

St. John the Baptist Diocesan High School

1170 Montauk Highway, West Islip, New York 11795-4959

Phone: 631.587.8000 Fax 631.587.8996

Principal: Mr. Walter D. Lace

Phone: 631.587.8000 Ext. 112

Press Release

For Immediate Release:
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Contact: Mrs. Sarah Murphy
631.587.8000, ext. 117

Lace But Not Least

West Islip, NY – After turning 65 last November and with 44 years of service at Saint John the Baptist Diocesan High School, sixteen as Principal, Mr. Walter D. Lace announced February 18th to the students and faculty that this will be his very last year as Principal of SJB. As the SJB-TV studio cameras rolled, tearfully, Mr. Lace explained he will continue to teach Sociology at Touro College of Health Sciences and remain an active member of the SJB Board of Advisors and an even more active grandfather...but always and forever an SJB COUGAR! Mr. Lace was joined on camera by the current Chaplain, Fr. Michael Holzmann and Msgr. Jim Vlaun'89, President of TELECARE, who served as Chaplain when Mr. Lace began as Principal in 1995.

When asked what motivated him to continue to dedicate himself to St. John's each and every day for so many years, he said, "It was that, even on the difficult days or weeks, in some way, shape or form, I wanted to make a positive difference in the life of this school for the students, alumni, faculty, staff and families." Even "the small victories" of making building repairs and upgrades or adding new courses and activities helped Mr. Lace maintain the energy, commitment and focus that has been his trademark. But the "big victories" of individual student achievements and the increased enrollment that occurred during his tenure are the "wins" that Mr. Lace is quick to acknowledge as "the efforts of the entire team of people I have had the opportunity to work with who were involved in the decisions, work and change – certainly not just me!" he stated.

Mr. Lace also offered up the most gratifying moment of his time as Principal of SJB. “It was in April of 2010 when Sr. Joanne Safian, the chair of the Middle States Visiting committee, addressed the faculty after they evaluated SJB’s Self-Study and plan for growth. She said she had only one word for St. John the Baptist DHS and that was, “Wow!” At that moment I realized that all we had worked for and hoped for had come to fruition and was recognized by an outside group of educators as outstanding! It was a great moment for me and for all of the St. John’s community.”

Known to all as a compulsive punster and caring gentleman, he identified the quote that hangs above his desk, a gift from the John King family, as his goal as a principal. It states, “One hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove, but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child.” The sentiment of the SJB school community is that he remains important and vital in the lives of thousands upon thousands of students and alumni as a teacher, coach, mentor, dean, principal, uncle, parent and grandparent. For all he has nurtured as an educator and leader and for the man that he is, the SJB family shouts a collective “Thanks and... WOW!”

About St. John the Baptist Diocesan High School: 1,700 students attend St. John the Baptist DHS, a college preparatory Catholic High School located on the south shore in West Islip. As part of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, St. John’s offers a value-centered education that recognizes the unique talents and abilities of each child, while fostering a school environment that challenges students to reach their true potential. Open since 1966, St. John’s offers a rigorous curriculum and extensive activity and athletic programs. Students have the opportunity to take numerous Advanced Placement classes and 99% of St. John’s graduates continue on to higher education. For Mission Statement and additional information: www.sjbdhs.org

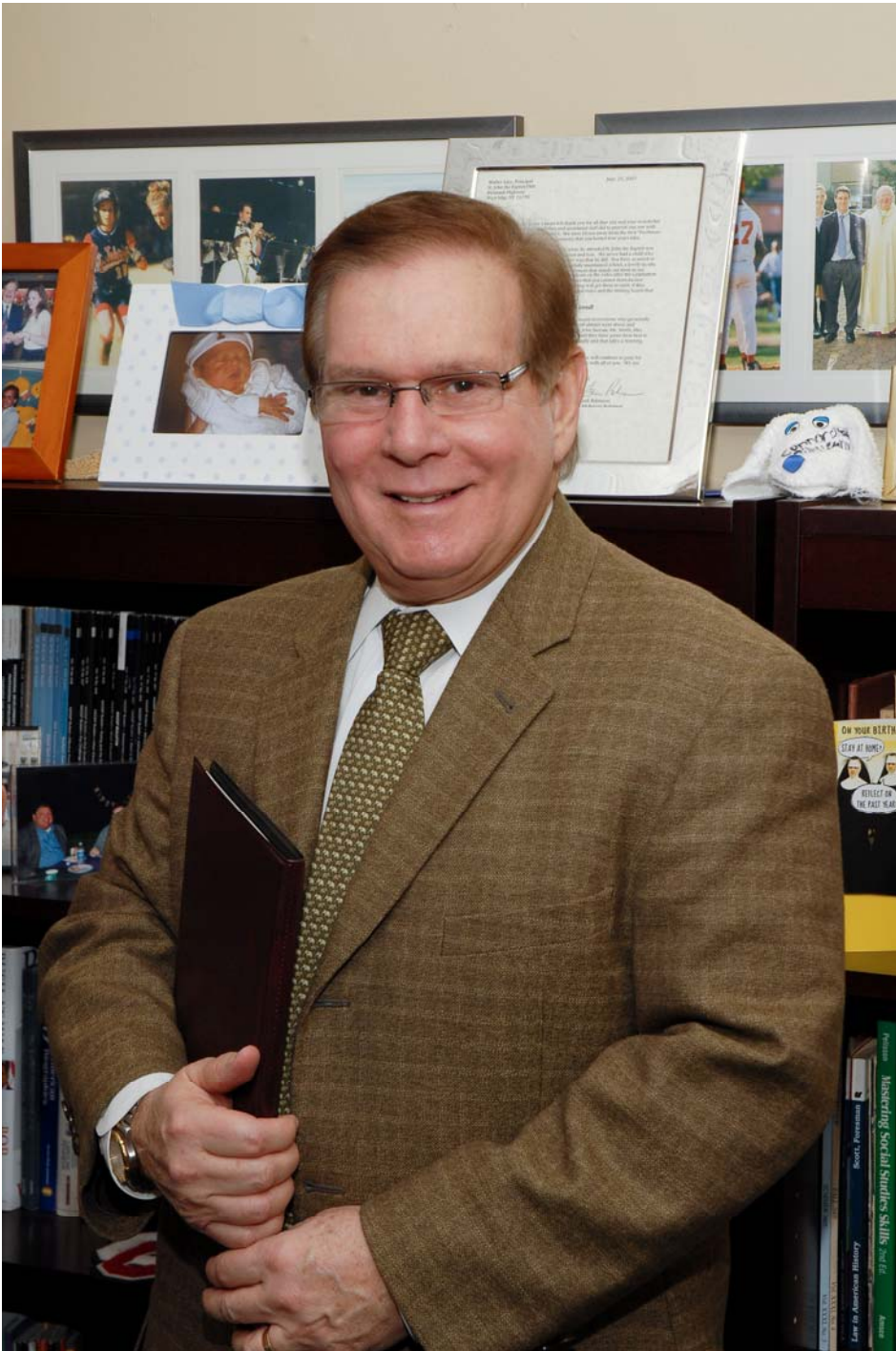


PHOTO OF PRINCIPAL, WALTER D. LACE ATTACHED

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