

Saint Mary's College of California

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Saint Mary's Magazine

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Spring 2020

### Saint Mary's Magazine - Spring 2020

Saint Mary's College of California

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# SAINT MARY'S



SPRING 2020

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CCIE advances pathways to equity and inclusion.

# GAELS UNITE TO HELP STUDENTS

**PRESIDENT'S EMERGENCY FUND ASSISTS  
STUDENTS IMPACTED BY COVID-19**



— WELCOME —

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Dive into Saint Mary's social media at  
[stmarys-ca.edu/getsocial](http://stmarys-ca.edu/getsocial).

## Welcome



“I have faith in this great institution’s ability to forge ahead resiliently and continue our Lasallian, Catholic mission of adapting and responding to the evolving academic needs of our talented students.”

We are in uncharted waters as a result of the global pandemic. At times like this, we must unite as Gaels for the well-being of our students, which is why the President’s Emergency Fund was created. Initiated in 2008 during the financial crisis, this critical resource provides urgent, financial relief for SMC students who have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 public health crisis.

Contributions to the fund will directly impact our students who are challenged financially, have limited access to resources to support distance learning, or face other hardships. I encourage the entire SMC community to join together to assist Gaels in need by making a gift to the President’s Emergency Fund.

As we address the serious concerns around us, we must acknowledge and remember our achievements, too, as a distinctive and nearly 160-year-old Lasallian, Catholic, and liberal arts institution of higher education. They serve as affirmations of our faith-inspired educational mission and are inspirational reminders of the ongoing pursuit of academic excellence at Saint Mary’s.

Our spring issue underscores many remarkable accomplishments, most notably the completion of the College’s tremendously successful Comprehensive Campaign. Defining the Future: *The Campaign for Saint Mary’s* concluded on Dec. 31, 2019, exceeding its audacious \$125 million fund-raising goal by nearly \$11 million and investing philanthropic revenue in academic excellence; student scholarships; our Lasallian, Catholic mission; College operations; and several capital projects.

We also recognize the scholarly work of talented faculty, including Education Professor Peter Alter, who is collaborating on an \$8 million teacher training initiative; World Languages and Cultures Professor Helga Lenart-Cheng, whose research illuminates the plight of refugees in Europe; and Biology Professor James Pesavento, who examines how algae can reduce greenhouse gases. Additionally, we spotlight the College Committee on Inclusive Excellence and the leadership of Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs and Senior Diversity Officer Kathy Littles.

Saint Mary’s has served as an academic beacon in the West for 157 years. While there may be challenges in confronting this global health disaster, I have faith in this great institution’s ability to forge ahead resiliently and continue our Lasallian, Catholic mission of adapting and responding to the evolving academic needs of our talented students. Yes, these are extraordinary times, but I find strength and solace in knowing that we will support one another and get through this difficult time together.

In the spirit of De La Salle,

Sincerely,  
James A. Donahue  
President





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In the wake of the COVID-19 global pandemic, which ultimately upended higher education throughout the nation, Saint Mary's has taken decisive measures to ensure the academic continuity of learning and instruction for students and faculty. In mid-March, the College suspended in-classroom instruction through the end of the academic school year and implemented online distance learning for all students.

With heightened expediency, the College's leadership team and Board of Trustees put measures in place to address the aforementioned challenges, which included implementing the President's Emergency Fund to provide assistance to students facing financial hardship as a result of the pandemic.

"This has been a difficult time for all of us but especially for our students. It has been disruptive to suddenly shift from

face-to-face classes with friends, classmates, and professors, to online learning, as well as adapt to the other changes that were implemented in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the state of California," said President James Donahue. "The faculty and staff at Saint Mary's have been putting forth a remarkable effort to support our students and their education."

In 2008, the President's Emergency Fund (PEF) was created by former President Brother Ronald Gallagher, FSC, '69 in response to the financial crisis occurring at that time to provide support to students facing the impact of the crisis. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the PEF is available to students in need. The PEF is a giving opportunity campaign that grows through donations, expanding the opportunity to provide support for more students in need. "This giving

opportunity was shared with the SMC alumni community, seeded with gifts from members of the Board of Trustees, and with full support of the President's Cabinet. To date, we've raised more than \$85,000, and new gifts continue to be received daily," said Carolyn Otis Catanzaro, interim vice president for Advancement.

"We don't want any student to have their educational aspirations and goals interrupted due to financial challenges brought on as a result of COVID-19," said Margaret Kasimatis, provost and senior vice president for Academic Affairs. "We are committed to supporting our students and providing continuity in the delivery of our transformative education, and living our Lasallian, Catholic mission."

Gustavo DePaiva '22, a student in the 3+2 Engineering program, knows

# President's Emergency Fund Assists Students Impacted by COVID-19

With generous support from the Saint Mary's community, the College is helping students continue their education during this time of uncertainty.

firsthand how financial support can make a critical difference in a student's educational pursuits. "Receiving financial support from SMC has made it possible for me to not only attend but to remain in college without having crippling debt. It's the only reason I've been able to attend Saint Mary's at all, and it's been life changing." The PEF is a safety net for students like DePaiva who otherwise would have to leave the College due to unforeseen financial challenges resulting from emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Saint Mary's is extremely fortunate that there has been only one confirmed case of COVID-19 (at time of publication) among our campus community; however, the social, emotional, and financial impacts of the pandemic to the community still remain. For students experiencing finan-

cial challenges, the PEF is an opportunity to provide a buffer to ease the financial burden so they can continue their educational pathway at Saint Mary's.

Since March, the PEF has helped several students and will continue to be a resource throughout the COVID-19 crisis. Students qualify for the financial support by meeting the following eligibility criteria:

- Students must be currently enrolled as a degree-seeking, full-time or part-time undergraduate or graduate student at SMC.
- Students must be experiencing unexpected financial hardship resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak.

The PEF supports a variety of needs, including but not limited to:

- Emergency medical expenses
- Technology/equipment needed to ensure continuity of online learning
- Travel expenses
- Storage and relocation expenses
- Housing and living expenses
- Child-care expenses
- Health insurance
- Tuition and fees related to the fulfillment of payment plans for the spring 2020 semester
- Other financial needs arising from individual and/or special circumstances to be determined on a case-by-case basis

"The President's Emergency Fund is possible because of the heartfelt love and care that our alumni, parents, friends, staff, and faculty have for our students," said Donahue. "We unite as one Gael

community at times such as this, which is why the President's Emergency Fund is so essential."

In addition to the PEF, the College is responding in other ways to assist with challenges that have developed as a result of COVID-19. Several residence halls were being prepared to be offered to support first responders in need of accommodations, especially since most are unable to return to their homes while responding to the pandemic.

This is not the first time SMC has provided campus resources during times of crisis. During World War II, the Navy established four preflight academies in the United States and chose Saint Mary's as one of the locations because the College had the space and the necessary resources to run such an operation. Within six months, the population at Saint Mary's exponentially increased, and the campus was a fully functioning military training site.

In keeping with SMC's commitment to its Lasallian core principles, the College continues to take measures to support all students. "Even though our campus is quiet now, all of our offices, including student support staff, are available by phone, email, and virtual meetings," said Donahue. "I have faith that we will get through this together as a school and as a community."

Contributions to the President's Emergency Fund campaign are welcome anytime. Direct, matching, and challenge gifts are options for giving. Please call (925) 631-4509 for more information.

“The President's Emergency Fund is possible because of the heartfelt love and care that our alumni, parents, friends, staff, and faculty have for our students.”

—JAMES DONAHUE, PRESIDENT



# S

— SPOTLIGHT —

## SMC AWARDED \$300,000 GRANT TO SUPPORT WOMEN IN STEM MAJORS

Saint Mary's College of California has received a \$300,000 grant award from the Henry Luce Foundation through its Clare Boothe Luce (CBL) Program to support undergraduate scholarships for women in science. The CBL Scholars Program at Saint Mary's provides full scholarships for three years—for eight upper-division women majoring in science. The award is designed to honor women who are excelling in STEM fields where women are underrepresented, and to form cohorts of female scientists and scholars on the College campus.

Saint Mary's President James Donahue applauded the scholarship program and its important role in supporting women in STEM. "Saint Mary's College is honored to partner with the Henry Luce Foundation in supporting women in the sciences. This award ensures women studying at the College are afforded all the opportunities needed to be successful in their scientific pursuits."

Jessica Kintner, Physics professor and director of the CBL Program at Saint Mary's, shared that the Henry Luce Foundation values the contributions and excellent work of women in the School of Science. "I look forward to working with two new cohorts of women and sharing in how the scholarships impact their lives and our community of scientists and scholars." —*Kay Carney*



## Set for Success: Jolanda Sanchez Learned to Lead at Saint Mary's

Meet Jolanda Sanchez '19, a recent SEBA alumna who is pursuing a career as a tax associate with KPMG, one of the global big four accounting organizations. Sanchez, who is the first in her family to graduate from college, credits SMC's Lasallian commitment to helping first-generation college students realize their higher education dreams, and acknowledges that this changed her life.

"The High Potential (HP) Program was my biggest support. From the beginning with Summer Academic Institute for Leaders and Scholars (SAILS)—a summer bridging program that gives you an insight into college life before you start college—I knew I had people on my side. The mentors and leaders of HP make it their goal to help you succeed. They provided resources like tutoring and counseling, and if they couldn't help us, they would refer us to someone in the College that could."

Knowing that her HP "fam" had her back, Sanchez thrived both socially and

academically. She became involved in student life, performing with the Ballet Folklórico Guadalupano dance club. And while she first thought her major would be business administration with a concentration in marketing, her focus soon shifted to the art and science of accounting.

Reflecting on her academic journey, Sanchez encourages others who are first-generation college students to consider Saint Mary's. "I would tell them about the High Potential Program and all the help they provide to first-gen students. But I would also tell them about the well-rounded education they would get both overall and within their major. SMC is a small school where you get to enjoy the relationships you build with classmates and professors. Just because it's a small Catholic college doesn't mean it should be disregarded. There's a home for everyone at SMC." —*Michael McAlpin*

# National Science Foundation Award Expands School of Science MAPS Program

Five years ago, the School of Science launched the Mentored Access to Programs in Science (MAPS) program, which supported full-tuition scholarships and robust academic support and mentoring services for 24 academically talented but financially needy undergraduates enrolled in chemistry, biochemistry, physics, and mathematics. Funded by an initial National Science Foundation (NSF) grant award of \$613,477, MAPS has seen impressive success.

Four out of the four first-year students from the fall 2014 cohort graduated on time, and the program's subsequent cohorts are projected to do the same. Recognizing the success of MAPS and the inclusion of a new science summer bridge component to the program, last year, the NSF awarded Saint Mary's a second S-STEM award of \$999,514 to help push the innovative initiative even further.

In addition to generous resources from the College, the 2019 version of MAPS provides for full-tuition scholarships for another 24 students, supporting three cohorts of eight students in the classes of 2023, '24, and '25. It also funds the innovative Summer Early Research Immersion Experience (SERIE) program, which introduces new MAPS scholars to the academic rigors of science studies and research.

In August 2019, first-year MAPS students participating in SERIE worked with SOS professors in contextual math coursework—such as math in the context of chemistry or biology—and conducted initial biology classes to become familiar with scientific calculations and lab processes. To promote peer support and academic success, MAPS students are housed in a Science Living Learning Community guided by the program's director, Mathematics Professor Chris Jones. —*Michael McAlpin*

*First-year students Jessica Pham, Johnny Caceres, and Joseph Garrett conduct scientific research in the MAPS program.*







### THE BEATIFICATION OF BROTHER JAMES MILLER, FSC

At the age of 37, Brother James Miller, FSC, was assassinated in 1982 as a result of his efforts on behalf of indigenous students in Huehuetenango, Guatemala. In 2018, the Vatican announced that Pope Francis approved a decree recognizing that Brother James died as a martyr, and he was beatified on Dec. 7, 2019, at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception in Huehuetenango. The beatification of Brother James was a first for a De La Salle Christian Brother from the United States.

In the 1970s, Brother James taught among the poor in Nicaragua, which was involved in a long civil war. In 1981 he was sent to teach at a secondary school in Huehuetenango and an education center where indigenous Mayans studied agriculture. Guatemala was also in a civil war, and the military forced students into service, which Brother James spoke out against. On Feb. 13, 1982, three gunmen approached Brother James from behind and fired repeatedly, ending his life.

Saint Mary's Brother Bernard "Bernie" LoCoco, FSC, knew Miller: "I think he represents the strength of the charism of De La Salle. Brother James wanted to work with the poor, and he was aware that he might be in danger. I think he represents what we're all called to be in living the life of a Christian Brother fully." —Michael McAlpin

## Saint Mary's, University of Kansas Partner on \$8 Million Education Grant

Researchers at Saint Mary's Kalmanovitz School of Education (KSOE) and the University of Kansas (KU) have been awarded an \$8 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to expand a program recognized for boosting student engagement. Known as the Class-Wide Function-Related Intervention Teams (CW-FIT) program, the classroom management initiative has proved effective in helping students focus on class material; reducing disruptive behavior; and allowing teachers more time to boost student achievement. KSOE will receive \$1.4 million from the grant to establish a training center at the College to expand the program nationally.

KU and Saint Mary's researchers will work with nearly 10,000 students in grades three through five in schools in Kansas, Missouri, and California. CW-FIT training will help teachers reinforce positive behaviors in students, increase the time students spend on their class assignments, and improve learning.

In the Bay Area, the project will be implemented in classrooms in the Mt.

Diablo Unified School District and the Vallejo City Unified School District. KSOE Associate Professor of Special Education Peter Alter will lead the College's CW-FIT training center.

"We're excited to train district personnel to implement the CW-FIT program," said Alter, who also chairs KSOE's Teacher Education Department. "It has the potential to positively impact teachers and students in area schools as well as to strengthen our partnerships in local districts." —Michael McAlpin



KSOE Associate Professor of Special Education Peter Alter will lead the College's CW-FIT training center.

## PROF. LYSLEY TENORIO REIMAGINES THE IMMIGRANT'S JOURNEY

Saint Mary's award-winning English Professor Lysley Tenorio's first novel, *The Son of Good Fortune*, out this July from Ecco, explores the dreams of a young, undocumented Filipino teen and his mother, a one-time Filipina B-movie action star—and a secret that keeps them always on guard. "We are TNT, *tago ng tago*," she told him, "hiding and hiding." Young Excel and his girlfriend head for a decrepit town called Hello City, where Excel can determine who he wants to be. Humorous yet heartbreaking, Tenorio's novel challenges familial bonds against the backdrop of an unwelcome America, questioning the meaning of "outsider." Last year, the short story "Felix Starro" from Tenorio's earlier collection, *Monstress*, was adapted into a musical off Broadway. He has received a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship, a Whiting Award, a Stegner fellowship, the Edmund White Award, and the Rome Prize from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

—Linda Lenhoff



*Saint Mary's students  
are always ready to  
welcome new Gaels.*

## SMC Welcomes Notre Dame de Namur Students

Saint Mary's has joined with Notre Dame de Namur University (NDNU) in a new transfer agreement that provides currently enrolled NDNU students with a clear and affordable pathway to complete their degrees at Saint Mary's.

Economic challenges have prevented NDNU from fulfilling its educational mission. However, the university's partnership with Saint Mary's ensures excellent academic opportunities and rewarding pathways for NDNU students.

"This is a student-centered transfer program that will assist Notre Dame de Namur students in transitioning to Saint Mary's in a very straightforward process," said Saint Mary's President James Donahue. "The collaboration allows them to continue their academic studies without interruption and stay on track to achieve their higher education goals."

As of mid-April, 74 NDNU students have been admitted to Saint Mary's. One of those new transfer students is San Francisco resident Sam Pastol '22, who said that while he was a bit disappointed with the situation at NDNU, he is looking forward to a fresh start at Saint Mary's. "I feel like, at the end of the day, I'm very excited to start this new journey."

Pastol also observed that even though other Bay Area institutions of higher education were options for him as a transfer student, he was confident that SMC was the right fit for him. "I was searching all these other universities, but Saint Mary's was definitely the one closest to my expectations, and it had the program that I was interested in, too." A 20-year-old rising junior, Pastol wants to prepare for a career as a physical therapist and will major in Kinesiology when he joins Saint Mary's in the fall.

—Michael McAlpin



## STUDENT VOTING AT SAINT MARY'S SEES SIGNIFICANT RISE

Saint Mary's received good news in a recent study about its student voter turnout. Student voting on campus jumped from a rate of 20 percent in 2014 to a rate of nearly 50 percent in 2018, a significant increase. The results are especially impressive when compared to the Average Institutional Voting Rate (AIVR) among campuses nationwide, which is 39.1 percent.

The All IN Campus Democracy Challenge recognizes campuses committed to improving democratic engagement and student voting turnout. Saint Mary's numbers are part of the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement conducted by the Institute for Democracy & Higher Education at Tufts University.

"We are proud that our efforts to improve student voting in last year's election were so successful, far surpassing the national average," said Politics Professor Stephen Woolpert. "Even though we had 188 fewer eligible voters than in 2014, the number of students who voted in 2018 increased by 1,037." —Sophie Cipolla '20



## SMC Museum Exhibit Celebrates Works by Women

*Feminizing Permanence*, which opened at the Saint Mary's College Museum of Art (MoA) in February, presents 40 artworks from 40 women artists whose creations are part of the museum's permanent collection. Both historic and contemporary, these works collectively speak to the underrepresentation of women artists in museums' permanent collections nationwide.

"*Feminizing Permanence* celebrates women artists included in the MoA's permanent collection despite a structure that has historically marginalized female artists. Moreover, the exhibition creates a space for dialogue and considers how this conversation has impacted and can impact our museum," said Curator April Bojorquez, who organized the exhibit with curatorial assistant Kate Perdue '20, in collaboration with Visiting Professor of Art Hossein Khosrowjah and students from the fall 2019 Issues in Modern Art course. Artists represented include Alice Brown Chittenden, April Funcke, Dody Weston Thompson, Elaine de Kooning, and Elizabeth Emerson Keith.

—Linda Lenhoff



# A New Fine Arts Open Learning Community

Saint Mary's graduate MFA classes in Creative Writing and Dance are now open for all to enroll in to cultivate their creativity. The opportunities are a result of the College's new Fine Arts Community Courses initiative. More than an extension program, the new open enrollment program provides lifelong learners, recent graduates, and working adults who are seeking to hone their artistic craft with access to schedule-friendly MFA-level courses.

"It's a great opportunity for both working and aspiring writers, dancers, and dance theater technicians to learn from our remarkable faculty without being enrolled in full-time MFA programs," said Sara Mumolo, associate director of the College's MFA in Creative Writing Program, who also co-directs the Fine Arts Community Courses effort and teaches open enrollment classes on writing. "It's a chance for targeted study with professors who are masters of these artistic disciplines. We cover real-world aspects of the profession, including finding an agent, and the diverse publishing pathways that are open to writers."

Those looking to continue studying at the barre can take courses in advanced dance performance and choreography. "Saint Mary's graduate Dance Program has a remarkable reputation for teaching the theory and practice of movement, with concentrations in creative practice and design and production for dance," said Roberta Chavez, program director for Dance and Theatre Community Courses.

Students who choose to pursue graduate studies at Saint Mary's can receive full credit for the community classes. For more information, visit [stmarys-ca.edu/arts](http://stmarys-ca.edu/arts). —*Michael McAlpin*

*Anders Engebretsen '20 (right), Valentin Spomer '21, and Filippo Zattarin '21 have been honored by the WCC.*



## MEN'S SOCCER | TRIO OF GAELS NAMED TO WCC ALL-ACADEMIC TEAM

The West Coast Conference (WCC) announced its 2019 All-Academic Team in December, naming three Gaels for their solid academic achievements: Valentin Spomer '21, Anders Engebretsen '20, and Filippo Zattarin '21.

At the conclusion of each athletic season, the WCC selects an all-academic squad for each WCC-sponsored sport. A student-athlete must maintain at least a 3.20 cumulative grade point average while also being a significant contributor to his/her team to be considered.

Spomer, a Physics major, recorded a 3.93 GPA. Economics major Engebretsen has a 3.76 GPA, while Zattarin, also an Economics major, holds a 3.73 GPA.

Saint Mary's had the most honorees of any program on the team, and Spomer had the third-highest GPA of the 10 members. This honor marks Engebretsen's second straight year on the All-Academic Team. Saint Mary's also had five honorable mentions considered for the team: Jeremiah Michael '20, James Person '22, Joseph Restani '20, Sebastian Schacht '22, and Philippe Van der Lof '22. —*Ryan Reggiani*

*Undergrad Holly Welpott '22 and MFA candidate Atalya Yeshayahu '20 rehearse with dance teacher Elizebeth Randall Rains, MFA.*



Head coach Paul Thomas greets new recruit Ayla Zawadzki.



# Saint Mary's College, University Credit Union Announce Partnership

During a press conference on campus last December, Saint Mary's President James Donahue and Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics Mike Matoso introduced University Credit Union (UCU) as the first comprehensive partner for Saint Mary's College to be integrated within both athletics and the campus.

"University Credit Union and Saint Mary's College have aligned values when it comes to making a difference in the lives of students and inspiring innovation," said Donahue. "This partnership marks a tremendous step forward for the College and will benefit the entire campus community."

The partnership includes support of current and new academic initiatives, including funding multiple scholarships, sponsored student research opportunities, internships, and experiential and service learning opportunities for both undergraduate and graduate students. SMC's student body also will have the opportunity to manage a small allocation

of University Credit Union's investment portfolio as part of a class curriculum.

"To our knowledge, this is a first for a campus partnership, allowing students to manage a portion of an outside entity's portfolio," said UCU President David Tuyó. He added, "The investment management opportunity is really unique and will provide Saint Mary's students with real-world experience in financial services strategies."

The partnership includes additional funding for the Gael Food Pantry, several campus ATMs, and a UCU branch for SMC. Also in the works are an affinity alumni debit/credit card and more financial services benefits for College employees.

The partnership provides for naming and sponsorship opportunities with Saint Mary's Athletics Department, including the rebranded University Credit Union Pavilion, home to Saint Mary's men's basketball, women's basketball, and women's volleyball. —Michael McAlpin

## EIGHT-YEAR-OLD SIGNS WITH WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

On Tuesday, Feb. 4, eight-year-old Ayla Zawadzki signed her Letter of Intent during a press conference in University Credit Union Pavilion in front of a host of local media, new teammates, staff, and student-athletes from Saint Mary's Athletics. Ayla and Saint Mary's united through Team IMPACT, a national non-profit that connects children facing serious or chronic illnesses with college athletic teams.

Ayla is a native of Moraga who has been diagnosed with type 1 diabetes along with celiac disease. "We find that Ayla has the ability to impact people in a lot of different ways. We are very proud of her for not only attacking the issues that she has but also staying strong to who she is," her father, Mark, said.

This is the third partnership for Saint Mary's with Team IMPACT and the first with the women's basketball team. "It's extremely important that both communities work together to create positive influences on our community," head coach Paul Thomas said during the press conference.

"I am happy to be here," Ayla began at the ceremony. "I want to thank my coaches and my teammates. I'm glad that I joined them. It gives me a great opportunity to make new friends."

"We like to bring into our program people with positive attitudes, people that are fun to be around," said coach Thomas, turning to Ayla. "And you really fit that bill, and we want to make sure that you continue to do that."

As an official team member, Ayla will attend Gaels practices, games, team dinners, events, and more surrounding the program. —Ryan Reggiani



Saint Mary's President James Donahue with UCU President David Tuyó.





Men's soccer goalkeeper Nicholas Lapinid '21 worked with Grateful Gatherings.

## Student-Athletes Give Back to the Community

Saint Mary's Athletics Department recently teamed up with Grateful Gatherings, a local nonprofit, to provide a way to give back to the community. Over a four-month span, the department began fundraising, collecting donations, and preparing to upgrade a foster home for six young female teens in Pittsburg, Calif.

"We wanted to partner with a group that shares the same core values that Saint Mary's College shares and provides support for those in need," said Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics Mike Matoso.

Saint Mary's had over 40 student-athletes from various teams on hand, providing the labor to plant new trees and flowers, and build patio furniture in the backyard. A second group worked to refurbish the home's interior.

"I'm glad we were able to do this," said cross-country's Abigail Mitchell '21. "It's always good to give back. I hope they feel peaceful in their new home."

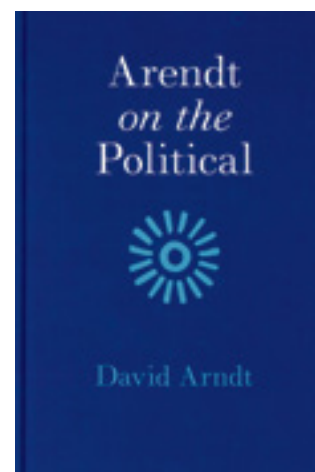
"It felt good giving back, knowing all the work was for good people who have been going through hardships, and knowing we are making their lives better," said soccer's Younes Dayekh '21.

—Ryan Reggiani

### INTEGRAL TUTOR DAVID ARNDT'S NEW BOOK EXAMINES INFLUENTIAL PHILOSOPHER

Integral Program Tutor and Collegiate Seminar Instructor David Arndt recently published a book on two basic questions of political theory: What is politics? And what view of politics is most conducive to a strong and just republic? *Arendt on the Political* (Cambridge, 2019) thinks through these questions in dialogue with the political theorist Hannah Arendt. "Arendt was able to work out an original concept of the political precisely because she had a deep understanding of the traditions of Western political thought," Arndt said. "She approached those traditions much as our students do—both to understand the limits they impose on our thinking and to retrieve the authentic insights they still offer us today."

Read an interview with David Arndt at [cambridgeblog.org/2019/11/what-is-politics-interview-with-david-arndt-arendt-on-the-political](https://cambridgeblog.org/2019/11/what-is-politics-interview-with-david-arndt-arendt-on-the-political). —Linda Lenhoff





S

## KSOE'S TAMARA SPENCER RECEIVES EARLY LITERACY EDUCATOR AWARD

Kalmanovitz School of Education (KSOE) Associate Dean and Associate Professor Tamara Spencer was honored with a 2019 Early Literacy Educator of the Year Award from the Early Childhood Assembly of the National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE). Spencer received the award last November during the NCTE Annual Convention in Baltimore, where she was acknowledged as a master educator who has demonstrated innovative, rich language and literacy pedagogy in the field of early childhood teacher preparation.

"To be nominated and receive this is an honor, particularly because NCTE is known for being both a serious research body and for making an intentional and purposeful investment in the professional practice of educators," said Spencer. "The Early Childhood Assembly of the NCTE is particularly concerned with language and literacy issues in early childhood education. Its work focuses on the complexity of literacy learning and development, and within my work, I focus on very young children's first experiences with formal literacy instruction."

The many nominations for Spencer's NCTE award cited her stellar scholarship, vision, empathy, and advocacy in the field of teacher education. Recommendations from peers noted her important contributions to centering issues of equity in the education of young children, especially children of color; demonstrating strong and public commitments to educating all children in culturally and linguistically equitable ways; and having a significant impact on how faculty collectively approach social justice issues in teacher preparation.

—Michael McAlpin



## DISTINCTIONS

2020

Western Regional Universities

—U.S. News & World Report: Best Colleges

TOP 5

#15

NEW: No. 15 of Top 25 Colleges With Bachelor's in Liberal Arts Programs

—GradReports

BEST COLLEGES

SAINT MARY'S AMONG BEST 385 COLLEGES IN U.S.

—PRINCETON REVIEW

TOP 8%

in the United States for highest earning potential in 2019 —payscale.com

COLLEGES THAT CHANGE LIVES

DISTINCTION IN 2020 —CTCL.org

TOP 25

Best Value in the Western Regional Universities

—U.S. News & World Report: Best Colleges

TOP 25%

of U.S. Colleges and Universities —Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education

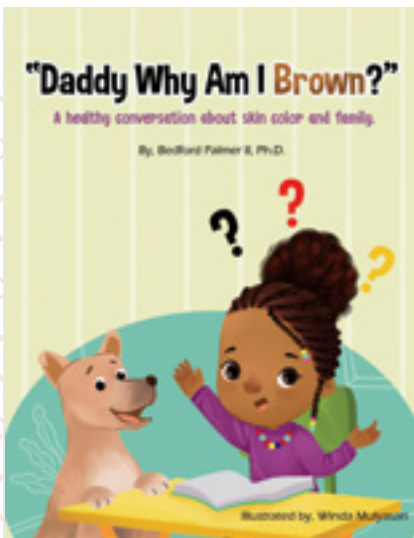
Sean Wright (center),  
mayor of Antioch,  
Calif., engages with  
SEBA students.



## ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR BEDFORD PALMER PENS CHILDREN'S BOOK ON RACE AND ETHNICITY

After having a discussion with his wife (Jenée Palmer, director of the High Potential Program) about how Black and Brown children can be harmed when teachers and students are not mindful in their discussion of skin color, Associate Professor of Counseling in the KSOE Bedford Palmer decided to write *"Daddy, Why Am I Brown?"* a children's book about having healthy conversations about your skin, your family, and your heritage. "Teachers and parents sometimes have a hard time explaining things like why people have different skin colors and what that difference means," Palmer said. "As a licensed psychologist and professor who focuses on social justice and culture, I thought that I might be able to help provide some language and context that would allow them to better navigate these conversations."

—Linda Lenhoff



# SEBA Students Pitch Plans to Help Antioch

Saint Mary's School of Economics and Business Administration (SEBA) is once again taking to task important research and study to provide recommended solutions to a business challenge faced by a neighboring municipality. The city of Antioch—the second largest city in Contra Costa County—and the Antioch Chamber of Commerce joined forces with Saint Mary's Center for the Regional Economy to seek ways to improve an economically depressed commercial corridor in the city.

Somersville, a small retail area in Antioch, faces the challenges of urban sprawl and an economy that favors large metropolitan areas. As a result, many retail establishments have shuttered their doors.

MBA students enrolled in MGT352 (Social Entrepreneurship From a Global Perspective) were eager to work on phase one of the project (September–December 2019) to identify relevant trends in the Somersville Road commercial area, prepare an analysis, and propose preliminary strategies for improvements. Phase two (February–May 2020) is being conducted by a group of Business Administration seniors as part of their Capstone project. They will build upon the work of phase one by delving deeper into data collection and research to help develop the final strategic plan. Two additional teams composed of junior and senior students from the Justice, Community & Leadership Program are tasked with finding the best practices that were used in cities comparable to Antioch.

Professor Berna Aksu, director of the center, is the lead investigator on the project. Under the direction of Associate Professor Marco Aponte-Moreno, the graduate students were grouped into five teams. Each team developed a mix of ideas that was presented to leadership and stakeholders from Antioch on Dec. 11. The proposals included developing a senior living community; taking advantage of opportunity zones to entice businesses to Antioch; working with the local community college to establish a skilled trades program; creating a farmer's market that would attract in-house and out of town vendors; and issuing a tax general obligation bond for redevelopment projects in specified areas. "The presentations were exceptional, and I am so proud of the high level of focus, ingenuity, research, and thought that went into the development of the proposals," said Aksu.

"With this project, our hope is to create opportunities for our residents to work, eat, and shop here. We are ripe for the opportunity," said Richard Pagano, CEO of the Antioch Chamber of Commerce. Ray Waters, general manager for the Somersville Town Center, added, "This is a great opportunity for Antioch to thrive. I think it is a step in the right direction to revitalize this area."

In May 2020, one of the five presentations will be selected as the winning proposal during a virtual public event. The top three teams will receive a monetary award from funds raised by the Chamber of Commerce. —Kay Carney

# R

— ROUNDTABLE —

## Cynthia Cooke St. Ange

Saint Mary's Title IX Investigator

"I Know Who I Am" by Sinach is my walk-up song. First of all, it's got an upbeat, inspirational, and empowering sound, and the lyrics speak to the foundation of who I am. There are many dimensions to my background and experience that some people find contradictory; however, when I walk firm in the knowledge of who and what God says I am, I bring that confidence to whatever I do, and I know that I am working from a position of God's grace and power to serve with fairness, equity, integrity, and inclusiveness.



## Brother David L. Caretti, FSC, '99, EdD

Assistant Director, Liturgy & Faith Formation

As an educator in Lasallian Catholic high schools for the past 18 years, I've found the title of Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'" has been a continual theme of my life's commitment to accompanying young people. Young people have important, deep questions about existence, identity, and faith that need to be taken seriously, heard by all of us, and offered a response that lets them know that God loves and accepts them for exactly who they are. I learned here at the College during my own days as a student that doubt and questions are intimate and essential parts of our relationship with God, rather than barriers to it.



## Ashley Rose '11

Digital Designer, Office of College Communications

My theme song would be a mash-up of "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" and the Indiana Jones music. My job, as a designer, requires me to be ready to jump in and work on a totally new project on a daily basis. I like to approach each new project as an adventure, with unforeseeable surprises. Like an adventure, each project has its exciting high moments and difficult challenges. Approaching the whole process as a fun new adventure makes navigating the low moments easier and more enjoyable.



## Swetta Abeyta, MLIS

SMC Systems and Digital Initiatives Librarian

My walk-up song would be the popular Punjabi bhangra remix "Mundian to Bach Ke" by Punjabi MC. My biggest prerequisite for walk-up music is that the song has to make the audience want to dance. I've been a dancer my entire life, and good music is such an essential part of dance. I want to get everyone on their feet, moving and grooving. I also like that this song represents my desi roots. What makes the song so great is its mixture of Western music (especially the wonderful bass from the theme of *Knight Rider*) with traditional Punjabi music. Get up and dance!



## Christopher Jones, PhD

Associate Professor and Chair of SMC's Mathematics and Computer Science Department

I would love to say it was something cool and upbeat; my son loves "Chosen One" by Valley of Wolves as his pump-up music. However, the truth probably came out in my classes. The students often have a sense of foreboding entering a math class, so to play with that, a couple of times on the first day of the semester I have hidden a Bluetooth speaker in the classroom, and when I walk in I play "The Imperial March" from *Star Wars*.



## THE TOPIC

# What Is Your Walk-up Song?



**Daniel Araujo Vazquez '20***Lasallian Peer Minister, Immersions and Social Justice*

My walk-up song would be Vicente Fernández's "El Rey." I listen to this song before and after any test. It pumps me up, and it makes me feel confident. I also listen to it whenever I am feeling down. Sometimes, I even sing to it in my car! If I were walking up to bat to "El Rey," I would be saying, "I feel good; I play good" over and over again until I am stepping on the home plate.

**Lloyd V. Schine III '98, MA '04***Director of Alumni Relations, De La Salle High School*

My baseball walk-up song would be "Happy" by Pharrell Williams. I am generally a very happy person: I am a half-full type of guy much of the time. Even in those half-empty times, I always have the ability to look toward the next fun party, family event, or trip that brings my half-empty to well over half-full. I typically have a smile on my face, and I laugh a lot. Besides having a contagious laugh, as many people do tell me, it makes me feel good, and I think it helps me to keep that glass half-full.

**Sharon Lee, MM***Adjunct Associate Professor, Assistant Director of Chamber Singers/Glee Club*

As a classical professional pianist, I "walk up" onto stage often. My walk-up music is unique: It changes! Depending on what I am about to perform, I select a piece to meditate on. I get into my car, set my GPS to my concert destination, then select the specific "it" piece from the program I plan to perform, and listen to it on repeat. With the music blaring full blast in the car, I wrap my mind, body, and soul into the piece. This helps me envision myself performing it.

**Annaliese Martinez '21***Intercultural Development Leader, Intercultural Center*

My walk-up song is "Sunflower" by Vampire Weekend, featuring Steve Lacy. This feel-good song by one of my favorite all-time bands sends a message about standing up for what you believe in and not conforming to systems and beliefs that are wrong and unjust. The song talks about a sunflower that stands in a garden, "taking up that space—no power can compel me." I want to tell the world as I "walk up" that I am willing to stand up for myself and my beliefs in equality and justice.

**Ron Salazar***Financial Aid Counselor*

I start to ponder what a walk-up song represents: It is a song that gets your adrenaline pumping! A song by Led Zeppelin, AC/DC, or Lynyrd Skynyrd? No, Elton John. The first three bands have songs that get my adrenaline pumping, but Elton's music speaks to more of who I am. "Holiday Inn" is about what it's like waiting around all day for you and your band to play music that night. It starts out mellow, then crescendoes into a mandolin solo, piano, and strings rock and roll assault. Awesome.



Baseball players are known for their walk-up songs, the music that plays as they approach first base or when pitchers take to the mound. Politicians also warm up the crowds with their walk-up tunes: President Barack Obama often took the stage to Stevie Wonder's "Signed, Sealed, Delivered," while Hillary Clinton pumped up the crowd with Rachel Platten's "Fight Song." And President George W. Bush rocked out to Van Halen's "Right Now." What is your walk-up music? What do you want to let people know about you, right from the start? Or if you use a song to inspire yourself before a challenge, what is it, and what does it say to you?





# DEFINING THE FUTURE:

## THE CAMPAIGN FOR SAINT MARY'S

### A Message From the President

Two years ago, we launched the public phase of Defining the Future: *The Campaign for Saint Mary's* with an audacious goal: to raise \$125 million to invest in academic excellence, support student scholarships, strengthen our Lasallian Catholic mission, and fund operations.

This goal far exceeded that of any previous fundraising campaign at the College. We knew the outcome would define the College's future possibilities. Success wasn't guaranteed, but we had faith in you: faith that our alumni and friends, students and parents, and faculty and staff would rise to meet the challenge.

By the Campaign's end on Dec. 31, 2019, nearly 30,000 donors—a participation record—had contributed almost \$11 million more than our goal. This historic accomplishment positions Saint Mary's College to become the leading Catholic comprehensive university in the Western United States. It reaffirms the value of our core traditions—Catholic, Lasallian, and liberal arts—while it supports academic transformations



that respond to the evolving needs of our students. For years to come, students will enter this College to find their voices and their vocations, and leave prepared for a lifetime of service to family, community, nation, and world.

On the following pages, we celebrate the promise of our students, the success of key initiatives, and the commitment of our donors. I am proud of the tremendous outpouring of support for Saint Mary's College, and I am deeply thankful to each of you for the Campaign's success.

Sincerely,  
President James A. Donahue





# MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

NEARLY 30,000 DONORS  
CONTRIBUTED

\$136 MILLION RAISED



*The artist's rendering of the new Library & Innovation Center envisions a three-story, 58,000-square-foot building that will serve as a vibrant hub for teaching, research, and scholarly achievement.*



## Engaging New Donors: The Library & Innovation Center

During the Campaign, 21,364 donors, or 71 percent, gave to support Saint Mary's for the first time, helping propel the Campaign past the finish line. Among them were John A. and Susan Sobrato, influential philanthropists who have pledged to donate 100 percent of their wealth to charity.

A pioneering real estate developer, John helped shape Silicon Valley by building office campuses for prominent technology firms. Concerned about rising inequality in the region, he and Susan made it a priority to support education and career training. Some of their most generous gifts have benefited Catholic institutions.

Saint Mary's captured their interest with its plans for the new Library & Innovation Center, the biggest capital project ever on campus. The Sobratos pledged \$5 million for the center, and with their gift, the College aims to begin construction in early 2023.

Located at the western corner of Chapel Loop, the three-story, 58,000-square-foot building will serve as a vibrant hub for teaching, research, and scholarly achievement. Here, the campus community will access print and digital library resources; and an Innovation Lab with a wide array of technologies, classrooms, study nooks, exhibition galleries, and more.

Margaret Kasimatis, provost and senior vice president for Academic Affairs, leads planning efforts for the center. "Our talented, diverse students and our world-class faculty deserve a facility that inspires innovation, empowers scholarship and discovery, and facilitates connection," she said. "Our Library & Innovation Center will bring this vision to light."





## Investing in Academic Excellence

\$27.5 million raised to attract and retain leading-edge faculty; support student-faculty collaboration; and provide the facilities, tools, and resources to prepare students for meaningful lives.

### INSPIRATION AND IMPACT

What motivated donors to give so generously to Defining the Future: *The Campaign for Saint Mary's*? Nancy Gracey Richardson, a friend of the College who has made it one of her top philanthropic causes, said: "I am impressed by the personalized education students receive in all areas of critical thinking."

A retired patent agent in chemistry and biotechnology, Richardson's connection with Saint Mary's began with watching Gaels athletic games. It deepened when she was invited to observe science students present findings from their summer research. "It was riveting—especially seeing the students interact with faculty. They had so much camaraderie," she recalled. The event inspired Richardson to volunteer with the School of Science (SOS) advisory board, which she has led as chair for five years.

The SOS exemplifies the deep impact of the Campaign on academic departments across campus. Donors like Richardson responded enthusiastically to the school's call to fund specific needs. As a result of their support, more students can receive larger awards for faculty-advised summer research. Students and professors have access to newly acquired sophisticated equipment for lab work and research, including a nuclear

magnetic resonance spectroscopy system for studying the structure of molecules. Academic excellence is recognized and rewarded with scholarships such as the prestigious Clare Boothe Luce Scholars Program, which helps build supportive cohorts of women science majors in fields where they are underrepresented.

At the Kalmanovitz School of Education, an anonymous donor has endowed a Professorship in Reading Recovery and Early Literacy Intervention. Dean Carol Ann Gittens explained, "This professorship underscores the school's equity and social justice mission by ensuring continued prominence as a national leader in this highly specialized field, which focuses on preparing teachers to help struggling beginning readers and writers." The school is one of only 17 Reading Recovery University Training Centers in North America.

While serving on the advisory board of the School of Economics and Business Administration, Sirisha Dasu became so inspired by the school's Women's Leadership Program that she enlisted her employer, VMware, to be a corporate sponsor. Dasu also arranged for seven women from VMware to come to campus for the program. "They were so energized and positively motivated. It helped them develop self-confidence, solve day-to-day business challenges, and build networks geared toward growth," Dasu said.

"I hope the Beck Family Field Study Fund kick-starts the career of the next great anthropologist," said Malerie Beck '18, who designed her family's Campaign gift to the School of Liberal Arts. The fund enables Anthropology majors to attend summer field schools, then make a presentation on campus as part of the Liberal Arts Bridge professional development program. "I had a wonderful experience at Saint Mary's thanks to my Anthropology professors. I wanted to give something back."

Assistant Professor of Chemistry Mark Lingwood works with former Saint Mary's students Brooke Vallier '17 (center) and Katharine Maurey '18.





*Marielle Gardner '19 relied on scholarships to fund her education and achieve her academic goals. She will begin a PhD program in the fall.*



## Supporting Student Scholarships

**\$32 million raised to increase need- and merit-based scholarships, improve access to education, and attract a diverse student body.**

### BEYOND THE DREAM

"The level of attention and support that faculty and staff provide our students is profound. Small classes and personalized education have the greatest impact on student learning, but they're also expensive," observed William Mullen, vice provost of Enrollment and Communications. More than 90 percent of undergraduates depend on financial aid to afford a Saint Mary's education.

The scholarship funds raised during the Campaign make an impact in multiple ways. "They enable us to attract a diverse student body, including high-need students who could not attend without aid and high-performing students who receive merit scholarship offers from multiple colleges," Mullen said. "Scholarships help to reduce loans in students' financial aid packages, keeping debt at a reasonable level and making repayment manageable after graduation."

Marielle Gardner '19 was a high-performing student who qualified for financial aid. She said: "Scholarships allowed me to focus on my studies and do the things that were important to me." This included participating on the debate team while completing the demanding Integral Program. Now, she aims to become a math professor and will enter a PhD program in the fall. "When I walked into Saint Mary's, I didn't even know what research was," she recalled. "But I found professors who believed in me and pushed me. They showed me I could go beyond what I had dreamed of."

Mullen added, "Saint Mary's has been recognized by *U.S. News & World Report*, *The Princeton Review*, Payscale, and

others for the transformative education and strong upward mobility we provide our students. Because of scholarship gifts, we can continue to change lives for years to come."

As a senior at Cristo Rey San Jose High School, Isabel Martinez '22 was set to enroll at UC Merced, when a counselor told her about a new scholarship just for Cristo Rey alumni attending Saint Mary's established by former College trustees. She toured campus and was impressed by the support available for first-generation students like her. "This scholarship tells me people believe in me," said Martinez, now a Psychology major. "It's like these donors are cheering me on."

Dr. Louis Geissberger '53 aimed to donate \$1 million to Saint Mary's with gifts like the Geissberger Family Basketball Endowed Scholarship Fund. But when he died in 2018, he hadn't quite reached his goal. His four sons, all alumni, added to the scholarship to complete his vision. "My dad attributed his success to Saint Mary's," said John Geissberger '92. "I hope the scholarship will help students achieve their dreams like my dad was able to do."

Students in the Integral Program dedicate all four years of college to rigorous study of a classic liberal arts curriculum, reading works by Western history's greatest thinkers and engaging in intense seminar discussions. The program's demands make it difficult for students to support themselves by working, so financial aid is critical. A scholarship grant from the Charles and Marie Robertson Foundation helps keep Integral students with unmet financial needs in the program.





## Strengthening Mission, Funding Operations

\$33.6 million raised to strengthen the College's Lasallian Catholic mission and to provide unrestricted support that benefits operations across campus.



*CILSA MICAH fellow  
Ryan Villegas '18 in  
the Alameda Point  
Collaborative.*

### RESOURCES FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

For more than 150 years, Saint Mary's College has remained faithful to the principles of its longtime stewards, the Lasallian Christian Brothers. In keeping with its commitments to social justice and inclusive community, the Catholic Institute for Lasallian Social Action (CILSA) connects students with organizations where they work for positive social change and gain leadership skills. CILSA also assists faculty with developing courses that incorporate community-based service or research.

Donors to *Defining the Future: The Campaign for Saint Mary's* have provided CILSA with the resources to expand these community engagement opportunities. In the 2018–19 academic year, 935 students put in a total of 58,655 hours of community service through CILSA internships, fellowships, and course-work. Students learned from real-world experiences like helping preschool children develop literacy skills, running job-training programs for high school students, and advocating for changes in public policy.

Ryan Villegas '18, who worked with formerly homeless youth in Alameda and in a preschool in Oakland, said CILSA taught him “how to find my vocation.... I found that the dynamic of mentorship was something that I loved, and it was something that I was totally new to.” Today, he teaches middle school students in Arizona.

CILSA experiences have also led alumni to found nonprofit organizations, become public interest attorneys, and volunteer with AmeriCorps. The Campaign's success ensures that future students will graduate with the passion and the skills to transform society.

### A FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE

In addition to an unwavering mission, the Christian Brothers brought to Saint Mary's a focus on effective management of institutional operations. This legacy is reflected in Campaign gifts that support the full range of today's operations.

“Our donors are our partners in ensuring Saint Mary's has both a solid financial foundation and the flexibility to respond to student needs with new services and educational approaches,” said Kevin Nagle, chairperson of the College's Board of Trustees.

Unrestricted gifts are especially important in this regard. They help pay the salaries of the College's 900 faculty and staff—attracting talented personnel who are dedicated to student success—and fund maintenance of the 420-acre campus, the activities of 16 athletic teams, and countless other basic needs.

Unrestricted gifts also enable the College to seize opportunities or resolve problems as they arise. They helped the Saint Mary's Chamber Singers and Glee Club travel to the World Choir Games in South Africa in 2018, where they won silver medals. And they covered the expenses of students serving as congressional interns in Washington, D.C.

“Unrestricted gifts, whether large or small, are indispensable to everything we do,” Nagle said. “They're a big part of the reason our star is rising.” Today, Saint Mary's ranks in the Top Five Western Regional Universities, according to *U.S. News & World Report*, and among the Top 10 Percent Nationwide for the Earning Potential of Its Graduates.



*Saint Mary's Chamber Singers and Glee Club traveled to the World Choir Games in South Africa in 2018 and won silver medals. Left: soloist Lindsay Kathryn Ford '19.*



## DONATION ALLOCATIONS



1. UNRESTRICTED—\$21,847,193 2. RESTRICTED—\$26,498,888  
 3. CAPITAL—\$53,556,395 4. ENDOWMENT—\$29,975,784  
 5. GIK AND OTHER—\$4,014,179

### A MESSAGE FROM THE CAMPAIGN CHAIR

Defining the Future: *The Campaign for Saint Mary's* has brought historic changes to campus. We can point to physical transformations, like the new Joseph L. Alioto Recreation Center and renovations in UCU Pavilion. In total, donors provided \$53.5 million for capital projects. We can also cite improvements in our financial outlook, such as the \$29.9 million that donors added to the College's endowment.

There's another Campaign outcome that makes me especially proud: We have significantly elevated the culture of philanthropy at Saint Mary's, embracing it throughout our community. I am confident that this culture will remain a source of strength as the College moves forward toward new goals, such as building the Library & Innovation Center.

When I was a student at Saint Mary's, the Christian Brothers who were my professors always took personal interest in ensuring my success. More than 50 years later, students say the same thing about today's faculty. This personalized attention, modeled by the Brothers, forges lasting connections between alumni and the College. It's one of the College's greatest assets, the source of our culture of philanthropy and our dedication to the Lasallian mission.

I am forever grateful for the Catholic liberal arts education that Saint Mary's provides, and I am especially thankful to all who have given back to this incredible institution.

Sincerely,  
 Garth Flint '63

## BY THE NUMBERS



29,993

DONORS FROM 50 STATES,  
 38 COUNTRIES, AND 9  
 DECADES OF ALUMNI

\$93.3  
 million



RAISED FOR COLLEGE  
 OPERATIONS, SCHOLARSHIPS,  
 ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND  
 LASALLIAN MISSION



\$53.5  
 million

RAISED FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS

\$32  
 million



RAISED FOR SCHOLARSHIPS



\$29.4  
 million

RAISED TO SUPPORT GAEL  
 STUDENT-ATHLETES

\$25.9  
 million



RAISED THROUGH LEGACY GIFTS  
 AND INTENTIONS

# Biology Professor Jim Pesavento Receives NSF Grant

Pesavento endeavors to unlock the multifaceted benefits of algae.

Jim Pesavento, assistant professor of Biology, loves that green, murky, often smelly stuff known as algae. In fact, it's his passion. So much so that he was recently awarded close to a half million dollars to research and uncover new findings about algae and its utility in removing carbon dioxide from the air and creating biofuels. It isn't as simple as it sounds, and the science behind his research is exceptionally complex, which may be why only a handful of scientists have taken the deep dive into algae research.

"The organism I'm interested in is green algae. It's unicellular. The actual name of the organism is *Chlamydomonas reinhardtii*. It's a mouthful, I know," said Pesavento with a chuckle. By description, *Chlamydomonas reinhardtii* is a single-cell green alga about 10 micrometers in diameter that swims with two flagella. It has a cell wall made of hydroxyproline-rich glycoproteins, a large cup-shaped chloroplast, a large pyrenoid, and an eyespot that senses light. To his fellow scientists, this makes perfect sense. To the layperson...what?

"This is the model for all of the green algae that exists. It's genome sequenced, and it grows very quickly. It's also photosynthetic, which means that it can take light energy from the sun, carbon dioxide, and make its own food," said Pesavento. He added, "By doing that, you're taking carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere if you can grow the green algae and feed air through them to suck out the carbon dioxide. This organism and similar ones have been interestingly paired with fossil fuel-burning exhaust. The fossil fuel gets

combusted, energy is produced, carbon dioxide is made, and then the gas is put through hundreds of filters of these cells, which suck up the carbon dioxide before it can go out into the atmosphere."

Pesavento further explained that algae can also be considered a biofuel—a renewable energy source. Algae has the ability to make lipids, which are energy-rich fats that can be burned. He asserts that if algae can be grown and use carbon dioxide to make their own sugars and effectively burn them, thereby replenishing the carbon dioxide, the algae will suck up the carbon dioxide by keeping it sustainable and circular, so there's no net increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. "If I were to talk to someone about epigenetics, they will likely have no idea of how that relates to carbon dioxide sequestering and biofuels," said Pesavento. "But it's a super important question to ask and an important field to investigate."

The National Science Foundation (NSF) obviously believed that Pesavento was onto something. There was a high level of examination and scrutiny of his 15-page submission, which he prepared leveraging highly impactful collaborations with algae expert Jim Umen (Danforth Plant Science Center) and epigenetics expert Gary Karpen (Lawrence Berkeley National Lab and UC Berkeley). The details were hunted down after precise review by SMC Director of Office of Research Elizabeth Gallagher to ensure that the proposal was in compliance. After all was said and done, Pesavento received the news that he was awarded the Research Impact Grant of \$460,000 for four years.

Pesavento is stoked that the grant will profoundly benefit his biology and biochemistry students at Saint Mary's, in addition to underrepresented students interested in science at SMC and at nearby Los Medanos Community College, who will participate in his upper-division molecular biology course taught at SMC. "Apparently, the grant proposal review panel loved the part that included undergraduates in my project. I have a section that details my engagement with Los Medanos Community College, where science students will come and shadow my upper-division molecular classes," said Pesavento. "I'm a big believer in peer-to-peer teaching. When students hear from others who are within their age group, I think they're more receptive." He contends that when the Los Medanos students see upper-division students with so much knowledge, they can more easily envision themselves learning just as much or more when they become juniors and seniors.

The students from Los Medanos will come to Saint Mary's for approximately four weeks to shadow upper-division students and to see how science is taught and experienced at this level. "I'm going to transport them for free and feed them for free to ensure that they have a great experience without having to worry about food and transportation," said Pesavento. "If they choose to transfer to Saint Mary's after they've completed their two years at Los Medanos, that's great. It's about exposing them to a four-year college's molecular upper-division program and opening their eyes to the endless possibilities in science."





Assistant Professor Jim Pesavento (right) with students De'andranique Jones '22 (left) and Henna Shaghasi '21 (middle).

“I live for moments like this. Instead of asking for money from the limited funds available to send my students to these conferences and to have paid internships over the summer, I now have the resources from the grant to fund this.”

—ASSISTANT PROFESSOR JIM PESAVENTO

Pesavento has expanded research opportunities and off-campus learning experiences in his plan for his science students. Over the past few years, funding to provide opportunities for the students to attend conferences or to have paid internships has been limited; with the grant award, however, there are no limitations. “I live for moments like this. Instead of asking for money from the limited funds available to send my students to these conferences and to have paid internships over the summer, I now have the resources from the grant to fund this,” said Pesavento. “I can only imagine with this four years of funding what kind of student experiences they’re

going to have, and how it will create pathways of opportunities for them in the future.”

Pesavento has seen firsthand how having opportunities and exposure can impact a student’s life. He speaks proudly of Jada Walker ’18, who was almost defiant in defense of her plans to become an optometrist. Her hard work at Saint Mary’s paid off with research and conference opportunities that have prepared her for her current status as a PhD student at the University of Texas (UT). When Walker was a sophomore in Pesavento’s Biology 1 class, he noticed her meticulous lab notebook and stellar lab reports. He invited her to conduct research in his lab, which opened her eyes to the world of science during the next three years. “I had no idea, no clue what scientific research actually was. Participating in research that first summer of my junior year led to a whole new world,” Walker said.

Opportunities for Walker to participate in conferences, most notably where she was able to deliver a student presentation, paved the way for her to meet some of

the top scientists and members of the academy in the field of science. Walker caught the attention of Professor Jennifer Brodbelt, chair of UT’s Chemistry Department, who encouraged Walker to pursue a PhD. According to Pesavento, “Jada is a great example of how expanded opportunities and exposure can create an even greater outcome. The NSF grant will help open doors for even greater opportunities and promising futures for my students.”

With more money for Pesavento and his students to expand their algae research, and the opportunity for Pesavento to collaborate with the top scientists in the world to uncover more truths about the benefits of algae, efforts to remove carbon dioxide from the air to benefit the environment are even more plausible.

Pesavento has no qualms about achieving all of the goals stated in his winning proposal. “I’ve been very fortunate. I have great students, and I can’t speak highly enough about the collaborative environment and cohesive community here at Saint Mary’s.”



## Immigrant Stories: Who Holds the Microphone and Why?

**In her Fulbright research, Professor Helga Lenart-Cheng studies how societies use, misuse, and abuse immigrant storytelling.**

In January of 2018, Saint Mary's Associate Professor of World Languages and Cultures Helga Lenart-Cheng learned she had been awarded a prestigious Fulbright U.S. Scholar Award. This allowed her to spend six months at the University of Bordeaux Emile Durkheim Center of Research, studying the European refugee crisis and how the testimonies of refugees and migrants are currently being recorded in France, in particular at museums focusing on the experience of migration.

"The purpose of my Fulbright grant was to research archives of immigrant stories in France," said Lenart-Cheng. "I'm a comparatist by training, focusing mostly on the literary aspects and cultural history of autobiographical storytelling (diaries, blogs, memoirs, autobiographies across centuries and cultures).



“Immigrants’ personal stories promise a glimpse behind the headlines and a more humane way to connect to our new neighbors.”

—PROFESSOR HELGA LENART-CHENG

feature prominently in the media, and migration museums play a special role in this new type of story-activism,” Lenart-Cheng added. “In the last decade, the number of migration museums has multiplied all over the world.”

Lenart-Cheng is most interested in the political positioning of migration trauma, as reflected in each historical period’s different archiving practices. A key resource for her was the French National Museum for the History of Immigration in Paris and its story collection called The Gallery of Gifts.

Lenart-Cheng’s research focused on the following questions: “What does it mean to exhibit stories of immigrants in a public space reserved for objects considered of shared national value? What purpose do these stories serve beyond educating the host society about their new neighbors? What kind of recognition is implied in the celebration of immigrants’ stories? And to what extent can these stories expand the limits of hospitality and our notion of democracy?” Comparing the French collection to the Ellis Island Oral History Archive, she also studied the differences between American and French museological approaches.

Like other European Union countries, France has experienced an unparalleled flood of refugees and migrants over the past three years. More than 1 million people, most fleeing war and terror in Syria and other countries, have sought safe harbor in EU countries, with more than 300,000 settling in France.

Lenart-Cheng’s research under the Fulbright allowed her to temporarily shift gears from studying literature to examining psychological, ethical, and political

aspects of immigrants’ lives—through their stories. The research transcends literature because autobiographical storytelling is “more than a literary genre,” Lenart-Cheng said recently. “It’s a fundamental element of our lives. Even the most taciturn among us are constantly rehearsing, if only in our heads, stories about who we are. We are highlighting certain elements of our family’s and community’s story, suppressing others, telling stories about who we are and how we arrived here.”

“For the Fulbright work, I decided to write about how societies use, misuse, and abuse immigrant storytelling. These are political questions: Who initiates and funds these story collection projects? Who holds the microphone and why? Which immigrant groups’ stories are being collected today and whose stories were collected in the past? Where are these stories being preserved and who can access them? I’ve already been working on U.S. archives, and this time I wanted to explore French archives, and eventually compare them.”

Lenart-Cheng grew up in Hungary, where she studied French and German. She received her PhD in Comparative Literature from Harvard. A Saint Mary’s professor for more than 10 years, Lenart-Cheng is the co-author of the 2016 book *Lénárd Sándor: Világok vándora (Alexander Lenard: Wanderer of Worlds)*, and her scholarship has appeared in many books and academic journals, including *American Studies/Amerikastudien*, *Auto/Biography Studies*, *Biography*, *Cultural Politics*, *Hungarian Cultural Studies*, *New Literary History* and *St. John’s Humanities Review*.

This time, however, instead of analyzing immigrants’ stories from a literary perspective, I wanted to focus on their politico-ethical aspects.

“In recent years, personal stories have become a privileged means of immigrant rights activism on both sides of the Atlantic,” Lenart-Cheng continued. “According to activists, immigrants’ personal stories promise a glimpse behind the headlines and a more humane way to connect to our new neighbors.”

“Immigrants’ autobiographical stories



The Saint Mary's College Committee on Inclusive Excellence (CCIE) has been committed for more than 10 years to advancing the goal of achieving inclusive excellence at all levels of the College community. This ongoing effort is supported by the CCIE's mission to call upon students, faculty, administrators, and staff from different social, economic, and cultural backgrounds to come together to grow in knowledge, wisdom, and compassion to become active and effective global citizens.

Efforts such as the aforementioned occur in the most visible of places on campus, and in conference room meetings where strategies are mapped out and honest dialogue ensures that representation is fair and just. Some of the more outward-facing actions of the CCIE have been the notable and sometimes controversial guests that it has sponsored to speak at Saint Mary's: Ryan Coogler, award-winning director, producer, and screenwriter whose riveting movie *Fruitvale Station* tells the true story of an armed white police officer who kills a young unarmed black man; and Melissa Harris-Perry, award-winning political commentator, author, and host of the often confrontational *Melissa Harris-Perry Show* that aired for four years on MSNBC. Harris-Perry recently presented at Saint Mary's on "Representation: Power, Resistance, and Media in American Politics,"



during the College's 44 Days Honoring Black History co-sponsored by the CCIE.

The College leadership in collaboration with the CCIE advanced efforts to hire a full-time administrator with significant experience in diversity and inclusion. In 2019, Kathy Littles '94, PhD, joined the Saint Mary's community as the inaugural associate provost for Faculty Affairs and senior diversity officer. Part of Littles'

responsibilities include serving as co-chair of the CCIE along with Margaret Kasimatis, provost and senior vice president for Academic Affairs.

Littles shared that she is excited to return to her alma mater to deliver on her passion about the critical importance of diversity and inclusion. "I've always been very passionate about this work around diversity, equity, and social

## Embracing the Richness of Diversity at Saint Mary's

CCIE advances pathways to equity and inclusion.





*Kathy Littles '94, PhD, associate provost for Faculty Affairs and senior diversity officer (at right), listens to participants in SMC's 2020 Black Convocation.*

justice because I really do think it's at the core of everybody's struggle of what it means to be human, what it means to think beyond yourself, and what it means to be in community with other people," said Littles.

Her work takes her far beyond the dictionary definition of diversity and inclusion. It's an area that people hear a lot about, but don't necessarily understand all of the varying components and intricacies involved within this sector. "The term diversity and inclusion is tossed around a lot, and people in my industry call it diversity fatigue. But diversity to me is about differences and honoring differences. Differences of ideas, differences beyond the self that contribute to a rich, robust society conversation," said Littles. "Diversity is about understanding the differences of what it means to be human. Certainly, it is defined by our social categories: race, gender, age, and ideas as well. Bringing people to the table is one thing, but integrating ideas to have conversations where people feel

heard and are moved to act is the goal."

Part of Littles' job responsibility is faculty affairs. One of her goals is to recruit, support, and retain diverse faculty scholars at Saint Mary's and to do it in a meaningful way. "I think the retention of faculty is huge. It was brought to my attention that this is an aspect of the job that needs to be addressed, and one of the things that I can put in place is to have open communication, support collaborations with faculty to ensure that they stay, and to see that they are getting the support that they need to be outstanding teachers and scholars," said Littles.

Another goal that Littles plans to achieve aims to increase and enhance opportunities for faculty professional development and learning that is grounded in inclusive excellence, diversity, and equity. She will achieve this by providing support resources, workshops for faculty, and by offering ongoing support that will assist in their professional development both in and out of the classroom. "I want to foster or help create a campus culture that engages all of us in dialoguing around diversity,

**“Diversity is about understanding the differences of what it means to be human. Certainly, it is defined by our social categories: race, gender, age, and ideas as well.”**

—ASSOCIATE PROVOST FOR FACULTY AFFAIRS AND SENIOR DIVERSITY OFFICER KATHY LITTLES

equity, and inclusion issues. You can't move the needle without conversation, collaboration, and then action," said Littles.

Littles' work puts her in the position of being a three-way collaborator, and a leader and a partner with faculty. "I don't think I can work with faculty without having an ear to what the student needs are and what the staff needs are. I certainly have all three facets coming to see me, and I think they are wonderfully interconnected here at Saint Mary's," said Littles.

It's essential to talk about differences and change and equity, but if people aren't moved to act to address larger issues of social justice and social change, then it falls flat. Littles shared that diversity practitioners can help others to look at the multiplicity and pluralities of what it means to be human, and how those things are brought to the table in terms of recruitment, retention, conversation, voice, who has access, who doesn't have access, and more.

Littles' work as provost for Faculty Affairs and senior diversity officer provides her with the opportunity to work toward a vision of what Saint Mary's will have achieved with its diversity and inclusion efforts in five years. "In five years, Saint Mary's will be a model for inclusive excellence. Faculty development will have a model mentoring program for faculty throughout their career—this means mentoring and professional development for new, midcareer, and faculty approaching retirement. Chairs and directors will have the resources and support for their own professional development as leaders. We will have ongoing diversity, equity, and inclusion workshops, training and resources that include implicit bias training for all search committees. We will have a campus environment where everyone feels heard and engaged, and we'll have a core understanding and belief of the importance of diversity, equity, and social justice," affirmed Littles.



— ALUMNI —

# Saint Mary's Staff Has Impact at International Lasallian Alumni Conference

The seventh World Congress of the Association of Lasallian Alumni (UMAEL) was held in Minneapolis last November, with plenty of representation from Saint Mary's. The international assembly, which celebrated its 25th anniversary, met for the first time in the United States. Its theme, "Beyond the Borders: One Heart. One Commitment," highlighted global commonalities and goals, as well as leadership opportunities for Lasallian women.

"The real gift of this international association is that it is a coordinated effort to share and discuss the long-term priorities of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools to make Lasallian education available to the most vulnerable, and in turn, it inspires us all to bring our gifts to the table to support these priorities—locally and beyond our perceived borders," said Saint Mary's Director of the Mission and Ministry Center Karin McClelland '90, MA, in a recent interview. McClelland organized the Congress and served as the Lasallian

Region of North America's (RELAN) appointed representative this past year, and is the first woman to serve on the UMAEL executive committee.

Saint Mary's Senior Director of Alumni Engagement, Courtney Carmignani Lohmann '05, MA '07, was elected vice president of the UMAEL executive committee, the first woman to hold the office. "I'm really excited to be a part of this leadership team," said Carmignani Lohmann. "This is an exciting time for Lasallian schools in the United States, where many alumni are thinking globally about their identity with the Christian Brothers and how to partner together in the work of the mission throughout the world—in collaboration with our fellow international Lasallian institutions."

Yolanda Franco ML '18, who participated in the gathering, came away inspired. "What was most impactful about the UMAEL Congress was the *convivencia* (coexistence) of all participants despite the cultural and language

differences," she said. "Getting to know so many people from around the world who are committed to the Lasallian mission reminded me that Lasallian charism transcends any language, culture, and religion."

Brother David Caretti, FSC, '99, EdD, the newest member of the Mission and Ministry Center, directed the prayer services during the Congress. "The UMAEL experience was unique among my encounters with our Lasallian Family," he said. "For the first time in my years of ministry as a Brother, I was able to represent the Saint Mary's College community as not only an alumnus but also as a Brother. Without question, these are two major parts of my identity, and it was a privilege to share this with other Lasallian alumni from around the world whose lives have also been changed forever through their association with the De La Salle Brothers and Lasallian education. Through this experience, I realize that Saint Mary's has new opportunities to connect our alumni with the Brothers, the wider Lasallian Family, and the Lasallian mission for many years beyond those we spend on this campus. We now have creative avenues and possibilities to engage our own alumni in deeper ways to advance our mission worldwide."

Made up of more than 50 alumni associations and federations, UMAEL facilitates opportunities for global Lasallian networking and collaborating. This impressed SEAS Success Coach Hwa Seong "Christine" Oh, MA '05 & '16. "One of my most memorable events at the Congress was hearing the news that Emily Redfern '17, the first SMC alum in the newly established international Lasallian volunteer program for the Institute, is continuing her work serving those most vulnerable in Lebanon. She's proof that our Lasallian mission doesn't stop inspiring our students after graduation." —Michael McAlpin



Left to right: Hwa Seong "Christine" Oh, MA '05 & '16; Courtney Carmignani Lohmann '05, MA '07; Brother David Caretti, FSC, '99, EdD; Yolanda Franco ML '18; and Karin McClelland '90, MA.





Retired Communication  
Professor Edward  
Tywoniak '75, EdD,  
AFSC.

## Professor Edward Tywoniak Named Affiliate of the Brothers of the Christian Schools

Brother Robert Schieler, FSC, PhD, Superior General of the Christian Brothers Institute in Rome, approved the affiliation of retired Communication Professor Edward Tywoniak '75, EdD (now AFSC) to the worldwide Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Tywoniak, who recently retired following a 40-year career at Saint Mary's, has been one of the champions of the Brothers' educational mission throughout his career and in his many positions of faculty leadership.

"I've said for years that I have been formed professionally and personally by the guiding hands of the Christian Brothers—not just here at Saint Mary's College, but by all the Brothers I have been fortunate to meet around the world," Tywoniak said. "This incredible honor of affiliation is extremely profound for me because it not only formally acknowledges my decades-long work in support of the Brothers' educational mission, but also celebrates the deep friendship I have enjoyed with

the Brothers over the years, especially the members of the Alemany Community—truly my second home! I am very humbled by this honor, and continue to marvel at how truly fortunate I have been to call Saint Mary's 'home' for so many years and the Brothers my confrères!"

"Ed is widely known to the Brothers, nationally and internationally," said Brother Donald Johanson, Brother Visitor, District of San Francisco New Orleans. A faithful member of District Mission Assemblies, Tywoniak has received several campus awards recognizing "the Lasallian tenor of his own teaching and mentoring of students," Brother Donald said.

Brother Donald commented that during Tywoniak's sabbatical in 2015, he devoted his time and scholarship to an aboriginal school conducted by the Brothers in Balgo, Western Australia. "The study that emerged was something that he was able to share with the College as well as the Casa Generalizia in Rome,"

Brother Donald said.

Vice President of Mission Frances Sweeney '86, MA '08, PhD, echoes Brother Donald's sentiments. "This is a wonderful and well-deserved acknowledgment of Ed's many, many achievements and his philosophy toward vocation at Saint Mary's," Sweeney said. "And in reality, it is a formal acknowledgment of the fact that Ed has lived his life as a Lasallian, with a big heart, deep faith, and active commitment to transformative education.

"Some say he's been a 'Brother' since his undergraduate days here," Sweeney continued. "He certainly embodies the Lasallian ethos in his professional and personal life, as a scholar, a teacher, and a colleague, touching the hearts of all he meets.

"He lives Lasallian, simply put," Sweeney concluded.

The College will hold an affiliation celebration for Tywoniak in the fall. Many congratulations to one of Saint Mary's most beloved professors. —Linda Lenhoff

2020 Alumni Awards  
Class: Matthew  
Dellavedova '13; John  
Matsuo '84; Carrie  
Matsuo '87; Suzy  
Thomas, MA '97, PhD;  
and Mary Ann Gomez  
Orta MBA '02.



## Saint Mary's Presents the 2020 Distinguished Alumni Awards



Left: Suzy Thomas MA '97, PhD, and Frances Sweeney '86, MA Liberal Studies '08, PhD, share a hug.

Saint Mary's College of California's Alumni Association and Athletics Department honored seven deserving Gaels and friends with awards for outstanding service to the SMC community in a ceremony on Saturday, Feb. 15. Congratulations to our 2020 recipients and honorees!

Saint Mary's Alumnus of the Year, **Matthew Dellavedova '13**, is an Australian professional basketball player for the NBA's Cleveland Cavaliers. During his days at Saint Mary's, the Gaels made the NCAA tournament three times, and in his freshman year, went all the way to the Sweet 16.

Meritorious Service Award winner **Mary Ann Gomez Orta MBA '02** has been leading the Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute (CHLI) since 2011. Founded by members of Congress, the nonprofit organization fosters awareness of the diversity of thought, heritage, interests, and views of Americans of Hispanic and Portuguese descent.

The Signum Fidei Award is given to an alumnus/a for outstanding participation



Right: Matthew Dellavedova '13 and Odell Johnson '58.



in the goals of higher education. It could not be in better hands with **Carrie ('87) and John ('84) Matsuo**, who have dedicated their lives to the Lasallian mission of education and support of underserved communities. John has worked in education since his graduation from Saint Mary's in 1984 and has been a school administrator for more than 20 years in the Bay Area and Hillsboro, Ore. Carrie has served as president of the Parent Teacher Club and SunCreek Little League, where she amplified the engagement of under-represented youth and families.

Presented to a member of the faculty or staff who has demonstrated a personal commitment to the students of Saint Mary's above and beyond his/her employee responsibilities, this year's Saint John Baptist de La Salle Award goes to **Professor Suzy Thomas MA '97, PhD**. Thomas has taught at the College since 1998 and challenged hundreds of students to consider the multidimensional aspects involved with supporting the academic, career, and personal/social development of K-12 students; and to recognize issues of privilege, power, and institutionalized oppression that perpetuate inequities in education. In 2017 she was named School Counselor Educator of the Year.

Emerging Leader Award recipient **Jessica Binzoni '10** founded HOPE + FUTURE International, an organization based in Northern Iraq aimed at advancing hope in conflict zones by empowering displaced people to build a brighter future for themselves, their families, and their communities. She currently serves as the organization's executive director and lives in Northern Iraq.

The SMC Athletics Hall of Fame inductees represent the history and excellence of the College. Honored this year, **Lisa Alipaz** served as the head women's tennis coach at Saint Mary's from 1999 to 2017, leading the Gaels to a tremendous run of success that has netted her five West Coast Conference (WCC) Coach of the Year awards. She guided the Gaels to four straight NCAA Tournament appearances (a first in Saint Mary's history) in 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013, and after



*Left: Family of Jessica Binzoni '10: Frank, Lisa, and Nicholas Binzoni.*



*Right: Carrie Matsuo '87 (left) and Molly Murphy Burke '86.*

a one-year break, took them back to the postseason with an at-large berth in 2015.

Also inducted this year is the **2009–2010 men's basketball team**. The team put together what may be the most exciting run in program history when it reached the NCAA Tournament's Sweet 16. The Gaels entered the NCAA Tournament as a No. 10 seed and beat No. 7 seeded Richmond 80–71 for their first tournament win since 1959. They then

stunned the country when they defeated No. 2 seeded Villanova 75–69 to advance to their first-ever appearance in the Sweet 16. They finished with a then-program record 28 wins and ranked 19th in the nation.

Congratulations to all of our devoted award winners. Saint Mary's thanks and honors you. To read more about our amazing recipients, please go [stmarys-ca.edu/2020alumniawards](http://stmarys-ca.edu/2020alumniawards). —Linda Lenhoff



*Men's basketball Sweet 16 team.*

# Gael Trailblazer and Mobile Banking Pioneer Makes Giving Back a Priority

Kim Vogel '89, MBA, holds a bachelor's degree in Accounting from Saint Mary's and an MBA from Harvard Business School. Both have provided the perfect foundation on which to build an extraordinary career. Throughout her professional journey, she has taken being a member of the Gael community to heart and given back in myriad ways.

"By far my education at Saint Mary's was unequivocally instrumental to my success. Neither of my parents went to college. Saint Mary's was a perfect place to grow and learn in a safe environment. Starting off at Saint Mary's provided me with the foundation I needed to then succeed at Harvard. Those two experiences combined were transformative, and I see the value

of my education in my overall success. Saint Mary's serves other individuals and families like mine. This is why giving back to the Saint Mary's community is so important to me. I want others to have the opportunities that I had," explained Vogel.

As a serial entrepreneur, Vogel became an early executive at pioneering mobile banking and payments technology company mFoundry. She served as CFO for almost a decade. Vogel next co-founded BaseVenture in the Bay Area, which develops innovative solutions in the areas of financial reporting, data visualization, and process management.

"It all started with math. When I arrived at Saint Mary's I thought I wanted to be a math major. Then, I took Introduction to Accounting and Intermediate Accounting with Professor Stan White, and discovered I liked it. By junior year, I no longer wondered about what I wanted to pursue. It put me on a clear path," Vogel said.

Vogel was recently recognized as one of *San Francisco Business Times*' Most Influential Women of the Year in 2019. She advocates for women's leadership in the corporate sector and was a panelist at two Saint Mary's women's leadership events this past year. Vogel was also a professor in the MBA program and undergraduate School of Economics and Business Administration (SEBA), and served on the SEBA advisory board (2014–2017). She now serves on the Board of Trustees.

"I love serving on the Board at Saint Mary's as it keeps me in touch with those who are just beginning their careers and gives me an opportunity to inspire students to forge innovative careers, while also demonstrating that giving back is a way of life," Vogel said. —*Tamara Monosoff*



## MICHAEL URBINA '14 CREATES SPACE FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Michael Urbina '14 takes the Saint Mary's mantra Enter to Learn, Leave to Serve to soaring heights. As an executive recruiter for Silicon Valley-based tech company Box, Urbina uses his dual degree in Sociology and Women's Studies to seek out and give voice to underrepresented talent in the business world.

While at Saint Mary's, Urbina was deeply involved with the Women's Resource Center and the popular Latinx Cultural Nights. These experiences, coupled with Urbina's commitment to social justice and drive to create space for conversations about diversity and inclusion, have led him to do executive-level diversity work in the Bay Area. "At this point for me, it's just about giving back and helping others," he said.

In this spirit, Urbina has launched a podcast series called *¡Adelante, Juntos!* in which he highlights the experiences of Latinx senior executives to inspire others. "I was looking for a one-stop shop like this myself when I entered the workforce, and I couldn't find anything. This is my answer to that missing piece and my way of paying it forward," he said.

Ultimately, Urbina hopes to continue expanding possibilities for diversity at the senior level. "There are very few Latinos in positions of leadership in Silicon Valley," he said, "and if you don't have leaders who look like you, how can you serve a diverse customer base?" Urbina's work embodies the Gael spirit, and he emphasizes the value of his liberal arts degree in getting to where he is today.

"Saint Mary's has positioned me tremendously well for where I am now. I did not take a single business class in college—so as a feminist, as someone with a liberal arts background, I'm doing this," he said.

—*Sophie Cipolla '20*







## Bari A. Williams: Influencer on Diversity and Inclusion in Tech

Bari A. Williams MBA '03 is the perfect trifecta. She is VP of Legal, Business, and Policy Affairs at All Turtles; a start-up advisor in the tech industry; and a published author in the *New York Times*, *Wired*, *Fortune*, and *Fast Company*. Her one-two-three punch has resulted in her rapid ascent and success as an influencer on diversity and inclusion in the tech industry. She was also named as one of “Five Innovative Black Women in Tech to Watch Out For.”

By the time Williams completed her strategic educational path—BA from UC Berkeley; MBA from Saint Mary’s College; MA from UCLA; and JD from the University of California Hastings College of Law—she was already beginning to make waves, challenge the status quo, and penetrate the proverbial glass ceiling in the world of technology. “Saint Mary’s is actually the reason I chose to attend law school. I took a class in Business Law and it changed my life. I thoroughly enjoyed the class and the professor, and it ‘sealed the deal’ in my decision to attend law school to become a transactional attorney,” said Williams.

Williams believed that having the blend of law and business in her academic arsenal would serve her well as she anticipated the inherent challenges of being a black woman in the business marketplace.

Having an interest in the technology sector, her first goal was to penetrate the seemingly impenetrable walls of Facebook. Williams joined the legal team at Facebook and quickly ascended to become its senior counsel. She also launched its supplier diversity program to ensure that businesses of color were afforded the opportunity to become vendors and secure

contracts with Facebook. Williams then joined StubHub as the head of Business Operations Management for North America. “There are so few black and brown people in tech that I was motivated to address the issue head-on. I’m a walking example of it, literally. It’s like you get a woman, and you get a black person. For me, it is always being hyper-conscious of who *isn’t* in the room and making sure to advocate for those people,” said Williams.

Williams discovered that she had both a platform and a public persona to voice her concerns, theories, and opinions about the massive lack of diversity and inclusion in technology. And when she spoke, people listened. “Diversity gets people in the door; inclusion keeps them there,” said Williams.

Williams also recently testified before Congress about the bias of artificial intelligence (AI) in financial services. “My concern is focused on making sure that certain biases are not coded and baked into the software that we’re all using. Congressman Cleaver asked me how AI could be harmful or beneficial. I responded that the problem has the potential to do both. It’s one of those systems where garbage in means garbage out. If you are using historical data sets that are based on creditworthiness and redlining, you’re not going to give black and brown people fair credit limits for mortgages, and you’re not going to give them fair interest rates. It can be changed, but no one is making a concerted effort to do so.”

Williams recently completed her first book, *Diversity in the Workplace: Eye-Opening Interviews That Spark Conversation*. —Kay Carney



*Christine Costamagna has forged new opportunities for many through her volunteering.*

## Alum Christine Costamagna Connects Tennis With the Special Olympics

The paralegal certification that Christine Costamagna '90 earned from Saint Mary's not only opened the door to a successful career in legal services: She believes it also helped pave a rewarding path to volunteerism ranging from Special Olympics to the top echelons of the United States Tennis Association (USTA).

After graduating from UC Davis with a degree in English, the San Rafael resident decided to pursue a legal career, and at the time, Saint Mary's was one of the few colleges in the United States with an accredited paralegal program.

That has led to a 30-year career with Bank of America, the past 22 years as an assistant corporate secretary. Costamagna credits BofA with supporting volunteer work among its employees.

"Without the paralegal certificate, I'm not sure I would have gone on to work at Bank of America," she said. "My company also supports volunteerism, which has allowed me to be as involved as I am."

In addition to coaching Marin County's Special Olympics tennis program and high school tennis, Costamagna has held many leadership roles with the USTA. She currently is chair of its Adult Competition Committee.

She has forged new opportunities for disabled athletes with USTA, including helping to create the Unified Doubles National Championships. The tournament pairs able-bodied coaches and players with Special Olympics athletes at the 100-court USTA national campus in Orlando, Fla.

"It's so much fun to see their faces when they show up on the campus for the first time," she said. —*Craig Lazzeretti*

## HARRIS MOJADEDI TURNS LASALLIAN BELIEFS INTO ACTION

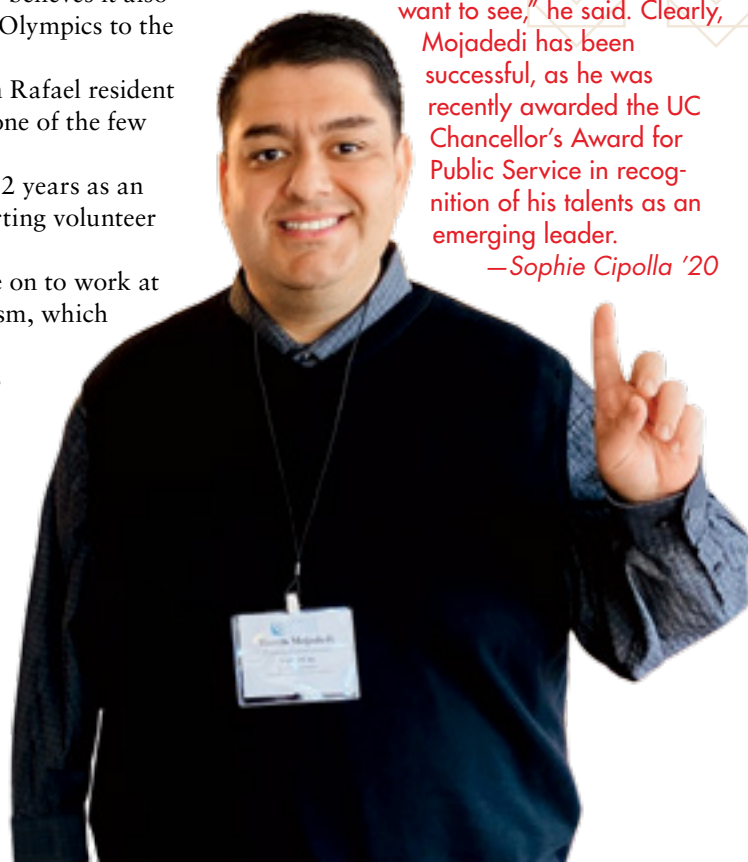
Harris Mojadedi MA '16 is a poster child for Lasallian principles put into action. Mojadedi, a child of immigrants, was born and raised in the Bay Area and came to the Saint Mary's Master's in Leadership Program with a desire to make change in his community. His experience at SMC was transformative to the point where Mojadedi now defines his leadership style as being entirely rooted in Lasallian principles.

"I think it was the adaptive leadership approach that Saint Mary's takes that really inspired me to continue to strive for change," he said. Mojadedi is nothing if not a changemaker. As chair of the Union City Planning Commission, he has led efforts to adopt inclusionary housing policies; and in his role as chair of the Alameda County Human Relations Commission, he has spearheaded the charge to preserve human rights across Alameda County.

Such roles are only the tip of the iceberg for Mojadedi, who uses his long-range vision and adaptive leadership style daily in his position as a policy analyst at UC Berkeley.

Mojadedi notes that he is a firm believer in being the change he wants to see in the world. "Saint Mary's gave me the tools to create access for underrepresented groups and really embody the values I want to see," he said. Clearly, Mojadedi has been successful, as he was recently awarded the UC Chancellor's Award for Public Service in recognition of his talents as an emerging leader.

—*Sophie Cipolla '20*







*Johnny Luna Lima '18 tests his speed and endurance competing in Spartan Races.*

# Kinesiology Alum Reaches New Heights in Obstacle Course Racing

Johnny Luna Lima '18 was running through the hills of Las Trampas Regional Wilderness Park several years ago when he was drawn to Saint Mary's campus in the distance. He knew that it would be the ideal setting to continue his education for a special reason.

"What really attracted me to Saint Mary's was the easy access to trails, and I wanted to be close to family," said Luna Lima, who completed his bachelor's degree in Kinesiology and Health and Human Performance in 2018.

At Saint Mary's, Luna Lima took full advantage of both the hilly Moraga trails and the College's world-class education to further his career in obstacle course and mountain racing, becoming a rising star of the Spartan Race series. The 24-year-old recently completed his best season, finishing second in the elite national series, and achieving first-place finishes in the Big Bear Beast and Utah Super events.

The Spartan Race tests athletes' speed and endurance in trail and mountain running while challenging them to navigate obstacles such as rope and wall climbs, crawling under barbed wire, and throwing spears.

Luna Lima found Saint Mary's exercise physiology class particularly useful. "It really helped me to understand the basic training principles and led me to become a more patient athlete with how I trained," Luna Lima, a native of Brazil, said.

Luna Lima has relocated to Boulder, Colo., a mecca for endurance training in the United States, to continue his ascent as a top mountain and obstacle course athlete. He hopes to one day become a physical therapist. —*Craig Lazzeretti*

## TEACHER ACTIVIST CHANGES LIVES

When Nora Zulema Garcia '08, MA '12, '13, returned home to Pomona in 2012 to become a high school teacher, she made good use of the lessons from her Saint Mary's education.

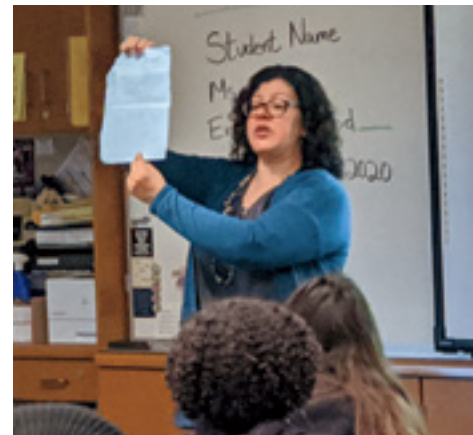
"I decided to take what the College taught me and become involved in my community once again," she said.

First, she fought successfully to keep the public library open when the city council moved to close it amid budget cuts: She is now president of the Friends of the Pomona Library. Garcia also worked with the Clean and Green Pomona group to hold industrial businesses accountable for the pollution they were causing in town.

In 2018, Garcia—who received her BA in English in 2008; MA in Creating Writing in 2012; and MA in Teaching in 2013—ran for city council against a 25-year incumbent and had little expectation of winning. But with some unexpected support (including from former professors at Saint Mary's), she pulled off an upset victory after spending six months knocking on voters' doors.

As a freshman English teacher at Citrus Valley High School, Garcia works to impact her students the same way her professors impacted her. "I literally have students who call me Mom," she said.

"Serving is just part of the DNA once you leave." —*Craig Lazzeretti*



*Nora Zulema Garcia's activism was fostered by CILSA in her time at Saint Mary's.*

# G

— GLIMPSES —



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**MFA** Fine Arts  
**ML** Leadership  
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**MS** Science  
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## 1949

**Walt deFaria** finished directing *Hello, Dolly!* at Carmel's outdoor Forest Theater and ended the year there with a theatrical fundraiser, Carmel Pops! 2019. Walt is a former member of the development staff. Since turning 93 in September, he says he is considering "retiring."

## 1970

**1** In 2013, after 40 years of service as a manufacturing engineer, **Ray Delea** retired from Hughes Aircraft Company in custom hybrid and microwave microcircuit manufacturing. He and wife Pattie have been married for 47 years and reside with their daughter Daniella in Lakewood, Calif. Ray recently published his first book, *High Sierra Adventures*, chronicling his six summers working for Mount Whitney Pack Trains on the eastern slopes of the Sierra Nevada, during the 1960s. Ray and Pattie are currently working on publishing four Bible-based *Character for Young*

*Hearts* books through their ministry, Rivers in the Desert Ministries.

## 1971

**Tony O'Donnell** is serving his first term as an elected member of the Montana Public Service Commission. On Sept. 22, 2019, he and his wife celebrated 42 years of marriage, and he looks forward to his 50th reunion at SMC in 2021.

## 1982

**2 Helen (Scully) Horyza** released her book, *Elevate Your Career: Live a Life You're Truly Proud Of*. She inspires all of us to overcome our obstacles and live life fully. Her book is dedicated to Saint Mary's College and her great uncle Vance Scully, who funded her SMC college education in his estate.

## 1983

**3** Fellow Gael ruggers (left to right) **Mark Murray '83**, **Bob Lenz '86**, **Mike Scully '83**, **Jim Sell '85**, **Dennis Tiernan '83**, **Geordie Hawkins '83**, **Art Fontes '83**, and **Dave Starkey '85** were hosted in Japan

when they attended the 2019 Rugby World Cup. They had a chance to catch up, experience Japanese culture, and watch some great rugby. This marked the third year traveling to the Rugby World Cup for this group. Their next stop will be France in 2023.

## 1987

**4** Almost 25 years ago, **Cecile (CiCi) Focha** switched from empowering students as a teacher to donning the uniform of a Sonoma County deputy sheriff. Soon she was promoted to detective, sergeant, and then chief spokesman for the Sheriff's Office. She was instrumental in the creation of the Family Justice Center and became a mentor to teens, a leader on the board of Verity, and a godsend to survivors of sexual assault and human trafficking. She recently became the first-ever female chief of the district attorney's investigations bureau.

## 1996

**5 Stephanie Carter** has been living in Juneau, Alaska, for the past six years with her boyfriend, Robert, and their cat, Magellan. She's been working for Gastineau Human Services for five years and recently accepted a new position as the company's performance and quality improvement coordinator.

## 2003

**6 Denny Bulcao Jr.** (Communication) had a full 2018–2019. He paid off his car and SMC loans, bought his first house near SoCal family, added a tennis court, got engaged (to Briana), and canceled a Wimbledon trip to welcome their first child (Dennis Edward Bulcao III). Denny says, "DBIII has to go Ivy League with a name like that" [wink]. Denny works from home as a writer/editor (Denny-Writes.com) and still loves cheering on his Gaels. He and Briana drove to Salt Lake City for March Madness in 2017 and hope to be dancing with SMC basketball in 2020.

## 2004

**7** After three and a half years serving as director of marketing for the LA Clippers, **Joe Legaz** was recently hired as the chief marketing officer of Times10, a boutique ad agency in L.A. Joe spends his free time hiking in the mountains and recently hiked 40 miles across Catalina Island.

## 2005

**8 Erik and Andrea Johnson**, and big sister Hilah, welcomed Finn on Oct. 19, 2019. Erik is now the deputy executive director of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments, where he's worked since graduation.

## 2006

**9 Allison Landa** is thrilled to be teaching at The Writing Salon in Berkeley and to be part of the S.F. Writers Grotto. Allison has been a freelance writer and teacher since the turn of the century, and also a performer for as long as she can remember. She is the author of *Bearded Lady*, a first-person account of living with an adrenal condition that

causes excess hair growth as well as obesity, infertility, and male-pattern balding in female sufferers. It's not written as a health treatise, she says, but as the story of a life.

## 2007

**10** Since graduation, **Katie Azevedo** has become an RN and found her dream job as a home-visiting nurse for expectant new mothers. Her love of the outdoors and horseback riding persists. In 2015, she and her mother rode the historic Pony Express Trail across the West together. Her now-husband, an avid sportsman, made a surprise proposal in the Marble Mountain Wilderness on a pack trip with their mule, horse, and dog. They were married last spring on her family ranch in the Sierra Nevada foothills and currently live on a small farm in Southern California.

## 2008

**11** With great enthusiasm, **Jennifer Mamola** joins the John Muir Project as its forest protection advocate in Washington, D.C.



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**12 Dana (Gilbert) Saindon** and her husband, Bryan, welcomed their second boy, Nolan Russell, on Nov. 28, 2019—Thanksgiving Day! Weighing nine pounds, nine ounces and 22.5 inches long, he gave the Saindon family something to be thankful for. Big brother Owen, Mom, and Dad are ready to take Nolan to his first basketball game.... Go Gaels!

## 2009

**13 Colleen (Fisher) Arizmendi** and her husband, Patrick, welcomed their first child, a son, Benjamin Francis Arizmendi, on Oct. 19, 2019. Colleen works as a fourth-grade teacher in Las Vegas.

## 2012

**14** On Sept. 28, 2019, **Alexis Boese** and **Joseph Captain** were married by Father John Morris at the SMC Chapel. They celebrated and danced the night away at the Soda Center with family, friends, and fellow Gael alumni, including her father, Lee Boese Jr. '87; maid of honor, Kelly Dickinson '12; Joe Vellutini '87; Eileen Corbett '87; Jim Abbate '86; Lexi

and Tori Abbate '18; Kassi Rasmussen '13; and Elizabeth Schroeder '12.

In September 2019, **Emily Lucas** joined Nike World Headquarters in Beaverton, Ore., as the company's global communications editor for Nike News.

## 2015

**15** Since attending SMC, **Maria (Ramirez) Elizalde** has made quite a few changes. She traveled to Israel and Mexico. Using some of her knowledge from her biblical art class, she interpreted the art she saw in Israel. She also met her now-husband and is happily married. Maria currently works for Contra Costa Health Services and loves helping those in need.

## 2016

According to his grandmother, Lynette Nyaggah, **Christopher Miller** has joined the U.S. Olympic snowboarding team in Park City, Utah, as the strength and conditioning coach.

## 2017

**16 Rio Acosta** and **Paula Tamashiro Tairaku**, MD, were wed on Aug. 16, 2019, at Holy Family St. Thomas Catholic Church in Brooklyn. The couple celebrated

their marriage at the Tribeca Rooftop in Manhattan. Paula is an attending physician and professor at NYU, and Rio is a legal coordinator with the New York City Office of Collective Bargaining.

## 2019

**17** Upon graduating, **Alejandra Rivas** served as a teaching artist with California Shakespeare Theater, then became the assistant director for a show at Crowded Fire Theater in San Francisco, before returning to Saint Mary's to assist with directing *This is Modern Art*. She is currently working at the Tony Award-winning American Conservatory Theater (ACT) in San Francisco in administrative operations and planned to direct there in January. Alejandra is a company member with TheatreFIRST and planned to stage manage there in February 2020 and help direct at the San Francisco Playhouse in April 2020.





## BROTHER MARK McVANN, FSC

Brother Mark McVann, FSC, PhD, of the Midwest District of the Christian Brothers, a professor in the Theology and Religious Studies Department at Saint Mary's for the past 20 years, passed away May 3, 2020. His academic research included the Gospel of Saint Mark and, in recent years, regional devotion to the Virgin Mary; he was the

author of more than 90 religious articles and essays; and for many years he edited *Listening*, an academic journal. Brother Mark delivered biblical lectures across the globe and will be remembered fondly by generations of students for his passionate teaching of the Bible.



## REMEMBERING MARY PARISH

Mary Parish, MA '89, EdD, passed away on Feb. 3. Parish taught in the KSOE from the early 1990s; served as associate dean for several years until her retirement in 2011; and was the director and placement coordinator of Saint Mary's Marriage and Family Therapy program for many years. She was beloved by her students, who relied on her

sharp wit, her commitment to their professional development, and her thorough knowledge of legal and ethical issues in the field of counseling. —Suzy Thomas



## PROFESSOR LAWRENCE CORY

Professor Emeritus Lawrence (Larry) Cory, PhD, passed away peacefully on Oct. 30, 2019, just after his 102nd birthday. Cory retired in 2012 after more than 60 years of service to Saint Mary's as a biology professor and mentor to countless students. He also conducted noted research on DDT and testified before Congress on questions of

its safety. In 2007, he was recognized as Professor of the Year, and in 2013, alumni created an endowment to fund the Professor Larry Cory Scholarship.

## ALUMNI

Mark D. Anania  
MBA '97  
Sylvain A. Borel '63  
Martin J. Bowman  
'58, parent of  
Jennifer L. Laredo  
'90  
Peter V. Butler '66  
Gilbert D. Chavez  
'57, parent of  
Amy G. Sarubbi  
'80, Jeannine  
Chavez-Parfitt '83,  
and Michael A.  
Chavez '90  
James A. Cooper  
'98, parent of  
Jessica B. Cooper  
'06  
Eduardo P. Cordero  
'84  
Lawrence R. Cory  
'39, former faculty  
Robert J. Emmons  
'50  
Kenneth D. Garcia  
'50, parent of  
Thomas K. Garcia  
'72  
Robert W. Haine  
'71  
John R. Higgins Sr.  
'52  
Birgit S. Hohn '94,  
former employee,  
parent of Gisella  
E. Larson '96  
Nicole T. Jones  
MED '14  
James P. Kerrigan  
III '89, parent of  
Joseph M.  
Kerrigan '23  
James C. Maloney  
MBA '02, spouse  
of Vanessa S.  
Walsh '94  
Warren H.  
McCausland '62  
Charles P. Noland  
'82  
Daniel E. Ortland  
'60  
Mary T. Parish MA  
'89, former faculty  
Barbara J. Piepho  
'88  
Gina M. Piombo-  
Spencer '80  
Michael J. Poitevin  
MS '90

Gilbert R. Presto '70  
Jose D. Rabago '84  
Alfred J. Rice '91  
Francis P. Riley '61  
Peter A. Selo '62  
William M.  
Sprietsma '50  
Paul L. Van Cleve  
IV '62  
Susan L.  
Williamson '81

## FRIENDS

Chester Aaron,  
former faculty  
Leo R. Croce  
Donald L. Gillan  
Patricia M. Grealish,  
late spouse, John  
F. Grealish '49  
Rodney A. Levander  
Robert J. McCarthy,  
former faculty  
John P. Moglia,  
cousin of Hon.  
Peter L. Spinetta  
'63  
Joan W. Pucci, late  
spouse, Hon. Roy  
G. Pucci '43  
Linda K. Rondeau,  
former faculty  
Alma Rose, late  
brother Hon. Roy  
G. Pucci '43  
Janice Rubay, late  
spouse, Joseph E.  
Rubay '51  
Pavahi Sheehy,  
spouse of Patrick  
E. Sheehy '62  
Valerie Silvestri,  
spouse of George  
J. Silvestri Jr. '63  
John F. Tierney Jr.

## PARENTS

Brinley S. Appleton,  
parent of Jeffrey  
S. Appleton '89  
and Michael E.  
Appleton '94  
M. Donald Bellew,  
parent of Michael  
J. Bellew '91  
Judy Croner, grand-  
parent of Adam K.  
Palmer '22

Jane C.  
Geissberger, late  
spouse, Dr. Louis J.  
Geissberger '53;  
stepsons, Dr. Marc  
J. Geissberger  
'88, Michael R.  
Geissberger '89  
'93, Dr. Jeffrey  
L. Geissberger  
'90, and John C.  
Geissberger '92;  
step daughter-in-  
law, Amanda J.  
Geissberger '89;  
and step grand-  
children, Robert L.  
Geissberger '20  
and Lindsey E.  
Geissberger '22  
Edwin M. Gunn Sr.,  
parent of Edwin  
M. Gunn Jr. '98  
Carolyn  
Hamaguchi,  
parent of employee  
Staci A. Byrne '05  
'07 and mother-  
in-law of Bryan T.  
Byrne '06 '14  
Alden F. Huff, late  
spouse, Mary J.  
Huff '83 and par-  
ent of Stephanie  
H. Granados '81  
Michael L. Kenney,  
parent of David  
M. Kenney '86,  
grandparent of  
Daniel L. Wright  
'06 and Shelby M.  
Kenney '15  
Norman A. Kirshen,  
parent of Keelan L.  
Kirshen '94  
Eugene F. Lynch Sr.,  
parent of Eugene  
F. Lynch Jr. '91  
Bertha Nino, parent  
of Dr. Henry E.  
Nino '66  
Oliver C. Storti, par-  
ent of employee  
Martin T. Storti '85  
and grandfather of  
Erich O. Storti '23



— VIEWPOINT —



**MAURA WOLF**

*Manager, Training & Professional Development  
Coordinator, Women's Leadership Program*

## Navigating Increased Complexity and Change

Several years ago, I was teaching an undergraduate Managing and Leading course when I noted something important happening in the classroom. Students were telling me, repeatedly, that they were really worried. They were anxious about what they might do after college; they were working five jobs and worried they couldn't finish all their work each week; and some were just worried, most of the time, and not really sure why.

We explored this theme and worked with it throughout the semester by introducing meditation, developing an app that measured stress levels in the moment, and helping them process their experience in teams, all while engaging with the course content.

For most of my tenure at Saint Mary's,

I have been an adjunct professor teaching in the Master's of Leadership program, which is predominantly for midcareer professionals. I learned that this high stress level was occurring across the board, for people in many different generations and industries. But seeing it play out with young adults compelled me to take bold action. I left the classroom that semester determined to create a curriculum that helped young adults gain new skills when facing complexity, rapid change, and increased uncertainty. I didn't know then how relevant this teaching would be today, in the middle of this crisis.

I knew that the fields of leadership, adult development, psychology, and spiritual wisdom traditions hold information about practices that help people manage complexity, anxiety, clarity of values, and rapid change. We also know a lot about how to cultivate social connection and resiliency amid churning and tumultuous environments.

This semester, I was in the middle of teaching a School of Liberal Arts class called Living a Purpose Driven Life when the news of the coronavirus spread. The relevancy of what I was teaching went from medium to off the charts in a week. The check-ins that began each class allowed students to speak to their worries, their frustrations, and their needs about shifting to a virtual learning environment, the uncertainty of graduation, internships, and more. They began using our practices to get through their days at

home while navigating family issues and the feelings of loss from having to leave the campus environment.

One of the practices I teach is to wake up and answer the question: What's one thing that matters to you today? This brings values down to a personal, practical level: Do I sleep for another hour, jump up and finish my paper, or go out for a run? This practice can help minimize that overwhelming sense of starting the day with 20 to-dos. It gives the day a focus and destination. Sometimes, you sit back, tune inside, and realize what's most important to you this day is trust in a higher power or a greater plan for your life. Then, you can get through your list with more ease and joy. I find it's a way to bring the notion of an internal compass to life daily.

As we all find ourselves attempting to adapt and process as fast as we are humanly able, identifying one thing that matters is a way to simplify what feels chaotic. Sharing this information with at least one person strengthens social bonds by allowing us to notice our shared experiences, increasing well-being and resiliency.

The thing about a living a purpose-driven life is that it's a living, breathing process. We don't do it once and stop there. It takes regular practices that get repeated again and again, and again. In our context, taking a pause, tuning in to our internal compass, and sharing with each other just became more important than ever.







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