



"We'll always come to thee again, when alma mater calls."

Leadership change



Darlene Kerstetter, '82, and Valerie Purzycki, '88, at a recent SBA Board meeting.

After 19 years of organizing, convening, writing, mailing, energizing, calling, and much more, Ann Comstock, '64, St. Benedict Academy Alumnae Association Coordinator, is pulling back to allow the "younger girls who know all the new technology"

to take the lead. SBA Alumnae Association board president Darlene Kerstetter, '82, and board member Valerie Purzycki, '88, will take the helm. "We're grateful to Ann for her many years of service," said Darlene, who has been on the board for 10 years. "And we're looking forward to her continued support." Ann will remain on the board and continue serving as treasurer.

Let us pray for our SBA alumnae who have passed into eternity—

- Helen Heil Kiehlmeier '46
- Audrey Jerge Wilson '49
- Theresa Kuzma Taft '52
- Evelyn Marie Dobrzynski '54
- Dorothy Rose Rutkowski Dahl '54
- Mary Ann Rogers Hedderick '55
- Patricia J Krauchen Mezzacapo '56
- Mary Anne Kaczinski Kleiner '56
- Barbara Anne Becker '60
- Patricia Alice Cackowski Kirk '61
- Judith A Schaaf Bentley '61
- Ruth A Page '62
- Marilyn Wisinski Eickley '64
- Rosemary Benim Winschel '66
- Christine Wisniewski Rudolph '67
- Rosemary T Trott Allgeier

Contact Us

Have an address change? Story to share? Idea to highlight your class in the newsletter? Email:

sbaalum@mtstbenedict.org

Class of '76 teachers...



Sister Mary Lou Kownacki

"Here's to standing up for the poor and powerless, Jane (Earll). And you have done that and more. As a strong woman leader with ideas, convictions, and principles you stood up and were counted. You made your voice heard and forged the way for other women to follow. You make the entire SBA family proud."



Sister Mary Hoffman

"Yes, Mary Beth (Cermak), I remember you always chose the advanced math and science courses. Your attention to detail prepared you well for the outstanding profession you have now chosen. Congratulations."



Sister Dorothy Stoner

"Darlene (Webb Feeney) has always had an earnest desire to make life better for others. Compassion, a sense of justice, faithfulness, integrity speak of who she is and what she has offered all of us. I'm proud of her!"



Sister Pat Lupo

"SBA was my first time teaching in an all-girls school and I loved it in the classroom and on the basketball floor. Seeing these young women mature over four years and become committed women in our community has been a great reward!"



Sister Rosanne Loneck

"It warms my heart and touches my soul when I hear about or meet an SBA alumna and learn where life has taken her. Raising and providing for a family is no easy task, and passing on skills, knowledge, and values learned at St. Benedict Academy anchors another generation."



Sister Phyllis Schleicher

"Jane (Earll) was and continues to be a model SBA'er. She loved learning, always seeking to study more, even if it meant speaking in French!"

... and students remember



Spirit of th



Darlene Webb Feeney

After a 25-year career as a teacher and high school basketball coach,

Darlene Webb Feeney's colleagues encouraged her to run for School Board Director for the School District of the City of Erie. She did and since December 2017 has served as a leader and representative of the community, and as an advocate for the students and the school district.

"I so admire our Benedictine sisters! They instilled in me a strong faith and a desire to advocate for social justice. I have maintained a close relationship with Sister Pat Lupo. Her work as an environmental leader inspired me to become a Master Gardener. Sister Dorothy Stoner has also been a great mentor and inspired me to use my voice to advocate for women and the poor and underserved," said Darlene, who has a Master of Arts degree in Special Education.

Participating in Forensics (debate and extemporaneous speaking) and Student Government at SBA, developed skills Darlene utilizes often as a School Board director. Playing basketball and coaching taught her how to be a team player, another skill necessary when working on a board.



Cindy Rettger

"I have raised a pediatric RN, a mechanical engineer, an educator and an

ICU mobility technician," said Cindy Rettger, wife of 41 years, mom to four children and grandmother (or Busia, Polish for grandma) to five. "My proudest accomplishment is my family."

For the past 35 years Cindy has made a career of making and decorating cakes, attributing this passion to Sister Rosanne Loneck, in an inter-term class. Her other enduring SBA influence was Mrs. Lucille Powers who instilled in her a love for sewing. "I have made several outfits for my family over the years."

"Another thing for which I will be forever grateful to SBA is my circle of friends. I am still close to several of these dear people. In fact, a group of four of us have been going away for a "girls weekend" every summer for several years. We come together from three states, even during this year's pandemic, as we decided to appreciate our own hometown," said Cindy.



Mary Beth Cermak


Mary Beth Cermak, MD, is a highly-regarded

hand surgeon at Hand

Micro Surgery in Erie, who has been practicing for over 30 years. She can still name influential and inspiring teachers, including Sister Mary William Hoffman, Mrs. Bedford and Mrs. Modulski. As co-editor of the yearbook, Dr. Cermak says she learned the importance of teamwork and organization. "Growing up in an all-girls school, with no one to put me down, I felt free to advance without the stress of male dominance. This environment helped me become a confident adult who wasn't afraid to venture into a world dominated by men," she said. Mary Beth's best friends were those she met at SBA, and many of those friendships continue today.

The Class of '76

Coordinated by Cindy Rettger, '76



**Susan
Pacinelli
DiVecchio**

“Although I never thought I would be in politics, my God saw something different for me,” said Susan Pacinelli DiVecchio. Susan was appointed City Treasurer by Erie City Council in 2005 and then ran for the position in 2006 and won. She won reelection every four years until she retired in January 2020.

“What I really liked about this job was helping people in any way I could, if they needed information about city services. Even while campaigning I found that people just want to be heard and tell you about themselves,” said Susan.

“SBA has always been a part of me. My teachers taught me things I remember to this day, including Mrs. Bedford’s needlepoint class. The girls from my class will always mean so much to me even though we do not see each other too often. They will always have a special place in my heart,” she reminisced.



**Diane
Adkins
Tobin**

Diane Adkins Tobin is happy to be a proud alum of SBA. She was elected associate judge for the Circuit Court for Harford County, MD, in November 2018, and three of her '76 SBA classmates attended her investiture in January 2019.

“I always wanted to be an attorney because that is a good way to help people who are undergoing a crisis in their lives. After I began practicing law, I realized that I wanted to be a judge. I defeated three male candidates to win my seat, and am the first woman in the history of this county to defeat a sitting judge in an election,” she told us. Diane’s law degree is from American University in Washington, DC, and she spent her entire legal career in the courtroom. As a prosecutor, she specialized in prosecuting people who commit crimes against children and vulnerable adults.

“I credit the education I received at SBA for giving me the confidence to believe in myself and my abilities. This confidence carried me throughout my education and my legal career.”



**Jane
Earll**

Jane Earll is an attorney and served four terms as a member of the Pennsylvania State Senate (1996-2012). “I fell into the political arena by an opportunity presenting itself...I was recruited to run for the State Senate, and ultimately decided that some of the same people were holding elective office in Erie County since I was a young girl. It was time for a change. New leaders needed to step forward to serve and I thought, ‘Well, why not me?!’”

“I participated in SBA Student Government and was class president. So in hindsight, that was the beginning of my political career, I guess!”

From St. Ben’s, Jane remembers in particular Sister Phyllis Schleicher, Mr. Paul Kovacs, and Sister Mary Lou Kownacki. “Sister Mary Lou had us make placards and form picket lines to support Cesar Chavez and the National Farm Workers. I didn’t appreciate it at the time, but I now believe that exercise instilled in me a belief that we all have a responsibility to do things outside of our own personal wants and desires. We need to be cognizant of the issues impacting a larger community,” she said.