

2012 Gesu Spirit Medal Honoree

Robert M. McAlaine

If you have ever been fortunate enough to sit down to dinner with Bob McAlaine, you already know his favorite topic of conversation: Gesu School. Since joining our Board of Trustees in 2001, Bob has seldom missed an opportunity to mention his favorite cause. Such enthusiasm on behalf of our children made his selection as the recipient of the 2012 Gesu Spirit Medal obvious.

Bob's good friend and then Gesu Trustee, the late Ray Rafferty, first introduced Bob to Gesu School in the late 1990's. Thanks to Gesu's donors and leaders, Gesu has grown tremendously since those early days, including the addition of two new floors, but Bob recalls how the school impressed him from his first visit. "The spirit was terrific," Bob explains. The school had what he considers "the four basics" in place – discipline, structure, safety, and the teachers' love for the children. He was hooked.

Bob stresses how much he has enjoyed getting to know other trustees, donors, the school administration, and the staff during his involvement with Gesu School, but the highlight of his experience has been getting to know the kids. He's an avid supporter of the Gesu basketball team, and mentored a struggling first grader until the boy moved away last summer a notably more confident, motivated, and disciplined rising fifth grader. "I have always loved the underdogs," Bob explains. "A lot of these kids are underdogs, achieving well beyond expectations and going on to do very well in life... What they need most is confidence and a chance, and Gesu gives them a chance to succeed in life."

While Bob has served on Gesu's Development Committee as well as Chairman of the Annual Fund for seven years, his most notable contribution has been spearheading the development and expansion of Gesu's Sponsor A Child program, an initiative replicated by a number of area schools. Seven years ago, immediate past president Christine Beck first presented to Bob the idea of asking donors to fully fund the education of a child with whom they could identify. Bob thought the idea "was a no-brainer" and immediately signed up as one of the very first sponsors. Today, Bob sponsors five students and has helped endow two additional scholarships in perpetuity, including the Janet McAlaine Annear Memorial Scholarship to which a number of his family members have contributed. Bob proudly reports that he still hears from the second student he ever sponsored, who is now a sophomore at West Chester University with a 3.0 GPA.



Our 2012 Gesu Spirit Medal Honoree Bob McAlaine spends time at a Gesu Scholarship Luncheon with the seven students he and his family support.

Under Bob's leadership, the Sponsor A Child program has grown to include 236 students whose education is funded by annual \$6,000 gifts or by endowed scholarships of \$125,000. Along with Trustee Julia Rafferty, Esq., Bob currently co-chairs *Gesu Isn't Gesu Without You*, an \$8 million three-year campaign that aims to include over 400 children in the Sponsor A Child program and is slated to conclude in 2013 with Gesu's 20th anniversary as an independent school.

Gesu is fortunate to have such a highly successful businessman as part of our school's leadership, and has benefited from Bob's talents in this arena. Primary among Bob's many career successes is his ownership of Namico, Inc. As Namico's CEO, Bob expanded the specialty chemical company through internal growth and with two acquisitions over the course of 18 years before selling the company. Currently, Bob serves as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Eastern Insurance Holdings, Inc. He is a graduate of Williams College and is married to Anne McAlaine and father of Tom, Molly, Katie and Dan. The entire McAlaine family has been involved with supporting Gesu and guiding Bob's mentee, going as far as throwing Bob and his mentee a joint birthday party in the school's library.

Bob's biggest vice is ice cream. Please send cartons of Bryers Cherry Vanilla or Vanilla Chocolate Swirl care of Gesu School with your patron or sponsorship level donation to honor Bob!

The Gesu Spirit Medal honors individuals who have shown, through their loyal advocacy and actions, extraordinary commitment to Gesu School, and who have made a significant contribution to Gesu School's success as a model inner-city elementary school. Gesu is honored to present this year's Spirit Medal to Robert M. McAlaine.