



# ST. THOMAS HIGH SCHOOL

BASILIAN FATHERS • 1900

December 12, 2024

Dear St. Thomas Community,

As we look toward the future of St. Thomas, we are committed to building upon our legacy of fostering an excellent learning environment, guided by leaders who understand and share our faith-centered mission. It is in this spirit that I write to you with exciting news about the future of our school's leadership.

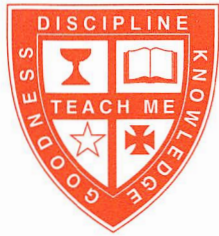
In recent months, the Basilian Network for Education and New Evangelization ("BNENE") has been aiding schools in transitioning to lay operational leadership in an effort to direct clerical expertise and talent to bolster their functions within the ministry; St. Thomas is excited to be an early adopter of this model, of which our brother schools either have or will soon follow suit. At the same time, the BNENE Board has transitioned into a mix of lay and clerical members for the first time. Each high school has been asked to nominate a school Board member and faculty member to serve three (3) year terms. St. Thomas is proud to announce that George Garza ('82) and Becky Dowdy (Dean of Science) will be representing our institution.

It is with even greater enthusiasm that the Basilian Fathers have decided to transition Fr. Murphy from his current role as President to serve St. Thomas in a new capacity as Vice President of Mission, a role that will amplify Fr. Murphy's ministerial gifts, guiding students through their journeys in the faith. The VP of Mission is a newly created position within the BNENE model that is being implemented at all of the Basilian high schools.

As President, Fr. Murphy has demonstrated an unwavering devotion to St. Thomas, its students and its families. Fr. Murphy led our school through the challenges of the COVID-19 Pandemic and has contributed to the remarkable growth of our student body and family retention in the years that followed. We are fortunate that Fr. Murphy's new role will allow him to continue serving our school in a pastoral capacity where he will oversee faith formation and provide sacramental support for members of our school community.

Fr. Storey, Basilian Superior General, and former President of St. Thomas shared the following about Fr. Murphy:

*Jim Murphy has been an outstanding president, and I consistently get feedback from students, parents, alumni and educators about how loved he is, in and out of the school. Jim's passion as a priest has always been ministering to people, and this new position as VP for Mission will allow Jim greater personal contact with students and families.*



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To accommodate this transition, the Board has appointed John Rynd, an alumnus and deeply cherished member of our community, to serve as our Interim President, beginning January 1, 2025. This transition – endorsed by the school’s Board of Directors – bridges our school to a future of permanent operational lay leadership.

John '75 is the son of Jack Rynd class of 1937. John brings to the school decades of experience in business leadership and a deep understanding of St. Thomas’ mission and culture. His background as a strategic thinker and business executive includes leading chief executive roles in publicly traded companies such as Tidewater and Hercules Offshore. John has been married to his wife Carol for 37 years and they both have been active members of the St. Cecilia Catholic community. Many of you may also personally know John as an alumnus of our school whose connection to St. Thomas has remained strong long after graduation. His sons Clay '08 and Kyle '09 both attended St. Thomas, and his daughter Kelley (St. Agnes 2012) was part of the cheerleading squad for 3 years. John has served as a volunteer coach for our freshman football team for the past 4 years where he has built a close relationship with Fr. Murphy and many members of our school community during that time.

We are excited to be a leader in this model that other Basilian schools will soon adopt, and we are confident that Fr. Murphy and John will work together with Dr. Dominguez and the entire faculty and staff to ensure a seamless transition for our school community.

This is an exciting period for St. Thomas as we make strides in our strategic goals and embrace new opportunities to achieve our shared mission. We thank you for your continued support in cultivating a faith-filled learning community to enrich current and future St. Thomas men.

Sincerely,

Kurt Hanson '83 P'14  
Chair, Board of Directors  
St. Thomas High School