

1940 - 1959



1959 - 2009



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1959 - 2009 Alumni Mass & Awards Ceremony

"Once a Cardinal, Always a Cardinal"

**Michel and Patty Charest, Alumni of the Year
Award Ceremony - Thursday, May 27, 2009**



Thank you Fr. Tom, Michele, Stacey, Dee and the Alumni Association for this honor!

Michel and I are very humbled and touched by this award, neither of us expecting to be the honorees! As students sitting in those bleachers as seniors in 1975 and 1977, we had no idea we would be where we are today, receiving this award.

All relationships are a compromise... especially true in a marriage...and we complement each other in many ways. To sum up our relationship, Michel is more action and I am more talk! So today, I will do the talking, as Michel would "rather catch a rattle snake bare-handed", than talk in front of the student body! I am sure more than one of you out there feels the same way!

Life is a funny thing...it happens to you just as you are making plans to be ready for life!

Seniors...you have planned for college for over a year and now it's about to happen! You are accepted to colleges... maybe to more colleges than you thought and now have made a choice...will it be the right one? Who can I ask about it? What will they say? What if I don't like it? You have so many questions flying through your head...they can make you forget about your goals and where you plan to go in life. Just then, you take a deep breath and remember what your parents and teachers have said..."keep your eye on the prize, focus on your goals and you can achieve them."

You may not think you can do it...but the education you have received here at Bishop... spiritual, athletics and academics, has provided you with a strong foundation to build the rest of your life upon. You were taught to think outside the box, go outside your comfort zone and by doing so, you grow.

There are many roles you will take on as you leave Bishop to make your mark in this world. What career will you choose? Where will you live? Will you get married and raise a family?

Of all the roles Michel and I have had in our lives, the toughest role is that of being a parent. When your child is born, it is the greatest miracle on earth! Your new baby is the cutest, the brightest and the happiest baby ever born! So many plans for your new life together...and then life happens. Your child will not be the brightest or the happiest...there are delays...special education, therapy, adaptive toys and training aids. Our son, Christopher (DPHS class of 2004) was born with developmental delays, meaning he learns things at a slower pace than most folks. One of his greatest joys in life is playing on sports teams. He and his younger sister Kelly (Bishop Class of 2005) have grown up together playing basketball with their Mom and Dad, which is our favorite sport.

We have coached many teams, from Dos Pueblos Little League, assisting here at Bishop, at the Goleta Boys and Girls Club to the Santa Barbara Special Olympics. We have worked with other alumni during the alumni basketball games that are held annually. By far, Special Olympics has meant the most to us. Michel has coached both softball and basketball teams for over 10 years.

There are so many athletes with the desire to play and be part of a team, and sometimes not enough coaches. By teaching them skills and seeing the joy on their face when they make a basket or win that gold medal, you feel it deep inside... the impact you are making in someone's life! We weren't sure about coaching, going outside our comfort zone, but each day gave us more satisfaction.

We work together to raise not only disability awareness, but acceptance too. Human beings are more alike than they are different. Our lives all have meaning. We all want to be loved; we all want to be accepted, to have friends to hang out with; we all want our accomplishments to be acknowledged.

There is a need to give a voice to those in our community that are underserved: especially the poor and the disabled. It takes all kinds of people to make the world go 'round...I keep reminding myself daily of this saying. Every person on this planet has something to offer this world. You don't have to be the top of your class, or the best athlete. What you have to be is true to yourself and honest with those around you.

Where there is a need, we try to help out as best we can. Sometimes this was by coaching, or fundraising for a worthy cause, like helping with the Bishop High Bob Morelli golf tournament and other times, to keep Goleta Valley Cottage Hospital from closing its doors. We all wear many hats and you can too!

With support of your family, teachers, coaches and friends, along with the skills you learn while at Bishop High School, you can accomplish amazing things! You are the instruments to your success...use it wisely to benefit those around you and you will benefit also. Thank you!