



# THE

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# '76

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The Newspaper of Local 1776  
The Association of Catholic Teachers

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## *From the President's Desk*

### **I WILL HOLD YOU IN MY HEART**

In my last official letter to you, the members of ACT, I want to tell you how much I have loved working for you and with you and how proud I am of you - you always stand your ground, no matter what the challenge. Since last spring, you have faced the greatest challenge in your teaching life and you have handled it exceptionally well.

In taking my leave, I want you to know that ACT will move forward in extremely competent hands with Irene Tori as your President.

As I retire from the Association of Catholic Teachers, I am both heartbroken and tremendously angry. Two of our high schools have been designated for closing at the end of the school year. That is unbelievably sad. The cold, callous and corporate manner in which the Secondary School System handled how these schools were eliminated is unconscionable.

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The very people who speak to us of Catholic identity and Christian witness failed miserably in exhibiting these pillars of our faith. Once more, it is "Do as I say, not as I do."

Teachers, students and parents of John W. Hallahan and Bishop McDevitt High Schools were notified that their schools were closing through an email released after 3:30 P.M. on November 18. That was the plan. Those who didn't check their email got the message on the evening news.

When the teachers, parents, students, alumnae and alumni from both schools asked for a meeting with those who made the decisions to close, they were each given a webinar that had been carefully scripted; they had no ability to personally address the impending death of their schools. How business-like, how heartless, how uncaring, how cowardly.

In 2012, the Faith in the Future Foundation pledged to regrow the 17 high schools in the Secondary School System and to wipe out the deficits. Sadly, they have failed on both counts.

What about the leadership of the Secondary School System? The letters to faculty and school communities, co-signed by the Faith in the Future Foundation and the Office of Catholic Education, with cut and paste signatures, contained no compassion, no emotion of any kind. They dropped the bomb remotely and left the faculty and administration of Hallahan and McDevitt to pick up the pieces, to try to explain to the soon-to-be-displaced students why this was happening and how sorry they were that it was. To date, there has been no contact from anyone in Faith in the Future or OCE with either of the school communities. This is appalling.

As we all prepare for the coming of our Savior, it is painfully difficult to relate the message of Christmas with what just happened. It will be extremely hard to listen to the message that our Archdiocesan leadership will be bringing to us this Christmas.

Please accept my heartfelt wishes for a Happy and Blessed Christmas. Keep safe and well. Stay strong.

I will forever hold you in my heart.

*Rita*

# **ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT SET TO RETIRE**

Rita Schwartz, long-time President of the Association of Catholic Teachers, Local 1776, is retiring. Rita has served the high school teachers for 36 years as President of the organization. Prior to that she served as Executive Secretary and Union Staff. Rita has been a driving force in the Association of Catholic Teachers since its founding, a total of 53 years.

ACT was the first Catholic Teachers Union in the United States. During the years the Association of Catholic Teachers, Local 1776 was affiliated with AFT, AFL-CIO, Rita served as Secretary of the AFTPA Board. Rita began her career in Catholic education at St. Hubert Catholic High School for Girls where, for 12 years (1963-1975), she taught English and worked as a Guidance Counselor. Rita will continue in her role as President of the National Association of Catholic School Teachers, the Union that assists Catholic elementary and high school teachers across the United States in their efforts to organize and bargain collectively with their employers.

The Association of Catholic Teachers, Local 1776, recently held an election to select the Union's Executive Board. Irene Tori, current ACT Vice President and ACT Staff for 20 + years was elected ACT President. She will take office on January 1, 2021. Joining her on the Executive Board are current Board Members Thomas Imburgia (Executive Secretary) and David Sommers (Legislative Rep). Board Member Katie Toenniessen-Innes steps into the Vice President position. Newly-elected are Frank Costantini as Treasurer and James Brennan, Christine Hanley-Maldonado and Bridget Mierzejewski as Members at Large. David McQuiston, Thomas McKeever, Tara Murphy and William Finnegan continue as ACT Area Vice Presidents.

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**HAVE A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS**

**AND A WELL-DESERVED REST**



The ACT Office will be closed for the Christmas holidays, beginning on Monday, December 21, 2020. We will return to the office on Monday, January 11, 2021. During the Office closure, we will be checking both email and phone messages. If you need to contact us, please send us an email with your message and a phone number as well as a good time to reach you. We will get back to you as soon as possible.

## EXECUTIVE BOARD ELECTION

The Executive Board Election results have been sent to all members via email. Our Congratulations to the winners and a thank you to all who placed their names in nomination. **Thank you also to the members of the Nominations and Elections Committee:** Anne Boland (LF), Dorothy Burdziak (MCD), James Flannery (RC), Devin Gallagher (AC), Glen Galeone (AR) and Chairperson of the Committee, Rich Knowlton (AC), Katherine Nobles-McGuire (AW), Beth Saggars (BS), and Fred Vietri (BS). They were certainly kept busy during the campaign and spent several hours on December 1st checking signatures, opening envelopes, counting ballots and certifying the election. Thank you to ACT counsel, Martin Milz, who was on call during the campaign and was present for the count. A big thank-you goes to Ginny Crowther, our Office Manager. She worked very hard to ensure that everything dealing with the election was handled properly.

**The Results of the 2020 Executive Board Election are printed on page 5 of this Newsletter.**



Pictured from left to right: Out-going President, Rita C. Schwartz, and Newly-elected, President, Irene Tori. Irene will take office On January 1, 2021.

**Congratulations** to you both as you begin new chapters in your lives.

The ACT Executive Board, on behalf of the Members of the Association of Catholic Teachers, wishes outgoing President, Rita C. Schwartz, a Happy and Healthy Retirement.

Thank you, Rita, for your dedication, and life-long service to Catholic Education and to the Students and Teachers in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. May God Bless You Always!

## ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC TEACHERS 2020 EXECUTIVE BOARD ELECTION RESULTS

<b>PRESIDENT</b>	<b>TARA MURPHY</b>	172	Votes
	<b>*IRENE TORI</b>	220	Votes

**VICE PRESIDENT**      **\*KATHLEEN TOENNIESSEN-INNES**

*The above position was uncontested. Therefore, the Nominations and Elections Committee cast the one ballot necessary to elect Kathleen Toenniessen-Innes to her respective office.*

<b>EXECUTIVE SECRETARY</b>	<b>*THOMAS IMBURGIA</b>	238	Votes
	<b>KATHERYN TUCKER</b>	141	Votes

<b>TREASURER</b>	<b>*FRANK COSTANTINI</b>	196	Votes
	<b>BILLY MITCHELL</b>	178	Votes

**LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE**      **\*DAVID SOMMERS**

*The above position was uncontested. Therefore, the Nominations and Elections Committee cast the one ballot necessary to elect David Sommers to his respective office.*

<b>MEMBER-AT-LARGE</b>	<b>JOSEPH AQUILANTE</b>	125	Votes
	<b>*JAMES BRENNAN</b>	226	Votes
	<b>*CHRISTINE HANLEY-MALDONADO</b>	179	Votes
	<b>*BRIDGET MIERZEJEWSKI</b>	184	Votes
	<b>ANTHONY POLSELLI</b>	154	Votes
	<b>LOUIS VALENTI</b>	157	Votes

(\*Indicates elected members of the Executive Board.)

<b>Total Number of Buildings Submitting Ballots</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Total Ballots Received</b>	<b>416</b>
<b>Invalid Ballots</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Total Valid Ballots</b>	<b>399</b>

\*\*\* **Reasons for Invalid Ballots:** 4 not eligible to vote, 4 did not arrive on time, 9 no secrecy envelope

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The Election Results were tabulated and certified on Tuesday, December 1, 2020, by the Nominations and Elections Committee—Anne Boland (LF), Dorothy Burdziak (BMD), James Flannery (RC), Glen Galeone (AR), Devin Gallagher (AC), Rich Knowlton (AC), Katherine Nobles-McGuire (AW), Beth Saggars (BS), and Fred Vietri (BS). Glen Galeone was Chairperson of this Committee.

# LEGISLATIVE REPORT

The following Legislative Report was submitted by ACT Legislative Representative, David Sommers, at the ACT Executive Board Meeting held via Zoom on November 18, 2020.

## The Pennsylvania General Assembly:

### **I.SB1252: Retired Volunteer Educator Tutors**

An act to provide tutors working through intermediate units for students in need who have been affected by the pandemic. **Last action:** Referred to the House Education Committee on October 22nd, 2020.

### **II. SB1335: Stabilization of Education Fund**

An act proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in taxation and finance, providing for expiration of authority to levy or collect real property tax. **Last action:** Referred to the Senate Finance Committee on November 9th, 2020.

### **III. House Resolution 704: National Family Literacy Day**

A resolution recognizing November 1, 2020, as "National Family Literacy Day" in Pennsylvania. **Last action:** Removed from House table (placed on the legislative calendar), November 12th, 2020.

### **IV. HB1342: Health & Vision Examinations**

An act further providing for in-school health services and vision screening and examinations. **Last action:** First consideration in the Senate on November 16, 2020.

### **V. SB530: Sexual Assault in Schools**

An act providing for safety protocols to protect students from abuse by peers. These protocols include to expel, transfer, or reassign said convicted and or adjudicated student. **Last action:** Signed into law; *Act 110 (of 2020)* enacted from SB530 on Tuesday November 3, 2020.

### **VI. SB 1216: Teacher Certification Requirements Relaxation**

An act providing for special provisions regarding teacher certification for the 2020-2021 school year including waiving of various requirements. **Last action:** Referred to the Senate Rules and Executive Nominations Committee on October 5, 2020.

## Noteworthy-----

### **Closure Mandate:**

The Montgomery County Board of Health ordered all K-12 schools to close for two weeks beginning Nov. 23rd through December 6th, 2020. The board voted unanimously (5:0) on Friday November 13th. This mandate affects all schools including private and archdiocesan within the county. Schools will revert to full virtual instruction only. *Archdiocesan high schools located in Chester, Delaware, Bucks, and Philadelphia counties are not impacted by this decision.*

### **PA Schools Health & Safety Grants:**

Additional funding has been approved for schools to meet the health and safety needs due to COVID-19. The funds are part of the Act 30 (of 2020) legislation passed in May. The health and safety grants are part of the original \$200 million package. Eligible uses for the funds include: purchase of cleaning/sanitizing products; training/professional development; safety items; school modifications; distance learning technology; mental health services. The applications process opened on November 2nd and submitted through the E-grants website.

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**School Property Tax Relief Update (November 16th, 2020):**

The Federal Government has rejected Pennsylvania's plan to use between \$200-300 million of the COVID-19 stimulus money. The Commonwealth had promised some \$621 million in property tax relief funds to local school districts. The promised state money has been included in district budgets for the current school year.

In the past, the money to lower individual's property tax bills has come from gambling revenue. Those funds have been significantly reduced to the effects of the pandemic on that industry.

A typical property owner received a reduction of between \$100-\$400 per year based on their individual assessment and the district taxing rates.

Discussions are ongoing between the state legislature and the governor which face a deadline of November 30th to pass a budget for the remainder of the fiscal year (7 months).

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## Seniority Lists Posted

Article V, Section 1a states "On or before October 31 of each school year, the Secondary School System shall supply to the Association and shall post in individual schools a complete listing of all teachers in the Secondary School System including those on approved leaves of absence arranged according to system seniority and school seniority." "Teachers shall have until **December 15** to call attention in writing to errors or file grievances with the local school administration concerning their positions on the seniority roster."

A Seniority List Discrepancy Form is posted on the ACT Webpage at [www.act1776.com](http://www.act1776.com).

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## FSA REMINDER

If you were a participant in the 2020 FSA Program, please remember that all monies in your account should be exhausted by December 31, 2020. Any funds that remain in your account after December 31, 2020 will be lost. However, this does not mean that all your eligible expenses have to be submitted by December 31, 2020. You have 90 days after the close of the calendar year in which to submit eligible expenses for 2020. All eligible expenses for 2020 must be submitted by March 30, 2021.

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*May They Rest in Peace,*

*And May Perpetual Light Shine Upon Them*



*Joan Bianco, Retired, Archbishop Prendergast High School*

*Joseph Dolan, Retired, Msgr. Bonner-Abp. Prendergast High School*

*Ted Torrance, Retired, Bishop Shanahan High School*

# INSURANCE INFORMATION

**Dental Plan:** As of January 1, 2021, you and each of your family members have \$1,000 in dental benefits to use for covered services in calendar year 2021. A list of your dental benefits is listed on the ACT Website at [www.act1776.com](http://www.act1776.com).

**Medical Plan:** A reminder that you will need to meet your annual \$100 individual deductible and/or \$200 family deductible for calendar year 2021. You may begin receiving bills for services requiring that a deductible be met before payment can be made. **These services include the following:** Outpatient laboratory and pathology, home health care and/or hospice, skilled nursing, chemotherapy, radiation, dialysis, outpatient Private Duty Nursing, and physician/surgeon charges that require a deductible.

**Voluntary Vision Plan:** Open enrollment for the Voluntary Vision Plan is coming to an end. If you were on the plan last year, you should use the same Vision Card that you were issued. New members to the plan will receive their Vision card in the mail. **Vision benefits will go into effect on January 1, 2021.** If you do not have a Vision Card, please email Ginny at [ginny@act1776.com](mailto:ginny@act1776.com).

## RETIREES' CORNER

### MONTHLY GROUP MEDICAL RATES FOR RETIREES AGE 65+

(Effective January 1, 2021)

**PERSONAL CHOICE 65:** Single Coverage: \$ 1017.00

**KEYSTONE 65 HMO:** Single Coverage: \$ 743.00

Retired teachers who are enrolled in either of the above plans are automatically enrolled in Medicare Part D. You DO NOT need to enroll in an individual Medicare Part D plan if you are enrolled in one of the above medical plans with the Archdiocese. In fact, if you do, you will lose your Archdiocese medical and prescription drug coverage because the Archdiocese plans are considered Medicare Part D plans, and you may not be enrolled in two Medicare Part D plans at the same time.

# ACT WEBSITE

All teachers are asked to logon to the ACT Website ([www.act1776.com](http://www.act1776.com)) and verify your personal information. It is critical that we have your current information and that it is accurate. It is important that we have a **PERSONAL** email address for you, since Executive Board Minutes, Newsletters, and other pertinent information will be sent via email. We cannot and will not send email to a school email address. Every teacher was provided with a username and password for the ACT Website. (New teachers will receive their logon information in an email.) If you do not have this information, please contact Ginny at the ACT Office at 215- 568-4175 or email her at [ginny@act1776.com](mailto:ginny@act1776.com) and she can provide this information to you. To update your personal information, logon to the ACT Website and, in the upper right-hand corner of the homepage, click on member login. Type in your username and password and then verify the information on file. Any changes made will be sent to the ACT Office automatically.

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**TO ALL OF OUR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES**



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE.**

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## CONTACT INFORMATION

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## IN MEMORIAM



### ***Joseph Dolan***

1954 - 2020

I have had the privilege of knowing many dedicated teachers who went above and beyond to help educate their students. One of these was Joe Dolan. Joe taught for over four decades and just retired in March 2020.

Joe was a Bonner graduate, Class of 1972, and returned to his alma mater and then Bonner-Prendergast, where he taught Chemistry, Biology and Environmental Science. During his teaching career at Bonner-Prendie, he had a lasting effect on the students, faculty and staff.

Joe could find goodness in any situation, was always in a good mood, and had a marvelous sense of humor.

When he was unable to teach due to illness, he marked and graded assignments while in the hospital or at home.

He had a lust for life that was contagious. He was an avid sports fan and a well-respected businessman, having opened and managed Early Learners Fundamental Childcare (ELF) and The Family Deli. He was also an active member of St. George Parish in Glenolden.

After department meetings, we would have discussions on various topics and I got to know him as a dedicated teacher and family man. His retirement was a loss to the Bonner-Prendie community and his passing is a loss to all.

We will miss your winning smile and contagious humor. Rest in peace, my friend.

*Tom Hinkle  
Retired Science Department Head  
Msgr. Bonner-Abp. Prendergast HS*

*The Association of Catholic Teachers  
Wishes you and your family*



*A Blessed Christmas  
and a  
Happy and Safe New Year.*

*Merry Christmas*