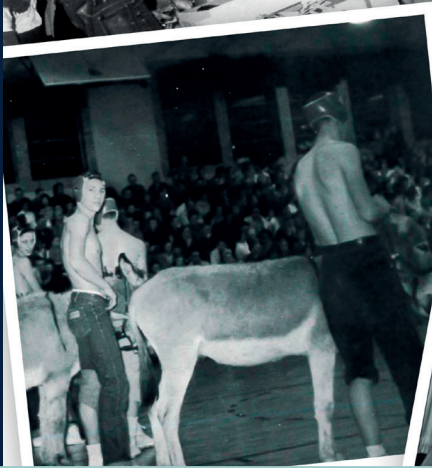
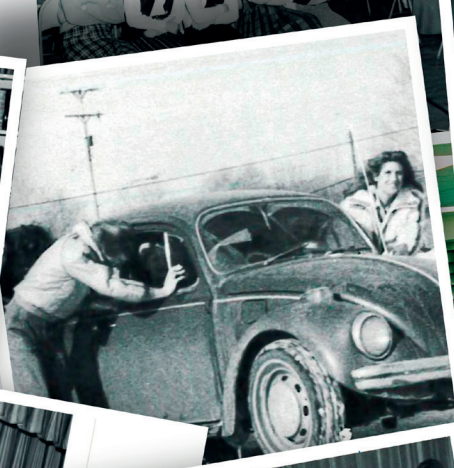




VOICES THROUGH
THE AGES



**SOUTH
CHRISTIAN**
HIGH SCHOOL

CALENDAR NEWS

AUGUST

- 26 First Day of School
- 30 Night of Worship – Amphitheater – 6:30 PM

SEPTEMBER

- 8 Fine Arts Boosters Tailgate and Pep Rally
- 9 Women's Golf Outing
@ Stonewater Country Club
- 19 Sports Boosters' Clay Shoot
- 26 Victory Day – 2:00 PM
- 28 Homecoming Week (Through October 2)

OCTOBER

- 2 Sailor Night Football Game
- 21 Orchestra Concert – 7:00 PM
- 24 75th Anniversary Gala
@ Frederik Meijer Gardens
- 26 All Choirs Concert – 7:00 PM

NOVEMBER

- 5-7 Fall Play
- 11 Veterans Day Special Assembly
- 23 Blood Drive

DECEMBER

- 9 Band/Orchestra Concert – 7:00 PM
- 14 All Choirs Concert – 7:00 PM

Please refer to the 2026-27 Events School Calendar on our website for more information.
www.schs.org/calendar/

On the Cover: Collection of photos from SCHS Anchor yearbooks.

The South Christian HiLites publication is produced two times per year.

SCHS is an equal opportunity institution. SCHS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, sex, or physical/mental handicap in its educational programming and activities, including enrollment, employment, and contracting.

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Byron Center, MI 49315
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P. 616.455.3210
E. office@schs.org



**COMMUNITY
NIGHT OF
WORSHIP**

Sunday, August 30
6:30 PM

@ South Christian's
Amphitheater

All are welcome to worship and pray blessings on the start of a new year.



Friday, October 2, 2026
5:00–7:00 PM

East Kentwood High School
Falcon Stadium

We welcome all alumni, families, and friends to come together for a night of Sailor Spirit, great food, and community fun.



**Veterans Day
Assembly**

Wednesday, November 11
9:00 AM

@ SCHS Performance Gym

South Christian High School will honor those who have served in the United States Armed Forces during our annual Veterans Day Assembly. Members of the community, as well as parents, grandparents, and veterans connected to the South Suburban schools, are invited to join us for this special event.

This year's featured speaker is Lieutenant Colonel Brent Gaylord, a professor at Michigan State University, pilot, and veteran who served 21 years in the United States Air Force. Brent is also the parent of South Christian students Sophie and Douglas, graduates of the Class of 2026.

WELCOME TO THE SUMMER HILITES



Through 75 years of rich history at South Christian High School – in classrooms, on stages and athletic fields, and in the faith formed here and carried forward long after graduation – decades of Sailors have faithfully served God through their unique calling in the world. This issue of HiLites gathers stories and voices from across the decades, and I think you'll find them both familiar and surprising. From throwback photos to reflections from alumni and former faculty members, these pages remind us that South Christian's story is far longer and richer than any single chapter and far bigger than any individual person.

At the heart of this issue is a simple but powerful idea that Lindsay Sinnema, our new Director of Advancement, puts beautifully in her article: we tell stories not just to remember, but to encourage and to

point each other to God's faithfulness. Fond memories with friends, meaningful lessons from teachers, and today's students serving the community are evidence of South Christian's commitment to Christ across generations.

As we celebrate our 75th year, I hope you'll mark your calendar for our upcoming Gala, a celebration of this community and the mission that has held it together for decades. It's exactly the kind of gathering these pages point toward: people who share a story, coming back together to celebrate what God has done and to imagine what's still ahead. I'd love to see you there, and I hope you'll come ready to share a story of your own.

AARON MECKES
Head of School

"WE WILL TELL THE NEXT GENERATION THE PRAISEWORTHY DEEDS OF THE LORD, HIS POWER, AND THE WONDERS HE HAS DONE."

PSALM 78:4

STAFF UPDATES

NEW Staff Members

Holly Baar - Choir Teacher

Daniel Dykstra - AP Psychology and History Teacher

Morgan Haagsma - Biology and Chemistry Teacher

Leanne Hendrikse - Athletic Assistant

Rachel Jansen - Human Resource Manager

John Kim - Chemistry Teacher

Greg Madendorp - FST and Algebra 2 Teacher

Emily Reidsma - Counselor

Luke VanderZee - Geography and Economics Teacher

Betsy Veldman - Business Teacher

Abby Wieringa - Art Teacher

RETIRING Staff Members



2013



SANDY DOBBS

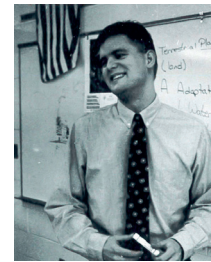
14 Years - Development Director



1987

BRUCE HUTTENGA

40 Years - Social Studies Teacher



1992

ROD JAGER

35 Years - Science Teacher



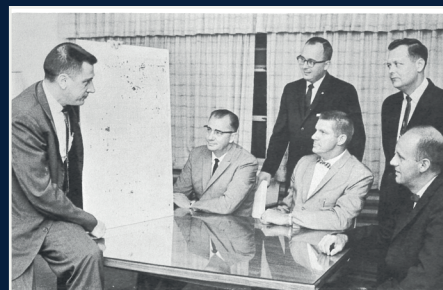
Thank you to the dedicated staff who are following God's leading to serve in new vocations or communities:

Natalie Bultman, Renee Hartman, Jess Hollenbach, Kelsie Schweir, and Abby Weaver

BOARD MEMBERS 2026-2027

Thank you to all who joined us at the annual Society Meeting in May. The budget was approved, and Aaron Meckes shared the new strategic plan. We introduced four new Board Members: Zach Blacquiere, Katie Prins, Amy Raak, and Jeff Sherwood. Please keep them in your prayers as they prepare to keep SCHS firmly focused on our mission.

Thank you to retiring Board Members: Ryan Bennink, Kim DeVries, Jason Maas, and Sara VanGrouw. We appreciate your wisdom and leadership the past three years.



"FOR YOU CREATED MY INMOST BEING; YOU KNIT ME TOGETHER IN MY MOTHER'S WOMB. I PRAISE YOU BECAUSE I AM FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE. YOUR WORKS ARE WONDERFUL, I KNOW THAT FULL WELL. MY FRAME WAS NOT HIDDEN FROM YOU WHEN I WAS MADE IN THE SECRET PLACE. WHEN I WAS WOVEN TOGETHER IN THE DEPTHS OF THE EARTH, YOUR EYES SAW MY UNFORMED BODY. ALL THE DAYS ORDAINED FOR ME WERE WRITTEN IN YOUR BOOK BEFORE ONE OF THEM CAME TO BE."

PSALM 139:13-16

MASTERPIECE

There is something deeply personal in these verses. They remind us that our lives are not accidents and our identities are not random. Before anyone else had an opinion about us - before grades, social circles, achievements, or failures - God had already formed us with care and intention. Every detail, seen and unseen, was crafted by Him. That means who you are right now is not a mistake to fix but a life designed with purpose.

In a world that constantly pressures us to measure up, to act a certain way, or to fit into shifting expectations, this truth is incredibly freeing. Society often defines worth by popularity, success, appearance, or possessions, but God's perspective is entirely different. He does not evaluate you based on trends or comparisons. He sees you as "fearfully and wonderfully made," valuable simply because you are his creation. When we truly believe that, we are released from the exhausting need to prove ourselves.

Understanding that we are created with purpose also changes how we live. If God intentionally designed each of us, then our lives are meant to reflect Him. Instead of chasing status or accumulating things, we begin to ask different questions, such as, "How can I serve?" Our gifts, personalities, and experiences are not just for our benefit; they are tools to love and uplift those around us.

Psalm 139 reminds us that every day of our lives has already been seen by God. That means your story matters, even in the small, ordinary moments. Serving others isn't always about big, visible actions. It's often found in quiet faithfulness, in choosing humility over pride, and in putting someone else before yourself.

So today, rest in this truth: you were intentionally made, are deeply known, and are fully loved. Let that truth free you from comparison and pressure, and let it lead you into a life that reflects God's heart - not one centered on self but poured out in service to others.

As we reflect on the rich history of our school, celebrate the work God is doing in the present, and look ahead with hope to the future, we are reminded that every generation has been shaped with purpose by His hand. This devotion points us back to the fact that we are "fearfully and wonderfully made," each created by God with unique gifts and a calling to serve Him. That same faithful God who carried our school through the past and sustains us today will continue to lead us into the future with hope and purpose. May we move forward trusting that the God who created us so wonderfully will remain faithful in every season still to come.



Mr. Bruce Huttenga
Psychology, PE, US History

BRUCE HUTTENGA
Social Studies Teacher

Photo Credit:
Anchor Yearbook 2004

ATHLETIC UPDATES



Congratulations to all of our winter and spring athletic teams, as well as the dedicated coaches who invested their time and talents throughout the season. Here are just a few of the many successes from another outstanding year of Sailor athletics.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Under third-year Head Coach Erika Brown, the Sailors had a historic season, finishing 27-1 overall and capturing the OK Gold Conference, District, and Regional championships before advancing to the Division 2 Final Four at the Breslin Center.

All-Conference Honorees: Abby Prins, Sophia Prins, Lizzie Wolthuis

GIRLS TENNIS

Coach Keith Stulp guided the Sailors to both OK Gold Conference and Regional championships before finishing 8th at the Division 3 State Finals in Midland.

All-Conference Honorees: Audi Burgess, Danya Hendrickson, Stella Jelsema, Morgan Struck, Gabby Young

BOYS VOLLEYBALL

Head Coach Mya Udell led the Sailors through the first-ever MHSAA-sponsored season, finishing as Division 2 State Runner-Up after winning the Regional championship and advancing through the Final Four.

All-Conference Honorees: Noah Jager, Noah Klump

BOYS GOLF

In his first season, Head Coach Ben Cook ('17) led the Sailors to an undefeated OK Gold Conference championship and a 4th-place finish at the Division 2 State Finals.

All-Conference Honorees: Harris Hoekwater, Hudson Kerstetter, Caleb Krosschell, Ty Swift, Drew VanderHeide

BOYS BASKETBALL

Under Coach Taylor Johnson, the Sailors captured the OK Gold Conference championship and finished 20-4 overall.

All-Conference Honorees: Caleb Krosschell, JJ Modderman, Max Zichterman

BOYS SWIMMING

The Caledonia co-op team, led by Coach Todd DeJong, continued to grow throughout the winter season and finished with strong performances at the OK Red Conference Meet and the MHSAA State Finals.

All-Conference Honorees: Brett DeJager, Hudson Kemper, Liam Schuurmans

TRACK & FIELD

Under the leadership of Head Coach Kori VanderKooi, the Sailors sent multiple athletes to the Division 2 State Finals while breaking five school records throughout the season.

All-Conference Honorees: Gabriella Agar, Tiffany DeMaagd, Lydia Huisman, Ava Oostema, Belle Oostema, Chloe Rinzema, Lily VanEyck, Annalise Wiltjer, Rex Jackson, Hudson Kemper, Easton Raak, Josiah Rozema, Thad VanderLaan, Ethan White





A LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE IN ATHLETICS

The scoreboard fades over time. The memories in the locker room never do. As a South Christian graduate and now Athletic Director, I've had the privilege of experiencing those moments from both sides of the locker room. Some of my favorite memories aren't the championships, but the time spent celebrating victories and encouraging one another after heartbreaking losses. Every generation of Sailors has shared those same highs and lows. The cross country team's first state championship in 1964 surely felt just as exhilarating as our basketball championships in 2003 and 2005.

That's what has always made South Christian athletics different. While championships are worth celebrating, the greatest victories happen in the character that's built along the way. Generations of student-athletes have been shaped by coaches who view the field, court, and track as places to build character, perseverance, teamwork, and leadership. Success is measured not only in championships, but in lives impacted. As a student, I competed in most of the men's sports. Those experiences inspired me to return to South Christian with the hope of having the same impact on today's students that my coaches had on me. Coach Ken Hiskes, in particular, was a role model who taught lessons that extended far beyond

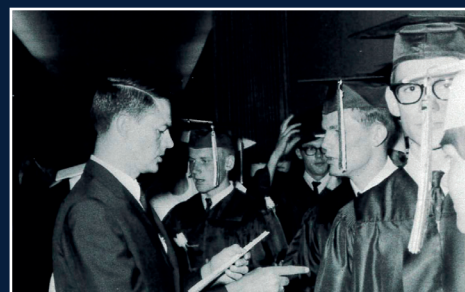
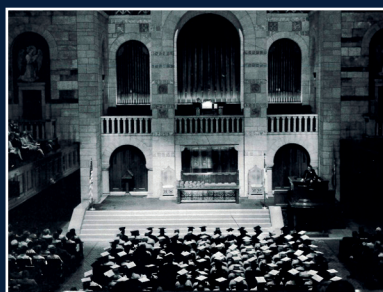
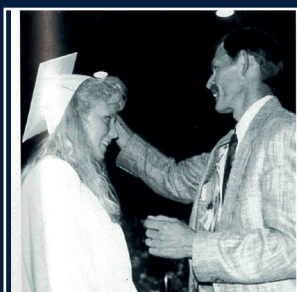
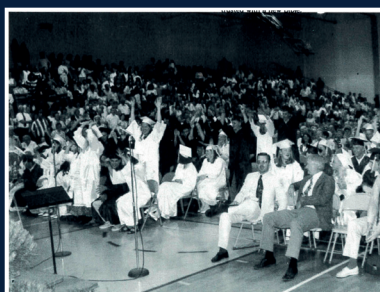
basketball. Over the decades, Sailor athletics has built a tradition of excellence across every season.

From football and basketball to soccer, volleyball, golf, tennis, track & field, and cross country, our programs have earned state championships, produced collegiate athletes, and demonstrated the hard work, perseverance, and teamwork that define South Christian athletics. Soccer, both boys and girls, has emerged as one of the premier programs in Michigan, with multiple state titles and a reputation for technical excellence and disciplined play. The volleyball program has also built a strong tradition of success, competing at a high level across multiple eras and adding to the school's championship legacy. In addition, the golf, tennis, track & field and cross country programs have demonstrated remarkable consistency, producing individual state champions and team success while embodying the hard work and endurance that define South Christian athletics. Across all sports, the Sailors have shown a commitment to excellence that spans generations.

DAVID KOOL
Athletic Director



CELEBRATING THE CLASS OF 2026





"THEREFORE, AS GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE, HOLY AND DEARLY LOVED, CLOTHE YOURSELVES WITH COMPASSION, KINDNESS, HUMILITY, GENTLENESS AND PATIENCE."

COLOSSIANS 3:12

DEPARTMENT AWARDS

ART: Grace Kooyer, Colette Plattner, Danielle Tiemeyer

AUDITORIUM & TECHNOLOGY: Chloe Hasper, Anneka Schuurmans

BIBLE: Grace Burgess, Noah Jager, Grace Kooyer

ENGLISH: Grace Kooyer

ESS - ACHIEVEMENT: Clara Halley

INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY: Landon Bailey, Braeden DeWard, Sam VanderMeyden, Nolan Vieu, Ava Williams

KENT CAREER TECHNICAL CENTER: Taylor Owen

MATHEMATICS: Zhibo Wang

NATIONAL SCHOOL BAND AWARD: Morgan Ball

NATIONAL SCHOOL CHORAL AWARD: Danya Hendrickson

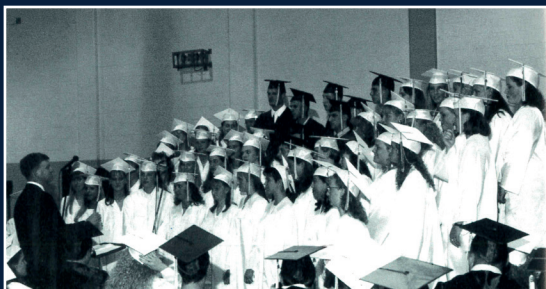
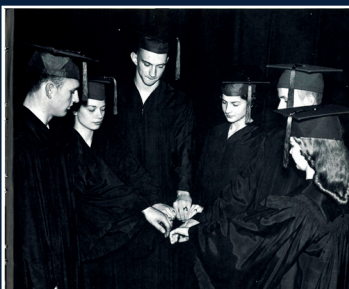
NATIONAL SCHOOL ORCHESTRA AWARD: Abigail VanWynyarden

PHYSICAL EDUCATION: Carson Joldersma, Evie TenHaaf

SCIENCE: Zhibo Wang

SOCIAL STUDIES: Kyan Hantle

SPANISH: Grace Kooyer, Anneka Schuurmans, Maraleisa VandenHeuvel



FINE ARTS UPDATES

A LEGACY OF MUSIC, THEATER, AND THE ARTS

For 75 years, South Christian's Fine Arts program has equipped students to develop their God-given talents while glorifying God through music, theater, and the arts. Today, that legacy continues as students build on generations of creativity, excellence, and worship through performances, competitions, and productions.

The **Band program** celebrated another outstanding season of performances and accomplishments. The Symphonic Band traveled to Chicago to participate in the Festivals of Music, earning a second-place award, while the Concert Band earned straight Division I ratings at the MSBOA State Band Festival. Looking ahead, the Marching Band is already preparing its 2026 production featuring the music of ABBA.

The **Orchestra program** also enjoyed a memorable year. The Symphony Orchestra earned a strong Division II rating at the State Festival. Congratulations to Abigail VanWyngarden, recipient of the National School Orchestra Award, recognizing outstanding musicianship, leadership, and dedication to the orchestra program.

South Christian's **Vocal Music program** continued the tradition of excellence throughout the year. The Concert Choir and Women's Choir participated

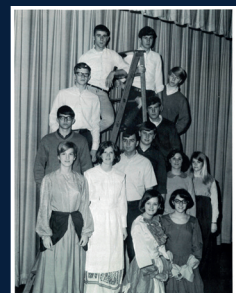
in the State Choir Festival at Trinity Lutheran Church, where both ensembles performed beautifully in a wonderful acoustic setting.

Madrigals once again maintained an active performance schedule, leading worship at the local churches, performing at choir concerts, deacons' dinners, and sporting events—including South Christian basketball games, the Grand Rapids Griffins, and Rise Volleyball.

The **Theater program** delighted audiences with its production of *Seussical*, bringing Horton the Elephant, the Cat in the Hat, and many beloved Dr. Seuss characters to life through energetic performances, colorful costumes, memorable music, and a heartwarming story centered on kindness, courage, and believing in yourself.



Back Row: Karl Wenzel, Doug Verhoff, Doug Bakker, Bob Dornbos.



For generations of South Christian students, Rev. Galen Meyer's beloved fictional character, Dunker, helped bring Scripture to life through memorable chapel stories. We asked Rev. Meyer what Dunker is up to these days—here's his answer, in his own words.

In chapel talks at SCHS I tried to apply the Scripture passage to life with a story about someone named Tread or, later, Retread. For the last 20+ years before I retired, I told many stories about Dunker for the same reason. These guys were not just imaginary characters for me. I saw them in the students who came into my classroom every day.

Stories about Dunker might include his dog, Horton; sister, Celia; parents, Hans and Trudy; his Grandma Swingma; good friend, Roach, and the girl on whom he had a crush but never got, Mitsy. They also included five or six actual students from the senior class.

Dunker was a perpetual senior – always short a fraction of a credit or of some requirement for graduation. It made him a bit sad every spring when he was told he would not get a diploma. But he learned over time how to weather disappointments.

Even his Valentine's Day disappointment when Student Council members entered his 7th hour class with bundles of carnations students had ordered for those they admired. Everyone seemed to get lots of them – except Dunker. When the dispensers of the carnations were ready to wheel their cart out of the room, one of them called out, "Anyone NOT get a carnation? There's one left." Dunker raised his hand slightly—only at the wrist. She noticed, walked over with the single carnation and handed it to him. He held it in front of his face. The stem was broken near the top. The bloom hung limply before his eyes. It reminded him of a bird that had flown against a window and broken its neck. Dunker looked for a name attached to the stem to see who might have sent it to him. There was none. "A left-over for a left-over," he sighed to himself, "Oh well, there's more to life than this on God's earth." It was a line Grandma Swingma used to say when things went wrong.

Knowing how much Dunker wanted to graduate and move on, I promised myself that I would not retire until I had done all I could to help make that happen. And it did happen in Spring 2008!

Because Dunker and his parents could not attend graduation (Grandma Swingma was hospitalized), I was given his SCHS Diploma, certifying "...that Dunker...has kinda-sorta, we're almost sure, somewhat completed the requirements for graduation from this High School...."

It was signed by June Atsma (Breakfast Club Monitor), David Lubben (Custodian), Lawrence Plaisier (Principal), and Goerge Guichelaar (Assistant Principal of Discipline).

Dunker made it! And I could retire!

I see Dunker once in a while at the Bitter End Coffee House on Leonard Street where he used to gather with friends while still at SC. Like them, he too has waded through some troubled waters since then. He and his wife have a little girl who is their worry (she will need some pediatric heart surgery in the future), but more than that, their greatest joy.

Dunker told me he is more deeply moved by sunsets as he grows older. "When the whole western sky is painted in the fiery reds or pastels of pink, blue, grays, and orange with beams of light piercing through at different angles," he said, "it's God's glorious benediction at the end of a day."

"And when the colors of the sunset are reflected in the clouds to the north and south and even in the eastern horizon," he added after a pause, "I know that his benediction surrounds me and my family – and that he holds this whole world of his in arms of love."

What can I say? Dunker has become my teacher.

REV. G.H. MEYER
Retired Teacher



— ADVANCEMENT UPDATES —

STRENGTHENING SUPPORT THROUGH STORYTELLING

What do squirt guns, barber chairs, and jail cells have to do with God's faithfulness?

Throughout Scripture, God calls His people to remember and proclaim what He has done. We tell stories not simply to preserve memories, but to encourage one another, strengthen faith, and point people to God's faithfulness. Sometimes those stories are profound. Sometimes they're hilarious. Together, they remind us who we are and why this mission matters.

I've had the privilege of serving as South Christian High School's Director of Advancement for six months. While people often think this role is about fundraising, I believe my greatest responsibility is storytelling.

I often get a funny look when I explain that I'm from Florida, I've never been in advancement before, and I do not have a background in Christian Education. That background has allowed me to see this community with fresh eyes. Until I arrived, I only knew South Christian through stories my husband, Cody, shared with other alumni around campfires. Since being here, I've witnessed joy, tragedy, and celebration. Through it all, I've seen this community pray, grieve, and celebrate together. The bonds formed here don't end at graduation. They continue for generations, creating stories for years.

They are the stories that make us laugh and reveal the humble beginnings that built this community. I've heard about basketball players changing

clothes in jail cells because their games were played in a city hall gym. I've smiled at stories of Rev. Meyer teaching from a barber chair and telling Dunker stories that students still remember decades later. I can't help but laugh at the story of Principal DeVries keeping a squirt gun in his desk drawer to spray students sent to his office for misbehaving. These details may seem small, but together they tell a much bigger story – one of faith, perseverance, joy, and people committed to Christ.

Our story is still being written every day in today's classrooms, on athletic fields and stages, during mission trips and service projects, and through alumni serving Christ in their homes, churches, workplaces, and communities.

So I have a simple invitation: share your story. Tell us about the people who shaped your faith, the lessons you still carry, and the ways God has worked in your life since South Christian. Your story may encourage a student, reconnect a classmate, or strengthen someone's faith.

Because when we tell the stories of what God has done, we aren't simply preserving memories. We're participating in His work.

LINDSAY SINNEMA
Director of Advancement



TUITION ASSISTANCE UPDATE

For generations, the voices of this community have spoken clearly: Christian education matters. Time and again, alumni, parents, grandparents, and friends have come together to ensure that South Christian remains accessible to families seeking a Christ-centered education.

This year, those voices were heard again through the incredible generosity of our community, which raised \$450,000 for Tuition Assistance for the 2026–2027 school year.

Your gifts are making a lasting impact across generations. They are helping students learn, grow, and find their own voice in Christ-centered community regardless of financial circumstances. We are deeply grateful for your support and for the role you continue to play in the story of South Christian.

It is so rewarding to share that this year the Scrap Metal and Pop Can Drive raised over \$12,000. Thank you to all who so generously donated your scrap metal and pop cans.

STRONG FOUNDATIONS 5K AND FUN RUN



The South Suburban Christian Schools hosted the 3rd Annual Strong Foundations 5K and Fun Run. The event raises awareness of the schools' foundations, with the overall intent to lower the cost of tuition for all students. Collectively, the schools raised \$85,000 – distributing \$17,000 to each school foundation. Runners from Byron Center, Dutton, Legacy, Moline, and South Christian schools came together for the joint cause and ran, walked, and invested in the future of their children together.

This year's event saw participation increase by 60% over last year. Runners made their way through South Christian's cross country course before crossing the finish line to cheers from the announcer, upbeat music, food, and a festive atmosphere. Awards were presented to the top 18 finishers based on their age-group placement and the children participating in the Fun Run received goody bags.



To see photos, participants, and sponsors from the event, scan the QR Code.



SAILOR IMPACT FUND

If you're interested in supporting South Christian High School through a Sailor Impact Fund, here's how you can set it up:

- **MINIMUM GIFT:** A minimum initial gift of \$10,000 is required to establish a Sailor Impact Fund.
- **ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS:** Once the fund is established, additional contributions of any amount may be made by anyone at any time.
- **DISTRIBUTIONS:** Distributions from the fund will begin once the \$10,000 minimum is reached.

ESTABLISHED FUNDS & SCHOLARSHIPS

- The **Al VanPopering Construction Trades Scholarship Fund** awards scholarships to students going into the Trades.
- The **Inaugural Sailor Impact Fund** was established through an anonymous estate gift for Tuition Assistance. Additional gifts have been made in memory of Mary and John Haaksma, whose legacy continues to support generations of students through Christian education.
- The **Sailor Golf Program Impact Fund** provides financial support for the men's and women's golf teams.
- The **Pylman Family Gift Trust** was established by Edward and Lori Pylman and provides support for the Fine Arts.

This is a wonderful way to demonstrate your passion for a specific program or purpose at SCHS through a Sailor Impact Fund!

MEMORIAL GIFTS

WINTER/SPRING 2026

Jason Agar
Brent Feyen
Nick Grasman
Mary Haaksma
Fred Hekstra
Ernie Leep
Roger Steigenga

Tim Tamminga
Saramae VanderArk
Maynard VanderStel
John VanLoo
Al VanPopering
Thomas VanTol
Christine VanZytveld

75th ANNIVERSARY

VOICES THROUGH THE AGES

If you know, you know. Hamburger Hill. The hallways with class composites posted above lockers. The smell of barbecue or Russ's cream turkey sandwiches on hot lunch days. Every generation has its own memories. Some remember hacky sacks in the lobby. Others remember donkey basketball, taking photos by the anchor, singing the alma mater, or piling into buses for "home" football games. For some, the memories are so vivid they can still hear the voices that shaped them.

The buildings have changed. The classrooms and technology look different. Yet when alumni from seven decades begin telling stories, they all end up talking about the same things: teachers who invested in them, friends who became family, sacrifices their parents made, and God's faithfulness through it all.

Long before there was a thriving campus, there was simply a field and a vision. Families purchased the land but didn't yet have enough money to build a school. Rather than wait, they planted crops on the property and used the proceeds to help fund what would become South Christian High School. It was a simple act of faith by ordinary families who believed Christian education was worth building.

Families have sacrificed for Christian education through generations. Bob VanLaar ('56) hitchhiked to school and paid his own tuition by picking beans and working whenever he could. Marie Faber ('56) worked in the muck to help pay for her tuition and clothes. Other families sacrificed in quieter ways. They skipped vacations, bought fewer new clothes, ate out less often, lived in smaller homes, and worked extra jobs so their children could receive a Christ-centered education.

Pam DeWitt ('79) is the second of her family's four generations of South Christian Sailors. When asked why her family continues to sacrifice and invest in Christian education, she explains it simply, "You have to look at Christian education as an investment in eternity." Pam's daughter, Tonya Brown ('03) says, "We wanted our kids to be taught and raised by people who have the same values."

The buildings have changed, but the memories remain.

Ask alumni what they remember most, and they don't begin with classrooms or sports records. They begin with people.

June Atsma ('75) says, "The message was remarkably consistent, no matter the teacher: God loves you. God has a plan for your life. Use your gifts to further His Kingdom." Some people specifically remember the teachers who echoed those exact words – some recalled Ms. Oranje and Ms. Telgen from the earlier years. Steve Poll ('78) remembers Rev. Meyer sitting in a barber chair, teaching Bible, and creating a classroom where students lingered after class just to talk. More recently, Alumni remembered Hutt and Jag walking alongside them in their faith. Those voices echo long after graduation.

Of course, every generation has its own stories. There was the famous funeral for a dead bird, complete with a tiny casket, choir robe, and pallbearers. There were the students who somehow managed to push cars into the school building, prompting maintenance to eventually weld the doorway so it couldn't happen again. There were homemade cheerleading uniforms that couldn't be worn because they showed too much knee. And there was Hamburger Hill, where countless friendships were formed over burgers, fries, and conversations that seemed far more important than getting home on time.

Much has changed over 75 years. Facilities have grown, opportunities have expanded and technology has transformed the classroom. Yet the foundation remains unchanged. For 75 years, South Christian has continued to declare the glory of God, one generation after another.

We hope you'll join us as we celebrate that story at our **75th Anniversary Gala, "Declare the Glory," on October 24 at Frederik Meijer Gardens**, where together we'll remember the past, celebrate God's faithfulness, and look with hope toward the generations still to come.



IN MEMORIAM

1950s

Marv Hibma ('57) passed away November 14, 2025.

Donald Wynalda ('58) passed away January 16, 2026.

John VanGoor ('58) passed away March 24, 2026.

Lois (Hoitenga, '59) Roelofs passed away January 11, 2026.

1960s

Calvin Buist ('66) passed away February 11, 2026.

Pamela (Smith, '67) Switzer passed away December 31, 2025.

Ina (Slendebroek, '67) Matz passed away March 19, 2026.

Sandra (Kooiker, '69) Zeigler passed away February 22, 2026.

Linda (Sweers, '69) Mulder passed away May 10, 2026.

1970s

Ron DeMann ('72) passed away January 12, 2026.

David Bouwkamp ('72) passed away March 23, 2026.

Joan (Bronsink, '72) Brock passed away May 23, 2026.

Joel Roodvoets ('79) passed away December 16, 2025.

Terry Pals ('79) passed away January 3, 2026.

1980s

Lynnell (Schut, '89) Berkompas passed away June 21, 2026.

1990s

Brent Feyen ('97) passed away February 12, 2026.

2000s

Nicholas Haan ('02) passed away August 30, 2025.

Laura Whaley ('06) passed away March 11, 2026.

SCHS CLASS REUNIONS

CLASS OF 1966

Date: Friday, August 28, 2026

Time: 4:00 - 7:00PM

Location: Special Olympics of Michigan
(SCHS Old Campus)

Contact:

Jim Hoekwater (jchoekwater@yahoo.com)

CLASS OF 1984

Date: Saturday, September 12, 2026

Time: 5:30 PM

Location: Douglas Walker Park

Potluck - Please bring a dish to pass and your own table service. (In the event of rain, the gathering will be cancelled).

Contact:

Kurt Poll (616.437.3855)

Kim (Brink) Haines (616.262.6343)

CLASS OF 1986

Date: September 26, 2026

Time: 6:00 PM

Location: Dave & Wendy Niewiek's Residence
Potluck - Please bring an appetizer or dessert to pass, your beverage of choice, and your best self! No RSVP needed.

Contact:

Bobbi Huizenga (bjhuiz68@gmail.com)



Class of 1982 Reunion

STAY CONNECTED

Visit our Alumni page at www.schs.org/alumni/ or contact Kerri Holbrook at kholbrook@schs.org.



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75th Anniversary GALA

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1000 East Beltline Ave NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525

Psalm 191

DECLARE THE GLORY

Join us for an evening of celebration
and worship with SELAH to
declare the glory of God's faithfulness!

RSVP Here!



5:00 p.m. Silent Auction
6:00 p.m. Devotions & Dinner
7:00 p.m. Worship

Early Bird - \$100 per ticket
until September 1, 2026

