

Honored Alumni

Barb Rygiel



Ms. Barb (Riley) Rygiel graduated from Newman Catholic High School in 1960. Her graduating class was the first to have all four years of high school be located at the current Newman High building. She worked as reporter and co-editor for The Red Hat throughout her years and her sister, Mary Riley, was Editor from 1955-56. She was mentored by Sister Emma. Ms. Rygiel became a high school teacher herself and went on to be the advisor of that school's newspaper. Later, she worked for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee where she co-published monthly newsletters for her office. She also had one of her articles published in a Vatican Newsletter called the ICCRO (International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Offices). She currently works at St. Agnus Parish in Naples. Barb feels indebted to Sister Emma for all that she did to shape her life.

Ms. Rygiel comes back to Wausau every few years from her home in Naples, Florida and meets with about ten of her closest high school friends from Newman. They laugh about the football and basketball games that they attended that were followed by Sock Hops in the gym. She remembers how respected and appreciated her principal, Fr. Abts was. So much so that whenever he would walk into the gym for assemblies, all students would rise and greet him. Just like today, Barb's schoolmates avoided stepping on the Big N in the lobby at all costs as a sign of respect and school spirit.