

## Spirit of the Heart Award: Angelo Del Russo



Assumption College for Sisters is pleased to bestow the Spirit of the Heart Award upon Mr. Angelo Del Russo at the Annual Caring Basket Gala.

Mr. Del Russo attended the Newark College of Engineering (NCE) for 8 years as an evening student and received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering from Newark College of Engineering (NJIT) in 1982. Concurrent with those years pursuing his desire to gain a higher education, he incorporated Del-Sano Contracting in 1975.

To supplement his engineering education, he joined with skilled tradesmen to become a journeyman carpenter, and eventually a superintendent. Such skills coupled with his focus on studies at NJIT enabled him to orchestrate the evolution of the Del-Sano company in providing comprehensive building services for commercial, industrial, and institutional clients, earning the A+ Surety. With over 45 years of experience in the building construction industry, Mr. Del Russo says, "This never grows old for me. I cannot wait to wake up each day and do it again". With a team of over 35 construction professionals, he inspires them to "become inquisitive and complete the mission fast", making the customer the priority and achieving an outstanding result.

The reward of a great career is not complete without the support of "family and those we love," as he often says. His treasures are his love for Beth, and his darling daughters Dawn and Denise, son-in-law Michael and granddaughters, Eliana Rose and Analise Evelina.

Mr. Del Russo often finds spiritual nourishment attending Mass at the Chapel of the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Christian Charity, Mendham, NJ. He acknowledges religious Sisters having a positive impact on him as a young person, while attending Saint Francis Xavier School in Newark taught by the Religious Teachers Filippini and attending services at Saint Lucy Church, Newark.

Mr. Del Russo believes strongly in the mission of Assumption College for Sisters as he understands the importance of providing the Sisters students with the professional and academic skills necessary to serve in their communities' ministries. Mr. Del Russo, after meeting some of the Sister students, offers great encouragement and, as an astute business person, understands the complexities and challenges of the ACS mission of "Teach a Sister...Touch the World".

## Family Life Award: Lisa & Kevin Clayton



Family and Catholic education have always been important foundations for the Claytons.

Kevin and Lisa reside in Basking Ridge, NJ and are proud parents of 3 children: Jessica, Patrick, and Grace. Jessica and her husband Brian have 3 daughters and “Mimi” and “Pop” lovingly dote on Georgia, Macailagh and Maeve who live nearby.

Kevin and Lisa were married 36 years ago at St. Rose of Lima Church in Short Hills. Kevin is a proud graduate of St. Rose of Lima School and Lisa grew up as a parishioner of Notre Dame Church in Bethlehem, PA. They are long time parishioners of St. James Church in Basking Ridge. Their children are all graduates of the St. James School, where their daughter Jessica teaches, and their granddaughters currently attend. Over the years, the Claytons have provided financial support for scholarships at St. James School in addition to being lead benefactors for the renovation of the St. James Rectory, Convent, and school classrooms.

Kevin and Lisa dedicate their resources, time and energy to philanthropic organizations that exemplify their strong Catholic faith. In addition to supporting the St. James Community, they enthusiastically support the Salesian Sisters and the Newman Center at Lehigh University. They have specifically focused their charitable contributions on educational scholarships for needy students attending St. James School, Blair Academy and Lehigh University.

Two years ago, the Claytons joined The Papal Foundation as Stewards of St. Peter. Since its inception in 1988, The Papal Foundation and its Stewards of St. Peter, have allocated grants and scholarships around the world to more than 2,000 projects suggested by Popes John Paul II, Benedict and Francis. The impact of The Papal Foundation has been meaningful; providing support for churches and chapels, rectories and convents, seminaries and monasteries, schools and hospitals, priests, nuns and laity scholarships. The Papal Foundation is the only charitable organization in the United States that is exclusively dedicated to fulfilling the requests of the Holy Father for the needs of the church around the globe. Kevin serves on the Strategic Planning and Development Committees. Kevin and Lisa were blessed to take their family to Rome last year for The Papal Foundation’s annual pilgrimage which included an audience with His Holiness, Pope Francis.

Kevin and Lisa have been instrumental in bringing FOCUS to Lehigh University. FOCUS is the Fellowship of Catholic University Students, an outreach program for American college students seeking meaningful purpose at a critical point in their lives.

Lisa has been an advocate and long-time supporter of the Salesian Sisters. She was influenced and enriched by her annual childhood summers spent at Camp Auxilium in Newton, NJ. Her involvement includes the ongoing adoption of many Sisters and providing financial support for children to attend summers at Camp Auxilium.

The Claytons continue to be long time supporters of the Diocese of Metuchen and the needs of the Bishop and his Annual Appeal.

With Lisa's unwavering support and blessing, Kevin was a member of the Board of Trustees at his alma mater, Lehigh University, for 22 years. Most notably he served as Lehigh's Interim President for the 2014-2015 academic year. Kevin recently completed his five-year term as Chair of the Board and now serves as Emeriti Trustee.

Kevin is the Managing Partner of the Finley Ridge Group, an investment advisory firm and private family office. He retired from corporate life after a successful career with the Chrysler Corporation, Trust Company of the West, and Oaktree Capital Management.

The Claytons look forward to further supporting the ever-important mission of the Assumption College for Sisters. *Teach a Sister . . . Touch the World!*

## Education Award: Sister Joseph Spring, SCC



Sister Joseph Spring, SCC, our Caring Basket Gala honoree for the Education Award, is well known by many of our benefactors.

Sister has generously and successfully served ACS for fourteen years as its 6th President. During these years, Sister, together with Sister Marie Cecilia Landis, SCC, steered the College from Mendham to Denville and contained the spread of Covid. For this, and so much more, Sister justly deserves the Education Award.

Born in New Britain, Connecticut, Sr. Joseph grew up with her sister, Mary Ann, in Kensington. After spending her early educational years in several two-room public schools, she reluctantly went to St. Paul's

Jr. High School, staffed by the Sisters of Christian Charity, and after a few short weeks, was "sold" on the Sisters and Catholic education. One Sister had a particular influence on her, remembering the kindness and understanding the Sister had for the students from public schools.

In 1960, Sister entered the Sisters of Christian Charity, Mendham, New Jersey, as an Aspirant (aspiring to be an SCC) and received admission into the novitiate in 1964. Sister Joseph received an A.A. from ACS, a B.A. from Marillac College, and a M.A. from Seton Hall University. Sister celebrates her Jubilee this year as an SCC for 60 years.

Sr. Joseph is a strong supporter of Catholic education. She is proud she was a teacher most of her life, with 10 years of classroom teaching; 19 years as principal, 5 years as Assistant Superintendent in the Diocese of Paterson, 8 years as Provincial Councilor, and 14 years as President of ACS.

Through the years, Sister received numerous awards. To name a few: National Catholic Educational Association's Distinguished Principal Award, Honorary Doctorate, St. Vincent College, Latrobe, PA. Named National Distinguished Principal in 1993 and awards received in honor of her commitment to Holocaust Studies are her most treasured.

With respect to these assignments and awards, Sister Joseph says, "I especially loved working in the Diocesan Schools Office where I led the writing of curriculum and helped faculty implement it. Although I loved all my years in formal education, my time at ACS will always stand out in my mind and heart. It is there that I learned from the Sister students what a challenge it is to learn a new language and new cultures--and still come out smiling! ACS is a very special place!"