

# Seton Keough principal honored with an award

Terrorists attacked the United States the first day Dr. B. Curtis Turner spent with his students as the new principal of The Seton Keough High School in Baltimore in 2001. A week later, two of his students were involved in a serious car accident. A week after that, one of those students died from her injuries.

"It was a difficult time, but I saw how the school really integrated God and family into one," said Dr. Turner, a parishioner of St. Joseph in Largo who is in formation to become a permanent deacon for the Archdiocese of Washington.

"I was glad to be at a Catholic school where Christ was at the center," he said. "The students were incredibly resilient. It was really clear that their faith in Christ was the foundation for everything."

Dr. Turner was named the recipient of this year's Doris Musil Award for Excellence in Catholic Education and Leadership. Dr. Ronald J. Valenti, superintendent of Catholic schools, conferred the honor during the 16th annual teaching awards banquet, held March 28 at Martin's West in Woodlawn. Teachers were also recognized for their teaching excellence, and certificates were presented to those with milestone years of service.

Dr. Turner said he takes pride that the young women of his school make prayer a priority.

"We begin and end everything in prayer," he said. "If we forget, it's always the students who remind us. It's great to have that witness from a 14- or 15-yearold girl."

Dr. Turner said he sometimes endures some gentle ribbing as a male administrator in an all-girls school. A few years ago, someone hung a sign in his office with the words, "Blessed are you among women."

"I think that says it all," he said with a laugh.

A former NASA engineer, Dr. Turner has emphasized science and mathematics at Seton Keough. The school partners with Northrop Grumman Corporation to help young people think about careers in engineering. The principal has also promoted the arts, noting that more than half the students are involved in some form of the arts.

In addition to serving as administrator, Dr. Turner teaches a calculus class and coaches the golf team. He most enjoys teaching, he said.

“If you asked me what I do for a living, my default answer is ‘teacher,’” he said. “I love it.”

Winning the Doris Musil award is an honor for the whole school, Dr. Turner said.

“I’m humbled by it,” he said.