

Comet Alumni Spotlight

Dennis McNamara Class of 1969



Educational Background:

Spalding Institute 1973

Eastern Illinois University 1978 BS

Bradley University 1986 MA

Western Illinois University EDS 1998

Recent Achievements: I spent my entire career as an educator in Peoria Area schools. My first ten years I was a teacher and coach at the junior high level. My next twelve years were spent as a principal at Brimfield Grade School. I accepted the job as the Brimfield Superintendent of Schools in 2000, until my retirement in 2013. I returned to Brimfield as an interim superintendent in 2019-2020.

I am currently active in the Ancient Order of Hibernians and Knights of Columbus.

Family: I have been married to my wife Tena for 41 years. We have two daughters, Kelcy Suydam and Lindsey McHugh. We have 3 ½ grandchildren, Donnie Suydam (2nd grade STS,) Fletcher Suydam (K STS), Faye McHugh, Baby McHugh due December 26th.

Both of my daughters are successful professionals; Kelcy as an occupational therapist for SEAPCO and Lindsey as a transition specialist for Chicago Public Schools.

Favorite experience as a St. Thomas Comet:

The lasting friendships that I made while I was a student at St. Thomas is my favorite experience. The connections I made are still strong today. Some of these people are my best friends. My hope is that my grandsons develop these same strong and lasting friendships at St. Thomas.

St. Thomas teacher who made an impact on you:

I was blessed to have many great teachers at St. Thomas. But when I was in 6th grade we had a teacher named Mrs. Rogers. She was new to St. Thomas and believed in hands-on- learning. She was a very positive teacher that was happy all the time. Our class learned all the songs to "The Sound Of Music" during winter indoor recess and then sang for the entire school in the Spring. I have many fond memories at St. Thomas that I still cherish to this day.

Piece of advice for current Comets:

In order to have good friends you need to be a good friend. Work hard and be proud of your accomplishments. Learn to be a good team player. Enjoy the friendships you make at St. Thomas- they just may last 63 years !!!

