



Dear Leo Family,

Every year our Parents Club sponsors a “Man of the Year” award to honor a graduating Leo senior who has made significant contributions to our school during his time here. The Man of the Year is recognized at the Senior Luncheon.

The award came up for discussion at a recent faculty meeting. Someone — me — made the point that it would be difficult to choose between two particularly accomplished seniors this year, so it might be a good idea to select co-winners.

Whereupon **Vice-Principal Frank Wilson** revealed he had a third candidate in mind, and when he identified the young man and listed his qualifications, the reaction was, “Why didn’t I think of that?” Then another senior was mentioned, and another, and all of a sudden we had as wide open a field of candidates as we’ve had in my five years here.

In other words, we’ll be saying goodbye to another exceptional senior class.

Which reinforced a point that has become increasingly obvious. For as much as we brag — justifiably — about Leo’s history and traditions, what truly sets the school apart is its people: past, present and future.

On April 24, nearly 700 Leo grads packed the Lexington House for the 60th annual Alumni Banquet. No other school in the city would expect such a turnout. And maybe it’s me, because I received my own Man of the Year award from the Alumni Association, but I thought this year’s crowd was remarkably upbeat and enthusiastic as they saluted Community Service Award winner **Tom Boyle ’65** and Hall of Fame inductees **George O’Grady ’51**, **Rich Doyle ’65**, **Tom Hopkins ’73**, **Shaka Rawls ’93**, **Jason Jefferson ’97** and the **2nd Battalion, 24th Marines**.

The next day, more than 60 members of the 50 year anniversary Class of 1965 and some two dozen spouses came to Leo for a tour. Most of them hadn’t been in the building since they graduated, and they seemed pleased to note that not much has changed — **Larry Hopman** said he remembered misplacing the sandwich (chicken salad) he claimed to have found in his old locker.



Current students served as tour guides, and the interaction between Leo Men past and present was truly heartwarming. As the reunion group was leaving, junior **Kentrell Drummond** asked if he could say a few words. Kentrell said he was mindful of Leo's traditions and history as he walked the halls every day, and he thanked the Class of '65 guys for helping create a legacy he was honored to try to uphold.

Then fellow junior **Chris Higgs** spoke. Chris joined us as a transfer student this year. In the past, he said, it was no big deal to people who asked him where he went to school and he said, Blue Island Eisenhower.

"But now," he said, "when I tell them I go to Leo, they say, 'Oh, Leo!' and they treat me like I'm somebody special. And I want to thank you guys for creating a school that makes all of us feel special."

The '65ers were beaming, walking on air as they left the building. Their legacy is in good hands with current Leo Men.

The future looks bright as well. We have tested more than 50 prospective members of the Class of 2019 already and we're looking forward to welcoming our largest freshmen class in several years.

We have a lot of work ahead of us as we undertake the transition to independent Catholic school status, and building enrollment, of course, is one important component in extending the Leo Legacy.

But build it we will. There are a lot of young men like Chris Higgs out there who want to be involved with something special.

As we head into summer and conclude our 89th year of operation, I thank you for entrusting your sons to us, and for your continued support. Leo High School is indeed something special. It's an honor to serve.

May God's blessings be upon you and your families.

Sincerely,

Dan McGrath '68

Leo High School President