Writers Café, which featured some of the best creative writing samples by JPII students.

The song, “Family Makes Our House a Home,” was written by the students – Jamie Galvin, Marta Gautsch, Kayla Kirby, David Kritikos and Trace Tignor – over four weekly sessions of one-and-one-half hours each, Kerr said. “These particular kids were very forthcoming with ideas,” Mr. Kerr said. “It’s really they’re song.”

Mr. Kerr and Ms. Vice helped the students take the project from the idea stage to the song stage, teaching them about architecture of a song along the way, he added.

“Les and I have done a couple of workshops teaching kids how to write a song,” including past years with the JPII Hand in Hand students, who have intellectual disabilities, Ms. Vice said.

The two songwriters work through the VSA Arts Tennessee program, which provides opportunities for people with autism and other disabilities to learn through the arts, Mrs. Vice said.

The Writers Café also featured original songs, stories and essays by



Songwriters Tammy Vice, left, and Les Kerr, far right, helped JPII Hand in Hand students Marta Gautsch, David Kritikos and Kayla Kirby, along with their classmates Jamie Galvin and Trace Tignor, write the song “Family Makes Our House a Home,” which they performed during Writers Cafe.

JPII students.

JPII FRESHMAN WINS TWO STATE SWIMMING TITLES

Pope John Paul II freshman Annie Kyriakidis won two individual state titles – including a new state record – at the Tennessee State Swimming Championships at the Centennial Sportsplex in Nashville on Feb. 14-15, leading the JPII women’s swim team to a sixth place overall finish, the highest finish in the team’s history.

Kyriakidis set the state record in the 200 Yard Individual Medley with a time of 2.00.08, besting the four-year-old state record held by former all-American Ashley Vance of Baylor by .82 seconds. She also won the 100 Yard Breaststroke with a time of 1.02.04, winning by .96 seconds over a current Baylor all-American, Bree Roman. Both times will qualify Kyriakidis as an All-American in those events.

The JPII women’s 200 Yard Medley Relay team of seniors Maddie Kolbe and Paige Scheriger, sophomore Allie Riley and Kyriakidis finished fourth in the state. The four girls also finished fourth in the women’s 200 Yard Free Relay. Their times in both events were school records.

Scheriger, who has signed a scholarship offer to swim for the University of Florida, also placed fourth in the 200 Yard Individual Medley, and fifth in the women’s 100 Yard Breaststroke. Kolbe, in the last event of her competitive swimming career, finished 10th in the 100 Yard Breaststroke.

In the men’s competition, JPII freshman Seth Kyriakidis finished sixth in the men’s 200 Yard Individual Medley and fourth in the

men’s 100-Yard Butterfly.

Also representing the Knights in the state meet were Larabeth Case, Charlsi Jayne Patterson, Ariel Pol, Anna Claire Herline and Grace Eatman. Eleven swimmers qualified for the state meet, the most ever for JPII.

Earlier in the season, the JPII swimmers came in first in Sumner County and second overall in the Middle Tennessee region. Top eight finishers at the region meet included: Men’s 200 IM, Seth Kyriakidis, second place; Men’s 100 Butterfly, Seth Kyriakidis, second; Women’s 200 medley relay (Maddie Kolbe, Paige Scheriger, Annie Kyriakidis, Allie Riley) first; Women’s 200 IM, Annie Kyriakidis, first, Scheriger, third; Women’s 100 Butterfly, Charlsi Jayne Patterson, sixth; Women’s 500 Freestyle, Patterson, sixth, Riley, seventh; Women’s 200 Free Relay (Patterson, Larabeth Case, Ariel Pol, Kayla Putnam) eighth; Women’s 100 Backstroke, Annie Kyriakidis, first; Women’s 100 Breaststroke, Scheriger, third, Kolbe, eighth; Women’s 400 Free Relay (Kyriakidis, Scheriger, Riley, Kolbe) second. JPII swimmers set seven team records at the region meet.

At the Middle Tennessee High School Swimming Awards, several JPII swimmers were honored. Paige Scheriger was named to the Women’s All Regionals first team; Seth Kyriakidis was named to the Men’s All Regionals first team, and Annie Kyriakidis was the co-winner of the Swimmer of the Year award. The team also took home a trophy as the Division III champion.



The Pope John Paul II High School chamber choir and women's chorus celebrate their recent superior ratings at the District Choral Festival. Pictured are: (first row, L-R) Kendall Kelly, Grace Wood, Chu Chu, Abby Sturgill, Comfort Onaghinor, Gaby Aguilar, Loraine Ilia, Sarah Link, Bob Shin, Brenden Spelta, Elise Hackett; (second row) Anna Bass, Emily Galluzzi, Taylor Hunt, Olivia Zimmer, Choral Director Jeanette Ebelhar, Malia Lane, Gorretti Onaghinor, Alyssa Rentuza, Emily Shipley, Hillary Edwards, Julie Lenderhill; (third row) Madi Leonard, Tally Bevis, Kinsey Mertens, Abby Fox, Mia Herrington, Jaime Rochester, Abbey Wood, Eddie Harrington, Zach Janson, Rachael Leonard, Emily Ernst; (fourth row) Amanda Bates, Laura Knight, Michelle Moore, Anna Veazey, Megan Reding, Whit Drennan, Greg Silverman, Brian Lee, Rivers Hinson, Ryan Robertson, Jacob Buda. Not pictured are Madaline Davanport, Jaime Dorsey, Teresa Gilstrap, Michael Locke, Jacqui Ramos, Sydney Sabash, Madisyn Shear, Taylor Smith, Luke Whittington.

JPII CHOIRS EARN SUPERIOR RATINGS

The Pope John Paul II High School chamber choir and women's chorus received superior ratings for their performance and sight-reading at the District Choral Festival held Feb. 26 in Murfreesboro.

"The judges' comments were very positive and constructive as the purpose of participating in adjudicated events is to learn what we do well and what we can do better," said JPII Choral Director Jeanette Ebelhar. "There is always room for improvement as this is how we grow and develop into finer musicians."

"Sight-reading rhythms, individual melodies and a multi-part selection is extremely challenging and nerve-racking, but both choirs soared right through each segment scoring above the 97th percentile," Mrs. Ebelhar said. "They were extremely proud of themselves, and I was even more proud of their accomplishments for the day."

Both choirs have qualified for State Choral Festival, which will be held at Lipscomb University in April.

JPII BOWLING FINISHES SECOND IN STATE TOURNAMENT

Pope John Paul II High School's boys bowling team rode a hot streak to the championship match of the Division II state tournament but finished just short of a state title. The Knights' senior Collin Bryant earlier in the tournament finished fourth in the individual competition.

The Knights entered the tournament with an 18-6 record and as the fifth of the five teams from the East/Middle Region. In the opening round, JPII beat Christian Brothers High School, Donelson Christian Academy, Friendship Christian, McCallie, St. Benedict and University School of Nashville. The Knights, whose only loss in the round was to Memphis University School, entered the quarterfinals as the number one seed.

In the semifinal round, the Knights squeezed by University School of Nashville 15-12. The Knights entered the third and final game of the match down 9-7, but rallied to win the game and tie the match score behind a 190 game by Bryant, a 184 by Daniel Worsham and a 172 by Dylan Pederson. The Knights had the higher total pin fall 2,804 to 2,760 to earn three points and the final margin of victory. Going into the third game, the Knights trailed in total pin fall by 26, but outscored USN in the final game by 70 to secure the win and a spot in the championship match against Friendship Christian, the top seed

from the East/Middle Region.

In the finals, the Knights ran out of gas and fell 19-8. Huff had the match's high game with a 208 and finished with a three-game series score of 546.

In the boys individual competition, Bryant opened the semifinal round with a 204 in the first game and finished with a 733 for the four game series, placing him third. The top six moved on to match play.

In match play, Niley Patel of Montgomery Bell Academy knocked out Bryant, 168-147.

In the girls individual tournament, JPII's Anna Reding finished 15th and Carlee Campbell 22nd. JPII entered the girls team competition with a 13-7 record and was seeded fifth in the region. JPII finished the opening round 2-5, beating Donelson Christian and Harpeth Hall. In the quarterfinals, JPII fell to St. Benedict 21-6. Allie Ward led JPII with a 435 series in the three-game match, and Reding had the high game of 190.

Senior Collin Bryant and freshman, Carlee Campbell represented JPII on the TSSAA State Bowling Teams. Bryant was named to the TSSAA All-Tournament first team for senior boys and the TSSAA Best Debut team. Campbell made the All Tournament Freshman Girls second team.

MR. COOPER FOLLOWS COACHING INTO CLASSROOM

John Cooper, a new math teacher at JP2HS this year, found his way into the classroom through the lacrosse field. After graduating from St. Joseph University in Philadelphia where he played lacrosse, Mr. Cooper moved to North Carolina to set up youth leagues. "I really liked working with young people," said Mr. Cooper, who ended up starting lacrosse teams at two North Carolina high schools. So Mr. Cooper, inspired by his own high school teachers, decided to get his certification as a teacher in North Carolina.



John Cooper

As a student at St. Joseph Prep, an all-boys Catholic High School in Philadelphia operated by the Jesuits, "The teachers pushed you, but you appreciated it," Mr. Cooper said. "They wanted you to do well. They didn't have to say it."

Mr. Cooper landed his first job teaching math at Newbern High School, a public high school in North Carolina. "I loved it," he said. "I liked sharing my knowledge of math with the kids, and being enthusiastic for the subject. A lot of my teachers in high school were like that. That made the subject fun, but it was still serious."

After three years at Newbern, Mr. Cooper took a position teaching math at the

Epiphany School of Global Studies, a private school established by Nicholas Sparks, the author of "The Notebook," "Dear John" and other novels. "It was a really good experience," Mr. Cooper said. But he and his wife, Kristen, wanted to move to a bigger city and to be closer to her family in Indiana. A friend had moved to Nashville, he said. "We visited them. I just loved it," so Mr. Cooper and his wife decided to try to relocate to Middle Tennessee.

He wanted a job in a private school and preferred a Catholic school, similar to the one he attended. "People thought it was weird going to an all-boys school, but it was the best four years of my life," Mr. Cooper said of St. Joseph Prep. After he applied for a job at JP2HS, Math Department Chair Betty Mayberry contacted him right away, Mr. Cooper said. Soon after, he was offered a position teaching Algebra II and Advanced Algebra II.

"I love it" at JP2HS, Mr. Cooper said. "A lot of the things I really enjoyed about my high school are present here, the pride in the school that the students have, the athletics. The rigor of the curriculum and the academics really stand out to me."

Mr. Cooper will also help with the JP2HS lacrosse program, serving as head coach of the junior varsity team and an assistant with the varsity.

Mr. Cooper grew up in one of the country's hotbeds for lacrosse and played in high school and for a Division I college program. "It's a fast pace," he said of playing lacrosse. "You've got to be smart to play it, but it's physical too."



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