

**Remarks by Margie (Guiney) Hopper
on Behalf of St. Mary's School Attendees**

**At the St. Peter's School Reunion
Saturday 05/14/2022 at the Bear Mountain Inn**

Good evening, everyone! What a great time! My St. Mary's schoolmates and I thank you for including us in this celebration reunion for St. Peter's School. Your Reunion Committee leader, Ken Adams, has been so gracious helping with our sign-ups, working with our Reunion Coordinator Renee Leisengang, and, of course, making us feel welcome . . . as you all have. Thank you, Ken . . . thank you all!

It was always special when our schools had events together. There were dances in our respective gyms, folk masses or concerts in Church, cheerleading from the girls at the boys' Saturday morning football games and even taking the SATs together in downtown Peekskill at one of the local public schools. One particular dance at St. Mary's stands out because the sisters decided to get the party going by pairing us off with the boys by height! Yes, it was cringeworthy!

In some ways our daily school life mirrored what happened at St. Peter's. Both schools maintained a 'self-help' program for which we had daily work jobs involving housekeeping, Dining Hall chores, assisting with Library duty or Chapel responsibilities. My children used to give a collective gasp when I described to them how St. Mary's girls walked two by two into the Refectory for meals, bobbed a curtsy to Reverend Mother at the head table, and before being seated . . . sang a Latin blessing.

We wore uniforms with ugly brown Oxford shoes, played field hockey in equally ugly gym uniforms, and wore little white Chapel caps when in the Sanctuary. When new friends in college learned where I had grown up I was often asked, 'Did you go to Woodstock?' Nooooo . . . but our oldest son and his girlfriend went to Woodstock (1994) 25 years later . . . and my husband and I were NOT happy about that!

More importantly I think the obvious parallel between St. Peter's School and St. Mary's School was the offering of a faith-based college prep education. Although there were times we may have felt isolated from the public school life most of our peers experienced, I like to think that the benefits outweighed the cons. It's impossible to remember a teacher or faith leader in our respective schools who did not take the time to care about each one of us personally. That said, genuine effort and completion was expected for school work, behavior was monitored and there were consequences for noncompliance!

We studied all the great religions of the world as part of our curriculum and had a 15-minute Chapel service each morning before class. Periodically we'd enjoy a 'hymn-sing' with favorites from the Hymnal of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America. I still have my 1940 copy of it and ever since I must admit I miss the traditional Church music of my youth. And I have no doubt that we have all found strength and comfort from the spiritual lessons we were taught at a tender age so long ago.

In closing, I think we're all entitled to pass along some wisdom to younger generations. Like the reality that many cliches turn out to be true! For example:

"The more things change, the more they stay the same."

"Don't cry over spilled milk."

"What goes around, comes around."

So in the spirit of this reunion, I offer a favorite song refrain by musician Peter Allen that we should all take to heart.

Don't throw the past away
You might need it some rainy day
Dreams can come true again
When everything old is new again! (Peter Allen, 1974)

Thank you, and Godspeed to you all!!!