

# Bishop Amat Memorial High School

## The Amat Tradition

February 2007 Alumni Newsletter Vol. 21, Issue 2



Carol (Wychico) Cunningham '94, Susan (Verdejo) Adissi '93, and their colleague Jane Relampagos were among the alumni present at Bishop Amat's College Night. Alums returned to provide information on their college Alma Mater to junior and senior Amat students.

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## 50 Years of Education, Service, and Worship

As a new year beckons, Bishop Amat begins to prepare for the celebration of its 50th Anniversary. The school seeks to fondly remember the past and firmly recommit to the progress of the present.

Amat's mission statement aptly states that the school aspires to prepare students to embrace the Gospel values, to respect themselves and others, to become life long learners, and to contribute positively to the community. As the beneficiaries of this mission, alumni are invited to help celebrate the school's fifty years of existence.

Anniversaries signal the commemoration of something important, something lasting. Bishop Amat has made a significant contribution to families in the San Gabriel Valley by upholding a positive presence in the community and by guiding thousands of young persons toward higher education and the values set forth in the Gospels.

The festivities will officially begin September 17th, 2007, with Cardinal Roger Mahony's celebration of the Eucharist in the Student Activity Center. All alumni are encouraged to attend.

The year 2007 will undoubtedly be an opportunity for many of us to reminisce, an opportunity to reconnect and give thanks. We hope to share this special time with you.

I would like to offer a special thanks to all those who have shared their stories with us these past few months. Your contributions help us to better pray and celebrate as a Family.

**Gabriel Escovar '98**  
Editor



Bishop Amat English Department teacher Emily Jones '95 speaks with senior Anthony Arias about Boston University. Alumni were instrumental in providing students and parents a first-hand account of out-of-state colleges and universities.

### College Night

College Night was hosted in the Student Activity Center on October 30th. Coordinated by College Counselor Michael Scott, the event aimed to provide students and parents with information about individual schools and the application process. The event also featured a financial aid seminar. Mr. Scott was pleased that so many Bishop Amat alumni were present to represent their college or university.

# Greetings! A Message From...

## The President



Dear Bishop Amat Alumni:

As Dr. Hemenway expresses so poignantly in his letter below, Bishop Amat High School lost a true friend and inspirational figure with the death of Msgr. Thomas A. Kiefer. I have been privileged to know him since 1967 when I first went into educational ministry with the Archdiocese. He firmly believed that Catholic high schools have a vital role to play in the formation of young men and women and he put his conviction into practice not only on this campus but also in three other high schools to which he was assigned as principal or pastor. I was deeply moved as I recited the prayers for the dying for him at St. Joseph's Hospital in Burbank and concelebrated his funeral Mass. May his good soul rest in peace forever.

Elsewhere in this newsletter we have provided you with information on our efforts to establish an endowment fund for Bishop Amat High School as proposed by the Consultative School Council. I am happy to report that in the past few days, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles gave us final approval to move ahead with this important project and I am now working to assemble a ten member Board of Trustees that will administer the endowment. Please be assured that I will draw heavily on qualified alumni in making appointments to this Board.

The Council is also making progress on another major project that will have far reaching affects on the functioning of the school. Under the leadership of Chairman Chris Trujillo, Class of 1974, the Plant and Facilities Committee is undertaking a thorough evaluation of all of the structures on our 50-year-old campus with a view to creating a Master Plan to meet the needs of the school through the next several decades. We are currently evaluating Prequalification Statements from six prestigious architectural firms with wide experience in drafting Master Plans for academic institutions. We will invite three of these firms to submit Technical Proposals regarding the evaluation of our facilities and the design of the Master Plan. We will move eventually to award a contract to one of them to provide us with our Master Plan architectural services.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to all of you who have already generously supported our renewed annual appeal. With contributions still being received we hope to realize a total profit of some \$25,000.00. We will allocate these funds to the four designated projects, namely tuition assistance, the new marquee, educational technology and the retreat program. If you haven't yet mailed your contribution please consider doing so as soon as possible. The current students of your Alma Mater would greatly appreciate your kind support of their educational programs.

Monsignor Aidan Carroll

President

## The Principal



**Farewell to our Founder - a personal reflection**

An era ended for historians of Bishop Amat High School on October 30, 2006. Founding Principal Monsignor Thomas Kiefer passed into eternal life. We all feel this loss in our own way. I personally recall the many ways he has inspired the paths I have taken in my life. As a young boy growing up in St. Michael's Parish in Los Angeles, I first came to know Fr. Thomas Kiefer during his tenure as an associate.

During the tremendous Catholic School expansion of the day, Fr. Kiefer moved to La Puente to found another high school, Bishop Amat Memorial High School. Thanks to Fr. Kiefer's focus, the "Amat Family" has become a powerfully lived tradition.

Fr. Kiefer played a significant role in my life, first by accepting me into Amat in 1961 as I transferred from Mt. Carmel High School in Los Angeles when my family moved. Immediately after my college graduation from St. Mary's College in Moraga, he hired me to teach at Amat. During my first year of teaching, early in 1969, Fr. Kiefer pulled me aside and noted that Catholic Education was about to undergo a significant change. He emphasized that there would be a tremendous need for Catholic lay leadership to replace the men and women religious that were moving on to other ministries following the effects of Vatican II. He advised me to get my administrative degrees and be ready. I followed his advice and his prediction came true. After I had served seven years as Vice-Principal, I was offered the job to serve as Bishop Amat's first lay principal in 1981.

We kept in touch after Msgr. Kiefer left his beloved Amat to become a Pastor. He often attended Amat football games, standing on the sidelines and sharing stories of those first CIF Championship years. He would laugh when newer generation Lancers commented, "Oh! the Kiefer of Kiefer Stadium is still alive!" The last time I saw him was at his own 60th anniversary parish celebration. He had a tired body but sharp eyes and was full of his ever-present laughter.

He has passed into eternal life. Kiefer Stadium now becomes "Kiefer Memorial Stadium."

Merritt Hemenway, Ph.D., '64

Principal

## Alumni News

### Fighting Lancer

Former junior lightweight titleholder Mike Anchondo '00 defeated Panamanian Armando Cordova in a bout at the Irvine Marriott Ballroom, December 14th. Anchondo (26-1, 19 KOs) controlled the fight, consistently outscoring his opponent. Anchondo is tentatively scheduled to appear against Darling Jimenez in January.

### Wedding Announcement

Marty Avalos '90 and Diane Sennatt married on November 4th in Fullerton, CA. Marty's brother and former Amat football coach John Avalos served as Best Man. The happy couple is looking forward to a long, fulfilling life together.

### It's a Boy!

Omar Garcia '95 and Benet Rosas '95 welcomed their first child into the world. Adan Omar Garcia was born on November 2nd, weighing 8lbs 8oz. Mom and baby are doing well!

### It's a Girl!

Dawn Baez De Nava '95 gave birth to her second daughter, Miranda Alaya De Nava on September 14th. Miranda weighed 8lbs 11oz and was 20 inches. Mia Aurora De Nava, born November 25, 2003, is proud to be a big sister. Mom, Dad, and sisters are well.

### Retired

Kathleen (Miller) Davis '63 retired last June after more than thirty years of teaching. Kathleen and her husband Rick enjoy spending time with their 20 month old grandson.

Peter Aguilar '63 retired from Kim Lighting in May, 2006. He now spends his free time with his wife Linda, daughters Gloria '88, Debbie '91, sons in-law Ben and Chris, and his four beautiful grandchildren.

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## Steadfast, Loyal and True School history to be written by Mr. Ron Woolsey '67

Next year marks the 50th Anniversary of Bishop Amat High School's opening. One of the many items planned for the coming year is the publication of a historical overview of the school. Alumnus and faculty member, Ron Woolsey, Class of 1967, has been working for several months writing about the school's past. Ron is a professional historian who has written two critically acclaimed books and is also an editor of an historical quarterly on the West.

Steadfast, Loyal and True: Bishop Amat High School 1957-2007, will include rare photographs that span five decades of Lancer history. Ron has used an extensive archive that includes The Lance and Tusitala. He has also conducted several interviews with faculty and students from decades ago. In fact, Ron had the opportunity to interview Msgr. Thomas Kiefer for the project this past summer. The book will be made available next year. "My purpose is to celebrate as many alumni as possible, and also provide an historical backdrop for understanding our school's past," commented Mr. Woolsey. Stay tuned! Details will follow on this exciting project.

## Extravaganza 2006 – A Disco Odyssey

Alumni, parents of current students, and friends of the school felt the "fever" November 4th at Bishop Amat's annual Extravaganza. This year's disco theme and SOTO's energized musical performance encouraged the large crowd to let loose on the dance floor.

The live auction featured frenzied bidding on sports memorabilia from the 2005 USC Trojan football team. The Matt Leinart signed helmet and Reggie Bush signed jersey generated quite a buzz. The evening's auctions culminated in separate drawings for \$10,000 and a new car.

Special thanks go to Chef David Jimenez (father of Taylor Jimenez '10) for providing the evening's meal.

## Homecoming Barbeque

Alumni community gathers for food and fellowship.

The 2006 Homecoming BBQ brought forth great memories and tasty food. Held October 27th, the barbeque preceded the Lancer's hard fought game against the Crespi Celts. While many classes were represented with attendees, the turnout from the class of 1961 was especially strong.

Rosemary (Escalera) Gutierrez ('61), a former Bishop Amat teacher in the English Department, attended with her husband Rufino. Rosemary currently teaches English at Rowland High School where she helped initiate their International Baccalaureate program. She is excited that Bishop Amat is now also participating in the specialized honors program.

Marilyn (Heglin) McGloin ('61) and her husband Patrick ('61) recently celebrated their 4th wedding anniversary. The two former high school sweethearts told how they reconnected at the class of 1961's 40 Year Reunion.

After eating in the covered lunch area, the attendees headed to Kiefer Stadium for the game. All alumni are invited and encouraged to participate in next year's event.



(From left) John Moore '62, Rufino Gutierrez, Rosemary (Escalera) Gutierrez '61, Patrick McGloin '61, James Moore '61, Marilyn (Heglin) McGloin '61



Joanne Leveque '84 visits Bishop Amat during Open House with her eighth grade daughter.

## Open House

Alumni parents are always among the many local families considering Bishop Amat as a high school for their children. At the recent Open House, held on December 2, 2006, alumni were excited to introduce their children to the "Amat Family." Eric Gonzalez '83 and his son, and Michelle Morales '87 and her son, were some of the alums present.

The entrance exam for the 2007/2008 school year will take place on January 27th. Application packages are available in the Main Office between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 3:45 p.m., Monday through Friday.



## Character Counts

Kory Minor '95 visits Amat to help current students live with Respect.

The Character Counts program at Bishop Amat supports Lancers as they try to live with a sense of respect, dignity, and class. The special assemblies have been largely student generated and often feature keynote speakers. This year's first assembly focused on Respect. Mr. Kory Minor impressed upon students the importance of respecting oneself and respecting others.

Kory told students of his positive life decisions while attending the University of Notre Dame. He explained that as a member of the Irish football team, there were many opportunities to make poor decisions. However, Kory emphasized that making good decisions allowed him to achieve his life-long goals of becoming a professional football player and having a family. Kory credits the strength of his relationship with his mother as a key factor toward allowing him to live a life of respect.

## In Memoriam

### Lena Vallejo

On Friday, November 3, 2006, Adeline "Lena" Vallejo entered into eternal life, after a long struggle with cancer. May she rest in peace. Lena worked at Bishop Amat for 29 years. Lena leaves behind her loving husband Carlos, who cared for her during her illness; their children Catherine,'76, Carlos III,'80, Cecilia,'81, and Arthur,'84, and their 7 grandchildren. The family would appreciate your prayers and support during this time of loss.



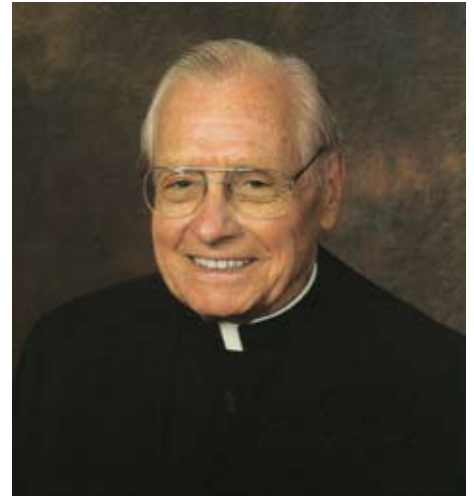
### Msgr. Thomas Kiefer

Bishop Amat's founding principal, Msgr. Thomas Kiefer, died Oct. 30th at age 87. A beloved priest of more than sixty years, Msgr. Kiefer spent fourteen years as principal of Bishop Amat. Cardinal Roger Mahony along with Monsignor Carroll presided over funeral services at St. Charles Borromeo Church in North Hollywood.

Current principal Dr. Merritt Hemenway remembers Msgr. Kiefer as a devoted man who strongly supported student activities. "Fr. Kiefer's focus on strong academics and activities like Speech and Debate that built school pride helped Bishop Amat grow in the early days." Dr. Hemenway noted that for the last thirty years, Bishop Amat has been one of the largest Catholic High Schools in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Much of the school's success can be traced back to Msgr. Kiefer's early guidance and dedication.

Msgr. Kiefer was recently congratulated for his sixty years of service as an ordained priest at the 20th Lancer Classic.

Thank You, Lord, for the gift of this great man.



## 2007 Lancer Classic

We are pleased to announce that the 2007 Lancer Classic Dinner and Awards will be held on Saturday, March 3, 2007 at the Marriott Downtown Hotel in Los Angeles. We will present the Monsignor Thomas A. Kiefer Award to Ms. Maria Contreras-Sweet, Chairwoman of the Board, Promerica Bank and the Alumnus of the Year Award to co-recipients Christopher Perez '86 and Peter Perez '92, Vice Presidents, Valley Vista Services. This year's Master of Ceremonies is Mr. Edward P. Roski Jr., Chairman and CEO of Majestic Realty Co. For further information, please email [developmentoffice@bishopamat.org](mailto:developmentoffice@bishopamat.org) or call 626-962-2495, Ext. 1-7401.

### *A Remembrance.*

I had the opportunity to interview Father Kiefer this past July for the historical overview that I am writing for Bishop Amat's 50th Anniversary. I knew Father Kiefer while I attended Bishop Amat in the 1960's, as a teacher during the times he revisited the campus, and while occasionally seeing him at the Alumni Classics. I always remember Father Kiefer as a gracious man who would give you time despite his busy schedule. He always made you feel as if you were the only person he was interested in at that moment, despite the many responsibilities and demands placed on him. In July, Father Kiefer told me that his fondest memories were as Principal of our school, and of the wonderful students and teachers that graced the campus during those formative years. It was told to me that among his peers, Father Kiefer was one of the most respected priests in the Los Angeles Archdiocese, which speaks to the dignity and integrity of the man.

Ron Woolsey '67  
Social Studies Dept

# Reunion updates...

## Class of 1966 - 40 Year Reunion



Group Photograph



Sue (Marias) O'Brien, Donna (Hestich) Merrifield



Colette Ostrye, Louise Miranda

The Class of 1966 celebrated their 40th at the Doubletree Hotel in Ontario. Attendees were happy to see so many friends after thirty or forty years.

Alumni came from all over the country to attend the event. Linda Lalich Wissler was in attendance, having just arrived from her summer home in France. A professional painter with exhibits all around the world, Linda shared stories with her classmates about painting with a Parisian group of painters.

Thank you to all participants, and we hope to see you at the **50th!**

## Class of 1986 - 20 Year Reunion



Alfred Calderon, Myra (Armendariz) Calderon, Yvette Rojo



Lisa (Micheli) Giancanelli, Wendy (Smith) Nugent, Nancy (Amato) Stickles, James Marquez, Andrea Marquez



Rick and Wendee Carter

The class of 1986 celebrated their 20 year class reunion at the Pasadena Hilton, October 14, 2006. There were many alumni in attendance who were unable to make the 10 year reunion. Those present were excited to hear about each other's children and new ventures.

The band was augmented by CD's of 80's music, prompting attendees to relive the sounds of their high school years. In addition to music, the reunion featured a memorabilia table and slide show with photographs from their days at Amat.

Special thanks go to reunion committee members Michele (Graziano) Vanillo, Lisa (Micheli) Giancanelli, Adela Ortiz, and Wendy (Smith) Nugent. See you at the 30 Year!

## Class of 1996 - 10 Year Reunion



Reunion Committee - L to R - Mari Kovich Bacon, Clarissa Gonzalez de Dios, Olivia Castro Hernandez, Robert Taylor and Dalinah Zabala



Raymond Vallente, Jay Parayno, Msgr. Carroll



Claire Verti, Mark Verti, Tom Gomez, Amanda Black, Brian Adamek

The Class of 1996 held its 10-year reunion at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Anaheim on Saturday, October 21, 2006. Over 100 classmates attended the event that was highlighted by a "Casino Night". On Sunday afternoon, Msgr. Carroll hosted a BBQ for the Class and a great time was had by all (pictured above).

## Announcements

President Msgr. Carroll announced that the **50th Anniversary** celebration will begin **Sept. 17th, 2007** with a mass celebrated by **Cardinal Roger Mahony**. The mass will take place at Bishop Amat in the Student Activity Center. All alumni are invited to celebrate the Eucharist with the Amat school community.

**Bishop Amat** thanks retiring staff members **Edith Torado** and **Kathy Verti** for their service.

**Edith Torado** has worked at Amat for the past 27 years in several capacities, most recently in the Studies Office.

**Kathy Verti** worked with the Attendance Office for 10 years.

The Amat community wishes these two women a fulfilling retirement. Congratulations!

**Ms. Deborah Oswald**, Development Director, invites interested alumni to participate in the **50th Anniversary planning committee**. Inquiries or suggestions may be emailed to [doswald@bishopamat.org](mailto:doswald@bishopamat.org)

## 2007 Golf Tournament

Please "**Save the Date**" for the annual Golf Tournament that will take place on **Friday, June 8, 2007** at the **California Country Club** located in Whittier. Tee time is **1:00 p.m.** For further information or to make reservations, call the Development Office at 626-962-2495, Ext. 1-7401 or email: [doswald@bishopamat.org](mailto:doswald@bishopamat.org).



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## Attention Alumni:

Have you visited the new Alumni Portal? If you haven't, check it out at [www.alumni.bishopamat.org](http://www.alumni.bishopamat.org). Over 600 Bishop Amat alumni have already registered! A post card with a temporary ID and password was mailed to alums that were in our database. If you did not get your postcard, or have misplaced it and need to get your ID/password, please go to the site and "contact us". You can also call the Alumni Relations Office at 626-962-2495, ext. 1-7433 to get details on registering. It is our goal to use this website to keep in touch with our graduates. We will be posting alumni news, school events and will soon be sending out e-newsletters from this portal. Help us better serve the Amat Family by signing up today.

### Ms. Deborah Oswald

Director of Development

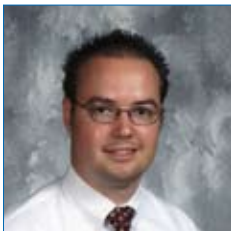
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## Endowment Fund Approved by Consultative School Council

For the past several decades, Catholic school administrators across the nation have been turning to endowments to provide for the long-term financial security of their institutions. We are happy to report that your Alma Mater will soon be joining that visionary trend.

On December 7, 2006 Msgr. Carroll brought a proposal to the Consultative School Council outlining the establishment of the Bishop Amat Endowment Fund with an initial investment of \$500,000. Already strongly supported by the Finance Committee of the Council, the proposal received the unanimous endorsement of the full Board.

The principal will be invested with the Investment Pool of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and will never be invaded. Interest from the investment will be used in perpetuity for the benefit of the school and its programs. Initially, funds from the Endowment will be used primarily to provide financial aid to families struggling to meet their tuition obligations to the school.

"My goal is to grow this fund to \$5,000,000," Msgr. Carroll stated. "Tuition costs will continue to escalate in the coming years. We have a moral obligation to keep our program financially accessible to families of modest means."