

A Message from Principal Marilyn Pigott



We were very excited to welcome our students back on campus on Thursday, August 6, 2020. Things are different this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but our students and faculty always know how to make OLA feel warm and welcoming like home.

We have had to put in place many new policies and procedures because our students and faculty health and safety are a top priority. Some upgrades we have made to the school are adding water bottle filling stations throughout the building. These are touchless fillers that use a sensor. All the students have to do is place their water bottle in front of the sensor, and the bottle fills with water. We also added hand sanitizing stations to each classroom and throughout the building. There are decals on the floor marking walking directions and advising students to remain 6 feet apart in the Commons. We take all students' and faculty temperatures each morning as they enter campus, and everyone wears a mask. I am very proud of how everyone has adapted so well to the changes made on campus.

Due to COVID-19, we are unfortunately not able to have guests on campus. We have missed having our alum visit us!

We are doing our best to continue with all of the OLA traditions even though we have had to make some modifications. We are now live streaming all of our events and Masses since parents are not able to attend. We have already live streamed 8th grade promotion and Ring Ceremony which were rescheduled from May to August. We have also live streamed the Big Sister/Little Sister ceremony. It is not the same without parents joining us, but we are so happy parents are still able to view the events.

Our next big event is, of course, Mercy Day on September 25th! Again, we are working hard to keep this day true to form but with some changes. The prayer service will be live streamed for families and alum to view. This year, only seniors will have the tea, but all of our other students will receive a light snack and refreshments in their homeroom class. We will have our traditional morning and afternoon activities and games along with a picnic lunch provided by the school.

There are some changes at OLA in order to follow COVID-19 protocol, but most importantly, we are together. The halls were empty for way too long. It was well past time for some laughter, cheer, and SISTERHOOD.

OLA is Turning 50!



In celebration of our 50th Anniversary in 2021, we are inviting our alumnae to share their memories from the past 50 years.

Please submit your stories, memories, pictures, and/or tributes to your favorite teachers to alumnae@ourladyacademy.com by October 30, 2020.



[Click here to update your alum info!](#)

ALUMNAE SPOTLIGHT

EMILY MEYERS CORLEY '02 NAMED HEAD VOLLEYBALL COACH

by Joe Gex



The Our Lady Crescents volleyball program witnessed the setting of a star in head coach Mike Meyers this past spring. However, OLA did not have to look far for a successor having named Emily Meyers Corley head volleyball coach for the 2020-21 school year. Corley is in her second year as Athletic Director at OLA and previously served six seasons under her father, Mike Meyers, as the junior varsity coach.

Corley takes over an OLA volleyball squad that she played on under her father, Mike, who spent the past 20 seasons as head coach. Emily is a 2002 graduate of OLA, excelled in volleyball, soccer, and softball while on campus as a Crescent and earned the Hull Award as the school's best all-around student-athlete.

Following her time at OLA, Corley signed to play soccer at Mississippi State University where she played four seasons for the Lady Bulldogs.

Corley stated, "I am very excited to take over as the head coach of the OLA volleyball program. This program has been a big part of my life for many years as a player and a coach. When my dad retired, I realized I had the opportunity to step in and keep the traditions alive and the program running like it has for the past 20 years. We have a great group of girls on our team this year. They have been working hard this summer and are looking forward to playing this season."

Corley is married to Saint Stanislaus head baseball coach Brad Corley and they have two sons, Tucker and Tanner.

ALUM UPDATES



Whitney St. Mary '11 announced her engagement to Philip Stevens. The wedding will take place on January 23, 2021 at Holy Family Church. She is the daughter of Todd and Theresa Wittmann St. Mary '82.

Whitney will graduate in December from the University of South Alabama with a Degree in Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner with a subspecialty in Palliative Care.

BECOME ONE OF OUR OLA ALUMNAE GUARDIAN ANGELS!



Thank you to all of our present 'Alumnae Angels! Your donation has helped so many of our incoming and current students to receive a Catholic education and to be part of the OLA family.

In honor of those that have participated in the program, we have etched your name on a plaque in the entrance hall of OLA. We hope other alums will consider being a Guardian Angel for an OLA student.

Anyone who donates \$300 or more per year is considered a Guardian Angel. Donations may be paid annually, semiannually, quarterly, or monthly and they are tax deductible. All donations are made payable to Our Lady Academy.

[Click here](#)



* Spring 2020
President's List
Natalie Favre '17
Abby Guy '18
Cassidy Ketchum '18
Mary Emily McGinity '15

2020 GRADUATE
Magna Cum Laude
Mary Emily McGinity '15
Bagley College of Engineering, BS



* Spring 2020
Chancellor's Honor Roll
Lydia Cates '18
Sarah Deano '18
Kiley Jacob '18
Camille Martin '18

Spring 2020 Dean's List
Lauren Kalom '18
Carol Trapani '18



SOUTHERN MISS
GOLDEN EAGLES
Spring 2020
President's List
Anna Denette '18
Kyleigh McNeill '17
Meredith McRaney '18

Spring 2020 Dean's List
Hailey Bertucci '17
Grace Breisacher '18
Isabella Breisacher '19

“IT’S A FAMILY AFFAIR”
by Sr. Jackie Howard, RSM



Elizabeth Elkins and Mrs. Shirley Schmidt

Mary Patricia Schmidt graduated from OLA in 1984. Soon after, she was diagnosed with liver cancer. She “fought the good fight,” but lost her battle in March, 1985. Her parents, Shirley and Dr. Frank Schmidt, immediately initiated a named scholarship in her honor. Over the past 35 years the corpus has grown and OLA is now able to award two scholarships each year in Mary Patricia’s name. At the same time, Sister Virginia Marasco, then principal, established the Mary Patricia Schmidt Character Cup, given to a senior at graduation who best exemplifies Mary Patricia’s traits of “Christian maturity, courage, dependability, service to others, sincerity, and stability.”



Mrs. Shirley Schmidt, Elizabeth, and DeeDee Elkins

The Class of 2020 saw many “firsts.” Because of COVID-19, they were the first to do three months of virtual learning. They were the first to have senior awards on the Crab Fest grounds. They were the first to graduate with social distance in the Church, while their families gathered in the Community Center. They were the first to incorporate May Crowning into the graduation ceremony. In my mind, it all worked! What a compliment to the class of 2020 and to the administration!

Another “first” happened this year. OLA saw its first Mother-Daughter MPS Character Cup winners. DeeDee Strong Elkins received the cup in 1987 and her daughter, Elizabeth, received it this year. To top it off, DeeDee’s sister, Debra Strong Bermudez, earned the honor in 1994. WOW! Three in the same family! DeeDee is now a pharmacist in Bay St. Louis. Debbie is a Diabetic Specialist in Mandeville, LA. Elizabeth, naturally, is headed into the medical field. What a compliment to Donald and Malena Strong, Elizabeth’s grandparents, who have such remarkable women in their family!



Debbie Bermudez, Elizabeth, and DeeDee Elkins

Elizabeth said on receiving the award, “I am honored to have received the MPS Character Cup because it is named after such a courageous and strong young lady. OLA has instilled in me all of the values that go with this award.”

Class of 2020 Valedictorian and Salutatorian



Paige Elise Palazzo, daughter of Christina and Steve Palazzo, was named Valedictorian. She has achieved Principal Honor Roll throughout high school. Paige was the 2020 recipient of the Hull Award. She is attending the University of West Florida with the University of West Florida Nautilus Scholarship and a University of West Florida Soccer Athletic Scholarship. Paige is majoring in mechanical engineering.



Elizabeth Maria Elkins, daughter of DeeDee and Andy Elkins, was named Salutatorian. She has achieved Principal Honor Roll status throughout high school. Elizabeth held office 10th through 12th grades as Class President. She is attending the University of Alabama at Birmingham and with a Presidential Recognition Scholarship. Elizabeth is majoring in immunology on the pre-med track.

OLA Installs Water Bottle Filling Stations

Thank you to all of our alums for your generous gift through the 2019 iGiveCatholic campaign. Your donations afforded our students access to water bottle filling stations on our campus this year. We truly appreciate your continuous generosity and support of our little school.



OLA Alums Grant a 7th Grader’s Birthday Wish

In April, we asked for your help to afford a promising 7th grader the opportunity to attend OLA in the Fall of 2020.



Because of your unwavering generosity and your commitment to the OLA mission, by the end of April, we received enough donations to enroll her into the 2020/2021 school year. She was so excited when our ambassadors placed the sign “Home of a Future Crescent” in her front yard. She knew then she was meant to be a Crescent.

‘Thank you’ just doesn’t seem enough to express our gratitude and pride for the outpour of donations that we received in such a short period of time! Please know how grateful the parents are too to be able to afford their child an OLA Catholic education and for their daughter to be a part of the OLA family.

✝ Memoriam of Our Alums and Family

August 21, 2020 - Deborah Ann Ginn Alford’ 76

She is survived by her husband Doug Alford and daughters Emily Alford Carr ‘98 and Ashley Alford Bruno ‘01.

July 31, 2020 - Mr. Thomas ‘Tommy’ Schafer

He is survived by his wife Camille Schafer and daughter Caroline Schafer ‘20.

June 6, 2020 - Mr. Thomas Ketchum

He is survived by his wife Theresa Ketchum and daughter Cassidy Ketchum ‘18.

In memory of alums that have passed away recently, we will have special intentions made in their name during OLA student body Masses. Please provide the names of any OLA and/or SJA alums that have passed to alumnae@ourladyacademy.com.

