



Recognizing the  
Legacy of Catholic  
School Educators

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2022

VENEZIA RESTAURANT  
BOSTON, MA

 SAINT JOHN PAUL II  
CATHOLIC ACADEMY

## **Opening Prayer**

Sister Gail Donahue, CSJ

## **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Kate Brandley, Regional Director

## **Share the Light of Jesus; Renmen, Renmen, Renmen; and The Future Starts Today**

Performed by second grade students from the Lower Mills campus

## **Recognizing the Legacy of Catholic School Educators**

Kate Brandley

Claire Barton Sheridan

Jane Breen

Kathleen Costello

## **Closing Prayer**

Reverend John Currie, Board of Trustees



## **Special thank you to the students who are with us tonight!**

From the Columbia campus

Thank you for sharing your science fair projects with us

From the Lower Mills campus

Thank you for leading us in song

From the Neponset campus

Thank you for welcoming our guests

## Recognizing the Legacy of Catholic School Educators

After the challenges of the last two years, we are honored to come together tonight to reunite with old friends and welcome new ones to the SJPIICA community. Thank you for joining us and for your generous support.

The constant that allowed SJPIICA to provide a quality education throughout the pandemic was our educators - the teachers, principals, vice principals, and staff that showed our students each day that they were known, loved, and called to excellence.

Our students have needed us in ways that we could never have anticipated. To gather tonight is to celebrate the impact that Catholic education has within our communities, It is the power of love, service, and commitment to our faith.

This evening, we gratefully honor three of our dedicated educators, who have given decades of service to the Academy.



Text SJP2CA to 53-555 or Venmo @SJP2CA to support our students



## Claire Barton Sheridan Principal, Columbia Campus

Claire has been a Catholic educator and leader for 34 years. Her Vice Principal Kristyn Joy called her "the Lighthouse Keeper of the Columbia campus of Saint John Paul II Catholic Academy."

Claire has led the campus since it was known as St. Margaret's, then Blessed Mother Teresa and Pope John Paul II. As part of the 2010 initiative to create SJPIICA, Claire was instrumental in creating the framework for the Academy.

There were so many good times - opening days, graduations, and other achievements - and Claire said that seeing the smiling faces of the children and working with great people made her job so easy each day. Claire is always outside greeting, talking and laughing with families.

Claire also led the campus through several crises and challenges: 9/11, the suppression of parishes and the closing of schools, the Columbia campus flood of 2015, and the Covid-19 pandemic. Claire is an incredibly strong leader in times of crisis. Through it all, Claire has been the lighthouse keeper - a steadfast beam of optimism, planning, and faith.

The familiar phrase, "All will be good" is recognized and appreciated by her faculty, families, students, and administrative colleagues. While meant to comfort, it also has been said with humor to remind us that we will get through anything together.

Claire is known for her big heart. She knows her families, students and staff. It is not uncommon for Claire to be finding resources such as food, jobs or new opportunities for her families and students. She is well loved by her staff because of her kind yet capable leadership. Claire always means business with a smile and quick joke. She is steadfast in her belief that everyone should have love, be known, have a good education and resources to enjoy life.

As she prepares to leave her leadership post she reminds us all to continue to do our very best and to be the beacon of light spreading hope to others.



## Jane Breen

### Fourth grade teacher and Title I instructional support, Neponset Campus

A fourth grade teacher at St. Ann's School since 1971, Jane has influenced countless boys and girls over the last 50 years. As one of the first supporters and defenders of Saint John Paul II

Catholic Academy, Jane helped rally other teachers because, "I thought the idea of starting the Academy in Dorchester was a lifeline for urban Catholic education. I was enthusiastic about being even a small part of that!"

That sentiment speaks to Jane's character as a dedicated teacher who wanted the best educational opportunities for the students in her care. Jane taught fourth grade at SJPICA from 2008 until 2017. She was known as the consummate professional. Jane was never late for school and rarely absent. She was the first to sign up for professional development and always took advantage of coaching to improve her instructional skills. Jane had the strongest fourth grade standardized test scores in the academy every year. She always expected excellence in herself.

Jane is a favorite at the Academy. She is known to be generous, kind, and collaborative. She was always seen at school functions, volunteering in the community, and a lector and Eucharistic minister at St Ann's Church. Her colleagues knew of her dedication, fun, and humility. She is a wonderful role model for our young teachers.

Jane loved teaching and was always looking for ways to improve the students' experience. When Grade 4 studied women's suffrage, it was not uncommon to see students dressed in early 1900's clothing chanting, "We want the vote!" throughout the school. Jane loved to share her knowledge of Boston history, especially Dorchester, with her students. She would invite local historians and plan field trips so her students would know more about the community they lived in. When she decided to retire, we could not say goodbye and offered her the opportunity to work as a Title 1 Instructional Support teacher. She tutored students who needed extra support in literacy. Jane has certainly given her life to the education of her students and families.

Jane retires from teaching having taught hundreds of students. While she says she is the one who has so many good memories of her time spent with the children over the years, we know our graduates can say the same of their time in her classroom.



## **Kathleen Costello** **Kindergarten II Teacher,** **Neponset Campus**

Known for her warmth, enthusiasm, and dedication to her students, families, and school, Kathy has worked in early childhood programs for more than 40 years, starting the early

childhood education program at St. Ann's school 23 years ago, and continuing when the school became part of SJP2CA. She has been a presence in the program ever since, as both a pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten teacher, impacting numerous students and mentoring new staff.

Kathy is always willing to learn and grow. She is the first teacher to sign up for professional development, find programs for students in the Academy, and teach others. Mediocrity is not a word in Kathy's vocabulary. She strives for excellence in all things every day.

As you might imagine, a lot of wonderful memories were created over the years. There were field trips, the Christmas music shows, apple picking, service projects, May processions, and great discussions in the teachers room.

Kathy is known as a team player by her colleagues. If there is an event to attend, an activity to plan, or a colleague who needs support, she is always there. She is one of the hardest working teachers in the Academy. Kathy is fun, optimistic and a joy to work with.

Kathleen has known each of her students as an individual. It is not uncommon for a child to need academic or emotional services in kindergarten. Because she starts from a position of love and knowledge, her families take her advice and get the help their children need. By doing that, she is able to guide them from where they were at the beginning of each year socially, emotionally, and academically to as far as each child is capable of achieving. Her rapport with the children is natural and they trust her.

Kathy leaves this advice: genuinely smile and greet families at morning assembly. They are leaving one of the most important people in their lives in your hands. Families should feel that you are ready and willing to take on the challenges and surprises of the day.

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## Points of Pride!

We are so proud of our students and their achievements...

- The Class of 2022 received 96% acceptance to the high school of their choice and \$2.4M in financial aid awards
- 88% of the class of 2022 will attend Catholic high schools in the Boston area
- 93% of our early childhood students tested at or above proficiency in kindergarten



Saint John Paul II Catholic Academy is a Roman Catholic school educating students age 2.9-Grade 8 across three campuses in Dorchester: Columbia, Lower Mills, and Neponset. Our Academy encourages students to grow in faith and knowledge in a safe, nurturing, structured, and culturally diverse environment. Our challenging and rich academic and fine arts curriculum helps our students develop the essential skills to become productive, responsible global citizens, and young men and women who possess a love of God, learning, and service to others.

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