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# Homecoming 2013 and the SJU capital campaign kickoff

Michael Hemesath

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

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## Quad 136

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## Homecoming 2013 and the SJU Capital Campaign Kickoff



President Hemesath raises a toast at the launch of "Forward Ever Forward". Photo: Paul Middlestaedt

This past weekend was homecoming in Collegeville which included the announcement of the public phase of our \$160 million fundraising capital campaign.

The *Forward Ever Forward* capital campaign kickoff was held on Friday evening in Sexton Arena where more than 400 alumni and friends gathered. *Forward Ever Forward* is a joint campaign for the University, School of Theology•Seminary, the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library and Saint John's Abbey – so all parts of Saint John's were well-represented at the dinner.

The highlight of the evening was a moving talk by the Fr. Walter Reger Distinguished Alumnus Award winner Jim Frey '78. Jim spoke about how warmly Saint John's had welcomed him when he visited campus as a high school student in a wheelchair, and how

Fr. Donald LeMay had made it clear that the community would work hard to make campus accessible to him. Jim's talk nicely captured the Benedictine spirit that makes Saint John's unique and special.

Saturday morning's activities included Mass, brunches for various reunion classes, and a ceremony to remember and honor Saint John's late, great English teacher, Stephen B. Humphrey '29. At the urging of Lee Hanley '58, we installed and dedicated a permanent display case in the lobby of the Humphrey Theater that includes a bust of Mr. Humphrey and a selection of notation-filled books that he used to teach Shakespeare during his decades-long career here.

Following this event, author and journalist, John Thavis '73, gave a presentation in the theatre entitled, "Backstage at the Vatican." This topic was of particular interest because John was writing his book *The Vatican Diaries*, just prior to the end of Pope Benedict's pontificate.

Although it rained Friday evening and Saturday morning, it stopped just prior to kickoff at the football game. In the only slight blemish on the weekend, the Johnnies lost their first game of the season to a very good Concordia team.



Jeff Korsmo '80, receives the Bob Basten Excellence in Leadership Award from President Hemesath. Photo: Paul Middlestaedt

At halftime of the game, we honored Jeff Korsmo '80 with the Bob Basten Excellence in Leadership Award which is presented to a former Johnnie football player who, in his life as an alumnus, has exhibited outstanding leadership traits; is involved in his community and alma mater; has a sense of fair play carried beyond the gridiron; and has an overall commitment to excellence. Jeff graciously thanked those who had mentored him during his time at Saint John's, including John Gagliardi, Joe Friedrich, and Chuck Rambeck, among others.

Late afternoon was filled with events on the tundra where everyone had time to socialize and visit the various booths that were set up. The day ended with dinners for different reunion classes at which classes honored individual members for their service and achievements.

The Institutional Advancement team members did a fabulous job of planning and running the homecoming events, and Dining Services exhibited the finest in Benedict hospitality. Overall, it was a great weekend at Saint John's where many friendships were renewed and our exceptional sense community was celebrated.

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About the  
Author:  
Michael  
Hemesath



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](#).