

SAINT FRANCIS

An aerial photograph of Saint Francis University campus. The main building is a large, multi-story stone structure with several towers and a central dome. It is surrounded by lush green trees and a well-manicured lawn. In the background, a body of water and a large stadium are visible.

Through the Lens

Savor the beauty and spirit of Saint Francis through the captivating photography of Jeffrey Crane (BA '97).

Fall 2025

LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT



“Shout joyfully to
God, all the earth;
sing of his glorious
name; give him
glorious praise.”

Psalms 66:2 (NABRE)

Dear Alumni and Friends,

Everything feels fresh on the University of Saint Francis campus this fall, reflective of the early weeks that accompany a new semester. Moreover, change is evident with the campus being framed by flags adorned with our updated logo, new monogram and “Discover greater” branding. Construction will soon be completed on the new Trinity Plaza, a developing gathering space for campus community connections in the walkway behind Trinity Hall.

We welcomed our largest student body in four years, rising back to above 1,900 students, another sign of positive change. We have the most residential students since 2018 and the most students ever in Crown Point. As we continue to develop our partnership with the Leffler Academy in Gas City and introduce programs in Lafayette, Saint Francis is clearly on the move throughout the state.

We are naturally excited about expansion, new programs and new approaches to reach and serve students. Please continue to join us in praying for our campus community as we strive to make sure Saint Francis is a destination for holistic higher education and a launching pad for people imbued with a desire for lives full of virtue, service and joy.

Speaking of virtue, service and joy, one of the articles in this fall edition of Saint Francis magazine features faculty sharing their insight into how our mission permeates many diverse academic courses and avenues. Our goal of developing and guiding college students in the academic, social and spiritual realm shines through their comments.

Stories about alumni that I believe you will enjoy: Army veterinarian Capt. Sean Kampe covers more than just animal health; Jason Beer makes a lasting impact on high school students; Crystal Kelly counsels people in an underserved part of the city; and Kristin Guss-Ayeni knows the way to her customers’ hearts—through fine cuisine and charcuterie!

Many of our more seasoned alumni will surely appreciate Ed Habrowski, a lifelong educator who retraced his father’s steps during World War II. Reflective of Saint Francis’ extended reach, Nicole Coomer was influenced in her care for the older generation by Saint Francis—despite having never been on campus!

As for being on campus, current softball player Abby Robakowski traded a larger NCAA Division I home for Saint Francis, and she hasn’t stopped setting hitting records since she arrived. Jeffrey Crane, meanwhile, knows Saint Francis inside and out—through his lens during years of photography.

I hope you are having a wonderful autumn filled with football, campfires and more. Or should I say s’mores? If you haven’t been on campus recently, please stop by. We would like for you to see our changes—and we would love to see you.

God bless,

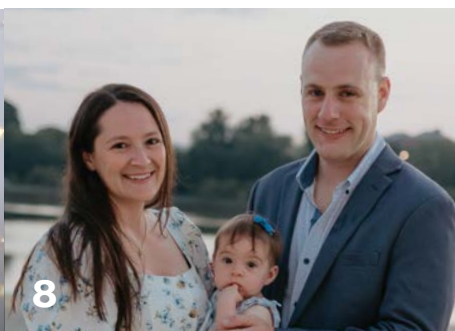
Dr. Lance Richey

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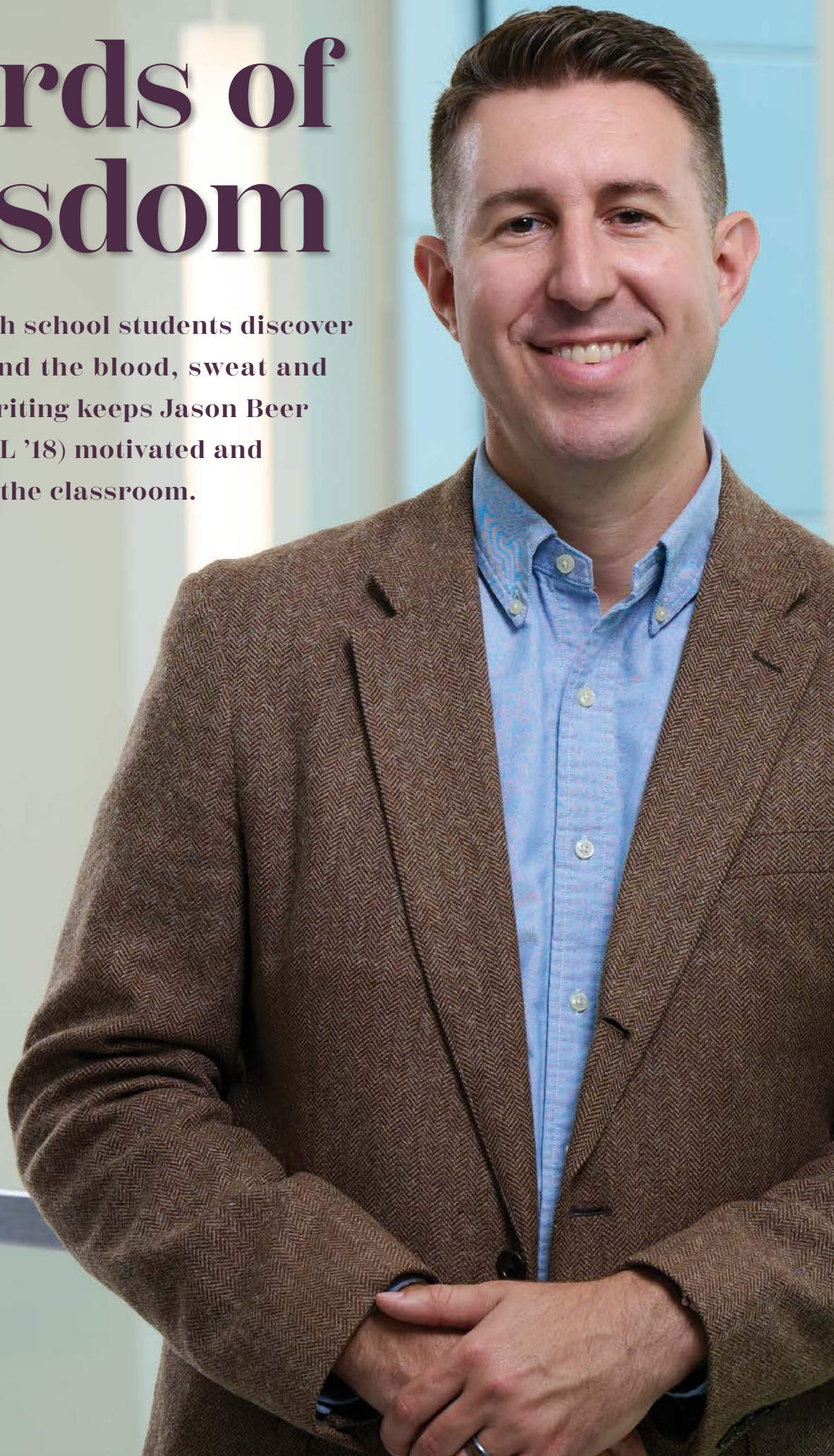
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Words of Wisdom

Helping high school students discover the joys—and the blood, sweat and tears—of writing keeps Jason Beer (BA '07, MOL '18) motivated and inspired in the classroom.





Jason Beer first taught full time at a south side Chicago high school where students arrived on public transportation. At his second locale, they held an annual “Drive Your Tractor to School Day.” Now, at Homestead High School, it’s a little bit city, a little bit country, and the place he calls home.

**“I love public school,” he said.
“I’m a big advocate of public
school. And I’ve just been so
grateful for my breadth of
experience. I like the variety.”**

Guiding juniors and seniors through English and writing courses helps Beer retain his energy as a teacher nearly two decades into his career. He especially enjoys engaging with students as they develop their writing skills, from blank screens to “crappy first drafts” to finished, thought-provoking final products.

“It’s such a fun age group to work with,” Beer said. “They’re excited about their lives, about what’s next. They’re people who care a lot. They care about their friends. They care about their families, their extracurriculars, their jobs. But even though they care a lot and they’re passionate, they’re open to change and they know they’re still growing. They change their minds and see things in new lights, and it’s refreshing to be around people like that.”

Beer understands being young and open-minded. He chose the University of Saint Francis to study nursing and play baseball, not necessarily in that order. A year into his studies, he experienced an epiphany. “I really enjoyed the classroom part of nursing,” he said. “But I quickly learned some of the hands-on elements—it was not going to be the best fit for me.”

Inspired in part by his older brother, Andrew, a college professor, he switched to English Literature. “My professors were phenomenal teachers, and I knew it was the right place for me,” Beer said. Upon reaching graduation, he taught as a substitute in Fort Wayne for a year before joining the Teach for America program.

After a short period of training in Los Angeles, Beer was assigned to Chicago Public Schools. He spent three years there—until after he and his wife, Cassie, had their first child, Avram. Avram was born with global disabilities and requires the kind of attention extended families can often help provide. Jason and Cassie’s families were back in Fort Wayne.

So, they returned to Fort Wayne, settled in and had two more children, Augie and Rosie. Cassie Beer is the Women’s Fund Director at the Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne and a musician. In fact, her former band, Rosalind & the Way, was the first to record with Saint Francis’ Marble Lounge Records.

Jason taught in Columbia City—where those tractors made a yearly parking lot appearance—before landing at Homestead. He has been at Homestead for 10 years and was one of three finalists for Indiana Teacher of the Year in 2022.

Beer fondly remembers his professors and mentors at Saint Francis: Dr. Steve Sullivan inspired him to see teaching as a vocation and form of service; Dr. Ken Bugajski impacted his love of literature; and Dr. Andrew Prall influenced his love of writing. Beer has written a novel and contributes to Fort Wayne Magazine and other publications. He demonstrates to his students the sometimes painful path to prose.

“I like to show my students my writing process, not because it’s the best way or the right way but to show I’m also in the struggle,” Beer said. “If you don’t write for a long time, you forget how difficult it is to start a piece, to get information, that you must keep editing and editing. We talk a lot about crappy first drafts. Get it down first; you really don’t even know what it is until Draft #3.”

Beer created Homestead courses in travel writing and novel/screen writing. He used a grant to travel to the UK this past summer. “Travel writing is a combination of storytelling and research. So, I get to work with students on research and writing, being informative and integrating quotes and evidence, but also trying to tell a good story. It’s a fun blend.”

Beer sees himself in his students and tries to help them discover their purpose.

“I was a decent student, but I hadn’t found my place in high school or even the first few years of college,” he said. “I’m always thinking about the students who, if they’re not disengaged, don’t completely see the point of school. I try, hopefully, to create opportunities for them to see something new.”

**“Even though we might never
see each other again after
commencement, I hope I play a
small but meaningful part in their
lives—and that’s a very rewarding
and cool thing about this job.”**

THE NO-JUDGMENT ZONE



Crystal (Perry) Kelly (BA '04, MS '09) brings extensive experience and a wealth of empathy as a mental health counselor with a passion for serving people on Fort Wayne's south side.

In the simplest terms, Crystal (Perry) Kelly loves helping others.

She primarily serves her neighbors on the south side of Fort Wayne, not far from where she grew up. As a licensed mental health counselor with her own private practice—Uniquely You Counseling & Wellness Center—she helps people address their mental health issues and move toward living their best lives. If all goes well, her clients “fire” her.

“Just seeing that transformation over time, that’s the beauty. That’s what keeps me doing what I’m doing,” Kelly said. “You’ve got to want to help people heal because they are trusting you with their stories, their traumas, the things they struggle with. I always tell people, ‘This is a no-judgment zone.’”

Kelly knew she wanted a career serving others when she graduated from Cornerstone Christian College Preparatory School, and she chose the University of Saint Francis for nursing. After her freshman year, she switched to psychology and was inspired by Professor Emeritus Dr. Rolf Daniel. “I loved the way he broke things down, and from that point on, I thought, ‘This is for me,’” she said. “The more I talked with him, the more I realized this is what I wanted to do.”

Kelly earned her bachelor’s degree in psychology, took some time off to work in her father’s Perry Carpet Cleaning Service, then returned to obtain her master’s degree. She began her mental health counseling career as an intern with Park Center in Fort Wayne, which led to a full-time position there.

Over the next few years, Kelly worked with Park Center, SCAN (now Iris Family Support Center), Quality Counseling & Psychological Services and Oaktree Guidance & Wellness Center. She experienced professional growth while working with individuals who were required to receive counseling through the Department of Correctional Services (DCS).



“You’ve got to want to help people heal because they are trusting you with their stories, their traumas, the things they struggle with. I always tell people, ‘This is a no-judgment zone.’”

CRYSTAL (PERRY) KELLY
(BA '04, MS '09)

“That helped thicken my skin because you’re going into someone’s home that didn’t really want you there,” she said.

While at Oaktree, she discovered a private practice environment was best suited for her skills and empathetic nature. “At that point, I debated opening up my own practice,” she said. “I prayed about it and decided to do it.”

She opened Uniquely You at 6710 Old Trail Road in August 2023. The business is close to the Waynedale home where her parents, Isaac and Mary, live. Her father’s entrepreneurial nature influenced her decision to open her own business. “That’s where I got my work ethic,” she said. Kelly balances work life with raising children Zyaire, 4, and Zuri, 1.

Kelly felt compelled to locate her business on the city’s south side. “There just aren’t enough services on this side of town,” she said. Uniquely You shares office space with Ginger & Iru, LLC, a counseling service operated by her colleague, Robin Crawford, who obtained a professional educator’s license from Saint Francis.

Kelly strives to make people feel comfortable the moment they step through her front door.

“We’re trying to get rid of that stigma that if you go to therapy, you’re looked at differently,” she said. “I have a lot of people on my caseload who are African American, and I’m working with a lot of African American men. Men don’t talk in general, so for them to come in and be vulnerable and open—I love that. It’s all about pulling back those layers and building trust so they can come here and get the tools to move forward.”

Clients will meet with her for different lengths of time, depending on their needs, and she jokes with them about looking forward to the day when they won’t need her help as often.

“I don’t want people to feel like they’re stuck in therapy,” she said. “I tell people it’s OK to ‘fire’ me. I know then that they’ve acquired the tools they need when it comes to stress and everyday life. When you don’t need to come here as often, that means I’ve done my job.”

Duty Calls



Sean (BS '17) and Ceaira (BSN '16) Kampe couldn't have imagined living in Germany when they met as Saint Francis athletes, but they are committed to following God's will wherever it takes them.

People are often surprised to learn the breadth of the work Cpt. Sean Kampe (BS '17) does as an Army Veterinary Corps Officer. They'll assume that he deals with animal care, and he does. But his duties stretch much further.

Take the Army-Navy football game last December.

"At one point, I was personally guarding President-elect Trump's food," Kampe said. "So, sometimes I end up doing weird stuff like that."

Kampe's job as an Army veterinarian does include tasks such as treating government-owned animals, including dogs and horses used by the Secret Service, FBI and other government entities. However, many people don't realize that veterinarians are also public health officers involved in inspections. "There was a week where I performed (an animal) surgery on Monday and then, by Wednesday, I was auditing an ice-cream factory in Vermont," Kampe said.

Today, Kampe is stationed in Kusel, a town in the Kusel district of Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany. He moved there in August, along with his wife, Ceaira (Bentley) Kampe (BSN '16), and their daughter Sloane.

Kampe's commitment to the Army, which provided the scholarship for him to become a veterinarian, continues through at least 2028, and he and his family are expected to remain in Germany through that time. "There is a lot of training for missions, in case we do get deployed," he said. "We do a lot of everything."

Sean, from the Chicago suburb of Berwyn, Illinois, and Ceaira, from Kendallville, Indiana, met as students at Saint Francis. Sean was a soccer player in the pre-veterinary program and Ceaira was a cross country and track-and-field runner studying nursing. They began dating when Sean was a sophomore and Ceaira a junior. They set their first date to go to a soccer house party, but "we ended up just sitting outside Padua (Hall), basically talking all night," Sean said. They were married in 2020, two weeks before the COVID-19 pandemic essentially shut the country down.

Ceaira, who began her nursing career with Parkview Health, was working as a travel nurse at the most in-demand and frightening time.

"During that whole time, Ceaira was treating the worst-of-the-worst COVID patients," Sean said. "She was one of the frontline workers."

"It was definitely worth it to help the patients that we were able to help," Ceaira said. "But then I kind of got a little burnt out from travel nursing and just wanted to stay home where Sean was."

Ceaira returned to hospital nursing, and they ended up stationed in Virginia, where she worked part time in cardiac rehabilitation. When Sloane arrived around Christmas last year, Ceaira became primarily a stay-at-home mom. Upon learning the family would be stationed in Germany for at least three years, Sean and Ceaira both trusted God to lead the way. Sean was raised a Catholic and Ceaira became a Catholic upon learning about the faith at Saint Francis.

"One thing I've learned, especially from Sean, is that you kind of go with it," Ceaira said. "If we're stressed or something's not quite going our way—it's God's will be done. We know he has a plan for us."

Sean and Ceaira mention their gratefulness for mentors at Saint Francis who helped them along the way to where they are now, both as professionals and as people.

"The Science Department in general—everyone over at Achatz (Hall of Science)—was exactly what I needed in order to get myself to this point," Sean said. "I am where I'm at today because of that one-on-one mentorship from every single faculty member."

Ceaira echoes those comments about the Health Sciences faculty and with all those who helped her along her faith journey. "I just felt so at home at Saint Francis," she said.

The couple say they are excited to immerse themselves into the culture in Germany. They live in a house outside the Army base and their family will also be growing—they are expecting their second child in the spring.

"Going to nursing school at Saint Francis, I never imagined I would be where I am right now, living in Germany with a family," Ceaira said. "It's pretty wild, but anytime anything happens, we know—God's will be done."



CULINARY CREATIONS

A love of cooking and a knack for charcuterie helped lead Kristin Guss-Ayeni (BSW '09, MBA '15) down a winding path to a passion for the restaurant business.



Out-of-town visitors must take a few twists and turns along scenic country roads to reach Kristin's Kitchen in Smith's Grove, Kentucky. This is apropos. Owner and operator Kristin Guss-Ayeni's story is all about navigating the twists and turns of life to reach a fulfilling destination.

Kristin Guss arrived at the University of Saint Francis in the fall of 2006 as a tennis recruit from Bucyrus, Ohio. She thought she'd become a teacher. Within two years, she veered off that path.

"I quit tennis and switched majors," she said. She rerouted into social work, joined student government and never looked back. After graduation, she returned to Ohio, pursuing community mental health work and a master's degree in business. In a bit of foreshadowing, she helped her father, Harmon Guss, with his restaurant and new event center.

"I realized through that whole process that my dream was to have my own place," Guss-Ayeni said.

Harmon Guss opened his event center on Halloween 2012 but died less than two weeks later. That left his family emotionally devastated and with a new business to run. Kristin pivoted to overseeing the event center for nearly a year—while maintaining her full-time social work position. The family eventually sold the restaurant and event center, but Kristin gained invaluable experience through a difficult time.

The next turn in life came when Kristin—now Kristin Guss-Ayeni—moved with her husband, Babatunde Ayeni, to Michigan for his position with General Motors/Corvette. Babatunde, who came to the United States from Nigeria as a grad student, met Kristin through an online dating service while he was working in Auburn, Indiana. They married in 2014 and have two sons, Kunle and Tokunbo.

The next life twist came when Babatunde accepted a "temporary" assignment with Corvette in Bowling Green, Kentucky, in June 2021. The whole family relocated to Smith's Grove, not knowing how long they'd stay. "We were down there a year, and they'd say, 'How about another two months?' and then 'another two months' and finally a position opened, and he applied," Kristin said. "We've been down here ever since." Babatunde manages the Corvette plant's vehicle electrical systems team.



After settling into Smith's Grove, Kristin took a charcuterie course through an enrichment program for GM/Corvette employees. She overestimated the food and supplies needed for the course. "We had all this extra stuff, so that's how I really got into charcuterie," she said. "I started doing the charcuterie and catering from our apartment. It wasn't to make money. It was literally because I enjoyed doing it."

One day, she received a message from a woman who owned a building housing a Smith's Grove boutique shop. The woman had seen Kristin's catering and charcuterie online page, and she had an unoccupied retail space at one end of the strip-mall-style building.

"She said, 'We've seen your work, and we have this open spot. Would you be interested in coming to take a look?'" Guss-Ayeni said. "I looked around and fell in love instantly."

Kristin took her husband for a closer look, and they seized the opportunity. Kristin's Kitchen was launched on Memorial Day 2024 and offers a sit-down restaurant along with catering and charcuterie.

"It's just been a passion, and since the day I opened it, it hasn't felt like work at all," Guss-Ayeni said. "I thoroughly enjoy creating. I was never good at art or anything, but this is like a sense of release as far as that side goes."

"But it's also about the customers who come in. You learn about their lives and what makes them happy, and you remember their orders and little things like that. That sense of community is like the sense of community at Saint Francis. This is a small location—and Saint Francis is not large by any means—and you feel that sense of community with the people around you."

Kristin's Kitchen is not on a heavily traveled road, but it is near Mammoth Cave, so tourists often discover the restaurant. As Kristin's connections grow, so does her business.

"Running a restaurant can be hard, but I feel so supported by my family and everybody around me," Kristin said. "It doesn't feel like I'm in this alone."



Saint Francis will field Indiana's first NAIA women's college flag football program this spring, and coach TJ Williams can hardly contain his excitement about the program's potential impact.

RAISING THE COUGARS' FLAG



Coach TJ Williams brings championship aspirations to the inaugural University of Saint Francis women's flag football program. He knows well what it takes from his own college experience, when he contributed to six National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) championship track-and-field teams at Indiana Tech.

Williams, primarily a triple-jumper as an athlete, believes in setting the highest goals.

So, yes, he plans to see the first women's NAIA flag football team in Indiana succeed under his direction this spring.

“We’re trying to set the standard,” Williams said. “It’s a cool position to be in, to be the frontrunners in the area. We want to trailblaze the right way.”

To that end, Williams cast a wide net in recruiting. While he has athletes from Fort Wayne and Indianapolis—including Northrop High School, where he coached girls flag football—he also has talented players from Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada and Texas.

Williams remembers his initial discussions with Saint Francis athletics representatives, primarily Associate Athletic Director Kelsey Passaglia, who spearheaded the introduction of the sport to Saint Francis.

“We had some great conversations as Saint Francis was thinking about starting a program and talking about, ‘What does it take and how fast can it be done?’” Williams said. “I told them I didn’t think this would be hard at all, especially with it being the fastest-growing sport in the world next to pickleball. It’s picked up a lot of steam.

“It’s not just nationally, but internationally,” Williams said. “Knowing the kind of potential it has, it wouldn’t be hard to get a group of women, especially with me being connected as far as the flag community at the national level.”

Williams says the Midwest is behind other parts of the country in women's flag football but that he expects the growth to come quickly as more colleges in Indiana and neighboring states embrace the sport.

During his time as a high school girls flag football coach, Williams was part of the movement that led to all Fort Wayne Community Schools' high schools developing girls flag football programs.



AG

Williams also connected with the NFL's Indianapolis Colts, who regularly champion girls and women's flag football. In fact, one of the Saint Francis flag football team's first games is tentatively scheduled to take place at the Colts practice facility.

Williams was first introduced to flag football more than 20 years ago when his father was stationed with the military in Japan; Williams began playing the sport. "While I wanted to play college football, I think track was better for my body. I eventually got back into football and haven't left it."

In addition to his Saint Francis women's flag football coaching position, Williams helps coach high school football at Northrop.

Williams has guided flag football teams to national titles in youth amateur leagues. He was named the first NFL Flag MOJO National Coach of the Year.

"First and foremost, it's a very fun game," Williams said. "It emulates a lot of the things (tackle) football does, especially with the rules and regulations. The biggest difference is there are fewer players on the field and you're pulling flags instead of tackling."

The pace of the game resembles tackle football, with heavy emphasis on passing in the seven-on-seven format. The Cougars will play their home games at Bishop D'Arcy Stadium, with the first home games coming at an invitational the weekend of March 20-22.

"Everybody around the country has weapons—receivers that can go up and get it and quarterbacks who can throw 50-60 yards down the field," Williams said. "They can really sling the rock. I think it's going to be very exciting."

"At Saint Francis, we want to be able to set the standard, but with that comes a little bit of pressure—making sure we help this sport grow in the right direction and grow in support," Williams said.

"It's an Olympic sport now, growing fast. NAIA is taking off with it, (NCAA) Division II and Division III are taking off. The last one will be Division I, and then it's really going to be at a fun stage. You'll want to jump on the bandwagon now and come out and support this."



“The faith aspect of my Saint Francis education was a big piece, because I was navigating a lot of questions at the time. I was really able to get a lot spiritually through my experiences at Saint Francis and, of course, the academics were great.”

Nicole Coomer (MHA '16)

Long-Distance Connection

As executive director at Center of Concern in Des Plaines, Illinois, Nicole Coomer still uses academic and spiritual lessons from her online Saint Francis education.

Nicole Coomer (MHA '16) is a perfect example of the far-reaching impact of the University of Saint Francis. She readily shares how she draws from her Saint Francis education nearly a decade after completing her master's degree online. And she testifies how the university influenced her positive outlook on life despite the fact she has never set foot on campus.

“The faith aspect of my Saint Francis education was a big piece, because I was navigating a lot of questions at that time,” she said. “I was really able to get a lot spiritually through my experiences at Saint Francis and, of course, the academics were great.”

While pursuing her master's in healthcare administration through online courses, Coomer worked at Good Samaritan Hospital Foundation in Vincennes, Indiana, where she eventually rose to executive director. She had earned bachelor's degrees in psychology and legal studies at Indiana State University by 2015 but sought to further elevate her skills.

She and her husband, Jesse, were foster parents, and started fostering a 2 ½-year-old boy, Malachi, who they ultimately adopted. With an already full life, the opportunity to pursue a master's degree online through a respected university was exactly what she needed.

“From early on, I wanted to be in a helping profession,” she said. “But as an undergrad, I pursued education so much because I was curious about a lot of different things, and I wasn't quite sure what I wanted to do. I knew I wanted to help people, but there are a lot of different ways to do that.”

She honed her skills in administration, of course, but she also emphasizes the value of the holistic Saint Francis education.

“We were working through foster parenting, so I think I was really kind of spiritually open,” she said. “So, when we worked through different spiritual texts, that really caused me to reflect spiritually. My husband and



I ultimately became Eastern Orthodox but I truly credit what I learned through Saint Francis as guiding me on a spiritual path.”

Her courses at Saint Francis helped solidify her call to be involved in a serving vocation.

Coomer’s first experience as a college student came in an internship at a faith-based nonprofit, Life After Meth (LAM). “It was actually in the jail system, a pastor ran the program, and I gained a lot of experience,” she said. “It also convinced me that maybe I was supposed to be in the administrative side, as opposed to client services.”

Coomer spent 10 years with Good Samaritan Hospital Foundation before leaving in September 2024 to become executive director at Center of Concern in Des Plaines. It was her biggest geographical move since her family relocated from Puerto Rico to Vincennes when she was a child.

Coomer believes the Center of Concern shares many of the same values espoused by Saint Francis, such as respecting the dignity of all people and serving others. The Center of Concern’s mission is to “inform, advocate and intervene on behalf of residents struggling with challenges related to aging, homelessness and accessing resources to remain independent in their homes.”

“We’re helping individuals who are aging with household tasks, shopping and some of those basic things that can just get harder for individuals to stay independent,” Coomer said. “A big part of what I’m doing is going out in the community and engaging with different local organizations, meeting business leaders. My goal is to increase our resources so that my team, who are incredible, amazing people, can deliver the best quality services to people.”

As for Saint Francis, Coomer has an in-person experience on her bucket list: “I need to devote a day to go and visit,” she said. “I’ve seen so many wonderful photos and images, it would be great to experience the campus in person.”



THROUGH the LENS

Jeffrey Crane (BA '97) sees and feels a photograph long before he snaps the shot. And when his artistic vision and technical skills converge on a place and community he knows well—the University of Saint Francis—magic often happens.



As a student, Crane walked along Mirror Lake, created works of art in the classroom and shared late-night laughs with now-lifelong friends. As an adjunct professor, he guided students in the craft and artistry of photography. He has viewed and enjoyed Saint Francis from all sides.

So, Saint Francis holds a special place in Crane's heart, and it shows in the way he produces his "near-perfect" photos capturing the campus. We'll say, "near perfect," because Crane can always look back on a fantastic photo and think of ways it might have been even better. The rest of us might not see those additional possibilities, but he does. And, so, his next shot moves ever closer to perfection.

Crane's goal is to capture the moment, reflect the emotion and instill a sense of what it was like to be there. With his Saint Francis photography, Crane's additional aim is to relay the spirit of the university, whether that's camaraderie among students during a big event or the quiet spirituality of the Oratory of St. Francis.

Crane's photos are stories of faith, togetherness, perseverance and more. Life at Saint Francis bursts with emotions and Crane's photos help us experience them, too.

Crane's images appear in the Saint Francis magazine, social media, campus galleries and off-campus places such as Parkview Field. No matter where they land, they reflect Saint Francis at its finest. He clearly takes pride in his alma mater. The feeling is mutual.



Virtue, Service, Joy

Saint Francis faculty members intentionally infuse their teaching with the purpose described in the now one-year-old mission statement.

In August 2024, the University of Saint Francis received a new mission statement from its sponsoring congregation, the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration:



“The University of Saint Francis offers formation of the whole person by providing an encounter with the heart and mind of Jesus Christ so that God, who is Love, may be loved. *Through our Catholic identity, Franciscan charism, and liberal arts tradition, we prepare students for personal and professional lives of virtue, service, and joy.*”

One year after the mission statement’s introduction, faculty members reflect on the impact of the mission statement on students and how they incorporate it into their teaching:

“Our work in the field of health and exercise science is rooted in relationship—building trust and connections to guide others toward healthier, more fulfilling lives. As followers of Christ, we are called to honor God’s creation by caring for the physical and spiritual well-being of ourselves and those we serve. This calling is central to our mission.”

– **Valerie Powers, Division Director, Movement Science**

“By grounding students in a truth-based education, we help them grasp that virtue is not relative but an objective understanding of how we should live in the world. It is only through truth, the *Logos* and Jesus Christ that we find joy.”

– **Dr. Carrie Duke, Assistant Professor of English**



Valerie Powers
Division Director,
Movement Science



Dr. Carrie Duke
Assistant Professor
of English



“While nursing is not an area of expertise directly related to the university’s mission statement, it is a profession that many are drawn to in a vocational sense. Nursing is a profession that considers patients and clients as holistic people, which aligns with the university’s mission statement.

“Prayer at the beginning of each class is often tied to the class topic of the day, church season or daily readings.”

– **Jennifer Richard, BSN Assistant Program Director**

“Our 10-day Field Course includes camping in a remote natural setting like the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and our Field Course to the Dominican Republic includes running medical and veterinary clinics for a week. Students come back from these experiences with passionate commitments not only to their respective careers, but to serving in a greater cause. Students become emotionally connected to the work and come home with lifelong commitments to service.”

– **Dr. Lou Weber, Department Chair of Biology/ENVS**

“On its own, business education offers a natural platform to explore how professional knowledge intersects with moral responsibility and human dignity. My area—entrepreneurial, strategic leadership and ethical character formation—is well aligned with the university’s mission to prepare students for lives of virtue, service and joy.”

“I intentionally frame strategic leadership and ethical decision-making within the context of service to others and the common good (local and expansive) in my courses.”

– **Dr. David Stehlik, Associate Professor of Management and Leadership**

“Creative problem-solving in graphic design requires a deep empathy for the client, the target audience and the end user. Empathy comes from a generous spirit, engaged with the human connection. It comes from a place only accessible once you put away the personal lens and look through one in a wider and, ultimately, loving direction. In an age where creativity and creative jobs are threatened by the ever-looming presence of A.I., I encourage students to deeply consider what it means to be a human creating art.”

– **Jeremy McFarren, Program Director of Graphic Design**

“My expertise in biochemistry is a rich avenue for touching on the mission statement the whole semester. Biochemistry is the study of life on the molecular level, and as such reveals a beauty and order in the universe, pointing to the Lord God our Creator.”

– **Sister Mary Augustine Warrell, OSF, Assistant Professor of Chemistry**

“We introduce students to the idea of formation of the whole person through discussion of the many facets of people: biological, cognitive, emotional, social and spiritual.”

“In a Franciscan context, we might say psychology can till the soil in which the seed of divine love can grow. Topics include the fact that human beings desire to love and be loved at our core, and we instinctively seek connection with others, all of which points to our capacity to know and love God.”

– **Dr. Monica Heller, Interim Division Chair of Psychology**



Jennifer Richard
BSN Assistant
Program Director



Dr. Lou Weber
Department Chair
of Biology/ENVS



Dr. David Stehlik
Associate Professor
of Management
and Leadership



Jeremy McFarren
Program Director
of Graphic Design



Sister Mary Augustine
Warrell, OSF
Assistant Professor
of Chemistry



Dr. Monica Heller,
Interim Division Chair
of Psychology



sentimental journey

Eighty years after World War II, Ed Habrowski (MSE '75) retraced his father's overseas steps in service to the country and found a new connection to his heritage.

Ed Habrowski hurried into his beloved grandmother Sophia's bedroom after her funeral in September of 1983, eager to uncover why the room was off limits for the entirety of his childhood. Grandma harbored a secret.

In the closet, "there amongst her black, open-toed, strapped shoes with two-inch heels, were two beige cardboard boxes tied with yellow ribbon," Habrowski wrote in his recently completed essay, "A Journey of a Lifetime."

The boxes contained 234 correspondence pieces written by Habrowski's father Julian during World War II, a vivid narrative of his wartime travels through England, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland and Germany. Julian Habrowski served in the

medical corps, assisting soldiers and others as the United States joined the Allies in fighting and defeating the Axis powers.

Ed Habrowski, an educator for 51 years and a history buff, was intrigued. He vowed to retrace his father's steps in what ultimately became an 18-day, unforgettable travel adventure.

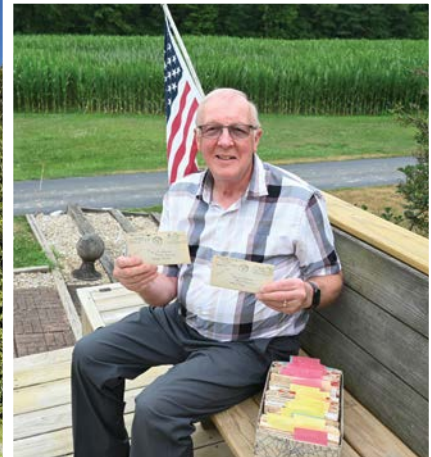
In 2023, almost 80 years to the day after his father reported to the U.S. Army, Habrowski took the trip abroad. Along with three siblings, a brother-in-law, a nephew and a family friend, he gained further insight into World War II and his father's legacy.

Ed's father died unexpectedly in 1969 when Ed was only 20. Father and son never had a conversation about World War II, Julian's work for the U.S. at first aid stations, dispensaries and hospitals, or the sights and people he encountered during the war.

"I never asked him any questions, even though there were souvenirs around the house—a German helmet, a German rifle," Habrowski said. "During the trip, I felt his presence quite closely."

Habrowski is no stranger to travel. He has been to five continents, all 50 U.S. states and "most of Canada, Central America, South America and Western Europe many times, eastern Europe except for Poland, southwest Asia and Saudi Arabia." As an Indiana University doctoral student, he lived in Malawi, a country in southeastern Africa, doing dissertation research. Given his extensive experience abroad, the logistics of the trip were not intimidating.





Three stops along the journey proved particularly memorable for him:

- **Cherbourg, France.** Habrowski and the group visited a place his father had written about called the Hotel Atlantique. It now houses various offices and the Chamber of Commerce. "It was a great feeling to see a building 79 years after our father was stationed and lived in it," Habrowski wrote in his essay.
- **Locarno, Switzerland.** The group visited the Hotel Esplanade, from which Julian Habrowski wrote three letters on hotel stationery in November 1945. "We stood right there and thought about how he would have stood in that exact same place," Ed said.
- **Brugge, Belgium.** Habrowski visited the Church of Our Lady and saw Michelangelo's "Madonna and Child," one of the few of the artist's sculptures that exist outside of Italy. It had been stolen by the Nazi regime and recovered in Austria after the war. "It was rescued by 'The Monuments Men,' that was highlighted in the George Clooney movie in 2014," Habrowski said.

Habrowski harbors a lifelong interest in history and devoted his life to education. An alumnus of Saint Joseph's College, he was a teacher at Most Precious Blood Catholic School in Fort Wayne when he earned his master's degree from Saint Francis, riding his bicycle to the Spring Street campus for summer courses. "It was a quaint



little campus then, but the professors were very, very helpful and took care of the students."

He spent 10 years at Most Precious Blood, the last four as principal, then returned to Saint Joseph's as registrar and secretary of the college and became chair of the education department and director of student teachers. After that, he served Rensselaer schools as high school principal and assistant superintendent. Habrowski retired in 2012 but spent another eight years as a Kankakee Valley school board member.

He's planning his next adventure to retrace his uncle Victor's wartime steps in the South Pacific.

Habrowski reflects on his trip to follow his father's journey and considers it a blessing from his grandmother. "It was a historical tour that I was able to verify from the letters he wrote to his mother, and that she saved for me to find and treasure for a lifetime."



RECORD-SETTING RESTART

In her first season playing softball for Saint Francis, third baseman Abby Robakowski rewrote the program's hitting records.

Abby Robakowski spent a year chasing NCAA Division I dreams at Indiana State University, but gradually lost some of her passion for playing softball. In a fortuitous phone call, she shared her feelings with Saint Francis infielder Sam Baker.

Robakowski and Baker became friends while playing travel softball together in their early teens.

"Indiana State just wasn't a great fit," Robakowski said. "I was talking to Sam and telling her, 'I'm not happy here, I want to find somewhere to transfer to.' She said, 'You should talk to (Saint Francis coach Ryan) Bolyn and check out the campus. I love it here and I'd love to play with you again.'"

Robakowski talked for more than an hour with Bolyn, who has coached the Cougars' softball team for 21 seasons. A Saint Francis alumnus, Bolyn knows exactly what Saint Francis has to offer student-athletes.

"I felt like we just clicked, and then I got to see campus and I loved campus," Robakowski said. "I thought, 'I could really fit in here.' So, I made the switch and I'm so happy here."

A happy softball player can often be a productive softball player. But "productive" doesn't even come close to describing how Robakowski has fit in at Saint Francis, where she joined Baker—now her campus roommate and teammate—and a talented team.

In helping the Cougars to a 29-21 record last spring, Robakowski set seven school single-season records: batting average (.515), hits (84), runs (60), doubles (23), home runs (17), runs batted in (57) and walks (24). She became the first Saint Francis player to be named First-Team All-American by the National Fastpitch Coaches Association, and she was a Second-Team NAIA All-American. Not surprisingly, she was named the Crossroads League Newcomer of the Year.

Robakowski's first season at Saint Francis marked the greatest offensive season by a Cougar in softball history. And she has two more years to try to top it.

"You hope you can get people like her in the program," Bolyn said. "She's a great kid, a high-energy kid. She works her tail off, and you can just follow what she does. She's a great leader that way, fun to play with and fun to coach. She really complements the rest of our team. We were good already, and she made us better."

Robakowski's knack for winning and setting records is nothing new. As a senior at New Prairie High School in northwest Indiana, she led the school to its first state title and set the Indiana record for most home runs in a season.

Bolyn said it often takes a former Division I athlete some time to adjust to NAIA pitching. "Abby adjusted much quicker than most of them do," he said.

"In Division I, every pitcher is throwing 60 to 70 (mph) and it was just fast, fast, fast," Robakowski said. "Here, pitchers focus more on locations and spin, and it's very different. I did a lot of work in the offseason with our own pitchers and that helped."

The Saint Francis softball team's success last spring produced even higher expectations for next spring, as most of the team's top players return. Six players received Crossroads League honors after last season. Reaching and advancing in the NAIA national tournament remains the team's No. 1 priority, Robakowski said.

Robakowski, a Health Services major, feels relaxed and optimistic about the year ahead because she's found her perfect college home.

"I have made so many friendships," she said. "I know I can trust these girls. We have had so many laughs and made so many memories. I feel like I regained my love for softball."





class notes

keeping connected with alumni and friends

1980s

01 Glenn Teschendorf (BBA '85) was selected to officiate the Wisconsin girls lacrosse state championship game in June.

02 Phyllis Hayes (DP '86) finished first in her age group in the women's four-mile race at Fort4Fitness on Sept. 27.

1990s

03 Teri Beam (BS '91) was appointed dean of the Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education at the University of Southern Indiana. **04 Jason Morrison (BS '96)**, a principal at SevenGen, earned his Sustainability Excellence Associate (SEA) credential through Green Business Certification Inc. (GBCI) and International Society of Sustainability Professionals (ISSP). The credential represents

a deep understanding of sustainability practices and a commitment to continuous improvement. **05 James Bolint (BS '99)** became principal environmental scientist at Clean Vapor of Blairstown, New Jersey. **06 Jeremy McFarren (BA '99)** became the program director of graphic design at the University of Saint Francis. **07 Adam (BS '99) and Jessica (Meyer) Swinford (BA '98, MBA '10)** hosted the 7th annual Reagan Swinford Benefit Golf Outing at Zollner Golf Course on July 11, raising over \$23,000 to support the Reagan Swinford Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship, a component fund of the Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne, provides financial assistance to Wayne High School students pursuing college dreams in honor of their daughter, Reagan.



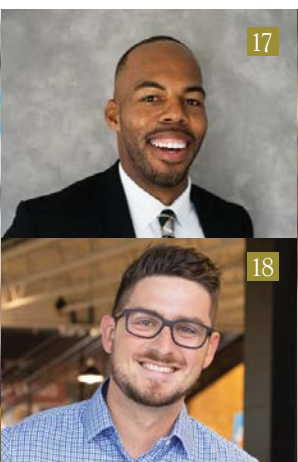


2000s

08 Jeremy Dutcher (BS '00) started a position as new car sales manager at Todd Wenzel Buick GMC, Inc., in Grand Rapids, Michigan. **Ben Meyer** (BA '01) started a new position as school psychologist with Fort Wayne Community Schools. **09 Jillian Minier** (BA '04, MBA '22) is a financial aid counselor at Purdue Fort Wayne. **10 Rachel Nelson** (BA '05), executive director of Home Repairs for Good (formerly NeighborLink Indianapolis), received the Robert O. Zdenek Staff Member of the Year award from Prosperity Indiana. **11 G. David Bokhart** (MBA '06) became Director of Institutional Advancement for Athletics at Indiana Tech. **Jennifer (Johnson) Garrison** (BSN '07) was named Mrs. Indiana American and will move on to compete in the national Mrs. American pageant. **12 Justin Aquila** (BA '07) graduated with a Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Fransican University of Steubenville in May 2025. He began a new role as a Mental Health Counselor at Catholic Charities of Fort Wayne-South Bend in July 2025. **Abigail (Demetre) Leaders** (ASN '08) earned a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) and is employed as a nursing professional development specialist at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, California. **Kristin (Jones) Miller** (BA '09) was elected to the board of directors for the Girl Scouts of Northern Indiana-Michiana.

2010s

13 Jade Haag (BA '12) began teaching at Indiana Institute of Technology. **Paula Langeloh** (MSN '12), a family nurse practitioner, has joined Parkview Physicians Group - OB/GYN and is now seeing patients in Columbia City. **14 Elizabeth J. Evans** (BSW '13, MHA '23) was appointed president and CEO of Aging & In-Home Services of Northeast Indiana (AIHS). **15 Kathryn Schoeff-Kuhn** (BS '14, MBA '16) became the Chief Operating Officer at Summit Radiology, P.C. **16 Jasmine (Bejar) Lobacz** (BA '15) was promoted to a brand strategist at One Lucky Guitar, Inc. **Amanda "Mandy" (Miller) Mohler** (AS '15) married Jonathan Mohler on June 1 in Valparaiso, Indiana. She works as a physical therapist with Aegis Therapies and Synchrony Rehabilitation, serving skilled nursing and assisted living facilities in northwest Indiana. **Katie Dwyer** (MOL '17) was named Vice President for Marketing and Enrollment at Saint Francis. **17 Akeim Kelsaw** (BBA '17) is a private banker at Old National Bank and director of basketball operations at TruFit. **18 Ryan Nix** (BA '17) became an account executive with Stephen Gould. **Ben Ogden** (MAT '17) was promoted to assistant vice president, agricultural and commercial lender, at Crossroads Bank in Warsaw, Indiana. **19 Cadence Faurote** (BA '18) became a fourth grade teacher at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School in Fort Wayne. **Renee Garcia** (BA '19) became Co-Director of Agency at AMA PDX.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

HAVE A CLASS NOTE? To update information, simply go to alumni.sf.edu and click on "Stay Connected" or send information to alumni@sf.edu or mail it to the University of Saint Francis Alumni Office, 2701 Spring Street, Fort Wayne, IN 46808. Thanks for keeping in touch with your alma mater!



IN MEMORIAM

1940s-1960s

Audrey Roy '49
Jane (Noll) Smith '56
Jean A. Chiavacci '60
Emily Murphy '65
Wayne Wyss '67
Cheryl (White) Flick '68
Gene Snyder '68
Patricia Champion '69
Janice Hildenbrand '69

1970s-1980s

Patricia Penick '70
Michael Romery '70
Paul Franklin Willer '72
MaryEllen M. Rice '73
Jacqueline (Keyes) Sponseller '74
David Darling '75
James Earnhart '77
Terry Dean '80
Sister Julie Marie Oxley '80, '10
Linda Sue (Baumgartner) Melsa '85

Friends of Saint Francis

Elizabeth Baddour
John Bellio
Donna M. Carteaux
John Eickhoff
Mary Lou Fries
Lois Hageman
John Kammeyer
Sister Judith Anne Schaeffer
Rudolph A. Wuttke

Student of Saint Francis

Whittney Pfefferkorn

2020s

20 Noah Asher (BA '20) is a motion graphics designer at PTR Premier Truck Rental. **21** Sherman Flucas II (BS '20) is an education specialist at Metropolitan School District of Washington Township. **22** John Jehl (BA '20) joined One Lucky Guitar as art director. **Em Napier** (BS '20, MOL '22) is an Associate Director of Residence Life Operations and Junior Senior Support at Whitman College. **Dr. Julian Colantonio** (BS '21) graduated from Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College in Toronto, Canada, and will begin practicing chiropractic medicine. **23** Olivia Obringer (BS '21) started a mentorship program in Miami, Florida, with VEG ER for Pets, an all-emergency animal hospital. This program includes weekly academic assignments, endoscopy training and hands-on experience managing surgical and emergent cases. **24** Sister M. Deogratias (formerly Natalie) Lindquist (BA '22) began her two years of Novitiate prayer, study and living the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration life. **Katie Taylor** (BS '22, MS '24) became a primary care physician assistant at Mercy Health in Toledo, Ohio. **Dr. Lou Weber** (MS '22) finished first in her age group in the women's 10k race at Fort4Fitness on Sept. 27. **25** Emma Bachtel (BS '23) graduated from the Orr Fellows program, a premier early-career development program connecting high-achieving recent graduates with future-focused companies across the state. **Ontarius Jones** (BS '23) works as a fitness specialist at Turnstone and appeared in an April episode of WANE's Living Local 15. **Eliana Serdynski** (BS '23) earned a master's degree in physician assistant studies at Carroll University. **26** Maddie Hughes (BA '24) became a skills coach at Bowen Health. **Addison Krebs** (BS '24) began working with Digital Mission Institute, a new ministry based in Fort Wayne focused on using modern tools and platforms to evangelize "across the algorithm," meet people where they are online and lead them back to the light of the Gospel. **Reitumetse "Tumi" Malatse** (BA '24) started a new position as producer at Pinnacle Advertising. **27** Joanna Evanich (BSW '25) joined Damascus as a full-time missionary. She primarily works as a worship leader. **Veronica Loeffler** (BS '25) began a sales engineer position at Sweetwater. **28** Madisyn Miller (BS '25) became an account coordinator for RunSwitch Public Relations in Louisville, Kentucky. **Alastair Wright** (BS '25) joined Saint Leo University as a graduate assistant within Residential Life.

FROM THE SIDELINES

A New Era Begins



Two of Saint Francis' top athletic programs are under new leadership this year.

Adam Sherman took over the football program from founder Kevin Donley and Nate Conley succeeded Chad LaCross in men's basketball.

Sherman (BS '05) played and coached under Donley, serving as offensive coordinator for three years. He was named Mid-States Football Association Midwest League Assistant Coach of the Year in 2024 after helping the Cougars to the playoffs.

Sherman succeeded Donley, who earned national recognition while compiling a 240-72 record at Saint Francis with NAIA titles in 2016 and 2017. Donley ranks fifth on the all-time list of winningest college football coaches in all divisions with a record of 356-157-1.

Conley, a Fort Wayne native and Defiance College alumnus, spent six seasons as head coach at Manchester University in Manchester, Indiana. Conley was named the HCAC Coach of the Year in 2023 when he led Manchester to its first HCAC regular-season title in more than a decade.

Conley succeeds LaCross, who compiled a record of 335-168 in 15 seasons, was the 2016 Rawlings NAIA Division II Coach of the Year and was one of 25 active NAIA coaches to win over 300 games. LaCross took 11 teams to the NAIA tournament.

CAMPUS NEWS



Saint Francis holds 'Ascension of Christ' stained glass window blessing

Saint Francis hosted a blessing for the 116-year-old "Ascension of Christ" stained glass window on Sept. 19 at the North Campus auditorium, 2702 Spring Street.

The family of Donald and Marilyn Balser donated "Ascension of Christ" to the university in 2024.

The 8-by-9-foot monumental stained glass window was designed by Tiffany Glass Studios of New York City and fabricated by the Kokomo (Indiana) Glass Company in 1909.

It was installed in the Scottish Rite Cathedral in downtown Fort Wayne until 1967, when the cathedral was demolished.

Saint Francis expands health sciences programs to Lafayette

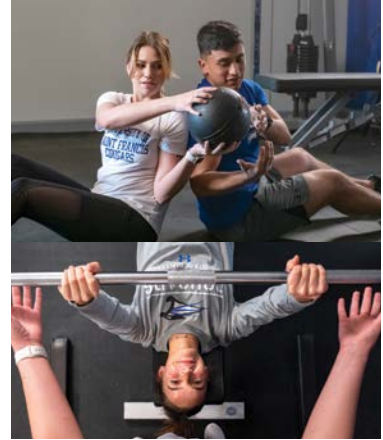
Saint Francis announced an expansion of its health sciences programs to Lafayette, Indiana, birthplace of the university in 1890.

Franciscan Health donated the former Bill Long Medical Building, 1450 Salem Street in Lafayette, to the university. The site will be named Our Lady of Lourdes Hall and will house Saint Francis associate degree programs with a medical imaging focus—including sonography and radiologic technology—along with two bachelor's degree completion programs. The site will also serve as a second location for the Leffler Academy, a Saint Francis partner founded in Gas City, Indiana, specializing in nursing degrees and pre-degree allied health certificates. Leffler Academy programs will begin upon approval by specialty and national accrediting bodies.

An anonymous donor contributed \$3.5 million to Saint Francis for program expansion in Lafayette.

Enrollment up for 2025-26

Saint Francis welcomed its largest student body in four years on Aug. 27 at the annual Opening Convocation and Mass of the Holy Spirit. The fall enrollment of 1,923 students includes a combined 835 new Fort Wayne, Crown Point, Lafayette and online students. The 425 residential students mark the highest on-campus total since 2018.



Strength and Conditioning Program earns prestigious accreditation

The Saint Francis Bachelor of Science in Health and Exercise Science Strength and Conditioning Program became the first in Indiana to be accredited by the Council of Accreditation of Strength and Conditioning Education (CASCE). Starting in 2030, candidates for the Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS) certification exam hold a bachelor's degree will a CASCE-accredited institution.



In loving memory

Saint Francis mourns the loss of Whitney Jeanne Pfefferkorn, a dedicated nursing student preparing to begin her senior year this fall. Whitney, 21, tragically passed away in an ATV accident on July 26, 2025, in Colorado. Her deep faith, infectious joy and compassionate spirit left a lasting impact on the Saint Francis community and all who knew her.



Katie Dwyer named VP for Marketing and Enrollment

Saint Francis welcomed Katie Dwyer (MOL '17) as Vice President for Marketing and Enrollment (VPME) in September. Dwyer has been with Saint Francis for 10 years and was named interim VPME last March. She previously served as marketing services manager in the marketing department and special projects manager for the President's Cabinet.



Saint Francis celebrates Class of 2025

Saint Francis awarded 545 degrees to 408 undergraduate and 90 graduate students on May 3. President Dr. Lance Richey, Board Chair Richard A. Poinsett and keynote speaker Jason Shanks, president of the National Eucharistic Congress, encouraged graduates, with Shanks urging them to seek God in both strengths and weaknesses. The university also awarded Donald F. Schenkel an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters for his leadership and Board service during pivotal moments in its history.



Discovery Academy receives extended funding

Saint Francis has received three additional years of funding from Lilly Endowment Inc. for the Discovery Academy, which offers summer enrichment programs for students in kindergarten through grade 12. The \$415,827 grant was awarded through its Indiana Youth Programs on Campus (IYPC) initiative.

Special education programs receive national recognition

The special education programs of the Educator Preparation Program are proud to receive national recognition from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). The recognition for the undergraduate and graduate special education programs came as part of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) accreditation process. Programs that earn national recognition meet rigorous specialty licensure area standards for the preparation of special education professionals. The national recognition demonstrates that Saint Francis graduates have the content knowledge of the specialty area that they will be licensed to practice.



ACADEMIC SEAL



UNIVERSITY OF
SAINT FRANCIS
INDIANA

UNIVERSITY LOGO



SF MONOGRAM

New logo, seal and monogram revealed to open semester

Saint Francis introduced its first updated logo and seal since 1998, and its first-ever monogram, during Welcome Weekend on Aug. 22.

The logo and academic seal represent an evolution of the ones the university has held for decades, and the designs respect the tradition of Saint Francis while embracing the future.

The monogram visually reflects Saint Francis' evolution, merging modern style with its heritage. Positioned between the primary and athletic logos, it enhances brand consistency and offers a flexible, contemporary option for non-athletic use.



SPRING 2025

COUGAR SPORTS

RECAP

Baseball

Seniors Eli Riley and Jayden Lepper earned First Team All-Crossroads League honors. Riley, a catcher who hit 11 home runs and stole 20 bases, was also named to the Crossroads League Gold Glove Team. Lepper led the Cougars with a .330 batting average. Lukas North earned Second-Team honors for his pitching, with a 7-1 record and 71 strikeouts in 80 2/3 innings. Senior Blaine McRae set the career strikeout record. Saint Francis finished 30-23, its second highest straight season with 30 or more wins.

Esports

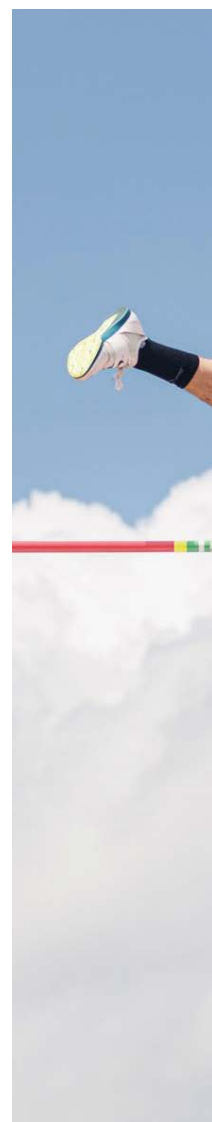
In the fall of 2024, the SF Overwatch team finished with a 4-1 record and qualified for the NECC Playoffs for the first time. After a tough fall season, the SF Rocket League team bounced back with a 4-3 record in the spring and qualified for the NECC Playoffs for the second time in history. The SF Super Smash Bros team competed well in the fiercely competitive Great Lakes Esports Conference.

Golf (MEN)

Junior Bailey Marquart earned Honorable Mention All-Crossroads honors after leading the Cougars with seven Top 10 finishes in the fall and spring, including two first-place finishes. He finished ninth in the Crossroads League Championship at The Fort Golf Course in Indianapolis.

Golf (WOMEN)

Senior Ava Warren led the way for the Cougars during the spring season, with sophomore Mary Jones and junior Abby Pequignot also turning in consistent performances over the course of the season. Juniors Tori Straley and Cylie Pyle rounded out the usual top-five Cougar golfers.





Softball

Led by Co-Coach of the Year Ryan Boly, the 29-21 Cougars had six players earning Crossroads League honors. Sophomore Abby Robakowski was named Newcomer of the Year and First-Team All-Crossroads League after leading the conference in batting average (.515), on-base percentage (.588) and slugging percentage (.969) and breaking seven school records. She led the league with 17 homers (third in the NAIA) and extra-base hits (40) and ranked fifth in NAIA in batting average. She earned First-Team NFCA All-American and Second-Team NAIA All-American status. Junior Macie Dowd and sophomore Payton Iliff were named Second-Team All-Crossroads League and juniors Madyson Minnich and Alexa Huth earned honorable mentions. Senior Brooklyn McCord was named to the conference Gold Glove Team.

Track and Field (MEN)

Graduate student Joey Rauwerda became Saint Francis' first track-and-field national champion since 2011 with first place in the pole vault (16 feet, 6.75 inches or 5.05 meters). Freshman Hugo Humbert finished 12th in the national 3,000-meter steeplechase and junior Benjamin Marano also earned a spot in the national championship in the 400-meter hurdles.

Track and Field (WOMEN)

Junior Hannah Boersema was named the Crossroads League Most Valuable Athlete in Field Events after she won the javelin with an NAIA "B" Standard and new personal best mark of 42.75m (140' 3"). Boersema also earned all-conference honors in the heptathlon with a school record of 4,144 points for second place. Boersema finished fourth in the javelin in the NAIA outdoor championship, earning All-American honors.



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