Diocese of Bismarck Shares News of $3 Million Gift

It was a special evening at the Brett and Susie Gendreau home on Monday, May 16 when Bishop David Kagan announced to a group of invited guests that the Diocese was donating $3 million to the Keep the Promise Light of Christ Catholic Schools Capital Campaign.

While sharing his perspective on the importance of a strong, faith-based Catholic education, Bishop Kagan expounded on the fertile ground our Catholic schools provide for growing future leaders of the faith. At this time, this Diocese has 28 young men in various stages of becoming a priest, seven of which are students from Light of Christ Catholic Schools.

Light of Christ President Gerald Vetter spoke about the need for this campaign. He shared a few stats about our tremendous growth:

- Since 2010, we have added 16 sections of elementary students. That is 16 new teachers, using 16 additional classrooms.
- Next year, we will have another 4.32% increase in student population. We will be at 107% of capacity and will be using three portable classrooms to gain the additional classroom space.

Light of Christ Mission Advancement Director Tim McCaffrey presented Bishop David Kagan
with a framed photo of the first Catholic school in Bismarck, circa 1878.

The guests also received the privilege of listening to Dale Brown, former men's basketball coach at Louisiana State University, share his story about how Catholic education influenced him. Dale grew up in Minot, North Dakota. His father left his family before he was born. His mother sacrificed for his tuition at St. Leo's Catholic School followed by Bishop Ryan High School. The first man who ever said, "I love you" to Dale was one the priests at his Catholic school.

Dale was a star athlete and received an education degree from Minot State College while receiving 12 letters in football, basketball and track. He coached at Bishop Ryan High School at that time. Eventually, he earned the head coaching position at Louisiana State University, taking the influence of Catholic education to the hearts, minds and souls of hundreds of young men.
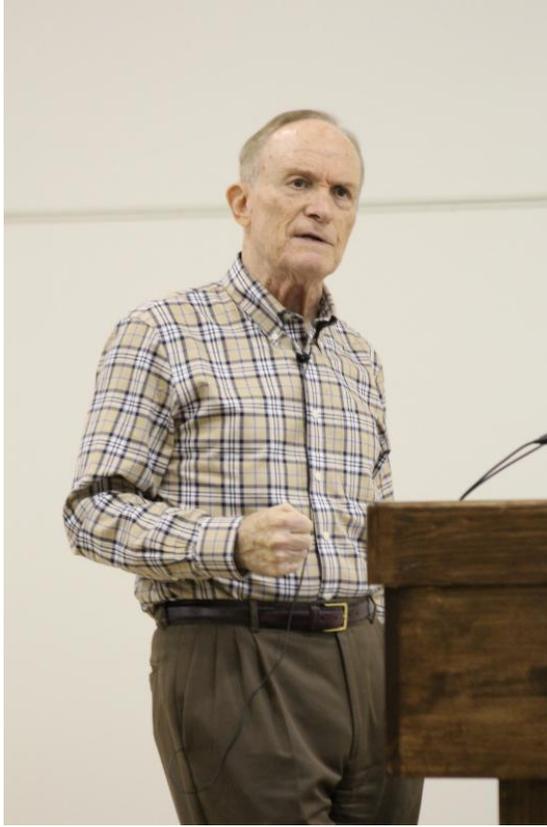
Bishop David Kagan and SMCHS Chaplain Fr. Jared Johnson listened to Coach Dale Brown speak to the crowd about the major influence a North Dakota Catholic education had in his life.

Dale closed by challenging everyone to become part of something larger than they could be individually. Just like a team of men can come together to win a championship that could not be accomplished as an individual, the Keep the Promise Campaign will expand, update and establish the endowment fund for the long term upkeep of the schools. This is an opportunity to make a difference for generations to come.

Legendary Coach Dale Brown with SMCHS and Academy Students

Earlier in the day, Dale Brown also spoke to the SMCHS and Academy students with a message about staying positive, striving for your goals and overcoming hurdles in life. It was a special moment when former SMCHS coach Duane Holly came back to the gym to greet Dale Brown. These former rival coaches showed an amazing level of respect for one another. Dale told the story of how Duane's Saints team beat him by 40 points, then by 30 points in the next game and were a driving

force in Dale developing his famous "Freak" defense that he went on to use in his successful college coaching career. Dale coached one of the very first games in the new SMCHS gym in 1951.

Legendary SMCHS coach Duane Holly shakes the hand of SMCHS teacher and coach Roger Haug, while visiting with Dale Brown in the SMCHS gym where the coaches once played against each other.

Coach Dale Brown challenged our students to ponder this thought:
"The choices we make...make us. Will you be bitter or better?"

Have a question? Want to volunteer to help with the campaign?
Just use this simple form.

CLICK HERE TO SUBMIT A QUESTION
OR VOLUNTEER TO HELP WITH THE CAMPAIGN.

We invite you to share these updates with your friends and family and submit the names of friends/family that would like to receive these updates directly.