

Morning Star High School seeking new friends



JC Demetree Jr., Robert T. Shircliff, Louis V. Walsh

Recognizing a need to provide a secondary education for children of the Catholic faith who have learning disabilities, in its sixth decade Morning Star School started a high school program this past school year. Believing in the future, school leaders commenced construction without having the \$1.5 million needed by using savings and a loan from the Diocese of St. Augustine.

To benefit the "Building a Brighter Future" campaign, and help pay off the loan for the special education high school, Morning Star School has launched an initiative and is planning a gala. Although the school is part of the Catholic diocese, 50 percent of the students are not Catholic, according to Maria Johnson, development director.

"We have students from five counties at the school; we are not a neighborhood school and 80 percent of the kids are on a scholarship program," Johnson said. "The kids we serve do not fit into the regular school system because they learn differently and need more attention and special learning tools. Most schools cannot accommodate that. Our 12:1 teacher ratio is an important part of why we succeed."

Circle of Friends, the initiative chaired by well-known philanthropists Robert T. Shircliff, JC Demetree Jr., and Louis V. Walsh, founder of Guardian School, will help support and promote Morning Star High School. A cocktail party was held March 30 at Epping Forest Yacht and Country Club to toast the school, add charter members to the circle of supporters and begin the awareness campaign.

The gala, A Night on the St. Johns River, will be held April 8, at The Haskell Building, beginning at 6 p.m. and will include an auction.

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Rogers ends football career as winningest Florida coach

Legendary high school football coach Charles "Corky" Rogers of The Bolles School officially ended his coaching career with more wins, state titles, championship game appearances, Hall of Fame inductions and collegiate players than any coach in Florida.

Rogers, 73, who has led the football program at Bolles since 1989, announced his retirement due to medical reasons March 7 during a press conference in Bolles' McGehee Auditorium.

"I'm sitting in a chair. I'm not coaching. I'm not teaching. This isn't fair to the kids," he said. "I don't want to short them in any way. They need somebody who is active and able to do things."

Finishing his career with a 466-84-1 record, Rogers is the fifth winningest coach nationally. In 2011, he was the eighth coach in the history of high school football to reach 400 victories. During his 45-year career, he also holds the Florida state record for most state titles won among coaches with 10 and has racked up 83 playoff victories – 78 at Bolles alone, which is more than any coach in state history. In 2016, he led Bolles to its 17th appearance in the state championship, a state record.

A graduate of Robert E. Lee High School in Riverside, Rogers played football at Georgia Tech and attended National Football League training camps with the Baltimore Colts and Washington Redskins as a tight-end receiver. His first coaching job was at Ribault Junior High, where he served as offensive coordinator before being appointed Head Coach at Lee High School in 1972.



Corky Roger's family was on hand during a March 7 press conference at Bolles, where he announced his retirement. From left, Clint Drawdy, wife Linda Rogers, Corky Rogers, daughter Tracy Rogers Yost and grandson Mason Yost.

During his 17 years at Lee, he accumulated 10 consecutive district titles, a state record then, and a winning record of 141-39-1.

An impressive number of Rogers-coached athletes have gone on to play football at the collegiate level, including 156 at Bolles. He has also had 11 former players compete in the NFL.

Rogers is a member of the National High School Hall of Fame (2015), the Florida Sports Hall of Fame (2013), Robert E. Lee High School Alumni Hall of Fame (2013), Gator Bowl Hall of Fame (2012), Florida

High School Athletic Hall of Fame (2005), and the Florida Athletic Coaches Association Hall of Fame (2002). He has also earned numerous Coach-of-the-Year honors at the state level and was named National High School Football Coach of the Year for 2004-05 by the National High School Coaches Association.

"I am most proud of being a head coach for more than 44 years, and I never had a losing season," Rogers said. "If you have a good, solid program, you are going to have a successful team."

Local coach judges cheerleading championship Worlds qualifier

San Jose resident Brian Payne served as head tumbling judge for the Kick's Cheerleading Championships held March 25-26 in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. As part of an international judges' panel, he assessed scores for over 150 competitive scholastic and all-star cheerleading squads, composed of more than 3,000 athletes, in their quest for a bid to Cheerleading Worlds in Orlando April 29-May 1 at Disney's Wide World of Sports.

Payne is head diving coach at Duncan Fletcher High School as well as trampoline and power tumbling coach at Infinity All Stars Gym. His wife, Layne Thompson-Payne, is the new executive director for Riverside Fine Arts Association. She previously served the nonprofit as the Project Listen Outreach coordinator 2006-2008.



Brian Payne and Layne Thompson-Payne

Blakely new assistant principal at Landon

Julia Landon College Preparatory School has a new assistant principal.

Katrina Blakely, formerly assistant principal of Terry Parker High School, took over the position vacated by former Landon Assistant Principal Carolyn Aponte just before Christmas break, said Landon Principal Timothy Feagins.

Blakely, a 2000 graduate of Terry Parker High School, has 13 years of educational experience, most at her alumna mater. The Arlington resident earned her bachelor's degree at the University of Florida, where she majored in telecom productions and minored in education. She began teaching at Terry Parker in 2004, and has also served that school as a teacher, graduation coach, and assistant principal.

"I love being at Landon," said Blakely. "It is my first experience at a magnet school. We have kids from all over the city, yet there is a real community spirit and phenomenal parental support here."



Katrina Blakely

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