

## **St. Thomas More Catholic School Legacy Award** **Enduring and consistent contribution to the legacy of** **St. Thomas More Catholic School's mission.**

Description – This award recognizes and honors those who through their time, talent, and/or treasure have furnished the school community with resources, experiences, guidance or programs that would not have been otherwise possible through its normal operation. This contribution has been instrumental in furthering the mission of the school, in particular, its ability to be Christ's presence to others.

Requirements – It can be a single person, a group of affiliated individuals, or an organization. The impact of their contribution must have an enduring, measurable effect at the time of the award. It must be accepted by the honoree or representative of that honoree. It cannot be awarded anonymously.

### **2014 - May Baldwin Waller Carmichael, awarded posthumously**

"Every institution can look into its past and see "kickstarts." An event or influence that caused the organization to leap forward, beyond typical hurdles, and accelerate its development. When a school begins with its own land, its own building, its own sense of place - that is a significant kickstart. William Donald Carmichael, Jr. died in 1961, and a deed for 17 acres of land was transferred August 8, 1963 to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Raleigh by his surviving widow, May Baldwin Waller Carmichael (1900-1985). Very possibly, if we had a way to find the comparative data, one of the largest philanthropic gestures by a woman in that era. Ms. Carmichael is well-remembered for being a presence at the school, even taking all the first communicants to tea at the Carolina Inn in the early years. "Miss May was the consummate lady, hat, gloves, and all. I was fortunate to know her for several years" - Drew Melvin. Here as witness to May's grand memory and even greater impact, is one of her close friends in those early years, Harriet Melvin."

- Commentary by Jeff Caiola, School Advisory Board President, at the STM 50th Gala, January 31, 2014.

### **2015 – The Reverend J. Paul Byron, awarded posthumously**

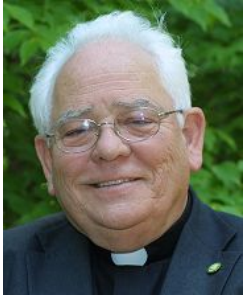
"This year we recognize the life and contributions of the Reverend Paul J. Byron, who lived from 1921 to 2011. Father Byron entered the priesthood in the Diocese of Raleigh and served in a wide variety of capacities for half a century.



One of his assignments was at St. Thomas More in Chapel Hill. At the time there existed a small church on Gimghoul Rd., and only an elementary school. It was the 1980's. During Father Byron's time the school flourished and he led the community in building an extra wing on to allow for a PreK class along with two sections in many grades. Through his efforts a "Youth House" was constructed, where you can see his initials inscribed next to the fireplace. Later this year during Catholic Schools Week we will dedicate the Youth House as the Father Paul J. Byron Youth House.

Parents and parishioners recall his pot luck dinners in the church basement, a Christmas open house with his signature "potent" eggnog, his enthusiastic and tremendous singing voice (always singing all the verses), his "short and excellent" homilies, and the bicycle that he used to ride down the hill to the school. Most notably, Father Byron began an endowment for the school. His efforts to inspire parishioners to make significant contributions in support of scholarship, teacher salaries, and capital improvements is why we have the largest scholarship endowment in the diocese. Every year students and families are able to afford a Catholic education thanks in part to his great effort."

- Commentary by Michael W. Ashton, Ed.D., Principal, at the Catholic Schools Week Friday Mass, January 30, 2015.



## 2016 – The Reverend Monsignor Gerald L. Lewis

“This year we recognize REVEREND MONSIGNOR GERALD L. LEWIS. Our prayers are with him as he is with family grieving the loss of a family member today, a cousin who he was very close with, and he extends his thank you for including Tommy Ferguson and his family in your prayers. Monsignor Lewis was very excited about visiting and concelebrating Mass with Father Scott, and he will do that later this Spring. (Monsignor was with us on Friday, March 4<sup>th</sup> and spoke with our children and celebrated Mass with us).

“Monsignor Lewis was born in Mississippi 83 years ago, and served as a Navy Hospital Corpsman before college, seminary, and Ordination in St. Mary Church of Goldsboro by the 3rd Bishop of Raleigh, Bishop Waters in 1961. Three years later he was the Master of Ceremonies for a celebration here at St. Thomas More when they first opened the school in 1964.

“He has served many in many directorship positions in the bishop’s office over the years, vocations, religious education, communications; he has served as a Vicar General, he was the chaplain of NCState and pastor of different parishes, which includes his time here at St. Thomas More from 1993-1995.

“He has stayed very busy even in retirement, serving as administrator or assistant at different parishes and now is the Director of the Archives of the Diocese of Raleigh. A notable honor was bestowed on him upon his retirement when the office of the Governor awarded him The Order of the Long Leaf Pine, one of the highest personal recognitions in the state of North Carolina.

“His support of our school is notable in the voice he has consistently provided to not only keep our school open when its enrollment faltered in the 1970’s and 80’s, but to provide vocal support when the parish considered continuing the school into the higher grades, a vision he provided during his time as pastor here, and that finally bore fruit in 1997 and 1998.”

- Commentary by Michael W. Ashton, Ed.D., Principal, at the Catholic Schools Week Friday Mass, February 5, 2016.