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Summer 2020

Gold & Blue Law, Spring/Summer 2020

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GOLD & BLUE LAW EDITION

SCHOOL *of* LAW

ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY

SPRING/SUMMER 2020



Inspiring Hope

School of Law project aids the wrongfully convicted

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friends who
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than \$61,000 for the
Student Emergency Fund.

Our students are still facing
financial hardships related
to COVID-19. Please
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On the cover: The St. Mary's Law Wrongful Convictions Project has worked on more than 50 post-conviction cases over the years, providing wrongfully convicted individuals with an opportunity for justice. Read more on Page L4. Photo by Carlos Javier Sanchez.



LAWCAMPUSNEWS

Courtesy William & Mary Law School



University names School of Law dean

St. Mary's University named Patricia Roberts, J.D., Dean of the St. Mary's School of Law beginning June 1. Roberts comes to St. Mary's from William & Mary

Law School in Williamsburg, Virginia, where she earned her Juris Doctor and served as Vice Dean.

"I was drawn to St. Mary's because of its Catholic and Marianist mission, and I look forward to enhancing the efforts of the St. Mary's faculty and staff in their commitment to faith and social justice," said Roberts, who was also named the Charles Cantú Distinguished Professor of Law.

Roberts practiced law for eight years as a solo practitioner and, later, as a managing partner of a civil practice law firm after earning her law degree from William & Mary.

As Vice Dean, Roberts was William & Mary Law's chief academic officer, responsible for academic programs and policies that are essential to an excellent legal education.

"I understand the values of integrating legal education with other academic programs, and I am committed to interdisciplinary teaching and learning," Roberts said. "Working together across boundaries is not just beneficial, but also essential in the training of ethical and creative problem solvers."

She is prepared to work with the faculty to improve mentoring, bar exam preparation, career services and overall student success.

"Roberts' leadership and teaching experiences, as well as her focus on professional responsibility, involve training ethical, competent and compassionate lawyers, and align with the St. Mary's mission in the Catholic and Marianist tradition," President Thomas Mengler, J.D., said. "I look forward to working with Roberts to advance academic excellence at the School of Law and the University."

Law advocacy program ranks among top in nation

The St. Mary's University School of Law Advocacy Program has ranked top 20 in the nation by *U.S. News and World Report* and top four in the nation by the American Bar Association.

"These rankings show the dedication and hard work of our students, faculty and, most importantly, our coaches who work hard every day to help our students become great lawyers," said A.J. Bellido de Luna, J.D., Hardy Director of Advocacy and Service Professor of Law.

The St. Mary's Advocacy Program prepares students for real-world litigation through the development of their trial and appellate courtroom skills, as well as their negotiation, mediation, client counseling and dispute resolution skills.

In 2019, the St. Mary's Law Advocacy Program also ranked in the top five by the ABA and was in the top 25% of programs by *U.S. News and World Report*.

This academic year, the St. Mary's Advocacy Program won six championships, and students were recognized as standout advocates eight times throughout the year, receiving a variety of awards including best brief, best cross examination and top 10 oralist.

St. Mary's Journal on Legal Malpractice and Ethics celebrates 10 years

This spring, the *St. Mary's Journal on Legal Malpractice and Ethics* celebrated its 10th anniversary.

The publication releases two issues a year and is the only law journal in the nation to spotlight legal malpractice issues.

In a tribute article titled, *Thomas L. Shaffer, Legal Ethics, and St. Mary's University*, immediate past Interim Dean Vincent R. Johnson, J.D., LL.D., recalled the line of thinking that led to the creation of the *St. Mary's Journal on Legal Malpractice and Ethics*.

"The risk of committing legal malpractice lurk(s) around every corner in law practice," Johnson wrote.

In the mid-1990s, Johnson suggested to the *St. Mary's Law Journal* staff the idea of a symposium dedicated to the topic of legal malpractice and professional responsibility, because at the time, no specialty journal for it existed and few law journals consistently addressed issues related to professional responsibility.

Then, in 2001, when Blakely Latham Fernandez (J.D. '02) was Symposium Editor, the *St. Mary's Law Journal* elected to make it a permanent symposium topic.

In the symposium's 10th year, the journal's board resolved to publish the symposium as a separate journal: the *St. Mary's Journal on Legal Malpractice and Ethics*. Laura E. Cauley (J.D. '11) became its first editor.

"Piece by piece, the law journal's focus on legal malpractice and ethics has grown. Such incremental growth was always anticipated," Johnson wrote in his tribute piece. "The last word of the new journal's title — 'Ethics' — was intentionally left unrestricted so that, as opportunities arose, the journal could, if it chose, focus on legal ethics, judicial ethics, government ethics, educational ethics and perhaps other types of ethics as well."



Photo by Robin Jerstad

◀ The 2019-2020 staff of the *St. Mary's Law Journal* and the *St. Mary's Journal on Legal Malpractice and Ethics* pose for a group photo.

THE LAST MILE

Colorado lawyer fights to bring high-speed internet to rural America

by Frank Garza

In some parts of rural Colorado, access to high-speed internet could look like a trip to the local Walmart parking lot or the public library, a barrier which can affect access to justice.

For example, Delta County in Western Colorado — about the size of Rhode Island — only has about 20 practicing lawyers. The youngest is 55.

“Young people will not go practice law in Delta County because they’ve got no broadband support. Everything is the equivalent of dial-up,” said John M. Vaught (J.D. ’78), the Denver-based past president of the Colorado Bar Association, who spent 42 years in private practice focused on commercial litigation. “Nobody wants to practice law without high-speed internet.”

Without broadband support, uploading a brief to the Colorado Supreme Court can require a 40- to 70-mile trip just to find a strong enough signal, Vaught said.

Vaught made expanding broadband connectivity to rural Colorado a priority during his tenure as CBA president.

“If there are no lawyers practicing in Delta County because of these conditions, where do you go to get a lawyer?” he said. “It completely denies access to justice.”

Much of the existing fiber optic cables in Colorado run through interstates and along

railroad lines, otherwise called the “middle mile.” The problem, Vaught said, is that most rural areas are still missing the connection between the middle mile and individual residences and businesses.

That elusive end-user connection is the “last mile.” If there aren’t enough subscribers to justify broadband infrastructure, the private companies won’t build it, he said.

Another obstacle is Colorado’s Senate Bill 152, passed in 2005. The law prohibits the use of city and county funds for improving broadband infrastructure. While counties can opt out, it can be a cumbersome and expensive process; the county must call an election and the residents must support the resolution before using taxpayer money for the infrastructure.

By October 2018, 116 Colorado municipalities and counties held elections to override SB 152. But those areas needed millions more to build adequate infrastructure, Vaught said.

So Vaught made his case to the American Bar Association: petition Congress for \$42 billion, which could be used to fully fund broadband infrastructure in rural America.

“Much to my surprise, all 600 (ABA) delegates voted yes. And I thought, ‘How do you get 600 lawyers to agree on anything?’”

The issue has become more significant in

light of the coronavirus, he added.

“The coronavirus has really underscored how important high-speed internet is,” he said. In many Texas towns, he added, “we’re trying to teach high school kids, and we don’t have the adequate infrastructure to do it.”

Before his tenure as CBA president, Vaught was president of the Denver Bar Association, chair of the Denver Bar Association Young Lawyers Division and served on the Colorado Bar Association Board of Governors.

The St. Mary’s University Law Alumni Association recognized Vaught as a Distinguished Alumnus in 2018. In June, he also became the Vice Chair of the St. Mary’s University Board of Trustees.

As Vaught’s mentor, Dean Emeritus Charles E. Cantú remembered him as a diligent student.

“He was always well-prepared, and somehow, I knew he would become very successful,” said Cantú, adding that Vaught stands out among graduates, as only a few have led state bar associations.

“If I can do some good to help St. Mary’s, I’m glad to. St. Mary’s Law made a huge difference in my life,” Vaught said. “I did exactly what I was meant to do, and that was being a lawyer. St. Mary’s gave me that opportunity.” ■



INSPIRING HOPE

School of Law project aids the wrongfully convicted

by Frank Garza

It took 15 years in prison to understand who she was, but Gricelda Moreno knows — she is strong, she has found her faith and she understands what domestic abuse is.

She was convicted in 1988 for failing to protect her daughter from being murdered by her abusive ex-husband and she received a 99-year sentence. For the next nine years, Moreno was repeatedly denied parole. That's when Clinical Professor of Law Stephanie Stevens (J.D. '91) and the St. Mary's University School of Law's Wrongful Convictions Project entered the picture.

"She tried many times to do the right thing, and it just felt like it was time for someone to step up for her and try," Stevens said.

This involved many appearances before the parole board to convince them that Moreno deserved a second chance, Stevens said.

"They want to see rehabilitation," Stevens said. "We were able to show that in all the time she had been in prison, she was a model inmate."

The parole board did eventually see it that way — Moreno didn't cause issues in prison, she earned several work training certificates and she attended therapy to work through her issues. She even had a job lined up for her if she was granted parole, Stevens said.

"I was very happy that somebody actually believed in me, that I had not killed my little girl," Moreno said. "It gave me hope."

Including Moreno's case, St. Mary's Law has worked on more than 50 post-conviction cases since the clinics began, Stevens said.

Ashley De La Garza (J.D. '20) started working with the Wrongful Convictions Project in her second year of law school because of her interest in reintegrating those released from prison.

"I've seen the difficulties of coming from that background and not being able to move past it," De La Garza said.

For the project, De La Garza would review letters from prospective clients, but she would also conduct background research. She looked for whether the individual already filed a writ of habeas corpus, which requires the court to determine if a person's imprisonment or detention is lawful. If they had, "you can't go back and file another," De La Garza said.

"What was difficult was seeing that half of them had already filed pro se (without representation)," she said. "They didn't realize how much they were damaging their case by doing that."

Continued on Page L6.

Several students, including Francisco Martinez Martinez (J.D. '20), left, have represented clients like Gricelda Moreno, center, who was paroled with help from the Wrongful Convictions Project. After hearing Moreno's story, Clinical Professor of Law Stephanie Stevens, right, decided to take on her case and is still working toward gaining clemency for her.

“ She tried many times to do the right thing, **and it just felt like it was time for someone to step up for her and try.** ”



Arguing a wrongful conviction is an uphill battle. Often, the case is old and it can be difficult to gather the facts, said Clinical Professor of Law Anne Burnham (J.D. '96).

This is why the project carefully chooses cases. Where did the case occur? How easy would it be for law students to travel to the county to investigate? Do the merits of the case increase the likelihood of success? Is there something about the person's story that stands out?

"When the students narrow down the cases and do a preliminary investigation, they bring it to us, and we determine if there may be something more we can do to help," Stevens said. "After that, we begin a more thorough investigation."

That involves meeting with witnesses and going through police reports. But if the case is old, people may be difficult to locate. Records may have been destroyed. Rarely, a case makes it past that second investigation. Then the project staff file a writ, which leads to more legwork and investigation.

"By that point, we may have invested a couple of years or more on the case," Stevens said.

And with that time invested comes mountains of files. Briefs. Court opinions. Case law. Letters from the community. Petitions. Interview transcripts.

The staff has dedicated a "war room" in the Center for Legal and Social Justice to house files and plan tactics. Because of how long cases take, the clinic ensures each is well documented, said Francisco Martinez (J.D. '20), former research assistant for the project.

"It allows everyone to go through and see where the case is now. There's a lot of discovery, so it definitely helps," Martinez said.

Due to the exhaustive post-conviction work, the Wrongful Convictions Project — currently consisting of 10 students — is only handling three cases, Burnham said.

One of those cases involves a man named Rogelio Gutierrez, who was convicted of participating in a gang rape in 1992. Gutierrez served more than two decades in prison before he was released on bond pending ongoing litigation of his case thanks to the project's efforts.

"His mother and sister went to bat for him, and when I started looking at the case, I thought it was compelling," Burnham said. "The victim had already recanted, and the system hadn't done right by him in recognizing his innocence."

After several hearings over the past few years, the Wrongful Convictions Project awaits the court's findings to grant Gutierrez relief in the form of a new trial or acquittal.

Like Gutierrez, in Moreno's case, though she's out of prison, there's still work to be done. The next step is seeking clemency for her, so that she might enjoy the full rights of citizenship again, such as the right to vote, Stevens said.

"I'm so grateful for the clinic because of the people in there, the people who work so hard to help people like me," Moreno said. "I couldn't pay them back, and yet they were willing to take a big chance on me, without knowing me. Something the rest of the world couldn't give me, they did." ■

Working with Clinical Professors of Law Stephanie Stevens, not pictured, and Anne Burnham, right, showed recent alumna Ashley De La Garza, left, the need for a program in the community like the Wrongful Convictions Project.



“
“I’m so grateful for the clinic because of the
people in there, *the people that work so hard to
help people like me.*”

OPENING DOORS

Assistant Dean of Law Admissions experiences a defining moment with new J.D. students every fall

by Frank Garza



As the St. Mary's University School of Law's Assistant Dean of Admissions, Cathy Casiano says her favorite time of year is seeing the new faces of each fall's incoming J.D. class.

"We don't know what the journey will look like, and there's an excitement in knowing that there's so much the future holds for them," Casiano said, already looking forward to welcoming new law students to campus in Fall 2020.

It's a feeling with which Casiano is well-acquainted as a 2007 graduate of St. Mary's University's J.D. and MBA programs.

"I squeezed everything I could out of my experience. I was an editor of *The Scholar: St. Mary's Law Review on Race and Social Justice*, a member of the moot court team, took part in the Criminal Justice Clinic, studied abroad in Innsbruck, Austria. You name it, I did it," she said.

After graduation, Casiano practiced family law and criminal defense for seven years. It's all of these experiences that

Casiano began referencing with prospective students when she first joined the St. Mary's Law admissions team in 2013.

"It allows me to tell prospective students that law school is as different (from undergraduate studies) as people say it is," she said. "It's difficult. But even if it's hard, it doesn't deter people because it's doable."

As a recruiter, Casiano often travels, whether it's to other cities in Texas — Austin, Denton or El Paso, to name a few — or out of state, to places like Miami, New Orleans, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.

Casiano loves talking to prospective J.D. students about St. Mary's Law and, when they enroll, she makes sure to keep the dialogue going.

Third-year J.D. student Elizabeth Duggan, who works for Law Admissions as a student assistant, said Casiano was the reason she came to St. Mary's Law.

"I had applied late in the game and was very passionate about attending law school, but did not know where I would fit in," Duggan said. "She had a way of making me

feel accepted and wanted. I know she has impacted so many lives the same way."

Third-year J.D. student Cameron Galvan feels similarly. He remembers when Casiano visited his undergraduate university, St. Edward's University, and how approachable she seemed.

"Since then, she has stayed in close contact with me and has assisted me with advice from her law school experiences on scheduling study time and balancing life problems," Galvan said. "The bottom line: she is dedicated and is the cornerstone of the admissions team."

Casiano said she always maintains an open-door policy, adding, "I'm invested in watching students on their journey."

It makes graduation an emotional moment for her, even if the celebration is held virtually, as it was in May.

"Some students, you'll see every day for three years, and then they're gone. Every spring, it's like you're a parent and your child is leaving the nest," Casiano said. "But you know they'll go on to do great things." ■

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CONGRATULATIONS, CLASS OF 2020

Though coronavirus precautions kept students, staff and faculty off campus for the second half of the Spring 2020 semester, the community still came together to celebrate the Class of 2020. On May 9 and May 16, the scheduled dates of the Spring Commencement and School of Law Commencement, respectively, the University honored graduates through its first-ever virtual graduation ceremonies. Thousands of supporters joined in the celebrations, which offered messages of hope and blessings for the new graduates. Graduates' photos, like those pictured here, showcased St. Mary's memories during the virtual ceremonies.



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St. Mary's University, as a Catholic Marianist University, fosters the formation of people in faith and educates leaders for the common good through community, integrated liberal arts and professional education, and academic excellence.

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On the cover: St. Mary's University faculty and staff tackle some of humanity's biggest problems — from housing shortages to mental health needs — through the lens of their expertise. From left, Seongbae Lim, Ph.D., Professor of Information Systems; Genevieve Hébert Fajardo, J.D., Clinical Professor of Law; Paul X. Uhlig, Ph.D., Chair and Professor of Mathematics; Johnny Clifford, Head Men's Soccer Coach; Angeli Willson, Ph.D., Chair of the Department of Education. Read more on Page 12. Photo by Josh Huskin.

Thank you

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Following the path set by our founder

by Thomas M. Mengler, J.D., St. Mary's University President

Enormous change has occurred since my previous *Gold & Blue* message and the pandemic spread across our nation, affecting lives and communities. But turbulent disruption is not foreign to the Marianists. Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, who lived during and drew lifelong lessons from the French Revolution, reminds us about the importance of adaptation and change during difficult times. I am proud to tell you that the St. Mary's community — our students, faculty, staff and alumni — has been following the Marianists' founder's sage counsel.

Thanks to the unprecedented efforts of St. Mary's faculty and staff, within one week in March our faculty had converted from on-campus, in-person teaching to fully online instruction and have maintained the St. Mary's distinctive touch — personal connection with and attention to the individual needs of their students. That same week, more than 1,000 students relocated from campus and began their online courses in a seamless transition. In early March, 1,130 students lived in St. Mary's residence halls. Today, there are fewer than 20 still living on campus.

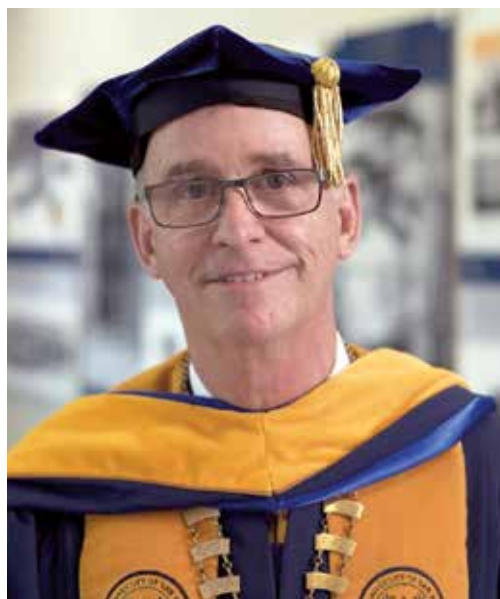
Our Alumni Association, as it has so often in the past, stepped forward to assist with a generous donation of \$620,000 to support the financial needs of current and incoming students. Our students' financial needs have greatly increased because of the devastating financial impact of the coronavirus on families. Through alumni and friends' online giving, we have received thousands of dollars to support our students, so that they can weather these weeks and return to campus this coming fall.

St. Mary's intends to resume classes and residential life on campus this fall. Like other Texas universities, we are planning to safely resume in-person teaching, learning and residential life for the fall semester. The safety of the St. Mary's community will be our first priority. We are making plans with the understanding that resuming on-campus activities in the fall will depend on the continued decline of COVID-19 cases in Texas and San Antonio. We are and will continue to be guided by government and public health officials.

St. Mary's has weathered many ups and downs in its 168 years. We continue to be financially sound, and we remain steadfast in our dedication to St. Mary's University's mission as a Catholic and Marianist university. The University is moving to position itself, not out of concern for survival, but in a sincere effort to move beyond the pandemic, prepared to continue to deliver a quality education grounded in our mission of sending purposeful young men and women into our communities to serve and lead. Who we are and what we stand for are even more vital today than ever before.

I thank you for your continued generosity to St. Mary's. I pray for you and your families. I ask you to pray for St. Mary's and our students. ■

“ Who we are and what **we stand for** are even **more vital** today **than ever before**. ”



Leticia Contreras to lead St. Mary's University Trustees

St. Mary's University welcomed Leticia "Leti" Contreras (B.A. '89) as the new chair of its Board of Trustees on June 1.



Contreras, who is executive vice president of Texas Security General Insurance Agency LLC, is the first woman to serve as chair in the history of the University's governing boards.

In 2017, Leti Contreras and her husband, Tom Contreras (B.B.A. '88), established the Contreras Family Executive in Residence and the Risk Management Student Success Fund in the Greehey School of Business. The couple also funded construction of The Pub at St. Mary's and the Contreras Family Terrace. Their company provided a startup fund for Rattler Enterprises, a student-led business also based in the Business School.

In addition to five new trustees joining the board, John Vaught (J.D. '78), retired senior counsel, Wheeler Trigg O'Donnell, LLP, joined Christopher "Chris" Martinez (B.B.A. '00), president, Central Electric Enterprises & Co., as a Vice Chair of the Board.

New additions to the board include:

- Leland T. Blank, P.E. (B.S. '67), Dean Emeritus, American University of Sharjah, UAE; Professor Emeritus, Texas A&M University
- Sara E. Dysart (B.A. '74, J.D. '81), attorney
- Steven Peña Sr. (J.D. '94), attorney and shareholder, Davidson Troilo Ream & Garza, P.C.
- Katherine Resteiner (M.S. '94), chief of staff, Intel Capital, Intel Corporation
- Corinne Vela-Zapata (B.B.A. '82), *Alumni Association Representative*, product management director, USAA

St. Mary's prepares to welcome students back to campus for the fall semester

St. Mary's University has announced plans to resume classes on campus for the fall semester. The University is also preparing for students to move into the residence halls in the fall.

"We share the hopes and optimism of other colleges and universities in Texas. We are planning to safely resume in-person teaching, learning and residential life for the fall semester," said President Thomas M. Mengler, J.D.

The St. Mary's planning team has begun its preparations with the understanding that resuming on-campus activities will depend on the continued decline of COVID-19 cases in Texas and in San Antonio. University decisions will continue to be guided by government and public health officials. The University's timeline for making these decisions on how it will safely manage teaching, living and other activities on campus is the end of June.

St. Mary's discounts tuition for recent alumni and for new undergraduates' summer classes

St. Mary's University will encourage students to continue on their path toward academic achievement by discounting tuition for recent alumni enrolling in graduate programs and for summer classes for new undergraduate students.

For both recent undergraduate alumni returning for a graduate program and incoming undergraduate students who want to start with a Summer 2020 course, St. Mary's University will temporarily discount tuition rates by 50%.

"For generations, St. Mary's students have enriched their knowledge and career development through our unique Catholic and Marianist liberal arts education," said Rosalind Alderman, Ph.D., Vice Provost for Enrollment Management. "To support this attainment during what will be challenging financial times and an uncertain job market for many in our community, St. Mary's will offer a tuition discount to recent alumni who meet the admission requirements and remain at St. Mary's as a new degree-seeking graduate student."

University announces Vice President for Administration and Finance

In April, the Board of Trustees unanimously confirmed President Thomas M. Mengler's appointment of Aaron Hanna (B.A. '10, M.P.A. '11, M.B.A. '13) as the permanent Vice President for Administration and Finance.

In February 2019, Hanna was named the Interim Vice President for Administration and Finance. With previous experience in managing some of the largest function areas in Administration and Finance, Hanna has continued to demonstrate that same excellent leadership in his management of the entire division.

In his year as interim, Hanna responded to the Finance Committee of the Board's request for providing even greater transparency of the University's complex finances, and his proposal for refinancing bond debt will result in new savings for the University. Hanna has led the Critical Incidents Response Team that, since the beginning of March, has been working to guide the University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

St. Mary's announces transition in University Advancement leadership

In March, St. Mary's University announced that Rick Kimbrough, Vice President for University Advancement, will leave at the end of June to take a similar position at Pacific University in Oregon.

Kimbrough joined St. Mary's in June 2013 and built a collaborative Advancement team. Kimbrough has led the \$150 million Defining Moment Comprehensive Campaign — with \$145 million raised.

The University named Joel Lauer as the Interim Vice President for University Advancement, beginning July 1. He came to St. Mary's in 2014 from the Washburn University Foundation, where he worked for more than 12 years. Lauer was the Executive Director of Advancement for the School of Law before becoming the Assistant Vice President for Development in 2018.

St. Mary's waives standardized testing requirements for many programs

In light of the complications for standardized testing as a result of the coronavirus, St. Mary's University has temporarily made the GRE and GMAT graduate school entry exams optional tests for most graduate programs.

The waiver applies to most Summer 2020 and Fall 2020 graduate program applicants.

To support freshman prospective students affected by the cancellation of ACT and SAT testing, St. Mary's is also offering an alternate, test-optional pathway to complete applications through Spring 2022.

University names Greehey School of Business interim dean

Stephanie Ward, Ph.D., Professor of Management, became Interim Dean of the Greehey School of Business on June 1.

Ward, who has taught at St. Mary's since 2004, succeeded Tanuja Singh, D.B.A., who had led the Greehey School of Business as Dean since 2009. Ward is past chair of the business school's Department of Management and Marketing and served on various University committees, including a past Core Curriculum Committee and as a faculty senator.

Singh accepted the position of Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at Loyola University New Orleans beginning in July.

Trustee becomes San Antonio's first plasma donor for COVID-19 relief

David Herrmann (B.B.A. '88, J.D. '90), CEO of Columbia Realty Limited and a St. Mary's Trustee, became San Antonio's first plasma donor in efforts to potentially ward off the physiological effects of the COVID-19 virus.

As reported by the San Antonio Express-News, Herrmann in March visited his doctor in San Antonio after returning home from a Colorado skiing trip with a fever. After testing positive for the virus, Herrmann, though his fever never broke 100 degrees, took measures to isolate himself and rest.

Once he recovered from the virus, "that same day I saw a report on the news about the plasma program and the local project with South Texas Blood and Tissue," Herrmann said.

"I reached out and they contacted me the next day," he said. "They screened me and, once I was approved" — after testing negative twice for the virus — "I did my first donation a few days later."

According to the Express-News, Herrmann's recent plasma donation "kick-started local efforts to treat the sickest COVID-19 patients with a therapy that has long been used for other diseases without treatment or cure."

Moore family donates \$1.7 million for scholarships

St. Mary's University announced a new scholarship after receiving gifts totaling \$1.7 million from the estate of Robert and Hildegard Moore.

Honoring the Moores' support of Catholic education, the new Robert and Hildegard Moore Endowed General Scholarship will assist students in good academic standing with demonstrated financial need.

Bill Greehey donates \$1 million to Business School

St. Mary's University has received a \$1 million gift from alumnus Bill Greehey (B.B.A. '60), a long-time philanthropist and the largest donor to St. Mary's University in the institution's history.

The gift will support the Greehey MBA for Values-Driven Leaders, the MBA for Professionals, scholarships and program development. Greehey has long been a significant benefactor of St. Mary's.

Rattler Hometown Advantage to aid incoming Bexar County students

During these uncertain times, moving closer to home or staying closer for college may be more important than ever.

The Rattler Hometown Advantage gives eligible students an additional \$1,000 per semester (\$2,000 per year) for a total of eight semesters of undergraduate study at St. Mary's. This \$8,000 of support is in addition to any scholarships and financial aid that students may qualify to receive.

Eligible students must be incoming new freshmen and transfer students for Fall 2020 who live in Bexar County and whose family adjusted gross income is less than \$100,000.

"The Rattler Hometown Advantage is made possible by a generous gift from our St. Mary's University Alumni Association as we work together to help our students reach their educational goals," said Rosalind Alderman, Ph.D., Vice Provost for Enrollment Management.

The gift from the Alumni Association will also help retain current students into the Fall 2020 semester.



St. Mary's University launches first-of-its-kind varsity esports program in San Antonio

Get your gaming fingers ready, Rattlers. Esports is headed to St. Mary's University.

St. Mary's Athletics will launch an esports program this fall, offering students the exciting opportunity to compete in one of the world's fastest-growing industries — competitive computer gaming, Director of Athletics Robert Coleman announced this spring semester.

The St. Mary's announcement marked the first university in San Antonio to sponsor a varsity esports program.

INNOVATION



“WE ARE GOING TO BE A CATALYST FOR GROWTH AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR THE RESIDENTS IN THE AREA.”

CATALYST

Alum's roles with the City of San Antonio and the Texas Research and Technology Foundation help boost SA's economy

by Jennifer R. Lloyd (M.B.A. '16)

Flourishing through innovation underpins not only Rene Dominguez's life, but also his career in economic development in the Alamo City.

San Antonio first lured Dominguez from his hometown of El Paso with its status as a major metropolitan area and a hotbed for Hispanic marketing. That interest led him to earn his bachelor's from St. Mary's University in English Communications Arts in 1992 and his Communication Studies master's in 2000.

"In '88, I completely fell in love with the school and jumped feet first — not only into the academic side of the school, but also the social side," said Dominguez, who participated in student government, was a President's Ambassador and a steadfast Rattler Basketball fan.

After working in restaurants and retail with a stint in Austin after graduation, Dominguez returned to St. Mary's to work in the Alumni Relations Office helping to organize Fiesta Oyster Bake. Over the next decade, he worked his way up to become the Executive Director of Development.

Dominguez recently leapt from a position with the City of San Antonio into the roles of president and chief operating officer for the Texas Research and Technology Foundation and its nonprofit innovation arm, VelocityTX.

His latest career turn fits what President Emeritus Charles L. Cotrell, Ph.D., described as his "modest and adaptive" demeanor.

"His administrative and professional abilities embody and personify what I would consider to be the Marianist charism in terms of working in community and trying to achieve excellence," Cotrell said.

Dominguez's interactions with leading St. Mary's alumni, such as Bill Greehey (B.B.A. '60), led him to mentoring relationships for his next phase. He became president of the Community

Development Loan Fund, which issued loans to small businesses. The City of San Antonio recruited him to run its Economic Development Department in 2009, though the "intense and awesome opportunity" came as the U.S. economy struggled from the Great Recession.

"San Antonio weathered the recession better than most U.S. cities," Dominguez said. "The recession allowed us to take a look at how we did economic development and the roles education and workforce development played."

With the city, Dominguez defined and established a more comprehensive economic development strategic plan that focused on local business expansion, workforce development and entrepreneurial development.

He worked on the expansion of everything from Fortune 500 companies, à la Microsoft and Google, to one-person biotech startups. His office also established economic partnership agreements with cities in China, Mexico, Israel and Germany. The efforts paid off — resulting in the creation of 20,000-plus jobs and more than \$3 billion in local investment.

His new role with the Texas Research and Technology Foundation and VelocityTX inspired him because of the elements it drew together — redeveloping a five-plus acre city block in the underserved near-East Side into an innovation hub; economic development, including the creation of jobs and investment; and company formation and expansion. He will also work on entrepreneurial development, such as helping startups — especially those in the biosciences — commercialize their ideas.

"We are going to be a catalyst for growth and economic opportunity for the residents in the area," he said. ■

▶ Rene Dominguez stands by the former Merchants Ice Building on Houston Street — part of the Texas Research and Technology Foundation's redevelopment plans.



Orion Knox Jr. crawls through an opening into one of the rooms at Natural Bridge Caverns in this courtesy photo dated Sept. 17, 1961.

Sixty years ago, four St. Mary's University classmates discovered Natural Bridge Caverns in San Antonio. Decades later, the caverns are still unfurling their mysteries.

by Alex Z. Salinas (B.A. '11, M.A. '19)

In the land before time — well, 140 million years ago — Southwest Texas lay under a warm ocean. During the Cretaceous period — about 60 million years ago — tectonic movements cracked spaces in subterranean rock. Water flowing there slowly carved passages and formations creating the Natural Bridge Caverns.

On March 27, 1960 — less than a year before John F. Kennedy became president — four St. Mary's University classmates launched their fourth expedition into ranchland owned by the Wuest family.

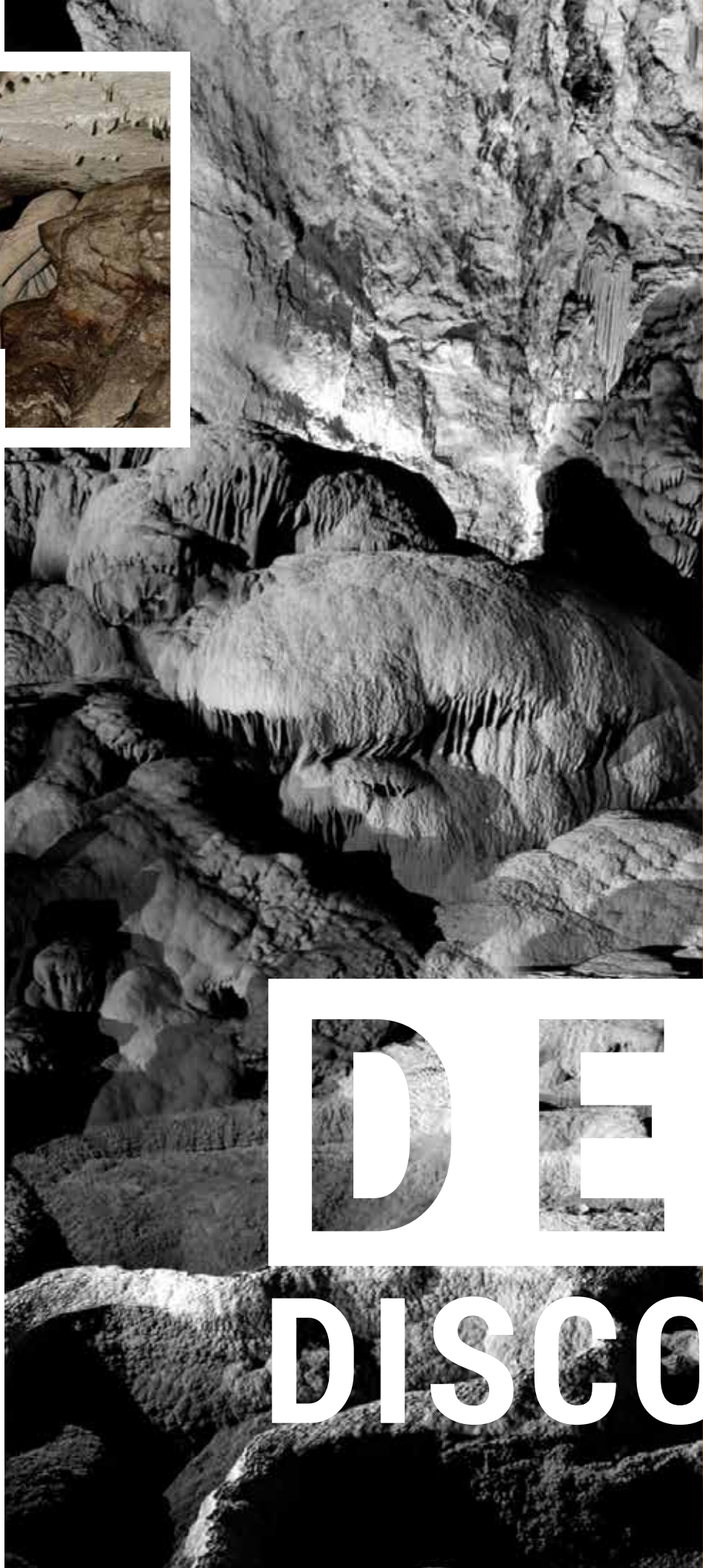
The students were members of the thrill-seeking, cave-exploring St. Mary's University Speleological Society.

Orion Knox Jr., Preston Knodell (B.A./B.S. '60), Al Brandt (B.S. '59) and Joe Cantu had permission from Clara Wuest Heidemann to search the cave near her family's cattle ranch.

"We'd always known there were passages beneath the area around the sinkhole and bridge, but no one had wanted to explore them before," Heidemann told *Texas Highways* magazine in 1988.

When the St. Mary's spelunkers trekked across a previously spotted narrow passageway "plugged with debris" nearly a hundred feet underground, they tapped on Knox, the smallest in the group, to crawl through it.

On the other side, when 19-year-old Knox laid eyes on an expanse of darkness — becoming the first human, perhaps, to peer into the largest known caverns in Texas, which now see thousands



DE
DISCO



EP COVERY

Photo by Stephen Voss

of visitors every year — he said to the group, “Hey, we may have something here.”

In a story by the *Austin Chronicle*, Knox said that finding the first room, later dubbed St. Mary’s Hall, “was the biggest adrenaline rush of my life.”

Knodell (now deceased) told the *Austin Chronicle* that discovering the caverns “was the second-biggest moment of my life,” next to getting married.

“It was a really tight fit the entire way,” Cantu said in the *Chronicle* story. “From the very beginning, Orion said he was going to help open the cave to the world. And he did.”

Knox put his college education on hold for two years to help excavate and develop the caverns, which opened to the public in 1964 and became a registered U.S. natural landmark in 1971.

Upon opening in 1964, then-Governor John Connally called the Natural Bridge Caverns “a jewel in the crown of Texas’ attractions.”

Knox, who eventually graduated from the University of Texas at Austin with a degree in architecture, recalled the minimalistic methods deployed to survey the caverns.

“At the time, we basically just used compass and steel tape,” he said. “Measuring was a complicated, meticulous process.”

Natural Bridge Caverns geologist Brian Vauter said the caverns were “initially discovered with 2.5 miles of passage.”

In May 2019, cavers found a 600-foot long passageway beyond where the 1960 exploration stopped. It opened into a space containing mineral-rich water pools and ice-like crystal mounds.

Stalactites, stalagmites, soda straws and flowstones are just some of the types of rock that compose the caverns. Even the jawbones of a grizzly bear that became extinct more than 8,000 years ago have been unearthed inside, pointing to signs of ancient activity.

For Evelyn Mitchell, Ph.D., Professor of Environmental Science, the caverns’ greatest significance lies in its relationship to the Edwards Aquifer.

“The caverns are the best place for the public to experience, to physically witness, the effects of water and rainfall in this region,” she said.

Mitchell, who has published research on the impact of bats in San Antonio’s Bracken Cave, said a clearer understanding of the caverns — and the source of the underground water supply — teaches us not to develop housing in the recharge zone.

After learning geology from the Marianists, Knox, now 79, enjoyed a career of cave planning and development. After Natural Bridge Caverns, some of his stops included Kartchner Caverns State Park in Arizona, Harrison’s Cave in Barbados and Grutas de Bustamante in Mexico.

“Between discovery and later development, Natural Bridge Caverns has impacted almost every aspect of my life, all for the better,” Knox said. ■

MIND, BODY AND

St. Mary's Spirit

University counselors, staff adapt to meet students' holistic health needs

by Nikki Harris

Universities across the country, including St. Mary's University, have been grappling with increasing mental health concerns among their student bodies. Compounding those existing challenges are the spread of the coronavirus across the United States and the significant shifts in the way we work, learn, teach and live.

For some, these situations and transitions can strain mental health and hamper achieving daily balance. St. Mary's is elevating the importance of mental health and wellness on campus through the Student Counseling Center and beyond.

Creating a wellness culture

Diane Coalson, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Student Counseling Center and Student Accessibility Services, sparked a mental health initiative on campus before the 2019-2020 academic year.

"What we're trying to do is create a culture of health and wellness on campus. And that's mind, body and spirit," Coalson said.

With the help of Staff Psychologist Teresa Caston and Deidra Coleman, Associate Director of the Student Counseling Center, Coalson started working with campus departments and community members to craft a culture of holistic wellness.

Beyond continuing existing services like free, individual counseling (mind) for undergraduate, graduate and law students, the Center partnered with University Ministry (spirit), as well as a nutritionist (body).

In the fall, the Center introduced a new Wellness Lab, which offers a quiet space with a rocking chair, yoga mat and computer program with breathing and relaxation exercises for students to practice meditation.

When the University transitioned to online classes in March during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Counseling Center adapted too, offering telehealth counseling and psychiatric services through telephone sessions and an encrypted-level of Zoom, a cloud-based videoconferencing platform, as well as offering tips to practice self-care at home.

Coalson's ultimate goal includes collaborating with more departments and organizations on campus, which may already be hosting mental health events like yoga classes and therapy animal visits.

"If we pool all those resources, we could take a big step forward in creating a culture of wellness on campus," she said.

Out in the open

The initiative has already garnered support from Student Development, the School of Law and Rattler Athletics.

"We all need to be knowledgeable of what mental health is. It was my goal to bring that to everyone's attention on campus," said Audrey Wandji, vice president of the University's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee.

Wandji, a senior Combined Science major and Women's Basketball player, noticed a need for increased awareness after seeing her teammates and fellow student-athletes

struggle with discussing their well-being.

"Being a student-athlete, sometimes mental health is put on the back burner," she said. "You're expected to be an athlete and a student. It's a lot of pressure."

She and the committee approached Athletics Director Robert Coleman about creating a support system that gives students the space to feel comfortable talking to coaches and teammates — and gives coaches the words and resources to help them.

"We've got to be ... really open in our communication," Coleman said. "If something's not good, you've got to come out with it. You've got to talk about it. It's not a sign of weakness."

The significance of self-care

The School of Law has also adopted wellness and mental health practices, such as free yoga sessions, meditation classes and the annual Law Wellness Week. Law staff stress the importance of making time for self-care, even if students only have an hour at lunch to spare.

The Counseling Center recommends keeping daily needs in balance with other areas of life: eating well, getting enough sleep, drinking plenty of water, exercising and meditating at home to help students focus better in class and at work — especially during stressful situations.

"I like to empower students to know that they have the resources and the coping skills to manage difficult situations," Caston said. "Once they learn that, they can do it." ■

Mind



- Set up a counseling session with the Student Counseling Center (students only)
- Utilize online tools to learn and practice relaxation skills, yoga and meditation
- Join a student club or organization, or pick up a hobby



Spirit

- Pray together
- Engage in community service
- Stop by University Ministry
- Visit the Marianist brothers



Body

- Eat healthy and balanced foods
- Get the recommended amount of sleep
- Drink enough water
- Exercise or take a walk outside





THE *BIG* *SOLVE*

ST. MARY'S FACULTY AND STAFF TACKLE SOCIETY'S BIGGEST CHALLENGES

At St. Mary's University, our campus community talks a lot about educating leaders for the common good — a noble yet, on first glance, abstract notion. What does it look like when our faculty and staff apply their expertise to solving some of humanity's biggest problems?

On these pages, you'll hear from professors in Mathematics, Education, Information Systems and Law, as well as our Men's Soccer Head Coach, who each use the holistic St. Mary's style of education to offer solutions to some of our greatest challenges.

Housing as a human right

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, on any given day in the Bexar County court system, you could find a long line of unrepresented tenants and homeowners about to lose their homes. The outcome was almost certain. Tenants would be evicted. Homeowners would be foreclosed.

During the pandemic, foreclosures were barred, the eviction courts were closed and vulnerable people had a brief reprieve from eviction. Now that we are slowly emerging from the crisis, the economic wheels are beginning to churn again. That means foreclosures will be filed and tenants will be evicted. Without major financial assistance, many individuals and families are now even more vulnerable than before.

Law professors often declare that law school teaches you to “think like a lawyer.” Yes, law graduates should understand the law, advocate for clients and work competently on individual cases. But thinking like a lawyer means questioning, criticizing, evaluating and reflecting upon the wider legal system.

Our traditional civil legal system works relatively quickly to remove people who have fallen behind on payments, and each case is handled on a one-by-one basis. This individualized system reinforces an isolationist and reality-blind approach to one of our most pressing social problems: housing loss.

The COVID-19 pandemic has given us an opportunity to rethink housing policy, putting the focus on income vulnerability, not individual fault.

We should modernize law and housing regulation at local, state and federal levels. We should adjust and restructure the property tax and appraisal system that is becoming unaffordable for seniors on a fixed income. We should study the history of predatory lending and discriminatory redlining (refusing loans to entire neighborhoods on the assumption that minority communities are a credit risk), and understand how they impact housing sustainability in the long term. Most of all, we should provide meaningful financial assistance to people who cannot afford to pay their rent or mortgage.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops recognizes affordable housing as a human right, stating “communities and the government have an obligation to ensure the housing needs of all are met, especially poor and vulnerable people and their families.”

As a Catholic and Marianist law school, St. Mary’s Law teaches students to impact the common good by advocating for clients within our individualized legal system of private property rights — whether those clients are tenants, homeowners, banks or landlords.

But it also means we teach students to recognize the limitations of the civil legal system and study bigger questions about income distribution, local and national government policy, and fundamental rights. ■

BY GENEVIEVE HÉBERT FAJARDO, J.D.
Clinical Professor of Law



Bridging economic divides



Economic divide — it's the common threat to a global society. For example, mango farmers in Haiti earn 2% of revenues for their labor. That's only two cents for every dollar of mangoes sold. This significant inequity — economic divide — is something which, with practical restructuring, can be diminished for the greater good.

The productivity of labor has been increased dramatically through innovation. But the benefits have not always been fairly distributed — a situation made even more starkly apparent by the economic effects of COVID-19's rapid global spread.

Innovation has also played a limited role in solving social problems. For example, while organizations have been improving the productivity of manufacturing by substituting robots for human laborers, they have ignored the negative impact of robot adoption, such as the collapse of the middle class due to job loss.

We can cultivate a smart future in which people are happy, organizations thrive and the environment flourishes.

To accomplish this, I suggest a strategy called living innovation, in which we can make a synergic combination of advanced technologies and existing resources to develop a creative solution for solving social issues.

For example, in the mango farmers' world, a high level of supply chain transparency provided by blockchain technology would help the farmers earn what they deserve.

An example of a company implementing living innovation strategy well is Warby Parker, an online retailer of prescription glasses. For each pair of glasses sold, the company donates another pair of glasses to people in need. The company also claims to be 100% carbon neutral.

When everyone earns a fairer share of the mango, our world is better suited to achieve the common good. ■

BY SEONGBAE LIM, PH.D

Professor of Information Systems

Author of [Living Innovation: From Value Creation to the Greater Good](#)

Educating beyond the test

This year, a former student, now a middle school teacher, approached me about a pupil who had confided in him about having thoughts of self-harm. This was not the first time I heard the issue of mental stress in teenagers.

A Pew Research Center survey revealed that 70% of teens see anxiety and depression as the top problem among their peers. Another study showed that the number of college students who sought help from campus counseling centers increased by an average of 30% to 40%, even though enrollment grew by only 5% during the time frame studied.

Some students develop testing anxiety because of the high-stakes, state-mandated standardized tests. They feel compelled to “fit in” due to the popularity and pervasiveness of social media, which follows them outside the classroom. This may be aggravated further by the pressures of society’s response to the COVID-19 virus.

With the unprecedented phenomena of schools closing and parents assuming responsibility for teaching their kids, what society must do for the common good has broadened. Based on my experience as a school teacher and administrator, we should look beyond over-emphasizing testing to advocate for the development of the whole person — cognitively, socially and emotionally — in our K-12 public schools.

Texas needs to create and fund a curriculum that focuses on developing socio-emotional intelligence, in addition to its existent academic standards. This program should start with awareness — self and social. It should include teaching students to recognize their strengths and weaknesses, gaining confidence from their abilities and demonstrating resiliency in the face of failure. This program should have mental health supports, such as counselors, psychologists and social workers trained in implementing a program through which students can develop empathy for others, and build and maintain healthy relationships.

Now, more than ever, school districts need to actively involve parents in the education of their children by having programs to empower families and help all students. At the elementary school where I was a principal, we had monthly family reading nights and family math nights, in addition to a parent-teacher association. After much student and parent interest, we also added a robotics night.

Research also needs to be done on online learning’s effectiveness. We must determine its barriers to success, effects on children’s academic and socio-emotional well-being, and how to help students readjust post-pandemic.

If public schools take care of their students early on, then they prepare them — mentally and spiritually — for success and the rigors of adult life. ■

BY ANGELI WILLSON, PH.D.
Chair of the Department of Education,
Associate Professor of Education



Mathematics for the common good

BY PAUL X. UHLIG, PH.D. (B.S. '90)
Chair and Professor of Mathematics



Last spring, I toured the Southwest Research Institute with a group of students to learn about summer internships. In a whirlwind overview, our host told us about some of their current projects and the cutting-edge mathematics being used. After the visit, I wondered how our students could succeed at such internships if they wouldn't encounter most of these topics until graduate school.

Back at St. Mary's, the question became: How can I lead my students to becoming proactive, independent, deep, lifelong learners who could thrive in such an environment? How can I encourage them to wade past shallow textbook exercises into a deeper understanding?

Easy: Take the textbook out of the equation!

For the rest of the semester, I gave my students puzzles (i.e., nonstandard word problems related to the course material). Reactions were mixed. Some students thought it was not fair to be given a problem without examples and guidance; others saw it as a refreshing change from the textbook routine.

The most convincing feedback was gratitude from senior Mathematics major Ana Molina, who received a special internship at KPISOFT, a cloud-based tech company, the following summer after impressing her interviewers by applying the proactive independent thinking she learned from my puzzle experience.

Today's graduates will enter a world about which we, their professors, know little except this: It will bring profound disruption. We've been reminded of that recently with the rapid change required to address the COVID-19 virus.

Learning absolutely must be proactive, independent, deep and lifelong. Isn't that the point of the

Greek precept, "Know thyself"? Yes, this is the foundation of a quality, integral education. This is what prepares students for adaptation and change.

Our students who learn to learn can become the very leaders the world needs now — and in the future. ■

Winning through failure

The loss of the opening game of the Fall 2019 Men's Soccer season felt like a make-or-break moment. But it wasn't just the loss that stung — it was the way we lost.

That night, I found that team players had left our bus full of trash. I was angry and disappointed because this wasn't the result of a winning mentality. Our culture needed to change in a big way.

The next morning, on a hot September day, instead of the team taking the day off, we met at the stadium for an extra practice. Every single one of us — staff included — covered a lot of grass that morning in a rigorous session. I definitely struggled the most, but it was a sacrifice for the common good.

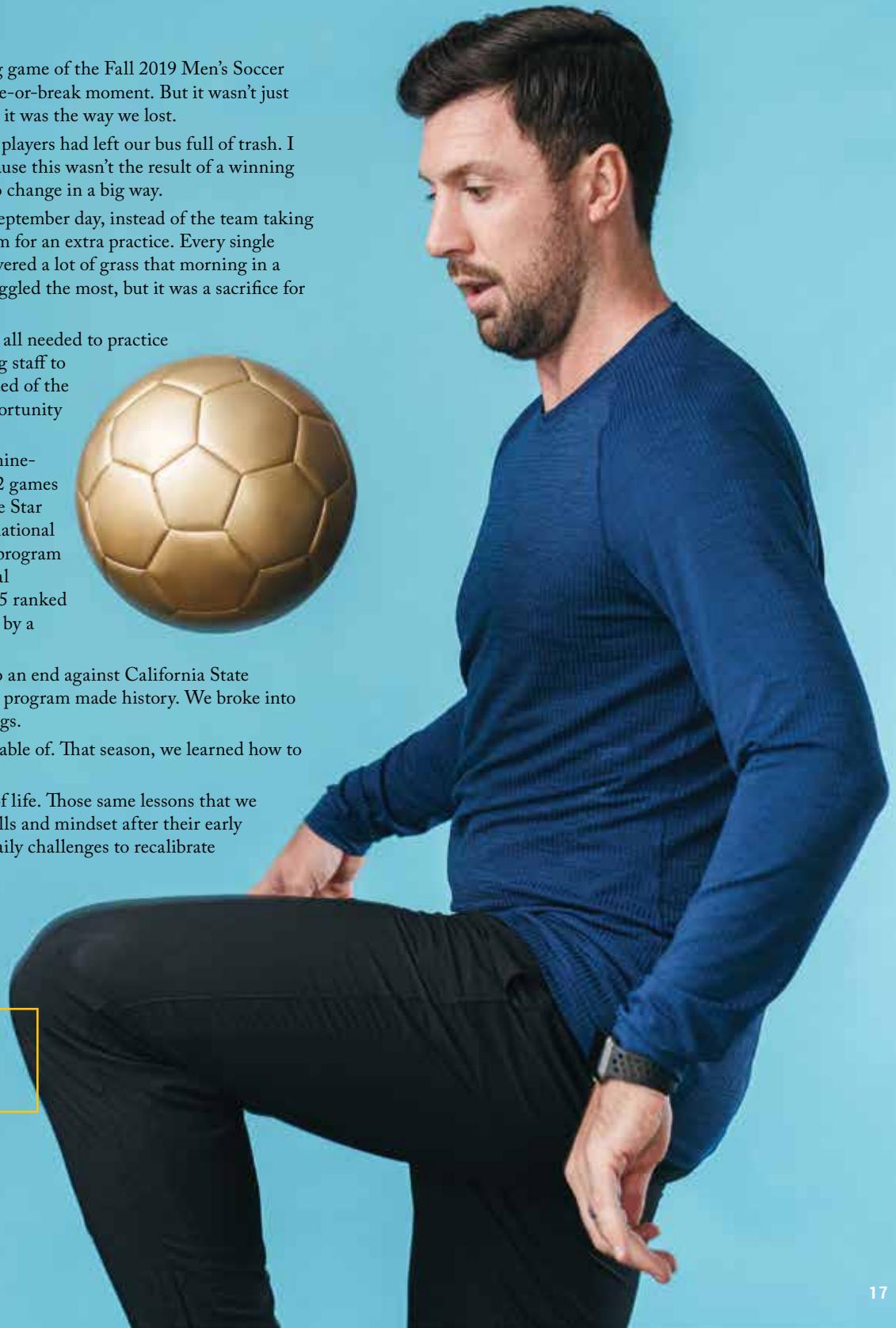
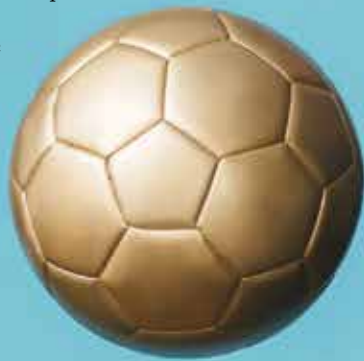
For our culture to change, we all needed to practice what we preached, from coaching staff to players. We needed to be reminded of the work we had put in, and the opportunity we had in the season ahead.

After that day, we went on a nine-game winning streak and won 12 games altogether. We qualified, as Lone Star Conference champions, for the national tournament for the first time in program history. We won our first national tournament game, beating top-25 ranked Western Washington University by a score of 5-0.

The season eventually came to an end against California State University, Los Angeles, but our program made history. We broke into the top 10 in the national rankings.

We learned what we were capable of. That season, we learned how to win — and lose — with grace.

Setbacks are inherently part of life. Those same lessons that we used to help refine the team's skills and mindset after their early loss, we can take into our own daily challenges to recalibrate and find success. ■



BY JOHNNY CLIFFORD
Men's Soccer Head Coach

A Defining **Brotherhood**



Alumni support St. Mary's and each other through lifelong friendship

by Melanie Skaggs (M.A. '02)

Michael “Mickey” Schott (B.B.A. '68) peers over first base toward the green outfield. The bat makes a loud crack! Schott fields the ball and tags the runner out. The memories flood his mind like it happened yesterday, but it has been more than 50 years.

Time may have passed, but Schott, as an active alum, has continuously stepped up to the plate in support of St. Mary's — and he is not alone. The friendships forged when Schott was a student are in a league of their own. Even after decades, these alums share an ironclad fellowship dedicated to each other and St. Mary's.

“St. Mary's is such a special place,” Schott said. “The connections you make here are powerful.”

Schott, a certified public accountant and president of the Gorman Foundation, is truly an all-star alum. A former Rattler Baseball first baseman, he was inducted into St. Mary's Athletics Hall of Fame in 2002. The U.S. Army veteran is also a past-president of the University Alumni Association and has served on the St. Mary's Board of Trustees since 2009. He will step down as Board Chairman when his term ends in June 2020.

“The last two years as chairman have been very exciting. There's been a renewed energy around St. Mary's with The Defining Moment Comprehensive Campaign,” Schott said. “Fundraising is not easy, but the Campaign has been led well and been very effective. It has been a tremendous shot-in-the-arm for St. Mary's. I anticipate, with confidence, it will continue to be successful going forward. This leadership team has the capability and commitment to make it happen.”

Schott, along with many of his high school friends from Central Catholic, gravitated to St. Mary's University. At St. Mary's, many became members of the Rho Beta Gamma fraternity, ROTC or athletic teams, which deepened their relationships.

“St. Mary's and the Marianists played an important part in my life and the lives of most of my lifelong friends,” Schott said. “There's a unique bond of brotherhood among the guys.”



A snapshot shows a burgeoning brotherhood whose St. Mary's experience has sparked lifelong friendships.

Rho Beta Gamma, founded in 1946 by the late Rev. Louis Reile, S.M. (B.A. '49), was St. Mary's oldest social fraternity until it disbanded in the 1970s. It provided the perfect foundation for lasting friendships to form. Their motto — *suaviter in modo, fortiter in re*; gentle in manner, strong in action — is something members said they carried forward into all aspects of their lives.

This band of brothers still swings for the fences when it comes to making significant contributions (in both time and money) to St. Mary's University.

A vast majority are active members of the Alumni Association — many having served as association president. A large number, including Schott, earned recognition as Distinguished Alumni. They are Fiesta Oyster Bake volunteers, like heavy hitter David Dickson (B.B.A. '68), who has done it for 38 years. In addition, many have been influential in shaping the future of the University by serving on the Board of Trustees.

“We've grown to be part of this incredible, influential group of alumni who are committed to each other and St. Mary's,” Dickson said. “We go to bat for one another every chance we can.”

Those who live in the San Antonio area meet regularly for lunch, dinner, golf or to catch a St. Mary's Baseball game. For the last 50 years, the larger group of 40 or more goes on a Gulf Coast fishing trip each spring.

“The tie that binds us is St. Mary's, but we are there for each other through the best and worst of times,” Schott said. “Our sense of commitment to St. Mary's and each other comes from the Marianist spirit and helps make us all leaders within our community.” ■

Michael “Mickey” Schott looks ready to play ball in his 1966-1967 Rattler Baseball photo.



“ Our sense of **commitment to St. Mary's and each other comes from the Marianist spirit** and helps make us all leaders within our community. ”



Understanding Identity

English Instructor champions Mexican American studies in University, K-12 schools

by Glory Turnbull

Every semester, Margaret Cantú-Sanchez, Ph.D. (B.A. '06, M.A. '07), hears students say, "I've never read anything by a Mexican American author." While this shocks her, it is an all too common experience among educators, even in a city as diverse as San Antonio, which is 64% Latino.

Cantú-Sanchez (B.A. '06, M.A. '07), an Instructor of English at St. Mary's University and a San Antonio native, is working hard to expand the canon of literature and open a dialogue about representation. She believes the canon continues to fall short, and that her students deserve to relate to what they read.

Be it the challenging novels of Nobel Prize-winning African American author Toni Morrison, or the cultural theories of Chicana scholar Gloria Anzaldúa, Cantú-Sanchez infuses her lectures with thinkers of color.

"Mexican American literature, and multicultural literature for that matter, speaks to my students because they're able to see themselves, their families and their culture," Cantú-Sanchez said. "Everyone needs to be exposed to this literature, whether they identify as Latino or not."

One way in which Cantú-Sanchez bolstered her mission was by creating and organizing the Mexican American Summer Studies Symposium — the inaugural event of which was held at St. Mary's in July 2019. The daylong symposium prepared local high school teachers for a new course, Ethnic Studies: An Overview of Americans of Mexican Descent, approved by the Texas State Board of Education in 2018.

"Margaret's Mexican American Studies Symposium last summer sparked a necessary conversation," said Refugio "Ito" Romo, Ph.D. (B.A. '83, M.A. '93), Professor of English Literature and Language.

Cantú-Sanchez hopes the new high school course will encourage young Mexican American students to explore their identity and relationship with the country's culture — just as her St. Mary's courses explore these themes in relationship with literature.

"We owe it to the younger generations, and to the generations of the future and the past, to know where we are from," said Luisa Ortiz, a senior Theology major who attended the symposium. "When I learn about Mexican American heritage, it makes me feel important, like I'm part of the conversation. I matter."

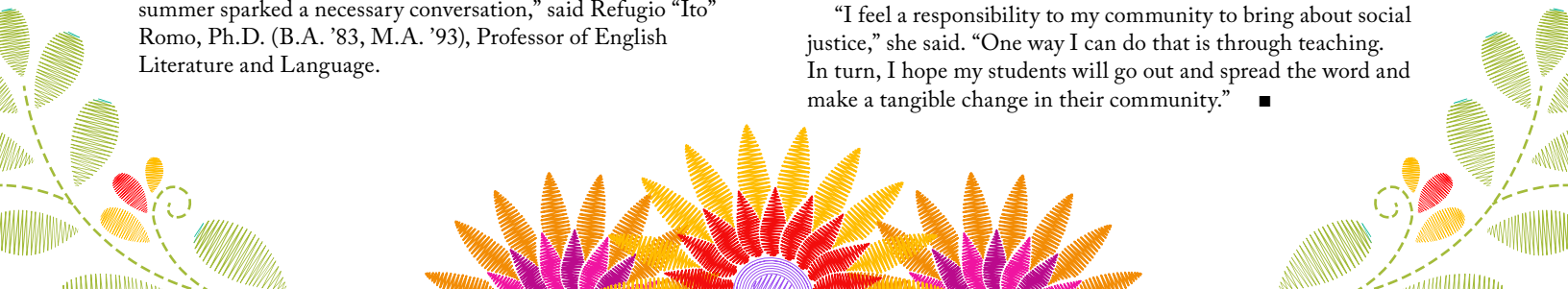
For students of Cantú-Sanchez who aren't Hispanic, the takeaways from her classes remain impactful.

"Margaret has a passion, not only for the content that she's teaching, but for the people in her department and her community," said Forest Lebaron, who earned her master's of English Literature and Language in May. "She wants us to relate to the materials, understand and, most of all, succeed."

"I use literature to help my students contemplate their own ideas of identity and how society can be a big influence on how we understand our identities," Cantú-Sanchez said. "Sometimes this can be positive. A lot of times, though, it can be negative because of stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination that have long existed."

Teaching for adaptation and change, then, is a foundation of Marianist education. It's why Cantú-Sanchez perceives events, such as last year's symposium, as necessary conversation-starters for the community.

"I feel a responsibility to my community to bring about social justice," she said. "One way I can do that is through teaching. In turn, I hope my students will go out and spread the word and make a tangible change in their community." ■



Viral Education

Biology professor takes lessons in virology and life into the virtual classroom

by Alex Z. Salinas (B.A. '11, M.A. '19)

In nearly three decades teaching at St. Mary's University, Gary Ogden, Ph.D., Professor of Biological Sciences, remembered a touching moment from early in his professorship at St. Mary's that brought him to tears.

"A student slid a letter under my door addressing his upcoming graduation and how he would've never graduated if I hadn't allowed him to redeem a bad grade he'd received in my class," Ogden said.

"It reminds you how fragile some students are — their situations — and how we, as professors, must always be mindful to work with them during a very important time in their lives," said Ogden who has brought that understanding into his now-virtual classroom.

Ogden, who also serves as Associate Dean of the School of Science, Engineering and Technology, received his Ph.D. in Microbiology/Molecular Virology from the University of Kansas in 1983.

Amid the global pandemic triggered by the COVID-19 virus, the virology expert adjusted not only to the online format, but also to more deeply cover coronaviruses. This spring, Ogden conducted class on Zoom, a cloud-based videoconferencing platform, and said being able to still see his students "nod in agreement or laugh occasionally at a lame joke is rejuvenating."

Before coming to St. Mary's, Ogden — the longest-tenured professor in the Department of Biological Sciences — made stops as a research scientist at Yale School of Medicine, Harvard School of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

While at the NIH from 1987 to 1989, Ogden's lab was "down the hall" from Dr. Anthony Fauci's — a top infectious diseases expert who became a household name while delivering coronavirus updates to millions of Americans alongside the president.

"Dr. Fauci was very friendly, very respected by my colleagues," Ogden said. "I sang Christmas carols with him once in Connecticut."

About the COVID-19 virus, Ogden said that it is an envelope virus — meaning it is surrounded by a membrane that renders it unable to spread when people use hand soap or hand sanitizer.

Ogden said the main key to avoiding the spread of viruses is cutting off their food source — i.e., people.

"Infections can increase exponentially, but only if the virus has sufficient food available. We are that food," he said. "We have to limit the virus' ability to find us."

Hector Garcia, senior Biology major, said Ogden is passionate about teaching microbiology.

"He's taught me that when facing a scientific problem, look at the big picture," Garcia said. "That's how you can create multiple solutions to one problem."

"We are fortunate to have Gary Ogden at St. Mary's University," Ted Macrini, Ph.D., Chair and Professor of Biological Sciences, said. "He has received grants from the NIH and the National Science Foundation to support his research with our students."

A native of Massachusetts, Ogden said that St. Mary's has been the perfect place for him since Day One.

"It's not hard to like our students here," he said. "They have the values that we do, not least of which are working hard and treating people with respect." ■



Photo by Robin Jerstad

▲
Gary Ogden pours milk for making cheese as part of a fermentation lab exercise in his Microbiology course.