

Memories of St. Joseph High School

By Pat Courtney

I am writing this at the encouragement of Peter Apicella, so send the blame to him. Just kidding. When I think back to the days, I shared with all of you at St. Joseph, I keep feeling warmer and warmer toward all of you. I do recall many of the events which have been mentioned in the wonderful Norseman Chronicles of the last year. As I think back I remember being an observer of many of those big events. Whether the event was in school or in the world around us. I was not much of a participant in events. I lived in Mentor with my family and my first days were in summer school before freshman year. There were five or six of us, as I recall, Jim Meil, Chuck Rankin, Larry Manion, Pete Fries and myself. I thought there was a sixth person, but cannot think of who it was. Anyway, my dad handled the morning drop off to school. We all piled into his Volkswagen bug, Meil in the front with the longest legs, the others in the back seat and I got into the small space behind the back seat. Moms shared the pickup at around noon, and I was the main source of humor being stuck in the back.

I got to meet Bro. Mike Volker who was very nice to me. He saw me waiting in the hall and invited me to his French lab to sit and listen in. I was never a star student and struggled to keep my head above water most of the time. I enjoyed Mr. Baca in freshman English. He was a first year teacher that year, and we all figured things out together. I have great memories of taking notes in class as our notebooks were an important part of our grade in each course during each quarter. I think note taking got me through most of what the faculty were trying to pass along to all of us. Those are skills that I carried with me through life, from St. Joe's to Marine boot camp, to undergrad at B.G., to grad school and post grad school.

It was the faculty who I remember most, as their influence caused me to choose a life as an educator. I will always remember Mr. Gutbrod, Mr. Storey, Mr. Banc, Mr. Thomas, Bro O' Grady, Mr.



Macuga, and Mr. Simonis, who showed me how to be a caring teacher and man. I have spent more than 40 years working in classrooms in high schools (special education), athletic director, high school principal, assistant superintendent, and finally professor of Psychology.

Even during the pandemic, we are all in the middle of, and the challenges in remote teaching, I still enjoy the interaction with students. I am pleased by their growth and success as they improve their lives and the lives of their families.

The last piece of my story now includes the last 13 years after my kidney transplant. I received a kidney from my youngest brother John in August of 2007 at the Cleveland Clinic. I have had a good life since, and now I am preparing for another transplant as this kidney is now slowly dying. I am back in transplant protocol waiting to see if I get added to the active transplant list. I have a few live donors in my family, so I do not think I will have to go on to the big list and wait for a donor (live or cadaver) to show up.