

SAINT AUGUSTINE SAINTS NEWS

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SINCE 1858

Welcome to the
Home of the Saints

For Parents, Alumni, Parishioners and Friends of St. Augustine School in Washington D.C.

Making Plans for the Future!

As many of you are becoming aware, Saint Augustine School has recently adopted a new model of leadership this year. Instead of the traditional Principal/Vice Principal model of leadership, we have moved to the President/Principal model.

As of February 1st of this year, Principal Sr. Emmanuella Ladipo has been appointed the new President of Saint Augustine Catholic School and former Saint Augustine Catholic School teacher and vice principal, Mr. Raven Wilkins has been hired as Saint Augustine School's new principal. I am grateful to both Sr. Emmanuella and Mr. Wilkins for embracing these critical new roles toward achieving both our present challenges and future goals as a school. This is a very exciting development that I believe is critical to securing our long-term place among Catholic elementary schools in the Archdiocese of Washington.

This is what I mean. Among other obvious things like securing qualified and excellent staff and teachers, another key to the success of Saint of Augustine Catholic School over the past 12 years has been in the area of marketing and development, fundraising and "friend-raising," grant

From the Pastor



writing and building a network of alumni, friends and benefactors along with helpful communication tools like this newsletter to keep all informed about the latest happenings in the school. This part of the running of Saint Augustine School, while more behind-the-scenes, has been and remains a vital and foundational part of the life of the school community. What I and others realized, however, is that this vital component has been almost the exclusive responsibility of our development officer and me along with one or two other key leaders.

With the introduction of the School President position, we are expanding the knowledge and functions of the development portion of running the school to a staff member who has actually run the school or worked several years in the school and is intimately familiar with the day-to-day life and challenges of the school and who can represent the school to those on the outside, such as benefactors.

The key to the success of this new model is the strong collaboration of the principal and president, both of whom feel a very real and personal stake in the school's success and growth. I believe we have this in Sister Emmanuella and Mr. Raven Wilkins.

Let me thank you for all of your support. The success of Saint Augustine Catholic School is something for which you have much to be proud. I ask that you offer special prayers for the success of our new president and principal. May the Lord bless and keep them both and smile upon them each day and grant his grace, strength, wisdom and peace. Amen.

With you in the Lord's Vineyard,

Fr Patrick A. Smith
Pastor

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New Beginnings

Dear Parents, Alumni, Parishioners and Friends,

I am very grateful to the pastor and the School Governance Committee for appointing me to be the president St. Augustine Catholic School. The governance model that we are implementing is one that a number of schools are using effectively.

As the president, I am focused on maintaining and promoting the good reputation of the school, working primarily with the school and the parish, including the School Governance Committee. I will also be working with our pastor and development director to be brought up to speed in the areas of fundraising, marketing, and long-term planning for St. Augustine School's future.

I am the chief spokesperson for the school in my new role as president. I am also working to ensure that our teachers meet the accreditation

From the President's Desk



requirements of the Archdiocese of Washington.

My new office is located on the second floor of the parish office building, however, I am not as tethered to an office, as I was in my previous role as principal. I am in and out of the school, working in close collaboration with the principal, Mr. Raven Wilkins, Sr.

As the new chair of the Religion Department, I am also getting more involved with our parish's Sunday School program to try to encourage more parish families that do not send their children to Catholic schools to consider our school. I am teaching a pre-Confirmation seventh grade class this school year. I am also identifying school families since 2008 who might have a need for sacramental preparation, and I am contacting them to offer our assistance.

I will also be working with Principal Wilkins to apply for the U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon of Excellence award for next year, completing the necessary forms and meeting the requirements.

With God's grace and your prayers and assistance, we can accomplish much for our school and our children.

Sincerely,

Sister Emmanuella Ladipo, HHCC

Eighth grade student wins Black Engineers contest

The first weekend in February, Aklasheya Ashefani won first place in a virtual shipbuilding and search and rescue mission competition sponsored by the Patriots Technology Chapter of the Society of Black Engineers. An eighth-grade student at St. Augustine, she also won second place in a Kahoot Competition based on the history of African Americans in the military.

Since 2018, some members of Girl Scout Troops 42046 and 3859 and the Read2Lead Book Club have participated in STEM programs and activities with Patriots Technology, with Ms. Dena Grant, a lifelong St. Augustine parishioner, school volunteer and alumna, providing invaluable assistance.

In addition to Aklasheya, Yohanna Owens (Grade 4), Abigeya Altashework,



(Grade 5), Yohannies Owens (Grade 6), and Lulia Berhane (Grade 7) have placed first and third place in previous competitions.

Before the Shipbuilding Competition, the students viewed

presentations from naval engineers, aquatic engineers and welders through their computers. The students then built their own battleships and tested them for naval readiness by successfully competing in a search and rescue mission.

In addition to Aklasheya Ashefani, Abigeya Altashework, Feben Belay, Kalkidan Belay, Lulia Berhane Yohanna Owens and Yohannies Owens competed. The students and their parents all represented themselves, the school, and their clubs well.

A multi-talented student, Aklasheya entered St. Augustine as a kindergarten student and submitted the winning entry from St. Augustine School for the CBN-DC essay contest in August 2019.

Wilkins becomes St. Augustine principal

Returns to school where he formerly served as vice principal

Raven Wilkins, Sr., has become St. Augustine Catholic School's principal, effective Feb. 1, the move coinciding with Sister Emmanuella Ladipo, HHCJ, the previous principal, being promoted to the newly-created position of school president.

"I always had love for the school, referring parents to St. Augustine," Wilkins said, the day after his appointment became effective, interviewed through Zoom from his home in Bowie, Md.

During the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift to social distancing and remote work for many Americans, Wilkins has learned that he really prefers working in person with young people.

Wilkins attended Catholic schools, growing up in Grant Circle, N.W., graduating from Holy Redeemer Catholic School and Archbishop Carroll High School. He graduated with a bachelor's degree from Howard



University and then received a Master's degree in Educational Administration at the University of Phoenix.

Wilkins worked for four years at Archbishop Carroll, from 2003-2007, where he taught Religion, Business Education, and served as Christian Service Coordinator. He later taught middle school Math at St. Augustine (2010-2012). He also served as vice principal at St. Augustine from 2012-2019, when he also served as director of admissions. Wilkins is a St. Augustine

parishioner and a member of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. and the Knights of Columbus Council #15723 at St. Augustine.

Wilkins, 41, has been married to his wife Lisbern since July 2014, and they have a 3-year old son, Raven Wilkins Jr. Wilkins met his future wife at Archbishop Carroll while they were students, and they later reconnected at the funeral for a Carroll teacher who had passed away. Lisbern Wilkins is a Science teacher at Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School in Takoma Park and head of the Science Department.

His goals for St. Augustine include qualifying for the U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, in addition to increasing the school's enrollment from 188 students to its capacity of 225 students from Pre-Kindergarten through eighth grade. He would like for a broader audience outside of the school and parish to know of the school's excellence, including

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New counselor begins

Ms. Ayasia Alfred joined St. Augustine Catholic School's staff in January as school counselor.

A native of Long Island, N.Y., Ms. Alfred holds a bachelor's degree in Social Work from New York University, as well as a Master's in Social Work at Fordham University, the Jesuit institution in New York.

She works at the school from Tuesday through Thursday, taking the place of Mrs. Russhelle Riley, Christ Child Society social worker and one of the longest serving members of the St. Augustine staff, who completed her work at the school in November. St. Augustine has benefitted greatly from its partnership with Christ Child Society and is very appreciative of Mrs. Riley and the Christ Child Society donors and volunteers for their years of work with our students, which have



included helping them with high school applications and Christmas presents.

Ms. Alfred was raised Catholic and attended Catholic schools for part of her youth and is excited about working at St. Augustine. She was attracted to the school in part because of its history of being founded in 1858 by free men of color and emancipated slaves and its

mission in the District of Columbia. In her position at St. Augustine, she wants to encourage teamwork among the staff in their work with students and families.

There have been many anecdotal reports from around the country about how hard social distancing and mask wearing is for children, particularly when activities such as in-person learning, sports and other traditional social activities have not taken place for about 20 million young people for a year. This state of affairs has led to more reports of depression and suicidal thoughts for some young people.

In her previous position, Ms. Alfred did Child Protection Services work in Washington, D.C., investigating reports of youth abandonment and abuse. She has also worked at a DC public charter school, focusing on student behavior management.

Happy and working with the incarcerated in Prince George's County



When Gregory Bearstop '79 works with a group of people whom many consider the lowest of the low – incarcerated individuals – he tries to remember what he learned at St. Augustine.

“When you hold (people) to a higher standard and treat them better, they respond,” he explained. Just as the Oblate Sisters of Providence held Bearstop and his classmates to a higher standard than they might have had in other places, so he must do the same to help those who have been incarcerated transition better to life outside the corrections system.

“This type of work is really the work of the poor and the abandoned,” Bearstop said, interviewed at a 74-bed community corrections facility in Upper Marlboro, Md., where he has served as director of inmate services since August. “They don’t have much; no one wants to deal with them.” Bearstop does not raise his voice with the inmates he works with, and he avoids using pejorative or threatening language.

“We are the parents they never had,” he said of his constituency, who are usually men and women in the final three to six months of their sentences or non-violent offenders who are permitted a pass to continue working in the community while incarcerated. The community corrections facility does not have any security personnel.

Bearstop can relate to how some inmates feel about the lack of parenting. He grew up never knowing his father, his mother refusing to reveal his identity. While praying as a child, he asked God to be his father and has gotten great comfort from his filial relationship with the Creator.

“Most people do not read the Scriptures,” he said. It’s up to believers to “plant the seeds” in those who are unchurched and lacking a religious formation that could later lead to their coming to believe in God as their father and following His way for them.

After leaving the Redemptorist Order in 1990, which he had entered as a minor seminarian in 1979, Bearstop completed his graduate studies to receive a Master’s in Divinity from Washington Theological Union as a layperson. He has worked as a Methadone clinic director and in alcohol and drug rehabilitation programs and experienced feeling burned out in the 1990s, which led him to live in Toronto for a period, before he came back to his hometown of Washington, D.C.

“I have a passion for this,” Bearstop said of his work. “I love working with people.” He has found that many inmates have been abused as children, including being raped by fathers and other adults and older children. “Most of these guys have bullet holes in them,”

he said, meaning they have been shot and survived and sometimes feel the need to arm themselves for personal protection.

Bearstop points to the Department of Correction’s (DOC) setting up barber shop and auto mechanic programs for inmates and also helping them with placements, such as at an animal shelter, to gain employment, as example of how DOC is providing opportunities for the incarcerated.

“You’re not gonna save everybody,” Bearstop said. “If you save some, you’re doing the world a tremendous service.”

In addition to our obligations to others and “right living” and a lack of compromise on moral issues, the Oblate Sisters taught the young Bearstop discipline that he has maintained as an adult. “There was no moral relativism,” at St. Augustine, he said. He remembers Rev. Msgr. Geno C. Baroni, who baptized him, as well as Fr. Bouchard and Fr. Raymond Kemp from St. Augustine Parish.

Bearstop grew up a block away from St. Augustine, raised by his late mother, who was a teacher’s aide at St. Augustine during the early 1970s. He remembers stealing candy from an Oblate Sister during first grade. “I felt so bad.” He never wanted to feel that way again.

Wilkins becomes St. Augustine principal

Continued from page 3

its impressive high school placement record, an often-heard refrain.

Wilkins wants to reestablish the St. Augustine Safety Patrol and make its Student Council more active. In addition, he would like to strengthen the school’s Science program, including offering more robotics instruction. Wilkins would also like to seek out more academic competitions for students,

given the success of initiatives such as the school’s Spelling Bee and its participation in the city-wide spelling bee.

Beyond the future-looking goals Wilkins has set, he wants to reassure that St. Augustine School is safe for students and their parents for in-person learning inside the school building, Just as it has been since the first day of school and in the hybrid learning model.

Healthcare leadership career began with a Catholic education

How many children can say their nominally religious father studied the world's religions, seeking the true one?

Margaret Hayes Jordan '57 can say that her late father, Jerome Frederick Hayes, did just that. Her mother, Ellen Hayes, came from a strong Episcopalian family active at St. Mary's Church, a historical parish in the District of Columbia. Nonetheless, Mr. Hayes, who operated a moving company, met Sister Consolata, O.S.P., the St. Augustine School principal, where young Margaret had first enrolled in the fifth grade in 1953, followed by her brother Jerome and later by Angela Hayes '67. As his older two children took Religion classes at St. Augustine, their father studied world religions.

Jerome Hayes' studies led him to read the Baltimore Catechism and later to receive instruction in the Catholic faith. He was received into the Catholic Church at St. Augustine and became an active member of the Holy Name Society.

Mrs. Ellen Hayes "felt left out" on Sundays, her daughter recalled, when they would go to St. Augustine, and she became a Catholic and an active member of Our Lady's Sodality at St. Augustine. Although he was not the oldest of his adult siblings, patriarch Jerome Hayes was seen as a leader by them, and two of his brothers later became Catholics as a result of his influence and example.

"The formation we received at St. Augustine as Catholics was key," Margaret Jordan said.

A direct descendant of Paul Jennings, an enslaved servant of President James Madison, she later became the first African-American graduate of the School of Nursing at Georgetown University in 1964, just nine months after she had attended the March for Washington in August 1963. Within days of her graduation, she got married and moved to San Bernardino, Calif., where her husband, Fred Jordan, received an assignment as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force.

The couple, who eventually divorced,



later moved to Boston and the San Francisco Bay area, where she received a Master's in Public Health at University California Berkeley in 1972, with a focus on community health policy. She had a particular interest in reducing disparities in health and community healthcare delivery for marginalized communities, including African Americans.

She felt her public health career, which was in part inspired by her father's health difficulties and taking care of him before he passed away, was stymied because she is Black and a female. That changed in 1979, when President Jimmy Carter nominated Patricia Roberts Harris, an African-American, to serve as the U.S. Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare. Realizing that the Public Health Service needed to better reflect America's population, Secretary Harris, during her 17 months in office in what in 1980 became the Department of Health and Human Services, took a particular interest in recruiting qualified African-American public health leaders.

After working in the Public Health Service from 1974 to 1978, Jordan was promoted to serving as head of Outpatient and General Services at San Francisco General Hospital from 1980 to 1981.

In 1986, Jordan's career further accelerated when Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Texas, part of Kaiser Permanente, hired her as first regional manager and vice president. She became the first Black female regional manager

in the Kaiser Permanente system. She developed expertise at turnarounds with healthcare delivery and from 1992 to 1995, she served as vice president for healthcare at Southern California Edison.

Jordan has focused much of her career on working with healthcare organizations in promoting patient safety affordable healthcare, including for underserved communities. From 2004 to 2019, Jordan intermittently served as president and CEO of Dallas Medical Resource, a non-profit that promotes Dallas as a destination for medical care that she had initially joined in 1995. She also served as executive vice president of corporate affairs for Texas Health Resources from 2000 to 2006.

She served on the boards of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, Mentor Corporation, Eckerd Corporation, the AT&T Performing Arts Center, the American Hospital Association, and the Dallas Museum of Art. While serving on the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas board, she would give regular reports on healthcare's impact on the economy in the Eleventh Federal Reserve District, which includes Texas, northern Louisiana, and southern New Mexico, with the Dallas Fed influencing national monetary policy.

In addition to her acumen as a healthcare executive, Jordan became known over the years in Dallas for throwing Christmas parties that brought together disparate people, a multi-racial crowd that does not normally mix together in North Texas.

She became friends with the late founder of Southwest Airlines, Herb Kelleher, who launched the upstart company on 48 straight years of profitability and took significant market share from established carriers. She witnessed how personable he was with his frontline employees while traveling and how they responded to his friendliness. She came to know the J.C. Penney chief executive office through the Dallas Fed, which tapped him to report on the retail economy.

A bit of extra pride

It was good to read during Catholic Schools Week (Jan. 31-Feb. 6) William McGurn's weekly column in the *Wall Street Journal* on Feb. 2, where he paid homage to Catholic school teachers and our institutions' resilience during this year-long COVID-19 epidemic, comparing the teachers' adherence to their mission to delivery drivers during this era of social distancing.

Catholic schools across the country, like Saint Augustine Catholic School, have learned to develop and implement plans and backup plans to ensure that student can have the option of in-person learning, as well as distance learning, with appropriate social distancing and mask wearing provisions for student and staff safety. Teachers have had to learn how to teach students in person and through a computer at the same time.

McGurn cited the success that Catholic schools have had in

DEVELOPMENT CORNER



Bill Murray

serving students coming from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as students of color. Reading the column made me feel a bit of extra pride in working with St. Augustine. This COVID-19 era has been challenging for our schools,

given the 6% national drop in enrollment from 2019-2020, a drop of 110,000 students to 1.6 million, according to the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA). Meanwhile, about 200 schools have closed around the country, and there are 5,981 Catholic schools in the U.S., according to the NCEA.

I liked reading McGurn's column, in part, because he quoted Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomeyer as saying that Catholic schools have been "a pipeline of opportunity," for students such as her, growing up in a Puerto Rican family living in public housing in the South Bronx. In urging the newly inaugurated president to pay tribute to Catholic schools, McGurn mentioned Biden's Catholic education in his native Delaware. The truth, to me, is that Catholic schools' success cuts across society, benefitting children from all kinds of backgrounds. We have also had

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Eighth grade student reflects on high school admissions process

Langston Davis

Langston Davis, an eighth grade student, reflects on the high school admissions process, including taking the High School Placement Test, required to apply to Catholic high schools in the Archdiocese of Washington. He has also been working with Ms. Karen Ross, eighth grade homeroom teacher and middle school English Language Arts teacher, and Mr. Ronald Riley, Math Department chair, and Mrs. Russhelle Riley, Christ Child Society social worker, who worked, until November, at Saint Augustine Catholic School.

During the high school admissions process, I received help from Ms. Ross, Mr. and Mrs. Riley, and my mother. The process was challenging because there were many equally important tasks such as preparing for and taking the High School Placement Test (HSPT), writing essays for the high school applications, and maintaining good grades. Through it all, the supportive energy from Ms. Ross, Mr. and Mrs. Riley, and my mother was very helpful. Though challenging, I was excited to prepare to meet new people in a new environment, and finally being in the shoes of the 8th grade classes before me. The essays took a substantial amount

of time to write and edit, but were very rewarding once completed.

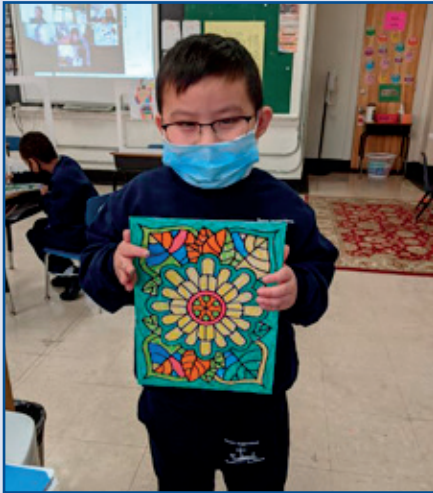
Other people that helped me during the high school admissions process were the administrators of each of the schools for which I applied. The information from the shadow days and open houses was helpful and appreciated. The administrators' informative answers and desire for students to come to their schools were amazing and inspiring. Mr. Matthew Keys, my educational advisor from the Jack Kent Cooke Young Scholars Program, has had a major impact on me as I prepare for high school, too. He has



made reading suggestions, reviewed my essays, and helped me prepare for possible interviews with high school admissions.

Another big part of the process was studying for and taking the High School Placement Test. Ms. Ross and Mr. Riley began preparing us in 7th grade and really worked with us the three months before the actual testing day. Their help made taking the test easier for me. I also studied most nights on my own to help myself. The process is easier when you have and accept help from the people who want to help you.

First Grade Highlights

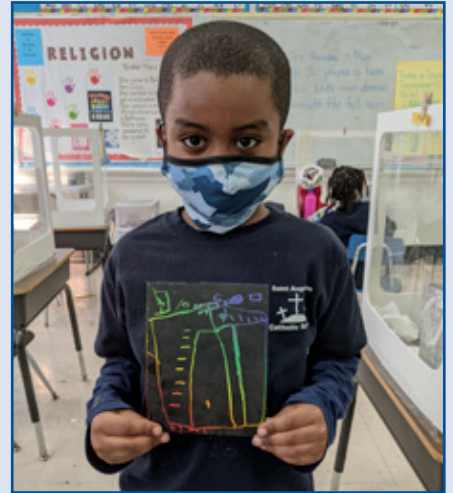


Ms. Marge Maceda, second grade teacher, has a dozen students who are learning in-person, and during the second week of February, she was getting ready to welcome two more students whose parents decided they feel comfortable sending their children

for in-person learning, leaving two additional students engaged in distance learning.

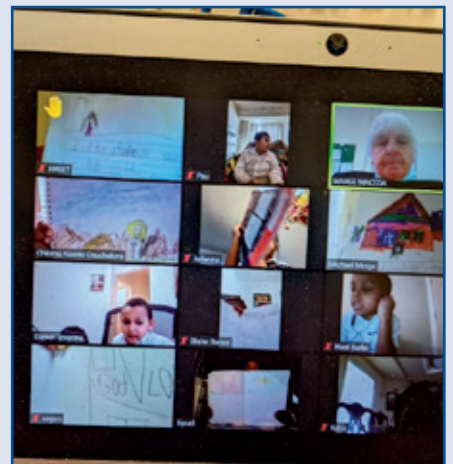
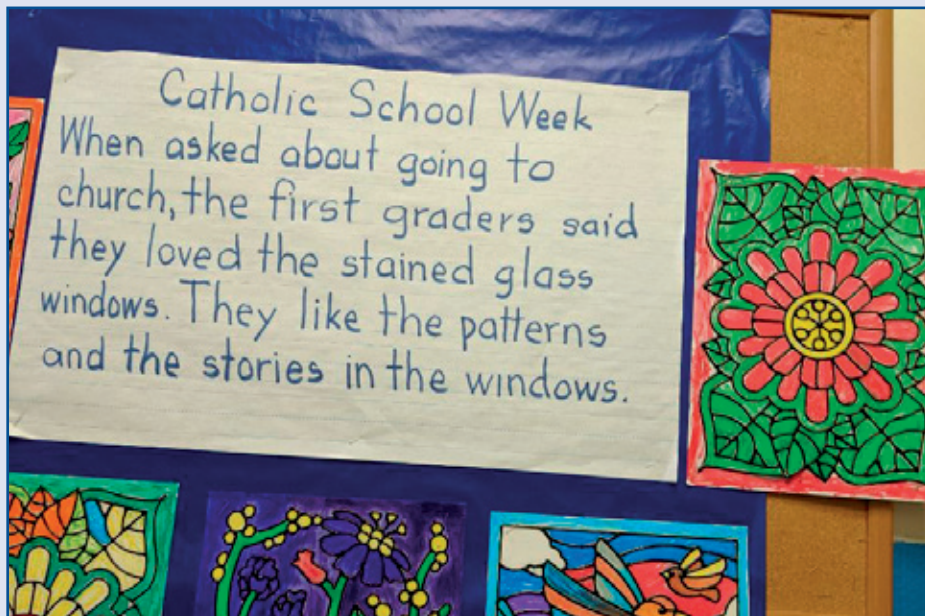
It's a particular challenge to teach writing virtually, according to Ms. Maceda, as well as doing interactive classroom activities. She is glad to have such a high proportion of her students coming to class and learning with appropriate social distancing and mask wearing.

Ms. Maceda, who became the second-grade teacher after serving as Title I teacher last year at St. Augustine, was also preparing to celebrate Valentine's Day and Chinese New Year with her students in February. This year is the Year of the Ox, and she was preparing a lesson on that, in addition to a class lunch of egg drop soup, egg



rolls, fried rice, and clementines for dessert. Following a Chinese custom, she also planned to give each student an envelope with \$1.00 enclosed.

A native of Long Island, N.Y., Ms. Maceda is very involved in her community, having served on the Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6E, a locally elected political position, as well as on the city's Alcoholic Beverage Control Board.



Development Corner

Continued from page 6

people of different political backgrounds support our mission at St. Augustine.

Speaking of politics, it's natural that some of us are concerned about the fate of the Opportunity Scholarship Program, the 20-year old federal program which has allowed thousands of lower-income students in our Nation's Capital to attend parochial and private schools such as

Saint Augustine, since Democrats are generally opposed to it, and they control both houses of Congress and the White House after the recent elections. The legislations' architects won over Mayor Muriel Bowser's support by including millions of additional federal dollars to support the city's public charter and public schools. Time will tell.

As I write this column, we have received nearly \$300,000 in donations from more than 400 individuals,

corporations, and foundations since July 1. While the average donation size has gone down slightly, we are seeing a higher number of donors. We are very grateful for your support and look forward to our continued partnership.

William Murray has served as development director for St. Augustine Catholic School since 2008. You can reach him at bmurray@saintaugustine-dc.org or 240-418-5427.

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In Memoriam

Diane E. Jones '64

*May the souls of the faithfully
departed, through the mercy of
God, rest in peace.*

Story ideas for the newsletter? Please contact **Bill Murray** at bmurray@saintaugustine-dc.org.

Would you like to update your address for our records?

Please complete an alumni contact form at www.staug-dc.org/alumni.html.

We welcome inquiries from alumni, former students and anyone interested in our school.