

THE

The Newspaper of Local 1776
The Association of Catholic Teachers



SPIRIT

OF '76

55+ Years Strong
1966-2016

3070 BRISTOL PIKE, BLDG. 2, SUITE 101, BENSALEM, PA 19020- 215-568-4175 - VOLUME XXXXV-NO.5
Fax 215-568-8270 - email (act@act1776.com) - website (www.act1776.com) **FEBRUARY 2025**



From the President's Desk

Looking Out for Each Other

This month I moved out of the classroom and started working full-time in the ACT offices. While it was difficult leaving my students mid-year, I see why it is important that the leader of our organization not be caught between trying to fulfill all of the expectations that are placed on our teachers as well as be available to address issues that affect our teachers as they happen. Now that I am in the office, I look forward to the opportunity to put all of my attention into working to protect and support our teachers.

As we move into the second semester, just as I will be working hard to look out for your best interests on my end, it is important that you all look out for each other at the local level. This is equally important for our newer members, some of whom have come on as recently as the past few weeks. Across the System, we have had over a dozen new teachers enter our System at varying different schools. These teachers did not even have the few clerical days that many of us had at the beginning of the year to be onboarded at our schools. It is important that we offer them the support and guidance of our experienced and veteran teachers to make sure they are able to integrate quickly into the different cultures found at each of our schools.

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From the President's Desk

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To that note, it is also equally important that we help our newer teachers, regardless of whether they are in their first few years of teaching or are an older professional entering our System, understand that they are protected by the contract. If a teacher is asked to attend a meeting with school or Archdiocesan administrators, the teacher should understand what the purpose of the meeting is before going into it. A teacher should never have to go into a meeting blind, and especially without making sure your Senior or Alternate Delegate is available to go with you.

At the end of the day, we are all in this together. Look out for those that need guidance and never hesitate to turn to your Delegates for help in navigating through the issues that arise both in and out of the classroom.

Wishing you all a great second semester!

James

PASSING THE TORCH

Outgoing ACT
President and
ACT Staff,
Irene Tori



Incoming ACT
President and
ACT Staff,
James Vernon

VOLUNTARY TRANSFER, TEACHER SWAP, TEMPORARY TRANSFER APPLICATIONS

Teachers interested in applying for a voluntary transfer, teacher swap, or temporary transfer should file their application **no later than April 1, 2025.**

Applications will be posted in the schools on March 1, 2025.



2024 TAX INFORMATION

Union Dues for 2024

January 2024 - December 2024 = \$624.54

For those who resigned or retired as of June 2024

January 2024 - June 2024 = \$384.54

YOUR ACT LEADERSHIP AND STAFF



Pictured with ACT President and Full-time Staff, James Vernon, is Katie Toenniessen-Innes, ACT Vice President and Assistant Staff.



Pictured left is ACT Office & Benefits Manager, Ginny Crowther

ACT CONTACT INFORMATION

Association of Catholic Teachers

215-568-4175 (phone)

215-568-8270 (fax)

President: James R. Vernon, E-mail: james@act1776.com

Vice President: Kathleen Toenniessen-Innes, E-mail: katie@act1776.com

Office-Benefits Manager: Ginny Crowther, E-mail: ginny@act1776.com

General Mailbox: act@act1776.com

Congratulations to our Newest Retirees!



*Joanna Catanzaro, Bishop Shanahan High School
John Janasik, Bishop Shanahan High School
Julia Schreiber, Pope John Paul II High School
Irene Tori, ACT Staff*

Best wishes for a well-deserved Retirement!

Rest in Peace



***+ Patricia McGee, retired, Kennedy-Kenrick High School +
+ Maureen Schlegel, retired, West Catholic High School +***

If anyone would like to submit an *In Memoriam* article, you are most welcome to do so. You can submit your article to act@act1776.com.

Retirees: If you have not received your 1099R for 2024, call Retirement Focus at 1-855-874-0356.

ATTENTION RETIREES

HOLD THE DATE

Retirees' Luncheon



May 13, 2025

12:00 – 4:00 PM to be held at

ANTHONY'S RISTORANTE

(formerly the Lamb Tavern)

865 W. Springfield Road

Springfield, PA 19064

Ticket price is \$40 per person. **You may bring a guest..**

An invitation and Registration Form will be sent to you via email.

OPTUM'S EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

As a Secondary Lay Teacher in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, you and your family members have access to an [Employee Assistance Program and WorkLife Services](#) through **OPTUM**. These services are available 24/7, either by phone or on-line, and are strictly confidential. There is no cost for using this benefit. You will need to logon to liveandworkwell.com to register, using access code [Archphilly](#).

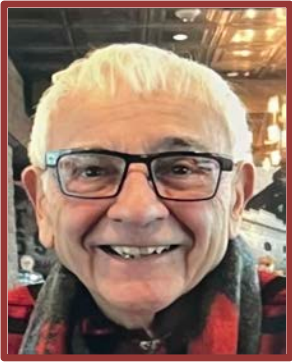
You can speak with master's level employee assistance specialists who provide consultation, risk screening, advocacy, referrals and educational materials. Or you can use their web services, which are available in both English and Spanish. There, you can search self-help information, resource databases/directories, video programs, personal empowerment programs and find thousands of articles online at liveandworkwell.com.

Some of the EAP services available to you are

- Face-to-face counseling (3 visits per event per year)
- Financial coaching from experts (up to 60 minutes free consultation)
- Legal counseling and mediation services (free 30 minute telephonic or in-person consultation with a state-specific attorney or qualified mediator per separate legal issue)
- Digital self-care tools
- Talkspace – Support when you need it – no appointments necessary. With Talkspace, you can reach out to a licensed network EAP provider 24/7.
- Virtual Visits – HIPAA-compliant technology delivers video EAP services in the privacy & comfort of your home.

Some of the WorkLife Services available to you are

- Adult care and eldercare support (retirement planning, adult daycare, financial and legal issues, in-home/nurse care options)
- Child and family support (childcare, adoption, day/summer camps, emergency/sick childcare, parent/family support groups)
- Chronic illness and condition support (respite, caregiving, assistive technology, affordable housing, meal and transportation services)
- Convenience services (pet, travel, car, shopping/dining)



IN MEMORIAM

Vincent Cancro

How can one capsulize a 54-year friendship in six or seven paragraphs? So much gets left out due to life being what it is for both of us. However, here goes.

I met Vince in 1970. I was fresh out of college, and my first teaching assignment was West Catholic High School for Boys. I had no idea what was in store for me. I walked into the English Dept. and met (what didn't take me long to realize) the most marvelous, wonderfully eccentric and creative group of teachers I had ever been around.

Back then there was no such thing as having a lead teacher. My chair, Mike Sikorski, gave Vince to me to watch over me and teach me the ropes. Vince was, I believe, just back from two years in the Peace Corps. *That really impressed me.* It said to me, what a loving and caring man he was. We clicked immediately. He loved teaching, and I soaked in all I could and all he had to offer. Vince was truly a Master Teacher.

We found that we both shared the love of teaching, the theatre, good movies--both new and old--and good food. Years later, he got me to eat alligator. I am still not sure it tastes like chicken. We found we had many more things in common, and over the years our friendship grew stronger.

Life took a cruel twist for Vince and his family in 1985 when his wife, Marylynne, passed away from breast cancer. I was married then, to Belinda, a teacher at West as well, and during the days prior and after Marylynne's passing, we tried to assist his family deal with the loss. Vince, though, was the rock that put the pieces back together again.

Life took another cruel turn when in 1998 my wife passed away from cancer. Vince was there during and after Belinda's passing. He was at her bedside with me and the family when the end came. I have never or will ever forget his love for my wife and my daughter, Ashley. It was now his turn to help us weather the storm and put the pieces back together again. We both were now raising children as single parents. Vince had it mastered and helped me in so many ways.

Vince found love again and married his lovely wife Donata in 2003, and he began the next journey in his life. Over time, life separates you from loved ones for many reasons, so we kept in touch mainly through cards and occasional phone calls.

I often think of those days when Vince ran an Arcade in Ocean City, New Jersey and Ash and I would visit Vince and his family.

For 54 years, my admiration and respect for Vince never waned. He was a marvelous father, a wonderfully kind and generous human being, and one of the finest teachers I have ever known or worked with. I was blessed to have known him and to have shared in part of his journey.

Until we meet again my FRIEND, REST IN PEACE!!

*Written by: Mike Wetzel, Retired
Msgr. Bonner-Abp. Prendergast High School*



IN MEMORIAM

John Francis Cramutolo
September 26, 1951 to December 13, 2024

Father Judge High School mourns the loss of Mr. John Cramutolo, a deeply respected teacher who dedicated over 50 years to guiding students within the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. As a beloved English teacher, Mr. Cramutolo leaves a powerful legacy of exceptional teaching, an unwavering commitment to Catholic education, and a profound impact on the Father Judge community.

Affectionately known to many as "John Cram" or simply "Cram," he was admired for his kind spirit, witty humor, and the unwavering support he offered students during challenging times. Throughout his distinguished career, he also served as Assistant Principal at North Catholic and Lansdale Catholic High Schools and successfully led the AOP Summer School program, ensuring students were well-prepared to return to their respective schools. Mr. Cramutolo deeply believed in offering individuals second chances. A humble and spiritual man, he often quietly assisted others, allowing their accomplishments to speak for themselves.

John played many pivotal roles at Father Judge during his long and distinguished career. He transcended the role of a mere English teacher, serving as a mentor, guide, and esteemed figure within the school community for many of his fellow educators. He held the positions of department chair and head of the English Language Arts curriculum. As the Stage Crew supervisor, he enthusiastically shared his passion for theater and the arts, encouraging students to explore their talents beyond the confines of their regular coursework. He also served as the school's union representative, demonstrating unwavering dedication and professionalism.

John shared his commitment to continuous professional development, expressing his desire to refine his teaching methods. This might involve integrating new educational technologies, exploring improved online resources, or utilizing student writing to effectively model the writing process. He believed that educators should engage in learning and share effective teaching strategies with their colleagues.

Mr. Cramutolo's teaching style was renowned for its high standards and challenging expectations. He consistently pushed his students to think critically, articulate their ideas with clarity and persuasiveness, and develop a profound understanding of literary texts. His English classes were both stimulating and in-depth, preparing students for the rigors of college and fostering a lifelong appreciation for literature and the art of effective writing.

Former students often recall Mr. Cramutolo's demanding nature alongside his genuine care for their success. One former student reminisced, "Mr. Cramutolo pushed me harder than any other teacher I've ever encountered, but he also believed in my potential more than anyone else." Another student shared, "He was both demanding and fair, strict yet compassionate; he was truly an exceptional teacher. In a school brimming with influential figures, he stood out as a giant." A former student and colleague remarked, "Few teachers have had the profound impact that Mr. Cramutolo had on me and my peers. He was truly transformative." This sentiment is echoed by numerous Father Judge graduates who attribute their subsequent success to the strong foundation they received in Mr. Cramutolo's classroom.

As we bid farewell to Mr. John Cramutolo, we celebrate a life dedicated to teaching, mentoring, and nurturing young minds. His enduring legacy lives on through the thousands of students he taught, the colleagues he inspired, and the profound impact he had on Father Judge High School. He truly fostered the holistic development of his students – spiritually, intellectually, and socially – and his influence will continue to shape the school for generations to come.

May his memory be a source of comfort and inspiration to all who knew him, taught alongside him, or had the privilege of being his student. Father Judge High School and the broader Archdiocesan community have lost a true leader in education, but his profound influence will forever remain with those whose lives he touched. Rest in peace, Mr. John Cramutolo.

*Written by: James Greene, Retired
Father Judge High School*

ACT Second Semester School Visit Schedule 2024-2025 School Year

NAME OF SCHOOL	ACT VISITOR	DATE	DAY
Bonner-Prendergast	James	April 11	Friday
Archbishop Carroll	James	April 28	Monday
Conwell -Egan	James and Irene	March 12	Wednesday
Saint Hubert	James and Irene	March 17	Monday
Father Judge	James and Irene	March 26	Wednesday
Lansdale Catholic	James	May 21	Wednesday
Little Flower	James and Irene	March 14	Friday
SS John Neumann- Maria Goretti	James and Irene	April 2	Wednesday
Cardinal O'Hara	James	March 4	Tuesday
Pope John Paul II	James	April 1	Tuesday
Roman Catholic	James and Irene	February 27	Thursday
Archbishop Ryan	James and Irene	April 9	Wednesday
Bishop Shanahan	James	March 24	Monday
West Catholic	James and Irene	May 5	Monday
Archbishop Wood	James and Irene	April 24	Thursday

Looking forward to seeing you soon!