

St. Camillus Academy Alumni Association, Inc.

A Message from SCAAA Board President, Pete Samples, September 25, 2014

By far, this has been the most difficult message I have written during my tenure as President of your SCAAA which approaches nearly 20 years of service in that capacity . The reason?

It all started with the closing of the St. Camillus Academy High School in the mid 90's, accomplished contrary to the recommendation of the Sisters of Divine Providence's own Feasibility Study and in direct opposition to the numerous public notices in both verbal and written form presented by the SCA Principal at the time, all of which came as a complete shock to the students, teachers, parents, alumni, and the community as a whole. The Association was never contacted in any manner prior to the Sisters announcing the closing of the high school program. If given the opportunity, the Association could have underwritten the anticipated rise in any associated costs necessary to keep the high school open to this day and beyond.

Several years later, during an all out effort by the Alumni Association to save the 1914 building, which had housed the grade school and high school programs and later on the first SCA Montessori Program, a building which had been home to hundreds of boarders residing there over the years while attending school, a building registered with the National Historical Society and one which the Alumni Association attempted to purchase to be renovated into a School of Fine & Performing Arts with the costs to be underwritten by MGM Studios, was torn down by the Sisters in favor of a Memory Garden. That Memory Garden, with tumbled statues face down on the ground and cracked and broken stone tablets bearing the engraved names of the Sisters who had taught and lived at SCA since its beginning, and areas of worn and trampled grass, the victim of treasure seekers and their metal detectors, was not representative in any way of my memory of the SCA I once attended.

Then, came the next to the final chapter when a small group of dedicated parents, made a valiant attempt to keep the Montessori and grade school afloat in a relatively new school building erected just prior to the demolition of the 1914 building and one left behind after the Sisters of Divine Providence closed SCA for good in 2012. In so doing, this group of selfless individuals gave hope to the Association that their efforts would prevail, that the school would be approved by the Diocese of Lexington and its Bishop as a Catholic school and perhaps become a feeder school for a new Catholic High School several years later. It was not to be. The school on the hill closed its doors and did not reopen for the fall of 2013.

Then, came the final chapter when the Sisters of Divine Providence contacted the Corbin Independent School Board offering to sell the SCA campus including land and buildings for \$1,000,000.00. Again, the Association was never contacted or given the opportunity to have any input. The Corbin Independent School Board jumped at the opportunity, purchased it and recently announced plans to turn it into a middle school. Rumor has it that it is presently being used as an Alternative School for the Corbin Independent School District. An Alternative School is the present politically correct name for what was once called a Reform School. Oh, and what about that Memory Garden you ask? An inside source tells me it will soon become a parking

lot. I vividly recall a conversation I had with that same inside source shortly after the Sisters announced the decision to close the high school program back in the mid 90's, who said, "The Sisters have already decided to tear down the 1914 building and turn its space into a parking lot."

As the renowned Paul Harvey would say if with us today, "And now we know the rest of the story."

This year's 2014 Annual Banquet and Reunion, originally scheduled for Saturday, October 18, 2014, has been cancelled due to the retirement of Peggy Smith, Director of Alumni Affairs, and the sudden and unexpected medically prompted resignation of one of the SCAAA officers who was instrumental in planning the Banquet and Reunion. Once a new Director of Alumni Affairs has been selected and installed, plans will begin for the 2015 Banquet and Reunion. In the meantime, all members who wish to remain active in the Association must submit their annual dues in the amount of \$10.00 payable to and mailed to SCAAA, P. O. Box 1701, Corbin, KY 40701.