



**OUR LADY OF THE WAYSIDE** SCHOOL  
ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, ILLINOIS

enriching minds.  
fostering faith.

## It's hard to let good teachers go

### Mrs. Koulias is retiring after 25 years at OLW.

We recently interviewed Mrs. Loretta Koulias, a fifth grade teacher, who is retiring after twenty-five years at Our Lady of the Wayside School. In prior years, Mrs. Koulias taught first and second graders at Our Lady of Victory in Chicago and also worked as an after-school care teacher and assistant-director at a private preschool . Mrs. Koulias began her tenure at OLW in 1991 teaching first grade. She was happy to resume her teaching career in a community where she lived and in the school that her two daughters attended. After eight years in first grade, Mrs. Koulias needed a change, and former principal, Alan Musial, asked her to revamp the fifth grade program. She redesigned it by helping to hire new teachers, ramping up the curriculum, incorporating additional responsibility roles and jobs for the fifth graders, and aligning the fifth grade science project to be an instructional version of the seventh grade science project. Mrs. Koulias and the fifth grade team's goal was to make sure that consistency and discipline were a part of the fifth grade program as the students transitioned to middle school. The strength of fifth grade at OLW today is an extension of what Mrs. Koulias began in 1999.

What did you like about teaching 1<sup>st</sup> grade? What do you like about 5<sup>th</sup> grade?

"I enjoyed teaching first graders to read. I loved seeing the 'first grade magic' when they'd switch from reading one word at a time to

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## Upcoming Events

**May 24, 2p**

School May Crowning

**May 24**

Feast of Our Lady of the Wayside

**Early June**

Class of 2008 mini-reunion  
Watch for an invitation.

**Early August**

Class of 2012 mini-reunion  
and college send-off  
Watch for an invitation.

## Feature Title

Here you can go into detail about absolutely anything you want your readers to know about. Make sure to connect the story to your readers and how it relates to the mission of your organization.

more fluent reading. Fifth graders are so eager to learn and make connections. I have real conversations with them, and I enjoy seeing the light bulbs turn on as they learn, understand and absorb. First grade was physically tiring because the younger ones were so energetic. Fifth grade requires a lot of mental energy and quick thinking. OLW has implemented many new curriculum programs in the past few years, and I'm learning right along with my students."

**What do you notice is the same and different for 5<sup>th</sup> graders over the years?**

"The students' eagerness to learn is the same as well as their ability to listen..I enjoy watching them grow and develop toward more independence over the course of the school year. Today's students are more stretched between school, sports and extracurricular activities. There are also many more things to distract them now (eletronics!). I've made adjustments over the years to meet the fifth graders' needs. The emphasis now is to teach them how to problem solve and research information. There is less emphasis on just memorizing facts. Many of our new programs in reading, writing, spelling and math allow the students to comprehend and learn with rigor. Students are able to engage in rich discussions and convey their thinking and demonstrate their understanding."

**What is your favorite part of 5<sup>th</sup> grade?**

"Science! A friend told me a long time ago (when I was thinking about where to concentrate my teaching) to become the science teacher because kids always like science – the experiments and problems. I really had to ramp up my science knowledge to be the fifth grade science teacher, but I love every minute of it! Another favorite is the Saint Project which concludes at All Saints' Day Mass . Being in a Catholic school, this activity is a very special part of being a fifth grader."

**What do you like about OLW?**

"I like being part of the Our Lady of the Wayside School Community. The parents are so invested in their children and their

community. Our students are very motivated; they work hard, get their homework done, and are well-behaved, so teaching becomes a pleasure. Students participate in service projects, learn Catholic values, and meet our high expectations. I was a substitute teacher in the public schools for a few years, but it felt like home when I started working at OLW. I appreciate the parish community and its generous support. I enjoy the families and the students. Over the years, I have really valued being in this OLW community where I pray, work, volunteer and enjoy being a member. My two daughters attended school here, and my granddaughter attends preschool now. I feel that OLW is my community. I am invested in it and want only the best ...just like other school families.”

#### What will you miss?

“I will miss the my colleagues, my students, their families, and the school community. I will miss seeing fifth graders grow and develop into responsible, capable middle school students. It is time for me to retire. The workload is taking up too much of my time, and I have other things that I would like to accomplish. I am a hardworking teacher and won't do a job halfway. It will be a hard transition to discontinue teaching fifth grade, but I hope to remain in the OLW school community in some capacity.“

#### What do you plan to do next?

“I want to spend more time with my family and grandchildren (four “sweeties” under the age of seven), meet up with my friends, exercise, read, and get back into my artwork. My husband will probably retire in a year, so I will look forward to that. In the meantime, I'll enjoy the new and slower pace!”

## Teacher Update

### Mr. Robert Rhinehart

Mr. Bob Rhinehart worked at OLW for 41 years – it was his only teaching job since he began at OLW right after graduation. He was our science teacher, girls' volleyball coach and Athletic Director during his long tenure, before retiring in 2009. He and his wife Patsy, the retired OLW Parish nurse, spend much of their time now at their second home in Eagle River, WI along the Chain of Lakes. They also travel to Aruba every fall; it's a

timeshare that they purchased while both working at OLW. Mr. Rhinehart thought the fall was a good time because he could take time away from school over the Columbus Weekend holiday. “It’s beautiful there and I’m glad we can spend a week or two in Aruba every year.” Mr. Rhinehart has great memories of coaching volleyball at OLW: he enjoyed it “immensely.” He keeps in touch with former principal Alan Musial and has visited Alan at his second home in Las Vegas. At the end of our conversation, he told us, “I still find time to pray every day.” Great advice!!

## **Teacher Update 2**

### **Mr. and Mrs. John Lee**

John and Rita (Sweeney) Lee each worked at OLW for over 20 years, he as an assistant principal and she as a teacher. Their retirement started in 1999 and since then they’ve had some good times. They travelled to Germany and Austria once, visited England and Scotland on another European vacation, and even rented a house in County Mayo, Ireland with former OLW staff Betty Morley and Kathy Doherty. The Lee’s have also cruised the St Lawrence River from Montreal to New York. Currently their travel is lighter – mostly between their summer home in Williams Bay, WI and their permanent retirement home in Bonita Springs, FL. John and Rita also enjoy being near their 14 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren (soon to be three). They both have fond memories of their time at OLW: “It was a special time and the memories are overwhelmingly good. Teaching there was a joy.”