

To my fellow Spartan alums:

A little more than a year ago, I accepted George Gonzales' call to be president of our **Alumni Council**. The Academy has had an Alumni Council in the past but it had been years since we had convened one. The primary purpose of the Council is to find ways for the school to better connect with its alumni, to keep our alumni informed of all that is happening with the Academy today, and to encourage the Academy alumni to remain connected with the school and fellow alumni. We were fortunate to have a focus right out of the gate, that being to promote alumni attendance at "A Toast in Time" Gala and Auction last month in Hershey to celebrate 225 years since the school's doors were opened in 1789.

The Gala turned out to be a tremendous success, and I only wish we could have shared the evening with more of you! I want to thank everyone who felt connected to us, whether in spirit or in person that night. As evidence that our Facebook strategy succeeded, 144 of you joined the Group page we created. We had upwards of 65 alumni attended the event. Since tickets were sold out, we are not sure what we would have done had more of you RSVP'ed. Yes, but we'd love to solve that kind of positive problem at a future event! Talk to anyone who attended, from parents to former and current faculty alike, and you will hear that the "spirit" from the alumni who were in attendance helped to make the night one to remember. I'm sure it was gratifying for current parents who came out in support of the school to meet alumni who still feel connected to the school some 20 or 30 or 40 years later!

As for other goings on with your Alumni Council, we have elected Mark Parsells '78 as **Alumnus of the Year** and he will be honored by being the Commencement speaker at the Academy graduation in June. We also took note of the great success of the Harrisburg Academy Athletics Hall of Fame that has been inducting honorees for the last six years with great success, and **we've decided to broaden the universe of Academy alums we'd like to see honored**. So, this summer you will be asked to nominate award recipients for the following four categories: 1) Service to Humanity, 2) Academic Achievement, 3) Professional Achievement, and 4) Rising Star Award for more recent alumni who exhibit great promise in their chosen field. We believe this will help present the world with a more rounded view of all that the Academy stands for.

We also are looking to find new ways to get people together, whether it is at small reunions in Harrisburg, or like we did this year, in NYC, Philly and San Francisco — or, back for an Alumni Homecoming weekend or class reunion. We share a simple bond having attended the Academy and having our lives shaped in big

and small ways by faculty, coaches, and classmates here. When we connect with each other years later, our lives are richer for it. Lastly, I would be remiss if I didn't mention this — should you feel so motivated, we encourage volunteers for the Alumni Council going forward. Please do not hesitate to contact me or George Gonzales if you are interested in getting involved. Here's to the Blue and Gold!

Fondly,
Joe Gillette