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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GUERIN PREP TO MARK GRADUATION CEREMONIES WITH OLD AND NEW TRADITIONS

Graduation ceremonies at Guerin College Preparatory High School, River Grove, this year will continue to reflect the special history of Guerin Prep as a co-ed institution.

“The members of this graduating class are the last students who began their high school careers at either Mother Theodore Guerin or Holy Cross High School,” explained Mrs. Bonnie Brown, principal of Guerin Prep. “It has been our focus at the co-ed Guerin Prep to honor the traditions of our foundation schools as well as carve out new traditions for the school we have become.”

Commencement Exercises

Commencement exercises for the 185 members of the Class of 2007 will be held Thursday, May 24, beginning at 7 p.m. in the Guerin Prep Auditorium.

Graduates will receive a diploma from Guerin Prep, but it will also carry the seal of Holy Cross High School for the boys; Mother Theodore Guerin High School for the girls.

A new tradition will be celebrated for the third year at Guerin Prep. The graduation

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speakers will be two members of the Class of 2007 chosen expressly for this honor by Guerin Prep faculty and administration. Anthony Alequin of River Grove and Cassandra Ann Bialas of Chicago were selected from among 15 students who auditioned.

Kimberly Plesnicar of Chicago is the valedictorian for this year's class; Danielle Piagentini of Chicago is salutatorian.

Other Ceremonies

In addition to commencement exercises on May 24, Guerin Prep will celebrate a Baccalaureate Mass for the graduates that morning with the entire student body. The Reverend Bernard Kennedy, OFM, former Holy Cross and Guerin Prep Campus Minister, will preside at the liturgy.

At the end of the liturgy, the McManus and Davenport Awards will be presented to outstanding graduates of Mother Theodore Guerin High School and Holy Cross in honor of the founding principals of those schools.

Ms. Nanette Bufalino of Chicago will receive the McManus Award. Currently, general counsel for Edward Hospital in Naperville, Nanette is a 1974 graduate of Mother Guerin. She was the school's first president of its lay board of directors. She currently serves as an ad hoc member of the board's development committee.

The Davenport Award will be given to Mr. Terry Malik of Wheaton, Ill., as the outstanding graduate of Holy Cross High School. Malik, a 1969 graduate, is an attorney with Winston & Strawn of Chicago. He currently serves on the Board of Directors for Guerin Prep.

Alumni Induction & Senior Awards

On May 23, the graduates were inducted into the alumni association, followed by the Senior Awards Ceremony. The highlight of the awards ceremony is the giving of the Mother

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Theodore Guerin Award to a senior girl and the Spirit of Holy Cross Award to a senior boy who have shown outstanding leadership and service. The winners are chosen by members of the senior class, the faculty and administration.

Erica Kulpinski of Chicago has been selected as the Mother Theodore award winner; Daniel Ristau of Elmwood Park will receive the Spirit of Holy Cross Award.

College-Bound Students

Of the 185 Guerin Prep graduates, approximately 98 percent of them will pursue a college education in a four-year college or will begin their college career in a community college with the intent of transferring to a four-year college.

To date, Guerin Prep seniors have been offered \$2.1 million in scholarship monies to finance their higher education.

Offers and acceptances to seniors have come from area universities and colleges like Concordia, DePaul, Dominican, Lewis, Loyola, North Park, Northeastern, St. Francis and St. Xavier universities, and Carthage, Columbia, Elmhurst and Monmouth colleges.

Offers and acceptances have also come from the American Academy of Art, Amherst College (Mass.), Bradley University (Peoria), California Design College, Carroll College (Wisconsin), Catholic University of America (Washington, D.C.), Eastern Illinois, Goucher College, (Maryland), Iowa State, Illinois State, Illinois Wesleyan, Marquette University (Milwaukee), Northern Illinois, Olivet-Nazarene University, Quincy University (Illinois), Ripon College (Wisconsin), Southern Illinois, St. Joseph's College (Indiana), ST. Norbert (Wisconsin), Tufts (Mass.), University of Chicago, University of Colorado (Boulder), University of Dayton (Ohio), University of Illinois (Urbana), University of Tampa (Florida), University of Wisconsin (Platteville), Wellesley College (Mass.) and Western Illinois.

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Background on the Valedictorian/Salutatorian

This year's valedictorian is Kim Plesnicar with a GPA of 5.10.

An Illinois State Scholar, Kim has also distinguished herself as the president of the senior class at Guerin Prep. A member of both the National Honors Society and the Spanish National Honors Society, Kim has also served as a lead tutor in the school's learning enrichment center.

This year she received an excellence in English for four years award from the English department and was a winner in the Word Masters competition and in the American Mathematics League Contest. She was named one of three outstanding seniors in Spanish and received an outstanding award in the field of science.

Her future career goal is to be a psychiatrist, and she hopes to major in psychology in college. She has been awarded the dean's scholarship from Dominican University and the Trustee Scholarship from Loyola University. Loyola has also given her the Catholic Heritage Award.

Danielle Piagentini, the salutatorian for Guerin Prep's class of 2007, has a GPA of 5.09. Danielle has also distinguished herself as a three-sport athlete each of her year's at Guerin, winning most valuable player and conference recognition in basketball, volleyball and soccer. In recognition of this, the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) named her an Honorable Mention recipient to the IHSA All-State Academic Team out of 400 nominees. She also was Guerin Prep's nominee for the Chicago Tribune All-State Academic Team.

Danielle, who hopes to earn a degree in nursing and eventually become a physician's assistant, won the Bausch & Lomb Science Award as a junior. This year she earned an award for excellence in English for four years, was named one of two outstanding seniors in

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Italian, earned honors from the Illinois Council of Teachers of mathematics and the Sister Jean Margaret Kaindl Science Award, plus an outstanding award in the field of science.

An Illinois State Scholar, she is a member of both the National Honor Society and the Italian Honor Society. She was one of four Guerin Prep students chosen to participate in a pilgrimage to Rome for the canonization of Mother Theodore Guerin, the school's patron.

Danielle has been awarded the presidential scholarship from Bradley University and has received the Gottlieb Memorial Hospital Physicians' Auxiliary Scholarship. She has also been accepted at Illinois State University and Marquette University.

Background on the Mother Theodore/Spirit of Holy Cross Award Winners

Erica Kulpinski, this year's Mother Theodore Guerin Award winner, also has the distinction of serving as the school's mascot the past four years. She has donned the school's Gator costume for numerous sporting events, pep rallies and other school activities and has been the model of school spirit for other students. "The gator has been my better half," Erica explained in the essay she submitted for the award. "I'm ever so proud to wear the gator and show some school spirit. I feel that was the greatest privilege I had in the years here. Not only have I shown my school spirit inside the school, but outside as well."

Erica was involved in volleyball and soccer each of her four years at Guerin. Additionally she served the athletic department as basketball manager. She also served as an ambassador for the school and was active in campus ministry activities, including Kairos retreat leader and altar server.

Erica was Guerin Prep's nominee for the Kohl's Kids Who Care Scholarship; she received the Alumni Award from Monmouth College. She plans to attend Carroll College in Waukesha, Wisconsin next year.

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Daniel Ristau, the Spirit of Holy Cross Award Winner, has been active in three sports during his high school career, including four years as a member of the baseball team.

A member of the National Honors Society and the Tri-M music honor society, Dan has also been a part of the Marching Pep band the past three years.

In his nomination essay for this award, Dan reflected on the transition from moving from Holy Cross to Guerin and his nervousness that the spirit of Holy Cross would be forgotten and lost forever. “I now realize that the spirit of Holy Cross is not the building, or the mascot, or the song. It is something much, much deeper than that, and it is alive and well in me, in my friends, in the faculty and in the memories.”

Dan has received scholarships from Dominican and Indiana Universities, as well as the National Honor Society Scholarship and the Montclare-Elmwood Park Community Leaders Scholarship.

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