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# GOLD & BLUE

ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY

SUMMER 2024



BUILDING  
**momentum**

Winston Erevelles shares his journey to the St. Mary's presidency



# of Gold & Blue magazine

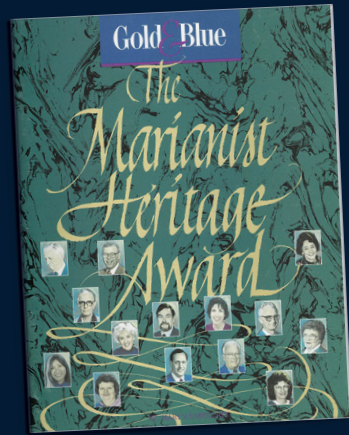
Gold & Blue magazine is celebrating 40 years. Our alumni, faculty, staff, students and Marianists have shared their journeys across these pages. They have deepened our sense of community by giving us a glimpse into their lives through stories and photographs.

Each person who has played a role in the magazine over the decades has generously given the invaluable gift of their time.

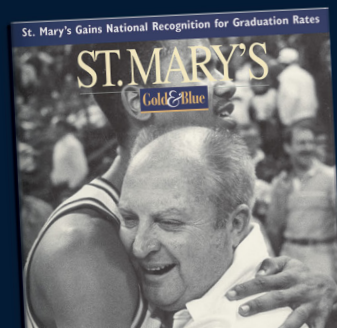
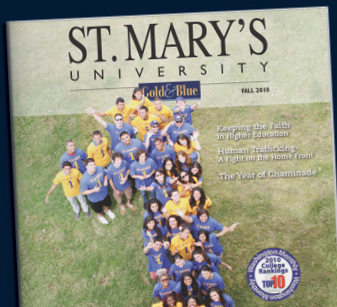
The Summer 2024 issue offers an opportunity to learn how the University continues to transform and to reflect on your connection to St. Mary's. It joins our previous issues housed in the Gold & Blue archive, where you can relive significant moments over the years.

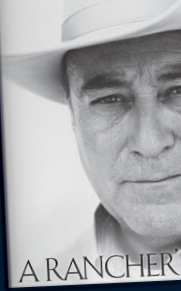
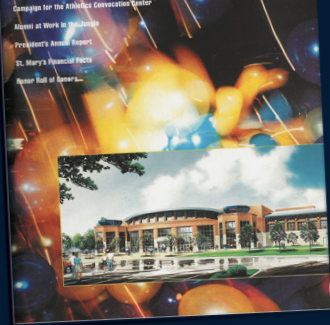
In my 14th issue leading this publication, and as we welcome our 14th University President in Winston Erevelles, Ph.D., I feel a special obligation to mark our St. Mary's history in print. May this publication continue to enrich your connection to our great campus for many years to come.

— Jennifer R. Lloyd (M.B.A. '16), Executive Editor



Scan to visit the Gold & Blue magazine archive.





# GOLD & BLUE

ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY



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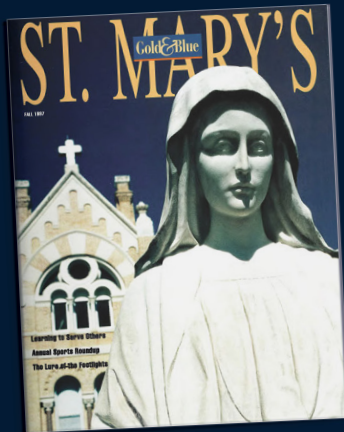
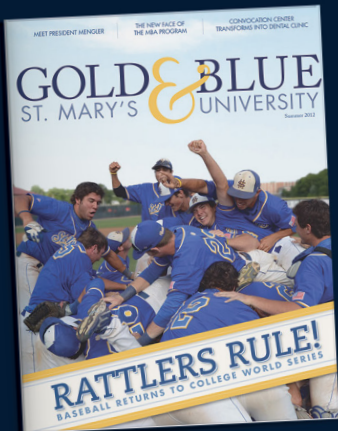
Trey Reed

Lucero Salinas



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

*The Gold & Blue magazine is produced for alumni and friends by the Office of University Marketing and Communications.*



This magazine was produced using environmentally friendly vegetable-based inks and paper.

[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



@StMarysU



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**ON THE COVER:** After a national search in 2023, Winston Erevelles, Ph.D., was selected as the University's 14th president, becoming the first person of Asian descent to hold the position. Serving as Dean of the School of Science, Engineering and Technology from 2009 to 2021, he was instrumental in creating the Blank Sheppard Innovation Center and helping launch the Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program. In this photo, Erevelles surveys the first floor of the still-under-construction Innovation Center. Read more on Page 12. Photo by Josh Huskin.

# HONORING OUR *legacy*, SHAPING OUR *future*

by Winston Erevelles, Ph.D., St. Mary's University President

This summer, St. Mary's University will celebrate its 172nd anniversary. It is deeply moving and inspiring to reflect on the hopes and aspirations the Marianist brothers must have had as they helped boldly lay the first stones of St. Louis Hall in the late 1800s.

It is impossible to overstate the legacy that permeates this historic building, our evolving campus and the role of President, which I've begun this month following my illustrious predecessor and friend, Tom Mengler.

In this *Gold & Blue* magazine issue, you will find a range of stories proudly highlighting our faculty, staff, students and alumni. I also look forward to sharing some of my personal journey up to this moment through the cover story as we — the St. Mary's University family — start writing a new chapter in the history of our beloved campus.

I liken the leading of a university of this stature to a relay race. We will all, myself included, be asked to accept the baton and run with purpose, focus and direction, to eventually pass the baton to others for the next leg of our quest for greater success.

Each of us holds responsibility for the future of this institution. Alumni will connect with and support the next generation of talent. The faculty will lead through the pursuit of academic excellence in teaching, scholarship and service. Staff members will excel in their efforts to support the mission of our University. And, most importantly, students will be encouraged to find joy in their studies, discern their vocations and realize the potential we all see in them. Our strength lies in our shared vision for the future.

As the statue of the Blessed Mother rises before St. Louis Hall on her pillar in the fountain, looking toward the heart of our city, we will keep our vision focused on furthering the Marianist values that make this University unique and responding to the needs of our community.

I look forward to welcoming you all in the family spirit as we enter this next great chapter for St. Mary's University. ■



Photo by Josh Huskin

“I LOOK FORWARD TO  
WELCOMING YOU ALL IN THE  
FAMILY SPIRIT AS WE ENTER  
THIS NEXT GREAT CHAPTER FOR  
ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY.”

# CAMPUS NEWS

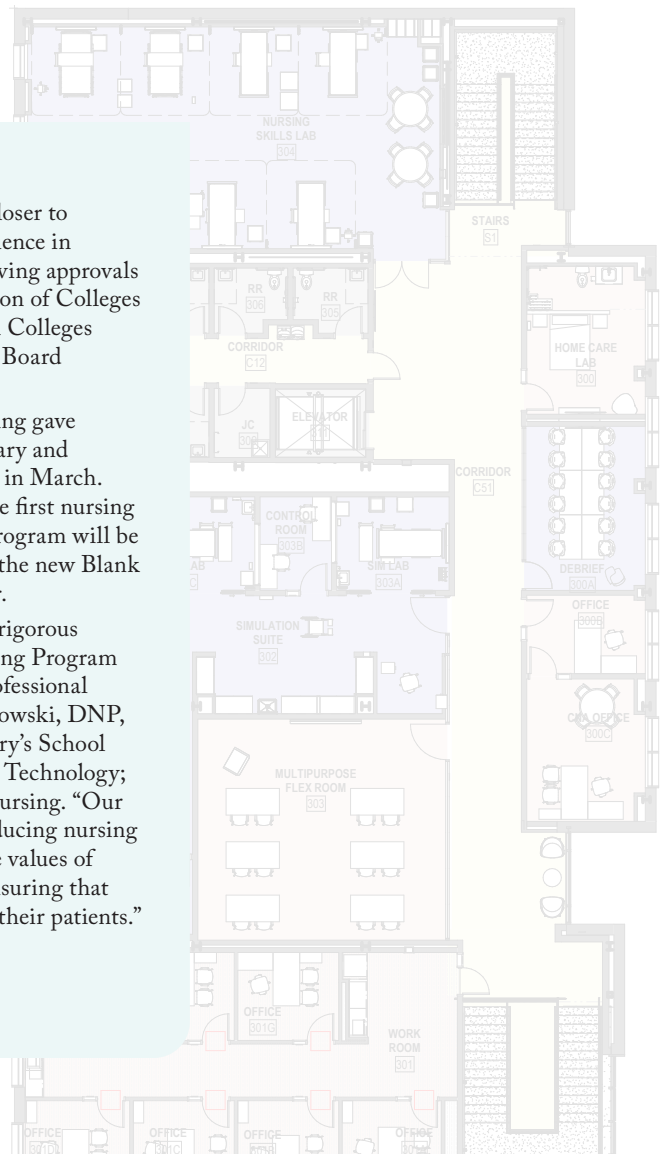


## Nursing bachelor's earns accrediting body approval

St. Mary's University is closer to launching its Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program after receiving approvals from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and the Texas Board of Nursing.

The Texas Board of Nursing gave unanimous approval in January and SACSCOC's approval came in March. The University will enroll the first nursing students in Fall 2024. The program will be housed on the third floor of the new Blank Sheppard Innovation Center.

"St. Mary's has created a rigorous Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program to prepare practice-ready professional nurses," said Donna M. Badowski, DNP, the Vice Dean of the St. Mary's School of Science, Engineering and Technology; and Founding Director of Nursing. "Our program is dedicated to producing nursing graduates who exemplify the values of compassion and empathy, ensuring that they provide holistic care to their patients."





John Carrillo

## Assistant VP for Alumni Engagement

St. Mary's University has hired a familiar face as its new Assistant Vice President for Alumni Engagement and Alumni Association.

John Carrillo (B.A. '08, M.A. '10) started on April 1 and serves as a member of University Advancement's leadership team and the Alumni Association's Board of Directors.

Carrillo was previously the St. Mary's Director of Outreach Initiatives in the Office of Admission from 2016 to 2021 and was the Executive Director of Student Completion and Community College Relations at Texas A&M University-Kingsville.

## Panel of local leaders address homelessness

Community leaders, policymakers and experts took part in a public discussion at St. Mary's University about the issue of homelessness. The event marked the latest in a series hosted by the Hon. Nelson Wolff (B.B.A. '66, J.D. '66), former Bexar County Judge and University Distinguished Service Professor, focused on finding common ground on challenging topics.

The February discussion included Wolff, U.S. Rep. Joaquin Castro, San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg, Haven for Hope President and CEO Kim Jefferies and St. Mary's Clinical Professor of Law Genevieve Hébert Fajardo.

Previous discussions in the Finding Common Ground for the Common Good lecture series explored issues related to gun violence and immigration.

## New conference room name honors the Menglers

The lasting influence left by former St. Mary's University President Thomas M. Mengler, J.D., and his wife, Mona Mengler, will continue in both name and spirit.

Conference Room A in the University Center has been renovated and renamed the Tom and Mona Mengler Conference Room. The space hosts numerous events, such as guest speakers, and is a welcoming spot for new Rattlers and their parents. It has also received cosmetic and technical updates, such as new speakers, carpets and entry doors, and the installation of three 4K UHD projection screens.

Thomas Mengler, the University's 13th President and second layperson to hold the position, retired on May 31.

The couple will also be the namesake of a new endowment supporting the President's Ambassadors, a program close to the Menglers' hearts and one that has 45 years of history at the University teaching students what it means to be a caring servant leader.



Scan the QR code to donate to the Thomas and Mona Mengler President's Ambassador's Fund.



Photo by Robin Jerstad

Surrounded by former St. Mary's University President's Ambassadors, retired President Thomas M. Mengler, J.D., and Mona Mengler participate in the program's 45th Reunion on April 5, 2024. Alumni also photographed are, from back left, Jose Chaman Alvarez (B.A. '23), David Mares (B.A. '22), Eric Ortega Rodriguez (B.B.A. '22), Pragyan KC (B.S. '22) and Angel Velarde (B.A. '20). From left center are Angela Zavala (B.B.A. '22), Natalie Pena (B.B.A. '22), Ximena Barbagelatta (B.B.A. '22) and Sophia Munoz (B.A. '22).



## Rattler Women's Golf team member wins consecutive conference award

For the second consecutive year, Rattler Women's Golf team member Rebecca Reed (B.B.A. '22, M.Jur. '24) has been recognized by the Lone Star Conference.

Reed was named Lone Star Conference Women's Golf Academic Player of the Year on April 14, 2024. She also received the award in 2023.

With an undergraduate degree in Marketing from St. Mary's University, she graduated from the Master of Jurisprudence Program at the School of Law in May. Reed was also a 2023 Presidential Award honoree.

Reed, alongside freshman teammate and Marketing major Savannah Dupre, was named a member of the Lone Star All-Conference Second Team. Libby Kilbride, a junior and Communications Studies major, was named to the First Team.

To be eligible for Lone Star Conference academic honors, student-athletes must carry at least a 3.30 GPA and be at least a sophomore, both academically and athletically.

## The Hector and Gloria López Foundation donates \$2.5M to St. Mary's University

The Hector and Gloria López Foundation awarded St. Mary's University a grant of more than \$2.5 million in March to help Latino students graduate debt-free.

The Foundation honors the legacy of Hector and Gloria López, married business partners and prominent community figures from South Texas who viewed their higher educational opportunities as the basis for their economic prosperity.

López Scholars study a range of majors and disciplines and may be first-year students or transfer students from other colleges or universities. The gift aims to assist first-generation, Pell-eligible students.

"We believe that, when possible, students should have the opportunity to pursue higher education without financial burden," said Sergio Rodríguez, Foundation President and CEO, and nephew of Hector and Gloria López.

Rebecca Reed tees off April 15, 2024, at the Lone Star Conference Championship in Thackerville, Oklahoma.



Photo by Trey Reed



## Rho Beta Gammas celebrate fraternal spirit

Members of the former St. Mary's University fraternity Rho Beta Gamma gathered for dinner and golf in December 2023 to celebrate their continued friendship and dedication to each other. Founded in 1946 by the late Rev. Louis Reile, S.M. (B.A. '49), Rho Beta Gamma was the first social fraternity at St. Mary's, disbanding in the 1970s. Fraternity members continue to give back to the University through donations and volunteering.

In this photo are, from left to right, front row: Paul Root (B.A. '70, M.A. '74), Jim Chambers (B.A. '65), Arthur Galvan (B.A. '65), Jim Tsakopoulos (B.B.A. '67), Edgar Dupre (B.S. '63), Vince Krause (B.B.A. '62) Paul Heffernan (B.B.A. '68) and Joe Scecina (B.A. '64). Second row, left to right, Bob Elizondo (B.S. '67), Ray Rodriguez (B.B.A. '74), Carl Granato, Wilton Shaw (B.S. '68), Jerry Arredondo (B.A. '70), Ed Boyle (B.B.A. '71), person whose name not known, Mike White (B.A. '66) and Wayne Carter. Third row, left to right, Pete Flynn (B.B.A. '68), Nick Pantuso (B.S. '72), Darson Persyn (B.B.A. '71), Robert Charles Cowen Jr. (B.B.A. '65, J.D. '73), Art Herrera (B.B.A. '72), John Garoni (B.B.A. '68), Mike Arredondo (B.A. '69) and Ray Carvajal (CL '68). Top row: Dave Dickson (B.B.A. '68) and Ernie Arredondo.

## Fondest Farewell

### MADISON "MADDY" RAMIREZ-MARTIN (CL '25)

Madison "Maddy" Ramirez-Martin, a junior at St. Mary's University, died at age 21 on April 10, 2024. She was an Art major with a concentration in Teacher Certification and worked as a student staff member of the Blume Library.

### ROBERT REID (B.A. '77)

Robert Reid died at age 68 on Feb. 19, 2024. A member of the Rattler Men's Basketball Team from 1977 until 1979, Reid had a 13-year career with the NBA, most of his time spent with the Houston Rockets. He reached the NBA finals twice. He was inducted into the St. Mary's Athletics Hall of Fame in 1987.



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



Photo by Lucero Salinas

# ECONOMICALLY SOUND

**Wall Street Journal recognizes Economics professor for most accurate  
2023 predictions**

*by Nathaniel Miller*



It would be easy to say Belinda Román, Ph.D., had a crystal ball for predicting the future, but she'll tell you all she is doing is following the trends.

The Wall Street Journal recognized the Associate Professor of Economics at St. Mary's University in February for being the most accurate of 71 business, academic and financial economists from around the country in their predictions of the U.S. economy in 2023.

Román's laser-sharp predictions outdid economists with Decision Economics, Santander US Capital Markets and Goldman Sachs.

Instead of relying solely on models, Román looked at historical trends — such as national employment bumps during the holiday season or local events, like Fiesta in San Antonio — when gauging the different economic indicators.

Most importantly, she added, it's about remembering each statistic reflects human behaviors.

"Those numbers represent us in our actions and activities," she said.

Participating in the newspaper's quarterly forecasts, Román suggested a 2.8% growth for the gross domestic product in 2023 and was closest to the 3.1%, as reported by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Román highlighted events, such as Taylor Swift's The Eras Tour, and the dual summer release of the films *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer*, as examples of how spending fueled economic growth and brought joy in a post-pandemic return to routine.

"It doesn't have to be extravagant like Super Bowl tickets because those are thousands of dollars," Román said, adding she contributed by watching *Godzilla Minus One* in theaters.

## SERVICE-FIRST MINDSET

Focusing on serving and informing the public is something that Román learned during her childhood in El Paso.

The daughter of a physician, Román and her siblings were involved in charity work, focusing on lower-income Hispanic populations.

An Economics class while earning her undergraduate degree at Texas Christian University helped her see she could make a difference through policy changes.

"It all just clicked for me that I was going to still be able to make a difference in people's lives," she said.

At St. Mary's, she has continued to extend her impact through a National Science Foundation grant of \$553,900 for a three-year research project studying how diabetes affects workforce participation in San Antonio. For the grant,

**"Whether those students end up focusing on business or philosophy in their careers, I hope they realize that we at St. Mary's tried to show them the bigger picture."**

Román leads a research team of faculty from the Biology and Public Health programs at St. Mary's, and an expert from Pepperdine University.

Román also oversees the Mexican American Studies Program at St. Mary's, which offers a 15-hour certificate and an 18-hour minor.

Her close colleague Steve Nivin, Ph.D., Chair of the Department of Economics and Associate Professor, said coming out on top against economists across the country in the Wall Street Journal analysis offers a testament to Román's abilities.

"It's a challenging time to just make an accurate forecast," Nivin said. "To be top among that type of panel is pretty remarkable."

Román said she hopes the public, especially her students, remember the economy represents more than just numbers on a page.

"I hope they take away that economics is much bigger than just supply and demand curves in the free market," she said. "Whether those students end up focusing on business or philosophy in their careers, I hope they realize that we at St. Mary's tried to show them the bigger picture." ■



# THE OLYMPIAN AND THE ROOKIE

**St. Mary's connections vie for Winter Games glory**

*by Leticia Romero*



Winter Vinecki



Collin Storms

**W**inter Vinecki, a lifelong skier and athlete, competed in the 2022 Olympic Winter Games in aerial skiing before launching herself into a new venture — the St. Mary's University School of Law's Online J.D. Program.

Collin Storms (B.A. '22), a lifelong baseball player and former Rattler Baseball pitcher, had never been in a bobsled before he entered a virtual combine for the Team U.S.A. bobsleigh team.

Although they had never met, their paths tie them from not-so-snowy St. Mary's University to the same Olympic training facilities in Lake Placid, New York.

"I love to see another athlete who chose the same school I have to learn and grow not only as an athlete, but also as a person," Vinecki said.

Robert Coleman, Executive Director of Athletics at St. Mary's University, said he's proud to see St. Mary's athletes, such as Storms, perform at this level.

"His success competing on the world stage allows our current student-athletes to believe in their dreams and strive for the goals they have set for themselves," Coleman said. "We wish Collin and Winter the best of luck as they prepare to represent their country — and the Gold and Blue — on the national stage."



1. First-year Online J.D. student and Olympian Winter Vinecki competes in the 2024 Intermountain Health Freestyle International Ski World Cup at the Deer Valley Resort in Park City, Utah. Photo credit: Steven Kornreich.
2. Former Rattler Baseball pitcher Collin Storms shows good form as he pitches during a St. Mary's University Baseball game in 2021. Photo credit: Casey Bourbonnais.
3. Winter Vinecki flies through the air as she competes in the 2024 Intermountain Health Freestyle International Ski World Cup at the Deer Valley Resort in Park City, Utah. Photo credit: Steven Kornreich.

## A SEASON OF WINTER

Named after her mother's favorite season, Vinecki and her family were always outdoors. She ran her first triathlon at age 5 and became the youngest person to run a marathon on all seven continents, just shy of her 15th birthday.

Her grandfather taught her traditional skiing as a child. She then took up ski racing before she met Olympian Emily Cook, who encouraged her to drop ski racing and try aerial skiing.

In aerial skiing, athletes ski down a steep slope, launch from a vertically inclined ramp, perform multiple twists and flips in the air and land on an inclined hill.

After a trial run in Salt Lake City, Vinecki was hooked. She moved in with a host family at age 14, qualified for the U.S. Ski Team in 2016, competed in the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics and has competed professionally ever since.

Throughout her training, Vinecki has mostly attended online school. The School of Law Online J.D. Program — the first ABA-accredited online program in the nation — made her dream of attending law school a reality. She began classes in Fall 2023, calling it all a balancing act.

Vinecki said she became one of the first American women to complete a triple backflip on snow, "all while in my first semester of law school during finals week."

"It was pretty cool to know that I can do both at the same time," she said.

## A SEASON OF STORMS

Storms, of Lewisville, has been playing baseball since he was 2 years old. As a healthy pitcher, Storms could pitch a 90- to 93-mph fastball. But he couldn't fully recover his pitching speed after an injury to his shoulder during his senior year at St. Mary's in 2022, while earning his bachelor's degree in Exercise and Sport Science.

Because of his running speed, his rehab trainer mentioned bobsled as a future career. Despite the time and financial commitment, Storms was interested.

After an impressive virtual combine showing in 2023, Storms was invited to rookie camp in Lake Placid, where about half the camp consisted of athletes who had also never been on a bobsled.

"If you can push a heavy object and run fast, you're probably going to be good at bobsled," Storms said.

Bobsleigh, or bobsled, consists of teams of two or four people racing down an ice-covered incline on a sled at speeds of up to 93 mph.

Storms made a name for himself at rookie camp, getting credit for never missing an opportunity to slide, filling in as brakeman (the person in the back who stops the sled) for a seasoned pilot (the person in the front who steers), and for taking bumps and bruises in stride.

"It was just six days straight of sliding," said Storms. "This track here is like the roughest in the world. It's a headbanger."

Storms will complete his first year of racing in July. Despite being in the early stage of his bobsleigh career, he has already competed in a few World Cup events, the highest level of competition for winter sports between Olympic years.

Storms and Vinecki both experienced the family spirit of St. Mary's and have taken that with them in their international travels for competition.

"It's really cool because it is such a community," Vinecki said. "I've just gotten a ton of support from the staff and St. Mary's in general and also my classmates." ■

# BUILDING momentum



Photo by Josh Huskin



## Winston Erevelles shares his journey to the St. Mary's presidency and outlook on the next chapter

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

**F**rom the whirl of his drill biting into wood to the footfalls marking his confident stride across the St. Mary's University campus — the sounds that follow Winston Erevelles mark the motions of a man building something.

Erevelles, Ph.D., has been a fixture of the University's School of Science, Engineering and Technology as its long-time Dean, Professor of Industrial Engineering and one of the masterminds behind the new Blank Sheppard Innovation Center and the Nursing Program soon to occupy the building's third floor.

The joyous tones of his laughter have traveled from his cubbyhole of an office in Treadaway Hall to the President's suite in St. Louis Hall as Erevelles took over as the 14th president of St. Mary's University on June 1.

Erevelles relies on the lessons from his childhood in India, his career in engineering and academia, his embracing approach to the St. Mary's community and his love of the Marianist charism to create a blueprint for the future.

True to his engineering roots, he uses the scientific term "momentum" to describe what's to come.

"We have momentum, which means we have magnitude and direction," Erevelles said. "We've got energy behind it. Progressively, we take what we have today and run with it."

▲  
Winston Erevelles observes the construction progress on the Blank Sheppard Innovation Center in Spring 2024.



# LEARNING TO give 100%

Erevelles' journey to become the first St. Mary's president of Asian descent began as his parents met in Mumbai after World War II. His father, Frank Joseph Erevelles, served in the Royal Indian Navy before moving to the United Kingdom to work for the tractor company David Brown. An engineer like his future son, Frank Erevelles, took those lessons in agricultural machinery back to India and began a tractor company with his younger brother.

Though Winston Erevelles' bent toward engineering may have come from his father, perhaps his effusive way with words comes from his mother, Jaya Erevelles, who was a professor of English and American Literature for more than 40 years at what was then known as the University of Bombay.

His father died in 1966 when Winston Erevelles was 2 years old. Both his parents came from Catholic families, and after his father's death, his mother instilled that faith in Winston Erevelles and his older sister, Gianni Erevelles, sending them to Catholic school.

"I grew up with my mom being the boss of the house, and my sister was her XO [executive officer]," Winston Erevelles said. "When you lose a parent very early, you grow up a little bit faster and get the sense of responsibility very early."



Winston Erevelles, right, plays music with his sister, Gianni Erevelles, during their childhood in India.

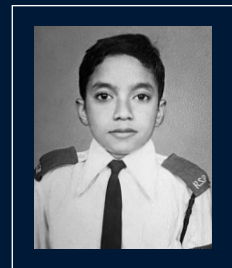
Though the tractor company continued to be successful, family friends provided fraudulent financial advice to his mother, leaving the family in dire economic conditions. Determined to raise her children on her own, his mother picked up tutoring in addition to her work as a professor.

The family shared household responsibilities, including a chore that's still a favorite of Winston Erevelles — cleaning the dishes.

He continues to draw on the lessons he learned at this time to guide him through hardships. His mother, sister and stepdad, Kurian Pottanani, fostered in him a work ethic that remains evident to this day. The first philosophy his mother, who lives in Mumbai, shared with her children was to accept that the hand you are dealt is the one you must play. The second is to trust in God and prayer, but still put in the effort to be successful.

"You've got to give 100% and then leave it in God's hands," Erevelles said.

When it came time to decide what he wanted to study in college, Erevelles found the origins of his love for engineering in his father's massive



blue toolbox. Using hand tools, he fiddled with scrap wood and metal in his free time on Sundays between obligations with Church and Boy Scouts.

Like so many students at St. Mary's who find value in real-world experiences, when Winston Erevelles first began studying for his bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering at Bangalore University, the classes — Physics, Calculus, labs — didn't click until his internship at a small manufacturing company called Mykron Engineers.

"All of a sudden, the drawings that I was doing in Engineering class came to life with the materials, dimensions, tolerances," he said. "This Engineering class now ties in with this concept of the product that we're making. It was about hands-on learning more than about grades."

The internship led to a role with Mykron building components for ship engines, such as grinding 18-foot-long crankshafts that weighed three metric tons, spending time facing his fear of heights on an oil rig in the Arabian Sea and, later, becoming a plant manager.

To advance his career, he knew he would have to get a graduate degree. His original plan was to earn a master's abroad and return to Mykron, where he was working on a project to re-engineer ship engines to work in cement plants. But "the research bug," that itch to find ways to perform better in new environments, had already begun to take hold and would lead him toward a master's and Ph.D. at what was then called the University of Missouri-Rolla and a career in academia.

# ENGINEERING A PATH forward

Some might see the early days of his career as less than glamorous. Erevelles worked several jobs while earning his master's.

He worked as a machinist and electronics technician, creating instrumentation for the Department of Cloud Physics at Rolla and also as a janitor for minimum wage of \$3.13 per hour. Another job paid slightly better — \$5 an hour — as a fish technician on the graveyard shift of a Department of Life Sciences project to grow tilapia in recycled water.

Taking readings for temperature and oxygen and cleaning the tanks and filters left him wet, smelly and feeling like he never wanted to eat tilapia again.

When his adviser began discussing his Ph.D. options, Erevelles said, “My take was that Ph.D.s were for smart people. I’m just an engineer.” However, he was guided toward more research projects and stayed at Rolla to do his Ph.D. in Engineering Management, focusing on Manufacturing Engineering.

A chance encounter at an engineering conference led him to an opening at what was then called GMI Engineering & Management Institute in Flint, Michigan, where he fell in love with their hands-on approach to learning as the Program Director for Manufacturing Engineering. Erevelles spent about a decade there before being lured to Robert Morris University in Pittsburgh, which wanted to set up an Engineering program.

At Robert Morris, building something from scratch in a 10,000-square-foot former gymnasium offered him “a huge hook.” He spent his first year there rallying the community from high schools to foundations to find funding, building a coalition of support for the program and creating a transfer pathway to enable students with an associate degree to get a bachelor’s in Engineering quickly.

“When you get a bunch of people sitting down and talking, you can move the needle,” Erevelles said.

Erevelles held several roles at Robert Morris, including Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, overseeing faculty recruitment and promotion, the grants office and international exchanges. He said the most fun portion of that job was hosting international visitors in the Rooney House on campus, made possible by the Rooney family, who own the Pittsburgh Steelers. This experience cemented his enthusiastic devotion to the football team.

In 2001, while at Robert Morris, he met and married Christine “Chris” Erevelles, M.D., an emergency physician. The couple had two sons together, Joseph Erevelles and Michael Erevelles, and two older children from Chris Erevelles’ previous marriage, David Tullius and Claire Tullius. And Winston Erevelles found “the joy of having a spouse who is your biggest supporter.”

“Very early on, I knew that Winston was my soul mate,” said Chris Erevelles, now the medical director and system director for the Baptist Neighborhood Hospitals in San Antonio. “We shared so many things on a very deep level, from our faith to our love of children to our desire to take the gifts that we were given and help other people.”

During this time, Winston Erevelles first encountered St. Mary’s University as a commissioner for engineering accreditation, voting to reaccredit the Industrial and Electrical Engineering Programs at the School of Science, Engineering and Technology.

His ties to professional organizations in his field have continued to grow since then. In 2015, Erevelles was named a Fellow by ABET, the global accreditor of college and university programs in applied and natural science, computing, engineering and engineering technology. In January 2024, Erevelles also became the President of the Board of the Society of Manufacturing Engineers.

“You’ve got to give 100%  
and then leave it in  
God’s hands.”



# CREATING A ONE-SCHOOL culture

The connection to St. Mary's was one he nearly missed because a snowstorm left him stuck at the airport in Atlanta on his way to interview for the role of Dean of Science, Engineering and Technology in 2009. On the cusp of giving up, he found a quiet spot in the Delta Sky Club to pray the rosary. A Delta employee approached him a few minutes later to say they'd found a seat for him on a flight to San Antonio. With his luggage in tow, he was only three minutes late for the interview.

The connection was a fortunate one, as he would spend the next 12 years leading the School of Science, Engineering and Technology.

St. Mary's Professor Emeritus of Law Gerald S. Reamey, J.D., LL.M., led the hiring committee that selected Erevelles as Dean. Reamey said Erevelles stood out, even in a highly qualified pool of candidates.

"It's difficult to find people in administrative positions, particularly executive positions like a deanship and presidency, who have both the energy to do the job well, the experience to do the job well, and the vision to know what job is going to be most beneficial to the school or university they lead. Winston had the combination," Reamey said. "I think he'll bring that same energy and vision to the presidency that he brought to the deanship."

At the School of Science, Engineering and Technology, Erevelles found talented and hardworking faculty and saw a path toward better tying the school to the region's needs. A thread that remains throughout his work at St. Mary's is bringing in students from disparate backgrounds and ensuring all are "wildly successful" post-graduation.

Finding labs and spaces that had not been updated since the 1960s, he created a 110-line spreadsheet of areas for improvement and developed a strategic plan to address needs for employees, students, scholarships, services and construction. During the next 12 years, with significant help from about 70 "co-owners" of the plan — from faculty and staff of the School to employees of University Advancement and the Office of Sponsored Projects, Academic Research and Compliance — Erevelles progressed steadily through those action items.

He demonstrated his ability to fundraise while serving as Dean during The Defining Moment Comprehensive Campaign, which concluded in 2021. The School of Science, Engineering and Technology secured more than \$45 million in gifts and grants to modernize labs, provide state-of-the-art equipment for learning and research, advance STEM education and create a drone lab.

But he said his top achievement — less tangible than brick-and-mortar and more meaningful than dollar signs — was helping forge a strong school identity, created through engaging with the mission and grounding the work in the Marianist charism.

"I'm proudest of the one-school culture we created," Erevelles said. "It used to be silos of people who liked each other. Now, it's a one-school mindset where it is always the School of Science, Engineering and Technology over my home department."

Across campus, the Rev. Jim Tobin, S.M., got to know Winston when Tobin became Chaplain of the Greehey School of Business in 2013. Tobin said he soon realized that "Winston truly 'caught' the Marianist spirit or charism, and it found a true home in his heart."

"I see that spirit of Mary reflected in Winston: a deep faith grounded in prayer; a warmth of welcome and hospitality to each person, a family spirit, an openness to God's plan for his life like Mary," Tobin said. "And as Mary told the waiters at the wedding of Cana: 'Do whatever He tells you,' I see a readiness to do it, to serve, even assume the presidency of St. Mary's."

Erevelles has turned the five characteristics of Marianist education into his guidebook. For instance, he said, a class working on an engineering project for a company in the area of ergonomics offers an example of students helping restore a worker's human dignity by ensuring their health and safety. He also embraced the family spirit. For instance, several times a year, he would cook dishes, especially his special South Indian coconut-based meat stew, originating in the State of Kerala, for students living in the Science Living and Learning Community.

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“I’m proudest of the one-school culture we created. It used to be silos of people who liked each other. Now, it’s a one-school mindset where it is always the School of Science, Engineering and Technology over my home department.”



Photo by Josh Huskin

Winston Erevelles, left, and his wife, Christine Erevelles, take turns constructing bunk beds for a family in need in March through the nonprofit Sleep in Heavenly Peace.



Jillian Pierucci, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology, still recalls walking across campus 11 years ago, soon after joining St. Mary's, and Erevelles was already greeting her enthusiastically by name.

"I was floored," Pierucci said. "This man, in his true form, cares to know others by name. Yes, St. Mary's is about the family spirit. But to me, the epitome of showing the family spirit is knowing someone by name. He has that warmth. He takes information and just humbly leads while being collaborative and bold in his vision."


Erevelles said students "don't just attend St. Mary's for a transactional education; they come here to be part of this community of faith and be surrounded by people who will support them."

"We embrace our students as they are and work to meet them where they are on their journey," he said. "And then, we are invited by the students to walk with them. It's a privilege when you can walk with a young person for several years and be part of their growth."

On a personal level, Erevelles knows better than most what happens when that privilege of sharing the journey with a young person is cut short. In 2020, his 17-year-old son, Joseph Erevelles, died by suicide. Erevelles and his family found support from many at St. Mary's "not because it was a dean who lost a child, but because it was a community member struggling."

"When we lost Joe, I was flat on my back," Erevelles said. "I could not see to the following day. This community propped us up with prayer, with caring. What premium would you place on a community that does that for one of its members in distress?"

The Erevelles family has continued their son's legacy with a personal service project, building 1,000 beds for children in need through the nonprofit Sleep in Heavenly Peace. They've built about 340 beds so far and include St. Mary's students in the volunteer work as often as possible.



“As adults, we make our own beds, right? We live with the consequences of the things that we do. Life will throw curveballs at you. We make decisions, and then we get to live with them,” said Erevelles, reflecting on his work building beds. “Children come into this world innocent, and no matter what happens with the families, no kid asked to be born into poverty or neglect. That’s heartbreaking for me.”

Erevelles has continued to say “yes” to the St. Mary’s community that lifted him up at his lowest point. When approached with a project during his subsequent sabbatical in 2021, he automatically said “yes.” What began as a smaller-scale idea for a new building blossomed, first, into a two-story innovation center concept and, finally, into a three-story design — now named the Blank Sheppard Innovation Center — that will house the new Nursing Program launching in Fall 2024.

“Since 2009, Winston has demonstrated his leadership and commitment to the University’s Marianist mission. He has shown our community his open heart and his ability to propel the key objectives and projects that will shape the University’s future, such as the Blank Sheppard Innovation Center,” said Lynda Ellis (B.A.S. ’81), Chair of the Board of Trustees. “Without a doubt, these traits will make him a great champion for St. Mary’s as its 14th president.”

As the building approaches completion and the sounds of construction wind down, Erevelles strides the floors of the Innovation Center with evident eagerness for both the structure and the possibilities it represents for both St. Mary’s students and continuing the mission. Beneath lies a strong foundation. Above soars a scaffolding of support beams. Each brick of the exterior forms a web of community unified by purpose.

“At the end of the day, the legacy or the future of St. Mary’s is not about any one of us. It’s about all of us working together,” Erevelles said. “Deans come and go. Presidents come and go. The handprints we leave on the University determine the next chapter.” ■



Scan to read a Q&A  
with Christine Erevelles.

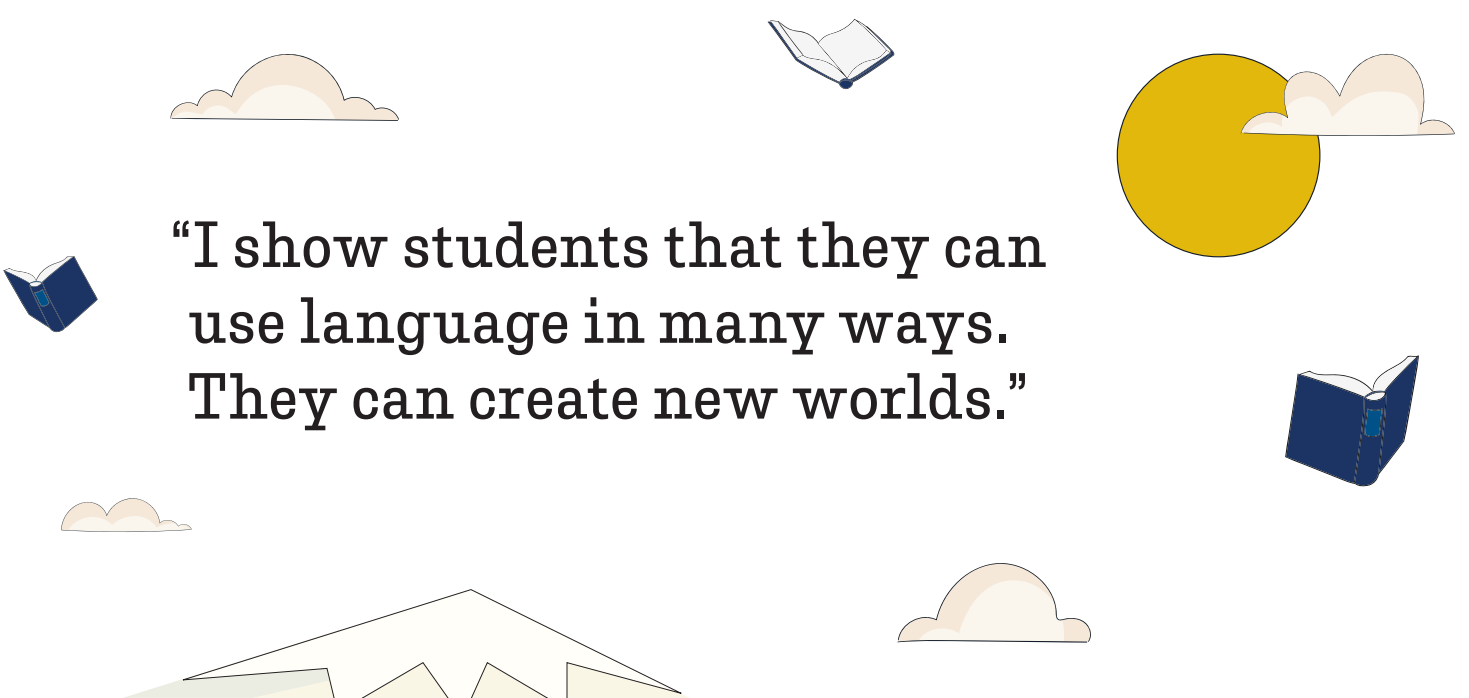


Photo by JoMando Cruz

# IMAGINATION IN TRANSLATION

**St. Mary's visiting professor wins major literary award in Peru**

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



“I show students that they can use language in many ways. They can create new worlds.”

**I**t wasn't enough for Christian Elguera Olórtegui, recently a Visiting Assistant Professor of Spanish at St. Mary's University, to teach four Spanish literature and language classes, compose award-winning poetry, and translate pieces from Portuguese to Spanish and from the Andean indigenous language Quechua to English.

With a pen and a spiral notebook in hand, Elguera spent scraps of his free time researching and writing a novel in Spanish over six years. The effort paid off.

This February, that novel, *Los espectros*, or *The Specters*, won a top literary prize in Elguera's home country of Peru — the Copé Award.

Looking forward to seeing his book's publication this summer, Elguera sat down with *Gold & Blue* for this Q&A to share his perspectives on writing, translating and teaching the next generation how to share in the richness of language.

**Q: Can you tell us more about the Copé Award and what it means to you to have won it?**

**A:** This literary contest has a long history in my country. The Copé Award is organized by the Petroleum State Company, called Petroperú. They are the most prestigious literary awards in Peru. From 1979 to the present, important authors have received this prize, such as Washington Delgado, Óscar Colchado Lucio, Cronwell Jara, among others, defining the routes of the Peruvian literary tradition. A jury integrated by

distinguished Peruvian intellectuals decides the winner. If you are a writer in Peru, you want to receive this award.

**Q: You've said you expect the book to be in print by this summer and that it is the first in a trilogy. Can you tell us more about the plot of *The Specters*?**

**A:** The first intention of *The Specters* was to be critical of the past and present socio-political climate in Peru. In this regard, the novel represents events from many decades ago and principally offers a fictionalized and hyperbolic portrait of a real person, Eudocio Ravines. During the 1930s, Ravines was the first secretary general of the Communist Party in Peru. But he later became a supporter of right-wing politics and a machinator against Peruvian presidents. In my novel, Ravines is a political chameleon, a sinister character who tries to destroy Peru. But he is actually a bit player in this game because the real masters of the political situation in Peru and around the world are called the Specters.

**Q: How have you balanced writing fiction with teaching? How do these two areas of your life blend together?**

**A:** On the one hand, I am a professor, but I am also a translator and a scholar of indigenous literature. My academic life helped me create this novel because,

for example, there is a character who is a historian presenting a conference about Ravines in Lima. So, I invented a fictional scenario. But the vocabulary, the style and the performance of this historian is that of a scholar. I created another character who is a translator and who reflects my own ideas and practice of translation. There is a synergy between these different aspects of my life.

**Q: You've said that, as a young person, you didn't think you could write a long novel. Now, you have taught classrooms full of young people. How do you convey to them that achieving a goal like this is possible?**

**A:** One of my major aims is to inspire students to write fiction in Spanish. I organize some of my classes as literary workshops in which students understand and practice how to create a storyline, describe spaces, or use different narrative voices and literary devices.

I show students that they can use language in many ways. They can create new worlds. Once they know how to speak and read Spanish, they can create artistic expressions with the language. ■





# MILITARY

## St. Mary's alumnus uses position to foster growth

by Nathaniel Miller



Top left: U.S. Army Capt. Joseph Puntoriero (M.A. '20) carries a U.S. flag at the beginning of the U.S. Senate Youth Program Final Dinner in 2023.

Bottom left: Puntoriero instructs his team of Military Mentors on the procedures for U.S. Flag folding.

Most students hope to get a good grade when submitting assignments online. U.S. Army Capt. Joseph Puntoriero (M.A. '20) was hoping just to get his assignment submitted.

An anxious Puntoriero sat in a military base in Lebanon with shaky Wi-Fi in December 2020 with the deadline looming. He was serving in a humanitarian role after the Aug. 4, 2020, explosion at the Port of Beirut.

Making matters more difficult, the Army would soon place him under a communications blackout, a time of no personal messages while preparing for his next deployment.

Luckily, Puntoriero quickly received good news: his exam landed in his professor's inbox. He would, after all, graduate from St. Mary's University with his master's degree in International Relations. The degree aided his journey to become a mentor to future leaders.

Now a deputy director with Special Operations Command Central in Tampa, Florida, Puntoriero said St. Mary's offers a welcoming community, even when students can't physically be on campus.

"The camaraderie and sense of community that St. Mary's has is phenomenal," he said. "It's something that I hope anyone going through the programs gets to feel."

“I LOVE THE FEELING I GET FROM HELPING SOMEONE PROGRESS FORWARD IN NEW IDEAS.”



U.S. Army Capt. Joseph Puntoriero mentors a group of eight high school students in Washington, D.C., during the U.S. Senate Youth Program’s Washington Week in 2023.

# MENTOR

## THE BEGINNING OF SERVICE

A native of Buffalo, New York, Puntoriero originally aspired to become a history teacher. He attended Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois, and earned a bachelor’s in Sociology and History while running track.

In July 2013, he enlisted in the military, completed basic training and attended Officer Candidate School. He was then deployed to South Korea as part of the United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission to monitor the 151-mile Demilitarized Zone between North and South Korea.

“Working with a coalition of United Nations officers, getting to walk through the DMZ, seeing that whole process really got me thinking that I want to be involved in international relations,” Puntoriero said.

Joining St. Mary’s University in 2015, he had to pause his academic studies when he began training for the Civil Affairs Division for Special Operations Forces — a requirement of the division.

After resuming his studies in 2017, Puntoriero said Associate Professor of International Relations Michael Sullivan, Ph.D., helped him get back on track.

“If we were merely a traditional on-campus program without our diversity of online offerings, we might never have met and shared in the success of exceptional public servants and military leaders like Joseph Puntoriero,” Sullivan said.

## THE MILITARY MENTOR

The St. Mary’s experience is part of what inspired Puntoriero to guide others.

When given an opportunity to pick an area of volunteer service alongside his military duties, he requested the United States Senate Youth Program’s Washington Week in 2023.

Serving as a mentor to a group of a dozen high schoolers from across the U. S., the focus of the program is to give an in-depth look at how the government works among the different branches and departments.

Rejoining the program this year, but as an Assistant Senior Military Mentor, Puntoriero will oversee 15 mentors as they take on a group of their own high schoolers who were accepted into the competitive program.

He calls mentoring “selfish,” but only because he feels joy while interacting with those eager to learn.

“I love the feeling I get from helping someone progress forward in new ideas,” Puntoriero said. “It makes me feel better knowing that I may have been able to leave a lasting impression on someone.” ■

# ◆ Fulfilling ◆ FAMILY SPIRIT

## St. Mary's employee's connection to the Marianist mission spans generations

by Megan Krippel (B.B.A. '21)

If you want to make God laugh, tell Him your plans. For one St. Mary's University employee, this adage defines her time on campus.

Linda Muller (B.A. '86, B.B.A. '86, M.A. '03), Director of Enterprise Systems and Services, never planned to attend St. Mary's University. But three degrees, a wedding, eight children and a 30-year career later, Muller is happy with God's plans for her.

Muller had always intended to stay in Houston, her hometown, for college but felt a calling to attend St. Mary's.

"I was cleaning my room one day, and there, on the floor, was the orientation schedule," Muller said. "I picked it up, and for some strange reason, I decided to go to St. Mary's."

Muller had one issue — it was the last day of orientation. After a long drive to San Antonio, Muller approached the orientation table, hoping they could help her. Already packing up for the day, the staff took one look at Muller and took her to the cafeteria to get something to eat before helping her settle in.





“From that moment, I was sold on St. Mary’s,” Muller said. “There was nothing you could say after that which would tell me I shouldn’t be here.”

Studying Computer Science and Accounting, Muller met her husband, Michael Muller (B.S. ’86, B.A. ’86, M.S. ’89, M.A. ’96), during one of the many classes they took together.

It wasn’t until after graduation that they reconnected and married in Assumption Chapel in 1993. They share eight children — many of whom continued the family tradition.

Four of her daughters, Angela Muller (B.B.A. ’18), Christina Muller (B.B.A. ’19), Rebecca Muller (B.A. ’20) and Victoria Muller (B.B.A. ’23), are alumnae of St. Mary’s. Theresa Muller, a Communication Studies senior, and Joseph Muller, an Accounting and Data Analytics sophomore, are current Rattlers.

Linda Muller’s strong connection to her faith inspired her to become a Marianist Educational Associate in 2019 to help spread the Marianist charism as a lay member through her work at the University. Her promotion of the family spirit earned her a spot as one of the 2024 Marianist Heritage Award honorees for showcasing faithfulness to the University’s Marianist heritage.

The Rev. William “Bill” Meyer, S.M., D.Min., Rector of St. Mary’s University, found Linda’s nomination no surprise.

“Linda’s faith is very strong,” Meyer said. “She’s a very approachable person, and so she attracts people. This makes it very easy for her to share her faith with others, and people walk away strengthened and feeling positive and hopeful.”

Entering her 30th year as an employee at St. Mary’s, Linda Muller reminisced about the University’s integral role in her life and how the family spirit she found on campus reinforced her career choice.

As the Director of Enterprise Systems and Services, Muller and her team manage the University’s enterprise system Banner, where much of the University’s data is maintained. The team also helps manage the University’s intranet, Gateway. They pull reports, complete data analysis for departments across campus, and manage any external data that goes to other outside systems, such as Canvas, the University’s web-based learning management system.

“When people arrive on campus, they are our family, whether they’re here for one day or whether they’re here for four years or 30 years,” she said. “Family spirit is the foundation of everything at St. Mary’s. To nurture that is better than any job title you’ll ever get.” ■

“Family spirit is the foundation of everything at St. Mary’s. To nurture that is better than any job title you’ll ever get.”

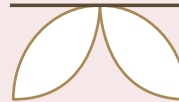


Photo by Lucero Salinas

◀ The Muller family visits University Ministry’s Catholic ArtWay. Clockwise, from top left, Joseph Muller, Michael Muller, Linda Muller, Victoria Muller, Theresa Muller, Anthony Muller, Angela Muller and Christina Muller. Not pictured are daughters Rebecca Muller and Monica Muller, who is now Sister Maria Benedicta of the Holy Spirit, OCD.



Photo by Sarah Brooke Lyons

# WOMAN OF faith

## Sister shares her calling to Theology

by Brianna Hiers

**S**ister LaReine-Marie Mosley, Ph.D., was not your average teenager. During her teens, she had already decided to venture into a life of religious practice.

Celebrating 40 years since joining the Sisters of Notre Dame, *Gold & Blue* magazine sat down with Mosley, who is the Miller Chair in Human Dignity and Associate Professor of Catholic Systematic Theology at St. Mary's University. She discussed what led her to a faith-filled path to womanist theology, which refers to a theology that gives a voice to the experiences of Black women regarding race, religion and how both themes tie together.

**Q: You said your family lived in New Rochelle, New York, but supported your interest in joining a high school program in Toledo, Ohio, for girls interested in becoming sisters. Can you share why your mother supported your move to Toledo, Ohio, when you were only 14?**

**A:** My mother was religious, and her faith was especially important to her. My mom trusted that I had strong discernment, and the door was always open if I wanted to come home. Therefore, she supported me in relocating to Ohio for the program. At Notre Dame Academy, I learned a lot and enjoyed being in a solely female community. I was only 14 years old and became a member of the Sisters of Notre Dame upon graduating high school. I have remained a member for 40 years. We have other Notre Dame academies in the U.S. that sisters of the congregation sponsor.

**Q: How would you describe your area of expertise, womanist theology and womanism, to someone hearing about it for the first time?**

**A:** Womanism is about Black women, how they have survived and how they understand God. When we reach back into history — during the time of slavery — and look at the horrific experiences that Black enslaved women had to endure, we marvel at the faith they had to persevere. Womanist theologians delve into the past and use resources, such as slave narratives, literature and social sciences, to understand how these Black women could negotiate the circumstances of their life experiences throughout history and today.

**Q: What sparked your research interest in womanist theology?**

**A:** When I earned my master's degree at Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans, I was first exposed to womanist theology and had some fantastic professors who challenged me and stretched me to think in new ways about God and to get in touch with what it means to be an African American woman.

**Q: What do you hope your students take away from the courses that you lead?**

**A:** I hope my students have a greater openness to people who are different than they are and that they listen when people talk about their experiences. My teachings inspire my students to allow people to speak for themselves and articulate their experiences without questioning the validity of their sense of self, how they see the world, or the experiences of underrepresented racial groups. ■



# AN INTERNATIONAL TREASURE

**Brissa Campos Toscano has helped international students at St. Mary's**

*by Jayden Mendez (B.A. '24)*

**W**hen she was a high schooler in Lima, Peru, Brissa Campos Toscano (B.A. '24) never imagined she would one day attend college in the United States.

Since childhood, studying abroad was a concept she thought impossible since her family never traveled outside of Peru due to the cost.

After arriving at St. Mary's University in 2021, Campos Toscano, who graduated in May with a major in International and Global Studies and with minors in Political Science and Music, made it her mission to help international students who, like her, were living outside their home countries for the first time.

"I used to hear people of different languages thanking me for the work I've done, and it was really rewarding," Campos Toscano said. "I was not looking for any gratitude or appreciation from everyone else. I just wanted to help other students."

During her first semester, Campos Toscano spent time developing connections with her peers, professors and coworkers online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She was struck by the strength of the St. Mary's community when she met her classmates in person for the first time.

"It felt heartwarming how faculty, staff and even students were really happy to see you," she said.

Campos Toscano sought to build more connections and look for a chance to represent her international peers by applying to become a President's Ambassador in her junior year, something she said allowed her to highlight their journeys to a wider audience.





Photo by Robin Jerstad

“Being able to represent the international community by being a President’s Ambassador let me showcase how international students have been doing at the University,” she said.

## Helping international students

Because of her newfound connection to the University and her own journey as an international student, Campos Toscano wanted to help students new to the United States find ways to adjust.

Joining the Center for International Programs as a student assistant in 2022, Campos Toscano became a welcoming presence and mentor. She volunteered to pick up students from the airport, buy them food if they were ill and help them learn English.

Associate Director of the Intensive English Program Catherine Whitlow praised Campos Toscano’s dedication.

“I don’t think I could have done so much work with international students without Brissa,” Whitlow said. “She’s always there, and she follows through on her commitments.”

Andrea Laguna, originally from Honduras, is one of the students with whom Campos Toscano worked. Laguna, a senior Engineering major and a fellow President’s Ambassador, said she is amazed by the passion Campos Toscano shows in her dedication to others as a representative of the Center for International Programs and of the International Student Association.

“I was president of the University Programming Council, and we both had to go to the same meeting once a month,” Laguna said. “She wasn’t scared of stepping up and advocating for those students who couldn’t do it themselves.”

Campos Toscano’s experiences at the Center impacted her, and she said she hopes to continue her work with international students at St. Mary’s.

“I want to continue learning and experiencing and coming to the University every day knowing I can help students,” Campos Toscano said. “All these opportunities have given me and my family back home the opportunity to renew ourselves as a family and me as an individual.” ■





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# HOT READS FOR Summer

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St. Mary's University alumni offer up summer reads to get you ready for fun in the sun. Pictured from left, San Antonio Express-News columnist Cary Clack (B.A. '85), Rattler Man and San Antonio Poet Laureate Eddie Vega (B.A. '99) read by the Périgueux Hall pool. Clack reads Vega's poetry collection, *Somos Nopales*. Vega peruses Clack's collection of columns, *More Finish Lines to Cross: Notes on Race, Redemption, and Hope*. Rattler Man attempts to finish *95 Power Principles: Strategies for Effective Leadership in Local Government* by the Hon. Nelson W. Wolff (B.B.A. '66, J.D. '66), St. Mary's Distinguished Service Professor.

Photo by Robin Jerstad

