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NEWSPRINT



# Index

## 2 FEATURE

Farewell Mrs. Kowalski  
By Julia Lorelli

## 3 FEATURE

Grad dresses: cultish  
or cool?  
By Maura Sullivan

## 3 FEATURE

Memorial Day  
By Alyssa Tisch

## 4 LIFE

Summer plans  
and memories  
By Julia Lorelli

## 4 FEATURE

Final exams  
By Alyssa Tisch

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# Farewell Mrs. Kowalski

STORY, PHOTO AND GRAPHICS: **JULIA LORELLI, SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROMOTIONS EDITOR**

After working for approximately 6 hours a day, 35 hours a week, 140 hours a month and 1,260 hours per year for 44 years of teaching Mercy girls math, Mrs. Vicky Kowalski is retiring. She attended private schools growing up and throughout her education, she realized she wanted to teach math at the high school level. “I went to St. Suzanne grade school on the west side of Detroit, and Rosary High School which was an all-girls high school in Detroit. Then I went to Oakland University,” Kowalski said. “One of my early teachers at St. Suzanne made me think I would want to go into the profession of teaching. My 9th grade algebra teacher, who was a sister, taught me I wanted to teach math, and then my involvement in sports taught me I wanted to teach high school because I wanted to coach.”

Most of the public schools had limited job openings 44 years ago. It would have been difficult to get a position in a public school, so Kowalski came to Mercy.

“Even though at that time, when I started, Catholic schools did not pay very much, I said ‘I got to have a job’, and I was actually offered a job here at Mercy and at Bishop Borges which was a co-ed school off of Telegraph and Plymouth Road,” Kowalski said. “I decided to take the job here because my sister was going to be a senior at Bishop Borges and I didn’t want to do that to her. Obviously, in hindsight, I am really happy with my decision and I really love teaching all girls.”

Being at a school for 44 years definitely brings up many memories.

“In my early days, I wasn’t that much older than the students. There was a group of students who graduated way back in 1981 and they were playing summer softball,” Kowalski said. “They didn’t have a pitcher and I could pitch slow pitches. I’m a lefty and I do this backward handed spinball, so I pitched for them for a couple of years after they got out of high school in the summer. So that was kinda fun to have some type of an association with some former students.”

Kowalski has one last message for the Mercy students.

“It has been an absolute pleasure to especially teach all girls. I have obviously very much enjoyed all my coaching and I do plan on continuing coaching next year,” Kowalski said. “Because I am going to continue to coach two sports [golf and bowling] there’s a possibility that I might have some type of part-time position doing something. I have just had enough of full-time teaching and all that comes with it. My husband’s been retired for five years now so it’s time for me to take some more time to relax.”

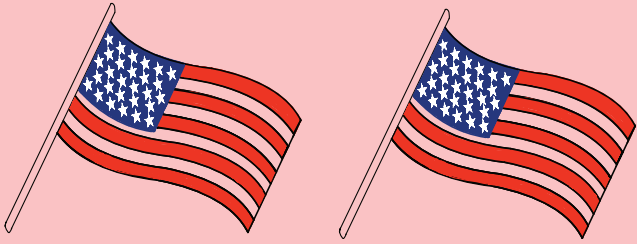


Mrs. Vicky Koawlski retires after 44 years of teaching at Mercy. Photo taken by Julia Lorelli



# MEMORIAL DAY

STORY AND GRAPHICS: **ALYSSA TISCH, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**



Memorial Day is a national holiday honoring our fallen military men and women who died in service. This year, Memorial Day fell on Monday, May 30.

Memorial Day was first created in the years following the Civil War according to [history.com](#). The Civil War was one of America’s bloodiest wars with more American casualties than any other war we have fought in according to the American Battlefield Trust. With so many killed, numerous places, starting in Waterloo, New York, began to hold tributes to fallen soldiers in May. In 1971, Memorial Day became an official holiday celebrated on the last Monday of May.

On Memorial Day Americans will visit cemeteries, go to memorials, hold family gatherings or participate in parades.

While Memorial Day is about honoring deceased military members, *Newsprint* also wants to recognize living military members. Junior Mia Juday has several family members who are involved in the military.

On her mother’s side, many of her relatives joined the Navy. Her grandpa, aunt, uncle and now her cousin Stan have all served. Stan was commissioned several years ago so he is very new and hasn’t earned any roles or awards yet. In contrast, both her aunt and uncle have been in the Navy for quite some time and earned the rank of sailing commanders. Additionally, her aunt’s grandpa received an award for his service in World War 2, and he is now buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

While Juday personally does not want to go into the Navy, she feels their stories are inspirational to her.

“One of our relatives served in World War 2, and obviously that was a big thing. It was cool that we knew him and getting to hear his stories was super inspirational,”

Juday said. “Additionally, my aunt was the only [female] in her unit so she overcame a lot of sexism and challenges so that was inspirational as well.”

Juday also talked about some of the other challenges that her aunt and uncle had to overcome when they served in Vietnam.

“Obviously the war was very controversial, but even still, these are people risking their lives volunteering to fight in this world and they still deserve recognition for that,” Juday said.

To honor her relatives, Juday has visited Arlington National Cemetery to visit her aunt’s grandpa’s grave and pay tribute for what they have done for our country.

Senior Gracie Grady also knows someone who has served, her older brother, Jeremy Henderson. Henderson joined the army after high school and served in the Middle East for a little bit before leaving the army and becoming a photographer. Grady still remembers the emotions she went through when he joined.

“It was very scary for me. I was about 8 when he joined, and 10 when he was sent overseas,” Grady said. “He could not tell us where he was when he was serving, but we did know he was in combat. I remember he could call us sometimes and he would send us letters. He would be gone for quite some time, and at such a young age I really did not know exactly what he was away doing. It was scary for me just knowing that my big brother was so far away and in danger.”

One interesting fact about Memorial Day is that according to Fox News, The National Moment of Remembrance Act, adopted in December 2000, gives a time for people to stop whatever they are doing on Memorial Day at 3 p.m. local time to reflect on and acknowledge those who died valiantly serving our nation.

# GRAD DRESSES: CULTISH OR COOL?

STORY AND GRAPHICS: **MAURA SULLIVAN, ASSOCIATE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

The topic of graduation attire has been long debated throughout the Mercy halls. While some love the tradition, others see it as cultish. A recent *Mercy Newsprint* poll of 46 students showed that 54% of respondents like the white dress tradition and 46% do not.

This Mercy tradition has a long and rich history.

“The long white dresses have been there since the beginning. We have pictures,” Dr. Cheryl Kreger, Mercy High School president, said. “It was the custom of many private girls schools and even some boarding schools and international schools to graduate in white dresses. It was supposed to be a very special and significant tradition.”

Many Mercy girls enjoy the tradition of wearing white gowns at graduation for various reasons. For one, many find the dresses more flattering than the traditional graduation attire.

“It looks more classy! Graduation robes are clunky,” senior Kendal Lavigne said.

Others liked the dresses because of their tradition and symbolism.

“It’s fun to have school traditions. It gives you a sense of pride to be a part of the school,” senior Jennifer Rabahy said.

Junior Jenna Jallad said the white color is significant.

“I think it is a good sign of a fresh start after high school ends and how it is a perfect time to have a clean slate/reinvent yourself,” Jallad said.

And while many feel the dresses symbolize good things, others interpret their meanings differently.

“I feel that it is like a marriage ceremony and we are being sent off to be married,” freshman Ryley Kline said. “Especially since we are an all-girls school, it makes it seem that our only purpose is to grow up and serve a man.”

Other girls shared the belief that the white dresses were not what they wanted to wear on their monumental day.

“They make all the girls blend in and white is not a flattering color for some people.

Also, the symbolism of white dresses is insulting and demeaning to women,” sophomore Miranda Lebednick said.

Further, the lack of alternatives to white dresses has caused some to turn against the tradition.

“There are many people here that don’t feel comfortable wearing a dress, but they are forced to anyway and I see that as uncomfortable and frustrating,” sophomore Milo Gouin said.

Kline agrees.

“Not everyone feels comfortable wearing a dress on a day of a big milestone like graduation,” Kline said. “It seems unfair that some people have to be unhappy, uncomfortable, or have the day tainted by being forced to wear a dress.”

Several students also expressed frustration with the dress requirements, even if they do not mind wearing a dress for graduation.

“I like the tradition, but it can be extremely, extremely hard to find a dress that meets the requirements and is flattering,” senior Aubrey Etue said.

Some suggested wearing their cap, gown and cords in order to show off their accomplishments over the past four years.

“Cap and gown just seems a little more appropriate. It’s just more traditional,” junior Emilee Theofanopoulos said.

Despite the mixed opinions, the tradition has a history that cannot be forgotten, and many people enjoy this unique feature of Mercy.

“There is this juxtaposition of let’s make a mark and do something new versus a tradition,” Kreger said. “Anytime a tradition has not been exercised or has not taken place, there has been major, major opposition on all fronts to that, so there is something valued about tradition. And yet as I said, within these traditions our young women can express themselves in certain ways. The traditions as a whole are very well respected and people look forward to them, parents, alumnae.”



# Summer Plans and Memories

STORY, PHOTOS AND GRAPHICS: JULIA LORELLI, SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROMOTIONS EDITOR

**M**ercury girls share their favorite memories from the 2021-2022 school year and their plans for summer break.



Junior Olivia Martinez.

**What was your favorite memory from this year?**

“My favorite memory from this year was probably A-Ball,” junior Olivia Martinez said. “I had a lot of fun with my friends and I also thought the dance was really fun.”



Junior Isabella Jappaya

**What made you want to go on the Spanish trip?**

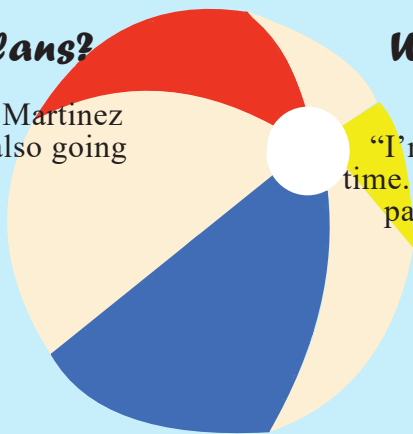
“I want to go on the Spanish trip because I like to go on vacations. I also think it would be a really cool experience because [going on vacations with your friends] is different from going [on vacation] with your family,” junior Bella Jappaya said.

**What are some of your summer plans?**

“I am going to play a lot of soccer this summer,” Martinez said. “I’m going to hang out with my friends. I am also going to go up north.”

**What are you looking forward to on the Spanish trip?**

“I’m really looking forward to going to Europe for the first time. I’m also really looking forward to the food. Nothing in particular, just Spanish food in general,” Jappaya said.



# Final exams

STORY, PHOTO AND GRAPHICS: ALYSSA TISCH, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

**S**tudents are counting down the days until summer break, but, before they get to their long-awaited vacation, final exams must be taken. Going into exams, people have very mixed feelings about how prepared they believe they are.

“I feel that I am very well prepared because of the rigor of my classes and my teachers’ excellent hard work,” junior Natalie Murphy said.

On the other hand, sophomore Rafi Sherman does not feel like she is fully ready to take her exams.

“I’m a little bit worried about how finals are going to go considering I feel like I haven’t gotten a lot of information about these finals,” Sherman said. “I’m also concerned that we are still learning new material so close to finals coming around.”

Some juniors offer up advice for their fellow students on how to prepare for these exams.

“My best tip would be to stay focused on what you want to achieve and make sure you put your best effort into each day of studying,” Murphy said.

Junior Megan Brissette also gave tips that have gotten her through her past exams.

“My number one piece of advice is don’t procrastinate. Make sure you don’t leave all of your studying to the last minute,” Brissette said. “Slowly just chip away at your study guides. If the teacher gives you information or worksheets to prepare you for the exam, take advantage of it.”



Junior Annie Campua studies for her biology final. Photo taken by Alyssa Tisch