

# Education

## AQ's first layperson, others begin lead roles

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

Although she is the first woman to serve as principal at Aquinas Institute in Rochester, **Vilma Goetting** doesn't believe this distinction should be cause for fanfare.

Goetting, 57, is also the first lay principal in the school's 95-year history. She replaces Father Albert Gaelens, CSB, now AQ's alumni director.

"My familiarity with the school's Basilian tradition, and the values we have taught over the years — that probably was more significant than that I was a woman," Goetting commented about the reasons for her selection. She began her new position July 1 after serving as Aquinas' assistant principal for instruction the previous four years.

"The letters and notes I've gotten from alumni, both male and female, have been very positive," Goetting added.

Goetting arrived at Aquinas as a science instructor in 1981, one year before the school began admitting female students. She became science department chairperson in 1985, and held that role until 1993. She was also dean of women from 1987 to 1993.

Prior to her arrival at Aquinas, Goetting taught in both public and parochial schools. She began her teaching career at Bishop Kearney High School, Irondequoit, in the early 1960s and also worked in health care for several years before returning to teaching full-time in the early 1970s.

She taught at St. John the Evangelist School in Greece (1980-81); Our Lady of Mercy Elementary School in Greece (1975-80); and Madison and Marshall high schools in the Rochester City School District (1971-75).

Goetting is a parishioner at Holy Name of Jesus Church in Greece and a lay associate of the Basilian Fathers. One of her chief goals as Aquinas principal, she said, is to emphasize the Catholic experience throughout the school day.

"We have a strong theology curriculum, and I would somehow like to see this correlate with the rest of the curriculum," Goetting said. "We start every day with prayer, but the prayer should also be part of the rest of the day. I think that's what we're all about — and if we can't do that, we might as well be secular."

Goetting gained her master's degree in education, as well as her administration certification, from SUNY College at Brockport.

Along with Aquinas Institute — an independent Catholic high school — a number of diocesan elementary schools are welcoming new principals. Based on information from the diocesan Department of Catholic Schools, the new principal assignments for 1997-98 are:

At St. Agnes School in Avon, **Dr. Gerald E. Benjamin** replaces **Victoria Rose**.

Benjamin was principal for elementary education at Cale-



**Vilma Goetting** talks with graduating senior **Meghan Kelly** during finals week, at Aquinas Institute, June 12.

Matthew Scott/Staff photographer

donia-Mumford Central School from 1990 to 1997. He served in the same capacity at Cambridge Elementary School (1987-90) and Geneseo Elementary School (1972-87).

He received his master's degree in elementary education/special education from Tufts University and his doctorate in special education and school administration/curriculum development from Syracuse University.

**Arlene McDermott** is the new principal at St. Mary's School in Waterloo, replacing **Sister Brian Madigan, SSJ**.

McDermott comes to Waterloo from St. Mary's School in Auburn (now known as St. Joseph's School at Clymer Street), where she taught from 1993 to 1997. In addition, she taught for 20 years in Geneva — first, at St. Francis de Sales School (1973-82) and also at the consolidated St. Francis de Sales/St. Stephen School (1982-93).

She earned her master's degree in administration, as well as her administrative certification, from SUNY College at Brockport.

**Mary Barrese-Frame** is the new principal at St. Charles Borromeo School in Greece. She replaces **Barbara Williams**.

Barrese-Frame was previously vice-principal at Northeastern Junior High School (1996-97). She also taught at Siena Catholic Academy (1993-96) and Good Shepherd School in Henrietta (1982-93).

Barrese-Frame earned her master's degree in administration at SUNY College at Brockport and her administration certification at St. Bonaventure University.

At St. Louis School in Pittsford, **Kathleen Carroll** replaces **Sister Barbara Hamm, RSM**.

She previously served as prin-

principal at St. Margaret Mary School in Irondequoit (1986-97). Carroll also taught at Holy Trinity School in Webster (1980-86); Our Lady of Lourdes School in Brighton (1973-80); St. Agnes School in Avon (1972-73); and St. John the Evangelist School in Spencerport (1967-

72). She earned her master's degree in education from Nazareth College and her administration certification from the University of the State of New York.

**Sister Mary Alice O'Brien, RSM**, is replacing Carroll at St.

Margaret Mary School.

Sister O'Brien was principal at St. Andrew's School in Rochester from 1981 to 1997. She was also vice principal/dean of students at Our Lady of Mercy High School (1978-81) and coordinator at the Sisters of Mercy Motherhouse (1974-78). In addition, Sister O'Brien taught at Mercy High School (1967-74); Cardinal Mooney High School (1963-67); and Holy Cross School (1958-63).

She gained her master's degree in education from SUNY College at Plattsburgh and her administration certification from SUNY College at Brockport.

Sister O'Brien's replacement at St. Andrew's School is **Norman Fagnan**.

Fagnan was interim principal at Honeoye Central Schools (1995-97) and Geneseo High School (1995), and interim superintendent at Southern Cayuga Central Schools (1994). In addition, he was superintendent of schools in the North Rose-Wolcott (1990-94), Oakfield-Alabama (1980-90) and Little Valley (1975-80) school districts. He was principal at Ernie Davis Junior High School in Elmira (1972-75) and Parley Coburn School in Elmira (1969-72). Fagnan also served as director of personnel at North Tonawanda City Schools (1965-69), and taught in the Alden Central School District (1961-65).

He received his master's degree in education, as well as his certification in education administration, from SUNY College at Buffalo.

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