



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
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November 10, 2017

Lisa Oriti, Principal  
St. Benedict Catholic School  
13633 Rockside Road  
Garfield Heights, Ohio 44125

Dear Ms. Oriti:

In recognition of St. Benedict's outstanding contribution to the Thoreau Bicentennial, please accept this gift—a 6" marble replica of Walton Ricketson's 1898 portraiture bust sculpture of Henry David Thoreau.

The Walton Ricketson bust of Henry David Thoreau is quite possibly the best sculpture ever produced of Concord's favorite son and author of *Walden*. It represents a young, idealized Henry Thoreau much the way he looked when he was living at Walden Pond. When Ralph Waldo Emerson's son Edward saw the life-sized bust in 1898, he thought it spoke for his "clear eyed courage and directness, a suggestion of Nature's ruggedness with Nature's refinement and wholesomeness, and a hint too of the tenderness and faith that made him poet as well as naturalist." This statue was sculpted by another young friend who was equally fond of his subject. Like many of your students at St. Benedict's, Walton Ricketson first became acquainted with Thoreau in childhood. He never forgot his father's best friend whose writings inspired him and countless others to live lives of virtue and principle.

On behalf of myself and the hundreds of other Thoreau scholars and enthusiasts who make up the Thoreau Society, we hope you will accept this gift as a token of our esteem and appreciation for your school's commitment to teaching children and young adults about the life and writings of one of our great American authors. We are most impressed with the work of one of your teachers in particular, Ms. Donna Marie Przybojewski. Educators across the United States and around the world have been inspired by her enthusiasm and commitment to Thoreau. Your students are lucky to have such an exemplary teacher as Mrs. Przybojewski.

Wishing you and the entire St. Benedict's community all the best.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mark Gallagher".

Mark Gallagher  
Editor, *The Thoreau Society Bulletin*