



## Teacher Feature: Kevin McGovern '74

By Pat O'Brien, Retired CBHS Counselor

AS A STUDENT, KEVIN MCGOVERN wasn't much different from those who came to Christian Brothers in the 70s: enthusiastic, sports-obsessed, friendly and playful. I know, I was his counselor and teacher. Somehow today he still has those characteristics but has added a remarkable but calm intensity of purpose.

Kevin is entering his twenty-fifth year as a teacher, a career which has included coaching, chairing the Art Department, serving as summer school principal, yearbook moderator, and running various CB fundraising programs. Yet his primary joy and mission is teaching.....especially art.

He doesn't consider himself an artist. "That's a word that is too vague; it's like calling someone a diva. What the heck does that mean? I'm a painter. And I'm a teacher. Most of my art inspirations have been painters who are teachers, and I like that combination." One teacher, Jack Ogden, had a big influence on Kevin's philosophy. He was looking for creativity, rather than the technically-perfect designs that students were bringing from their technically-oriented high school classes. That principle of fostering creativity has now been a god-send to the art students of Christian Brothers.

One of Kevin's more famous students, PGA Tour Professional **Kevin Sutherland '82**, reinforces this point when he thinks of Mr. McGovern. "He wasn't that much older than us (we were 17, he was 24), but we respected him. He was a teacher in the classroom but a friend on the golf course. He had a nice balance that fostered freedom and personal responsibility, a great way to inspire kids. Even when he had to correct a 'char-

acter' on the team, he'd just roll his eyes, and this quiet approach did the trick."

Sutherland continues. "When I visited school recently we had a chance to talk and I could see those same qualities, which made me admire him years ago, came through again. He has a great way to inspire the best in a kid."

In 2003, Kevin was invited to the Huether National Workshop in Chicago, focused that year on Fine Arts. As he shared examples of CB's approach with participants from the many Christian Brothers schools throughout the United States, Kevin became aware of the uniqueness of his program. "Other schools have art classes, we have an art program; and that's because we built a great program." In many schools, art has been squeezed out of the curriculum to make way for more "academic" courses. Fortunately, CB's curriculum includes an art course for all freshmen, advanced classes for those who wish to continue in the field,

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*Kevin is still teaching at  
Christian Brothers High School - 2016*

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contests, display areas, exhibits, and the yearly La Salle Art Show. Thus, the program is a model for the many Brothers' schools throughout the country.

Kevin has always been a realist. When Sutherland played in the Nor-Cal Golf Championships in Chico as a senior, he asked his coach to find a place where they could hit balls. They did find a place, but it was full of pock holes and gravel, but little grass...a far cry from the manicured lawns where he plays now. As they finished hitting, coach said "Remember this place. This is the life you're going to have in the future. It won't be all

beautiful fairways; there will be some hard times, tough difficulties." Sutherland still recalls those words which, providentially, have prepared him for a life of ups and downs on the professional circuit.

Today McGovern's dream is to visit New York's Museum of Metropolitan Art ("I hear it's amazing!") and maybe a sabbatical will someday provide the opportunity.

Finally, Kevin credits the support of his wife Leslie and his three children: Brian, Shannon, and Allison with giving his life great meaning. He's also proud to have Brian (Class of 2008), a budding cross-country runner, attending CB.

Hopefully, Kevin will be with us for 25 more years to bring out the artistic abilities of future generations of students.

Kevin's paintings, drawings and prints can be seen at the Art Foundry Gallery located in The Building at 10th and R streets. ■