



2026 NEWMAN GUIDE LEADERS SUMMIT

*In Order to Form a
More Perfect Union*

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BIOGRAPHIES

Pope Benedict XVI Distinguished Lecturer on Catholic Education &
Saint John Henry Newman Award Recipients

Major General Patrick H. Brady, U.S. Army (Ret.)

Pope Benedict XVI Distinguished Lecturer on Catholic Education



"I cannot emphasize enough the role my faith played in any success I have had. It was the source of whatever courage I had, a constant source of comfort, of calm and of the confidence that allowed me to do things that for me would have otherwise been impossible. For reasons that escape me, the Good Lord has seen fit to bless my life in so many ways, not the least of which was saving lives."

Major General Brady spent over 34 years in the Army, serving in duty stations all over the world. He was in Berlin before and after the building of the Wall. He served in the Dominican Republic during that conflict, in Korea as commander of the troops at the Joint Security area of the DMZ, and for two years in Vietnam as a helicopter ambulance pilot. He has eight years' service with America's citizen soldiers, our Reserve Components, and is a former

Chief of Army Public Affairs.

While in Vietnam, he was awarded the Medal of Honor for a series of helicopter rescues which began at sunrise and ended after dark. Repeatedly he was warned by competent advisors that the missions were impossible due to weather, the enemy situation, and mines. Major Brady convinced them it had been and could be done. On three different missions and six tasks, Major Brady helped rescue wounded soldiers from areas where other aircraft failed, on one mission seven times.

On two different occasions, his aircraft were hit by automatic weapons fire. On a third, his aircraft was severely damaged by a mine. Major Brady's aircraft were so severely damaged that three aircraft were required to complete the missions, and at the day's end the aircraft he flew had over 400 holes in them. That day Major Brady evacuated over 70 patients, many who would have died without expeditious medical care. In two tours in Vietnam, he flew over 2,500 combat missions and helped rescue over 5,000 wounded, men, women, and children, enemy as well as friendly. He developed foul weather and tactical techniques for air ambulance rescues never before executed in combat, for which he is identified in the *Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War* and other books as the top helicopter pilot in that war.

Gen. Brady is the only living veteran to hold both the Medal of Honor and the Distinguished Service Cross, our nation's second highest award, and one of very few soldiers ever to hold four awards of the Army's three highest awards: The Medal of Honor, The Distinguished Service Cross, and The Distinguished Service Medal (2). He earned over 85 medals, 65 combat related, 12 for valor. His other awards include: the Defense Superior Service Medal; the Legion of Merit; six Distinguished Flying Crosses; two Bronze Stars, one for valor; the Purple Heart, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with palm and silver star, and 53 Air Medals, one for valor.

Brady is widely recognized as the most highly decorated living veteran as well as the top helicopter pilot in Vietnam. His civilian awards include the Distinguished Citizen Award from the American Legion, their highest award, and the Daughters of the American Revolution's Medal of Honor.



Major General Brady with The Cardinal Newman Society at the canonization of Saint John Henry Newman, October 2019

General Brady is a Master Army Aviator and member of both the Army Aviation and Dust Off Halls of Fame. He is the first and only Army Aviator in the National Aviation Hall of Fame. He is also the only Army Aviator to receive the Bob Hoover Freedom of Flight Award and was recently inducted into the Living Legends of Aviation. General Brady is a past President of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society. He has a bachelor's degree in psychology from Seattle University and an MBA from Notre Dame University. He is a former Commissioner of the Battle Monuments Commission at the time it completed the World War II memorial. Along with his daughter Meghan, he published *Dead Men Flying* which covers his experiences with the origin and execution of Aero Medical evacuation in Viet Nam, called Dust Off, the greatest battlefield life saver in history.

Despite his numerous awards, General Brady is convinced that it is not what you did to earn the medals, but what you do as a result that defines a person. He believes he was saved to serve. Accordingly, he has dedicated his life to our youth, the elderly, and veterans.



Anne Carroll

Executive Director and Founder, Seton School (Manassas, Va.) Founder, Seton Home Study School

The Cardinal Newman Society gratefully presents the Saint John Henry Newman Award to Anne Carroll, the founder and 51-year leader of Seton School in Manassas, Va., and founder of Seton Home Study School. Her pioneering leadership in independent, lay-led Catholic education and Catholic homeschooling has blessed thousands of families. On their behalf, we recognize Anne Carroll for her extraordinary love and devotion to her students, and we uphold Mrs. Carroll, Seton School, and Seton Home Study School as models of faithful Newman Guide Recommended education.

Mrs. Carroll graduated from Loretto Heights College in Denver, Colorado, and earned a master's degree from New York University. She married Dr. Warren Carroll and helped bring him into the Catholic Church in 1968. Warren worked for *Triumph* magazine, a journal promoting Catholic renewal amid the upheaval of the 1970s, and in 1975—the year Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton was canonized—Mrs. Carroll founded Seton School to provide a faithful Catholic education for junior and senior high school students.

Mrs. Carroll has led the school ever since, appointing Bob Pennefather in 2019 to direct the school's day-to-day functions while she continues as Executive Director. The school is now at capacity with 350 students and has many more applicants. Most importantly, it is a school that puts the Catholic formation of its students before anything, and it was the first high school to be recommended in The Newman Guide.

"We began Seton with nothing, but God made something out of nothing," Mrs. Carroll wrote upon the school's 50th anniversary. Bishop Michael Burbidge of the Diocese of Arlington called Seton School a gift to the Diocese and to the Church.

In 1977, Mrs. Carroll was instrumental in her husband's founding and early development of Christendom College, which began in Triangle, Va., but later moved to Front Royal, Va. Christendom College has been strongly recommended in The Newman Guide since its first edition in 2007.

In the early 1980s, families outside Northern Virginia sought the same quality Catholic education Seton School provided, but it was sadly lacking in their local schools. In 1982, Mrs. Carroll founded Seton Home Study School and appointed Dr. Mary Kay Clark as director. Today the faithful Catholic homeschooling program boasts more than 14,000 enrolled students, 20,000 students who use Seton materials, and about 50,000 students using Seton Testing Services.

Mrs. Carroll is also the author of two widely used history texts: *Christ the King: Lord of History* (TAN Books, 1994) and *Christ and the Americas* (TAN Books, 1997). She has received numerous honors, including the Benemerenti Medal from Pope Leo XIV, an honorary doctorate from the Notre Dame Graduate School of Christendom College, a second honorary doctorate of human letters from Christendom College, Christendom's St. Catherine of Siena Award for distinguished service to the Church, and the St. Thomas More Award from the Diocese of Arlington.



Eileen Cubanski

Former Executive Director & Co-Founder, National Association of Private Catholic and Independent Schools (NAPCIS)

The Cardinal Newman Society gratefully presents the Saint John Henry Newman Award to Eileen Cubanski, a co-founder and long-time Executive Director of the National Association of Private Catholic and Independent Schools (NAPCIS). Her pioneering leadership in fostering independent, lay-led Catholic education across the United States and helping parents ensure the faithful formation of their children has blessed thousands of families. On their behalf, we recognize Eileen Cubanski for her inspirational and selfless leadership, and we uphold Mrs. Cubanski and NAPCIS as models for the reform of Catholic education.

The seeds of the independent school movement were planted in the heart and mind of Mrs. Cubanski in the 1980s. As a first-grade teacher in a Sacramento parish school, she attended a faculty in-service meeting and was shown a film by the dissident Fr. Richard McBrien, chairman of the University of Notre Dame's Department of Theology; he advocated women's ordination, the repeal of priestly celibacy, the use of birth control, and defiance of the papal doctrine of infallibility. After 15 years of teaching and eight in school administration, Mrs. Cubanski saw that something needed to be done to provide families a more faithful education. In 1993, the same year The Cardinal Newman Society was founded to reform Catholic higher education, Mrs. Cubanski co-founded St. Maria Goretti Academy, a Catholic independent school in Loomis, Calif.

NAPCIS started to take shape when Mrs. Cubanski met and joined forces with Fran Crotty, who for several years had been helping lay Catholics figure out how to start independent schools. In 1995, Mr. Crotty and Mrs. Cubanski joined with John Brennan, Carol Coyne, Margie Crotty, Chuck and Margaret Day, Michele Jenkins, Jerry and Diane Muth, Chris Potter, Doug and Janet Sherman, and Robert Spencer to found NAPCIS with four member schools: Kolbe Academy in Napa, Calif. (opened in 1980 and today recommended in The Newman Guide), Manresa Academy in Reno, Nevada (opened in 1993 and closed in 1995), St. Maria Goretti Academy in Sacramento, Calif. (opened in 1993 and closed in 2007), and Thomas Aquinas School in Tahoe City, Calif. (opened in 1994 and closed in 2005). Mrs. Cubanski served as Executive Director for 30 years until 2025, when NAPCIS became a subsidiary of The Cardinal Newman Society. Within its first five years, NAPCIS membership went from four schools to 32 and, by 2025, had 87 member schools serving 12,800 students.

Mrs. Cubanski says The Cardinal Newman Society, founded in 1993, was the inspiration for the founding of NAPCIS two years later. With the Society's expansion to promote faithful elementary and secondary education, its union with NAPCIS last year makes sense for Catholic families and educators. The Cardinal Newman Society founder Patrick Reilly was keynote speaker at the 10th anniversary NAPCIS conference and recipient of the inaugural 2003 Spes Nostra award.

Unable to be present in Washington, D.C., to receive the St. John Henry Newman Award, Mrs. Cubanski sent the following acceptance letter:

Thank you Patrick, The Cardinal Newman Society, and everyone involved in the development and implementation of The Newman Guide and its mission to identify and recognize colleges and universities, elementary and secondary schools, and graduate programs that uphold the standards of faithful Catholic education.

I am humbled to be recognized and accept this award this evening. My whole time and experience as Executive Director of NAPCIS was an honor and privilege. Every day was awarded by meeting, whether it be in person or conversations on the phone, with so many people who became beloved colleagues and friends. To sum up my tenure of 29 years with NAPCIS—I have walked and worked among saints.

Patrick Reilly was the keynote speaker at the 2003 NAPCIS Independent Schools in Service to the Church Conference and the recipient of the inaugural 2003 Spes Nostra award.

The Cardinal Newman Society, founded by Patrick in 1993, was the inspiration in the founding of NAPCIS in 1995. While CNS's mission to renew Catholic identity in Catholic education, at that time, was focused on colleges and universities, NAPCIS would share in that mission but focus on elementary and secondary schools.

I couldn't be more pleased that NAPCIS is now a subsidiary of The Cardinal Newman Society and, through the CNS acquisition of the NAPCIS accreditation program, will continue to serve independent, lay-run schools devoted to salvation of souls and academic excellence.

NAPCIS begins an exciting new phase with The Cardinal Newman Society, integrating the Newman Guide Recommended schools and the NAPCIS accreditation process.

This new partnership represents a significant opportunity for Catholic K-12 education. By coordinating CNS and NAPCIS resources and expertise, existing and new NAPCIS schools and all Newman Guide Recommended schools will have the option of NAPCIS accreditation and will benefit from a streamlined accreditation process, enhanced support for maintaining and protecting Catholic identity, and expanded opportunities for networking and professional development.

NAPCIS retains its independent 501(c)(3) status under its own Board of Trustees. A NAPCIS Trustee and now the new Chair of the NAPCIS Board is Denise Donohue, CNS Vice President of Educator Resources and Evaluation. The board also includes attorney Quentin Fairchild and Michael Van Hecke, founder of the Catholic Textbook Project and founder of the Institute for Catholic Liberal Education.

NAPCIS Trustee and now the Executive Director of NAPCIS is Dan Guernsey, a senior fellow at The Cardinal Newman Society and director of Ave Maria University's Master's in Catholic Educational Leadership program.

With Dan Guernsey as Executive Director and Denise Donohue as NAPCIS Board Chair, NAPCIS couldn't be in better hands to ensure the future and its goal "to make faithful accreditation simpler, more affordable and more impactful—helping schools live out their Catholic mission with confidence and joy" (Dan Guernsey, CNS, *Our Catholic Mission*, Winter 2026, p.13) .

I am accepting this award on behalf of NAPCIS to acknowledge all the founders, staffs, parents, and families that have pioneered for decades and sacrificed so much. The majority of NAPCIS schools were founded by parents who fully embraced their role as primary educators of their children and, hence, their responsibility to provide faithful Catholic education in schools whose goals are "salvation of souls and academic excellence", as advised me by Dianne Muth, co-founder of Kolbe Academy, Napa, Calif., on my first visit to Kolbe in 1992.

I celebrate that Joe Norton is being honored this evening for his outstanding dedication to faithful Catholic education as an educator and Principal of Holy Angels Academy, Louisville, KY, from his assuming the mantle of leadership at HFA, when its (1973) founder, Sr. Mary Elise Groves, retired in 1986, to his retirement in 2022.

Joe was a Trustee on the NAPCIS Board from the earliest years of NAPCIS. He served on the board until just recently. His final service to NAPCIS was to plan, organize, and host the 30th anniversary retreat and

celebration of the NAPCIS founding at Fr. Joseph Fessio's Sweetwater retreat center in Guerneville, Calif., the same retreat center where NAPCIS was founded in 1995.

Joe planned the retreat and anniversary celebration for the weekend of July 13, 2025, the same weekend that NAPCIS was founded at the annual Sweetwater retreat in 1995. Fr. Fessio welcomed NAPCIS and the attendees to Sweetwater as his guests. He celebrated Mass for the attendees and presented two sessions for the attendees on Saturday.

For years, Pope Saint John Paul II spoke of the Springtime of Hope in the activity of the Holy Spirit in the Church. This Springtime of Hope never expires. NAPCIS schools are exciting examples of this hope-filled activity of the Holy Spirit. It is His activity that makes them possible and His grace that produces the fruits of their labor. Vocations to the priesthood and religious, and the early formation of Catholic doctors, lawyers, business leaders, and parents are the fruits already realized.

The future of NAPCIS is contained in the Holy Spirit's promise to provide for the Catholic education of young minds and hearts. NAPCIS cooperates, as an instrument of the Holy Spirit in His promise. NAPCIS will continue as a leader in the apostolate of Catholic education to insure the future leaders in the Church and society. Clear in its vision and mission, NAPCIS will let its light shine before men, so that they may see the good works and, thereby, give glory to God.

While I have retired from my official duties as the Executive Director of NAPCIS, my heart, thoughts, and prayers are still at work for NAPCIS. I continue my prayer to the Holy Spirit, the prayer that began every NAPCIS meeting and gathering.

Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore You.

Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, console me.

Tell me what I should say and do.

Give me Your orders.

I promise to submit myself to all that You desire of me

And to accept all that You permit to happen to me.

Let me only know Your will.

Working together in the Holy Spirit's activity and in total abandonment to and confident in His will be done, we can be sure that the future of NAPCIS and independent Catholic schools is in good hands for the next 30 years!

Ad Majorem Gloriam Dei!

With sincerest gratitude, I thank you for this honor.

Eileen Cubanski

Joseph M. Norton

Former Headmaster and Trustee, Holy Angels Academy



The Cardinal Newman Society gratefully presents the Saint John Henry Newman Award to Joseph M. Norton, longtime Headmaster and Trustee of Holy Angels Academy in Louisville, Ky., which is the oldest operating independent, lay-run Catholic school in the United States. His 35 years of pioneering leadership in faithful Catholic education has blessed hundreds of families locally as well as families nationwide. On their behalf, we recognize Joseph Norton for his inspirational and selfless leadership, and we uphold Mr. Norton and Holy Angels Academy as models for the reform of Catholic education.

After exposure as a young teacher to Catholic schooling that was either weak or heretical, Mr. Norton sought a position in an authentically Catholic school, and in 1982 began teaching at Holy Angels Academy, a Pre-K through Grade 12 private, independent school in the Archdiocese of Louisville. He later served as Headmaster for 35 years and as a trustee for many years, prior to recent retirement. During his tenure, Holy Angels became fully accredited by the National Association of Private Catholic and Independent Schools (NAPCIS) and achieved recommendation in *The Newman Guide*. Also under Mr. Norton, the Academy secured permission to reserve the Blessed Sacrament, retained a school chaplain from the Fathers of Mercy to nourish students with the grace of the Sacraments, and completed a beautiful renovation of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Chapel.

Holy Angels Academy was established in 1973 by parents in collaboration with Sister Elise Groves, O.P. and is recognized as Catholic by the Archdiocese of Louisville. Despite numerous financial challenges and several moves before settling at its current location, the school is doing well after more than 50 years.

Mr. Norton also served on the NAPCIS board of directors from the earliest years of NAPCIS until it became a subsidiary of The Cardinal Newman Society in 2025. His final service to NAPCIS was to plan, organize, and host the 30th anniversary retreat and celebration at Fr. Joseph Fessio's Sweetwater retreat center in Guerneville, Calif., where NAPCIS was founded in 1995.

Mr. Norton continues to support Holy Angels Academy in an advisory capacity (he says he enjoys the low-stress, part-time work of trimming bushes and washing windows) and serves on the advisory board for Saint Thomas Aquinas Classical Academy.

Mr. Norton and his wife, Juli, of 42 years have seven children and 19 grandchildren. He credits his parents, Edward and Rita Norton, with his love for the Catholic Faith and is thankful, by the grace of God, that they were able to recognize what was going terribly wrong with Catholic education in the 1960s. His goal in life is to live by the motto, *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*—do all for the greater glory of God.



Dr. William Edmund Fahey

President, Thomas More College of Liberal Arts

The Cardinal Newman Society gratefully presents the Saint John Henry Newman Award to Dr. William Edmund Fahey, the third and long-serving President of Thomas More College of Liberal Arts in Merrimack, N.H. Appointed in 2009, Dr. Fahey will step aside in September, taking on a new role as Chancellor and continuing to teach on the faculty. He stabilized and greatly strengthened Thomas More College, a stronghold for faithful Catholic liberal arts education rooted in the same classical and Christian tradition that gave rise to the once-great Catholic universities of Europe. On behalf of Catholic families, we recognize Dr. William Edmund Fahey for his many years of leadership in preserving and advancing Catholic liberal education and uphold him and Thomas More College of Liberal Arts as models of faithful Newman Guide Recommended education.

When Dr. Fahey became President in 2009, the enrollment at Thomas More College was 39 students. The College had no endowment, and long-term debt and deferred maintenance approached \$5 million. But under Dr. Fahey's leadership, enrollment now hovers around the historic campus's capacity of 100 students, the endowment has now surpassed \$5 million, and all long-term debt has been eliminated. The curriculum was revised to offer a unified liberal arts major based on Western classics, while allowing disciplinary concentrations, awarding an associated degree for students discerning professional careers outside the liberal arts, and now—just this year—New Hampshire approved the College's expansion into graduate education.

During Dr. Fahey's tenure, the College established a permanent Visiting Scholars Program named for St. John Henry Newman, the Thomas More College Press, and a conference center, and it expanded its Rome program to welcome students from peer institutions. The campus was blessed and consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the chapel was renovated, and priests from several different charisms provide the sacraments. The College invested more than \$2 million in campus infrastructure, restoring the historic facilities and acquiring the 27,000-square-foot Mercy Hall.

Dr. Fahey first came to Thomas More College as Provost in 2007. He previously taught at Christendom College for nearly a decade, where he founded and chaired the Department of Classical and Early Christian Studies and was President of the Faculty Senate. He also taught at the Catholic University of America, Brookfield Academy (Wisconsin), the American Academy (St. David's, Penn.), in Germany, and for the Intercollegiate Studies Institute Western Civilization Honors Program at Oxford and Cambridge Universities, England. He has held the Richard Weaver Fellowship, the Henry Salvatori Fellowship at the Heritage Foundation, the H.B. Earhart Fellowship, and the Maguerite Eyer Wilbur Fellowship at the Russell Kirk Center for Cultural Renewal.

He edited *The Foundations of Western Monasticism* (TAN Books, 2013) and *New Hampshire and Independence: Rediscovered Writings from the Sons of the American Revolution* (The History Press, 2026).

Dr. Fahey is a Benedictine Oblate with the Monastery of Our Lady of the Annunciation (Clear Creek, Oklahoma), a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, and a Knight of Merit of the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of St. George.

Dr. Fahey and his wife, Amy, have five children.



Dr. Marianne Evans Mount

Co-Founder and President Emeritus, Catholic International University

The Cardinal Newman Society gratefully presents the Saint John Henry Newman Award to Dr. Marianne Evans Mount, co-founder of Catholic International University in 1983 and long-serving President from 2008 to 2023. Dr. Mount has been a pioneer in distance and now online learning, ensuring that families have access to quality, faithful Catholic education from their

homes anywhere around the world. On behalf of Catholic families, we recognize Dr. Marianne Evans Mount for her many years of entrepreneurial leadership in building and advancing online Catholic education and uphold her and Catholic International University as models of faithful Newman Guide Recommended education.

From Dr. Mount's idea for a Catholic correspondence course in religious education, the Catholic Home Study Institute was founded under Bishop Thomas Welsh of the Diocese of Arlington in 1983. It was the first institute in the United States approved by the Vatican to award a catechetical diploma earned by correspondence, and the Vatican praised its highly innovative methods. It started small, with two professors offering one course on the Apostles' Creed, based on tape recordings from Jesuit Father John Hardon. By 1986 it earned regional accreditation, launched a master's program in religious studies in 2000, added a bachelor's degree in 2005, and changed its name to Catholic Distance University.

Under Dr. Mount's 15-year leadership, Catholic Distance University grew to 1,500 students from 49 states and 24 countries, with 9 percent of students from outside the United States. The University secured accreditation from the Distance Education Accrediting Commission and the Higher Learning Commission, and it was the first fully online school accredited by the Association of Theological Schools. In 2023, *Forbes* ranked Catholic Distance University as the top Catholic option for earning a theology degree online.

In an interview Dr. Mount attested, "Our curriculum is rooted in a strong Catholic identity that fosters a transformative encounter with the living word of God." That is in large part due to her own faithful devotion to authentic Catholic education. Even after her retirement, she remained on the University's board for two more years, when it was renamed Catholic International University to emphasize the global reach of its online programs.

Dr. Mount is serving a five-year term as consultor to the Vatican Dicastery for Culture and Education, and she previously served four years on the Board of Commissioners of the Association of Theological Schools and six years on the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council. She is a supernumerary in Opus Dei, a Dame of Malta, and a member of the Pontifical Equestrian Order of St. Gregory the Great.

Her honors also include Christendom College's St. Catherine of Siena Award for Distinguished Service to the Church and Catholic Higher Education, DETC Distinguished Service Award, Loudoun County Woman of the Year for Education Award, Mount St. Mary's University's Bicentennial Medal, and the Outstanding Graduate Research Award at the 27th Annual Research to Practice Conference.

Marianne and her late husband have two children, and she has three step-children with her second late husband, and 10 grandchildren.



Dr. Timothy T. O'Donnell

Professor and President Emeritus, Christendom College

The Cardinal Newman Society gratefully presents the Saint John Henry Newman Award to Dr. Timothy T. O'Donnell, the third and longest-serving President of Christendom College in Front Royal, Va., from 1992 to 2024. From a mustard seed faithfully planted by founder Dr. Warren Carroll, Dr. O'Donnell nurtured and expanded Christendom College into one of the Church's most important institutions, having worldwide influence in reforming the study of history and theology and in the formation of young men and women for Christ. On behalf of Catholic families delighted by Dr. O'Donnell's teaching, speaking, writing, and leadership, we recognize Dr. Timothy O'Donnell for his devotion to faithful education and uphold him and Christendom College as models of faithful Newman Guide Recommended education.

Under Dr. O'Donnell's leadership, undergraduate student enrollment at Christendom College increased from 144 to nearly 550. The College also merged with the Notre Dame Institute to form the Christendom College Graduate School of Theology, and it initiated two international study abroad opportunities in Rome and Ireland. The campus was greatly expanded with the magnificent Christ the King Chapel, St. John the Evangelist Library, St. Louis the Crusader Gymnasium, St. Lawrence Commons, and several residence halls. The alumni base grew to nearly 4,000, including 166 alumni priests and religious. The college's endowment grew from \$200,000 to more than \$28 million, even while the College has courageously declined government funding to avoid threats to its religious freedom.

Even before his 32 years as President, Dr. O'Donnell taught history and theology at Christendom College for seven years and served as the Vice President of Student Affairs, Chairman of the Theology Department, Editor of the *Faith & Reason* journal, Director of Student Activities, and Dean of the Summer Apologetics Institute. He previously taught at St. John's Seminary in Camarillo, Calif., and Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. He was the first layman to receive a doctorate in ascetical and mystical theology from the Angelicum, the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome. He is the author of *Swords Around the Cross: The Nine Years War. Ireland's Defense of Faith and Fatherland* (Christendom Press, 2001) and *Heart of the Redeemer: An Apologia for the Contemporary and Perennial Value of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus* (Ignatius Press, 2nd ed., 2017).

Today Dr. O'Donnell remains on the Christendom College board of directors and faculty, teaching theology and history. He is a consultant to the Pontifical Council for the Family, to which he was appointed 2004 by Pope St. John Paul II, renewed in 2009 by Pope Benedict XVI, and renewed in 2013 by Pope Francis. Dr. O'Donnell has served on the advisory boards of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, Institute of Catholic Culture, Institute on Religious Life, and The Cardinal Newman Society. He is a Knight Grand Cross of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

Dr. O'Donnell's awards include the Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice from Pope Leo XIV, the Bowie Kuhn Special Award for Evangelization from Legatus, the St. John Bosco Award for Catholic Education from Angelus Academy, the Distinguished Service Award from the Brent Society of the Diocese of Arlington, and the Christ the King Award from The Christian Law Institute. The Irish Education 100 named him one of the top 100 educators in the United States.

Dr. O'Donnell and his wife, Cathy, have nine children.



Dr. William K. Thierfelder

Professor and Former President, Belmont Abbey College

The Cardinal Newman Society gratefully presents the Saint John Henry Newman Award to Dr. William K. Thierfelder, the 20th and long-serving President of Belmont Abbey College in Belmont, N.C. Appointed in 2004, he resigned the presidency in 2025 and has continued on the College's faculty. Dr. Thierfelder greatly expanded the College and established its national reputation for outstanding athletics, learning, and virtue—all the while refusing to yield to pressure to compromise Belmont Abbey's Catholic mission and Benedictine heritage. On behalf of Catholic families, we recognize Dr.

William Thierfelder for his exemplary leadership and witness to the Church and culture, and we uphold him and Belmont Abbey College as models of faithful Newman Guide Recommended education.

During Dr. Thierfelder's 21 years as President, undergraduate enrollment at Belmont Abbey College more than tripled from about 500 to more than 1,600 students. New programs were launched, including the well-respected Honors College, the Motorsports Business Management Program, and eight master's degrees including the M.A. in Classical and Liberal Education. Dr. Thierfelder led a successful \$150 million capital campaign and oversaw the construction or renovation of 40 campus buildings, including the St. Joseph Adoration Chapel and the influential Belmont House in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Thierfelder led the College to embrace its Catholic mission across all activities, including athletics. The son of a New York Yankees vice president, an Olympian and two-time All-American high jumper, and a respected sports psychologist, he deftly integrated the College's academics and athletics, which at Belmont Abbey is a school of virtue. During his tenure, the College's athletics program became the 7th largest in the country with 44 teams. Many of those teams and their students have won national recognition, and more than 65 teams won the Messik Award, the Conference Carolina's recognition of best overall sportsmanship.

Amid all this, Dr. Thierfelder has been a staunch defender of religious freedom, for which The Cardinal Newman Society is especially grateful. When a few faculty members tried to force the College to include contraceptives in its insurance coverage—and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission took their side—Dr. Thierfelder stood firm and ultimately prevailed. The College later sued the Department of Health and Human Services under the Obama administration to oppose its contraceptive mandate. Dr. Thierfelder has also been a courageous leader in opposing attempts to impose gender ideology in sports, which would contradict Belmont Abbey's core mission.

Dr. Thierfelder continues to teach psychology at Belmont Abbey College, while providing sports performance consulting to NFL and NCAA football teams.

Prior to coming to Belmont Abbey College, Dr. Thierfelder was President of the York Barbell Company, Executive Director of the Player Management Group, National Director of Sport Science at NovaCare, founder and President of ProSportDoc, and adjunct Professor of Surgery at the Milton S. Hershey College of Medicine at Penn State University.

Dr. Thierfelder has been honored as Boston University School of Education's Alumnus of the Year and is an inductee into the Sports Faith International Hall of Fame. He is a Knight of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta. He authored *Less Than a Minute to Go: The Secret to World-Class Performance in Sport, Business and Everyday Life* (St. Benedict Press, 2013).

Dr. Thierfelder and his wife, Mary, have 10 children.

Joseph M. Guiffre

Retired Owner and President, Guiffre Distributing Company



The Cardinal Newman Society gratefully presents the Saint John Henry Newman Award to Joseph Guiffre, the retired owner and President of Guiffre Distributing Company in Alexandria, Va. An astute businessman with great love for family, the Eucharist, and Catholic education, Mr. Guiffre loves to “plant seeds” and has been an invaluable partner to many Catholic organizations, including The Cardinal Newman Society, through which he has had a transformational impact on the reform of Catholic education. On

behalf of Catholic families who greatly benefit from Newman Guide Recommended education, we recognize Mr. Joseph Guiffre for his transformational impact, and we uphold Mr. Guiffre as a model of lay Catholic leadership and a witness to the value of faithful Catholic formation.

The Guiffre Distributing Company was founded by Mr. Guiffre’s grandfather in 1933. Mr. Guiffre worked in the family business throughout high school and college. “I started at the bottom for very little pay and worked my way up,” Mr. Guiffre told the *Alexandria Gazette Packet*. “I cleaned offices and bathrooms and unloaded box cars. My father wanted me to have a very clear understanding of every aspect of the company before I assumed any supervisory role and I did.” After college, he rejoined Guiffre Distributing as a driver salesman and eventually became President and General Manager. He retired in 1993, handing off the position of President to his son Michael, and remained Chairman of the company until 2012.

Mr. Guiffre has been an extraordinary partner and advisor to The Cardinal Newman Society’s work of promoting and defending faithful Catholic education, with special interest in launching new projects. These include the initial distribution of our Catholic Curriculum Standards, which now used in at least 52 dioceses serving nearly half a million students; the Newman Guide scholarship program that introduces faithful Newman Guide Recommended colleges to thousands of families every year; the establishment of The Cardinal Newman Society’s headquarters building; and the creation of an endowment fund with the Diocese of Arlington to ensure that our work continues well into the future. When we expanded The Newman Guide recognition to include elementary and secondary schools, Mr. Guiffre spread the word far and wide and invited several schools to apply and successfully achieve Newman Guide Recommendations.

Mr. Guiffre has also contributed his experience and insight to many Catholic and community organizations. He helped found and chaired the Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Arlington, having an enormous impact on the parishes and Catholic education across the diocese. He has served his parish in many capacities, including as an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist. He served as an appointed member of several state and local boards and commissions, including the Virginia Department of Highways Commission, Virginia Solid Waste Commission, Alexandria Economic Development Authority, Alexandrians for a Better Community, Alexandria Operation Bailout flood relief program, and Alexandria Zero Litter program. He has chaired and served on the boards of organizations including the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, Alexandria-Olympic Boys & Girls Club, Optimist Club of Alexandria Foundation, Alexandria Center for Employment, the American Cancer Society’s “buckboard” fundraising effort, National Beer Wholesaler’s Association, and Virginia Beer Wholesaler’s Association.

Mr. Guiffre is well-known to many in Northern Virginia and was named a “Living Legend of Alexandria” by the organization of the same name in 2013. His many honors suggest the extent of his service: Last year, in recognition of Mr. Guiffre’s volunteer and charitable service to the Church, Pope Leo XIV awarded him the

Benemerenti Medal. Other honors include the St. Mary's Grammar School Distinguished Alumni Award, Brent Society recognition for Catholic Schools Activities, James J. Matthews Legacy Award from Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington, Jaycees Alexandrian of the Year, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce George Washington Leadership Medal, two beautification awards from the City of Alexandria, United Indians of America Outstanding Citizen Award (for his efforts to restore Jim Thorpe's gold medals), Boys Club Medal for Service, Generations of Giving Award from ACT for Alexandria, and Alexandria Optimist of the Year.

Mr. Guiffre and his late wife, Ann, have four children.



Jeffrey S. Kelly

Chairman and Retired Owner/CEO, Hamill Manufacturing Company

The Cardinal Newman Society gratefully presents the Saint John Henry Newman Award to Jeffrey Kelly, the Chairman and retired owner/CEO of Hamill Manufacturing Company in Penn Township, Westmoreland County, Penn. With Mr. Kelly's strong Catholic faith and decades of experience leading a premier manufacturing company and collaborating with other industry leaders, he has been an invaluable partner to The Cardinal Newman Society in establishing the Newman Guide Network to bring together faithful school, homeschool, college, and graduate program leaders to advance the reform of Catholic education. On behalf of Catholic families who greatly benefit from Newman Guide Recommended education, we recognize Jeffrey Kelly for his transformational impact, and we uphold Mr. Kelly as a model of lay Catholic leadership and a witness to the value of faithful Catholic formation.

Jeffrey Kelly became Executive Vice President of Hamill Manufacturing Company in 1981 and President in 1996, following in the footsteps of his father, William, who founded Hamill in 1952. The precision machining and fabricating company serves the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program and other defense-related companies, as well as the power generation and aerospace industries. Mr. Kelly promoted employee esteem for technology throughout the company and ensured clean, air-conditioned facilities equipped with state-of-the-art CNC machining tools, EDM machines, Radiography Lab, CMM facility, and modern weld equipment.

Under Mr. Kelly, Hamill was a founding member of the National Tooling and Machining Association's Pittsburgh Chapter. He has been a member of the NTMA since 1977 and served as the 2007 NTMA National Chairman.

Mr. Kelly started an Employee Stock Ownership plan for the company in 2009, and when he retired as President at the end of 2021, he sold his ownership and made Hamill a 100 percent employee-owned company. Today he remains Chairman of the board of directors.

Outside the company, Mr. Kelly has generously served his community in workforce development and preparing students for manufacturing careers. He was Chairman of the Westmoreland County School-to-Work Partnership and Chairman of the Westmoreland Fayette Workforce Investment Board. He brought BotsIQ to Southwestern Pennsylvania in 2005, helping high school students team up with local manufacturers to design, build, and operate 15-pound combat robots. Since its inception, more than 20,000 students from 127 different schools have participated.

Before joining Hamill in 1976, Mr. Kelly served five years in the United States Marine Corps as an aviator. He is a graduate of Serra Catholic High School in White Oak, Pa., and he continues to support that school and other faithful Catholic schools. He also graduated from Duquesne University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Physics and earned a Master of Business Administration from the University of Pittsburgh. He and his wife, Sharon, have three children and two grandchildren.

Unable to be present in Washington, D.C., to receive the St. John Henry Newman Award, Mr. Kelly sent the following acceptance letter:

As I approach my 80th year, I find myself thinking about the four last things: life, death, heaven, and hell. I know when I stand before the Lord Jesus Christ, He will determine if I took the narrow path or strayed from it. My soul will experience the consequences. I believe that the Catholic Church offers the clearest means to stay on that path. I believe that the Church has the keys to the way, the truth, and the life.

I grew up in a Catholic family and went to Catholic school from grade 1 to 16. I remember watching Bishop Sheen on a black-and-white television in the early 50s and saying the Rosary in the evening, sitting by the radio. I thank the Sisters of Mercy in grade school and the Franciscan Friars in high school for their guidance and helping me to see the path of Christ.

How things have changed. Many Catholics who grew up in that era and later have left the Church. The secular and now woke cultures have done much to put millions of souls in jeopardy.

Throughout much of my life, catechesis has been weak, watered down, and almost irrelevant. I believe Patrick Reilly recognized that and decided to do something about it. He saw that faithful Catholic education was the key to keeping a strong cohort of faithful Catholic institutions alive. He knew there were bastions of faithful Catholic education, and he decided they needed to be identified and promoted so that families could have the tools they and their children needed to fight the secular culture.

Pope Benedict XVI predicted that, in the future, the Church would be smaller but more faithful to the teachings of Christ. I see many signs of exactly that happening. I salute those organizations like The Cardinal Newman Society, Bishop Barron's Word on Fire Ministries, CatholicVote, Students for Life, and many others that know we are in mortal combat with the devil. And they are taking that fight to him.

At this point, I reflect on my time in the Marine Corps. It is unique among all the war-fighting organizations in the world. It prides itself on doing more with less, having a singular focus, and maintaining standards that allow it to execute its mission. In the past, it had a recruiting slogan: We are looking for a few good men (and women). The subtext was we don't need a whole lot, just a few good ones. I believe The Cardinal Newman Society recognizes that there are many Catholic institutions that, in essence, are Catholic in name only (CINO). The Society has found the few good ones and promotes them and helps them execute their mission. I look at the Newman Guide schools as analogous to Marine Corps training depots. Each one is trying to turn out young people who have been taught to recognize the narrow path to Christ's kingdom and will live their lives accordingly.

I appreciate the honor that The Cardinal Newman Society is bestowing on me. I'm sorry that I can't be here to accept the award in person. Please note that my commitment to the Society will not waver. In fact, I will endeavor to do more, because I feel so strongly that The Cardinal Newman Society's mission is critical to the future life of our Church in America.



Robert E. Laird

Senior Counselor to the President, The Cardinal Newman Society

The Cardinal Newman Society gratefully presents the Saint John Henry Newman Award to Robert Laird, who has served his Church, country, and community with distinction. By his selfless service to The Cardinal Newman Society over the last 14 years, serving in key roles that launched important new programs and supported every function of the organization, Mr. Laird has been instrumental to our mission of promoting and defending faithful Catholic education. On behalf of Catholic families who greatly benefit from Newman

Guide Recommended education, we recognize Robert Laird for his transformational impact, and we uphold him as a model of lay Catholic leadership and a witness to the value of faithful Catholic formation.

A graduate from the United States Military Academy, Airborne School, Ranger School, and The Command and General Staff College, Mr. Laird devoted his early years to his country through the Army, first as Assistant Professor of Nuclear Engineering at West Point. He later led a team negotiating agreements between the U.S. and Russia concerning the security and safety of nuclear weapons. He also led a working group to Russia as part of the Nunn-Lugar Act to assist the Russians in the safe and secure disposal of their nuclear weapons. He retired as Colonel after serving in the Army for 22 years.

Mr. Laird then dedicated himself to serving the Church as Assistant Director and later the third Director for Family Life of the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia. He expanded the respect life, marriage preparation, and Natural Family Planning programs; started a young adult program that included the popular "Theology on Tap"; initiated the diocesan Project Rachel program for post-abortion healing; and established the Gabriel Project, a parish-based crisis pregnancy program.

Mr. Laird was also Executive Director of Tepeyac Family Center (now Tepeyac OB-GYN), a nonprofit, pro-life obstetrics-gynecology practice in Fairfax, Va., and Executive Director of Divine Mercy Care, a nonprofit medical organization bringing Catholic health care to Northern Virginia. He organized the expansion of Tepeyac from three practicing physicians to six, creating a business model that combines an authentically pro-life practice with excellent medicine while caring for insured, under-insured, and uninsured patients.

Mr. Laird also served 10 years on the board of directors of the Couple to Couple League. He and his wife, Gerri, have taught Natural Family Planning to more than 1,100 couples since 1984.

Not content to rest, Mr. Laird then devoted the last 14 years to The Cardinal Newman Society's work of promoting and defending faithful Catholic education. In that time, he launched and led the Catholic Education Honor Roll, our first recognition program for elementary and secondary schools that was assumed and adapted from The Acton Institute; he launched and led several working groups of leaders at Newman Guide Recommended institutions; and he launched and continues to lead the Newman Guide Defender program to track legal developments and defend the religious freedom and steadfast fidelity of Newman Guide Recommended education. He has served in multiple positions including Director of Programs, Vice President of Development, and now Senior Counselor to the President.

Mr. Laird is a frequent writer and speaker on religious freedom, Catholic education, pro-life issues, marriage, natural family planning, and family life programs. He has appeared on television, radio, and print media. He has served on several nonprofit boards and is active in his parish as the chair of the finance council and the religious freedom committee, for which he writes a weekly "Church Persecuted" column in his parish bulletin.

Bob and Gerri are in their 57th year of marriage and have five children and 12 grandchildren.

