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# GOLD & BLUE

ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY

FALL 2023



End of an era

UNIVERSITY EVOLVES UNDER TOM MENGLER'S LEADERSHIP



# CONTINUING *the* HERITAGE



**N**early 350 St. Mary's University volunteers fanned out to 25 sites across the city for Continuing the Heritage in August.

Continuing the Heritage is a twice-yearly service day during which the St. Mary's community gives its time and energy to partnering nonprofits throughout San Antonio.

The day of service brings together volunteers for projects, such as assembling picnic tables for schools,

assisting with clean up and organization at nearby nonprofits, weeding and planting in community gardens, helping with litter pickup and painting over graffiti at parks.

Pictured from left, St. Mary's seniors and Rattler Softball team members Destiny Salinas, Erika Gomez, Mackenzie Dugi and Reba Reyes paint sidewalks and railings at St. James the Apostle Catholic School.





Photo by Darren Shiverdecker

# GOLD & BLUE

ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT Thomas M. Mengler, J.D.

CHIEF OF STAFF Dianne Pipes (M.P.A. '11)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UNIVERSITY MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS Gina Farrell (M.P.A. '11)

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*(Denotes degree from St. Mary's University)*

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[www.stmarytx.edu/magazine](http://www.stmarytx.edu/magazine)

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## MISSION

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.

## CONNECT WITH US



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Presidential duo creates memorable years at St. Mary's helm

**ON THE COVER:** As St. Mary's University's 13th president, and second layperson to hold the position, Thomas M. Mengler, J.D., has guided the 171-year-old University through impactful moments. With support from his wife, Mona Mengler, Tom Mengler's leadership has influenced the advancement of the Marianist mission while working to make St. Mary's a premier institution in the region. In this photo, the Menglers embrace their future as they walk through the doors of the historic St. Louis Hall. *Read more on Page 6.* Photo by Josh Huskin.



*Defining the heart*  
**OF ST. MARY'S**  
**UNIVERSITY**

Photo by Stacy Goldberg

**Board Chair reflects on President Tom Mengler's tenure**

*by Lynda Ellis (B.A.S. '81), Chair of the Board of Trustees*

Nearly a dozen years of visionary leadership and unwavering dedication have reshaped St. Mary's University under the guidance of President Thomas M. Mengler, J.D. — or simply “Tom” to those of us who have had the pleasure of getting to know him.

His tenure has been defined by a leadership approach transcending the ordinary and profoundly impacting the University's students, staff, faculty and alumni. Tom's legacy is a testament to his ability to build a strong team, nurture growth and fearlessly champion innovation.

Perhaps this is best demonstrated by the Center for Catholic Studies, created during his tenure. This dream became a reality by engaging students and deepening their faith and understanding of the gifts given through the grace of the Holy Spirit, helping our students become examples of God's love.

A thoughtful leader, Tom's authenticity radiates through his actions. His commitment to Marianist and Catholic values is not a mere formality; it's a living embodiment in his everyday interactions. His deep understanding of these values and their application to the University's mission has been a compass that directs the St. Mary's community toward ethical growth.

**“His commitment to Marianist and Catholic values is not a mere formality; it's a living embodiment in his everyday interactions.”**

It's said that one must “walk the talk,” which Tom models through his Catholic and Marianist values, whether in making tough decisions, guiding others through failures, proactively reaching out to extend his hand or simply being there.

These impacts extend beyond campus borders. His embrace of the wider community reflects his dedication to building bridges and nurturing relationships. He recognizes that a university's vitality is interconnected with its surroundings, and his efforts have woven St. Mary's into the fabric of San Antonio, especially the West Side.

For the members of the University's Board of Trustees, Tom's leadership has been transformative. With a discerning eye, he identifies opportunities and embraces feedback to drive trust and confidence.

His meticulous approach and openness to learning from others have elevated the Board's effectiveness, leaving an indelible mark on its members. Personally and professionally, I have benefited immensely from his leadership.

I loved Tom's comment about what being on the Board should be like for trustees, “It should be fun,” driving home his passion for enjoying getting things done and working as a team.

A one-of-a-kind fundraiser, Tom has shared his vision with such passion that donors have been drawn to the St. Mary's mission. He doesn't merely ask for support; he invites individuals to be part of a larger purpose. And nearly 11,500 donors heard his clarion call to contribute to The Defining Moment Comprehensive Campaign.

As Tom's presidential tenure draws to a close, we celebrate his remarkable journey of leadership with this issue of *Gold & Blue*.

St. Mary's University stands stronger and more deeply connected to its values and its community, all thanks to a man whose word is his bond, whose actions reflect unwavering integrity and whose vision ignited a collective spirit of growth.

There is no doubt Tom will leave a legacy that will continue to shape the University's trajectory for years to come. ■



**St. Mary's employee reflects on Jovita Idár's new quarter**



St. Mary's employee Rose Ann Martinez holds out the new quarter featuring her great-great-aunt, Jovita Idár.

What's round, worth 25 cents and has a connection to St. Mary's University?

The answer: The new Jovita Idár quarter issued by the United States Mint.

Idár, a Mexican American woman born in Laredo in 1885, became a journalist, activist, teacher and suffragist, according to the Mint. She fought against separatist ideologies and worked to build a better future for Mexican Americans and women, earning a spot on the Mint's line of American Women Quarters.

The coin — the ninth in the series — was revealed on Sept. 15 in San Antonio. Idár's family, including St. Mary's employee Rose Ann Martinez, joined in celebrating the momentous occasion. Martinez, who began working at the University about three years ago as an accounts payable technician, said she found inspiration in the new quarter featuring her great-great-aunt.

"I have grandchildren, and I want them and future generations to know the history behind that quarter," Martinez said.

Read the story at [www.stmarytx.edu/jovita-idar-quarter](http://www.stmarytx.edu/jovita-idar-quarter).

**\$2.1M grant funds St. Mary's program to train scientists**

The National Institutes of Health awarded a grant of \$2.1 million to enable St. Mary's

University to train the next generation of biomedical scientists.

Led by Professor of Biological Sciences Verónica Contreras-Shannon, Ph.D., the Undergraduate Research Training Initiative for Student Enhancement at St. Mary's will build the pool of students interested in research by exposing high school students to research in STEM fields. The grant will provide St. Mary's students with more opportunities to participate in biomedical research with faculty mentors. Additionally, the grant will fund training for a cohort of students intent on pursuing a Ph.D. in Biomedical Sciences.

**Stella Silva named Associate Vice President for Inclusive Excellence**



Stella Silva, Ph.D.

St. Mary's University, in June, announced Stella Silva, Ph.D., as the University's Associate Vice President for Inclusive Excellence.

"Inclusive excellence builds on the ideas of diversity, equity and inclusion and underscores an essential element of our Catholic and Marianist identity and mission," said President Thomas M. Mengler, J.D.

**St. Mary's creates unique Business and Law undergrad major**

St. Mary's University has created a collaborative major for undergraduate students interested in the intersection of business and law, unique among San Antonio's universities. The B.B.A. in Business and Law began enrolling students

this fall, appealing to those who want to be leaders of new and evolving professions that require a broad business education and an understanding of the legal environment.

This innovative program is a collaboration between the University's Greehey School of Business and the School of Law, giving undergraduates the unique opportunity to take between five and 15 credit hours of School of Law courses.

**U.S. News & World Report ranks St. Mary's second in the West for Best Value**

St. Mary's University is just one spot away from the top ranking in the West region in the Best Value Schools rankings by U.S. News & World Report, which released the 2024 edition of its annual Best Colleges guide. St. Mary's also tied for the No. 14 spot out of 120 regional universities in the West for academic quality.

St. Mary's ranked No. 20 in the West for social mobility among regional universities. St. Mary's also ranked first in San Antonio in this analysis for the fifth year in a row. The University also ranked top in San Antonio and rose to the No. 8 spot in the West among the Best Colleges for Veterans.

For more rankings, visit [www.stmarytx.edu/rankings](http://www.stmarytx.edu/rankings).

**IBC Foundation donates \$1M for new nursing wing**

The International Bank of Commerce Foundation awarded St. Mary's University \$1 million for start-up costs associated with the University's planned Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program, including constructing the new IBC Foundation Nursing Wing.

**FALL READS**

Get cozy with books by St. Mary's authors

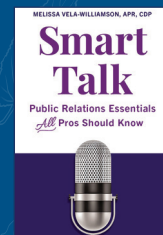


**Mosaic Knitting Workshop: Modern Geometric Accessories for You and Your Home**

Ashleigh Wempe (M.B.A. '18)

David & Charles, 2023

Rather than focusing primarily on selling her creations, Wempe designs knitting patterns, which she called "recipes," for people to create their own knit pieces. Read the full story at [www.stmarytx.edu/mba-knitting-author](http://www.stmarytx.edu/mba-knitting-author).



**Smart Talk: Public Relations Essentials All Pros Should Know**

Melissa Vela-Williamson (B.A. '02)

Lioncrest Publishing, 2022

Aiming to bridge the gap between classroom and career, expert Vela-Williamson shares her experience in the public relations industry to help new professionals avoid common pitfalls.

The Nursing Program will be housed on the third floor of the state-of-the-art, 30,000-square-foot Blank Sheppard Innovation Center, which is under construction and slated for completion in 2024. The Nursing major is expected to begin enrolling students in Fall 2024, pending approval by the Texas Board of Nursing and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.



A rendering shows the new space for the Nursing Program.

### Rattler Women's Golf team named Academic National Champions

For the first time in its history, the St. Mary's University Women's Golf team has been named Academic National Champions by the Women's Golf Coaches Association. The association made the announcement in July, as the Rattlers topped the list of the All-Scholar Team GPA Award in NCAA Division II.

The Men's Golf team was also named Academic National Champions in 2009.

### Trustees join St. Mary's Board

New Trustees include:

- Tom Grothues (B.B.A. '91, M.B.A. '97), President, Tom G Consulting Group, LLC

- Christopher "Chris" Martinez (B.B.A. '00), President, Central Electric Enterprises & Co.
- Gordon Schutze, M.D. (B.S. '80), Vice Dean, School of Medicine, Baylor College of Medicine and Professor of Pediatrics
- RaSheeda C. Keir (B.A. '01, M.A. '02), Real Estate Investor and Contractor
- Thomas C. Washmon (J.D. '98) (Law Alumni Representative), President and General Counsel, Privateer Capital Management

New Trustee Emeriti include:

- Martin D. Beirne Jr. (J.D. '69)
- The Rev. Louis J. Blume, S.M., awarded posthumously
- Leticia "Leti" Contreras (B.A. '89)
- The Rev. James L. Heft, S.M.
- Ray E. Berend (B.B.A. '67), awarded posthumously

### University bestows the Living the Chaminade Legacy Award

In October, Robert G. Newman (J.D. '83), of counsel with Norton Rose Fulbright US LLP, received the St. Mary's University Living the Chaminade Legacy Award. Newman has provided significant legal services to the University for many years.

The award recognizes Chaminade's contributions as demonstrated by an equally passionate individual whose beliefs and actions reflect the Marianist mission of academic excellence, ethical commitment, servant leadership and community building. The University president selects the recipient of this award, which is open to anyone within or connected to the University community.

## Fondest Farewell

### Ray Berend (B.B.A. '67)

St. Mary's University Trustee Emeritus Ray Berend died at age 77 on June 5, 2023. Berend and his wife, Dorothy, gave a \$1 million endowment in 2018 to the Greehey School of Business to attract and retain Accounting faculty. Berend was also a member of the Greehey School of Business Advisory Council of Executives.

### Kenneth Adam Cruz Jr. (B.A. '23)

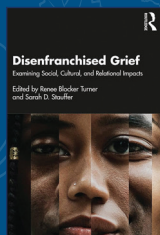
Kenneth Adam Cruz Jr., a senior at St. Mary's University, died at age 23 on Sept. 15, 2023. Known as Kenny by his friends, he was awarded an honorary Bachelor of Arts in Chemistry and had plans to become a pediatric oncologist.

### The Rev. Albert G. Kuntemeier, S.M.

The Rev. Albert G. Kuntemeier, S.M., died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Oct. 13, 2023, at age 93 with 75 years of vowed life. In 1948, at the age of 18, he professed his First Vows. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Education from the University of Dayton, a Master of Business Administration from Marquette University and Master of Arts in Counseling from the University of Notre Dame. He was well-known for his love of tennis, serving as the Men's and Women's Tennis chaplain.

### Ronald D. Merrell, Ph.D.

Professor Emeritus Ronald D. Merrell, Ph.D., died at age 90 on Sept. 14, 2023. He served as both a professor and dean of the graduate school at St. Mary's University and retired after 37 years. He also retired at the rank of major after serving 30 years in the U.S. Air Force, including in the Vietnam War.



### Disenfranchised Grief: Examining Social, Cultural, and Relational Impacts

Renee Blocker Turner (Ph.D. '11)

Routledge, 2023

Turner, a licensed professional counselor with more than 20 years of experience, writes and speaks about trauma, grief, parenting, childhood issues and women's issues, including infertility and loss. In her latest book, Turner educates others about the grief that results from social, cultural and relational oppression.



### Trash Poems

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

Gnashing Teeth Publishing, forthcoming 2023

Originally conceptualized as a social media photo series of poems written on pieces

of trash, such as napkins and gum wrappers, Salinas' *Trash Poems* evolved into a book. Out later this year, *Trash Poems* is Salinas's fourth poetry collection.

For more books, visit [www.stmarytx.edu/fall-reads-2023](http://www.stmarytx.edu/fall-reads-2023).



# End of an era

Retiring President Thomas M. Mengler  
leaves lasting mark

*Stories by Nathaniel Miller*

Not long after taking the position of president of St. Mary's University, Thomas M. Mengler, J.D., was sharing his vision with the Board of Trustees when he quoted one of the most famous lines from the film *Casablanca* about how this was the beginning of a "beautiful friendship."

That partnership of almost 12 years saw Mengler — the second most famous face of the University behind Rattler Man — sharing his vision with others while expanding on the University's Catholic and Marianist traditions to continue educating servant leaders for future generations.

Now, the indefatigable Mengler will start a new chapter when he retires on May 31, 2024.

Since June 1, 2012, Mengler has guided the University through some of the biggest moments in its 171-year history: from overseeing the largest fundraising campaign in St. Mary's history, creating more than a dozen new degrees and certificates, strengthening community ties in San Antonio and bolstering the University's emphasis on integrating Catholic Intellectual Tradition into the educational experience.

In the last decade, a new residence hall, the foundation of the Blank Sheppard Innovation Center, a Drone Lab, and the additions of The Pub at St. Mary's, the Contreras Family Terrace and Student Lounge, and Alkek Plaza have changed the layout of the campus. Additionally, faculty have received millions of dollars in grants to expand research efforts and help students prepare for their future careers.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Mengler's decision-making and communication while navigating an unprecedented series of events have been widely praised by members of faculty and trustees alike.

Mengler, along with his wife, Mona Mengler, leave behind lasting memories for those they encountered, many of whom extol the couple's accomplishments across these pages.

"True leadership is about being humble enough to serve others and strong enough to do what's right," said Martin Beirne (J.D. '69), St. Mary's Trustee Emeritus. "And that is Tom Mengler."

“True leadership is about being humble  
enough to serve others and strong enough  
to do what's right. And that is Tom Mengler.”



Photo by Josh Huskin

▲  
St. Mary's University President Thomas M. Mengler, J.D., and his wife, Mona Mengler, share a moment outside St. Louis Hall.



# Extending the Marianist mission



## Outgoing president's faith touted as benefit to University

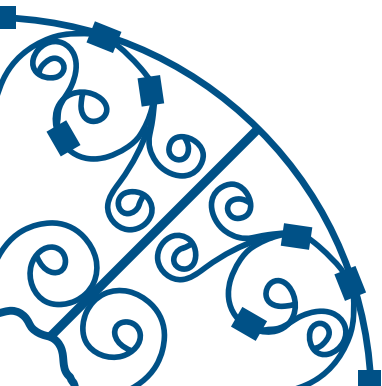
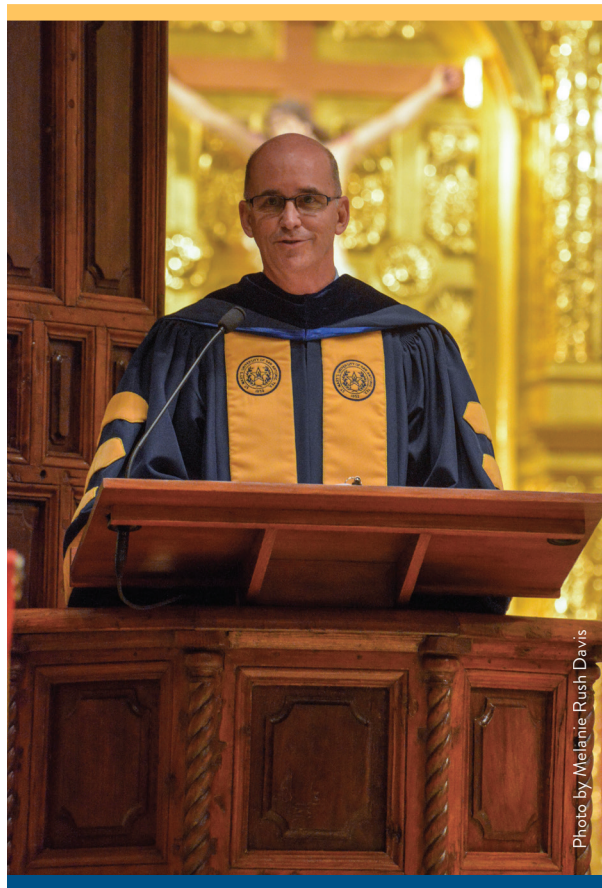
Getting up from his seat in the Bill Greehey Arena, St. Mary's University President Thomas M. Mengler, J.D., made his way to the stage and walked up to the podium like he's done more than a few times since June 2012.

Addressing St. Mary's students, staff and faculty in August 2023 during the annual Mass of the Holy Spirit, also known as Opening School Mass, Mengler restated the importance of the Catholic and Marianist mission, focusing on the formation of faith.

"As Christians, the way of servant leadership modeled by our teacher and Lord becomes our own," Mengler said. "All that is asked on our part is faithfulness to love God and neighbor."

Since being selected as the University's 13th president — the second layperson to hold the position — Mengler's goal has been to make St. Mary's not just a top-notch Catholic institution in the Southwest, but a premier university where people can "revitalize and expand" what makes exceptional Catholics and servant leaders.

Thomas M. Mengler, J.D., speaks during the School of Law's 60th annual Red Mass in 2012 at San Fernando Cathedral.



During the 12 years of Mengler's presidency, the campus has seen numerous advancements, from a vigorous focus on Catholic and Marianist traditions and an update to the Core Curriculum, to the culmination of a massive comprehensive campaign. Here are a few of the many milestones under his watch.



## Sharing the St. Mary's mission

In pursuit of this mission, Mengler, along with his wife, Mona Mengler, have been recognized by members of the Catholic community inside and outside of the University.

"I have come to know Tom and Mona very well over the past decade — they are faith-filled Catholics who put their faith into action — not only in the outstanding efforts they make on behalf of St. Mary's University, but in many other fields," said the Most Rev. Gustavo García-Siller, M.Sp.S., Archbishop of San Antonio. "They do this quietly and without fanfare."

Despite his humble demeanor, Mengler still brought fanfare to the accomplishments and new additions to the University in its pursuit of expanding Catholic studies and reinforcing Catholic Intellectual Tradition.

In a February 2014 speech, Mengler shared his vision for St. Mary's to expand the education of Marianist values to prepare for a future in which those teachings can be continued and extended by laypeople, in addition to priests and brothers.

In that same speech, Mengler announced two new endowments, one supporting research initiatives for Theology and Philosophy faculty, and another funding student scholarships for studying peace and social justice.

Mengler also announced the acquisition of the Heritage Edition of *The Saint John's Bible* and the establishment of the Escobedo *Saint John's Bible* Lecture Series, funded by Ruben Escobedo (B.B.A. '60) and his wife, Veronica Salazar Escobedo.

*The Saint John's Bible* is the first completely handwritten and illustrated Bible to be commissioned by a Benedictine abbey since the invention of the printing press. The Heritage Edition owned by the University is a high-quality reproduction of the seven-volume set, one of only 299 created.

To bring the work to life for the community, the Escobedo *Saint John's Bible* Lecture Series draws biblical scholars to campus to share knowledge on topics enhancing intellectual development and spiritual growth. Martin Beirne (J.D. '69), St. Mary's University Trustee Emeritus — who has a passion for Catholic Intellectual Tradition and endowed the Beirne Director of the Center for Catholic Studies with a \$1 million gift — considers the Escobedo *Saint John's Bible* Lecture Series part of what helps make the University a beacon for Catholic teachings.

"In a world we live in that can seem full of negativism, we need people out there explaining what faith is about, who people of faith are and what they can do," Beirne said.



Photo by Robin Jerstad

▲ St. Mary's University acquires the Heritage Edition of *The Saint John's Bible* in September 2013. Volumes are displayed in St. Louis Hall and Blume Library.



### JUNE 2012

Mengler begins his presidency at St. Mary's University.

Mengler approves the purchase of a new costume for Rattler Man, the University's mascot.







Photo by Robin Jerstad

Students perform community service during Continuing the Heritage in August 2023.

## Building a strong foundation

Being offered a chance to support Mengler’s vision for further infusing the Catholic Intellectual Tradition into education, Beirne and his wife, Kathleen Beirne, could not pass up the invitation.

The University established the Beirne Director and the Center for Catholic Studies in 2018. The Center enables faculty, staff, alumni and students to deepen their understanding of Marianist education and the Southwest. The Center’s events include the Escobedo *Saint John’s Bible* Lecture Series, the MacTaggart Catholic Intellectual Tradition Lecture Series and the Lin Great Speakers Series. Another area for teaching and implementing Catholic Intellectual Tradition involves planning how St. Mary’s can embrace environmental sustainability.

Heeding Pope Francis’ call regarding the moral and ethical reasons for environmentalism, Mengler led the University to become the first in Texas to pledge to be part of the international *Laudato Si’* seven-year action plan in November 2021.

“In making this commitment, President Mengler has not only highlighted a focus on environmental sustainability that aligns with our Marianist mission, but he has positioned our University to address the concerns and meet the needs of current and future members of the St. Mary’s community,” said David Turner, Ph.D., Chair of the St. Mary’s *Laudato Si’* committee and Professor of Environmental Science.



### NOVEMBER 2012

Mengler is inaugurated as the 13th president of St. Mary’s University.



### MAY 2013

*Gateway: A Vision for St. Mary’s University*, a blueprint for the University to become one of the finest private universities in the region, is adopted and implemented.

2013

Jason King, Ph.D., the Beirne Director of the Center for Catholic Studies who joined St. Mary's in June, said sustainability objectives rooted in Catholicism, resources dedicated to achieving goals in the Marianist traditions and Mengler's support for the director role inspired him to apply. King was previously the Irene S. Taylor Endowed Chair for Catholic Family Studies and the Director of Core Curriculum at Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania.

"When I was considering the job, I asked people about President Mengler's leadership at St. Mary's University," King said. "Everyone I spoke to said he took the school's Catholic identity seriously and made St. Mary's a model for other institutions."

## Strengthening the West Side

The St. Mary's community is not contained within the campus' gates. Students armed with paint brushes, rakes and good intentions head out into the city to do works of service for nonprofit organizations. The University also invites residents to run or walk in the StMU 5K for the Neighborhood each fall. A faith-based leadership and service program called the Marianist Leadership Program cultivates and nurtures family spirit while allowing students to focus on faith and leadership.

In 2023, the Continuing the Heritage Day of Service celebrated 26 years of service. The event has empowered about 13,500 volunteers to donate time and energy to local nonprofits over the past quarter-century.

Looking to expand support for services in the neighborhood near St. Mary's, the StMU 5K became

a running success, contributing to the health of the community as well as raising funds for those in need.

Since 2017, Holy Rosary Catholic Church, located next to campus, has received \$75,000 from funds raised during the event. That money helps the church pay for operational expenses, unexpected repairs and for high school students to attend the Marianist LIFE summer program, a faith formation experience.

The Rev. John Thompson, S.M., Ed.D., the University's Vice President for Mission, pastored the Holy Rosary congregation for four years prior to joining St. Mary's.

Seeing opportunities for community outreach, Thompson said Marianist Leadership Program students are offered opportunities to work with the church and, over the years, Holy Rosary has seen an increase in student attendance. Nicolas Romero (B.S. '20), an alumnus of the Marianist Leadership Program and a former President's Ambassador, said the organization educates students about servant leadership. Romero added he had a chance to see Mengler's management style up close as a President's Ambassador.

Now a mechanical engineer in Cleveland, Romero said he uses what he learned every day — particularly the importance of keeping your word.

"If President Mengler said he was going to do something, he did it," Romero said.

Thompson said it's evident Mengler, as a lay leader, uses his strong Catholic faith as a compass when it comes to guiding the University.

"Tom's gift to St. Mary's is his own personal Catholic faith and how he allowed that faith to play itself out in his leadership at St. Mary's," Thompson said. ■

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“Tom's gift to St. Mary's is his own personal Catholic faith and how he allowed that faith to play itself out in his leadership at St. Mary's.”

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### AUGUST 2013

Mengler establishes the President's Award for Excellence, focusing on faculty and staff members advancing excellence.



### FALL 2013

The Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering is added.



UNIVERSITY MINISTRY



**SEPTEMBER 2013**

St. Mary's University acquires the Heritage Edition of *The Saint John's Bible* and establishes the Escobedo *Saint John's Bible* Lecture Series.



**FEBRUARY 2014**

St. Mary's endorses *The Characteristics of Marianist Universities* as a foundational document, promoting five elements that characterize the Marianist approach to education.

2014





Photo by Robin Jerstad



## FALL 2014

The Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting and Data Analytics is added.

The Peer Ministry Program is established within University Ministry.

Students walk past the Catholic ArtWay in front of the Office of University Ministry. Students in the Fall 2021 Color Theory class painted images reflecting contemporary biblical imagery, which became the basis for the mural.



# Innovating education through the Marianist lens

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## Integrating Catholic Intellectual Tradition helps students become critical thinkers

**T**odd Hanneken, Ph.D., does not expect students to go out and discuss the history of general councils of the Catholic Church years after taking his Theology courses, but he does hope they remember how to live with respect for others.

As a Professor of Theology, Hanneken knows not all students in his class are Catholics, so he focuses on teaching students of all faiths how to coexist and share ideas peacefully.

Through what he calls principal dialogue, his students learn how to have conversations about complex topics, such as differences in religion, helping them gain skills for future use as servant leaders.

“I don’t expect my students to agree with every idea that is presented,” Hanneken said. “But understanding how and why people think what they think and believe what they believe is going to make them better at building bridges.”

Theology is one of several courses St. Mary’s University students must take as part of the Core Curriculum — a set

of courses fostering the body of knowledge, skills and attitudes integral to a St. Mary’s education, which was revamped and put into place in 2021.

The curriculum, focused on educating students to think beyond themselves, is instrumental to giving students a liberal arts education integrated with Catholic and Marianist values. These courses are designed to develop the whole person using skills, such as critical thinking, formal reasoning, intercultural knowledge and the Marianist commitment to working for justice.

These strengths, Hanneken said, can be used across all professions. As St. Mary’s continues to add new programs and new academic spaces, these lessons will continue to serve students throughout their careers.

“It’s easy for college to prepare someone for a task,” Hanneken said. “What St. Mary’s does is give students the flexibility to adapt, to learn new things and to apply what they’ve learned to new situations.”



### OCTOBER 2014

St. Mary’s introduces the StMU 5K for the Neighborhood, benefiting area nonprofits and neighboring Holy Rosary Parish.



### JANUARY 2015

St. Mary’s launches its Master of Jurisprudence, the first in Texas.

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2015



Photo by Robin Jerstad

From left, St. Mary's students Sophia Rodriguez, Andrew Thomas and Abraham Albarati perform with the Jazz Orchestra. Each student, regardless of major, is exposed to the teachings of Catholic Intellectual Tradition through the curriculum.

“What I find most exciting about the Catholic Intellectual Tradition is its grounding in truth, goodness, justice and beauty. In this light, all searches for truth – whether conducted in a laboratory, a library, an art studio or a chapel – become a search for meaning, purpose and the divine.”



#### APRIL 2015

Fiesta Oyster Bake, the annual Fiesta San Antonio event, celebrates its 100th birthday during Mengler's tenure.



#### SEPTEMBER 2015

The Pub at St. Mary's returns after 25 years thanks to a gift from Leticia "Leti" Contreras (B.A. '89) and Thomas "Tom" Contreras (B.B.A. '88).



## Extending the educational foundation

Composed of 45 credit hours, the Core Curriculum includes courses ranging from Freshman Composition and Literature, to Philosophy and Mathematics.

As a liberal arts university, St. Mary's requires these classes to expand a student's education across topics while preparing them for positions in leadership and lives of service.

The list of classes may look like a hodgepodge of courses outside someone's desired field of study, but Hanneken said it's only when students start taking the courses that they understand how they fit into their education.

"You can have a pile of sugar, a pile of flour and a couple of eggs and still not have a cake," he said. "By mixing these things together, we're helping students see that when they take a history class, they're not just checking a box. We're showing them how to look and understand the past."

The curriculum also incorporates Catholic Intellectual Tradition. Based on two assumptions, the Catholic Intellectual Tradition teaches that everything — including human reasoning — comes from God. The second is that humans are thinking creatures and can't help but make sense of the world.

Jason King, Ph.D., the Beirne Director of the Center for Catholic Studies, cites four prominent characteristics of Catholic Intellectual Tradition: faith and reason are compatible; humans are made in the image and likeness of God; humanity is afflicted by sin; and humans are called to love one another.

As a Catholic university, King said it's easy to see how lessons from the Core Curriculum align with the four characteristics.

"All humans deserve respect," King said. "Their own agency, their relationships to other humans and their openness to the transcendent are all essential pieces of being human and must be honored."

President Thomas M. Mengler, J.D., said Catholic Intellectual Tradition is a great way to see the engagement of the Catholic Church alongside the world and its different cultures over the last 2,000 years.

"What I find most exciting about Catholic Intellectual Tradition is its grounding in truth, goodness, justice and beauty," Mengler said. "In this light, all searches for truth — whether conducted in a laboratory, a library, an art studio or a chapel — become a search for meaning, purpose and the divine."



Photo by Darren Shiverdecker



### AUGUST 2017

Périgueux Hall, a new suite-style residence hall, opens. It's the first new hall in 10 years.

The Greehey School of Business launches the MBA for Professionals.





## Welcoming new perspectives

When David Turner, Ph.D., talks about a Geology class, most people think about rocks and mentally move on.

The Professor of Environmental Science knew many people coming into this classroom were there to check off a course in their Core Curriculum, get the credit and go on to their next set of classes. There was a time when he did not see many students outside the School of Science, Engineering and Technology.

By taking the time to meet and forge relationships with students and professors outside his course of study, Turner found new ways to incorporate the Marianist mission into his teaching.

For instance, Turner asked Robert O'Connor, Ph.D., Director of *The Saint John's Bible*, to discuss how the hand-illustrated Bible was compiled. Bringing in one of the seven volumes to Turner's course, O'Connor shared insights about project management. Turner never imagined it would be so easy to incorporate Catholic values in his teaching.

"These opportunities to bring the Marianist tradition into a science class and use them in a way that helps link what we do in science more closely with our Marianists — it's wonderful and welcoming," Turner said.

During the review process of the Core Curriculum during the 2020-2021 academic year, Turner was in favor of adding the First-Year Experience course for first-year students. The course is designed to not only help incoming freshmen adjust to University life, but also assist them in becoming acquainted with St. Mary's and its mission. The classes are capped at 18 students, ensuring a more personal experience.

Taught by professors from across the University, Turner uses the topic of environmental science in his First-Year Experience course to ask his students how their major is working to either explain climate change or address it.

In the three years since the First-Year Experience started, Turner said students have engaged more with their professors and each other, helping build a sense of community and giving faculty a chance to teach outside their specialty.

"As faculty, we forget what it's like to experience our disciplines for the first time," he said. "And we are also of a different generation from our students. They have new perspectives and ask questions in ways I've never thought about before."

◀ Sallie V. Sheppard, Ph.D., pictured left, and her husband who is not pictured, Leland T. Blank, Ph.D. (B.S. '67), as well as others, break ground on the new Blank Sheppard Innovation Center in October 2022.



### SEPTEMBER 2017

A \$1 million gift allows St. Mary's University to endow the Beirne Director of the soon-to-be-established Center for Catholic Studies.



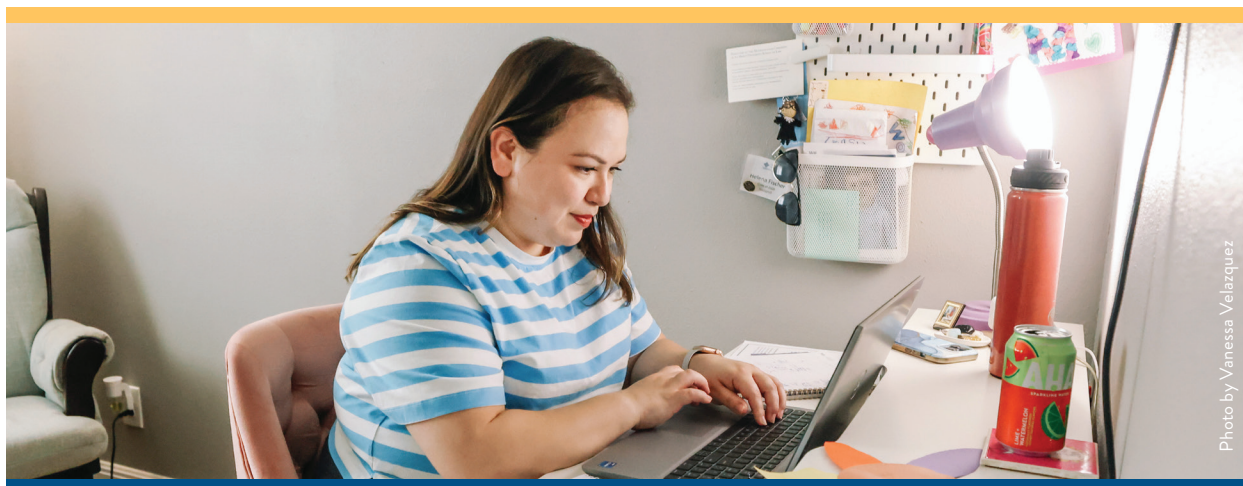


Photo by Vanessa Velarquez

▲ Helena Hernandez Fisher is a student in the inaugural cohort of the School of Law’s Online J.D. Program, an innovative approach to legal education that began in 2022.

## Finding new ways to serve

Since June 2012, physical and educational advancements have changed the campus, setting up opportunities for students to pursue new careers, extending from the University’s mission of servant leadership.

The Unmanned Aerial Systems Laboratory now sits behind the Richter-Math Engineering Center as a space for drone education. A new, three-story building called the Blank Sheppard Innovation Center will open in 2024. It will house laboratories and collaboration spaces for advanced manufacturing, instrumentation, data science and machine learning, as well as the new Nursing Program, pending approval by the Texas Board of Nursing and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

St. Mary’s also offers more degrees than it did when Mengler began in June 2012: a Bachelor of Business Administration Degree in Accounting and Data Analytics beginning in 2014; a Master of Jurisprudence in 2015; a Master of Science in Cyber Security in 2015, which helped the University gain recognition as a National Center for Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense by the National Security Agency and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security; a Master of Arts in Public History in 2017; and an Online J.D. Program in 2022, to name a few.

Graduate offerings, such as the MBA for Professionals Program started in 2017, offer a flexible curriculum with

online options for those looking to take the next steps in their careers.

These changes have not gone unnoticed by alumni.

“The campus has changed so dramatically since I was matriculating there. It’s almost unrecognizable,” said Michael “Mickey” A. Schott (B.B.A. ’68), the Chair of the Presidential Nominating Committee, who also chaired the University’s Board of Trustees from 2018 to 2020. “Campus life, in general, has improved under Tom’s watch.”

Jason Pierce, Ph.D., Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, has been in the position since June 2022, and said he’s been given ample space for innovation under Mengler’s leadership.

Pierce said launching new degree programs, innovating existing spaces and constructing new buildings are instrumental to attracting top-tier professors and recruiting students. But it takes vision and a group of like-minded people to implement those goals.

“One of the things I appreciate about Tom is his willingness to empower those he’s working with to innovate and to move nimbly in response to what we see as opportunities for St. Mary’s to advance its mission,” Pierce said. “The Nursing Program is a great example because it’s a way for us to marshal the effort in response to the nursing shortage.”

### NOVEMBER 2017

St. Mary’s unveils the start of the four-year public phase of The Defining Moment Comprehensive Campaign with a fundraising goal of \$130 million.

### NOVEMBER 2019

The Defining Moment Comprehensive Campaign surpasses its initial \$130 million goal by \$8 million with two years remaining. The University announces an increased goal of \$150 million.

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“One of the things I appreciate about Tom is his willingness to empower those he’s working with to innovate and to move nimbly in response to what we see as opportunities for St. Mary’s to advance its mission.”

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Trustee Emerita Leticia “Leti” Contreras (B.A. ’89), who served as Chair of the Board of Trustees from 2020 to 2022 as the first woman to hold the position, has also been excited about the changes at St. Mary’s.

While not an academic building, Contreras and her husband, Thomas “Tom” Contreras (B.B.A. ’88), were instrumental in changing campus life by funding the Contreras Family Terrace and Student Lounge, along with reopening The Pub at St. Mary’s in 2015. The couple first met as undergraduates at an earlier incarnation of The Pub.

Mengler’s commitment to making St. Mary’s a premier institution, and his affection for San Antonio as a city, has been crucial to his success, Leti Contreras added.

“We could have the greatest facilities in the world, but your faculty and staff in the classrooms teaching are the students’ first impressions,” she said. “We have to ensure that they’re getting what they need to spread the University’s mission, and Tom Mengler has done a great job of making sure they have that.” ■



▲ Leticia “Leti” Contreras (B.A. ’89), Trustee Emerita, and Thomas “Tom” Contreras (B.B.A. ’88) visit The Pub at St. Mary’s, which they helped reopen through a gift to the University.



## JANUARY 2020

St. Mary’s University launches a varsity esports program, the first of its kind in San Antonio.



# Expanding research, cultivating vocation



## Big grants and revamped career services enhance the student experience

**V**erónica Contreras-Shannon, Ph.D., learned she received tenure at St. Mary's University on June 1, 2012 — the same day Thomas M. Mengler, J.D., started as the University's president.

The Professor of Biological Sciences said she had a brief conversation with Mengler that day, joking that because his signature was on the paper, he was responsible for her promotion.

"It's kind of exciting to think about it," Contreras-Shannon said. "I figured from that moment on I would fly under the radar, and he wouldn't remember who I was."

Flying under the radar, though, is something Contreras-Shannon has not done.

Awarded a \$2.1 million grant in May from the National Institutes of Health, Contreras-Shannon serves as Director for the Undergraduate Research Training Initiative for Student Enhancement (U-RISE). The grant builds the pool of students interested in research careers by exposing them to research in STEM fields.

Through grants like this one and a realigned career services office, the University's faculty and staff continuously look to improve the college experience, give hands-on

learning opportunities and pinpoint a vocation that aligns with students' passions.

Knowing how important each dollar is to funding programs, Contreras-Shannon said she put herself under a lot of pressure during the application process. However, support from the president's office and her dean encouraged her to apply for the U-RISE grant opportunity.

"There have been times when I didn't think I could have done something without knowing President Mengler supported our goals," Contreras-Shannon said. "Because of that, we were able to go out and find ways to help our students."

## Supporting the process

Since Mengler became president, St. Mary's has been awarded more than \$37 million in grants, according to the Office of Sponsored Projects, Academic Research and Compliance.

In the 2022-2023 academic year, faculty across St. Mary's submitted 33 grant applications with a success rate of 64.5%, far surpassing the University's average 40% success rate.

Betsy Smith, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Political Science, oversees a five-year grant of more than \$2.8 million, which funds improvements to the student experience during the first year of study and implements high-impact practices in the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

Having never applied for a grant before, Smith said Mengler was instrumental in helping her craft her application.



### MARCH 2020

The University pivots to create a safe educational approach during the COVID-19 pandemic by temporarily closing campus and moving courses online.



### JULY 2020

Leticia "Leti" Contreras (B.A. '89) becomes the first woman to chair the St. Mary's University Board of Trustees.



Photos by Robin Jerstad

Students walk by the Greehey School of Business, where research efforts there and across campus are improving the student experience.



Verónica Contreras-Shannon, Professor of Biological Sciences, directs a \$2.1 million grant to train the next generation of scientists.



### AUGUST 2021

A revamped Core Curriculum launches at St. Mary's, focusing on integrating Catholic Intellectual Traditions into its liberal arts education.

Rattler Athletics cheers the launch of the varsity STUNT team.

The University's career services relaunches as the Career and Professional Development Center and helps turn student passions into vocations.



By asking detailed questions about how the money would assist students and advance the University's mission, Mengler's feedback was focused, respectful and eye-opening, Smith said.

"When I think about what Tom has contributed in terms of the research and the grant experience here at St. Mary's, it's providing faculty that space to explore ideas and a chance to try new things," she said.

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**“When I think about what Tom has contributed in terms of the research and the grant experience here at St. Mary's. it's providing faculty that space to explore ideas and a chance to try new things.”**

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## Finding the why in your career

Preparing students for their careers extends beyond the classroom.

At the Career and Professional Development Center, revamped in Fall 2021, students receive assistance with career coaching, internship opportunities and résumé tips.

During the 2022-2023 academic year, the Center reported more than 700 one-on-one career coaching appointments and more than 300 appointments to build a network between students and alumni.

Stephanie Ward, Ph.D., Vice Provost for Student Success and Vocation, has led the Center since 2021. She aims to help students find opportunities that sync with their life goals.

"Finding a student's purpose aligns with the Marianist mission of the University," Ward said. "Our staff is here to educate and equip students to have meaningful lives and purpose in the world and to contribute to the common good."

In leading the Center, Ward works closely with Mengler and Jason Pierce, Ph.D., Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs. When presenting ideas to leadership about the Center's goals, Ward said Mengler helped her explore all angles. His leadership style, she added, is one of open-mindedness, honesty and trust.

"Tom has shown me that a thoughtful leader is open to the innovative ideas of the people you work with, but is also firm in his or her own beliefs and direction," Ward said. "What I take away is that good leadership is not always having the answers, but being able to listen and discern if what you're hearing could be the answer."

## Enabling the leaders of tomorrow

Madeline Emke, of St. Louis, is a senior History major with a double minor in Philosophy and Spanish, who has been interested in attending law school since her freshman year.

Knowing Mengler was dean of a law school before coming to St. Mary's, Emke walked into his office and requested a meeting. To her surprise, he set one up for later that week and had a 30-minute conversation with her.

That initial interaction was enough for Emke to want to learn more about Mengler's leadership style and solidified her decision to apply to the President's Ambassadors. President's Ambassadors are students who volunteer their time and personable attributes toward serving and promoting St. Mary's University alongside the Office of the President.

"That meeting made me want to work with President Mengler more so I could try to be the same type of leader," she said.

Since joining the program in her sophomore year, Emke said working with Mengler and his wife, Mona Mengler, has allowed her to gain proficiency in new areas and be involved in events she may not have attended otherwise.

In stepping out of her comfort zone, Emke also worked on soft skills — communication, time management,



### SEPTEMBER 2021

The School of Law announces the Online J.D. Program, the first in the nation to be accredited by the American Bar Association. The program launches in Fall 2022.



### NOVEMBER 2021

St. Mary's commits to Pope Francis' ecological efforts and becomes a *Laudato Si* university.

adaptability and teamwork — which can be taken with her into her career.

Being able to network with St. Mary's alumni has helped her become more confident in interacting with new people. Because of this, Emke said she now feels comfortable giving an elevator pitch, which is a quick, persuasive speech lasting about 30 seconds or less.

These skills helped her obtain an internship at a local law office during her sophomore year. There, Emke learned about different law processes and developed a desire to practice constitutional law.

“St. Mary's is a home away from home, but it's the type of home where you can build a network of faith, friends, family and career connections,” she said. “St. Mary's has given me the support and confidence to do my best.” ■



Lindsey Kowalik, Senior Director of the University's Career and Professional Development Center, advises a student.



Students use an Anatomage Table to glean insights about the human body.

## DECEMBER 2021

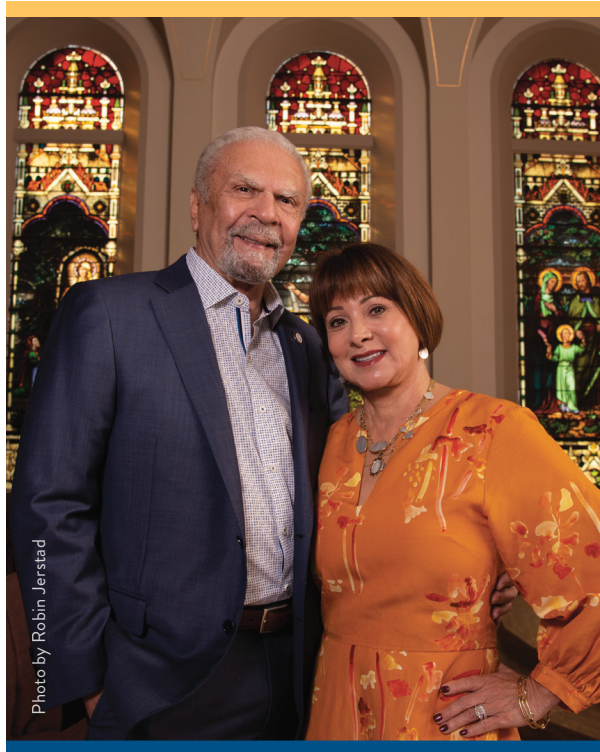
St. Mary's concludes The Defining Moment Comprehensive Campaign with an astonishing \$165 million raised — \$35 million more than the original goal.

## MARCH 2022

The Master of Science in Cyber Security helps St. Mary's obtain a designation as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense by the National Security Agency and Department of Homeland Security.



# Setting the fundraising standard



▲ St. Mary's University Trustee Emeritus Charles T. Barrett Jr. (B.B.A. '62) and his wife, Melissa Barrett, have supported the University through gifts.

## Mengler's steadfast work helps The Defining Moment Comprehensive Campaign reach new heights

**Y**ou don't raise \$165 million sitting behind a desk.

The success of St. Mary's University's largest campaign didn't happen without logging thousands of miles, shaking hundreds of hands and emphatically sharing a vision about the future of its campus and schools.

President Thomas M. Mengler, J.D., knew what needed to be done when he was hired in 2012 and was willing to roll up his proverbial sleeves to start the silent phase of The Defining Moment Comprehensive Campaign soon after arriving on campus.

"Tom's visionary outlook played a crucial role in The Defining Moment Comprehensive Campaign," said Joel Lauer, Vice President for University Advancement. "His unwavering commitment to St. Mary's and to engaging with alumni and friends, be it on campus or nationwide, underscored the significance of his vision and passion. This made all the difference in surpassing our goal in such a momentous fashion."

The Defining Moment Campaign, the largest and broadest campaign of its kind for St. Mary's, raised \$165 million — \$35 million more than the original goal announced at the start of the public phase of the campaign in November 2017.



### AUGUST 2022

Amazon Prime's *The College Tour* features St. Mary's University for prospective students.



### OCTOBER 2022

St. Mary's breaks ground on and unveils the name of the Blank Sheppard Innovation Center.

Charles T. Barrett Jr. (B.B.A. '62), Trustee Emeritus and Chair of the Board of Trustees from 2012 to 2014, said he and his fellow Trustees initially thought a goal that large was unattainable. However, Mengler, along with his wife, Mona Mengler, were instrumental in surpassing everyone's expectations.

"There are only a few people who could have accomplished that goal," Barrett said. "If there's another, I would like to know, because we're looking for someone by May."

## Setting a new standard

The Defining Moment Campaign, Lauer said, was the first time a St. Mary's campaign focused on a campus-wide vision that gave alumni options on what their funds supported.

Lauer said Mengler's willingness — some might say eagerness — to go out and meet with alumni, faculty and staff made a difference in how the vision was received. Working across campus with each dean and program director, Mengler helped outline goals fitting the University's mission.

"It's not just about the million-dollar donors," Lauer said. "We had nearly 11,500 alumni give to the campaign. And we had almost 2,300 give \$1,000 or more. Every donation was important to this campaign."

In total, \$115 million was raised specifically to fund the University's college and three schools: \$41 million for the School of Science, Engineering and Technology; \$32 million for the Greehey School of Business; \$22 million for the School of Law; and \$20 million for the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

Money raised during the campaign funded 14 new endowed academic positions, 94 endowed scholarships, \$58 million in new scholarships and \$13 million for innovative labs and classrooms.

## Speaking from experience

Benefiting from scholarships offered at St. Mary's, international student Paola Canedo said knowing some of her tuition has been covered has helped her both monetarily and mentally.

With scholarships covering more than half of her costs, the Mexico City native is a student in the Greehey School of Business studying Management with a minor in Marketing. Canedo wanted to attend St. Mary's ever since an admissions counselor met with her family and introduced them to the University.



▲ Paola Canedo, a Management major, attends St. Mary's University because of the scholarships she's received.

Working part-time to cover additional expenses, Canedo said that without scholarships, she would have to work longer hours, which would take away from her schoolwork.

"The scholarships give me time to study, be part of the community and find all these internship and networking opportunities," she said. "If I didn't have these scholarships, I wouldn't have been able to come to St. Mary's."



### AUGUST 2023

The Bachelor of Business Administration in Business and Law is added.





Photo by Robin Jerstad

▲ Students spend time in the Contreras Family Terrace and Student Lounge, which opened in 2015 along with the return of The Pub at St. Mary's.

## Looking toward the future

Thomas “Tom” Contreras (B.B.A. '88), Chair of the Greehey School of Business portion of The Defining Moment Comprehensive Campaign, is more than willing to say how much St. Mary's has given him.

“We have a story we enjoy sharing with others whenever we get the chance to talk about St. Mary's,” Contreras said. “We tell that story when asking others for support because we want these students to have a memorable experience.”

As an undergraduate, Contreras met his wife, Leticia “Leti” Contreras (B.A. '89), who would eventually become the first woman to chair the St. Mary's Board of Trustees. Their two children are also St. Mary's alumni.

The couple's donation during the campaign created the Contreras Family Terrace and Student Lounge in the University Center and funded the reopening of The Pub at St. Mary's. These gifts transformed the heart of campus along with a renovation of Alkek Plaza through a gift from the Albert and Margaret Alkek Foundation

Tom Contreras said his family's story is just one of the many Mengler shared to help people see the University as a worthwhile investment.

“Tom Mengler didn't share his vision from his office,” Tom Contreras said. “He was in the community in front of alumni. That shows Tom's commitment. He was like waves hitting the shore. It was happening every day.”

The Hon. Mary Anne Bramblett (J.D. '81), who chaired the St. Mary's University School of Law's portion of The Defining Moment Comprehensive Campaign, attributed her education at the School of Law to her career success. As the first woman elected to a district court in El Paso, Bramblett served as judge of the 41st District Court from 1989 until 2012.

Along with her husband, Coll Bramblett (J.D. '80), the two have endowed the Law Success Program's second-year curriculum.

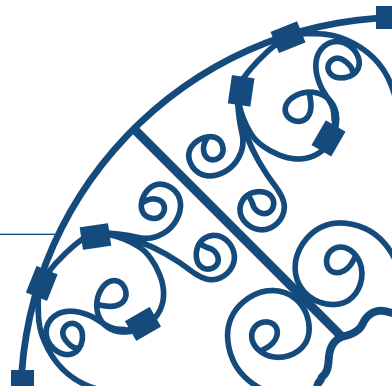
Mary Anne Bramblett said Mengler has a down-to-earth nature that was crucial to the campaign's success.

“President Mengler was the right person to bring everyone together to do what St. Mary's needed to have done,” she said. ■



## OCTOBER 2023

The Board of Trustees approves the Master of Science in Program Evaluation and Bachelor of Science in Nursing.



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“Tom Mengler didn’t share his vision from his office. He was in the community in front of alumni. That shows Tom’s commitment. He was like waves hitting the shore. It was happening every day.”

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▲ Leticia “Leti” Contreras (B.A. ’89), Trustee Emerita, and Thomas M. Mengler unveil the grand total raised during The Defining Moment Comprehensive Campaign – \$165 million.



# SHARED STEWARDSHIP

## Presidential duo creates 12 memorable years at St. Mary's helm

by Tom and Mona Mengler

From the very first moments, we have been grateful to this University. The St. Mary's community, its Board of Trustees and the Marianists took a big risk in offering Tom the role of President. At that time — February 2012 — we understood not much about St. Mary's University and the Marianist characteristics that have defined St. Mary's for more than 170 years.

We were newbies to the mission. We had never experienced the Marianist family spirit. The phrase "Marianist charism" had never left our lips; nor for that matter did we understand the term charism. In our new roles, Tom as President and Mona as Very, Extra-Special Adviser to the President, we lacked the experience of everyone before us — 11 presidents who were Marianist brothers, and Charlie and Abbie Cotrell — each of them steeped in an understanding of St. Mary's and of all things Marianist. We, in contrast, arrived with a clean slate.

Thank you for your trust in us.

We are grateful for the outpouring of warmth and hospitality extended to us in 2012 and throughout our time. When our St. Mary's journey began, we didn't know what to expect. But whatever anxieties we were feeling at the time dissipated almost immediately at the overwhelming welcome we experienced from the Marianists, alumni, faculty, staff and students. That same welcome has touched the hearts, minds and souls of thousands among the St. Mary's community over the years.

Most of all, we thank all of you who, in your daily efforts, have fostered the formation of faith in our students and prepared them to become leaders for the common good. For more than 170 years, Marianist brothers and lay faculty and staff have gently mentored young men and women to leave St. Mary's with generous spirits and humble hearts and to view their professional careers as vocational journeys, not simply jobs. It's little wonder our graduates overachieve in the workplace.

At St. Mary's, our new graduates move forward and outward, not with the narrow goal of personal gratification, but with the aspiration of a life purposefully lived. Thank you for helping form future leaders of faith, respect, integrity and compassion.

For almost 12 years, we have viewed our roles to be stewards of the St. Mary's mission. Along with promoting a culture of excellence and continuous improvement, we have tried to deepen and enhance St. Mary's as both Catholic and Marianist. We have sought to foster the belief among alumni and friends that St. Mary's University is an outstanding institution worthy of their philanthropic investment.

Our time at St. Mary's has been a Defining Moment in our lives. We pledge to assist in passing on to the 14th president this stewardship of the University's sacred mission. God bless you all. ■



Photos by Josh Huskin

St. Mary's University President Thomas M. Mengler, pictured right, and his wife, Mona Mengler, stand in front of *Ave Maria*, a painting commissioned to celebrate the conclusion of The Defining Moment Comprehensive Campaign.



“For almost 12 years, we have viewed our roles to be **stewards of the St. Mary’s mission**. Along with promoting a **culture of excellence and continuous improvement**, we have tried to deepen and enhance St. Mary’s as both **Catholic and Marianist.**”







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# Best regards

As Thomas M. Mengler, J.D., prepares to retire as the 13th president of St. Mary's University, those who worked closest with him share their thoughts on the mirthful nature, optimistic outlook and discerning leadership that he brought to the University along with his wife, Mona Mengler.



"Tom and Mona are a great team, and the bonds that they created extend far beyond the walls of the University."

— **LETICIA "LETI" CONTRERAS (B.A. '89)**  
*St. Mary's University Trustee Emerita*

"We're going to miss Tom's charm, his constant contact and easy availability. If you ever needed something, he would get it accomplished."

— **CHARLES T. BARRETT JR. (B.B.A. '62)**  
*St. Mary's University Trustee Emeritus*

"It has been a joy to work with President Mengler because of his great passion for St. Mary's University; Catholic and Marianist education; care for students, faculty and staff; and service to the Catholic Church."

— **THE REV. OSCAR VASQUEZ, S.M.**  
*Chancellor of St. Mary's University and Provincial of the Marianist Province of the United States*

"As a direct recipient of Tom's leadership and guidance, I have witnessed firsthand the care and stewardship Tom has brought to the presidency. Regardless of the situation, Tom has always provided steady leadership, even in times of significant tumult."

— **AARON HANNA (B.A. '10, M.P.A. '11, M.B.A. '13)**  
*Vice President for Administration and Finance*

"Many characteristics come to mind when I think about President Mengler: integrity, justice, compassion, kindness and presence."

— **CAROLYN TUBBS, PH.D.**  
*Vice Provost for Academic Affairs*

"You can't compliment Tom without complimenting his wife, Mona. They've developed relationships in the local community and have been active in both local and national organizations on behalf of St. Mary's. They did more than just embrace St. Mary's; they embraced San Antonio."

— **MICHAEL "MICKEY" SCHOTT (B.B.A. '68)**  
*Chair of the Board of Trustees at St. Mary's University from 2018 to 2020.*

"Tom was steadfast in his determination that the University's and each school's strategic plans be connected to our Marianist mission and Catholic values. His legacy will be felt long after his departure in every corner of the University."

— **PATRICIA ROBERTS, J.D.**  
*Dean of the St. Mary's University School of Law*

