

# REGIS

FOR ALUMNI, FAMILIES, AND FRIENDS OF REGIS HIGH SCHOOL | SPRING 2023



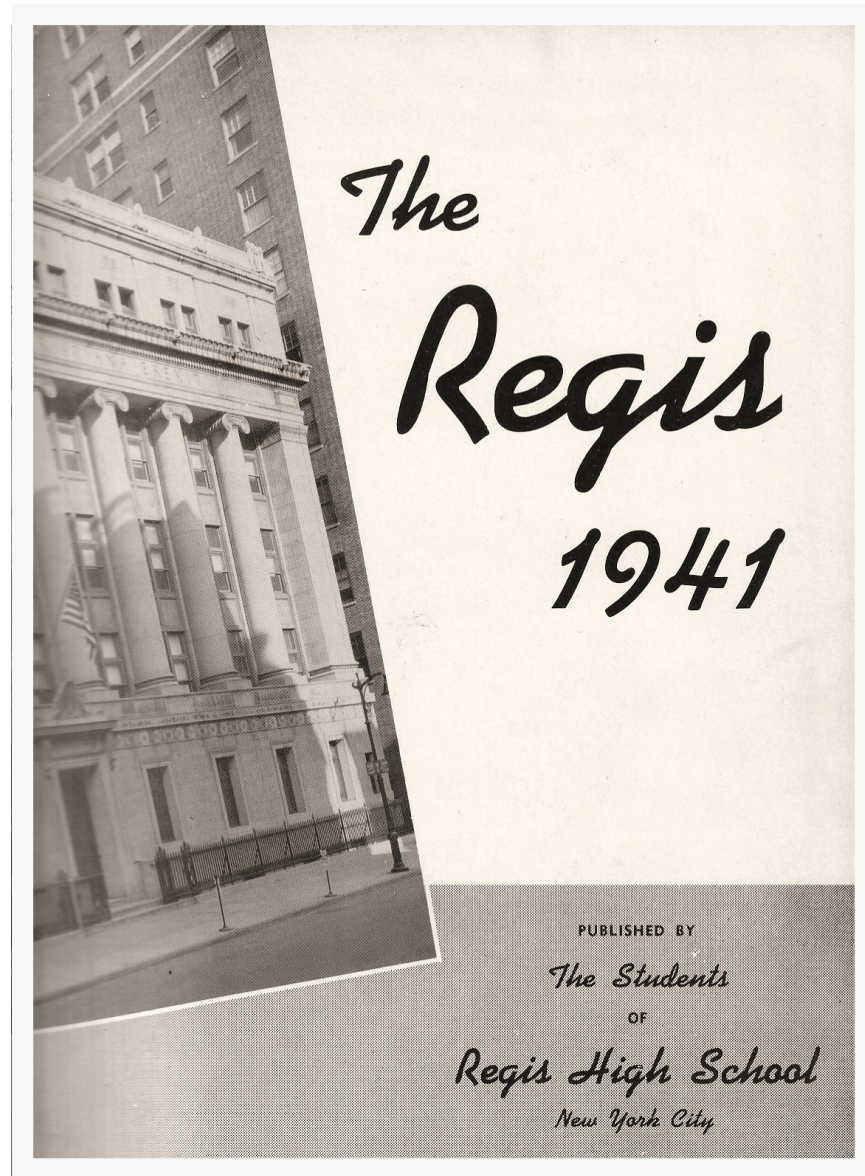
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Shortly before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Daniel Ngiam '23 came across a weathered copy of the 1941 Regis yearbook, which he brought home so he could eventually deliver it to a friend whose great-grandfather was a member of that class. When the lockdowns began, he still had the yearbook in his possession, and as he read about the graduating seniors, he began Googling some of their names. By mid-2020, he realized he wanted to know even more about these young men, and driven by his passion for filmmaking, he was inspired to begin a documentary project centered on Regis's 24th graduating class. Through interviews with living relatives and a deep dive into the school's history, Ngiam's *Project 1941* video series explores the lives of the members of that class before, during, and after Regis, and how their time at 84th Street would ultimately shape them and their families for generations to come.

To watch the *Project 1941* series, go to [regis.org/project1941](https://regis.org/project1941) or scan the QR code.

**On the Cover:** Sophomores work on an experiment in the chemistry lab.



## President's Report Called to Serve



Several weeks ago, I celebrated the funeral Mass for my mentor Bill Meehan. Bill had an extraordinary career as a McKinsey consultant and executive and, more recently, as a professor at the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University.

A product of Jesuit education, Bill was deeply inspired by the mantra of "Men for Others" introduced by

Pedro Arrupe, SJ, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus. He was also a disciple of Robert Greenleaf, who wrote the influential and now classic book *Servant Leadership*.

In 2016, Bill was invited to speak as part of Stanford's "Last Lecture" series in which faculty impart their wisdom to graduating second-year students. Bill quoted Greenleaf's words:

The servant-leader is servant first.... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions.... The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And what is the effect on the least privileged in society?

While not referring to Arrupe or his mantra directly, Greenleaf eloquently elucidates the core meaning behind Arrupe's "Men for Others" mantra.

The question is where did Arrupe find the origin of "Men for Others" in the life of St. Ignatius Loyola, whose spiritual journey so deeply shaped him and his worldview? We should look no further than a cave outside of Manresa in northern Spain. During a dark eleven-month period, Ignatius suffered from profound self-doubt. His moral fever eventually breaks when he comes to recognize God's love for him and is given the extraordinary insight and grace

to find God in all things. Ignatius became convinced that he was called to "help souls," and he encoded this call in the DNA of the Society of Jesus through the term "cura personalis": care for the whole person.

Over the past few decades, many schools have adopted "service-learning programs," but Regis's commitment to service finds its rationale in this much older tradition. In Greenleaf's language, this "servant-first" approach is what we labor to pass on to our students.

But does it work?

As I complete my first year as Regis's president, I am here to tell you, with great confidence, that it does. For evidence, I point you to two sources.

First, *The Pigeon*, a new student publication filled with essays and articles about students' experiences serving those in need. One essay tells the story of Matthew Cameron '24 and Leonardo Lobaccaro '23, who teach an online course at the Zotung Refugee Catholic Learning Centre in Kuala Lumpur. Other stories describe tutoring grammar school students in East Harlem, spending time with the elderly on the Upper East Side, and traveling to the Kino Border Initiative in Nogales, Ariz., to learn about the plight of immigrants at our southern border.

Second, the enduring value of servant leadership can be found in the lives of our alumni. This year, as I traveled the country to meet Regians far and wide, I heard countless stories of their commitment to service. Whether it was teaching CCD in their local parish, serving on a board of a local charitable organization, or organizing their company's day of service, Regians continue to be shaped by the call to help souls.

My prayer is that Regians continue to allow themselves to be moved by God's love and grace and become Men for Others — servant-leaders — whose noble hearts seek to help souls and promote their growth and well-being. For in so doing, they and their beloved alma mater will truly set the world on fire.

Sincerely,

Rev. Christopher J. Devron, SJ  
President

# The Office of Development

## The Annual Fund Is Our Lifeblood

The Annual Fund is the most critical stream of income for Regis. By covering the majority of the school's operating expenses each year, Annual Fund donors forge a lasting impact and allow Regis to remain tuition-free, as it was imagined more than 100 years ago. The 2022 Annual Fund was the most successful in the school's history and continued an upward trend in giving from our generous community.

**From 2013 to 2017**, the Annual Fund averaged **\$6 million** in gifts.  
**From 2018 to 2022**, the Annual Fund averaged **\$9.8 million** in gifts.

This impressive but necessary increase in Annual Fund revenue allows Regis to:

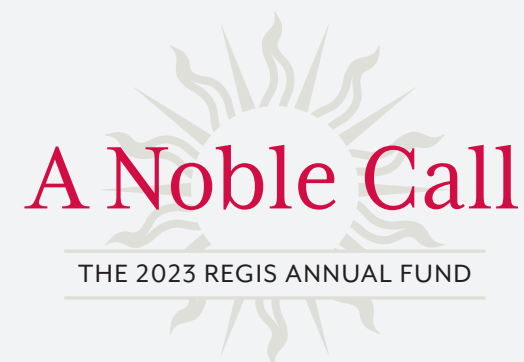
- Provide rigorous academic courses and robust extracurricular programs for our students. The cost of educating one student for one year is roughly \$30,000.
- Make responsible, 4 percent yearly withdrawals from the endowment.
- Support our faculty and staff, including professional development opportunities, competitive salaries, and benefits.
- Maintain our historic building and adapt it to meet our evolving needs.
- Sustain a community that is dedicated to developing young men who are open to growth, intellectually proficient, religious, open to others, and committed to doing justice.



None of this would be possible without your unwavering resolve and generosity. Thank you for supporting Regis's mission by contributing to the Annual Fund. We appreciate your commitment to ensure that future generations of young men have access to a first-rate Jesuit education.

Called to grow. Called to excel. Called to love. Called to believe. Called to serve. Called to be generous.

The 2023 Annual Fund ends on June 30. If you believe in the enduring power of the Regis mission, answer the call today with a gift for the present that ensures our future.



Your support is essential. Visit [regis.org/give](https://regis.org/give) today.

# THE 2023 AUCTION CHALLENGE

During our annual Parents' Club Auction on March 25, Regis President Rev. Christopher J. Devron, SJ, invited attendees to support the 2023 Auction Challenge. This year, donations to the Auction Challenge helped support a planned overhaul of our art room. The renovations, which are scheduled to be completed by the start of the next academic year, will see the creation of a space that's clean, comfortable, and versatile, with new furniture, ample storage, and better ways to display students' work.

Thanks to the generosity of the Regis community, we're proud to have raised \$189,657 towards this important goal, and look forward to a new art room that will spark creativity in Regians for many years to come.



# News & Notes

FOR EXPANDED COVERAGE OF THESE AND OTHER NEWS STORIES, VISIT [NEWS.REGIS.ORG](https://news.regis.org)

## Transitions in Admissions Office and REACH Program

Mr. Eric DiMichele first joined the Regis faculty in 1982 and has served as the school's Director of Admissions since 1993. In addition to his legendary work ethic and profound commitment to the Regis mission, Mr. DiMichele has brought vision, wisdom, distinct humor, and heart to this work, shaping the Regis student body and serving as an ambassador to the greater community beyond 84th Street.

As he approaches his 42nd year of service at Regis, Mr. DiMichele has decided to transition to a new position as Director of Community Engagement at the end of the academic year. In this new role, he will engage and collaborate with alumni, parents, alumni parents, and various cultural and educational institutions to identify and create opportunities for partnerships, special events, and experiential learning that will benefit Regis students and the broader Regis community. He will remain the coach of the Hearn Speech and Debate Society, the powerhouse program he has guided to national success since 1983. He also will continue to teach seniors and freshmen.

"Eric DiMichele is one of the most influential leaders in the history of Regis High School," said President Rev. Christopher J. Devron, SJ. "The Regis community is grateful for his unrivaled dedication and contributions to the school, and we are blessed that Eric will continue to serve us in these valuable roles."

As Mr. DiMichele steps away from his admissions work, Director of the REACH Program Mr. Doug Eickman '05 will take on a new role as Director of Admissions & Enrollment at Regis. In this new position, he will lead the recruitment and admissions processes for both Regis and REACH. Mr. Eickman already has overseen REACH Admissions for the past four years, and he also is expertly familiar with the challenges and complexities of high school admissions through his work preparing REACH students to gain scholarships to Regis and other Catholic high schools. Prior to his current role, Mr. Eickman served as REACH Dean of Mathematics and a member of the Regis Mathematics Department.

"Doug Eickman is a brilliant administrator who brings a commitment to academic excellence, educational access, and Jesuit values to this critical new position," said Fr. Devron. "Doug possesses a unique understanding of the academic programs and admissions processes of both Regis and REACH, and he has a proven track record of tackling complex challenges with data-driven analysis, relentless effort, and an engaging personality." Mr. DiMichele shared that "as his former debate coach and keen observer of his extraordinary range of contributions to Regis over the years, including close collaboration between admissions and REACH, I am thrilled that Doug has accepted this new position."



## Senior Brian Park's Path to Grammy Glory

Brian Park '23 first played his cello on-stage at Carnegie Hall when he was just 10 years old. And since his freshman year at Regis, Park has been a member of the New York Youth Symphony, a group of around 60 musicians ranging in age from 12 to 22 who regularly perform in the storied venue as a showcase for some of New York City's most gifted young musicians.

But in March of 2020, concert halls shut down, and the NYYS had to cancel all the live performances it had been preparing for. The group had to pivot to alternatives that allowed for social distancing, and music director Michael Repper crafted a plan to instead record the symphony's first studio album. The ambitious project culminated earlier this year, when Park and his fellow performers became the first youth orchestra to win a Grammy Award.

Because the whole orchestra couldn't gather together in one room during the early part of the pandemic, Park and other members were given six weeks of remote



instruction over Zoom and then began socially distant in-person rehearsals with different parts of the orchestra practicing at different times.

When it came time to make the album, the studio couldn't accommodate 60 socially distanced musicians and their instruments, so different sections of the group were forced to record their parts separately over the span of four days, with 14-time Grammy winner Judith Sherman handling production duties. The string section was the first to record their parts for the album, so Park could only hear the other strings as he performed.

For the album, the orchestra chose to perform pieces by three Black composers: Florence Price, Jessie Montgomery, and Valerie Coleman. The finished result was released in February 2022, and by May it had reached No. 1 on the Billboard Classical Albums chart. Six months later, it was nominated for the Best Orchestral Performance Grammy alongside the likes of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Berlin Philharmonic conducted by legendary composer John Williams. And in February, Park was at home with his family when he learned the group had taken home the award.



## Career Day Connects Students With Alumni

On January 31, alumni from a number of industries returned to 84th Street for Career Day. Alumni had the opportunity to connect with current juniors and seniors, helping them to discern their career interests and navigate life after Regis.

Organized by the Guidance Department and Development Office, the event began with a keynote address by Brendan McGuire '94, chief counsel to New York City Mayor Eric Adams. "For the most part, it is a real challenge, as you proceed in your professional lives, to find one thing, and one thing only, that you're able to do every day that brings you deep satisfaction and that can pay the bills," McGuire told the students. "For most of us, it will be something less than a vocation, but I do want to emphasize that that does not mean that a fulfilling career, a career with meaning, a career that brings you deep satisfaction, is beyond your grasp, because it absolutely is not."

Following McGuire's remarks, students broke out into two career panels according to their preferences, attending discussions with alumni in arts and entertainment, business, education, engineering, healthcare, law, politics and public service, and tech and entrepreneurship. Structured as informal conversations, the panels allowed students to ask questions they had about various fields, learning valuable work and life advice from fellow Regians to use in college and beyond.

"Career Day provides our students a unique opportunity to connect with fellow Regians and explore diverse industries, and we are glad to have been able to host this event in-person for the first time since 2019," said Alumni Engagement Coordinator Mr. John Morin '16. "Our alumni have used what they've learned at Regis to positively contribute to their communities and our broader world, and we are grateful to the panelists for imparting their knowledge to the next generation of leaders."



## Regis Seniors Contribute to Groundbreaking Physics Project

Six Regis seniors last year participated in a paid internship with Columbia University's branch of the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory, or LIGO. The project, for which three scientists won the 2017 Nobel Prize for Physics, aims to "listen" to gravitational waves created by the collisions of massive heavenly bodies, such as black holes, by using two-and-a-half-kilometer-long machines called interferometers that measure the bend of light particles fired within them.

Jeremiah Alonzo '23, Daniel Jarka '23, Antonio Lobaccaro '23, Leonardo Lobaccaro '23, Raymond Provost '23, and Alex Zhindon-Romero '23 were tasked with proofreading and testing instruction manuals for precision timing devices that are used in the interferometers.

Under the supervision of Columbia Professor Zsuzsa Márka P'20'26, one of the head scientists of the university's LIGO branch, and Dr. Luca Matone, a physics teacher at Regis who has worked on the LIGO project for much of his career, these seniors reviewed manuals on how to initialize, calibrate, and operate the timing devices used in LIGO's two interferometers. The timing devices record the movement of light particles traveling within a fraction of a fraction of a second.

The manuals are part of LIGO's effort to use Open Source Hardware, which allows individuals and organizations across fields to collaborate on the development and improvement of science and technology. In the case of the timing devices, the manuals could one day help scientists and engineers use the technology for other research. "The ultimate purpose of advocating for and improving the use of Open Source Hardware is to allow future generations to benefit from the work of today's scientists and engineers," says Provost. "As a member of the next generation of engineers, this goal holds significant importance to me."

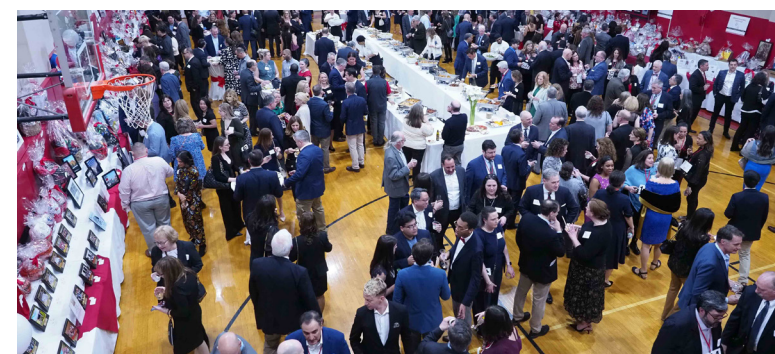
LIGO has been a collaborative project since its inception with over 1,000 scientists participating. In 2015, LIGO successfully observed gravitational waves directly for the first time in history. These waves are ripples in the fabric of space and time that Albert Einstein had theorized a century earlier without the technology needed to prove them. It was for this discovery that three of the project's key scientists won the Nobel Prize.

## Regis Rep Dazzles in *Almost, Maine*

The Regis Repertory took the stage from March 29 through April 1 for their Spring 2023 production of John Cariani's *Almost, Maine*. Featuring heartwarming performances from the cast and imaginative set design, the show captivated students, families, faculty, and alumni with an exploration of love and loss in a remote town.

Organized by Rep moderator Ms. Gena Reisig and directed by Ms. Maura Malloy, the school's production of *Almost, Maine* highlighted the incredible talents of student actors from Regis and its sister schools. Supporting the cast, the crew helped bring the play to life, contributing their creative skills through work on lighting, costumes, and sound.

"The tireless efforts by our family of cast and crew, guided by our exceptional director, shone under the bright stage lights during rehearsals and performances," said Jacob Salazar '23, who played Chad in the show's sixth vignette. "The focus and passion that everyone carried with themselves truly enhanced the already profound joy of performing *Almost, Maine* with them."



## Regis Parents' Club Auction Celebrates 30 Years of Connecting the Community

More than 450 parents, friends, alumni, faculty, and staff filled the halls of Regis on March 25 for the 2023 Parents' Club Auction. With a theme of "Connected in Community," the evening celebrated 30 years of auctions that have helped support generations of Regians.

The festivities featured a wide assortment of gift baskets, art, experiences, and Regiana for attendees to bid on during the silent auction as they socialized over drinks and hors d'oeuvres in the Upper Gym. The live auction that followed kicked off with the singing of the Alma Mater and the debut of an original song by Tony, Emmy, Grammy, and Pulitzer Prize winner Tom Kitt P'24.

Eugene Flinn P'10 and Mr. Eric DiMichele once again emceed the live auction, encouraging bidders with enthusiasm and humor as they introduced items like World Series tickets, a private dinner for 10 at Babbo, and a cocktail party for 30 on the Regis roof. The night culminated in the launch of the 2023 Auction Challenge supporting renovations to the art room. Read more about the Auction Challenge on page 5.

## Regis Ethics Bowl Team Finishes Second in National Championships

Regis's Ethics Bowl team placed second out of 24 national finalists on March 31 at the National High School Ethics Bowl Championship at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. More than 4,000 students and 500 teams from over 350 schools across the country participated in Ethics Bowl this year.

The 2022-2023 season marked the National High School Ethics Bowl's tenth year challenging high school students to develop their ethical reasoning and critical-thinking skills through engaging in productive dialogue about contemporary ethical issues. During an Ethics Bowl competition, two teams face off by trying to prove their complete knowledge of the topic in question. Teams are awarded points based on their ability to express their understanding of all facets of the topic, not their ability to promote a single solution to the problem. Teams also get a chance to offer constructive criticism of their opponent's presentation, hoping to poke holes in it.

The Regis team — Julian Bober '24, Andrew Joel '23, Hugh Kane '23, William Lee '23, Leo Lobaccaro '23, Toby Platt '23, and Gabriel Tramontana '24 — defeated the Stony Brook School to qualify for nationals.

"This is just a great group of guys," said Mr. Anthony Debonis, Regis theology teacher and Ethics Bowl moderator. "Six out



of seven were returning members, and it's been wonderful to see their personal growth in the context of preparing for and participating in Ethics Bowl over the last two years. Not only have they honed their collective ethical acumen, but they've developed greater intellectual humility by leaning into the complexity of contemporary moral issues."

As three beloved members of the Regis community retire, we look back at the long, impactful careers of Dr. Ralph Nofi, Ms. Mary Henninger P'93'98, and Ms. Caroline Christie.

# Fond Farewells



In the spring of 1991, **Dr. Ralph Nofi** paged through a copy of *The Owl* as he waited to be interviewed for the position of school psychologist at Regis. Dr. Nofi, then an associate psychologist at South Beach Psychiatric Center in Staten Island, recalls reading a story in the issue about the retirement of Rev. Stephen Duffy, SJ, after 35 years on the faculty. During his interview, Dr. Nofi said that he told the then-Headmaster, “While I don’t know if I can offer 35 years of service, I really felt like I could make Regis High School the focal point of my practice.”

Nofi says now that the article showed him early on that Regis was a special place. “I remember being impressed that it was a place where people would stay,” he said. It turned out that he would go on to stay, too, serving Regis as a psychologist and teacher for 30 years and then as an administrator. This year, in which he served as interim principal prior to his retirement, was his 32nd as a member of the Regis community.

Having previously treated adults in a state-run hospital, Dr. Nofi said he found joy in giving students “their own resources to put themselves back into the lane that they need to be in. For a man with a hammer, everything looks like a nail.

And for our guys, for a kid with a huge intellect, everything looks like an intellectual problem.”

Dr. Nofi guided students through challenging periods like 9/11 and the COVID pandemic, as well as through major changes like the emergence of social media. But even in difficult times, students and faculty have been able to rely on Dr. Nofi’s calm, humorous, reassuring presence.

Dr. Nofi says he used to prefer his psychologist role over his teacher role, but that he came to appreciate them both. One year, he taught a group of 50 seniors during the first two trimesters of the year, and was heartened when 20 of them opted to take his third-trimester elective to continue studying with him. “That’s when a light bulb went off in my head and I realized, this is why people love to teach,” he said.

And though Dr. Nofi didn’t work with every student during his years as the school psychologist, he kept in touch with the larger community in other ways. While working in the bookstore, he became familiar with the curriculum and school roster as he filled students’ orders. By setting the students’ class schedule, he grew in tune with the rhythm of Regis’s daily life. He updated the guidance department curriculums on a regular basis and for years facilitated the school’s participation in research projects involving Jesuit schools. He became involved in Schola, the student-led group responsible for providing music at school-wide liturgies, and, with a counselor from Loyola, started an unofficial support group for gay students in the 1990s.

The wealth of experience he accumulated over three decades served him well in his final year as interim principal, and he leaves Regis as a beloved member of the community who has

touched the lives not just of students, but of the faculty members he worked with.

“Ralph and I came to Regis in the fall of 1991, and he has been a friend throughout those years, always ready to lend a helping hand, listen, and truly care for each person in the building,” said theology teacher Mr. James Scacalosi ’83. “I think everyone at Regis has been blessed by his sense of humor, his kindness, and his sincerity.”



Admissions officer. Assistant dean of students. Academic services coordinator. Assistant librarian. Founding supervisor of the Diversity Club and the Young Democrats and Republicans. Kickstarter of the HeForShe Club and Prism, Regis’s LGBTQ+ and allies organization. Creator of Coffee House. Graduation tuxedo coordinator. Mother of two Regians.

**Ms. Mary Henninger P’93’98** has proven to be a Renaissance woman during her decades of service to Regis, and her passion for expanding students’ cultural, social, and political education has had a profound effect on the school’s culture.

“Promoting diversity and inclusion in moderating the Diversity Club, as well as working with students in the Young Democrats and Republicans Club, has given me great hope for Regis as we continue to define our place in a changing world,” said Ms. Henninger.

Ms. Henninger formally joined the staff at Regis as the assistant dean of students after her youngest son, Peter, graduated from the school in 1998. By that point, she was already so involved as a parent, serving as a Hearn judge and working with the Parents’ Club, that joining the school full-time was seen as a natural fit.

“After witnessing her devotion to Regis as a parent, it was almost too obvious how much Mary would elevate the Regis community when she officially joined the ranks as an Ignatian educator,” said Director of Admissions Eric DiMichele.

Six years later, Ms. Henninger moved to the library to assist Ms. Laura Allen while also becoming the school’s academic services coordinator and assembly coordinator, one of her favorite roles at Regis. In that capacity, she was charged with bringing in speakers to supplement the curriculum with glimpses into the arts and other fields. This sparked her interest in providing the Regis student body with opportunities to expand their intellectual horizons and create spaces for discussions of race, class, gender, and more. “I am a product of the 60s, and so I believe very strongly in the work in diversity and in the work we needed to do at Regis,” she said.

Around this time, Ms. Henninger helped create the Diversity Group, a precursor to today’s Diversity Club. In 2016, she also argued alongside the founding student members of what is now Prism for the necessity of an officially recognized LGBTQ+ and ally organization. Ms.

Henninger also sought to facilitate a healthy exchange of ideas. As moderator of the Young Democrats Society in the early 2000s, she realized that without an opposition voice, the group served as a self-reinforcing forum for partisan opinion. She helped restructure the group into the Young Democrats and Republicans Club, and since then meetings have become a hotspot of intense, but cordial, debate. “Respect for Mary’s political acumen and integrity were the only points of bipartisan agreement,” said Mr. DiMichele.

Ms. Henninger has also served on Regis’s faculty and staff Diversity Committee and played a part in the revival of John Francis Regis Day, a non-instructional school day that highlights a different social-justice topic each year. And while she has never taught an academic class, Ms. Henninger has been a model of an educator and in 2022 was recognized for her work when she was presented with the Patricia Hannon Ignatian Educator Award.

In her final position change, Ms. Henninger in 2008 joined the Admissions office, where she assisted Mr. DiMichele on the admissions committee, helped lead recruitment efforts, and articulated to prospective students the unique opportunity that Regis offers those who are awarded scholarships.

Said DiMichele: “There is no one more fitting to be both one of the first faces a Regian meets at an open house as a naive eighth-grade student and one of the last faces they see as they’re fitted and dressed in their white tuxedos to walk out of the 84th Street doors one final time as fully grown men for others.”

**Ms. Caroline Christie’s** dedication to the Regis community and to Ignatian values has been on display in many ways over the years.

Born and educated in South Africa, Ms. Christie taught biology, math, and science to high school students in her native country before transitioning to training in the IT industry. She arrived at Regis in 2005 and has served the school for 18 years as a computer science teacher, a fervent participant in the Campus Ministry retreat program, a longtime freshman advisor, and a dedicated singer with Schola.

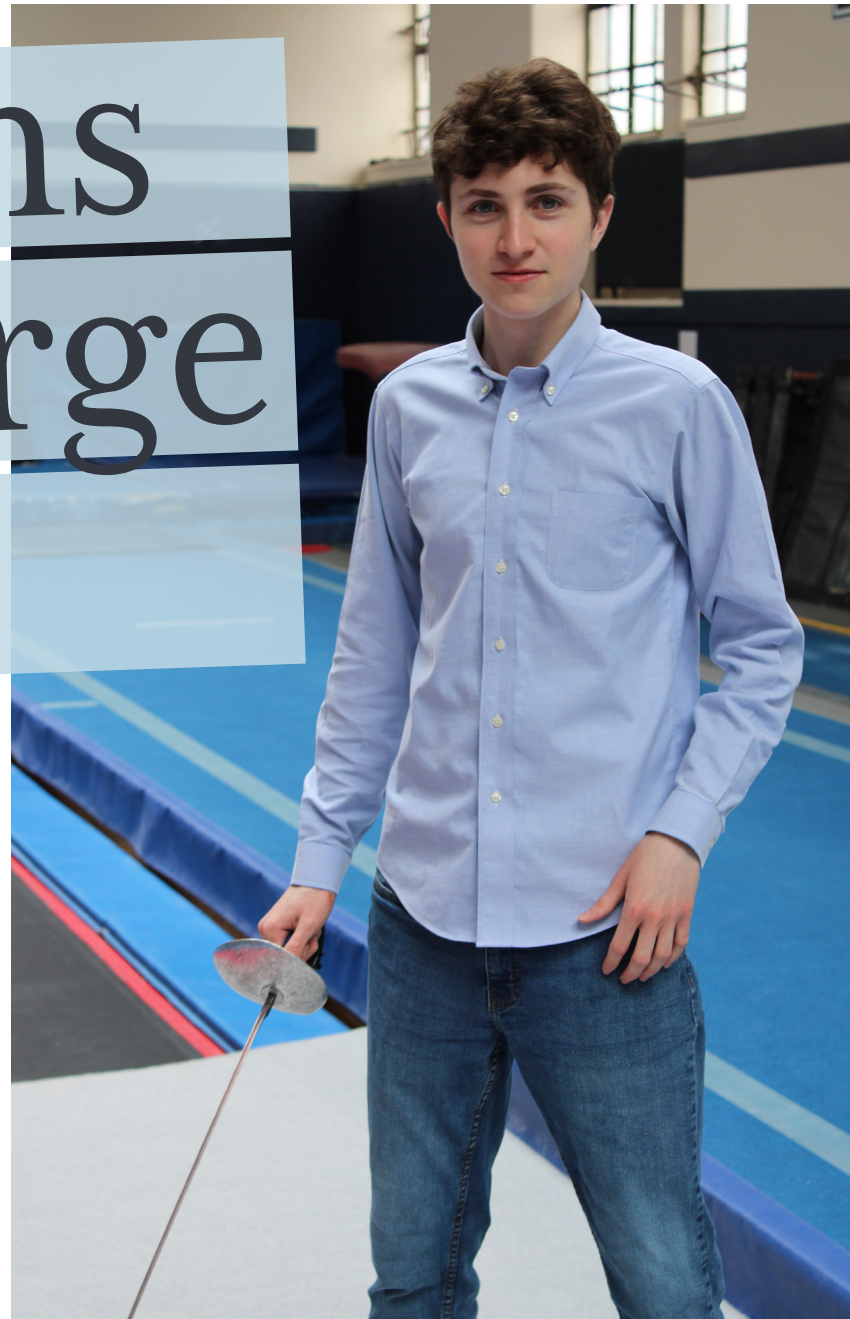
“The most meaningful thing for me at Regis has been the caring: the boys caring for each other, the boys and faculty caring for other communities, the caring of the faculty for each other and the students, and the parents who are so generous and caring,” said Christie. “Regis has been so special because teaching and caring are the main focus.”

In 2021, Ms. Christie was honored with the Patricia Hannon Ignatian Educator Award in recognition of her longtime service to Regis, dedication to the profession of teaching, and commitment to enriching the lives of students.

“Teaching at Regis allows me to enjoy many of the things that I love in one place – my Catholic faith, teaching, teaching teenagers, music, and technology,” Ms. Christie said in 2021 upon being selected for the award. “I love the challenge of learning new things every day.”

# Passions Converge in SRP

The Science Research Project offers students an opportunity to investigate a topic meaningful to them and enhance their knowledge of the sciences. For fencing enthusiast Alex Greene '22, that meant a deep dive into the sport's techniques — and his first publication in a peer-reviewed journal.



When Alex Greene '22 was a freshman at Regis, he remembers talking with his brother Cameron Greene '20 about the research Cameron was doing as part of the school's Science Research Project, an independent study program that for decades has allowed students to work one-on-one with faculty members to investigate some question of particular interest to them. Cameron was studying the movement of fencers' legs, and Alex was intrigued that his brother was combining his interest in science with the sport that the two had long participated in outside of school.

Alex first tried fencing at age 11 after he lost interest in soccer and thought that sword fighting sounded like a cool alternative. He quickly took to it, honing his skills and traveling to regional and national tournaments. He caught the science bug a few years later during his first year at Regis, where he enjoyed his freshman biology class as well as the "cool dissections" he did as a member of the Medical Science Club.

Alex decided to follow in his brother's footsteps and sign up for SRP himself, though he didn't immediately try to find his own way to connect science and fencing. (His first project involved studying the effect of growth hormones in radishes.) But as he was deciding on a topic for junior year, Greene circled back to the idea of combining his academic and athletic interests.

"Measuring the length of radishes isn't as interesting as something more practical and more dynamic," he said.

Working with his faculty advisor, Mr. Xavier Simon '05, Greene decided to explore the effect of arm kinematics on blade velocity, studying the angles of competitors' elbow joints and wrists to determine if there's an optimal position. He designed a study, then took a high-speed camera to his fencing studio to observe a number of athletes as they competed. Working with Mr. Simon, he learned how to gather data in a way that was scientifically sound and how to interpret it. His research found that the optimal elbow joint angle at initiation for saber fencers might be 110 degrees, and that coaches would be wise to place more importance on optimizing elbow joint angles earlier in training.

After Greene presented his completed work at the end of his sophomore year, Mr. Frank Barona approached him with a suggestion.

"He looked at it and said, 'Alex, you should publish this.' And I'm like, 'Cool, what

do you mean by that?'" He laughs when remembering the moment now, but the comment set the stage for his senior-year project: learning the ins and outs of turning research into a professional manuscript.

Greene began researching potential journals and worked with Mr. Simon to learn how to identify existing research, present his own work in line with industry norms, and revise the article until it was ready for publication. He eventually found a home for his work in the *Journal of Emerging Investigators*, which publishes research from middle school and high school students. The study was published in March, during Greene's first year at Yale.

"It was exciting and long in the works," said Greene. "The fact that I started off from SRP and learned how to do this research and then ultimately got it published, it was very meaningful and fulfilling."

Mr. Simon is quick to praise his former student. "He was very diligent and thorough in his work," he said. And while Greene worked with faculty members in the Science and Math departments over the course of the project, Mr. Simon credits him with spearheading the whole project. "Really Alex was steering the ship and making sure his boat would make it to the end of the journey," he said.

Mr. Barona said that Greene's research is a great example of how SRP offers students interested in science an opportunity to conduct meaningful research beyond what they could learn in a classroom.

"At some point Alex realized he knew more about what he was doing than anybody else and that's exactly what's supposed to happen," said Mr. Barona. "Becoming an expert, even if it's about this tiny little thing, is educationally transformative, which is the whole point of this."

## The Year in SRP

A sampling of projects that students worked on this past year.

**Will Filocomo '25** is using a simulation tool to test the claim that the rounded corners of U-Haul trucks significantly reduce wind drag and increase fuel economy by up to 20 percent.

**Jason Alperin '24** is studying the behavior of *Daphnia*, a common water flea, in an environment of micro-gravity.

**Brandon Wilk '24** is investigating the effect of pollutants on *Cilia* population in water.

**Julien Bober '24** is testing the efficacy of various memory-retention strategies in foreign-language vocabulary retention.

**Charlie Mango '25** is studying how certain bacteria have the ability to physically copy and transfer from plasmids to other bacteria — and how these plasmids can encode antibiotic resistance. Specifically, he's looking at oleic acid, which may have the ability to inhibit that conjugation.



## With an ear for languages and an actor's love for the camera, Brian Wiles '04 has found a following online.

By Morgan McCordick '19

In less than three years, Brian Wiles '04 has amassed more than a million subscribers to his YouTube channel. Speaking in both English and Arabic, he's earned a devoted following for engaging videos oriented around American and Egyptian culture, as well as for tutorials on how to learn a new language. Yet just a few years before Wiles launched the channel, he didn't speak a word of Arabic.

Wiles's road to YouTube renown was circuitous and unplanned, but it began when he caught the acting bug while at Regis. As a student, he began to take seriously the prospect of pursuing acting professionally. He was an active member of the Hearn's speech division and a frequent performer in Regis Repertory productions.

"Acting wasn't necessarily something I came to Regis thinking I would end up doing," said Wiles. "But because I enjoyed it so much and because people at Regis encouraged me, I went to college thinking acting would be my major and that it would be something I wanted to pursue."

After leaving 84th Street, Wiles — who went by the name Brian Lewis before changing his name for professional reasons — earned an MFA in acting from Yale University's

School of Drama and took roles in films and shows like *Billions*, *Person of Interest*, and *Manifest*. But as he established himself as an actor, a budding side career in language was slowly taking shape, even if he didn't realize it at first.

With some background in French — the language Wiles studied at Regis — he began teaching himself Spanish, Mandarin, and Arabic with whatever spare time he had. At first, he considered it a hobby — a way to occupy the downtime in his schedule, and perhaps something that could one day prove useful for his acting career.

Then came the COVID-19 pandemic. Across the industry, production stalled and opportunities for new roles withered. By the time the first shutdowns began, Wiles had been studying Arabic independently for about two years, becoming fluent by relying primarily on live, face-to-face communication with Arabic speakers over the internet.

"I didn't think, to be honest, that I would pursue language-related stuff as a career," said Wiles. "But during the pandemic I sort of developed a sidebar second career."

Isolated during the early stages of the pandemic, Wiles began to make videos on YouTube to refine his Arabic. "I decided that I would try to start making videos as a way to force myself to get better, and to improve my speaking skills, and my confidence, and really just to do something," he said. But given his professional background, he couldn't resist the actor's temptation to treat the homemade videos as little productions. "Because I'm an actor," he said, "it's hard for me not to perform."

The videos quickly became popular, and Wiles leaned into creating more content for his channel. At first, he expected his audience would consist mostly of Westerners embarking on their own quests to learn Arabic, but he soon realized that wasn't quite the case.

"My first few videos were oriented more toward how to learn Arabic and why I chose to learn Arabic," said Wiles. "But over time it became pretty clear that the people who had an interest in watching were mostly located in the Arabic-speaking world." Since Wiles speaks in the Egyptian dialectic, the vast majority of his audience is based in Egypt, he said.

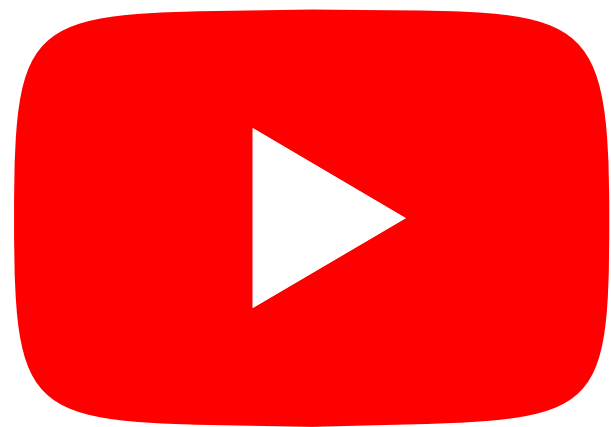
In part to conform his content to the composition of his rapidly

expanding audience, Wiles began to produce short comedy videos lampooning the idiosyncrasies of American life and poking fun at the naïveté that underpins some Americans' perception of foreign cultures. Among these videos are amusing explainers on American traditions like monster truck shows, Civil War reenactments, and Groundhog Day. But mixed in with the innocent levity is more serious content that aims to offer a forum for meaningful cultural exchange.

Wiles, who co-taught a senior elective on acting at Regis this past trimester, hopes that the success of his channel will ultimately translate into acting roles in Arabic-language productions. But for now, he remains focused on his channel and his million-plus followers.

"I don't want to pretend that my videos are changing the world or anything like that," said Wiles. "But I think that my audiences appreciate not just the videos themselves but the message underneath them: that people in the West do care."

# THE ROAD TO YouTube STARDOM





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The varsity baseball team met with former Yankees outfielder Nick Swisher during the team's annual spring training trip to Florida in March.