JOSEPH MCGEEHIN '98

WHITE HOUSE FELLOW

WASHINGTON, DC

As a White House Fellow you were placed in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR). What can you share about the work you do?

To provide some background: the Fellowship was created by President Johnson in 1964 on the premise that "a genuinely free society cannot be a spectator society." It provides firsthand experience in the process of governing to a small group from a variety of backgrounds (16 in our case) with the goals of promoting service and developing public leadership. I feel extraordinarily fortunate to be a part of the program and to be placed at USTR. My work focuses on our domestic and international economic engagement, from relationship-building with foreign governments to negotiation and enforcement of other countries' obligations to us under various agreements. Given the attention trade has received by both the outgoing and incoming administrations, there has been no shortage of work or learning!

How did you come to be a White House Fellow?

I had known about the program since college and had always hoped to apply. The process was intense; it began with a written application that required significant thought about what I hope to accomplish in life and why I considered the Fellowship a necessary part of that development. From the written submissions, approximately 100 people advanced to 8 regional panels, where we underwent a day and a half of evaluation. Thirty people then proceeded to the national Selection Weekend, which is held in Washington, DC with the President's Commission on White House Fellows, a group of appointees charged with interviewing and selecting each class. After two and a half days with the Commission, 16 of us were selected for this year's class. I began drafting my application in September 2015 and learned of my appointment in June 2016 (special thanks to my wife, Lauren, for being my editor- and interviewer-in-chief).

What do you remember most about your years here at Holy Child?

The two things I remember most about Holy Child are the people and community. Some of the most formative relationships I've had with teachers were at Holy Child: Mrs. Cassidy in second grade, Mr. Algeo in eighth, and Mrs. McCloskey in math. They pushed me to think critically, to ask questions, and taught me that learning would be a lifelong process. All of this was complemented by a community that encouraged students to be respectful and appreciative of each other.

What is your favorite Holy Child memory?

I ran for a touchdown against Waldron Mercy in eighth grade; my brothers say the time had to be measured in days rather than seconds. Aside from that, my favorite memories are Mrs. McReynolds regularly putting aside a stack of books for me to take home from the library. I'm in her debt for making me such a reader.

> "Holy Child taught me **to think**, **to write**, and **to have confidence** that my opinion mattered."

What did you learn at Holy Child that contributed to your professional success?

Appreciating that learning is a lifelong process has been quite helpful along the way because it's made me more intellectually curious than the alternative. To the extent that's not developed early I think it can be difficult to do later in life. I also return frequently to the motto of "Actions Not Words," which is how I pattern my leadership style. ✣