

ST. MARY'S SCHOOL

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

St. Mary's School has established the Distinguished Alumni Award to recognize graduates with outstanding post-elementary achievements. Annually, the St. Mary's Board of Education nominates an individual for this award.

The National Catholic Education Association provides criteria and a framework to enable individual Catholic elementary schools to nominate for national recognition, graduates who have made a significant contribution to the Catholic Church and to the United States.

The following graduates of St. Mary's School are past recipients of the Distinguished Alumni Award:

- **2017 – Joe Finken**
 - Member of St. Mary's Parish
 - Served on the Melrose City Council
 - Serves as Mayor of the City of Melrose
 - Serves as a member of the Melrose Fire Department and serves as Department chaplain
 - Involved in the St. Mary's Parish and serves as lector and usher
 - Is a role model for our community
- **2016 – Craig Maus**
 - Member of St. Mary's Parish
 - Serves on the Parish Council
 - Serves as Police Chief of the City of Melrose
 - Serves as a member of the Melrose Fire Department
 - Involved in the St. Mary's Parish and community
 - Is a role model for our community
- **2015 – Father Benjamin (Ben) Kociemba**
 - Former member of St. Mary's Parish
 - Served as a Boy Scout and earned the Eagle Scout award
 - Serves as a priest in the St. Cloud Diocese
 - Serves as full time Chaplain at St. Cloud Cathedral High School
 - Serves as Chaplain for the Scouts of the St. Cloud Diocese
 - Is a role model for our community and the St. Cloud Diocese
- **2014 – Jennifer Ellering**
 - Member of St. Mary's Parish
 - Serves on the St. Mary's Board of Education
 - Serves on the Area Parish Cluster Board
 - Serves as a Eucharistic Minister
 - Serves as a volunteer teacher for the St. Mary's Art Masterpiece Program
 - Serves on the St. Mary's Dinner/Auction for Education Committee
 - Very involved in the St. Mary's Parish, St. Mary's School and community
- **2013 – Amanda (Thieschafer) Smock**
 - Former member of St. Mary's Parish
 - Very active in current parish community

- Serves as ambassador for Catholic Education
- Serves as a positive role model for children
- Represented our country in the 2012 Summer Olympics
- **2012 – Jean Ritter**
 - Member of St. Mary's Parish
 - Parish Administrative Assistant for St. Mary's
 - Eucharistic minister for St. Mary's
 - Served on the Liturgy Committee
 - Served on the Religious Education Committee
 - Served as a Lector
 - Very involved in the St. Mary's Parish
- **2011 – James Athmann**
 - Member of St. Mary's Parish
 - Serves as a mass server and usher for St. Mary's
 - Involved in the St. Mary's Parish and community
 - Served our country during the Vietnam War
 - Very active in the VFW Schanhaar Otte Post # 7050
- **2010 – Ernest Kociemba**
 - Member of St. Mary's Parish
 - Serves as Deacon for St. Mary's
 - Very involved in the St. Mary's Parish and community
 - Owns Ernie's Family Foods in Melrose
 - Member of the Chamber of Commerce
 - Very supportive of St. Mary's Parish and St. Mary's School
- **2009 – Carol Moormann**
 - Member of St. Mary's Parish
 - Serves as a Lector for St. Mary's
 - Very active in the community
 - Involved in the St. Mary's Parish and community
 - Reporter/feature editor for a weekly newspaper
- **2008 – Melvin Roehrl**
 - Member of St. Mary's Parish
 - Serves on the Maintenance Committee for St. Mary's
 - Very supportive of St. Mary's Parish and St. Mary's School
 - Very active in the community
 - Served on various organizations in the community
- **2007 – Bernard Hollermann**
 - Member of St. Mary's Parish
 - Owned and operated Hollermann Manufacturing; giving time and talent to many parish and school communities
 - Supported Catholic Education
 - Supported school and parish with his handyman talents
- **2006 – Lucille Orth**
 - President of the St. Mary's Mission Society
 - Member of MCCL
 - Member of St. Elizabeth's/St. Bernard's Society
 - Member of the Christian Mothers/Women
 - Member of St. Mary's Adult Choir

- Very involved in her political party
- Performed in the musical “Nunsense”
- Active in the community
- **2005 – Fr. Julius Beckermann OSB**
 - Entered St. Johns Abbey as a brother candidate in 1962 and made his first profession of vows March 21, 1964
 - Worked in maintenance, building, grounds, and plant management at St. John’s Abby
 - Served 20 years at St. Mary’s Mission in Red Lake, MN during which time he learned the Ojibwe language
 - Served as pastoral minister to Native Americans
 - Is the first member of St. John’s Abby to become a permanent Deacon (Ordained June 2, 2000)
 - Was ordained in to the priesthood June 6, 2003
- **2004 – Alan Wiechmann**
 - Member of St. Mary’s Parish
 - Served on the St. Mary’s Board of Education
 - Served on the Stewardship Committee
 - Involved in the St. Mary’s Parish and community
- **2003 – Jim Matchinsky**
 - Member of St. Mary’s Parish
 - Very supportive of St. Mary’s Parish and St. Mary’s School
 - Very supportive to the St. Mary’s Education Endowment Fund
 - Supportive of the community
 - Successful businessman
- **2002 – Judith (Hollermann) Kluempke**
 - Member of St. Mary’s Parish
 - Administrative Assistant St. Mary’s School
 - Sponsor couple for married couples
 - Mass server scheduler
 - Eucharistic minister for St. Mary’s
 - Member of the Christian Mothers/Women
 - Coordinator of the art masterpiece program at St. Mary’s School
- **2001 – Raymond Maus**
 - Member of St. Mary’s Parish
 - Very involved in the St. Mary’s Parish and community
 - Was businessman in Melrose for many years
 - All six of his children graduated from St. Mary’s Catholic School
 - Served on various organizations in the community
- **2000 – John Kociemba**
 - Member of St. Mary’s Parish
 - Serves as an usher for St. Mary’s
 - Served as chair of the St. Mary’s Finance Committee
 - Owns Snyder V & S Variety in Melrose
 - Member of the Chamber of Commerce
 - Involved in the St. Mary’s Parish and community
- **1999 – David H. Sieben**
 - Member of St. Mary’s Parish
 - Graduate of St. John’s University

- Taught social and served as football coach
- Athletic Director of the Melrose Area Public Schools
- Served as Army Major in the Reserves
- Supportive of Catholic School Education
- Involved in the St. Mary's Parish and community
- **1998 – Steven J. Borgerding**
 - Member of St. Mary's Parish
 - Very involved in the Boys Scouts and served as Scoutmaster
 - Served on the Melrose City Council
 - Draftsman for a lumber company
- **1997 – Sister Ephrem (Rita) Hollermann, OSB**
 - Entered St. Benedict's Monastery in 1961 and made final profession in 1967
 - Served the community as a junior high teacher of English and religion
 - Served as director on novices and initial formation at St. Benedict's Monastery
 - Served as doctoral student in historical theology
 - Served as associate professor of theology at the College of St. Benedict and St. John's University
 - In 1995, was elected the 14th prioress of the St. Benedict's Monastery
- **1996 – Gail Schlicht**
 - Member of St. Mary's Parish
 - Member of St. Mary's Adult Choir
 - Served as Trustee for St. Mary's Parish
 - Involved in the St. Mary's Parish and community
- **1995 – Al Westendorf**
 - Member of St. Mary's Parish
 - Served on the St. Mary's Education Endowment Committee
 - Member of the Melrose Knights of Columbus
 - Member of the St. Bernard's Society
 - Former Melrose City Clerk-Treasurer
 - Involved in the St. Mary's Parish and community
- **1994 - William G. Meyer**
 - Member of St. Mary's Parish
 - Served on the St. Mary's Education Endowment Committee
 - Member of St. Mary's Adult Choir
 - Owned a law firm in Melrose
 - Involved in the St. Mary's Parish and community
- **1993 - Julia Westendorf**
 - Member of St. Mary's Parish
 - Administrator of the Melrose Hospital
 - Involved in the St. Mary's Parish and community
 - Member of the Chamber of Commerce
- **1992 - Gary Walz**
 - Member of St. Mary's Parish
 - Eucharistic minister for St. Mary's
 - Graduate of St. John's University
 - Melrose Economic Development Coordinator
 - Involved in the St. Mary's Parish and community
 - Member of the Chamber of Commerce

