

# SAINT JOSEPH'S

FALL 2019

UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE



**A BOLD  
VISION FOR  
HAWK HILL.**

24





*Above: Cheryl A. McConnell, Ph.D., provost and vice president for academic affairs; Angela Rowe McDonald, Ph.D., dean of the new School of Health Studies and Education; Zenobia Hargust, chief human resources officer; and Billy Lange, men's head basketball coach*

*Cover illustration by Melissa McFeeters*

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## **READY TO LEAD**

by Jeffrey Martin '04, '05 (M.A.), Gabrielle Lacherza, Kelly Welsh '05 (M.A.) and Brendan Prunty '06

Four newcomers are bringing experience and energy to key positions.

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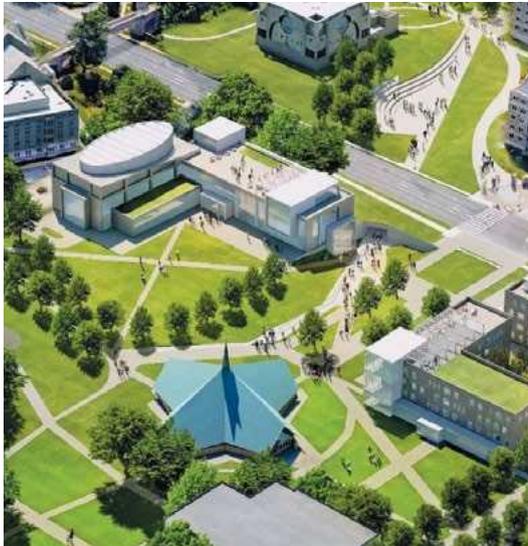
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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

In 1729, the Jesuits founded the first Roman Catholic Church in Philadelphia. That site at Old St. Joseph's Church on Willings Alley would become the birthplace of St. Joseph's College in 1851. The Jesuits intentionally chose Philadelphia because it was one of the most influential cities in America at the time, and because they prefer to focus their work around the urban center, plugging in to the complexities, opportunities and challenges found in those places. While these realities have evolved over nearly 300 years, the need for a Jesuit perspective in our city is as strong and resilient as ever.

The College moved around in its early years to a site at Juniper and Filbert Streets in 1856, back to Willings Alley in 1860 and then to 17<sup>th</sup> and Stiles Streets in 1889, where the Church of the Gesù was constructed, and where St. Joseph's Preparatory still sits. In 1922, having raised \$1 million, Saint Joseph's College purchased 23 acres where the University currently exists. Construction of Barbelin Hall began shortly thereafter and was completed in 1927, capped by a dedication ceremony that was attended by Charles A. Lindbergh, fresh off his historic trans-Atlantic flight.

It's hard to imagine that with just a million dollars and 23 acres, our current campus was formed. We have come a very long way; 102 acres to be exact. Now, SJU encompasses 125 acres that straddle the city and suburban sides of the major thoroughfare of City Avenue. We've doubled our academic spaces, modernized our playing fields and added recreational and residential buildings. We now own the former Episcopal Academy campus, the famed Cardinal's Residence and have an educational partnership with the renowned Barnes Arboretum. Our unique location and myriad offerings make us attractive to potential students, community partners, businesses and external organizations.

And, as you'll learn in this issue of *Saint Joseph's University Magazine*, the vision for our campus continues to grow in the form of a campus master plan. It will take much more than a million dollars to get us there. But it is

imperative that we always look ahead ... to the developing needs of current and upcoming generations of Hawks, to the demands of new technology and modes of learning, to the ever-changing realities that our graduates will face in the future of everything.

For the thousands of incoming students and their families that I have personally welcomed to campus this summer during several orientation sessions, we must deliver on our pledge to not only offer an unmatched education, but also an experience that challenges and changes them. For the early Jesuits who built an educational philosophy based on discovery, invention and holistic learning, we must push for state-of-the-art living and learning spaces. Our campus and our facilities play an important role in fulfilling these promises by providing not just high-tech research laboratories, but also communal gathering spaces, exercise and wellness programming and best-in-class fields and courts for athletes and fans.

We remain strong by always reflecting on our past, while being open to change, new perspectives and ideas. This issue is a perfect illustration. We take a retrospective look at the first 10 years of our Kinney Center for Autism Education and Support, with a bold look ahead to the next decade. We introduce some of our newest campus leaders and share how they complement the talent, institutional knowledge and expertise of the team. And, of course, we provide an exciting look at our future campus.

While we maintain a strong allegiance to our roots, the revolutionary spirit of our founders compels us to always think bigger and move ahead. We look forward to building the future together.

Mark C. Reed, Ed.D.  
President



## Workshop Examines Effects of Structural Inequality

As part of the University's ongoing commitment to building a diverse and inclusive campus climate, nearly 500 students, faculty, leaders and staff gathered over the course of the spring semester to participate in FACTUALITY, a board game and facilitated simulation of real-life experiences in America that examines the advantages and limitations of each character's identity and intersectionality.

Similar to the game night favorite Monopoly, players work to build revenue and secure property. But in FACTUALITY, each person encounters barriers and benefits based on their unique intersection of race, gender, sexual orientation, faith and class. Along the way, participants get used to being uncomfortable, while learning about the realities of societal injustice.

"I think the structure of the experience enables people to talk about and experience things through a game environment that you might not be able to otherwise," says Kim Allen-Stuck, Ph.D., assistant vice president of student success and educational support.

Feedback after the sessions was so positive that additional sessions were offered during each orientation for the incoming class of 2023.

## Grants Offer Opportunities for Students

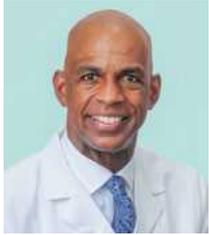
Marcello Balduccini, Ph.D., assistant professor of decision and system sciences, received a \$50,000 grant from the Federal Highway Administration for the development of an educational tool aimed at teaching civil engineers, managers and inspectors the techniques that exist for bridge evaluation. Additionally, Balduccini and Assistant Professor Kathleen Campbell-Garwood, Ph.D., received more than \$220,000 in grants from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to study how common cyber-physical systems — systems where computers and physical devices interact — work. The grants allow three students to work firsthand with the faculty members, meeting weekly to discuss assignments and progress.

"Grants have traditionally been heavy in lab sciences and statistics, and recently they have come in to the analytics and cyber-physical space," says Garwood. "These grants are an opportunity for us to help our students really separate themselves when they graduate by working on these projects."

## Student Scholarship, Fellowship Recipients

The following students earned scholarships, grants and fellowships during the spring semester:

- **Elise Brutschea '19**, National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship
- **Jason Ngo '20**, Gilman Scholarship
- **Kalia Mundell-Hill '20**, Gilman Scholarship
- **Megan Belivacqua '19**, Teaching Assistant Program in France (TAPIF) Fellowship
- **Robert McCullough '19**, Teaching Assistant Program in France (TAPIF) Fellowship
- **Johanna Neece '19**, Peace Corps Award
- **Amanda Adinolfi '19**, Peace Corps Award
- **Becky McIntyre '17**, Peace Corps Award



Washington

## Washington, Zook Join SJU Board of Trustees

Raymond G. Washington Jr., M.D. '91, a general surgeon with Pinehurst Surgical Clinic, North Carolina, and John D. Zook '71, founder of Zook Dinon PA, a regional public accounting firm, joined Saint Joseph's Board of Trustees this spring.

Washington specializes in general and bariatric surgery with an emphasis on laparoscopy. He was a member of the Hawks men's basketball team during his four years on Hawk Hill, appearing in more than 80 games. Washington completed his residency at Christiana Care Health System in Delaware. He received a medical degree from the Medical College of Virginia and a bachelor's degree in biology from Saint Joseph's.



Zook

Prior to founding Zook Dinon PA in 1979, Zook was a financial analyst with Verizon and a member of the audit staff of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP where he served as an

industry specialist for utilities and hospitals. In the community, he is professor emeritus of accounting at La Salle University and has published over 30 articles in national and regional journals. Zook received a Master of Business Administration from Drexel University and a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Saint Joseph's.

## SJU Launches M.S. Program in Cybersecurity

The Department of Computer Science is enrolling students this fall for a new master's degree in cybersecurity. The 30-credit, stackable program expands on the existing cybersecurity certificate program, which premiered in the fall of 2018. Offered fully online, the course load will expose students to the most recent information technologies and methodologies that strengthen the security and resilience of cyberspace.

"This program will properly develop cybersecurity professionals of the future and meet the growing industry demand as employers continue to put great emphasis on cybersecurity," says Joshua Power, Ed.D., executive director of graduate and extended studies in the College of Arts and Sciences. "Saint Joseph's graduate programs are designed to advance your career, whether you want to move forward in your current industry or change career trajectories completely."

*Find out more: [sju.edu/cyberMS](http://sju.edu/cyberMS).*

## Alumnus Returns to Hawk Hill With a Biotech Startup

In 2018, *Forbes* magazine named Philadelphia among the top 10 cities in the United States for startups. As fledgling companies flock to the city looking for space to innovate, Saint Joseph's has found a unique partnership with one of its alumni.

Nicholas Nicolaides '87 is the co-founder Navrogen, a local biotech startup with the goal of becoming an industry leader in the area of humoral immune oncology by developing cancer treatments that will improve anti-cancer outcomes. Nicolaides and his co-founder, Luigi Grasso, needed a lab space to conduct their molecular and cellular biology work, so Nicolaides reached out to his former classmate, Michael McCann, Ph.D. '87, professor of biology.

That partnership provides benefits for the University, as well: Nine students worked as



Left to right: Megan Cecchine '22, Nicolaides, McCann, Michael Fontana '21, Grasso

interns with Navrogen during the spring semester, gaining valuable hands-on experience with the two accomplished scientists.

"Students are always our first priority," says Shaily Menon, Ph.D., dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. "A great component of this partnership is that participating students

don't have to travel off campus for high-level research and entrepreneurship experience. Not only are they able to learn basic methodology in translational medicine, but Navrogen's work allows students to impact real-life solutions and assist in improving cancer treatment outcomes."

## Barnes Arboretum Earns Distinction

The Barnes Arboretum at Saint Joseph's University has been certified by Botanic Garden Conservation International, making it one of only five gardens in the United States to achieve the honor and confirming its adherence to the highest international standards. The 12-acre arboretum is astonishingly diverse for its size, with more than 2,500 varieties of woody and herbaceous plants — many rare. In 2018, Saint Joseph's University and the Barnes Foundation launched an educational partnership expanding opportunities for students and the surrounding community to engage in horticulture education.



## Local Snack Superstar Tells Family Success Story

Ed Herr, president and chief executive officer of Herr Foods, Inc., shared lessons from the \$250 million family business's seven decades of success with local entrepreneurs in March as part of the Family Business Legacy Speaker Series, presented by the University's Initiative for Family Business & Entrepreneurship.

"Our main family values are hard work, integrity, respect and humility," Herr said in an interview before the event. "We want to set a positive example for our employees and show that working hard can be rewarding.

Continuous learning in the workplace is beneficial to employees and the employer. There is always an opportunity to keep learning, no matter your job title."

The Initiative for Family Business & Entrepreneurship provides entrepreneurial families the support, guidance and tools necessary to increase long-term competitiveness, ownership prosperity and family unity for generations to come. Backed by the thought leadership of the nationally ranked Haub School of Business, the Initiative incorporates interactive education in family business, with a deliberate focus on peer-based learning and accountability.



Herr

## Chocolatier Funds Education with Grant

Kate McAleer, founder of Bixby & Co., a health-focused confections company based in Rockland, Maine, is learning how to accelerate the growth of her booming business through the University's Food Marketing MBA. She joined the program after receiving a \$100,000 grant from the Tory Burch Foundation to help promote women entrepreneurs. Part of the grant helped her to open a new factory for her business, while part helped to fund her return to education.



McAleer

The SJU Food Marketing MBA is the only program of its kind in the world, and McAleer says she "appreciates its laser focus on such a nuanced and complicated industry." Its online option gives her the flexibility she needs to pursue her degree at her own pace and expand her knowledge base while spanning the globe. McAleer is excited to build a company where she plans to be involved for the long-haul, and she believes her Saint Joseph's education will be the perfect springboard for future success.

## Research Helps Immigrant Communities Discuss Domestic Violence

One of the most important factors in combating intimate partner violence is identifying safe ways for victims to report abuse. But victims in immigrant populations often find particular difficulty in finding the safe reporting outlets because of language barriers, legal status and sometimes cultural customs such as privacy.

A recent study conducted by Chunrye Kim, Ph.D., assistant professor of sociology, has found that one industry in particular could fill the need: hair styling.

“Stylists in the Korean immigrant population in New York are very aware of intimate partner violence among their clientele, more than 50 percent,” Kim said. “And most stylists would welcome education on how to direct victims to trustworthy resources.”

Her pilot study, published in the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, surveyed 47 hairstylists in the Bayside and Flushing communities of Queens, both of which have large Korean immigrant communities and numerous salons. More than half of the surveyed stylists reported that their clients disclosed physical and sexual abuse by their partners in the past year, with even more — more than 80 percent — reporting emotional or economic abuse.

Kim is hopeful that in the safe, intimate environment of the salon, victims may be more willing to open up, breaking the cycle of shame and self-blame. The unique relationship between a stylist and client could provide an open door, amplified by the comfort of speaking in the client’s native language. Stylists, for their part, expressed a near-unanimous willingness to openly display posters and brochures about domestic violence in public areas like waiting rooms.

The next step in Kim’s research will be to secure funding to conduct a study using a case-control design in Philadelphia measuring confidence levels of trained stylists in assisting potential victims and the effectiveness of education.



Kim

## In Memory

### Louis Fischer (1930-2019)

Louis Fischer played an instrumental role as one of the founders of the Academy of Food Marketing at Saint Joseph’s. Dedicated to his faith and social justice, Fischer is credited for ensuring that the food industry was central to Jesuit ideals. Through Fischer’s leadership and scholarship, the academy was created to promote Food Marketing education and support the development of graduates in food and allied industries. As one of the founders of Gino’s (a precursor to McDonald’s and Burger King), Fischer’s legacy can be seen in all aspects of the food industry.

### J. Randall (Randy) Kiernan (1960-2019)

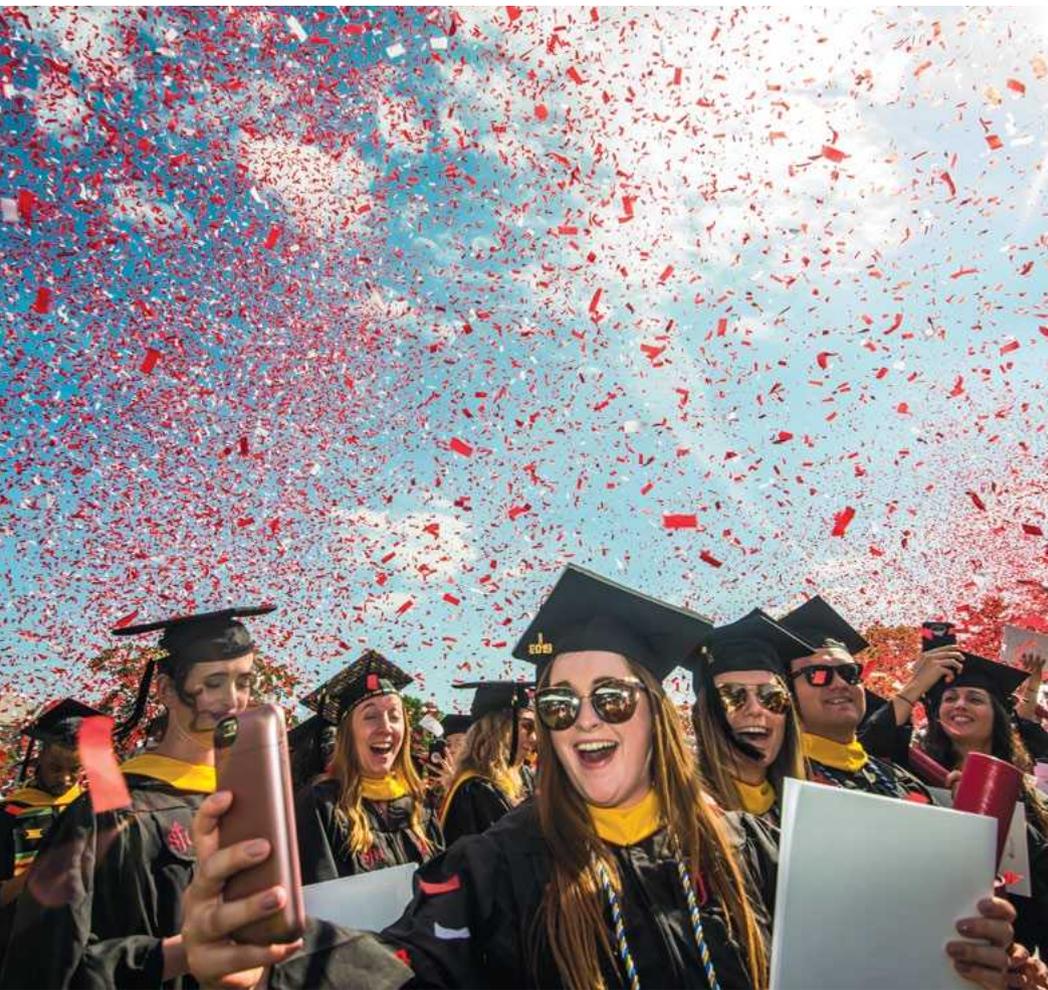
Randy Kiernan ’82 proudly served as the Hawk mascot for the men’s basketball program at Saint Joseph’s from 1981 to 1982. Joining the team in 1981, Kiernan was part of the unheralded Hawks’ squad that stunned the nation’s No. 1 team, DePaul, in the second round of the 1981 NCAA Tournament and advanced to the Midwest Regional Final, before falling to eventual champion Indiana. During his senior year, Saint Joseph’s captured the 1982 East Coast Conference title and returned to the NCAA Tournament. After graduation, Kiernan spent his professional career in the technology sector and continued to cheer on his beloved Hawks as a long-time supporter of the University and athletics. Kiernan’s family recently established the Randy Kiernan Scholarship Fund at Saint Joseph’s in his honor.

### Charles F. Shreiner ’50 (1924-2019)

Charles F. Shreiner ’50 spent nearly 30 years as part of the faculty at Saint Joseph’s. Having previously held positions in Latin America with Catholic Relief Services and the United States Food for Peace program, Shreiner first joined the University’s social sciences faculty in 1965. When Saint Joseph’s Latin American studies minor was created in 1990, he served as its program director until his retirement in 1993. Shreiner had a profound impact as a mentor to many students over the years, inspiring their interest in and passion for Latin America, which in many cases shaped their futures. He was recognized with The Reverend Joseph S. Hogan, S.J., Award in 2007 as an individual exemplifying the Christian principles of faith, hope and love, and outstanding loyal service to the University. Shreiner’s legacy of engagement with the University remains through the Charles F. Shreiner ’50 Latin American Studies Fund, which provides sponsorship of lectures and scholarships for students, supporting their travel to and studies in Latin America.

### Jack Whitaker ’47 (1924-2019)

Jack Whitaker voiced some of sports’ most iconic moments over his five-decade-long broadcasting career. Before completing his education, he was a decorated veteran of the U.S. Army, where his service included fighting in the Battle of Normandy in World War II. He was the CBS announcer for Super Bowl I in 1967 and called Secretariat’s runaway Triple Crown-sealing victory in the Belmont Stakes in 1973. Whitaker was also the voice of dozens of major golf tournaments and several Olympics. He won the Emmy for Outstanding Sports Performer in 1979 and was recognized with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Sports Emmy Awards in 2012. He was inducted into the American Sportscasters Association Hall of Fame in 1997, the National Sportscasters and Sportswriters Association Hall of Fame in 2001, and the Saint Joseph’s University Athletic Hall of Fame in 2005.



## SJU Celebrates Class of 2019

More than 2,500 graduates received bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees on May 18 during the University's annual commencement exercises. Throughout the day, honorary degree recipients and student speakers celebrated the accomplishments of the class and expressed excitement for their future.

Anne Welsh McNulty, an investment executive, philanthropist and advocate for women's leadership, addressed the undergraduate class after receiving an honorary degree. Honorary degrees were also bestowed during the undergraduate ceremony on Valerie V. Gay, a performing artist, civic leader, arts advocate and community builder; and Francis H. Trainer Jr. '68, a business ethics pioneer and investment leader.

Christopher Gheysens '05 (MBA), president and CEO of Wawa, Inc., received an honorary degree and delivered an address at the graduate and doctoral ceremony.

*Watch the ceremonies at [sju.edu/2019](http://sju.edu/2019).*



"Your life's passion may not be crystal clear to you right now. But I urge you to pay attention to the voice inside you that screams, 'Yes!', even if it seems that thing is far removed from where you are or where you are heading."

– JENNIFER RAHNER '19  
*Undergraduate Student Speaker*



*Clockwise from left: Rahner; McNulty, Gheysens*



"Fear flees from alertness, light and proper perspective. These are all lessons I've learned here."

– JACOB MATTHEWS '19  
Graduate Student Speaker



From top: Matthews; Gay (right) with Dr. Reed; Trainer (left) with Dr. Reed



## Crimson & Gray Society Announced

Saint Joseph's University announced the launch of its Crimson & Gray Society, a giving society that celebrates donors who make annual gifts of \$10,000 - \$24,999 in support of the University. Crimson & Gray members provide Saint Joseph's with vital resources to pursue its bold strategic initiatives, grow key priorities and expand in innovative and ambitious ways.

The primary purpose of the Crimson & Gray Society is to provide support for current use financial aid which remains among the University's highest fundraising priorities. However, donors may opt to designate their gift to other areas as well.

Crimson & Gray members enjoy special opportunities to experience the impact of their generosity on current students through exclusive campus events, including the University's annual scholarship reception, as well as regional and affinity gatherings. Members also receive regular updates on campus initiatives along with recognition at University events and in publications.

*To learn more about the Crimson & Gray Society and the University's range of giving societies, visit: [sju.edu/givingsocieties](http://sju.edu/givingsocieties).*

*Saint Joseph's University Magazine* invites feedback from our readers in the form of letters to the editor and ideas for future stories with connections to the University. Please send your correspondence to [sjunews@sju.edu](mailto:sjunews@sju.edu).





Photo: Dan Moretz

## New Court Design Highlights Athletics Enhancements

A complete reimagining and redesign of the court in Hagan Arena highlighted a number of upgrades and enhancements to facilities for men’s and women’s basketball this summer. The new court design is a unique combination of striking graphics and meticulous production detail, capturing the spirit of Hawk Hill while looking to a bold future.

In addition to the Hagan Arena enhancements, the courts at the SJU Tennis Complex on the Maguire Campus, as well as the Sweeney Field Courts, were completely resurfaced during the summer, upgrading the University’s 10 courts for varsity, club and recreational use.

### SJU Introduces Leadership Academy for Student-Athletes

Saint Joseph’s launched a leadership academy for student-athletes last year designed to enhance leadership skills on and off the field. A total of 53 coach-nominated sophomores, juniors and seniors from each team took part in the program. Participants attended several presentations throughout the academic year which focused on personal growth, career preparation, leadership, and faith and spirituality.

“We have to make sure the student experience is consistent with the Jesuit tradition, which is a holistic development of students,” explained Director of Athletics Jill Bodenstener. “Jesuit tradition is all about education, and athletics has to be a critical part of that education.”

### Hawk Roundup

- **Anna Willocks '19**, the most decorated student-athlete in SJU field hockey history, is one of 12 student-athletes from the Atlantic 10 to be nominated for the prestigious NCAA Woman of the Year Award.
- **The Hawks landed 15 men’s lacrosse student-athletes** on the Northeast Conference’s (NEC) 2019 Spring Academic Honor Roll, which requires that a student-athlete maintain at least a 3.20 cumulative GPA.
- **Women’s rowing junior Shane Devine** earned Second Team All-Atlantic 10 honors as part of the Varsity 8 squad this past season. Devine was also named to the *Philadelphia Inquirer* Academic All-Area Women’s Rowing Team and the Commissioner and Athletic Director’s Honor Roll.

» FOR MORE ATHLETICS NEWS: [SJUHAWKS.COM](http://SJUHAWKS.COM)

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**Hawks learn the skills to excel in their first jobs and possess the savvy and versatility to adapt to whatever comes next — and the region’s top companies are taking notice.**

*Allison DelGrippe '17 maintains a client list that includes upscale eateries like The Bercy, a French brasserie in Ardmore, Pennsylvania.*

# WHAT EMPLOYERS WANT: Our Graduates

by Katie Smith '15

Allison DelGrippo '17, a sales representative for Breakthru Beverage Group through E&J Gallo, remembers her third day on the job. She was still learning the tools of the trade and her boss had assigned her the company's "starter accounts" — longtime, reliable clients who would help her through her first few months as a salesperson. Yet, even with the head start, she was uncertain of how one of her earliest meetings with a client would go.

"Don't worry," DelGrippo's boss reassured her, "I can do all the talking."

But DelGrippo, who received a bachelor's degree with dual majors in marketing and leadership, ethics and organizational sustainability, found her footing quickly.

"The buyer and I instantly hit it off," she recalls, "and by the end of the meeting, I had learned all about his family and his vision for the restaurant, and we both left thrilled to be working together."

When DelGrippo graduated from her "starter accounts" a few months later, instead of ending her relationship with this client, the buyer reached out to E&J Gallo and negotiated keeping her as his sales rep.

DelGrippo's experience echoes what employers across the region and around the world learn when they hire Saint Joseph's graduates: what the world has labeled as "soft skills" are actually critical traits that are valued on any résumé, and Hawks have them in spades. Alumni enter the workforce equipped not only with expertise that will help them accomplish their first job, but with a broad knowledge base, an appreciation for learning and

interpersonal and leadership skills they can call on no matter what the marketplace throws at them.

"In our office, we are trying to help students and alumni develop careers, not just land a job after graduation," says Panagiota Kokkalis, associate director of employer engagement at the University's Career Development Center. "Our office takes a consultative approach that asks hiring managers and students alike what they need to succeed."

As a two-time alumnus, former Hawk mascot and current member of the University's Board of Trustees, Dan Gallagher '94, '99 (M.S.), vice president of talent acceleration at Comcast, knows what he is getting when he hires Saint Joseph's graduates: hard workers, critical thinkers, deep empathizers and strong communicators. More than 250 alumni have found success at the media giant by espousing those qualities.

"Comcast values work ethic, collaboration, integrity and problem solving," says Gallagher, who has worked at the company since 2000. "Hawks learn how, when and why to use their leadership voice, to be inclusive of others, and to get things done the right way for the right reason."

Comcast is a significant contributor to the Philadelphia economy, employing about 9,000 workers at its campus in the city, which also serves as its global headquarters. Founded in Philadelphia more than 55 years ago, Comcast has grown to be one of the world's largest media and technology companies with three primary businesses: Comcast Cable, NBCUniversal and Sky, one of Europe's leading media and entertainment companies.

Alumni represent the University in many of Comcast's sectors, including data analytics and visualization, where Tom O'Hara '16, a senior analyst for data visualization at Comcast Cable, says that the real-world data he was able to work with while studying business intelligence and analytics at Saint Joseph's prepared him for the complexities of his job.

"At work, data is complicated," O'Hara says, "and having the experience of using complex data from other sources at SJU was a good first taste. In one of my classes, we mined a dataset from a Latin American school network, provided analysis and visualization, and had to tell a compelling story to drive insight. Having the chance to use real data — nothing altered or too perfect from a textbook — prepared me for the unpredictability of real-world data analysis."

*See "Data for a Better World," page 30, for more on this project.*

O'Hara's story is not uncommon at Saint Joseph's: 87 percent of students complete at least one experiential learning opportunity while on Hawk Hill, according to data collected by the Career Development Center. These experiences include internships, co-ops, lab work, classwork with real-world examples or even service. Roughly 30 Hawks of each graduating class pursue a service opportunity as part of their postgraduate plans by choosing a year of service with organizations like the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, the Jesuit Volunteer Corps and JVC Northwest. The lessons they

# “Hawks learn how, when and why to use their leadership voice, to be inclusive of others, and to get things done the right way for the right reason.”

Dan Gallagher '94, '99 (M.S.)

learn while serving others prepare them for future opportunities.

“People often ask me how I went from a year of service to Google,” says Ryan Musso '14, who served as an engagement coordinator at St. Andre Bessette Catholic Church in Oregon through JVC Northwest from 2014 to 2015. “And I tell them it is so important to have a wide variety of life experiences to help figure out what you value, what your skills are and how to best apply them in the roles you want to have. JVC Northwest gave me that space.”

Now Musso, a former leadership, ethics and organizational sustainability major, is an account strategist at Google, working with 120 clients who are currently spending with the company to optimize services and strategize how to improve the customer experience. It is a fast-paced, customer-driven role that Musso says requires one so-called “soft skill” above everything else: communication.

“Meeting people where they’re at is crucial in my current role, but it’s something I learned on Hawk Hill and in JVC Northwest,” he says. “Whether it was my senior year business policy presentation or giving myself to focusing solely on one client experiencing homelessness during a mental health crisis, I was learning how to focus on the individual in that moment. Having a multitude of experiences, learning different personality types and communication styles sets me apart from my coworkers in how I operate in this role.”

The University maintains strong relationships with dozens of companies who visit campus to interact with students, teach them about their industries and recruit new hires. Joe McDonald, who joined Saint Joseph’s in 2018 as director of corporate and industry partnerships, manages many of the relationships. He says that companies can hire SJU graduates with confidence that they’ll be ready for everything that they experience.

“The life cycle of a skill in the marketplace used to be three decades,” McDonald says. “You could enter an industry knowing how to do something and that wouldn’t change for your entire career. But now, new skills are needed all the time as job requirements shift. We’re teaching skills that will be relevant to jobs that don’t even exist yet.”

Paul Pritchett, sales operation manager for Printpack, Inc., a manufacturer of packaging for major food and beverage brands, first engaged with Saint Joseph’s when the company was starting a sales training program in 2015. Representatives for the company attended career fairs around the region, looking for qualified candidates.

“We weren’t sure what we were looking for initially,” Pritchett says. “But two schools’ students’ quickly stood out to us, and Saint Joseph’s was one of them. St. Joe’s students are well prepared and authentic. They have a deep intellectual curiosity and eagerness to

learn that serves them well as they take on new jobs. Hawks also have a long-term approach to their career goals. They know that their first job won’t necessarily be their last, and they have the presence of mind to be ready for any changes in the road ahead.”

Working with McDonald’s office, Printpack continues to return to the University, visiting sales management classes taught within the Haub School of Business. Though the company is 3,500 employees strong, it only hires fewer than a half dozen new employees to the sales training program per year. Several have been Hawks.

McDonald recalls speaking with a hiring manager who had visited classes at Saint Joseph’s and was impressed with their advanced knowledge of data visualization software that would be crucial to jobs in the industry.

“He was in the process of searching for candidates to fill a position, but was having trouble finding anyone with the combination of knowledge and experience that the listing called for,” McDonald says. “They wanted three years’ experience, but he was finding students at St. Joe’s with more relevant knowledge. He convinced his supervisor to change the requirements so he could hire someone out of that class.”

## By the Numbers

Each fall, Hawks from the most recent undergraduate class are asked about their post-graduation activity. The Class of 2018 reported the following:

# 97%

Employed, pursuing graduate study or in full-time volunteer programs within six months of graduation.

# \$51,330

Mean starting base salary, above the national average.\*

\*According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

# 87%

Completed at least one experiential learning opportunity at SJU.

**“Having the chance to use real data ... prepared me for the unpredictability of real-world data analysis.”**

**Tom O’Hara ’16**

**A**cross all industries, one factor that united the nearly two dozen alumni interviewed was the value of inherent human respect that they learned at Saint Joseph’s. That foundation — of treating people as people, instead of numbers — makes Hawks better teachers, sales people, social service providers, data analysts, doctors and managers.

Jim Multari ’06 (MBA), vice president of national sales strategy and insights at Comcast, reflects on the idea that a personal touch is just as important as business acumen.

“I always try and remember that every data point represents a person: customers or employees that are working hard to do the right thing to create better worlds for themselves and their families,” Multari says. “My SJU education reinforced that business success and community success aren’t mutually exclusive.”

*Katie Smith is a freelance writer based in Philadelphia.*

*Tom O’Hara ’16 says his studies in business intelligence and analytics prepared him for his current role as a senior analyst for data visualization at Comcast Cable.*



**Top Destinations**

Among graduates from 2015 through 2018, the following companies hired the most Hawks:



# READY TO LEAD



## A QUARTET OF KEY HIRES IS PREPARED TO TAKE SAINT JOSEPH'S TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

A new energy can be felt across campus this fall. In addition to welcoming an incoming class of fresh faces, Saint Joseph's officially launched a new academic school, introduced enhancements to the athletics program and proposed plans to transform the campus' physical footprint. As Saint Joseph's embraces this next chapter in its history, these additions reaffirm the University's commitment to enhancing the student experience and elevating programs of excellence.

This summer, Saint Joseph's also welcomed three notable newcomers: Cheryl A. McConnell, Ph.D., provost and vice president for academic affairs; Angela Rowe McDonald, Ph.D., dean of the new School of Health Studies and Education; and Zenobia Hargust, chief human resources officer. They join new head men's basketball coach Billy Lange, who came to Hawk Hill at the end of March, as part of a diverse team of long-serving leaders and new additions that are ready to launch the University forward.

*Saint Joseph's University Magazine* spent time with each of the new arrivals to learn about their history, passion and vision for the University's future.

## A THOUGHTFUL APPROACH Cheryl A. McConnell, Ph.D.

By Jeffrey Martin '04, '05 (M.A.)

**W**hen Cheryl A. McConnell, Ph.D., first arrived in Pennsylvania, the house she was moving into was not yet ready, and her furniture was stuck on a moving van somewhere between Philadelphia and her previous home. So she spent the first few weeks of her new life in a temporary apartment, sleeping on an air mattress.

That's just how eager she was to get to work.

As the first provost to come to the job from outside the University in more than two decades, much of McConnell's early days on Hawk Hill centered around learning its history and meeting with faculty and administrators in order to develop her vision for its future. After more than three decades as an academic, McConnell is well practiced at identifying challenges in higher education and creating strategies to approach them.

"People around the country are questioning the value of college," McConnell says. "Costs are rising faster than wage increases, many students are graduating with significant loan debt, and companies are offering alternative educational opportunities that they believe will upskill their workforce more effectively than graduate school. We must act quickly and share a compelling message that clearly communicates the value that higher education adds — how we transform students and how vital a comprehensive education is to every individual's human development."

Before coming to Saint Joseph's, McConnell spent almost 31 years with another set of Hawks at Rockhurst University, the Jesuit university in Kansas City, Missouri. She chaired academic departments and Rockhurst's faculty senate and served on budgetary planning committees and task forces. In her most recent position, as dean of the College of Business, Influence, and Information Analysis, McConnell consistently sought ways to grow the college's offerings, especially in its graduate and not-for-credit education.

"The jobs that our graduates will get today are not the same as the jobs that they'll be doing five or 10 years from now," McConnell says. "We need to think ahead and offer programs that will match those jobs, while at the same time

keeping focus on the things that sustain a quality education and will last a lifetime: critical thinking, reading, writing, speaking and data literacy.”

Thomas Curran, S.J., president of Rockhurst University, says that McConnell’s approach will push Saint Joseph’s ahead of its peers.

“She’s like the Wayne Gretzky of academics,” Curran says. “She skates to where the puck is going to be, not where it was. She sees needs and pursues thoughtful solutions.”

McConnell says she is encouraged by the steps the University has already taken to offer innovative programs, including the growth of the cybersecurity certificate and graduate programs, the announcement of a forthcoming Center for Addiction and Recovery Education, and the opening of the School for Health Studies and Education. She brings a special interest in the last of these, having spent a year as interim dean of Rockhurst’s College of Health and Human Services.

While she is dedicated to being creative and forward-thinking, McConnell’s experience at Rockhurst has given the way she works an unmistakably Jesuit style.

“She doesn’t jump into things looking to elbow other people out of them,” Curran says. “She is a true companion and partner, emphasizing the ‘with’ in the Jesuit pillar of being with and for others. She wants to participate fully in the culture of a place.”

For her part, McConnell says that one of the driving forces that brought her to Saint Joseph’s was the shared connection to Jesuit principles. She wants to help the University grow while staying grounded in the values that she sees in people here.

“I have a vision of walking across campus in three or five years and seeing a community where everyone feels welcome, everyone feels at home, and we are deeply engaged in dialogue and education that allows our graduates to take on the most difficult challenges of the world,” she says. “I want that spirit to emanate from everybody. I’m passionate about the transformational value of education, and I think if we commit to each other, we can continue to provide that to students in a vibrant way for 10, 50, 100 years.”

*Jeffrey Martin is managing editor of Saint Joseph’s University Magazine and host and producer of the Good to Know podcast.*

**“The jobs that our graduates will get today are not the same as the jobs that they’ll be doing five or 10 years from now.” - McConnell**



**“I can already see so many directions that we could take this school because of the rich expertise that exists.”**

- McDonald



## CHARTING A PATH

# Angela Rowe McDonald, Ph.D.

By Gabrielle Lacherza

**T**he opening of a new school comes with it a long checklist. Seek accreditation. Evaluate the need for new program offerings. Find partnerships that will give students opportunities for hands-on learning and create career pathways. But none of these things can be accomplished until the first item is complete: Find the right leader.

Fortunately, Saint Joseph's has found an experienced educator and health professional in Angela Rowe McDonald, Ph.D., the inaugural dean of the new School of Health Studies and Education (SHSE).

McDonald has spent her life at the intersection of health and education. After earning a degree in human services counseling from Old Dominion University, she worked as a community counseling intern while earning her master's degree. She served as a family counselor in the School of Education at the College of William & Mary while working toward her doctoral degree and has been a professional counselor, either for a college or in private practice, for nearly all of her career.

Steering the direction of a new school will not be an unfamiliar task for McDonald. After 10 years in the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, she spent the last year as the interim dean of its College of Health Sciences. Like SHSE, the college was formed from existing programs and faculty. The experience taught her the value of the early steps in the process of forming a school.

“Saint Joseph's is developing a plan to pursue national accreditation in educator preparation,” McDonald says. “This will allow us to be more competitive in the market and give our students an advantage that will help them to be more mobile.”

On the health side, McDonald's focus will be growing partnerships with health organizations and enhancing programs so that those students are fully prepared for professional health graduate programs and the pursuit of health

## “I’m attracted to organizations with strong missions, like SJU.”

- Hargust

careers. In a city with many health and education professionals, the opportunities for Saint Joseph’s to establish its voice in the marketplace are endless.

“We need to expand the opportunities for undergraduates to earn necessary clinical hours on campus or through partnership arrangements,” she says. “Saint Joseph’s will be plugged into the network of health schools around the country.”

McDonald is taking on the work with a balance of agility and precision.

“I want to move the school forward, but to be strategic in our approach,” she says. “I want to dig into data, leverage market research and rely on faculty expertise to decide which growth opportunities to pursue.”

The school will benefit, McDonald says, from the strength of its existing programs. It is composed of dozens of established undergraduate, graduate, doctoral and certificate programs, and McDonald will look for ways to expand those offerings.

“We have strong, foundational offerings and a world-class faculty,” she says. “I can already see so many directions that we could take this school because of the rich expertise that exists.”

McDonald is particularly impressed by the work being done by the Institute for Clinical Bioethics and the Kinney Center for Autism Education and Support (*For more on the Kinney Center’s work, see page 32*).

“We should be building on these successes and looking to expand our offerings or curriculum in the area of ‘helping professions’ who have specialized training to work with a variety of populations that have specific educational or health needs,” McDonald says. “I want to evaluate our portfolio across the school to see what additional growth opportunities we may have and look to grow our footprint in these areas regionally.”

One of the key advantages that McDonald sees the school offering is its Jesuit roots, which she says speak to her training as a licensed counselor and support the need to prepare professionals to engage in ethical decision making.

“Everyone has a story, but it’s the job of a counselor to appreciate the complexity of the

human spirit and to explore beyond the surface,” she says. “That’s very similar to the way that the Jesuits approach education.”

As the school begins its first semester, McDonald knows that keeping an eye on the future of the health and education industries will be crucial to the success of both the school and its graduates. Students must be prepared to enter the workforce now, but should also be equipped with the tools to thrive as the world around them changes.

“For all the technological advances in both fields, the one thing that tech can never replace is empathy,” McDonald says. “Human compassion is needed as an educator, as a health care professional and as an administrator. All of these professional roles are about listening to people and helping them achieve their goals. That’s what I hope to do with the School of Health Studies and Education.”

*Gabrielle Lacherza is the PR and communications specialist at Saint Joseph’s University.*

### PERSONNEL INTUITION

## Zenobia Hargust

By Kelly Welsh '05 (M.A.)

**S**omewhat unknowingly, Zenobia Hargust, new chief human resources officer, started her career early in her college years.

As an undergraduate psychology major at West Chester University, Hargust worked full time at a bank, putting in 30 to 35 hours per week on top of her studies and involvement on campus. Through her coursework in organizational psychology, Hargust honed a curiosity about workplace dynamics and an astute sensitivity to inconsistencies she was experiencing in her organizational culture.

“All bank employees attended a two-week orientation at headquarters. There was a great deal of energy spent on on-boarding, setting expectations and acclimating new hires to the



bank's culture," Hargust explains. "But the minute I returned to my branch, everything I learned seemed irrelevant. I had managers telling me, 'That's not how it really works.'"

A natural human resources professional even before earning her degree, Hargust began asking questions and doing what she could to mitigate the divide between what the organization wanted to be and how employees were living the mission.

Hargust pored herself even deeper into her studies, combining some education courses that sparked a passion for training. By senior year, she landed what was supposed to be an internship as an HR specialist, but turned into a full-time offer well before graduation.

For over a decade, Hargust, a native of the West Oak section of Philadelphia, has been at the helm of organizational cultures, mostly in the non-profit sector. She cites a desire to work for enterprises where people find meaning in their work. Early in her career she was a member of the HR staff at Lutheran Children and Family Service of PA and The Madlyn and Leonard Abramson Center for Jewish Life. In 2011, she earned a master's degree in human resource management from Walden University. In 2013, she made the move to higher education, accepting a position in HR at Swarthmore College.

"Higher ed was a change of pace," Hargust admits. "Things move a little slower because the culture is very consensus-based. But I learned to love the process of decision-making that was unique to this sector. I realize how much more complete decisions are and how the tone and tenor change when diverse voices weigh in. I also see how much more sustainable change is when there's an intentional and inclusive process."

The position at Saint Joseph's University felt like a natural progression for Hargust. Her time at Swarthmore solidified her passion for higher education and for the last four years, she's been a leader in the space, serving as the Pennsylvania/Delaware Board President of the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources.

Hargust says that her early interactions on campus formed strong impressions of a community whose values align with her own.

"There were great synergies when I came to campus and began meeting with members of the community," says Hargust. "I was immediately

intrigued by the strategic vision of Dr. Reed and enthusiasm of the HR team to drive important conversations and strategy."

Former colleague Pamela Prescod-Caesar, vice president for human resources at Swarthmore College, says that Hargust's openness to continual learning is among her greatest strengths, along with her gift for nurturing relationships.

"Professionalism, competence and heart are the quintessential qualities that speak to the essence of Zenobia's leadership," Prescod-Caesar adds. "She imagines and strives to create the ultimate workplace where evolving institutional needs are aligned with, and supported effectively by, a talented workforce."

For Hargust, community development and talent management are topline priorities as she takes the lead in HR at Saint Joseph's. "I look forward to helping the University attract leading professionals and to building strong relationships with the president's office, the provost's office and student life to ensure that all constituents are aligned and engaged."

Having spent almost her entire career working for faith-based organizations, Hargust doesn't need to look hard to see common threads.

"I'm attracted to organizations with strong missions, like SJU," she asserts. "And regardless of their faith affiliation, I am drawn to places where honoring humanity is baked in."

*Kelly Welsh is executive director of communications at Saint Joseph's University.*

## MAKING A MARK

### Billy Lange

By Brendan Prunty '06

**B**illy Lange has just wrapped up a meeting with his staff. The door to his office opens, and there are assistant coaches, each with a laptop in hand, alongside the operations staff collecting their notes. "Just focusing on details," Lange says, as the group exits. He clears the couch for his next meeting, and takes a seat in a chair near the window, where the rain clouds have finally cleared up behind him. Then he notices something.

It's a smudge on the dark wood of the coffee table in front of him. He pauses, and then grabs

a Kleenex from the box and wipes the left-hand corner of the table clean.

"Details," he says with a smile.

He is, at this point, in his 60th day as the 15th head men's basketball coach in Saint Joseph's University history. He is, at this point, trying to make sense of a roster which has required him to both recruit players in uniform and those deciding whose to wear, from minute one of his tenure. He is, at this point, still trying to straddle the line of taking over for Phil Martelli — the head coach on Hawk Hill for 24 years — while trying to mold the program in a new and vibrant way.

He is, at this point, a man who is consumed by details.

Because he knows, at Saint Joseph's, the details matter.

"Every place I've been, has a story to it," Lange said. "There's a passion. People care about Navy. People care about Villanova. People care about Herb Magee at (Philadelphia) Textile. The Sixers. If you brought an assistant coach from somewhere else and put them in Philadelphia, it would take them about 10 games to realize, 'This is a different experience.' That's what attracted me to here."

From the very minute the vacancy was public, it was clear that whoever would take over as the next head coach of the Hawks would have to chart a very different path. The last time there was a head-coaching vacancy on Hawk Hill, Bill Clinton was still in his first term as president. The culture of the country, college athletics and the University had changed dramatically. So when Director of Athletics Jill Bodensteiner looked at the list of candidates, she knew she wanted — needed — someone who could come in on Day One with a plan, and an energy to get it done.

"To me — and being at Notre Dame for 20 years, I know this — you start seeing things through one lens," Bodensteiner said. "So it's been refreshing to have someone come in and look at every aspect, and say, 'Why are we doing it this way?'"

The answers, she and Lange often found, were that it had just been done this way. Immediately, she gravitated to Lange's ability to dive into subjects, minutiae even, and figure out what made it tick. Little things, that even she hadn't considered. Case in point: During recruiting visits, players were always shown Villiger Hall, the University's newest residence. But when they arrived on campus, freshmen were placed in

McShain Hall, which was built in 1988. Lange asked why.

The reason, Bodensteiner told him, was that the building wasn't fully staffed during the Christmas holiday, when the visits usually happen. "I told him, 'Well, that sounds like something that can be fixed,'" she says.

Every aspect of the program has been inspected to create greater efficiency, and put the University's best foot forward. From health monitoring, to nutrition and diet, to tutoring locations — Lange's approach has been to examine it all. In the case of the dorms, it wasn't necessarily to put players in the nicest ones. "That's one street they don't have to cross," he said, his voice resonating with parental empathy.

It comes from his desire to immerse himself in every aspect of everything he does.

When Lange got the first major break of his career on the staff of Villanova under Jay Wright, he did something that most coaches on the basketball side don't do: He wandered over to the business end of the program. That's what struck Chris Heck as odd. Now the president of the Philadelphia 76ers, Heck had never seen that in his role as VP and GM of Villanova Sports Properties. The two men soon began to chat about all things program-related. How basketball impacted the business side. How the business elements could help the basketball program grow.

Lange's career made the usual twists and turns of a basketball coach: three years on Villanova's staff, seven years as the head coach at the Naval Academy, two more years back with Villanova, before landing on Brett Brown's staff with the Sixers — where Heck once again found the same curiosity. And then some.

"We had a very common core of beliefs when we arrived at the Sixers," Heck recalled. "As damaged and behind-the-times as we were there — there was an air of complacency that being OK was OK. But there was a group of us who wanted to be great. And one of the traits that Billy had that made him such a great fit, was that he knew it was okay to fail. But we were going to do it the right way.

"We had a long view on how to rebuild this once great brand."

Heck remembered getting a push notification on his phone when the St. Joe's position became

**"If you brought an assistant coach from somewhere else and put them in Philadelphia, it would take them about 10 games to realize, 'This is a different experience.'" - Lange**



available, and immediately texting Lange — who was in the midst of a scouting assignment week consisting of the Milwaukee Bucks (Giannis Antetokounmpo), Charlotte Hornets (Kemba Walker), and Boston Celtics (Kyrie Irving) by the way — to tell him this was the perfect opportunity. Yes, Brown had been grooming him for a future as an NBA head coach, but this spot was made for him.

He wasn't just a local coach who entered Bodensteiner and University president Dr. Mark Reed's vision; he wasn't put on the list because of a search firm algorithm; he had a real, tangible St. Joe's story. His parents, Bill '70 and Kathy '70, graduated from Hawk Hill. His brother Mark '97 was a four-year manager for the Hawks. His wife, Alicia, was the coordinator of academic services for student-athletes from 1997 to 2004. There are two sisters-in-law who graduated from SJU as well.

That was part of the 30-page plan he presented to Bodensteiner and Reed during his 90-minute interview. As they went through the process of making the decision, they kept coming back to Lange. His experience, his approach, his methodology, his learnings, his preparation ... his story. It just fit. Even in the heat of the moment, as he and his hand-picked staff pour over potential recruits to fill out the roster for this season, and bolster it for the future — all while continuing to bring their vision of the Hawks to life — Lange has these "pinch me" moments.

Running his first practice at Hagan Arena.

Coaching St. Joe's at the Palestra in a Big 5 game for the first time.

Prowling the same sideline as Jack Ramsay during his first home game.

"On my interview, Dr. Reed asked me this question: 'Why would you come back to Saint Joseph's?'" Lange recalled, referencing going from the NBA to college. Lange proceeded to lean forward, and tap the spot on the table he had just cleaned, as he reiterated what he told Reed and Bodensteiner in that meeting.

"I told them, 'There is nothing back about Saint Joseph's. There's nothing back.'"

There was a new smudge now.

His fingerprint.

*Brendan Prunty '06, is a former nationally recognized sports writer for the Newark Star-Ledger, whose work has appeared in The New York Times, Sports Illustrated and Rolling Stone. He currently works in sports PR for Dan Klores Communications in New York.*

## Building Our University Leadership



Saint Joseph's University's Leadership Council has evolved into a team of new hires and longer-tenured leaders who possess a strategic and complementary mix of institutional knowledge, wide-ranging skills and rich professional backgrounds and experiences. Composition and representation have changed in recent years to include more operational and academic areas, and women now constitute nearly half of the Council. According to University President Mark C. Reed, "I have a desirable and trusted team of advisers. The collaboration and energy of this Council inspires me and affirms my confidence in our ability to move this University forward while remaining grounded in our mission and identity."

**1. Mark C. Reed, Ed.D.,  
President**

*Length of Service:* 4 years  
*Previous Institutions:* Fairfield University, Xavier Brothers High School, St. Joseph's Prep  
*Standout SJU Moment:* Shaking the hands of each graduate at commencement.

**2. Cheryl A. McConnell, Ph.D.,  
Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs**

*Length of Service:* 3 months  
*Previous Institutions:* Rockhurst University  
*Standout SJU Moment:* The strength of our senior leadership and faculty and their commitment to our mission.

**3. David R. Beaupré, MBA,  
Vice President for Finance and Administration & Treasurer**

*Length of Service:* 3 years  
*Previous Institutions:* Duquesne University, Loyola University Maryland, Booz Allen Hamilton, Arthur Andersen  
*Standout SJU Moment:* Giving the welcoming remarks at the Veterans Entrepreneurial Jumpstart program graduation ceremony.

**4. Joseph P. Kender, MBA,  
Vice President, University Relations**

*Years of Service:* 6 years (2004-2007, 2016-present)  
*Previous Institutions:* Lehigh University, Georgetown University  
*Standout SJU Moment:* Experiencing the transformative impact of the \$50 million gift from the Maguire Foundation as it raises the University's endowment, supports scholarships and financial assistance to our students, and expands University programs.

**5. Cary M. Anderson, Ed.D.,  
Associate Provost and Vice President, Student Life**

*Length of Service:* 12 years  
*Previous Institutions:* Canisius College, College of the Holy Cross  
*Standout SJU Moment:* The University's vision and commitment to a quality student experience that the acquisition of the Maguire Campus and the upcoming campus master plan provide.

**6. Jill R. Bodensteiner, J.D., MBA,  
Director of Athletics**

*Length of Service:* 1 year  
*Previous Institutions:* University of Notre Dame; Bryan Cave; The Honorable Catherine Perry, U.S. District Court Judge, Eastern District of Missouri; Seyfarth Shaw LLP  
*Standout SJU Moment:* Watching the field hockey team win their second consecutive Atlantic 10 championship on Ellen Ryan Field with a huge crowd of supporters.

**7. Joseph A. DiAngelo, Ed.D. '70,  
Dean, Erivan K. Haub School of Business**

*Years of Service:* 19 years  
*Previous Institution:* Widener University  
*Standout SJU Moment:* Seeing our business programs achieve national rankings prominence on a regular basis, with insurance, accounting, marketing, finance and data analytics consistently rated in the top 25 by *U.S. News and World Report*.

**8. Fran J. DiSanti '79, M.S.,  
Chief Information Officer**

*Years of Service:* 22 years  
*Previous Institution:* West Chester University  
*Standout SJU Moment:* Participating in leadership development programs like the Ignatian Colleagues Program and Ignatian Leadership Program.

**9. Zenobia Hargust,  
Chief Human Resources Officer**

*Length of Service:* 4 months  
*Previous Institution:* Swarthmore College, Madlyn and Leonard Abramson Center for Jewish Life, Lutheran Children and Family Service  
*Standout SJU Moment:* Joining the community during the recent influx of new leadership at SJU, each with diverse ideas and experiences, has made this an exciting transition. There is great energy among the leadership to continue to support the strategic plan of SJU.

**10. Rev. Daniel R.J. Joyce, S.J. '88,  
Executive Director, Mission Programs**

*Length of Service:* 14 years  
*Previous Institution:* Wheeling Jesuit University  
*Standout SJU Moment:* Seeing so many of my colleagues accompany others, especially students, through versions of the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, which offers a life-long spirituality of discernment and deepens each person's relationship with God.

**11. Robert J. McBride, M.A.,  
Associate Vice President, Enrollment Management**

*Length of Service:* 6 years  
*Previous Institutions:* La Salle University, Holy Family University  
*Standout SJU Moment:* As a first-generation student and beneficiary of the Pell grant program, I was grateful to be part of the effort to significantly increase the number of Pell recipients in the freshman class in 2018.

**12. Angela Rowe McDonald, Ph.D.,  
Dean, School of Health Studies and Education**

*Length of Service:* 3 months  
*Previous Institutions:* University of North Carolina at Pembroke, East Carolina University, College of William & Mary  
*Standout SJU Moment:* I've really enjoyed working with Provost McConnell and appreciate her approach to new leadership on campus, her dedication to academic programming, faculty development and student experiences.

**13. Timothy A. McGuriman, M.Ed.,  
Associate Vice President, Administrative Services**

*Length of Service:* 3 years  
*Previous Institutions:* Loyola University Chicago, Susquehanna University  
*Standout SJU Moment:* The engagement that we now have with students, as paraprofessionals working within our departments, as critical voices on various committees and in the selection of new business partners at SJU.

**14. Shaily Menon, Ph.D.,  
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences**

*Length of Service:* 2 years  
*Previous Institutions:* Grand Valley State University, San Francisco State University  
*Standout SJU Moment:* Working with passionate and engaged students and faculty on social justice issues and innovative initiatives.

**15. Karen A. Pellegrino, M.A.,  
Vice President, Enrollment Management**

*Length of Service:* 1 year  
*Previous Institutions:* Fairfield University, Fordham University, Boston College  
*Standout SJU Moment:* Enrolling 27 students from Puerto Rico for the Class of 2023.

**16. Sarah F. Quinn '89, '09 (MBA),  
Assistant Vice President and Chief of Staff**

*Length of Service:* 23 years  
*Previous Institution:* PricewaterhouseCoopers  
*Standout SJU Moment:* The day I discovered that over four generations of my family has earned 25 degrees from SJU, including two honorary degrees.

**17. Wadell Ridley '19 (MBA),  
Interim Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer**

*Length of Service:* 12 years (2006-08, 2009-present)  
*Previous Institution:* Mayor's Office of Community Services in Philadelphia, Philadelphia's 4th District  
*Standout SJU Moment:* I've been most impressed by the University's commitment to the Samuel Gompers Elementary School. The partnership between Saint Joseph's faculty and students and the University's neighbors in the Wynnefield and Overbrook communities has transformed the lives of hundreds of young children.

**18. Marianne Schimelfenig, J.D., M.A.,  
General Counsel and Corporate Secretary**

*Length of Service:* 11 years  
*Previous Institutions:* Saint Mary's College of California, Regents of the University of California system, Clorox Co., Georgia-Pacific, U.S. House of Representatives  
*Standout SJU Moment:* Supporting and witnessing the evolution of the myriad uses, and physical integration, of the Maguire Campus for the benefit of the University's students, faculty, staff, alumni and visitors.

**19. Marie Williams,  
Chief Marketing and Communications Officer**

*Length of Service:* 1 year  
*Previous Institutions:* Edelman, University of Pennsylvania, Temple University  
*Standout SJU Moment:* Collaborating on the programming and communications to support the campus visit of Congressman John Lewis.

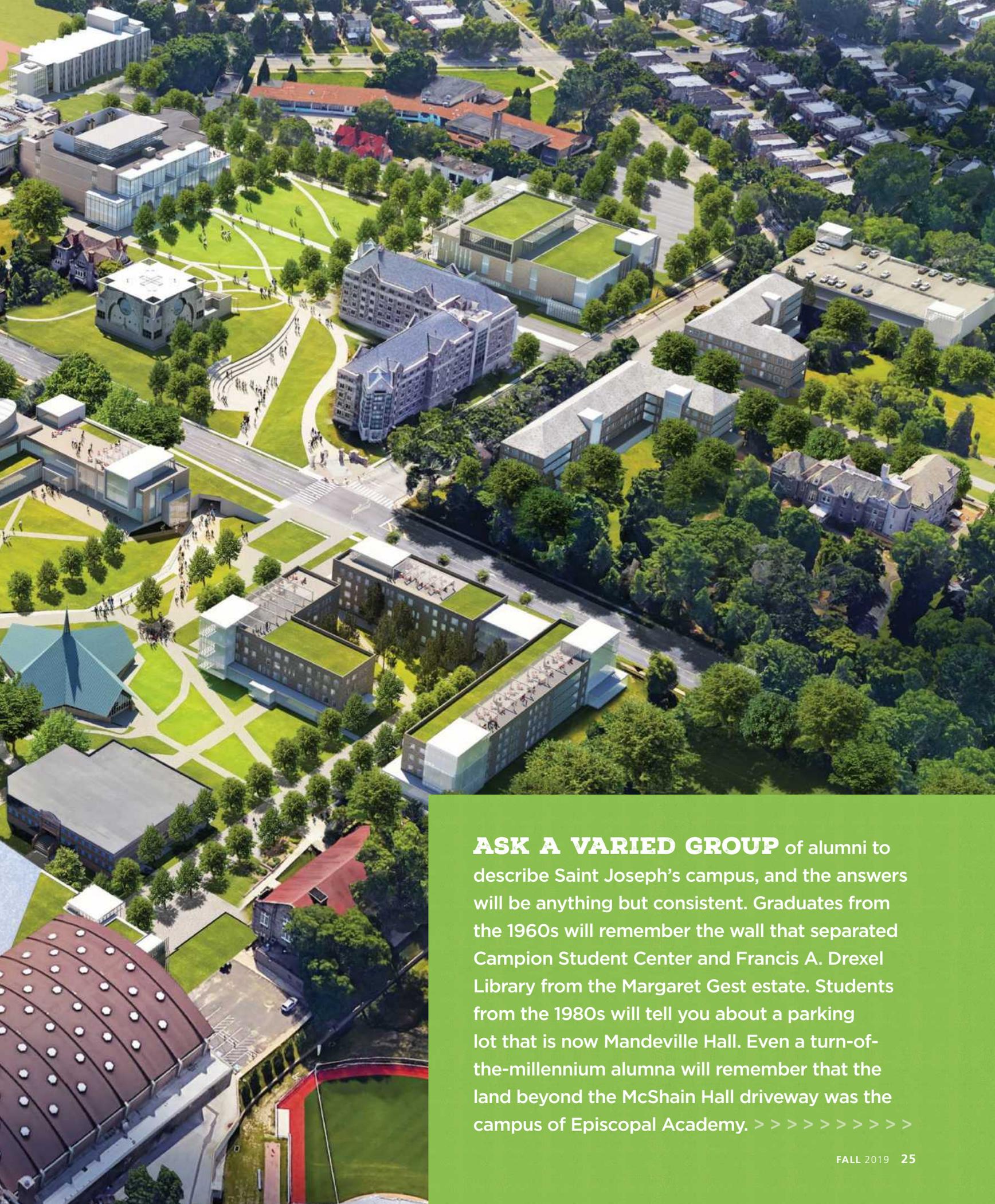


COVER STORY

# ENVISIONING A CONNECTED CAMPUS

The University presents a bold vision for a future campus. Already underway, the plan optimizes the campus' urban and suburban footprint and features an academic expansion; contemporized athletic and wellness facilities; and enhanced recreational, residential, pedestrian and green spaces to enrich the total student experience.

BY MEAGHAN RESTA



**ASK A VARIED GROUP** of alumni to describe Saint Joseph's campus, and the answers will be anything but consistent. Graduates from the 1960s will remember the wall that separated Campion Student Center and Francis A. Drexel Library from the Margaret Gest estate. Students from the 1980s will tell you about a parking lot that is now Mandeville Hall. Even a turn-of-the-millennium alumna will remember that the land beyond the McShain Hall driveway was the campus of Episcopal Academy. >>>>>>>>>>

## COVER STORY

Since its arrival on Hawk Hill in 1927, Saint Joseph's has transformed itself and the community around it countless times. In recent decades, the University has capitalized on timely opportunities to expand its reach at a steady pace, nearly doubling its grounds to 125 acres with the addition of the Maguire Campus and Barnes' property in Lower Merion, and the Maguire Wolfington Welcome Center in Philadelphia. Uniquely positioned along City Avenue, the University intersects vibrant urban neighborhoods and historic suburban properties, offering students the best of both worlds. Interestingly, while the University's original location was entirely in Philadelphia, the campus' acreage in Merion today outnumbers that on the city side.

### AN EVOLUTION WITH URGENCY

Now, a new plan has taken shape to once again re-form the face of the University. In order to meet the evolving needs of today's students, Saint Joseph's must strategically maximize and modernize its facilities. And, according to University President Mark C. Reed, Ed.D., that strategic time has arrived.

"Our strategic plan, *Thinking Anew, Acting Anew*, challenges us to reimagine our academic enterprise and all aspects of our student experience. It is time to ensure that the physical plant is transformed in a way that it further supports those same goals," Reed says.

The campus master plan, introduced in the last year, imagines a bold future for every facet of life at the University, from academic facilities to athletics fields to student spaces.

"Although some of the projects won't be realized in the near future, there's a sense of urgency here," Reed continues. "We are committed to providing the best possible educational experience for our students. Higher education is not an inexpensive endeavor and if we are going to be asking people to make the investment — we have to be able to deliver on that."

### A LONG-TERM VISION IN MOTION

The University partnered with SASAKI Associates to conduct a campus assessment over the course of eight months to establish a framework for the future campus. They conducted site visits, stakeholder discussions with students, faculty and staff; space analysis and classroom utilization trends and interactive surveys.

The vision for a reimagined Saint Joseph's includes projects in the Main Campus district



### Main Campus District

*The master plan aims to transform the front door to the University's main campus. Prospective students and visitors will enter through the historic Maguire Wolfington Welcome Center and find a newly developed residential quad and a state-of-the-art student center.*

**"IT'S TIME TO  
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**in a way that  
further supports the  
strategic plan."**

**— Mark C. Reed, Ed.D.**

and Maguire Campus district, a City Avenue pedestrian underpass and an athletics hub.

Timothy A. McGuriman, who has served as associate vice president for administrative services since 2016, explains that every aspect of the plan is interconnected. Each proposed project will be determined by sequencing, facility condition feasibility, and student and programmatic demand.

"This is a long-term plan in that it takes into account specific endeavors over the next 5-10 years and conceptual ideas that could be 20-25 years out," McGuriman says. "It's important that we approach this in a strategic way which enables us to react to opportunities that present themselves through the expansion of new programs."

### A PHASED AND PRIORITIZED APPROACH

Reed describes the plan's top priorities in waves, with the initial wave including a full renovation of O'Pake Recreation Center in the Maguire Campus

district; an addition to Merion Hall for the Kinney Center for Autism Education and Support, a new student center and residential quad in the Main Campus district; the City Avenue pedestrian underpass at Cardinal Avenue; and renovations of athletic facilities.

Reed said the second and third wave of the plan anticipates renovating Paris Hall as the campus theater and a possible conversion of the Foley Campus Center to a dining or food court so the University would have a true satellite center.

### A FOCUS ON MODERN LEARNING

The future campus also includes ongoing renovations of academic spaces to enhance the University's teaching and learning experiences. The Kinney Center expansion is just one important academic enhancement, but classrooms will be upgraded, laboratories modernized and study and lecture spaces enhanced.

"The facilities in which our students learn and interact are an integral component of our academic offerings," Reed adds. "We routinely and continuously upgrade our classrooms and labs in order to meet the needs of our faculty and the ever-changing learning styles and expectations of our students."

### A WALKABLE CAMPUS

In addition, the University plans to improve the flow of pedestrians throughout campus by creating more walkways, consolidating parking and creating two additional parking garages.

Reed is most excited about the pedestrian underpass and the related parts of the plan that connect the campus together.

"We're a pedestrian campus and yet some of our most commonly traveled areas on campus

# A HISTORY OF BUILDING

A look back at the progress we've made over the years.

## 1851

A gathering of young men in September at St. Joseph's Church on Willings Alley marks Saint Joseph's beginning.

## 1922

Saint Joseph's begins an ambitious campaign and finds a new home on 23 acres on City Avenue, giving rise to Barbelin Hall and Lonergan Hall Tower.

## 1943

Saint Joseph's acquires adjacent homes, converting them to the campus' first student residences.

## 1960s

Saint Joseph's continues to grow with the addition of new student residences, Bellarmine Hall, Drexel Library and Campion Student Center.

## 1980-2000

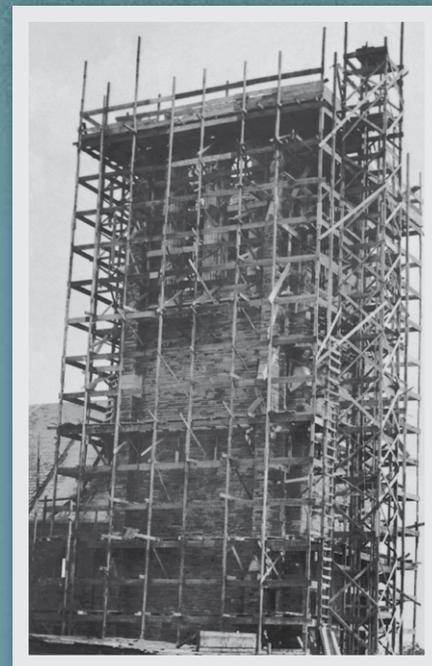
Saint Joseph's shifts from a commuter school to a residential institution, welcoming larger classes and expanding its full-time faculty.

## 2000-2008

A series of capital improvements begins to transform the campus. The University acquires the adjacent 38-acre Episcopal Academy in Merion. Hawks' Landing also opens.

## 2010-2014

Impactful projects include: the Post Learning Commons addition to Drexel Library and Villiger Residence Hall. The University acquires the former 8.9-acre Cardinal's Residence property, which transforms into the Maguire Wolfington Welcome Center.



## 2018

Saint Joseph's partners with the Barnes Foundation for the future stewardship of the Barnes' Lower Merion property.

## 2019

A new campus master plan is launched.

don't reflect that as well as they should," Reed says. "Some of our infrastructure — whether that is parking garages, the need for an underpass to cross City Avenue or regular walkways throughout campus need to accommodate the students, faculty and staff of Saint Joseph's today and in the future."

### A FULLY TRANSFORMED STUDENT EXPERIENCE

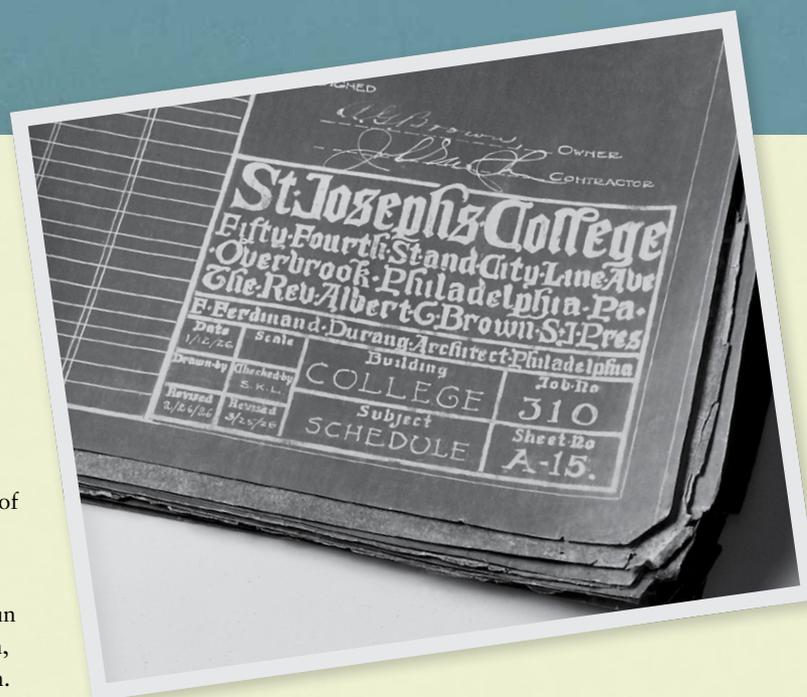
Another way the plan intends to transform the student experience is by creating a student center that supports learning and engagement, and improving and modernizing residence halls.

"We have an incredibly vibrant student experience on campus — active organizations, athletics, Campus Ministry — all the co-curricular programs and activities, but it's glaring that a lot

of those activities are lacking space or they are making do in suboptimal space," Reed explains. "The recreation center would provide students with health and wellness opportunities, which is incredibly important for the mind, body and soul of Jesuit education."

### A PLAN OF ACTION

Work has already begun to realize part of the plan, according to McGuriman. He says the University has



## COVER STORY

taken the first steps to rendering and conceptualizing the renovations to O’Pake, and has also begun to investigate the feasibility of the underpass. Saint Joseph’s recently released an RFP to engage an executive architectural firm to help the University bring all the projects in the initial wave to further development through schematic design, adds McGuriman.

“There’s been a lot of excitement generated by the opportunities presented in this bold and visionary plan and we are eager to get started with the first phase,” McGuriman says.

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The future campus is about creating a  
**“TOTAL EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE**  
that Saint Joseph’s prides itself on.”

– Mark C. Reed, Ed.D.

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The plan promises unlimited possibilities for the University’s future, but how the plan will unfold will be determined by student demand, academic needs, logistics and financial support.

“The priorities of this plan will be supported primarily through philanthropy. We are grateful to our alumni, parents and friends who have generously contributed to making SJU what it is today, and we look forward to that continued support as we look to further enhance SJU’s mission in care of our students, their families, our faculty and staff, and the surrounding community,” explains Reed.

“This plan is the next logical step in SJU’s development. We pride ourselves on providing a comprehensive and total educational experience for our students. To that end, we need to ensure that our buildings and facilities support that in the best way possible.”

*Meaghan Resta is the editorial director at Saint Joseph’s University.*

See more at [sju.edu/masterplan](http://sju.edu/masterplan)



### Maguire Campus District

*With greater access to this part of campus from surrounding areas, the plan also calls for a renovated wellness and recreation center with improved spaces for fitness and activities; an expansion of the Kinney Center for Autism Education and Support, improved parking and potential for additional academic buildings.*



### City Avenue Pedestrian Underpass

*With the construction of an underpass across City Avenue, the two hearts of campus will be connected, allowing for safe and efficient navigation around campus.*



### Athletics Hub

*Fans and spectators will benefit from greater viewing experiences on the Quinn track and Sweeney field. Facilities in Hagan Arena will be upgraded to provide modern student athletes with the fitness, nutrition and conditioning they require to perform at their best.*



# Concentrate on Wellness.

For over 40 years, Saint Joseph's has been providing health professionals with the skills to educate and empower their patients and communities. Building on that legacy, we've introduced a new concentration to our M.S. in Health Education: **Health Promotion and Wellness.**

Designed to expand your knowledge of the social impact of health issues, the process of policy and health program development and promotion, and how to help patients and clients navigate systems of care, this program will empower you to lead — and change — the conversation around wellness.

[sju.edu/healthEd](https://www.sju.edu/healthEd)





**SJU faculty crunch the numbers to help solve real problems.** by Will Bunch

**F**ive years ago, Kathleen Campbell Garwood, Ph.D., assistant professor of decision and system sciences, was teaching a summer class in advanced data analysis. Hoping to give the students more hands-on experience, she handed them a large set of data and some pointers on how to make the most out of it.

Nearly 4,000 miles to the south, in the mountainous South American nation of Bolivia, *Fe y Alegria*, a chain of schools that educates thousands of children from economically depressed neighborhoods, was trying to get a better handle on identifying which students needed the most help with specialized career training to escape poverty. The administrators had collected reams of data on these children but didn't know what to do with it.

It turned out to be the start of a beautiful long-

distance relationship between Saint Joseph's and the South American educators that's thrived over Skype, and more than an occasional assist from Google Translate.

That summer in 2014, John Neiva de Figueiredo, Ph.D., professor of management, shared with Garwood that he had received all this raw data from *Fe y Alegria* that no one had really analyzed. Garwood gave her students the numbers, and they eventually narrowed down the factors that were common among the children who needed the most help, including whether their house had running water, how many people lived in the home and their father's work status.

That information was so useful that the Bolivian educators keep coming back to Garwood and her classes — to help them determine whether they should close struggling schools or open new ones, or to assist in analyzing data

from schools in other underprivileged countries like Haiti. Last year, three of Garwood's students traveled to Bolivia and visited classrooms and homes to connect the data with real-life situations. Meanwhile, the output from the SJU data analysts — like heat maps tracking poverty in the neighborhoods around *Fe y Alegria* schools — continues to grow more sophisticated.

"It empowers the students," Garwood says. "They start to see that their skill set is about more than just getting a good job."

Indeed, the students can use their increasing mastery of algorithms to undertake social projects like the work with *Fe y Alegria* — work that isn't about making greater profits but about making the world a better place.

That's not by accident. In an era when the availability of all sorts of data — from people's social media habits to detailed Google Earth

maps — and the remarkable predictive power of artificial intelligence are showing both the promise and the peril of the Information Age, faculty members in SJU's Department of Decision and System Sciences are determined to crunch the numbers for social advancement.

Virginia Miori, Ph.D., department chair, says that using data for the betterment of society is “just part and parcel with the nature of the University” and in line with the its official mission statement. These efforts are coming at a time of elevated societal awareness of how big businesses such as Facebook and Amazon are collecting and storing data about their users and how that information is being used to sell products or influence opinions. Miori sees the ongoing proof at St. Joe's as a reminder that data doesn't have to be synonymous with bad intentions.

Over the last few years, professors in the department, and in some cases their students, have been working on projects to improve the quality of life and patient care in nursing homes, help drug-treatment centers improve outcomes, assist ride-sharing companies operate more efficiently to curb traffic and pollution, create a more ethical pricing scheme for prescription drugs, and help connect Pennsylvania farmers with towns where shoppers need better access to healthy produce.

Miori, who studied how to optimize business supply chains while pursuing a doctorate at Drexel University, has spent years on the front lines of analyzing data. In a world where piles of data are now not only accumulating at once unimaginable rates but so much easier for researchers to access, Miori and her colleagues have ramped up their efforts to show the power of smart analysis.

“I think the University is just becoming more aware of the importance of data and how to use it to improve all areas of life,” says Nicolle Clements, Ph.D., assistant professor of decision and system sciences, who also coordinates the master's degree program in business intelligence and analytics. “You can learn so much from data, and here at Saint Joseph's we're well equipped with faculty experts.”

Clements is one of those experts. Over the last few years, she and Miori have developed a specialty in using satellite maps to study land use and agriculture practices, with the goal of helping farmers on the ground increase their crop yields. In a story similar to some of her colleagues, Clements said her work began about 10 years ago when she “stumbled” across a large cache of data — including aerial imagery — from

**“The students are starting to see that their skill set is about more than just getting a good job.”**

*Virginia Miori, Ph.D.*

agricultural regions of East Africa such as Kenya and Tanzania. The goal was to detect vegetation patterns and advise local farmers on sites that might yield better crops than those currently under harvest.

Now what she learned in Africa is being applied closer to home. Clements and Miori recently started working with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's PA Preferred program to use satellite images to better connect farms with nearby “food deserts” — communities where residents lack stores selling fresh produce.

“These tend to be areas where income levels are low, but where there's a high death rate from obesity,” says Clements, who added that state officials only recently began to learn these areas are not just in the poorest neighborhoods of Philadelphia or Pittsburgh but also in smaller towns scattered across the state. The hope is that better mapping and analysis will help PA Preferred create new farm-to-market pipelines.

Meanwhile, the streets of larger cities are increasingly clogged by traffic caused by the surging popularity of ride-sharing apps such as Lyft and Uber. Sina Shokoohyar, Ph.D., assistant professor of decision and system sciences, has been working off the voluminous data these companies produce in an effort to make urban transport more efficient.

“Uber is competing with public transportation,” explains Shokoohyar, so information about where residents are going and at what times of day can be incredibly valuable to city planners. Public transportation can use that data to provide better services, or even forge collaborations with the ride-sharing platforms. Shokoohyar is also studying how to make ride-sharing more environmentally sustainable, and how to make their services function better during extreme weather events.

His colleague, Ronald Klimberg, Ph.D., professor of decision and system sciences, worked for a time with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration before moving into academia. Klimberg uses a technique called data envelopment analysis to sift through information

from nursing homes in Massachusetts in order to develop more efficient methods of patient care.

That led to a side project in which he looks at techniques for nursing home staff to offer better personal attention to patients showing signs of dementia and, as a result, perhaps reduce pharmaceutical treatments and their side effects. “The whole purpose is to get their minds more active,” Klimberg explains.

Miori has been conducting somewhat similar data work for a drug-treatment program in South Florida, a region that has become a magnet for opioid abuse rehab centers as well as complaints that some facilities are not doing enough to prevent relapses. Her project, now in its third year, looks at the data from patient satisfaction surveys and follow-up calls by staff to better understand what factors best prevent patients from slipping back into addiction.

The data, Miori explained, can help the center by showing that longer patient stays are more effective — information that could then convince insurance companies to pay for extended treatment. The data also demonstrated that an alumni network that helped former patients stay away from drugs frequently needed to be more active in the period three-to-six months after the initial treatment — a time when relapses are common.

For Miori and the department, the sum of this work is greater than its parts. That's because, in a moment of heightened anxiety over privacy and abuses of data, the work that Saint Joseph's faculty members and students are carrying out sends a message that data not only can but should be used for ethical purposes and to foster human growth.

“We are not seeking to use data to our advantage — nobody's making any money off any of this,” Miori said. “We are using data for the common good and we're using it ethically.” The challenge, she added, is for the next generation of business executives coming out of universities like Saint Joseph's to hold onto those values. “It's time for the people we put out into industry to put a greater ethical value on privacy and ethical use of data.”

*Will Bunch is the national opinion columnist for The Philadelphia Inquirer and author of several books, including Tear Down This Myth: The Right-Wing Distortion of the Reagan Legacy.*



Since 2009, the Kinney Center for Autism Education and Support has established itself as a trailblazer in autism awareness, student success and research. In the next decade, the Center will look to enhance its national reputation, advocate for autism inclusion and educate the field's future leaders.

# A DECADE of SUCCESS

*By Kristen A. Graham*

One day this spring, Christine Palus found Kimberly, her 8-year-old daughter, focusing intently on her Etch-a-Sketch. Christine moved closer to her daughter, who has verbal challenges, but is growing in reading and writing. What Christine saw made her smile: Kimberly was drawing three letters over and over:

SJU, SJU.

Kimberly, who has autism, was counting down the days until school was over and she could start summer camp at Saint Joseph's Kinney Center for Autism Education and Support.

"It's just her happy place," Christine says.

For the past 10 years, the Kinney Center for Autism Education and Support has been at the forefront of serving individuals with autism across their lifespan and their families, like Kimberly and Christine.

Since its founding in 2009, the Kinney Center has established itself as a center of national renown, offering services across the lifespan and trailblazing many firsts in the field: the first major and minor in autism studies in the country; one of the first college support programs for individuals with autism; one of the first and only accredited camps in the Delaware Valley to implement reverse inclusion,

fostering meaningful interactions between individuals across the autism spectrum and their neurotypical peers; one of the first higher education institutions to offer an autism break room in an NCAA Division I athletic arena.

The Kinney Center was founded with support from Paul '70 and Margaret Hondros with a two-fold mission: "to educate and train the autism professionals of tomorrow while supporting and serving the people and families affected by autism today." The needs are critical: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention now estimates that 1 in 59 children have autism spectrum disorder — a developmental disability that can cause a broad range of social,



## MEMORABLE KINNEY MOMENTS

**Sept. 2007** - Saint Joseph's launches a minor in Autism Studies.

**October 2009** - The Kinney Center for Autism Education and Support officially opens. (1)

**June 2010** - The Kinney Center launches Camp Kinney and the SCHOLARS (Students Committed to Helping Others Learn about Autism Research and Support) program. (2)

**September 2012** - The Kinney Center formally launches the ASPIRE (Autism Support Promoting Inclusive and Responsive Education) program.

communication and behavioral challenges — up from 1 in 88 when the Center was established in 2009.

On the education side, the Kinney SCHOLARS (Students Committed to Helping Others Learn about Autism Research and Support) program leads the way. SCHOLARS are Saint Joseph's undergraduate and graduate students who utilize evidence-based applied behavior analysis and provide one-on-one support to the 800 to 1,000 people with autism who participate annually in the Kinney Center's youth, transitional and adult programs. SCHOLARS, who can come from any major, including the University's autism behavioral studies major, receive extensive training with more than 2,000 hours of service — this much training is unheard of at the undergraduate level. Kinney representatives believe no other program in the country provides that level of hands-on training. This practical experience, coupled with their degrees, gives SCHOLARS a competitive edge over other job and graduate school applicants.

In December 2018, Saint Joseph's became one of the first higher education institutions

to offer an autism break room in an NCAA Division I athletic arena. The space was complete with sensory-friendly items and noise-canceling headphones, and staffed by Kinney Center experts in order to provide a space for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families a space to take a break from the excitement of a Hawk game.

Increasingly, the Center is also consulting with businesses who want to create sensory-friendly practices and spaces to welcome a more diverse customer and employee base. Officials with Aer Lingus worked with the Kinney Center to help them develop resources to make travel smooth and enjoyable for all of their guests, including those on the autism spectrum. The Kinney Center has also partnered with the Philadelphia Zoo and other institutions and businesses to create programming and training.

This fall, the Kinney Center celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, ready to embrace the future. In the next decade, the Center will look to enhance its national reputation, advocate for autism inclusion, educate the field's future leaders and engage in applied research.

## MAKING CONNECTIONS

Over its decade of existence, the Center has become a standout. That's part of the reason that Saint Joseph's student Bridget Cichon '20 was drawn to the Kinney Center. Cichon entered the University as a biology major eager to become a doctor. Then a friend told her about the Kinney Center and what a good experience she had as a SCHOLAR. Cichon knew little about autism but was drawn to the community she found at the Center and the opportunity to serve. She took the leap to become a SCHOLAR herself, falling in love with the program and eventually choosing to double major in biology and autism behavioral studies.

"The more I work at the Kinney Center and make these connections with people I never thought I'd meet, the more I can't imagine my life without them," Cichon says. She anticipated a work-study job where she completed paperwork or sat behind a desk; instead, she's working with people with autism, helping them develop social skills and independence whether



3



4

**September 2013** - Saint Joseph's University launches a major in Autism Studies.

**May 2017** - The Kinney Center graduates its first classes of apprentice SCHOLARS and ASPIRE students.

**June 2017** - The Kinney Center launches the Faculty Affiliates Program to foster autism-related research, programming and advocacy.

**July 2018** - Camp Kinney honors Wawa for generously donating more than \$1 million in support of Kinney Center programming over the past six years. (3)

**December 2018** - Saint Joseph's opens an autism break room in Hagen Arena. (4)

it's on the basketball court or learning to take the train.

Cichon still dreams of medical school, but now, she wants to become a developmental and behavioral pediatrician, primarily serving children with autism. "I just find it so rewarding to work with the people the Kinney Center serves," she says.

Cichon spent her summer concentrating on a new area of Kinney Center focus: research.

Practical experience has always distinguished Saint Joseph's and the Center, but adding a research arm is taking the Center to a new level. In 2018, the University appointed Joseph McCleery, Ph.D., assistant professor of psychology, as the Center's new executive director of academic programs. McCleery most recently served as a scientist at the Center for Autism Research at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Under McCleery's mentorship, Cichon has been studying the effects of exercise on social functioning in children and adolescents with autism.

Going forward, "our work [at Kinney] will be driven by research," McCleery says.

"By providing research opportunities to our students, we are working to create pipelines for people to not just become teachers, but nurses, clinical psychologists, social workers and doctors."

For McCleery, what sets the Kinney Center apart is the caliber of students, young people motivated by the Jesuit notion of being men and women with and for others. "We have very skilled people, very service-oriented people. That's why they come to St. Joe's. It's a very different motivation than you'll find in other places," he says.

And if history is any indicator, Cichon's experience will serve her well as she moves into her career. "You don't usually have the length or quality or depth of exposure to this population by the time you graduate with an undergraduate degree," McCleery says. "They're developing themselves and setting themselves up for very high-level careers as they do this."

## 'ANYTHING COULD BE POSSIBLE'

The benefits for people with autism and their families have been tangible. The closer Ira Tucker got to high school graduation, the more his mother, Lisa Edwards, panicked. Tucker has autism, and was lucky to receive a good education in Lower Merion schools, but Edwards worried her son would sit at home after graduation with nothing to do. Then she heard about the Kinney Center, and the more she learned, the more relief she felt. All of Tucker's neurotypical peers were heading to college, and now, in a way, Tucker was, too.

For the past four years, Ira has continued his life skills training, played sports, gardened, attended dances and Saint Joseph's athletic events, and even found work as a dog walker through the Kinney Center. He's earning his own money and advancing in independence. "The Kinney Center has given my son a sense of purpose, and that helps the rest of our family because I feel him moving toward a place where independent living could be possible," Edwards

**KINNEY  
CENTER  
FAST FACTS**

**800**

The number of families the Kinney Center serves in the community.

**84%**

Graduation/retention among ASPIRE students.

**100%**

of ASPIRE students gained employment.



*Kinney SCHOLARS provide one-on-one support to individuals with autism.*

says. “The Center makes me feel like anything could be possible.”

Samantha Sur '17 now works as a systems analyst for a health insurance company in Pittsburgh. But if it was not for ASPIRE (Autism Support Promoting Inclusive and Responsive Education), the Kinney Center’s program that provides transitional support for students with autism as they enter college, Sur is sure she would not have received her degree.

Statistics bear out her feeling: Nationally for students with autism, there’s a 20 percent completion rate for college. At Saint Joseph’s, the

freshman to sophomore year retention rate is 88 percent and there’s an 84 percent graduation/retention rate among ASPIRE students.

Furthermore, 100 percent of ASPIRE graduates gained employment, and 90 percent are still employed, statistics that far outstrip national employment averages for people with autism, which typically range from 14 to 40 percent.<sup>1</sup>

“What’s happening at other universities is students with autism are paying the tuition, then they’re dropping out,” McCleery says. “We don’t have that, and we don’t think any other university is doing anything quite close to it.

Everyone we talk to is clamoring to hear more.”

Supports for individuals and families affected by autism are also crucial to the Center’s purpose. Through the ASPIRE program, Saint Joseph’s undergraduates with autism receive support including individual case management, intervention and prevention, time management strategies, independent living and social skills training, and a supported work environment — students are hired as SCHOLARS if they are interested. The Kinney Center acts as an intermediary with faculty and residence life, provides academic support and facilitates student mentoring.

ASPIRE unofficially began with a single student with autism who was struggling to make college work; the program formally launched with three students in 2012. For the fall 2019 semester, 34 students are enrolled, and 13 have graduated from Saint Joseph’s. ASPIRE staff provide a range of services, from educating faculty about the needs of their students with autism to regular check-ins with those students and social activities for ASPIRE students and their SCHOLAR peer mentor.

Sur, who grew up in the Philadelphia suburbs, started her college career at another Philadelphia-area university. It had an academic support program but “it wasn’t really what I needed,” Sur says. She and her family looked nationally at schools with strong autism support programs, but found one close to home — at Saint Joseph’s.

Sur felt immediately that Kinney Center staff “tried to understand me from many angles, not just as a person with differences.” And once she was enrolled as an autism studies major

Saint Joseph's became the **first university in the country to offer a major in autism studies.** Now the University also offers an autism studies minor and graduate, adult learner and certification options.

and music performance minor, Sur found help with skills training and advocacy. The targeted academic and social guidance she received was “really helpful as my professors seemed to know me well on the first day of class, considerably increasing my comfort in the room and giving me the space to learn and participate.” The Kinney Center also gave Sur her first job, as a SCHOLAR, and helped her transition to the world of work outside of the University.

ASPIRE and the Kinney Center also helped LeAnn Behrens' son find his footing. Diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome when he was 8, Behrens' son did not have many social challenges, but struggled with executive functioning skills. “He didn't have the ability to go sit down with a professor and say, ‘I don't know what you want.’ He just wouldn't do the assignment.” ASPIRE helped Behrens' son choose the right classes. They nudged him to use the campus resources available to him, including the University's student-run Writing Center, and helped him reach out when he hit stumbling blocks. Behrens' son hit his stride, graduated, worked on Capitol Hill and is now headed to law school.

“I don't think we would have gotten him to where he is today without the Kinney Center's assistance,” Behrens says. “The Kinney Center and the ASPIRE program are set up to meet kids where they're at, and that's different for every kid on the spectrum. They assess, and then they fill the gaps.”



Since its inception, the Kinney Center has had a dual mission: educating and training tomorrow's leaders in the field of autism support while serving individuals and families affected by autism today. The Center has impacted more lives in the past 10 years than we could have ever imagined.

We feel immense pride and hope when we hear from and meet the many families served by Kinney. We feel fortunate to be able to witness the steady stream of SJU graduates who have successfully pursued professional paths as educators, researchers, clinicians and advocates dedicated to the autism cause. The Kinney Center has traveled alongside so many families on their autism journey, helping some navigate early childhood through adolescence and adults seeking training and preparation for their first job. We are grateful that SJU has opened their community to annually accept, support and graduate a cadre of fully enrolled students with autism through the highly regarded Kinney ASPIRE program.

Our vision for the future of the Kinney Center remains focused on education and service, with an emphasis on continuously improving. From the expansion of SJU academic offerings, to partnerships with leading autism research institutions and through SJU led clinical research, the Kinney Center aspires to do more for more. Over the next 10 years we will continue to commit to meeting the needs of individuals throughout the lifecycle, provide an elevated focus on independent living and on job readiness, and continue to live the magis. There is much more work to be done.

## Paul '70 and Margaret Hondros

*Founders of the Kinney Center for Autism Education and Support*

## SCHOLAR Reflects on Experience



Arianna Esposito '12, '14 (M.S.), '18 (MBA), knew nothing about autism in 2009 when, as a sophomore, she clicked on an email introducing the Kinney Center. Esposito was a psychology major and she thought working for the Center might help her studies. She ended up as part of the first-ever round of SCHOLARS (Students Committed to Helping Others Learn about Autism Research and Support). It was an experience that would change the

trajectory of her life. As part of a summer program, Esposito met Mia, a 3-year-old newly diagnosed with autism. Mia was guarded, with little language at first, but slowly but surely, her bond with Esposito helped the young girl blossom.

“It was life-changing, seeing her transform,” Esposito says. “At the end of the summer I said, ‘This is it, this is what I want to do for the rest of my life.’” Esposito eventually declared an autism studies minor and, after graduation, decided to pursue graduate school at Saint Joseph’s with a goal of becoming a Board Certified Behavioral Analyst and working with people with autism. Esposito was still a graduate assistant when she was tapped to become the Kinney Center’s full-time director of adult programs, a job she held for six years.

Recently, Autism Speaks, an international agency that advocates for people with autism, recruited Esposito as a director of lifespan services and supports. Esposito quickly discovered what an edge she had because of her experience working at the Kinney Center.

“Even as a college student, I got this direct experience, and that put me light years ahead of most other college students,” she says. “At the Kinney Center, you get experience across the entire lifespan.” In the Center’s earliest days, people had little idea what the Center was or what it was about. “Now, people know,” she says. “People are not only aware of what the Kinney Center is, but they’re paying attention to what it is doing.”

## FUTURE PARTNERSHIPS

Angus Murray, executive director of the Kinney Center since November, is charged with guiding the Center into the future. It’s a prospect that Murray is thrilled about, given the Kinney Center’s successes so far — its direct service work, its success aiding students with autism succeed in college, its high-level preparation of the autism professionals of tomorrow. And the next natural step for the Center, Murray says, is pushing more into the job sphere: vocational trainings to get people with autism into the workplace, empowering them to greater levels of independence.

The way Murray sees it, “over the last 10 years, society has done an improved job of preparing folks on the spectrum for society. Society has not done as well at preparing itself for people on the spectrum.” But as businesses realize what people with autism can add to their workforce and customer base, the Kinney Center has reached out to help. It can and has worked with firms who want to prepare coworkers to collaborate with people with autism, working at onboarding and other HR matters, all while keeping costs low for businesses. “We’re looking to do this in partnership with the Haub School of Business,” Murray says. “We have all the resources here at Saint Joseph’s University.”

It’s also focused on helping businesses deal more sensitively with customers who may have autism. Aer Lingus connected with Kinney in 2016 to help it develop a visual guide to help people with autism and related disorders prepare for and experience air travel — the first of its kind for an airline. The guide was produced by Kinney Center board-certified behavior analysts in conjunction with Aer Lingus and Transportation Security Administration officials, and contains color photographs with person-first language that break the entire flight experience into pieces to help individuals who might fear unknown experiences or struggle with transitions.

“Aer Lingus is proud to offer this proactive resource that allows families and caretakers who fly with our airline to narrate and prepare for travel scenarios that could be challenging for individuals with autism,” said Jack Foley, vice president for Aer Lingus North America, when the resource debuted. “We are grateful to our partners at the Kinney Center for

Autism Education and Support for giving us this opportunity to respond to the needs of this population and for providing this essential support to our guests.”

The Kinney Center also consulted with Philadelphia Zoo, Alvernia University and Chestnut Hill College to better accommodate people on the spectrum. And recently, McCleery and Theresa McFalls, the Center’s associate director of community outreach, spent time at Merrill Lynch and at Vertex, an international firm with offices in King of Prussia, to train employees there in preparation for ASPIRE students completing summer internships at both companies. “We’re modeling what we’re doing here at St. Joe’s,” McFalls says. “We’re providing an added level of support for any troubleshooting. This is an area where we can really grow partnerships.”

The Kinney Center has established itself as a top-quality clinical interventions and support service provider. In the future, the Kinney Center will partner with leading local, national and international clinicians and researchers to further enhance its services and establish novel evidence-based practices for use by the larger autism service community. While other researchers specialize in the neurobiologic and genetic aspects of autism for future generations, Kinney is focusing on the research that will help improve the lives of those with autism today.

“The Kinney Center’s future looks like a place where students, clients and the public can come to learn,” Murray concludes. “Students will learn about the most up to date interventions and therapies for individuals on the spectrum, clients can come and get caring, compassionate support that prepares them for whatever stage of life they are in and the public can better understand the steps they need to take in order to ensure that all people, regardless of their abilities, are included.”

*Kristen Graham is a local writer who focuses on education issues. She frequently writes for Saint Joseph's University Magazine.*

<sup>1</sup>: Roux, Anne M., Shattuck, Paul T., Rast, Jessica E., Rava, Julianna A., and Anderson, Kristy A. *National Autism Indicators Report: Transition into Young Adulthood*. Philadelphia, PA: Life Course Outcomes Research Program, A.J. Drexel Autism Institute, Drexel University, 2015.



(Top) Kinney Center clients and SCHOLARS work with PETacular, a high-quality pet care service. (Above) Guests dance the night away at the Kinney Prom.

# UNLOCKING THE MYSTERIES OF SLEEP

Grant-funded research into the reasons we rest.

by Renee Twombly



Nelson

**W**hy do we sleep? Why spend roughly one-third of our time on Earth horizontal, largely unaware and useless? The puzzling purpose of human sleep extends to all manner of life forms, from elephants to minute beings.

Theories range from need for rest to repair, but to understand what sleep means and how it comes about, a handful of scientists turn to a tiny transparent worm for, literally, insight.

One of them, Matthew D. Nelson, Ph.D., an assistant professor of biology at Saint Joseph's University, has built such a vibrant research and educational program around the 1-millimeter long roundworm that he has been awarded two large and exceptional grants.

In his second year at Saint Joseph's, Nelson received a three-year, \$324,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health. Now, in his fifth year, he has been awarded another grant from the National Science Foundation for \$750,000.

The NSF recognized Nelson with a CAREER (The Faculty Early Career Development Program) grant, which according to the foundation is one of its "most prestigious awards in support of early-career faculty who have the potential to serve as academic role models in research and education." These scientists represent future leaders in integrating education and research, according to NSF.

Nelson has long believed that scientific investigation and education are tightly interwoven. Even during his postdoctoral research at the University of Pennsylvania, in the laboratory of neurologist David Raizen, M.D., Ph.D., Nelson involved

undergraduate and graduate students in his research.

"Matthew is pretty amazing. He is, himself, very driven, but he has a lot of patience. He can read students and know what they will be good at," says Raizen, whom Nelson names as his mentor. "At St. Joe's he has a full teaching load, he does bench research and writes grants, and mentors many students. This very prestigious NSF grant recognizes all of Matthew's strengths."

## Single neuron releases cascade of sleep signals

Nelson's bench research focuses on the sleep-wake cycle in the round worm. In teaching molecular biology, genetics, neurobiology and behavior to his classroom and lab students, he uses these nematodes as subjects to look at what he calls "the basic science of things."

More specifically, his lab teases apart the genetic mechanisms that coax neural machinery in the worm, known as *Caenorhabditis elegans* (*C. elegans*), to switch on sleep.

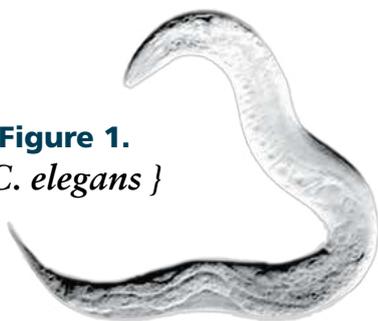
*C. elegans* has become the darling research model for scientists who study the nervous system, because it is one of the simplest organisms to have one. The tiny worm has about 1,000 cells, and its brain consists of 302 neurons wired together into a "connectome" that has already been described.

Nelson delved into the genetics of *C. elegans*' sleep-wake cycle while in Raizen's lab, and was lead author on several novel studies. One found that stress, such as slightly lowering the oxygen content that round worms breathe induces them to sleep. "That's rather like a human sleeping more when they are sick," he says.

Another discovery was that stress prompts a gene in the brain (FLP-13) to produce neuropeptides (molecules that act like neurotransmitters) that are then released by a single neuron (ALA).

At the University, Nelson and his students — two pursuing master's degrees and 12 pursuing

**Figure 1.**  
{ *C. elegans* }



undergraduate degrees — identified the neuropeptide-signaling pathway, controlled by a gene called NLP-14, that becomes activated during stress. NLP-14, a relatively large protein, is processed into smaller neuropeptides that are then secreted from ALA to signal receptors on, as yet unknown, brain cells.

“The neuropeptides are turning down behaviors such as feeding, movement and sensory awareness,” Nelson explains. “But we have to genetically dissect the NLP-14 pathway to figure out what cells they are signaling, how that alters function, and how, ultimately, that puts the worm to sleep.”

## Biology is conserved across species

The mighty round worm and the powerful gene-editing CRISPR technology makes this research possible. CRISPR allows researchers to make precise changes in molecules involved in the NLP-14 circuitry so Nelson and his students have methodically knocked out or increased expression of specific neural genes to determine how they are related to sleep. “We have created more than 200 strains here using CRISPR and other transgenic approaches,” he says.

Then, they freeze the altered worms. “It’s crazy, but it is possible to freeze *C. elegans* then thaw them when you need them alive for experiments. They develop in four days and then only live as an adult for several weeks. Preserving the worms is so helpful for a smaller university like this. You don’t have to worry about losing your strains. That provides real peace of mind.”

Once the worms are thawed and squirming, other technology comes into play. The transparent worm may glow with red or green fluorescence added before freezing to tag expression of specific genes. Another technique, optogenetics, uses light

to control neurons that have been genetically modified to express light sensitive chemicals. The transgenic strains created in Nelson’s lab have allowed the researchers to identify neurons that have been activated by neuropeptides involved in sleep. “Now we just need to connect the dots between specific neuropeptides and cells,” he says.

Whether NLP-14 exists in humans is not known, Nelson says. “But biology is conserved across all species, and the pathways that we are studying have related genes in other animals. We know that neuropeptides regulate sleep in humans, so by understanding the basic science about how a neuropeptide pathway can induce and control sleep you can gain a lot of information of how a similar pathway might be acting in a more complex animal like a human.”

## Empowering students

Nelson has made sure that he shares his growing treasure trove of transparent worms and technology with Saint Joseph’s students.

In his lab, he allows students, some of whom are developing theses and preparing for medical school or science Ph.D. programs, to explore and innovate. He uses some of his grant money to send students to research conferences and in some cases, can pay them stipends.

“I have been working with undergraduates ever since my Ph.D. thesis work where I did a big project with 10 undergraduates working with me,” he says. “The NSF award leverages all my expertise and all my interests together really nicely because we are doing real research but are doing it with students, which I really enjoy.”

Senior biology major Alana Cianciulli has been working in Nelson’s lab for three years and the experience has prompted her to take a clinical research year before attending medical school.

“Dr. Nelson has been an incredible mentor to me. We are very close to publishing a paper, and I’ve attended three national conferences where I’ve presented my research,” she says. “We’ve reached so many goals in a very short time because of Dr. Nelson’s ideas and incredible work ethic.” She is now finishing her thesis on her work using the CRISPR system “which has been an amazing experience.”

The lesson Cianciulli says she will carry with her into medical school and clinical practice is from Nelson: “Failure doesn’t mean that you haven’t found the answer but that you need to look at the problem in a different way.”

Alessandro Sparacio ’17, ’19 (M.A.) approached Nelson as an undergraduate, asking if he could work in Nelson’s lab to explore his interest in using imaging to explore the microscopic structure of tissues, a field known as histology.

“In a classroom where Nelson was a guest lecturer, he made sense of histology, so I asked him about working with him and he welcomed my interest and curiosity,” Sparacio says. “He takes students’ viewpoints and makes you part of a team while giving you freedom to explore. I feel empowered. As a mentor he is very influential in the way he sets you up to realize your own successes.”

Sparacio focused on revealing the structure and function of a tooth-like structure the worms use to break open the bacteria they ingest. Nelson introduced Sparacio to the “*C. elegans* community” in Philadelphia where he presented his studies. “I’d grown comfortable and excited about what the worm can do in research,” he says.

Sparacio worked with Nelson for four years and graduated with a master’s degree in biology in May. He is set to take a job as a research specialist at the University of Pennsylvania.

## A motel for round worms

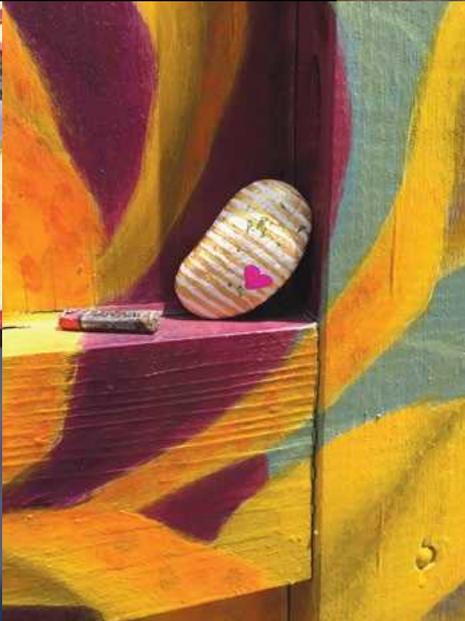
This fall, with the help of a graduate student, Nelson is spreading his love of research to greater Philadelphia via an existing Geokids outreach program.

A “WorMotel” that houses sleeping *C. elegans* will soon show up in elementary schools in the city, and also in some middle and high schools. A “WormCam” will connect the worm motel to a website where the students and their teachers can log in and run hypothesis-driven behavioral experiments remotely.

The program will “teach the students about the importance of model organisms like *C. elegans* and what they can teach us. We’ll throw in a little about genetics and gene discovery, whole genome sequencing and CRISPR,” he says. And there will be field trips to his lab.

“It is going to be a lot of fun,” Nelson adds with a laugh.

*Renee Twombly is a longtime chronicler of the stories behind medical science advances.*





# A REFLECTIVE LENS

by Jeffrey Martin '04, '05 (M.A.)

Life is full of distractions. Attention is the currency of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and people and devices compete for it on a per-second basis. Sometimes, it takes stepping away from it all to realize which voices are most important, and to hear what your own voice has been trying to tell you.

Sarah Quinn '89, '09 (MBA) is no stranger to this dynamic. As an assistant vice president and Saint Joseph's chief of staff, Quinn plays a crucial role in the University's daily operation and strategic planning. With such a demanding

day-to-day, Quinn had become accustomed to the din of distraction. That is, until she participated in the Ignatian Colleagues Program, an 18-month program offered by the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities designed to educate participants more deeply in the Jesuit and Catholic tradition of higher education.

"One of the components of the program is a seven-day silent retreat," Quinn explains. "I had a bit of angst leading into that. I wasn't sure I wanted to get to know myself on that level."

The only time Quinn could speak during the retreat was during daily meetings with a spiritual director. The two women would talk about how Quinn was passing the time, and one hobby continued to come up.

"I told her I was taking a lot of photos," Quinn says. "She asked if I was a photographer, and while I wasn't sure I could call myself one, I often

have moments where I walk past something, think it would make a good photo, and continue on my way, only to feel something inside me tugging me back to take the picture."

The director encouraged Quinn to embrace that feeling, and to make time in her life to let her inner artist out. After leaving the retreat, Quinn followed the advice, undertaking a year-long quest to take at least one photo a day and reflect on the joy that each photo brings. The resulting project, an exhibition that Quinn calls "Soul Exposure," was displayed in the Haub Executive Center in McShain Hall this spring.

"The spiritual director told me that photography is my church," Quinn recalls. "As odd as I thought that was at the time, there's some real truth to it. My camera has opened up a whole new way that I see God in the everyday moments of life."

*Jeff Martin is managing editor of Saint Joseph's University Magazine.*



Tim Castanza '10

# A Better Education for Staten Island's Students

BY EMMALEE ECKSTEIN



**I thought of a way to stretch our curriculum to fit the needs of my students.”**

TIM CASTANZA '10

When Tim Castanza entered college, he had absolutely no designs on studying education of any kind.

“Everyone in my family is some sort of teacher – everyone,” he insists. “So when I got to St. Joe’s, I said that I would absolutely not be a teacher. That I would be different.”

That kind of conviction now seems strange when you review Castanza’s résumé. He has taught in the School District of Philadelphia, coached new educators with Teach for America, and worked in planning and community engagement in the New York City Department of Education.

Over the past three years, Castanza has been focusing his passion into a new endeavor: the launch of Bridge Prep Charter School, the first and only public charter school in New York State, and one of only a few schools nationwide designed to meet the needs of students with dyslexia and other language-based learning differences. Castanza is the school’s founder and executive director.

As a young teacher in Philadelphia, Castanza observed early on that no matter the performance of a school, not every school is good for every student. For instance, some students he taught were struggling with basic phonics and forced to carry around humbling, neon pink textbooks while their peers read *Othello* and *Hamlet*.

Castanza adapted and did what he reasons any good teacher would have done. “I thought of a way to stretch our curriculum to fit the needs of my students.” Soon enough, his students were carrying around their own copies of *Othello* and *Hamlet*, versioned for their reading levels.

Eventually, he left the classroom for a position in New York City’s Department of Education, and soon after, Staten Island’s borough president reached out to Castanza with a proposition: lead the creation of a learning space for Staten Island’s most at-risk students.

Although starting a public school for an underserved population is an invigorating prospect, Castanza immediately felt trepidation at leading the charge given the serious time and difficulty that comes with opening a new school, let alone a type of school that hadn’t existed in New York.

“Our staff must be prepared to serve students with a variety of academic and social emotional needs and at a variety of academic levels,” Castanza says. “But that’s what public school is supposed to do and that is what our kids deserve.”

Though the school has barely just opened its doors, Bridge Prep’s team is already looking towards its future and identifying ways to partner with those in higher education to discuss and implement strategies for providing instruction and preparation to future educators who will work with students experiencing learning differences.

“What we are doing here is something really special, and something that is long overdue. This is the most challenging, but fulfilling experience I have ever been a part of because our outcomes are truly transformational for our kids, families and community,” Castanza beams.

Read more: [sju.edu/magazine/castanza](http://sju.edu/magazine/castanza)

*Emmalee Eckstein is associate director of communications at Saint Joseph’s University.*

**Mahmoud Mustafa '12**

# Safety at the Push of a Button

BY EMMALEE ECKSTEIN



**“I’m wearing so many hats and not all of them fit naturally, but that’s what working at a startup is about.”**

MAHMOUD MUSTAFA '12

Mahmoud Mustafa '12 came to Saint Joseph's University with aspirations of working on Wall Street with heavy-hitting investment firms. Now, he's the chief operating officer of ROAR for Good, a mission-driven technology company dedicated to cultivating safer environments and workplaces through wearable self-defense systems. Just like any Hawk, Mustafa was able to elevate his original dream into a multifaceted and unique role doing good for the world.

The shift in focus began when Mustafa took a class in decision and system sciences with Associate Professor John Yi, Ph.D., as part of the core curriculum for business students.

“I completely fell in love with that course,” he admits. “Dr. Yi taught an emerging field of business that felt more exciting to me than traditional business finance.”

This new interest led Mustafa to a double major in finance and business intelligence and analytics. He gained practical experience through an investor relations internship at Comcast but, after a couple years, an opportunity opened that sparked Mustafa's passion. His sister, Yasmine, had returned from a trip abroad inspired to create the Athena device, ROAR for Good's first piece of wearable self-defense technology.

Athena is a small device that can be worn as a pendant necklace or clipped onto clothing or bags. By pressing the button on the Athena, alerts are sent to the user's emergency contacts, sharing their location and alerting them to their compromised situation. It can also set off a loud, emergency alarm.

When ROAR debuted the device on crowdfunding platforms, consumers responded with a wave of approval — the campaign raised nearly seven times its goal. Mustafa oversaw development of the finished product, working with international manufacturers to fill the crowdfunding orders.

“I'd never done anything like that before,” Mustafa admits. “But, that's what working at a startup is about. I'm wearing so many hats and not all of them fit naturally.”

After receiving a growing number of enterprise-level requests to use Athena, ROAR shifted to a business-to-business model and dove into developing its next product: AlwaysOn, a patent-pending employee safety platform that provides a reliable and cost-effective method of staff security built to work without WiFi or power.

“We launched AlwaysOn in the hotel industry first because we learned that up to 58 percent of

housekeepers experience sexual harassment at work,” Mustafa says. “So we decided to focus our resources to aid those in the ‘invisible workforce’ where abuse of labor rights can unfortunately be common.”

The future of AlwaysOn is bright: The technology can expand to nursing, social work and other industries where workers may be put in vulnerable situations. The challenge to scaling the business is resources and time.

“To go to market in all of these industry verticals, ROAR is seeking to scale the team and begin fundraising,” Mustafa remarks. “The goal is to raise the capital necessary to become the industry standard for workplace safety.”

*Read more:* [sju.edu/magazine/mustafa](http://sju.edu/magazine/mustafa)

*Emmalee Eckstein is associate director of communications at Saint Joseph's University.*



# Advance Your Leadership Skills.

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The construction of Mandeville Hall established a home for the newly renamed Haub School of Business 20 years ago. What could the next big construction project bring? Revisit our story on the campus master plan on page 24 for inspiration.

## SAVE THE DATE

**SEP**  
29 | Undergraduate Open House

**OCT**  
Career Conversations Month

**OCT**  
17 | SJULive in New York City:  
How Streaming is Changing  
Our Lives

**OCT**  
24 | Leadership Awards Dinner

**OCT**  
24 | SJU Theatre Company Presents  
*Company*

**OCT**  
29 | Poetry Readings and Discussion  
*Poets Speaking Back to  
Catholicism*

**OCT**  
30 | Presentation by Paul C. Gorski,  
author of *Reaching and  
Teaching Students in Poverty:  
Strategies for Erasing the  
Opportunity Gap*

**NOV**  
6 | SJULive in Philadelphia:  
Data Intelligence

# aka

» also known as

Exploring the lives of SJU community members away from Hawk Hill

## Shaily Menon, Ph.D.

As Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Shaily Menon, Ph.D., has a lot on her mind on a day-to-day basis: institutional strategy, guiding the direction of the College, budget management. But in the few quiet moments she gets away from the office, her mind will occasionally drift to her childhood home of India and the stories she wants to tell about it.

Over the last decade and a half, Menon has published four creative pieces — one nonfiction essay and three short stories (one published under a pen name) — inspired by her life experiences, including her upbringing in Mumbai and a research project that she undertook in the rainforests of southern India.

Menon says that her early love of storytelling was fostered by her parents. Her fondness for short stories was developed by reading authors like O. Henry, Chekhov and Premchand, one of India's most celebrated Hindi-language writers.

"At an early age, my parents encouraged me to read," she recalls. "And I knew that my father had wanted to write poetry or short stories when he was young, but he had to start working and that fell away."



Illustration by Lisa Chicchi

Now, Menon finds inspiration in the authors of the Indian diaspora — writers including Jhumpa Lahiri and V.S. Naipaul who, like her, are emigrants or children of emigrants from the subcontinent. Menon says that she is drawn to the themes of "longing and displacement" in the authors' works.

"My own writing is characterized by nostalgia," she says. "I take memories and impressions from my life and let them take a fictional form."

Most of Menon's published writing is scientific — as a biologist and academic, she has dedicated years to producing research. But while Menon insists that scientific writing requires some creativity in discovering new ways to test theories and replicate experiments, she says that her fiction allows her to exercise different writing muscles.

"If you're writing about the results of an experiment, there's little room to write about

your impressions of the space around you. Nobody cares about the landscape; it's give me data or give me death," she jokes. "With my short stories, I can write about human impressions and experiences."

Menon says that she would one day like to collect all her creative writing into a single volume — if there's ever enough to call it a collection.

"I have a few more stories in progress: one comedic tale about a tiger who leaves the mountains and winds up in a village, and another that's more serious and has some magical realism aspects to it," she says. "But they've been written and re-written several times. If I ever find some downtime, I may get to finish one of them."

*Jeffrey Martin is managing editor of Saint Joseph's University Magazine and host and producer of the Good to Know podcast.*



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