

saint francis

A Magazine for Alumni and Friends of the University of Saint Francis



LETTER FROM OUR INTERIM PRESIDENT



Dear Alumni and Friends,

As we embark on another academic year at the University of Saint Francis, we face a period of continual change and transition, a time of opportunities and challenges, and a season of hard work and hope. *“Good indeed is the Lord. His mercy endures forever, his faithfulness lasts through every generation.”* Psalm 100:5 (NABRE)

Through 133 years (and counting!) of change and growth, the University of Saint Francis has remained true to our Catholic, Franciscan mission to educate students—not only for successful careers but also to lead lives of meaning and service to others. In this season of change, we continue that tradition, filled with hope in the future and confident that God has great things in store for the University of Saint Francis!

It is my pleasure to invite you to enjoy this fall edition of Saint Francis magazine. I believe you will find an appealing mix of stories about those who are invested here and, especially, alumni who enhance their communities.

You will indeed find some stories of transition within these pages, such as new Vice President for Catholic Culture and Student Life Sr. Maria Gemma Salyer, OSF and Deacon Dan Avila, recently retired as a Saint Francis adjunct professor and now serving two parishes. You’ll catch a glimpse of two of our devoted educators: Associate Professor of English Weston Cutter offers a first-person account of his Haven Watch Co. and Program Director of Radiologic Technology Heather Lortie shares with her two sisters how Saint Francis influenced her.

This academic year’s Franciscan value—Foster peace and justice—is certainly reflected in the compassionate work of Matthew Anjorin with the Allen County Public Defender’s Office. You should expect to be inspired, too, by the selflessness of OT and Kim Ochieng, who have brought fresh water to so many people in OT’s homeland of Kenya.

I know you’ll want to read responses to the question, “Who’s Your Favorite Professor?” Alumni and current students alike brought up more than 100 names through social media, an undeniable testimony to Saint Francis. One of those favorites, of course, was Rick Cartwright, who passed away this spring after a battle with cancer. Rick’s stamp on Saint Francis is undeniable, his legacy vast. He will be sorely missed.

We were also saddened by the recent passing of longtime Saint Francis supporter and friend Mimi Rolland. Those who knew Mimi will cherish their memories of her forever.

Please visit our campus whenever you have an opportunity. We would love to see you. I also invite you to join me in praying for a tremendous year ahead for our students and the campus community.

God bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lance Richey". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a horizontal line.

Dr. Lance Richey

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2023-2024 FRANCISCAN VALUE

FOSTER PEACE
AND JUSTICE

in this issue

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Family ties. Sisters Heather (Dice) Lortie, Tara (Dice) Pettigrew and Amanda (Dice) Schultz found independence during their time at Saint Francis. But they always maintained their sibling bond.

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Mentors matter. Saint Francis' five valedictorians each found their route to collegiate success through hard work, perseverance and strong mentors. They each credit Saint Francis professors for inspiration.



Connecting faith and friends. Sr. Maria Gemma Salyer, OSF hopes to emulate St. Francis in her quest to help others see Jesus in their lives. She'll guide Catholic culture and student life as a new vice president.

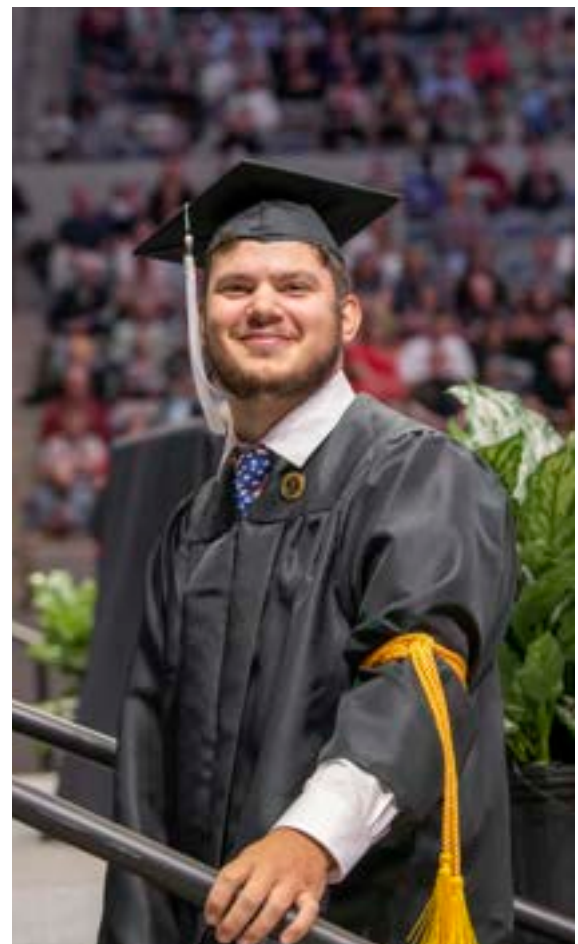


Leaving a legacy. The late Rick Cartwright spent 42 years helping students succeed at the University of Saint Francis. His contributions will resonate for years and years to come.



Field trip fun. Students on the Wisconsin Field Studies trip put in long days and nights exploring nature. Their experiences left them with new perspectives on the world we share.

On the cover: Matthew Anjorin knew from an early age that he wanted to find a profession where he could help people. He's now encouraging second chances through the Allen County Public Defender's Office.





TOP *of the* CLASS

USF is known for the personal connection of professors and students, and the 2023 valedictorians testify to the well-deserved reputation. Our 2023 valedictorians were spurred on to their tremendous accomplishments with the help of their mentors.

The 2023 University of Saint Francis valedictorians share many traits, including self-motivation, dedication and perseverance. Another common denominator to their successes—they all developed and valued great relationships with their professors. The 2023 valedictorians were Joseph R. Caffee (BS, Exercise Science), Isaiah B. Lacey (BS, Computer Information Systems), Emma Mantica (BS, Biology; AS, Chemistry Pre-Pharmacy), Daniel W. McKeeman (BS, Finance) and Timothy J. Tippmann (BS, Biology Pre-Medicine; AS, Chemistry Pre-Pharmacy). The 2023 valedictorians share their thoughts on how their professors propelled them forward:



“Everybody always has their favorite professors and so do I. These people are kind and brilliant, and they helped me significantly on my journey, teaching the classes I loved. It’s the sign of a good professor when they love the material and they help you love it, too.”

Joseph R. Caffee, working as a personal trainer for Catalyst Fitness



“I just fell in love with the computer science program. Rick Miller (program director who passed away in December 2022) and the way he set up the program was the best thing about my experience and helped me reach my goals. The most positive part of USF is the small class sizes and how that allows faculty to be personal and available for you.”

Isaiah B. Lacey, working in computer technology and serving with the Kentucky National Guard



“Coming in, I was scared of going up to professors, but once I got to know them, I soon considered myself friends with a lot of them. I expect to have a relationship with them after Saint Francis. Getting to know them—that really helped me gain a full understanding of what they were teaching and make the connections that prepared me the most.”

Emma Mantica, studying in the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at Manchester University



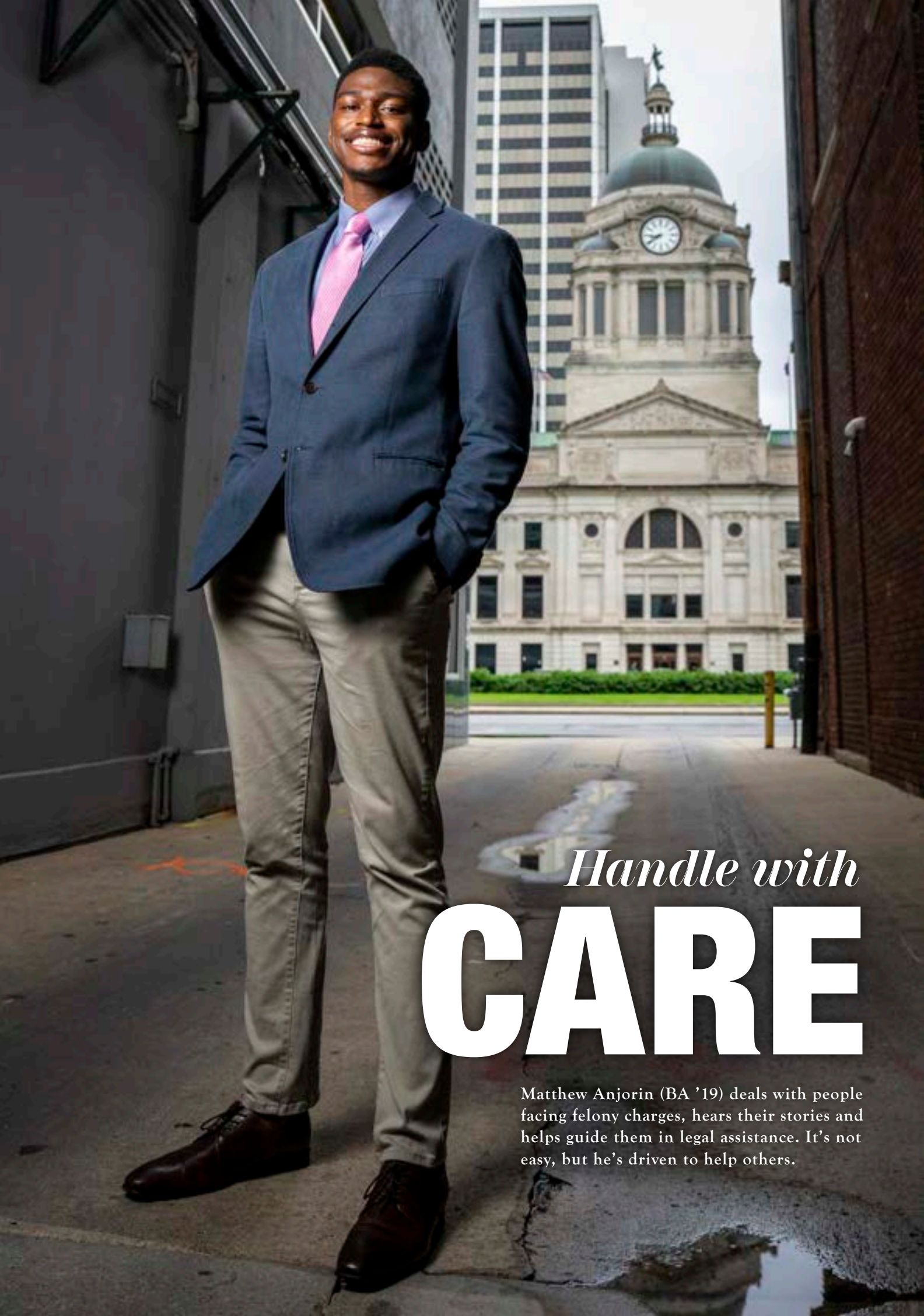
“My experience at Saint Francis was everything I could have asked for, gaining great knowledge with good internships, mentors and advisors. Liz Unger was huge in getting internships arranged and setting me up for a springboard to where I wanted to go. I went into internships always being able to implement something I learned in classes. Saint Francis builds the whole picture.”

Daniel W. McKeeman, working for Wealth Advisors Group




“I knew all my professors well and I would contact them any time and they would respond. That personal level of working together allowed me to be successful. Most universities treat you like a checkbook, but Saint Francis isn’t like that. The teachers live by the Franciscan values.”

Timothy J. Tippmann, working in orthopedic medical device sales while preparing to pursue medical school



Handle with
CARE

Matthew Anjorin (BA '19) deals with people facing felony charges, hears their stories and helps guide them in legal assistance. It's not easy, but he's driven to help others.



As a felony investigator with the Allen County Public Defender's Office, Matthew Anjorin (BA '19) must convince defendants that he has their best interests in mind. They need to know he cares.

His compassionate nature usually doesn't take long to shine through.

"I've always been interested in helping others, whether I was going to be a police officer or a detective or maybe FBI—I like helping," Anjorin said.

A typical day for Anjorin includes interviews with defendants—sometimes at the Allen County Jail, sometimes in an office—where he compiles information about their case, learning their version of events. He then shares that knowledge with their court-appointed attorney. Most defendants, Anjorin says, desire a route onto the right path, despite the choices or situation that led to felony charges.

"Gaining trust with them is hard, but it's the most important part of the whole process," Anjorin said. "They're a complete stranger talking to another complete stranger, hoping you can do something for their case. I learn their background and get to know who they are and work with them to resolve the case in their best interests."

Yes, he encounters some dangerous offenders, but many people Anjorin serves genuinely seek a positive way forward. He especially enjoys helping those hampered by substance-abuse issues.

"Every single one of them, especially in the drug cases, cares about someone or something in their lives and they want to get back to it—their kids, their grandkids, brothers, sisters, girlfriends, spouses, livelihood," he said. "We try to see what we can do to help."

Anjorin arrived at the University of Saint Francis with an unwavering focus on pursuing a degree in criminal justice and criminology. He played basketball for the Cougars and worked at the Jorgensen Family YMCA, developing a love of teaching and leading children. He continues to guide young people as the eighth grade basketball coach at Summit Middle School. He met his wife Madeline at Saint Francis, and they have a toddler son, Julius.

Anjorin's concern for others, while cultivated at Saint Francis, became ingrained long before

he enrolled. He grew up in Valparaiso, Indiana, one of six children of Kam and Christiana Anjorin. He was the third son, born after David and Michael, and has younger sisters Princess, Mary and Damilola. All six siblings earned degrees or are still attending college.

The expectation of high academic achievement was a given in his family.

"I was the only one who wanted to become a lawyer or pursue criminal justice," Anjorin said. "There was more of a focus on becoming a doctor. But, even though I have to see autopsy photos now, I'm not into all that medical stuff. I did not watch 'Grey's Anatomy.' That stuff grosses me out."

Anjorin's undergraduate work at Saint Francis reinforced his commitment to criminal justice and helping others. He was a member of the program's first graduating class and interned with the Allen County Public Defender's Office as a senior.

"Matthew was a joy to have in the classroom," Director of Criminal Justice and Criminology Heather Jeffries said. "It was a pleasure to watch him excel academically and to see what he is accomplishing and the wonderful man he has become."

Anjorin always tries to be present in every situation, whether at work, at home with his wife and son or out in the community.

"I try to look out for other people," Anjorin said. "I see it so much where people are just in their own world, and there's nothing wrong with that, but that's not how I view the world when I wake up. I try to think two steps ahead—I'll be walking downtown and watching to make sure someone doesn't step out in front of a car turning left. I'll think, 'How fast can I sprint up to help get them out of the way?' Being aware of other people is very big in my life."

Anjorin's outward-focused nature allows him to empathize with defendants he interviews. He attempts to guide them into the best-possible outcome.

"You're just talking to another person who needs help and using your limited powers to do what you can," he said. "I've seen some of our clients out of jail, clean, holding down a job, and that's one of the best feelings—to know they're doing well."

The Dice Girls



Sisters Heather Lortie, Tara Pettigrew and Amanda Schultz grew up in Churubusco, Indiana, and wound their way to success in healthcare and teaching with their Saint Francis degrees. As their families grow, their bond remains strong.

As they grew up, the three sisters acquired a nickname—The Dice Girls, a play on their last name of Dice, with a nod to the 1990s pop music group, the Spice Girls. The Dice Girls were intelligent, driven and athletic, and found their career passions at the University of Saint Francis. Heather (Dice) Lortie (AS '07, MHA '19) now leads the USF radiologic technology program. Her twin sister Tara (Dice) Pettigrew (BSN '08) works as a nurse at Parkview Southwest Surgery Center. Their younger sister Amanda (Dice) Schultz (BSE '10) teaches first grade at St. Joseph Catholic School in Decatur.



FINDING A HOME AT USF

“At first, I wanted to go to Purdue, but I had dated my husband Todd all through high school so I wanted to get an associate degree and get married. I loved the small classes at Saint Francis, living at home and being a commuter. With the rad tech program, I felt a real sense of belonging.” – Heather

“I had no desire to go far away. I had an option to go and play basketball at IPFW, a small NCAA Division I school, but they planned to redshirt me as a freshman. I liked the smallness of the classes at Saint Francis and studying nursing with the same group for four years. I think it was easier coming here together (with Heather), but we really didn’t see each other that much.” – Tara

“I came here because it was close to home, and I initially went into nursing. I switched to education because nursing wasn’t for me. I really liked how you could connect with the professors, and right away in your first education class they had you in a school classroom.” – Amanda

SISTER CONNECTIONS ON CAMPUS

“I went to a lot of Tara’s games. You’ve got to be your sister’s biggest cheerleader in life.” – Heather

“Amanda’s (future) husband would scrimmage against us in basketball, although I didn’t really realize it until later when Amanda said he knew me from basketball practice. He didn’t guard me; he’s 6-5 and was guarding the post players. But I remembered the tattoo on his leg.” – Tara

“I felt at home in a small school. I remember going to watch Tara’s games and going to parties with her and, of course, my biggest memory is meeting my husband.” – Amanda

CAREER SATISFACTION

“I started working weekends at DeKalb Memorial Hospital as we were starting our family. I always knew I wanted to come back and teach. I remember telling one of my professors, ‘I want your job.’ I always felt our professors cared and invested in us and that’s something I want to emulate. We care about students’ success.” – Heather

“Being in nursing and basketball was hard—7 a.m. to 7 p.m. clinicals and then practicing from 8 to 10 p.m. I do like being a nurse but there are days when it’s challenging, and it especially was during Covid. I really like outpatient surgery, where I am now.” – Tara

“Teaching is a passion and I love my job. I get to teach and learn new things each day. The most fulfilling thing about my job is when you see the light bulb go off and the student understands the concept.” – Amanda

FAMILY TIME

“I met Todd when I was 15 and we’ve been married almost 18 years. Our daughter, Brynn, is 13 and our triplets—Braylee, Boone and Bristol—are almost 12.” – Heather

“I met my husband Jon not long after I graduated college. We knew each other from 4H. We have a boy, Ty, who is two weeks older than Heather’s triplets, and then we had Kyle and Brooks.” – Tara

“My husband’s name is Brian (BBA '09), but everyone calls him Cork. He played football at Saint Francis. We have a daughter, Drew, and a son, Beau. We’re all at busy phases in our lives, and we have only two weekends open the whole summer. I love it.” – Amanda

Q & A

with Saint Francis Interim President
Dr. Lance Richey



Dr. Richey will guide the university while the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration—the university’s sponsor—and the Saint Francis Board of Trustees search for the next permanent president.

Here are some excerpts from an interview to get to know Dr. Richey a little better:

Where did you grow up?

I was born and raised in Greenville, South Carolina. I attended Furman University in Greenville, which provided an excellent foundation in the liberal arts. For me, a first-generation college graduate, that was a transformative experience that set the path for the rest of my life. Dad was a construction worker and Mom worked various jobs—office secretary and so forth. Neither of my parents was college-educated. I’m not the first to go to college in my family, but I am the first to finish. I went there not knowing what college was, and it was truly life-changing. I converted to the Catholic faith while I was in college and wound up studying for the priesthood for two years at Conception Seminary College. While I was there, I discerned I didn’t have the call of vocation to the priesthood, but I wanted to pursue graduate studies and teach at the college level. Two Ph.D.s later, here I am.

How did you end up at Saint Francis?

When I was at Cardinal Stritch University, I was involved in the Association for Franciscan Colleges and Universities, and that’s how I met Sr. M. Felicity Dorsett, OSF (former assistant professor of theology at USF). When I saw the job opening here, I knew Sr. Felicity and I applied.”

What do you enjoy about Saint Francis?

I love the University of Saint Francis because it is rooted in the Catholic, Franciscan tradition and is true to those values and tries to share them with everyone who comes here, regardless of faith. That’s what I wanted for my children, which is why I sent them all to this university. I do sincerely believe we try to be true to our mission. Our mission is the only thing worth fighting for in higher education, and we fight for it.

THIS OR THAT?

A Dozen Choices with Interim President Dr. Lance Richey

Spontaneous or Planned? “I have a quick mind and I trust my instincts.”

Optimist or Pessimist? “I’m confident the university is accomplishing good—and the world needs more good.”

Coffee or Tea? “Three cups every morning.”

Introvert or Extrovert? “I’m a gregarious introvert. I enjoy the company of others, but I’m a little introverted, as any philosopher would be.”

Phone Call or Text? “I like more information rather than less.”

Mountain or Beach? “I like trees.”

Summer or **Winter**? “Winter lets me indulge my inner introvert.”

Pizza or Salad? “You have to ask! I don’t eat green food.”

Action or Rom-Com? “I have enough romance and comedy in my life already.”

Morning Person or Night Owl? “Morning person because I’m old, but I have to go to bed early.”

Sports Car or **SUV**? “I usually have something to carry with me.”

Big Band or Taylor Swift? “Neither. Classic rock.”

Tell us about your family.

Carol and I have been married 31 years. We have five children and Carol homeschooled them all the way until college, so that kept her busy for 21 years. She’s from Nebraska and we met in Milwaukee when I was in grad school at Marquette University. Our children are Emma, Madeleine, Karl and Louis, who are all Saint Francis alumni, and Zoe, who will be a junior this fall.

Do you feel Saint Francis is in a good place?

It’s an exciting time to serve in this role because higher ed is changing so quickly and the university has a lot of opportunities to carry out its mission in different ways if we respond to these challenges with hope and creativity. The Sisters and the board have asked me to help strengthen our commitment to our Catholic, Franciscan mission and to make sure we’re using our resources in the most effective, sustainable way to carry out that mission.

How do you look forward to dealing with students as interim president?

I’m excited about having an opportunity to engage students in a new way this fall, and to get to know an even broader range of students than I have. The Sisters have it made—you know they’re Sisters by the way they dress. You won’t necessarily know I’m president when you see me coming. I thought maybe I needed a tie-dye cowboy hat. Then, they’d say, “There’s the president.” But I told that to my wife and she said, “no way.”

What is the most positive aspect about Saint Francis?

I think we are an outstanding example of how Catholic higher education continues to be relevant to our community, not only in such diverse fields as the arts, healthcare and business but also in creating educated and involved citizens committed to the greater good.

Valerie Jackson (BA '08) leads a team of photographers who bring musical instruments and products of Sweetwater Sound to visual light. Her team's images play a major role in the company's worldwide success.

A seemingly endless supply of guitars and other instruments stretch on and on, a silent sea of sound waiting to come to life in the Sweetwater Sound distribution center. Valerie Jackson (BA '08) figuratively has her eyes on every single one.

Jackson serves as manager of photography at Sweetwater, a position that tends to be equal parts artist, coach, boss and “mom,” as she’s called by one of the 25 photographers she supervises. Once they collaboratively capture an inviting image, the photo moves on to the print and digital pages of Sweetwater’s advertising, ready to generate ongoing sales.

The volume is staggering. In an average month, Jackson’s team photographs nearly 20,000 guitars, along with other instruments and audio products.

The essence of Jackson’s role rests as much on her people skills as her photographer’s eye.

“I try to make sure everybody has what they need to succeed as a photographer or an assistant or whatever role they are in,” Jackson said. “We have to be so fluid in what we’re doing, making sure everyone’s on pace with each other and communicating well.”

Jackson, a native of Ossian, Indiana, earned a degree in Fine Commercial Art at Saint Francis and sharpened her skills as an intern at Roberts Photography, where she also worked professionally after graduation. She gained further skills as an independent contractor before joining Sweetwater—landing a position that opened when her older brother decided to leave the company.

At first, Jackson was one of two photographers shooting guitar photos, but Sweetwater’s need for more photographers soon increased exponentially.

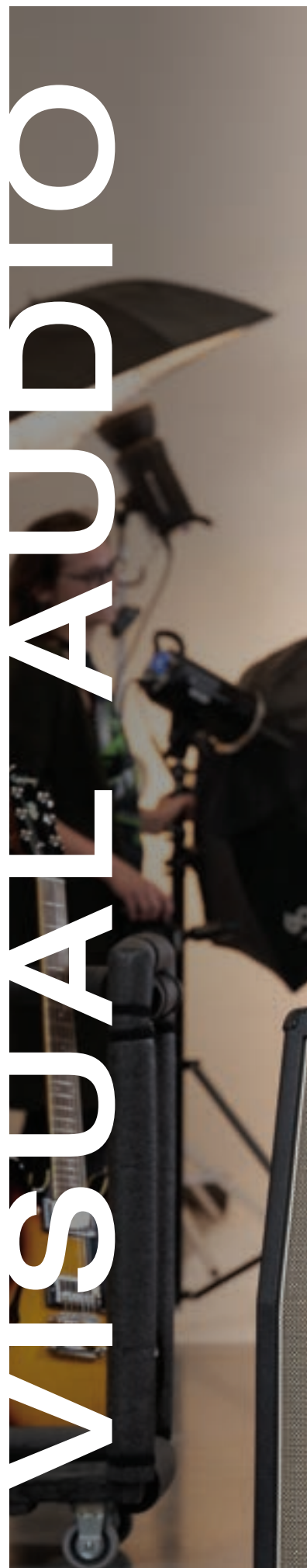
“Sweetwater has expanded tremendously since I started working here,” Jackson said. “It’s cool to think where it’s been and how much has happened in 10 years. It’s exciting to be part of a growing business.”

Founded by Chuck Surack in 1979, Sweetwater is the largest eCommerce provider of musical instruments and audio gear in the United States. The company announced more than \$1.5 billion in sales in 2022, serving more than 1.6 million unique customers. That marked the third straight year of more than \$1 billion in sales.

Walk through the Sweetwater distribution center and you’ll witness a flurry of non-stop action, with professionals working on product, moving inventory and—in the case of Jackson’s team—taking thousands of photos to allow potential customers to view their vast array of choices.

Jackson operates as a conductor of sorts, keeps her team nimble, efficient and always on the move. Since she is not a musician, she had to learn about guitars on the job and has acquired even more knowledge through working with additional orchestral instruments.

VISUAL AUDIO





The team shoots traditional and 360-degree photos, which can be especially challenging.

“I make sure people are trained in how to think about what they’re doing, so they can learn to see things themselves and feel empowered to act,” she said. “The last thing I want to do is look over their shoulders all day. It’s always better to teach people the best ways and best practice and then trust them to do their job, making sure they have what they need.”

Jackson’s team includes three Saint Francis alumni—Dee Morrow (BA ’21), Emilio Guevara (BA ’20) and Mercedes Sanchez (BA ’19).

“Saint Francis definitely prepared me to understand how to adapt to whatever I’m doing,” Jackson said. “My photography skills were developed through a combination of college and studio work. The experiences I had at Saint Francis were amazing. I just messaged my college roommate the other day. I would highly recommend living on campus.”

Jackson’s photography away from the job has slowed over the years as she and her husband, Andrew, raise three children—Riyan, 19, Antalya, 16, and Lucas 3. The demands of parenthood preclude much professional photography work away from Sweetwater, Valerie said.

“My job at Sweetwater is still in the photography aspect, but it’s photography plus efficiency—getting everyone what they need,” Jackson said. “At one point, we had a queue of 80,000 items to shoot. They said, ‘You’ll never do that.’ I said, ‘Watch me work.’”

TIME

BY WESTON CUTTER

Associate Professor of English

When I started Haven Watch Co., I didn't think of it as much different from writing, or even teaching. At the time, there was something I wanted, something I thought should exist, which didn't exist. That's usually the precipitating idea in writing: you read, for instance, a bunch of poems, and eventually you come to recognize a space, or a voice, that you want to hear but haven't. If you're foolish and determined enough, you sometimes luck into making the thing you wanted in the world but hadn't been able to find.

My dad, after 20 years of using his MBA, started his own watch and clock repair company. The first watch he gave me, when I graduated from college, I gave back to him—I didn't wear a watch then, and didn't want to. When I earned my MFA, he gave me a vintage watch, this time with my initials on the back, and that one stuck. Three years later, when my wife was pregnant with our first daughter, he gave me another vintage watch which sparked a fascination that's yet to let up much.

The other big overlap between writing and teaching, and running a watch company, is that you don't really know what you're doing when you start something—and it may be more accurate to say you can't know where you're going. That's the point: you have to discover it in the work itself. Beginnings are usually fairly murky—a line of dialogue, an idea, a bit of character—but the goal is simply to be present, to see what can be made from some small kernel. There's no guarantee any of it'll be successful, but that's not really the point: the goal is simply to make something that feels right, or true.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Associate Professor of English Weston Cutter is originally from Minnesota. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in English from Gustavus Adolphus College and a Master of Fine Arts in Poetry from Virginia Tech. He has published fiction poetry in several literary journals; has written book reviews for the Minnesota Star Tribune, Rain Taxi and the Brooklyn Rail; and has published a book of short stories and several collections of poetry.

IS OF THE ESSENCE

HIS FATHER'S PERSISTENCE IGNITED WESTON CUTTER'S INTEREST IN CLASSIC WATCHES AND PROMPTED THE FORMATION OF A SUCCESSFUL WATCH COMPANY. CUTTER ENCOURAGES UNIVERSITY OF SAINT FRANCIS STUDENTS TO TAP INTO THEIR CURIOSITY WHILE FORGING THEIR INDEPENDENT PATHS.

By the spring of 2018 I'd been buying and selling vintage watches for five years; I found them beautiful and fascinating, though I'd never really had any plan—I was simply curious. What had become clear in that time was that there was a hole in the contemporary watch market, something missing. For those curious, what was missing was a three-register manual-wind integrated chronograph for under \$2,000; for those who just went cross-eyed, it's a type of watch that had once been common and reasonably priced for three decades, and now didn't exist. That lack frustrated me, so I decided to do something about it.

Plus, there was the fact that American watchmaking had, until the middle of the 20th century, been a huge industry, and had set global standards for accuracy. Many of those companies had Midwest roots—Elgin in Illinois, Ball in Ohio, Illinois in Wisconsin (I'm kidding—they were in Illinois, too). I have a larger-than-average chip on my shoulder about the Midwest, and I grew increasingly frustrated that this industrial legacy of ours had just vanished. Beyond that, in the years I'd been paying attention to watches, prices had skyrocketed—vintage watches had become a much bigger asset class. While there wasn't anything necessarily bad about that, it frustrated me that prices were making it harder for young people to buy a quality watch.

So, I started Haven, and we released our first watches in 2019, released the first tie-dyed chronograph ever as a limited edition in 2021, and then released another limited edition in 2022, this time a chronograph with the date at 9 (it's a tiny detail,



but, in the world of watches, the location of a date on the dial is a Big Deal). We released two new models in the fall of 2022—a dive watch and a GMT—and we'll be releasing another chronograph this year. All our watches retail for under \$2,000, which is a lot of money, but in watches, it's not much.

There've been challenges and difficulties in starting a watch company while a full-time professor, husband and dad of three. That said, the fun Haven offers feels very similar to the fun of writing, or the fun some of us find in a classroom: the open-ended inquiry, of being able to follow one's curiosity. More than anything, it's monumentally satisfying to make the thing you feel like you can't find; I don't imagine the pleasure from that abates anytime soon.

POINTING PEOPLE TO
JESUS



VICE PRESIDENT FOR CATHOLIC CULTURE AND STUDENT LIFE SR. MARIA GEMMA SALYER, OSF, TRIES TO FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI. SHE SEEKS TO HELP OTHERS SEE JESUS THE WAY ST. FRANCIS SAW HIM.

During Sr. Maria Gemma Salyer's freshman year at Ohio Dominican University, a theology professor posed a question that became embedded in her mind.

"Have you ever thought about religious life?" the professor asked the group of students. "You are all young women who love your faith. It should be something you think about."

Sr. Maria Gemma remembers her first reaction at hearing the question. "No one had ever said that, ever, to me. No, thank you," she recalls thinking.

Still, the question lingered. Born in California and raised in Newark, Ohio, Sr. Maria Gemma grew up Catholic. She drifted from the faith during her first two years at Ohio Dominican, she said. Then, during Christmas break of her junior year, she felt God speaking to her. "He asked me two questions: 'Who are you?' and 'Who do you want to be?' I didn't know who I was, but I knew I wasn't who I wanted to be. That was the shift in my life. I went to confession for the first time in a long time and after I left there, the memory of my theology professor came back to me," she said.

"I had spent a couple of years trying to find happiness for myself and failed miserably. God knows why he created me—let me try that."

From there, Sr. Maria Gemma began to pursue her purpose. Feeling called to religious life, she explored various religious orders. After conversations with a friend pursuing the priesthood, she realized how much she wanted to emulate St. Francis, who was radically transformed by Jesus and the Gospel, and inspired many to follow Jesus.

During the fall of her senior year, she visited the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration—the University of Saint Francis sponsor—in Mishawaka, Indiana. "I drove onto the grounds and felt his peace come over me," she said. "This is

my home." She became a postulant the following fall after graduating from Ohio Dominican.

While Sr. Maria Gemma pursued her perpetual vows, she taught theology at Central Catholic High School in Lafayette, Indiana, and helped with campus ministry. After that, the Sisters assigned her to the motherhouse in Mishawaka to live and work with the Sisters in formation. She then earned a master's degree in philosophy at Franciscan University of Steubenville (Ohio) before an assignment to the University of Saint Francis. She earned a doctorate from Indiana State University this summer.

Sr. Maria Gemma's new role as vice president for Catholic culture and student life allows her to help Saint Francis deepen its Catholic identity while pointing students of all faiths to Jesus.

"Our students are why we are here," she said. "The Catholic identity and culture of the institution is central to how we engage with students. They come here for a degree, but it's not just a transaction. If they leave this place and haven't heard of Jesus, that's our fault. They come for transformation, whether they know it or not."

During her time on campus, Sr. Maria Gemma says she has felt a natural unity between Christians of all denominations, whether students, faculty or staff. The common ground is a faith centered on Jesus.

"Our students are interested in Christian unity," she said. "When we focus on Jesus, we have a lot more in common than when we focus on something else."

Sr. Maria Gemma says she remains inspired by St. Francis and his example of giving and serving to point people to Jesus. Everything St. Francis did was predicated on "gazing at Jesus," she said.

"Being Catholic and being who we are in our Catholic identity allows us to embrace others," she said. "If we don't know who we are, we can't embrace others in who they are. In modern culture, those who follow Jesus are closer than ever before. We have so many Christian brothers and sisters who work here in unity. We're united and it looks so different from the world's culture. It's 100% an exciting time to be at Saint Francis and make our institution a light to the world."

EDUCATION *and* CARE

BY YVONNE SCHROEDER

MELANIE BOOSEY (MHA '21) NEVER STOPS LEADING—AND LEARNING—AS SHE WORKS TO HELP FAMILIES THRIVE THROUGH HER CAREER IN PERINATAL NURSING.

Melanie Boosey added a master's degree in health administration to her nursing resume 20 years after her bachelor's degree to become the best version of herself—and the best leader for obstetric nurses, expectant mothers, new babies and families.

"I wanted to be a nurse since I was a child," said the 2021 Saint Francis MHA graduate, now working in Indianapolis for Franciscan Health. "I got into nursing to help others. I love babies and the birthing experience. I love sharing that special moment with families. I became a leader several years ago and worked my way up to the manager position. I knew that I wanted to be the best manager for my co-workers, families and physicians. Furthering my education in healthcare administration was an easy decision to help me support the team."

A registered nurse with 15 years of experience in a level III Women and Children's Birthing Center, she can speak expertly on the changes in support for expectant mothers, newborns and families during her time in the field.

"We have come a long way in supporting mothers and their babies through pregnancy and delivery, because research leads to improved practices," she said.

Strides have been made to help mothers in labor position themselves for vaginal deliveries rather than Caesarean sections, which are less safe. Early treatment of severe hypertension during pregnancy now helps prevent lifelong cardiac disease. Timely recognition and treatment of postpartum hemorrhages keeps conditions from worsening to life-threatening levels.

When the opioid crisis emerged, new practices for treating addicted mothers developed. "We have learned more about how the brain works, and changes occurring due to opioid use during pregnancy," she said. "We understand addiction as a brain disease. We have learned better ways to treat substance use disorders in pregnancy and postpartum, and we support the family along the way."

Perinatal obstetric nursing provides crucial education, because some expectant mothers are still in the dark about pregnancy and birth.

"Education is a major piece to providing obstetrical care," she said. "Expectant mothers need to know what to watch for: fetal movements and when to call providers; signs of preeclampsia (elevated blood pressure which can be life-threatening); and warning signs related to pregnancy, birth and the postpartum period."

Don't believe everything you read on social media, she advises expectant mothers. "The internet can be great, but there is also disinformation out there that can be dangerous. We encourage patients to attend pregnancy and birth classes, and my hospital has an OB nurse navigator to assist women throughout their pregnancies."

There's no "all clear" whistle when postpartum mothers return home. Boosey hopes for changes in the support for women and children after the hospital setting.

"After discharge can be the most challenging," she said. "Major complications can occur the first week postpartum, and the follow-up for most mothers is six weeks. That is too long to wait in most cases."

Unfortunately, Indiana ranks high in maternal and infant mortality, but that is changing, she said.

"Indiana has created a maternal mortality review committee to investigate causes, and enacted laws to improve outcomes. Gov. Holcomb supports laws giving mothers access to the care they need for a healthy



pregnancy and birth. Changes in Medicaid have expanded coverage for the pregnancy and after the postpartum period.”

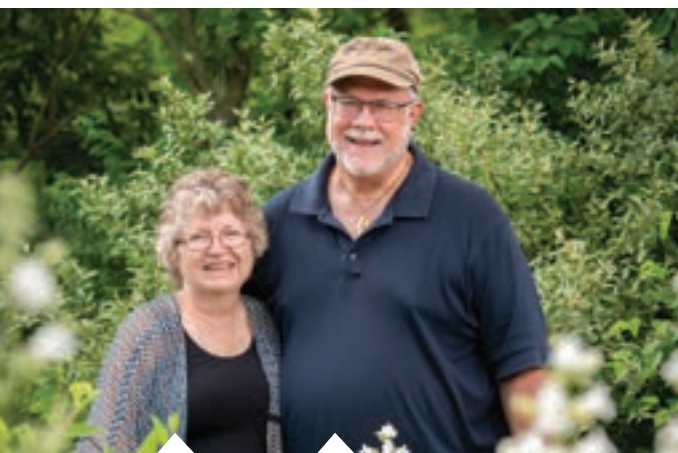
Perinatal obstetrical nurses can now give a broader range of care. “Professional organizations such as the Association of Women’s Health, Obstetrics and Neonatal Nurses have improved care through research, education and staffing guidelines,” she said. “Through the Perinatal Levels of Care Law, we are able to staff the obstetrics areas and send the mother to the level of care she may need.”

Boosey felt well supported by cohort students and professors while pursuing her MHA at Saint Francis. “I gained confidence and knowledge through the program and feel I am a better leader because of it,” she said. “I have a better understanding of human resources, finance and what it means to be a Franciscan leader.”

She’s proud of her MHA and encourages registered nurses pursuing advanced degrees to consider it. “There are other programs, including the MHA, for nurses looking for a leadership position. They are not limited to advanced nursing degrees. I like how my degree differs from the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN).”

My Favorite PROFESSOR

A callout to Saint Francis alumni to pick their favorite professors struck a chord—and showed it's impossible to choose just one. More than 100 professors were mentioned by those who responded.



Leading.

“Doc (Larry) and Katie Wiedman—no doubt the best combo couple ever.”

Daniel McCarty (BS '17)

Encouraging.

*“My mind immediately goes to **Dr. Amy Obringer**, professor of biology, Formula for Life faculty advisor, mentor and, most importantly, friend. Not only was Dr. Obringer one of the best professors I've ever had the pleasure to have, but she also pushed us (the students) to our very best potential. I recall reaching back out to Dr. Obringer during my very first year of medical school, telling her how well prepared I was for all my courses, even compared to students who came from Ivy League universities! I truly believe I was able to excel in my medical school coursework due to the teachings of Dr. Obringer. Not only was Dr. Obringer one of the best professors I've met, she also was, and still is to this day, an amazing mentor. Perhaps the best attribute of Dr. Obringer is her true selflessness and willingness to give to others. As a graduate of USF, I still appreciate the Franciscan values, and Dr. Obringer exudes these naturally. I could not and would not be the pediatrician I am today without Dr. Obringer's mentorship along the way. And to her, I can only simply say, ‘Thank you.’”*

Chelsey Caldwell Hahn (BS '11)



Captivating.

“For me, it’s a four-way tie. I loved every class in the biology department with *Dr. Richard Hurley* and *Dr. Gary Tieben*. ‘*Dr. Sister*’ *Dorothy (Schlaeger)* was amazing in biochemistry. I always smile when I remember *Dr. Earl Kumfer* pausing during a New Testament discussion to add, ‘This is a pun in Aramaic!’”

Julie Voirol (BS '83)



Inspiring.

“Professor *Dave Johnson* was an excellent teacher. He really took time to learn about his students and how to inspire them to be their very best. He definitely left a lasting impression on me.”

Mary Jo Hayes (BSN '17)

Motivating.

“My favorite will forever and always be the late *Rick Miller*. He took the computer science program to another level from that small closet-sized room in PJP11 to having what they have now, truly awesome. He taught me to never settle and always lead with hope and walk with courage. May he rest in peace.”

Reggie Telemaque (BS '22)

“I concur with (Reggie Telemaque) 100%. *Rick Miller* taught us the meaning of life beyond computers and technology.”

Sam Eastman (BS '21)



Influencing.

“I named my daughter after *Jane Martin*—she made such an impact on my life. She is an encouraging mentor and life coach! Always helping students to shine bright, even during the darkest times.”

Stephanie (Goebbert) Smith (BA '14)



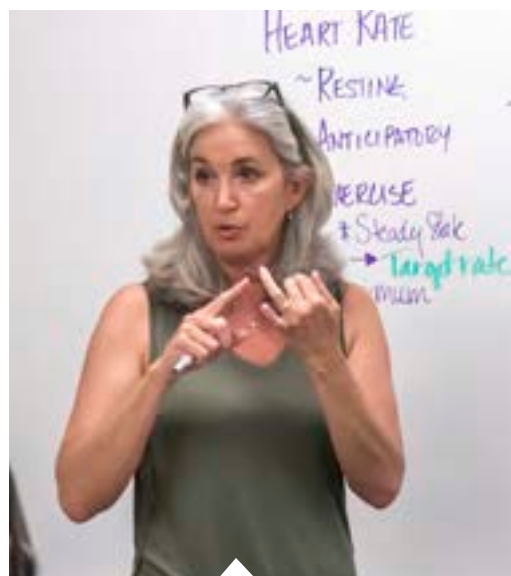
Stimulating.

“So hard to pick just one! *Rick Cartwright, (Maurice) Maury Papier and Sufi Ahmad.* Impactful, visionaries, insightful, inspiring mentors.”

Heather Gaff (BA '98)

“*Rick Cartwright* was a mentor, an inspiration, a friend and a confidant. He helped me stretch the limits of my capability. He was tough, fair and understanding. I will never forget him in my experience at the University of Saint Francis. I wish I could have the opportunity to speak to his wife Louise and tell her what he meant to me. I was so sorry to hear about his passing.”

Ted Ornas (AA '83)



Engaging.

“I’ll never forget *Shawn Ambrose*. He was passionate about business operations and brought kindness to his lessons that was always engaging. He recognized when students struggled with concepts and took time to break down the material until we understood. Philosophical differences were always welcomed and debated respectfully. I was sad to hear of his passing. His classes were a highlight of my undergraduate degree.”

Thomas Seabold (BA '18)

Guiding.

“*Katie Wiedman* (pictured on page 22), *Beverly Moellering* and *Valerie Powers*. It’s hard to choose just one! I would not be where I am without the roles they played in my time at USF!”

Haylee Shirkey (BS '17, MHA '21)



Clarifying.

“Dr. (Louise) Weber never fails to make me feel understood and her knowledge about the natural world is so inspiring.”

Abby Westropp
(current student)



Informing.

“Dr. Wendy Clark was always so encouraging and full of information to get me through my MSN program.”

Kayla Bauman
(MSN '13)

Energizing.

“Alan Nauts has a magical and magnetic personality. At the time, he was still working for a successful ad agency and teaching at Saint Francis. He was able to bring real-world experience and perspective to the classroom. He always gave constructive and positive feedback that made his students better. He made you want to be better.”

Carla (Satchwell) Pyle
(BA '00, MOL '22)

“Tie between Alan Nauts and Cara Lee Wade. I'd never have made it close to as far, career-wise, without them.”

Patrick Taylor (BA '07)

“Cara Lee Wade. There is no other choice.”

Jen Mignard (ASN '08)

Understanding.

“Mason Roberts is hands down the best professor at USF. She has so much passion for what she does and all she wants is for her students to succeed. She is so knowledgeable and extremely understanding. I have looked up to her since the day I met her. I hope that I will be at least half as great of a nurse as she is. She made me recognize my true calling to critical care and now I'm officially an ER nurse! There are truly not enough words to describe this woman. She is amazing!”

Brianna Sartuche (BSN '23)

Caring.

“Mary Kay Solon was the very first person I met when I visited USF on college visit and ultimately was one of the main reasons I came to that university—because of how kind, caring and understanding she was from the moment I met her. She was an incredible professor who explained every topic with great detail and was easy to understand. She took the time to listen to each student's questions and concerns. She truly cared about every single person.”

Mary Williams (BS '15)

Supporting.

“The first person who came to mind was Sr. Kate (Katherine Haffner). Her psychology classes were fun and interesting. She was a huge supporter of student athletes—attended many events.”

Marsha Reimbold (BBA '94)





Teacher. Mentor. Friend.

Rick Cartwright's influence extends beyond the physical confines of the University of Saint Francis.



“Rick was an incredible man—teacher, mentor, friend—and the art school would not be what it is without his leadership, his touch, his inspiration, his guidance, his tenacity and his willingness to fight for everything he believed his students needed.”

Assistant Professor of Graphic Design Alan Nauts (BA '82, MA '05)

Friends, colleagues and former students will forever remember Rick Cartwright’s high standards (“Good is not good enough”). They’ll think of his encouragement—and critiques—and feel motivated to do better. Even University of Saint Francis alumni who never took a class under him during his 42 years on campus benefited from his unrelenting push to do whatever was best for all students.

“Rick was an incredible man—teacher, mentor, friend—and the art school would not be what it is without his leadership, his touch, his inspiration, his guidance, his tenacity and his willingness to fight for everything he believed his students needed,” said Assistant Professor of Graphic Design Alan Nauts (BA '82, MA '05), a former student who became a close friend of Cartwright and has taught at Saint Francis for more than two decades.

Cartwright died on May 25 after a battle with cancer. He was a member of the Saint Francis faculty from 1975 until his retirement in 2017. He was the founding dean of the School of Creative Arts in 2004 and served as dean until his retirement.

“Rick was my father away from home, keeping me out of trouble, and lovingly opening his home and family to me and my brother,” said Michael Palmer, Ph.D. (BA '86), who called his time at Saint Francis the most influential of his life. “So many wonderful memories of laughter and happiness. Just a great human being. Saint Francis and hundreds of students are better because of Rick.”

“He was always the guy I worked hardest for and tried to please the most,” said Amy Shreffler Sutter (BA '96, MFA '05). “He had such a great way of both pushing hard and praising to get the most out of his kids. I loved the art program at USF so much as an undergrad, and because of Rick’s influence I went back for my MFA. He was an amazing teacher.”

There’s no such thing as a “short list” of Cartwright’s accomplishments.

He forged the School of Creative Arts, then added programs in music technology, pre-art therapy, art history, museum studies with the Fort Wayne Museum of Art and dance in partnership with the Fort Wayne Ballet. He established a theater program and continued to build the Jesters performance group into a nationally recognized program featuring people with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD). Under his guidance, USF was accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) in 2004.

Cartwright led 756 students on 19 European trips as part of a global education, visiting all the major art museums of the Western world in 12 countries.

“He was just so engaged and interested in wanting the University to succeed, and wanting me to succeed,” President Emerita Sr. M. Elise Kriss, OSF, said. “It almost felt like he was a mentor to me as president.”

Cartwright worked with Sr. Elise on a variety of projects, including restoration of the Bass Mansion (now Brookside), launching of the Mimi and Ian Rolland Art and Visual Communication Center, development of the downtown site and visioning for the St. Francis Chapel.

“That was the type of person he was—he dug into something and got it done,” Sr. Elise said.



Nauts vividly remembers his undergraduate courses under Cartwright. The classes would meet every Thursday morning and, inevitably, Nauts and his peers would pull all-nighters trying to finish the five required artworks that would reach the critical eye of Cartwright that morning.

“All of us who had Rick as a teacher remember how he taught and how he encouraged his students,” Nauts said. “He could be funny and quite the character—and he could also be pretty intimidating during a critique. His intent was always to make us better artists and designers.”

Nauts said Cartwright was proud of taking so many students to Europe, allowing them to expand their worldview—in art, certainly, but in multiple other ways as well. Cartwright emphasized to his students to avoid stagnation. Pursue ideas. Pursue art. Pursue life.

“Rick was a visionary,” Nauts said. “He didn’t finish something and say, ‘OK, we’re good.’ It was always, ‘What are we going to do next?’”

SERVANT'S Heart

A lifelong learner, Deacon Daniel Avila spent much of his career fighting for issues close to the Catholic Church. Today, he works faithfully for two parishes, a reflection of his servant's heart.



**“I HAVE SET YOU AN EXAMPLE
THAT YOU SHOULD DO AS I
HAVE DONE FOR YOU.”**

John 13:15 NIV

Deacon Daniel Avila (BA '80, MA '16) had already graduated from Saint Francis College by the time he learned the story surrounding his birth. As surprising as it was to hear and comprehend, the revelation reinforced his belief that God has a plan for everyone's life.

Avila, a native of rural Roanoke, Indiana, was born with a cleft palate and a malformed eyelid, the result of a Vitamin B deficiency. “The doctor told my mom that I would probably not develop intellectually and physically, so it would be better if she didn't see me and he would arrange to have me put in an institution,” Avila said.

Phyllis and Frank Avila vehemently disagreed.

“My mom said, ‘Bring my son in here, I want to hold him,’” Avila said. “The story is, she started crying and the doctor or nurse said, ‘See, I told you this is too difficult.’ But my mom said, ‘I'm not crying because of all that, but because I'm realizing the challenges he's going to go through in life.’”

Avila experienced challenges, no question. But he faced each one head-on and proved to be a committed ally in the fight for the unique dignity of every person. Once erroneously deemed unlikely to thrive, he became a multi-degree lawyer, national pro-life lobbyist, adjunct USF professor and now a deacon serving St. Joseph Catholic Church in Roanoke, Indiana, and St. Catherine of Alexandria Church (Nix Settlement) in Whitley County, Indiana. He and his wife Elaine have a grown daughter, Miriam, and a shared devotion to service.

“I've had a very full life,” Avila said. “I've loved every moment.”

Avila's lifelong commitment to pro-life causes, from abortion to euthanasia, first strengthened when he was thrown in jail as a Saint Francis student in 1978.

“This was a time of sit-in movements at abortion clinics,” Avila said. “My mom was really active in Nurses Concerned for Life and pro-life was a big thing in our house. So, I decided to go to the local clinic to sit in, but I didn't tell my parents until I had to call them from jail. I remember being arrested and put with a group of people in the wagon and everyone was asking, ‘What are you in for?’ They said stealing or assault and I said, ‘I'm in for sitting in at an abortion clinic.’ They said, ‘Cool, man, that's great.’ So, I had support even then.”



Avila, who earned a fine arts degree at Saint Francis and continues to create art today, pursued law school at Valparaiso University (JD '83) and launched a career in working for pro-life causes. He met Elaine when both were part of a pro-life group in Speedway, Indiana. “Elaine keeps me centered,” he said.

Over the course of his career, Avila served as a legislative director and lobbyist for Massachusetts Citizens for Life; chief staff counsel for the National Legal Center for the Medically Dependent and Disabled; associate director for policy and research for the Massachusetts Catholic Conference; policy advisor for marriage and family, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; and an independent consultant on legal and policy issues.

“I have worked through an onslaught of cultural challenges that the bishops and their allies have faced on all sides,” Avila said. “You can't fit the Church into a box, especially lobbying for bishops. Some days, I was shoulder to shoulder with advocates on poverty issues or healthcare or disability rights—they were sometimes people who were our opponents on abortion or cloning or same-sex marriage. That's the beauty of the Church. You can't brand us right or left.”

Avila returned to USF for his master's degree in theology, which he earned in 2016. He then taught theology and philosophy as an adjunct for seven years before retiring in May.

The path to becoming a deacon presented another challenge for Avila, a lifelong learner. With Elaine's encouragement, he considered serving the Church in a new role. “He has always been vibrant in the Church, singing in the church choir and teaching religious ed, always involved,” Elaine said. “When we were first engaged, I said Dan would be great as a deacon and, 30 years later, it happened.”

For Avila, ordained in January 2023, his latest journey is a natural and joyful one, tied to his faith in God and his commitment to serving all people.

“Besides charitable outreach and liturgy, teaching is a very important function of the deacon,” Avila said. “Father Dale (Bauman of St. Joseph Catholic Church) asked me to put on talks and things like that. I love to learn and to share in ways people can appreciate. As I tell people, I'm still learning. I'm still a baby deacon.”



WISCONSIN²⁰²³ FIELD STUDIES





OUT IN THE FIELD

Saint Francis students on the Wisconsin Field Studies trip last spring felt some wear and tear—in a good way—after a two-day, overnight hike, which included 22 miles on the tough terrain of the Ice Age Trail in Kettle Moraine State Forest Northern Unit. “Most of them came back with blisters, but they all expressed how awesome the hike was with the beautiful sights and different terrains and ecosystems,” said Assistant Professor of Biology Jenny Maldonado (BS ’04, MS ’10), who led the trip.

Other highlights included witnessing bird migration at the Wyalusing State Park and bald eagles at Effigy Mounds National Monument, hiking Devil’s Lake State Park and Gibraltar Rock State Natural Area and canoeing a portion of the Kickapoo River, one of the country’s oldest and “zigzag-iest,” Maldonado said.

The trip—as part of the class mission—allowed students to observe, interact and increase their awareness within the natural environment, and experience responsible, cooperative learning in the outdoors to develop a deep care for creation within the Franciscan tradition.



FOR THE LOVE OF

Mimi Rolland's influence will live on at Saint Francis

A love of art—and a dedication to encouraging and supporting young people—permeated the lives of Mimi and Ian Rolland, and their legacy is forever secure at the University of Saint Francis.

Visitors will always be reminded of the couple's support and commitment when they enter the Mimi and Ian Rolland Art and Visual Communication Center on the southeast side of campus. Those who were personally touched by the Rollands will never forget them.

Mimi Rolland, 90, died on Aug. 19, leaving lasting memories of friendship and support for Saint Francis, which she demonstrated along with her late husband Ian, who died in 2017.

"I will miss being able to spend time with her," Saint Francis President Emerita Sister M. Elise Kriss, OSF, said. "Spending time with her was enjoyable—and an honor, really."

Ian Rolland, who earned a national reputation in business as CEO of Lincoln National Corporation, began serving on the Saint Francis College board under then-President Sister JoEllen Sheetz in 1979. That was the beginning of a decades-long relationship between Ian and Mimi Rolland and Saint Francis.

The late Rick Cartwright sold the idea of turning a dilapidated Standard Oil facility into the Creative Arts home that now carries the Rollands' names. The couple was impressed with Cartwright's vision for how Saint Francis could grow its creative arts program in a renovated campus home. They also worked closely with Sister Elise, who served 27 years as Saint Francis president, as the program developed.

"Rick demonstrated his vision to us, and Mimi was drawn to it also," Ian said in 2014. "The first time in the building I thought, 'You've got to be nuts, this place is a mess.' But you can't say no to Rick, and Lincoln used to say I couldn't say no to a nun. So now, it's a special place."

Ian Rolland encouraged other board members and community leaders to support Saint Francis, and he and Mimi led the way with their commitment to philanthropy. Arts United presented them with a Lifetime Achievement Award and they were honored by the American Red Cross, the United Way and many other community organizations.



Saint Francis awarded Mimi with a Doctor of Humane Letters in 2016.

While Ian used his business savvy to assist various organizations, Mimi often brought the extra personal touch that epitomized the couple's caring personalities.

"She doesn't like boards and structure and decisions, and is more comfortable with one-on-one and small groups," Ian said in 2014. "She contributes to individuals, schools and the inner city. I can do the boards and the organizational stuff. I prefer it and it works out pretty well that way."

Mimi worked with the East Wayne Street Center and led Girl Scouts, among many volunteer activities.

The couple's love of art was evident to those who visited their home, and they shared artwork with others, including donating a collection to Saint Francis. They also left a Mimi and Ian Rolland Endowed Scholarship to Saint Francis.

Their impact on Saint Francis will live on in the Mimi and Ian Rolland Art and Visual Communication Center—and in the hearts of those who experienced the couple's kindness and generosity.

MIMI



FAITH

in action

OT Ochieng (BA '78) and Kim (Judson) Ochieng (BA '81) met at Saint Francis College in the late 1970s. They've made an impact for God together for more than four decades.



The biggest challenge in sharing even a sliver of the life story of Otieno “OT” and Kim Ochieng lies in deciding where to begin.

Drop in at nearly any point and you’ll be fascinated and inspired. We could start with their dedication to bringing fresh water to OT’s homeland of Kenya, where the couple has been instrumental in establishing 13 new sources of water—improving the health of countless families. We could start with the Sango Association, the organization they founded to provide tuition assistance to high-school bound

students in rural Kenya communities—an endeavor that has helped more than 250 students to reach the university level over the last 20 years. We could start with how they rallied people in the Village Church of Barrington to enthusiastically support both projects and take mission trips abroad.

We could even start with the contagious, upbeat personalities of OT and Kim, faith-filled people who could persuade anyone to jump on board to help them in about five minutes.



Photography by Steve Vordeman



**“In the same way,
faith by itself, if it
is not accompanied
by action, is dead.”**

James 2:17 NIV

Let’s just start at Saint Francis College, where it all began.

“For Kim and me,” OT said, “Saint Francis was the foundation of our life.”

OT’s older brother brought him to the United States when OT was 17, a true stranger in a strange land, far from his home village of Ka Wanyande. “Think of going to the moon,” OT said. “That’s how different it was. I grew up in a hut in a village where everybody knew everybody. We’d never seen an airplane. How does it even fly? Then I’m in Philadelphia. The culture change was very hard.”

OT ended up at Saint Francis on a scholarship to play soccer and study business marketing. Kim, who grew up near Goshen, Indiana, started her academic career at Saint Francis when OT was a senior in the fall of 1977.

“It was a small campus, and you couldn’t help but notice OT—everybody knew him,” Kim said. “I thought he was a little crazy. We’re two very different people who came together.”

“Very, very, very different—I remember the nuns saying that,” OT said.

Friendship and romance blossomed and by Kim’s sophomore year, OT proposed. He first insisted on securing the approval of Kim’s parents. They immediately gave their blessing. “I think they surprised him,” Kim said.

The couple married in 1978. OT started his career, first with Johnson Wax before he went into a long-term career in pharmaceutical sales. Kim finished her degree in commercial art in 1981. OT’s career took them to homes in Kentucky, Wisconsin, Oregon, Canada and Kenya before settling in Hoffman Estates, Illinois, where they live now. “OT’s plan was to go home to Kenya after college and I kind of put a wrench in that. God had a different plan,” Kim said. Kim spent her career in insurance, working for Zurich American Insurance, based in Schaumburg, Illinois.

They raised two children—son Okado and daughter Akelo—and became increasingly compelled to act on OT’s desire to help people in his native land. Their empathy was rooted in the personal: One of OT’s older brothers died from typhoid fever due to drinking contaminated water.

“Our missions pastor, who is also a good friend, met with OT one day and said, ‘If you could do anything for your village in Kenya, what would you do?’” Kim said. “OT said, ‘Clean water.’ Out of that developed a plan and a fundraising campaign to drill a borehole for fresh water. We did one by OT’s village and another on a piece of land a gentleman had donated to the community to build a clinic. Their main building is the Barrington Building.”

OT and his group eventually took their mission to Rotary International and raised additional funds to continue the fresh-water work. Other mission projects developed, including helping Kenyans learn to teach Bible school, supplying eyeglasses and bringing personal hygiene products to young Kenyan girls. OT and Kim own a home in Kenya, so they have a place to stay when they or other missionaries visit.

“The best part in what we have done—with a few people from my tribe who live in the Chicagoland area—is the Sango Association,” OT said. “The purpose is to educate kids in high school and help the very brightest eventually go to university.”

Children in Kenya must pay tuition to go to high school, most of them being boarding schools. Many families cannot afford to do so, as limited income is used for everyday needs. “These kids are hungry for education, but they would be sitting at home if not for these scholarships,” Kim said.

Success stories abound, with young Kenyans progressing to become doctors, nurses, teachers and business professionals. The Sango Association currently supports 55 Kenyan students.

“This has always been in OT’s heart,” Kim said. “He loves his home, and he loves his people. Because God has blessed us so much here, we need to use that and be good stewards. So that has been his motivation.”

The couple point to a favorite Bible passage, James 2:15-17 (NIV): Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes or daily food. If one of you says to them, “Go, I wish you well, keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”

In their commitment to the essence of those verses, OT and Kim Ochieng guarantee their compelling and inspirational story remains far from finished.



From the left: David Rhodes, Dr. Tracy Stewart, Dr. Lewis Pearson, Ben Adams, Dr. Wendy Clark and Danielle Peterson

Saint Francis names interim vice presidents, dean

Saint Francis announced three positions will be filled on an interim basis for the 2023-24 academic year: David Rhodes as interim vice president for enrollment management, Dr. Tracy Stewart as interim vice president for academic affairs and Dr. Lewis Pearson as interim dean of the College of Arts, Sciences and Business. Rhodes' career in higher education and enrollment management spans nearly 40 years and includes extensive work in admissions, financial aid, international student services and retention. Dr. Stewart has served in a variety of capacities in higher education, including vice president, provost, department chair and assistant and associate professor. Dr. Pearson began his Saint Francis journey as an assistant professor of philosophy in 2010. By 2023, his title and job duties had evolved to professor of philosophy and philosophy course coordinator.

Ben Adams joins Saint Francis as CIO

Ben Adams joined the University of Saint Francis as chief information officer (CIO). He is responsible for information technology strategy, budgeting and leadership across the university. Ben began May 15 through the university's contract with Ellucian. He graduated from Fordham University and has an MSE in Technology Management from the University of Pennsylvania. Adams brings his experience as CIO at The College of St. Scholastica, CTO at The Davidson Academy of Nevada and Senior Director Education IT at NYU Langone School of Medicine to his role at USF. In addition to his education and IT leadership experience, he brings teaching experience and a background in analytics.

Clark, Peterson win Saint Francis teaching awards

Dr. Wendy Clark and Danielle Peterson were honored with 2023 campus awards. Dr. Clark, professor in the nursing program, received the Teaching Excellence and Campus Leadership Award, given annually to a full-time faculty member. Peterson, assistant professor in the social work program, received the LeePoxey Award for Teaching Excellence. The LeePoxey Award recognizes outstanding performance in the classroom and other direct teaching arenas, such as clinical placements, art studios, labs, field studies and distance learning.



Saint Francis celebrates new MLK monument

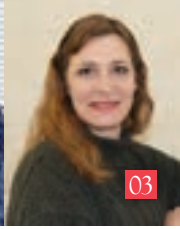
USF enthusiastically hosted the 60th Anniversary Celebration commemorating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s speech in Fort Wayne in 1963. The celebration took place in conjunction with the Pillars of Hope and Justice Monument Dedication, held on June 5 at the corner of Main and Ewing streets. Martin Luther King, III, spoke at the event and at the celebration inside the Robert Goldstine Performing Arts Center. He delivered a speech from the same spot as his father spoke exactly 60 years earlier.



01



02



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class notes

keeping connected with alumni and friends

1970s

01 Jim Pickett (BSE '72, ELEDM '78) a retired teacher, recently released his fourth book in the Kekionga series that covers local and the old Northwest Territory from 1790 to 1813. The historical fiction adventure, "The Taming of Kekionga: 1812-1813," addresses the Indian wars and the War of 1812. More information is at jimpickettbooks.com.

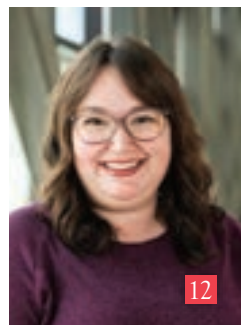
1990s

Linda Otis (BSN '92) won the Most Innovative Research Study award at the Parkview Research Symposium in November. Parkview based the award on the study that was the most creative, addressed a problem and improved a process. The title of the research study was "Postoperative Vital Signs: Traditional Versus Evidence Based." **02 Dr. Joseph Steensma (BS '94)** received the "Excellence in Mentorship" award at Washington University for his commitment to entrepreneurship. **03 Sabra Combs (AA '96)** started a new job as secretary to the departments of Respiratory Therapy, Simulation and Master of Health Administration in the USF College of Health Sciences. **04 Blue Jacket Executive Director Tony Hudson (MA '99)** and the entire staff of Blue Jacket, Inc., celebrated receiving an award as the 2023 Greater Fort Wayne Inc.'s Nonprofit of the Year.

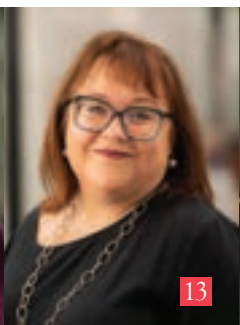
2000s

David Luetzelschwab (BS '02) became Midwest business development manager at Curtis Metal Finishing Group. **05 Amos Norman (BSW '05)** received the Mad Ants' inaugural Community Stewardship Award, in conjunction with Black History Month. He was recognized for serving

our community through the YMCA of Greater Fort Wayne. The award recognizes members of the Fort Wayne community who work daily to improve the lives of those less fortunate in areas including education, mentoring, volunteering, donating and coaching. Amos is the district executive director with the YMCA of Greater Fort Wayne overseeing Renaissance Pointe YMCA, Metro Skyline and the Youth Service Bureau branches. **Jeremy Rice (BBA '05, BSN '18)** started a new position as director, supply chain integration at Parkview Health. **Heather Bontempo (BBA '06, MBA '08)** joined 3Rivers Federal Credit Union as the community engagement manager. **Amber (Wallace) Gingerich (AS '06)** reunited with Goshen Health-Goshen Physicians OBGYN. **Marc McMillen (BA '06)** started a new position as vice president creative, partner at LABOV. **06 Nikki Quintana (BBA '07)**, executive director, Fort Wayne Metropolitan Human Relations Commission, was a panelist at Greater Fort Wayne Inc. Women's Network event highlighting multicultural leaders and the impact they are making in the community. The discussion, entitled "Embrace Equity: A Discussion on Cultural Advancement for Women," honored International Women's Day 2023.



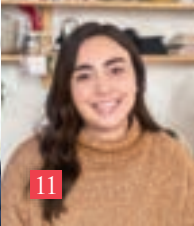
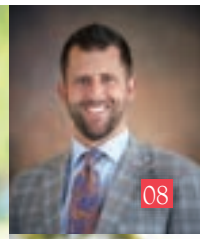
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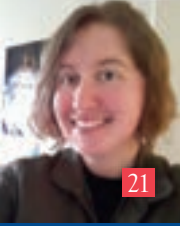
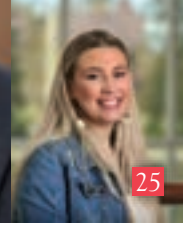
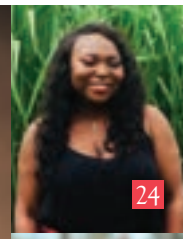


2010s

Reneta Thurairatnam (MBA '11) was promoted to first vice president, senior wealth advisor, in Lake City Bank's Wealth Advisory Group. She has been with the bank for more than eight years. **Amy (McKee) Davis (BA '12)** and Blaine Davis welcomed their first child, a boy named Arlo Winston Davis. **07 Natalie Leedy (AS '12)** accepted a position as project manager for the USF College of Health Sciences. **08 Jonathan T. Lehman (BSE '12)**, partner and private wealth advisor at Summit Financial Group, earned the Chartered Life Underwriter (CLU) designation from the American College of Financial Services. This is in addition to the Chartered Financial Consultant (ChFC), Wealth Management Certified Professional (WMCP) and Retirement Income Certified Professional (RICP) designations he previously held. **09 Tony Moore (BBA '12)** became a financial planner with Westpoint Financial Group and obtained a Series 6 certification from the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority. Tony also became an assistant football coach at Saint Francis. **Cassandra DeGood, J.D. (BA '14)** started a new position as child services attorney at Indiana Department of Child Services. **10 Thea Smekens (BA '14)** is the director of First-Generation Student Success, a newly created position at Ohio Wesleyan University. **Mike Zawahri (MBA '14)** joined Howard Bailey's operations team as director of finance. **11 Jasmine Bejar (BA '15)** celebrated her promotion to content strategist at One Lucky Guitar on her two-year anniversary.

12 Katie Bell (BA '15) joined USF as assistant director of annual giving. Katie will lead fundraising efforts for annual giving and expand areas of donor engagement. **13 Gretchen Johnson (MSE '15)** is USF data, information and reporting manager in the Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness. **14 Samantha (Goddard) Phend (BA '16)** earned a certification as a Meta Certified Digital Marketing Associate. **Kyle Sovine (BBA '16, MBA '17)** became the new boys basketball coach at Heritage High School. **15 Nicholas Yoquelet (BSW '16)** is the clinical director for Lifeline Youth and Family Services and oversees all clinical programs for the state of Indiana. **16 Cassandra Mitchell (BA '17, MBA '18)** is a credit analyst at Nucor Corporation. **17 Ashley Roby (MBA '17)** was promoted to controller at USF. **18 Cameron Shackelford (BSW '17)** received recognition at the Indiana Black Expo Fort Wayne Chapter's Unsung Heroes Banquet, which honored African Americans and others who are making positive contributions to the community. He is the coordinator of the Allen County YMCA's Safe Place Program and helps youths in crisis. He is also an organizer of My Brother's Keeper, a group that provides mentoring and scholarships to African American teenagers. **Cadence Faurote (BA '18)** is the executive assistant to the vice president for Catholic culture and student life at USF. **19 Renee Hammond (MHA '18, MOL '20)** passed the Nursing Professional Development certification exam. **Mollie Shutt (BA '18)** is an account executive at Catalyst Marketing Design, Inc.





in memoriam

Friends of Saint Francis

- Mary Baldus
- Dottie Carpenter (Doctor of Humane Letters '19)
- Rick Cartwright
- James Griffith
- Dr. Julie A. (Gauss) Howenstine
- Suzanne Libbing
- Mimi Rolland (Doctor of Humane Letters '16)

1950s

- Beverly Grote '51*, '97

1960s

- Cathy Brown '60*
- Martha (Gatzemeier) Haag '61
- Nancy Delaney '63*
- Georgia Grady '64
- Lois (Hammond) McInnis '66

1970s

- Boris Gosheff '70, '73
- Doris Grandos '70
- Sr. Geraldine Hartke '70, '76
- Shannon Schneider '70
- Gary Bender '71
- Paul Schilb '75
- Tertuliano "Terry" Giraldo '76
- Kathryn Sharp '76
- Rebecca Windmiller '76

2000s

- Caron Lynette (Diehl) Gillenwater '00
- Trina (Brashear) Donahew '08

*St. Joseph School of Nursing

2020s

Macy Burtch (BS '20, BA '20) joined the Human Resources Department at Parkview Health and completed her master's degree in human resources. She also received Kendallville's Young Professional of the Year award. ²⁰ John Jehl (BA '20) is enjoying success with the promotion of the card game Intel, which he developed and designed as a student at USF. His game is available for purchase in several local stores. ²¹ Georgia Lieb (BA '20) is the communication and marketing coordinator at Bishop Luers High School. ²² Bryce Conder (BS '21) is a senior account manager at Blink Marketing, Inc. Ryan Donias (BA '21) worked as a digital artist for the 3D environments in the Marvel film, "Ant-Man & the Wasp: Quantumania." ²³ Nicholas Lucas (BS '21) joined Summit Financial Group and will serve as a financial planning analyst. Bryce Turner (BS '21, MBA '22) is an associate investment advisor at Donaldson Capital Management. Morgan Bair (BS '22) is the spirit director at Indiana Institute of Technology. ²⁴ Jada Baymon (BSW '22) received the YMCA of Greater Fort Wayne Youth Service Bureau Volunteer Award of Service. ²⁵ Alyssa Hoffman (BA '22) is a marketing coordinator at GoldenSun Insights. Jordan Kortenber (BS '22) is a music technology instructor at Mark Murphy's Music. ²⁶ Elizabeth Laker (BS '22, MHA '23) was promoted to assistant director of admissions and completed her Master of Healthcare Administration degree both at USF. ²⁷ Jackson Long (BS '22) is a business development manager at Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership. ²⁸ Katie (Jester) Taylor (BS '22) married Timothy Taylor on May 13 and is a pediatric registered nurse at Parkview Regional Medical Center. ²⁹ Hunter Alles (BSN '23) is a nurse in the cardiovascular intensive care unit at Parkview Regional Medical Center. ³⁰ Emma Bachtel (AA '23) is a program coordinator at Hylant. ²⁹ Kendyhl Black (BSN '23) works in the emergency room as a registered nurse at Parkview Hospital Randallia. ²⁹ Chloe Bowman (BSN '23) is a registered nurse in the emergency room at Parkview Whitley Hospital. ²⁹ Kyndel Buchanan (BSN '23) works in the inpatient oncology unit at Parkview Regional Medical Center. ²⁹ Gabrielle Buday (BSN '23) works in pediatrics with Parkview Regional Medical Center. ²⁹ Olivia Byers (BSN '23) works in the emergency room at Parkview Hospital Randallia. ²⁹ Aerika Campbell (ASN '23) works at the Parkview Heart Institute at Parkview Regional Medical Center. ²⁹ Miranda Eldridge (ASN '23) is an emergency room nurse at Parkview Warsaw. ²⁹ Lauren Etzler (BSN '23) is a labor



and delivery nurse in obstetrics at Parkview Regional Medical Center. ²⁹ **Alisha Farner** (ASN '23) is an obstetrics nurse at Parkview Noble Hospital. ³¹ **Leah Hall** (BA '23) works at TentCraft as a production artist. ²⁹ **Melissa Hall** (ASN '23) works as a community flex nurse for Parkview Health. ²⁹ **Jasmin Hoot** (BSN '23) works as a community flex nurse in the Neurological Unit at Parkview Regional Medical Center. ²⁹ **Hannah Hopkins** (ASN '23) works in the neuro trauma unit as a registered nurse at Parkview Hospital Randallia. ²⁹ **Brittany Jones** (ASN '23) is an emergency room nurse in obstetrics at Parkview Hospital Randallia. **Ally Keaffaber** (BS '23) works at MedPro Group as a commercial lines account executive. ²⁹ **Meleah Kunkel** (BSN '23) is a labor and delivery nurse in Medical/Surgical at Parkview Noble Hospital. ²⁹ **Natalie**

Montoya (BSN '23) is a registered nurse in the emergency room at Parkview Noble Hospital. ²⁹ **Brianna Sartuche** (BSN '23) works in the emergency room as a registered nurse at Parkview Hospital Randallia. ³² **Andrew Schiebel** (BA '23) is a graphic designer and content creator at Superior Auto, Inc. ²⁹ **Katie Schier** (BSN '23) is an operating room nurse at Parkview Regional Medical Center. ²⁹ **Carrie Schmit** (ASN '23) works at Parkview Hospital Randallia as a registered nurse. ²⁹ **Meagan Schoeff** (BSN '23) works in the Orthopedic/Trauma Unit at Parkview Regional Medical Center as a registered nurse. ²⁹ **Maile Steckelberg** (BSN '23) works in Ortho Trauma at Parkview. ²⁹ **Madison Stoy** (BSN '23) works in the emergency room as a registered nurse at Parkview Hospital Randallia. ³³ **Noah Zimmerman** (BS '23) works at WANE 15 as a digital specialist account executive.

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SPRING 2023

COUGAR SPORTS

RECAP

Baseball

Junior outfielder Xavier Croxton topped the individual accolades by earning All-Crossroads League First Team honors. Croxton hit .382 with six homers, nine doubles and four triples while driving in 49 runs in 49 games. Nick Parsons, a redshirt junior, was named Co-Newcomer of the Year in the Crossroads League. Parsons hit .390 with 10 home runs and 46 RBIs in 48 games. Sophomore Jayden Lepper was named to the All-Crossroads Second Team with a .338 batting average and 54 RBIs. The Cougars finished 29-25 overall and 21-15 in conference play.

Esports

The Super Smash Bros team, led by seniors Joseph Caffee and Callahan Kagel, finished second in the Great Lakes Esports Conference during the fall season, the highest finish in school history. Freshman Jagger Walraven and junior Ivan Serapio also played major roles. Caffee was awarded the Most Valuable Player in the Great Lakes Esports Conference for Spring 2023. The Rocket League team, led by sophomore Nick Anglin, picked up big wins over Franklin College and Marietta College with the help of Carson Kreischer and Evan Williams.

Golf | MEN

Freshman Bailey Marquart was named to All-Crossroads League Team honorable mention. The Cougars finished third in the Crossroads League Championship in May. Junior Levi Follett of Garrett finished seventh and Marquart finished ninth. Junior Wyatt Johnson (19th), freshman Seth Roop (24th) and senior Gabe Schenk (29th) helped the Cougars to their high conference finish.

Golf | WOMEN

Sophomore Melissa Francis (35th) and junior Amara Eckert (36th) were the highest placers as Saint Francis finished eighth in the Crossroads League Championship in May.

Softball

Two Cougars made the All-Crossroads League First Team: senior catcher Tori Miller and freshman first baseman Macie Dowd. Miller hit .356 with a .735 slugging percentage and drove in 41 runs in 46 games. Dowd hit .377 with five homers and 11 doubles. Junior pitcher Mackenzie Rust and senior centerfielder Aubrey Dunnuck earned selections to the second team. Rust finished 12-12 with a 3.38 ERA and 107 strikeouts.



Dunnuck hit .323 with 10 home runs and 34 RBIs. Freshman catcher/first baseman Payton Iliff was honorable mention and also hit 10 home runs. The Cougars finished 23-26 (16-20 Crossroads League).

Track and Field | MEN

Junior Joe Painter reached the NAIA Outdoor Nationals in the pole vault to cap off a successful junior season, finishing in a tie for 10th in the national meet. In the Crossroads League Championship, junior Cole Miller took fifth in the hammer and junior Nate Burns took sixth in the 400-meter hurdles.

Track and Field | WOMEN

Senior Evie Miller capped a tremendous senior season by taking second place in the 3,000-meter steeplechase in the NAIA Outdoor Nationals. She earlier earned the Most Outstanding Track Athlete Award at the Crossroads League Championship, where she set a conference record in winning the 10,000-meter run. She also won the 1,500-meter run. Three others took first-place finishes in conference: junior Alex Ebetino in the 5,000-meter run, sophomore Mariah Maley in the 400-meter hurdles and freshman Hannah Boersema in the javelin as the Cougars finished sixth in the team standings.





Belville, Moody named to coaching positions

David Belville joined Saint Francis as the men's and women's golf coach and Dr. Brendon Moody was named director of track and field/cross country. Belville previously served as an assistant golf pro with Elks Blue River Country Club in Shelbyville, Indiana; Harbour Trees Golf Club in Noblesville, Indiana; Anderson Country Club in Anderson, Indiana; and Honeywell Golf Course in Wabash, Indiana. Moody came to Saint Francis in 2022 as the cross country coach and was promoted to the new position overseeing both the track and field and cross country programs. He succeeds Kyle Allison, who became the athletic director at Marian University's Ancilla College.



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Learn how Radiologic Technology Program Director Heather (Dice) Lortie and her sisters found purpose as students at Saint Francis—page 10.



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