

“FIVE QUESTIONS WITH JERRY THOMAS '53”

1. What was your most significant athletic moment at Saint Thomas Academy?

I had two significant athletic moments at the Academy and in both of them St. Cloud Cathedral was involved. We defeated Cathedral 2-1 in the championship game of the 1952 state baseball tournament. In 1953, we also beat them in sudden death overtime to win the state basketball tournament

2. Who was the most influential person during your Academy days and how did he inspire you?

For me, the person who most influenced me at the Academy was Skip McMahon. He was a great coach and he also taught me a lot about life. If it wasn't for Skip, I would have left the Academy after my freshman year. I lived in Bloomington and it was a long haul for me to hitchhike back and forth to school everyday. I was frustrated and had made up my mind to leave the Academy and transfer to Bloomington High School. In fact, I had drawn football equipment for pre-fall practice at Bloomington. Skip called me when he found out about it and he talked me into coming back to the Academy for my sophomore year. I've been eternally grateful to Skip for doing that because I believe it completely changed my life.

3. How did the Academy prepare you for your athletic success?

I was fortunate enough to have the advantage of excellent coaching from Skip McMahon in football and Tom Feely in basketball and baseball. They both did a great job of teaching the fundamentals of their sports and they both preached the importance of the team concept. In addition to the coaching, the Academy also provided us with excellent facilities for all sports which is important in having winning programs.

4. What does the word “team” mean to you?

The word “team” is very important to me and always has been. It is important in athletics but it is also important in everyday life. Whether it is your job or your family, the importance of teamwork is very significant.

5. What does it mean to you to be an Academy alumnus?

I am very proud to be an Academy alumnus. I received a great education which prepared me for college. I had the opportunity to participate in athletics and played on some outstanding teams, with great teammates. The military training also taught me a great deal about discipline, which I sorely needed. The most important thing to me were my classmates and teammates. I made a lot of friends, many of which I still have 55 years later.