

REGIS

FOR ALUMNI, FAMILIES, AND FRIENDS OF REGIS HIGH SCHOOL | WINTER 2024



Contents

- 3 President's Report
- 4 The Office of Advancement
- 6 News & Notes
- 10 His Honor
- 12 Everyone Deserves a Fair Chance at Being Saved
- 14 Bridging Generations
- 16 Prowlings
- 39 Milestones
- 39 Events Calendar



Rev. Christopher J. Devron, SJ
President

Charles W. Heintz
Principal

Maureen Barry P'21
Vice President for Advancement

Colin Adamo '19
Communications Associate

Diane Brush P'20'20'21
Campaign Manager

Krystal Camacho
Advancement Database Manager

Viktoria Cameron P'24
Events Coordinator

Matthew Cappabianca '17
Alumni Engagement Coordinator

Magda Correa
Advancement Coordinator

Joe DeLessio '02
Director of Communications and Engagement

Kate Fiscus
Annual Fund Director

Catherine McCordick P'17'19
Director of Major Gifts

Giancarlo Milea '11
Foundations Coordinator and Major Gifts Officer

Marie Orraca
Administrative Assistant

Some photographs for Regis publications are provided by Harisch Studios, Kai-Shan Kwek-Rupp '24, and the staff of *The Regian*, the school yearbook. Regis reserves the right to publish and edit all submissions.



Above: The varsity soccer team celebrates in front of Regis's cheering section following a win in the CHSAA state semifinals at St. John's University on November 10. For more on the team, see page 7.

On the Cover: Daniel Bajada '24 descends the 84th Street staircase. To read more about Bajada's speech in advance of September's March to End Fossil Fuels, see page 8.

President's Report

Our Commitment to Justice



This issue of *Regis Magazine* features the text of an address delivered by Silas Nwaishienyi '24 at the Ignatian Family Teach-In for Justice this fall. The IFTJ is an annual multi-day conference in Washington, D.C., that convenes hundreds of students from Jesuit secondary schools, colleges, and universities from across the nation.

In his speech, which you can read on page 12, Silas highlighted the disparities in health care for underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. He spoke about his mother's near-death experience during his birth and how her condition went undiagnosed by doctors because it primarily affects Black people. This experience led Silas to become an advocate for greater racial equality in medical education and improved access to health care.

After Silas's speech, I received a message from Jim DeGraw '80, who attended the IFTJ and said that Silas represented Regis well and wowed listeners with his remarks. Jim and his wife, Cate, have long supported and helped to advance the growth of the Ignatian Solidarity Network, the organization that sponsors the annual Teach-In.

Though Jim grew up in Brooklyn, he now lives in San Francisco, where he and Cate raised their family. Jim works for justice by helping to give hundreds of young people like Silas an extraordinary opportunity to form community and share their aspirations, stories, and strategies to participate more fully in God's kingdom — a kingdom of justice in which each person, regardless of background or identity, is created in dignity and is recognized, heard, and truly belongs equally.

Silas and Jim, separated by generations and geography, had never met before their encounter at the IFTJ. It is improbable that they would ever find themselves in the same room if not for Regis's transformative mission.

Watching the video of Silas's speech reminded me of Regis's Profile of the Graduate at Graduation. One of its outcomes is that a Regis graduate becomes "Committed to Doing Justice":

By graduation, the Regis High School student has acquired considerable knowledge of the many needs of local, national, and global communities. Desiring to take a place in these communities as a concerned and responsible adult committed to doing justice, he is developing his awareness and the skills necessary to live as a person for and with others.

Service to our neighbor and sharing our resources with the "least of our brothers and sisters" (Matthew 25) are necessary Christian virtues, and Regis develops these virtues through our Christian service requirements. But the demands of a Jesuit education are not satisfied solely through practicing service and charity.

The Church teaches that "Christian love of neighbor and justice cannot be separated" and that working for justice is a constitutive element of our Catholic faith (see *Justice in the World*, produced by the 1971 Synod of Bishops). Therefore, we expect that the Regis graduate will recognize and question the social realities and structural dynamics that cause inequalities in the first place and then work to alleviate them through change — exactly like the changes Silas advocates.

We help our students realize a commitment to doing justice in a myriad of ways: Ignatian educators probe the dimensions of justice in their subject areas, seminars invite seniors to reflect on the social context of their Christian service work, our annual John Francis Regis Day examines a social justice topic in-depth, and many students participate in special programs like the IFTJ.

When Silas graduates in a few months, I am confident he will continue to work for justice — a commitment he shares with Jim.

I hope that Silas's and Jim's stories as men for others inspire you to reflect on how a Regis education has formed you, or a Regis alumnus you know or love, to work for justice.

Sincerely,

Rev. Christopher J. Devron, SJ
President

The Office of Advancement The 2024 Annual Fund

Your support fuels innovation, nurtures potential, and transforms lives.

With its emphasis on academic rigor and Catholic formation, Regis High School fosters the development of young men into compassionate leaders, critical thinkers, and responsible global citizens. Our commitment to providing an exceptional Jesuit education remains steadfast, grounded in a tradition of holistic education that emphasizes intellectual, moral, and spiritual development.



The Annual Fund provides more than half of Regis's yearly operating budget and plays a pivotal role in sustaining its programs and initiatives.

Your generous contributions directly impact the lives of our students every day by:

Enriching Academic Programs

Your support enables us to continue to attract exceptional educators and offer advanced courses that challenge and inspire our students.

Cultivating the Arts and Athletics

Through your donations, we can continue to offer a wide range of extracurricular activities that enable students to explore their passions, from performing arts to competitive sports.

Investing in Technology and Innovation

In a rapidly changing world, your support helps us equip our students with the technological skills and resources they need to thrive in the digital age.

Promoting Spiritual Growth

Through theology studies, liturgies, retreats, and service projects, Regis helps students develop both intellectually and spiritually as they deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Keeping Regis Tuition-Free

The generosity of our community helps sustain our unique merit-based, all-scholarship model.



Thanks to more than \$189,000 in donations to our 2023 Auction Challenge, Regis's art room underwent a full renovation prior to the beginning of the school year. The work transformed the room into a modern, comfortable, and flexible space for students. Upgraded furniture and lighting were installed, in addition to a new sink, whiteboards, and projectors. As part of the renovation, the room also got much-needed storage space and bookshelves.

"It's a wonderful, wonderful improvement," said President Rev. Christopher Devron, SJ, at a reception thanking Auction Challenge donors on November 16. "Going back to the 16th century, an appreciation for the arts as well as artistic creation is a part of our DNA as Jesuits and in Jesuit education." Ms. Robyn Prezioso, Chair of the Arts Department, praised how the room encourages collaboration and is designed to meet the changing needs of the school.

"Thank you so much for trusting us with your children to teach them how important the arts are at Regis and in Jesuit education," said Ms. Prezioso at the November 16 reception. Additional work in 2024 will complete a new air conditioning system as well as a movable divider to separate the room into two distinct spaces. The 2023 Auction Challenge was launched during the Parents' Club Auction last March. The 2024 Parents' Club Auction will take place on March 9.

Dear Regians...

At our 2023 JUG Night on October 13, we asked alumni to write notes of advice to current students that we can display in the library throughout the year.

Here's a sampling from the more than 250 Regians in attendance.

*Regis friends are the best you'll have in your whole life - cherish them now & forever.
- Joe Pericomi '66*

Dig deep @ Sam - '14

Remember to read a book for fun some time - Alumnus'11

REMEMBER - IT'S HOW YOU DO IT, NOT WHAT YOU DO!

News & Notes

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



Regis Celebrates Mass of the Holy Spirit

The Regis community joined together on September 8 at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola to celebrate the Mass of the Holy Spirit, a cherished tradition in Jesuit education. It marked the first time that the Class of 2027 celebrated Mass with the broader Regis community.

Regis President Rev. Christopher Devron, SJ, served as the primary celebrant and was joined on the altar by Rev. Arthur Bender, SJ '67, and Rev. James Ferus, SJ. More than 40 students volunteered as lectors, Eucharistic ministers, altar servers, musicians, ushers, and gift bearers.

"Today we boldly ask the power of the Holy Spirit to bless our upcoming year together," said Fr. Devron during his homily. "May the flame of the Holy Spirit burn from within us any fear or suspicion of the other. May the wind of the Holy Spirit cleanse our minds and hearts so that we can listen and understand each other and even understand how God is working in our lives."

Following Fr. Devron's homily, Regis students, faculty, and staff offered petitions in 12 languages: Malayalam, Portuguese, Italian, Korean, French, Russian, Greek, German, Ukrainian, Spanish, Tagalog, and English. The Regis community remembered in a special way Matthew G. Leonard '80, Gregory J. Trost '93, and Paul J. Battaglia '96, the three Regis alumni who died in the attacks of September 11, 2001.

Before Mass concluded, Fr. Devron and the Regis community conferred a special blessing on Mr. Charlie Heintz, the new Principal of Regis.

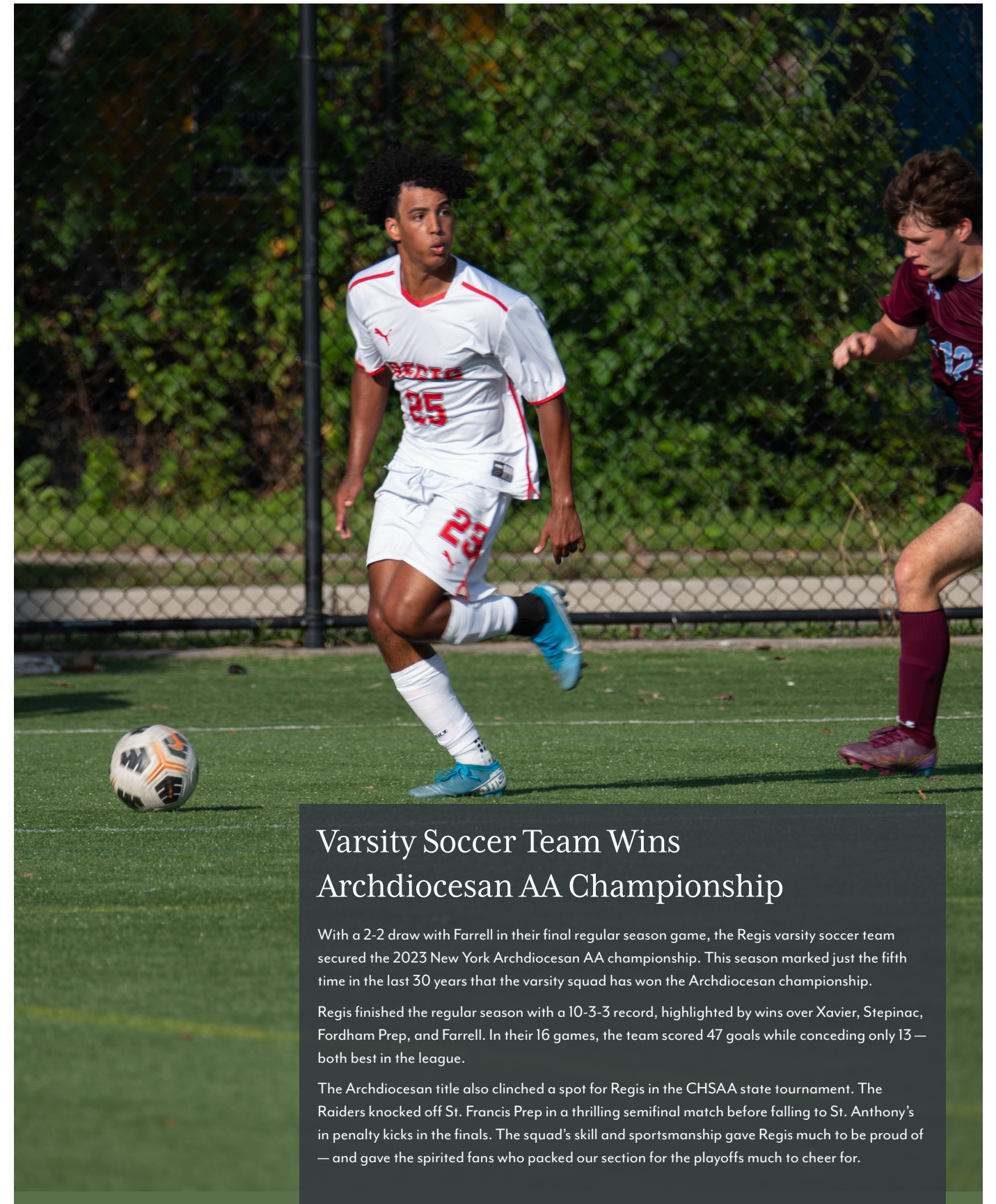
"Good and gracious God, pour out your love and blessings upon Mr. Charlie Heintz's gifts," said Fr. Devron, as students, faculty, and staff raised their arms towards the new Principal.

The Mass followed several days of orientation sessions in preparation for the new school year. After Mass, the Class of 2024 gathered with faculty in the cafeteria for the annual Senior-Faculty Luncheon.

Fall Convocation Recognizes Student Achievements

On the new school year's first day of classes, the student body and faculty gathered for the 2023 Fall Academic Convocation, which celebrated Regians' achievements from the previous year. Students who earned final grades of Honors or above in all full-credit courses were awarded Order of the Owl recognition. General Excellence awards were given to students on the basis of superlative performance in coursework and, in the opinion of the faculty, extraordinary level of interest, initiative, and achievement beyond the classroom. Individual awards were also bestowed upon select upperclassmen for their accomplishments within the school community.

"If this convocation is about notching off things that people can write on college applications, then it really doesn't have much value," said Regis President Rev. Christopher Devron, SJ. "But if this is about you being faithful to a call to use your intellect, to use your gifts in ways that you are going to find to serve others and to give God greater glory, then for sure this convocation is about faithfulness. It's about faithfulness to the gifts that God has given you. That's what we're here to celebrate today."



Varsity Soccer Team Wins Archdiocesan AA Championship

With a 2-2 draw with Farrell in their final regular season game, the Regis varsity soccer team secured the 2023 New York Archdiocesan AA championship. This season marked just the fifth time in the last 30 years that the varsity squad has won the Archdiocesan championship.

Regis finished the regular season with a 10-3-3 record, highlighted by wins over Xavier, Stepinac, Fordham Prep, and Farrell. In their 16 games, the team scored 47 goals while conceding only 13 — both best in the league.

The Archdiocesan title also clinched a spot for Regis in the CHSAA state tournament. The Raiders knocked off St. Francis Prep in a thrilling semifinal match before falling to St. Anthony's in penalty kicks in the finals. The squad's skill and sportsmanship gave Regis much to be proud of — and gave the spirited fans who packed our section for the playoffs much to cheer for.



Mr. David Bonagura '99 P'25 Translates St. Jerome in New Book

On October 17, the Sophia Institute Press released *Jerome's Tears: Letters to Friends in Mourning*, a translation of seven of St. Jerome's letters of consolation by language teacher Mr. David Bonagura '99 P'25.

"St. Jerome is best known for compiling the Latin edition of the Bible, called the Vulgate, and rightly so," said Mr. Bonagura. "He is also known for a famous quotation: 'Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.' But there is more to St. Jerome than this. We have 123 of his letters, written in a style equivalent to the modern essay, on a variety of topics. His letters of consolation stand out as some of the greatest examples of Latin prose and of pastoral care. Appropriately, St. Jerome offers wisdom from the Scriptures as his primary medicine for comforting the bereaved."

Mr. Bonagura became interested in St. Jerome's letters years ago while writing his graduate school thesis, for which he analyzed St. Jerome's quotations of classical Roman authors such as Virgil and Cicero. "As I worked on the thesis, I thought people could really benefit from reading St. Jerome's letters of consolation," he said. "They are moving and inspiring. To my knowledge, these letters have never been put together in a single volume in English. So I went to work on them."

The book contains seven letters written by St. Jerome from the years 389–412. In addition to translating the letters, Mr. Bonagura wrote an extended introduction to St. Jerome's life, work, and thought. He also wrote a brief paragraph before each letter identifying the deceased, the bereaved, and the context.

The book is dedicated to the memory of Regis teachers Mr. John Connelly '56 and Dr. Lou Macchiarulo, who influenced Mr. Bonagura's path to becoming a Latin teacher.

"The ancients have so much to offer us," said Mr. Bonagura. "Communicating this fact is something I have tried to do in my Latin classes for 20 years now. I am happy to offer St. Jerome's teaching as a small example of this, especially on a topic that affects all of us: grief and mourning."

Regis Senior Speaks at Climate Rally

In advance of September's March to End Fossil Fuels in midtown Manhattan, Regis senior Daniel Bajada '24 spoke at a press conference held by the Catholic Climate Covenant's Youth Mobilization program.

"While these recent wildfires kept us New Yorkers inside for a couple days, climate tragedies in the Global South force people out of their homes, displacing millions and forcing the most vulnerable to suffer," Bajada, a uniformed Scout, said from the steps of St. Paul the Apostle Church on West 59th Street.

Bajada encouraged those gathered to look for ways to make a tangible difference in their communities. "Pope Francis tells us, 'The environment is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all.' As the youth, this world will soon be ours to live in. We must spearhead the movement to defend our planet."

The march, timed to coincide with the United Nations' Climate Ambition Summit, drew tens of thousands of demonstrators from some 700 organizations, including numerous Catholic groups.



Students and Faculty Head Outdoors for Bear Mountain Day



Students and faculty boarded buses on September 22 for Regis's annual Bear Mountain outing. The beautiful day outdoors offered a pleasant change of scenery from the rigors of the academic calendar, as it has for generations of Regians. Though hiking trails were unavailable due to storm damage from the summer, students took part in a range of recreational activities, including basketball, volleyball, soccer, Spikeball, and ultimate frisbee.

Students divided into teams for Catalyst's second annual charity two-hand touch football tournament, with proceeds going to St. Aloysius Gonzaga, a Jesuit high school in Kibera, the largest slum in Nairobi, Kenya. The school serves children who have lost one or both of their parents to HIV/AIDS.

The day culminated with the annual senior vs. faculty softball game. With Mr. Charlie Heintz providing music as DJ on his first trip to Bear Mountain since joining Regis as Principal, the seniors "won," 14-7. However, the faculty unilaterally decreed that an asterisk be placed next to the final score in the record book, as the seniors allowed varsity baseball players to participate, violating the game's rules. Tough luck, gentlemen!

How the Apiary Society Harvests Its Honey

The Apiary Society harvested their first batch of honey for the school year in early October. With more than 180 members, the club tends to two hives on the green roof atop Regis throughout the year, carefully monitoring the colony of tens of thousands of bees.

To harvest the honey, students first remove frames from the beehives, after which the bees fly back into the hive. The students bring the frames inside, where they scrape the wax off of them with a knife. This reveals the honey and allows the frames to be put into a hand-cranked honey extractor. Club members then pour the honey into a specially designed bucket, which allows for easy bottling. The unused beeswax will be melted and turned into lip balm and candles.

The harvest produced more than 50 pounds of honey, and club members bottled more than 60 jars. Regians immediately piled into the art room to buy the honey, with the proceeds going towards equipment that will allow the Apiary Society to continue harvesting. The club plans to next extract honey in the spring.





His Honor

Celebrating
the Hon. John
F. Keenan '47,
recipient of the
2023 Deo et
Patriae Award.

The Latin words *Deo et patriae* — “for God and country” — are a part of the very fabric of Regis. They’re etched into the building’s facade, are displayed in the official seal, and are used in the name of the prestigious award given each year to a person who has served the school and the community in a distinguished capacity.

They’re also, fittingly, words that have guided the Honorable John F. Keenan '47 over the course of his life. And on November 2, Regis was proud to present Keenan with the 2023 Deo et Patriae Award during a reception at the New York Athletic Club. Keenan was celebrated for his devotion to public service, most notably in the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office and later as a district judge for the Southern District for New York.

“God blessed me with a good and interesting series of jobs before I got the best job in the world, which is being a federal judge,” said Keenan, adding that “one of the highlights of my very fortunate life was my career, and the other was my four years at Regis High School.”

Throughout the evening, Keenan was praised for his legal skills and intelligence, which have been paired with unquestioned integrity and sound judgment.

While presenting Keenan with the award, Regis President Rev. Christopher Devron, SJ, also called special attention to all those Keenan has mentored over the years.

“They’re here to honor you, as we are,” said Devron.

Keenan was introduced by William E. Craco '82, one of his former clerks.

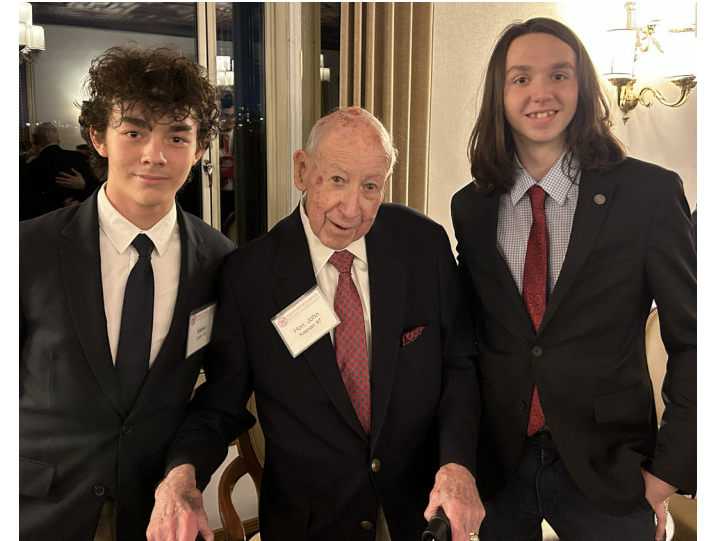
“Through his remarkable career of service, John Keenan has been the living embodiment of the values that Regis seeks to instill into its graduates,” said Craco.

After graduating from Regis in 1947 and Manhattan College in 1951, Keenan earned a law degree from Fordham University in 1954. While receiving the Dean’s Medal of Recognition at Fordham Law School in 2019, he told guests that upon his graduation, he received a \$100 check for exemplary performance in moot court competitions, explaining to those gathered that he used the money to take (and pass) the bar exam and to take his now-wife, Diane, on a date to propose.

His law career was put on hold when he joined the U.S. Army, where he was assigned to the Army Security Agency and stationed in Tokyo from 1954 to 1956 during the Korean War.

Soon after completing his service and after a four-month stint at a law firm — the only time he spent in private practice — Keenan found his way to the Manhattan District Attorney’s office, where he worked as assistant district attorney from 1956 to 1976, including a stint leading the homicide bureau from 1970 to 1973. Keenan would go on to serve as the chief assistant to three district attorneys in Queens and Manhattan.

In 1976, Governor Hugh Carey and New York Attorney General Louis Lefkowitz appointed Keenan deputy attorney general and



The Hon. John F. Keenan '47 with student volunteers Tristram Hines '25 and Mateo Juan '25

special prosecutor for corruption. Three years later, Mayor Ed Koch appointed him to be chairman of New York City’s Off-Track Betting Corporation, and in 1982, Koch appointed him to be the city’s coordinator of criminal justice.

President Ronald Reagan appointed Keenan as a United States district judge for the Southern District of New York in 1983, beginning his decades-long tenure on the federal bench. In 2016, a courtroom was named in Keenan’s honor at the Daniel Patrick Moynihan U.S. Courthouse on Pearl Street.

In 2019, Regis held the first event in the Hon. John F. Keenan '47 Lecture Series. The inaugural event featured a discussion with Keenan himself and drew roughly 100 alumni and friends.



EVERYONE DESERVES A FAIR CHANCE AT BEING SAVED

Remarks by Silas Nwaishienyi '24

During October's Ignatian Family Teach-In for Justice in Washington, D.C., Silas Nwaishienyi '24 delivered a speech on racial inequality and health care to thousands of attendees in the ballroom of the Washington Hilton. Nwaishienyi, one of 16 students in Regis's IFTJ delegation, discussed how Black Americans, Latin Americans, and Native Americans are among those who face worse health outcomes because of a lack of research into their care. Read his remarks, which have been lightly edited.

Good afternoon, everyone, I'm Silas Nwaishienyi from Regis High School in New York City. And first, before anything, I want to give Regis their due shout-out, and I want to shout out my great friends from the Arrupe Leaders Summit that I had this February. It's a huge honor for me to be on stage today to raise a voice to this pressing issue with such deep roots in our society.

Now, first I want to start with a question: When you hear the words "health care," what pops into your head? Probably ideas of cures, or love, or compassion from the hearts of doctors, nurses, or first responders you call to on a sick day, right? And I totally understand that. I'm an EMT in New York City, of all places. It takes a lot more than wanting to become an EMT to stay an EMT. But the privilege of being able to look at health care in this positive light often remains a dream for millions of Americans today who have to find the courage to make a call. And, ironically, I'm a lucky example of that.

If I were to rewind to March of 2006, I'd find myself unborn, still awaiting the wonders life has to offer inside my mom's womb. Now, I couldn't quite tell you what I was thinking back then, as I'm sure my memories have since left me. But, if there's one thing I do know, it's that I wasn't expecting to be born for another two months. And since I'm born in March, clearly something went wrong. And it did.

Two days before what's now my birthday, my mom developed a life-threatening heart condition that required her to be rushed to the hospital. But that was all it was described as. See, despite pregnancy being such a common facet of life that you'd think the doctors had everything understood about it, they didn't quite know what was wrong with my mom. And because both she and I were at stake, otherwise I wouldn't be talking to you right now, they had to sign on to this belief that she had preeclampsia, which you've probably heard of. It's far less fatal, it differs drastically in symptoms, and, more importantly, is believed to disappear after childbirth. So, when this quote-unquote preeclampsia began affecting me in the womb, I was delivered two months early into this

amazing world. But that's all fun and games, right? I mean, I get to live, and my mom gets to see me.

Only, she didn't. She was still having that heart condition that doctors didn't really have a name for. So what happened to her? Well, she was dismissed from the hospital — without checks to ensure that her heart condition had actually gone away. And because she didn't have preeclampsia, within the week, she was back in the hospital, in such a bad state that shutting her eyes to rest could have been the last time she shut her eyes at all. I was at risk of losing my mom before I'd even met her.

Fortunately, I was spared of that reality, and I'm sure not without hours of petrification on my father's part, because she was diagnosed accurately with peripartum cardiomyopathy. But 17 years later, I still couldn't thank her doctors for that, because they didn't find it. It was my father, a spectator who didn't have the same resources as the hospital staff, who had to diagnose her because it was the same chain of illness that killed his mom and stillborn brother three years after he was born.

If it weren't for the experience that my dad had to face as a child, I would have shared that same reality. So, naturally, 17 years later, I wonder: Why didn't the doctors know what was wrong with my mom? Because peripartum cardiomyopathy primarily affects Black people, 15 times more than any other race. The textbooks that guided the teachings of these doctors had under-prioritized this illness because it was seen as insignificant. And the reason I know this is because as soon as my mom started recovering, med school students began rushing to her hospital to use her as a study guide, to teach them what their textbooks couldn't.

I'd like to think of myself as the only potential victim to this system, but in reality it's riddled throughout American society. Even after the 1960s, when hospitals were first desegregated, all patients of color were treated under the standard of a white patient because they were all who society deemed mattered. And today, it's clear to see that these inequitable systems still persist, and not just for Black people. Hispanics, Latin Americans, and Native Americans all face worse health outcomes because of a lack of



understanding in their care. I see patients every day who are scared, petrified to walk onto an ambulance because they don't want to leave a hospital worse than when they entered. So, while today we can't blame anyone sitting around us for the problems of our nation's past, we can be the ones to change it now for the better.

And that's why I call out to all of you. We have to realize that health care in humanity is boundless, too. It will never disappear, and if we don't fix it, its problems won't end. Whether you feel you have already been affected by this issue or not, I ask you to be steadfast and boundless in your unity of our love of our neighbors and an advocate for an equitable health care system. As you all grow into prominent figures of the spaces you impact, I ask you to lead from a place of love, with understanding and education to this pressing issue so you can engineer your voices for change.

And so to sort of inspire that in everyone, I do have three solutions to offer. First, we can work to make health care more accessible by promoting the services and working to alleviate the financial barriers marginalized people face. For example, directrelief.org works internationally in health aid and directly across the 50 states with their

Health Equity Fund to make sure money isn't the determinant between life and death. You can donate to this site, or petition to your local hospital to make it a partner so that more people can access health care without having to break the bank for it. Second, we can work to diversify workers in health care. For those who want to pursue paths in medicine, I 100 percent encourage you to do so, because it's been super fun for me. But if you don't, then maybe you can help make the quality of education better for those who want to pursue those paths. You can work in tutoring, or publish free study resources online, or appeal to lawmakers for better educational funding, because right now 60 percent of kids say they want to become doctors. And while I'm sure that statistic is mildly skewed, we can work to maintain that yield. And finally, I call to you to spread this message in your communities. Racial inequities in health care aren't spoken about a lot, yet their devastating impacts are clear. Bringing this issue to greater stages than this will be the start to both making this issue known and curing it. And then that way, everyone will have a fair chance of being saved.

Thank you.

BRIDGING GENERATIONS

A conversation between Dr. Allison Tyndall and Jerry Kappes '52.



Jerry Kappes '52 taught English at Regis from 1957 to 1982, and at a Christmas gathering in December 2022, he found himself talking to English teacher Dr. Allison Tyndall. The two quickly found themselves deep in conversation about books, plays, and teaching, and in the year that followed, they struck up a friendship. Kappes has since visited Dr. Tyndall's classes on a half-dozen occasions and has joined her on outings with her Theater in New York class — a senior elective he helped create in the 1970s.

"I think it's safe to say we're in sympathy on a lot of impressions about what to teach and how to teach it," said Dr. Tyndall, the English Department Chair who joined the Regis faculty in 2018. "I count it a singular privilege that I've been able to have a friendship with Jerry." The two sat down to discuss how English classes have changed at Regis over the years — and how they haven't.

Dr. Allison Tyndall: What keeps you coming back to visit classes?

Jerry Kappes '52: Nostalgia, curiosity. You become attached to a place, and so you want to find out what's going on and how it's doing.

AT: From my point of view, I see your investment in the institution as well. You want to see what's going on, but I think you really care about the English Department and how the school is continuing to live its mission.

JK: Yes. If you're a Regis graduate, there's a connection that stays with you.

AT: What have you learned from your visits to my classes?

JK: Well, I learned that *Gatsby* is alive and well, just as I had thought the novel should be when I was on faculty. I was probably the first English teacher to bring *Gatsby* into the English curriculum.

AT: There were moments when you were able to pipe up in my class and share the reception history of *Gatsby*. It was kind of a largely overlooked text that picked up in popularity later on.



JK: By 1951, *The Great Gatsby* had become popular and was widely available in paperback. I wanted to take advantage of that availability and end the use of the tedious anthology textbooks, which I had endured as a student. And one of the great things that happened that coincided with the time I started teaching in 1957 was Sputnik and a spotlight on education.

AT: So we could compete with Russia.

JK: Yes, that was the thing. The U.S. was way behind, really in science and math, but it also involved teaching English and the advent of Advanced Placement. So I was able to get us away from textbooks and into a situation in which a teacher could devise his own course.

AT: Have you sat in on any specific classes that you've particularly enjoyed?

JK: Well, *Gatsby*, and also *Waiting for Godot*, which was the initial thing between us, when you told me you were teaching it. I had done a production of the play here on kind of a dare. I had boys reading it, and they said, "This is impossible. You can't put this on." I said, "Well, let's try." And it was fairly successful. That's why I was very sorry to miss the production you went to with your students.

AT: I don't know if you'd agree with me, but I'd say this is a piece of philosophy. It works to disrupt a tradition in theater, but its content — I love teaching it with the juniors, because they're taking ethics in theology. They're reading Continental and modern philosophy. They're raising and trying to answer questions of existence, and they're seeing it in my class in a version of art. I was the only one teaching *Godot*, and to hear that you taught it 40-plus,

gosh, almost 50 years ago now, was a touchstone that was really important to me. And then when you said you produced it — I was also involved with Regis Rep, and theater is a particular interest of mine. It was like, how did I not know this? I went right to the yearbook and dug up 1975. I found the photos of it, and I ran off copies for my kids. It's anecdotal, but that stuff is valuable to me.

JK: I should say also it was just one performance.

AT: One night only.

JK: Because it really wasn't on the schedule. Back at that time, we had a Jesuit, Denis Moran, SJ, who was a theater person, and he directed a lot of plays in the period.

AT: He's who you started Theater in New York with, right?

JK: Yes. And I said to Dennis, "Oh, I'd like to do this." And whatever the play was for the fall production was already scheduled. So he said, "Well, let's try to fit it in." And so it was just the one performance. But it seemed to work pretty well, thanks to great performances from Jose Forero, Joe Santi, Tom Weiser, and Chris Zarbetski.

AT: What inspired you to start Theater in New York?

JK: When senior electives started, it was something that would get the kids out of the classroom and could be very appealing as a senior elective. One of the things I always tried to do, just generally even before senior electives, is get the boys out into the city to experience the city, I guess in a way that I did not as a student. When I was a student, I never went to the theater. I knew there was Broadway theater, but to me, that was a grown-up thing. As

a student here, I never went to the Met Museum. I think I must've known that it was there, but no teacher that I can recall ever gave any advice or assignment that would involve going over there. So I told the students a few times, "Go over to the museum, find a painting that you like, write about it, and let's see what you have."

AT: Having seen it from different angles, what do you think makes a Regis English class a Regis English class?

JK: I would say what struck me coming back was the eagerness of the boys to say what they wanted to say. I had a note from one of my classmates who was remembering a particular teacher, Richard Horchler. He said something like, "With Horchler, it was so great because you knew that it was okay to say whatever was on your mind." And I think that's the case with what I observed from sitting in your class.

AT: I see it the same way. The majority of my students that I teach are usually juniors, so I write a lot of college recommendations. And in preparation for me writing those letters, I have them fill out a reflection on the year. And I would say the number one top topic of reflection is about taking risks in class discussion. Whether it's a kid who's not afraid to speak, but is trying to curate what he says, letting go a little bit and taking a risk with an interpretation. Or a kid who speaks less, and I won't leave him alone, and over time he finds his bearings a little bit and is able to contribute something. I think that's the most-cited evolution, maybe hand in hand with writing an argument that they voice.

JK: That's what I think is special about the Regis English class. In the classrooms I've visited, I sense the same eagerness to speak up and voice an opinion. It's still very much there, and that's what you want in an English class. You don't want to be standing there lecturing.

AT: I tell them, this is like a laboratory for thinking. You're going to conduct experiments, and they're not always going to work. You're going to work from the materials that you know, and the idea that you think is going to work, but you don't know it until you try it. If it fails, we leave it on the classroom floor. It doesn't matter. You haven't even committed it to writing. This is the place to test something, judgment free, and see if it has legs. That's a strength of this school, this curriculum. We're not teaching to achieve a Regents score or an AP score. Genuine inquiry and production of thought are still alive here. And I mean, we've got to protect it.



REGIS HIGH SCHOOL

DEO ET PATRIAE PIETAS CHRISTIANA EREXIT

55 EAST 84TH STREET | NEW YORK, NY 10028
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 6698
NEWARK, NJ

www.regis.org

Alumni and other members of the Regis community gathered on November 6 for our annual Boston Regional Reception. The pennant held by President Rev. Christopher Devron, SJ, was presented to the school earlier in the day by Ann Brady, whose father Vincent was a member of the Class of 1919.

