Dominican High School Announces Spencer J. Smith as Next President

The Dominican High School Board of Directors has announced the appointment of Spencer J. Smith as the school's next President. Smith will succeed Leanne Giese, who will retire at the conclusion of the 2026-27 academic year after nearly two decades of service to the Dominican community.

Smith brings more than a decade of leadership experience in Catholic education and currently serves as Vice President of Advancement and Operations at Catholic Memorial High School in Waukesha, Wisconsin.

> *"The search committee and the Board of Directors were deeply impressed by Spencer's commitment to Catholic education, his strategic leadership experience, and his authentic connection to Dominican High School," said* ***Chris Schumacher '83, Chair of the Board of Directors****. "His ability to bring people together around a shared mission, coupled with his proven success in enrollment growth, advancement, and operational leadership, makes him uniquely positioned to lead Dominican into its next chapter."*

About Spencer Smith



Smith earned a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a Master of Business Administration from Marquette University.

Spencer expressed that his K-12 Catholic education prepared him for his success in college and in his career thus far. He first began his professional work in Catholic education at Dominican High School, where he served as communications manager under Leanne Giese. Building on that experience, he advanced to Marquette University's Admissions Marketing team, expanding his expertise in higher education marketing and communications. He later returned to Catholic secondary education, bringing his growing experience and leadership skills to Catholic Memorial High School, where he continued to advance his career in educational leadership.

During his tenure at Catholic Memorial, Smith served as Director of Marketing and Communications before being promoted to Vice President of Advancement and Operations. In those roles, he provided leadership for cross-functional teams spanning enrollment, marketing, advancement, athletics, strategy, and operations. Under his leadership, Catholic Memorial increased student enrollment to its highest number in more than a decade and grew robust tuition assistance and scholarship offerings. He also worked closely with the board of directors to accomplish several strategic plan goals.

Smith resides on the East Side of Milwaukee with his wife Kristyn, and son, Camden, and belongs to St. Peter and Paul Parish. He grew up in Wisconsin Rapids and attended Catholic schools throughout his childhood and graduated from Assumption High School.

> *"It is with a deep sense of humility, gratitude, and genuine enthusiasm that I accept the opportunity to serve as the next President of Dominican High School. This opportunity means a great deal to me personally and professionally. Dominican helped shape the person, professional, and Catholic leader I am today. I am motivated to lead Dominican successfully into its next chapter while honoring the mission, traditions, and community that make the school so special."* – ***Spencer Smith***

Leanne Giese's Legacy

Giese joined Dominican High School in 2009 as Director of Advancement and was named President in 2012. During her tenure, the school completed two major capital campaigns, and several capital improvement efforts that raised more than $14 million to expand and modernize Dominican's academic, athletic and fine arts facilities.

These transformational investments included the construction of new science laboratories, the development of Palermo's Sports Field, new fitness center, renovations to the Bill Crowley Gymnasium, the James and Virginia Wheeler Auditorium, and cafeteria and office space. During Giese’s tenure the school's endowment grew by nearly 400 percent.

Giese also guided the school's sponsorship transition from the Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters to Dominican Veritas Ministries, helping position Dominican for long-term success while preserving its Catholic and Dominican identity.

Under her leadership, Dominican has been recognized as the No. 1 Catholic co-educational high school in Wisconsin by Niche for the past two consecutive years, earned AP Platinum Honor Roll status and was awarded Exemplary Recognition for Mission and Catholic Identity by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Leanne has created a strong community at Dominican High School demonstrated by the steady increase in enrollment and the longevity and dedication of the faculty and staff.

The Board of Directors extends its sincere gratitude to Giese for her exceptional leadership, unwavering commitment, and lasting contributions to Dominican High School over the past 15 years as President.

> *"I have seen firsthand Spencer's deep commitment to the mission and values that make Dominican so special. His passion for Catholic education, dedication to our Dominican tradition, and understanding of what makes this community unique makes him the perfect person to lead the school moving forward. I look forward to seeing Spencer build upon Dominican's momentum while remaining faithful to our mission," said* ***Leanne Giese***.

Presidential Search Committee

The presidential search committee was chaired by the Board of Directors' Past Chairperson, Dave Mazza and included representatives from across the Dominican community, including members of the Board of Directors, current parents, alumni, alumni parents, and faculty.

The Board is deeply grateful for the committee's dedication to leading a thorough and comprehensive search process. Committee members included:

- Lisa Bangert
- Laura Bray
- Amy Brown '01
- Mike Carter
- Brian Conole '73
- John Desing
- Stacey Drifka
- Joe Emmerich
- Sr. Mary Howard Johnson, OP
- Dave Mazza
- Michael Mueller
- Vinnie Murray
- Emily Naczek
- John O'Connell
- Michelle Rindt
- Chris Schumacher '83

- Jerry Weidmann
- Abby Young