



MISSION STATEMENT

The Joliet Catholic Academy Hall of Champions is committed to recognizing the outstanding achievements of athletes and supporters both in the world of sports and in the local community. The Hall of Champions promotes leadership, values, character and faith through athletics.

*"Champions are not the ones
who always win races -*

champions are the ones who get out there and try.
And try harder the next time. And even harder
the next time. 'Champion' is a state of mind. They
are devoted. They compete to best themselves as
much if not more than they compete to best others.
Champions are not just athletes." SIMON SINEK

MEMBERS OF THE 2019 HALL OF CHAMPIONS - ATHLETICS

Sean Bergman '88

Mary Will Jaworski '74

John Piazza '79

Mark Sopko '00

Christine Nicole Toscas '85

Wayne Vercellotti '53 (*Legacy Tribute*)



ATHLETICS

6th Annual Joliet Catholic Academy's HALL OF CHAMPIONS ATHLETICS

Class of 2019 Inductees

Sean Bergman • Mary Will Jaworski • John Piazza
Mark Sopko • Christine Nicole Toscas • Wayne Vercellotti

Good Evening,

On behalf of the Joliet Catholic Academy administration, faculty, and staff, I would like to welcome everyone to our Sixth Annual Hall of Champions celebration- an event that calls attention to the greatness of our past athletes. It doesn't get any better than this!

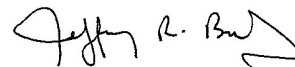
First, congratulations to our inductees: Sean Bergman, Mary (Will) Jaworski, John Piazza, Mark Sopko, Christine Nicole Tascas, Wayne Vercellotti. You represent the character, integrity, sportsmanship, passion and purpose that make the JCA athletic program one of the finest in the entire country. We are proud, and humbled, to honor you.

I also would like to thank our Athletic Director, Dan Sharp, and our Director of Alumni Relations, Sue Bebar, for being the co-chairman of the Hall of Champions for Athletics, as well as the work of the selection committee. Furthermore, I would like to thank Chris Voss, the Director of Special Events, for organizing tonight's celebration. We could not do this without your hard work, dedication, and talent. Heartfelt thanks also to our sponsors: Order of Carmelites, Brown & Brown Insurance, D'Arcy Motors, Edward Jones, Rathbun, Cservenyak & Kozol Law Firm LLC, Adler Roofing and Sheet Metal Inc., Advantage Home Services LLC, and all the other people who helped with the event.

Since coming to JCA, this has been part of our vision — to recognize the best of the best of our historic Angels and Hilltoppers. You are the foundation of the greatness that exists in our student-athletes ... you give them the inspiration, every practice and every game, to reach for the stars and walk away as champions.

We hope that you enjoy the festivities and thank you for joining our celebration.

With heartfelt regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey R. Budz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Dr. Jeffrey R. Budz, President/Principal

Joliet Catholic Academy

2019 HALL OF CHAMPIONS

EVENING PROGRAM

5:30 pm

Enjoy Open Bar and Delicious Appetizers

6:30 pm

WELCOME

Dr. Jeffrey Budz, President/Principal

INVOCATION

Fr. Jeff Smialek, O.Carm.

BUFFET DINNER

7:15 pm

INDUCTION CEREMONY

Mr. Dan Sharp '74, Athletic Director

INDUCTEES

Sean Bergman '88

Mary (Will) Jaworski '74

John Piazza '79

Mark Sopko '00

Chistine Nicole Toscas '85

Wayne Vercellotti '53

ENJOY OPEN BAR, DESSERTS, COFFEE

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Sue Bebar

Debbie Dispenza

Dick Goss

Tina Kinsella

Kathy Major

Ryan Quigley

Bill Scheibe

Dan Sharp

EVENT COMMITTEE:

Karen & Tom Tyrell

Chris Voss

EVENT CHAMPIONS:

Ryan Quigley - Director of Admissions/Communications

Jose Lopez, Keith Klein & Staff - Set-up Service

Millie & Dick Schuster - JCTV

Michelle Jankowski - Bella Cucina Catering

Jim Richards, Sr. and Jim Richards, Jr. - RME Audio Video

All Video Participants



Sean Bergman

Sean Bergman (JCHS '88) is a former Major League Baseball right-handed pitcher who spent 14 years in professional baseball with big league stints with the Detroit Tigers, San Diego Padres, Houston Astros, Atlanta Braves, and Minnesota Twins. His best season came in 1998 with the NL-Central Champion Astros, where he went 12-9 with a 3.72 ERA over 31 appearances (27 starts). He also spent parts of two seasons pitching professionally in Japan.

Bergman was a starting wide receiver on the Hilltoppers' 1987 IHSA State Championship football team, while also earned a varsity letter in basketball. He was a member of perhaps the greatest pitching staff in Joliet Catholic history, featuring fellow major leaguers Mike Grace and Chris Michalak, along side long time professional pitcher Barry Johnson. He spent three years at SIU-Carbondale where he was named a Pre-Season 1st Team All-American pitcher before being selected in the 4th round of the MLB draft by the Tigers in 1991. He was elected to the SIU-C Athletics Hall of Fame in 1998.

Bergman spent three seasons as the pitching coach at the University of Findlay in Ohio. He is currently a physical education teacher at Hicksville Elementary School and has coached baseball, junior high girls basketball, and girls golf. Bergman has been married to his wife Jennifer for 21 years, with whom he has five children: Addison (20), Katelyn (18), Jackson (16), Lindsay (15), and McKenna (8).



Mary (Will) Jaworski

Mary (Will) Jaworski (SFA '74) coached cheerleading at JCHS/JCA from 1983-1997.

The teams were extremely successful winning two Can-American National Championships in 1991 and 1992 and two top 5 finishes in 1996 and 1997. The teams also finished in the top 5 at the NCA National Competitions from 1987-1989. In 1996, Jaworski was named National Coach of the Year at the Can-American Competition.

Jaworski credits her assistant coaches for the success of the program. She considered herself blessed and lucky to have had the opportunity to work with such incredible people that truly cared about the athletes and gave tirelessly to assure that they were given every opportunity to succeed. Many cheerleaders went on and cheered at the collegiate level and several held the title of "Collegiate All-Americans."

In 2016 Jaworski's daughter Kristen became the head cheerleading coach at JCA, with daughter Katie joining her the following year. Returning after twenty years to watch her girls lead the program has brought back many memories she holds dear to her heart. Walking into practice feels like being back home with the vibrant enthusiasm of the young people that she so enjoyed working with.

Jaworski is a lifetime resident of Joliet, and currently serves as the President of the Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce. Mary and her husband Paul have four children: Mike '96, Katie '97, Kristen '98, and Nick '05 and 12 grandchildren.



John Piazza

Piazza was a three-time starter at middle linebacker on the 1976, 1977, and 1978 State Championship teams. He was a perennial all conference and all area player. The Champaign Gazette named him their Junior of the Year in 1977. Piazza received

All State honors in both his junior and senior years.

During his four-year tenure at Joliet Catholic, the Hillmen posted a 51-1 record. The 1978 Championship team out scored their opponents 387-37 and shutout all four playoff opponents. The Hilltoppers had a total of eight shutouts that year.

Piazza graduated 5th in his class at Joliet Catholic. He went on to graduate from Yale University and played four years for the Bulldogs.

Piazza's father, Pete was an outstanding football and basketball player for the Hilltoppers in the early '50s. His brothers Chris ('76), Jamie ('80), Greg ('84), and Sean ('85), all enjoyed successful football careers at the Hill. John is one of 13 children (7 girls and 6 boys) born to Pete and Noreen Piazza.

He served as the Mayor of Lemont for two terms (2001-2009) and has had a successful career in the mortgage banking industry for 33 years.

Piazza is married to Karen Gans Piazza and has three boys; Dominic (27), Tony (24), and JP (21). They have made Lemont their home for the past 28 years.



Mark Sopko

Sopko (JCA '00) was a five-time letter winner at Joliet Catholic. On the gridiron he was a two-year starter at quarterback and selected to the all-conference team following both seasons. He led the Hilltoppers to

a 14-0 record and the school's eighth state championship in 1999, throwing for 200 yards and 2 touchdowns in the 4A Final. Sopko was a three-year starter for the Hilltoppers in the spring on the diamond. As a pitcher and outfielder, he was a two-time member of the ESCC all-conference team and was named to numerous publication's all-area teams, sporting a sub 2.00 ERA both years as an upperclassman. He led the 2000 Hilltoppers to a Class AA runner-up finish and was selected to the all-state team as well as honorable mention for the USA Today All-American Team. Following his junior year, he was picked to play in the Team USA Tournament of the Stars, featuring the top 100 prospects in the country. He was named one of the "Top Five High School Athletes" in the state of Illinois by the Chicago Sun-Times for the class of 2000.

Sopko signed a letter of intent to continue his baseball career at Arizona State. As a Sun Devil, he was selected to the 2002 NCAA Freshman All-American Team. He was drafted by the Toronto Blue Jays in the 2003 MLB Amateur Draft and spent four seasons in the Blue Jays organization. After retiring from baseball, he returned to ASU to finish his degree in Business and Communications.

Sopko has been employed for nine years for a publicly traded software company, Cognex. Sopko owns/runs the Global Accounts portion of the logistics business. He resides in Chandler, AZ with his wife MacKenzie, sons Kaenon and Knox, and daughter Rori.



Christine Nicole Toscas

Christine Nicole Toscas (SFA '85) was a five-sport athlete excelling in badminton, volleyball, and basketball while in high school, graduating as SFA's career record holder at the time for points (1,893) and rebounds (1,028). She was a four-time team MVP and two-time team captain. As a junior and senior, Toscas was named First-Team All-State Chicago Tribune, USA Today All-American Honorable Mention and All-State Associated Press, averaging 29 ppg. and 13 rebounds to lead the Angels to 28-3 record her senior year. She was also named IHSA All-Tournament, and an IBCA All-Star.

In 1985, Toscas was named the Most Outstanding High School Athlete in the nation by the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA). AHEPA again awarded her the Most Outstanding Collegiate Athlete Award in 1989.

Toscas received a full scholarship to play basketball at the University of Georgia, where she was a member of the Bulldogs SEC championship team. After transferring to Lewis University, Toscas broke several school and GLVC conference records, while becoming a 1st Team All-Conference and 1st Team All-American recipient. Toscas was selected by the Lewis Athletic Department to the Women's All-Decade Team for the 1980's.

After college, Toscas embarked on a six-year professional career that saw her compete for the Greek National Team Hellas, as well as playing in Australia. She became the first player in Australian history to lead the nation in scoring, rebounds, and blocked shots.

Toscas has been employed by Adventist Health system for the past eight years, six of which she has served as the executive assistant supporting the CEO and CFO of AdventHealth Altamonte and North/West Market.



Wayne Vercellotti

Wayne Vercellotti (JCHS '53) has been named this year's Legacy Tribute for the JCA Hall of Champions. Vercellotti was a proficient golfer who got his start as a caddy at the Joliet Country Club.

A stalwart on the Catholic High golf teams, Vercellotti earned a golf scholarship to the University of Notre Dame, where he graduated with a B.S. in Commerce in 1957. That same year he married Barbara Friedrich.

A workplace accident in 1962 led to Vercellotti's arm being amputated. Vercellotti's daughter Janet said, "the first thing he did when he came home was pick up a club and hit wiffle balls in the backyard. He was the most competitive person I have ever known."

Vercellotti played golf in the summer and was an avid hunter in the winter months. He participated in the National Amputee Golf Association "tour", winning the one-arm division several times at the national level. In 2008, Vercellotti was inducted into the Joliet Area Sports Hall of Fame for his golfing accomplishments.

Outside of his athletic achievements, Vercellotti was civically involved, serving as the President of the Notre Dame Alumni Association's Joliet chapter and the ND Sorin Society. He was an advocate for the Joliet Park Board, serving for many years as the Park Board President. He was also a member of the Joliet Kiwanis Club and the Joliet Country Club.

Vercellotti was married for 51 years and operated Friedrich Binding and Embossing. Vercellotti passed away in 2008 after a battle with Alzheimer's. He and Barbara had three children: Janet (Madrigal), Paul, and Doug and seven grandchildren.

The Angel and Hilltopper Prayer

Almighty God whose authority is over all and whose love never fails,
make me aware of your presence and faithful to your will.

Keep me true to my best self, helping me to live with character and
integrity so that I can face my family, my friends, my Angel sisters,
and my Hilltopper brothers without shame or fear.

Grant me the loyalty to be procient in my studies and in training as a
student-athlete.

Give me the will to do the work of an Angel and Hilltopper and to
accept my share of responsibilities with energy and enthusiasm.

Keep me loyal and faithful to my teachers and coaches and to the
tasks they and my Angel sisters and Hilltopper brothers have
entrusted to me.

Make me considerate of those who look to me for leadership.

Help me wear the emblem of Joliet Catholic Academy with dignity,
and let it remind me daily of the tradition which I must uphold.

If I am inclined to doubt, steady my faith.

If I am tempted, make me strong to resist.

If I should miss the mark, give me courage to try again.

Through the intercession of Mary, the Queen of Carmel, and St.
Francis of Assisi, give me wisdom by which I may understand your
answer to my prayer.

Grant this prayer through Christ our Lord.
Amen.



Past Honorees

CLASS OF 2014

Gordie Gillespie, Bill Gullickson, Allie Quigley,
Jim Stefanich, Tom Thayer

CLASS OF 2015

Mike Alstott, Terry Gannon, Mark Grant, Tippy Madarik,
Liz Tortorello-Nelson

CLASS OF 2016

Jane Condon, Pat Mudron, Mark Parker, Jack Perconte,
Pat Sullivan, John Carroll

CLASS OF 2017

Patricia Carbery, Emily Marino, Larry McKeon,
Dan Sharp, David Sims, Bill Sticklen

CLASS OF 2018

Coby Fleener, Chris Michalak, Kelly Murphy,
Sam Quigley-Smith, Jack Schimanski, Andrew Matichak

Champion

is a State of Mind



It's not about running faster or jumping higher. It's about trying and about always doing your best.

It's about giving everything you've got and then giving even more.

It's about seeing challenges where others see obstacles and seeing opportunity where others see failure.

A Champion always looks ahead at how to exceed their own expectations because in all things a true Champion takes up the shield of faith and pushes on for the Glory of God. A true Champion works in celebration of the talents God gave them and is an unstoppable force for the Glory of God all across God's Garden.



Congratulations
Class of 2019 Hall of Champions
from the Order of Carmelites!

The image shows a football field at night or in low light. A large number '10' is visible in the background. A football is in the foreground. The text 'Our Goal: to make sure you're protected!' is written vertically on the left. 'Go Hilltoppers!' is written vertically on the right. The Brown & Brown Insurance logo is in the top right corner. Contact information is at the bottom right.

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CONGRATULATIONS
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HALL OF CHAMPIONS INDUCTEES:

SEAN BERGMAN '88

MARY WILL JAWORSKI '74

JOHN PIAZZA '79

MARK SOPKO '00

CHRISTINE NICOLE TOSCAS '85

WAYNE VERCELLOTTI '53

LEGACY TRIBUTE



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Christine Nicole Toscas '85

Legacy Tribute Wayne Vercellotti '53

Edward Dollinger, '81

Mark Karner, '83

Matt Schimanski, '98

Warren Lindsay '99

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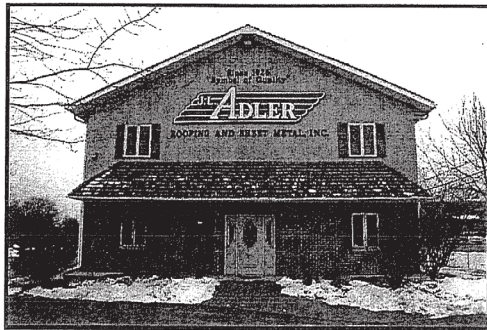
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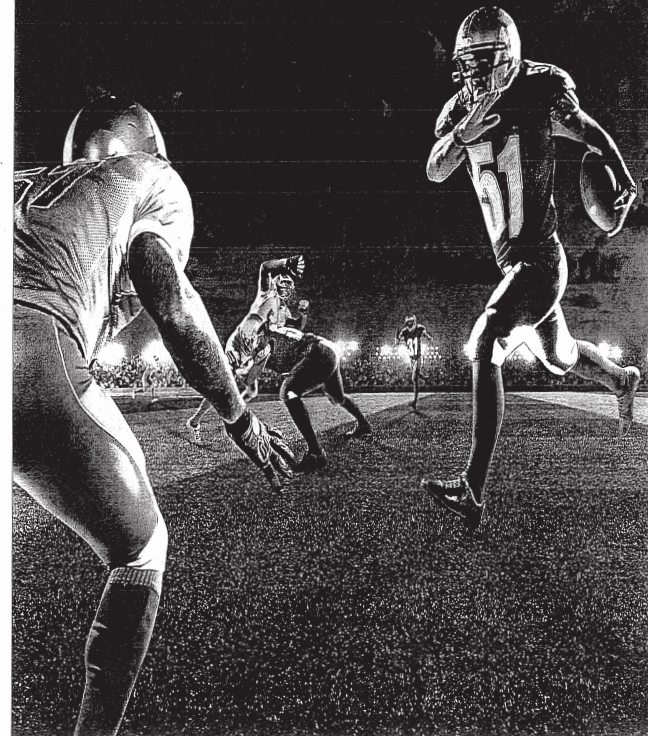
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