

1 December, 2018

Dear parents,

Well, here it is – my last letter as President of this great school that I have loved since I was a 14 year old freshman in 1967. My four years in high school were some of the greatest of my life – I long for the days when I could run, catch, throw, shoot, and hit. I don't know where the years have gone, but I cherish them dearly. I can't remember what I had for breakfast this morning, but I can vividly recall great times and sad times, particularly on the basketball court or baseball field, as if they were yesterday. I can remember sitting in the hallway at Smithfield High School after a playoff loss in basketball in 1971, suddenly realizing that my basketball days at Hendricken were over. Luckily, I had the baseball season coming up, which made the spring of my senior year much more enjoyable than it would have been had basketball been my only sport. One of the points I always tried to make when I was coaching basketball, was that our student-athletes should cherish each moment at BHHS, because it will go by in a flash, and the memories will stay with you forever.

To our students – please take advantage of every opportunity that our wonderful school offers to you; when you look back on your high school days you don't want to say "I wish I had only...". The four years will fly by, and before you know it you will be graduating from the Cathedral; it will be bittersweet, as you yearn for the next great adventure in your life, but will soon miss the wonderful times you had with your high school friends. Please support Bishop Hendricken as you grow into adulthood – people made sacrifices for you to attend BH, and the financial need of families is growing each and every day. Every alumnus has an obligation to help those prospective students realize their dream of experiencing all that Hendricken has to offer. Many people helped you, it is now time, as an alumnus, to pay it back.

To our parents, grandparents, guardians – thank you from the bottom of my heart for entrusting the education of your young men to us. Thank you also for your support, whether it be financial, as an advisor, or a trusted shoulder to lean on. Growing up in the world today is far more complicated than it was for many of us, and your unconditional love, if not appreciated now, certainly will be as he grows older.

To our teachers and staff – thank you for your dedication, professionalism, compassion, and understanding. Thank you also for the many sacrifices that you have made – your commitment to our mission has been extraordinary, and it has come at great cost to you. I hope you realize that your reward is the satisfaction of knowing that you have changed countless lives for the better.

To our alumni – thank you for your unwavering support of your alma mater. We have persevered during some difficult times, and whenever called upon, you delivered. I am sure that you share with me some great memories of our school during the time that you were here, and your support means more than you can imagine.

The Catholic Church is enduring difficult times these days, and it has affected our schools. But if we keep our focus on Jesus, the sacrifice he made for our salvation, and the Church that he put into the hands of our first pope, St. Peter, we will continue to fulfill the mission of this great school – bringing every member of our community into a closer relationship with God.

I am retiring, but not leaving for good – I will be back, cheering for our teams, and reading about all of the great accomplishments of future Hawks. May God continue to shine His light, share His Truth, and bless all members of the Bishop Hendricken High School community.

God Bless,

John A. Jackson '71  
President