



ILLINOIS MUSIC EDUCATION CONFERENCE

MARMION ACADEMY

Marmion Men's Chorus & Marmion Schola Cantorum
Brian Birch, Conductor
Melinda Rudy, Accompanist
2026 Illinois Music Education Conference
Friday January 30

About Marmion Academy

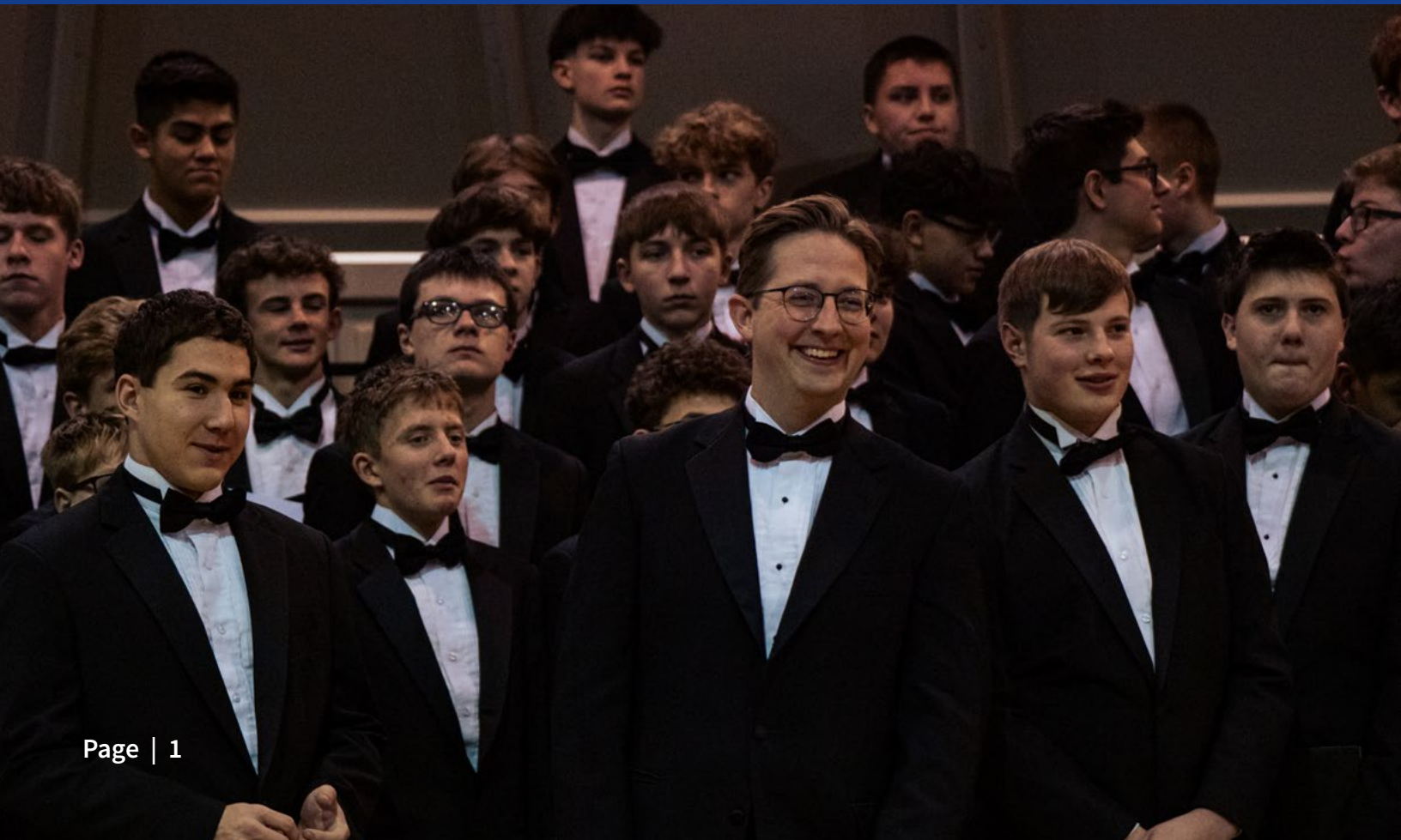
Since 1933, Marmion Academy has been a catholic school for young men guided by the Benedictine monks of Marmion Abbey in Aurora, Illinois. Marmion had become a military school from 1935-1994, and was known as Marmion Military Academy. In 1994 Marmion became a college preparatory school, but still holds a strong tradition in leadership formation through JROTC. Our foundation in Faith, Leadership, and Academic Excellence forms young men to lead lives of purpose, service, and strength. On our 325-acre campus, students are immersed in a culture where hospitality and spiritual growth are part of daily life. With Benedictine monks present in our classrooms and chapel, students are nurtured in both intellect and soul. Our academic programs are as diverse as our students' paths, from advanced college-prep and engineering partnerships to hands-on vocational training and personalized academic support.

At Marmion, students are able to engage in curricular fine arts programs as part of our close-knit community where they are inspired to be more, aim higher and live with purpose.

For Spirituality. For Academics. For Leadership.

Marmion Academy, a Catholic-Benedictine college preparatory school for young men and women, is a community dedicated to spiritual formation, academic excellence and leadership development.

Call 630-897-6939 or visit marmion.org.





Congratulations to the Marmion Men's Chorus!

Dear Illinois Music Educators Association Conference Directors,

It is with great pride and enthusiasm that we present to you the Marmion Men's Chorus. We are deeply honored that this outstanding ensemble has been selected to perform at the Illinois Music Educators Conference—an achievement that represents the highest level of musical excellence and artistry in our state.

This invitation is a testament to the exceptional skill, discipline, and dedication demonstrated by these students in every rehearsal and performance. Their selection reflects not only their musical talent, but also their commitment to collaboration, expressive artistry, and continual growth as musicians. To be chosen to perform for colleagues and leaders in music education from across Illinois is a remarkable distinction and one that speaks volumes about the quality of this ensemble.

We extend our sincere congratulations to each member of the choir and to their director, Mr. Brian Birch, whose leadership, vision, and unwavering commitment to musical excellence have guided this ensemble to this moment. Under his direction, these students have cultivated a powerful sense of unity and purpose, resulting in performances that are both technically refined and deeply expressive.

We are immensely proud of how this choir represents Marmion Academy on such a prestigious stage. Their dedication and preparation embody the very best of our school community and serve as an inspiration to fellow students, educators, and audiences alike. This performance is not only a celebration of their hard work, but also of the transformative power of music education.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our students' artistry with you. Please join us in congratulating the Marmion Men's Chorus on this well-deserved honor and in celebrating their contribution to choral music in Illinois.

With warmest regards,

Fr. Abbot Joel Rippinger, O.S.B.
Abbot and Chancellor

Anthony M. Tinerella
President

Joseph W. Large
Principal

I am very proud of my students boldly accepting the challenge to sing for this IMEC performance. For most of my students, singing in the Marmion Men’s Chorus is their first experience with singing and performing. Our program discusses a concept I call “the cycle of fear,” which illustrates that what we do to overcome fear is often what brings our fears to fruition. By boldly displaying the skills we learn, we can, over time, overcome our fears and become the best versions of ourselves and together build up our brothers through song.



Program

Escaping the Cycle of Fear | Brian Birch, conductor | Melinda Rudy, accompanist

I. Fear Encountered

O Vose Omnes. Brian Birch
 Demon in my View. Jeffrey T. Horvath

II. Fear Face to Face

Go, Lovely Rose! J. Chris Moore
 Ghost Ship Dave and Jean Perry

III. Challenge Accepted

If. Jonathan Reid
 The Warrior J. Reese Norris
Edward Vera, percussion

IV. Risk and Reward

Tell My Father Frank Wildhorn arr. Andrea Ramsey
*William Acevedo, solosit
 & Diego Castillo Sanchez, Flutist*
 Ev’ry Time I Feel The Spirit trad. Spiritual arr. Moses Hogan
*Matthe Hohol, Anthony Capasso,
 & Christopher Quail, soloists*

Program Notes

O Vos Omnes

Latin

*O vos omnes qui transitis per viam,
 attendite et videte:*

Si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus.

*Attendite, universi populi,
 et videte dolorem meum.*

Si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus.

Translation

*O all you who walk by on the road,
 attend and see:*

If there be any sorrow like my sorrow.

*Attend, all people of the world,
 and see my sorrow:*

If there be any sorrow like my sorrow.

I composed this piece after first being exposed to the Pablo Casals composition of this text during my time singing with the Sts. Peter and Paul Choral Scholars in Naperville, Illinois. I was so moved by the haunting flow and development. While sitting at the piano with a friend who sang in the ensemble with me, I came up with the golden brick as Eric Whitacre would say. I wanted to craft a piece that would suit my ensemble but fit the contemporary sacred music style we were singing at Sts. Peter and Paul.

This text, taken from lamentations, is a sad appeal to man to take note of the sorrow of Christ during His Passion. The feeling of the piece is that of sorrow and fear of what is to come.

Demon in my View

This pairing of text, from the poem “Alone” by Edgar Allan Poe, and music by Jeffrey Horvath, a professor at Harvard University, brilliantly portrays the beauty of the world around us, yet there is a cloud of depression that blocks the view of the protagonist and takes the form of a demon. Sometimes the fear we face is within ourselves. It continues to stalk us even though we try to subdue it.

Alone by Edgar Allan Poe

*From childhood's hour I have not been
As others were—I have not seen
As others saw—I could not bring
My passions from a common spring—
From the same source I have not taken
My sorrow—I could not awaken
My heart to joy at the same tone—
And all I lov'd—I lov'd alone—
Then—in my childhood—in the dawn
Of a most stormy life—was drawn
From ev'ry depth of good and ill*

*The mystery which binds me still—
From the torrent, or the fountain—
From the red cliff of the mountain—
From the sun that 'round me roll'd
In its autumn tint of gold—
From the lightning in the sky
As it pass'd me flying by—
From the thunder, and the storm—
And the cloud that took the form
(When the rest of Heaven was blue)
Of a demon in my view—*

Go, Lovely Rose!

In Go, Lovely Rose, J. Chris Moore sets Edmund Waller's poem as an intimate reflection on the apprehension of a lover who cannot speak directly. Rather than addressing the beloved herself, the speaker sends a rose as a messenger, revealing a deep uncertainty about how his feelings will be received.

Moore's choral writing captures this sense of hesitation through gentle pacing, restrained dynamics, and transparent textures that suggest careful thought rather than confident declaration.

As the poem turns toward the inevitability of time and loss, the apprehension deepens into quiet urgency. The rose's brief life becomes a proxy for the speaker's unspoken emotions, underscoring the risk inherent in revealing one's affection.

Go, lovely rose!

*Tell her that wastes her time and me,
That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be.
Tell her that's young,
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That hadst thou sprung
In deserts, where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died.
Small is the worth*

*Of beauty from the light retired;
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desired,
And not blush so to be admired.
Then die—that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee;
How small a part of time they share
That are so wondrous sweet and fair.*

Ghost Ship

This piece, packed with humor and text painting is tremendously fun. Our pirates quake and freeze scared stiff as they see the perils of the sea and the ghost ship before them. The fear of what could happen prevents them from living and loving a life on the high seas.

Ghost Ship lyrics

by Michael Perry

*I've Been at sea since thirty-two;
I've laid my share of line.
My leg's been crushed, me eye poke out:
Yet still I'm feeling fine.*

*And I would leave this port once more
To ride the ocean blue,
If only I had never seen
The ghost of a ship and her crew.
Yo ho, yo ho, the ghost of a ship and her crew.*

*The Air was damp, the wind was dead,
No light just dark and gray.
I stood me watch upon the deck
I wish I'd faced away,*

*Then, through the mist, I saw it come
Far from the depths of blue
My good leg froze when I beheld
The ghost of a ship and her crew
Yo ho, yo ho, the ghost of a ship and her crew.*

*Her bowsprit cracked, her sails in rags hung from the silent mast.
The planks upon her floor, decayed; a shred moved on her staff.
The spirits drifted 'cross the deck, as dead are wont to do.
My soul was chilled when I beheld the ghost of a ship and her crew.*

*Away she vanished in the fog
From whence the craft had come.
Then came a breeze, the sun appeared;
Her sails went full to the plumb.*

*And though the sea was good to me,
I won't return to the blue.
For I saw my face upon that ship,
The ghost of a ship and her crew.
Yo ho, yo ho, the ghost of a ship and her crew.*

If...

This piece is filled with hope. Rudyard Kipling's poem is a challenge to young men to learn to live their lives with confidence even in the face of "triumphs or disasters." How we conduct ourselves to hold on and continue the race with everything in you is the path to becoming a man and discovering true joy and fulfillment. Jonathan Reid peppers in the motif "You can" throughout the piece as if to add a cheerleader on the sideline of life.

If...

by Rudyard Kipling

*If you can keep your head when all about you
are losing theirs and blaming it on you.
If you can trust yourself when others doubt you.*

*If you can dream and not make dreams your master,
If you can think but thoughts are not your aim
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And lose, and start again, and never breathe a word;*

*If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew,
If you can hold on when there's nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: Hold on!"*

*If you can fill the unforgiving minute
with sixty seconds worth of distance run
Yours is the earth, and everything that's in it,
And what's more, you'll be a Man, my son!*

The Warrior

This piece is a dramatic composition with thunder, percussion, spoken dialog, and sound effects building to a huge climax as the warrior displays his dominance over circumstance, in this case, fear and intimidation. He accepts the challenges, faces the fear, and vanquishes it.

*Fate whispers to the warrior,
You cannot withstand the storm.
And the warrior whispers back,
"I am the storm."*

Tell My Father

This piece from *The Civil War: An American Musical* offers a said reality of the pressures on a man to honor his family, to be brave, and to overcome fear. There is great risk in fighting against fear. Told from the perspective of a soldier's final message home, the text reveals vulnerability.

The gentle lyrical writing conveys an emotional journey, allowing fear to be acknowledged and then gently transformed into acceptance and strength. Although the cost was great, the reward was dignity.



*Tell my father that his son
Didn't run or surrender;
That I bore his name with pride,
As I tried to remember
You are judged by what you do
While passing through*

*As I rest 'neath fields of green,
let him lean on my shoulder;
tell him how I spent my youth
so the truth could grow older
Tell my father when you can
I was a man.*

Chorus:

*Tell him we will meet again
Where the angels learn to fly;
Tell him we will meet as men
For with honor did I die.*

*Tell him how I wore the Blue
proud and true through the fire.
Tell my father so he'll know
I love him so.*

Chorus:

*Tell him how I wore the Blue
proud and true, like he taught me.
Tell my father not to cry,
Then say, "Goodbye."*

Ev'ry Time I Feel The Spirit

Moses Hogan's setting of *Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit* draws on the spiritual's message of faith as a source of strength and reassurance. Rooted in the assurance of heaven and the end of life's tribulations, the text reflects a journey from uncertainty toward confidence and joy in that promise.

Hogan's driving rhythmic and full-bodied harmonies of the backup chorus convey a spirit that rises above doubt. The work celebrates the resilience that comes from faith—an expression of having faced fear and emerged with renewed courage and hope.



Refrain

*Ev'ry time I feel the Spirit,
moving in my heart, I will pray.
Yes, ev'ry time I feel the Spirit,
moving in my heart, I will pray.*

Verse 1

*Upon the mountain, when my Lord spoke,
out of God's mouth came fire and smoke.
Looked all around me, it looked so fine,
till I asked my Lord if all was mine.
Ev'ry time I feel the Spirit...*

Verse 2

*Jordan River, chilly and cold,
it chills the body, but not the soul;
there ain't but one train upon this track,
it runs to heaven and right back.
Ev'ry time I feel the Spirit...*

Verse 3

*Ain't but one train on this track,
Runs to heaven and right back.
St. Peter waitin' at the gate,
Said come on sinner, don't be late.*

Marmion Men's Chorus





Marmion Men's Chorus

The Marmion Men's Chorus is the foundation for all choral activities at Marmion. Rooted in the Benedictine tradition, the chorus develops students' musical skills, vocal technique, and personal character. Beyond performance, the chorus fosters a supportive community where students grow as individuals and as musicians, gaining confidence and self-expression through every rehearsal and concert.

The Marmion Men's Chorus welcomes any student who wants to sing. There is a good balance between freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Most of the students join the choir without any prior experience singing in an ensemble.

The chorus meets before school three days a week and prepares music for four concerts a year, a competition at IHSA, and music for church services at the school.

Schola Cantorum

The Schola Cantorum is an auditioned ensemble that meets during the school day. Part of their curriculum includes private lessons where they develop skills in solo singing and prepare vocal solos for the Wisconsin Music Educators Association (WSMA) solo and ensemble competition. This also serves as the college preparatory part of their curriculum. Part of their curricular expectations is to mentor the young singers in the Marmion Men's Chorus. This mentorship is vital to the growth and health of the program.

This group is also the arm of the chorus that regularly reaches out to the community. In keeping with the school's military tradition, they are most known for their work honoring veterans through their singing of the service songs. The group will also sing at nursing homes and retirement homes, and other special events including the NCAA Golf Championship, The Fox Valley Fire Chiefs Ball, and they were honored by Naperville Responds to Veterans for their service to veterans.



The Basses

Lucas Bachert, Anthony Capasso, Cooper Guvenoz
Dayton Guvenoz, Matthew Hohol, Michael Justiss, Ryan Le
Michael O'Hara, John Palenik, Christopher Quail
Jackson Rocush, Joshua Smith, Leo Vi Luna



The Baritones

William Acevedo, Arman Aurora, Jameson Brave
Neal Carney, Thomas Chung, Salvador Esquivel, Alex Feinberg,
Nick Kackert, William Legner, Derek Lopez, Anthony Velazquez II



The Tenor I's

Aiden Aristuk, Evan Burns, Diego Castillo Sanchez, Ryan Cibulskis
Joseph Danz, Charles Davis, Clayton Gallois, Dashed Koss
Ethan Stanesecu, Sam Stetter, David Tomaszewski, Daniel Zielinski



The Tenor II's

Max Casiano, Keegan Edmunds, Dominic Haddad, Gabriel Heck
Aiden Krol, Marcos Rojas, Sam Rowe, Jonah Sartain
Daniel Skura, Evan Stolhand, Carsten Zink



Schola Cantorum

William Acevedo, Arman Aurora, Evan Burns, Max Casiano, Diego Castillo Sanchez, Thomas Chung,
Joseph Danz, Clayton Gallois, Dayton Guvenoz, Dominic Haddad, Gabriel Heck, Matthew Hohol,
Aiden Krol, Christopher Quail, Samuel Rowe, David Tomaszewski, Jonah Sartain, Josua Smith

Brian *Birch*

Brian has been an Aurora native most of his life. He sang in his church choir under the direction of Patricia Doctor and then joined his high school choir at West Aurora High School under the direction of Meg Papadolias.

Brian Birch began teaching the chorus at Marmion Academy in 2012. He has brought a wealth of experience holding a BA of Acting and a BME from Illinois State University. In 2020 he received his MME from Vandercook College of Music. There he also met his now wife of three years. They have two young children together.

Brian became the Fine Arts Department Chair in 2016. Now, in addition to his duties as director of the Marmion choirs, he teaches Music Appreciation, Film Production, and Music Technology while additionally directing the musical and assisting with the band. He is a proud member of the Illinois Music Educators Association and the American Choral



Directors Association where he has served as the Tenor Bass Rep on the Illinois board for four years.

Given his position, he is uniquely versed in the men's choral repertoire. His ensembles are known for expressive, energetic, and lively performances. The large bass choir creates a bold sound that is quite unique from most high school choirs. He has extensive knowledge of dramatic interpretation and expression from his theater background, which he incorporates into the ensembles performances to inspire his students to interpret text. He uses movement to help the students express that meaning to their audiences. Brian uses his gifts to generate enthusiasm for creativity, motivates his students to inspire excellence in one another, and supports his students' actualizing their dreams.



Melinda *Rudy*

Melinda Rudy is a pianist from Batavia, Illinois with extensive teaching and accompanying experience. Melinda is also a proud mother and wonderful grandmother to my children. She has taught piano and has served the Fox Valley region as an accompanist for many years. She enjoys working with soloists of all ages to prepare for recitals and contests and has wide-ranging experience accompanying choirs: adult and children's choirs, her church choir and Sunday School choir, and school choirs from elementary to collegiate. She also participates as accompanist in various clinics and festivals including the annual Batavia Elementary School Choir Festival. She has a Bachelor of Music degree in piano performance from Valparaiso University and a Master of Music degree in piano performance from Northern Illinois University.

Special Thanks

Fr. Abbot Joel and the monks of Marmion Abbey

Fr. Michael Burrows

Fr. Anthony Maria Minardi

Br. Mariano DiCristofano

Administrators

FACULTY AND STAFF OF MARMION ACADEMY

Anthony Tinerella, President of Marmion Academy

Joseph Large, Principal

Rebecca Cann, Assistant Principal

Andrew Damato, Assistant Principal

Justin Dimitri, Dean of Students

Joe Piekarz, Dean of Students

Amy Malatt, Assistant to the Director of Student Affairs

Mark Malkowski, Director of activities

Joe Currie, Patrick Mitchel & Paul Chabura Athletic Directors

GRATEFUL PRAISES

John Salomone

Math Department Chair and Choral Assistant - Marmion Academy

René Rosas

Band Director - Marmion Academy

Lizbeth Reszel

Private Voice instructor

Marmion Music Boosters

Ian McGarrie

Music Director - Rosary College Prep

Nick Sargis

Assistant Drama Director and Producer

Matthew Pilmer

Pit Director and Band teacher in Naperville 203

Anthony Cirrincione

and the Leadership formation Department

Lt. Col. Williams

and the JROTC Department

Alexandria Kordelewski,

Director of Choirs, Plainfield East High School, Plainfield

Dr. Tim Fredestrom,

Professor - Illinois State University

Jodi Taylor,

Choir Director - Holy Angels Catholic School, Aurora

Patricia Doctor,

Music Teacher - Holy Cross Catholic School, Batavia

Grace Politiwicz,

Music Teacher - Immanuel Lutheran School, Batavia

Bradley Staker,

Vocal Director - Kaneland Harter Middle School, Sugar Grove

Heidi Van De Voort,

Music Teacher - Annunciation Catholic School, Aurora

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Kimberly Moorman

Traugher Junior High School, Oswego

Brittany Anderson

Plank Junior High School, Oswego

Josh Brooks

Bednarcik Junior High School, Oswego

Patrick McGehee

Murphy Junior High School, Plainfield

Kathleen Hillman

Rotolo Middle School, Batavia

Janel Bach

Wredling Middle School, St. Charles

Michell Rybski

Thompson Middle School

Eric Hibbeler

Geneva Middle School South, Geneva

Rhonda Hibbeler

Geneva Middle School North, Geneva

Kenneth Lambert

Washington Middle School, Aurora
& Jewel Middle School, North Aurora

Erica Barnett

Jefferson Middle School, Aurora

Jeffrey Glogowski

Herget Middle School, Aurora

CLINICIANS

Paul LaPrade, Vandercook College of Music

Andy Bruhn, Illinois State University

Sam Moore, Oswego East High School

Dr. Lisa Fredenburg, Aurora University

Dr. Robert Sinclair, Vandercook College of Music

NOTABLES

My wife and kids



1000 Butterfield Rd. Aurora, IL 60502



admissions@marmion.org



630-897-6936



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