

Comet Alumni Spotlight

Brigadier General Dan McDonough

St. Thomas Class of 1977

Educational Background: I went to St. Thomas for all 8 years of grade school. Then I went to the Academy of Our Lady/Spalding Institute from 1977 to 1981 (AOL/SI and Bergan High School evolved into Notre Dame). I earned my Associate's Degree from Illinois Central College and got my Bachelor's Degree from Indiana State University with a major in Aviation Administration in 1985.

Recent Achievements: I had the dream job! I was flying airplanes for a living in my hometown. Eventually, I was lucky enough to command the Peoria Air National Guard Wing, the 182nd Airlift Wing. Recently, I was promoted to Brigadier General so I could command for the entire Air National Guard of Illinois.

Family: I come from a family of 5 kids. I had 2 brothers and 2 sisters. I'm the middle child. All of us went to St. Thomas. I have a wife (Mrs. McDonough who was a teacher at St. Thomas) and a set of twins who are 22. They went to St. Thomas from Kindergarten to 8th grade from 2005 to 2014.

Comet Siblings/Children: My Brother Mike works and lives here in Peoria. My sister Anne is retired and lives in Bend, Oregon. My younger sister Mary is a teacher in Marquette Heights, IL. My brother Andy is a Civil Engineer in Chicago. All five of us went to St. Thomas.

My Kids are Danny who has one more semester at the University of Iowa where he's studying to be a Physician's Assistant. My daughter Kelly just graduated from the University of Iowa. She will attend the University of Indiana to continue her studies in Speech Pathology.



Favorite experience as a St. Thomas Comet: I had lots of great experiences. Probably my most memorable was when I was in 6th grade and we were supposed to write an essay about what we wanted to be when we grew up. I wrote that I wanted to load bags on airliners so that I could be close to airplanes. Father Bush, our parish priest, met with all of us to discuss our future plans. He asked me why I didn't want to be a pilot. I had never thought about that because our family didn't have much money and I thought it would be difficult to get enough flying time to become a professional pilot. From that conversation forward, I made it my life's goal to become a pilot. I was lucky enough to fly three awesome aircrafts in my hometown; the A-37, the F-16 (a supersonic jet fighter) and the C-130 where I got to see a whole lot of the world.

St. Thomas teacher who made an impact on you: Once again, many great teachers. Mrs. Hayes who was my teacher for 3 different years. Mrs. Dean who gave me her dog soon after my dog had died. She couldn't keep Barney the Beagle anymore and thought we would make a great home for him. Father Bush who had the impact I wrote about above.

Piece of advice for current Comets: Dream big! You can do anything you want to do in life. Dream big but work hard to get to your goal. Never give up and don't ever let anyone tell you that you can't do what you dream of doing!