Dear Parents,

We send this magazine to college-age graduates at their parents’ homes. Please forward this to keep your son or daughter informed about GA.
On an idyllic, crisp fall day in September, more than 400 Glen Oak alumnae, former students, faculty and staff gathered at Gilmour Academy’s Lower School campus, the former home of the all-girls school, for a first-ever multi-class celebration. The gala weekend culminated over two years of online research, recruitment and commitment by devoted Glen Oak alum Roberta “Berti” Guarino ’82.

“While I didn’t realize it at the time, Glen Oak set my foundation in life,” reflects Guarino. “Glen Oak let me know it was okay to be who I am. Their family environment and different teaching styles encouraged me to try anything. I wanted to honor that and reconnect us all!”

Reconnect she did – Guarino used her research skills to find Glen Oak grads across the country. But, she did not stop there; Guarino tried to find every student who ever attended Glen Oak, whether or not they graduated from the school. By the time she finished, she had researched more than 700 Oakies including faculty and staff!

Guarino set up the Glen Oak School Facebook group. As more and more classmates were found, the group grew with messages posted about the upcoming event. Excitement built, memories were shared and friendships were rekindled. Guarino was so moved by the stories she heard through the two-year planning process that she intends to write a book about Glen Oak to commemorate the impact the school had on the lives of so many.

Glen Oak was founded in 1968 by the Sisters of the Sacred Heart under the motto of Person – Service – Love. Innovative educational models such as open classrooms, nongraded evaluations and team teaching were widely used at Glen Oak and valued for their
novelty at the time. In addition to the modern teaching styles, Glen Oak established a warm, family-like atmosphere that welcomed students of all backgrounds.

“Glen Oak transformed me,” explains Edwina Moore ’79 who attended the reunion to reconnect with friends she had not seen in 35 years. Growing up in the Lee/Harvard neighborhood of Cleveland, Moore recalls the influence Glen Oak had on her. “At first being at Glen Oak was traumatic,” she remembers. “Everything was so different, but eventually I felt welcomed and empowered. I graduated and went on to Boston University and a successful business career. I attribute all of this to Glen Oak.”

Glen Oak was the first school in the Cleveland area led by the Sisters of the Sacred Heart. The school was not designed to be a traditional Catholic girls school. Although religious instruction was important, an ecumenical approach was taken in which not only a Catholic priest but also a Protestant minister and a Jewish rabbi guided the religious studies program. Students from all belief systems were accepted.

Lisa Waxman ’81 grew up in Lyndhurst and actually learned about Glen Oak through friends of hers involved in her synagogue’s youth group. She remembers how supportive the school was of her religious upbringing and how Glen Oak fostered strong relationships with others and the community.

“The teachers provided space and time for learning about who we were and what we were capable of achieving,” Waxman recalls.

As part of the gala celebration, Brother Robert Lavelle, C.S.C. welcomed alumnae and guests during an opening reception. He spoke warmly about the impact Glen Oak had – and continues to have – on Gilmour Academy.

“As a community, we make sure that Glen Oak is not forgotten. Your stories continue to unfold,” he remarked. “Some of you I see as Gilmour parents now! All of you are part of an environment that says, ‘We can reach out and make a difference.’”

Brother Robert revealed an engraved plaque that now hangs in the front hallway, renamed the Glen Oak Wall, that reads: “Glen Oak School cultivated girls to fulfill their academic, social, moral and spiritual potential to become tomorrow’s leaders. The philosophy of Glen Oak was based upon the educational thrust of the Society of the Sacred Heart: the love of God for people of all races, religions, cultures and nationalities. Glen Oak School was innovative in its approach to education including building design; organizational structure; student-teacher relationships; and methods of learning, such as team-teaching and flexible scheduling. A sensitivity to and awareness of the value of each individual was an essential quality of this education.”

After lunch, gala attendees continued to reminisce and reconnect outside under the archway and canopy of the over 40-year-old oak tree. Throughout the school, posters and slideshows displayed photos of Glen Oak students through the years. Glen Oak graduate Stella Gresham ’76 and Gilmour archivist Brother Ken Kane, C.S.C. spent the months leading up to the event collecting school memorabilia. Many contributed their yearbooks, programs from school events, photos and other items unique to the school to the collection that Stella and her daughter compiled to
adorn the hallways and classrooms. There was even a theatrical performance put on by some of the alumnae and faculty organized by Rachel Freed ’76, Lorna Strand and Joe Leotta.

Attendees marveled that while the hairstyles and fashions had changed, clearly the educational values and impact Glen Oak had on its students had not. Many of the women in attendance cited Glen Oak as a launching point in their lives that led them on to further academic pursuits and engaging careers.

Perhaps the alumna who traveled farthest was Lanie Burkhart ’81, who has been living for the past 25 years in Alaska. She and her two sisters all graduated from Glen Oak, which she credits with “cultivating her independence.” She works as an environmental consultant and includes Mini Week at Glen Oak among her fondest memories.

Other alumnae have stayed closer to home but have had a worldwide impact. Hallie DeChant ’76 lives in Shaker Heights and works as an internist at MetroHealth Medical Center. She and her husband adopted two children from Korea, now 10 and 8 years old. They are preparing to adopt a third child, a 2 1/2-year-old special needs boy from China, this winter.

“Glen Oak was the place where I learned how to learn things simply for the love of learning,” explains DeChant, who still wears her Glen Oak class ring daily.

Those who were at Glen Oak from the beginning recalled how everyone had to start from scratch and the camaraderie it created.

“There were no clubs, no activities,” recalls Kim Johnson Francis ’72. “We had to decide as a group what we were going to do. I still remember discussing that we wanted to have a dance. Glen Oak was a universe being created.” Francis graduated and went on to study history, theater and English at Case Western Reserve University. She earned a graduate degree and in the late 70s moved to New York where she has been living ever since. Her return for the reunion marked the first time she had been back in 40 years.

Faculty who taught at Glen Oak and later Gilmour joined the festivities as well. Among those who returned to reminisce were Headmistress Sr. Claudia Klyn, O.S.U., English teacher Gay Janis, physical education teacher Barb “Alice” Vaughn, French teacher Susan Silbiger, Spanish teacher Lisa Forino, math teacher Dorothy Coerdt and math teacher Bonnie DiCillo.

“Glen Oak has its own identity,” explained DiCillo. “The environment was less formal. We had open classrooms and morning meetings. We traveled with students to New York and took them on college tours. We had ring ceremonies and Arbor Day celebrations. There were some nice traditions at Glen Oak.”

Glen Oak carries on – not just in the hearts and minds of its former students – but also through the establishment, in 1984, of the Glen Oak Scholarship. For over 30 years, Mary Alexander Ray ’75 has chaired the committee that awards this scholarship to a female Gilmour junior who embodies Glen Oak’s founding principles of awareness of others, evidenced by a commitment of service and sense of responsibility to one another, the school and the community at large.

The Glen Oak celebration concluded with an evening presentation complete with the history of the school by one of the founding Board members, Skip Watts, plus a ring ceremony, comments from Glen Oak Scholarship award winner Jennifer Furlong ’13 and closing remarks from Guarino.

Those who traveled from near and far to reconnect with their classmates that weekend were grateful they had made the journey.

“Temporal relationships are not so with the far-reaching branches of the Glen Oak community. We are all many Oakies on an over 40-year sturdy trunk. May our tree be even stronger now that we have reconnected and grafted new relationships that we will cultivate for many years to come,” concluded Guarino.

For all her efforts in coordinating the Glen Oak Gala, Berti Guarino has been named Gilmour Academy’s Alumni Woman of the Year. She will be honored at the annual Christmas at the Academy party in December.
One of the founders and the first Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Glen Oak School, William Hauserman, passed away at age 92. His funeral was held on October 29, 2012 at St. Ann Church in Communion of Saints Parish. Hauserman was the beloved husband of Diane and devoted father of Joan Collignon (Frederick), Pamela Myers (Richard), Holly Langer, William F. Hauserman, Jr. (Debbie), Teri Hauserman G.O. ’74 (Stan Pilch), Cynthia Little G.O. ’75 (Daniel), Patricia Winder G.O. ’76 (Peter) and David Hauserman. He was the grandfather of 16 and the great-grandfather of nine.

Hauserman served in the Pacific Theater in World War II and rose to the rank of Lt. Commander in the Navy. He then joined the F. Hauserman Co. in 1946 and retired as Chairman and CEO in 1986.

Throughout his life, Hauserman was committed to the Greater Cleveland community and devoted his time, talent and treasure to many organizations including the United Way Greater Cleveland, the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation, the Cleveland Institute of Art, the Greater Cleveland Growth Association and the Young Presidents Association.

He was also dedicated to educational institutions. In addition to serving as president of the Board of Trustees of University School and chairman of the Advisory Board to Notre Dame College, Hauserman was instrumental in the launching of Glen Oak School. In 1964, he, along with Thomas Coakley and Daniel Gorman, proposed securing 30 acres from Gilmour for an all-girls school and donated some of the funds needed to do so. He was involved in selecting the architect and the building plans and was the founding chairman of the Board from 1968-1969 and then served on the Board of Trustees of the School. He was made an honorary life Trustee of Gilmour Academy upon Glen Oak’s merger with Gilmour.

Gilmour Headmaster, Brother Robert Lavelle C.S.C. said, “I came to know Bill and Diane through their dedication to Glen Oak and subsequently their support of the combined schools. Bill was interested in the educational path of excellence for the newly formed coed Gilmour and was very affirmative of the continued progress.”

As evidenced by the passion shown for Glen Oak by the alumnī at the Gala in September, Hauserman’s efforts were a success – leaving a legacy of alumnī who credit Glen Oak with shaping them as lifelong learners.

To see more pictures from the weekend as well as some Glen Oak videos from the Archives, visit www.youtube.com/user/glenoakschool.