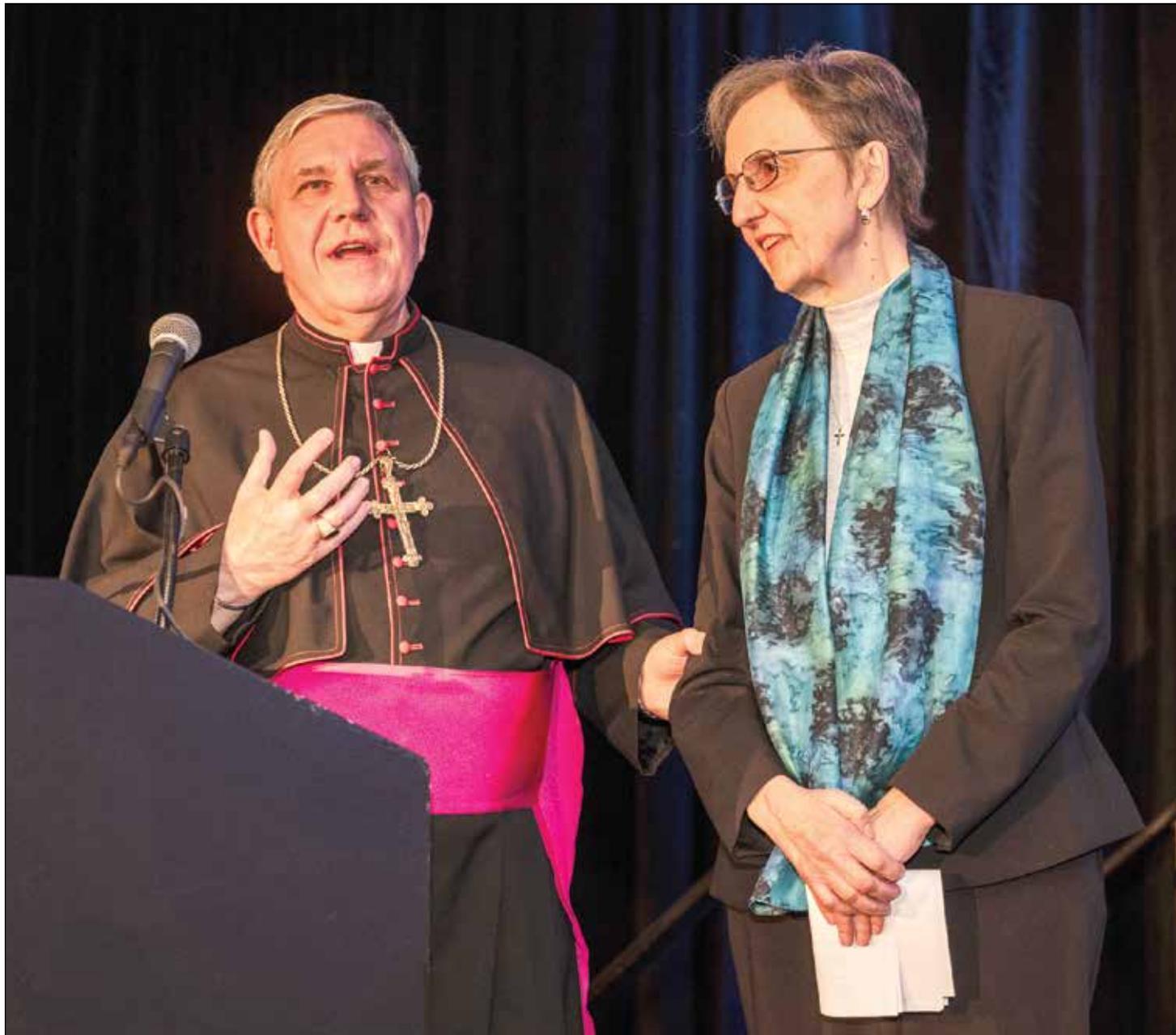


CATHOLIC HERALD



Dr. Cepelka Honored at Catholic Schools Dinner

KAREN MAHONEY
SPECIAL TO THE CATHOLIC HERALD

When he had been archbishop for less than two years, Archbishop Jerome ListECKI addressed the Men of Christ Conference. They were good, solid men, and he said they wanted to ask practical things. He was admittedly surprised when they asked him an unusual question.

He was asked what he wanted on his tombstone.

“Gosh, I had not even been here for two years, and they had me buried,” he said, laughing.

The archbishop pondered his answer.

“I want it to say, ‘He hired Kathleen Cepelka.’”

Dr. Cepelka was initially slated for the archbishop’s search team to find a new superintendent but, after working with her and talking with her, he knew he wanted something else.

“I had her over to breakfast and began asking her all sorts of questions about Catholic identity and Catholic stewardship, and she answered with all

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▲ Dr. Kathleen Cepelka (right), shown with Archbishop Jerome E. ListECKI, was honored for her 53 years of service to Catholic education at the Catholic Schools Dinner on Thursday, March 10. Dr. Cepelka is retiring as the superintendent of Catholic schools at the end of the school year. (Photo by Pete Fenelon)

Love One Another

Capital campaign moving into next phase.

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Princess Tales

Personalized fittings make First Communicants feel special.

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GIFTS Program Keeps Growing

KAREN MAHONEY
SPECIAL TO THE CATHOLIC HERALD

In the past three years, the Grant Initiatives for Today's Students program has provided more than \$600,000 and 93 grants for Catholic Schools.

"It was through grants to allow for innovation that our classrooms (were able) to try new things, provide for electronics, technology and robotics; and continue to make sure that our schools are strong with faith and leadership," said Archdiocese of Milwaukee Development Director Andy Gaertner during the annual Archbishop's Catholic Schools Dinner on Thursday, March 10. "This year, we will receive grant request proposals of \$350,000. Our hope normally is to provide

\$200,000 in grants for these schools. We are hoping to raise another \$50,000 tonight in order to do that."

The event, held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, spotlighted many of the ways the GIFTS funds have been used and serves as the biggest fundraiser for those grants.

The funds raised for the GIFTS program offer Catholic schools the opportunity to apply for grant funding to support implementing programs in one of these areas: Catholic Identity, Development/Marketing, Educational Innovation, or Project Initiation: Seed Money.

Each year, Archbishop Jerome E. ListECKI presents the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Award to a priest, educator and community member for their devotion to God and

their dedicated commitment to the vitality of Catholic education in the archdiocese. This year, Archbishop ListECKI presented four awards.

The award recipients were Fr. David Reith, Siena Catholic Schools President Brenda White, Joan Shafer and Mike Giffhorn.

Catholic Financial Life President and CEO John Borgen and Sargento Foods Director of Corporate Relations Portia Young served as co-chairs for the schools dinner.

Borgen and his wife Katie realized they are part of something much greater than themselves through their experience with their formation in Catholic education and enrolling their children in area Catholic schools.

► DR. CEPELKA, FROM PAGE 1

the right responses," the archbishop said.

He wanted her to lead the search committee for the new superintendent. Instead, he asked her to be the superintendent herself.

"After I asked her, she held her chest and said, 'It has always been my dream to head the Catholic schools.'"

Archbishop ListECKI said Dr. Cepelka partnered early on with John Stollenwerk, an area philanthropist known for owning Allen-Edmonds Shoes.

"John is well known for his love for Catholic education and support. Seton began with John and Kathleen getting on a plane, and going to various areas and studying the work of Catholic education in New York and other places, and coming back and evaluating what was right and what was wrong about it," he said. "When it came time to developing Seton, they looked to minimize the mistakes and maximize their efficiency."

For her 53 years of service to Catholic education, including the founding of Seton Catholic Schools, Archbishop ListECKI presented Dr. Cepelka with the St. John the Evangelist (Johnny) award.

"She is such a high-quality person that her contract was worth more than Aaron Rodgers," he said. "She knows every single administrator at each of our Catholic schools and made a point to train all of our new principals. She is so deserving of this award."

Speaking on behalf of Catholic Financial Life, President and CEO John Borgen explained that the organization gives more than \$250,000 each year in scholarships to members who attend Catholic grade schools, high schools or colleges.

"Combined with our grants program supporting Catholic schools, sponsorship of the Give Back contest to recognize Catholic school teachers, sponsorship of the Soles for Catholic Education Walk and support of Saint Francis de Sales Seminary, Catholic Financial Life provides over \$500,000 annually in support of Catholic education," Borgen said.

Borgen added that Catholic Financial Life's donations rarely make headlines, which is the point, he said. Their goal is to go about their work quietly in keeping with the Catholic principle of subsidiarity, and they heed the teachings of St. Matthew. "Our Father who sees in secret repays the organization many times over"

"But tonight is different. I am pleased to announce the largest single gift in Catholic Financial Life's history. This gift is being made to the Archdiocese of Milwaukee's Love One Another Campaign, earmarked for Catholic education. And it is being made in honor of our superintendent of Catholic Schools, Kathleen Cepelka," he said.

"For 53 years, she has poured her entire being into making disciples (and) forming educators, and lived a life worthy of her calling as a teacher," Borgen continued. "It is impossible to count the number of

lives you have touched, Kathleen. It is difficult to put into words what you mean to Catholic education in this archdiocese and, dare I say, this country. We could spend hours telling stories about the lives you have impacted and the lessons you have taught us. The more we would go on, the more uncomfortable you would become. And yet, the closer you might come to understanding how much those of us who are privileged to call you friend and teacher would know how much we love you. Well done, good and faithful servant."

On behalf of Catholic Financial Life, Borgen announced a gift of \$250,000 in honor of Dr. Cepelka's lifetime of Catholic education with another gift of at least \$50,000 to go to Seton Catholic Schools.

Since Milwaukee has been the home of Catholic Financial Life for the past 130 years, Borgen said it is essential to give back to the community.

"We have a very strong concentration of members throughout southeast Wisconsin and the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Many of them were educated in Catholic schools, send their children to Catholic schools and teach in the Catholic schools," Borgen said. "So you put all that together, and I would say you see first-hand the difference your contribution makes. The impact of a dollar donated to Catholic schools in this archdiocese is far greater than that dollar. People are such good stewards of money, given that we know it has a two-, three- and four-fold impact. That is powerful and compelling."