

Alumni & Friends  
**NEWS  
LETTER**

Spring Edition 2024

**INSIDE:**

**Cru Wrestling** ..... Page 1

**May Merriment 42** ..... Page 2

**Crusaders for Life** ..... Page 2

**Student Spotlight** ..... Page 3

**Alumni Spotlight** ..... Page 3

**Hall of Fame** ..... Page 4

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[dwhalen@marquetteacademy.net](mailto:dwhalen@marquetteacademy.net)



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# FOOTPRINTS

## MAHS WRESTLING – **TAKING IT TO THE MAT!**



In its 2023-24 revival season, the Marquette Academy wrestling program has left an indelible mark on the school's athletic history. Led by first-year Coach Trent Lyons, the Crusaders achieved remarkable success, showcasing their talent, determination, and sense of community.

One of the highlights of the season was the team's impressive performance at the conference tournaments, where they placed second. This achievement speaks volumes about the dedication and hard work of the wrestlers, as they battled against tough opponents to secure their position on the podium.

Additionally, the team made waves by qualifying six wrestlers to sectionals, a testament to their skill and tenacity on the mat. This accomplishment reflects the depth of talent within the program and sets a promising precedent for future seasons.

However, perhaps the most memorable moment of the season was the first home duel in school history. The anticipation leading up to the event was palpable, as the team and the school community rallied together to support their Crusaders. The gymnasium buzzed with excitement as fans filled the stands, eager to witness history in the making.

Amidst the electrifying atmosphere, one standout moment stole the spotlight – senior Luke Amicon's first win. Despite never having wrestled before, Luke's decision to join the team as a senior exemplifies courage, trust, and a belief in something greater than oneself. His victory symbolizes the spirit of the Crusaders wrestling program – a testament to resilience, unity, and the power of belief.

Coach Trent Lyons reflects on Luke's journey, stating, "Luke's decision to join the Crusaders wrestling team as a senior without any prior experience is truly inspiring. His trust in the program and desire to be a part of its origin speaks volumes about his dedication and the positive culture we've fostered."

As the season draws to a close, the Marquette Academy wrestling program can look back with pride on its revival year. With a foundation built on hard work, camaraderie, and a commitment to excellence, the future looks bright for the Crusaders.





Scan with your camera to visit the auction website.  
www.bidpal.net/mmm42

**Save the date for Saturday, May 4, for Marquette May Merriment XLII - Happily Ever After!**

At Marquette Academy, education goes far beyond textbooks and classrooms. Marquette has been able to offer our students exceptional academics, strong moral values, athletics and extracurricular programs provided by our outstanding faculty and facility, preparing them for the future. Thanks to the generosity of our alumni, families, parishes, community and businesses, we continue to support our MA students as they work towards their 'happily ever after'. We invite you to support our hard-working students by attending May Merriment, and/or donating to our cause.

**NEW** this year at May Merriment XLII, 'Happily Ever After', we will crown the *Belle of the Ball and Prince Charming!* Monetary voting will determine the winners who will be crowned at the event and win a free ticket to next year's May Merriment! To nominate a Bell of the Ball and/or Prince Charming, contact the Advancement Office by April 1.

Don't miss out on our **\$25,000 Big Cash Raffle!** (With 5 other cash prizes available) Tickets cost \$100. The Early Bird drawing will be held on April 26 for \$1,000. **Stop by the HS campus or call us at 815-433-0125 ext. 1017 or 1018 with questions.**



This year's committee is as follows: (Back row) John & Katie Nelson, Tara & Paul DeMink (Front row) Mike & Karen Obenhin (Honorary).

To purchase dinner and raffle tickets, sponsor or donate, preview and bid on auction items from near or far please visit our auction website: [www.bidpal.net/mmm42](http://www.bidpal.net/mmm42).

Celebrate MMM XLII with us. Don't miss the social event of the year! Marquette Alumni - get your classmates and friends together to support the Crusaders at MMM XVII - 'Happily Ever After'! Contact our office to make a reservation at **815-433-0125 ext. 1018**.

**Student Spotlight** **JENNA Gamons** >>>



Congratulations to Marquette senior, Jenna Gamons, who will be attending Notre Dame University in the Fall of 2024 to study Mathematics. Jenna is very active at Marquette Academy and has certainly made the most of her four years here. She will be graduating this spring with an Associates degree in Science and Arts from the IVCC Running Start Program, along with her high school diploma. Jenna participates in softball and Poms and is a Social Officer for the Crusaderettes. Outside of school, she is a lifeguard and swim coach at the Ottawa YMCA, and a hostess at the Lone Buffalo Restaurant.

*"I have known since 6th grade that Notre Dame was where I wanted to go. I've been a few times over the years for football games, but I didn't formally visit until last September. When I was there, I kept getting this gut feeling like 'Wow, this is where I am supposed to be.'*

*After applying, I got an email saying that there was an update in my application portal, so I clicked the link and a letter popped up on the screen. I saw I had been accepted and just broke down. I don't remember much of the rest of the night after that. All of my friends on Poms and cheer were waiting outside the chapel so when I came out they were all there jumping around and screaming. The rest of the night seems like a blur. Everything that I had been working towards for the last four years had finally paid off and it felt like 1,000 pounds were lifted off my shoulders.*

*Notre Dame was almost too perfect. It was the perfect place to choose. Every other school I had applied to was at least 12 hours away. This was the only one within a 3 hour radius from home. Also, I really value my Catholic education and it was something I wanted to continue throughout college, which made my decision even easier.*

*I can't wait to get there and experience all the school has to offer. I am just excited to see what the future holds! "*



**CRUSADERS** *for Life*

**MAHS students attend ProLife March**

The Marquette Academy High School Crusaders for Life enjoyed a 5-day trip to Washington D.C. for the National March for Life. The trip was filled with visits to beautiful churches, national sites, and opportunities to uphold the dignity of the human person. It was an experience of God's providential goodness. The group is deeply thankful to all who supported the trip by donations and prayers.

Of the many good surprises that came up during the trip were one, Rep. Darin Lahood asked the Diocese of Peoria to share which schools would be in DC for the March, so one of his staff members reached out to us to offer a meeting with him and a staff-led tour of the Capitol. The second surprise was on Saturday evening at a diner, a gentleman came up and asked about our group. He then paid for our meals. His name is Darren Tillis, and he's currently a scout for the Dallas Mavericks. He played for the Celtics in the NBA in the 80's.



**Alumni Spotlight**  
**CLASS OF '73 CELEBRATES 50th REUNION!**

Members of the Marquette class of '73 enjoyed a busy weekend of events last October 6-8 to celebrate their 50th reunion! They gathered Friday evening for happy hour at the Cat's Eye Wine Bar, followed by dinner in the Gold Room at Bianchi's Pizza, and then were honored during half-time of at the varsity football game at Gould Stadium. After the game, they had a good time at the Knights of Columbus. On Saturday, there were remembered during Mass at St. Columba and then enjoyed a special night together at Grand Bear Lodge in Utica. On Sunday several classmates enjoyed brunch at Starved Rock Lodge. The class voted to donate two kneelers for use in the Marquette high school chapel. Thank you to the classmates who traveled many miles to celebrate with us for this special occasion.



**Clubs**

- Student Council; Office: President
- Fine Arts Club
- Key Club; Office: President
- FFA
- Companions in Christ
- ACES Team
- Order of the M
- Crazy Cru
- Science Club
- Prom Committee
- Student Ambassadors
- Robotics Team
- Freshman, Sophomore, Senior Retreat Leader



**Awards**

- National Honor Society (2023-present)
- Phi Theta Kappa (2023-present)
- IVCC Presidential Honors (2022-present)
- Regional Office of Education 35 Student Excellence Award (2023)
- DAR Good Citizens Award (2023)
- Ottawa Sunrise Rotary Student of the Month (October 2023)
- Illinois State Scholar (2024-2025)
- John Ourth Award 2024

# JOHN POCIVASEK Hall of Fame

On Jan. 19, Marquette Academy inducted seven new members, Donny Phillis, Don Debernardi, Bob and Cheryl Durdan, Monsignor Halfacre, Father Kiper, and Steve Kuhn into the John Pocivasek Hall of Fame. The ceremony will take place at the Crusader boys basketball game in Bader Gym. Following the varsity game all were invited to the Knights of Columbus for tenderloins and cake.

- Donny Phillis was a baseball standout, named to the 2005 Illinois High School Baseball Coaches Association All-State Team. He went on to pitch at the University of Illinois-Chicago.
- Don Debernardi was a track and field standout, finishing ninth at the 2005 state finals in the long jump. He also played football and basketball.
- Bob (Class of 1963) and Cheryl Durdan have been Marquette supporters for more than 60 years.
- Monsignor Halfacre has been a fixture at Marquette for more than 30 years and is a strong supporter of the Crusaders athletic teams.
- Father Kipfer has been a strong supporter of Marquette and its athletic teams for 30 years.
- Steve Kuhn has been a Marquette supporter for many years and coached the sophomore boys basketball team for 13 years.



**We Are Marquette!**

Stay up to date with info and events online at [www.marquetteacademy.net](http://www.marquetteacademy.net)



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