



St. Thomas More SPIRIT

Fall 2015



**Stanley Wang, WIAA Girls' Golf Division 2 State Champion,
with STM Athletic Director John Hoch,
Head Varsity Coach Tom Huppertz, and
Assistant Varsity Coach Cliff Sirovina**

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Scholarship Spotlight

Gail Guskowski Memorial Scholarship Fund offers unique opportunity for students facing hardship

While the mainstream education debate tends to focus only on top-performing students, most students do not finish eighth grade with perfect grades or outstanding athletic achievements. Schools – especially institutions of faith serving urban populations – must also provide significant resources for students who, because of personal or familial hardships, have not yet achieved the success of their peers. Fulfilling our role as a compassionate Catholic school, St. Thomas More strives to provide opportunity for all students. Rather than looking only at past accomplishments, STM seeks to evaluate and maximize the future potential of all students, allowing them to perform to the best of their abilities.

Looking to give back to the neighborhood where he was raised, Glen Guskowski (Don Bosco '72) wanted to invest in a school that was actively expanding high-quality educational opportunities to students facing adversity. While adversity can be caused by a number of things, such as managing a serious illness or familial hardship, these hardships create considerable barriers for young people as they progress through school. In addition to increased emotional and mental stress, students' and their families' days are often consumed managing these hardships, reducing the amount of time available for academic pursuits and increasing the likelihood of financial problems. With much of these students' time already occupied, there is often less room for studying, participating in sports or extra/co-curricular clubs, or planning for college.

This fundamental goal to help young people overcome the adversity caused by unplanned hardships is very personal to Glen and his wife, Nancy. At age 25, Glen's sister, Gail, passed away after a lifelong battle with the effects of several congenital birth defects.

Once they were financially able to do so, Glen and Nancy knew that they wanted to honor Gail's memory through a scholarship program designed to assist young people dealing with the type of adversity that Gail, Glen, and their family faced. While the Guskowskis considered multiple Milwaukee-area high schools, they chose St. Thomas More not just because of Glen's status as an alumnus but because of the school's vision to expand opportunity for those students who have struggled during childhood. Glen and Nancy also believe that by investing in a community-based school like STM, they are helping strengthen Milwaukee's south side, providing a valuable institutional resource for current and future residents.

Before each school year, Glen and Nancy choose an incoming STM freshman who has demonstrated persistence and determination as he or she fights through personal or familial adversity. The selected student receives a four-year scholarship to help cover the costs of an STM education. "The purpose of the Gail Guskowski Memorial Scholarship Fund is not to reward the brightest or the most athletic," Glen explained. "It's really to provide an opportunity to those students who are facing adversity and need additional support to become successful. And this idea goes hand-in-hand with St. Thomas More itself."

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Each spring, Glen and Nancy meet with the scholarship recipients for an annual luncheon, allowing the Guszkwoskis to see the impact of their investment in STM. “Watching the students go from freshman year all the way through to senior year and become adults is a very rewarding experience,” Glen described. “Nancy and I love seeing what the scholars are interested in, how school’s going, and how they continue to deal with adversity.”

Since Gail’s illness prevented her from attending college, Glen and Nancy emphasize the importance of post-secondary education completion through Gail’s scholarship. By providing financial assistance to facilitate increased enrollment at STM, the Guszkwoskis allow more students – students who might otherwise be forced to attend a poor-performing school – to reap the benefits of our rigorous college preparatory curriculum, valuable college planning resources, and supplemental programs. Upon their graduation from STM, Glen and Nancy also provide each Guszkwoski Scholar with financial resources to help afford the rising cost of college tuition, ensuring that these students can achieve what Gail unfortunately could not: a college education.

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As a successor school, STM aims to continue the welcoming, familial atmosphere that was such a significant part of the Don Bosco, Pio Nono, St. Francis Minor Seminary, and St. Mary’s Academy communities. “The thing that struck me the most was the spirit that I felt being at the school,” Glen stated. “It reminded me of when I was at Don Bosco.”

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St. Thomas More aims to continue the legacy of its predecessor schools not only through our ubiquitous school spirit and comradery but also as an institution that provides opportunity for all students. To help us continue this legacy, Glen hopes his former classmates and other alumni will reengage with their alma mater and its compassionate educational vision through the Gail Guszkwoski Memorial Scholarship Fund. “I would encourage anyone who has the desire to help kids who are right here in our community where we all live and work to grow up and be successful to consider contributing to Gail’s scholarship,” Glen concluded. “It can really make the difference as to whether that student is able to go to a place like St. Thomas More or has to go somewhere else where they don’t get the kind of support and the kind of help that it takes to overcome the challenges of today’s world. And our scholars had an added personal adversity, and that makes it doubly hard to become successful.”



Glen and Nancy with the 2014-2015 scholarship recipients