

ALUMNI HONOREE

Daniel E. Doyle, Jr., '67

The timeless Peace Prayer of St. Francis begins with the petition “Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.” Daniel E. Doyle, Jr., Class of 1967 and recipient of St. John’s 1993 Distinguished Alumnus Award, has taken this supplication and transformed it into a lifelong vocation. Embodying each virtue of the Xaverian charism – compassion, humility, simplicity, trust, and zeal – Dan Doyle is pioneering global pathways to peace through the work of his Institute for International Sport.

Partnering with distinguished world figures such as President Bill Clinton, Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, and Nobel Laureates Elie Wiesel and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Dan Doyle, for over a quarter of a century, has engaged thousands of young people worldwide in cultural exchanges that foster goodwill and friendship through athletics and the arts.

Dan’s steadfast convictions first took hold in Worcester’s Main South neighborhood where Dan, brother Michael, Class of ‘68, and sister Johanna were nurtured by their devout Catholic parents, the gracious, artistically talented Marie (O’Regan) Doyle and Daniel E. Doyle, Sr., St. John’s Class of ‘32. Dan’s friends from Main South’s predominantly blue-collar families viewed the welcoming Doyle house on Clement Street as a second home.

Young Danny’s passion for athletics, and basketball in particular, were apparent beginning in his elementary school years at St. Peter’s Grammar School. One of Dan’s most inspiring childhood experiences was on the day that Dan’s dad and Dr. Jim Morrison, a member of the Class of ‘35 and St. John’s Hall of Fame, took six-year-old Danny to his first St. John’s basketball game at the old school on Temple Street. Dan’s eyes were fixed solely on the extraordinary skills of one standout St. John’s player, Joe Lane. By eighth grade, Dan himself was becoming a basketball legend, leading school and CYO basketball teams in one championship game after another. Dan’s entrepreneurial talent became evident in junior high at St. Peter’s through his organization of full-fledged basketball and baseball leagues for the youth of Main South and Worcester.

In 1963, Dan was a freshman at St. John’s new Shrewsbury campus, playing JV basketball coached by his childhood idol Joe Lane. Dan admits his high school years were driven by athletics more than academics. He is quick to point out that “It was Mr. Lane’s tough, disciplined, loving guidance” that channeled the “fiercely competitive yet genuine, generous nature” described by longtime friend and St. John’s classmate Dr. Steve Lahey. Michael Jordan, ‘69 and Dan’s teammate at both St. John’s and Bates College says, “Everyone admires Dan’s great athletic gifts. But what is most striking about Dan is his sense of compassion. When we were in high school, Dan had an ‘old soul’ maturity – rare in someone so young.” These compelling attributes forged a deep friendship between Dan and Mr. Lane that lasted until Joe’s death in 2009. Nancy Lane, Joe’s widow, says “Dan made Joe and me part of his family. Danny phones me regularly and includes me in every family milestone event.”

Following his 1967 graduation from St. John’s, Dan spent a prep year at Worcester Academy playing basketball for future UConn great Donald “Dee” Rowe. From there Dan went on to co-captain the basketball team at Bates College where he quietly performed one of the many quintessential acts of kindness that have become trademarks of his life. Of his own volition, Dan convinced the Bates coach that one of his St. John’s teammates would be a great asset to both the college and its basketball team – and that this prospective student was also deserving of a full scholarship. This quiet, unpretentious gesture made it possible for Michael Jordan to attend Bates College.

Steve Lahey notes, “The word ‘impossible’ is not in Dan’s vocabulary. He is unquestionably the most selfless, honest, singularly-focused individual I have ever known.” While still only in his early twenties, Dan convinced the legendary Sugar Ray Leonard and his handlers to allow Dan to promote the boxer’s matches and public engagements, including an appearance at St. John’s.

Graduating from Bates in 1972, Dan embarked upon a highly successful basketball coaching career, beginning as a freshman coach under St. John’s acclaimed Coach Charlie Bibaud. Patrick Rosseel ‘76 recalls that he and his freshman basketball teammates were initially daunted by the thought of playing for Dan, whose storied schoolboy basketball career was the stuff of legend throughout Worcester County. “Dan had a seriousness of purpose but also a great sense of humor” says Pat, “He treated freshmen with the same respect accorded seniors. Dan taught us how to manage our lives, not just play basketball.”

Dan left St. John’s in 1974 and continued to coach with great success as an assistant at Brown University, head coach at Kingswood-Oxford High School in Connecticut, and ultimately at Trinity College in Hartford where in 1981 he was named New England College Coach of the Year.

A series of life-changing events charted the future course of Dan's life. While touring Europe with a 1968 New England prep school all-star team whose players and opponents hailed from diverse backgrounds, Dan's eyes were opened to the notion of sport as a means of bridging religious, racial, and ethnic differences. Subsequent overseas sojourns including a 1975 Christmas tournament in Czechoslovakia with his Kingswood-Oxford team, a 1980 trip to Cuba with his Trinity College players (the first American team to visit the island since the 1959 revolution), and the 1989 Northern Ireland Belfast United sports initiative Dan launched secured his vision of a peaceful world transformed by the positive power of sport.

In 1972, Dan married Worcester native Katherine Butler, a graduate of Marian High School and the University of Massachusetts. Kathy and Dan soon welcomed their first child Daniel, followed by sons Matthew and Andrew and daughters Meg, Caroline, and Julie. When young Daniel was diagnosed with autism, Dan decided to set aside a fast-track coaching career at Trinity to work to help his son Danny in the family's West Hartford home. Still determined to realize his dream of using sport to advance world peace, Dan's pursued part-time studies toward a master's degree in international relations at Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. Dan's 1982 master's thesis detailed a philosophical and organizational blueprint for what in 1986 became the Institute for International Sport.

Among the many initiatives launched by Dan and the Institute are National Sportsmanship Day, the renowned World-Scholar Athlete Games, the Center for Sports Leadership, and the Institute's most ambitious program, this summer's 2011 World Youth Peace Summit. Beginning with a May 21st peace march in Hartford, Connecticut to be led by grand marshal Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the 2011 World Scholar-Athlete Games in late June and the Peace Summit in early July will bring together at the University of Connecticut nearly 20,000 scholar-athletes and scholar-artists to launch student-led peace projects across the globe. Former U.S Vice-President Al Gore, General Colin Powell, and acclaimed *Three Cups of Tea* author Greg Mortensen are among the luminaries who will speak to those gathered at this historic event at the University of Connecticut.

Dan's extraordinary drive and relentless pursuit of his goals are readily apparent. Michael Jordan observes, "Dan has an uncommon capacity for work and is never daunted by challenges that would discourage most people." St. John's classmate Walter O'Malley, Dan's close friend and member of the Institute's board of directors, notes that "although Dan left Worcester years ago and today travels in lofty circles, he has never forgotten where he came from. He reaches out and keeps in touch with boyhood friends. Stories of Dan helping classmates and others who have fallen upon difficult times are legion. Dan gets people back on their feet – not with a handout, but through quiet and humble ways of connecting people to resources that will empower them to rebound."

So generous is Dan's heart that he's able to extend compassion even to those who do harm. In a remarkable act of forgiveness, Dan and his wife Kathy encouraged four teenagers to change their lives after these teens, in a 2005 random act of violence, beat the Doyle's son Matt unconscious with severe injuries as he was leaving a gym near Chicago's Northwestern University.

Dan acknowledges the key role St. John's faculty and coaches like Joe Lane, Bob Devlin, and Charlie Bibaud played in instilling the sense of personal responsibility and social justice which have shaped Dan's family and professional life. St. John's has benefited from Dan's generosity through his co-founding of the Worcester County Young Writer's Conference held annually at St. John's, his service on the St. John's Capital Campaign Cabinet, and his ongoing work to bring speakers of note to campus such as recent guest U.S. Senator Scott Brown. Dan has been a role model for several St. John's alumni now pursuing careers in international relations as a result of their inspiring experiences at the World-Scholar Athlete Games.

An avid tennis player, former marathoner, and poet, Dan is a Pulitzer Prize-nominated author of several books including the award-winning *Encyclopedia of Sports Parenting, Volumes I and II* and the novels *Are You Watching*, *Adolph Rupp?* and *African Rebound*, the latter scheduled to be published this year. Dan is a frequent guest commentator on the ESPN program *Outside the Lines* and one of the country's most sought-after speakers on the topics of leadership, creativity, master coaching, and international relations.

Dan's accomplishments have been recognized with numerous awards including the 2009 Terence Cardinal Cooke Humanitarian Award, the Distinguished Alumnus Award from Tuft's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, honorary doctorates from the University of Rhode Island and Bridgewater State College, and the 1993 Irish Sports Person of the Year presented by Ireland president Mary Robinson. Dan's Belfast United sports initiative was credited with playing a key role in bringing an end to "the Troubles" in Northern Ireland.

Though he walks among world leaders in his quest to make world peace a reality, the principles that guide social entrepreneur Dan Doyle remain deeply rooted in the Xaverian values of St. John's and his childhood home in Main South.