

Stories from the Heart



SACRED HEART ALUMNA SMASHES JEOPARDY! RECORDS

Photo: Jeopardy Productions, Inc.

By now you most certainly heard the name Mattea Roach. At the tender age of 23, Mattea became the most successful Canadian to ever play the Jeopardy! television game show with a 23-game winning streak. At the end of that streak, on May 6th, Mattea had won \$560,983 US dollars, roughly equivalent to \$729,000 in Canadian dollars. She is the youngest contestant in the history of the show to win that much money, and she is the fifth all-time in regular-season earnings. Impressive numbers all of them.

What you might not know is that Mattea Roach is a Sacred Heart alumna from the Class of 2015.

Mattea's Jeopardy! story is fascinating. She applied to the program on a whim in November of 2020 not long after she heard the news of longtime Jeopardy! host Alex Trebek's death. After a rigorous testing, interview, and practice process, Mattea was informed in June 2021 that she had been admitted into a pool of contestants that would be active for 18 months. On January 5, 2022 she was asked to head to Los Angeles to tape the show in three weeks' time. It was then that she really had to think long and hard about whether or not she wanted to go through with it as she knew it would mean publicity, something she wasn't terribly keen on.

Of course, we know Mattea took the plunge. She did so, she says, because she owed it to everybody who wanted to be there to do her best, and just the chance to be on the stage was an honour. After all, Jeopardy! only selects 400 contestants for the show from a pool of approximately 100,000 applicants annually. According to Jeopardy! spokesperson Alison Shapiro, Mattea was not the first Nova Scotian to compete on Jeopardy!, but she was one of very few they've ever had.

Mattea wasn't interested in going on Jeopardy! for the money because she's sensible enough to realize that anybody who does that is likely to walk away very, very disappointed. Likewise, she did not go in with big expectations, in fact, she expected to be a one-and-done player. But after the first game and her unexpected win, she became more comfortable. She was fast on the buzzer, and she quickly picked up the rhythm of the game. Then suddenly it was the end of the first day of taping, which was actually the end of four games, and she realized she was in the middle of a life-changing experience. She had already won \$104,000 US dollars and was looking squarely at Tournament of Champions territory.

To read the rest of the story, and learn what's next for Mattea, [click here](#).

ALUM DAY





Finally, after three years we hosted our annual Alum Day IN PERSON and ON CAMPUS on May 6th. The day started with our Afternoon Tea where alums from a number of decades joined us in the Little Theatre for refreshments and conversation. Later that day, we hosted our traditional Old Boys and Old Girls Basketball games. The action on the court was fierce, particularly on the boy's side where the Old Boys pulled out a narrow victory against the Sharks. On the girl's side, the action was slightly more subdued but no less entertaining as the Old Girls took the win. After the games, alums and PALs joined together on the Mezzanine to reminisce over refreshments. It was a joy to have so many of our alums together again and in such good spirits. Thanks to all of those who made a special effort to join us this year.



The End of an Era

After ten years as the leader of Sacred Heart School of Halifax, Sr. Anne Wachter, RSCJ is ending her time with us. Sr. Wachter has made so many contributions to our School, but one of the things she will be most remembered for is how she put love at the center of everything she did. As part of our celebrations to honour Sr. Wachter, we hosted a community celebration on June 2nd, and we were thrilled to see so many from our full community and especially so many alums here to wish Sr. Wachter well. We wish her all the best as she brings her talents and devotion to Japan as the Headmistress at the International School of the Sacred Heart in Tokyo. If you missed the chance to say goodbye or thank you, feel free to **drop her a line!**

Welcome to Our Newest Alums!

Congratulations to the Class of 2022! For the first time in three years, we were blessed to have full, in-person graduation ceremonies to celebrate this class of resilient, capable, and kind young adults. Check out the graduation highlight videos: [Fountain Academy](#) and [Barat Academy](#). We look forward to seeing how our newest alums make their mark on our world.





The Quraishi Family Make it Four!

This past graduation ceremony was the fourth and final one for parents Dr. Ata ur Rehman and Dr. Tabassum Quraishi as they celebrated the success of their son, Omar, ending a 20-year run for this lovely family who have been a very dedicated part of our Sacred Heart community. All four children, who started at Sacred Heart in their early years, have demonstrated remarkable academic, community service, and leadership skills. Omar was this year's Head of Students for Fountain Academy and was a multiple-prize-winning Valedictorian who showed impressive leadership during his time here. Fareeha '13, recently graduated with her Masters in Education from the University of Toronto; Shifa '14, has finished medical school in Pakistan and is about to start shadow work in anticipation of her residency here; and Manal '18, just graduated from the University of Toronto with an Honours BSc and as a Provost Scholar (among the top 15% of Trinity students). Manal will be heading to Dalhousie Medical School this fall. Congratulations to all of the Quraishi children, what impressive accomplishments! We look forward to welcoming all of you back to the Heart as alums and PAL's!

Speaking of All in The Family



Siblings Eliza '20, Graeme, and Ben were all back at the Heart to see youngest sister Claire graduate this year. All four Rankins attended Sacred Heart for some or all of their high school years. Not surprisingly, all four were basketball standouts during their time here. We wish Claire well as she heads off to Queen's University this year, following in the footsteps of her brother Graeme, her uncle, and her grandfather.



Big sister Meghan Beland '18 was on hand to watch her brother Sean graduate this year. Sean's parents, Mark and Catherine (Meagher), who has been a teacher at Sacred Heart for 16 years, were beaming with pride as they watched Sean collect a number of awards and trophies this year, including The Schulich Leader Nominee Award and The Queen Elizabeth II Medal.



Big sister Rachelle Lawen '18 and little sisters Chloe Lawen '26 and Kiana Lawen '29 joined their parents for their brother Ivan's graduation this year. Rachelle has just completed her Bachelor of Medical Sciences at Dalhousie University and graduated with distinction — congratulations Rachelle! She's off to Dal Dentistry School in September.



And big sister Maisie Wong '18 was also back at the School with her parents cheering on little brother John as he graduated this year. The Wongs were headed to what was quite possibly the largest family graduation party ever, with 80 people expected at their family restaurant!

Pass it on!

We know our alumnae and alumni best understand the value of our Sacred Heart education, which is why we're thrilled to see a number of more recent alums already inquiring about enrolling their children in our JP Program. If you have children and are considering your alma mater, of course we would love to have you! Please let our Admissions Department know you're an alum when you start your application process.

Welcome Back!



Our alums are always welcome to drop by their alma mater any time, just like Jeremy (Jinhun) Dan '17 did recently when he was back in Halifax after completing his studies in Regina. Jeremy was showing his girlfriend around the school, and while he was here, he had the chance to catch up with some of his former teachers and took some time to visit his old haunts. Thanks for staying connected Jeremy!

Legacy of Love

Submitted by Paula Thomson (Farmer) '80



"Let us leave acts, not words"

So reads a quote from Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat, beloved founder of the Sacred Heart Society and schools. Madeleine Sophie lived in turbulent times. The Catholic religion was in peril during the aftermath of the 1789 French Revolution. In Paris between 1795 and 1800, Madeleine Sophie even had to live in a safe house and teach catechism to children in secret! Nevertheless between 1800 and her death in 1865 she welcomed just under 3,500 religious who founded over 100 schools – all with corresponding free schools that offered high-quality education to impoverished area children. She travelled extensively throughout France before railroads. She is credited with averting a schism between the Vatican and the Bishop of Paris. Her order and its schools survived the rule of Napoleon and more revolutions in 1830 and 1848. She was a pragmatic woman of faith, of purpose, and of vision – all in a male-dominated world. Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat was a woman of action.



True to the quote above, in focusing on acts Madeleine Sophie did not prioritize words. Unlike Augustine or Thérèse of Lisieux, Madeleine Sophie did not write an autobiography. She did not document visions, as did Theresa of Avila. Nor did she write prayers like Francis of Assisi. Apart from a few journals, she was an active letter writer (14,000 to her credit). But her letters were not evangelical, she wrote in support of action needed by the Society and its schools. "Letter writing was central to Sophie Barat's exercise of leadership. It was the phone, the fax and the email of her time, essential for maintaining relationships and good governance." Most letters addressed the day-to-day issues of the Society of the Sacred Heart: personnel, studies, spiritual guidance, even frank advice and problem-solving!

To read the rest of this story, and to see more archival photos, [click here](#).

The Class of '82 Reunites Online

Vanessa Buhr-Rountree

In June of this year, our class of 1982 celebrated 40 years since graduating from Sacred Heart. The realization of this significant milestone came across as somewhat of a shock when this spring I discovered a copy of the June 1982 issue of J.O.S.H., edited by fellow classmate Chamine David. The publication had an announcement about the "Spring Time Formal" that would take place on June 4, 1982, at the Harbourview Room, Hotel Nova Scotian. The musical entertainment was the "Terry Hatty Band" (for those of you who might remember them, they were a very popular band in Halifax back then.)

I felt it would be a worthwhile endeavour to reconnect with as many of my classmates as I could. As fate would have it, about a week after this discovery, it turned out that Chamine was flying into Halifax to visit family. She and I had a lovely walk in Point Pleasant Park and discussed the idea of an online reunion.

Reunion organizers Chamine David and Vanessa Buhr-Rountree



Between April and May, we tried to track down as many classmates as possible. Emails invited people to submit videos telling us about what they have been up to for the last 40 years. With Chamine's help, a Zoom reunion was organized. Of a class of 17, 14 were tracked down and seven of us were available to join the conversation on the official anniversary date of June 4th. It was magical to catch up after all these years, and everyone looked great! We will certainly make plans to reconnect again soon.

Tidbits

Dalhousie University has given us four new doctors to be very proud of! Congratulations to alums **Clarissa Brisseau '12**, **Claire Bullock '14**, **Alexander Sapp '14**, and **Sabrina Secord '14**.

Speaking of Claire Bullock, well done to her and her Dal colleague Lauren Miller who, this year, co-created the education mini-course "Battling the Burnout Epidemic".



Hats off to **Hugh MacAskill '18**, who has graduated from Acadia University with a Bachelor of Business Administration with a major in Entrepreneurship and Innovation and who will soon start his position with Bauld Insurance as a Personal Insurance Advisor.



Long-time PAL and volunteer coach of the Sacred Heart Track and Field and Cross Country teams, Bonnie LeFrank, has confirmed her son, **Sebastian Young '14** has recently gotten engaged. Congratulations!

A hearty congratulations to **Meghan Beland '18**, who just graduated from the UNB Bachelor of Recreation & Sports Studies Program with Honours and will be working as a Program Coordinator for Baseball NB coordinating youth events across the province and with the Jays Care Foundation.

Kudos to **Emma Valardo '18**, who received her Bachelor of Arts Degree with a concentration in Forensic Psychology and a minor in Religious Studies from St.FX and is now off to UNB Law School in the fall. Impressively, Emma was also accepted to Trinity University in Belfast, Ireland for a Master of Law in Conflict Resolution.





Well done to **Olivia Stephen '18**, who graduated from St.FX with a Bachelor of Arts Degree with Distinction majoring in Psychology and with a special concentration in Forensic Psychology. Olivia made the Dean's List all four years at St.FX.

Welcome back to Nova Scotia **Ailin Chant '17** who will be pursuing her Law Degree at Dalhousie's Schulich School of Law this fall.

Congratulations to **Ruining Zhang '18**, who graduated from the College of Creative Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara and is now off to Columbia University to pursue her PhD in Materials Science where she will be designing algorithms and simulations while studying nanoscale structure and material properties.

Best wishes to past student **Genevieve Cunningham** who after working this summer at Citadel Hill will be off to study voice and opera at the School of Music at Memorial University.

Well done to **Michael Dempsey '13** who has just graduated from the University College of Cork, Ireland with his Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) degree. Michael is returning to Halifax to practice.

Start Planning Your Reunion!

If you graduated in **2013, 2003, 1993, 1983, 1973, 1963, 1953, 1943, 1933 or earlier**, and want to gather with your classmates next summer for your class reunion, please contact **Miriam Regan '80** for assistance in planning your special event.

We Want to Hear from You!

Share your stories, news, photos, and announcements, or pass along regards to a favourite teacher or former classmate. **Drop Miriam an email!**

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