

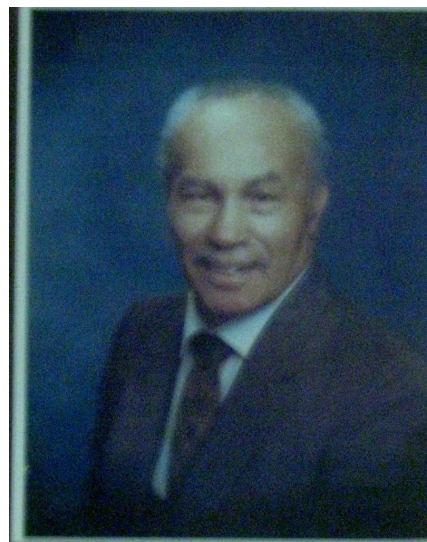
The St. Francis Messenger *Alumni News January 2012*

St Francis School
525 Holley Street
St Albans, WV 25177
304.727.5690
<http://sfsww.com/>

Loving St. Francis Award Alexander Fortson

On Sunday, January 29th 2012, Father Pat McDonough presented Betty Ann Fortson with the "Loving St. Francis Award" on behalf of her late husband, Alexander. The 11:00 AM Mass also marked the beginning of "Catholic Schools Week" at St. Francis School. The Church was full of students, parents, parishioners, Alumni and loving members of the Fortson family.

Alexander spent countless hours coaching St. Francis School Basketball Teams for over three decades.



Alexander Fortson

He won five Championships in the Catholic Parochial League. He also coached the only Football Team in St. Francis School history during the 1963-64 year. He mentored some of the finest athletes ever to play in the Kanawha Valley including two eventual football Kennedy Award Winners. His close friends called him "Jie". His players respectfully called him "Mr. Fortson." Everyone who was a part of St. Francis of Assisi Parish and School during his tenure admired him greatly for his leadership, faith, love of children and family.

Alexander was a member of the U.S. Navy, and served in World War II. He was a member of The Knights of Columbus at St Francis and later became a member of Pilgrim Home Baptist Church in St. Albans, where he served as chairman of the Deacon board and was a member of the male chorus.

Alexander was employed as a Weigh Master for 30 years at Union Carbide in South Charleston.

He was an active member of the community in all of St. Albans as well as at St. Francis. He coached baseball at St. Albans and the first Midget League Football team in St. Albans, known as The Black Knights. He also umpired baseball.

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Pastor's Message

A new year is a gift from God. The gift God gives us is "time." Each year, each day, each moment is the very substance of our existence. At St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School our children learn the lesson of using time wisely. The years of childhood are most important for the development of the mature person. In these grade school days our children learn to be successful in fulfilling their duties to their brothers and sisters on Earth and their God in Heaven.

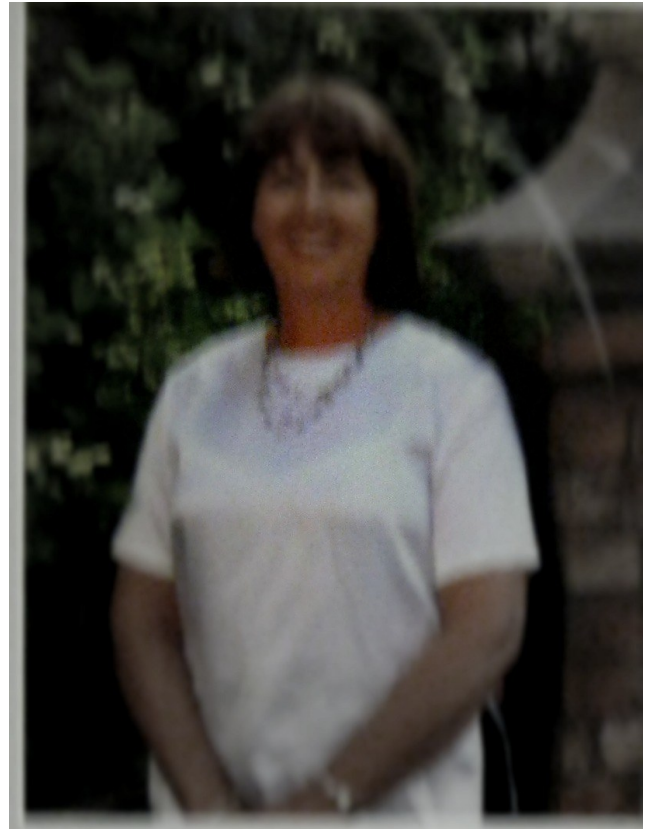
E-Readers

At St. Francis we encourage reading, and in keeping with the times it was decided at a recent teacher meeting that e-readers without internet access or game capability will be permitted at the school, and may be used at the discretion of the teacher and/or staff member. Thank you.

Kindergarten News

The new year brings an abundance of new and exciting opportunities to learn. Kindergarten will begin to "Look Up" in 2012 as we begin our Solar System unit. The students will learn many outrageous facts about the universe and enjoy many "out of this world" experiments. They will even help construct a rocket in the classroom. The students will continue to work cooperatively in reading groups and continue to master many concepts in math. The month of January is the perfect time to reflect on oneself and decide what we can do in our lives to further please and serve God. Thanks again to everyone who made our classroom Christmas party a success.

Glendale Spence Retires



The entire St. Francis Community is grateful to Glendale Spence for her many year of service.

Glendale served in a variety of Administrative duties. Her dedication and skill will be sorely missed by Father Pat McDonough, Erin Sikoa, Principal and everyone associated with St. Francis School..

All who work for St. Francis School go well above the call of duty to provide an excellent curriculum and loving environment for the children of St. Francis. Glendale provided more than her share.

Glendale, we wish you a richly deserved and happy retirement.

Loving St. Francis Award, Alexander Fortson cont.

Alexander was united in marriage to Betty Ann Morgan, Sept. 24, 1946. Alexander and Betty are the loving parents of Richard (deceased) Betty Jo Fortson, Alexander (Tootie), Mark, Teresa Willis and Paul and a host of great grandchildren, grandchildren nieces and nephews. Alexander and Betty predeceased one grandson, Daniel.

He warmed the hearts and souls of everyone he touched. St. Francis of Assisi Parish and school are as enriched today as they were during his life. Thank you Alexander Fortson and the entire Fortson family for the countless blessings and talents you shared. St. Francis Parish and School are eternally grateful. ●



ALEX FORTSON is shown here with his champion basketball team. These 7th and 8th graders from St. Francis took the title last week in the six-team valley Catholic league, their first championship since 1964. The happy youngsters are (l-r) Johnny Webb, son of John Webb in polyethylene; Dave Farley, John at Tech Center; Mark Heindl, John of maintenance; Richard, son of Coach Alex Fortson (center) in warehousing; and Ricky Schoen whose father, Frank, works at the Tech Center. Alex has coached the St. Francis team for 11 years. He also has performed as a player in the annual St. Albans PTA Basketball Tournament for 12 years.

Coach Fortson's 1968 Champions (one of many) were loaded with Sons of Union Carbide.

The St. Francis Messenger Alumni News January 2012

THANK YOU FROM THE PRINCIPAL

I would like to begin by expressing my heartfelt appreciation for the outpouring of support we received from our alumni during our annual fund drive. I am happy to report that we raised \$12,025, enough to purchase our new communication system (Mother Theotima would be proud), a new computer for the school secretary, and to add to the Jim McDonough Scholarship Fund. This drive could not have been accomplished without the help of alumni president, Mike Moriarty, whose guidance was needed daily. Many, many thanks to Mike and all of our Alumni.

January 29 through February 3 is our celebration of Catholic Schools Week. This year's theme is "Faith. Academics, Service." Each year I reflect on all of the benefits at St. Francis School: The ability to pray; art class all year long, state of the art computer lab with weekly technology classes; up to date educational materials; Accelerated Reader Program; Spanish class; character education class, music class with the opportunity to sing in a children's choir; public speaking opportunities; computer centers, Smartboards and document cameras in all K-5 classrooms; a fourteen camera security system; staff and faculty are CPR and First Aid certified; a championship basketball program; a competition chess team; physical education class twice weekly; library class; only school in Kanawha County with an elementary band program; partnership with Christ's Kitchen; structured after school care program with Department of Agriculture approved snacks; and a brand new school management system.

Yes, we have a fantastic academic program, but our greatest treasures are our teachers, staff members, families, alumni, parishioners and Father Pat. The dedication and support of these groups is what makes our school so special.

At January 29th 11:00am Mass we presented the "Loving Service Award" to Mr. Alexander Fortson, former coach and supporter of the school.

Winter Blessings,

Erin Sikora