



SAINT PATRICK HIGH SCHOOL

Dear Saint Patrick,

It's hard and surreal to believe that my four years here at St. Pat's are coming to an end. As cliché as it sounds, four years really do fly by especially when it's spent at a place as special as St. Pat's. I first found out about St. Pat's when I was 4 or 5 years old because this is where my older brother, Kevin went. I can still remember going to one of Kevin's award ceremonies for swimming and looking at my mom and saying this is the school I want to go to. I wanted to come here at first because I wanted to be like him and copy everything he did, but do it better. Fast forward to 7th grade when it was time to start thinking about where I wanted to go, I shadowed St. Pat's for the first time. I can still remember walking towards the front doors on 5900 W Belmont feeling nervous and having butterflies in my stomach, but also excited at the same time. That feeling of being nervous and having butterflies went away instantly once I started walking with my host to his first class. Students were giving me fist bumps and saying "hi" or "what's up" whether they knew me or not and treated me like I was already one of them. That camaraderie made me feel like I was already a part of the Shamrock family. I shadowed again in 8th grade because I wanted to experience it all over again. To no surprise, it was exactly what I remembered and then some, from Coach Fabs greeting me at the front saying "What's up JW(J-Dub)" to experiencing high school level classes to sitting on Coach Luke's couch and talking with him in his office (who to this day still remembers and asks how my brother is doing).

Playing football at St. Pats played a pretty big role in my career here. It not only taught me life lessons that I'll carry for the rest of my life, but it also allowed me to meet some of my best friends whom I consider brothers. Some of my most fond memories are ones I made during the football season; from 6 am lifts and summer practices, to a state playoff run to beating St. Ignatius for our home opener at Triton. Especially this football season in particular, Coach Mertens ran each practice in a way I had never experienced before. It didn't matter if you were on Varsity, JV, or Freshman, we all practiced together. We did each drill as if there was only one team rather than three. This not only made me have to step up and lead by example but also allowed me to form new bonds with people whom I might not have met had it

not been for football. The memories made, both high and low, and bonds formed both new and old are what made each year fun and unforgettable.

Brotherhood - the most frequently used word when people talk about St. Pat's. It's something that you have to experience in person to understand why it's so heard of and talked about, because no words, pictures, or videos could ever truly describe what it's like to be a part of the Shamrock brotherhood. It's shown in the stud section at the football and basketball games and in the halls and classrooms Monday through Friday from 7:45 am to 2:45 pm. It doesn't matter if you're a freshman, sophomore, junior or senior, every single Shamrock is a part of that brotherhood and it will last them forever. It's that same brotherhood that made it easy choosing St. Pat's as the place I wanted to call home.

As I prepare for the next chapter in my life at college, I know that I am prepared for it because of what St. Pat's has done for me. I truly can't imagine what my life would look like had it not been for St. Pats. It is here where the foundation for what I wanted my life to be was laid. It is here where my friends and I, a group of 17 and 18 year old kids created lifelong memories and became men. It is here where I learned life lessons that will guide me throughout life, and for that, I say, "thank you." Thank you to every coach, teacher, and person in the St. Pat's community, for you all played a part in shaping me into the person I am today. In particular, Coach Fabs: thank you for all of the handwritten letters you sent when I was in 7th and 8th grade, it's those letters that made me want to come to St. Pats even more, and for always being the person we could ask a question both on and off the field. Coach Mertens, thank you for teaching us what it means to be UNCOMMON. Coach Galante, thank you for attending my grade school football games in grade school and introducing me to St. Pats football, and for always giving us a good "murr" at any given time. Coach Luke, thank you for all your stories of the impossible being possible, for showing us how to be men, and last but certainly not least for your daily morning greeting "I want to Wak".

Sincerely,

Jonathan Wakabayashi '23