

SAINT AUGUSTINE SAINTS NEWS

• VOLUME 16, NUMBER 2

• SPRING 2024

SINCE 1858

Welcome to the
Home of the Saints

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

Major Donor Dinner A Success



Lawrence H. Parks II, Esq. '75



Sister Emmanuella Ladipo



Ann Bown Fudge '65

This year's major donor dinner at Saint Augustine featured one of the school's most successful alumnae.

Ann Brown Fudge '64, accompanied by her husband Richard Fudge, attended the event on Saturday, March 9 at the St. Augustine School cafeteria. She gave brief remarks at the event, after an introduction by Rev. Patrick A. Smith, pastor of Saint Augustine Catholic School, who credited her for her extraordinary generosity in fulfilling a three-year pledge of support during 2008-2011, when the parish resumed managing the finances and operations of the Saint Augustine Catholic School.

Sister Emmanuella Ladipo, acting

principal and president of the parish school, spoke briefly, dressed in the white habit of her religious order, the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus.

Lawrence H. Parks II, Esq. '75, who is also the chair of the Parish Finance Council and the Strategic School Governance Committee, also spoke about how St. Augustine students do well after they graduate and matriculate to top local high schools.

Rev. Patrick A. Smith, pastor of St. Augustine, spoke in part to the audience of about 30 people about the challenges of distance learning and learning loss that the school encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Both he and Parks fielded questions from the donors about how the school could increase its enrollment and become an even more compelling option to parishioners with young children through improved communications with parishioners and other supporters.



Eighth grade contributions to our Art Fair in April in the St. Augustine Room. Photos courtesy of Mrs. Pamela Castleberry.

INSIDE
PAGES

From the President's Desk 2
St. Augustine School Way
street sign dedicated 3
Teaching Math with Mrs. Hanton..... 4

New teachers join staff 5
Sheku Kabia '08 5
Catching up with Steve Benefield 6
Emory Verstraete '13 7

A Reflection on the School Year



Dear Saint Augustine School Community,

As the spring semester comes to a close and we approach graduation, and closing of the 2023-2024 School Year.

I am writing to thank you for continuing to uphold the values and mission that makes Saint Augustine Catholic School a special community during the 2023-2024 school year. We are beautifully shaped by a unique culture of care that is central to what

From the President's Desk

makes this school a special place to learn, live and grow.

I enjoyed seeing many of you and celebrating at various end-of-year events that acknowledged the contributions and achievements of our students.

In May and early June, we counted down the days to our Baccalaureate Mass, Graduation, Awards Ceremony and closing for the summer. We used these honored academic traditions to focus on the outstanding accomplishments of our graduates, faculty and staff. Such accomplishments are representative of the collective commitment to excellence that defines our community. We salute the members of the Class of 2024, our outstanding graduates, and the family and friends who have supported them. We welcome this time when all of our students can celebrate their friends, classmates and community.

I want to express my profound gratitude for the feedback, constructive criticism, engagement and support for me, our trustees, alumni, donors and community partners. You have helped me during a challenging period.

The summer ahead is an opportunity for reflection and renewal as well as a time to prepare for the year ahead, enjoy time with your families and friends and to get some well-deserved rest.

I hope that we can use these next months to recharge and return this fall with a restored sense of purpose.

It is my honor to serve as your President. I welcome our new principal, Dr. Anika Logan, to the Home of the Saints and wish her a fruitful tenure in an environment where we love to learn and learn to love.

Yours in Christ,

Sister Emmanuella Ladipo, HHCJ
Interim Principal/President.

Learning Spanish in the Third Grade



If there's one teaching method that can work well in a Spanish class, it is having students listen to a song in that language. That's the teaching method that Ms. Lisbeth May, Saint Augustine's Spanish teacher, used one June morning, as she was teaching the third grade.

Dressed in a crème-colored blazer, with a white shirt, Ms. Mays stood before the 14 students. After listening to the song, on the whiteboard, she wrote the different vocabulary words she found in the song.

Ms. Mays is a native Spanish teacher, coming from a Venezuelan family, although she was raised in Barcelona. She was teaching the third graders in Ms. Yvonne Taylor-Stewart's third grade homeroom class.

"Bailar" means "to dance," and "visitor," means "to visit."

"Amigos," of course, means "friends." Meanwhile, "prima" refers to a female cousin. "Mas" means "more," while "Los Santos" means "The Saints,"

a term that stumped the third graders that morning, which was ironic, since St. Augustine's mascot is The Saints.

"Suenos" are dreams, while "porque" means "because," although when it is spelled "por que," the two words become "Why?," Ms. Mays explained. Meanwhile, "contigo," means "with you" in a familiar relationship. "Jardin," meanwhile, is "garden." Finally, "No se habla" means "is not spoken."

In Memoriam

Dolores E. Rosier '50

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

Black History Month Production

On Friday, Feb. 23, the school presented *King: The Life of Martin Luther King Jr.* as its Black History Month production.

The hour-long event was produced and directed by Mr. Ronald Riley, longtime Mathematics Department chair at Saint Augustine Catholic School, who also narrated. He explained to the audience that he wanted the students to better understand King's life and to delve past what many Americans associate King with, which is the "I Have a Dream" speak from the 1963 March on Washington.

While songs played in the background, students acted key aspects of the civil rights leader's life, from graduating from Morehouse College at the age of 19 in 1948 after he had skipped two years in high school to his wedding into Coretta Scott King in 1953, after meeting her while he was studying for his theology doctorate at Boston University, and she was studying Music at the Boston Conservatory of Music.

Students also learned that King loved baseball and that he was born "Michael King, Jr.," but by the time he was 4 or 5, his father changed his name to Martin Luther King, Jr., in honor of the 16th century leader of the Protestant Reformation in Germany, Martin Luther.

They also acted out Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat on a public bus in Montgomery, Ala., in 1955, which led to the boycott that ended segregation there. King had become pastor at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery in 1954 and became involved in the civil rights movement there and within several years became a national figure.

In the penultimate scene, they acted out King's assassination in Memphis, Tenn., on April 4, 1968.



Rev. Patrick A. Smith, pastor of St. Augustine Parish, led opening and closing prayers at the event, which was attended by dozens of parents and friends of the school in the St. Augustine Room.

"If the world is filled with darkness, the problem is not the darkness," but rather the lack of light, he said. He also pointed out that the stories of the past

have a message for the present time.

Ms. Helene Cropper, vice principal, presented Mr. Riley with a couple of bouquets of flowers in appreciation for his work on the production.

Sister Emmanuella Lapido, HHCJ, interim principal and president of St. Augustine, also spoke at the end of the production.

Alumni Notes • Alumni Notes • Alumni Notes

Kenya J. Jenkins '10 graduated Magna Cum Laude from Purdue University on May 4 with a Master's of Public Administration degree. Having grown up in St. Augustine Parish, Kenya was the salutatorian of her class at St. Augustine, and her mother is Lisle (Turner) Cole '85.

Kenya persevered through her studies, despite being diagnosed with a debilitating medical condition while she was a student at Towson University, where she earned her bachelor's degree in 2017. Kenya played basketball at St. Augustine and was on the varsity rowing team at Elizabeth Seton High School. She was also a Junior Sodalist at St. Augustine and is a lifetime Girl Scout, having earned the Silver Award. She was also a youth member of the D.C. City Council while at St. Augustine.



Kenya works for the Knights of Columbus, as an event coordinator at the Saint John Paul II National Shrine in Northeast Washington. Her one-year old son Westin was baptized Catholic at St. Augustine Catholic Church in July 2023.

For Butch McAdams, It's All Sports, All of the Time

For James "Butch" McAdams '65, it all started at St. Augustine.

As a 19-year old, fresh from graduating from MacKin Catholic High School in 1969, his pastor, Rev. Raymond Kemp, kept pestering him.

As part of the St. Augustine pastor's attempts to rejuvenate what had been an aging parish, Fr. Kemp wanted to revitalize the parish through launching a Mass featuring Gospel hymns each Sunday at 12:30 p.m., in addition to building the parish's youth programs, including its CYO sports program.

Fr. Kemp wanted McAdams, who had played varsity basketball at Mackin, to coach the Junior CYO boys team (7th and 8th grade) at St. Augustine. After initially trying to rebuff his pastor after Mass, McAdams told Fr. Kemp that he would coach for a season, realizing that Fr. Kemp wasn't going to give up, particularly after the persistent pastor tried to enlist McAdams' friends to convince him to coach.

After losing in the playoffs to end his first season, McAdams remembers how he felt in the car ride home from Georgetown Prep in Bethesda, where the game was played. He remembers how bad it felt to lose and how he didn't want to lose again.

McAdams coached Saturday morning CYO games at DeMatha Catholic High School in Hyattsville for St. Augustine for four seasons, winning two Mid-Atlantic championships and only losing five games during that time.

He helped bring back the echoes of a great basketball program at St. Augustine.

"I learned one thing," he recalled. "I enjoyed coaching. It was my life's work."

By the age of 24, he had left the St. Augustine CYO program to serve as an assistant coach at St. Alban's in



James "Butch" McAdams '65

Cathedral Heights. By 1978, at the age of 31, he was hired by Maret to be their varsity boys basketball coach.

His coaching continued for 37 years, when he retired in 2007 from coaching the varsity boys team at Maret School, two years before he retired from working at the District prep school.

He remembers the young men whose lives he impacted, such as a 6'8" boy in the 109th grade whom he insisted should play on a team he coached, even though the boy wasn't the most talented basketball player. He recalls a young man from St. Augustine whom he helped obtain a basketball scholarship to attend St. Alban's, a leading prep school.

It may be more than 16 years since he quit coaching, but McAdams' cell phone greets callers with "Coach McAdams." He also hosts a two-hour Sunday sports talk radio show from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on WOL-1450.

Required by his WOL1450 general manager to maintain a social media presence years ago, McAdams has learned to use Facebook to elicit commentary and engagement from readers. On a given day, you can find him debating with his listeners and friends about whether Caitlin Clark, the rookie

basketball player from the Indiana Fever in the WNBA, should have been included on the USA women's Olympic basketball team and whether one of her teammates should act as an "enforcer," retaliating when Clark receives rough fouls by opponents. He also likes to ask his listeners and friends about who they think are the all-time best high school basketball players and teams from the District of Columbia.

In October 2023, McAdams was voted into the Washington Metropolitan Basketball Hall of Fame.

But it all started at St. Augustine. "I'm so proud of my classmates," McAdams said of *Jacqueline Beard '65*, *Ann Bown Fudge '65*, *Judy Butler Rodney '65*, and *Linda Lyles Williams '65*, whom McAdams hosted as guests on his sports podcast program. "I call them the 'Golden Girls,'" McAdams quipped.

"She was one of us," McAdams said of Ann Fudge, who he described as a "Straight A student" who didn't "act nerdy." One of the most famous St. Augustine School alumni, Fudge holds an MBA from Harvard Business School and led a \$5 billion division of Kraft Foods, later serving as chairman and CEO of Young & Rubicam Brands.

"I'm partial to St. Augustine's and the Oblates," McAdams said. He called the Oblates Sisters of Providence "pure gangsters." They knew to use corporal punishment effectively and how to motivate their students, he said. Perhaps the worst punishment for a boy like him who might cut up during class was to deny him the opportunity to go outside during recess.

The Oblates taught McAdams and other students that "failure wasn't an option," and that they should not use any experiences of racism as an excuse for not persevering and overcoming any obstacles placed in their way.

Young Alumna Finds Purpose From Loss

Ghelatia Araia '12 transformed a very traumatic event into her life's mission.

In 2013, her father, Petros Araia, suddenly died of a heart attack in front of her. Whereas many young people would be very shaken by witnessing such an event, to the point of wanting to block it from their memories, Araia found herself very curious about the causes of her father's passing. Her father had been guarded about his health with family, so she had to investigate by asking questions.

Her father had been treated for cancer, and she found out that his treatment led him to be diagnosed with diabetes, since his A1C levels had increased, as well as hypertension, and kidney complications. These ailments left him vulnerable to a heart attack.

Out of an interest in working in health and wellness, she is preparing to take the MCAT exam to enter medical school, with the goal of being a pediatrician.

"I've always wanted to be a doctor," she said. "I'd like to improve the lives of children."

She earned a bachelor of science in Biology from American University in 2020, followed by a Master's degree in Public Health from New York University in 2023. She had received admissions offers from Brown University, Columbia University, and George Washington University, and she chose NYU because of their offering online classes, which was a critical consideration during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the course of her education, she developed not only an interest in the cellular impact of health at the physical level, but also the psychological and sociological aspects of health.

"Public health really involves putting it all together," she said of



biology, psychology, and sociology.

She credits Saint Augustine Catholic School, which she attended from Grade 4 through 8, for helping her to build discipline, which has served her well. After graduation, she attended Emerson College Preparatory, a District of Columbia school which is now defunct.

She thinks that she was a "very competitive child," and that Saint Augustine gave her a venue to compete with others, such as representing the school in the DC Spelling Bee, as well as winning the Prudential Spirit of Service Award, the first St. Augustine student to do so after parishioner and school volunteer Donna Gaskins Pasteur '64 helped introduce the school to the awards program.

She appreciates how St. Augustine fused Black and African-American cultures, as well as helped students learn about other cultures, such as European and Latin American ones. She remembers as a sixth-grade student studying Australia's culture, for example. Ghelatia's family is from Eritrea, the East African country that in 1993 became independent from Ethiopia. More than half of St. Augustine students are from Ethiopia or Eritrea families.

St. Augustine's location near U Street, N.W., and its historic role in Black arts was also significant to her, and she appreciates the school's encouragement and fostering of student interest in the arts.

In 2022, she successfully applied to become an intern with the U.S. Health and Human Services Department's Kidney Innovation Accelerator (KidneyX) program, a public-private partnership with the American Society of Nephrology to stimulate innovation in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of kidney disease through offering \$9.2M in grant awards.

Beyond her academic and work pursuits, last year, Ghelatia has found herself relearning to play the violin, which led her to give a public recital. She also participated in the Miss DC Pageant, as "Miss Columbia Heights."

Admissions

Do you know a child who could benefit from a Catholic education?

Saint Augustine Catholic School has 2024-2025 school year openings from Pre-Kindergarten for 3 and 4 years olds through the eighth grade.

In addition to small class sizes, our school offers an Honors Math program. Our aftercare program includes Basketball, Chess, Fence Club, Girls Scouts, Reading Circle, and Spelling Bee Club. Our high school placement includes Academy of Holy Cross, Bishop McNamara, Bullis, DeMatha, Georgetown Day School, Georgetown Visitation, Gonzaga, Maret, St. John's, and St. Vincent Pallotti. Financial aid is available.

Please contact Ms. Lynn Teran at 202-265-1470 or visit our website at www.staug-dc.org to find more information.

Preparing for Kindergarten Graduation

Kindergarten graduation was just days away, and it was time for the 13 students to show what they had learned.

Ms. Janine Nixon, lead teacher, helped by longtime assistant Mrs. Dolores Grymes, was rehearsing the presentation with her students, many of whom are five years old, standing on a rug in the front of class, facing her.

First came a song highlighting vowels in the alphabet; A, E, I, O, and U. In case we did not know already, the song reminded us that the other 21 letters in the alphabet are consonants, given us the basic ingredients we have to use when forming words.

Next up came the rehearsal of a song where the students counted to ten.

"One, two, buckle my shoes," they sang. "Three, four, shut the door," the students continued, singing along to a YouTube video that Ms. Nixon's grandson, a volunteer who had just graduated from Archbishop Carroll High School, had pulled up on the computer.

"Five, six, pick up sticks," came



the next lines, sung by the six girls and seven boys in the class, dressed in their blue and white uniforms.

"C'mon," Ms. Nixon implored, as the student shifted to their left and then to their right, to animate the song. "Sounds good. Let's do it again."

"I want my mom to pick me up," one student chimed in. Apparently, he wasn't feeling well. Ms. Nixon quickly acknowledged his need to leave before addressing her students as a whole.

They added one quick song to the presentation: "Father, Son, Holy Ghost," they began, days after Holy Trinity Sunday. "Our teacher, Ms. Nixon, she's the most."

They then sang a song where they counted by even numbers. They used syncopation through hand clapping and knee slapping to punctuate the song. The beats sounded like Queen's 1977 rock song "We Will Rock You."

They took turns reciting lines from the revision of a 1950s poem by Dr. William Holmes Borders, "I Am Somebody." For the first part of the poem, students recited lines individually. In the latter part of the poem, two students at a time spoke together.

"I may be Black," one student recited, referring to his skin color. "I may be Brown," another said. "I may be White," a third student, the only Caucasian student in the class, then said, which led to a smile from his lead teacher. 'But I am somebody,' each one concluded.

"Today is Monday," Ms. Nixon said to her students. "By Thursday, you gonna nail it," she said of their June 11 Kindergarten graduation presentation, which they would make before proud parents, grandparents, staff, and friends, marking their completion of the academic year.

Second Grade Math White Board Fun

One sunny June morning, days before the end of the school year, Ms. Donna Robinson Porter stood before her 14 second grade students.

It was time to practice addition and subtraction for numbers up to four digits on the white board at Saint Augustine Catholic School. The students would have to work their way to earn their time outside at Family Fun Day, which occurred later that week.

The first question; If a woman was born in 1955, how old will she be in 2024? Using a black marker, she wrote the current year above 1955. She then formed columns for the four digits for



each number, labelling the far left one "thousands," the next one "hundreds," the third one "tens," and the final one "ones." She crossed out digits in '1955' where that number was higher than its

corresponding digit in '2024,' borrowing from the next highest digit. She quickly produced the answer for her students, clad in the school's blue and white uniforms. She would turn 69 years old.

To check her work, she had of her student, Bennett, volunteer to come forward. He would add 69 to 1955 to see if it produced 2024, which would mean that 69 was the correct answer to the question.

Her second question had to do with a student, Lester, collecting 900 classic cars and selling 450 of them. How many cars would he be left with?

Continued on page 7

Career Day 2024



Brendan Quinn

Cindy Vojtech

Ellissia Price

Emory Verstraete

Larry Fitzgerald

Lisle Cole

Mary Morgan

Steve Nash

On the morning of Thursday, March 14, a group of a dozen parishioners, parents, alumni, and friends of Saint Augustine Catholic School joined us for our annual Career Day.

Larry Fitzgerald, a longtime parishioner, spoke about his career managing large mainframe computers for IBM. Brandon Quinn, a friend of our school, spoke about Ernest Maier, Inc. the Bladensburg, Md.-based company that sells construction materials at numerous retail locations, where he serve as CEO.

Rev. Mr. Steve Nash, a friend of St. Augustine who serves as a permanent deacon at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Largo, Md., spoke about his work as president and CEO of Stoddard Baptist Home Foundation, Inc., located in the District of Columbia. He explained to the students that Stoddard Baptist employs hundreds of personnel to take care of its nursing home residents: personnel from physical plants and

maintenance to physical therapists and nurses to cooks and receptionists. A graduate of Princeton University, he seems up to the task of managing the historic institution, which was founded in 1902 as a retirement home for Baptist ministers, their wives, and widows.

Mary Morgan, a parishioner, spoke about her three decades of experiencing as an owner of airport-based retail stores, giving the students a peek into a very unique market that was subject to larger forces, such as the Sept. 11 attacks and the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to short-term slowdowns in pedestrian traffic at airports.

Shelore Williams, an attorney and former St. Augustine principal, spoke with the students about her career. Jacqueline Taylor, who has served as a volunteer and substitute teacher at St. Augustine, talked with the students about "soft skills," such as how we present ourselves to others, including

our shaking hands when meeting a person and speaking directly and clearly to others in the workplace.

Emery Verstraete '13 spoke about her work in New York City as a neuro surgical nurse in a hospital. She is part of a three-generation family from the parish, and she is part of the second generation of her family to attend the parish school. She was clearly excited about being back at her alma mater.

The morning featured three sessions, with students divided according to age level. Other speakers included Dr. Cindy Vojtech, Ph.D., an economist from the Federal Reserve Board, Lisle Cole '85, a nutritionist, Dr. April Joy Damian, Ph.D., who spoke about public health, and Ellissia Price, who spoke about her previous work as a school counselor. Emily Williams, a school parent and Doula, seemed to elicit the most questions from students about her work with women giving birth.

Continued from page 6

Second Grade Math...

Bennett wrote 900 above 450 on the whiteboard. He then formed the columns, with "h" for hundreds, "t" for "tens," and "o" for "ones" above them. Checking his work, a second student, Diann, added 450 to 450 to come up with 900. As the students worked, signed hung above the white boards with the "Class Rules,"

Listen to the Speaker

Show respect

Work quietly

Raise your hand and speak

Be responsible

Always try your best

Be a caring friend

Take care of your things

Be kind

For a third question, Birut, one of Ms. Robinson Porter's students, wrote 2020 above 3131, and then he added the two numbers to come up with 5,151.

"Look at your sign. Look at her operator," Ms. Robinson Porter, a native of Jamaica, implored him.

Lester, another second-grade student, checked his work, taking 3,131

from 5,151 to come up with 2,020.

'Step back,' she encouraged her student, Gabrielle, who was checking work that Justin later completed on the white board, subtracting 80 from 175. "Inhale. Relax. Think about what you are doing. Let it flow. You got this."

At this point, more than half the class had ventured up to the white board, and not one of them seemed reluctant to work in front of their classmates or teacher.

Family Fun Day would come a couple days later.

Office of Alumni Relations/Development
St. Augustine Catholic School (PreK-3 to 8)
1421 V Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009
202-667-2608

Non-Profit Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 966
Southern Maryland

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

SAINT AUGUSTINE SAINTS NEWS • VOLUME 16, NUMBER 2 • SPRING 2024

Congratulations to the Class of 2024

They've been admitted to:

- Academy of the Holy Cross
- Archbishop Carroll
- Benjamin Banneker
- Bishop McNamara
- DeMatha
- Don Bosco Cristo Rey
- Duke Ellington School for the Arts
- Elizabeth Seton
- Georgetown Visitation
- Gonzaga
- St. John's

Congratulations to our eighth graders,
their families, and our wonderful staff
in preparing our students for success
in high school and beyond!



www.staug-dc.org

Rev. Patrick A. Smith
Pastor

fatherpat@saintaugustine-dc.org
202-265-1470 (church office)

Sister Emmanuella Ladipo HHCJ
President

elapido@saintaugustine-dc.org
202-667-2608

Bill Murray
Development Officer

bmurray@saintaugustine-dc.org
240-418-5427

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.