

THE

SPIRIT

OF

'76

50+ Years Strong
1966-2016

The Newspaper of Local 1776
The Association of Catholic Teachers

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Fax 215-568-8270 - email (act@act1776.com) - website (www.act1776.com) **JANUARY 2021**



From the President's Desk

A NEW YEAR FAMILIAR ISSUES

Happy New Year! I hope that 2021 brings you and your family good health, much happiness and every blessing.

As I was reading one of my professional publications, I discovered the following quote by British American author and inspirational speaker, Simon Sinek.

*"Leadership is not about being in charge.
Leadership is about taking care of those in your charge."*

His words about leadership really resonated with me. During the November ACT Executive Board election period, I said that it would be my honor to lead you and the Association of Catholic Teachers forward. Now, having been elected ACT President, it is my honor and it will be my mission to take care of you who are in my charge.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

I am truly humbled to be your President. Thank you to everyone who has expressed congratulations, support and good wishes over the last few weeks. I am learning how to adapt to my new position and I look forward to representing you.

I want to extend a very special thank you to President Emeritus, Rita Schwartz. She has been the best mentor anyone could ever have. Rita led ACT with strength, honesty, grace, compassion, and humor. There will never be another ACT President like her, but it is my hope, as we move forward, to build on everything that Rita has given us and the Association.

Unfortunately, with a new calendar year and a new Executive Board, the same issues still exist. Two matters remain front and center for the Association.

We continue teaching in a hybrid model while the pandemic remains part of our everyday lives. This school year has definitely been and will continue to be more challenging than any other school year. However, you have risen to the challenge and accomplished more than you believed possible. Your ability to transition between the hybrid model and totally virtual instruction at the drop of a hat is astounding. Your dedication and commitment to provide the best possible education for your students sustains everyone in your school community. My admiration for all you have done and continue to do for your students during this most difficult school year is beyond measure. You are the best!

The light at the end of the tunnel will be the vaccine, with teachers being in Phase 1b of the distribution cycle. When the vaccine is available, the Association is encouraging everyone to receive it. However, if you meet the Phase 1a criteria and can schedule an appointment through your county, please do so. I want all of you to be protected as soon as possible.

The Archdiocese, the System and the Faith in the Future Foundation remain heartless, uncaring and cowardly in addressing the teachers, students, and parents of John W. Hallahan and Bishop McDevitt High Schools. None of these Archdiocesan entities have had any contact with the schools or the people whose lives they have devastated. Any requests by the schools for information that led to the decision to close have been ignored by Faith in the Future.

ACT has twice asked for a copy of the complete feasibility study upon which the Archdiocese made its decision. ACT has not received any response to its communications, nor has it received a copy of the complete feasibility study.

Catholic identity and Christian witness are nowhere present in the cold, callous, and corporate manner in which the Archdiocese just dropped the ball and ran away. The Archdiocese has given a whole new meaning to "Do as I say, not as I do."

As you finish the first semester and move into the second semester of this school year, know that my prayers are with you. Please do all that you can to remain safe in these very uncertain times. Know that I and the ACT leadership are here to help you. Feel free to email ACT Vice President, Kathleen "Katie" Toenniessen-Innes, or me with your concerns, questions, and, most of all, your successes. Together we will achieve "Justice and Dignity for Catholic Teachers".

Irene

ACT WELCOMES NEW PRESIDENT

Irene Tori (*former Vice President of the Association*) stepped into her role as President of the Union on January 1, 2021. Irene succeeds longtime President (*now President Emeritus*) Rita C. Schwartz, who retired on December 31, 2020.



Irene's career began as a mathematics teacher at Archbishop Ryan High School for Boys in 1977. Irene was active in the Union from the start of her career. She has been on the Executive Board since 1982, serving first as a Member-at-Large, then as Executive Secretary, followed by Vice President, and now as your elected President. Irene has extensive knowledge of the contract, having served on every negotiating team since 1982 as well as on many contractual committees.

Irene has been on staff at the Union headquarters for the past 19 years, answering teachers' questions, representing teachers at meetings, and listening to their concerns. Irene will continue to fight to protect teachers' hard-earned rights under the Labor-Management Agreement as she has done since becoming active in the Union in 1982.

The Association of Catholic Teachers wishes Irene well as she moves into this new position. The challenges that lie ahead will not be easy; however, we know Irene is up to the task and will do everything in her power to make sure the contract is followed, and that teachers' rights are protected.

Godspeed, Irene!

2021 ACT EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

Irene Tori	(ACT)	President
Kathleen Toenniessen-Innes	(CO)	Vice President
Thomas Imburgia	(CO)	Executive Secretary
Frank Costantini	(BS)	Treasurer
David Sommers	(BS)	Legislative Representative
Thomas McKeever	(RC)	Area Vice President (Central)
William Finnegan	(AR)	Area Vice President (Northeast)
Tara Murphy	(AW)	Area Vice President (Northwest)
David McQuiston	(BS)	Area Vice President (Southwest)
James Brennan	(RC)	Member-at-Large
Christine Hanley-Maldonado	(CE)	Member-at-Large
Bridget Mierzejewski	(WC)	Member-at-Large

IT'S TIME TO START THINKING SABBATICAL!

It's time to start thinking about whether or not you want to apply.
Applications for sabbatical will be posted in each school in February.

**Applications for sabbatical leave must be submitted
no later than March 1st.**

A BIG THANK YOU!

*Thank you to everyone who contributed to our Special Edition of **The Spirit of '76**, honoring President Emeritus, Rita C. Schwartz on the occasion of her retirement. **A copy of the Special Edition is posted on the ACT website at www.act1776.com.***

HAPPY RETIREMENT

ACT congratulates Elaine Wright, Conwell-Egan High School, on her retirement from the Secondary School System. Elaine is retiring after nineteen years of service to the students of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Best wishes for a happy and healthy retirement, Elaine!

Items of Interest

TAX INFORMATION

UNION DUES FOR 2020

ARCHDIOCESAN HIGH SCHOOLS - \$563.84

W-2 Forms

The schools have been notified that the W-2's are available in Dayforce. In addition, all individuals on payroll during 2020 will be receiving a hard copy of the W-2 at the address listed in Dayforce.

FSA REMINDER

If you were a participant in the 2020 FSA Program, please remember that all monies in your account should have been exhausted by December 31, 2020. Any funds that remained in your account after December 31, 2020 will be lost. However, this does not mean that all your eligible expenses had to have been 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.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Dear ACT Union Members,

In addition to my monthly legislative report, ACT President Irene Tori has asked that I highlight recent legislation passed in Harrisburg regarding waivers and regulations for teacher certification in Pennsylvania in response to the ongoing working/staffing conditions due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Pennsylvania Act No. 136 (formerly SB1216) has relaxed teacher certification requirements for the 2020-2021 school year. Signed by the Governor on November 25, 2020, the law *provides for special provisions including the waiving of various requirements.*

Pennsylvania Senator Wayne Langerholc, Jr. has highlighted the following points that may be of interest to some of our teachers. They are as follows:

- *Allow the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to issue a temporary certificate to individuals that have completed all of their teacher preparation requirements except their final assessment (i.e. praxis).*
- *Allow PDE to issue an exceptional case permit for current educators who are unable to take their assessment to move from an Instructional I certificate to an Instructional II certificate.*
- *Allow PDE to issue a temporary certificate under limited circumstances for individuals who were seeking to add on a certification (physical education/health, cooperative education and special education are exempted). Individuals will have to provide proof to PDE that their assessment was cancelled.*

Please look to future legislative reports that may contain further information coming out of our local, state or federal governments that may affect us as teachers.

Respectfully Yours,

David Sommers

Legislative Representative
Association of Catholic Teachers

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The following Legislative Report was submitted by ACT Legislative Representative, David Sommers, at the ACT Executive Board Meeting held on Wednesday January 20th, 2021. (via Zoom)

I. COVID-19 Vaccine: Updated December 20th, 2020

CDC recommendations of COVID-19 vaccines allocation, per work group considerations.

Phase 1b. Frontline Essential Workers--Education (teachers, support staff, day care). This will be the second round of the vaccination process. We are currently in the *Phase 1a.* vaccination distribution. A January 2021 vaccination distribution date is expected for this group phase.

II. Ethical Concerns for the COVID-19 Vaccines: Updated December 14th, 2020

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) justify the use of both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. USCCB sight the gravity of the pandemic, along with the lack of any other suitable alternatives in their decision. Any possible "remote connection" to compromised cell lines has been taken into account.

III. COVID Emergency Relief Act (H.R. 133):

The federal final legislation, H.R. 133 (116), provides \$900 billion in coronavirus relief.

\$82 billion has been budgeted for education in the framework for education. This includes \$2.75 billion for private schools; \$54 billion for public K-12 schools. The money has Federal restrictions including paying for religious instruction; scholarships; and tuition.

The USCCB has lobbied for the inclusion of parochial schools to receive their proper shared amount of funding.

Highlights include the SAFEE TO WORK Act providing companies protection from COVID-19 claims until the end of 2024 or until public health emergency is over; additional Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funding. Households also will receive \$600 payments for each adult and dependent listed at that address. Payments based on 2019 adjusted gross income; with \$75,000 for individuals and \$150,000 married couples income levels set for phasing out. A \$300 per week federal unemployment subsidy is included for workers extending until March 14, 2021.

Last action: Signed into law on Sunday December 27th, 2020.

IV. PA House Education Committee: Tuesday January 12, 2021, 10:00A.M.

The initial meeting of the legislative session. Voting meeting on Committee Rules and any other business that may come before the committee.

- V. **HB86: Online Learning Equality:** An act providing for technology and internet access for those students living in "Acute Poverty Household" as defined by the Federal poverty guidelines. The goal is to provide equitable online instruction/distance learning to all students within a school district. **Last action:** Referred to the House Education Committee on Jan. 11, 2021.

VI. HB94: "Unexcused" Absences

An act defining the following terms; urgent reasons, irregular attendance, and nonattendance with regards to unexcused absences on a student's permanent record.

Last action: Referred to the House Education Committee on Jan. 11, 2021.

NACST SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS **John J. Reilly Memorial Scholarship**

The National Association of Catholic School Teachers established the John J. Reilly Memorial Scholarship to help defray the cost of a college education for outstanding children of NACST members. During their senior year of high school, \$4,000 awards are made to two students, \$1,000 in each of their four years of college study.

All sons, daughters and stepchildren of all active NACST members are eligible to participate in this scholarship provided they are in good standing in their senior year of high school. [Application forms are available from the Senior Delegate of each high school.](#) There is also an application posted on the ACT Website at www.act1776.com. **Deadline for submission of all applications is March 19, 2021.**

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.

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: If you signed up for the vision plan, your benefits went into effect **on January 1, 2021.** You should have received a vision card by now. If you do not have a Vision Card, please contact Ginny at 215-568-4175 or email her at ginny@act1776.com. If you were on the plan last year, you will use the same card you had last year.

The ACT Executive Board & Office Staff wish all of our members a happy, healthy, and blessed new year.

**YOUR BENEFITS UNDER THE UNITED CONCORDIA DENTAL PLAN
(CONCORDIA FLEX uses the ADVANTAGE NETWORK)**

BENEFIT CATEGORY

PLAN PAYS

BENEFIT CATEGORY	PLAN PAYS
Class 1 – Diagnostic/Preventive Services	
➤ Exams	100%
➤ Cleanings and Fluoride Treatments	100%
➤ X-rays	100%
➤ Space Maintainers	100%
➤ Palliative Treatment (Emergency)	100%
Class 11 Basic Services	
➤ Basic Restorative (Fillings, etc)	100%
➤ Simple Extractions	100%
➤ Endodontics	100%
➤ General Anesthesia	100%
➤ Surgical & Non-surgical Periodontics	50%*
Class 111 – Diagnostic/Preventive Services	
➤ Oral Surgery	N/A
➤ Inlays, Onlays, Crowns	N/A
➤ Prosthetics (Bridges, Dentures)	N/A
➤ Repairs to Inlays, Onlays and Crowns and Prosthetics	N/A
Orthodontics (Dependents to any age)	N/A

Included Plan Features

****Smile for Health – Wellness Program***

Provides periodontal care for people with certain Chronic medical conditions: diabetes, heart disease, lupus, oral cancer, organ transplant, rheumatoid arthritis and stroke

- Covers 1 additional periodontal maintenance per year and all are covered at 100%
- Scaling and root planing are covered at 100%
- 4 periodontal surgery procedures are covered at 100%
-
- **Maximum benefit per calendar year is \$1,000 per teacher and covered family Member.**

IN MEMORIAM



Edward A. Givnish
1934 - 2020

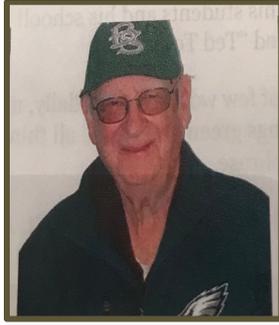
My favorite memory of Ed was after my initial 2 week observation period, my 1st day of actual teaching, Ed says to me "I'll introduce you, walk out the front door and come in the back door". Well 45 minutes later he walked in the back door to find me a scared deer staring into headlights. Looking back, I understand why he did that. He always acted like he was cranky with the kids, but I saw through him and saw that he had a love for his subject and the kids, even the ones who got on his nerves. We had an immediate bond, and as I mentioned earlier, I still imitate him 23 years later.

*Written by Eric Wahl
Pope John Paul II High School*

Rest in Peace

- + Carmen Calvanese, Archbishop Ryan High School. +*
- + Edward A. Givnish, Bishop McDevitt High School. +*
- + Joseph McElhone, Monsignor Bonner High School +*
- + John Renye, Father Judge High School +*
- + Edward G. "Ted" Torrance, Jr., Bishop Shanahan High School +*
- + Mary Regina "Jean" Turnbull, Monsignor Bonner High School +*

IN MEMORIAM



Edward G. "Ted" Torrance, Jr.

January 27, 1932-October 12, 2020

In October, Ted Torrance passed away and Bishop Shanahan High School lost a link to its past. Ted was a member of the founding faculty when the school first opened its doors in 1957. During his nearly 60 year tenure at Shanahan, Ted did it all. He was the first and longest serving department chair in Social Studies. Having Mr. Torrance for Civics, POD or Senior Social Studies (whichever name was then in vogue) was a rite of passage for thousands of Shanahan people. "In the 1960's during the folk music craze, Ted organized the Hillside Singers as Shanahan's very own folk singing group. When it came to sports, hundreds of students experienced Ted as their baseball, football, basketball or cross-country coach, and many of these records still stand. Ted was especially close with Shanahan graduate Muffet McGraw, Notre Dame's winningest women's basketball coach. In later years, Ted put his coaching experience to good use when he became a sports writer for the West Chester Daily Local News. When Ted finally retired after 50 years in the classroom, he went on to serve as Shanahan's AD and could be seen at countless school sporting events. It's no wonder that Ted was inducted into the Chester County Sports Hall of Fame. The passing of Ted Torrance marks the end of an era for Bishop Shanahan and the school community mourns his loss.

*Written by David McQuiston
Bishop Shanahan High School*

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