



# **St. Mary Catholic Central High School**

*Living Faith, Gaining Knowledge, Serving Others*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **SMCC ANNOUNCES NEW ENDOWED FUND TO SUPPORT TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

Kenyon and Karen Calender have made a significant gift to the SMCC Endowment Fund, which has established a vehicle to support teacher recruitment and retention at St. Mary Catholic Central High School.

SMCC President Sean Jorgensen stated, "This extraordinary gift will enable us to be more competitive in both the recruitment of faculty and the support of our staff's continuing education and advancement in teaching and learning. The Calenders recognize that the essence of our mission of forming the next generation of disciples occurs in the relationship between teachers and their students in the classroom. This new resource will enable us to recruit better and retain those individuals most committed to improving as educators and faithful servant leaders."

The couple established the Calender Family Fund with a planned gift to the non-profit foundation supporting the high school. The SMCC Endowment Fund exists as a separate legal entity from SMCC. An independent board of directors oversees the Endowment Fund. The Fund is designed to solely benefit the School through scholarships, support for faculty compensation, and funding for areas such as music, technology, and other operational needs. The SMCC Endowment Fund has over \$5.5 million in assets and has its investments managed in partnership with the Wealth Management Division at First Merchants Bank.

Michael Miller, Chairman of the SMCC Endowment Fund, stated, "The Calender's extraordinary generosity to our school is both humbling and inspirational. Planned gifts offer resources for achieving long-term goals. They ensure that SMCC's mission will continue for generations. I am especially pleased to see Ken and Karen's forethought to this particular gift, focusing on supporting and encouraging our teachers."

Miller continued, "Planned gifts like the one the Calenders gave SMCC reflect a tremendous hope in the future, and very few can affect that future as a great teacher can. Gifts from a person or couple's estate to a school, church, or community organization you love that establish these sorts of endowed funds can live on to benefit your grandchildren's children. Planned gifts often catalyze others to consider doing similar things, so we also appreciate their willingness to allow us to share this incredible news."

Mr. Calender is the CEO of KC Logistics, one of the Midwest's largest private logistics and transportation companies. Mrs. Calender is the former Karen Barron, a 1976 graduate of St. Mary Academy and a retired nurse. The Calenders have four grown daughters, Charis (RJ) Calender-Sumenick, Mara Trefry, Brittney Calender, and Megan (Jonathan) Dieckman, all graduates of St. Mary Catholic Central.

Mr. and Mrs. Calender commented on their intent in making this gift: "We hope this endowed fund will serve as a source of support and encouragement for our school's wonderful educators. We are

inspired by their devotion to SMCC's mission and its students and so pleased to be able to recognize their contributions with the establishment of this Fund."

Mr. Jorgensen stated, "The purpose of the Calender Family Fund is to support the recruitment and retention of outstanding educators at SMCC. The annual proceeds will allow us to assist young faculty members more substantially with their continuing education and certifications, acknowledge outstanding promise among some of our younger staff, and be more competitive in recruiting new teachers."

Jorgensen continued, "The Calender Fund is the perfect complement to the Duffey Teachers Fund, which is also held as part of the SMCC Endowment. The Duffey Fund, established by the late Bob Duffey in memory of his wife, Rita, provides our staff with an annual years-of-service bonus rewarding all staff and especially recognizing the many members who have dedicated their entire careers to serving in Catholic schools."

Mr. and Mrs. Calender each served separate six-year terms on the SMCC School Board, with Mr. Calender leading the Board as its Chair for two years. After his service on the SMCC School Board, Mr. Calender became a member of the Board of Directors for the SMCC Endowment Fund.

As Campaign Chairs, the Calenders led the School's 2015 capital fundraising drive, *MOVE – A Campaign for St. Mary Catholic Central*, which raised over \$2.1 million for student scholarships, facility enhancements, academic program enhancements, and technology resources and upgrades.

The couple have served as volunteers in various events at the school, including as adult leaders on multiple Christian Service Mission teams to both Appalachia and Guatemala.

The Calenders were selected as the recipients of the School's Fidelis Award in 2009. Mrs. Calender was named the School's Alumnus of the Year in 2016 for her lifetime contributions as a graduate of St. Mary Academy and a person dedicated to the mission and ministry of Catholic education.

"Ken and Karen have been among the most impactful and influential figures in SMCC's history. Their generosity of spirit and commitment to our students are reflected in both word and deed and have been sustained for many decades. We challenge our students to be salt and light for the world and to become servant leaders. The Calenders are one of the best examples we could ask for of what faith lived out in today's world looks like," said Mr. Jorgensen.

### **About SMCC**

St. Mary Catholic Central High School is a heritage school formed from the 1986 merger of St. Mary Academy and Monroe Catholic Central. SMCC continues the church's educational tradition in Monroe that began when the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, founded St. Mary Academy in 1846. The Brothers of Holy Cross came to Monroe in 1944 to staff Monroe Catholic Central, a new all-boys Catholic secondary school established by the Archdiocese and several local parishes. The school's mission statement is, "Building on the charism of our founders, St. Mary Catholic Central High School is a Christ-centered learning community forming lives in a tradition of faithfulness to the Gospel, educational excellence, and service to others." For more information, go to [www.smccmonroe.com](http://www.smccmonroe.com) and follow SMCC on Facebook or X (Twitter) @SMCCMonroe

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