

Distinguished Alumna Award

Thinking about my remarks today reminded me of Fr. Murphy's sermon at our opening prayer service. He suggested that the freshmen, "Open their hearts and minds to the possibilities Ursuline has to offer." As a person who has been a student, alumna, teacher, and parent at UHS, I can think of no better advice. Ursuline offered me life-long friends, academic challenges, and service opportunities.

When we graduated in 1979, I'm sure my classmates and I had no idea then how many chapters we would share in the book of our lives. Special thanks to those here today, do the math, they have been by my side for 37 years!

In 1997, my colleagues became my friends despite how awkward it was to call former teachers by first names. Our teachers are passionate, knowledgeable, generous people who mentor me daily. They love Ursuline as much as me and I wish they could share the limelight today to know how much they are appreciated.

Of course with academics, there are two sides to the desk and I've met 100s of kids at 15 years old. Whether they are now studying medicine in Mexico City, sporting a white shirt and black tie at the Dawn, or are teaching under the same roof, what a pleasure it has been for me to watch them reach their full potential as young professionals.

In the realm of service, the Ursuline Sisters and Fr. Venglarik were formidable models for me. In service class, I visited Joe at Windsor Nursing Home each week. On my final visit he handed me a gift wrapped in a dinner napkin and said it was all he had. I opened it to find a pack of Marlboro Cigarettes! I was hooked, not on the cigarettes but on the call to serve. From those roots and the example of my father-in-law, Dr. Robert Morrison, I found the courage to sponsor mission trip myself.

Thanks to my parents and in-laws for choosing Ursuline to build upon the foundations they laid at home. Thanks to my family and friends, especially Pete, David, and Megan who have never let me endure anything alone.

I was trying to avoid sappy, sentimental stories but I hope you'll forgive this closing story, as it is true! My senior English teacher asked her class to write letters to ourselves reflecting on our hopes for the future. She held the sealed, self-addressed stamped envelopes for a year. When I returned home from Bowling Green after freshman year, the letter with familiar handwriting was waiting. It read that I hoped to be married to my prom date, Peter Morrison, have four children, and teach at Ursuline High School. The question of those two missing children is answered by the 450 students in the bleachers! I hope your experience at UHS helps dreams become reality too. Clearly my dream for the future was linked to the past and I thank Ursuline for letting me stay home.