

The impact of a Catholic education lasts a lifetime: Part 2



Catholic Schools Week: January 25-31, 2015

On Sunday I kicked off Catholic Schools Week (CSW) with my best memories from years past during my ministry at John Carroll and some reflections by grads of Catholic schools in Harford County.

In Part 2, I'll continue to share more reflections from Catholic school grads on the impact that this education had on their lives.

More reflections on our Catholic schools:

"...her words come back to me."

Mrs. Susan Fisher, retired John Carroll English department chair, attended grade school at St. Charles Borromeo in her native Toledo, Ohio.

She reminisced,

"An Ursuline sister, Sister St. Simon, my teacher for fourth, fifth, and sixth grades, held me accountable and didn't allow easy A's. She treated her students as adults with intelligence instead of as children. She also boosted my confidence by publishing an essay about me as an example of why students should be trusted and given the freedom of their own ideas."

Susan later attended Mary Manse College in Toledo, a women's college which opened in 1922 and was also operated by the Ursuline Sisters. She reflected,

"Years later, I had the good fortune to attend a women's college where this same sister had transferred; I enrolled in her philosophy course, Metaphysics. Every time I'm in an existential mood, her words come back to me. I hope I became a teacher who was like her in that I tried to find the best in my students and to avoid talking down to them."

(Note: Mary Manse College eventually went coed in 1972, but when hard hit by economic times in the 1970s, declared bankruptcy and closed in 1975.)



Mrs. Fisher's AP English class hosted Holocaust survivor Leo Bretholz in 2011.

Bretholz was the author of *"Leap into Darkness: Seven Years on the Run in Wartime Europe."*

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Read more about their extraordinary classroom experience here.

Bretholz died in March of 2014 at age 93.

Read more about Leo Bretholz's impact on John Carroll students here.

"...beacons of morality and inspiration."

2014 John Carroll grad Lindsey McCumber is now a freshman at UCLA. She shares about the impact that John Carroll had on her life:

“After attending public schools during elementary and middle school grades, John Carroll was a breath of fresh air. The teachers stood not only as instructors, but as beacons of morality and inspiration.

“Throughout my four years, I developed a higher moral compass and became a part of a strong community full of love and support... that way in part because of the community’s shared faith. I can’t believe that it was sheer chance that just about every faculty member and student was happy to come to school.

“I feel that because faith served as our school’s foundation, somehow it made the experience more pleasant and enjoyable, and it always made me feel safe. I never realized this in its entirety until I spent time at a non-religious institution (at college now at UCLA)... There is definitely a difference.

“Another thing that really touched me was how whenever I would discuss my career aspirations with my teachers, they would refer to God’s purpose/calling for me. That was unbelievably comforting, knowing that I wasn’t pursuing a silly job, but rather finding out what I was meant to do.

“It also made me feel like my teachers actually cared about me... And I can text some of them still today about everyday problems or trials. I don’t know if my friends from public schools can do that.”



Lindsey (center) performed in “Singing in the Rain” November of her junior year (2012).

Seen here with friends and castmates Karly (left) and Kyleigh (on right).

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Lindsey and her classmates enjoy Senior Field Day which was held the week before graduation in May, 2014.

“...truly blessed to have such amazing students over the years”

Marie Prosser, a graduate of St. John the Evangelist School in Hydes, John Carroll in 1998, and then-College of Notre Dame of Maryland for her masters in teaching, shares about the strong impact that she experienced during her Catholic school days which led to her commitment to service and education.

Marie's service include teaching science first with the Capuchin Franciscan Volunteer Corps, then teaching physics and religion at St. Frances Academy in Baltimore in 2002-2003, chemistry at the Institute of Notre Dame, and biology at Cristo Rey Jesuit High School. Marie also taught Spoken English as a Salesian Lay Missioner in 2012-2013 at Don Bosco Catholic High School in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
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She reflected on teachers who made a difference and on her own years in the classroom:

“As you know, Catholic education has had a tremendous impact on my life. All of the teachers who encouraged, inspired (and sometimes even challenged) me certainly gave me something I would not have gotten any other way. Here are some examples:

“Sr. Ann (SSND) was my English teacher from fifth through eighth grade. Because of Sister Ann, I have always known more about grammar than most people I interact with. I think of her when I pedantically correct posts on Facebook.

“Mr. Ralph Trautwein (Deacon at St. Ignatius, Hickory) taught my AP Bio class at John Carroll the year his wife was undergoing cancer treatment. He had to miss a lot of time to care for her, but he always made a point of being there for our AP class as much as he could. The first chance I had, I “stole” his