UNCOMPROMISING ACADEMICS.
UNCOMMON BROTHERHOOD.

» THE PRESIDENT’S FIRST 100 DAYS
» MISSION POSSIBLE TO HONDURAS
» BIGGIO ’13 BASH TO BIG LEAGUES
» PATRICK RYAN ’99 FORTY UNDER 40
» GUYS AND DOLLS SPRING MUSICAL
Events

SEPTEMBER 13
Founders Day Mass

SEPTEMBER 20-21
Homecoming Weekend
Good Ol’ Boys Luncheon and Alumni Tailgate

OCTOBER 11
Fall Theater Production

OCTOBER 18-20
Father/Son Mass
An Evening in Paris Auction & Gala
Hot Art/Cool Jazz Performance

NOVEMBER 1
Thanksgiving Prayer Service

NOVEMBER 9
Open House

NOVEMBER 19
Mother/Son Mass

NOVEMBER 22
Christmas Concert

DECEMBER 8
Christmas Holidays

DECEMBER 10

DECEMBER 12

DECEMBER 23- JANUARY 3

Departments

14 Eagle Flight
Kellin McGowan ’19, Tuscan Savarino ’19, Cole Carrabba ’19, Seth Deitz ’19 and Ian Wheeler ’19 front an array of leadership excellence.

78 Eagle Pride
The St. Thomas Sports Hall of Fame relishes the Class of 2019 while the 28th Annual St. Thomas Golf Tournament unites Eagle brotherhood.

50 Eagle Flight
Eagle Athletics earns riveting success surrounded by state championships in swimming and track while Peyton Matsuda ’19 and Josh Wolf ’19 brace for future success.

92 Eagle Spirit
The annual Goodness, Discipline and Knowledge Society and 46th Annual Mothers’ Club Style Show & Luncheon celebrate rich St. Thomas traditions.

Features

The First 100 Days
God is at work within our walls and within our faculty. You can see it in the students as they make their way into the world.

Mission Possible
What I cherish about these efforts is the outpouring of our Basilian DNA. This is the tangible impact of goodness.

Eagle Eyes Fixed on the Future
Cheers and tears abound as St. Thomas recognized and bid farewell to the Class of 2019.

Biggio Bash
Cavan’s encouraging Blue Jay launch could eventually forge a fantastic big league Biggio twosome.

Another Rip-Roaring Revved Up Round-Up
Without the students who otherwise would not be attending, you wouldn’t have St. Thomas. Our guys understand that.

Patrick Ryan ’99 - Here’s the Top 40 Ticket
Our initial goal was to get to $10 million in revenue annually. Now we have many weeks when we do $10 million.

Guys and Dolls Plays All Its Cards Right
...a masterclass that could be called How to Make a Classic Production More Accessible to Modern Audiences.

Like us, follow us, keep up with us!
@sthcatholic #mySTH
From the very beginning of his new command role at St. Thomas, Fr. James Murphy, CSB embraced the benefit of introspection, not just inspection. Named on January 31 the third president in the school’s storied history, Fr. Murphy was intent on an ego-less approach to his 100-day action plan that would introduce and reflect his leadership style.
He was armed with crossover lessons from his previous positions within the campus community including the Board of Directors, faculty, assistant dean of students, assistant athletic director, assistant drama director and in Campus Ministry. Communication, patience and precision served as the launch pad for Fr. Murphy to instill confidence, and enhance moral within senior administration and throughout the ranks. He discusses his initial 100 days as St. Thomas president.

What would best describe your intent since succeeding Fr. Kevin Stoney, CSB following his appointment to Superior General of the Congregation of St. Basil?

“More than anything else I wanted to meet with and confirm the strengths of those around me. I was seeing them from a much different perspective than in my previous years, just as they were viewing me through a much different lens. I wanted to establish the working relationships within our inner circle moving forward and a trust within the team’s collaborative expertise. (Principal) Aaron Dominguez is a phenomenal leader and does incredible work relating to the totality of our academic programs. There’s great respect for Mark deTransaltis in advancement and Patty Miller as the vice president of finance. We have tremendous talent and proven professionals in place in athletics, admissions, counseling and support staff. And I see much of my role as supporting them now that I’m better attuned to their roles.”

What was essential in building rapport and demonstrating connections with key stakeholders?

“The importance of listening is often overlooked and underused in setting an effective tone. I’m studied enough to ask the right questions and have no issue deferring to superior expertise. I’m flexible which is not the same as malleable. There’s a self-assurance to grapple with the breadth and depth of responsibility while understanding overconfidence is often at odds with reality. Smartness is helpful, but so are humility and inquisitiveness. I’m not going to rewrite the St. Thomas story or my own story, for that matter. I hold with great regard the work that has been done here for generations, is being done right now and will continue to be done by those who know what they’re doing. We have a roster of marvelous contributors. I’ve merged the team and set an effective but ambitious agenda for prompt and far-reaching results.”

What is your singular consistent message to faculty, parents, students and donors?

“That’s been our Basilian identity for 119 years. And that quality will always be the most defining measure of who we are, the best that St. Thomas can be.”

God is at work within our walls and within our faculty. You can see it in the students as they make their way into the world. And I believe we can be an anchor for them after they leave and throughout their lives.”

Given the ongoing internal dialogues, what’s your insight relating to the Joplin Campus expansion?

“Our master planning today is much different than five years ago when we entered into the transaction with HISD. For example, the renovations to the Basilian residence, an iconic building within proximity to Clay-Story Hall, is now available as a versatile adult meeting space. That conversation opens Mary Moody Hall as a student center. All of which more clearly defines how we are best utilizing the neighboring property. As we continue to better understand our enrollments, our admission priorities, and how we are to serve the campus community needs, the Joplin expansion has assumed a unanimous vision. The impact on athletics will be first and immediate.

“What hasn’t changed in five years is that Houston remains one of the most dynamic parochial and private school environments in the United States. And St. Thomas is uniquely positioned, both physically and strategically, to play a vital role in the heart of one of the nation’s most thriving urban centers. “The Joplin Campus represents a period of unparalleled fundraising from the St. Thomas community. We have been incredibly blessed by the generosity of our alumni and benefactors involved in the historic 4500forever capital campaign. It’s exciting to honor that philanthropy with the proper concepts to transform our campus before our eyes.”

How would you qualify the success of the 2018-19 academic year and how are you preparing for increased success in the next academic cycle?

“It has nothing to do with the brick and mortar. It’s not campus expansion and test scores. All of which are unquestionably important, demand expert attention and excellence. And we’ll exceed the prescribed marks. But what strikes me most deeply is the humanity of our campus community. St. Thomas is not immune to real-world problems. It doesn’t take Hurricane Harvey for personal lives to be shaken. In recent years we’ve had to deal with tragedy and its consequences, the loss of life. Again, we’re not immune. Those challenges are never-ending. And I’m extremely proud of how we react to mission critical situations ... with intelligence and support ... faithfully and prayerfully. That’s been our Basilian identity for 119 years. And that quality will always be the most defining measure of who we are, the best that St. Thomas can be.”
For 119 years St. Thomas has primed its graduates for a life of purpose and continual exploration - young men empowered to bridge divides and engage in public service, poised to pursue human aims and define true worth in the eyes of God.

The latest commencement exercises proved triumphant, a reverence to Basilian principle in lockstep with rightful respect to a milestone moment, all in celebration for the exceptional achievements of 157 graduates who were awarded nearly $11 million in merit-based scholarships to renown colleges and universities throughout and outside the United States.

Former St. Thomas president and faculty member Fr. Kevin Storey, CSB, Superior General of the Congregation of St. Basil, delivered the keynote address, offering personal insights reserved primarily for the Class of 2019, those who rose to embody the value of a formative college preparatory experience rooted in the Basilian ideal of Teach Me Goodness, Discipline and Knowledge.
With the threat of inclement weather forcing the exercises from the traditional Granger Stadium venue to Reckling Gymnasium, Fr. Storey shared advice from an African proverb “which says if you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go far, go together. You already intuitively know this. You have gone far at St. Thomas because of all the people here (today). Thank everyone that came … they love you! Most of the people (in attendance) have had your back since the day you were born and they will be there for you always. Don’t forget that. Lean on them when you struggle and don’t neglect to let them lean on you when they need your strength.”

In July 2018, Fr. Storey accepted a four-year term as the lead position within the Basilian Fathers. He was succeeded in February 2019 by Fr. James Murphy, CSB. Fr. Storey discovered his most recent return to campus particularly poignant.

“This is much more emotional for me than I expected,” Fr. Storey explained following the exercises. “I distinctly recall this group arriving as freshmen and to see how they have matured, even since my being away for not quite a year, to see how their lives are lunging forward, really strikes me. There’s a great satisfaction to be here and be a part of their salute.”

Fr. Storey initially joined the St. Thomas faculty beginning in 2004. After earning his Master of Education, Administrative Leadership from Basilian University of St. Thomas in 2011, he followed Fr. Donald Schwarecz, CSB, the school’s inaugural president and invaluable influence who had served in that role since 2006 after eight years as principal.

During his term as president, Fr. Storey played an essential influence in elevating St. Thomas for future growth. He assumed a prominent and pivotal position in the most ambitious capital campaign in school history - the $66 million 4500Forever which included the single-largest donation in the institution’s history, the $30 million transformational gift from Dona and Al Clay ‘61 that resulted in the naming of Clay-Storey Hall on the St. Thomas main campus. Both Clay and Fr. Storey were honored as inspired leaders who boldly stepped out to help advance an extraordinary period in St. Thomas history.

Under Fr. Storey’s stewardship in June 2011, Aaron Dominguez ’16 was named in a breakthrough appointment the 27th principal and first layman to assume that role since 2006 after eight years as principal. While Fr. Storey’s introduction was met with an emphatically warm welcome, the most stirring ovation of the evening engulfed senior Kellin McGowan - the first African-American valedictorian in the school’s history.

The compelling story of McGowan’s distinction was shared extensively in recent weeks by local network television affiliates in Houston and spread on various media platforms throughout the United States. Houston Public Media News 88.7 was in attendance for the graduation ceremony to showcase McGowan in a National Public Radio feature.

McGowan challenged his classmates “to live lives as authentic individuals because doing so will enable us to achieve true happiness. Obviously, this does not mean that we are to bury our friendships and live by ourselves; rather, this means that we are to build upon the moral foundation established at St. Thomas and use it to navigate the world and to develop our future friendships.

“As we have done during these past four years, we must associate with those who have our best interests at heart and those with whom we will form fulfilling lifelong relationships. Some of us will be going to the east. Others will be going to the west. Regardless of how far apart we are, we will always be united by the bond that exists between us all.”

McGowan will enroll with an extensive scholarship at the University of Chicago with the intent to attend law school. His itany of academic acclaim and rewards include a National Merit Corporate Scholarship, a Phi Beta Kappa Scholarship, the Mitchell-Baill-Rosen Memorial Scholarship and the St. Thomas Rev. Albert R. Gaelens, CSB Goodness, Discipline and Knowledge Award.

In his closing remarks, McGowan envisioned “of where the class of 2019 will be in 10 years … I think of men in an emergency room saving lives as doctors. I think of men working for major news organizations as journalists. And I think of men guiding their children along the sidewalk as fathers … Whether the road you’re on leads you to the Oval Office or to a small business, always remember where you came from, sit down, be humble, and complete every task ethically, thoroughly and honestly.”

Two weeks earlier Andre Hence ’67 was on campus attending the 2019 St. Thomas Sports Hall of Fame induction. He along with Tom Gray ’67 represents the first African-American graduates of St. Thomas. With no direct connection or familiarity of McGowan, Hence embraces the extension of what he actively established more than 50 years ago.

“I’m very proud to have been that trailblazer,” Hence said. “I have seen so many African-Americans who followed here at St. Thomas. I hope that some of what I contributed, what I did and did not do during my years, allowed what was started to move forward. And now we have a valedictorian … extensive accomplishment in academics, athletics and everything that defines St. Thomas. It’s extremely gratifying to have played a role.”
McGowan and salutatorian Tuscan Savarino were the highest ranking members of their class based on the calculation of their four-year grade point averages.

Savarino leads another large St. Thomas contingent of graduates attending the University of Texas where he will study engineering. The president of the St. Thomas chapter of the National Honor Society was also a two-sport scholar-athlete. He was named to the 2019 TAPPS Division I baseball all-state tournament team and was a contributor to the school’s first-ever state swimming championship. Savarino received the Texas A&M University Opportunity Scholarship, a scholarship from the United States Air Force Academy and a Colorado School of Mines merit scholarship.

A legacy graduate following his father Dominic ’88 and uncle J.J. ’94, Savarino related that “the time we all spent here at St. Thomas will be remembered not just for our collective successes ... because when we failed a test or lost a game, we will remember that our Eagle brothers were there to pick us up and motivate us to keep going. Whether it was here on campus or beyond the school walls, this place is made special by the people - past, present, and future - who have lived the life of a Man of St. Thomas. Everyone struggles, this place definitely showed us that reality. More importantly, it showed us how to overcome those struggles together.

“The journey to this point has been sometimes painful, sometimes funny, sometimes sad, but through it all, we have grown into Men of St. Thomas and are all stronger because of it. I’ve enjoyed my time here with each and every one of you and I wish all of you the best in whatever comes next. Congratulations class of 2019!”

Savarino and McGowan were previously among nine members of the class of 2019 gaining permanent membership into the prestigious St. Thomas Club - elite students with a minimum 4.0 grade point average for seven consecutive semesters. The elite group includes Armando Amador, Jarrod Brown, Joseph Chavez, Hunter Henderson, Gabriel Lenz, Angel Sosa-Yanez and Maxwell Voltz.

Griffin Wilkins was recognized as a National Merit Commended Scholar while Amador, Chavez, Brandon Jackson and Plato Pappas were named National Hispanic Scholars, all among 33 senior members in the National Honor Society.

In addition to the University of Texas, significant numbers of Eagle graduates are enrolled at Texas A&M, Texas A&M-Galveston, Texas Tech University, the University of Houston, Rice University, Baylor University, Southern Methodist University, Creighton University, Loyola Marymount University, the University of Colorado, the University of Mississippi, the University of Missouri and the University of North Texas.

Eagle scholars are also attending DePaul University, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, George Washington University, Howard University, Louisiana State University, New York University, Seton Hall University, Texas State University, Tulane University, the University of Alabama, the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, the University of Miami, the University of Michigan and Washington University in St. Louis among many other prestigious institutions.

Twelve St. Thomas scholar-athletes across six sports seized opportunities to extend their careers at the collegiate level, including six to Division I programs, increasing the number to 131 since 2012.

Collectively the Class of 2019 provided superior leadership to fuel yet another remarkable Round-Up fundraising effort which produced more than $525,000 in raffle ticket sales. The resounding total means Eagle scholars crashed the half-million dollar mark for the fourth consecutive year, raising the recent seven-year mark to $3 million, with all monies annually and always devoted to St. Thomas tuition assistance, a Basilian practice which dates for 92 years.

Fr. Storey was the latest in a recent succession of dedicated and vibrant advocates for St. Thomas who have engaged as commencement speakers including legacy benefactor Clay and essential 4500Forever capital campaign contributor Vincent Giammalva ’80, along with Houston Texans head coach Bill O’Brien in 2016, Weldon Granger in 2017 and Tom Vaughn ’85 in 2018 - all long-time champions for Catholic education in Houston.
William Castillo ’19, one of the most acclaimed scholar-artists in recent St. Thomas history, was accepted during his senior year to study studio art in the renowned Steinhardt School at New York University.

“The opportunity to experience one of the great cities in the world and the rigors of the NYU curriculum is a dream come true,” Castillo said. “The competition to excel in the arts is intense and there is a proven plan to develop the artist. I was ecstatic when I received the (email) acceptance (in late March). My plan is to explore different mediums but specifically animation and digital graphics.”

Castillo was attracted to the concept of the thriving New York City art world after taking part in an exhilarating one-month NYU summer program for high school students in 2016. Assistant principal Mary Criaco strongly encouraged Castillo to pursue the option and ultimately he was one of only 46 students enrolled into an intensive discipline that brought a wide diversity of participants.

“NYU wasn’t really on my radar until last summer,” Castillo said. “Without that exposure, I’m not sure I would have targeted the school. But I sampled the life of an NYU student and that absolutely told me there would be no better college destination. I lived in Founders Hall (located in the Union Square/East Village area). I was involved in printmaking, painting and video production. And it wasn’t just learning enhanced techniques. There were discussions on art philosophy and history, plus field trips to galleries all over the city. The entire (NYU) campus and facilities were made available. I mixed with students from Beijing, Ireland, France and throughout the United States.”

Castillo then navigated the daunting process to secure a place in one of the most selective universities in the nation. For the first time in NYU history, the initial acceptance rate for students at the New York campus dipped to 19 percent in 2018. His application included award-winning credentials, national recognition, an impressive portfolio and emphatic artist statements. Castillo then utilized and leveraged a bonus element that no doubt provided a measurable impact.

“One of my letters of recommendation came from the Steinhardt’s director,” Castillo said. “He one of the instructors during the summer program and I was able to create that connection.”

Castillo’s rise to prominence is even more profound given his sparse artistic practice as recently as his sophomore academic year at St. Thomas.

“A self-taught visual performer with only one fundamental course to his credit, Castillo was essentially operating off the ground. Yet he thrived on that feeling of urgency and excitement when the creative juices flowed and the urge to draw took command, not for prestige or profile, but simply for the sheer enjoyment.

“Once his raw talents were brought to the attention of fine arts dean Mike Nebel and instructor Chau Nguyen, the depth and scope of Castillo’s natural range emerged with a willingness to push his skills into action. The expressive, gestural and technical aspects of his drawing soared, the results as jaw-dropping as they were daring.

“I attribute that 100% to St. Thomas,” Castillo said. “There has been so much acceptance and support for me to pursue my ambitions and be successful. I never imagined that all this was within my reach.”

In 2017, Castillo became the first-ever Eagle to be honored with Gold Key distinction in Drawing and Illustration in the prestigious National Scholastic Regional Art Competition, receiving one of only 80 Gold Keys awarded among more than 1,500 entries from private and public schools.

As a junior, Castillo collected two Silver Keys in that same category and then completed his career with Silver Key distinction in Digital Art for his compelling Frankenstein show card promoting the 2018 fall production staged by St. Thomas Drama.

“Art had never been my passion ... more like a hobby,” Castillo recalls. “Math was always my preferred subject. I thought I would end up in accounting or working statistical analysis. But all that has changed and I’m so excited for what the future may bring.”

Imagination and will power were always the most important gifts granted Shane Williams ’19. He applied the powerful pair in equal doses during a St. Thomas career marked by brilliance magnified by his own appreciation.

“I love this school because of the opportunities for every student,” Williams says. “The gut feeling to attend here was strong. That same intangible didn’t register when I was considering my other options (in 2015). I almost instantly knew this was the place for me.”

A promising swimmer from the age-group club scene near Lake Jackson, Williams chose St. Thomas in small part “because they had never won the state championship and I wanted to make history.”

Which he did in the most outrageously robust fashion, a record-smashing finish to make any Hollywood screenwriter jealous (see page 57).

But for Williams, the taproot of his drive that determined St. Thomas as the destination was foremost about “academics ... always my first priority. Swimming was important but second. College preparatory is not casually slapped on the name here. It’s demanding. And that’s what I was seeking.”

The transition for Williams from Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic school was hardly seamless. He committed to an exhausting daily routine multiplied by four years - an unceasing combination of commutes, classes, tutorial, pool practice, weight training, competition, no distractions.

A grueling schedule that Williams never begrudged for an instant. He grinded with an incredible tolerance for work while adhering to a Hemingway-esque code - craft a plan, be the best, stay humble, make your family proud, that’s all you can control.

“My first two years were especially challenging,” Williams says. “I had to discover the necessary discipline to bring out my best. The academic results in my junior and senior years were dramatically improved. I tapped into the time management and focus that swimming taught me.”

Williams was recognized during the annual Academic Awards Assembly with distinction within the anatomy and physiology curriculum. He was then celebrated in May along with a host of fellow Eagle scholar-athletes extending their careers at the collegiate level (see page 72).

Division III Gustavus Adolphus College in Minnesota offers Williams the properly calibrated mix of academics and athletics within a college mission that matches his St. Thomas experience.

“My professional goal is to be a financial planner,” Williams says. “I know if I continue the ethic that St. Thomas helped me develop, the opportunities will continue to present themselves. Perhaps graduate school, then a Fortune 500 company. There are no limits.”

Only a quote for the journey - Warriors don’t live in the past. The past is dead; life is now. And the future is waiting.
Plato Pappas '19 leaves St. Thomas with a substantial record of academic acclaim and accomplishment. Pappas’ strong academic performance was recognized as a National Merit Hispanic Scholar, earned entry into the National Honor Society, and served as an active member of the St. Thomas community. 

For all his accomplishment, Pappas holds a particular pride for an association unrelated to scholarship. In 2014, seven of his father’s closest friends established the Jimmy Pappas Memorial Sporting Clay Shoot Tournament. The fundraiser has generated valuable dollars and awareness for the Halo House Foundation and Sunshine Kids charity. This previous spring Plato was asked by the group to serve on its board of directors assuming a more active role in organization and execution. “I can’t describe how important and meaningful that involvement is for me,” Pappas says. “Shooting was one of my favorite pastimes with my father. It’s a way to stay connected to him. And I want to remain loyal to the fight against cancer so that others who are suffering may someday benefit.” Pappas remains absolute in continuing his father’s rich legacy for life and success. Plato will study engineering at Texas A&M University where Jimmy was a distinguished alumnus and a tremendous role model for his son. Plato, against cancer so that others who are suffering may someday benefit.

Danny Griggs ‘19 impresses in first-time encounters as real and deep and earnest. And the deeply real and earnest feelings of his initial days and weeks as a St. Thomas newbie are as fresh as the sudden flurry of Instagram flashes.

“I can’t describe how important and meaningful that involvement is for me,” Pappas says. “Shooting was one of my favorite pastimes with my father. It’s a way to stay connected to him. And I want to remain loyal to the fight against cancer so that others who are suffering may someday benefit.” Pappas remains absolute in continuing his father’s rich legacy for life and success. Plato will study engineering at Texas A&M University where Jimmy was a distinguished alumnus and a tremendous role model for his son. Plato, against cancer so that others who are suffering may someday benefit.
The Class of 2019 embarks on their next chapters all across the country.
ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS

**Andres Aiza**
Suffolk University, University Achievement Grand

**Aucker Hamlin Alch**
Louisiana State University - Academic Scholars Non-Resident, Texas Tigers Scholarship, President’s Student Aid Scholarship, The Catholic University of America - Catholic University Award, Parish Scholarship

**Armando Serapio Amador**
Rice University Rice Investment Plan Scholarship

**Daniel Robert Bissy**
New Mexico Military Institute Regent Incentive Scholarship

**Zachary Natheniel Blice**
Jacksonville University Athletic Scholarship

**Logan Christian Bobo**
Texas Tech University Presidential Scholarship

**Jarred Chad Brown**
Tulane University Founder’s Merit Scholarship

**Nathan Wade Bryant**
Texas A&M University at College Stations Corp of Cadets 21st Century Scholarship

**Cole Laughlin Carrabba**
Baylor University Scholarship, Southwestern University Butler Scholar Award, Texas State University Texas State Achievement Scholarship, University of Houston Academic Excellence Scholarship

**Austin Blake Castro**
Houston Baptist University, University Grant I Scholarship, Joseph Armando Chavez Rice University Rice Grant

**Hunter Dane Cheek**
University of Incarnate Word Academic Scholarship

**Aidan Gregory Clark**
University of Mississippi Eagle Scout Gold Award

**Carl Donovan Collins Jr.**
Pepperdine University Merit Scholarship, DePaul University Merit Scholarship

**John Marshall Cordes**
Creighton University Father Joseph Labaj Award, Regis University Scholarship

**Matthew Jacob Cotrone**
Texas Tech University Godfrey Family Endowed Scholarship

**Jackson Eaton Crawford**
Creighton University Founder’s Award, Miami University RedHawk Excellence Scholarship, St. Edwards University President’s Excellence Scholarship, Xavier University Xavier Excellence Scholarship, Saint Louis University - Catholic High School Award, Dean’s Scholarship

**Nathan Alan Cousu**
Abilene Christian University, University Award, Houston Baptist University, University Grant I Scholarship

**Jackson Eastham Dawkins**
Texas Tech University Scholaristic Success Scholarship

**Seth Thomas Deitz**
Baylor University Founder’s Scholarship

**Jonathan Gealey Evans**
Texas Tech University Presidential Scholarship

**Douglas Patrick Fahrbach**
National Security Language Initiative and the International Education and Resource Network Scholarship

**Anthony Joseph Farino IV**
University of St. Thomas Cell Award

**Josheph Kameron Freels**
Texas Tech University Scholarship

**William Stuart Garner III**
Missouri University of Science & Technology Reception Scholarship

**Bennett McGowan Gist**
Louisiana State University Texas Tiger Scholarship, Transformation Merit Non-Resident Scholarship, Millaps College Founder’s Grant, Legacy Scholarship, Texas Tech University Presidential Scholarship

**Ethan Gould**
Texas Tech University Scholaristic Success Scholarship

**Diego Alejandro Guajardo**
Schreiner University Mountaineer Scholarship, University of Houston Downtown Merit Scholarship, University of St. Thomas New Student University Grant

**Ian Bradley Holcomb**
Texas Tech University Scholaristic Success Scholarship

**Benjamin Murdoch Huggins**
Texas Christian University Scholarship

**Aidan Gregory Clark**
University of Houston Academic Excellence Scholarship

**Rice University Rice Grant**
Joseph Armando Chavez

**Austin Blake Castro**
Texas State University Texas State Achievement Scholarship, University of Arizona Excellence Scholarship

**Keaton David Louis Lippman**
Texas Tech University Presidential Scholarship

**John Michael McCorkle**
Houston Police Officers’ Union Scholarship

**Baylor University Merit Scholarship**
Carl Donovan Collins Jr., Pepperdine University Merit Scholarship, DePaul University Merit Scholarship

**Isaiah Matthew Leal**
Houston Baptist University Legacy Scholarship, St. John’s University - Catholic High School Scholarship, St. Vincent De Paul Merit Scholarship

**Gabriel Eric Lenz**
Creighton University - Founder’s Scholarship, Father Joseph Labaj Award, Regis University Board of Trustees Catholic Award, Spring Hill College Presidential Scholarship, University of Oklahoma Distinguished Scholar Scholarship

**Cole Forrester Letlow**
Baylor University Provost’s Gold Scholarship, Invitation to Excellence Scholarship, Colorado State University Dean’s Scholarship, Texas State University Achievement Scholarship, Texas Tech University Presidential Scholarship, University of Arizona Excellence Scholarship

**Brady Kirk Logsdon**
Sam Houston State University Baseball Scholarship

**Adriel Primo Lopez**
Houston Junior Forum College Scholarship, Houston Police Officers’ Union Scholarship

**Seth Alexander Macias**
Roger University of Technology - Grant, Presidential Scholarship, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology - Grant, Merit Scholarship, Catapult Scholarship

**Joshua Nathaniel Madden**
Louisiana State University - Academic Scholars Non-Resident Scholarship, President’s Student Aid Scholarship, Texas Tigers Scholarship, Texas Tech University Presidential Scholarship, University of Texas at Austin Academic Scholars Non-Resident Scholarship, Texas Christian University Scholarship

**Theodore Duc Mai**
Louisiana State University Texas Tiger Scholarship, Transformation Merit Non-Resident Scholarship, University of Houston Merit Scholarship, University of Mississippi Merit Scholarship

**Peyton Joseph Matocha**
University of Miami Athletic Scholarship
Connor Davis McGovern
University of Missouri Mark Twin Scholarship
Emerson College Spotlight Scholarship

Kellin Martic McGowan
James-Kara Scholarship
Mitchell Bead-Baen Memorial Scholarship
National Merit Corporate Scholarship
Phi Beta Kappa Scholarship
St. Thomas High School Albert R. Gaelens Award
University of Chicago University Scholar Scholarship

Tyler Cuchulainn McStravic
Houston Baptist University Merit Founder’s Scholarship
Michigan State University - Non-Resident Scholarship, Presidential Study Abroad Scholarship
St. Edward’s University - Academic President’s Excellence Scholarship, Gold Hilltopper Award
Trinity University Academic Merit Trustee’s Scholarship

Brenden Louis Murray
Southern Methodist University Cox School of Business Scholarship
Texas A&M University Dean’s Scholarship
University of Texas, Austin Cockrell School of Engineering Scholarship

Benjamin Thomas Nordle
Colorado State University Academic Recognition Award
Southwestern University Legacy Scholarship
Sul Ross State University Texas Grant

Matthew Phillip O’Connor
University of St. Thomas Presidential Excellence Scholarship

Donovan James O’Hare
Regis University - University Scholarship
Saint Mary’s College Gable Scholars Scholarship
Seton Hall University Summer Scholarship
St. John’s University - Dean’s Scholarship, Catholic High School Award

Benjamin Thomas Nordle
Colorado State University Academic Recognition Award
Southwestern University Legacy Scholarship
Sul Ross State University Texas Grant

Matthew Phillip O’Connor
University of St. Thomas Presidential Excellence Scholarship

Plato James Pappas
National Hispanic Scholarship

Andrew Thanh Hien Phan
Texas Christian University Founder’s Scholarship
Texas Tech University Presidential Scholarship
University of Houston Academic Excellence Scholarship, Cougar Engineers Class of 2023 Incoming Freshman

Nico Hieu Pham
College of Wooster Merit Scholarship
Ithaca College Merit Scholarship
Kalamazoo College Merit Scholarship
Loyola Marymount University Merit Scholarship, University of Puget Sound Merit Scholarship

Carson Andrew Rau
Loyola Marymount University - Arrupe Scholarship, Early Action Award

Martin Christopher Reat
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Dean’s Scholarship

Tuscan Anthony Savarino
Colorado School of Mines Merit Scholarship
Texas A&M University at College Station Opportunity Scholarship
United States Air Force Academy Scholarship

Dante Miguel Segura
University of St. Thomas - Celt Award, New Student Grant

David Nicholas Smetek
Louisiana State University Scholarship, University of Oklahoma Scholarship

Thomas Christian Snow
Louisiana State University Scholarship
Texas Christian University Faculty Scholarship
University of Oklahoma Scholarship

John Russell Sparks
Regis University - Blue and Gold Scholarship, Catholic High School Award, Grant
Texas Tech University Scholarship
University of Colorado, Colorado Springs Scholarship
University of Montfort Leadership, Achievement & Service Scholarship

Nelson Suarez Jr.
Baylor University Gold Award Scholarship

John Austin Teague
Miami University, Oxford RedHawk Excellence Scholarship
Regis University - Board of Trustees Scholarship, Catholic High School Scholarship
St. John’s College President’s Merit Scholarship
Temple University Merit Scholarship
University of Mississippi - Non-Resident Alumni Scholarship, Academic Merit Scholarship, Academics Merit Non-Resident Scholarship

John Matthew Temple
Baylor University Founder’s Gold Scholarship
Texas Tech Presidential Scholarship
University of Missouri Mark Twain Award Level II

Camden Mason Thomas
Texas State University President’s Honor Scholarship, University of Houston Academic Excellence Scholarship

Kenneth George Van Doren
Hofstra University Deans Scholarship
St. Bonaventure University Provost Scholarship

Juan Miguel Vasquez
University of North Texas Scholarship Excellence Scholarship

Terrance Shane Williams
Gustavus Adolphus College Gold Scholarship
Saint John’s University - Dean’s Scholarship, Saints Scholarship, Saint John Abbey Scholarship

Flybys

The St. Thomas Singers continued the program’s strong reputation for acclaim by earning distinction at the Texas Private School Music Educators Association (TPSMEA) state competition.


The TPSMEA judges awarded 1st Division ratings to the choir in both the Concert and Sight-Reading portions of the contest that featured outstanding performances from soloists Mamaradlo and Jackson Phillips ‘20, as well as brilliant accompaniment by Moreno-Garza on recorder and Wilson on guitar and djembe.

STEPS FOR STUDENTS

Isaac Garza ’20, Blazek Skocius ’20, and head track and cross country coach Nathan Labus led the St. Thomas campus community in the 14th annual Steps For Students 5K Race & Walk celebrating Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.

The collective St. Thomas effort among more than 11,000 registered helped make Catholic education made affordable and accessible to a wider diversity of Houston families.

GOLD ADDYS

St. Thomas is proud to share in recognition received at the 57th edition of Houston’s American Advertising Awards - formerly the ADDYs.

» Gold distinction for Elements of Advertising - Still Photography, Digitally Enhanced category
» Gold distinction for Elements of Advertising - Still Photography, Campaign category

Official credits were given to Karl Heim of KH Studio as creative director, photographer Nathan Lindstrom and client St. Thomas.

The three collaborated in the summer of 2019 with a host of Eagle scholar-athletes to create a dynamic photo shoot showcasing and promoting Eagle Athletics for the 2018-19 academic year.

The acclaim brought qualification for the American Advertising Federation Tenth District Awards competition in Dallas. The merit was announced in February during a celebration at the Hyatt Regency Houston Downtown rewarding the creative spirit of excellence in the art of advertising.

Wallpaper of the Week

Tyler McStravic ‘19, Nicholas Kurzy ‘20 and Nicholas Chandler ‘20 combined to again win the World War II High School Quiz Bowl event in New Orleans, the third consecutive year St. Thomas captured the title.

The 15th annual competition hosted by The National WWII Museum and sponsored by the New Orleans Advocate included a wide array of topics such as European and Pacific theaters, Louisiana in World War II, World War II in the news and geography, as well as several challenging teamwork activities.

In 2017, McStravic, Kurzy and Nate Belcher ‘18 secured the championship with a victory over New Orleans Jesuit.
GRADUATES 2019

CARRABBA - Joe '57, Cole '19 and Luke '83

CLINTON - Posie IV '91 and Posie V '19

MADDEN - Willie '82, Marshall '18, Michael Ethridge '19, Josh '19 and Patrick '89

PATRONELLA - Michael '83, Damian '19 and Domenic '16

SMETEK - Patrick '19 and Patrick '78

STEINER - Brian '83 and Nicholas '19
CONGRATULATIONS LEGACY GRADUATES - CLASS OF 2019

**BARROSO** - Chris '96, Ronie '19, Chris '77 and Jayson '18 (not pictured, Gordon Benge '49, Earl '58, James Benge '75 and Anthony '79)

**BARTULA** - Connor '19 and Raymond '58

**MCCAIRNS** - William '19, Daniel '85 and Walker '19

**COTRONE** - Matthew '19 and Joe '53

**SANCHEZ** - Sal '83, Alejandro '13, Vareata '10, Ivan '19, Matias '13, *Marciano* '28 and Arturo '85

**IGNAS** - Thomas '85 and Matthew '19

**O’HARE** - Donovan '19 and Dan '87

**SAVARINO** - Dominick '88 and Tuscan '19

*future Eagle class of 2028*
Select Eagle scholars again aimed for the stars in an effort to outdistance elite students from across the United States.

For the second time in four years, St. Thomas occupied an exclusive orbit - advancing two groups to compete at the Team America Rocketry Challenge (TARC) National Final, the world’s largest student rocket contest. Seniors Brandon Jackson, Daniel Bixby, Ethan Hunter, James Morgan, Joseph Lauckner and Jacob Matthews returned to the National Fly-Off after soaring as freshmen in 2016.

First-timers David Torres, Thanh-Vinh McColloster, Peter Zhong, Drew Caver and Mark Cheek represented the Class of 2022 in a showcase that encourages engagement in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) activities.

Faculty member Dr. Ed Marintsch infused expertise and inspiration into St. Thomas Rocketry for nearly two decades, his passion fueling a consistent St. Thomas lift to aspiring heights vying for valuable scholarships and national acclaim. And in 2019 St. Thomas was one of only two institutions in Houston and 15 in Texas to successfully navigate to the national final, and one of but two schools in the state to qualify more than one team.

Marintsch learned long ago that clustering his teams according to class created a particular brand of camaraderie and led to greater investment.

He partnered this year with faculty colleague Dr. Pete Nordloh for the first time in mentoring Eagle scholars through months of preparation, designing, building and testing to meet rigorous parameters set by the contest’s sponsors, the Aerospace Industries Association and National Association of Rocketry. “This senior group was more laid back but you would expect that after three years in the program,” Marintsch says. “They put out a rocket right away ... more simple than creative ... but simple usually works well.”

Nordloh recognized the “freshmen were hooked from the start ... embraced the process ... delved into the computer models. Then, once they got away from the simulators and actually started launching their interest really spiked. Of the two groups, they had a larger hurdle qualifying for a variety of reasons but they got it done.”

The contest rules and scoring parameters change every cycle to summon ingenuity and encourage a fresh approach to execution. The strict protocols for the 17th annual event were to design, build and fly a rocket with precise weight, length and impulse restrictions themed around the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing. The mission required carrying three raw eggs in a capsule to an altitude of 856 feet and return it to the ground with the payload intact within 43-46 seconds.

“The rockets had to separate and individually land safely ... had to use at least two parachutes,” Marintsch says.

“The three eggs represented the three astronauts (Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins). The altitude of 856 feet, the central standard time Armstrong walked on the moon in July 1969.”

The TARC competition is judged on a point basis with the goal of finishing with the lowest score possible. Teams gain one point for each foot that they deviate from the goal and four points for each second if they over/under-shoot the time window.

St. Thomas conducted testing and qualifying at Johnson Space Center over five consecutive Saturdays in February and March to emerge among the 100 entries for TARC from more than 800 schools representing nearly every state and Washington, D.C.

“(The seniors) did all three of our qualifications on the same day,” Jackson says. “The conditions varied considerably from launch to launch. You always have to adjust for the obvious variables such as wind, humidity and temperature which can change considerably in a matter of hours. Then we had to allow for the powerful engines and relatively low target height without too much added weight.”

At the end of the academic year, Marintsch concluded a distinguished tenure of more than three decades in the St. Thomas science department. His rocketry teams reached TARC 10 times in 17 years, an event that originally began as a celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Wright Brothers first flight and quickly morphed through overwhelming demand into an annual exercise to promote future scientists and engineers.

In 2005, St. Thomas finished 13th at nationals and its fifth-place result in 2009 enabled the team to work on a year-long student initiative with NASA.

Nordloh saw St. Thomas returning to the National Fly-Off as “a home run in Ed’s last at bat.”

Marintsch humbly accepted inner pride that his rocketeers consistently demonstrated to the country how “they can problem-solve by working together as a team and using their knowledge of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. There was, of course, some disappointment when we missed out the last couple of years. You try to analyze what you did wrong but the reality is not everyone makes the grade. To step out with two teams this year was really as good as you can get.”
One hundred and fifty-eight acclaimed scholars were recognized, led by Kellin McGowan ’19, the first African-American valedictorian in school history, and salutatorian Joseph Chavez ’19, the first president in St. Thomas history after eight years as principal. The school’s motto of Goodness, Discipline and Knowledge.

The two joined Armando Amador ’19, Jarrod Brown ’19, Seth Deitz ’19, Gabriel Lenz ’19, Ansel Sosa-Yanez ’19 and Maxwell Voltz ’19 in gaining permanent membership into the prestigious St. Thomas Club - elite students with a minimum 4.0 grade point average for seven consecutive semesters.

The National Merit Program previously acknowledged Amador, Chavez, Brandon Jackson ’19 and Plato Pappas ’19 as National Merit Hispanic Scholars and awarded Griffin Wilkins ’19 with a Letter of Commendation acknowledging exceptional academic promise. Select accolades were again reserved for four Eagle scholars who not only excelled in a rigorous college preparatory environment but also separated through a civic identity beyond campus.

For the first time the GD&K recipient was also granted the inaugural Fr. Ronald Schwenzer, CSB Goodness, Discipline and Knowledge Scholarship in the amount of $2,500, the financial stake generously funded by an anonymous former St. Thomas teacher in the spirit of the Basilian motto. Fr. Schwenzer was appointed in 2006 the first president in St. Thomas history after eight years as principal, working tirelessly to develop citizen scholars and leaders during his tenure.

Seth Deitz ’19 was given the Fr. Schwenzer Campus Ministry Award for most exemplifying the Man of St. Thomas motto of Faith, Service and Leadership. He was applauded for “consistently placing others ahead of himself ... embracing those around him ... with an attentive soul and caring heart... always eager to lend a hand to those in need with an eye for who may be struggling.” Deitz plans to study psychology at Stephen F. Austin University.

Ian Wheeler ’19 was saluted with the Rev. Carl Mitchell Allnoch, CSB Athletic Memorial Trophy for Excellence in Academics, in honor of the 16th principal of St. Thomas. Wheeler followed Parker Rasnitski ’18, Sam Yeboah ’17, 2016 TAPPS Male Athlete of the Year David Jones ’16, Campbell Clarkson ’15 and Joseph Lowry ’14 as the most recent recipients.

Wheeler was a dual sport multi-year varsity letterman with academic all-state distinction. His sultan of smash-and-dash senior football season ended with 1,309 rushing yards and 15 touchdowns, plus 503 receiving yards and three scores.

The Principal’s Service and Leadership Award winner was Legacy graduate Cole Carrabba ’19, valued for the brand of integrity defined as “doing what is proper and appropriate even when no one is paying attention ... consistently displaying humility, kindness to everyone he encounters ... with enthusiasm, joy and a broad smile ... and an uncanny charisma that is simultaneously sincere and warm ... marked by an internal motivation for excellence.” Carrabba intends to study geology at the University of Texas.

“THIS TESTAMENT TO THEIR TALENTS CONTINUES OUR UPWARD TRAJECTORY AS A PREMIER COLLEGE PREPARATORY INSITUTION IN THE CITY, STATE AND REGION”
The news floated through and beyond Granger Stadium, absorbed by a group of St. Thomas students and community members who viewed the information with their eyes, shared it on iPhones, repeated it aloud with their voices, barely believing it with their ears.

“Seriously?” was the chorus singing to the verse when the latest raucous Round-Up fundraising totals reverberated throughout campus.

The frantic first March Friday brought the traditional crescendo and revealed that Eagle scholars raked $525,028 in raffle ticket sales - crashing the half-million dollar mark for the fourth consecutive year, raising the recent seven-year mark to $3 million, with all monies annually and always devoted to St. Thomas tuition assistance, a Basilian practice which dates for 92 years.

An unmatched student initiative.

Incredible and genuine and organic.

And in typical St. Thomas fashion, an aggressive final kick push rushed sales past ambitious goals with a striking statement of Eagles coming to the aid of their fellow Eagles. Faculty members Casey Johnson ’05 and Grover Green ’04 again proved to be the duo of driving forces who inspired, prodded and cajoled the driven committed student body to an ab fab finish.

“I applaud the leadership of Casey and Grover and these seniors who decided every single day to extend a little further, find one more contact, sell one more book, bring in one more check, and that’s how we reached this kind of total,” President Fr. James Murphy, CSB said. “Every single quota counts. And that’s the mantra.”

“What matters most is what we achieved as a group and that brings us closer as a community and together as a whole.”
Brendan Hotze ’21 commanded in back-to-back campaigns the dream big, no limits charge. His $23,240 in sizzling sales was followed by Ben Huggins ’19 ($18,500) and Damian Patronella ’19 ($16,580), the second and third overall sellers. Huggins fronted the class of 2020 for the third straight year while generating nearly $32,000. Patronella closed with a pair of efforts totaling more than $22,000.

The top 10 performers included - Zach Kroencke ’20 ($18,700), Nicolas Prodoehl ’20 ($16,000) for a third straight year; Aaron Schlosser ’21 ($12,000), Aidan Kelley ’21 ($11,000) and Rory Gremillion ’21 ($10,000) joining Hotze from the sophomore class; Dayton Woodlief ’22 ($7,605), the lone freshman; and Keaton Lipman ’19 ($7,400).

“These dollars support the day to day life of our school,” Fr. Murphy said. “Without the students who otherwise would not be attending, you wouldn’t have St. Thomas. Our guys understand that. I see those who are receiving assistance working tirelessly to make those results happen right alongside their Eagle brothers. That speaks to the depth of their collective character and what they want St. Thomas to be.”

Within weeks of Fr. Murphy being appointed the third president of St. Thomas, he beamed with particular pride and burbled with appreciation - the first Round-Up on his watch registering a jaw-dropping $62,970 total as a freshman. In proving yet again there is truly no distance can diminish the Basilian motto Touch Me Goodness, Discipline and Knowledge more alive and in full force.

In 2016, the half-million barrier was broken for the first time in 2015, Hotze ’17 and Domenic Patronella ’16 were one-two in sales for the second consecutive year in another record-smashing rendezvous. In 2014, the staggering $63k from Hotze ’17 was the largest single stake in a sum that shattered the previous St. Thomas standard set the previous year.

In 2015, Hotze ’17 and Domenic Patronella ’16 were one-two in sales for the second consecutive year in another record-smashing rendezvous. In 2016, the half-million barrier was broken for the first time as Hotze ’17 was first and foremost for the third consecutive year ($17,460). Tucker Britt ’17 was next on the tote board as Hotze ’17 was first and foremost for the third consecutive year ($17,460). Tucker Britt ’17 was next on the tote board as Hotze ’17 was first and foremost for the third consecutive year ($17,460). Tucker Britt ’17 was next on the tote board as Hotze ’17 was first and foremost for the third consecutive year ($17,460). Tucker Britt ’17 was next on the tote board as Hotze ’17 was first and foremost for the third consecutive year ($17,460). Tucker Britt ’17 was next on the tote board as Hotze ’17 was first and foremost for the third consecutive year ($17,460). Tucker Britt ’17 was next on the tote board as Hotze ’17 was first and foremost for the third consecutive year ($17,460). Tucker Britt ’17 was next on the tote board as Hotze ’17 was first and foremost for the third consecutive year ($17,460). Tucker Britt ’17 was next on the tote board as Hotze ’17 was first and foremost for the third consecutive year ($17,460). Tucker Britt ’17 was next on the tote board as Hotze ’17 was first and foremost for the third consecutive year ($17,460).

In what has become a lasting family tradition, an unassuming behemoth Brendan through STH standards set the previous year.

Eagles cared for Eagles.

We were blessed to have phenomenal leadership with chairs Monique Jenkins, EJane Hughson Myers and Dena Skucius plus a legion of volunteers who devoted countless hours to support another record-smashing extravaganza, all saluting a brotherhood unlike any other.

See you March 1, 2020!
or nearly two decades, the St. Thomas campus community has remained steadfastly committed to short-term student mission trips that collide with long-play social justice. Eagle scholars devoting a second consecutive spring break to aid the under-served in Honduras delivered an authentic re-connection with children and a community in need. The undeniable goal was supplying sustainable growth and restoring dignity.

Most striking to foreign language dean and mission organizer Danny Hernandez ’08 was again the decisive display of the St. Thomas group living the Basilian motto that has served as the institution’s divine compass for more than a century – Teach Me Goodness, Discipline and Knowledge.

“What I cherish about these efforts is the outpouring of our Basilian DNA,” Hernandez says. “This is the tangible impact of goodness. Every day in the academic year I focus on knowledge and discipline. There are also spontaneous life lessons that emerge but goodness is never as clearly defined. I see that quality in our students throughout the mission trips and that’s incredibly rewarding.”
“Last year St Thomas built a bond which transcended the projects we accomplished,” Cordes says. “This March the Honduran students were thrilled that their friends had actually come back to spend another week. The greetings were from the heart. That reunion with the students and staff made the stay even more special.”

Among the half dozen returning student leaders were Cordes’ son, John ’19 (family members of All Saints Catholic Church in the Heights), and John Lucas ’20. The two have made humanitarian relief a resounding way of life.

“The last two years have been eye-opening experiences that I believe will affect me for many years to come,” says Lucas who enrolled at St. Thomas from St. Helen Catholic School in Pearland. “You learn not to take what you have for granted, that you’re blessed and that there’s so much you can do to help people who are less fortunate. It’s a true motivator to take action. I feel as though I have left a part of myself in Honduras and have brought a part of that community back home. I think about those children all the time, the challenges they face every single day, and I pray for them.”

Ed Cordes believes that “joining John the last two years in Honduras has provided me with a precious week without technology, work or academic distractions. Caring for the well-being of others and advancing science are obviously essential … and so is spending quality time and working closely with my son to achieve something important.”
That measurable is most clearly calibrated as contributing to an immediate and permanent difference in the lives of those in need, delivering manpower and construction assistance, building materials, tools and expertise (Cordes is the leader of the Science + Technology practice for acclaimed architecture and design firm Perkins + Will).

The latest Friday-Friday excursion to Tegucigalpa included a dicey landing at Toncontin International Airport, one of the most dangerous in the world due to short runways and proximity to mountainous terrain.

Saturday was dominated by a substantial planting of king grass that will furnish a natural wind barrier for crops. Next were four full labor-intensive days expanding the aquaculture projects that were established during the initial St. Thomas involvement. Aquaponics is a neologism that combines water-based planting and fish cultivation for an alternate way of growing a recurring food supply, leaving earth – that is, dirt –behind. The 2018 St. Thomas group created an aquaponics pond stocked with tilapia. What feeds the crops is recirculating water from the mega-gallon tanks and the waste generated by the fish. The pond itself fertilizes the growing farm, making the entire project a complete ecosystem.

“The students are involved in truly an immersion experience,” Hernandez says. “They embraced the needs of the community … what was similar rather than what was different. There were no charter companies and scenic tours and posh hotels. They accepted the simple things in life … a hot shower after a long day shoveling, digging and lifting. No television … no WiFi … no streaming … nothing on demand. But there was the pleasure that can be driven from a late afternoon soccer match after an exhausting day farming or building. There was the revelation that it doesn’t take so much ‘stuff’ to make you happy.”

The stay included Sunday Mass at the Basílica de Suyapa, an evening enthusiastically sharing in a meal of pupusas (the traditional breakout dish of thick tortillas typically filled with cheese, herbs and meats), and a meeting with Cardinal Oscar Andres Rodriguez Maradiaga of Tegucigalpa, whose nephew attended St. Thomas with Hernandez. “We couldn’t have been received more graciously,” Hernandez says. “Marching bands, performances, food and full activities. It was overwhelming.”

John Cordes will next study at Creighton University (“accounting or a science curriculum”), a decision partially based on the strength and depth of the school’s volunteer opportunities particularly with at-risk populations. He has already made contacts within the program who coordinate the many outreach projects to facilitate his participation.

Ed is predictably proud yet humble when he says he recognizes “John’s leadership and ethic. I know the mission trips have had a pronounced effect on him and provided all of our sons with a unique opportunity to not only understand how fortunate their lives are but also how rewarding reaching out to others can be. Seeing the dedication of these students has absolutely confirmed my steady belief in the spirit of St. Thomas.

“The week was exhausting but we accomplished something meaningful. The friendships gained through shared work, meals, bonfires, and conversations have inspired me to begin planning a third trip for next year.”

THE HARD-CHARGING HARDBALLING BIGGIOS - CAVAN ’13 AND CONOR ’11, CRAIG, PATTY AND QUINN - were bonded again, swirling in a diamond daze far removed from when the two brothers tag-teamed at Fr. Wilson Field for Eagle state championships nearly a decade ago with their forever Astros icon dad as the bench boss.

Then the collective dugout dreams were for a scene that would one day shift to a stage resembling Minute Maid Park, identical to the weekend affair in June with an out-of-towner celebrating a grand homecoming in the very venue where he routinely watched up close and personal as a youngster his father’s Hall of Fame identity in the making.
Biggio the Younger, a freshly minted Toronto Blue Jay, three weeks to the day marking his legacy major league debut, his rousing return to Houston in the midst of Father’s Day weekend. The rightfully aligned cosmos would command no other way. With mom, dad, siblings, family and friends all dizzy and relishing in his wake. With St. Thomas President Fr. James Murphy, CSB extending the Eagle connections and bellowing the Canadian national anthem Saturday afternoon.

Cue the Disney cameras.

Blue Jay no. 8 quickly stepped into the batter’s box to lead off. He flashed the patented Biggio two-handed finish swing that propelled Craig to 3,060 career hits, the swing that for 20 years prompted chants echoing throughout the rafters of the Astrodome and then the downtown pleasure palace.

BIG-GI-O! BIG-GI-O! BIG-GI-O!

The similar but low-wattage response for Cavan was not nearly as thundering nor unanimous. After striking out his first two at-bats against Gerrit Cole, Biggio connected with a pitch in the fifth inning and drove it off the wall in center field for his first career double driving home the only two Blue Jays runs of the game.

Biggio the Elder could only simmer in satisfaction. He has scrutinized Cavan seemingly through every pivot since the playgrounds from the vantage point of father, face of the franchise, St. Thomas coach, scout, talent evaluator, mentor, confidant - arming him with a low-maintenance left-handed batting stroke designed to sustain consistency. Nowhere in the arsenal, not once, the hint of self-indulgence, rather the continued joy of one who still plays with the insouciance of a child in a pickup game.

Biggio projects as a prominent prospect. He primarily patrols second base but started moonlighting this year as an outfielder while tearing up Triple-A pitching.

His power paired with versatility, baseball IQ and instincts demanded a late May elevation to the biggest of shows. In his first 20 games, Cavan manned second, first, right and left field. After his three-day frenzied reunion he smashed two home runs in a Monday night defeat to the Los Angeles Angels after a two-homer bash four games prior at Baltimore. Cavan has long carried that unmistakable surname with class and humility as he crafted for his big league profile. He and Conor (who was drafted by the Astros in 2015) grew up with a batting cage in their backyard. During Astro homestands, Craig religiously picked them up from St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School and traveled straight to Minute Maid Park for the pre-game batting practice. The kids would then convene at the concrete bunker of a batting cage in the bowels of the stadium. They would hammer off the tee and romp around the space, only retreating if an Astros bench player came to get ready for a pinch-hitting at-bat. And their attention would of course veer to the nearby bubble-screen TV when dad took turns at home plate.

On Friday, June 29, 2007, the teenage Biggios were in the Minute Maid funhouse rocking full Astros game gear, this time joined in a prime seating section with their mother and sister among 42,537 poised for history. That was the evening Craig joined immortals in the 3,000-hit club becoming the 27th player all-time after ripping a seventh-inning RBI single to center field off Colorado’s Aaron Cook to collect his third hit of the night.

In 2015, the Biggio band was assembled in Cooperstown, New York for Craig’s career coronation - the first home-grown Astro voted into the hallowed Hall of Fame. He earned his place traveling a distinct journey that demanded the amazing transitions from catcher to second base to center field, covering three of the four up-the-middle defensive positions. Forgotten is his seamless recovery from surgery in 2000 to repair the torn ACL and MCL ligaments of his left knee. The inevitable and ultimate salute was to a triumphant big league tenure fueled by an insatiable drive with equal devotion to family and faith. “Being a parent and a dad is the most important thing I’ll ever do,” Biggio says.
The Biggio brood was in full tow to Toronto when Cavan received his major league marching orders. They were prominently positioned behind the third base dugout to witness his opening night which netted two strikeouts in three at-bats in a 6-3 loss to the San Diego Padres. More significantly, Biggio and Vladimir Guerrero Jr. became the first-ever sons of Hall of Famers to perform together on the same team. Twenty-four hours earlier, Cavan was a Buffalo Bison in a Triple-A game in front of 7,965 at Frontier Field, home of the Rochester Red Wings.

In the Sunday afternoon series finale with the Padres, Biggio drilled a second-inning single in his seventh Blue Jay plate appearance for his breakthrough hit. And merely a prelim for his big bang theory two innings later.

Biggio put barrel on the ball, the balance in his feet, his hips working in sync, and blasted a towering solo smash to the right field upper levels of Rogers Centre sending a 1-2 pitch 405 feet to become the first St. Thomas Eagle to homer in the major leagues.

Cavan is progressing on pace after the Blue Jays drafted him in the fifth round in 2016 following a standout stay at Notre Dame. His professional promise soared in 2018 when he bombed 26 home runs with 23 doubles while driving in 99 runs in 132 games. He was named the Eastern League MVP on the Double-A New Hampshire team that won the championship.

Biggio built on that success this spring with Buffalo, slashing six home runs, seven doubles, a triple and 26 RBIs for the Bisons while gloving five positions.

Craig grew up in Kings Park, New York, a middle-class commuter town on the north shore of Long Island. He was a multi-sport schoolboy star, the Astros first-round selection out of Seton Hall in June 1987 and in the majors to stay a year later. His was a legendary career marque filled with record-smashing and All-Star acclaim through 2,850 games. The guy simply would do whatever needed to be done. Burning at the bedrock was a passion stoked by a principle supplied by his own dad, Lee.

You finish what you start.

It is unusual for the son of a standout athlete to equal, much less surpass, a father’s supreme accomplishments. The pressures can be enormous even with talent and deep desire prominently in play. Cavan’s encouraging Blue Jay launch could eventually forge a fantastic big league Biggio twosome. But what matters most within their souls is that the two are simply and profoundly, father and son.
BUILDING CHAMPIONS FOR LIFE

Whether it’s on the field, in the classroom or on the job - our students and graduates excel in every competitive area. Our commitment to academic excellence, faith, and service means making a difference in the world and building champions for life.


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eagle FIGHT

► 50 history calls eagles answer
► 58 josh wolf ’19 - start spreading the news
► 54 aqua eagles ride the wave
► 66 peyton matocha ’19 - patience proves a virtue
Thomas was seeded eighth but promptly unleashed a pair of shot puts heard all around Waco. He and Thomas then stepped into the ring for a pair of shot puts. Thomas put up 50 points from the field events and get their total over 90. "I knew we could put up 50 points from the field events and get our total over 90," coach Nathan Labus said.

The shock and awe heave shoved him to an unexpected third-place result. Carter then applied a simple physics equation of angel and velocity to muscle a throw of 50-08.25 for his second gold medal in a matter of minutes. The tide had turned and was ready to engulf. The wave of Eagle momentum swept to the pole vault pit where a personal record from Ian Wheeler '19 (13-6) carved a 2-3 finish with Luke Pane '20 (12-0).

St. Thomas had not so suddenly soared to second place with all eyes riveted on the high jump area for the climactic event. The Eagles needed 14 points to forge a tie and 15 to seize a title thought to be well beyond their collective reach. Dayton Matocha ’19, the 2017 state champion and two-time state runner-up, and Alex Rivero ’20 represented the last hopes.

Wheeler reconvened with his teammates following his pole vault finale. "We were all doing the math. I think Dayton knew he was going to win. He wasn’t concerned with the scoring. He wasn’t going to lose." Matocha had arrived at the stadium around 1:30 p.m. Expecting to compete within 90 minutes only to have the event’s start time later delayed nearly two hours. Navigating the waiting game presented the day’s first sizable obstacle to overcome.

"I think one of my strengths is boosting the morale of the guys around me and they brought it big when it was time to go," Matocha says. "Then all I needed was about 30 minutes to be primed for what I had to do. I live for that kind of moment." Assistant coach Joe Malouf serves as a confidant in the event as well as a long-time Matocha family confidant. "Coach approached (Alex and me) and said if one of you finishes first and one of you places...we’re state champs," Matocha says. "He knows me. I don’t get rattled. That did nothing but put a smile on my face. When competition is staring me down...that’s what excites me."

The official announcement soon reverberated throughout the near empty confines. The 6A state champions...St. Thomas High School.

A delightfully dizzy conclusion in the way Howard Finster’s paintings or Sonny Landreth’s slide guitar solos are enjoyable. "Peyton can handle the pressure. He has just a great desire to win regardless of the circumstances," Labus says.

And the crescendo moment was so near to never materializing. Matocha had maneuvered into the spring fresh from National Signing Day commitment to the University of Miami after a record-smashing football season set the standard for which all future Eagle quarterbacks will be measured. His intent was to fixate the focus on training for his summer entry to The U, until a not so subtle motivational nudge from his sister Kirby (St. Agnes Academy ’16 and a high jumper at Texas A&M) pushed him fateful back to the track.
“She sat me down and said I don’t really care what you want ... you’re going to jump,” Matocha says.

Malouf was equally emphatic. “I told him the team needs you and this is your last hurrah. Go out with another state championship and leave a legacy. Obviously, he cared deeply about his school and his team.”

Matocha believes to be “blessed for what I was able to contribute to our school this last year. St. Thomas has done so much for me. I’ve developed as a person and a student as well as an athlete. There’s so much pride in what the last four years have meant to me. To give back is what really matters most.”

In claiming the title in the 14th season under Labus’ steady leadership, St. Thomas enjoyed an outrageous 62-2 edge in field-event points. Every last drop of contribution from depth spread throughout the roster was required to produce the program’s second state triumph in four years.

Juan Vasquez ’19 recovered from a fall injury that wiped out his final cross country season and ran personal records for valuable third and fourth place finishes in the 1600 (4:35.6) and 800 meters (2:00.04). Four dual-sport athletes teamed for fifth in the 4x100 relay - Hunter Cheek ’19 (Incarnate Word football), Dylan Dixon ’19 (Navarro College football), Wheeler (Howard football) and Brandon Hondros ’19 ripped a 43.87 to keep the Eagles within reach.

Even Wheeler’s nondescript sixth in the 100 meters (11.16) was two slots ahead of his seed and worth three points that proved essential at the end.

“This is so apropos given how our track team is truly emblematic of what defines St. Thomas,” athletic director Mike Netzel says. “Taking so many different types of individuals, jumpers, hurdlers, runners, throwers, vaulters - a complete mix of talent, speed and strength all coming together in a unified effort to complete the championship result. This group represents a wide variety of personal backgrounds, complementary skills and single purpose. That’s the fabric that is St. Thomas.”

Two nights before the meet Labus and Malouf had assembled the team, crunched the projected numbers and laid out the law of the land.

‘We went to all our guys and told each one of them ... this state championship comes down to you ... and you ... and you ... all the way down the line,” Malouf says. “Everyone scoring and not trying to do more than what you’re capable but absolutely producing your best. They knew what was expected of them.”

The unassuming Labus marveled that “this was a team accomplishment in absolutely every respect. I’m very fortunate to have a coaching staff that emphasizes the technical aspects of each event. We can’t rely on speed. In the field, the technique is a premium and that’s where we excel. That’s where we won it.”

In 2016, Malouf’s son Landon ’16 (Texas A&M) provided the irresistible force behind the Eagles dramatic run to the state throne. One of the most versatile and acclaimed track competitors to wear the Red & White racked four individual championship performances, his dynamo swirl of results proving to be the catalyst for the program’s first state triumph since 2005.

The track and field encore was the 103rd state prize in the rich and storied history of Eagle Athletics and the second in the academic year following a first-ever for Eagle Swimming. The crown is the 17th since Netzel was named athletic director in 2008 - including four in rugby (2009, 2011-13), four in baseball (2010, ’11, ’14 and ’17), three in wrestling (2011-13), two in basketball (2008 and 2011) and one in golf (2012), with Labus the one constant as the senior member within the Eagle coaching ranks.
Shane Williams ’19 collected valuable second and third-place individual finishes and anchored two dramatic relay victories including the title-clinching, final event as Eagle Swimming seized the TAPPS Division I state swimming championship – the program’s first-ever state crown in the second season with head coach Donna Skorupinski.

St. Thomas set the tone for history early as Williams (school record 21.98) tag-teamed with Gabriel Lenz ’19 (22.39) for a 2-4 result in the 50 yard freestyle and later paired with Sebastian Ortiz ’20 (51.02) for 3-6 in 100 free.

In the first of two tight-tick relay wins, Williams contributed the anchor kick in the 200 free with Ortiz, Dylan Michaels ’21 and Lenz (school record 1:29.31) to out-touch perennial powerhouse El Paso Cathedral at the wall by the slimmest of sub-second margins.

The championship deciding stage was then set for Williams who responded with the most clutch swim of his celebrated Eagle career. He stood on the starting block and experienced a percussive adrenaline surge, his mind absolutely hell-bent on the winner take all result.

Williams again followed Ortiz, Michaels and Lenz into the water and applied a Phelpsian will to claim the 400 free by less than two seconds in an Eagle record 3:17.07. He edged out a Cathedral competitor who had previously defeated him in an individual race. For the victory. And the team title.

“I had worked my swimming life for that moment,” Williams said in closing out his eighth straight winning relay without a miss. “I wasn’t the least bit nervous or anxious … just another race … instincts took over … and I was taking that leg and we were taking the championship.

“When I touched the wall and saw the number one next to St. Thomas, I started crying. It felt like a Disney movie. Whatever I could have imagined would not have been better than real life.”

Fueled by the scorching relay results the Eagles racked 291 points and denied Cathedral (283) the state championship for the first time since 1990. St. Thomas also outpaced Plano St. John XXIII (203), Awty International (181), The Village School (174), San Antonio Antonian College Preparatory (145) and Dallas Bishop Lynch (138).

The versatile Eagles leveraged superior depth throughout the competition at the Mansfield ISD Natatorium.

Hunter Nguyen ’12 teamed with Josh McLean ’22, Patrick Pham ’21 and Carrick Brogan ’22 to take fourth in the 200 medley relay.

Michaels swam fourth in the 500 yard free (5:06.24) and sixth (1:50.80) behind Ortiz’s third (1:50.08) in the 200 free. Lenz packed more points with a fifth in the 100 butterfly (54.96).

Other notable results include ...

» McLean 11th (2:12.78) in the 200 individual medley
» Nguyen 10th (23.91) and Brogan 13th (24.29) in the 50 freestyle
» Nguyen 8th (1:05.57), Griffin Greaney 9th (1:05.86) and McLean 14th (1:08.75) in the 100 breaststroke
» Patrick Greaney 21st (59.58) and Pham 14th (1:00.70) in the 100 butterfly
» Ethan Armenta 20th 11th (59.31) and Isaac Wolf 20th 12th (54.25) and Aiden Bralinsky 20th 15th (56.35) in the 500 freestyle

The 102nd state championship in the rich history of Eagle Athletics comes as Eagle Swimming continues its recent surge of success. In 2018, St. Thomas posted a convincing second-place finish at TAPPS State matching the program’s previous best-ever showing.

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RED AND WHITE READY TO FIGHT

St. Thomas announces its ambitious 2019 football schedule that includes two generational series, four matchups with UIL programs, an equal split of 10 home-and-away games and an October travel date to San Antonio.

AUG. 30 • AT STRAKE JESUIT
After hosting Strake Jesuit twice in four years at NRG Stadium, the home of the Houston Texans, the Eagles return to Clay Stadium to open the 2019 season. Eagle Football holds the overall advantage in the all-time series 29-25-1 including four victories in the previous six meetings.

SEPT. 6 • NEEDVILLE
The opener at Hotze Field inside Granger Stadium will be the return date of a home-and-home set following the first-ever encounter. The Eagles full frontal offensive attack was in absolute display in 2018 behind 573 total yards and six touchdowns from quarterback Peyton Matocha '19 (University of Miami).

SEPT. 13 • AT KINKAID
The inner city private school programs will meet for the fifth time in six years. The series was interrupted in 2017 by the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey. Eagle Football posted three consecutive season-opening knockouts over the Falcons by a combined margin of 109-51 before Matocha’s 2018 onslaught of 489 total yards and eight touchdowns.

SEPT. 20 • STAFFORD
The Eagles will return home for the first leg of its only two-game homestand of the season and aim to duplicate their 2018 success over Stafford. Matocha took part in all four Eagle touchdowns including a stunning 98-yard connection with receiver Hunter Cheek ‘19 (University of Incarnate Word). And a revitalized defense delivered drive-killing sacks, game-changing turnovers and two essential fourth-quarter stops in a 28-21 win.

SEPT. 27 • CEDAR HILL TRINITY CHRISTIAN
The two programs will engage for the third consecutive year with Cedar Hill Trinity Christian fresh from an undefeated season and back-to-back TAPPS Division II state championships. Previously, Pro Football Hall of Fame Class of 20192.10-21, Sanders has served as the team’s offensive coordinator. The 2017 stare-down at Hotze Field inside Granger Stadium saw three lead changes in the second half after the Eagles relinquished a 10-point advantage. Thunder-foot kicker Jacob Manley ‘18 had his final-play field goal attempt from 33 yards blocked to seal a 28-27 defeat.

OCT. 4 • AT CHINA SPRING
The Eagles will travel on the first Friday of October to complete the first year of its home-and-home set.

OCT. 11 • TOMBALL CONCORDIA LUTHERAN
The Eagles will open district competition at Hotze Field inside Granger Stadium. Last season Matocha continued his season-long assault with four touchdown passes while workhorse running back Ian Wheeler ‘19 bullied for 226 yards and two scores. Eagle Football built a commanding 28-0 edge and was never threatened in a 42-27 victory.

OCT. 18 • AT SAN ANTONIO ANTONIAN COLLEGE PREP
The final district road game of the season will take Eagle Football to San Antonio. In 2018, St. Thomas secured a weather-shortened 28-14 victory with Wheeler following his career-best game with two first-half touchdowns including a 62-yard jolt to the end zone to break a second-period tie.

OCT. 25 • SAN ANTONIO CENTRAL CATHOLIC
The Eagles will conclude their home slate with a contest that has pivoted from non-district to district competition since 2017. Eagle Football owns consecutive head-to-head wins. The return to Bob Benson ‘66 Stadium in San Antonio featured the most complete effort of 2018 - a 49-21 bodyslam that included an offensive tsunami of sustained touchdown drives and quicksilver scoring strikes and a suffocating defense that set the big-play tone with its first touchdown of the season for the first points of the game.

NOV. 8 • AT ST. PIUS X
Following an open date, the Eagles will conclude the regular season with the clash that has traditionally determined at least a share of the district championship. In 2018, Matocha put on a dazzling display of talent, skill, precision, will and want with seven touchdowns including four in the third quarter when Eagle Football seized control to rally for a stunning 52-49 shootout to reclaim the district crown, a fifth in seven years. In the stretch dating to 2011, Eagle Football enjoyed five straight head-to-head wins and six victories in seven games.

2019 ST. THOMAS FOOTBALL SCHEDULE
(home games bolded)
Aug 30 @ Strake Jesuit 7:00 p.m.
Sept 6 Needville 7:00 p.m.
Sept 13 @ Kinkaid 7:00 p.m.
Sept 20 Stafford 7:00 p.m.
Sept 27 Cedar Hill Trinity Christian 7:00 p.m.
Oct 4 @ China Spring 6:30 p.m.
Oct 11 Tomball Concordia Lutheran 7:00 p.m.
Oct 18 @ SA Antonian College Prep 7:00 p.m.
Oct 25 SA Central Catholic 7:00 p.m.
Nov 1 off week
Nov 8 @ ST. Pius X 7:00 p.m.
The 53rd overall selection carried a bonus slot value of $1.37 million (each pick in the first 10 rounds of the Draft has an assigned financial number). Wolf was the eighth high school arm taken after a run on pitchers began mid-way in the first round that resulted in eight grabbed in 12 picks.

The 6-foot-2 Wolf vaulted into elite consideration during the spring with an uptick in velocity to upper-90 mph with an overmatching curveball after touching 89-92 during the 2018 summer showcase circuit. He struck out 126 in 69 innings during his stellar summer showcase circuit. He struck out 126 in 69 innings during his stellar summer showcase circuit. He struck out 126 in 69 innings during his stellar summer showcase circuit. He struck out 126 in 69 innings during his stellar summer showcase circuit. He struck out 126 in 69 innings during his stellar summer showcase circuit. He struck out 126 in 69 innings during his stellar summer showcase circuit. He struck out 126 in 69 innings during his stellar summer showcase circuit. He struck out 126 in 69 innings during his stellar summer showcase circuit. He struck out 126 in 69 innings during his stellar summer showcase circuit. He struck out 126 in 69 innings during his stellar summer showcase circuit. He struck out 126 in 69 innings during his stellar summer showcase circuit. He struck out 126 in 69 innings during his stellar summer showcase circuit. He struck out 126 in 69 innings during his stellar summer showcase circuit. He struck out 126 in 69 innings during his stellar summer showcase circuit. He struck out 126 in 69 innings during his stellar summer showcase circuit.

What MLB Pipeline says:

"We couldn't be more excited for Josh and what he has upcoming." The Mets and vice president of scouting Tommy Tanous acknowledged Wolf owns the skills necessary to play in the major leagues while offering the opportunity to prove he also possesses the drive to exploit them.

Wolf is entering a player development phase that is heavily weighted and influenced by pitch-tracking analytics to accentuate an individual's strength. TrackMan and the tech evolution have exploded as the unmistakable changing force in a data-intensive diamond world where four-seam fastballs and high spin rates are all the rage. The progressive environment where seemingly every movement is critiqued through slow-motion video captured by high-speed cameras is unlocking a pitcher's lethal weapon repertoire and favors the intellectually curious athlete which perhaps plays to Wolf's advantage.

Those changes have increased the velocity and movement on his fastball... His curveball is residing in the low 80s with 12-6 break when he stays on top of it... Though Wolf's changeup isn't as effective as his other two pitches, he'll flash some solid ones with fade and tumble. He already shows the aptitude to work both sides of the plate and all four quadrants of the strike zone. He still has room to add another 15 pounds and scouts rave about his makeup.

Wolf's draft night thrillarama was only two weeks and two days removed from his St. Thomas commencement exercise. In November 2017 a sudden recruiting swirl resulted in his verbal commitment to Texas A&M and Wolf confirmed his pledge on the 2018 November National Signing Day. The Mets and vice president of scouting Tommy Tanous acknowledged Wolf owns the skills necessary to play in the major leagues while offering the opportunity to prove he also possesses the drive to exploit them.

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Wolf opened the state playoffs one walk away from a six-inning perfect game in a dominant 10-0 victory over Austin St. Dominic Savio at Fr. Wilson Field. He was in absolute command striking out 11 and allowing no base runners after issuing a five-pitch walk to open the game. A double play closed the first inning and Wolf cruised through 67 pitches. He struck out six straight batters from the second through fourth innings and then blowtorched four of the last six hitters to complete the no-hitter.

Wolf followed in the best-of-three series opener against San Antonio Antonian and pitched to within one out of his second straight complete-game victory in a 4-3 verdict. The Eagles clinched the series 4-2 in the win or go home showdown to eliminate Antonian for the third straight postseason.

Wolf’s state tournament masterpiece was reminiscent of the 2018 state Final Four in Austin.

In his first career playoff start, Owen Meaney ’18 (Texas) allowed Dallas Parish Episcopal only two base runners after a leadoff single to start the state semifinals. He struck out seven of the last nine batters and 12 for the game, finishing with a one-hit shutout and brought home the game’s only run with a fifth-inning single. The following night Meaney registered three RBIs in an overwhelming five-inning 15-1 runaway rout over Beaumont Monsignor Kelly Catholic to capture the 24th state title in program history and fourth since 2010.

The knock over district foe TCL was the second in six years on the state tournament stage. In the 2014 championship final, Matthew Ashbaugh ’16 measured beyond his years. The sophomore allowed one run and four hits and retired TCL in order in the first, third, fourth, sixth and seventh innings. Ben Condara ’14 (Loyola New Orleans) delivered Rawlings Elam ’14 (Loyola New Orleans) for the most important deuce of the Eagles season - the deciding run in the season’s final at bat for a 2-1 verdict that delivered the school’s third state title in five years.

The Drive For 25 now continues.
The demolition was near complete.

A season-long series of opponents had been reduced to a collapsed building. Just a hole surrounded by broken bricks and mortar strewn all over the road.

Eagle Soccer stepped back from this smoldering wreckage unabated, all but undefeated, not the least bit satisfied by the most scintillating - and winningest - season in school history.

But two more had to fall to the St. Thomas wrecking ball for the young, restless and relentless Eagles to end a near four-decade pursuit of the program’s second state championship.

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The Eagles staged a commanding 25-3-2 season, scorching the Atlantic Sun Conference.

The only other blemishes were 1-1 ties with John Cooper in late November and then at Marble Falls January 4.

And perhaps most stunningly, until the season’s less than grand finals, the Eagles did not trail except for a double dose of 1-0 regular-season defeats, first to El Paso Cathedral in the Houston High School Showcase in late November and then at Marble Falls January 4 in the Temple Tournament.

Repeat – never trailed in 27 games.

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In 2018, the Eagles cruised to a 22-5-2 record crashing the postseason Final Four and claiming the district crown, both for the first time since 2008. They scaled a victory plateau that produced 63 wins and only 12 losses in 82 games.

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In 2018, St. Thomas enjoyed a cathartic 4-0 knockout in the state semifinals to complete their almost four-month bulletproof spree that produced 63 wins and only 12 losses in 82 games.

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Three essential contributors to the recent resurgent Eagle Football season are among the latest St. Thomas scholar-athletes to continue their careers at the collegiate level.

Record-smashing quarterback Peyton Matocha ’19, reliable receiver Hunter Cheek ’19 and versatile two-way dynamo Dylan Dixon ’19 celebrated the February National Signing Day among an enthusiastic wave of family, friends and supporters in the St. Thomas Hall of Honor.

Matocha cemented his verbal commitment to the University of Miami. Cheek officially sealed a position with the University of Incarnate Word of the FCS Southland Conference and Dixon to Navarro College.

“I’m grateful for you … thankful for you … honored to be your athletic director,” Mike Netzel said. “These are scholar-athletes who embody what makes St. Thomas special. Here you have to perform in the classroom before you reach the field. These unselfish individuals were also involved with multiple varsity sports. It made them better and made our programs more successful. It’s been rewarding to see these three mature as players and people, particularly this previous football season, keeping the resilience and bringing so much joy to our community.”

Cheek and Dixon were frequent Matocha targets during the 2018 offensive assault that produced thrills, chills and a robust 42 points per game. They were driving forces in an Eagle revival tour that reclaimed the district title and posted the program’s first playoff victory since 2015 while reaching the TAPPS 6A regional finals. The trio combined for 68 connections and eight touchdowns, including Cheek’s 98-yard catch-and-run against UIL Stafford for the longest scoring play in program history.

At midseason, Dixon transitioned to impact a depleted defensive secondary and was nominated by the Touchdown Club of Houston for Ironman of the Year while Matocha was recognized as the private school co-Offensive Player of the Year. His staggering senior send-off suggested life imitating PlayStation – a single-season school-record 3,697 passing yards with 35 touchdowns plus 787 rushing yards and 14 more scores.

Cheek concluded 2018 with 48 receptions for 767 yards and four touchdowns and now somewhat follows his father’s athletic path. Zach Cheek played baseball for UIW in 1997-98.

“I grew up on the campus … attended a lot of baseball games … really got comfortable with the school,” Cheek said. “They are putting someone who works hard … who is determined … not afraid of challenges … who will give their all … on the field and in the classroom. Growing up around the game I just love football … the grind … the ethic that is required to overcome obstacles and adversity. That’s a quality that will serve me well throughout my entire life.”

Before the 5-9 Dixon flipped to defense he made 20 catches for 340 yards and four scores. He has embraced the “underdog” role that his mighty mite physique suggests and doesn’t anticipate changing the mindset as he prepares to advance to the next level.

“God has given me this opportunity and it’s up to me to take full advantage of it,” Dixon said. “I’ve always carried that edge that pushed me to persevere. I’m disciplined and I can ball so I’ll just continue to work like I always have and good things will happen.”

Eagle head coach Rich McGuire acknowledged that National Signing Day “is a great individual accomplishment but this is also very much a team day. There is so much work that takes place that no one sees … reps throwing the ball for Peyton … routes for Hunter and Dylan. And these three were always there helping each other improve … work that creates the culture of team that they have done this together. That is invaluable and contagious inside a program. I am proud to have played a role in their development and am so excited to see how their careers move forward.”
PATIENCE PROVES A VIRTUE

Peyton Matocha ’19 has long performed as if born for the storm, commanding a calm in the tsunami of defensive duress essential to football’s mission critical position. As if he were somehow destined for a future in the swirl of Hurricanes. Matocha’s unquestioned inner quality became ever more valuable throughout his scintillating senior season, as the weeks passed and the yardage totals pinballed and records were erased with equal measures of poise, purpose and flamboyance. And the collective take from college football masterminds near and far for the future was not nearly as torrid as Matocha’s scorching Friday night assaults. Frigid even. But Matocha simply sought to peer through the proper prism to ponder his potential. He never wavered and proceeded as he had through three consecutive seasons as the Eagles’ starting quarterback taking direct snaps from the shotguns - survey the landscape, narrow the options and instinctively select the correct choice while in the frantic turbulence of chaos and confusion. “Throughout this process, I believed that God had a plan for me,” Matocha says. “And I’ve always believed that the only person who can stop me is myself. I was never going to allow that to happen.” What did happen, just as the National Signing Day approached to cap the coast-to-coast carnival of frenzied football recruiting, was Matocha hiding in plain sight. And primed to pounce was a new coaching regime with running orders to restore a dynasty in decline. Matocha signed his National Letter of Intent with the University of Miami as the No. 24 dual-threat prospect in the 247Sports composite rankings. The mutual interest spiked two weeks after Manny Diaz was announced on December 30 as the new head coach when longtime offensive guru Dan Enos joined the staff as coordinator and quarterback coach. He spent the previous season tutoring Alabama sensation Tua Tagovailoa into the Crimson Tide’s fourth consecutive College Football Playoff title game and was slotted to become the new offensive chief for Nick Saban with a deep stable of talented Tide game-breakers. Instead, Enos opted to join Diaz in a rebuild at Miami. In mid-January Enos quickly connected with Matocha with a scholarship offer. After his official visit to Coral Gables, Matocha responded with his verbal commitment to the Hurricanes. “As soon as (Enos) got to Miami he said I was the first guy on his board,” Matocha said. “He called me right after he got the job and came to watch me throw to make sure I had what he was looking for. I guess I checked all the boxes.”
I’ve always believed that the only person who can stop me is myself. I was never going to allow that to happen.

There is not a better developer of quarterbacks in the country to help me get to where I want to be,” Matocha says. “There’s no doubt I’ll be pushed in a way I never have before given the quality of players already in that program. I can’t wait to get started.”

Throughout the campaign, with execution as surgical as it was explosive, Matocha played majordomo to a crew who proved to be difference-makers in different moments. The offensive onslaught included:

- 435 yards and four touchdowns in a 52-32 scoring spree against Plano John Paul II that produced the first St. Thomas playoff victory since 2015.
- 336 yards and four touchdowns that closed the season and his career in a 42-15 defeat against the Dallas Bishop Lynch in the TAPPS 6A regional final.
- 489 total yards and eight touchdowns against Kinkaid.
- 575 total yards and six touchdowns against UIU Needville.
- 362 total yards and three touchdowns against UIU China Spring.
- 445 total yards and four touchdowns in the 28-21 win at UIU Stafford.
- 384 total yards and four touchdowns in the 42-27 victory at Tomball Concordia Lutheran to launch the district race.

At season’s end, Matocha had incited a raucous Eagle resurgence, a revival tour that posted the first St. Thomas playoff victory since 2015. All while rocking a robust .42 points per game. The final high school salute was recognition by the Touchdown Club of Houston as the private school Co-Offensive Player of the Year.

And now for Matocha is the move to Miami. Peyton the realist understands the next path to stardom, let alone starting, can be circuitous, and college prep pedigree does not necessarily correlate with campus gridworld success.

But he advances undaunted while still humble and hungry, confident in applying his full fixed focus on the future, the next stage in continuing his career however that opportunity best presents itself.

“I truly appreciate my family and the coaches for all their sacrifices that have helped me reach this position,” Matocha says. “I’m blessed. I couldn’t ask for a better situation.”
With every end, a new beginning. Twelve St. Thomas scholar-athletes across six sports are the latest Eagles to relish their childhood dreams becoming a starburst reality.

The opportunity born of skill, passion and serendipity to extend athletic careers to the collegiate level came during the spring for Tucker Alch ’19, Zach Blice ’19, Alex Jacobs ’19, Anderson Kopp ’19, Jack Schell ’19, Ian Wheeler ’19 and Shane Williams ’19.

And previously during the academic year when quarterback Payton Matocha ’19 signed with the University of Miami, pitcher Josh Wolf ’19 with Texas A&M, center fielder Brody Logsdon ’19 with Sam Houston St., receiver Hunter Cheek ’19 with Incarnate Word and receiver Dylan Dixon ’19 with Navarro College.

Six Eagles advanced to Division I programs and the overall total for Eagle Athletics increased to 151 since 2012.

Blice to Jacksonville University represents the first Division I soccer commitment from St. Thomas in more than two decades. Even though he wasn’t introduced to the competitive game until his freshman year, Blice blistered an immediate impact with a gut burn to be great, a four-time all-state selection inside the most successful three-year stretch in school history.

Blice’s father Jeff is a member of Angleton High School Sports Hall of Fame after a standout basketball career led him to Sam Houston State University. Two years ago he relocated to Colorado and senior power trader for Xcel Energy, Blice had the option of following and joining a gorilla program in the midst of nine consecutive state championships. But he instead elected to remain in Houston with his mother Danielle, loyal to St. Thomas and his band of brothers, determined to leave a legacy.

“I wanted to show that we could give St. Thomas soccer an identity,” Blice says. “I couldn’t have asked for a better group of teammates and coaches. They were my family. They watched out for me and I watched out for them. I grew up here … became a man here … learned from my mistakes. And now I’m ready to take it to the next level.”

Williams is packing his sweet swimming stroke to Division III Gustavus Adolphus College in Minnesota where his family owns deep ties to the state and region. His laser determenation and unbridled passion that began in youth swim clubs in the Lake Jackson area ignited school records and a first-ever St. Thomas championship in his grand Eagle finale (see page 57).

“I had to take a proactive approach in developing the relationship with the college,” Williams says. “Turns out they needed a sprint freestyler … my specialty … so it’s made to order. This move forward is not so much about ability but the ability to work hard. That’s what has propelled me and will continue to do so. It’s what my parents have instilled. And I wanted a destination that provided first class academics and embraced me as a person the way St. Thomas has. Finding this next challenge is exciting.”

Two-sport standout Ian Wheeler ’18 also ended on an equally rewarding state championship stage where Eagle Track and Field harnessed a mind-numbing comeback in securing the program’s second crown in four years (see page 52). He contributed invaluable points to that effort in the wake of racking nearly 2,000 all-purpose yards as a workhorse running back for Eagle Football and was awarded the 2019 Rev. Carl Mitchell Allnoch, CSB Athletic Memorial Trophy for Excellence in Academics. Wheeler methodically evaluated his available options and ultimately tapped into the wisdom of his grandmother in deciding on Howard University, a historically black university in Washington, D.C.

“She suggested to make the decision based on where I would rather attend and not so much on football,” Wheeler says. “This is a fresh start and I see myself growing in different ways in that environment. It’s one of the most prestigious (HBCUs) in the country (ranked among the top 40 on the Bloomberg Businessweek college rankings). I see this as once in a lifetime opportunity. I’ve had my prayers answered.”

The whirlwind single-season for Anderson Kopp ’19 with Eagle Basketball concluded with a scholarship offer to Lamar University. He struck a particular chord with head coach Ti Price who was an assistant at Tennessee-Chattanooga in the 1990s when Kopp’s father Will was starring on the university’s tennis courts.

“(Price) expects me to earn freshman of the year in the (Southland) conference and be part of the core that takes them back to the NCAA (tournament),” Kopp says. “The style of play … moving without the ball, catch and shoot, pick-and-pop, iso match-ups … plays to my strength.”

Kopp’s arduous journey to upper echelon hoopdom required a fully charge industrial strength GPS. His own promising tennis talent first took him to the Advantage Tennis Academy in Irvine, California. He decided to flip his focus to basketball, opted for home school academics while tutoring under the city’s resident godfather of dribble–drive John Lucas, then bounced to the Wasatch Academy in Utah where an ankle injury forced surgery and prompted a second return to Houston.

With one year of high school eligibility remaining, Kopp enrolled at St. Thomas. The demands included an abrupt transition to not only the rigorous college preparatory experience but also unfamiliar teammates who themselves were adapting to the culture shift of first-year head coach Gary Hall. Yet despite the turbulence Kopp emerged calm, collected, and poised for opportunity.

“My decision to come to St. Thomas couldn’t have played out better,” Kopp says. “I love this school. The academics have me absolutely prepared (for college). And I wouldn’t be this position without coach Hall. His ability to connect with players is his greatest strength. Fighting through the injury … being a part of 25 wins … the team aspect … so rewarding. I’ll never forget how I was welcomed by everyone in this campus community … an outsider here for just one season. Couldn’t have asked for more.”

In four years Alex Jacobs ’19 morphed from wrestling novice to accepting a promising role at Central Michigan. He flushed football after his freshman year, redirected his high octane competitive drive to the mat where he was an important catalyst in a revitalized Eagle Wrestling program that came within one point of the 2019 TADPS state title.

Jacobs rose to a two-time state champion and 2019 all-American at 145 pounds. In February, he dramatically capped his three appearances at Prep Nationals by capping his three appearances at Prep Nationals. Through his upper lip during competition and requiring emergency room treatment only to return and place among the elite performers.

“The chance to compete on the college stage … larger stakes … more awareness of the sport … is really exciting,” Jacobs says. “The individual nature of the sport has a definite appeal for me. There’s a persistence and discipline required that brings out my best. The key is not to overthink and stress … just go out and have fun. But our team success this last season means as much to me as anything.”

Second baseman Jack Schell ’19 and pitcher Taylor Alch ’19 were key contributors to Eagle Baseball earning the TADPS state Final Four for the ninth time in 10 seasons.

Schell was named the 2019 team most valuable player and to the all-state tournament team after St. Thomas reached the state championship final. He’ll continue his career at Division III Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi.

“This has been my dream ever since I started with Bellaire Little League,” Schell says. “I love the game and this chance means so much to me. Everyone looks for that right fit and I knew right away after meeting with the coaches on my visit that Millsaps represented a great opportunity.”

Alch took a decided aim last summer on continuing his career beyond St. Thomas and a number of destinations were in the mix. Once a mutual interest with Division III Catholic University in Washington, D.C. was confirmed, he sought out former Eagles Nolan Lundholm ’16 (2019 second-team all conference) and Eric Moore ’16 for an inside view of the program. A rousing endorsement settled Alch’s decision.

“My decision to come to St. Thomas couldn’t have played out better,” Alch says. “There’s a network of connections for internships all over D.C. I wanted to experience another part of the country and this is an awesome chance to keep playing. It’s really the complete package.”

The collective individual acclaim punctuated a power point within a phenomenal year for the Eagle Athletics that spiked with a pair of state championships, three state runners-up, a second Final Four team and two regional finalists.
The rapid business rise of Patrick Ryan ’99 is largely predicated on a proven principle which has long provided enduring success. Even in the midst of mega-million dollar revenues - never undersell the value of customer service.

So an unexpected avalanche of texts and emails demanded that he clear his calendar in early April, a full front collariding with a surging current of apprehension that something somewhere had flipped sideways.

Until the one by one reveal through his inbox and messaging indicated quite the contrary, that Ryan’s world was, in fact, rocking into a far-reaching stratosphere and the deluge of attention was merely the ready response from colleagues, cohorts, family and friends reaching out to congratulate.
Ryan was selected by Sports Business Journal for its coveted Forty Under 40 Awards, an annual list of 40 executives recognized for excellence and innovation in their careers, all before the age of 40. The elite group represents a broad cross-section of the sports business field, bringing an entrepreneurial spirit to their work in media, at leagues, teams and colleges; as agents, with corporate partners in technology, ticketing and finance, in marketing and sponsorship; in e-sports and in new sectors such as sports betting.

“If the Indians don’t reach that round of the playoffs, I’m probably not here today,” Ryan says. “We likely wouldn’t have had enough capital to keep the business going.”

But in the spring of 2008 Ryan’s confidence was such that he quit at age 24 as one of the youngest national sales team reps with Careerbuilder to devote to a full-time collaboration with Cubero and The Ticket Exchange.

“Our initial goal was to get to $10 million in revenue annually,” Ryan says. “We projected that benchmark would make us sustainable. Now we have many weeks when we do $10 million. We have weeks when we do $50 million. From that perspective, our success appears preposterous.”

“We can’t take credit for the secondary market erupting but we have taken advantage of the digital wave of commerce. From the very beginning, we were progressive, aggressive, and easy to work with. We built to scale to match distribution, connecting teams with platforms. We never viewed StubHub and Vivid Seats and SeatGeek and TickTick as competition. Our motives were to partner and reach new customers, everyone learning from the other, getting smarter together.”

Ryan and Cubero rebranded as Eventellect in 2016 and are relishing a continuing robust roll of exponential revenue growth, identified eight consecutive years by Inc.’s ranking of fastest-growing privately held U.S. companies. Not the sort of prosperity one would casually predict when an Eagle who graduates from the University of Texas strikes forces with a Strake Jesuit Crusader with a finance degree from Texas A&M.

Ryan next fortifies in the ongoing battle between venues and television screens for the spectator’s attention. The competition for consumer dollars has never been more rugged given the growing popularity of digital streaming services making it easier for a potential audience to skip the stadium, the arena or the theater and stay home to binge.

Ryan required roughly a decade to capitalize on the latest consumer trends in the secondary ticket marketplace. While the attention of the coast-to-coast fandom is typically focused on favorite teams or major companies such as Ticketmaster and StubHub, Eventellect has quickly and quietly built a powerful position.

“Working with dozens of professional franchises, Ryan has become a trusted ally on ticket distribution, pricing, sales strategy, and inventory management, in effect becoming a valuable resource. “We’ve seen teams lean on us and seek our guidance, and that’s allowed us to pollinate best practices in a unique way,” Ryan says. “We’ve begun to engage in what I consider true consulting relationships because our goal remains to complement what the teams are doing themselves.”

Eventellect’s supercharged acceleration is staggering. One mammoth example is the nine-figure partnership with the Dodgers brokered in 2018 and believed to be the most valuable-known in the ticketing world, at least in terms of a single team. Ryan says Eventellect “handled about $350 million worth of tickets last year … up from $200 million in 2017 … up from $100 million the year before … up from $50 million.”

Hardly the explosion Ryan anticipated in July 2007 when he teamed with longtime friend Ignacio Cubero on a side venture – $10,000 worth of Cleveland Indians tickets, an investment which armed the pair with plenty of playoff inventory when the team advanced to the American League Championship Series.

The salute from Sports Business Journal allowed Ryan to network with the likes of Boston College Athletic Director Martin Jarmond and Zach Leonsis who oversees content for Monumental Sports Network, the over-the-top digital network operated by Monumental Sports & Entertainment that counts the Washington Wizards, Capitals, Mystics and Valor as part of its portfolio along with the Baltimore Brigade and Capital City Go-Go.

The 20th anniversary of Forty Under 40 also returned a host of previous distinguished honorees such as George Pastolos, among Ryan’s Eventellect partners and the former Rockets and Astros president who played an instrumental role in working with Jim Crane and his group to purchase the Astros in 2011.

The most recent acclaim confirmed to Ryan that Eventellect shares a culture fit “in an ecosystem with like-minded developers intent on growing sports and the fan’s enjoyment while attending sports. When we all engage there’s the confidence that we hold ourselves to certain values and accountability.”

“As the entertainment landscape - Do the experience and cost of attending an event outweigh the convenience of viewing at home?”

“If we do then, how would you explain? I’m ten years removed, still the vibe is in my veins.

Ryan next fortifies in the ongoing battle between venues and television screens for the spectator’s attention. The competition for consumer dollars has never been more rugged given the growing popularity of digital streaming services making it easier for a potential audience to skip the stadium, the arena or the theater and stay home to binge.

The fundamental friction driving the seismic divides across the entertainment landscape - Does the experience and cost of attending an event outweigh the convenience of viewing at home?

“When we launched (in 2006) there wasn’t HD television, Netflix, Amazon Prime, the flexibility of choices,” Ryan says. “Going to a game or concert was a no-brainer. Tickets meant access. Now the in-home options are multiplying every month, plus Toggleg and iPic Theaters.

“We’re on board with very powerful brands and sales forces. Our mission is to continue supporting those structures with subject matter expertise and perspective. Moving forward, the pivot points will be dynamic pricing models, a captivating game-day experience, communal seating and creative promotions.”

Or as Jay-Z would offer from high atop rap Rushmore …

Get your umbrellas out because, that’s when I brainstorm You can blame Shawn, but I ain’t invent the game 2019
Remember St. Thomas in your will or living trust.

So many of our students could not have the St. Thomas experience without the faithful giving of others. If St. Thomas opened doors for you, consider how you can now open doors for others. Join the 1900 Society by including St. Thomas in your will or estate plans and help provide affordable tuition, exemplary instruction and spiritual growth for generations of students to come.

If you remember all the goodness, discipline and knowledge that St. Thomas gave you, then please: Remember St. Thomas.

Remembering St. Thomas in your will or estate plans costs nothing during your lifetime, but will transform the lives of STH men down the road.

Contact
Mr. Mark deTranaltes, ’83, P ’10
Vice President for Advancement
remember@sths.org • 713-341-5557

Like us, follow us, keep up with us! @sthcatholic #mySTH
There is one road that will always remain the same. It’s familiar. It’s comfortable. And it’s destination is somewhere never quite left.

For former Eagles, distant and near, it’s the road home, their home at 4500 Memorial Drive.

And for five luminaries a return in May carried the greatest recognition afforded a St. Thomas scholar-athlete - enshrinement into the institution’s prestigious Sports Hall of Fame.

The latest inductees along with the triumphant 1964 Eagle Football state champions were remembered and revered at a vibrant and supportive ceremony in Cemo Auditorium.

David Benesh ’66
- pitched Eagle Baseball to consecutive state championships in 1965 and ’66, and the 1966 American Legion state title
- two-sport scholar-athlete earning five varsity letters in baseball and basketball while a member of the St. Thomas Club for scholars who maintained a minimum 4.0 grade point average for seven consecutive semesters
- selected by the St. Louis Cardinals in the 1966 MLB Draft but accepted a scholarship to Texas A&M with legendary head coach Tom Chandler
- named 1966 All-Southwest Conference with teammates Bob Long and Dave Elmendorf while leading the Aggies in wins, complete games and a 2.01 earned run average
- in 1970, led the Aggies in appearances with future Los Angeles Dodger Doug Rau
- selected again by the Cardinals in the 1970 MLB Draft
- earned his Bachelor’s in mathematics and then a Master’s of statistics in 1972
- significant professional distinction with Texas Instruments, Mostek and several companies founded with partners and associates
- passed June 23, 2017 at age 69 of natural causes

Benesh was represented by his wife Frances and his son Andrew.

Jerry Koch ’67
- versatile multi-sport scholar-athlete who contributed to the 1966 and ’67 state football champions and the 1967 state basketball finalists
- accepted a football scholarship to attend University of Texas at El Paso
- led Miner freshman in receptions and touchdown passes
- graduated with a degree in engineering
- a registered professional engineer who excelled for nearly 50 years in the construction business in Houston, Baltimore and Washington, D.C.
- active participant in professional organizations such as ASHRAE and ISPE
- currently a senior engineer for JE Dunn Construction in Houston
- active member serving the St. Thomas Alumni Board and St. Cyril of Alexandria Catholic Church where he has conducted pre-Cana marriage seminars and led Eucharistic service
- celebrates 50-year marriage with Margie Koch

St. Thomas is not the only thing in all of our lives but it is the best thing in all of our lives. And when we return to campus for whatever reason, we feel that love. My best friends to this day are my Eagle teammates and classmates. The athletic experience is memorable but there’s so much more ... the love, the friendships, the grace of Jesus Christ ... that’s what rides out front. We followed that 1964 team ... had to rebuild ... quarterback came back from injury ... had a big late season surge ... won a game on penetrations ... repeated as state champs (in 1965) ... just a blessed year.
Jack Laurenzo '68
- two-time all-state selection gaining more than 3,000 rushing yards for Eagle Football
- named 1967 honorable mention all-american by the Chicago News World
- valuable impact presence for 1965 and '66 state champions
- four-time all-state contributor to Eagle Track and Field and two-year letterman for Eagle Baseball
- nine-time varsity letterman while member of the St. Thomas Club for scholars who maintained a minimum four-year grade point average for seven consecutive semesters
- accepted football scholarship to Rice University, then transferred after two years to Boston College where the Eagles finished 9-2 in 1971
- accepted fellowship to study in the Department of Urban Studies and City Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- collaborated with his mother, Ninfa Laurenzo, brother Roland '65 and sister Phyllis Mandola in establishing iconic Ninfa's restaurants brand
- currently a senior executive with broadline food distributor Jake's Finer Foods

I was so enthralled with St. Thomas growing up ... inspired by watching my brother Roland play. I went to my father and told him I wanted to go nowhere else. He said, 'Improve your grades (at then downtown Annunciation Catholic School, the oldest parish in Houston.)' My first true goal in life was to go to school here. And I'm sure if I went to another high school (I wouldn't have been afforded the opportunities I was able to foster through St. Thomas.) I was the only sophomore on our state baseball championship team (1966) ... hit the big bases in a season ... very intimidating to be surrounded by such tremendous talent. I'm still embracing the knowledge but I'm trying to spread it with the goodwill and representing the discipline. And I can't say enough about coach (Jim) Schwarzbach (class of 1955 and Sports Hall of Fame member 2001). I can't say enough and for those of you who know him ... I'm sure can't say what he said (laughter).

André Matthews '85
- electrifying two-time two-way all-state performer and two-year team captain for state champion Eagle Football in 1983 & 84
- named TCL Offensive Player of the Year in 1983 when he gained more than 1,600 yards rushing
- named all-state in 1983 and '84 as both a running back and defensive back
- three-year letterman for Eagle Baseball
- accepted scholarship to Howard University with College Football Hall of Fame head coach Willie Jeffries
- immediate defensive difference-maker at Howard where he helped lead the program to its first Mid-Eastern Atlantic Conference championship and a 9-1 record in 1987
- earned his BBA in finance, master's in education from Texas Southern and is completing his Ph.D in education
- owns more than 30 distinguished years as an acclaimed superintendent, principal and academic administrator in the Greater Houston area

This is for my family and friends ... cannot say enough about you ... wouldn't be here without you. It was that love that I took into education ... that Teach Me Goodness, Discipline and Knowledge that was instilled in me so much. It's how I live ... what I breathe ... who I am. It was started here at St. Thomas ... taught me perseverance ... learned how to sacrifice ... to focus on more than myself ... most importantly learned how to be a good teammate. To this Eagle family ... thank you. You gave me an opportunity ... not just as a student but to become a person who represents that Basilian motto. As you can see at this stage in my life, I'm still embracing the knowledge but I'm trying to spread it with the goodwill and representing the discipline. And I can't say enough about coach (Jim) Schwarzbach (class of 1955 and Sports Hall of Fame member 2001). I can't say enough and for those of you who know him ... I'm sure can't say what he said (laughter).

J.J. Savarino '94
- dynamic three-sport scholar-athlete who earned eight varsity letters within Eagle Athletics
- three-time all-state Eagle Baseball performer who contributed to four consecutive state championships
- established a school record in 1992 for most stolen bases in a season
- three-year letterman for Eagle Basketball and participated in two state tournaments
- versatile four-year letterman at Rice University with College Baseball Hall of Fame and national championship head coach Wayne Graham
- career .300 hitter and teamed with Lance Berkman and Matt Anderson in 1997 on first-ever Rice team to advance to the College World Series
- ardent professional career in technology sales and marketing
- creative director and co-founder of Tijn TV, a digital platform that communicates unique insights about emerging technologies
- founder of Vendor Vines, LLC
- lives in Austin with his wife Sara and two children, Julian and Rose

Savarino was introduced by his nephew, 2019 salutatorian and two-sport scholar-athlete Tuscan, a member of the 1998 to commemorate exceptional Eagle athletic accomplishment while celebrating lifelong excellence consistent with the Basilian motto of Teach Me Goodness, Discipline and Knowledge.

The Class of 2019 joins Richard Kristinik '57, Andrew Locke '03, Jeff McCurry '88, Keavin McDonald '73, Kelly McDonald '78 and Remon Smith '84 from the Class of 2018 ...

Rick Apolski '85, Rick Azios '59, John Braniff '59, Tom Brown '65, Dick Kirtley '57, Danny Newman '75, and John Pizzitola '62 from the Class of 2017 ...

Brandon Caraway '96, John Fisher '74, Marcus (Marc) Jankowski '70, Roland Laurenzo '65, Del Leatherwood '73, Steve Martin '67, Bill Sage '61, Tim Staples '54, Michael Young '66, Larry (Zinz) Zientek '66 and the legendary undefeated 1939 St. Thomas Football Team from the Class of 1939 ...

and Bernard (Nardy) DeGeorge, Jr. '63, Gary Martin '69, George Mehaffey '53, Mike Mulvihill '56, Ted Nowak '70, Jerry Pizzitola '60, Jimmy Raley '62, Bradley Smith '88, Billy Welu '50 and Mark Yokubaitis '70 from the Class of 2015 as the most recent inductees ... increasing the overall membership to 71 individual Eagles.
Generations of Eagles joined with patrons, sponsors and contributors to make the 28th annual St. Thomas Golf Tournament a roaring success at Wildcat Golf Club.

Throughout a wind-blown Monday in April Eagle brothers joined for a wide variety of fairways split, wedges shanked, enormous greens and par-saving putts missed, inevitable wagers placed – and all with many a Macanudo lit.

And once again one of the most thriving alumni groups in Houston teamed with friends and Eagle supporters to generate valuable monies identified for St. Thomas tuition assistance and Eagle Athletics.
One of the wittiest of American musicals, Guys and Dolls remains a rich classic that never skimps on wit or charm, an indelible gem from Broadway’s Golden Age.

Yet St. Thomas Theater Director Dan Green was wise to how his spring 2019 musical would be interpreted in the now and presented a masterclass that could be called How to Make a Classic Production More Accessible to Modern Audiences.
a funny, gaudy, dance-happy revival featuring modern twists on exaggerated expressions and sweeping gestures. “The character movement and presentational theater were larger than life,” Green says. “It took some intense rehearsal to get it right but once our actors reached that full understanding, they did it beautifully.”

The production resuscitated and made relevant for the Netflix generation streetwise denizens created by newspaperman Damon Runyon - louts, touts and their dames, petty thieves, gamblers and grifters with names like Benny Southstreet (Dante Segura ’19), Rusty Charlie (Jacob Lara ’19) and Nicely-Nicely Johnson (Daniel Tran ’19). This was a New York underbelly and chivalric Broadway underworld (“in the devil’s own city on the devil’s own street”) with a double dose of dolls ultimately seeking to save their guys and woo them from their degenerate ways. In one corner was high-rolling Sky Masterson (Carl Collins ’19) dating pious Salvation Army officer Sarah Brown (Caitlyn Gilliam, St. Agnes Academy ’20). And in the next, nightclub queen Miss Adelaide (Suzanna Marbach, Incarnate Word Academy ’19) was paired with lovable scoundrel Nathan Detroit (Daniel Griggs ’19), proprietor of the oldest established permanent floating crap-game in the five boroughs, much to the chagrin of his long-suffering fiancée of 14 years. These were the couples and citizens of Runyonland where trickery turned into love, lies led to marriage and comedy ensued.

Musical director Josh Wilson infused verve and energy that saturated the senses with a nonstop hit-parade of songs from Frank Loesser that included “Luck Be a Lady” and “Sit Down, You’re Rockin’ The Boat.” The leads proved all aces and pumped out more winners than hot slots. In the roles made famous by Marlon Brando and Frank Sinatra in the 1955 film, Collins commanded both the presence and magnetism that truly elevated the Masterson character skyward. His smooth dance moves, unending charm and easy smile resulted in the audience’s ability to disapprove of his actions but adore the person nonetheless. Griggs proved endearing as the ever-scheming Nathan and neatly epitomized the anxiety-driven small-time hustler. He was perfectly partnered by Marbach who supplied the yang to his yin. The gregarious anxious moll Miss Adelaide captured not just the comedy but also the pathos of a woman realizing the proverbial clock tick-tick-ticking away.

The leads about a save-a-soul mission that wanted “to do good on Broadway” burned brash, bright, and adorable at Cemo Auditorium -
“It’s always rewarding to take classic work and put your own mark on it,” Collins says. “There are definite expectations of Sky because he’s familiar and it’s fun to play with it. I didn’t really consult previous videos … wanted to build primarily from the text … brought some grit to that character … more of a contemporary spin.”

Green says with Griggs “you have an actor with great heart. He’s constantly searching for ways to be amused by the story he’s telling himself. I need that component in a comedian … tells me he cares that what he’s relaying to the audience is interesting.”

Griggs says “the frantic nature of Nathan was most appealing to me. He was trying so hard to make the world work when it wasn’t. The relationship with Adelaide shouldn’t have worked. And it did. There were lessons learned that apply to 2019. Women trying to change men and men not wanting to change but once they do it’s all for the better.”

The outstanding choreography of Iris Lacsamana and faculty member Elizabeth Schaeperkoetter was a seamless melange of ballet, jazz and modern that dovetailed with Green’s burnished style. The Addams Family Musical brought some grit to that character … more of a contemporary spin.

Griggs and Collins consistently held the stage with ease in old-style, over-the-top Broadway performances that often declare an actor a very big theater star. The execution was made all the more impressive given the stark contrast to their roles in the Fall 2018 production of Frankenstein when Collins portrayed the Creature and Griggs the role of Frankenstein’s friend and accomplished surgeon, Henry Clerval. 

That’s a tribute to the theater program here at St. Thomas, to have such diverse opportunities, and to be able to work the process as an artist without inhibition,” Collins says. “There was plenty of room for me to fail as the Creature and the same with Sky but you have to explore and step out of yourself … strip the insecurities. Frankenstein was actually the most comfortable I’ve ever been on stage and that experience was invaluable in moving on to Guys and Dolls.”

Green believes the ethos within the department is forever changing the student-actors. Once I see that they are successful in one genre, let’s flip it and see how they react … from Gothic to slapstick vaudeville comedy. Stretch and test performers … have them enjoy not knowing where the process is going to take them … have them enjoy not knowing the next step and discovering the direction of where characters are headed.”

Green has established an expansive program emphasizing a comprehensive knowledge of every aspect of the process, from acting to directing to stage management, with the experience coming together to collaborate. At the bedrock of the steady streams of success is fostering talent and inspiring dreams, nurturing aspiring thespians to follow in the accomplished footsteps of previous St. Thomas stars.

Collins will continue his acting at The Theater School at DePaul University in Chicago. For three years through six St. Thomas productions, he and Griggs delivered tenacious work ethics and what Green calls “great capacities for precision.” The rise from supporting to commanding was firmly rooted in equal measures due diligence and delayed gratification.

“‘My sophomore year in 12th Night, I was a sailor; a musician and a soldier,” Collins said. “My only line was ‘Hut.’ And I said it about 30 times. The process is very humbling. But it supplies the necessary foundation. And when I leave St. Thomas for DePaul, the cycle will continue. I’ll go back to ensembles, the stage manager roles, understanding why that is so necessary.”

Griggs also debuted in 12th Night as a sailor and an understudy for the Sebastian role. “This program absolutely demands commitment before moving into more prominent positions. If you love acting, you learn to love the process. I believed (as a sophomore) I was ready to play Gomez in The Addams Family Musical. But then I quickly saw the reality … there was no way. There’s great satisfaction when you are properly prepared to move it forward.”

For Green, the sustaining culture is simply about “helping the actors get past the hurdles they’re facing to get to the next level. And more often than not, the next level is the next audience. We try to keep everyone in the moment, reviewing and editing, hyper-critical of ourselves in a productive manner because we care about improving - every line, every scene, every show, every year.”
An Evening in Paris
St. Thomas High School Auction & Gala
November 9, 2019

2019 Auction Chairs
Mary Beirne
marybeirne1@att.net

Christine Cummins
cccummins@comcast.net

Catherine Rentz
jkrentz@swbell.net

puttin’ on the ritz

going 10 rounds with rod takacs
As the highest ranking Lord of Discipline (in complete accord with goodness and knowledge), what’s the most outrageously creative albeit untruthful excuse/alibi that sparked your internal bemusement from a guilty party trying in vain to avoid inevitable wrath?

This has actually happened a couple of times. It’s the cheater caught with a sheet that was hours in the making ... intricate detail ... micro-fine print ... conveniently placed to exact information supposedly without detection ... but once he was apprehended during the exam he of course never resorted to using it even though he was caught with the information within view.

You and your five younger sisters attended Mount Carmel. Your sons, Victor and Scott, and daughter Camille followed that lead. But your roles at St. Thomas, first within the faculty and now as the dean of students, continue an extensive family heritage within the Basilian institution. How meaningful to you is that generational relationship with St. Thomas?

It takes on more and more significance the older I become and for this reason - my dad (Victor ’45) always stressed to me the impact this school had on him and specifically his faith formation. He was the son of immigrants from Hungary, Catholic but not staunch practitioners. He said his Catholic faith was instilled mostly by the Basilian Fathers. And that spiritual strength was then passed onto me, and me to my sons and daughter. That’s a powerful connection.

My office was the principal’s office when my father was the senior class president. He and his brother (Paul ’39) ... my mother’s five brothers ... all walked these same hallways. My uncle Jack (Jones ’37) later became a priest. That legacy strikes me often during my day to day duties ... the measure St. Thomas has on young lives. It’s an honor to have the opportunity to influence students in some of the same kinds of ways my father was affected by the Basilians. I’m genuine when I say I’m truly fortunate to be at St. Thomas.

You graduated from the University of Texas in 1974 with a degree in government, an academic pursuit likely periodically sidetracked by visits to Scholz’s, Rome Inn, Armadillo World Headquarters, Hole in the Wall, Dirty’s, Matt’s El Rancho, Armadillo World Headquarters, Barton Springs, Mount Bonnell, Deep Eddy, Broken Spoke and maybe even the Armadillo World Headquarters. What was the signature Austin-tacious experience that didn’t involve final exams or campus uprising?

There were two ... Van Morrison and Bruce Springsteen (center stage at, get ready, the Armadillo World Headquarters). Obviously, both are engaging performers but just as memorable were the bands ... skilled, precise and polished even though the commercial success was still years to come. Phenomenal shows and showmanship. Springsteen bellowed out “The Fever” (never on a commercial release until 1999) ... an absolute showstopper ... incredible nights. Austin has always thrived as a progressive music center. Did you unknowingly happen onto an unknown talent at the time who later exploded on the scene?

As a matter of fact ... Soap Creek Saloon ... way out on Bee Caves Road ... mid-week ... no cover charge ... house band is Paul Ray and the Cobras. I’m there with friends ... small place ... pool tables ... some chairs in front of the stage. Paul Ray was a popular vocalist. The band cranks up and all of a sudden the lead guitar player just absolutely takes over. We’re like, ‘Who is this guy?’ Just a kid ... great command ... could improvise ... stole the crowd. Come to find out years later ... Stevie Ray Vaughn was the real Ray worth remembering from that night.
A couple of years ago you declared an all-time allegiance to the Allman Brothers Band and “the greatest live album in the history of recording... At Fillmore East (1971). If you could conjure one musical act to see perform tonight at its absolute zenith with the primo of prime seating, who is it?

Allman Brothers... without question. And I’m square in front of Duane. The first time I listened to At Fillmore East it was unlike anything I had ever heard... combination of blues, jazz, rock and country... completely fresh, totally inspired and utterly original... remains the gold standard of blues-based rock & roll. Allman on the steel guitar and Dickie Betts dueling off each other... abandoning leads... pioneering guitar harmonies. Regardless of how many times I listen to that release I still marvel of what I know is coming up. And today you have Devon Allman and Duane Betts (sons of legends Gregg Allman and Betts) coming up. And today you have Devon Allman and Duane Betts (sons of legends Gregg Allman and Betts) joining forces. You can hear in them their fathers and also the next generation of funk-blues jam. Pretty cool.

Music appreciation aside, what’s the lasting impact of those undergraduate years in Austin - a young adult carving out his path, professionally. There’s been an awareness to temper radical reactions, factor out the extremes and see both sides of an issue or a problem without a predetermined agenda. Listen first to the multiple perspectives, then formulate a reasoned judgment. That’s a plan that works for me, concerned about public policies and the impact on citizens, rather than solely attentive only to individual wants and needs. And that discovery stayed with me, concerned about public policies and the impact on citizens, rather than solely attentive only to individual wants and needs. And that discovery stayed with me... that college prep is a competitive world moving forward and you have to be ready.

Your father and his brother attended Texas A&M. Your sons are fightin’ Texas Aggies. Victor teaches at St. Pius X and Camilla in the La Porte ISD after graduating from the University of Houston. What are the family ties that bind? The Phoenix Design Group... the accomplished St. Thomas Jazz Ensemble... and the invaluable contributions from the host of Eagle mothers who empower the Basilian Fathers to teach goodness, discipline and knowledge.

And in grand Style Show custom, there is no splendor to match the saritorial struts of president Fr. James Murphy, CSB and his fellow bastion of bespoke, principal Dr. Aaron Dominguez ’96.

Wall played, gentlemen. And you should have seen the shoes.
in memoriam

William O. McCurdy III ’56
April 27, 2019

William F. Pohl III
father-in-law of Patrick Brogan ’87, uncle of Jack Brogan ’18 and Carrick Brogan ’22, December 14, 2018

Joyce Ann Broussard
sister of Jerry Walker ’52, Jack Walker ’55, Robert Walker ’55, and cousin of George Delhomme Jr. ’34, March 12, 2019

Armando Mercado
father of Bryan Mercado ’02, uncle of Carlos Salvatierra ’86 and Rene Salvatierra ’88, January 13, 2019
An Evening in Paris

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