

ACADEMY OF OUR LADY OF MERCY

Lauralton Hall



HALLMARKS
SQUARED
V1.2021



Shades Shutter Photography

The LH Engineering Team (pictured here) was named winner of the Sikorsky STEM Challenge 2021! While the annual competition was on hold in spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our team resumed activities in Fall 2020—advised by LH science faculty members Theresa Napolitano P'11, '13 and Danielle Kratter—and went on to win the 2021 event in May. Team members produced a video, modeled on a “TED” talk, to present their design for a remotely operated helitanker that intakes and disperses water to fight fires. “We are so impressed with the focus, resilience, and creativity our team members displayed in an especially challenging year,” said Head of School Elizabeth Miller. “As the only all-girls team in the competition, this is truly a Lauralton ‘Signature Program’—an experience that girls will not find elsewhere.”



Molly McAndrew '21 presents the Lauralton Hall Engineering Team's winning design in the 2021 Sikorsky STEM Challenge. To view, go to lauraltonhall.org/signatureprograms

The Rewards of Sound Investment

A LETTER FROM OUR HEAD OF SCHOOL

When you invest, the expectation is that there will be a return or reward in the future. Whether you invest your money, time, talent, energy, or other resources, the idea—of course—is to gain; otherwise you’re simply spending.

Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, Luralton Hall is investing in our Mission, our girls, our offerings, and our campus. The return? Knowledgeable and capable graduates, responsible citizens, and positive contributors to our world in the Mercy tradition of Catherine McAuley.

A sampling of the myriad ways Luralton is investing:

- **Continuous Learning:** We are so proud of the fact that, through this COVID-19 pandemic, our dedicated faculty and staff have invested their time, talent, and creativity to give students the option this academic year to attend classes on campus or to enroll in our LuraltonatHome program. On average since September 8, 2020, 75% of students chose to be on campus, and 25% learned at home. Our students have reaped the benefits of a high level of learning continuity given these challenging times. And, we continue to expand offerings, most recently adding AP Psychology and AP Statistics taught by LH faculty on campus beginning Fall 2021.
- **DEI@LH:** As we shared in the December 2020 issue of *Hallmarks Squared*, we launched our diversity, equity, and inclusion initiative last summer. Professionally-facilitated activities included a virtual town hall for alumnae and virtual focus groups for current LH students who are women of color. In April, the Luralton Hall Board of Trustees approved the DEI mission statement (shown right) written by our DEI@LH work group. Also, among the Mercy Education core values (lower right) is to respect the dignity of each person, an ideal we strive to achieve as a community.
- **Education-based Athletics:** Read inside about our investment in Luralton athletics from staffing to streaming (See “Persistence in Achieving Academic and Athletic Excellence”). Our student-athletes participated in all three seasons this year, despite COVID-19 restricted rules for play.
- **Financial Intelligence:** A new Luralton Hall Signature Program, our Financial Intelligence curriculum, was launched in September with the Class of 2023. This required one-semester course is designed to help sophomores gain financial acumen that will help them in their personal and professional lives for decades to come—helping them invest in their own financial well-being. Read more about this new offering at luraltonhall.org/signature.
- **Luralton Identity:** We are #LHproud and we want everyone to know it! From our new sign at 200 High Street to spirit signage on our athletic fields to our animated digital ads featuring our students talking about their School, we are relaying that Luralton is a vibrant community—on campus at full schedule—where girls thrive. In fact, our local WTNH News 8 featured LH in its “What’s Right With Schools” segment in February, interviewing our seniors about the ways they are balancing academics, college decisions, and traditions amid the pandemic.
- **Technology:** Our continued investment in technology includes securing new laptops with improved security software for every faculty member and for usage in our arts and STEM activities.
- **Chapel:** We look forward to the day we celebrate Mass regularly in our beautiful, century-old Chapel, seated together and singing loudly! Meanwhile, masons have completed restoring the brickwork, master craftsmen have completed plasterwork, and the full interior will be painted this summer.

Much of our investment is made possible by our generous donors. For example, read inside (“Legacy of a Luralton “Lifer”) about Ms. Alba Elizabeth Roessle ’55 who, upon her death in July 2019, gifted a large portion of her estate in scholarships to benefit future generations of Luralton ladies. Phase II of our Window Project continues as donors choose to sponsor a new window—part of our ongoing investment in responsibly preserving our historic campus. All of our current classes and several alumnae classes have begun building endowed scholarships this year, enabling funds to be awarded on an annual basis to Luralton students in need. Please contact Director of Advancement Kathleen Kearns Donahue ’80 P’06, ’14 at kdonahue@luraltonhall.org if you would like to consider planned giving, sponsor a window, spearhead an endowment effort on behalf of your or your daughter’s graduating class, or simply be more involved.

We are so grateful for our giving Luralton community—especially now. And, we continue to ask for your support, which enables our continued investment in the best Luralton educational experience for each and every girl—the true reward.

In Mercy,



Elizabeth Miller, Head of School




Head of School Elizabeth Miller



Inspired by the Mercy Core Values, Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, Luralton Hall endeavors to create, nurture, and sustain an inclusive culture that inspires all members of our community to share life experiences from their own diverse perspectives and to gain a deeper understanding of people from different races, cultures, religions, and backgrounds.

Faculty and staff embrace practices that inspire young women to open their minds and hearts to others during their time at Luralton Hall and as they embark on their journey to find their place in the world beyond our campus; we strive to champion diversity, equity, and inclusion for all and empower young women to pursue their highest potential in our global community through lifelong learning, compassionate service, and responsible leadership.



A Voice For Dignity and Respect

Mercy students honor the intrinsic value of the individual and recognize God’s presence in each person. We embrace a global vision and value differences of opinion, and are unafraid to confront hostile or hurtful attitudes. By standing up for those who can’t, we go beyond acceptance to help make sure everyone feels recognized and heard.

Honoring a Career of Care

Luralton Hall has seen many changes, including to our campus facilities, over the past three decades. But one constant has been the skillful and dependable presence of Luralton’s Maintenance Supervisor Jacinto “Chito” Lucas, who has rarely missed a day in 33 years making sure campus is operating safely and efficiently. In early March, Head of School Elizabeth Miller shared with LH faculty and staff the news that Chito has chosen to retire this June.

Having emigrated from the Philippines to the U.S. in 1986, Chito was originally hired at Luralton in 1988 as caretaker. Chito, his wife Lydia, and their infant son Justin lived on campus in the caretaker’s apartment in Mercy Hall, as was customary for caretakers at the time. “I was so fortunate to find work and a home at Luralton as we got settled into our new lives here,” recalled Chito.

Lydia later worked as a part-time bookkeeper in Luralton’s Business Office, and for the past fifteen years has had a real estate career as an agent in Milford with Berkshire Hathaway. Justin graduated from Fairfield Prep in 2006, went on to graduate from Fairfield University in 2010, and today has his own Internet marketing business in Milford. Longtime Milford residents, the Lucas’ are active members of St. Mary Roman Catholic Church where both Chito and Lydia have served as Eucharistic ministers for more than 20 years.

According to Luralton Hall Director of Advancement Kathleen Kearns Donahue ’80, P’06, ’14, the Lucas family has been actively loyal over the years. “It is very much a ‘family thing’ for them to be here to help at Christmas in the Mansion and other big Luralton events,” Kathleen said. “They’re always giving back,” she added.

Chito looks forward to traveling and working on his many woodworking and other building projects, but said he will miss his quiet early mornings in the LH Chapel before the school day starts and “all the best people” at Luralton.

We applauded Chito’s life’s work at Luralton during the Class of 2021 graduation June 5. LH faculty, staff, and other retirees honored Chito’s service and celebrated his retirement at a luncheon on campus June 11. Luralton girls chose to dedicate the 2020-2021 yearbook to Chito. And in May, we launched the “Chito Lucas ‘Keep the Faith’ Endowed Scholarship” to create opportunities for future Luralton students. To contribute to this named scholarship, go to luraltonhall.org/give and specify “Chito Lucas Endowed Scholarship” in the designation field or mail a check made out to Luralton Hall in the enclosed envelope noting this is for “Chito Lucas Endowed Scholarship.” We will miss Chito’s steadfast presence, versatile skills, knowledge of all things that keep LH safely running, and his constant good cheer!



Chito Lucas (center) celebrates with his son Justin and wife Lydia at Luralton’s retirement luncheon held June 11 in Claven Auditorium



Legacy of a Luralton “Lifer”

Luralton was honored to learn that, upon her death on July 17, 2019, Ms. Alba Elizabeth Roessle ‘55 had gifted a large portion of her estate in scholarships to benefit future generations of Luralton ladies. Alba’s planned gift is already helping two current freshmen who matriculated at Luralton in Fall 2020, and the estate continues to fund students for the duration of their four-year LH careers.

Alba was an immensely proud lifelong resident of Milford. When she entered first grade at Luralton in September 1942 during the height of World War II, Luralton was a grade 1-12 school. She graduated in 1955, joining the ranks of “lifers,” girls who completed all 12 grades at Luralton. While at Luralton, Alba made many lifelong friendships, particularly with her friend Judith Moravek Ellsworth ‘55. Later, as class agents, Alba reconnected and became close friends with Edla Caldwell Saffo ‘55.

After graduating from Luralton Hall, Alba attended Stone College in New Haven (known today as Stone Academy) and earned a diploma in August of 1957 in stenography. Alba then worked at Dresser Industries as a pricing coordinator for more than 25 years and was a member of the company’s Retirees Club. In addition, Alba found great fulfillment in the 50 years she spent as a volunteer at Milford Hospital. A supportive alumna, Alba continued to be very active at Luralton.

“Alba certainly lived the Mercy value of compassionate service,” said Luralton’s Director of Advancement Kathleen Kearns Donahue ’80, P’06, ’14. “She was also a very generous person, and her legacy in life was to continually provide support to Luralton Hall.”

Elizabeth Miller, Head of School, said she had the privilege to meet Alba at a recent class reunion. Alba’s family and friends describe her as “one of the most well-loved persons,” and she was known for being gracious, friendly, and kind to all. Her life was faith-filled, and many of her treasured rosaries and other religious items were recently donated to the Luralton Religion Department.

“Alba was devoted to Luralton her entire life, and we are so grateful for her thoughtful planning to provide generous tuition assistance to students for years to come,” said Mrs. Miller.

Please consider a planned gift to Luralton Hall. For more information, go to luraltonhall.org/plannedgiving or contact Kathleen Kearns Donahue, Director of Advancement 203-877-2786, ext. 129 or kdonahue@luraltonhall.org

New Trustees Bring Wide-ranging Experience to Board

Luralton Hall announces the addition of three new members to its Board of Trustees and one retirement from the Board. Joining the Board July 1, 2021 are Father Guy Dormévil P’12; Brian Elliott P’20, ’21; and Sarah Longden Ulc ’89. Shaileen Sullivan Kopec ’64 retired from the Board in June, 2021.

Father Guy Dormévil brings his perspective as an LH alumna parent and a longtime active member of St. Joseph Church in Norwalk, where he has served in roles including trustee, member of the parish council and finance board, and leader of the liturgical committee. Newly-ordained a Roman Catholic priest in June, he has served as a transitional deacon in the Diocese of Bridgeport this past year while completing seminary in Massachusetts. Father Dormévil was born in Haiti and emigrated to the U.S. in 1988. He and his wife Magalie, who passed away in 2015 after 29 years of marriage, raised two children, Guylendy, Luralton Class of 2012, and son Guyvensky, a Fairfield Prep alumnus.

Brian Elliott, a financial advisor with Morgan Stanley, brings expertise based on more than 25 years of financial management experience. Parents of Quinlyn ’21 and Alexandra ’20, Brian and his wife Victoria of West Haven have been active and enthusiastic members of the LH community for the past five years—cheering on their daughters’ athletic events, participating in Irish Night and fundraising events, and offering testimonials about their family’s Luralton experience for our enrollment marketing video last fall.

Sarah Longden Ulc ’89 is a supervising producer in New York City for CBS National News and CBS This Morning. Prior to joining CBS in 2017, Sarah spent 16 years with NBC Universal as producer for programs including Dateline NBC and The Meredith Viera Show. An active LH alumna, Sarah has attended many LH events over the years and served as a featured speaker at Career Day. Sarah and husband Kenneth now reside in Fairfield.

“We are grateful that our outstanding new board members—who already lead very full lives—have committed their time and talent to Luralton,” said Luralton Hall Board of Trustees Chair Paul Fama P’17. “Their broad range of professional skills, knowledge, and life experiences is an asset to our governance work and to the School, and we welcome them to the Board,” he added.

After six years of service, Shaileen Sullivan Kopec ’64 has retired from the Board. Shaileen has made significant contributions to Luralton drawing on her more than 40-year career in executive leadership, fundraising, enrollment marketing, and strategic communications. Most recently, as Chair of the Heart of Mercy Committee, Shaileen steered Luralton’s once-every-six-year Mission Accountability Self-Study. Under her expert direction, Luralton successfully delivered this in-depth report in December. Shaileen also has served the Board on its committees related to Mission Integration (which she chaired), strategic planning, search for Head of School (2017), and governance.

A trailblazer in her own right, Shaileen was the first woman to serve as Vice President for College Advancement at Marist College. Her Luralton legacy dates back to her mother Jane Clancy Sullivan ’35.

“We will miss Shaileen’s broad talents and deep commitment to serve,” said Paul Fama. He added that she is truly dedicated to Luralton, traveling for years (before the COVID-19 pandemic) to Luralton from her home in Poughkeepsie, New York for the Board’s meetings and other LH events. “I thank Shaileen on behalf of the entire Luralton community for her tireless work to ensure the Luralton Mission endures and that girls thrive here.”

Our best wishes to Shaileen, her husband Tony, and daughter Christina!

Alumnae, Share Your News!

We love hearing from you. For example, Peggy Hutchinson ’19 (pictured below), a rising junior at Purdue University majoring in materials engineering, told us she will return to work at Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin Company, this summer following an internship last summer in its Materials and Processing, Blades Division. “I was lucky enough to work on site last year directly with people on the Black Hawk tail blades production floor to test the surface preparation of the blades,” Peggy told us. “I also led an investigation to see whether a type of defect, called a pucker, would affect the strength of the material,” she said. “It was a great professional experience learning about aerospace materials engineering, and I’m so excited to return this summer.” Peggy also noted that participating in the Sikorsky STEM Challenge at Luralton prepared her to ask questions and to function on a team—skills that helped her better navigate the workplace and to learn from co-workers. Alumnae, please let us know what you are doing at luraltonhall.org/classnotes, and join our growing LinkedIn group at Academy of Our Lady of Mercy—Luralton Hall!



Luralton Hall Celebrates the Class of 2021

The Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, Luralton Hall celebrated its 115th commencement on June 5. As the State of Connecticut eased COVID-19 limitations on gatherings in May, Luralton was thrilled to host graduation for the Class of 2021 in the LH Athletic Center with invited family and friends. The ceremony was also available to view via livestream.

Luralton Hall Chair of the Board of Trustees Paul Fama P’17, Head of School Elizabeth Miller, and Dean of Academics Jan Powers ’75 conferred diplomas to 88 young women. Speakers included Class of 2021 Valedictorian Catherine McLaughlin and Salutatorian Erin Paranal. Catherine, daughter of Mr. Dennis McLaughlin and Dr. Teresa Money McLaughlin ’86 of Milford, will attend the University of Virginia as a pre-med major. Erin, daughter of Mr. Ernesto Paranal and Mrs. Christine Paranal of West Haven, will attend Sacred Heart University with interest in pursuing computer science and music.

Erin also received Luralton’s highest honor, the Catherine McAuley Award, presented to her by Paul Fama (pictured above). This annual award, named for the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, is presented to the senior who best demonstrates the Luralton mission of Mercy values including compassion, courage, graciousness, spirit of volunteerism and sound academic performance.

In her address to graduates, Head of School Elizabeth Miller attested to the strength of the members of the Class of 2021 who excelled as they “lived the close of their junior year and their senior year during a global pandemic.” She also reminded graduates that the world needs them to continue to “explore what being a woman of Mercy means in our community,” with the assurance they are always welcome to “come home to Luralton” where we will proudly cheer on their alumnae accomplishments while loving them for who they are.

To view senior awards, college acceptances, and videos of the June 2 Baccalaureate Mass and June 5 graduation, go to: luraltonhall.org/classof2021

Persistence in Achieving Academic and Athletic Excellence

What does it mean to provide an “education-based athletic program?” Athletic Director & Dean of Student Development Jennifer Casceillo addressed this question in a presentation to the Luralton Hall Board of Trustees in March. “Luralton’s philosophy is that our girls are students first, athletes second,” explained Dean Casceillo. “We emphasize that, while athletics is an important part of the high school experience, to be a Luralton athlete is to take responsibility for balancing ‘the honorable pursuit of victory’ with strong academic achievement.”

Dean Casceillo believes that being a Luralton student-athlete this past academic year of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the most challenging of any high school season. First, there was the uncertainty prior to September about whether athletics would be allowed by State and local health authorities to take place in any capacity. Then, once athletics got the “go-ahead,” athletes were required to adhere to strict and evolving safety policies for play—all this, while keeping up with their learning under an array of COVID-19 guidelines on campus. “Our athletes showed great dedication and perseverance under stress,” said Dean Casceillo. “They chose to push forward and to play and achieve their best, and I was inspired by their display of resilience,” she added.

After navigating athletics through a pandemic, I know our girls can do anything they set out to achieve.

—Dean Casceillo

Among the athletic achievements this academic year: Luralton’s field hockey team won the 2020 SCC Division B Field Hockey Championship, the cross-country team took third place in its division at the SCC Championship, and the swim team earned runner-up in the SCC Divisional Meet and runner-up in the SCC Championship Meet. For more about our students’ recent athletic achievements, go to luraltonhall.org/athletics and click on the “Announcements/Highlights” and “Awards” tabs. These achievements followed a 2019-2020 season cut short March 11, 2020 when the pandemic was declared in the U.S. and LH closed campus. Go to luraltonhall.org/athletics19-20 for a look at results of the Fall 2019 and shortened Winter 2020 season.

Dean Casceillo noted the string of recent investments in our athletics program, which includes a priority on hiring and retaining our coaches. “The goal is to provide consistency and stability season-to-season, with staff who know our athletes and support our Mission,” said Dean Casceillo. Currently, our coaching staff features an individual who coaches two different sports, three individuals who coach sports in all three seasons, four coaches who are LH faculty members, and six coaches who are LH alumnae. All 15 head coaches plan to return for the 2021-2022 academic year.

As stated in our handbook signed by all student-athletes and their parents, the goal of the LH athletics program is simple: To put forth teams that are competitive, to create a sense of school spirit and pride in the athletic program, and to achieve success. “After navigating athletics through a pandemic, I know our girls can do anything they set out to achieve,” said Dean Casceillo, “And I cannot wait to see the renewed energy and excitement they will bring next fall as we emerge from this difficult time.”

ATHLETIC INVESTMENTS

Among LH athletic investments ranging from programming and equipment to staffing and safety, LH has eliminated \$250 per season pay-to-play fees, implemented livestreaming technology at no cost to families (video also is used for training), and secured grants for coaches’ professional development. Go to luraltonhall.org/investinginathletics for a comprehensive look at recent bolsters to our athletics program.

ALUMNAE WEDDINGS

Signature LH Program

We are so happy for our alumnae who were able to safely and joyfully celebrate their weddings in the Luralton Hall Chapel this past year, including (pictured top) Lauren Piontek ’07 who wed Joseph V. Misseri November 7, Luralton Hall Trustee Rachel Bode ’02 who wed Joseph Mundackal October 10 (lower) and Ashley Bresnahan-Franko ’11 who wed Michael C. McGannon September 19 (inset). We look forward to the many LH weddings planned for this summer and fall in our century-old and newly-refurbished Chapel. Are you an engaged alumna? Go to luraltonhall.org/alumnae/weddings for details about having your wedding at your *alma mater*!



Eric Brushett Photography



Shades Shutters Photography



Casarella Consulting

Watch our new series of videos at luraltonhall.org/faqs in which students and faculty answer prospective students’ most frequently asked questions including “What does it mean to be a Luralton student?” Pictured here is Kevinah Wright ’22 who says, “I’m really grateful to go Luralton Hall because the education here and the environment as a whole has definitely changed me for the better, and allowed me to challenge myself and grow...”



Please keep us up-to-date on your latest moves at:

LURALTONHALL.ORG/MYINFO

For a list of Luralton loved ones who have passed away in the last year, please visit:

LURALTONHALL.ORG/INMEMORIAM

Luralton Hall Valedictorian Catherine “Katie” McLaughlin ’21 celebrates graduation June 5, joining a strong alumnae legacy including (from left) her aunt Catherine “Katie” Money ’81, mother Dr. Teresa Money McLaughlin ’86, sisters Brenna McLaughlin ’19 and Haleigh McLaughlin ’17, aunt Mary Money ’76 (mother of Elizabeth “Liza” Leonard ’13), aunt Anne Money Atkins ’83, and cousin Rose Money, daughter of the late Patricia Ford Money ’79. See inside for more about the Class of 2021.