

Nursing next for St. Gregory and Serra alum

TOM BURKE
CATHOLIC SAN FRANCISCO

The "wonder years" for Ben Taft just seem to keep on coming. Following graduation from San Mateo's St. Gregory School and Junipero Serra High School it was on to Santa Clara University for Ben and upon completion of sociology studies there, eight years as a youth counselor in a program at San Francisco General Hospital.

Still wanting to do more and inspired by male nurses he had met, he enrolled in an accelerated nursing program at Oakland's Samuel Merritt University for those already holding undergraduate degrees. Ben graduated the nursing program in April and passed his state boards June 12.

Ben's aim is to specialize in emergency room pediatrics. He is currently seeking a job in Washington, D.C. He is a certified Emergency Medical Technician.

Ben's mom is Betsey Taft. His dad, Ray, is deceased. His late grandparents who called St. Greg's home for many years are Rose and August Ruggiero.

"He loves children and is great with them," Betsey told me. "Ben is such a caring individual and always keeps his wit about him, and always sees the positive in people, that nursing is the next natural step in his life's journey."

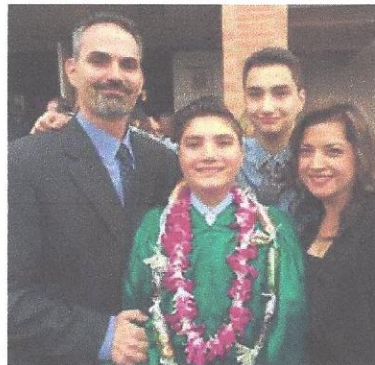
TEACHER HONOR: Marin Catholic High School presented its Reverend James T. Tarantino Distinguished Teacher Award to Rick Luther at the school's baccalaureate Mass June 4. Rick has taught math at MC for 17 years including honors and AP classes. "Mr. Luther is known for



Rick Luther



YMI HONOR: Tom Fourie is pictured here with his wife Pat at ceremonies in June naming him the Young Men's Institute 2014 Man of the Year. The award was presented in June at a Grand Council Convention at Lake Tahoe. "During his tenure with the YMI, Tom has demonstrated leadership and served as his council's president and the organization's Grand President," YMI said. Tom and Pat are longtime members of All Souls Parish, South San Francisco, and Tom has been part of South San Francisco YMI Council #32 for more than three decades. Today, the YMI is active in three states with more than 2,100 members.



GOOD KIDS: Duggan's Serra Mortuary recently presented Bud & Madeline Duggan Kindness Scholarship Awards to eighth grade students who "exemplify kindness to students and teachers alike." Pictured are St. Veronica School winner Michael Key, center, with his dad Trevor, brother Dylan and mom Paquel. Other winners are Jonathan De La Cruz, Holy Angels, Colma; Madeleine Ambrose, Good Shepherd, Pacifica; Miguel Angala, Our Lady of Mercy, Daly City; Alia Nunez, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Daly City. "Kindness is an important part of our ministry, a gift in our everyday association with the families we serve," said Dan Duggan. Winners receive a scholarship award, a sweatshirt from the high school they will attend and tickets to a Giants game.

his dedication, patience and extreme care for his own students, but also other math students he hasn't had the

opportunity to teach," the school said. "He enjoys teaching math because of the challenge and the opportu-

nity to build students' confidence so that they can be successful in ways they didn't dream possible." The senior class chooses the winner of the Tarantino honor by vote. "I love working in a cohesive community where everyone has the same focus in helping our students develop into self-actualized young adults," Rick told Catholic San Francisco.

SPEECH PATTERNS: Brigid O'Brien, a 2014 graduate of Mercy High School, Burlingame, has been honored with a Laurent Clerc Medal for her studies in American Sign Language. The award, named for the man whose work is credited with the beginnings of ASL, is the highest honor awarded to a high school senior for American Sign Language with only six winners named nationwide.

"Brigid not only met, but exceeded the stringent requirements for this award, and maintained an A- average in all ASL coursework while maintaining at least a 3.7 GPA in all other subjects," Mercy, Burlingame said. "Brigid showed a continuous desire to learn American Sign Language and a compassion for the culture which made her a leader in classroom." Brigid will attend Philadelphia's St. Joseph University in the fall.

BREAKING BREAD: Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone is principal celebrant and homilist at the Aug. 16 Handicapped Mass and lunch at noon in the lower halls of St. Mary's Cathedral, Gough Street at Geary Boulevard, San Francisco, Gough Street entrance. All disabled people and their caregivers are invited. Volunteers are always welcome to assist in this cherished tradition. Call Joanne Borodin, (415) 239-4865.

CONCERT: St. Mary's Cathedral music director and organist, Christoph Tietze is featured performer July 20, 4 p.m., in the cathedral Gough Street at Geary Boulevard, San Francisco. Freewill offering accepted at the door; (415) 567-2020, ext. 213; www.stmarycathedralsf.org.

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