



## St. Peter's School Alumni Association Christmas 2024

**Christmas Greetings** from Charlie Berger '64, Merlyn Lee '64, Randy Lyon '67, Rodney Nelson '64, Ralph Price '64, Schuyler Purdy '64, Tony Roberts '59, Augie Stanton '62, Dexter Warrington '59 and Ken Adams '60.

Often, during the Christmas Season, a person's heart and mind carries them back to precious times in the past. As Christmas nears, it is our hope that you will remember that there was once an amazing school in Peekskill, New York. And, that it was there that you became, in some measure, the man that you are today.

### Some Reminiscences of the SPS Glee Club

The Rev. Father Frank C. Leeming founded St. Peter's School on September 20, 1938. The student body numbered 24 boys. During that first year of the school, Father Leeming created the Glee Club. By 1940, the group was performing at area Churches and for community groups such as the Elks.

From that small beginning, the Glee Club grew to become a formidable organization that gave superb concerts, recruited students, raised funds and trained young voices. It could truly be said that the Glee Club became the face of St. Peter's School to the world.



First Glee Club, 1939

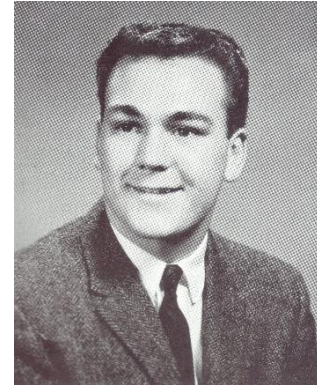
Years later, Father Leeming would write in his book, *Twenty-Five Years of St. Peter's School*, "Music has always played a large part in the life of the school." And so it was.

### **Dexter Warrington '59 remembers:**

Early in my 5th Form Year, on one afternoon, I and two friends walked around the corner of Stabb Hall. Directly in front of us was Father Leeming. He raised his arm and pointed his finger straight at me. He said in a stern voice, "You! In the Choir Room after dinner!"

I did as he directed, not knowing what was going to happen to me. To my surprise, I was drafted into the Glee Club. I had a decent voice and Father Leeming may have heard me singing in the Chapel because I have always been one to "sing out."

That occasion may not seem of much significance, but out of 100 plus boys in his charge it showed me how well Father Leeming knew each and every one of us.



A second memory was of a trip to sing in a Mass at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in NYC. Attending the Service were many very attractive young ladies. I apparently gazed at a few of them as they approached the communion rail. Father Leeming did not miss my surveying. Later, he let me know in very clear language that he did not approve of my "inappropriate conduct."

### **Brian Ridgeway '63 remembers:**

I was a member of the St. Peter's School Glee Club for three years and I loved being one of the Bishop's Men.

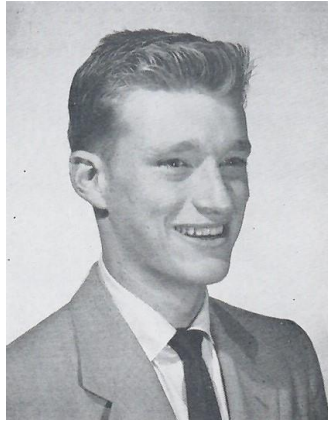
I especially recall the Annual Glee Club tour in Florida when I was in my 5th Form Year. I remember staying at the home of a couple who attended the Parish which we were visiting. Residing in the home were two teenage girls. I was smitten by one of them! I wrote to her for two years after spending just one night there. She finally sent me a "Dear John" letter. She said that she was sorry, but needed to break off our correspondence as she had a new boyfriend.



On another Florida tour, one of our concerts was held in Cocoa Beach. While there, I got a scorching sunburn. It was so bad that it was difficult to move. The Parish family that hosted me put me in a lukewarm tea bath so that I could recover enough to sing that night. Surprisingly, the treatment worked and I was able to sing. But I will always remember how very sore I was that evening.

### **Jim Perry '53 remembers:**

During our 1952 tour to Ohio, we stopped at Clarksburg, West Virginia, to sing Mass. While there, I was assigned to stay with a family that lived in a gorgeous mansion with front doors that were nine feet high. However, every other doorway in



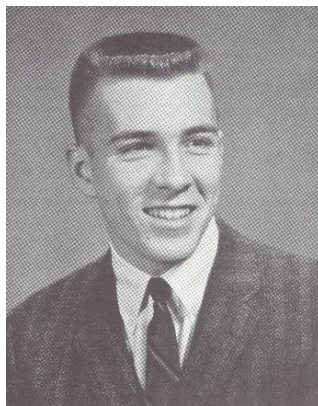
the house had doors that were only six feet high. At the time I was growing like a weed, was by then about 6' 4" tall. I bumped my forehead on every doorway in the house and showed up for church on Sunday morning with a swollen forehead that was colored black, blue, green, and red.

In 1953 the Glee Club toured in Florida. Abruptly, two SPS boys including our baritone soloist were caught AWOL and were sent home, and I suddenly became the soloist for "Let My People Go." I stifled my terror by focusing on a very pretty girl in third row and singing to her.

During the intermission the parish priest came to me and said he wanted to introduce me to someone. It was that pretty girl I had sung to. She and I became good friends.

### **Charlie Knight '59 remembers:**

Each year, during the winter we would sing at St. Thomas Church on 5th Avenue in New York City at Sunday Morning Services. Between Services, we were given breaks of an hour or more to walk around mid-town Manhattan.



In my Senior year, about six or seven of us wandered off to Grand Central Station. Having arrived there, we thought that it was our civic duty to make some improvements to the seating arrangements in one the waiting areas in the mezzanine. There were several long heavy oak benches set parallel to each other. We decided that it would better serve the public if the benches were set in the form of box so that in order to sit in them, you would have to climb over a bench.

We did an excellent job in rearranging a Grand Central Station waiting room that Sunday morning. We felt that we had performed our civic duty well.

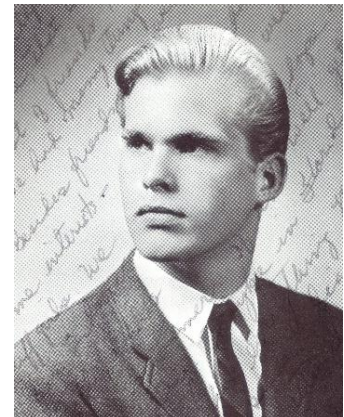
### **Schuyler Purdy '64 remembers:**

In the Spring of 1964, the Glee Club was preparing for the annual concert at the Roosevelt Hotel. The morning of the concert, my twin brother, Royal Purdy, was leaning out of a rear window of the Annex. The window was located near the stairs leading down to the basement. Someone was coming up those stairs and forcefully

threw open the door, knocking my brother right out of the window. Royal's fall was a story and a half. He hit the ground hard, dislocating his right shoulder. The nurse relocated his shoulder and placed his arm in a sling.

Months earlier, I had broken my left arm during a baseball game. As a result of the injury, my wrist was placed in a cast and my arm was hung in a sling.

As the Glee Club entered the stage at the Roosevelt Hotel, my brother, with his right arm in a sling, was positioned first in line on the right side of the stage. I was last in line and took my spot on the left side of the stage.



My grandmother was seated in the center of the audience in front of the stage. Standing before her were her beloved grandchildren, both of whom had their arms in a sling, one with a right arm sling and the other with a left arm sling. She became so overcome with seeing their injuries that she fled the Ballroom. Fortunately, after a short while, my maternal aunt, Miss Dorothy Hasbrouck, was able to console my grandmother and she was able to return to the concert.

**An SPS Reunion will be held in Orlando on Friday, April 25, 2025.**

The dinner and evening activities will be at the home of Augie (Jay) Stanton '62. There will be no charge for the dinner and evening activities as Augie has generously offered to cover all the expenses.

Please sign up to attend now so that we know how many guests to expect. To sign up, call Ralph Price '64 at (508) 813-7501 or visit the SPS website:  
<https://stpetersschoolpeekskill.com/>

You may use the following link to listen to songs from the 1957 and 1958 SPS Glee Clubs. <https://stpetersschoolpeekskill.com/music>

**“It was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God bless Us, Every One!”**

