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## At our finest

Michael Hemesath

*College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University, mhemesath@csbsju.edu*

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## Quad 136

At Our Finest

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### At Our Finest

The community that is Saint John's University and the College of Saint Benedict is excellent in many ways.

We enjoy each other's company and enthusiastically celebrate life's joys together. This can be seen at any Johnnie football game or commencement exercise or reunion.

We thrive at welcoming new members to our community, whether it is a visitor to our campuses who is delighted to find so many generous and helpful people in Collegetown and St. Joseph, or a new student or employee who feels almost immediately that they are part of this Benedictine community.

We are great at reaching across generations as older Johnnies and Bennies provide mentoring and personal relationships that make up the well-known and envied Johnnie and Bennie professional network.

But we are at our finest as a community when we reach out to others in a time of sadness and pain.



David Forster Jr. '11

On Friday June 24, 2016, David Forster Jr. '11 collapsed and died as he finished an evening run in Minneapolis. David was a cross-country runner at Hopkins High School and at Saint John's. He was also a marathoner who had completed several races, including Grandma's only a week earlier in which David had helped his Bennie fiancé complete her first marathon.

**David's death** at 27 is a mystery and tragedy; a painful reversal of life's rhythms as his parents, Sandy and David, were shocked to have to bury their first born.

David's funeral was held at the Basilica of Saint Mary in Minneapolis last Thursday. It was an incredible tribute to David, his family and to the CSB/SJU community. The Basilica, which holds nearly 2000, was full, with a number of mourners standing in the aisles and the back.

Cross country runners from SJU, across many years, formed an honor guard that stretched the length of the center aisle. Hundreds of Johnnies and Bennies from David's parents' and grandparents' generation were there, and there were many current and recent students, who never met David but simply wanted to be there to support the many people who loved him. And of course David and his fiancé's friends turned out in droves, many flying in from across the country.

A young woman from David's class said, "I have never felt more proud to be part of this community than I did at David's funeral. To see the number of people at the funeral was amazing."

A monk from Saint John's who has attended hundreds of funerals over many years noted that, "It was impossible to be at this event and not be proud and impressed by Saint John's and Saint Ben's. I felt so proud of the community."

None of this is to forget the deep tragedy of David's death. May we have few opportunities to show the strength of this community. But it is deeply consoling to be part of such a community, knowing that they will wrap you in their arms during the inevitable painful events of life.

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By [Michael Hemesath](#) | July 6th, 2016 | Categories: [Alumni](#) | [1 Comment](#)

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## About the Author: [Michael Hemesath](#)

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Michael Hemesath is the 13th president of Saint John's University. A 1981 SJU graduate, Hemesath is the first layperson appointed to a full presidential term at SJU. You can find him on Twitter [at] [PrezHemesath](#).