

“FIVE QUESTIONS WITH DENNY MONAHAN '53”

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

Ironically my most significant athletic moment didn't even occur on the athletic field, but it was an “event” that shaped my athletic career and my life forever. One day after track practice, in the spring of my freshman year, Skip McMahon approached me to play football the following fall, but I declined because I played in the band for my grandfather, Bandmaster, Master Sgt. Weber and leaving the band was not an option. But Skip had already spoken to my grandfather and it was agreed I could do both. I am very grateful to my grandfather and Skip McMahon for giving a 125-pound clarinet player the opportunity to play football at STA; that day impacted the rest of my life.

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

It would seem unjust to single out only one influential person from my time at the Academy. The original “old guard” of teachers and coaches: Sy Turbes, Fred Gatto, Marv Bassett, LeRoy Brown, Bob and Tom Byrne, Tom Scott, Jack Campbell, Jim Keane, George Schnell, Skip McMahon and Norb Robertson were all great men of character. All of these men pushed me and others to be the best we could be on and off the athletic field. But it was Norb Robertson, whom I had the pleasure of playing two sports for at the Academy. I learned a lot from Norb, and maybe, most importantly, I learned a lot about myself from him. Norb was a true gentleman in every sense of the word. He was always very positive and his words of encouragement were calmly spoken. It was that calmness and his faith in you that would make you play your hardest, for fear of disappointing him or letting him down. You wanted to win for him. He was a great coach, and even a better person. It was a privilege to have been taught and coached by Norb.

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

The coaching, the preparation, the dedication and competitive experiences gained at Saint Thomas Academy helped me develop the skills and confidence I would need for future athletic success.

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

“Team” is a group of individuals working together to achieve a common goal. In sports, at work, and in your family life, you need to carry out your own individual responsibilities to the best of your ability. Only by doing so can you achieve your goals as a team and make your greatest contribution to others.

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

Saint Thomas Academy has always been a special place for me and our family – my grandfather taught here from 1923 - 1953, my two brothers, a brother-in-law and two sons all graduated from STA. I am thankful to have had the opportunity to attend the Academy and be a part of its rich family, academic and athletic traditions. I am proud to represent Saint Thomas Academy and these traditions and humbled to be in its Athletic Hall of Fame. Thank you for this honor.