



CANOPY

A PUBLICATION OF THE AQUINAS COLLEGE OFFICE OF ADVANCEMENT



LASTING LEGACY: KIM
HANRAHAN '85 HONORS
PARENTS IN GIVING

MEET MONSIGNOR BUKOWSKI
AWARD RECIPIENTS SVETLANA
DJIRACKOR '20 AND ANNA
SKOOG '21

5 QUESTIONS WITH ALUMNUS
BG (RET) JIM BRUNSON '71
MA, JD, MSS



CANOPY

SUMMER 2021

Canopy is a publication of the Aquinas College Office of Advancement. Whether you are near or far from Aquinas College today, we want to share some of the great things happening in our Saints community under the enduring canopy of our beautiful campus.

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AQUINAS COLLEGE

1700 FULTON ST. E
GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49506

Aquinas College is an equal opportunity employer and an inclusive educational community rooted in the Catholic Dominican tradition. Aquinas College provides a liberal arts education with a global perspective, emphasizes career preparation focused on leadership and service to others, and fosters a commitment to lifelong learning dedicated to the pursuit of truth and the common good. Aquinas College values:
Faith, Learning, Service, and Community.

From Our Vice President for Advancement

Dear Saints,

As I am writing this, we are closing in on the completion of our Contributing to More Comprehensive Campaign. Already, we have reached a historic level of support with \$54.7 million raised. Thanks to the efforts of so many, the finish line is now in sight.

I've heard it said that mile 23 of a marathon can be the most challenging. Three miles stand between you and your goal, and that is when you need your people most. Friends, family and even kind strangers cheering to carry you on to victory.

We are on mile 23 of this campaign and we need you to cheer us to the finish line!

I typically use this space to share what's new and exciting in the Office of Advancement. Today, I am asking for your help. We need your support to finish this race for the good of our College.

Contributing to More is transforming the experience we offer at Aquinas College. Through it, students and community members are experiencing joy and fellowship in the new Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Chapel. Campus infrastructure, grounds and gardens are being restored. And most importantly, through \$8.8 million in gifts for endowed and annual scholarships, we are offering more opportunities to remarkable students, making their Aquinas education possible.

The final phase of this campaign centers on the expansion and renovation of Albertus Magnus Hall of Science, where faculty are preparing the next generation of students for the medical and science careers of today and tomorrow.

Our mission calls us to do more. I kindly ask that you consider Contributing to More by joining us today! Donate using the enclosed envelope or online at aquinas.edu/supportscience.

Be well and be blessed,



Gina Covert, CAP®
VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADVANCEMENT

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

AUGUST 8:

BLESSING OF THE DOGS

As the story goes, St. Dominic's mother, Jane of Aza, dreamed of giving birth to a dog holding a torch in its mouth. That torch would enkindle the fire of God's love throughout the world through St. Dominic and his followers. Join us for this community-wide event to celebrate and bless our canine companions, who are a constant source of unconditional love in our lives.

SEPTEMBER 16 - 19:

HOME COMING AT AQUINAS COLLEGE

Thursday, September 16

Grand Opening and Blessing of Albertus Magnus Hall of Science at 5 p.m.

Welcome Home Reception & Awards Celebration at 7 p.m.

Presenting our 2021 Alumni Awards to:

Joellyn Ciccirelli '87

Outstanding Alumni Award

Nkech Ezech, Ed.D.

Distinguished Service Award

Rachael Steil '15

Young Alumni Award

We will also celebrate Aquinas College Hall of Fame inductees:

Mary Clark-Kaiser

Sister Lillian Bockheim, O.P.

Sister Margaret Mary Birchmeier, O.P.

Friday, September 17

Alumni Golf Outing at The Golf Club at Thornapple Pointe at 9 a.m.

Inaugural Coach Terry Bocian

Athletic Hall of Fame at 6 p.m.

Hall of Fame inductees include:

Ashley (Aspinall) Garrett '09

Jackie (Braspenninx) Ehnis '07

Kurt Huizenga '95

Paul Lauer '90

Pedja Lazic '11

Vicky (Sackett) McWilliams '02

1984-85 Women's Basketball Team

2004 Men's Cross Country Team

Saturday, September 18

All Class Reunion (for classes celebrating 5 & 10 year milestone anniversaries in 2020 & 2021) at 10 a.m.

Multicultural Alumni Social at 3 p.m.

Mass at 5:15 p.m.

Athletic Games

(schedule to be released later this year)

Live music, food trucks, kids games and drinks under the Main Stage Tent

Sunday, September 19

Golden Saints Mass at 10 a.m. with brunch to follow at 11:30 a.m.

OCTOBER 7:

1886 LEGACY SOCIETY LUNCHEON

This will be the first event to celebrate Aquinas' new 1886 Legacy Society, which honors those who have included a gift to the College in their will or estate plan. In addition to lunch, guests will be treated to a reading and Q&A with Linda Nemeč Foster '72, Grand Rapids' first Poet Laureate, who recently published her latest book of poetry titled "The Blue Divide."

OCTOBER 15-17: ALUMNI WEEKEND GETAWAY ON MACKINAC ISLAND

Enjoy a beautiful fall weekend in northern Michigan with your fellow Saints on Mackinac Island. This weekend getaway is graciously hosted by alumnus Ken Neyer '67 at his Inns - Metivier and Harts. Rooms are offered to guests at a discount. Please call (906) 847-6234 to reserve your space. To learn more, contact Alexa Carey '09, director of alumni engagement, at (616) 632-2822 or alumni@aquinas.edu.

NOVEMBER 18:

SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON

We are delighted to bring back this annual event honoring those who have generously established a scholarship fund for students at Aquinas College. The event brings donors and student scholarship recipients together to learn from one another and enjoy great conversation over lunch.

3Things to Know

President Kevin G. Quinn

**Return to In-person Classes and Activities**

Over the last year, we've learned a great deal about COVID-19. Through our health and safety protocols and commitment to one another, we were able to avoid classroom-related virus spread on campus. With that, we are now joyfully turning our attention to providing a more traditional campus experience with in-person student activities, open on-campus housing, in-person athletic practices and competitions with spectators, and alumni activities in person, including Homecoming. Health and safety will continue to be our priority, and we will adjust plans as needed.

Congressman Peter Meijer Made a Visit to AQ

In a small step towards returning to regular activities, in April, we were pleased to welcome Congressman Peter Meijer to Aquinas. This was his first visit to campus in an official congressional capacity. During our time together, we were able to share the history of the College, the success of AQ students, College programs, plans and the important role the College plays in the West Michigan community.

Nursing Students Get Frontline Experience Fighting COVID-19

Throughout the pandemic, students in our nursing program have gained hands-on experience with managing COVID-19. This spring, a collaboration between Aquinas, University of Detroit Mercy and Mercy Health resulted in them also serving the community by administering vaccines at the West Michigan Vaccine Clinic. Over ten weeks, 8,000 vaccinations were given by our students. Here on campus, they also provided for our athletes the required three times per week COVID testing so they could compete. This is a fine example of living our mission as AQ Saints. We applaud these students.

CONGRADULATIONS!

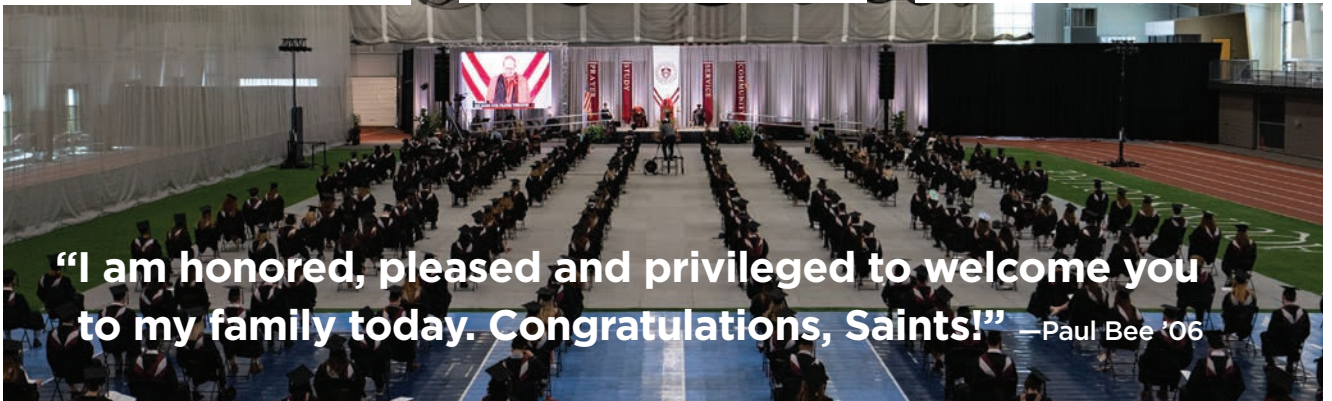
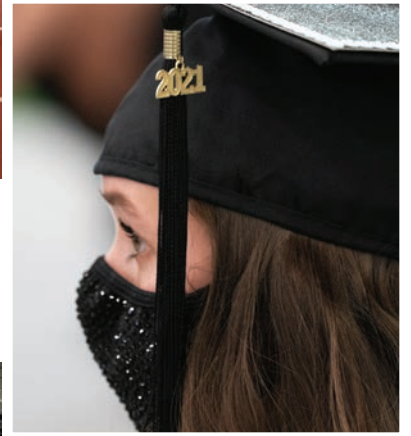
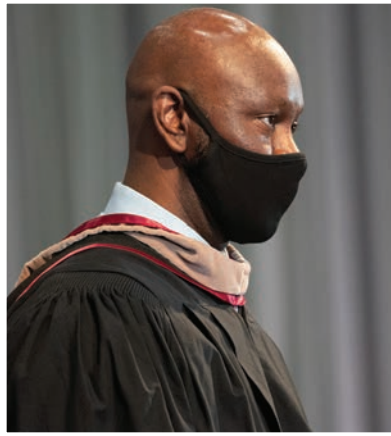
Aquinas College marked the achievements of the Class of 2021 on Saturday, May 8 and the Class of 2020 on Sunday, May 9. A Baccalaureate Mass was celebrated at the Cathedral of Saint Andrew with Bishop David J. Walkowiak presiding. The commencement ceremonies took place at the Alksnis Athletics & Recreation Building with graduates, the Board of Trustees and the President's Cabinet in attendance. The events were live-streamed for families and friends.

Milwaukee Bucks executive and alumnus Paul Bee '06 received a warm welcome back to campus to deliver this year's commencement address. Matt Wey, MM '11, Trustee Emeritus and Managing Director of Marsh and McLennan Companies, was conferred with an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters.





AQUINAS



“I am honored, pleased and privileged to welcome you to my family today. Congratulations, Saints!” —Paul Bee '06



RECEIVING THE HIGHEST HONOR

MEET OUR CLASS OF 2020 AND 2021 MONSIGNOR ARTHUR BUKOWSKI AWARD RECIPIENTS

The Monsignor Arthur Bukowski Award, named in honor of the first President of Aquinas College, was first presented in 1974 and is the highest honor given to a graduating senior.

Svetlana Djirackor, Class of 2020 Monsignor Arthur Bukowski Award Recipient

Hometown: Nairobi, Kenya

Majors: Biology and Music



NOW THAT YOU'VE HAD A YEAR AWAY, AS YOU REFLECT ON YOUR TIME AT AQUINAS, WHAT STANDS OUT TO YOU?

Svetlana: There are a few moments that come to mind, including playing my first concerto from memory (an equally exhilarating and nerve-racking experience), performing with the West Michigan Flute Orchestra and the Aquinas College Jazz Band. Everything about being an AQ music student was legendary! Presenting a research talk at the West Michigan Regional Undergraduate Science Research Conference at Van Andel Institute was also a highlight. It was the most intense 12 minutes of my life.

Beyond that, I think about my AQ community. Before I came to Aquinas, I felt completely out of place, and I was literally at home. I moved to a whole new continent and found my community. That, to me, is my greatest treasure.

WHAT DOES RECEIVING THE MONSIGNOR BUKOWSKI AWARD MEAN TO YOU?

Svetlana: To me, this award means that my actions mattered. For a long time, I didn't think I was doing or being enough, but this award makes me feel seen and heard.

WHAT HAS YOUR JOURNEY BEEN LIKE SINCE LEAVING AQUINAS IN SPRING 2020? AND WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU?

Svetlana: After graduation, I returned to Nairobi to be close to family. Since then, I launched a writing lab (sdwritinglab.com) with a friend. Having worked as a writing consultant at Aquinas, I realized that I never had access to this type of resource during my student years in Kenya.

I am also currently working in a laboratory as a research assistant. I am returning to Grand Rapids in the fall to start my Ph.D. program at Van Andel Institute Graduate School. I am excited and ready for the learning that awaits me.

Anna Skog, Class of 2021 Monsignor Arthur Bukowski Award Recipient

Hometown: Elgin, Illinois

Majors: English with a writing emphasis and Communication

WHAT DOES RECEIVING THE MONSIGNOR BUKOWSKI AWARD MEAN TO YOU?

Anna: Receiving this award validates that I made the most of my time here and that I made a difference. When I first visited Aquinas with my family, our tour guide was Kascha Sanor '17. She knew everyone and was involved in everything. My parents always said that I should be like Kascha. Coming full circle, she received the Monsignor Bukowski Award in 2017, so I guess I did it, mom and dad!

WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF FROM YOUR TIME AT AQUINAS?

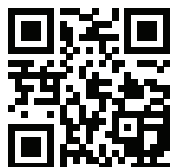
Anna: One of my biggest accomplishments is revamping AQ Sound. When I joined, the club was in transition. I suggested moving from the airwaves to podcasts. I became president, and we grew membership and launched our first podcast series this year.

I am also proud of a personal podcast project that I created through an independent study. I wanted to do something that would allow me to learn new software and gain hands-on experience. I just launched "Rooted in Pillars," a podcast series that explores the history of Aquinas through the lens of our Dominican pillars.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DO YOU HOPE TO MAKE IN THE WORLD?

Anna: On my graduation cap, I included a quote from St. Thomas Aquinas that reads, "The things that we love tell us what we are." I love connecting with people and community. I love hearing people's stories and I want to help amplify their voices. I hope to learn about the world and God through others.

Use the camera feature on your mobile device to scan this code and listen to Anna's podcast, "Rooted in Pillars."



1886 Legacy Society

Featuring Kim Hanrahan '85



In addition to being a member of the 1886 Legacy Society, Kim also currently serves on the Aquinas College Board of Trustees. In January, she retired from Steelcase and is enjoying a 'gap year' being present, exploring new interests, and spending time with her partner Sally Schoen, their pup, Oreo, and her beloved family and friends.

**“My family,
my faith
and my
education
are critical
to who I
am.”**



“I grew up with the best parents in the world. They provided love and support and instilled in us the belief that with hard work and determination, we could do anything,” Kim Hanrahan said.

Kim grew up on the northeast side of Grand Rapids as the second oldest of six children. Her dad worked for Steelcase while her mom stayed home with the kids. As a shy young woman who was also working to pay her tuition, Kim knew she wanted to stay close to home for college. “I toured Aquinas and knew it was the place for me. There was a sense of calm and welcome—it just felt right,” she said.

JOIN THE 1886 LEGACY SOCIETY

The 1886 Legacy Society recognizes those who include Aquinas College in their estate plans. Members receive updates from leadership, recognition in our publications and invitations to special Aquinas College events.

*To learn more or to discuss your ideas for leaving a legacy, contact **Cecilia Cunningham**, senior philanthropy officer at (616) 632-2816 or c.cunningham@aquinas.edu.*

At Aquinas, she majored in accounting and business administration and minored in computer science. In addition to her coursework, she loved the liberal arts aspect of the curriculum. “It exposed me to so much more and broadened my thinking. I learned to think more critically and deeply about issues,” Kim said.

Through the coaching and encouragement of her professors, Kim participated in on-campus interviews her senior year. She secured a tax internship and received an offer to start at a firm immediately following graduation. She launched her career in public accounting and eventually landed at Steelcase, where she served 28 years and ascended to Vice President of Global Taxes.

“When I started at Aquinas, I couldn’t imagine my future. Working at one of the big eight public accounting firms, having my dream job at Steelcase, traveling the world, meeting interesting people and loving my work. I want everyone to have this kind of opportunity,” Kim said.

After years of volunteering and contributing back to the College, Kim began to see an opportunity to do something meaningful to honor her parents and their impact on her life. “At first, creating a scholarship seemed insurmountable. I thought, ‘I don’t have those kinds of resources.’ After many conversations with representatives of the College, I saw that it could be possible,” Kim said.

In 2013, she established The Kevin and Barbara Hanrahan Family Scholarship. “My parents wanted all of us to be happy and successful. They set a great example,” Kim said. “The scholarship is a way for me to intentionally and thoughtfully impact someone else’s life now and in the future. I am proud of that.”

In her estate plan, Kim has included a gift that will add to the scholarship after her lifetime. “Aquinas is always on my list, and I wanted to leave a legacy gift,” Kim said. “I received scholarships and financial aid to attend Aquinas. As you get older, you realize those scholarships come from people who donated to the College. Really understanding that was a light bulb moment for me. I want to provide that for others, the same way those donors did for me.”



Barbara and Kevin Hanrahan



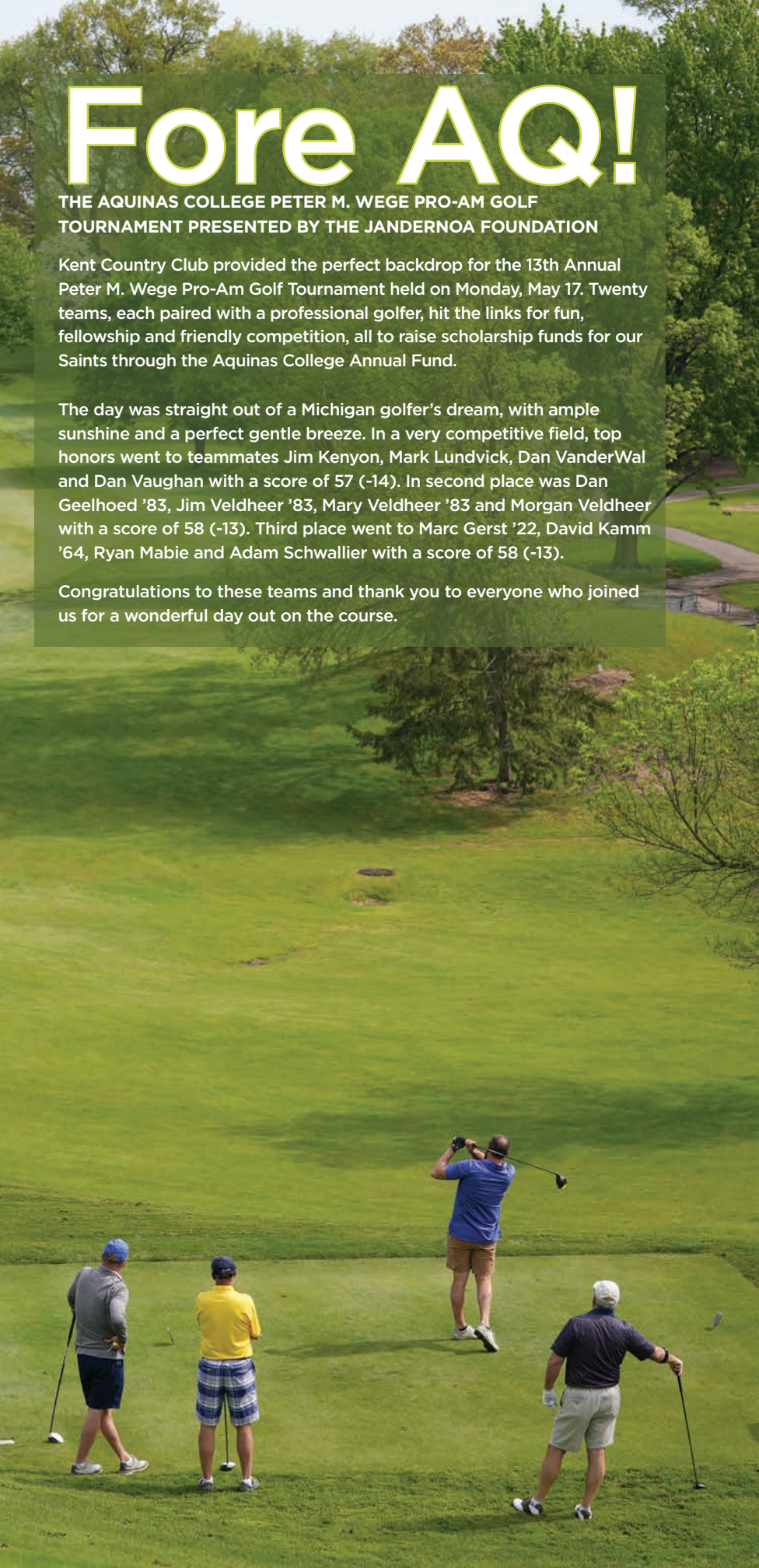
Fore AQ!

THE AQUINAS COLLEGE PETER M. WEGE PRO-AM GOLF TOURNAMENT PRESENTED BY THE JANDERNOA FOUNDATION

Kent Country Club provided the perfect backdrop for the 13th Annual Peter M. Wege Pro-Am Golf Tournament held on Monday, May 17. Twenty teams, each paired with a professional golfer, hit the links for fun, fellowship and friendly competition, all to raise scholarship funds for our Saints through the Aquinas College Annual Fund.

The day was straight out of a Michigan golfer's dream, with ample sunshine and a perfect gentle breeze. In a very competitive field, top honors went to teammates Jim Kenyon, Mark Lundvick, Dan VanderWal and Dan Vaughan with a score of 57 (-14). In second place was Dan Geelhoed '83, Jim Veldheer '83, Mary Veldheer '83 and Morgan Veldheer with a score of 58 (-13). Third place went to Marc Gerst '22, David Kamm '64, Ryan Mabie and Adam Schwallier with a score of 58 (-13).

Congratulations to these teams and thank you to everyone who joined us for a wonderful day out on the course.





THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS FOR MAKING THIS SPECTACULAR EVENT POSSIBLE:

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Suzanne Haas Williams '75

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**Save the date for next year's Peter M. Wege Pro-Am Golf Tournament!
MONDAY, MAY 16, 2022
BLYTHEFIELD COUNTRY CLUB**



Jim Brunson enjoyed a lengthy legal career, serving as an Army lawyer, chief assistant prosecuting attorney in Bay City and assistant United States attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan, a position he held for 23 years. In 2003, Jim was nominated by President George W. Bush to the rank of Brigadier General and was Deputy Commander of the Michigan Army National Guard until retiring in 2007. He and his wife, Diane, now reside in Raleigh, North Carolina, and will celebrate their golden anniversary this fall.

Giving Back to AQ

5 Questions with BG (Ret) Jim Brunson '71 MA, JD, MSS

In each issue of Canopy, we feature an alumnus or alumna who has given back to Aquinas College with financial support. Jim Brunson has been an annual donor since his graduation—that's 50 consecutive years! This year, he made a gift in honor of the class of '71 and their milestone reunion being celebrated at Aquinas' Homecoming this fall.

1. How did you choose to attend AQ?

The summer after my sophomore year, my dad took me along on a work trip that included stops in Sault Ste. Marie and Grand Haven. On the way home to Grosse Pointe we stopped by Aquinas College—out of the blue, as far as I know. It was a beautiful August day. We had no appointment but bumped into Athletic Director Richard Dornbos, who showed us all around campus. Aquinas was the only college I applied to.

2. Do you have an Aquinas memory that you'd be willing to share?

Shortly after graduating from St. Paul High School, I received correspondence from Aquinas that included a summer reading list and an artistically done bookmark with a quote from Goethe, "It is the property of true genius to disturb all settled ideas." For me, this signified that a new journey was about to begin. I still have the bookmark today.

3. What made being part of the class of '71 special for you?

We witnessed a whirlwind of social, cultural and political events—on campus, nationally and internationally. Monsignor Bukowski retired as president. Dr. Hruby stepped into that role and immediately initiated the self-study. The results validated the rigor of Aquinas' devotion to the liberal arts and were also transformative and forward-looking.

4. As an alumnus, why is giving back important?

Hearing about the "living endowment" provided through the Dominican Sisters didn't mean much to me as an 18-year-old, but over time, when you think about their oath of poverty, their service and selflessness, their underappreciated professionalism and their unsung dedication to the College that we have benefited from, it's vital that we give back. It is up to those of us who have found success to help ensure that this top-flight liberal arts education in the Dominican tradition will continue for generations to come.

5. Any words of encouragement for other alumni considering making a gift to the College?

As a young man, I had everything handed to me, including an Aquinas education. It wasn't until after I graduated from law school and was helping to raise my own family that it hit me that on the day I was born I had already rounded second and was on my way to third. As the expression goes, "to whom much is given, much is expected in return." I've been given a lot, notably an Aquinas education, and I think others can relate. It's time to give back.

LET'S CONNECT

If you are an alum who wants to explore ways to get more involved, we'd like to hear from you! Drop us a line today at alumni@aquinas.edu or join our online directory at aqsaintsnetwork.com.

AQUINAS COLLEGE

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