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FORT LAUDERDALE

St. Thomas Aquinas High is on national honor roll

St. Thomas Aquinas High School in Fort Lauderdale has been recognized as one of the 50 top Catholic high schools in the nation.

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After 47 years as an educator, Tina Jones now has another reason to smile.

Her school, St. Thomas Aquinas High in Fort Lauderdale, has been recognized as one of the nation's top 50 Catholic high schools -- the only one in Broward to receive that designation.

"I am happy, excited and proud of the honor," said Jones, who has worked at St. Thomas as a teacher and administrator for 28 years, including the last five as principal. "The kids here are really good. To be recognized as one of the top 50 in the country is certainly a credit to the teachers, students, administration and parents here at St. Thomas."

The National Catholic High School Honor Roll of Grand Rapids, Mich., invited all 1,300 Catholic high schools in the country to apply for inclusion in the Honor Roll by completing three surveys.

More than 250 schools participated.

The agency computed the overall rankings by averaging the school scores on three main criteria: academic excellence, Catholic identity and civic education.

Jones said St. Thomas has an exemplary program of academics, spiritual growth and extracurricular activities.

Maria Pierson of Coral Springs, who has a ninth-grader and a 10th-grader at the school, agreed.

"St. Thomas has an incredible reputation for academic excellence," said Pierson, adding that she made the right choice when she enrolled her kids there.

"This honor raises the school to a new level of excellence," she said. "As a parent, it shows me that the school lives up to its ability to provide and create a really great academic environment. It also has the Catholic background, and that is very important."

St. Thomas Aquinas is a Roman Catholic, coed, college preparatory school for grades 9 to 12.

The campus is at 2801 SW 12th St., on a 20-acre site in Fort Lauderdale.

"St. Thomas is exceptionally proud of its capacity to provide a superior Catholic education to the families of South Florida," supervising Principal Monsignor Vincent T. Kelly said. "It is our desire to continue this service in forming responsible Catholic Christian leaders through the participation of our administrators, faculty and parents."