

"Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the LORD."
Ephesians 2:20-21

MEET THE HALLS: A LEGACY OF FAITH, A TRADITION OF GIVING BACK



RICH AND SALLY HALL

//There was no other option for us, it's just what we did," says Rich Hall when asked why his parents, Lou and Tatty Hall, sent him, his 4 other brothers and sisters to our Catholic schools. When asked why he sent his own kids to our Catholic schools, Rich replied, "There was no other option for us, it's just what we did!"

The Hall family's legacy within our Catholic schools is its own tradition. Rich's father, Lou, joined as one of the original 5 member trustees of the Billings Area Catholic Education Trust (BACET). Seeing the struggles of our schools at that time, and having participated in another Foundation board, Lou brought his experiences and connections to ensure our schools' future. With BACET now at its 50th anniversary, Lou and his fellow trustees succeeded.

Lou's passion for the schools extended to his generosity. When a family he knew desired to send their kids but couldn't, he'd make sure it happened by helping to pay the

family's tuition.

Rich graduated Billings Central in 1964. With a one-year detour at Assumption Abbey in Richardton, ND, he received his degree from St. Martins in Olympia, WA, served as a marine officer, and was briefly a teacher at Lewis and Clark Middle School. "One day, my dad told me that I'd be a good salesman, and I should come work for him at Streeter Bros. Insurance. It turned into a 40-year career."

Knowing the value of the Catholic education he received, Rich gave back. He walked the halls of Central as a volunteer for Young Life ministries. He participated in Mayfair. He gave of his time with board service to the Foundation. As a tribute to his father and desiring to see our schools for generations to come, Rich has religiously given to BACET for decades now.

As a self-described "Fratt Bratt," Leslie (Hall) Schaff attended Kate Fratt Memorial and graduated Billings Central in 1992. "We used to wear a plaid jumper with a white top. In the winter, we wore plaid pants. We looked like golfers," she reminisced with a chuckle.

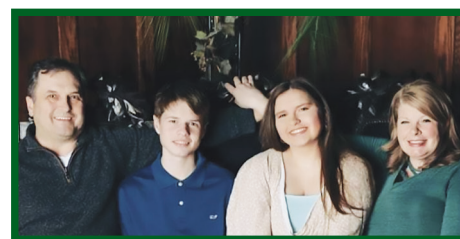
Our schools certainly left an impression on her. After college, she became a social worker in Spokane. After deciding that prevention was the key, Leslie went back to school to become a teacher, which she did throughout Washington and Oregon. The family moved back to their hometown in 2016.

Now known as "Mrs. Schaff" to her students, she teaches 7th grade science and math at Lewis and Clark Middle School – the same school her dad taught at. But as a legacy of Catholic schools, her kids – Tiernan and Annika – attend Billings Central. "It's tradition at this point!" she exclaims.

In that same vein as her father and grandfather, Leslie continues the family legacy of giving back to the schools that gave her and her family so much. "I work at my own school during the days, so can't really volunteer at our schools. But I had a deep desire to give in some way. That's when I saw the opportunity for the school board. They meet after school hours. It seemed like a perfect fit." As an educator with a deep understanding of our system, Leslie was a natural choice. She began her school board service in 2022.

As for her kids, Annika, a junior, participates in speech and debate and the art club. Tiernan, a sophomore, is a speech and debater too, a member of the Central Science Bowl team, and plays baseball.

It's certainly too early to say, but here's to hoping that the Hall family legacy continues for generations to come! **+**



Welcome to The Cornerstone, your quarterly newsletter from your family at the Billings Catholic Schools and Foundation. In these pages, you will read stories of tremendous students, families, and alumni; school updates and happenings; invitations to events; and of course, ways to continue your support of our schools.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Meet the Halls	p.1
Then, Now, Tomorrow: BACET's 50th	p.2
New BCCHS Principal	p.2
The Origins of BACET	p.3
Rams Day of Giving	p.4
Upcoming Events	p.4

BILLINGS CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND FOUNDATION SETS OUT ON A YEARLONG CELEBRATION OF BACET AND ITS 50 YEARS OF BENEFACTION

It's 1973. A bedrock of Catholic life across America begins to cleave. With rising costs, unsustainable increases in tuition, and falling attendance rates, the storm clouds gather. These spiraling winds create a hurricane. Upon landfall, a wave of Catholic school closures sweeps the nation.

Here in Montana, rural Catholic schools got swept up in the floodwaters of disaster.

Sensing the impending forced closures and fearing the worst, Phillip Fortin, a generous philanthropist and pragmatic businessman, followed up on a substantive donation he made to Billings Central Catholic High School. Calling upon Mr. Ralph Studer, Sr. – a well-connected member of the Billings Catholic Schools community – Mr. Fortin asked a straightforward question, "Have we made a difference?"

Mr. Fortin's question soon became known amongst the various school board members. The answer became a new model to bolster Catholic



education in Billings, Montana. Three pillars – tuition, parish support, and endowment funds – would provide the foundation needed to ensure our Catholic schools' future.

"In witness whereof," Jack Tenge, Ralph Studer, Lou Hall, William Roscoe, and Agnes O'Leary as the original five trustees "set their hands and seals" on August 3, 1973, establishing the Billings Area Catholic Education Trust.

This seminal moment constituted a new founding in the life of our Catholic schools. While many

founders could not have known, this trust stabilized our schools to educate and form children for the next 50 years, continuing to this day.

August 3, 2023, marked the 50th anniversary of BACET. The Billings Catholic Schools family commemorates this golden jubilee with:

"Then, Now, Tomorrow; 50 Years of the Billings Area Catholic Education Trust"

Beginning August 2023 and ending one year later in 2024, the Billings Catholic Schools and Foundation will set out marking this historic event together.

We seek to educate the latest generation of our Catholic School's family about BACET's impact on today's Billings Catholic Schools, its students, families, teachers, programs, and more. We envision a future that inspires the Billings Catholic Schools family toward this legacy of faith and philanthropy.

We celebrate this founding and its 50 years of benefaction. Stay tuned!

NOLAN TRAFTON TAKES THE HELM AT BCCHS



Mr. Nolan Trafton began his first year as Principal of Billings Central on July 1.

A 2014 alumni, Mr. Trafton credits his formative year's to the influence of our Catholic schools, "The Catholic schools for me are family. My mom (Mrs. Michelle Trafton) has worked here since 1994. My 3 brothers graduated from here. As a result, I wanted to be an educator – and there was only one place I wanted to be!"

As a head coach and state champion of our Rams soccer, Mr. Trafton brings his coaching insights to his role,

"Whether on the soccer field or in the classroom, we strive for more. Striving for excellence is who we are."

And as our previous religion teacher, Mr. Trafton knows that our faith is central to Billings Central, "Our Catholic faith and response to Jesus is the foundation for us as individuals and for Billings Central as a community."

Congratulations Mr. Trafton! Know of our prayers by your Billings Catholic Schools family!



FAITH • FAMILY SPIRIT • ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

THEN, NOW, TOMORROW:

50 YEARS OF THE BILLINGS AREA CATHOLIC EDUCATION TRUST

THE ORIGINS OF BACET

Upon concluding his meeting with Mr. Phillip Fortin, Ralph Studer Sr. feared losing the support of such a prominent philanthropist. Loss of future contributions from such a public figure would significantly devastate the schools – further endangering their existence. Others would follow, pulling their donations.

Seeing this possible death-spiral, Mr. Studer discussed his conversation and the situation amongst a few of his fellow board members – Chairman Archie Vap, Ralph’s brother Dean Studer, and Jim Thelen. As they deliberated, a plan began to form: a type of savings or endowment fund that would support the schools and assure the largest donors of their gifts.

Knowing they needed help, these board members sought individuals who could devote time, ensure the project’s completion, represent the various parishes, and had heart for the schools. At the urging of Mr. Studer, Sr., Charles Heringer, Jr. called the initial meeting at his personal home. That first meeting included Mr. Jim Thelen, Mr. Archie Vap, Mr. Ralph Studer, Sr., Mr. Ruben Day, Mr. Jim Keating, Mr. Ralph Studer, Jr., and Mr. Charles Heringer.

Consensus on the nature of the problem quickly emerged. The Catholic schools were supported by two pillars – tuition and parish funds. As the group saw it, raising tuition too high risked losing parents who could not afford to send their students. The loss of students would necessitate further tuition increases, creating a vicious circle. Experiencing significant upheaval themselves, the Catholic parishes could not sustain an increasing burden on their limited resources. A third pillar was needed to keep the schools from toppling over.

Meeting every few weeks, the committee hammered, grinded, chiseled, and brushed their way to build this

third pillar: Would the funding be for all schools or Billings Central only? How would the fund be set up, as a savings fund or an endowment such as the collegiate model? Who would control the fund, school board members or independent trustees? What would this be called?

After months of back and forth, answers began to take shape: Disbursement of funds would be for ALL Catholic schools. A trust would be established and invested to provide necessary, on-going funding. The trustees would consist of independent members to ease the burden on school board members. Provisions for accepting gifts, managing investments, and disbursing funds were decided.

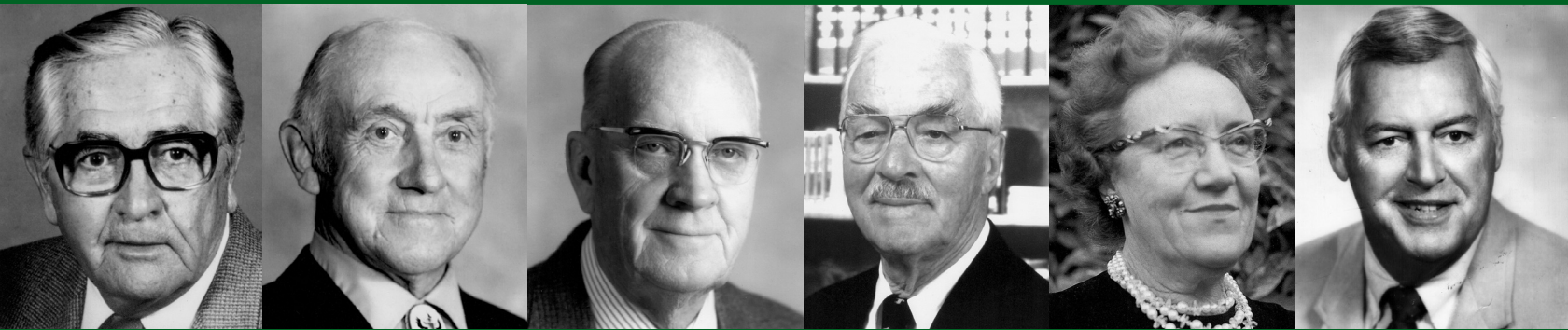
In particular, Mr. Heringer gave great thought to the name. The committee knew everyone in the community needed to back it for this to work. With this in mind, **the committee decided on the Billings Area Catholic Education Trust (acronymized BACET and pronounced “Back It”).**

The final item before incorporation; selecting trustees with unquestionable character, believing in the strength of Catholic education, and could volunteer their time and efforts to the Trust. The committee found its first members in William Roscoe Jr., Ralph Studer, Sr., Louis Hall, Jack Tenge, and Agnes O’Leary. Mr. Heringer was Secretary/Treasurer. Mr. Roscoe was appointed its first chair of the board.*

These six members contributed \$500 each for a first deposit of \$3,000 to open an account at Midland National Bank. As the oral history goes; at each subsequent board meeting, each member laid \$100 in the middle of the table or risked not getting in!

Stay tune for Part 2 of 4 – Coming in the November Cornerstone

**In order as listed above*



Supporter Information

☐ Yes! Keep me in the loop with the latest from Billings Catholic Schools and Foundation.

name: _____

email: _____

address: _____

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city: _____ state: _____ zip: _____

note: we will never share your personal information.

Gift Information

I/We want to support the Billings Catholic Schools & Foundation with a gift:

☐ Tuition Assistance ☐ The Greatest Need ☐ BACET ☐ Other: _____

☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$300 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$1,000 ☐ \$2,500 ☐ \$5,000 ☐ Other: \$ _____

3RD ANNUAL RAMS DAY OF GIVING SET FOR THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12

Help them climb with the **3rd Annual Rams Day of Giving**. This 24-hour virtual event impacts our students, families, teachers, staff, and schools with funds they need and projects you care about most!

Your gifts to last year's Rams Day of Giving helped complete many projects for our schools! Billings Central kicked off their campaign for a new high-performance fitness center, transforming our student athletes. The St. Francis Chapel will be completed with needed liturgical items, furnishings, and décor. St. Francis upgraded their safety features with new door locking mechanisms, safety film on windows, and emergency

management software. The soccer team purchased two new soccer goals. K-4 music received new handheld drums. BCCHS Theater purchased a stage for their performances. St. Francis ECE students can perform their Christmas and year end concerts on risers now. Many other projects were funded through your generosity.

The top 3 projects that receive the most donors will receive additional prize funds of \$3,000, \$2,000, and \$1,000. There will be matching gift challenges for specified projects. Even the smallest gift of \$5.00 can make an incredible impact!

Help our Rams Climb on



Thursday, October 12 through Rams Day of Giving! Stay tuned through our website at billingscatholicschoolsfoundation.org or our Facebook page: Search Billings Catholic Schools Foundation and click "like." **Our Rams Day of Giving website will be live Thursday, September 28. Stay tuned!**

LISTEN TO YOUR BC RAMS ON KJCR – BILLINGS CATHOLIC RADIO!

Can't make the game? Don't want to travel to the HI-LINE? Listen to your Rams Football on Billings Catholic Radio – **KJCR 97.5FM, 100.9FM, or 1240AM. Or listen from anywhere in the world at billingscatholicradio.com.**



LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH

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events*:

upcoming

Parent Night	Saturday Sept. 9
Running on Faith	Sunday Sept. 10
Homecoming Week	Sept. 11 – Sept. 15
BCCHS RoundTable	Wednesday Sept. 27
Rams Day of Giving	Thursday, Oct. 12
BCCHS Turn the Table	Wednesday, Oct. 25

*Events are subject to change. If you're signed up, check your email for the most current information; or sign up for email updates today!

pg 4

Payment Information

- ☐ Check (Please make check payable to Billings Catholic Schools Foundation)
- ☐ Credit card (Please fill out information below)
- ☐ On-Line (I will make my gift online at www.billingscatholicschoolsfoundation.org)



Name as it appears on card: _____

Signature: _____

Type (Visa, MC, Amex, Discover)	Card Number	Expiration Date	CVV Code
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Please fill out address portion on back side of this piece.
Once filled out, please return this portion of the form in the enclosed envelope.
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