

Gesu Catholic School
17139 Oak Drive
Detroit, Michigan 48221
(313) 863-4677
gesuschool.udmercy.edu

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ALL-SCHOOL REUNION PLANNED FOR JULY 2020

M.B. DILLON

When Kevin Lesinski last walked the halls of Gesu School as an eighth grader, it was 1970. From Gesu, life catapulted Lesinski to Grosse Pointe North High School to the University of Arizona where he studied political science, graduating Phi Beta Kappa with honors and highest distinction -- and on to Harvard Law School and jobs in silk-stocking firms on both U.S. coasts.

A cybersecurity expert and trusted advisor to businesses, Lesinski is a partner with California's Seyfarth Shaw LLP's Litigation Department, where he co-chairs the firm's National Securities, Financial and Directors & Officers Litigation Practice Group. In 2018, Lesinski was selected by Law & Politics as a Northern California Super Lawyer. He lives with his wife Vanusa in Walnut Creek, near San Francisco. But he left his heart in Detroit, near McNichols and Livernois. When he isn't immersed in securities litigation, internal corporate investigations and the like, Lesinski is organizing an all-class Gesu reunion set for July 10-12, 2020.

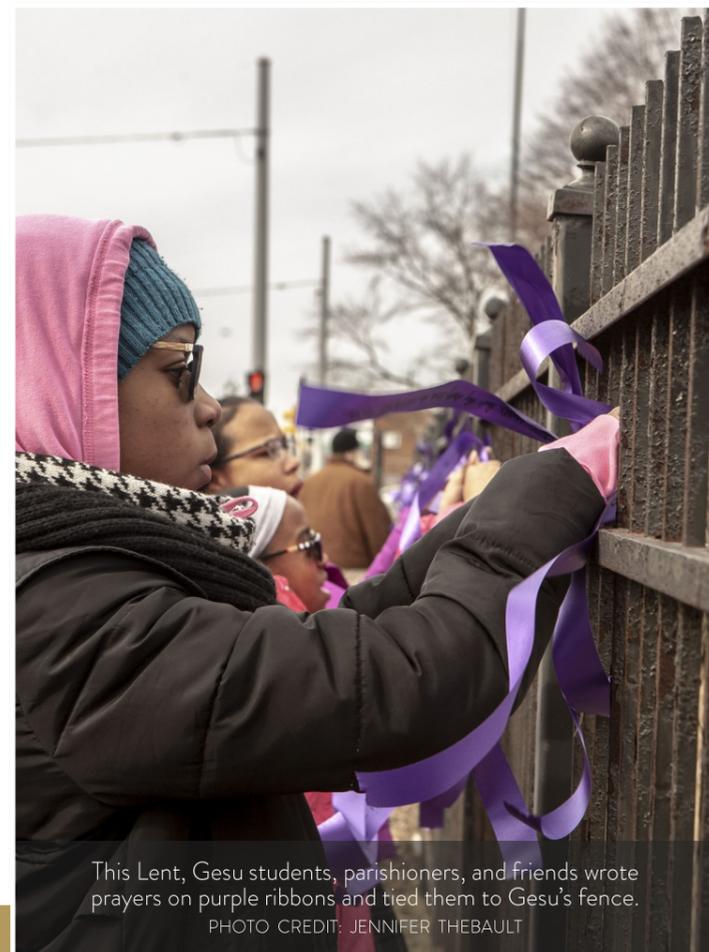
"We are more than a year out, but I just put a deposit down for our Saturday night event from

6 p.m. - 11 p.m., July 11, at The Heathers Club of Bloomfield Hills," said Lesinski. "It will be the 50th reunion for our class, and we are going to try to focus on the classes celebrating their 20th and 40th, too. But it's an all-class reunion. It will be Gesu's 95th anniversary, so we are billing it as a celebration of Gesu." Lesinski is getting a little help from Gesu friends -- Bill Drummond, Doris Vansen and Kim Porter-Hoppe -- preparing for the reunion.

"We are also planning to do some other events, starting with people who want to get together for a cocktail Friday evening at the (nearby) Courtyard by Marriott," Lesinski said. "For those who want to go, we'll have a breakfast Saturday morning at the Courtyard by Marriott, and at noon, we're going to have a private tour of the Detroit Institute of Arts for an hour-and-a-half.

"At 6 pm. that evening, we'll start our main event at The Heathers of Bloomfield Hills with hors d'oeuvres and a buffet dinner. Hopefully the weather will be nice, and we can enjoy the patio next to the dining room. On Sunday, we will have a Mass.

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This Lent, Gesu students, parishioners, and friends wrote prayers on purple ribbons and tied them to Gesu's fence.
PHOTO CREDIT: JENNIFER THEBAULT



Gesu students win 1st place in the UDJ robotics competition.
PHOTO CREDIT: JENNIFER THEBAULT



Gesu students compete in a regional track meet.
PHOTO CREDIT: JENNIFER THEBAULT

GESU REUNION CONT.

We're encouraging people to come to 10:30 Mass at Gesu, and Anita Sevier (Gesu's Community Outreach Coordinator) said we can have a tour of the school after Mass. So we're giving people options."

RAISING FUNDS FOR GESU

"One thing we want to do is figure out a way to raise money for the school," said Lesinski. "The problem is we're going to have a tight budget. The tickets for Saturday night's dinner will most likely be \$75, which probably will not cover costs," said

"It was just a very special time when everyone knew everyone else, and there was a real neighborly feel to it. A lot of it had to do with Gesu School."

Lesinski, who is subsidizing the event with a \$500 contribution. "If people want to go to the museum, that will be a stand-alone thing. We had considered making the dinner \$85, with \$10 going to the school, but that is a lot of money," he said.

A 1980 graduate is exploring the idea of supporting a particular need at Gesu School, and may set up a "Go Fund Me" account, Lesinski said.

"Our last all-class reunion was in 2014 at Camp Ticonderoga in Rochester which is on a golf course, like The Heathers," said Lesinski. "We had about 100 people. We're hoping for 125 or 150 for this one." As plans come together, alumni will receive an email invitation with information about registering via Eventbrite. More information will be available by emailing Gisureunion@gmail.com.

The son of the late Michigan Lt. Gov. T. John and Carol Lesinski, Kevin is one of six children. "I am the fourth oldest. I have three older sisters. I was the first boy, and I have two younger brothers, he said. "I was born in Detroit and baptized at St. Louis the King Church. We moved to Gesu after I finished third grade at St. Louis the King School. We lived on Birchcrest between Clarita and Margarita. The neighborhood was filled with big families who had children numbering from five or six to 15 or more. There were lots of families with 10 kids. We hung out in the neighborhood and played on the sidewalks, in the parks, and in people's backyards," said Lesinski, now a certified Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt.

"There was a lot of camaraderie. It was just a very special time when everyone knew everyone else, and there was a real neighborly feel to it. A lot of it had to do with Gesu School; people enjoyed going to school and everyone got together for Mass. It was kind of like the good old days.

"I will never forget Sisters John Mark and Ann Lawrence playing 'Blowin' in the Wind' by Bob Dylan in Religion class, and how that opened my mind to social justice. I thought, 'This is cool,'" Lesinski said. "Everybody knew them; they taught a Religion class together and were very innovative and very progressive. We were integrated, black and white, and all got along pretty much. Gesu is where I learned how to write well and learned grammar and punctuation. I learned to appreciate good literature. It was the beginning of liberal arts for me," added Lesinski, author of the book *New Developments in Securities Litigation 2012: Leading Lawyers on Adapting to Trends in Securities Litigation and Regulatory Enforcement*.

All-School Reunion

July 10-12, 2020

Friday night cocktails

Saturday night dinner 6:00 p.m.- 11:00 p.m.

The Heathers Club of Bloomfield Hills

Sunday, 10:30 Mass at Gesu

School tours following Mass

"I think most of the people who went to Gesu felt they got a really good education," he said. Lesinski and his wife Vanusa, originally from Brazil, have a son, Timothy, 28, who teaches Latin at Newton North High School near Boston, MA.

What prompts a busy lawyer recognized as one of the country's leading securities and business litigators to volunteer his time getting Gesu grads together? "It gives me great joy to be in touch and to be able to communicate with my classmates and other people who went to Gesu in other classes," said Lesinski. "I really enjoy that a lot. It is just great."

ALUMNI NOTES

Pauline Mary Weinberger Brennan '43: My maiden name was Weinberger. My husband of 67 years, Thomas E. Brennan, died September 29, 2018. Mrs. Roy was my Godmother. She taught 8th grade English class for over 25 years.

Eileen Callanan Dunlop '48: My wife Eileen Callanan Dunlop of 61 years passed away on October 3, 2018. She attended Gesu for 8 years. Her brothers and sisters also attended Gesu. She was the oldest of 7 siblings. She was a special lady.— William Dunlop.

Anthony (Dick) Saia '50: I was known as Dick Sayed when I was a student at Gesu. I finally changed to the original spelling.

James Foster '51: It's great to see Gesu Catholic lead the way! Keep it up!

Albert Risdon '55: Fondly remember my Gesu years (Mrs. Roy, Sister Jonathan). Been in Florida 30 years. Just celebrated 58 years of marriage, 3 daughters, 7 grandchildren, 1 great grandchild. All the best to all.

William Buhl '55: Thanks for all of the hard work of all the teachers, staff and volunteers who support Gesu. Blessings to all of you.

Kenneth Baldwin '57: Professor Emeritus and former owner real estate school. We live at the ocean & love it! All my family still lives in Detroit; I visit occasionally. Mrs. Walker taught me how to diagram a sentence, leading me to a PhD in English from Johns Hopkins.

John Ceru '57: Happily retired from the Colorado Commission on Higher Education and Regis University in Denver. I am a superannuated man!

Richard Cunningham '57: Thanks again Sr. Ann Pauline. I would still like to climb the tower.

Craig Minbiole '59: Remembering the many contributions of Don Bridenstine.

Anthony Arata '60: Retired architect (U of D), widower — wife of 47 years passed away 3/19/18 from complications of Alzheimers. 3 children, 5 grandchildren. Moved to CA in 1978.

Mary Stevenson Bink '61: Keep up the good work. I remember going to Mass every day at school. Tom, Dick '53, me, Joanne '64, and Eddie '72 Stevenson, my mom and my aunt went to Gesu also.

Mary Rita Jones '62: Loved Gesu! Keep up the good work.

Margaret Knaus '62: I cherish my time with the IHM's for 13 years.

Nigel Fullick '66: Any plans for class reunions?
- SEE ARTICLE ON PAGE 1 -

Paul Hathaway '66: Greetings and best wishes to the great Gesu giants!

Mary Lapenta Butler '67: Living in California, Chief Probation Officer for Napa County. Licensed marriage family therapist.

Patrick Duggan '67: My wife Debbi of 46 years passed away in June 2018. Our happiness and successful marriage owe much to the education and Christian values imparted to me from 1958 to 1966 in the school and church. Please continue.

Kevin Fermoye '69: As we sent our girls to Catholic school for their education, we hope this helps someone to attend.

Steven Miranda '71: After leaving Detroit in 1982, my wife Carol and I have lived in the Chicago area, New Jersey, China and northern Virginia. As we tell our 3 children, "we have a lot of places we can call home!" A shout out to my '71 classmates!

Andrew McGuinness '71: Keep up the wonderful progress! I love Gesu!

Dan Bridenstine '77: Proud to be alumni. Keep up the good work.

Suzanne Tanguay '77: I am so happy to hear about the improvements to the school and the achievements of the students. I have such fond memories of Gesu!

Sandra Joy Gaines '83: Thank you for your service to children and our community.

Rev. Norm Dickson S.J.: Keep up the good work!

Diane McKnight Vieson: I only went thru Gesu 6th grade. My two older sisters did graduate from Gesu. It is good to see how Gesu is improving!

Bishop Don Hanchon: God bless Gesu students and staff!

GESU CONTINUES TO BE A SPECIAL PLACE

We love hearing from alumni! This publication, the “Gesu Alumni and Friends Newsletter”, is published so that alumni can reconnect, and we can inform our friends about Gesu. This beautifully written letter from Patty Fallon Nichols ’61 came to us and we wanted to include it:

It has been such a delight becoming reconnected with Gesu. I see so many familial names as well as those of several classmates of '61. Following our last newsletter, I sat down to list the names of as many of our classmates as I could remember and was astonished to come up with 84 names! Of course, I remembered those of Girl Scout troop #16 since we had been together since Brownies but with the exception of 2 or 3, haven't been in contact since our trip to D.C. for which I joined them in eighth grade. I remember the boys and girls with whom I would walk home from school for over nine years. I have never forgotten them nor the kindnesses of their families, especially their dear mothers.

My father died when I was in 5th grade and by the end of seventh grade mother made the decision to move the eight of us closer to grandparents. I pleaded with her to wait just a year so that I could graduate with my class and remain connected but of course it was not just about me and my needs. And so we moved to Grosse Pointe, with all the relationships among my young 12 and 13 yr. old childhood friends disappearing way too abruptly. I still think about these friends today thinking about their lives and the adults they have grown to become and continue to remember them in prayer.

My years at Gesu from nursery (pre-K) and kindergarten through seventh grade (when we moved to Grosse Pointe) were happy and filled with many occasions of celebratory joy! From daily Mass in the church prior to the start of each school day to 9am Mass on Sunday mornings in the school chapel with all our classmates as well as our IHM religious sisters. From receiving the sacraments of First Holy Communion in 2nd grade and Confirmation in 4th grade! as well as "participation" in many infant Baptisms among family and friends we were

extraordinarily blessed with community!!!

The piece de resistance; the annual "operetta" production with the fourth-grade classes under the direction of Sr. Helen Fidelis IHM. Always an elaborate theatrical production the theme of which was based on content pulled from American history which we studied/practiced for all school year long; learning the songs in music class with class musicians honing their instrumental skills, memorizing lines for speaking/acting parts, painting set designs and props in art class. Mothers were busy sewing up costumes and "adornments" and accessories were created to complete the costuming. I believe our performance was titled something akin to "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean". And then, performances for the entire school during the day with evening and weekend performances for family and friends. Broadway and "Hamilton" had nothing on us. We were thespians! (just didn't know it then.)

And what an outstanding education we received from the best of the professed "educators": the IHM order and the Jesuits! Not only was the foundation of Gesu School's mission statement formed by these early Gesu educators, but the groundwork was laid for all the subsequent teachers and staff. Oh, and done not without the total commitment from each of our families, foremost the dedication of our parents! Though not cognizant of it at the time, what graces were so often bestowed upon us for which I remain most appreciative and forever grateful!! May God continue to bless you and your ministry.

Patty Fallon Nichols

Atlanta, Georgia
Class of 1961



Lester Lewis is a current Gesu father. Born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, Lewis loves this city and appreciates the quality education that his four children receive from Gesu. “Each is thriving in this educational environment.” Lewis oversees the Dad’s Club at Gesu and continues to be a contributing member of the Gesu Community.

KATHLEEN BARRETT: A GESU GIANT VOLUNTEER

KATIE KERWIN

When Kathleen Barrett and her twin, Judy, were midway through eighth grade at Gesu School, their parents decided to move the family to the suburbs. All four of their elementary aged children—the twins and younger siblings Mary and John—objected vehemently. (Older brother Michael had already graduated.)

“None of us wanted to go,” Barrett recalls. “I absolutely loved being at Gesu. I can remember how it looked: the floor tiles, the bricks on the wall, the P.A. system. I remember the cloak room so vividly.” She especially liked the SRA box. When a student was finished with class work, he or she would pull a card from the box and read the short, detailed story on it. “Then you had to know the answers to the questions on the back of the card.”

Barrett went on to high school at Our Lady of Mercy in Farmington, then the University of Michigan, where she majored in French. “I had actually planned on going into journalism,” she says. “But by the first semester I realized that I was way too shy.” By then, her love of France and its language had taken root.

At 20, Barrett worked as a governess in the Paris suburbs. She later won a scholarship from the French government to study in the Jura region of eastern France. Eventually, she enrolled at the Sorbonne at the University of Paris. Before she began classes, Barrett researched which American universities give students credit for a master’s degree earned in France.

She chose one of them, the University of Cincinnati, where she became a teaching assistant in French while earning her degree. Barrett fell in love with Cincinnati and took a job in the city’s public-school system at a bilingual magnet school. In the classroom, where she built a rapport with students, Barrett found she wasn’t shy. She taught French to junior high students for 15 years before a friend convinced her to switch to teaching first grade,

which she did for another 15 years.

When Barrett retired in 2010, she continued to volunteer at her former school. But the year before, she and two siblings had bought a condominium in White Lake Township outside Detroit. Since she lives closest, she comes to Michigan for at least a week every month.

After Barrett attended a Gesu reunion in summer 2014, Anita Sevier, the school’s community outreach coordinator, contacted her about identifying some of the alumni in photos of the event. “I found myself offering to help out at the school,” Barrett says. Every month, she can be found filing documents, sorting historical photos—or even helping to cut fabric for new blinds for the classrooms. “I love doing it,” she says.

And she’s happy to return to the old neighborhood. “When I go to Gesu,” Barrett admits, “I have to go down Fairfield, past the outside of our old house,” which was between Pickford and Curtis. She likes to stop and soak in the memories. “I hope they don’t think I’m a stalker,” she adds with a laugh.

Most of all, Barrett enjoys working in Room 205, the nerve center of the community outreach and special projects department. Being in the midst of the cataloging of old photos, organization of current activities and planning for the years ahead, “I get to see Gesu’s past, present and future,” she says. “How lucky I am.”

Gesu thinks it’s pretty lucky to have her, too.



Kathleen Barrett

Don Bridenstine ’53, Gesu volunteer, passed away in March. Thank you, Don, for all your gifts of time, talent and treasure.



LADIES OF CHARITY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CELEBRATES GESU

M.B. DILLON

The Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul turned back the hands of time at a one-of-a-kind event in Royal Oak last fall, giving 160 guests a glimpse into the storied past of Gesu and the Catholic Church in Detroit.

Patron of all charity, St. Vincent de Paul founded the Ladies of Charity in 17th century France to respond to the needs of the poor. LOC is the oldest lay women's organization in the world. Its members seek to make Christ present by serving others and performing corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Over 300 women belong to the local chapter.

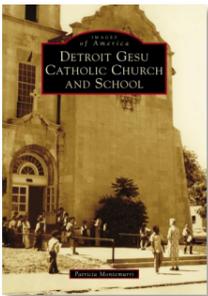


Photo History Book of Gesu Parish and School
BY PATRICIA MONTEMURRI

Please order now at
www.gesuschool.udmercy.edu

Entitled "Bygone Catholic Detroit and What Survives to Thrive Anew," the lunch at Red Run Golf Club was co-chaired by Denny Dinan-Panico, Martha Whiting and Mia Materka of the LOC. Keynote speaker and writer Patricia Montemurri, recently retired from the Detroit Free Press, spoke about the history of Detroit Catholic parishes and schools over the last 100 years, highlighting Gesu. Montemurri is the author of *Images of America: Detroit Gesu Church and School*, issued by Arcadia Publishing.

Montemurri is the perfect person to have penned a book about Gesu, and to address the Ladies of Charity. The family of her husband, Paul Diehl, played key roles as Gesu took shape. Paul's grandfather, George Diehl of the architectural firm Diehl & Diehl, designed Gesu, as well as other prominent churches including Detroit's Blessed Sacrament Cathedral. Paul Diehl's grandmother's family operated Detroit Stained Glass Work, which created the stained glass windows for Gesu and many other area churches.

Montemurri and Diehl displayed at Red Run numerous framed vintage architectural drawings of Gesu and renderings of the church's stained glass. Photographs in the colorful Power Point that Montemurri narrated brought history to life.

Centerpieces in the room drew attention also. "Guests enjoyed table decorations with creative fall arrangements of pumpkins, leaves and flowers. Each one also included a framed photograph of a historic Detroit church, along with a brief history," Dinan-Panico said. "Our guests commented that they really enjoyed the delicious food, the speaker, church photographs and architectural artifacts." Every attendee received a complimentary copy of Montemurri's book.

The event was a fundraiser for both the Ladies of Charity and Gesu School. Proceeds will assist the organization with its clothes closet and food pantry, Thanksgiving dinners for the needy, Christmas toy drive, nursing home outreach, efforts benefiting the elderly and women in crisis pregnancies, and other ventures.

THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES

M.B. DILLON

One special day last November, a spotlight shone on Gesu and her glorious history. The Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul hosted a luncheon at Royal Oak's Red Run Country Club commemorating Detroit's Catholic parishes, focusing chiefly on Gesu. Keynote speaker Patricia Montemurri narrated a Power Point featuring archival photos of Gesu and other iconic Catholic churches in the city. Each guest received a complimentary copy of the Arcadia book chronicling the story of Gesu, recently authored by Montemurri. (*See accompanying story.*)

Betty Desmond of Bloomfield Hills attended the event and enjoyed every anecdote and image --- with good reason. The daughter of Jack and Peggy Breen, Betty grew up in Gesu parish, attended Gesu School, taught there, and settled in the parish after her marriage. "I was the oldest of three. My sister Kathy and younger brother Michael --- all three of us went through Gesu," said the 1956 graduate. "We tell our children those were the best years of our lives.

"We were able to ride our bikes and take the bus anywhere downtown," she said. "All we had to do was make sure we were home by dinnertime. Being right by the University of Detroit was great. We had the U of D football games to go to. We lived on Normandy, and Wildemere, too. We walked to school. I walked to U of D. I could have walked to high school (Immaculata). It was wonderful growing up there and being able to teach at Gesu was a real dream."

Betty majored in English and elementary education at U of D. She married Terry Desmond, who grew up in St. Benedict Parish, and the couple bought a home near Gesu. "We lived on Oak Drive, in one of the flats right by the church. It was great," she said.

"I did some subbing and did my student teaching at Gesu. That was a big 'in.' Luckily, they needed a fourth-grade teacher, so I taught fourth-grade in 1964-65," Betty said. "I was just thrilled to be able to teach in the school that I'd attended. There was a familiarity and a love aspect, because I had loved my years there. And there was pride in continuing the traditions I had grown up with. Plus, it was fun teaching children whose families I'd grown up with and knew; as well as neighborhood and parish friends. And I enjoyed getting to know more people."

Betty remembers her own school days vividly. "We had lots of great teachers. The most memorable



Betty Green married Terry Desmond, who became a Gesu man "by adoption," --- very active and involved in parish life.

for me was our eighth-grade teacher, Sr. Jonathan. She was a terrific teacher, and very engaging in art. She stressed vocabulary and memorizing vocabulary words every week. That's one of my favorite memories. I loved grade school. I loved all my schooling -- that's probably why I became a teacher."

Fr. Bill Foley S.J. was a Gesu priest who left an indelible impression. "His nickname was Wild Bill, because his Masses took 20 minutes. People loved to catch his 8 a.m. Masses because of that," Betty said. "Fr. Foley was there throughout our childhood and after."

When Betty Desmond taught at Gesu, class sizes averaged between 45-50 students, but it wasn't an issue. "Kids were good. You grew up that way. If you weren't good, you got in trouble," Betty said. The Immaculate Heart of Mary sisters who taught at Gesu were "first and foremost educators and were determined to bring out the best in each student," said Betty. "They were sticklers for education. They made you work hard to realize your potential."

God blessed the Desmonds with six children: Peggy, Tom, Kathy, Matthew, Anne and Kevin. Betty and Terry are now expecting their 18th grandchild and are active supporters of Catholic education and causes. The Desmond children attended Brother Rice, Marian and the University of Detroit Jesuit high schools. All six offspring followed in their father's footsteps, graduating from the University of Notre Dame. Three Desmond children -- Margaret, Kathy and Kevin -- joined their father in the local family funeral business, A.J. Desmond & Sons.

"What a golden childhood we had in the fifties. It was safe to walk, run, or bike anywhere. Life was good and happy in the Gesu and U of D neighborhoods."



Mothers attend the May Crowning with their children
PHOTO CREDIT: JENNIFER THEBAULT



Class of 1970 First Communion in the fall of 1963
PHOTO CREDIT: JENNIFER THEBAULT



Father Phil blesses the mothers of Gesu students at the May Crowning
PHOTO CREDIT: ANITA SEVIER