Schools were also recognized for their STEM learning programs in 2019. Both the Middle School and Elementary School are Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Distinguished Schools. Only 148 middle schools and 214 elementary schools across the U.S. received the Distinguished School honor in 2019.

Lourdes Academy launched a comprehensive STEM program in 2015 by integrating curriculum from Project Lead the Way, the nation’s leading provider of STEM programs, into grades four through six. Over the past five years, the program has been expanded to include kindergarten through high school.

"STEM principles are foundational in a variety of businesses, yet studies have shown for years that there is a workforce shortage of STEM-qualified workers," Dinegan added. "With that end result in mind, it was our goal to ensure that all students have access to STEM training to best prepare them for the future workforce."

Through PLTW, students learn skills such as coding, automation and robotics, and 3D design and modeling. Other STEM elements have also been incorporated to supplement PLTW’s curriculum.

Fourth graders, for example, learn to use an app called Tynker to help build brain fitness. And, each elementary grade learns how code affects our daily lives through Hour...
Join us for Catholic Schools Week

Life is Beautiful Hygiene Drive
Through Feb. 2 at Lourdes Academy schools and the Oshkosh Catholic parishes

January
16 5th Grade, Middle & High School Step-Up Day
   Noon-3 pm, Lourdes Academy High School
24 9th Annual Scooter Hockey Tournament
   5:30 pm, Lourdes High School
28 All-System Mass
   9:30 am, St. Raphael Parish
28 Future Freshman Knight/High School Open House
   6 pm, Lourdes Academy High School
30 Early Learning Knight
   6 pm, Lourdes Academy Elementary School
   (1207 Oregon Street)
30 Red & White Knight Boys Basketball Game vs. Hustisford
   6 pm JV • 7:15 pm Varsity, Lourdes High School Castle

For more information on Catholic Schools Week activities and other events, contact Jody Ruark at (920) 426-3626, ext. 541 or visit www.lourdes.today.

Lourdes Marian consecration to take place February 11

Lourdes Academy will celebrate Our Lady of Lourdes Feast Day on February 11 by consecrating the school to Mary. A consecration is a dedication or devotion to unite our school with the Blessed Virgin Mary. A special novena will begin on January 30 to prepare for the consecration, followed by mass on February 11. Join us for this special event. Instructions and details will be posted on www.lourdes.today.

Matilda the Musical
Join Lourdes Academy for a night of singing, dancing and entertainment at The Grand Oshkosh.
Tickets go on sale in February.

Friday & Saturday, March 27-28 @ 7 p.m.
Sunday, March 29 @ 2 p.m.

10th Annual Awards & Recognition Dinner
Friday, April 24 • 5:30 p.m.
LaSure’s Banquet Hall, Oshkosh
Sponsored by Nicolet Bank

Lourdes Academy will recognize outstanding alumni, staff and volunteers who have served their schools and communities. Join us in honoring these awards:
• Outstanding Alumni – Karlene Grabner (’92)
• Distinguished Stewardship – Mary Buttke (’70)
• Athletic Hall of Fame – George Benz (’71); 1969 Track & Field State Championship Team
• Dr. Stanley Spanbauer Education & Leadership – Helaine Lasky Family

Tickets are $20 each and can be purchased by contacting Jody Ruark at (920) 426-3626, ext. 541 or jruark@lourdes.today.

15th Annual Lourdes Academy “Tee It Up for Kids” Golf Outing
Friday, June 12 • 9:30 a.m.
Lake Breeze Golf Club, Winneconne

Early Bird Pricing (Through April 17)
$125/golfer
$500/foursome

Regular Pricing (Starts April 18)
$140/golfer
$560/foursome

For more information or to register, contact Jody Ruark at 920.426.3626, ext. 541 or jruark@lourdes.today

Come for golf and stay for the 60th Anniversary All-Alumni Reunion on June 13.
See back page for details.

Sponsorships Available!

Lourdes Academy will celebrate Our Lady of Lourdes Feast Day on February 11 by consecrating the school to Mary. A consecration is a dedication or devotion to unite our school with the Blessed Virgin Mary. A special novena will begin on January 30 to prepare for the consecration, followed by mass on February 11. Join us for this special event. Instructions and details will be posted on www.lourdes.today.
Steve Mugerauer owns four companies in three states with the Oshkosh location employing 45 people.

Steve Mugerauer - The need for speed

Steve Mugerauer ('65) got his first taste of car racing in high school and was hooked. He watched stock car oval track, drag racing, tractor pull and all different types of racing. He was fascinated by how the engines worked and how they could be improved.

After graduating from Lourdes, he decided to pursue a career in a mechanical trade. He worked at Rockwell International and joined the National Guard for six years, maintaining and repairing helicopter engines. He also went from watching race cars to driving them, racing all over the country and all different classes of cars, but he gravitated toward drag racing. At the end of his racing career in the late 1970s, he raced in a top-fuel class reaching speeds of about 300 miles per hour in five seconds.

At the start, there was a lot of competition to develop faster, high performing engines. Mugerauer started building and maintaining cars and engines as a hobby in his garage.

"Back in those days, you could modify and build cars easier than you can now, and car racing was very popular," Mugerauer explained. "The faster you go, the better parts you need. They weren’t always available, so I had to make or modify parts."

He soon began supplying engine parts to other racers, and in 1970 his first business was born. Today, Competition Products sells engine parts online to end users all over the world. Most products are purchased from other manufacturers, but some are manufactured and modified in-house. Steve owns four different corporations in three states. The Oshkosh facility employs 45 people.

"Today there are more engines, more parts and more usages," Mugerauer said. "It’s expanded from the old days. Engine controls get very technical."

After starting Competition Products, Mugerauer purchased Howards Cams, a business that has been manufacturing racing car parts for wholesalers since the 1940s. He moved the California-based business to Oshkosh and invested in technology and machines to improve the products and grow market share. Howards Cams now does work for other companies around the country, such as Harley Davidson and Briggs and Stratton.

While he hasn’t raced cars in several decades, he’ll always have racing in his blood. But a decline in the racing industry has him looking to new opportunities. "Racetracks are closing and newer vehicles cannot be modified," Mugerauer added. "Restorations of older, high-performance cars is very popular, but fewer people are gravitating to higher tech, more expensive engine applications."

Mugerauer is setting his sites on his biggest venture yet—the Allstar Engine, a large high-horsepower engine that runs on natural gas and clean fuels. He designed the concept for the engine, then employed the help of specialty engineers to design its parts.

The unique aluminum race engine started use in off-shore racing boats and other race applications. But its market is far wider than the racing circuit. The engine also provides temporary or back-up power generation for military use, retail and other business sectors. The potential for the Allstar Engine is unlimited, and Mugerauer plans to focus his attention on finding new markets that can benefit from it.

Purtell chronicles Vietnam experience


Karen Boehm, Advancement Director

When Jim Purtell graduated from Lourdes High School in 1967, he felt his options were limited—live at home and work, go to college locally while living at home, or go away to college. But he wasn’t interested in higher education, and he butted heads with his father and didn’t think they could coexist under one roof. So he looked toward the military.

"The country was pro-Vietnam at that time," Purtell
said. “I was patriotic and wanted some adventure, so I joined the Army in June 1967.”

Purtell didn’t want to kill anyone, so he requested to be trained as a medic. He was influenced by his father who was a WWII veteran and officer, and worked in the medical profession.

He completed basic training at Fort Campbell in Kentucky then continued on to Fort Sam Houston in Texas for leadership school, after which he completed 10 weeks of medical training. His recruiting sergeant told him he’d be stationed in Germany or Hawaii, both places he was eager to visit. He eventually received orders for Cameron Bay in Vietnam, the “country club” of army bases, then returned home for a 30-day leave before deploying.

“I told my family they had nothing to worry about,” he said. “I’m going to the country club of Vietnam. I was in Vietnam for three days and was ordered to get my stuff together and report to the helicopter pad. The infantry unit needed medics. I boarded the chopper with no way to communicate to anyone back home.”

The pages of Purtell’s book share with brutal honesty stories of his experiences, from ambushes and gaining ground to losing friends and leaders. Vietnam was no country club.

“There wasn’t anything good about where we were,” Purtell recalled. “The weather was hot and humid. There were insects and snakes, greenery that would cut you or prick you, leaches that attached to your armpits and groin. We all hated being there, especially when the country started turning against us.”

Politicians publicly came out against the war, and music and television picked up on the anti-war fervor. The disdain people felt for the war trickled down to the soldiers themselves.

“Walter Cronkite reported nightly on how many of our ‘American boys’ were killed. We were over there trying to fight it,” Purtell said. “People couldn’t separate the war from the warrior.”

In February 1969, Purtell finally returned to Oshkosh. He was excited to be home with family and friends. But he realized quickly the transition back was not as smooth as he imagined. The anti-war sentiment was high, and he found it difficult to connect with people who didn’t understand what he’d experienced. He recalled veterans having a difficult time finding a job because employers believed what they saw in the media—“that we were crazed drug addicts and baby killers.”

“After I returned home, I thought everybody had changed, and it bothered me,” Purtell recalled. “Then I realized I was the one that changed so significantly. That realization took months.”

Feeling lost, Purtell reached out to Al Torsiello, who he served with in Vietnam. He discovered that Torsiello was having the same acclimation issues, and the short visit in New Jersey was time well spent for both of them. Forty-five years later, Purtell and Torsiello combined their musical talents to write a CD of songs about their war experiences, titled Vietnam: There & Back. Torsiello would later write the forward to Purtell’s book in 2018.

While writing the book, Purtell recalled a quote that was etched into the exterior of the Lourdes building, “The truth shall set you free.” Purtell said it was paramount that he tell the complete truth about his war experiences—the good and the bad—and let the chips fall where they may. Writing the book, which he hopes also conveys the brave stories of his fellow infantrymen, did help set him free.

Purtell had 18 months left to serve after leaving Vietnam. He was stationed in Savannah, Georgia, at the Tuttle Army Health Clinic. In June 1970, he enrolled at UW Oshkosh and graduated in three years with a degree in education with a social science emphasis. He later received a Master’s Degree in Guidance and Counseling and moved to the east coast to help disabled veterans find employment.

He worked for the federal government in several different agencies including the Defense Logistics Agency, the Department of the Navy, and the U.S. Department of Labor - OSHA. Purtell, now retired, splits his time between Oshkosh and Fort Myers Beach, Florida. 


SHOP LOCAL

Are you a local business owner? If so, we’d like to promote you. Lourdes Academy features a “Shop Local” directory on its website to thank and recognize the many alumni- and family-owned businesses that support us and to encourage others to support local as well. Shop or register for your free listing today by clicking on the “Shop Local Directory” link at www.lourdes.today.
Reunions

Class of 1969 - 50 Years

The Class of 1969 celebrated their 50th class reunion on August 24 at the Best Western Premier Waterfront Resort.

Class of 1975 reunites on the links

Ten members of the class of 1975 recently participated in a golf outing at Sweetgrass in the Upper Peninsula. Pictured from left to right: Bob Muza, Gary Kempinger, Frank Kufel, Dr. Martin Weisse, Tom Wrasse, Kevin Drexler, James Matschi, Dr. James Runke, Mike Schultz, and Tom Shea.

On-Court Reunion

Players and coaches returned for the annual Alumni Basketball Tournament over Thanksgiving weekend.

Support the Lourdes Fund

Have you made your gift to the Lourdes Fund?

Every gift to the Lourdes Fund helps bring learning to life. It ensures that students receive a top quality Catholic education with opportunities for leadership, citizenship and personal growth.

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STEM...from page 1

Third graders learn to animate movies using code.

of Code. Third graders are learning how animated movies use code and are using their coding abilities to create a dance party using multiple animals, including background dancers. And high school students are learning coding applications using Python, Blocky, MIT App Inventor and VEX Coding.

This year, Lourdes Academy started a STEM Club as a way to continue to expand students’ STEM interests. Club members have been working on computer programming in Python making a small game. In the spring, they will delve into 3D modeling and robotics.

For more information about Lourdes Academy’s STEM program, click on the “Academics” tab at www.Lourdes.today.

*Source: Percentage calculated using a total of 43,497 public and private secondary schools, sourced from the National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics, Table 214.10.

Upcoming Reunions

#U-Knighted4Life

60th Anniversary All-Class Reunion
Saturday, June 13 @ Lourdes Academy
See back page for details

Class of 1970 - 50th Reunion
Friday, August 14 - fish fry
Saturday, August 15 - reunion
Contact Mary Buttke - mrbuttke@aol.com

Class of 1980 - 40th Reunion
Saturday, August 22 @ Lourdes Academy
Planning a reunion? Contact Jody Ruark at 920-426-3626, ext. 541 or jruark@lourdes.today for assistance. Lourdes Academy offers free mailing lists and facilities usage for Lourdes class reunions.
Join us for a special 60th anniversary celebration

U-Knighted4Life Reunion

Saturday, June 13 • 5-10 p.m.
Lourdes Academy High School, 110 N. Sawyer St.
$25 before June 1, $40 after/at the door

Mark your calendars for a one-of-a-kind reunion for all classes to celebrate Lourdes Academy’s 60th anniversary.

- Attend mass with Lourdes alumni priests.
- Enjoy food from local alumni-owned establishments.
- Experience the fun, interactive music & entertainment for alumni of all generations by Full Tilt Entertainment.

Great Food
Prizes
Music & Entertainment
School Tours
TONS OF FUN!!!