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BI-WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF ERIE

May 8, 2016

# FaithLife

**MERCY WORKS.**

PRACTICE THE ART OF LISTENING.

A spiritual work of mercy for the Holy Year

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### Priest numbers holding steady worldwide

WASHINGTON (CNS)—It's ordination season and Catholics have reason to be pleased with the numbers of priests who will serve the church well into the future.

In recent years, the numbers of priestly ordinations have given Catholic Church observers reason to believe there is not a global vocations crisis, but they still acknowledge that there is a need for more clergy.

"The good news is that the global number of priests stopped declining about five years ago," said Father Paul Sullins, associate professor of sociology at The Catholic University of America in Washington.

Since 2012, the total has been stable at about 415,000 priests worldwide, a number that is the net of new ordinations and retirements or deaths, Father Sullins told Catholic News Service.

"The church now has about the same number of priests that it had in 1970," he said. "The bad news, though, it is not really bad news, is that the global population of Catholics has grown dramatically since then, so today we have far fewer priests per Catholic."

Though the global numbers are currently strong and vocations are plentiful in some regions of the world, such as Africa and Asia, the quantity of priests are not as abundant in other continents, such as in parts of North America, Father Sullins said.

"We are importing priests from areas of the world where young vocations are booming, or at least more prevalent than in the U.S.," he said. "In 2014, almost a third of priests ordained in the U.S. were foreign-born and that does not count foreign-ordained priests who serve in the U.S. on assignment."

Many U.S. dioceses also are faced with a disparity in the number of new priests being ordained and the number who are retiring or leaving ministry, said Father Carl B. Fissette, director of vocations for the Diocese of Providence, R.I.

The church also has more than 18,000 permanent deacons today who perform many functions, like homilies, baptisms and marriages, that were reserved to priests in the 1960s, when the church did not have permanent diaconate in place.

### Transitional deacons ordained



Photo by Rich Popalis

Bishop Lawrence Persico ordained seminarians Sean Kerins, left, and Kyle Seyler into the transitional diaconate for the Diocese of Erie April 30 at St. Mark Seminary.

In his homily at the Mass, Bishop Persico told the newly ordained transitional deacons: "If you want your ministry as deacons to be fruitful, you must remain in the Lord's love by faith and hope."

Deacon Kerins and Deacon Seyler both currently attend St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore for their priest formation.

Deacon Kerins is a native of Notre Dame in Hermitage. Deacon Seyler's home parish is St. Patrick in Franklin.

## HAPPINESS 'IS NOT AN APP'

100,000 teens attend papal Mass



CNS photo/L'Observatore Romano

VATICAN CITY—Pope Francis listened to the confession of a youth at St. Peter's Square at the Vatican April 23. More than 100,000 teens converged in Rome April 23-24 for a Year of Mercy celebration. The pontiff told them that happiness "is not an app" that you can download on your phones." Love, he said, leads to true freedom, which is a gift that comes from "being able to choose good."

## Youth ministry changing

BY MARY SOLBERG | FAITHLIFE

Everyone in a parish has to be a youth minister if the Catholic Church is to stop the exodus of young people from the faith, according to Frank Mercadante, guest speaker at the April 23 ReVision: Diocesan Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry.

This heightened responsibility, Mercadante said, is the "third generation" of youth ministry in today's American church. The first generation was run by youth groups. The second generation was led by comprehensive youth ministry programs.

"The third generation youth ministry is where we're not going to have just the specialists work with teen-agers, but the whole parish works together to build disciples among young children and older," Mercadante told FaithLife. "We have to fully integrate young people into the entire church so that they have in the course of growing up, dozens of youth ministers in their lives."

The executive director of Cultivation Ministries, Mercadante has designed and written extensive youth ministry training manuals.

This shift in how the church must now reach and retain young people in the faith is necessary, in part, because of the rapidly changing digital world in which we live, Mercadante told conference participants. He quoted Pew studies that show some startling statistics: 48 percent of people leave the church by age 18; for every one person entering the church, six leave; 36 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds are unaffiliated with any religion.

Most of the 60 youth ministers, catechists and religious education directors who attended the conference gave the church a "D" grade in its current outreach to youth. The only response to this low grade, Mercadante explained, is to create disciples at an early age. Children should become regular lectors, parish council members, greeters, and take on many other roles.

Bishop Lawrence Persico addressed those in attendance and also met with some of the members of the newly formed Diocesan Youth Board.

The need for better outreach to young people has emerged as a top priority in the pastoral planning process underway in the Diocese of Erie.

"Youth ministry has to be a way of life," Bishop Persico said.

## NFP: Interest, resources in natural fertility grow

BY MARY SOLBERG | FAITHLIFE



Steve and Monica Dvoranchik

Kathryn Elenchin

In the past month, at least 10 couples from the Diocese of Erie and across the country have contacted Kathryn Elenchin of St. Eulalia Parish in Coudersport to learn about Natural Family Planning (NFP).

A full-time nurse anesthetist, Elenchin is committed to teaching the scientific, natural and morally responsible way by which married couples can achieve or postpone pregnancies. NFP-practicing couples, she says, even have lower divorce rates.

"I just want to help women and families," Elenchin says.

Since she started teaching NFP in person and online about three years ago, Elenchin has instructed more than 50 couples a year in the Marquette Method of NFP. It is one of four NFP methods taught in the diocese.

The Marquette Method employs a fertility monitor that tests hormones present in a woman's urine at different times during her cycle. The method also offers instruction on observing cervical fluids or basal body temperature.

Other methods taught in

the diocese include: symptothermal by the Couple to Couple League and the Erie diocesan program; mucous-only by the Family of the Americas Foundation, and the Creighton Model Fertility Care system.

The Natural Family Planning Office of the Diocese of Erie currently offers the expertise of 24 NFP teachers, the most since the office opened in 1994.

Elenchin is among the newer NFP instructors and offers the only online course at this time. Interested women and/or couples can expect to take a one-hour introductory class with follow-up assessments.

Monica and Steve Dvoranchik of St. Joseph

Parish/Bread of Life Community, Erie, are instructors with the Couple to Couple League. For about four years, they taught NFP in the Diocese of Arlington, Va., but then moved to Erie about a year ago. They are scheduling sessions for later this summer in Erie, and currently are seeking their online certification.

"NFP has been such a huge blessing for our marriage. It has opened up the doors of communication because if you can talk about NFP, you can talk about anything," Monica Dvoranchik says.

Two other couples also are relatively new to teaching in the diocese: Miguel and Xhonané Olivas, who

offer NFP in both English and Spanish in Clarion County; and Peter and Mary Burkett, who teach the Family of the Americas method mostly in Crawford County.

All NFP teachers in the

diocese are certified by the NFP national office. There are varying fees charged for the classes, but in some cases costs are waived.

For more information on NFP in the diocese, go to [www.ErieRCD.org/nfp.htm](http://www.ErieRCD.org/nfp.htm).

### BENEFITS OF NFP

Natural Family Planning (NFP) is the general title for the scientific, natural and moral methods of family planning that can help married couples either achieve or postpone pregnancies.

NFP methods are based on the observation of the naturally occurring signs and symptoms of the fertile and infertile phases of a woman's menstrual cycle. No drugs, devices, or surgical procedures are used to avoid pregnancy.

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Source: USCCB and Diocese of Erie, NFP Office

## Newsmakers

Snippets of Catholic headlines and stories from around the world

from Catholic News Service

### ■ Canonization process moves forward for activist Dorothy Day

NEW YORK—The Archdiocese of New York announced April 19 an important next step in the canonization process for Dorothy Day. There will be a canonical inquiry into the life of the co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement and famed peace activist. “For those who knew her, there is no question about Dorothy’s holiness and her prophetic witness,” said Patrick Jordan, a former managing editor of *The Catholic Worker* newspaper that Day helped launch in 1933.

The canonical inquiry by the archdiocese will include a historical commission that will issue a report and review her unpublished writings. New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan will appoint theological experts to review her published writings with an eye toward doctrine and morals.

### ■ Pope issues warning against clericalism

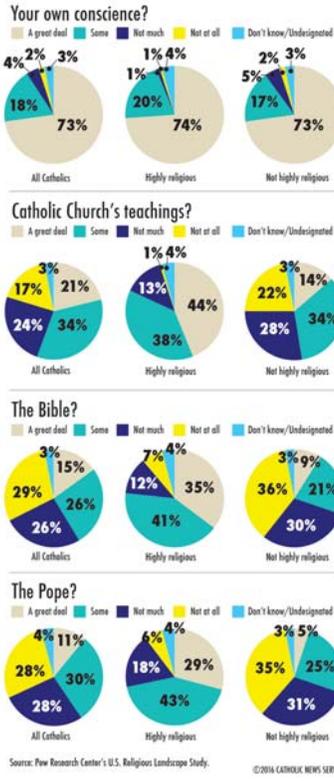
VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Clericalism is a danger to the Catholic Church not only because on a practical level it undermines the role of lay in society, but because theologically it “tends to diminish and undervalue the baptismal grace” of all believers, whether they are lay or clergy, Pope Francis said.

“No one is baptized a priest or bishop,” the pope said in a letter to Cardinal Marc Ouellet, prefect of the Congregation for Bishops and president of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America. The fundamental consecration of all Christians occurs at baptism and it what unites all Christians in the call to holiness and witness.

In the letter, released at the Vatican April 26, Pope Francis said he wanted to ensure that a discussion begun in March with members of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America “does not fall into a void.” The topic of that discussion was on the public role of the laity in the life of the people of Latin America.

## MORAL GUIDANCE

How much do Catholics look to each of the following for guidance on difficult moral questions?



# Confirmation gifts can last a lifetime



Editor's Notes  
Mary SOLBERG

What do an 11th-century king, an apostle and a fourth-century physician from Turkey have in common?

They are all saints chosen by me for their confirmation names.

St. Olaf was the king of Norway who requested that missionaries be sent from England to advance the Christianization of his Scandinavian homeland.

St. Paul was a persecutor of Christians who became one of the greatest missionaries, mystics and theologians in the history of the Catholic Church. St. Blaise was a martyred bishop and physician known for healing a young boy who had a fish bone stuck in his throat.

My youngest son, Jon, receives the sacrament of confirmation on May 9 at Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Edinboro. Like most teen-agers, he readily admits that selecting a cool-sounding name is essential for confirmation. Blaise, apparently, was just the ticket.

My oldest son chose Olaf because my husband is 100 percent Norwegian. My middle son chose Paul because that's his best friend's name.

What I love about the confirmation process is that it begins with these simple reasons for selecting a name. It then continues with questions like, “Why did he retreat to a cave and take care of wild animals?” or “Why was he or she beheaded?” Answers start coming, followed by reflection on what the saint means to you personally and to the larger church in general. Through the help of confirmation sponsors, teachers and retreats, young people grow to understand that simple questions are part of the journey to a mature, adult faith.

Somewhere in the confirmation process, students then begin to wonder about the biggest question of all: What is the Holy Spirit and how does his grace work in my life?

The church teaches that the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit that are given freely at baptism are sealed and strengthened in us permanently at confirmation. These gifts are: wisdom, understanding, counsel, knowledge, fortitude, piety and fear of the Lord.

At my own eighth-grade confirmation 42 years ago, I remember feeling somehow empowered by this thought. Yet, it took years of experience—some joyful, some painful—to recognize that the Holy Spirit, however unexplainable, was actively working in me.

What got me through the difficult deaths of my mother or my nephew? What helped me see that someone needed to talk? Why did I decide to take the high road when the other would have been easier and more comfortable?

There is only one answer: the presence of the Holy Spirit. The graces we receive at confirmation are not wrapped in tangible boxes with glittery paper and bows. Oh, here's piety! And here's fortitude!

No. For most of us, these gifts are revealed gradually over a lifetime. And to think it all starts with choosing a cool name and asking a few questions.

Mary Solberg is the editor of FaithLife. Email: msolberg@ERICD.org Call 814-824-1171 Twitter: @ERICDsolberg

## Remember Mother's Day, Memorial Day



Guest Commentary  
Kathy Wilcox

My mom was in her twilight years, and since she could no longer drive, she depended on me to take her wherever she needed to go. In May of 2008, she called to say we needed to take at least a few hours to run some errands.

What I thought was a shopping trip, turned out to be so much more. We first went to her favorite garden supply where we purchased a trunk full of salmon-colored geraniums. She then proceeded to give me directions to the first of several cemeteries we would visit. She reminded me to write down where each family plot was located so that when she was gone, I could find their graves again.

At each site, we carefully cultivated and weeded

around the grave markers and planted the geraniums. While we were still on our knees, she led me through prayers for each person. We tended the graves of her second husband, his first wife and his sister.

Then we proceeded to another cemetery to care for the grave of a friend who never married and had no siblings to remember her. Finally, we went to my dad's site where we repeated the tasks of praying and remembrance.

The warm breeze, bright sunlight, flowers and prayers that day changed my perspective about the month of May and Memorial Day. It is one of my most poignant memories since my mother passed away in the summer of 2009. Yes, we remember the brave soldiers who died and we should visit their graves. But we also need to remember and pray for all who have died, especially our friends and loved ones. In this month of May, we especially remember our mothers.

The Catholic Catechism tells us that “from the beginning the Church has

honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God.” (1032)

The church has given us this perfect prayer: “Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.”

May is a month of remembrance, and takes on special meaning for those who have lost their mothers.

Yes, I'll be filling up my car trunk with salmon-colored geraniums again this year, and making the rounds in memory of all of those who were close to my family.

But my last stop, of course, will be to my parents' graves, where I will pray and always remember.

Kathy Wilcox is a retired grandmother and a member of St. Boniface Parish, Erie. She is a contributing writer for the Erie Catholic Charismatic Renewal newsletter, and multiple online writing sites.

### DOUBLE CELEBRATION

## Coalport couple marks special occasions



Joseph and Christine Pino

COALPORT—Happy 90th birthday and happy 70th year as a couple to Joseph and Christine Pino, grandparents of Father Justin Pino, pastor of St. Joseph Parish and Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, Oil City.

Joe Pino turned 90 on April 21, and Christine will be 90 on May 18. They met as members of a wedding party in 1946, and were married on Feb. 15, 1947, at St. Basil the Great Church in Coalport. They have been parishioners of St. Basil ever since. The Pinos have three children, seven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

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# 'I WAS THIRSTY'

## Students learn how to filter water for a healthier planet

BY MARY SOLBERG | FAITHLIFE

For fourth-grader Kennedy Liedtbach, filtering water is all about saving lives.

She and her classmates at

St. Stephen School in Oil City were among 289 fourth-graders throughout the Diocese of Erie who recently designed water filtration systems made out of plastic soda bottles, dirt and such ma-

terials as sand, stones, and even nylon book covers.

Their challenge was to think of ways to clean dirty water and, perhaps, more clearly understand the issues facing 1 in 9 people worldwide who do not have clean, safe drinking water. Water-related illnesses, according to Catholic Relief Services, cause children around the world to miss 443 million days of school every year; each day, 2,000 children under age 5 die from diarrhea.

"I did this project so I could try to help and possibly save somebody's life," Kennedy said. She and her classmates at St. Stephen took first place in the water filtration lab project that was part of the "I Was Thirsty" program offered by the diocese. "I Was Thirsty" was made possible with a \$984 grant from the Religious Education Endowment Fund (REEF) of the diocese.

"I believe the program had an impact on these young students," said Kim Lytle, diocesan director of curriculum. "It changed the world—at least a little bit—for the better, and it heightened their awareness of a big problem."



Students at St. Stephen School, Oil City, managed to clean up some very dirty water, as shown in these before and after photos.



Filtering water is a captivating project for Our Lady of Peace fourth-graders Cooper O'Camb, Jacob Esser, Carson Phillips and Jack Miller.

Contributed photo

Besides the filtration lab work, the "I Was Thirsty" program included discussion of the book, *Drop by Drop*, published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Students also took a pledge to conserve water, and each fourth-grade homeroom of the 15 participating schools selected a Catholic Relief Services project that they could monitor and support through prayer.

St. Stephen's fourth-grade teacher, Martina Love, enjoyed mentoring her students throughout the water program.

"The project was a great opportunity for my students to combine their scientific learning and problem-solving skills with the virtues of compassion and social justice," Love said.

A cash award was given to St. Stephen for their first-place win. Cash prizes also were awarded to second-place finishers: St. James, Erie; Seton School,



Contributed photo

Fourth-graders Brady Gibson, Jacob Wenner and Kyle Beichner pull their resources to filter water during their "I Was Thirsty" project at St. Stephen School, Oil City.

Meadville, and St. Marys Elementary, St. Marys. Next year, fifth-graders in Erie area Catholic schools will continue their focus on the

earth in another program, "Care for Our Common Home," made possible with a \$45,000 grant from the Thomas Lord Charitable Trust.

### EVENTS

#### Golf and sports raffle scheduled May 13

HARBORCREEK—The Knights of Columbus at Our Lady of Mercy Church will hold their 23rd annual golf and sports raffle May 13 from 6 to 11 p.m. at Sperry Hall, located at Bartlett and Durton roads in Harborcreek. The grand prize is a six-day Royal Caribbean Cruise for two to Bermuda.

Other prizes include two U.S. Open tickets, golf course memberships, sets of clubs, day golf passes, two Steeler tickets, a sailing charter, Seawolves passes, passes for a day fishing trip, and a large-screen TV. Individual tickets are \$8, or two tickets for \$15. Free food and refreshments are included. Must be over 21 to attend.

Also included are casino games, raffles and a gift auction, cash prizes for those in attendance and door prizes. Tickets are sold at the door. Proceeds go to youth programs at Our Lady of Mercy Church. For more information, call 814-572-5437.

#### St. Peter Cathedral to host special concert

ERIE—Singers from Mercyhurst University, the Erie Renaissance Singers, Chautauqua Chamber Singers, the choir of New York's Church of Christ Savior and elsewhere will come together to sing "All-Night Vigil"—Opus 37, vesper by Sergei Rachmaninoff, on May 15 at 7 p.m. The concert is free and open to the public.

#### St. Casimir Rosary Society sponsors card party

ERIE—The St. Casimir Rosary Society will host its Maytime Card Party on May 18 at 6 p.m. at the St. Casimir social hall, located at Hess Avenue and Atkins Street, Erie. There will be food, raffles, door prizes and a gift auction. Admission donation is \$7.

#### Learn about being an associate of the SSJs

ERIE—The Sisters of St. Joseph will offer an information session for anyone interested in becoming an associate of the religious community. The session will be held May 24 at 7 p.m. at the Sisters of St. Joseph Community Living Center, 5031 West Ridge Road, Millcreek.

SSJ associates are women and men committed to living the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph within the context of their lives and responsibilities. Associates make an annual, written commitment of their desire to live the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Associates participate in a variety of spiritual, ministerial and social events. Associate membership is open to all men and women, regardless of age, marital status, spiritual tradition or vocation.

For more information, contact Linda Kuhn or Nancy Donnelly at 814-836-4134 or email [associates@ssjerie.org](mailto:associates@ssjerie.org).

#### Visit the relics of St. Sharbel in Carnegie

CARNEGIE, Pa.—A two-day ritual of devotion to St. Sharbel will be held May 18-20 at Our Lady of Victory Maronite Catholic Church, 1000 Lindsay Road, Carnegie, Pa. First-class relics of the saint, which have been traveling throughout the world, will be displayed and various devotions will be held both days.

#### Corpus Christi Sunday to be celebrated

WARREN—All are welcome to attend a celebration at St. Joseph Church in Warren for Corpus Christi Sunday, May 29. There will be an outside Eucharistic procession after the 10:30 Mass. Father Ross Chamberland, OFM, of St. Bonaventure University, will speak at the Mass and at the luncheon following the procession. There is no cost for the luncheon.

## PNC Bank provides funds for scholarships



PNC Bank Regional President Jim Stevenson, center, presents a check to Bishop Lawrence Persico, left, and Father Nicholas Rouch, vicar for Education.

ERIE—PNC Bank Regional President Jim Stevenson presented a check for \$61,500 to Bishop Lawrence Persico and Father Nicholas Rouch, vicar for Education, for scholarship assistance to children attending Catholic schools in the 13 counties of the Diocese of Erie.

PNC made the contribution to the diocese's STAR Foundation with funds from Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program. The gift will provide scholarships to more than 100 students.

Since 2001, PNC has contributed \$871,000 to the diocese for

educational scholarships. According to Stevenson, "We think it's critical for PNC to support Catholic education in our region, and we are committed to continuing this collaboration with the diocese in the future."

Stevenson is personally invested in Catholic schools as well. He graduated from St. John the Baptist, Cathedral Prep and Gannon University, all in Erie. His two daughters attend St. George School, Erie.

"The Catholic mission is extremely important to me. I attribute my own success to my Catholic upbringing," he said.

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### Sisters of Mercy tutor at DuBois Elementary



DuBOIS—DuBois Central Catholic Elementary Principal Gretchen Caruso, center, checks out the technology being used by Sister Margaret Park, RSM, left, and Sister Patricia Tyler, RSM, volunteer tutors for the school's elementary students. Both Sister Patricia and Sister Margaret were recognized recently for their service to DCC students the past six years.

### Lectors installed in the permanent diaconate



ERIE—Four candidates to the permanent diaconate in the Diocese of Erie were installed to the ministry of lector on April 9. They are joined in this photo by their wives and Bishop Lawrence Persico.

Pictured, from left, are: Jeanne and Kevin Harmon, Janet and Daniel Satterlee, Bishop Persico, Joseph and Carlee Yochim, and Jerry and Kathleen Peterson.

In his remarks to the candidates at Mass, Bishop Persico said the ministry of lector is essential to the life of the church. "Sear into your hearts," the bishop advised, "the words of Pope Paul VI: 'Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers. And if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.'"

### Children deliver food, monetary donations to food bank



SMETHPORT—Religious education students from St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish delivered food and monetary donations this spring to the Christian Community Services Food Bank in Smethport. Students in grades 1 through 11 collected items throughout Lent as their spring service project.

### What do you know about the Catholic faith?

ERIE—St. James School in Erie captured first place and St. Marys Middle School in St. Marys took second in the diocesan religion competition. "To Know and to Serve," at St. Mark Catholic Center April 25. St. James answered all 50 religion questions correctly and won a \$100 award that will be shared with their charities of choice: St. James Food Pantry and Twinbrook Nursing Home.

Besides St. Marys and St. James, other competitors included St. Michael School, Greenville; and St. Joseph School, Lucinda.



The St. James winning team, from left, are: Isabel Ladaika, Joshua Rose, Raecan Suranofsky, Rue Daniels and William Barnes.



The St. Marys winning team, in the front row from left, are: Melaina Gradl, Sean Radkowski and Alex Wolfe. In the second row, from left, are: Audrey Dornisch, Joey Geci, Tiffani Total and Charlie Brendel.

### Confirmation classes hold intergenerational event



DuBOIS—Confirmation candidates from St. Bernard Parish in Falls Creek, St. Joseph Parish in DuBois, and St. Michael the Archangel Parish in DuBois hosted an intergenerational event during Lent. The students, pictured from left, are: Brooke Eli, Michael Blizzard, Brian Elias Jr., Pedar Garred, Abigail Kirk, Ashley McCluskey, Adam Bankovich, Carson Hanna and Garret Kemerer. Also shown is Jordan Eli, a fourth-grade helper.

### 'Media Rats' remembered with classroom at Gannon University



ERIE—Gannon University classmates Monique Beatty and Kevin Sullivan made a gift to their alma mater by naming a classroom in the Center for Communications and the Arts. They are pictured here with Gannon President Keith Taylor, far left.

The room is named in honor of a group of fellow students known as the "Media Rats." Both Beatty and Sullivan are 1987 graduates of Gannon now working in Hollywood. Sullivan is a writer with Nickelodeon and Beatty is a director of Production, TV at DreamWorks Animation Television.

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