GOLDEN TATE GIVES BACK TO JPII

As a student at Pope John Paul II High School, Golden Tate set the standard for athletic excellence for the new school. But he wants his legacy to stretch further than the football field.

“Life is all about giving back,” said Mr. Tate, who returned to JPII on June 9, to have his number 23 retired by the school and to announce the establishment of the Tate Scholarship Fund at the school. “I’ll remember what I did for others more than any touchdown.”

Mr. Tate, who graduated from JPII in 2007, starred on the football field, where he was a Mr. Football winner, the baseball diamond, where he was selected in the Major League Baseball draft as a high school senior and again as a junior in college, the basketball court and on the track as a sprinter.

After JPII he starred as a wide receiver on the football team for the University of Notre Dame, where he won the Fred Biletnikoff Award as college football’s top receiver. He also starred on the Notre Dame baseball team as an outfielder.

He was drafted by the Seattle Seahawks in 2010 and helped the Seahawks win the Super Bowl. He then signed with the Detroit Lions, where he was named to the Pro Bowl.

As a high school student, he wasn’t known as a one-dimensional student. During the dinner to retire Mr. Tate’s number, Jj Ebelhar, his chorus teacher, remembered him as a hard-working student in her class who eventually became a member of the school’s elite chamber choir.

“He was the total package, a faith-filled scholar athlete,” said JPII football coach Justin Geisinger. “To recognize the achievements of an alum that’s really reached the top is truly a great honor. … Number 23 will live on in the memory of everything you brought to this community.”

“Walking through the hallways … lots of memories are coming back,” Mr. Tate said in a press conference before the...
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dinner. “JPII helped form the person I am today, mostly because of the people here, the teachers and coaches. ... I took something from each of these people.”

Mr. Tate is now trying to give back, he said. “I want kids to have the same opportunities I had,” he said.

The Tate Scholarship Fund will give financial aid to girl and boy student athletes. There are families that want their children to have a JPII education, Mr. Tate said, and he wants to help them do that. “Academically, this is one of the best schools in the area, maybe the state,” Mr. Tate said.

The fund, with support from Tate and sponsors ServPro, Premier Orthopedics, Botsko Builders, Body Guard Sports Medicine, the Ron and Kimberly Scott Family and the Doug and Jj Ebelhar Family, will begin with $25,000, said Michelle Barber, JPII’s Dean of Admissions and Advancement.

I hope to make it bigger and bigger,” Mr. Tate said. “It’s incredible … to affect families the way we are.”

The scholarship fund was announced at the dinner to retire Mr. Tate’s number. “It’s an incredible honor,” Mr. Tate said of having his number retired. “I never would have thought coming into high school I would have my jersey retired.”

Mr. Tate thanked his family for their support. “Not a day goes by that I don’t thank God for you guys,” he said. “Whatever we needed, my mother and father, my grandmother, my grandfather found a way.”

Mr. Tate credited his religious faith with helping become the man he is. “Without my faith in God, I wouldn’t be here today,” he said. “Appreciate life, appreciate what God gave you.”

He encouraged members of JPII’s football team attending the dinner to “use your platform to be leaders in the school, to make it a better place.”

On Friday, June 10, Mr. Tate returned to JPII for the first ever Golden Tate Football Camp, which drew more than 300 third through eighth graders and was co-sponsored by the NFL Foundation and USA Football.

“It’s been something that’s been on my heart for a while,” he said of organizing the camp. “I never knew where to start,” and he thanked Mrs. Barber for helping him to organize the camp.

“We’re excited about getting it going,” Mr. Tate said. “We want to be here every year and grow it.”

Rentuza receives National Merit Scholarship

Alyssa Reina B. Rentuza, a 2016 graduate of Pope John Paul II High School, has received a National Merit Scholarship from Boston University in Boston, Massachusetts.

Rentuza, who finished high school as the co-salutatorian at JPII, listed her probable career field as medicine.

She is one of more than 3,800 students across the country who have received a National Merit Scholarship financed by 176 colleges or universities, in amounts ranging between $500 and $2,000 annually for up to four years of undergraduate study.

More than 7,300 2016 National Merit Scholars have received scholarships worth a total of about $33 million.
**BROOKS NAMED SUMNER COUNTY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

Ben Brooks, a rising senior, was named the Sumner County Player of the Year on the All-County baseball team, one of several honors he has received in the wake of the 2016 season.

The Knights starting shortstop since his freshman year, Brooks also was one of three finalists for the Tennessee Baseball Coaches Association (TBCA) Mr. Baseball Award in Division II-AA.

A panel of high school coaches, college coaches and scouts selected the finalists based on their athletic ability, outstanding character and academic achievements.

During his junior year, Brooks compiled a .408 batting average with a .512 on-base percentage, leading the team in runs scored (32), stolen bases (12) and doubles (10). He helped lead the Knights to the Division II-AA state tournament, the third time in school history the Knights have made it that far. It was the second consecutive trip to the state tournament for the Knights and Brooks, who is also the starting quarterback for the Knights’ football team.

He has verbally committed to play baseball at the University of Memphis after the completion of his senior year.

Brooks has also been named the Division II-Class AA East/Middle Region Player of the Year. Three teammates – pitcher Mason Hickman, pitcher Dalton Heath and first baseman Ryan Hatten – joined Brooks on the 10-member Division II-Class AA All-East/Middle Region Baseball Team. Hickman, who will graduate in 2017, is a Vanderbilt University commit, while Heath and Hatten, both 2016 graduates, have signed to play baseball for Chattanooga State Community College and Virginia Military Institute, respectively.

Other Knights to be named to the All Sumner County Baseball team were: pitcher Mason Hickman, athlete Ryan Hatten, first team; second baseman Jake Rucker, outfielder Pace Dempsey, and pitcher Dalton Heath, second team; and catcher Jack Shuttleworth, honorable mention.

**LASCARA NAMED LACROSSE ALL-AMERICAN**

Grace Lascara, who graduated from JPII in May, was one of six Tennesseans chosen as All Americans in women’s lacrosse. Lascara, who will continue her lacrosse career at Kennesaw State University in Georgia, owns the school record for career goals.

She was named to the Tennessee Girls Lacrosse Association All-Central West Region Team for four consecutive seasons and played in the TGLA All-Star Game as a junior and senior. She was also selected to compete with the Women’s National Lacrosse Tournament Team for Southeast Tennessee last year.

In her senior year, Lascara helped JPII to a 16-3 record and an appearance in the state semifinals. During her four years at JPII, the team had a 53-19 record and reached the state quarterfinals twice and the state semifinals twice.

**5 KNIGHTS NAMED TO ALL-COUNTY SOCCER TEAM**

Five JPII soccer players were named to the All Sumner County team for the 2016 season: senior midfielder Andrew Harrison, first team; senior forward Wyatt Kaiser and senior midfielder Tristan McTasney, second team; junior forward Will Ransom and senior goalkeeper Kyle Sanginario, honorable mention.
JPII BASEBALL SHINES IN SUNBELT CLASSIC

JPII baseball put its stamp on Team Tennessee's championship in the 2016 Junior Sunbelt Classic tournament in Oklahoma, which features some of the top high school players in the country.

New JPII head coach Chris Parker led Team Tennessee to the championship, the third time he's managed the championship team since taking over as head coach in 2007. During that time, Team Tennessee has captured championships in 2011 and 2012 and was the runner-up three times.

Mason Hickman, who has committed to play college baseball for Vanderbilt, was named the Pitching MVP of the tournament. He won both of his starts on the mound, giving up one earned run against Georgia and pitching a one-hit shutout against Colorado.

This was the second year Mason was named to Team Tennessee. He has one more season at JPII before heading off to Vanderbilt.

Fellow rising senior Ben Brooks was the second JPII player on this year’s team. Brooks, who has committed to play baseball at the University of Memphis, was named to the All-Tournament team.

Team Tennessee defeated Mississippi 5-0 in the championship game, avenging an earlier defeat to Mississippi, which was their only loss in the tournament.

CLASS OF 2016 SPREADING ACROSS THE COUNTRY

The 2016 graduates of Pope John Paul II High School were accepted to 134 colleges and universities across the country. Below is the list of schools where JPII's Class of 2016 were accepted; the schools where they will be attending are in bold.

Aquinas College, Auburn University, Austin Peay State University, Ave Maria University, Baylor University, Bellarmine University, Belmont University, Beloit College, Berry College, Birmingham-Southern College, Boston College, Boston University, Bucknell University, Butler University, Carson-Newman University, Case Western Reserve University, Centre College, Chattanooga State Technical Community College, Christian Brothers University, Clemson University, Coastal Carolina University, College of Charleston, Colorado State University Pueblo, Columbia College Chicago, Cumberland University, DePaul University, DePauw University, Drake University, Drexel University, Elon University, East Tennessee State University, Eckerd College, Elmhurst College, Elon University, Emory University, Florida International University, Franciscan University of Steubenville, Furman University, Georgetown College, Georgia Institute of Technology, Grace Bible College, Hanover College, Hendrix College, High Point University, Hofstra University, Illinois College, Indiana University at Bloomington, Kennesaw State University, Lehigh University, Lipscomb University, Louisiana State University, Loyola Marymount University, Loyola University Chicago.

Marquette University, McGill University, Miami University at Oxford, Michigan State University, Middle Tennessee State University, Millsaps College, Mississippi State University, Murray State University, New York University, Northeastern University, Oberlin College, Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Oglethorpe University, Otterbein University, Pace University, New York City, Pennsylvania State University - All Campuses, Purdue University, Radford University, Rhodes College, Rutgers University-New Brunswick.

Saint Louis University, Samford University, Sewanee: The University of the South, Southeastern Louisiana University, Southern Methodist University, Spring Hill College, St. Norbert College, Stony Brook University, Syracuse University, Temple University, Tennessee Technological University, Texas A&M University, The Catholic University of America, The College of Wooster, The Ohio State University, The University of Alabama, The University of Alabama in Huntsville, The University of Arizona, The University of Iowa, The University of Memphis, The University of Miami, The University of Notre Dame, The University of Pennsylvania, The University of Pittsburgh, The University of Rochester, The University of California, Los Angeles, The University of Texas at Austin, The University of Texas at Dallas, The University of Texas at El Paso, The University of Texas at San Antonio, The University of Texas at San Diego, The University of Texas at San Marcos, The University of Texas at Tyler, The University of Virginia, The University of Washington, The University of Wisconsin-Madison, The University of Iowa, The University of Kentucky, The University of Louisiana, The University of Maryland, The University of Maryland, College Park, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, University of Michigan, University of Mississippi, University of Missouri Columbia, University of Montevallo, University of Mount Union, University of Nebraska at Lincoln, University of Notre Dame, University of Regina, University of Richmond, University of San Diego, University of San Francisco, University of South Carolina, University of Tennessee – Chattanooga, University of Tennessee – Knoxville, University of Tennessee – Martin, University of Washington, Valparaiso University, Vanderbilt University, Villanova University, Virginia Military Institute, Volunteer State Community College, Washington University in St. Louis, Western Kentucky University, Westminster Choir College of Rider University, Xavier University.
JPPI HIRES MEN’S BASKETBALL, WOMEN’S LACROSSE COACHES

Pope John Paul II High School has announced the hiring of two new coaches. Charles Wade will take over the men’s basketball program, and 2011 graduate Mary Leonard will return to JPII to take over the women’s lacrosse program.

Coach Wade also is returning to JPII. He served as an assistant coach for both the JPII women’s and men’s basketball teams.

“Charles is an exceptional coach and person and we are excited that he has decided to rejoin the JPII family,” said JPII Athletic Director John Dempsey. “Coach Wade understands our program and the region we play in, he is familiar with our kids and some of their families from his previous tenure with us. Coach Wade is the perfect fit for our school; he is someone who values education, hard work and mental and physical toughness.”

During his previous stint at JPII, Coach Wade worked with Kip Brown, the man he is succeeding as head basketball coach. Coach Wade left JPII to accept a full-time teaching and coaching position with Bellevue Middle School, where he was both the head basketball and football coach.

A native of Mississippi, Coach Wade played basketball for Copiah Lincoln Junior College and then played for Trevecca Nazarene University in Nashville, where he was a teammate of Kip Brown’s. He has earned bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees from Trevecca. Coach Wade will join the JPII faculty as a history teacher.

“My family and I are extremely proud and humbled to return to the JPII family as the new head coach of the basketball team,” Coach Wade said. “I am grateful to Headmaster Mike Deely, Athletic Director John Dempsey and the JPII Board of Trustees for allowing me to lead and mentor young men through basketball. I plan to build on the success of the basketball program with the end goal of promoting honorable young men competing at the highest level.”

“Charles is well respected in the community and has a strong history with our school,” said Mr. Deely. “We feel blessed to have him lead our Men’s Basketball Program. His strengths as a coach are strongly matched by his strengths as an educator and we know he is a great fit for our school.”

Mary Leonard was the most accomplished women’s lacrosse player in JPII’s history during her high school career. While playing lacrosse at JPII, Coach Leonard was a two-time member of the Tennessee Women’s National Tournament team, was twice awarded Academic All-American status, and was honored as a Lacrosse All-American in 2011.

She went to play at Davidson College, where she played Division I lacrosse for four years and was named a team captain her senior year. She has a degree in psychology with a minor in educational studies. Previously, she was an assistant coach at Bishop Watterson Catholic High School in Columbus, Ohio, has coached travel lacrosse teams in Tennessee and North Carolina. She will work full-time in the JPII Admissions Office.

“We are delighted to have alum Mary Leonard take the reins of our women’s lacrosse program,” said Mr. Dempsey. “Mary was a tremendous player while here at JPII. … Mary will bring passion and energy to our women’s lacrosse program. She is vested in our school, community and athletic program and will be a great asset for us.”

“Mary Leonard was a great player for JPII and we love having an alumnus back with the Knights Family,” Mr. Deely said. “We are so blessed to have her back. Our program has a history of success and we see her making women’s lacrosse highly competitive across the state.”

GALVIN, CRUZ RECEIVE POST-SEASON LACROSSE RECOGNITION

For the second consecutive year, JPII lacrosse player Matt Galvin was recently designated second team all-league by the Tennessee Scholastic Lacrosse Association. Leading the Knights’ defense, he posted 38 ground balls and 22 take-aways while covering the opponent’s best player during the 2016 season. Galvin also served as a team captain in 2016.

Nic Cruz was recognized at the state level as a recipient of first team all-league and first team all-state honors. A long stick midfielder, Cruz’s determined physical play allowed him to post the state’s top ranking in ground balls (103) and take-aways (38). Cruz plans on continuing his lacrosse career next year at Furman University.

At the season year-end team banquet, the following awards were distributed: Most Valuable Player, Jon Knox (Captain); Most Valuable Offensive Player, Chris Byrne (all-time leading scorer at JPII); Most Valuable Defensive Player, Matt Galvin; Most Improved Player, Riley Southard and David Thomas; Coaches Award, Jackson Sterrett.
JPII BEGINS 15TH YEAR BY HONORING ITS FOUNDING

As Pope John Paul II High School launched its 15th year of operation during its second annual Alumni Weekend June 3-5, the school looked back to its founding. Bill Puryear, one of the founding members of the school’s Board of Trustees, was honored at a special brunch on Sunday, June 5, to cap off the Alumni Weekend.

“This is a story about grace at work,” Mr. Puryear said of the founding of the school. “It’s grace that saw us through. In our darkest hours grace saw us through.”

When Bishop Edward Kmiec commissioned a study to review the best location to build a new diocesan high school, many were surprised when the recommendation came back to build it in Sumner County. “The Catholic population in the area was small, but the need was there,” Mr. Puryear said.

“Monroe Carell’s anchor gift (of $5 million) was the key to the whole thing,” leading to the success of the capital campaign that funded the construction of the school, Mr. Puryear said. Another important benchmark was the hiring of Hans Broekman as the school’s founding headmaster. “Hans was a superb marketer, the best I’ve ever seen,” Mr. Puryear said. “We hired him, which led to hiring an outstanding faculty.”

“As we look to the future and all that we as an academic institution see on the horizon, it’s important to reminisce by revisiting our roots, to remember what our founding trustees envisioned and as we look to our next 15 years, ensure this community that we continue on a trajectory of excellence by providing our students superior growth opportunities spiritually, academically, athletically and artistically,” said Michelle Barber, Dean of Admissions and Advancement.

“I like to call Bill Puryear the ‘Founding Father’ of Pope John Paul II High School,” Mrs. Barber said. “Back before there was anything but an empty parcel of land where our beautiful building now sits, Mr. Puryear carried the plans for the new high school, which was drawn up on the Puryear’s kitchen table, in his infamous brown leather briefcase,” she said. “This gentle man, an accountant by trade, is an artist, historian, author, and philanthropist, a husband, father and grandfather. ... He embodies all that JPII stands for, he’s truly a Renaissance man.”

“We’re about to start our 15th year as a school,” JPII Headmaster Michael Deely said at the reception to close the Alumni Weekend. “A lot’s happening. It’s a wonderful time at JPII.”

“Many new initiatives are on the horizon at JPII,” explained Mr. Deely, who will be starting his second year at JPII in August. “Mrs. Jennifer Dye will lead the new INNOV8 Program, enhancing the academic program by offering exploratory study in everything from film production to robotics, architecture to engineering. ... The course offerings are extensive.

With INNOV8, underclassmen will take on-site course work in a variety of special interest areas then, during their junior and senior years, students are encouraged to partake in pre-professional internships. "The new INNOV8 Program provides for the practical application of our collective curriculum at JPII," Mrs. Barber said. "When a student takes classroom knowledge and then is given a venue in which to apply it, well, that’s the ultimate educational experience. ... When your lessons in World History become a documentary, when the algebraic equation becomes useful in creating a robotic limb. ..."

“This new INNOV8 Program is cutting edge,” said Mrs. Barber.

“The strength of our academic program continues to be the hallmark of the JPII experience,” said Mrs. Barber. Recently the Nashville Business Journal ranked JPII among the three top performing private schools in Nashville based on average ACT scores, joining University School of Nashville and Montgomery Bell Academy in the high ranking. "Impressive for such a young school, but not surprising knowing our academic program is under the direction of Dean of Studies Ms. Karen Phillips, founding academic dean,” said Mrs. Barber.

In the coming months, JPII will be marking and celebrating the school’s 15th year of operation with a variety of events and activities, Mrs. Barber said. More details will follow in the future.

JPII GRAD FINISHES COLLEGE BASEBALL CAREER

JPII alum Matt Brown recently completed his collegiate baseball career at Birmingham Southern College in Birmingham, Ala., where he helped lead the Panthers to three trips to the NCAA Division III South Regional.

Brown graduated from JPII in 2012. As a four-year starter at shortstop and third base for Birmingham-Southern, Brown helped lead the Panthers to three consecutive Southern Athletic Association regular season championships and two tournament championships.

Brown completed his career with 204 hits and a .297 batting average, as he was named an All-Conference honorable mention. As a sophomore, he tied for the team lead with a .351 batting average, was third on the team with 11 doubles, stole 20 bases and was named to the All-Conference team.

He followed that with a junior campaign, in which he hit .308 and had a career high 30 runs batted in.

SARAH GOULD NAMED TO ALL-STATE BOWLING TEAM

Pope John Paul II High rising senior Sarah Gould has been named to the Tennessee Sports Writers Association All-State Bowling Team for the 2015-16 season.

Gould finished fifth in the finals of the Division II state individual tournament, after entering the tournament seeded 23rd. She made the finals as the No. 4 seed before suffering a 166-157 loss to Friendship Christian junior Brice Dabbs in the second ladder match of the championship round.