Welcoming Margaret Cuthbert Staszak '75 as Mount Mercy Academy's New Principal

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Presenting the Class of 2011 Graduate Daughters of Alumnae pictured here at their Baccalaureate Mass

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CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2011

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MMASK Recap and Photos
Margaret Cuthbert Staszak ’75 Appointed MMA Principal

Mount Mercy Academy will have a new principal for the 2011-12 school year – Margaret Cuthbert Staszak ’75. Mrs. Staszak has served on the Mercy faculty for the last nine years as the Assistant Principal and will begin her new position as Principal on July 1, 2011.

Mrs. Staszak began her career as a teacher at MMA in 2002 and was appointed Assistant Principal in 2003-04 by Principal Paulette Gaske. She will now replace Mrs. Gaske who is retiring after 27 years on the faculty at MMA and 9 years as Principal.

Mrs. Staszak holds a master’s degree in Secondary Education from D’Youville College and a bachelor’s degree in Business from State University of New York College at Buffalo. She is an MMA Alumna and proud parent of two Mercy graduates – Leah Staszak Gallagher ’99 and Janelle Staszak ‘04, as well as daughter-in-law Nicole Young Staszak ’01.

Mrs. Staszak was identified after a thorough search and interview process in which a number of well qualified candidates were considered for appointment. She was the clear choice of the search committee comprised of parents, students, faculty, staff and members of the MMA Board of Trustees, and will bring a strong focus to academic excellence in her leadership.

When addressing the faculty and staff at Mount Mercy Academy, Staszak said, “I am thrilled and humbled by this wonderful opportunity. I thoroughly recognize the importance of this awesome responsibility and will work diligently to provide our students with an excellent educational experience, where they are able to maximize their potential for academic success.”
A Candid Interview with Mrs. Staszak

Where were you born and raised?
I was born at Mercy Hospital to Joan (Cronin) and Mathew Cuthbert. Our family, which includes my brother Mark (Timon '75), and sisters Kathy Cuthbert (MMA '77), Janice Sheehan (MMA '80) and Nora English (MMA '81), lived in South Buffalo and attended St. Thomas Aquinas Grammar School. From there, my sisters and I went on to Mount Mercy Academy and I graduated in 1975. So, my early education was shaped by the Sisters of Mercy.

How would you describe your leadership style?
I have a collaborative leadership style. Bringing others who have the expertise and talent into the ring of leadership and working together towards the same goals builds optimism for the future. Mount Mercy Academy is fortunate to have a wonderfully skilled faculty and staff from which to draw, making this an exciting venture for me.

What was your Mercy Girl experience like?
I loved every minute of my high school experience at MMA! I was a good student, enjoyed my classes, especially English Literature, and had wonderful teachers. I was a work-study girl after school to help with the cost of tuition (which was $400 at the time), and was involved in Student Council, the annual musicals, and all sorts of activities. I had (and still have) long time friends who came to MMA with me from STA, and a broad range of others who were athletes, cheerleaders, National Honor Society members, etc… Mount Mercy was as perfect a fit for me then as it is now!

What were some of your favorite Mercy Memories as a student?
I remember my junior prom, which was held right in the school gym. I won a pair of tickets to the prom for a poem I wrote based on the theme "This Magic Moment." We decorated the gym from top to bottom to make for a memorable evening. I also remember some of my favorite teachers. Miss Margaret Moran, my English teacher was a big influence, as was Sister Mary Clare Powers, who I remember with fondness. Sister Mary Ellen Twist, who is now the President of MMA was my sophomore Religion teacher.

How do you see Mount Mercy Academy in ten years?
I see Mount Mercy Academy as strong and vibrant, still offering an excellent academic program to students, while staying loyal to our hallmarks. Mount Mercy Academy will continue to prepare young women for success in their college career and in life beyond.

How do you plan on using your experience as a Mount Mercy student, parent, teacher, Alumna, and Administrator in your new position?
All my life experiences have prepared me to take on this awesome responsibility with an empathetic understanding regarding many of our constituents. I hope all that I've gained from my life and my career will help me to be a compassionate and caring administrator.

What are your expectations for the students as you plan to implement your goals?
All Mount Mercy students are fortunate to have a strong academic and spiritual foundation as they move through life. My expectations are for them to aim to reach their own maximum potential, and not to settle for less. I want them to dream big, work hard, and be successful in whatever path they choose to follow.

What is your favorite Mount Mercy event and why?
The Mount Mercy school ring is such a significant symbol to every Mercy girl that wears one. I have to say that our Ring Day Ceremony is one of my favorite events. The students are so excited to become part of our larger community of Mercy girls, and receiving their Mount Mercy ring during this rite of passage is very meaningful. I am able to tell each girl to wear her ring proudly. It is a privilege to be able to pass that message along to so many Mercy girls each year.
Proudly, we present the Class of 2011.

FAST FACTS ABOUT 2011 GRADUATION
Number of Graduates: 68 Students
College Acceptance: 100%
Total Scholarships Awarded: $7,698,190

Valedictorian: Emilie Fose
Salutatorian: Carly Andriaccio
Graduation Speaker: Mary Travers Murphy, Executive Director of the Family Justice Center

Who Will Tell the Story? Laura Ortiz ’83, Paula Penepant ’75, Katie Farr ’11 and Sister Nancy Hoff ’61 were presented special awards from the Network for Mercy Education during the graduation ceremony.

Creating a New Legacy Stephanie Khoury, member of National Honor Society, proudly processes into Kleinhans carrying the McAuley Rose and the rose signifying her Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation, to begin the graduation ceremony. Her younger sister Tania is proudly following in her footsteps at MMA and will graduate in 2012.

Director of Alumnae and Proud Mother Grace Gannon Jackson ’82 and her daughter Bridget ’11 celebrated a bittersweet moment – the end to her days walking the Mercy halls but the beginning of her journey to Oswego.

Just in Time... Kaitlyn Murphy and Abigail Campbell raced to their Baccalaureate Mass on May 25, 2011 moments after winning the Monsignor Martin Softball Title. No time for a dress – the girls just wore their jerseys under their graduation gowns.
EXCERPT FROM Valedictorian Emilie Fose’s Graduation Speech

Hopefully, each one of us has become a true “Mercy girl,” a woman who is ready to tackle whatever life throws at her, a woman who is not afraid to do what she feels is right and just, a woman who believes in herself and her ability to make a difference in the world. Hopefully we have changed “for good,” for as Glinda and Elphaba sing in the song from Wicked,

"I've heard it said,
That people come into our lives for a reason
Bringing something we must learn
And we are led
To those who help us most to grow
If we let them
And we help them in return
Well, I don’t know if I believe that’s true
But I know I'm who I am today
Because I knew you."

"It well may be
That we will never meet again
In this lifetime
So let me say before we part
So much of me
Is made of what I learned from you
You'll be with me
Like a handprint on my heart
And now whatever way our stories end
I know you have re-written mine
By being my friend"

So just remember that no matter where your life will lead you, there will always be people in your life who will help you live, learn, and grow. You will always have family, whether that be the family you were born with, your Mercy family, or families yet to be made, and friends to be there for you, through thick and thin, through times of stability and times of change, like now. So although our time as Mercy students has ended, we will forever be connected to the time we have spent here, from the lifelong friends we have made, to the valuable lessons we have learned. Moving on does not mean forgetting, but rather celebrating, the moments we have shared with others, the accomplishments we have made both big and small, and the opportunities that lie ahead of us. So promise me that each and every one of you will go out there and do the wonderful things that I know you are capable of... for, to again quote Glinda and Elphaba, “together we are truly unlimited!”
“Welcome Home, Meg” was the first words that I heard from Ms. Colleen Shanahan as I walked through the blue doors on my first day as a summer intern for the Marketing department during the summer of 2011.

Now, as I sit in an office on the 3rd floor of the school, it is a weird feeling being on the other side of things around here. On my first day, while catching up with the faculty, students and staff, I was also able to meet some new faces. Sure, it was a little humorous when people asked “Oh, the lights went off at your graduation and you all sang the Suscipe, right?”

It seemed as though it was good timing coming home from Mercyhurst and starting my internship in the last week of May. My first day on the job, I was immediately given tasks to help make the MMA 5k Race a successful event. While working on various items for the race, I quickly realized that everyone was planning two events— a 5k race and a party!

The 5K was held on Friday, June 3rd. 300 runners and walkers participated in the race and were congratulated by over 200 friends of the Academy who joined us in the Grotto for the after-party. This event raised $10,000 for the school which will be directed to the Alumnae Scholarship Fund.

MMA was honored to dedicate this year’s 5k to Charlie O’Neill, renowned local musician and member of the Stone Bridge Band. Mr. Robert Fix, a Mount Mercy Academy faculty member for 26 years, led the race as the 2011 Honorary Race Starter. A special congratulations to Ray McGurn and family for his achievement in winning the Mount Mercy Civic Pride Award.

Guests were at the party until midnight dancing and singing along with the Stone Bridge Band. Not to worry, Mrs. Jeanne Burvid (Director of Admissions) has requested that “Sweet Home Alabama” is put on the playlist for next year’s 5k Race, tentatively scheduled for Friday, June 1, 2012.

This event would not have ran as smoothly or have been as successful without the help of the 5k Committee, the parent and student volunteers as well as members of the Alumnae Board who all put in countless hours executing the race and hosting an entertaining party.

Congratulations to the Institutional Advancement Office for pulling off a challenging, but successful event. I am thrilled that I was given the opportunity to take part in it all! I had the best four years of my life thus far as a student of MMA, so I am excited to start seeing Mercy in a whole different perspective while learning many aspects of business and marketing, contributing to various projects and growing in my Mercy spirit.
Mary Lynn Ryan ’79, Winner of the Peabody Award
Mary Lynn is currently the Southeast Bureau Chief for Cable News Network (CNN). She was awarded the prestigious Peabody Award in New York City on May 23, 2011 for her work in journalism for CNN’s coverage of the Gulf Oil Spill. The George Foster Peabody Awards, first presented in 1941, recognize distinguished achievement and meritorious service by broadcasters, cable and Webcasters, producing organizations, and individuals.

UB Law Distinguished Alumni Award bestowed upon Kathleen M. Kaczmarek Mehltretter ’72
The State University of New York at Buffalo Law School honored Kathleen Mehltretter in early May with their Distinguished Alumni Award. The recently retired Mehltretter had a long, distinguished career and was the former U.S. Attorney. She was recognized for her commitment to public service.

Mary Ann Shea ’56 receives Effective Leadership Award for Women in Business
Mary Ann has been the chairwoman for the Grand Island Professional Women’s Chapter for 29 years. Prior to retirement, she was a Senior U.S. Customs Inspector assigned to the Buffalo/Niagara Falls area and was awarded the Federal Woman of the Year for Western New York. The Leadership Award was presented on June 9th at the Buffalo Launch Club. The award is presented to a woman who “promotes equality and equity for all women in the workplace and inspires women to achieve their full potential.”

Rings Around the World
The Hess Girls (left to right: Meghan ’08, Kelly ’12 and Katlin ’06) proudly wear their rings on their family excursion to Ireland, where they visited the Mercy International Center. They posed for this photo in front of Catherine McAuley’s grave on Baggott Street in Dublin.

Mercy Girls from the 1950’s and the Florida sun seem to agree with each other! Rose Stadler Hagen ’59 is pictured on a recent trip to visit Carol Kolb Anderson ’59 of Palm Coast. The Class of 1959 classmates are photographed during a lunch break at JB’s Fish Camp in New Smyrna Beach.

The Mercy ring circles the waterways with Judy Jenkins Kilroy ’57 who is pictured here sailing in British Virgin Islands on her sailboat. The Mercy traditions are deeply ingrained in this alumnae legacy family. Judy’s sister Elizabeth wears the Mercy ring of their mom, Julia Carey Jenkins ’27.
Lost Alumnae

We need your assistance to locate some of our lost alumnae listed below. Please check your address books, Christmas card lists, email and cell phone contacts or make some requests on Facebook. We want to locate the following alumnae to keep them in touch with Mercy and get ready for your next reunion!

Contact MMA Lost Alumnae Coordinator - Arlene McKenna Rola ’48 at (716) 826-1984 or email the Alumnae Office at gjackson@mtmercy.org. If you are the missing alumna - you can click on the contact us section at www.mtmercy.org and provide your updated address.

Rose Coppola Hudock ’45
Geraldine Lynch Cunningham ’49
Joan Hughes Snyder ’49
Connie Rupert Brown ’51
Judy Dehass Bogner ’51
Dorothy Tyczyła Kaczmarczyk ’53
Adrienne Spisak Schmigel ’55
Marie Nagy Kalenda ’56
Mary Biletsky Billman ’57
Phyllis Schmelzinger Miller ’58
Eileen Burke Sherman ’58
Judith Nyitral Brown ’59
Gloria Kompinski Brown ’63
Donna O’Connor Harshany ’63
Nancy Miller Forest ’64
Jean Coughlin Hoff ’65
Linda Spahn Blemel ’65
Linda Madigan DiJoseph ’65
Patricia McCarthy Campbell ’65
Ann Langan Bergmann ’66
Sheila Seibert Eckert ’66
Dr. Mary Anne Schichtel McNamara ’66
Kathleen O’Connor Retig ’68
Marion Bunce Kharem ’69
Kathleen Scheier Ross ’71
Anne Dugan ’72
Deborah Sławiak Brightful ’72
Patricia Zwick Rommel ’72
Debra Cuddihy ’73
Susan Murphy Hayes ’73
Esther Mikolajek Iryzcki ’73
Donna Grabowski Schrifla ’73
Susan Honan Matuszewski ’73
Rosemary Kelly Speranza ’73
Lynne Fitzgerald Schifano ’74
Kathleen Konter Masterson ’74
Mary Hughes Worthman ’74
Mary Boss Sniezek ’75
Elizabeth Cavaretta Thorpe ’75
Margaret Hoffman Klass ’75
Mary Kelly Caraci ’75
Margaret Campbell Rokita ’76
Linda Enright Lapiński ’76
Evelyn Philbin ’76
Carolyn Sonier Chase ’76
Mary Bradford Klessig ’77
Maureen Daly McGowan ’77
Patricia Moskal ’77
Mary Kehol Azzaroni ’77
Teresa Ryan ’77
Bernadette Szuliga ’77
Kathryn Drziminski Parks ’78
Darlene Kane ’78
Rosanne Baus Kendal ’80
Eileen Curtin ’80
Kathleen Gorman Wilson ’82
Marianne Federowicz Newton ’82
Anna Mychasiuk-Tadej ’82
Anne McCarthy Radka ’83
Catherine Malachy Michno ’83
Tina Menczynska Aldridge ’83
Marie Porter ’83
Lucinda Ricci Stone ’83
Suzanne Villacorta ’83
Eileen Lyons ’84
Lynn Martin ’84
Patricia Murphy ’84
Karen Lasota ’86
Jill Winkley Colburn ’87
Shanan Hartel Murphy ’88
Bonnie Kaczmarek Clough ’88
Tiffany Page ’88
Megan Russell ’88
Pamela Brown ’89
Maureen Browne Gosch ’89
Catherine McNamara ’89
Michele Kelly Fessel ’89
Rebecca Smyth ’89
Amy Suto ’89
Caroline Ahlers ’90
Tracy McCarthy ’90
Jennifer Schuster ’90
Colleen Donohue Nolan ’91
Tracy Cera ’91
Molly Harris ’91
Krista Rettig ’91
Jackie Czerniak ’92
Dr. Jennifer Gaj Kubiak ’92
Tracy McNerney ’92
Lisa Lombardo ’93
Cylb Robbins ’93
Krista Sengbush ’93
Kimberly Heath ’94
Kara Wittman Hines ’94
Angel Schneider ’94
Melissa Tynan ’94
Margaret Canavan ’95
Mary Haseltine Winters ’95
Roseanne Serafin ’95
Erin Sobkowski ’95
Nicole Schollard ’95
Kathleen Goetz ’96
Melissa Mendlewski Bannister ’96
Colleen Bender ’97
Colleen Coggins ’97
Nicole Murphy ’97
Kristin Sieracki ’97
Kimberly Watkins ’98
Sara Drilling ’99
Andrea Faltrisco Kadryna ’99
Nicole Seychew Morris ’99
Joan Lauber ’00
Corrie Maguire ’00
Katie Mowbray ’00
Jessica Newman ’00
Jennifer O’Shei Simpson ’00
Amy Bogner ’01
Shannon Alba ’02
Mary Hontz ’03
Stephanie Michalow ’03
Sara Kuzemsky ’04
Catherine Robinson ’04
Whitney Hohl ’05
Brittany Bigouette ’08

The Mount Mercy Academy 2010 Annual Report is available online at www.mtmercy.org. If you would like a hard copy mailed to you please call Brittany at (716) 825-8796 ext. 321 or email bfinnegan@mtmercy.org