



HEADMASTER'S REPORT

Rev. Edwin D. Leahy O.S.B. '63

THIS was a school year distinguished by general excellence. We know that our effectiveness depends heavily on student leadership, both formal and informal, whether from those chosen, or those who emerge. Our many successes reflected the capacity of our seniors to set a tone in all the important ways - in high academic achievement, and in outstanding performances all year in sports, drama, music, art, journalism and service.

The year began with several of our most talented and engaged students representing us at the Third International Conference of Benedictine Youth in Germany and from there at the World Youth Day with new Pope Benedict XVI. Near year-end many of these same student leaders coordinated a workshop on prejudice and stereotyping developed in connection with the "Anytown" program.

We had more seniors consistently attain top academic honors all four years than in many years. Ninety five percent of the class will go on to college, and, not surprisingly, the top students in the class will go on to represent us at Amherst, Boston College, Columbia, Davidson, Georgetown, Holy Cross, Northwestern, Notre Dame and the University of Pennsylvania, among others.

HERE IS A SAMPLE OF SOME OF OUR STUDENTS' MORE NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS THIS YEAR:

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- Late in the spring our Drama Guild was chosen as one of fifty high schools nationwide to participate in the August 2007 Edinburgh Festival Fringe, the largest arts festival in the world. Drama Guild director Patricia Flynn H '95 was nominated and her application was filled with letters of praise and gratitude from former students.
- Our track team competed with great success in all three seasons, capturing the State Prep Championships in cross-country, indoor and outdoor track and winning several other prominent meets during the year. The capstone was a victory in the 4 x 400 at the Penn Relays, a major national competition.
- The Guild produced *Guys and Dolls*, the first full-scale musical accompanied by our own student musicians. Guild student actors also created their own clever adaptation of *Don Quixote* in the spring, which a select troupe also took to Santa Cruz, Bolivia to a variety of audiences, with our friends from *Tauichi* serving as our local hosts.
- Our soccer team went undefeated and was ranked 1st in the nation by National Soccer Coaches Association.
- The Benedict News, our school paper, won a grant from the American Society of Newspaper Editors, to establish a partnership program with *The Star-Ledger*, and produced more issues of greater competence than any recent year. It was cited again for excellence by the Columbia Scholastic Press Association. A bonus came when the paper was itself the subject of a story in the *Columbia Journalism Review*.
- Over half of our Latin students received honors on the National Latin Exam, with six receiving gold medals, the highest honor.
- Our basketball team made headlines all season, and won the State Prep Championship again. Top players will go on to Duke, Marquette and Seton Hall.
- Over two hundred students participated in some way with a combination of music, art, and spoken word performances in conjunction with a special NJPAC commissioned program on Billie Holiday: *Portrait of a Lady*.

All these accomplishments rested on the steady and demanding work of leadership by a fine group of seniors. As we bade them farewell and blessed them, we realized that coming right behind them was the largest entering class since the 1960s, 158 new freshmen. We hope to help them achieve some of the same wonderful accomplishments as the fine group just graduated. We know that all our helpers are collaborators with us in the good work of raising these young men, and we thank you for the generous support that allows us to continue that work.

Edwin D. Leahy O.S.B.