

November 4, 2004

**All Hallows High School recognized as 'Top 50' parochial school
by Noah Fowle**



Thank to dedicated instructors like Roland Gallo, All Hallows High School is regarded as one of the nation's top Catholic schools.

This past October, a Highbridge high school was recognized by the prestigious Acton Institute and named to a list of the top Catholic High Schools in the country. In its inaugural year the 2004 Catholic High School Honor Role included 50 schools from around the nation that embraced a vibrant Catholic identity and instilled an appreciation of the social, political, and economic dimensions of the world that students will engage. All Hallows High School was one of four schools named in New York State and the only one from the five boroughs.

The school's principal, Sean Sullivan, said he was very pleased with the recent honor, but remarked that although it was a surprise it keeps with the tradition of excellence at the 164th Street school. A teacher for 28 years, Sullivan took over as principal in 1996 with a different mindset and mentality. "I came in a with a big broom and got rid of the dead wood on both sides of the classroom," Sullivan said. "I wanted to instill more responsibility in the students, faculty and parents." Under the Sullivan's guise a longer school day was instituted; a mandatory reading period was inserted into the daily schedule; a 110-hours of community service was added to the graduation requirements; and an after school program became compulsory for each student.

In order to facilitate the different tastes of the student body, which stands at 517 students, there are 12 different non-curriculum religious programs and 12 leadership programs, in addition to regular extra-curricular activities like athletics and music. "Part of this initiative was to get the students to set their own sites higher and look past city colleges and consider nationally recognized schools," Sullivan said. "We are constantly thinking outside the box to attract kids to the school and give them the best opportunities." If any proof is needed for Sullivan's methods he simply points to the schools 100% graduation and college acceptance rate for the past two years.

Currently the school boasts a number of great programs and resources. Part of the Gilder Lehrman Academy of History, the school holds monthly Saturday walking tours of

different New York City neighborhoods. The school also contains a TV studio; three computer centers; an honors program with advanced placement courses; a media arts program which requires students to create their own video/CD portfolios to be kept on record for future generations; and next semester a distance learning center will be set up to facilitate interactive courses with St. Thomas Aquinas College in upstate New York.

Roland Gallo, a history teacher at the school for 31 years, who heads the Gilder Lehrman program in its goal to increase the love and interest of American history among the students. Students work with primary documents, create their own web designs, study famous American authors and choose between more focused electives throughout their four years at All Hallows High School. By incorporating American history into each class beyond the State requirements, Gallo said students are gaining a more complete understanding of the world. "We are eager to get them to see the bigger picture and aim higher," Gallo said.

Although the school seems to be at the head of the class, Sullivan, a former graduate of All Hallows, does not intend to rest on his laurels. In fact he already has an idea for where he would like to see improvement. "I want to increase parent involvement," he said. "I've always believed if you take care of the little things, the bigger things fall into place."



News Channel 4's Maurice DuBois recently visited students in All Hallows' TV studio.