



## Episode #26 - Kerrie Schludecker

Gary: 00:02 You're listening to Rebel Five an interactive interview podcast with alumni, past and current parents and friends of Roncalli High School. I'm your host, Gary Armbruster, Director of Alumni and Corporate Relations at Roncalli . And each week I will ask our guests five questions regarding how their lives have evolved and how key connections of experience, opportunity and alumni networking have propelled them to where they are today. We'll talk challenges, how to overcome challenges and what they've learned along the way. Stay tuned.

Gary: 00:33 I'm Gary Armbruster and this is the Rebel Five podcast. Our guest today is a 2003 graduate of Roncalli High School. She attended St. Joe's college for a year and then off to Marian, she went, uh, she has a master's in sports administration, a BS in sports management, a minor in business. She loves to travel, loves to hike, goes to play golf. Welcome Kerrie Schludecker to the Rebel Five podcast.

Kerrie: 00:59 Thank you for the opportunity.

Gary: 01:00 So with a name like Schludecker, you have to have a nickname.

Kerrie: 01:06 Schlu!

Gary: 01:06 And a lot of people still call you that?

Kerrie: 01:08 They do. Um, actually once I moved to this new position that I'm at, I was Schlu, you know, college professors to my kids coaches. So in the office it's Kerrie . It's been different getting used to.

Gary: 01:20 So always Schlu, Kerries kind of a little bit out there for you. You are the assistant commissioner of the I H S a a the Indiana high school athletic association. So how many years before we take that assistant off of that, that the job title and you become the commissioner?

Kerrie: 01:41 You know, I have thought about it. I don't know if I'm there yet cause I very much love where I'm at. The sports that I'm in, um, still have some plans for some of the sports and I would like to him.

Gary: 01:54 Right. So we'll come back to that. Oftentimes in our Rebel Five podcasts, I will ask our visitor, our guest, what the first job was. Not your first job when you get out of school, but your very first job. Did you have a job when you were in grade school or high school?

Gary: 02:10 No. Okay. But did in college, but you were very involved. You were a shortstop on our state championship team in '01 I was third base baseman that year. Okay. Third baseman Megan Christ. Oh, okay. Okay. All right. So playing on our, on our second that was would have been our second state championship in softball. Um, you were involved in travel softball, I'm sure from probably a very young age. Talk a little bit about that experience in travel softball and maybe some of the good and bad of that.

Kerrie: 02:44 I was about 14 had come from South port little league days. Um, played for center Grove frost, the whiteland road runners, Champion's edge and then finished off with Indiana angels and it, a lot of hours, a lot of sacrifices for my parents. Um, my brother was a trooper. He would be along for the road, he would shag balls in the outfield. It was a family experience. Yeah, my grandma went to everything. Um, but as a lot of hours together as a family. Um, but it was pretty neat experience. Got to meet so many girls, girl they got to play with in high school, college. Um, and now I work with some of them so it's kind of nice go around.

Gary: 03:29 But it was kind of like a job because I know the number of hours that you practiced and uh, you know, you go on a Friday night and you play till whenever. And so some of the lessons may be that you were able to learn from playing. Uh, did you ever play up in those all night tournaments?

Kerrie: 03:51 Well yeah. Where you play like seven, nine games on one day. Yeah. Talk a little bit about that cause I know there's some good lessons to be learned there. Oh yeah. It's a matter of discipline, you know, with your drinks, the food that day. Um, like I said, family time, uh, the commitment and just hard work. It was a lot. Um, but a great experience but it's very much time management. You learn cause you know you have your academics of course. Um, but just keeping all in perspective cause you need to, you know, be performing in the classroom as well as on the field. So

Gary: 04:27 at Roncalli you were in the national honor society, you were the vice president of the German club, and for four years you had perfect attendance. Talk a little bit about those things. What the a, what do those three things mean to you? What does it, what does it say about you? I, I guess my question is,

Kerrie: 04:46 um, appreciation. It was, you know, first off to my parents for sacrificing a lot to send my brother and myself to private institution. Um, and appreciation my teachers, you know, I was around a staff that I tried to emulate every day that were there for, for us and you know, you didn't want to disappoint them. And I'm very much OCD when it comes to my work. I wanted my own notes. Um, and plus, you know, you didn't come to prac or come to school, you couldn't go to practice. And I'd be disappointing my team jeopardizing the team, um, as well as coaches. Um, but just very much appreciation for all the opportunities that this, you know, being able to attend here. Okay. Right.

Gary: 05:27 You won the state championship your sophomore year. Right, right. Um, I assume that's your, um, fondest memory of Roncalli. Talk a little bit about that season. Did, did you know you were going to have a good season just being a sophomore, you were pretty young. Talk a little bit about what that season meant to you.

Kerrie: 05:43 Um, like I said, I was always shortstop, um, but saw an opportunity at third base and Megan Christ made it very known that I was to work hard and be there for her. Um, but it's, I learned a lot about myself that year. Um, yeah, my family, we had family practices outside of the season and just, it was memorable, memorable. Um, it was a tough road. Once we got past at Mount Vernon, we kind of knew it was all coming together. But you had Christy Utnage and I'm saying all names, they're all married. Um, yeah, she just, she knew she had a defense behind her and it

was, it was the best and it was neat to be able to say our whole team was all South deanery. Who'd you play in the final game? Gibson. Southern Gibson. Southern. Okay. One 13 - 0 I tell them that every time I see him.

Gary: 06:32 Um, and we still, I mean we play them. Uh, I believe we play him still great program. Yeah. And they have, uh, over the years, uh, you leave Roncalli you graduate in '03 and off to st Joe's. Why'd you go to st Joe's?

Kerrie: 06:45 That coach again? Travel ball was at every tournament. I mean he traveled far and you know, I appreciated it. And um, I was able to get an academic scholarship there as well. And it just, the amount of time he put into looking at me and it had a comfortable feel with him. Yeah. Um, they were supposed to get a sports management program. So, you know, that's the road I was taking. But you were only there for a year. Correct. So what happened? They were not going to get that program and it was kind of upsetting because our game started at one and me being big family, right. My parents and grandma and grandma Schlu could not come. And so, you know, there's an opportunity at Marian, um, her coach Maria, um, had just graduated. So they needed a short step. And

Gary: 07:36 coach Maria, uh, talk a little bit about that cause that's the Roncalli connection.

Kerrie: 07:40 Yes. Um, well I didn't really know her then. Um, all I remember was she? Yes. Um, all I remember is I'm pretty sure her home run hit against us at st Joe's is still flying. So I knew I had big shoes to fill. Um, and you know, I enjoyed that team. Um,

Gary: 08:00 yeah, but that was at Marian. So how did you go from st Joe's to Marion?

Kerrie: 08:05 I knew I was going to be transferring and was looking at, you know, U of I, Butler. Um, and then a full transfer opportunity was at Marian. So

Gary: 08:14 what conference was marrying in the MCC? Is that right? And so did you have success there or?

Kerrie: 08:21 Yes, as a team we made it to regionals. Um, individually was player of the week and all conference and then academic, all American,

Gary: 08:30 no regrets going to Marion cause they had the program you wanted, um, the master's in sports administration. Was there ever any thought to do anything else besides sports administration?

Kerrie: 08:42 Um, I had actually gone into thinking chemistry, but me working by myself all day probably wasn't a good idea. Um, so I, I knew I needed to be around kids or event planning. I liked behind the scenes. Right. Um, so I knew it was something with athletics.

Gary: 08:58 Do you have a favorite memory at Marian as far as softball goes or, uh, any accolades other than what you've mentioned?

Kerrie: 09:05 More so I, I came in when coach Fleming, Scott Fleming is his first year. So yes. Um, I'm making his first year, we'll just say memorable. Just make me the first time. Never coached girls. So it was hilarious given the nice transition.

Gary: 09:20 So he started when you started. Okay. What about grandma Shluh? She was able to go your games, right?

Kerrie: 09:26 Oh, yes, it was the best is, you know, if I had a late class right before our game, a coach had already have her chair set up in the outfield and knew grandma Schlu was coming. So

Gary: 09:35 Marian's expansion explosion has kind of coincided with Roncallis. Right. So you probably played down in the wetlands. Um, did you spend any time out at Marian now going

Kerrie: 09:48 yup. Actually going there for the football game on the 28th. Okay.

Gary: 09:52 So, uh, like I said, very much a similar expansion like we have gone through. You've graduated now from Marian. Your first job out of college is at Marquette, Michigan, Michigan City Marquette. Catholic school shouldn't be a, a big jump. You went to St. Jude, you went to St. Joe's, you went to Marian, all Catholic schools, Michigan City Marquette. Talk a little bit about that. How did that come to be? What was that experience like? You're talking about a school with 300 kids.

Kerrie: 10:24 Sure, absolutely. Um, it was an eye opener. I had never really been to Michigan City and uh, was, you know, in an area I was not used to. And it was actually in my little personal timetable of, you know, am I coming back in Indianapolis? And the last day I got the call from them and quickly interviewed with them and perfect fit, uh, had a month before I started. So, of course, can't sit there, sit there quietly, went out and looked at their athletic fields cause no being a softball kiddo. Um, and I don't know when the last time someone had been out there, um, asked the principal, you know, to see the facility equipment and there was nothing. Um, so I push mowed all the facilities. Um, then everyone knows the 94 Buick Regal that I had was our Gator, the infield grass came up to the knees. We had trees growing, we didn't have regulation backstop and um, kind of just took it from there is, you know, let people, the family see that I'm out there right. Because the money wasn't there to fix them in. So slowly they came and we got regulation softball field. We actually aligned the soccer goals. So they were straight across from one another. Um, fix the dug outs. It was,

Gary: 11:42 did you not see these facilities before you [inaudible]

Kerrie: 11:45 cause they were off campus, um, cause beautiful school that I was at. Um, but no, it's, it was perfect for me at first start. Um, because I got to be all-in. Um, do every component of it. So I learned to appreciate everything. So when I moved to my second job, I was able to appreciate every worker knowing what they had, you know, what they needed to accommodate him. Um, but it was quite an experience, but it, it was great for me and I had a very supportive principal and it, it made it where I needed to start.

Gary: 12:20 So you started as athletic director or were you a softball coach as well? No, no. Marquette. And how old were you? I was 25. So you're a 25 year old female coming out of college, you're the athletic director of this small Catholic school in Michigan City. Um, did you get any pushback from people? What, what was the worst part of that? And then I'll follow it up with the best part.

Kerrie: 12:43 It was really an easy transition. Um, coaching staff bought in cause I was very visible. Right. And the kids bought in cause they were very visible and they are great kids. I mean just like Roncalli, they're there to Excel. Um, their parents are investing into them. So really I worried about how other athletic directors will look cause I was the youngest and a female. Right. I'm not from the region, but it was a great transition. It, I got so many mentors that would help out. Um, it was tough cause the previous athletic director didn't have all contracts organized. Um,

Gary: 13:20 so it was the, uh, previous athletic director had been there for a while or

Kerrie: 13:24 he had, he was also the volleyball coach, which there was a rich tradition in that program. Um, but yo, yep. Um, but it was a matter of financially and he was also injured just, I for some reason didn't want to put forth the effort. Right. Tremendous guy but just didn't have a lot of the resources and just, just didn't want to go that extra mile I guess. Yeah. Um, but also it was a lot of hours. I mean I lived there, it was a lot of paying my brother in beer money to go out there and pull weeds with me. Um, that it, you know, and I had my parents, my grandma out there. Um, I just think that was kind of, didn't have much to work with.

Gary: 14:03 They don't have a football team, do they? Nope. Okay. So, um, being from Roncalli you graduated in '03. We had just won a couple of state championships. Football was King. How, how was that going to a school without a football program?

Kerrie: 14:16 It was different. Um, and it took a lot of creativity and scheduling some excitement on a Friday. I'm trying to find other schools and programs that didn't have a football program that might want to create community support and events and we would link a fundraiser with the Friday night volleyball match. Right.

Gary: 14:33 So you leave Michigan City Marquette and off to the big town of Valpo at Boone Grove. So how did that happen?

Kerrie: 14:42 Was looking possibly for, you know, a bigger school. Um, again, missed football and the biggest thing was their new superintendent was with assistant superintendent I worked with and I was interning at Valpo high school and she's phenomenal educator and she was just district one superintendent of the year. So I wanted the opportunity to work with her, um, and was given the opportunity after interviewing extensively with the at school corporation. Um, but she was the main reason I, I wanted to take the move. What was the enrollment at Boone Grove about 500.

Gary: 15:17 So not a huge jump, but you go into a, a school system with a lot more resources, right? Football program. Uh, no field. Oh really? So where'd they play?

Kerrie: 15:30 Oh, at the time it was at Valpo university or had road games. No plans in place. Yeah.

Gary: 15:37 And then how long were you there? Three. Three years. And any development for the football field?

Kerrie: 15:42 No? Um, did I add new? Um, but I had created a relationship since I intern at Valpo high school that we would flip flop when they were away, we'd have home. Um, and then I needed to have a plan for concession stand. So I bought a trailer, designed that and put, pull that for a concession stand. Pull behind your 94. No, I didn't, I had to trade that in that, on the softball field. But, um, I would pull it with one of our school corporation trucks and I would add, you know, concession money in the gate, be able to pay \$1,500 for the rental fee and then I would clean the bleachers to save that expense. So cause our crowd's not like a Roncalli crowd, um, we'd have, you know, our gate would probably be about 2,500 and then you have your concessions so you problem solved. Wow. That was my favorite memory.

Gary: 16:36 That's, that's a big mountain to climb. And so you're what, 26, 27 at that point in time still probably the youngest athletic director, I assume they played in the conference.

Kerrie: 16:47 Uh, we did end up, uh, football was independent and that was a nightmare trying to schedule that. That's a domino effect. Um, so we drove with the Porter County conference for all sports, but football, I was able to negotiate my way into the greater South shore in which Marquette Catholic was involved with. Since they didn't have football, we were their replacement.

Gary: 17:06 How did you schedule football? If you talk a little bit about that? Cause, I mean we've had our own issues here at Roncalli, not so much recently, but you know, probably 10 years ago. Um, who were you able to set a schedule and, and where people are willing to talk to you?

Kerrie: 17:21 You had a travel. It was, cause most schools are in a conference, so you know, weeks three to, to nine or conference. So everyone's looking for one, two, and I'm looking for nine weeks. Um, so it was a matter of weeks one through three were easy. And then after that we traveled. Um, you know, we'd come down here and play Indianapolis John Marshall that's closed, um, schools that we didn't have a relationship with schools that were bigger. You know, we were a fairly new program, had no business playing them, but it was a game. Um, and I wanted to stay in state versus going to Illinois and Michigan that were close.

Gary: 17:56 Who is our athletic director at the time here at Roncalli? Was Dave Toner? Yes. Did you ever reach out? Would that be a program was to go well, no, no, no. Not to, not to necessarily play, but to say, Hey, um, how do you do this? Or I know as maybe a mentor that,

Kerrie: 18:12 um, it was w it was, we have great, I'd say internal program. Um, website w that's where you post or you need. Um, so I had many announcements on there asking for games and um, then you just kind of have the rumor mill, so-and-so's leaving a conference or someone's looking for it. So you have to be the first, you gotta be able to react.

Gary: 18:31 Right. And how long were you there? Three years. So three years at, at Michigan City Marquette, three years at Boone Grove and then to the IHSAA? Yes. Okay. We're going to take a break and we're going to be back with Kerrie Schludecker and we're going to talk about that transition.

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Gary: 19:19 We are back with Kerrie Schludecker on the Rebel Five podcast. Kerrie, you talked about being at Boone Grove for three years and then it's off to the IHS AA. How did that happen?

Kerrie: 19:31 The position opened. I remember I was at a conference meeting, um, and I got some calls from the IHSAA board, you know, asking if I'd be interested and out of respect to the position, you know, knowing I've only been athletic administrator for five years, didn't even think anything of it. Um, and then I, you know, our softball team, actually Boone Grove had made to the state finals in a softball in approach. Some of this is in commissioners just asking them what their daily jobs look like. You know, cause I didn't want to leave, you know, the kids, the coaches and sit behind a desk all day. Um, and I was in a good spot. I had a wonderful school corporation, very supportive. Um, and after that day it say finals. Kinda got to thinking, um, cause they brought up some important aspects I didn't think of. Um, I was in charge of our States for our athletic administrators, professional development and very much enjoy mentoring new athletic directors.

Kerrie: 20:25 And, um, you know, I never thought about still being able to do that in at the IHSAA the position in which I was applying for would be applying for at the time would be dealing with the student advisory committee in which it's a panel of 18 kids from all over the state. And so that was enticing. And so I just talked to my superintendent, um, and she was very, and you know, I, I don't have a teaching license and should she leave, what would my future at Boone Grove look like? Um, you know, there's big school corporations out there. I don't know if I would've had the opportunity to work there. Um, not having teaching license and ministrative roles are changing in the schools. And you know, having the athletic director evaluate teachers, which is just baffling to me. Um, and so I didn't know where my future hold held.

Kerrie: 21:15 And so I had one more conversation with one of the assistant commissioners and then I put my lengthy application in. It's quite an extensive application. Um, and just thought if it's meant to be, it's meant to be. Um, but very much wanting to be able to still have my role of working with new athletic directors. How long does the process take? It was one long interview. Um, yeah, they um, interviewed I think nine of us and got the call a couple of hours after the interview. Wow. That's pretty quick. That was the last one to interview. Um, I still remember sitting at home cause you know, I'm, I'm at my parents' house and got the call right there with them and said I'm coming home.

Gary: 21:58 So your family is pretty happy that you're back in town. Um, what exactly is the position assistant commissioner and what are you responsible?

Kerrie: 22:07 All right, so I oversee the sports of softball, volleyball and boys and girls swimming and diving, um, as well as implementing our student leadership conference and administering the student advisory committee. Um, I also process trans reports. There's four of us in the office that do that. Um, so it's about 1200 applications a year, um, and processing and, but then also we serve on different committees with the national Federation should we be asked. And so I serve on two committees, the swimming and diving, which is just ironic. I can barely swim. And then, um, as well as their net national student leadership summit.

Gary: 22:44 You've been doing this for five years. Yes. Um, I'm going to ask you two questions. What's the worst part and what's the best part?

Kerrie: 22:51 The worst part is processing transfer reports and going into hearings. Um, and how often does that go on the hearings for transfer students? Well, we have them monthly. We average about 50 hearings a year. Um, like I said, we process each of this as a commissioners. That process reports about 1200 and fortunately this year, so far I only have five hearing scheduled. Um, but it's messy. Yes. Um, in some very sad situations having to deal with. And you know, I've had numerous conversations with Mr. Weisenbach about it, his philosophy, my philosophy, how can we get better? Um, it's frustrating. Um, coming from Boone Grove and Marquette, I only probably processed five every, you know, before. And they were smooth ones cause he was coming to the country. Right. Um, so they were legitimate moves and having to deal with attorneys and it just gets messy. Um, the best part, um, is dealing with the student advisory committee. Um, dealing with, um, new athletic directors, mentoring them, letting them know it's okay, you know, it's, let's worry about what can get you fired and you know, cover those bases. Um, but then also our state championships, you know, the softball one softball one is very special to me.

Gary: 24:08 Yeah. You travel a lot. Yes. And you, I think you just told me you were in Seymour and where else just resourcing just came back from Evansville. What part of that do you like?

Kerrie: 24:20 Uh, seeing the different facilities actually is really neat. Um, but I'm there, you know, seeing our new athletic directors or the schools in which I process their transfer reports, just kind of saying hello. Um, but I'm really, if I travel for games or matches in my sports is to watch officials, um, or unruly coaches. Um, but it's just being out there, being visible. That's one thing when I transitioned in is, you know, the, I'd say IHSAA someone you don't want to mess with or you know, is intimidating getting a phone call and I didn't want to beat that. And so it's going out. They're seeing athletic administrators and just being there to support them cause I know what the role is and I don't want to forget where I come from and just letting them know we're here for them.

Gary: 25:02 You're relatively young, I would assume in your position. Um, do you ever feel like people try and take advantage of that?

Kerrie: 25:09 No, cause I'm very vocal, um, in a positive way is, like I said, I don't forget where I come from. And so when, you know, someone makes a snide comment about an athletic administrator or coach is one, wait a minute. Let's, let's look at what the role of an AD is now versus when you are an office. Um, no I don't. Um, and maybe it's because I'm very visible or positive. Um, I haven't, um, you know, in anything, any position I've been in, luckily we've had very much support from everyone,

Gary: 25:41 You have represented us, well at Roncalli speaking of, we like to see ya at our games and our contest. And it's always nice to know that I'm somebody as a assistant commissioner is a friend of ours. I was say, when you're traveling around the state, um, does Roncalli come up? Do people know that you're a Roncalli alum? Do you let that be known? Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

Kerrie: 26:05 Oh yeah. I let everyone know. I'm pretty sure everyone does know. Um, but if, you know, someone's makes a snide comment about private schools or charter schools, I'm the first one to tell me your opinion. Give me your facts that you're, you're stating, um, so it's new people, you know, can make the comment others just know. I respect it very much. Um, but no, it's, you know, especially with the department of education changing with open enrollment, it's, I think that that kind of the private schools recruiting is kind of gone wayside. So, but no, I make it known. I'm very proud and just appreciative that I, I came from Roncalli,

Gary: 26:42 well not only the, uh, open enrollment, but um, for so long the CYO was such a great feeder system and it still is for, um, all of the Catholic schools. But now you have big corporations that have similar feeders, schools, um, you know, Brownsburg and center Grove and you know, all the suburban schools. Um, I think they always probably did at some point in time, but now it's, it's more, um, centralized, I guess, into what Catholic schools have been doing for a long, long time. Um, just kind of backing up a little bit, uh, being a student at st Jude and this goes way back,

um, and talk a little bit about the CYO because teaching kids how to be good sports and, um, that's a big part of the CYO mission. So is there any part of that with the IHSAA that you are out there promoting?

Kerrie: 27:36 Yeah, we have really good relationship with Mr. Scifres at the CYO and I know a couple of us have gone down there and been presenters or you know, kind of helping him with his transition. Um, but you know, it's, there's such good coaches in place and it's exciting to play for. You know, I, the biggest thing I think I was more proud about, um, when coming to Roncalli is, you know, your public schools, they have one high or one middle school or maybe two, um, depending on the size or they've already selected their shortstop or their quarterback. Whereas here you're transitioning. How many South deanery kids are coming to that first summer conditioning workout, right? And you have nine quarterbacks and you somehow quickly have to be on a month mesh to a team. Um, so I've always, that's something I always share and I, you know, had an email and I copied, uh, Mr. Weisenbach on defending Roncalli and private schools is they're very unique and it's something that should be treasures. How the transition that we have to learn as athletes coming into a high school is not only you're trying to figure yourself out, but you got to mesh, you know, you've played against one another and now you have to be one strong unit,

Speaker 2: 28:45 Five years. I, I kidded you, uh, earlier about being the assistant commissioner and taking that, um, part of your title off and becoming commissioner. What do you think the future holds? What are the challenges in high school sports that you're going to have to address? And then, you know, that's the whole, the big picture. But you personally, what do you think the future holds?

Kerrie: 29:09 I really think, um, we're to the point we need to start looking at emerging sports. Um, you know, we've flirted with having boys volleyball. I would love to have boys volleyball on, um, but we can't obviously with title nine, we need to bring on another girl's sport. But I think we need to have some department of emerging sports, um, you know, reach out to bowling. Um, we gotta start reaching out to different kids. You know, kids are specializing, they're doing different hobbies and we need, we're here for them. So being creative in our strategic plan for the athletes and whatever they're needing or wanting to do, we need to get onboard.

Gary: 29:49 Football is not part of your responsibility, but there's lots of challenges in football with participation levels and concussion issues and so on and so forth. Um, maybe this isn't your expertise, but where do you see that changing or do you see that?

Kerrie: 30:04 Yeah, just like soccer. It had its highs and then it slows and now it's back up. Football unfortunately looking at projections, I don't think it's going to get there for a very long time, which is kind of disappointing in the fact that this is probably the safest the sport has ever been. Um, you know, our coach association in our state is doing a phenomenal job in making it a safe sport. Um, and I think we're there. It's just, I think really it, it's in our youth programs, you know, it's a lot of, sorry to say it, fathers out there that are reliving, you know, back in the day and not there for the right reasons. And it's, it starts there and I know youth USA football out there working on it and doing coaches education, but that's really where it starts. But for till that changes, I think we are in a state of issue with, with football.

Gary: 30:56 Oh, um, you've been in a position five years. Like I said, do you have a, a proud moment to this point that you're, uh, you look back on and you say, you know what, we did a good job there.

Kerrie: 31:05 At the IHSAA? the day we announced moving the state finals to Purdue and that was for softball, state finals. Um, you know, when I played, we were at cherry tree and complex at Carmel, um, which I went last year to sectional. It's completely different. Um, but then, you know, when I was an athletic Director at Boone Grove and we were at Ben Davis for the state finals and was there for two years and they did a phenomenal job, but it just didn't feel like a safe finals. Um, and you know, you look around every team sport was either a proficient professional or collegiate venue except for softball. And so I just asked commissioner Cox if I could have free reigns to just tour the state and asked some universities, would they be interested in the cost? Um, went to IU beautiful, complex. Um, but we'd already had a relationship with them and you know, for track, right. And went to Purdue, new administration there. So it was like, yes, please get me in the door. Um, and it, it has been wonderful. It was a matter of whatever you need. We're there and they



have exceeded our expectations. I'm to the point, I can't believe I'm announcing it. We are going to two days for softball state finals. I haven't announced that yet.

Kerrie: 32:19 Um, it's, our attendance has grown that we need to go. And you know, college venues aren't made for large crowds because how many during the cold cause there he on the cold part of the spring so they don't need that much seating. Um, and we have the great fan support, um, brand new facility. Yeah. So it's, it is beautiful and that's just been able to bring it for our student athletes, our coaching staff. It's been wonderful.

Gary: 32:44 Well it's easy to get to. They just put a new uh, intersection there at Cherry lane and 231 which you may or may not be aware of because a, we go up there for football games and what, we're going to go to another break and we'll be back with Kerrie Schludecker in just a minute.

Break: 33:01 The Rebel Five is sponsored by Steve's flowers and gifts for the best and freshest flowers in Indianapolis and surrounding areas. Steve's flowers, and gifts, have exactly what you're looking for. For your next special occasion. Call Steve's flowers at 800-742-9359.

Gary: 33:20 We're back with Kerrie Schludecker on the Rebel Five podcast. Kerrie, thanks for being here today. We appreciate you taking some time out and sharing some of your, uh, some of your career with us. We're going to talk a little bit more about Roncalli. So maybe one of your Roncalli special connections. Do you have a good story or a, maybe something that you've learned along the way as a Roncalli connection?

Kerrie: 33:56 I would have to say connection would be coach Jean Kesterson. Okay. That's an interesting yes. Um, very, um, she, long time coach at cathedral successful coach played against turn volleyball, uh, freshman, sophomore year, young to me, she was mean. Jean scared of her, very intimidated. And here I am taking my role with IHSA, and the own facilitating volleyball program. She's right down the street. Um, and it's been a pleasant surprise. Um, very good resource. Uh, you know, very educated, obviously on the sport. Um, but a great resource for coaches. Um, informative. I learned a lot about the officiating component, um, you know, from the coaches standpoint. Um, and now she, since she's retired, she is the president of our volleyball coaches association in which she chaired into changing it from the Indiana. Um, girls, coaches association and built it strong enough to be on its own. Um, they no longer need to be under the umbrella for protection. And she is just a tremendous resource, not only for myself but for coaches. Um, they, she runs a clinic and what she has hundreds of coaches coming and she gets representation from the American coaches, volleyball coaches association, um, other successful coaches. But just being around her now, you know, she's a sweetie. Um, but it's been a pleasant surprise and very fortunate to have her.

Gary: 35:25 That will be a surprise to a lot of our listeners because Jean was the face of their program and always a, a tough match no matter what. But many of our listeners won't know that she was a Roncalli alum. She graduated in 1971 from Roncalli, who was the St. Jude Raider and a Southsider. So obviously very well respected throughout the state. And, um, so that's a great, uh, connection to Roncalli. That will surprise some people, I'm sure. What are some advice that you've received in, in your career that maybe stuck with you, that maybe you look at each day or when you're dealing with people? Anything.

Kerrie: 36:08 Just always remember you come from, um, and you know, I think with my family and having been here is don't ever forget the leadership value of appreciating others. And I believe having gone through Roncalli, um, having supportive staff and coaches, I think that's kind of the reason why I was successful is not only being visible, um, but appreciating others and you know, you get buy in and you get support and you get positive results.

Gary: 36:38 You touched on this earlier, you filled out the bio sheet for this. This is what you said. I'm very appreciative of the opportunity my parents afforded me to attend. Roncalli prepared me for college and life. Talk a little bit about that.

Kerrie: 36:53 Um, you know, tuition, you know, they could have sent my brother and I to a public school, um, and they sacrificed a lot of their luxuries in which they're enjoying now with the horse racing. Um, but they put life on hold for my brother and I and invested in our education. And, um, I don't know where I would be if I didn't, hadn't gone

to Roncalli and you know, st Jude. Um, cause I learned a great deal about myself. Um, and it, this just, I'm not kidding being around, you know, Mrs. Miles and mr Crosley, um, coach Wantz coach K , all of that. Mr Niewedde. Um, they prepared me, you know, college was easy, um, you know, is a matter of studying, but I knew how to do it and um, got support from my professors because I was there cause I worked hard. Like I did at Roncalli.

Kerrie: 37:42 Um, but you know, Mrs. Miles and that red pin on that paper, she said it was a sign of love. Um, but it's because of her, um, you know, writing papers in college, you know, professors like, you know, really appreciate taking the interest in your, in your work. It's like, let's expected, um, you know, Mr Crosley, I had the opportunity to have him at st Jude and, and his transition to Roncalli , you know, and just how excited he is, um, which made you not want to disappoint them and you, I wanted to be that for other students and they're the reasons why, you know, along with my parents, I was successful.

Gary: 38:20 Earlier in the episode, you talked about your grandma and I know she obviously was a big influence on your life, so she has since passed. You talk a little bit about your grandma and why she was in so port, so important to you.

Kerrie: 38:34 know, she never drove and I don't know if any of my friends knew that. Um, so she'd find some way to come to the games and honestly, she suffered from Alzheimer's. Um, so my brother and I's schedule athletic schedules. We kept her going, you know, she had to think about what to look forward to, um, how to get there, whether it be taxi cab or my brother or my me picking her up, um, you know, or my mom getting her there. Um, but really it was a compliment to my teammates. You know, they called her grandma Schlu. They gave her that. It kept her going. Um, you know, she, we made, she made sure we all had enough seeds and sunflower seeds and gum. Um, so a coach pageant never was out of range sunflower seeds. Um, but she's, she was everything. I mean, she was there for, you know, every game when we would, when she wanted to celebrate, she take us out to eat. Um, so it was always afterwards where we eating. So just having her there, you know, looking out, going to position either would be third short and seeing her and left field was pretty special.

Gary: 39:40 Good. That's a good memories. I can imagine. Ah, this is the Rebel Five podcast, so it's time to throw out the Rebel Five questions. All right. Favorite time or place when you have run into a Roncalli person?

Kerrie: 39:54 I'll say Brian Richmond, um, classmate of mine. We were at a golf outing recently and it was Indiana farm Bureau, which is a big sponsor with, for the IHSAA and he's representative for them. And we saw each other at our putting contest and he actually sank the putt.

Gary: 40:11 What do you wish you could tell your younger self?

Kerrie: 40:14 Enjoy it. You know, there was some rough times, um, personally and you know, in the academic scene, um, it just enjoy it. Um, don't have to have an answer for everything. Just relax. Very much. Worry about everything

Gary: 40:32 and that might go along with his last questions. Any a life advice,

Kerrie: 40:36 don't take it so serious. Um, everything happens for a reason. Um, that's how you kind of get out of the lows is try to find the positive. Um, like I said, there were some personal things but also, um, trying to find a job and why am I, you know, North in [inaudible] you don't have to have any answer, just find the positive in it and you'll enjoy it wherever it takes you to. You can look back and just say, I remember that feeling.

Gary: 41:02 Yeah. One last thing. Well actually two, we didn't really talk necessarily about, um, highs and lows, but you have a, um, a setback overcome.

Kerrie: 41:14 I don't want to get in the personal thing, but I was up North, um, and just graduated with my master's degree and you know, thinking I got a Master's Degree, I can apply for everywhere and I'm going to get a job. Right. Not the case as a nice reality check. Um, so here I am in an area I, you know, all my friends had from my master's

degree and really wanting to be successful. Now find my why. Um, and you know, I'm 24 years old, uh, working at an orchard, dipping caramel apples and being a second grade and teachers aid just to pay rent and interning still at Valpo high school, um, you know, is their ticket manager and just trying to put, build up the resume, coaching junior varsity softball. Um, again thinking I have a master's degree and my bigger than this and it was a nice reality check is you're, you're paving your way. Just keep working through it. Something will happen and that's when Marquette came in, but it was an nice checkpoint as to you gotta work for it. Yeah.

Gary: 42:17 Well, we want to thank you for being here on the Rebel Five podcast, having worked for the IHSAA as the assistant commissioner and you're out all over the state and you're representing the commissioner's office, but you're also representing Roncalli in a big way. And, um, I know that whenever we see you on our campus, we, we are happy about that because, um, you do represent us so well. So thank you very much. Appreciate everything you do for all the kids in the state and um, come back and see us early and often we'll do, I'll be on the 20, the 27th for soccer or football, football, homecoming. Very good. And uh, we'll see you then and go rebels. Okay.

Kerrie: 43:00 Thank you very much.

Gary: 43:03 I'm Gary Armbruster, and thanks for joining us today for this episode of the Rebel Five podcast. To find out more information about the podcast, please visit [50.roncalli.org/podcast.php](http://50.roncalli.org/podcast.php). Again, thanks so much for joining us today, and until next time. We'll find a head.