

## **Aquinas Academy among Top 50 Catholic High Schools Named for 2005**

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (Sept. 8, 2005) –The [Catholic High School Honor Roll](#) today announced the second annual selection of its best 50 secondary schools in America. Building on the success of last year’s program, this year’s Honor Roll will continue to serve as an invaluable resource for students, parents and benefactors. By recognizing the nation’s top 50 high schools, the Honor Roll promotes quality Catholic secondary education.

Among this year’s top 50 is Gibsonia’s Aquinas Academy ([www.aquinasacademy-pittsburgh.org](http://www.aquinasacademy-pittsburgh.org)). The co-ed, 37-student school is independently run. In addition to this accolade, Aquinas Academy has also been recognized as a category leader for its strength in two areas: academic excellence and Catholic identity. It is truly a distinct honor for Aquinas Academy to be considered among the top 50 Catholic high schools in the country.

More than half of the Honor Roll schools are repeat performers from last year. Honorees include co-ed, male and female schools, and ranged from the 24-student Holy Rosary Academy in Anchorage, Alaska, to St. Thomas Aquinas High School in Fort Lauderdale, Florida with more than 2,100 students. The state of Florida led the way with seven schools selected, followed by Texas and New York (6 each) and Pennsylvania and Illinois (5 each). In all, schools from 21 states made the Honor Roll. In addition to the Top 50 list, the Honor Roll also published the top 20 finalists in three categories that are important to overall excellence: academics, Catholic identity, and civic education. To see a complete list of the schools, please go to the Catholic High School Honor Roll Web site at [www.chshonor.org](http://www.chshonor.org).

Advisory board member Father Bernard O’Connor, president of De Sales University, said the Honor Roll provides a valuable service. “It is important to highlight the accomplishments of schools that are contributing in exemplary ways to the moral and intellectual formation their students,” he said.

The primary goal of the Honor Roll is to encourage schools to educate students as effectively as possible, in a way that integrates Catholic faith and prepares students for active engagement with the world. By supporting this constructive competition, the Honor Roll provides insight into the character of Catholic secondary education and calls everyone to improve the academic and spiritual formation given to America’s youth. In promoting rigorous educations, the Honor Roll desires to better prepare students for fruitful vocations in politics, business, and the Church.

Strength in each of the three areas—academics, Catholic identity, and civic education—was key to placing on the Honor Roll, according to the project’s director, Dr. Kevin Schmiesing. “It is encouraging to see so many outstanding examples of Catholic education,” he said. “Though the schools represent a diverse array of types—including Christian Brothers, Franciscan, Legionary, diocesan and independent—what they have in common is a commitment to excellence in the areas that we examine.”

The Catholic High School Honor Roll is an independent project of the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion & Liberty, an international research and educational organization based in Grand Rapids, Mich. The Honor Roll was produced in consultation with a national advisory board comprised of Catholic college presidents and noted Catholic scholars. For more on Acton, please go to [www.acton.org](http://www.acton.org)

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