

OCTOBER 2022

# SPIRIT OF

## St. Francis

ALUMNI & FRIENDS OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC  
SCHOOL, HUMPHREY, NE, NEWSLETTER



## JESUS IS AT THE CENTER

HE IS THE REASON FOR THIS SCHOOL

The Eucharist is the source and summit of the whole Christian life. A Eucharistic Procession, is a public witness of the veneration toward the most Holy Eucharist. Our procession was a pilgrimage beginning at the altar of the church and ending at the altar in the high school chapel. This is meant to remind the Catholic faithful of their spiritual journey toward eternal life with God. Jesus is at the center of all we do here.

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# A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

FATHER ERIC OLSEN

Greetings from St. Francis!

It is the beginning of another exciting year for the Flyers, and things are off to a great start. In what has become an annual tradition, we began this year with a Eucharistic Procession, bringing Jesus to reside with us in school in a designated chapel. Our students are increasingly engaging their faith, and our faculty and staff are modeling Catholic Christian behavior by doing everyday things in Christ-centered ways.

We are so blessed at St. Francis with the rich history and tradition of our school. However, there are some challenges beyond our control that will need to be addressed. The rural population in all parts of the country continues to decrease. Teachers, especially after the pandemic, are harder and harder to hire. The availability of priests is also declining. Since none of these trends show any signs of abating, the Archdiocese of Omaha is embarking on a ten-year pastoral plan to address the current realities.

Although this plan is in development, one of the decisions already made is the composition of our new family. In addition to having St. Francis in Humphrey, Holy Family in Lindsay, St. Mary's in Leigh and St. Michael's in Tarnov, Ss. Cyril and Methodius Parish and St. John Neumann grade school in Clarkson will be joining us. We will be

assigned two priests; one pastor and one associate for these five parishes, two high schools, three grade schools, and two daycares run by the Church in these communities.

Obviously, this will require some streamlining. What that looks like precisely has yet to be determined. It seems clear, however, that there will be significant changes in the way our parish and schools operate in the very near future.

As alumni, your support through this transition will be vital. Now more than ever, we will need your prayers in the difficult decisions that will need to be made. The only certainty is that our future is always bright because it is always guided by prayer!

May God bless you and your families this fall. I will be keeping you all in my prayers as well.



Fr. Eric Olsen  
esolsen@archomaha.org

## WAYS TO GIVE BACK

Please call the parish office at 402-923-0913 or contact Ashley Krings via email at [akrings@hsfschool.org](mailto:akrings@hsfschool.org).

- Remember St. Francis in your estate planning.
- Donations of grain.
- Underwrite an issue of Spirit of St. Francis newsletter.
- Blue and White Night sponsorships, auction items,
- Bazaar game prizes, auction items, cash for expenses.
- Purchase items from the parish or a teacher's wishlist.

## A WORD FROM THE PRINCIPAL

JENNIFER DUNN

In the last edition of the newsletter, I shared about the journey we are on—a journey that can be identified by mile markers consisting of COVID, teacher shortages, co-oping education and extracurricular activities with Lindsay Holy Family, and priest shortages. Where are we on this journey today? Today we have successfully welcomed into our community the new music teacher from the Philippines. Mr. Secuya and his family have been in Humphrey for just a few weeks and continue to be extremely grateful for the opportunity to teach here. Through Title IV funds, St. Francis has purchased musical instruments—flute; saxophone; trumpet; clarinet; bass and electric guitars; a drum set; and everyone's favorite, classroom sets of recorders! It is exciting to witness the students'

eagerness to learn and explore these instruments.

Also new this year, we are incorporating student prayer groups. We are connecting with community members to come into school and lead groups during the school day. It is our hope these opportunities will assist students in building a relationship with Jesus. Religion classes traditionally focus on teaching the faith. Prayer groups focus on the relational piece of the faith.

Our school is blessed in so many ways, and I want to thank you for your support. Whether it is through prayer, your personal gifts and talents, or financial means, we could not do this without you. Thank you!



Mrs. Jennifer Dunn  
jdunn@hsfschool.org

## ARCHBISHOP'S 45TH ANNUAL DINNER FOR EDUCATION



*Mrs. Dunn was joined at her table by her husband, JoJo, and their children, (Jocelyn, Jett, Jameson and Jaxton), her parents and her sister, and Fr. Eric Olsen. A number of faculty, staff, and friends of Mrs. Dunn attended the event as well. (Read more on page 7.)*

# WE GATHER TOGETHER



To celebrate Fr. Olsen's 20th anniversary as a Catholic priest, we gathered in the church for his regular Thursday afternoon offering of benediction with the elementary. Fr. Olsen was unaware this would be happening and was completely taken aback at the number of students and faculty present. His reaction later was, "It was AWESOME!" The singing of "Holy God We Praise Thy Name" was glorious.

Catholic tradition is an important part of attending school at St. Francis. Our students have opportunities to attend Mass regularly, to participate in the sacrament of reconciliation, to pray the rosary, to attend adoration, to participate in benediction, to pray the stations of the cross, and to spend time in the chapel. We also have an annual



Students and faculty from both St. Francis and Lindsay Holy Family gathered to pray over Fr. Olsen and to have a party with Dr. Pepper and ice cream sandwiches after benediction.

Eucharistic Procession at the beginning of the school year during which Fr. Olsen stops in each building on campus to bless the building, the rooms, and the people within them.

All of the students in the school participate. The procession ends in the high school chapel where the consecrated Host is removed from the monstrance and placed in the tabernacle where it will remain throughout the school year.



The juniors and seniors kneel to pray in the chapel. This is where the teams gather to pray together before games, and, when possible, attend Mass.

## NEW FACULTY

### KINDERGARTEN

Mrs. Jenkinson, daughter of Jim (1980) and Deb (Hassenstab, 1980) Herchenbach of Humphrey, is a 2015 graduate of St. Francis. She is married to Trey; they live just outside of Humphrey and have one child, Graham, who was born in January of this year. Trey works in banking and finance, managing a branch of One United Federal Credit Union in Columbus. Mrs. Jenkinson graduated from Creighton University with a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education with an Early Childhood Endorsement in 2019. She earned a master's degree in Curriculum & Instruction from Doane University in 2021. She taught for three years at St. Michael's in Albion. She is excited to be back at St. Francis and is embracing the challenge of 27 kindergarten students.



Mrs. Jenkinson works one on one with a student while other students study and work on centers.

### SCIENCE

Mrs. Sydney Wiese married Brock Wiese of Lindsay in June; they live just outside of Lindsay. Brock farms with his parents, John and Rose (Preister, 1983) Wiese. Mrs. Wiese graduated high school from Pope John XXIII in 2018 and is the daughter of Steve and Becky Kerkman of Elgin.

Having graduated from the University of Nebraska in Omaha this past May with a degree in Chemistry and a concentration in education, this will be Mrs. Wiese's first year of teaching. She student taught at Roncalli High School in Omaha.

Along with sharing her interest, knowledge, and understanding of



Tucker Czarneck and Ella Foltz provide bookends for Mrs. Wiese.

science with the students, Mrs. Wiese is excited about sharing her Catholic faith with them. She has had the opportunity to do so already as she chaperoned the students who went to the Steubenville retreat and was an adult counselor at JC Camp.

# NEW FACULTY

## BUSINESS AND MUSIC

Mrs. Katelynn Micek began the school year on maternity leave as her daughter, Charlotte, was born in July, and she arrived in person on campus on September 8. She lives on a farm outside of Columbus with her husband, Alex. Charlotte is their first child. Mrs. Micek graduated from Lindsay Holy Family in 2014. She graduated with a degree in business administration from the University of Nebraska, Kearney, in December of 2021. She will be taking classes in the transition to teaching program through UNK to earn her education degree, while also teaching and being a new mom. She has a lot going on but is happy to be at St. Francis. The students are happy to have Mrs. Micek in the classroom, rather than simply monitoring them from afar.



Tessa Deets is in personal finance with Mrs. Micek

"Though I spent the first three weeks just monitoring students' work from my computer, I have already noticed the quality of work and effort given. I was eager to get to teach these kids in person. In the first week

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back I received nothing but respect and grace, as this is my first time teaching. I am excited to see what the rest of this year will bring!"

## MUSIC

Mr. Chris Secuya has arrived from the Philippines with his wife, Tita, and two small children, Johann (4) and John (3).

He is pictured below with members of the high school choir.

Mr. Secuya plays a number of instruments and is looking forward to



working with our students for both vocal and instrumental music. In the halls we not only hear piano notes wafting through the air, but at times we can also hear the xylophone, electric guitar, drums and brass instruments.

His journey to the United States was a long one, filled with a great deal of paperwork and red tape so that he could enter the United States legally and hold a job as a teacher in our school.

His wife, Tita, and their two preschool-age sons traveled with him from the Philippines. As of this writing, they are looking for a permanent dwelling but have a place to live for now.

# DISPLAY OF ACHEIVEMENT

## 2022 RURAL ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR

St. Francis was well-represented at the Archbishop's 45th Annual Dinner for Education in Omaha on Thursday, September 22. Our principal, Mrs. Jennifer Dunn, was honored as rural administrator of the year.

Mrs. Dunn was nominated for her calm under pressure. "Because of her desire to show the love of Christ, she never hides from difficult situations," said Father Eric Olsen. "Rather, she confronts them directly, professionally, consistently and always with the eye to what is best for the school, the student or employee, and the Church."

## LETTER JACKETS ARE BACK!

Flyer pride and accomplishments can now be displayed on letter jackets if students choose to purchase one. The jackets have returned to St. Francis after a more than 20-year absence, and Sarah Kessler (Dustin 1997) took the reins on organizing the design and purchase possibilities.

The letter of St. Francis high school is an emblem sanctioned by the school for achievement as a sign that a student has conformed to school regulations, has observed training rules, has manifested a correct attitude toward teachers and school regulations, and has shown true Catholic sportsmanship.

Recipients of award letters are determined by criteria set in advance of the season by head coaches in addition to the preceding criteria. The criteria for each sport and activity are different. A student is awarded a letter the first time he/she earns one in any sport or fine art activity such as one act and speech. After the first letter, students are given a certificate for each additional letter. A student is to be given a letter his/her senior year for four years of participation, if they finish in good standing.



*The St. Francis letter received a facelift. Historically it was a large "H" with the letters "SF" sewn in the center. The new letter represents St. Francis in a big, bold way.*

Participation pins are awarded during the May honors night each year. These pins can be displayed on the letters which can be displayed on the jackets.



*Some of the students who purchased the jackets are modeling them in the picture. Emerson Krings, junior; Mason Geilenkirchen, sophomore; Bella Foster, sophomore; Nyla Kessler, sophomore; Karly Kessler, junior; and (on the floor) Kegan Hackerott, senior.*

# A WORD FROM THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

ERIC KESSLER

The fall sports season is in full swing and the Flyers and Lady Flyers are off to strong starts. The Lady Flyer volleyball team is currently ranked as one of the top teams in Class D2. Coach Dean Korus, in his 35th year as the Lady Flyers head coach, has six seniors on the roster and is looking forward to big things from his team as they finish the season, hopefully with an appearance at the state tournament. Should be an exciting time for the Lady Flyers.

The St. Francis cross country team is also off to a great start. Coach Denise Brockhaus has five boys out this year, and all of them have improved their times over the course of the season. Senior Garret Zach has broken multiple school records this fall and has been a consistent medalist for the Flyers.

The team also broke a school record at the Kearney all-state meet in September. Big things are in the future of this team as the state meet in Kearney approaches.

The St. Francis football team has an adventurous start to their 2022 campaign. The Flyers started 0-2 with loses to ranked teams EPPJ and Wynot. They responded by winning their next two games,

highlighted by an overtime thriller over 3rd ranked Osceola on the last play of the game. The Flyers are currently in district play with hopes of making their 28th consecutive playoff appearance later in October.

The months of September and October are two of the busiest months for St. Francis athletics not only for our varsity teams but also our jr. high teams. A special thanks to all our jr. high coaches for all the time and effort they put in to coach as we are very lucky to have such quality coaches working with our jr. high athletes.

Additionally, with all the activities going on, there are so many people that volunteer to help out with concessions, taking gate, cleaning up, calling lines, keeping score, etc. A big thank you to all those that help in any way as it is greatly appreciated.

The months of October and November include numerous big games including district and state competitions. Information about these games, including game times, location, and streaming possibilities can be found on The Dispatch, the HSF athletics Facebook page, and Sycamore. Thank you for your continued support of St. Francis School and athletics. Go Flyers!!!!



Mr. Eric Kessler  
ekessler@hsfschool.org

# TAILGATING FLYER STYLE

SMELLS LIKE TEAM SPIRIT

Flyer spirit filled the air at Heritage Park in Humphrey on Friday, August 26. Fans young and old filled the west shelter with excitement as they awaited the season opener against Elgin Public Pope John.

The athletic board put on a dual-purpose tailgate. First and foremost they saw it as a great way to bring fans together and generate enthusiasm about the season, while raising money to help pay for a shooting machine for the basketball teams.



Fans visit over plates of delicious food and drinks as they await the start of the 2022 football season.

The afternoon event included a free-will donation meal with all the fixin's and raffle drawings for prizes provided by generous donors.



As the *Top Gun* theme song played in the background, fans gathered to cheer on the football team, escorted by Coach Eric Kessler, as they made their way to the field.



Fifth grade girls watch in awe as the football boys display focus and determination on their walk to the field.

# FINAL FLIGHT

## FEATURING ALUMNI JARED & TIFFANI WIEHN

Those who know in high school exactly what they want to do with the rest of their lives are rare. Jared Wiehn (class of 2003) was one of those as he entered the Army National Guard on July 2, 2002—the summer before his senior year and, after many years with the Army, had planned for this to be his life's work. And it has been, up until a few months ago when he received a letter telling him he was being discharged for medical reasons. He served in the army for 20 years as of July 2, and will celebrate his 20th class reunion in May.

Having returned from boot camp and AIT training in October of 2003, it did not take long for Jared to see active duty. In November 2003 he left home for training in Kansas and left the US, deployed to Iraq, in January 2004. During his time in Iraq he provided supplies for those in the field.



When he returned in January of 2005, he first started classes at SCC for heating and electric but was offered a full time job at Camp Ashland, and he took that position. In 2010, he married his high school sweetheart, Tiffani (Foltz, class of 2004.) Then in 2012 Jared was offered a position in Grand Island with the National Guard, which he accepted. Just weeks after the birth of their daughter, Alivia, in July of 2013, Jared left for training to become a helicopter mechanic. He returned home in December of that same year.

Two years later, he was deployed to Kuwait from May 2015 through January 2016, working as a helicopter mechanic. Tiffani had given birth to their second child, Preston, just three weeks before Jared shipped out.

His third deployment, this time to Afghanistan, came just three years later from January of 2019 to November of 2019. He and Tiffani now had three children; Alivia (5), Preston (3), and Devin (3 months). This was a shorter 8-month stay—but it was more intense in regard to his job. He operated as a door gunner/flight engineer and saw action regularly. His team was in charge of air assaults. They hauled teams of specialized soldiers to where they had a mission, dropped them off, and returned to pick them up when they were called. They flew at night to avoid being seen under the call sign KIDNAP, as that was the operation of the special forces, SEALs, and other teams they supported. The missions they flew were secret and the less they knew the better as the teams they transported and picked up were assigned to kidnap enemy commanders and others of political or military clout.

# FINAL FLIGHT

## CONTINUED

Every time they returned to pick up the team, there were people in custody. Jared did not know who they were, nor did he ask. He simply stuck to his mission, which was getting the team in and out of their operation safely.

It was during a mission in Afghanistan, just before Memorial Day 2019, that he was in a helicopter crash that eventually caused his medical discharge. They were just starting off in their chinook when a vehicle could be seen coming directly at them. The lights on the car went off, and the vehicle disappeared in the dark. The pilots got scared, pulled up, and crashed the helicopter from about 100 ft. in the air. There were 35 people aboard, and several of the soldiers, including Jared, were taken by life-flight to a hospital (or roll).

The injuries sustained were to Jared's legs upon impact. The doctors had informed Jared and Tiffani that the road to recovery would take some time, but all would be addressed once he arrived home.

Less than a month after the crash, Jared resumed flights and completed his tour. He came back from that, his final deployment in November of 2019.

Three years, eleven total surgeries--on both knees, both feet, and twice on the same Achilles tendon--and mere months away from 20 years in and full retirement, he received a letter stating that he is medically unfit for duty. In the Army's opinion, he cannot physically do his job anymore. He was given 90 days' notice of



Jared and Tiffany experienced a first and last together. Tiffany's first flight and Jared's last.

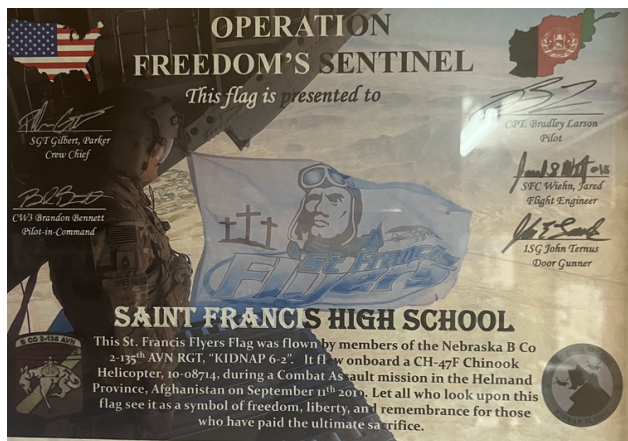
dismissal, a disappointing end for Jared and his family.

Through many and varied experiences across 20 years, his relationships with his unit became an important part of his life, and that is what he will miss the most. "I will miss the people I served with...miss the family...a very close family," some of whom have ties to Humphrey and to St. Francis. John Ternus' grandparents were from Humphrey; Lance Harvey, who was also in the helicopter crash, is the son of Robin Cheney who taught Spanish at St. Francis for a few years; and Carson Fuscher is the son of Kathy Fuscher who taught English at St. Francis, and, in fact, taught both Jared and Tiffani.

# FINAL FLIGHT

## CONTINUED

Recently Jared took his final flight in a helicopter during his final weekend drill training as a member of the National Guard, and Tiffani got to go with him. For ten years his unit had sent letters to the president requesting permission for family members to take a ride with them. The request was always denied until this year. Joe Biden said yes. So on Sunday, September 11, Tiffani donned a headset, took a seat beside her husband of twelve years—sweetheart of 22—and took a 30-minute airborne stroll over the city of Grand Island and the Platte River. Tiffani very much enjoyed the flight, saying “It was awesome! We [wives] were nervous at first, especially when they handed us barf bags! But no one threw up.” Jared, on the other hand, was alternately a little bored (adrenaline is in short supply on a training flight, compared to serving in the Mideast) and somewhat dejected, knowing that was the last time he would be in a helicopter as a soldier.



During his 2019 tour in Afghanistan, Jared's Company flew with a St. Francis flag during a Combat Assault mission. This flag hangs in the halls of St. Francis where two of Jared and Tiffani's kids currently attend; Alivia, fourth grade and Preston, second grade.

Now he is trying to figure out what to do with the rest of his life. He is very young—37—with a lot of years ahead of him. Tiffani described him as a “jack of many trades.” It is just finding the right fit for a man who has spent the last 20 years managing supplies, keeping helicopters in good running condition, and flying secret missions in service of our country, protecting those who serve.



Jared made it clear that he wants the St. Francis community to know that he appreciates all of the tremendous support—every letter, every care package, every prayer, every token of support—meant a great deal, uplifting him during his time away from home.



# RAISING THE BAR

## FEATURING ALUMNI NICK SACHAU

Small town plus small school does not equal small future. Nick Sachau, a 2014 graduate of St. Francis, is a great example of setting the bar high.

After Nick graduated from St. Francis, he attended Wayne State College and graduated in May of 2017 with a Bachelor of Science majoring in psychology, sociology and criminal justice.

Nick saw law in his future and enrolled at Creighton University where he earned a Juris Doctor degree in May of 2022. As summer came to a close, Nick's future was just beginning to open even wider; he passed the Bar Exam, finishing in the top ten percent.

On September 20, joined by his proud family, Deacon Kent and Tina Sachau, at the State Capital in Lincoln, Nick took an oath and was sworn in by the Nebraska Supreme Court.

After celebrating his achievement, Nick took a moment to reflect on how he got to where he is today. Coming to St. Francis as a junior, he found it very



*Deacon Kent and Tina Sachau were excited to make the trip to Lincoln and watch as Nick was sworn in at the State Capital on September 20th.*

beneficial that he was provided an opportunity to enroll in college courses, which gave him a jump start on his general education requirements. When asked what advice he'd give current students, he said, "Find a field you are passionate about; however, also look at employment opportunities." He also recommends getting involved in as many extracurricular activities as possible during college.

Nick will not be slowing down any time soon. He works as an attorney at Drew Law Firm in Blair, Nebraska, and continues to expand his opportunities working on waiving into additional states.

Congratulations, Nick. This small town school is proud of you!

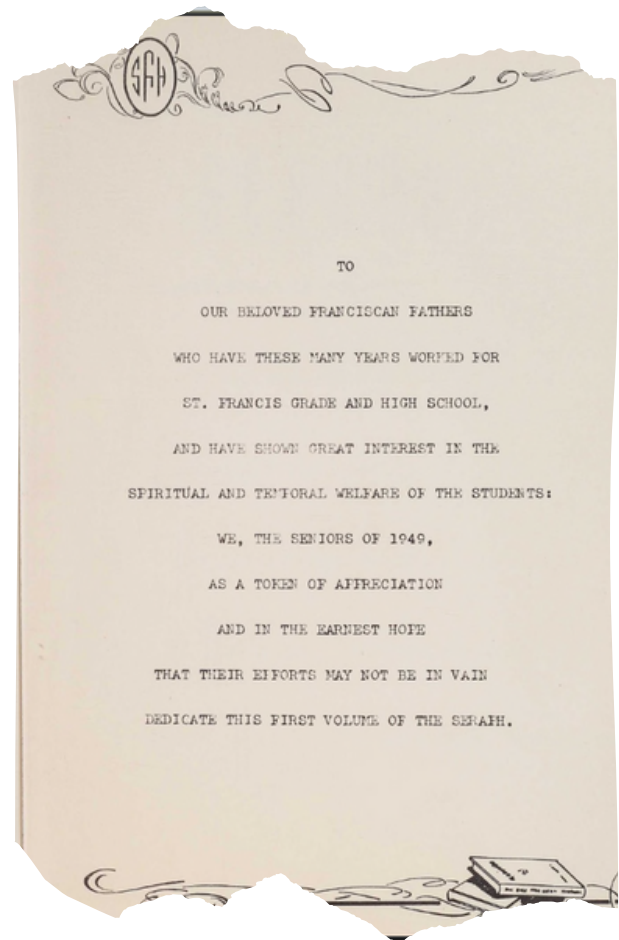
# TRAVEL BACK IN TIME

## YEARBOOKS NOW DIGITAL

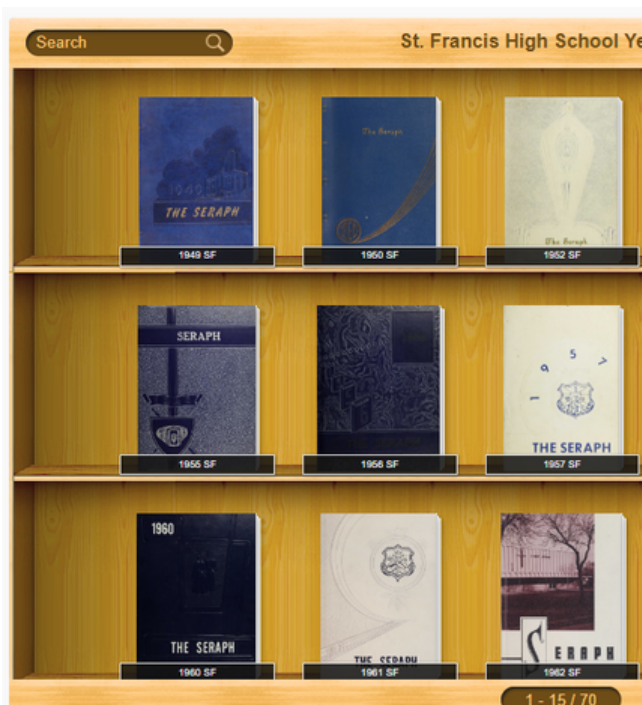
On the shelf of the high school library, carefully organized by year, you will find a copy of all past yearbooks. The very first yearbook was published in 1949 by the senior class. The second edition was published the following year, 1950. It was thought for a short time that we were missing the 1951 yearbook, until we realized that Volume 3 wasn't produced until 1952, although we still haven't uncovered the history of why.

You might wonder what sent us on this wild goose chase, ensuring we had every yearbook in hand. There was a good reason. Thanks to the time and treasure of alumni and spouses, Jerry (1977) and Cindy (Warth, 1977) Sand, Mike (1983) and Sally Duesman and Jim (1981) and Deb

(Hassenstab, 1981) Herchanbach, all of the St. Francis yearbooks have been digitized and made available online, through 2019. The more recent years will eventually be put online, too.



*Pictured above is the dedication page from the very first St. Francis Seraph, published in 1949. The senior class had a strong understanding and appreciation for the forefathers who sacrificed so that we could have an amazing Catholic education..*



Anyone with access to the internet can take a stroll down memory lane. Visit [humphreystfrancis.com](http://humphreystfrancis.com), under St. Francis School - Alumni - Yearbooks, you will find a virtual bookshelf. Simply click on the year you want to explore, and you'll be on your way. You can see a snippet of the book shelf to the left.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS



**ST. FRANCIS PARISH & SCHOOL WISHLIST**

**GRANT A WISH TODAY**

1. Visit [Giftster.com](https://www.giftster.com)
2. Search by teacher's name or email address.
3. Click on their wish list

\*You can join the parish and school wishlist group by requesting to join Humphrey St. Francis Parish and School Wish List (search for Ashley Krings - Development Director).

### SAVE THE DATE

#### HSF One Act Festival

Tuesday, November 8

#### State Volleyball Tournament

Wed, Nov 2 - Sat, Nov 5

#### Blue & White Night

Saturday, November 19

#### State FB Finals

Monday, November 21

#### GBB Jamboree @ Stanton

Monday, November 28

#### State Play Production

Wednesday, December 7

#### Catholic Schools Week

Sun, Jan 29 - Sat, Feb 4

**Prize-a-day calendars available until December 15, or while supplies last!!!**

To purchase, send \$50 per calendar to the parish office with your name, address & phone number, indicate for prize-a-day.

This issue of Spirit of St. Francis was produced by Ashley M. Krings (2002) and Tina Schumacher (1986). A big thanks to everyone who contributed images and information to this issue.

To share your alumni news, scan the QR code and submit details or send an email to [akrings@hsfschool.org](mailto:akrings@hsfschool.org).



**Scan to Share your news!**

Keep up with St. Francis at <http://humphreystfrancis.com>

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Please contact the parish office  
with address updates.



*Congratulations  
Mrs. Jennifer Dunn,  
Omaha Archdiocese rural  
administrator of the year!*