



THE ST. EDWARD CENTRAL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL MAGAZINE SUMMER 2026

MONARCH



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Dear Alumni and Friends of St. Edward,

Grounded in our rich tradition of faith and community, St. Edward continues to grow in ways that strengthen our mission and expand opportunities for our students. This past year has been one of thoughtful progress as we celebrated student achievements, welcomed new opportunities, and looked ahead with hope and purpose.

As we continue shaping the future of St. Edward, we are especially grateful to our Executive Commission of Advisors and Strategic Planning Committee for their thoughtful leadership and steadfast dedication in developing a strategic plan that will help lead our school for years to come. Their commitment reflects the shared belief that a St. Edward education forms virtuous leaders prepared to serve others with faith, compassion, and excellence.

To our St. Edward family and friends, thank you for your unwavering support and generosity. Because of you, our students continue to grow in mind, body, and soul while building lifelong connections that define the Green Wave community.

We hope you enjoy this edition of *The Monarch*.

With gratitude,

AnnMarie Woj-Dufelmeier ('98)

Head of School

Thank you to all those who contributed to *The Monarch*; your insight, memories, and support have made it truly special. We appreciate your help celebrating our history and achievements.

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Peg Corcoran ('84) – ECA Member

Jennifer Davis – ECA Member

Patti Hannula ('03) – ECA Member

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Jorge Vargas and
Deacon Rafael Villagomez



BROADENING HORIZONS IN THE CLASSROOM AND BEYOND

Education extends far beyond the classroom. Guided by our mission, St. Edward Central Catholic High School continues to create experiences that challenge students academically, prepare them for future success, and broaden their understanding of the world around them. The world needs more service-driven leaders from St. Edward.

Expanding College Credit Opportunities

One of the most exciting areas of growth has been the expansion of our dual credit offerings. Students already have the opportunity to earn college credit through our partnership with Benedictine University, where university-level courses are taught on St. Edward's campus by certified faculty members.



Beginning in the 2026–27 school year, through the Elgin Community College (ECC) Part-Time Dual Credit Program, qualified juniors and seniors will be able to earn both high school and college credit while taking courses on the ECC campus. Initial offerings include sociology, world languages, web design, hospitality, engineering, and healthcare pathways, along with opportunities in the trades.

Preparing for Life After St. Edward

Our post-secondary counseling program continues to grow, helping students and families navigate college and career planning with confidence. This year, all students utilized Naviance for career exploration and course planning. Juniors began senior planning meetings in the spring, conducted college searches, and learned how to interpret SAT scores and admissions requirements.

Students also benefited from Illinois' new *One Click College Admit* program, which allows eligible students to receive fee-free admission offers from participating public universities based on their academic performance. In addition, counselors hosted College Planning Presentations for sophomore and junior parents, providing resources and guidance throughout the college search process.

Along with additional initiatives to showcase diverse career options, these opportunities reflect St. Edward's commitment to helping students discover their talents and prepare for life outside of high school.

Learning Beyond the Classroom

Our World Travel Program provides students with transformative experiences that foster cultural awareness, independence, and confidence. Students traveled to Spain in Spring 2026, will visit Italy in Spring 2027, and are looking ahead to an unforgettable experience in Costa Rica during Summer 2028. These opportunities allow students to see the world through a broader lens while creating lifelong memories.



Students Visit Spain – Spring 2026



GRADUATION 2025



Class of 2025 Valedictorian

**Robert Sommer,
University of Notre Dame**

"Yet, as I reflect on these four years, what I know I will remember aren't my test scores or GPA—it's the stuff

that wasn't graded: the weird, wonderful, messy, and memorable moments that made St. Edward feel less like a school, and more like a second home...The real journey of high school isn't about perfect attendance or perfect papers. It's about finding your people, finding your courage, and eventually finding yourself."

Robert Sommer, Class of 2025 Valedictorian



Class of 2025 Salutatorian

**Matthew Tulgar,
Marquette University**

"As we head into the next chapter of our lives, it's important to remember the values that helped us

to succeed. Remember to be open-minded and ready to learn. Remember to be kind and compassionate. Most importantly, remember to be you. We all have our own talents and gifts that define who we are. As we go forward in this exciting next chapter of our lives, remember to be yourself. May God guide us in everything that we do."

Matthew Tulgar, Class of 2025 Salutatorian



GRADUATION 2026



Class of 2026 Valedictorian

**Sophie Holland,
University of Illinois**

"Our time at this school for the past four years has strengthened our relationship with God and reinforced our

Catholic values. The lessons we have learned and the faith we have fostered will endure as we face the inevitable uncertainties of the future. God has a plan, and His love for us will never falter."

Sophie Holland, Class of 2026 Valedictorian



Class of 2026 Salutatorian

**Alaina Nolan,
Columbia University,
New York**

"We didn't just survive these four years. We grew, we changed, and we proved

to ourselves that we are capable of more than we ever imagined. And as we move forward, let's not forget what got us here: perseverance, connection, each other and most importantly God."

Alaina Nolan, Class of 2026 Salutatorian

"May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed."

~Psalm 20:4



Young Alumni Career Series

In Spring 2026, St. Edward launched the "Young Alumni Career Series", welcoming recent graduates back to campus to share their college experiences, career journeys, and professional advice. Presenters representing careers in law, culinary arts, hospitality, and law enforcement inspired students to explore future opportunities. Interested in presenting to our students this fall? All alumni are welcome to contact mainoffice@stedhs.org.



**Kasey Cooke ('15)
James Beard Nominee;
Executive Chef**



**Ofc. Clarissa Ramos ('14)
and Det. Arely Ramos ('16)
Elgin Police Department**



**Alecia ('15) now works
with fellow alumnus
Emi Morales ('99)
at Morales Law Group
in Elgin**



FAITH, COMMUNITY & PHILANTHROPY

ROOTED IN FAITH, DRIVEN BY GENEROSITY

The Difference You Make

Every gift to St. Edward reaches beyond our school. It touches the life of a student and helps a family choose a faith-filled education they may not otherwise be able to afford. Because of the generosity of the St. Edward community, more young people can learn in a place where they are known and supported as they grow in faith.

Since 2002, the Guardian Angel Fund has helped make a St. Edward education possible for countless students. Nearly 40% of our students now receive financial assistance, with more than \$200,000 awarded to qualifying families this year. For these families,

scholarship support can make the difference between hoping for a Catholic education and being able to say yes to it.



Your support also helps close the gap between tuition and the actual cost of educating each student. That cost is nearly \$16,000 per year, while tuition covers just over \$10,000. Gifts to the Guardian Angel Fund, Green Wave Day, the Tidal Wave Gala, the Annual Fund, and other initiatives help us provide strong academic programs, meaningful faith formation, updated

resources, and experiences that shape each student's years at St. Edward. Thank you for your support.

Building Community Through Service: Inaugural Day of Service 2026



Wave of Service Day

On January 28, 2026, more than 215 St. Edward students and staff took part in the school's first Wave of Service Day. Participants supported local organizations such as TLC Pregnancy Services, Food for Greater Elgin, Marklund Home, PADS of Elgin, and Phil's Friends. Others completed projects for Anderson Humane and The Ruth Project. Students chose opportunities that were meaningful to them and saw firsthand how service can make a difference.

Another Wave of Service Day is planned for August 27, 2026, in remembrance of the lives lost in the tragedy at Annunciation Catholic School in Minneapolis. Principal Matthew DeBoer ('04) and his children visited St. Edward over spring break and shared that serving others would be a meaningful way to honor the victims. Every St. Edward student and staff member will participate in this "wave of good," strengthening the community while keeping the victims and their families at the heart of the day.



From St. Edward to Seminary: An Interview with Alumnus Joseph Johnson ('23)



St. Edward: *How did you select the best college seminary program for you?*

Joe: When I chose to apply for seminary under the Rockford Diocese, the choice to go to St. John Vianney College Seminary was made for me by the Bishop. I find that this is a freeing reality; I simply respond to a direction provided for me. I can say with certainty that this choice has been a great blessing for me for the past three years, and I believe it will continue to be for the years to come.

St. Edward: *What is discernment like for you as you move through these years?*

Joe: Discernment in essence is coming closer to Jesus and His own Sacred Heart. I have noticed that as I grow closer to the Him, I recognize His "heart beat" more and it is clearer to me which direction He is pointing.

St. Edward: *You met Pope Leo XIV?*

Joe: Meeting Pope Leo XIV is one of the greatest highlights from my time in seminary so far. He was very joyful and simple in his conversation with us, and he encouraged us to continue to pray—especially for peace. He is very personable and kindhearted, which was evident in his demeanor and tone of voice when we met him.

St. Edward: *What will your role be at Holy Family this year, and what kind of studies are you continuing at the college level?*

Joe: This summer I will have an assignment at Holy Family Parish in Rockford. This assignment will entail helping lead Vacation Bible School, a talk given at the parish, and going with the youth group to a Steubenville conference. I will also be altar serving and helping the priests with whatever they need, along with being present at different events at the parish. When I return to the seminary in the fall, I will begin my last year of undergraduate studies for a double major in Philosophy and Catholic Studies before beginning graduate Theology in Major Seminary.



The Gift That Changed a Class

**Rev. Paul White,
Alumnus of the Year**



"It is not about what we do, but what God wants us to do and does through us that really matters."

Those words were at the heart of Rev. Paul White's acceptance of the 2026 Alumnus of the Year Award. Rather than reflecting on his own accomplishments, Fr. White spoke about a defining moment that forever shaped the Class of 1981.

During their senior year, classmate Don was diagnosed with cancer. Through the Fr. Schneider Award, a group of classmates came together to provide Don with a computer. Looking back, Fr. White believes it was more than an act of kindness, it was God's invitation to serve.

"Our class never really won many awards or went down in the school annals for much," he reflected. "But we loved each other, brought our faith into our lives, and have done wonderful things after St. Edward because of our time there."

The bonds formed at St. Edward are among the school's greatest legacies. They are not measured by accolades or achievements, but by lives guided by faith, strengthened through lifelong friendships, and committed to serving others. More than 40 years after graduation, the Class of 1981 continues to embody these values. A lasting testament to the power of a St. Edward education and the community it creates.



CHAMPIONS IN THE CLASSROOM AND ON THE COURT, IN THE FIELD: Athletic victories and record-breaking achievements.



SOPHIE HOLLAND ('26) & HAYDEN POOLE ('28)

XC and Track School Records Broken

St. Edward's distance runners made history this year in both cross country and track. At the IHSA State Cross Country Finals, **sophomore Hayden Poole ('28)** broke the three-mile school record with a time of 18:23.4, surpassing the mark previously held by Hall of Famer Ashley Lucas ('08). **Senior Sophie Holland ('26)** moved into third all-time with a time of 19:07.8. During track season, Poole broke the 1600M school record on May 4 and later lowered her own record to 5:25.69 at the IHSA State Finals.

Alaina Nolan Sets New St. Edward Strikeout Record

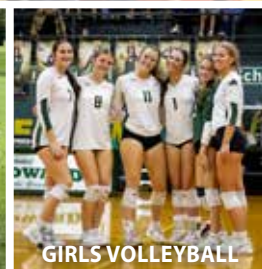
Alaina Nolan ('26) capped a standout St. Edward softball career as a two-time Chicagoland Christian Conference Pitcher of the Year and Second Team All-State selection. She finished with 865 strikeouts, surpassing Hall of Famer Lindsay Zdroik's ('16) previous school record of 781. Nolan will play Division I softball in the Ivy League next year at Columbia University.



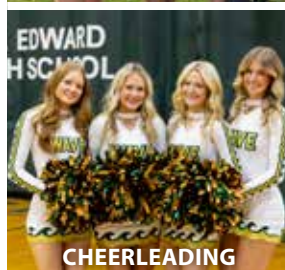
REG/SEC/SUPER-SECTIONAL CHAMPS 2026



GIRLS GOLF



GIRLS VOLLEYBALL



CHEERLEADING



FLAG FOOTBALL REGIONALS 2026



IHSA STATE FOURTH PLACE 2026



BOYS SOCCER



**SOFTBALL
REGIONAL CHAMPS**



2025-26 MATH TEAM

ATHLETICS & CLUBS



Welcome, Dave Archibald: Interview with the New Dean of Athletics

As St. Edward Central Catholic High School continues to build upon its tradition of excellence, we are pleased to welcome Dave Archibald as our new Dean of Athletics. With 23 years of experience in education and athletics, Coach “Arch” brings a passion for student development and community building. In this interview, he shares his vision for the future of Green Wave athletics.

St. Edward: *As the new Dean of Athletics, what excites you most about joining the St. Edward community?*

Dave: I am thankful that my energy for athletics and ideas have been received with positivity. While I know that I am still growing as an educator and athletic director, my experiences over the last 23 years have prepared me well for this role. I am also motivated to raise the competitiveness of the football program as the Head Coach, but also support all our programs in raising the bar. It will be a process, but I hope our athletes rise to the challenge and show progress that will energize the community and bring more athletes to St. Edward.

St. Edward: *What is your vision for growing and strengthening the athletic program in years ahead, both in participation and competitive success?*

Dave: Practically speaking, I want to significantly raise the bar in our training. Increasing strength and speed across all sports is positive for the school. Plans for a new fitness center coincide well with this emphasis, and when surrounding communities see that we are serious about growing our athletic programs, I hope that more high character and talented athletes will join our community.

St. Edward: *How do you hope athletics at St. Edward will help shape students beyond the field, court, or track?*

Dave: I want our athletes to see the value of intense competition not only for the here and now, but also because training, striving to win as a team, and going through the many forms of adversity that can happen in that process, can allow them to grow in skills, values, and virtues--some which are more difficult to learn outside of the athletic arena.

From raising the standard of training to helping student-athletes grow through competition and adversity, Coach Arch brings a clear vision for the future of St. Edward athletics. We are excited to have him leading our programs and look forward to the continued growth of Green Wave athletics under his leadership.

REMEMBERING JAMES “PERK” PERKINS

The St. Edward community remembers and honors James “Perk” Perkins, who passed away on December 10, 2025. During his 22 years at St. Edward, Perk served in numerous roles, leaving a lasting mark on generations of Green Wave students and athletes. As Athletic Director, he helped grow the school’s athletic program from six interscholastic sports to 17, and as head golf coach, he led St. Edward to its first and only state championship in 1981.

A respected educator, coach, and mentor, Perk’s contributions to athletics were recognized through his induction into the Elgin Sports Hall of Fame, St. Edward Sports Hall of Fame, and Illinois Sports Hall of Fame. His legacy of leadership, dedication, and service will continue to inspire the St. Edward community for years to come. Thank you, Perk, for all you did.



FINE ARTS & THEATER

CREATIVITY IN THE SPOTLIGHT: THE ARTS AT ST. EDWARD



A Stage for Growth

Since opening in 2024, the Fox Family Performing Arts Center (PAC) has quickly become one of the most versatile and meaningful spaces on the St. Edward campus. While it serves as the home of the performing arts, its impact reaches far beyond the stage.

Momentum continues to build in music and theater. In his first year at St. Edward, Music Director Matt Hickey grew the choir from four students to 24. In the spring of 2027, the choir will travel to Nashville for the WorldStrides Heritage Festival. Students also explored the technical side of performance through a new A/V and IT Theatre Fundamentals elective course taught by Theatre Director Chris Gonzales and IT Director Joe Salchert. This year's St. Edward productions included *The Play That Goes Wrong* and *Legally Blonde: The Musical*.

For Gonzales, the greatest reward is not the applause at the end of a performance, but seeing students discover where they belong. The

performing arts program gives them room to take creative risks, solve problems, and become more comfortable sharing their talents.

The space has also become central to school life. St. Edward gathers here for Mass, transforming the PAC into a place of worship and reflection. It hosted Signing Day, celebrating student-athletes preparing to continue their athletic careers in college. Career Series speakers also took the state-of-the-art stage to share their knowledge and insights with students preparing for life beyond high school.

Strengthened connections with younger students were also possible because of the new space. Productions from Deanery elementary schools St. Catherine of Siena and St. Patrick Catholic were spectacular ways for a new generation to feel at home as part of the Green Wave. Whether St. Edward gathers to perform, celebrate, learn, or worship, the Fox Family PAC continues to bring the community together while creating new opportunities for students.

Connected in Community: Remembrance & Class Notes

Forever part of the Green Wave

St. Edward honors and remembers alumni in our community who have gone before us. If you are aware of the passing of a St. Edward alumni or friend, we kindly ask that you notify us by emailing mainoffice@stedhs.org.

Benjamin Downs '49 – February 28, 2025

Jerry Gosse '54 - October 23, 2025

Kim Michael McGee '58 - June 26, 2026

Bill Hansen '75 – June 1, 2025

Steven Taeyaerts '83 – April 8, 2026

Tommy Wood '23 – July 11, 2026

Friends of St. Edward

James “Perk” Perkins – December 10, 2025

Steve Edwards – March 5, 2026

Eugene J. “Gene” Balmonte – April 2, 2026

“Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.”

One of Our Own is a Published Author!

Joe Snellgrove from the Class of 1980 has recently become an author of three books. Joe has owned and operated the “Heavenly Hot Dog” stand in downtown Glen Ellyn for the past 18 years. He drew from experiences working in the hot dog stand to author three children’s books. Joe was recently highlighted on *NBC Chicago Today*. He has worked with Dupage County Pads, Glen House Food Pantry, and Ups for Downs, to benefit children with Down Syndrome. Joe recently commented on how much he appreciates working with these families. He loves their winning attitudes. Check out “Heavenly Hot Dogs”.



Mark Your Calendars for Upcoming Class Reunions and Celebrations

Class of 1966 60-Year Reunion, September 26, 2026

Holiday Inn, Elgin, IL 60123 5:30pm

Tours of the school are available as described in the invitation letter.

Contact: dennis@wardlane.com, caroljungles@yahoo.com, scrabblemom@msn.com

Class of 1972 Birthday Bash, October 10, 2026

Pub 72 Bar & Grill, 38 E. Higgins Rd, Gilberts, IL 60136

Class of 1976 50-Year Reunion, September 26 and 27, 2026

Plans are still being finalized

Contact: Mary Johnson – mjohnsmg@aol.com

Class of 1986 40-Year Reunion, September 25, 2026

Football Game and Party at Bandito Barney's Beach Club

10 N. River St., East Dundee, IL 60118

Contact: Michael Ossola – michael.ossola@yahoo.com

Class of 2016 10-Year Reunion October 16, 2026

Football Game and Party at River Street Tavern

102 N. River Street, East Dundee, IL 60118

Contact: Maegan Gross – maegangross732@gmail.com

Gabriella Tripicchio – tripicchio@ucco.com



Have you changed careers, earned a degree, gotten married, welcomed a new family member, celebrated a milestone, or reconnected with classmates?

We'd love to hear from you.

Help us keep the St. Edward alumni community connected by sharing your updates and ensuring your contact information is current.

Scan the QR code or visit stedhs.org to submit your news and update your information.



Share a digital edition of *The Monarch* with family and friends. Visit www.stedhs.org.



ST. EDWARD CCHS

335 Locust Street
Elgin, IL 60123

Join Us for Upcoming Events

Homecoming – September 25, 2026 – Soccer 5PM, Football 7PM

Green Wave Day – October 16, 2026 – A Day to Celebrate. A Gift That Lasts.

Tidal Wave – April 17, 2027

Visit www.stedhs.org for more information.



Any article suggestions, photos, or comments can be directed to mainoffice@stedhs.org.

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