

Echo

Committee gives seniors a voice in planning graduation

By Amy Carr

Our Lady of Mercy High School

It is an event that symbolizes change, a transformation into new independence, and a special farewell to four years of friendships and growth. It is the main goal to be conquered from the first day of freshman year. It is the moment of graduation.

This year, the senior class at Our Lady of Mercy High School has participated in the organization of its upcoming graduation ceremony through the work of a senior graduation committee. The committee, under the direction of moderator Sister Joan McAteer, involves and represents the ideas of the senior class during the graduation preparations.

A tradition that began with Mercy's first graduating class, the senior graduation committee was created to give interested seniors the chance to participate in the planning of their own graduation. In March of this year, 16 to 20 seniors volunteered to be members, although any interested seniors are welcome to attend committee meetings. The group meets about once every two weeks during scheduled lunch periods to discuss the June 22, ceremony, which will be held at the Eastman Theatre.

"Planning for a high school graduation is a kind of thankless job," Sister McAteer said. "Yet the committee basically represents the work of Mercy (girls) trying to make (gradua-

tion) special for each other."

Committee membership carries responsibility for a variety of tasks. Members collect slides of senior photos to be shown in a slide show at the Eastman; create and distribute ballots for voting on the class and student speakers; and assist in assembling diplomas and invitations to family members. The committee is also in charge of choosing a class song for the ceremony, and participates in choosing a theme to unite the speeches of the valedictorian and student speaker.

"The committee tries to involve all of the seniors so that they can have a say in graduation," Sister McAteer said. "Much of the ceremony is formal and traditional, but the work of the students makes their graduation unique."

Committee member Karen Da Costa Fernandes echoed Sister McAteer's remarks. "The group signifies the moving on of our senior class," she said. "The committee tries to represent the wishes of the senior class for graduation to the best of its ability."

The committee works with the traditional aspects of the Mercy ceremony as well. On June 21, the day before graduation, the senior class will attend the Mercy "Rose Mass" in the Mercy motherhouse chapel. The Mass gives graduates the opportunity to celebrate their accomplishments with their classmates and the

faculty. The rose is an important symbol during the Mass, as each student places a rose on the altar during Mass, then receives it back the next day to carry during graduation.

"The rose symbolizes a dedication to God as the seniors give their rose to God during the Mass and then receive it for graduation — a giving and receiving," Sister McAteer said.

Another Mercy graduation tradition is to present the "Witness Award" to the senior who has best lived out the message of service and kindness to others. The committee is responsible for organizing the balloting for this award to give both students and faculty the opportunity to vote. Committee members also work with their class when choosing a speaker for graduation. The committee tries to choose someone the class recommends, and who can relate to the graduates and share a message with them. Past speakers have been successful Mercy graduates and prominent Rochesterians.

As the senior graduation committee is a Mercy tradition in itself, it has set its own precedents over the years. "A prayer is said at the opening of all Mercy graduations," Sister McAteer pointed out. "This was an idea created by a senior committee one year, and now

all the committees choose who or what their class' prayer will be for and what it will represent."

As graduation draws nearer, most seniors have realized the importance of the senior graduation committee. "The girls (in the committee) can represent the class as a whole," senior Lisa Rischenole said. "We have had four years of teachers planning our entire day; now we can do something on our own."

"This graduation is for us and celebrates our accomplishments," senior Cory Curtin said. So they (seniors) should be the ones planning it, and the ceremony should be special — but within tradition."

For the faculty and parents involved in graduation, the committee is looked upon as a group of enthusiastic seniors helping Mercy to organize the annual ceremony. Yet to most seniors, it symbolizes class unity as well as the realization of the final completion of a period in their lives.

"All of us have spent four years with the same friends and many of them we might not see again," senior Amy Bradley said. "Graduation is the last time we'll be together and unified as one class. So that is why I believe graduation should be a special moment."

By Renee Prame
Aquinas Institute

My mother has been the most influential person in my life. As far back as I can remember, she has always taught me right from wrong, bad from good and what is really important. She has always been there to help me through the rough times and congratulate me on the good ones. I know she'll always support me and believe in me, if she knows that I believe something is really important.

With all her "words of wisdom," though, she said one thing that changed my life and will always be with me: "Renee, do what you think is right for you, not for anyone else. You'll know its truly right if it feels right in your heart."

So many times I have used this statement to help evaluate my life and to decide what I want to do with it. Everyone knows that growing up isn't easy, but it is much harder than I thought it would be. There is always that constant peer pressure to follow the group, but I know it is not right for me. I would not be hurting only myself if I gave into peer pressure, I would be hurting my parents and everyone who loves me.

At 17, I know I am probably ignorant of much of the pain — and happiness — that can be found in a serious relationship. I have a lot of time ahead of me, and I plan to use my mom's words to evaluate my relationships, decide if they are right for me and the steps I'd like to take. As it has done in the past, her advice will guide me through any relationships I have in the future and, hopefully, will help me to find the balance between pressure and a happy relationship.

From kindergarten through eighth grade, I attended a public school, so coming to Aquinas was a big change for me. I remember my friends asking me why I wanted to go to school at Aquinas. The only answer I had was that I needed a change: new sur-

Speaking Out

roundings, new people and a new start. They didn't understand, but I knew I needed to be myself and make my own decisions and not live according to how everyone had stereotyped me. I love being at Aquinas and I know now that I definitely made the right decision.

My religion and my faith in God is another area which my mother's words have influenced me. I believe in God and don't mind going to church, but in today's society — at least at the teenage level — one who attends church is considered a "religious freak." It is right for me, however, and that is what I truly want to do.

The last thing I want to explain may not seem very important, but it is to me. When I came to Aquinas, I decided to join the color guard. I know it's not the most popular thing to do, but I love it. I have found real friends in that guard, and I know everyone cares. I would never quit because I have already made memories and friendships that will be with me forever.

I'll never forget the words my mom said, and I'll always keep them close to my heart so that I'll do the right thing. Not only did she teach me to respect myself, but also to respect the views of others. Only when we respect ourselves and others will we be happy with what we are doing. I hope that my mom will be proud of my choices and decisions, and also that she will know how much I admire her, because she is someone special who will help me along and guide me through my life.

DeSales High School

Was it wise for the U.S. to notify Iranian rigs that we were attacking?

NOLA ZECK, freshman

In my opinion, it was good that the U.S. notified the Iranians before the destruction occurred, so a lot of innocent people didn't have to be hurt.



PAUL HEZEL, sophomore

It was wise of the U.S. to warn the crews on the oil rig of the attack. First of all, in international conflicts, it is not wise to victimize civilians in a strictly political affair. Also, it is in the self-interest of the U.S. not to receive adverse propaganda about such an event. Also (since) the U.S. has superi-



As Teens See It

or equipment and technology at its disposal, U.S. forces have the capability of defending themselves against a counterattack.

STEVE VEDORA, junior

No, I don't think it was wise. If we're going to fight, we should fight. We shouldn't give Iran time to retaliate, because that could cause American casualties.



Nazareth Academy to celebrate anniversary of '38 class

Nazareth Academy's annual alumnae banquet will take place on Friday, May 6, marking the 50th anniversary of the class of 1938. All alumnae whose graduating year ends in a three or an eight will also be honored at the banquet.

The gala will take place at the Mapledale Party House, beginning with cocktails at 6 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m. The cost is \$20 per person.

Homecoming 1988 will continue on Sunday, May 8, when the spouses and families of alumnae will be invited to a 10 a.m. Mass at Nazareth, 1001 Lake Ave., Rochester. The Mass will be followed by a breakfast. The price of the meal is \$3 per person with a \$12 limit for families.

Call (716)254-3219 for information.

HOUSE OF GUITARS

Most New Album And Tape Releases Just \$5.98
CD's From \$8.98 - \$11.98 Each

We received 12 correct entries identifying The New York Times & The Daily News as the two newspapers identified in Billy Joel's song "New York State of Mind."



The winner was Marty Lunn of SUNY Buffalo

MUSIC TRIVIA

This week's question:

Who recorded the original version of the song "Whiter Shade of Pale"?

A:

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____
Zip Code _____
School _____

Rules:

Each week, the Courier-Journal, in conjunction with the House of Guitars will feature a Music Trivia contest. All you have to do to enter is answer the question, fill in your name and address and the school you attend (if applicable), cut out the coupon, and send it in to the Courier-Journal. If more than one correct entry is received, a drawing will be held and one winning entry will be drawn. If yours is the winning entry, you will be mailed a coupon for a free album or tape of your choice redeemable at the House of Guitars, 645 Titus Ave. All entries must be received within seven days of this paper's issue date. Winning names and answers will be printed the week following each drawing.

The Courier-Journal
Music Trivia
1150 Buffalo Rd.
Rochester, N.Y. 14624



Zambito's



Team Outfitters

Golf - Baseball - Softball - Hockey - Football - Basketball

We received 5 correct entries identifying Bill Virdon as the only N.Y. Yankees manager never to manage the team in Yankee Stadium in the last 50 years.

The winner was Melanie Falzot of St. Ann's

SPORTS TRIVIA

This week's question:

What current NHL team has suffered the longest since its last Stanley Cup title?

A:

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____
Zip Code: _____
School: _____

Rules:

Each week, the Courier-Journal, in conjunction with Zambito's Sport Shop will feature a Sports Trivia contest. All you have to do to enter is answer the question, fill in your name and address and the school you attend (if applicable), cut out the coupon and send it in to the Courier-Journal. If more than one correct entry is received, a drawing will be held and one winning entry will be drawn. If yours is the winning entry, you will be mailed a certificate redeemable for \$10.00 OFF towards any purchase at Zambito's Sport Shop, 1350 Culver Rd. All entries must be received within seven days of this paper's issue date. Winning names and answers will be printed the week following each drawing.

The Courier-Journal
Sports Trivia
1150 Buffalo Rd.
Rochester, NY 14624