

SUMMER 2024

MAVERICK

A YEAR OF FIRSTS



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M
MERCY
UNIVERSITY



Looking back. Looking ahead.

As I reflect on the past year, I'm filled with immense pride for what we've accomplished and great excitement about what lies ahead. This year has truly been one of "firsts" for Mercy University, as well as being my first year as president of this exceptional institution. I'm thrilled to have shared these remarkable milestones with you.

First, we started this year off by welcoming the largest freshman class in our history. In September, nearly 1,200 freshmen Mavericks started their journey with us, motivated by our reputation for academic excellence and empowered by our vision to redefine higher education. Our new students brought fresh energy and perspectives and enriched our campus life, and we look forward to supporting them on their way to doing big things.

Just a few weeks ago, we wrapped up the year with the first class of Mavericks to graduate from Mercy University. This landmark name change more accurately conveys the broad scope of our programs and disciplines and reflects our continued growth and forward momentum. I am confident these graduates will achieve their career goals and will make us proud of their impact on their families and their communities.

Our Bronx Campus will host the launch of our revolutionary Catalyst Program, designed to kick-start students' college careers by removing financial burdens and allowing students to focus solely on advancing their education. They'll graduate with the experience and skills they need to create the future they imagine.

We also introduced the world to Mercy University with a groundbreaking moment: We aired our newest commercial during the Super Bowl. This new ad brought our ambitious and striking vision to life, and it cemented Mercy University as a forward-looking institution of educational excellence where the Maverick spirit thrives. The excitement generated by this dynamic event was palpable on campus and throughout the Mercy community.

This sense of community and purpose, shared by our alumni, students, faculty, and staff, is what makes Mercy University such a unique and vibrant place to learn, grow, and succeed.

Together, we'll continue to build an amazing future for Mercy University, one filled with endless opportunities for our students and for our alumni.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susan L. Parish". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Susan L. Parish, Ph.D., M.S.W.
PRESIDENT OF MERCY UNIVERSITY



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Mercy's largest freshman class is moving up!



**THIS YEAR'S FRESHMAN CLASS SET THE RECORD AS MERCY'S LARGEST EVER.
AND NOW THEY'RE MOVING UP TO START THEIR SECOND YEAR IN THE FALL.
READ MORE TO LEARN WHO'S WHO ON CAMPUS!**

This fall, Mercy welcomed the largest freshman class in its history to its campuses. The 2023–2024 class of nearly 1,200 students represents a 28% increase over the previous year, fueled by record applications and campus visits, and reflects the University's significant programmatic and campus improvements.

"This year's record-breaking freshman class is just one of the magnificent changes happening with our new university status," said Susan L. Parish, Ph.D., M.S.W., president of Mercy University. "We have ambitious goals to redefine higher education, and we're delighted that so many see the value of attending Mercy to pursue their degrees and jump into their careers."



Sophia Resolme

Major: Marketing | Minor: Data Analytics

Sophia grew up performing in theater. She starred as Jane in “Mary Poppins” at the age of 10. One of her dreams is to eventually go back to California, where she grew up, and help her dad run the theater he founded.



Derek Long
Undecided

Derek is deciding on a major but leaning toward exercise science. He’s always participated in sports and physical activity, so understanding how the human body works comes naturally to him.



Maeva Yaro
Major: Psychology

Maeva is West African and moved to the U.S. from France when she was 10 years old. She wants to be a cardiothoracic surgeon one day and is fascinated by the human heart. “[The heart] is about the size of a fist, but ... it’s so mighty and powerful.”



Jaden Basdeo

Major: Business

“There’s no language barrier with music. It’s just the easiest way to communicate. Anyone can talk about music, can speak the same language through music. If you can feel whatever you’re playing, that’s the easiest way to get to know somebody.”



Olga Ineza

Major: Finance and Data Analytics

“It’s OK to have different passions that you want to pursue ... Life isn’t linear, and you’re going to have so many side quests and niche things about you that you build over time. And that’s not something to be afraid of, to be multifaceted.”



Devi Dehaney

Major: Marketing and Data Analytics

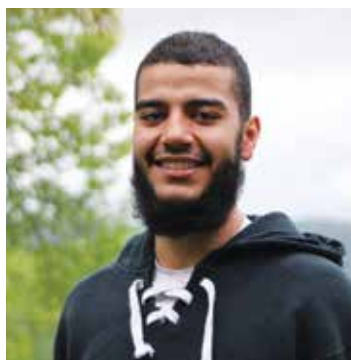
Devi is VP of the Data Analytics Society, treasurer of the Marketing Communications Club, part of the student Advisory Board for Business and Accounting and member of both the Finance Club and CEO Club. She dreams of running her own nonprofit organization one day.



Angelina Mangroo

Major: Nursing

Angelina has a tradition of surprising her friends for their birthdays. She’ll pretend to forget the occasion and then sneak into their dorms to decorate or just show up at their door with cake!



Youseff Shihadeh

Major: Pre-Physician Assistant | Minor: English

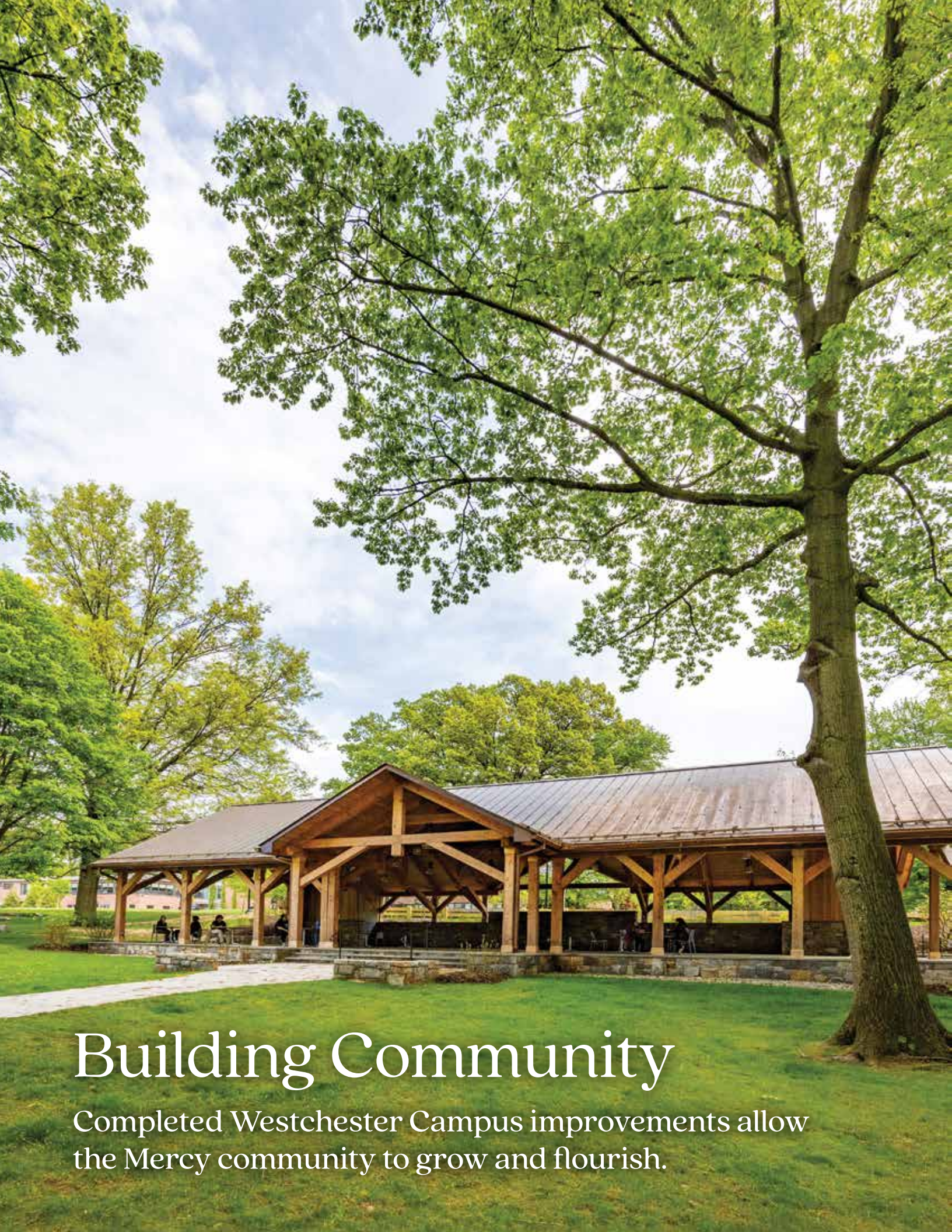
When he needs to unwind, Youseff is just as likely to be found lifting at the gym or baking some cookies. “... From the moment [I start] whisking the eggs to sifting the flour, adding the butter to watching it rise in the oven ... it reminds me of what home is.”



Do you have a story to tell?

We’d love to hear from you!
Share your Mercy story with PR@mercy.edu.





Building Community

Completed Westchester Campus improvements allow the Mercy community to grow and flourish.

Passing through the stately brick walls of the main entrance of Mercy University's Westchester Campus, the engaging beauty of the newly enhanced landscape is quickly revealed. In spring 2024, the remarkable transformation in Dobbs Ferry came full circle. Along with enhancing the physical beauty of the campus, these improvements have another goal: fostering a stronger sense of belonging and connection among students, faculty, staff and the community.

"We want to do what we can to make our campuses feel more welcoming, create connections, break down silos and create multi-use spaces," said Thomas Simmonds, Mercy's vice president of operations and facilities.

Once past the redesigned main entrance that welcomes visitors with the new Mercy University name, The Gardens on Broadway feature dramatic softscape additions in the form of a beautiful pollinator garden. Envisioned through a generous donation from former Mercy staff member Irene Buckley, who retired in 2020 after a distinguished 39-year career, the garden showcases colorful native plants that attract pollinating insects. Buckley wanted the entrance to have a "splash of color" year-round. Now, the garden is a place where students can meet to pause during their busy day, recharge and be inspired by nature. Visitors have a beautiful space to walk or rest, as they explore the garden's sustainable native plants.

Another large-scale addition for the community is the incredible 4,100 square foot open-air pavilion, named in honor of Timothy L. Hall and Lee Nicholson Hall, Mercy's 12th president and his wife. Located in a high-traffic area of campus, this amazing focal point also serves as a hub of activity, promoting conversation and connection among the entire Mercy community. "We wanted to facilitate informal gathering, inclusiveness and accessibility, so all feel welcome," Simmonds said. In May, the pavilion hosted a performance from the Paul Carlon Latin Jazz Trio to celebrate its opening, among other student events.

The section of the Old Croton Aqueduct (OCA) that runs through campus also saw some much-needed upgrades, including surface improvements to the trail, outside seating

and a raised pedestrian walkway where the OCA crosses the campus entry driveway. The trail is popular with students and the local community, who can frequently be seen walking, jogging or just sitting, taking a break from classes and enjoying its natural beauty.

Smaller in scale but adding to the overall transformative enhancements, the addition of the first phase of new signage throughout the campus serves as a visual testament to the University's evolution, creating an atmosphere of growth. Sustainability was a paramount consideration with the improvements, and the incorporation of sustainable building elements and stormwater management additions not only mitigate environmental impact but also serve as a reminder of the University's responsibility toward ecological stewardship.

Mercy's commitment to continuous improvement is evident in the upcoming enhancements to its athletic fields. New dugouts, a state-of-the-art scoreboard and an enhanced audio system are just a few of the exciting changes on the horizon. These upgrades not only elevate the athletic experience but also underscore Mercy's dedication to providing top-notch facilities for its students and athletes. Work starts this summer.

Photos by Kenneth Gabrielsen



Raising Awareness Through the Power of Film

Mercy's 24th Annual International Film Festival celebrates cultural diversity.





This spring, Mercy's School of Liberal Arts presented a weeklong series of thought-provoking foreign films at its 24th Annual International Film Festival. Mercy University's International Film Festival was established in 1999 to promote foreign language study and foster cultural awareness. Every year, students, faculty and community members come together to view and discuss entertaining and engaging films from across the globe.

"The International Film Festival is a signature event for Mercy and the School of Liberal Arts because it epitomizes our commitment to the arts as well as to our surrounding community," said Peter West, dean of the School of Liberal Arts. "In addition to introducing audiences to a range of compelling films they might not otherwise have a chance to see, each screening includes a presentation and discussion that invites everyone to explore the themes of each film, ask questions and share their own perspective."

This year's lineup included "Prayers for the Stolen" (Mexico), which received an Ariel Award (the Mexican equivalent of the Oscar) for Best Picture in 2022; "Writing with Fire" (India), which received a Peabody Award for Best Documentary Film in 2023; "Lunana: A Yak in the Classroom" (Bhutan), Academy Award nominee for Best International Feature Film in 2022; and "Apples" (Greece), nominated for a Hellenic Film Academy Award (the Greek equivalent of the Oscar) for Best Newcomer in 2021.

"We try to select films that were submitted by countries for consideration for the Academy Award for Best International Feature Film as well as films that received recognition at some of the more renowned festivals like Cannes, Sundance, Tribeca and Toronto," said Steven DeRosa, festival coordinator and associate director for Writing and English at Mercy's Center for Academic Excellence and Innovation.

Each of the selected films explored different aspects of the theme of perception, telling stories from different perspectives of resilience and triumph, overcoming societal barriers and oppression, coping with mourning and experiencing a coming-of-age journey.

"Events like the film festival help broaden our students' horizons, encourage them to think critically about the world around them and appreciate the interconnectedness of our world," DeRosa said.



"Prayers for the Stolen" | Mexico, 2021 | Directed by Tatiana Huezo | Drama | In Spanish (with English subtitles) | R
In a secluded Mexican mountain town, girls with boyish haircuts hide underground. Ana and her friends take over empty houses, dressing as women in secret. In their magical world, joy prevails, but their mothers warn of dangers that could destroy their innocence.



"Writing with Fire" | India, 2021 | Directed by Susmit Ghosh and Rintu Thomas | Documentary | In Hindi (with English subtitles) | NR
This documentary follows the inspiring journey of Khabar Lahariya, India's only all-women news network. Despite facing societal barriers, these brave journalists work tirelessly to uncover corruption and amplify the voices of marginalized communities.



"Lunana: A Yak in the Classroom" | Bhutan, 2019 | Directed by Pawo Choyning Dorji | Drama | In Dzongkha (with English subtitles) | TV-PG
In a remote school in the Himalayas, young teacher Ugyen finds unexpected friendships and a deeper appreciation for the transformative power of education and community.

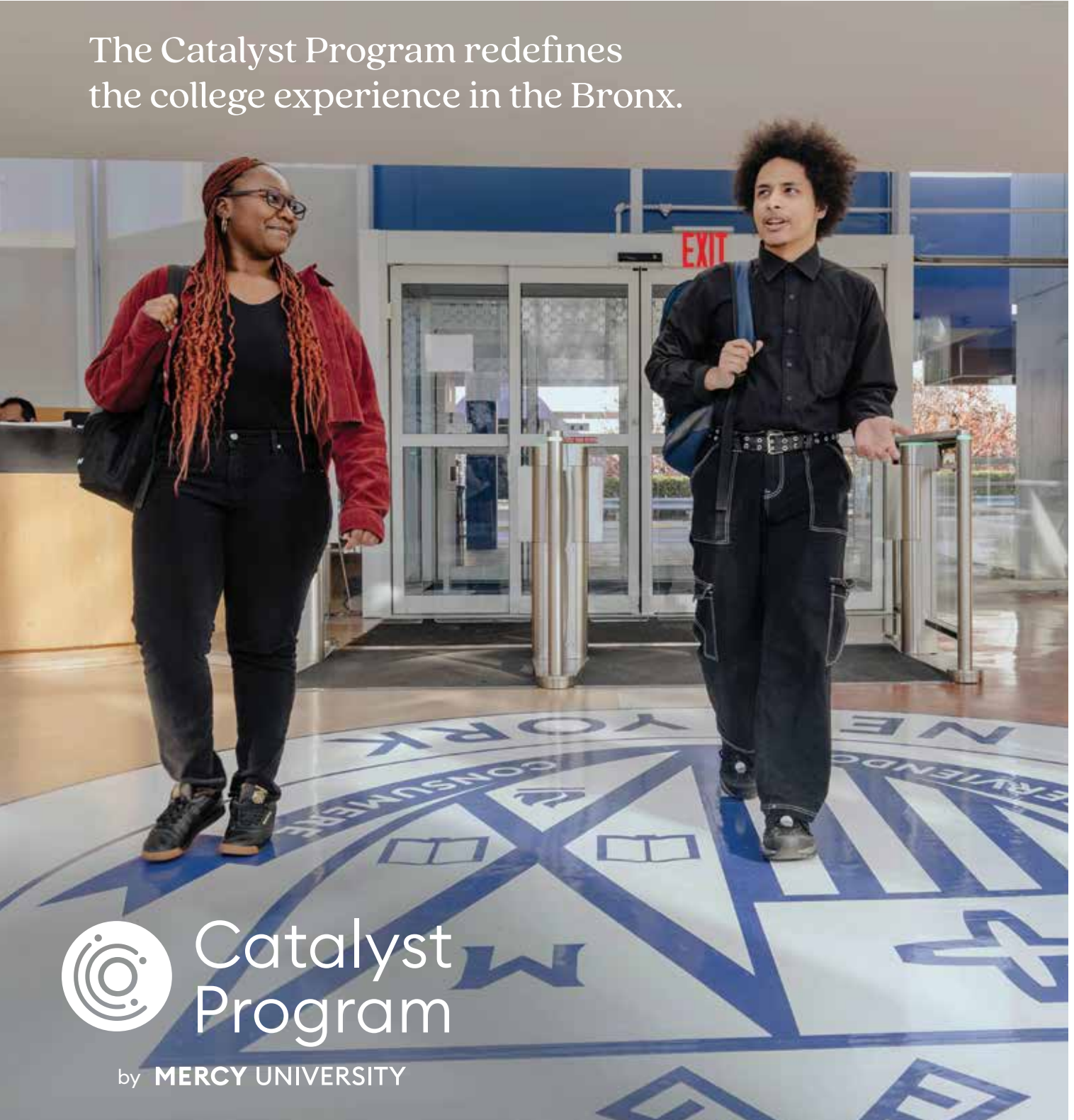


"Apples" | Greece, 2019 | Directed by Christos Nikou | Comedy | In Greek (with English subtitles) | NR
A man enrolled in a recovery program for amnesia creates new memories through daily tasks on cassette tape and Polaroid photos in Christos Nikou's surreal debut film.

Screenshots featured from official film trailers and press kits.

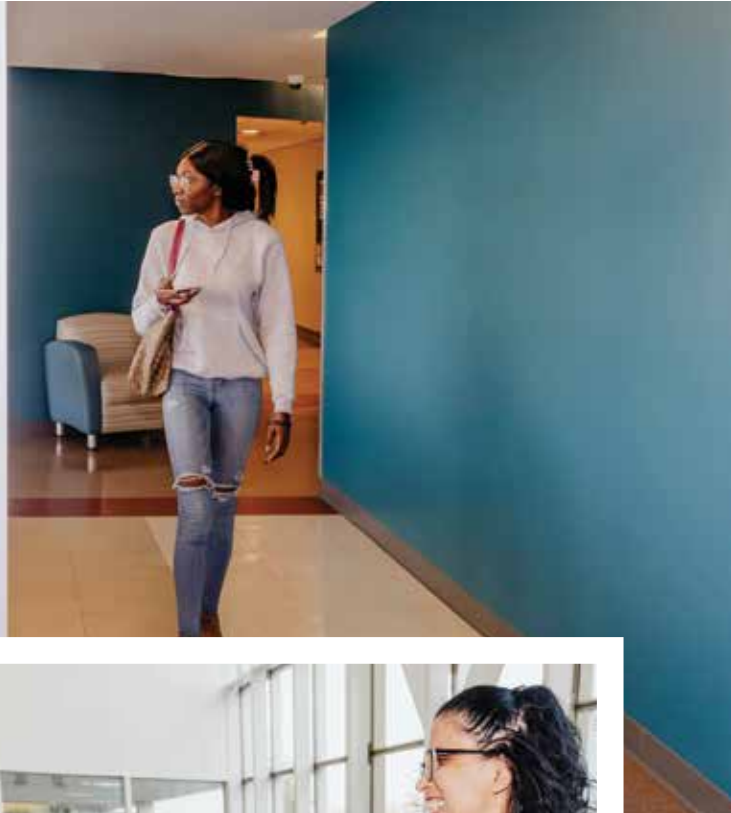
A Catalyst for Change

The Catalyst Program redefines the college experience in the Bronx.



Catalyst
Program

by **MERCY UNIVERSITY**



Mercy University has launched a revolutionary initiative meant to jump-start students' college careers by breaking down the barriers that far too often derail their educational journeys. The Catalyst Program, offered exclusively at Mercy's Bronx Campus, provides students with a comprehensive support system that allows them to focus purely on their studies.

"At Mercy, our goal is not only to make higher education attainable, but also to provide students the resources and support they need to position them to succeed," said Anne Gilligan, assistant vice president of admissions and recruitment at Mercy University. "The Catalyst Program offers aspiring college students the opportunity to attend the beautiful Bronx Campus and have access to all the robust support services and opportunities Mercy has to offer."

Catalyst Program participants, or Catalysts, benefit from an array of support services, including financial aid, on-campus meals, laptops with hotspots, mentoring and assistance both inside and outside the classroom. They can choose from three academic pathways: Business, Education and Social Work. These areas of study were curated specifically to address employment demands in and around the Bronx, preparing them for success after they graduate.

From the moment they set foot on campus, Catalysts are enveloped in a fully supportive environment. They receive 360-degree support from faculty and staff, including a dedicated faculty advisor and a PACT personal mentor to help them get the most out of their Mercy experience. They attend class with other Catalysts in a formal learning community and benefit from a career-focused curriculum with job placement support. Catalysts will have the opportunity to earn certifications, internships and an associate degree along the way to a bachelor's degree in their chosen field. They will also get the preparation they need to attend graduate school.

Photos by Merissa Blitz

To eliminate financial barriers, Catalysts receive special grants to meet their full financial need, up to full-time tuition. Additionally, they receive a transportation grant to help cover commuting costs and have a free lunch on days they are on campus.

The Bronx Campus offers state-of-the-art facilities to maximize opportunities for learning, student-centered spaces and a landscaped courtyard that provides a serene setting for study and reflection in an otherwise bustling New York City borough.

Learn more about the program at mercy.edu/catalyst.

From Classroom



to Community

Mercy's Physical Therapy students put their skills in motion to help older adults.

Students in the Doctor of Physical Therapy (D.P.T.) Program give back to the community before they even graduate. True to Mercy's values, the D.P.T. program emphasizes service. Students must complete community service hours, and certain courses involve projects that help the surrounding community.

In the third and final year of the D.P.T. program, students take a course titled "Maturity and Physical Therapy Practice," which teaches how to treat conditions that arise as people age. When faculty members began incorporating more hands-on practice into that course a few years ago, they organized opportunities for students to conduct wellness screenings and present health education sessions to older adults in nearby communities.





In February and March this year, third-year students conducted wellness screenings with older adults in Dobbs Ferry and Yonkers. In each screening, students worked in pairs to conduct an intake interview, took vital signs and assessed the patient’s movement. They then shared their recommendations with a faculty supervisor for approval before explaining them to the patient.

Michael Bulla, D.P.T. ’25, saw the wellness screenings as a welcome opportunity to apply everything he had learned to date. Though his patient in Yonkers did not have any mobility deficits, she did have lingering orthopedic issues and comorbidities, which he said could lead to musculoskeletal issues over time. “This was one of the best experiences I’ve had as a physical therapy student,” he said. “It was particularly helpful to practice active listening, which is the core of what we do as physical therapists.”

In a wellness screening in Dobbs Ferry, Cheri-Ann Parris, D.P.T. ’25, found that her patient’s blood pressure was high and that her balance was impaired. After conferring with the faculty supervisor, she and her classmates referred the patient to a primary care physician and a physical therapist. “I was glad we could put these concerns on her radar,” she said.

In addition to these personalized screenings, D.P.T. students led health education sessions for older adults through the Senior Citizen Nutrition Program in Dobbs Ferry and the Neighborhood Naturally Occurring Retirement Program in Yonkers. In small groups, students presented on yoga, Pilates, strengthening exercises and methods of getting up from the floor safely. The sessions were well-attended with approximately 50 total participants.

Bulla’s group led the session on getting up from the floor safely. They spoke about the prevalence of falls among older

adults and demonstrated how to safely get up from the floor. Then, many of the participants – even those who had entered the session using walkers and canes – practiced getting down on the floor and then getting back up safely.

Parris’ group led the session on strengthening exercises to promote bone health. To make the exercises more accessible, they explained the exercises in terms of everyday activities – such as describing dead lifts as picking up heavy grocery bags – and gave the option of using canned soup instead of dumbbells. “We don’t want exercising to feel like a big, daunting activity,” Parris explained. “The main goal is for older adults to be more functional in their daily lives and understand that strength training fosters vitality.”

Participants described the students as well-trained and professional. Patti, a participant at the Senior Citizen Nutrition Program in Dobbs Ferry, said, “Students checked our form and really zeroed in on making sure that we were doing things correctly and that our position was correct.”

Beverly, another participant in Dobbs Ferry, agreed: “They explained everything well and overall did a really nice job. I found the movement, stretching and breathing exercises helpful.”

Ruth Hansen, P.T., D.P.T., Ph.D., associate professor and associate director of Mercy’s Physical Therapy Program, was pleased with the turnout and audience participation. “I’ve never seen a group of older adults participate and interact as much with the students as they did this year,” she said. “I was really proud of the students for leading such strong sessions.”

In addition to enabling students to apply their knowledge and skills, serving community members inspired students like Bulla to continue giving back. “This experience opened my eyes to how much good physical therapists can do in our communities,” he said.





How Mercy
is meeting
the nation's
growing
demand
for teachers.

Fast Track

to the

Classroom



*I*t's no secret that New York State is facing a shortage of teachers across various disciplines. State education officials estimate that New York will need up to 180,000 new teachers in the next decade. At the same time, sources indicate the state's population is expected to increase by 61,000 students within five years.

The looming crisis begs one to ask: How will New York support and sustain the next generation of teachers?

To answer this vital question, Mercy University is poised to launch two new undergraduate programs in education. A Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood and Childhood Education, with concentration in science, technology, engineering and mathematics or STEM, and a "4+1" combined bachelor's and master's degree designed to create dual certified teachers in special education and early childhood, childhood or adolescent education. Both are enrolling for fall 2024.



“The teacher shortage can be attributed to a number of factors, including a rise in the number of students, a growing number of teachers expected to retire in the next five years and a scarcity of high-quality teacher education programs,” said Eric Martone, Ph.D., dean of Mercy’s School of Education (SOE) and professor of history and social studies education.

The two new offerings, which are the first undergraduate programs to be offered by the SOE since its inception, will complement the school’s extensive array of graduate programs and certificates. The initiative is among many significant steps that Mercy is taking to address the state’s need for more qualified teachers.

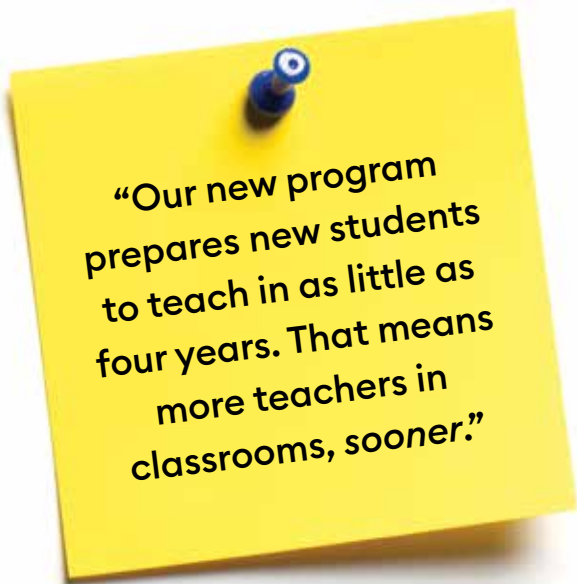
Key “shortage areas” – subjects requiring the most teachers, both now and in the future – have been identified as bilingual education, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), special education and STEM education. “We expect our new programs to attract more students to these fields,” Martone said. “This will not only help address the teacher shortage, but will also equip graduates with the skills and knowledge to best support areas of greatest need.”

Both programs provide foundation courses that offer a well-rounded teacher-education experience, from mentoring to capstone semesters in district classrooms. “The 4+1 BS/MS program in special education and early childhood, childhood or adolescent education is especially suited for students who know they want to become teachers, but who are undecided about the subjects or grade level they want to teach,” Martone said.

With its focus on STEM, the bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood and Childhood education enables students to develop the necessary expertise in a high-demand content area, in addition to gaining two teaching certificates that prepare them to compete for highly sought-after teaching positions. “While the content focus is on STEM education, students will graduate with the credentials to teach preschool through grade six,” Martone said.

A key feature of the 4+1 BS/MS program in teaching students with disabilities and early childhood, childhood or adolescent education is that it allows students to take 15 graduate education credits as part of the undergraduate degree. These credits can be applied to both bachelor’s and master’s degrees. This streamlines the teacher preparation program and enables students to earn the necessary credentials in less time and for a lower cost than is typical for a master’s degree, which is required for maintaining certification as a teacher. Best of all, Martone said, “Students have four years to decide on which MS option they prefer to pursue for the ‘+1’ year. These programs offer the most flexibility, with more choices in how you learn and more options after you graduate.”

Until now, the quickest way to obtain teaching credentials at Mercy has taken five years, followed by additional certifications. “Our new program prepares new students to teach in as little as four years. That means more teachers in classrooms, sooner,” Martone said. He added that Mercy’s well-established relationships with elementary and secondary schools across the region provide a host of opportunities for student teaching as well as the potential for jobs right after graduation.



Eric Martone, Ph.D.,
dean of the School of Education

“Mercy is not only preparing future educators but also contributing to the betterment of the community.”

—
Eric Martone, Ph.D.,
dean of the School of Education

Enrollment in the two programs is relatively smooth for students transferring or changing majors, especially if they have 60 credits or less. “We’re also working on several articulation agreements with other colleges as incentives for releasing some of their students to attend Mercy without losing credits,” Martone said.

The new programs create ongoing opportunities for earning multiple certificates that address a variety of district needs. With the added incentives of continued support and new certification pathways, program graduates can look forward to continuing their educational journey with Mercy for as long as they need.

Mercy’s nationally recognized programs in education are best known for small class sizes, skilled mentoring and stellar clinical and fieldwork experiences. “We believe our two new bachelor’s degrees will be a huge draw for students interested in teaching. Mercy is not only preparing future educators but also contributing to the betterment of the community,” Martone said. “Think of the difference they can make in the lives of young children and their families.”



MERCY UNIVERSITY IS

Made *for* Mavericks





A behind-the-scenes look at how a creative vision and a director's passion came together to relaunch Mercy as a university.



Picture a typical ad for a university: Sweeping drone footage of campus. Young people smiling and playing frisbee. Students huddled over microscopes and laptops.

"We wanted to go hard against that," said associate creative director Ryan Barber of Familiar Creatures, the agency tapped to create Mercy University's new commercial.

Their creative team wanted something that was unique to Mercy and that would stand out in a busy advertising landscape. It was during a key brainstorming session that they figured out how to incorporate Mercy's mascot, the Maverick horse, into the commercial. They envisioned the wild creature in the middle of a Bronx street and liked the idea of how jarring that would be.

More important, the concept worked as a powerful metaphor to inspire future Mercy Mavericks. Mercy's marketing team worked closely with the agency to ensure that the message was true to students' stories. "We loved that the concept showed that Mercy students don't necessarily follow a traditional education path," said Kristen Sangregorio, Mercy's creative director. "Every challenge can lead to something extraordinary."

Familiar Creatures found the perfect director in Cuba Tornado Scott. An accomplished artist and director, her art-driven style is the hallmark of her boundary-defying work. Granddaughter of director Ridley Scott, her vision embodied the spirit of the Maverick and the spirit of Mercy students themselves.

Scott was also an accomplished equestrian, growing up on horseback. She felt an immediate connection to the story and the project, and her inspiration for the shoot came from the profound





lessons she had learned from a lifetime of loving horses. That spirit was the core of her vision for the commercial, and her experience, skill and tenacity made it all happen.

"This isn't Hollywood, where we have stunt doubles and a bunch of different horses if it doesn't work," explained Justin Bajan, co-founder and creative director at Familiar Creatures. "There's a lot of moving pieces, but she was unfazed."

Scott's industry connections proved invaluable to the production. "People came out of the woodwork to support her, and she was very much in control," Barber said.

From her mother, Rhea Scott, founder and producer of Little Minx Films, to the horse handler who worked on "Game of Thrones," there were "a lot of amazing things she brought with her that we didn't even know about when we hired her," Barber added.

The vision embodied the spirit of the Maverick and the spirit of Mercy students themselves.

The setting was a major character in the story, and the team found the perfect location at 1896 Studios & Stages in the Bushwick section of Brooklyn. The studio's four turn-of-the-century warehouses are home to more than a dozen unique locations for shooting photos, film and television, and houses 30 artist studios. It was the ideal space for a complicated shoot that featured 'wild' horses galloping down gritty New York City streets.

When auditioning actresses, they needed someone who looked like she could be a Mercy student. But the selection had added challenges, because the actress had to be very comfortable

around horses and expressive enough to convey complicated emotions with no dialog.

When the team at Familiar Creatures met actress Sojourner Brown, they knew they had found their star. Without saying a word, "She was able to convey the whole emotional arc – from curiosity, to fear, to gaining confidence, to determination, to her triumph," Bajan said.

Asked what it was like working with the horses, named Jedi and Cricket, there were "no issues," Barber said. "It was awesome from the beginning, and it just kept getting better ... you couldn't take your eyes off them."

The shoot wrapped, and the commercial premiered in fall 2023. A highlight of its run so far has been a placement during the 2024 Super Bowl.

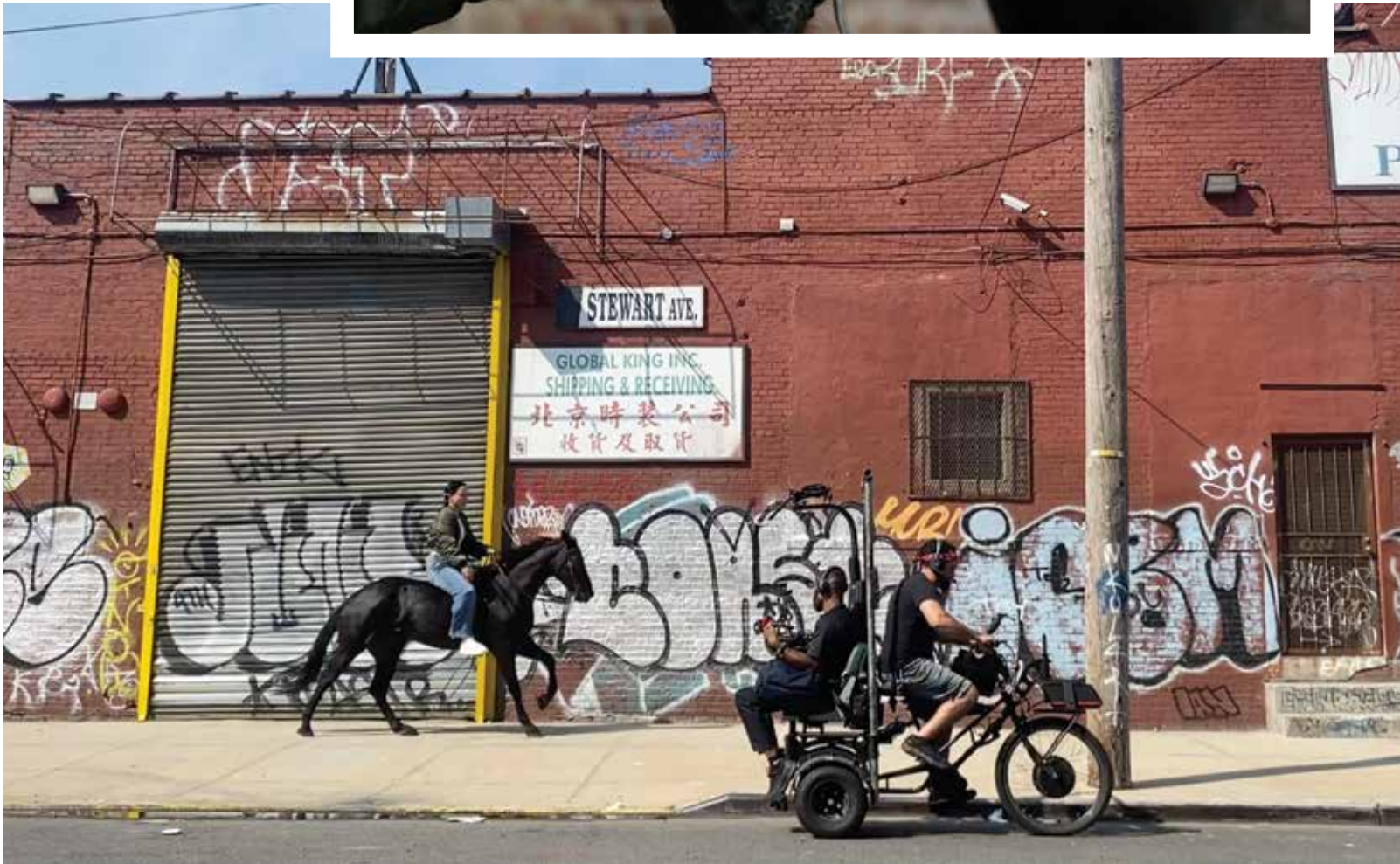
Watching the final spot, from the moment the hero peers curiously down a dark alleyway, the audience is hooked. So is she. Her encounter with a mysterious horse in the middle of the city transitions from apprehension to confidence. As they gallop down the New York City street, she feels powerful and free. She feels like a Maverick.



Cuba Tornado Scott, the director of Mercy's commercial | Photo by Fabien Baron



SEE THE FINAL
COMMERCIAL
ON MERCY'S
YOUTUBE PAGE





Nursing

the Profession

Back to Health

New program aims
to promote equitable
patient outcomes.



Research shows that race and ethnicity are tied to health disparities, including higher rates of chronic disease and premature death. Higher education can play a big role in advancing health equity. Mercy University's School of Nursing is rising to the challenge with the nation's first Health Equity Influencers Program (HEIP) for nurse educators. This unique program is an intensive residency designed to strengthen nursing faculty's preparedness to educate the newest generation of nurses through the lens of health equity.



“We’re going to help participants look at their institutions’ policies, practices and curricula through a lens of anti-racism and equity.”

—
Kenya Beard, Ed.D., AGACNP-BC, ANEF, FAAN,
dean of the School of Nursing

“Over time, we’ve realized that improving health outcomes isn’t just about focusing on patients or the system; it’s also about focusing on providers,” said School of Nursing dean Kenya Beard, Ed.D., AGACNP-BC, ANEF, FAAN, whose publications and research have focused on best practices to move the needle on diversity, inclusion and health equity. “The research shows that we all have implicit biases because of how our environment shapes our reality. We’re trying to help educators create curriculum and policies that acknowledge these implicit biases and their impact on our decision-making.”

HEIP aims to provide nurse educators with the skills to assess and create equity-minded solutions that influence health outcomes. Anti-racism content expert Danica Sumpter, Ph.D., RN, CNE will facilitate the sessions along with guest instructors. The hybrid program will be delivered synchronously over six months through a mix of virtual and in-person sessions at the Bronx Campus. Thanks to a grant from the American Nurses Association and the National Commission to Address Racism in Nursing, Mercy will waive the course fee for every HEIP participant this year. Participants will also receive a small stipend to offset the cost of long-distance travel.

“We’re going to help participants look at their institutions’ policies, practices and curricula through a lens of anti-racism and equity,” Beard said. “And then we’re going to help them make everything really inclusive.”

Twenty nurse educators from institutions across the country were chosen to participate in HEIP’s inaugural cohort this year. They bring diverse experiences challenging inequities in patient care and as nurses. For example, Jannyse Tapp, DNP, FNP-BC, assistant professor of nursing at Vanderbilt University School of Nursing, comes to this work as a Black woman who has encountered racism at times during her nursing education and practice. “My experiences have fueled my commitment to ensuring that future students and patients who resemble me encounter more positive environments,” she said.

Photo by John Raiola



Kenya Beard, Ed.D., AGACNP-BC, ANEF, FAAN,
dean of the School of Nursing.



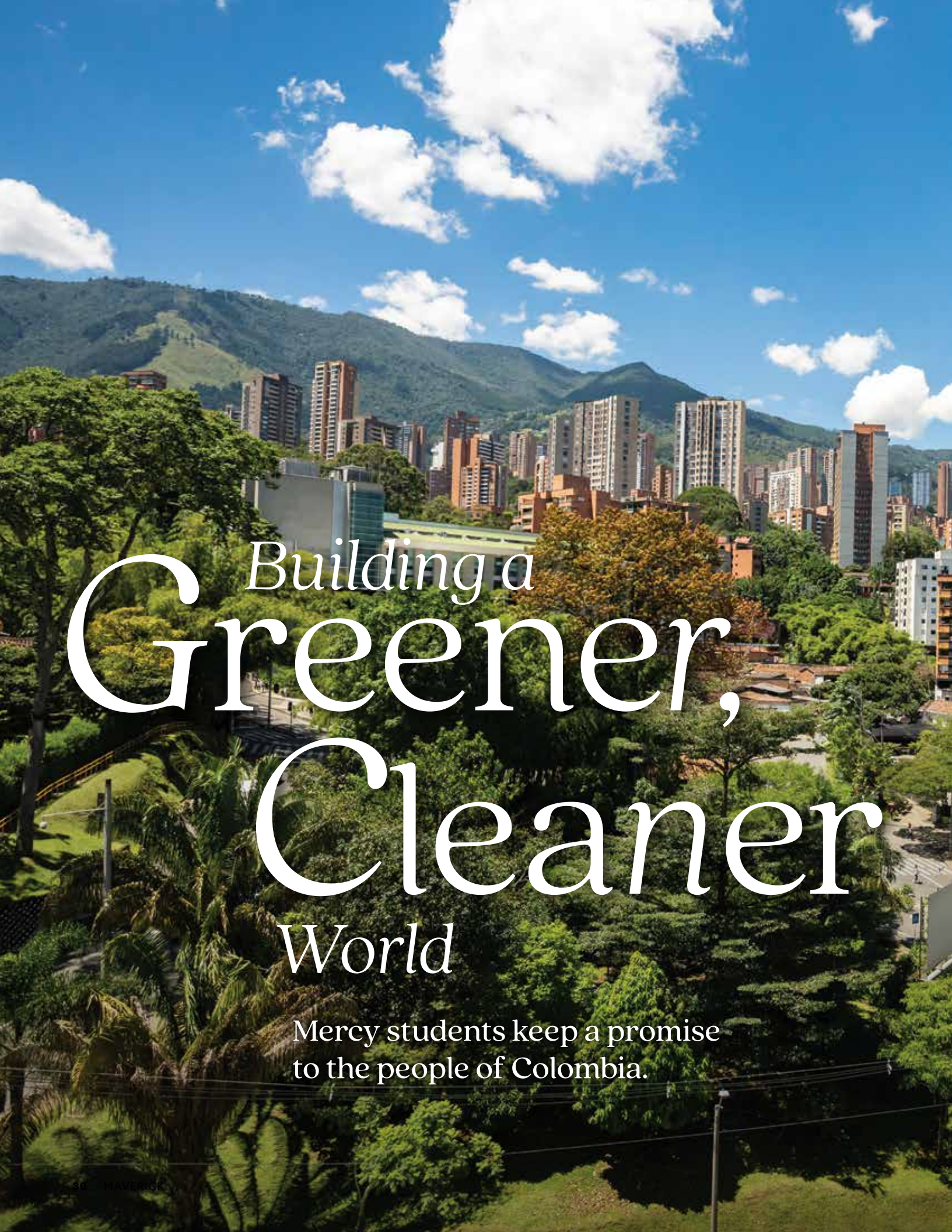
Photo by Leslie Kahan

Participants see HEIP as providing a safe space where they can learn how to tackle this important work. “For many nurse educators, discussions on policy and equity can be intimidating,” said Brittany Baker, DNP, APRN, FNP-C, CNE, clinical assistant professor and assistant director for program evaluation at East Carolina University College of Nursing. “Though we see firsthand the outcomes that patients experience because of inequity, educators do not always feel equipped to engage in discussions regarding policy and systems-level changes that can help to address disparities. Programs like HEIP are necessary because they provide safe spaces for development and practice.”

Many HEIP participants are looking forward to learning how to start, lead and sustain difficult conversations about racism and health inequities at their institutions. Laura Kincheloe, Ed.D., MSN, RN, NE-BC, director of nursing practice at the Texas Nurses Association, described the unacceptable health inequities in Texas: “Diversity, equity and inclusion programs have been greatly impacted by legislation, and nurse educators around the state feel conflicted on what they can say and teach in schools. I chose HEIP because I want to be the voice for nurses and empower them to discover their own voices.”

Beard hopes that HEIP will spark new research projects, conference presentations and discussions to extend the anti-racism work even after participants finish the program. “We were only able to invite 20 educators to join the HEIP this year, but there are hundreds of institutions that can benefit from this work,” she said. “It will take educators using their influence to share this information to unearth the policies and practices we inherited as nurse educators but never really questioned – until now.”





Building a
Greener,
Cleaner
World

Mercy students keep a promise
to the people of Colombia.



In the city of Medellín, Colombia, a project carried out by Mercy students is helping support global sustainability. During spring break this year, a group of students and faculty advisors traveled to South America to help build and install the region's first restaurant biodigester, which converts organic waste into fuel and fertilizer.

The trip was the latest of several international travel projects headed by Stuart Sidle, Ph.D., dean of the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences. He was joined by senior lecturer T.H. Culhane, Ph.D., who led the students in designing, building and installing the biodigester.

"The skills students learn from traveling to do service abroad are highly relevant to the multicultural workforce of the future," Sidle said. "Not only are these skills adaptable to many careers, but they also help to build trust across cultures."

Medellín, Colombia's second-largest city, has been designated as a Special District of Science, Technology and Innovation by the Colombian government. Since 2013, the city has been garnering awards for its advances in politics, education and social development. Leaders have set a goal for Medellín, once associated with high crime and drug trafficking, to become a model for sustainability and social equality in South America and worldwide.



“It’s not just humans ingesting pesticides and chemicals – it’s also the bees and butterflies, it’s all of life.”

—
Kassandra Hernandez '24



“Clean energy is a growth industry that also provides a rewarding sense of mission and purpose.”

—
T.H. Culhane, Ph.D., senior lecturer,
School of Social and Behavioral Sciences



So what does this have to do with a contraption that eats waste and turns it into fertilizer and fuel?

The impetus for this year’s trip began on a 2023 learning trip to Medellín. Students observed a group of women sorting trash from recycling materials, which led to a plan to assist the community’s sustainability efforts. The project focused on a Medellín farm-to-table restaurant owner seeking to expand his operation’s sustainability practices. In March, 12 Mercy students, along with Sidle and Culhane, completed their task. Today, the region’s first biodigester recycles food waste and turns it into cooking fuel for the restaurant’s kitchen and fertilizer for the restaurant’s gardens.

The trip to South America was a first for Kasandra Hernandez ’24, a psychology major in Mercy’s dual-degree childhood education program. She recalled a dynamic conversation with an organic farmer. “He kept reminding us that it’s not just humans ingesting pesticides and chemicals – it’s also the bees and butterflies, it’s all of life,” she said. “It got me thinking about how I can contribute to society, because we can never stop learning what we can do for the world.”

Behavioral Sciences major Lenny Velasquez ’25 was inspired by the passion and dedication of the local residents. “It was incredible to see how the people of Medellín are making a real difference in promoting sustainability and social change within their community,” he said. “The trip has shown me that change is possible, even in challenging circumstances, and has motivated me to seek out opportunities where I can make a positive impact on society by pursuing a career that aligns with values that create a better future for all.”

The recent trips to Medellín have led to important connections for students that may lead to other opportunities in the clean energy field. “Clean energy is a growth industry that also provides a rewarding sense of mission and purpose,” Culhane said. “With this project, our students proved themselves to several influential connections.”

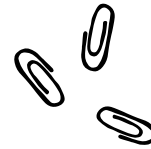
Sidle added, “We’ve been in contact with two companies involved in the international green energy space, and they are very interested in our students after seeing them in action.”

Plans for next year are already taking shape with an idea that emerged when students visited a cacao plantation. After brainstorming with the plantation owners, the students suggested an idea for overcoming logistical challenges by using ziplines to transport materials over rough, mountainous terrain. Culhane said he and the students have already begun developing the concept, using 3D modeling programs and AI to understand the physics and engineering principles. “We’ve assembled a prototype zipline and successfully demonstrated the concept, which we’re now adapting to a full-scale application,” he said.

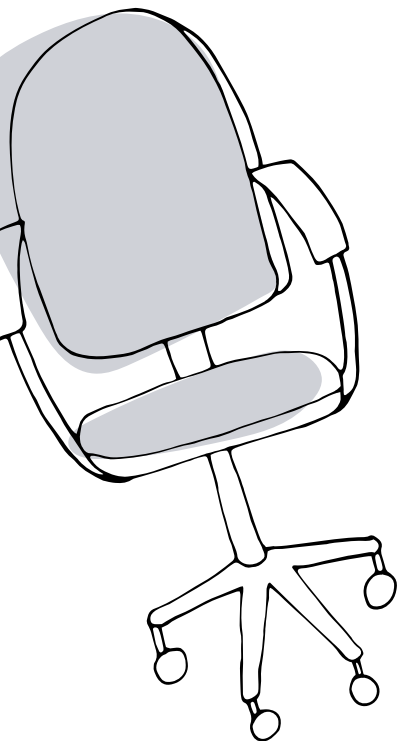
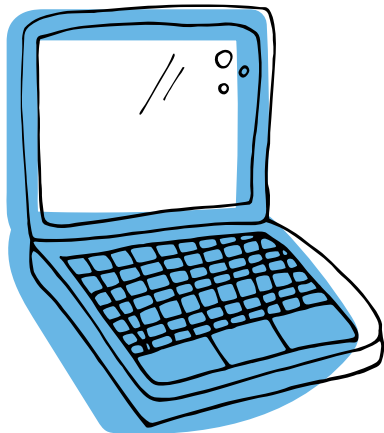
“I’m proud of the way our students approach problems,” Sidle said. “They embraced the project like it was their own. They were willing to devote time and careful thought to working out a solution.”



Managing at a Distance



Two business professors offer guidance on remote work.



School of Business associate professor Tom Coughlan, D.B.A., and Gary Bernstein, M.B.A., C.P.A., Mercy trustee and senior instructor, have co-written a book to offer guidance on remote and hybrid work. “Managing at a Distance: A Manager’s Guide to the Challenges of the Hybrid and Remote World,” published in February 2024, provides simple tools to help managers and leaders find their way. Coughlan and Bernstein, who presented their book to faculty, students and staff at Mercy’s Westchester Campus this spring, offered the Magazine some insight into the book.

Q: What inspired you to write the book?

Coughlan: Prior to becoming an academic, I was a marketing communications consultant, and I spent most of my time on the road, so I had lived what some might consider a type of hybrid job for decades. And I worked with global teams, so I understood the challenges of attempting to work together while not sharing either the same physical space or even the same time zone.

It was probably early 2018 that I started to seriously toy with the idea of writing a book about remote management. In 2019, I approached Gary Bernstein, David Fogarty and Lynda Wilson to develop the book. What inspired us was that we recognized that the world had reached an inflection point. That the governance models we relied on for decades, and in some cases centuries, were exhibiting signs of age and entropy. We needed to address social, economic and technical

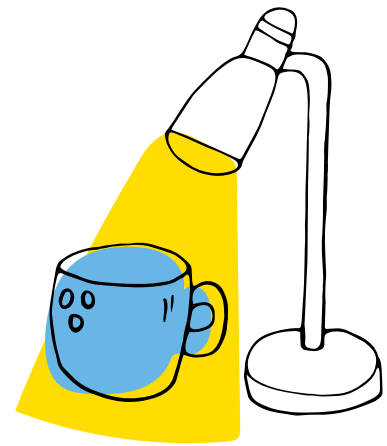
changes that are now, and for the foreseeable future, will be continually redefining our age, and affecting the success of our organizations.

Bernstein: I found it exciting to be able to contribute to a highly contemporary business topic that has become so important in business today and will be more so in the future.

Q: What are some of the challenges of managing employees working remotely?

Coughlan: When I spoke to senior executives while developing the book, the big issues they were concerned about were culture, mentoring, innovation and engagement. Then they worried about how this would affect their strategy going forward on staffing, real estate, recruitment and retention. It is harder (not impossible) to lead culture remotely. So, managers and leaders need to be more deliberate in how they manage their culture because the tacit experience of the culture is more difficult to manage.

Bernstein: A lot remains to be learned on how remoteness of a workforce will impact the ability to develop top senior leaders in the future. Some of the greatest challenges that are already apparent in the workplace do not have easy answers, including the matter of equity between employees that are able and allowed to work remotely versus employees that need a physical presence in the workplace. It will take time until compensation and benefits packages catch up to these types of issues.



“There is no going back to the way it was before.”

Tom Coughlan, D.B.A., associate professor of the School of Business

Q: What tips can you offer for engaging with employees in today’s hybrid and remote world?

Coughlan: The first issue is to understand that there is no going back to the way it was before.

We need to recognize that the office is simply a tool to facilitate a process. In discussion with a number of commercial real estate executives, we have found that many organizations are rethinking the size, location and layout of their office spaces. There are fewer private offices and more team spaces.

We dedicate a lot of space in the book to the concept of proximity – defining it as more than just geographic closeness and more as an emotional connection between team members. And proximity affects the flow of information between members of an organization. So having an effective proximity strategy becomes critically important.

Bernstein: The top three issues for engaging a hybrid or remote workforce are 1. communication, 2. communication and 3. communication. Once we get past that, there are a myriad of best practices to focus on such as creating a virtual teamwork environment using technology to bring in a feel if not the same, but similar to the workplace and learning how to truly shift away from evaluating work on time and focusing on results. We also need to allow employees to earn trust and leaders in turn need to give a level of trust toward employees, such that remote employees are and feel equally valued.

Q: Do you believe remote and hybrid work will become more widely accepted across industries?

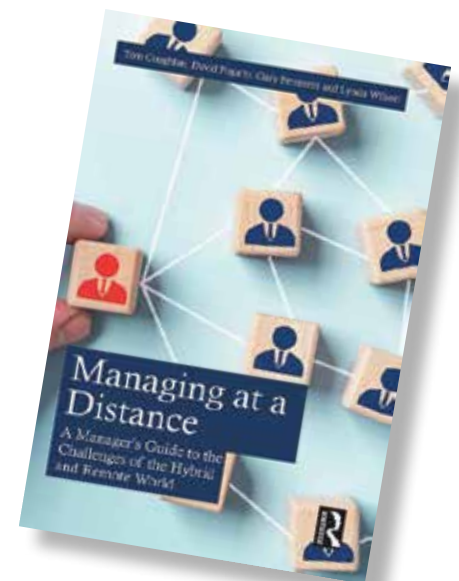
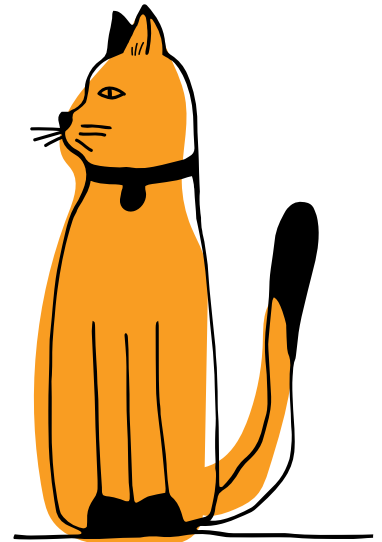
Coughlan: Without question, hybrid and remote have become mainstream, but those hybrid and remote workers are not evenly distributed. It is far more common to be hybrid or remote in IT and finance than it is in transportation and hospitality.

Bernstein: It must become more accepted as employees will demand it. There is also the stronger generational pull of younger employees having an even greater preference for remote and hybrid approaches. In a business marketplace where knowledge-based employees and top skills are in both short supply and of paramount importance, this acceptance must happen if an enterprise wants to attract the best talent.

Q: As you both teach in Mercy’s School of Business, has the pandemic or the world after it changed the way you prepare students for the workplace once they graduate?

Coughlan: The pandemic was an inflection point. But the changes we’ve experienced were evident long before the pandemic happened. So, a better way to answer the question might be that managers and organizational leaders can never remain static for very long – especially when they see a shift in the rate of change.

Bernstein: If I had to attribute two aspects to change in preparation, it would be the need to help students first learn the power of communication with all, but especially remote employees, and expand their viewpoint of the role that leaders must take in accepting, embracing and extracting the very best from a new reality.

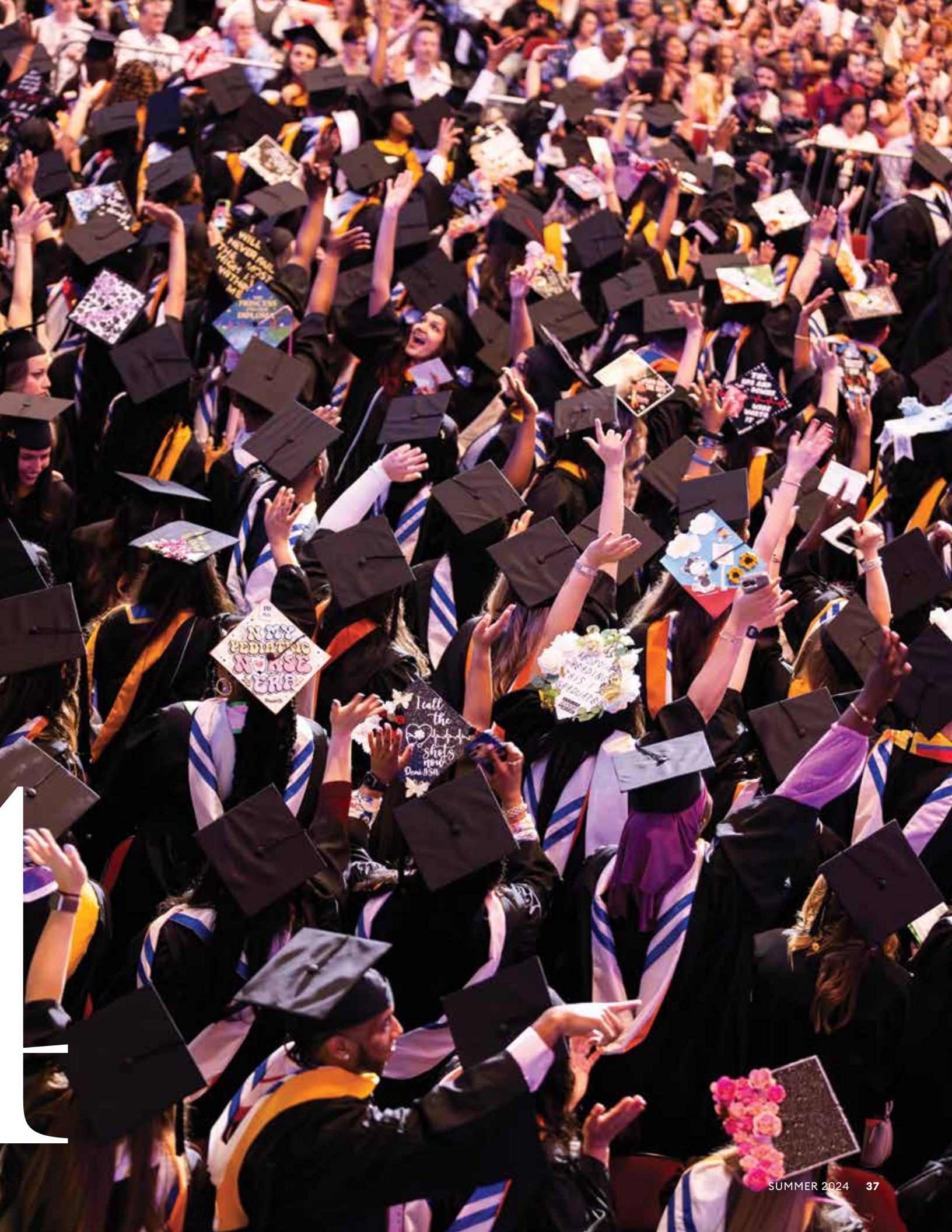


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Our First Commencement as Mercy University

A historic celebration marks a new beginning
for Mercy and this year's graduates.

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“ Don't let anything stop you because you know you're destined for greatness. ”

—Robert Chapman '24



Former Student-Athlete Ryan MacSpadyen Comes Full Circle as Men's Lacrosse Head Coach

Ryan MacSpadyen, '19, M.S. '21, is something of a men's lacrosse legend at Mercy University. His time as a student-athlete was marked by blazing performances on the field along with honors and awards for scholarship.

Now the Mercy alumnus has come full circle. MacSpadyen recently completed his second season as head coach of the Mercy Men's Lacrosse Team. His journey from lacrosse wunderkind to head coach and assistant director of athletics at his alma mater reflects his passion for the sport, his commitment to the next generation of student-athletes and his

desire to give back to the institution that played a pivotal role in shaping his character and his career trajectory.

Raised in Toronto, Ontario, a Canadian province where "everyone played hockey all winter and lacrosse, or 'road hockey,' all summer," MacSpadyen remembers his dad cutting down one of his own full-size hockey sticks so the boy could begin playing both sports at the age of 5. As a teenager, MacSpadyen played in a junior league, where his coach, Joe Corace, happened to be the former college roommate of Mercy's legendary coach Jordan Levine. Levine spoke highly of

Mercy, with its leafy green campus less than an hour from New York City.

"Growing up in Toronto, I always enjoyed the liveliness of being near a city," MacSpadyen recalled. "The combination of a small campus near a big city really appealed to me." MacSpadyen felt the spark of a new goal. With Levine's encouragement, he enrolled at Mercy on a lacrosse scholarship, drawn in by the strong academic programs and promising lacrosse culture. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in 2019 and a master's in 2021, MacSpadyen was

drafted by the National Lacrosse League's Georgia Swarm, another first for Mercy's Lacrosse program.

Yet MacSpadyen never strayed far from his goal to mentor the next generation of athletes. His journey led him back to Mercy, where he was hired as an assistant men's lacrosse coach while earning his master's degree. Working with his revered mentor Levine for two seasons prepared him for the next step: When Levine left Mercy, MacSpadyen was tapped to succeed him as head coach.

True to form, he saw it as an opportunity to give back the guidance and support he had experienced. MacSpadyen dedicated himself to fostering a culture of excellence that reflected the values he'd absorbed. In his first year as head coach, he led the Mavericks to their fourth straight East Coast Conference (ECC) Championship, netting him honors as ECC Coach of the Year. This year, the team made it to the NCAA Division II Men's Lacrosse Championship Quarterfinals.

MacSpadyen credits his Mercy education for providing him with the foundation to succeed both on and

off the field. He credits the invaluable guidance from mentors – professors as well as coaches. "Simple concepts, like working hard, doing the right thing when nobody's watching – they drilled that into us," MacSpadyen said. "At Mercy I learned the right way to respond when things don't go your way. That has molded me into what I am today."

Beyond the wins and losses, MacSpadyen prioritizes the well-rounded development of his players, encouraging them to excel academically, personally and athletically. His philosophy applies just as well to performance on the field as in the classroom – and in life.

"Whether you win or lose, the lessons you learn from each season in the sport are applicable to real life."

—
Ryan MacSpadyen '19, M.S. '21,
head coach, Men's Lacrosse

"Whether you win or lose, the lessons you learn from each season in the sport are applicable to real life," he said. "It's the same with being a student. You don't know how much of your education will help you until you enter the workforce and start pulling out those lessons that apply to your life situation."

He added, "It's the best part of being a student-athlete: You are learning more than you realize."



Photos provided by Ryan MacSpayden





Sister Mary Virginia Orna:

Blazing a Trail for Women in Chemistry



1993

Sister Mary Virginia Orna, OSU, is truly one of a kind. Energetic and talkative, with short silver hair and robin-bright eyes that miss nothing on her daily five-mile walks, she could pass for a woman far younger than her 90 years.

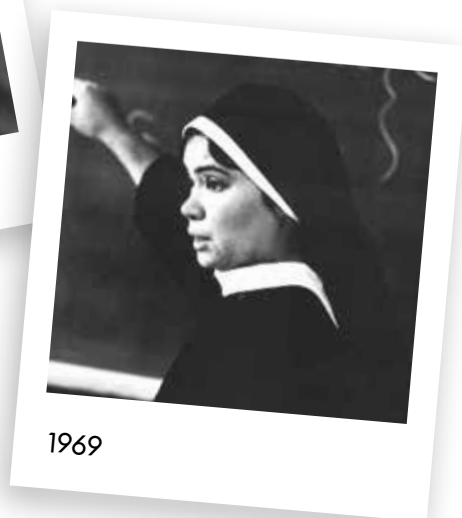
But Orna, who taught chemistry at the College of New Rochelle (CNR) for 40 years, has never been one to rest on her laurels. Her many honors and achievements are more than mere high points in her remarkable life and career. Orna's story includes travel and study, bold adventures and serendipity, all revolving around service and the deep love of chemistry that has guided her throughout her life.

Born and raised in New Jersey, Orna entered the Order of Saint Ursula in 1962, almost immediately after receiving her doctorate in chemistry at Fordham University. Following 30 months of novitiate training and another year of theological study at the Catholic University of America, she was assigned by the Order to teach chemistry at CNR. Though at first skeptical of the college's small chemistry department and her even smaller teaching role, she said, "It didn't matter. I was ready to do anything," as long as it involved her beloved subject: chemistry.

The 1960s were a time of upheaval laced with opportunity. "Girls were not encouraged – not even given a peek – at anything related to science when I was young," she said. Sensing the student discontent that characterized much of that era, Orna and several colleagues devised a core curriculum before it became a trend. Some of the courses had no textbooks, "so I wrote them," she said with a shrug.

Orna recalled a lightbulb moment when she realized that teaching students the history of chemistry could personalize courses that many students found remote and difficult. "The students [were happier when they] were looking at the people behind the molecules," she said.

She was always studying, traveling and contributing to her field. As a Fulbright Fellow, she lectured at the renowned Hebrew University and Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel. In Rome she collaborated with two Italian authors, translating a dense volume on the periodic table from Italian to English. In Poland she taught English as another language, possibly the fourth or fifth for most of her students. When she began studying the chemistry of color, it awakened in her a fascination that led to two of her many books, "The Chemical History of Color" and "March of the Pigments: Color History, Science and Impact."



1969

As a longtime active member of the American Chemical Society, Orna garnered a slew of awards and appointments related to chemistry education and publishing. In 2021, the Society gave Orna one of its most distinguished honors: the HIST Award for Outstanding Lifetime Achievement in the History of Chemistry.

True to the Ursuline motto, she has never ceased to practice "*serviam*." When the college closed in 2019, she served on the CNR Legacy Council during its migration to Mercy and remains actively engaged with Mercy and the CNR alumni community. "We are very grateful to Mercy for providing a place to meet where we feel welcomed and honored," she said.

Orna was thrilled to be recently selected as the 2024 CNR reunion speaker for the Sister Dorothy Ann Kelly, OSU Lifelong Enrichment Series, established in honor of the former CNR president. On June 15, she led a discussion on color – its rich history, its chemistry and its impact throughout human history. The event was open to all Mercy and CNR alumni, faculty, staff and students.

Orna's keen scientific mind has not softened over the years, but it has mellowed into a philosophy that is almost spiritual. "Our job as humans is to pay attention to what is in front of us every single day," she said. "With every experience, every person, every event, we need to pay attention."

Mercy University Faculty Publications

JULY 2023–MAY 2024



School of Business

Tom Coughlan, D.B.A. (associate professor, Business), **David J. Fogarty**, **Gary Bernstein, M.B.A., C.P.A.**, (Mercy trustee and senior instructor) and **Lynda Wilson**, “Managing at a Distance: A Manager’s Guide to the Challenges of the Hybrid and Remote World” | Routledge, 2024.

Zachary Williams, “IFRS vs. Japanese GAAP Tested with Value Relevance Methodology,” *Indonesian Journal of Accounting Research*, 27, 2024.



School of Education

Victoria Núñez (associate professor, Literacy and Multilingual Studies), “Open Access Resources to Improve Bilingual Teacher Training for Students with Disabilities,” in Lidia Mañoso-Pacheco, José Luis Estrada Chichón and Roberto Sánchez-Cabrero (eds.), “Inclusive Education in Bilingual and Plurilingual Programs” | IGI Global, 2024.

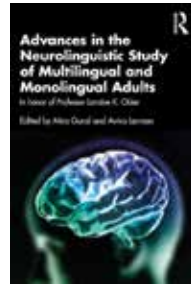
Tina Bruce, Yukiyo Nishida, Sacha Powell, **Helge Wasmuth** and Jane Whinnett (eds.), “The Bloomsbury Handbook to Friedrich Froebel” | Bloomsbury, 2024.

School of Health and Natural Sciences

Katie Pincura, Matt Lyons, Jeannie Newton, **Charis Davidson**, Beth Woodard and Wenasha Hall, “The Way Forward for Integrated Health Sciences Degree Programs,” *Education for Health Change in Learning and Practice*, 37, 2024.

Irina V. Ellison, “Leveraging Regime Change as an Opportunity to Reimagine, Reset, and Demonstrate Results in Honors,” *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council*, 24, 2024.

Maleha Mahmud, David C. Lahti and **Bobby Habig**, “The Impact of Land Use and Human Population Density on Benthic Macroinvertebrate Diversity in a Highly Urbanized River,” *Cities and the Environment*, 17, 2024.



Taryn R. Malcolm (assistant professor, Communication Disorders) and **Susan De Santi**, “Differentiating Neuropathology, Biomarkers, and Clinical Symptoms in Dementia due to Alzheimer’s Disease vs. Primary Progressive Aphasia,” in Mira Goral and Aviva Lerman (eds.), “Advances in the Neurolinguistic Study of Multilingual and Monolingual Adults” | Routledge, 2024.

Peter V. Minorsky, “The ‘Plant Neurobiology’ Revolution,” *Plant Signaling and Behavior*, 19, 2024.

Marisa Perdomo, Claire Davies, Kimberly Levenhagen, **Kathryn Ryans** and Laura Gilchrist, “Patient Education for Breast Cancer Related Lymphedema: A Systematic Review,” *Journal of Cancer Survivorship*, 17, 2023-2024.

School of Liberal Arts

Saul Fisher, “On Guyer’s Vitruvian Normality,” *Estetika: The European Journal of Aesthetics*, 61, 2024.

Saul Fisher, “Lives and Afterlives of Architectural Objects,” in Zoltán Somhegyi and Lisa Giombini (eds.), “The Routledge Companion to the Philosophy of Architectural Reconstruction” | Routledge, 2024.

Robert Murray, “Beauty and the Brain: The Science of Human Nature in Early America by Rachel E. Walker (review),” *Journal of the Early Republic*, 44, 2024.

Zhiyuan Wei, **Usman Rauf** and Fadi Mohsen, “E-Watcher: Insider Threat Monitoring and Detection for Enhanced Security,” *Annals of Telecommunications*, 2024.

Hortensia Soto, Leonardo Abbrescia, Adam Castillo, Laura Colmenarejo, Anthony Sanchez and **Rosaura Uscanga**, “Actualizing the Virtuality of the Cauchy-Riemann Equations,” *ZDM: Mathematics Education*, 2024.



Fadi Mohsen, **Usman Rauf** (assistant professor, Cybersecurity), Victor Lavric, Alexander Kokushkin, Zhiyuan Wei and Adalynn Martinez, "On

Identification of Intrusive Applications: A Step Toward Heuristics-Based Adaptive Security Policy," IEEE Access, 12, 2024.

John Yoon, "Exploiting Metadata for Intelligent and Secure JSON REST API Services," Proceedings of World Conference on Information Systems for Business Management, 2024.



Libraries

Moddie Breland (director and associate professor, Libraries), **Miranda Montez** (assistant

professor, Libraries) and **Yvette Page** (assistant professor, Libraries), "Where Do We Start? Building a Library Mentorship Program for Undergraduate Students," Library Leadership and Management, 37, 2024.



School of Nursing

Roberta Waite, **Kenya Beard** (dean and professor, Nursing) and G. Rumay Alexander, "Anti-Black Racism and Nursing Leadership," Nurse Leader 22, 2024.

School of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Eduardo Albrecht, "Disinformation and Peacebuilding in Sub-Saharan Africa: Security Implications of AI-Altered Information Environments," United Nations University Policy Paper, 2024.

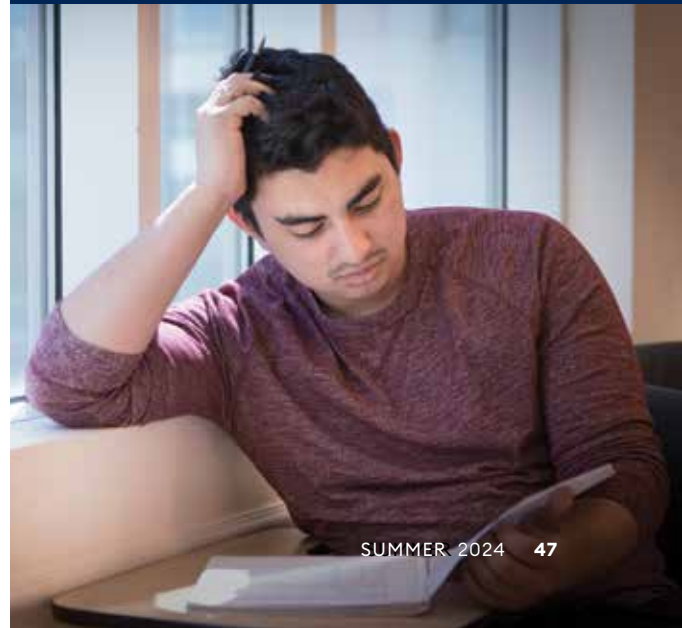


Deisy Amorin-Woods and **Evan Imber-Black** (professor, Marriage and Family Therapy), "The Ackerman Institute: A Journey of Culture and Diversity Over Six Decades. A Conversation with Evan Imber-Black," Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy, 45, 2024.

Adam Trahan and **Douglas Evans**, "Perceptions of Legal System Legitimacy Among Family Members of Individuals Incarcerated for Sex Offenses," Psychology, Public Policy, and Law 30, 1, 2024.

Hyoungah Park, **Jeong Kim**, **Illya Lichtenberg** and Tae Jin Chung, "North Korean Migrants in China: A Case Study of Human Smuggling and Trafficking," Asian Journal of Criminology, 2024.

Cody Ding, **Melissa Ramdas** and Marcello Mortillaro, "Editorial: Emotional Intelligence in Applied Settings: Approaches to its Theoretical Model, Measurement, and Application," Frontiers in Psychology, 14, 2024.



Mercy Class Notes

Our Mavericks marking milestones.

OCT. 16, 2023–MAY 13, 2024



1980s

Elizabeth de Almeida '89 has a new role as development manager for Greenwich House, a nonprofit organization offering programs in the arts, education and social services in Greenwich Village and across New York City.

2000s

Monique Sebastian '02 has a new role as executive director of Entertainment for Seneca Gaming Corp. “Sebastian is an inspiring, creative and innovative thinker who will help elevate our overall entertainment offerings and experience to a new level,” said Seneca Gaming Corporation’s CMO. Sebastian is a member of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation. [1]

San Diego resident **Rebecca Zipp '04** has been selected to fill the vacancy created last year when now-Justice Jose Castillo was elevated to the 4th District Court of Appeal. Early last year, Zipp joined the litigation department of Seltzer Caplan McMahon Vitek in San Diego. Before joining the firm, she spent more than a decade as a prosecutor at the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office. [2]

Kevelyn Guzman '06, chief operating officer for Coldwell Banker Warburg, has been named the luxury real estate broker’s newest president emeritus. Guzman has been with Coldwell Banker Warburg for 16 years. [3]

Edward Murray '07 started a new position as assistant director of instructional technology at Baldwin Union Free School District in Baldwin, N.Y. Murray has been with BUFSD for six years. [4]

2010s

Jacqueline Leslie, M.S. '13 started a new position as itinerant speech-language pathologist (SLP) for the Cherry Creek School District in Greenwood Village, Colo. Prior to this role, Leslie worked for the Douglas County School District for six years as a speech-language pathologist and assistant technology specialist. [5]

Phillip DeSantis, M.S. '15 was recently promoted to senior consultant – Intelligent Finance and Accounting Operations (IFAO) at Capgemini. Previously, DeSantis worked for Accenture and KPMG in financial management and audit roles.

Meriem Sbaiti BenMansour '15 was recently promoted to area manager for AJH, a real estate management company based in Lakewood, N.J. BenMansour has been a licensed real estate broker since 2018.

2020s

Vivian Boyd '20 has been promoted to supervisor with Substation Operations for Con Edison in New York. Boyd recently completed Con Edison's Leadership Development Program and has been with the utility company since 2019, starting as an analyst aide intern. [6]

Nekendra Liddie '20 started a new role as psychotherapist at Alssaro Counseling Services in New Rochelle. Liddie also earned her master's degree in social work from Fordham University.

Melisia Reader Mede '20 started a new position as a registered nurse at White Plains Hospital. Keeping the legacy alive, Reader Mede's daughter is a current Mercy University student. [7]

Jennifer Ofosu Asante '21, has been accepted into The Johns Hopkins School of Nursing's Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program specializing as a Family Primary Care Nurse Practitioner. As a nursing tutor at Mercy University, Ofosu Asante is committed to both clinical excellence and education. She also founded a CPR training company. [8]

Andy Sanabria BSN '21, RN, CCRN has received his certification as a Critical Care Registered Nurse (CCRN) through the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses. Sanabria currently works as a CCRN for AdventHealth in Tampa, Fla. [9]

Randy Gómez, MSOL '21 has been promoted to director of corporate and community relations at Berkeley College in New York City. Gómez has held several roles with Berkeley College since 2009. [10]

Justine O'Reilly '21 was recently featured as Best Guidance Counselor in the Bronx Times Best of the Bronx 2023 issue. O'Reilly is an early career guidance counselor at Bronxdale High School, her alma mater. [11]

Steven Orantes '22 enrolled in Albany Law School in Jan. 2024. Orantes worked as a paralegal at Sobo & Sobo LLP, a civil litigation firm in Rockland County, N.Y. He is also a member of the Mercy Alumni Advisory Council. [12]

Marlo Scott, M.S. '22 has recently been hired as a corporate security officer for Fox News TV in New York City. [13]



Mercy Class Notes is a way to stay connected.

We would love to share your recent news, life events and accomplishments. Tell us about them, and we will include it in the next issue. Email: alumni@mercy.edu with your class note.

CNR Class Notes

Our alumni achievements.

OCT. 16, 2023–MAY 13, 2024

1950s

Margaret (Mardy) Moore SAS '51 was featured in March's issue of the Daily Gazette in an article entitled: "At 94, Niskayuna's Mardy Moore reflects on pioneering civic career." Moore was the first female supervisor ever in the town of Niskayuna, New York's 200-year history.

1960s

Reverend Pat Miod Kriss SAS '69 is now Reverend Doctor Pat Kriss. The Doctor of Ministry was conferred upon her in May 2023 by Hartford International University of Religion and Peace. Dr. Kriss holds two other graduate degrees from Yale Divinity School: a Master of Divinity and a Master of Sacred Ministry. She graduated from the College of New Rochelle with a bachelor's in Fine Arts and Education in 1969. Her career led her into nonprofit fundraising for 34 years in health and education before a call into ministry. She is a full-time senior pastor for First Congregational Church Danbury UCC, and is marking her 14th year as a pastor.

1990s

Fulton Books author **Denise Sampson SNR '90**, a widow and a loving mother of seven and grandmother of eight, has completed her most recent book, "Meet Cleo and Mindy," about two animals who are best friends despite the rude comments they hear from the other animals because of how different they are from each other.

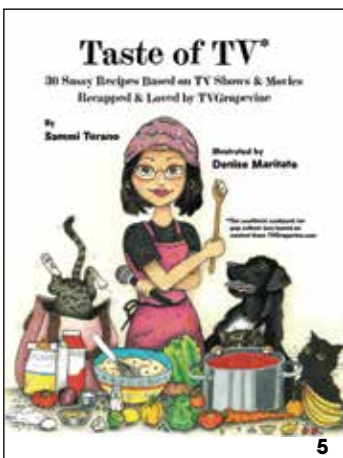
Victoria Coudray McMullen SAS '93 started a new role as vice president of marketing for the New Jersey Innovation Institute in Newark, N.J. This institute, an NJIT corporation, helps turn ideas into workable solutions across health care, entrepreneurship, defense and homeland security, and professional and corporate education. Previously, McMullen was the vice president of marketing for Certara, a consulting firm for the biotech industry. [1]

Heather Archibald SAS '94 has been elected to the Board of Directors for the Berkshire County Historical Society. Archibald is a member of the American Legion Auxiliary and Kiwanis International as well as other volunteer groups giving back to the Berkshire community. [2]

JoEllen Revell SAS '98 has started a new position as vice president of Child Integrated Services at LifeStream Behavioral Center, Inc. in central Florida. LifeStream is a behavioral health and social services organization that provides high-quality treatment, education, care management, rehabilitation, child welfare, primary care and homeless services to children, adolescents and adults. [3]

Christine Simoneau-Hales GS '98, Art Therapy, will be exhibiting at the Angels by the Sea Episcopal Church gallery at Longboat Key, Fla. Over 20 Byzantine-style icons will be displayed. "In a convent in France, I met an iconographer named Sister Miriam," Simoneau-Hales said. "She explained to me about icons and it just changed my whole world. It just seemed to encompass great art." [4]

Don Keene GS '99 recently exhibited artwork in a show titled "Abstract Reality" at the Guilford Art Center in Guilford, Conn. The exhibit featured a selection of 15 works encompassing both realism and abstraction created in the past 23 years.



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2000s

Samantha (Sammi) Turano SAS '05, journalist, was recently featured on local TV station WTAJ, Altoona, Pa., along with her cookbook, "Taste of TV: 30 Sassy Recipes Based on TV Shows & Movies." Turano has been working as a journalist for the past 12 years, specializing in entertainment, celebrity, sports and lifestyle news. [5]

Nanette Brownlee SNR '08, GS '11 started a new role as mental health therapist with Centurion Health based in Atlanta, Ga.

Kay Casanova SN '08 started a new position as director, utilization & medical expense review at VNS Health, a home and community health care provider based in the five boroughs of New York City. [6]



2010s

Viola Hamilton-Keith MPA SNR '11, GS '16 started a new position as community health worker for Columbia University. Hamilton-Keith also works as an administrative associate for the Board of Elections in the City of New York, a position she has held for 10 years.

Andrea Fobbs SNR '13, GS '15 recently welcomed her new grandchildren, Daniel and Destiny Johnson. Fobbs also started a new position as workforce development specialist and case manager at Soulful Synergy, a socially conscious consulting company that takes a multifaceted approach to sustainability, workforce and community development based in Queens Village, N.Y. [7]

Dr. Ramya Bharathi SAS '14 had an article recently published on The Open News, "Septorhinoplasty Beyond Aesthetics: The Medical Benefits of Nose Surgery." Dr. Bharathi is an otolaryngologist at Tufts Medical Center in Boston, Mass. [8]

Theresa Walton SNR '15, GS '17 started a new position as co-director of administration and grants management at the National Institute for Early Education Research at the Graduate School of Education at Rutgers University. [9]

Jamar Crow SNR '16 has recently completed his Master of Science in Developmental and Child Psychology from Capella University. Crow works as a program director for Acacia Network. Acacia Network is a human services organization in New York City and one of the largest Hispanic-led nonprofits in the state, providing integrated, culturally-competent and trauma-informed programs in the areas of health, housing, social services, economic development and cultural revitalization. [10]

Catherine (Katy) Baudendistel Fragola SAS '16 was recently promoted to senior manager, HRIS (Human Resources Information Systems) at Telesign, a Proximus company that connects, protects and defends the customer experience with intelligence from billions of digital interactions and mobile signals. [11]

Fabiola A. Padilla Ríos SAS '18 has recently opened her own coaching business, Authentic Narratives, as she studies Holistic Health Coaching at the Institute of Integrative Nutrition (IIN). She is focused on cultivating a self-relationship to create an authentic narrative of life for more health and happiness. She is also a wood artist running her business, Wethin Yoursoulf. Additionally, Padilla Ríos is a volleyball coach and seasonal travel manager abroad. [12]

Lisbet Zepeda Becerra SAS '19 has recently been promoted to assistant vice president for Guy Carpenter, an international risk management and reinsurance brokerage firm. Zepeda Becerra is a fine example of pivoting careers through skills and education. Prior to becoming a reinsurance professional, she was a mathematics teacher. [13]





Strengthening Alumni Connections

This past winter and spring, Mercy held receptions for Mercy and College of New Rochelle (CNR) alumni in Connecticut and California. The gatherings offered alumni a chance to reconnect, meet President Susan L. Parish, Ph.D., M.S.W., network and learn about exciting new developments at Mercy. From sharing memories of their college years to discussing ways to give back to Mercy, these events deepened the integration of the Mercy and CNR alumni communities, enhancing their connection to the University while fostering valuable connections for all attendees. They encapsulated the spirit of camaraderie and community that characterize Mercy and CNR alumni.

From the eastern shores of Connecticut to the sun-kissed beaches of Malibu, meet some of the attendees:



Melissa Petrie-Bullock, M.S. '02 and **Darryl Bullock** '73 (from left)



Mary Crescenzo, CNR



Richard Burke, M.B.A. '13

Connecticut

Connecticut Area Alumni Reception, hosted by Therese FitzMaurice, CNR SAS '83, was held on Jan. 20, 2024.

Darryl Bullock '73 (retired) and Melissa Petrie-Bullock, M.S. '02 (principal for academics and technology at Mercy High School in Middletown, Conn.): they met at Mercy.

Q: How did your experience at Mercy influence you in your career trajectory?

Melissa: It allowed me to work on my administration degree while also working full time. I was exposed to and learned from professionals practicing in the field who were able to share practical and real experiences. With the strong foundation gained at Mercy, I had the tools I needed to be successful in my various administrative roles.

Darryl: I was provided an opportunity to learn about a variety of things such as student evaluations, teaching, working with regional accrediting groups and serving in membership at regional and national planning and research groups.

Q: Why do you think it is important to remain connected with Mercy and give back to the college community?

Melissa: I am proud of the advancements I have seen at Mercy while maintaining its core values and mission to a diverse student body. Mercy has been a continual presence in our lives, helped us to develop our professional skills and has continued to catapult its students into the futures that they dare to dream for themselves. Giving back to Mercy is an important way to remain a part of that mission and ensure that it continues.

Darryl: I went to Mercy and saw how I grew, and I think that I am now watching the University grow, and as I'm able to assist, be it financially or in some other way, then I want to do so.

Therese FitzMaurice, CNR SAS '83: attorney running her own law firm.

Q: How did your experience at CNR influence you in your career trajectory?

Therese: My CNR education prepared me for my career as an attorney by instilling in me the need to be thoughtful, inquisitive and creative, while always remembering the importance of character and the spirit of giving.

Q: Why do you think it is important to remain connected with CNR/Mercy and give back to the college community?

Therese: Even though the CNR of the past is no longer as we exactly remember, the CNR/Mercy of the future fosters the same core values. As someone who benefited from a CNR education, I think it is important to ensure through continued involvement with the new CNR/Mercy that the same will be passed on to generations to come.

California

California Area Alumni Reception, hosted by Terry Davis, CNR SAS '73, in Malibu was held on March 9, 2024.

Richard Burke, M.B.A. '13: HR business partner at TikTok.

Q: How did your experience at Mercy influence you in your career trajectory?

Richard: Completing my M.B.A. at Mercy was a very impactful experience. Initially struggling to find my path, I found a sense of direction from the graduate business courses at Mercy. Having a core understanding of each main business function, along with an understanding of how each function strategically works together, gave me a leg up in terms of my ability to consider how day-to-day business decisions in my specific function (HR) might influence or impact the rest of the company. These insights have been a differentiator for me in the corporate world and have given me the confidence to make bold recommendations to the businesses I support as their HR business partner.

Q: Why do you think it is important to remain connected with Mercy and give back to the college community?

Richard: Mercy University does a great job supporting those that might need just a little extra guidance to achieve their full potential. That's the support I felt as an M.B.A. student, learning from faculty that consisted of full-time tenured professors as well as senior business professionals, many of whom chose to teach at Mercy because they also saw the hidden potential in Mercy students. It's why I think it's important to remain connected and give back to the next generation of students.

Mary Crescenzo, CNR: arts strategist/practitioner, author and public speaker on arts engagement for persons living with dementia.

Q: How did your experience at CNR influence you in your career trajectory?

Mary: In the mid 1970s I was one of the first graduate students at CNR to study art therapy. The profound influence of my CNR studies later contributed to my pioneering work in developing comprehensive methods of arts engagement through all the arts and my subsequent "Care Through the Arts" program for those living with dementia and their caregivers.

Q: Why do you think it is important to remain connected with CNR/Mercy and give back to the college community?

Mary: To remain connected with this community is a way to share perspectives, continue to learn from each other, offer suggestions and find ways to communicate the mission of this institution within our individual communities where we live and work around the world. Giving back takes many forms, whether through sustained connection or financially.

Jennie Vega '98: senior paralegal for the Walt Disney Company.

Q: How did your experience at Mercy influence you in your career trajectory?

Jennie: The degree I earned opened up new avenues for me in my career. I went from handling administrative tasks to drafting, negotiating and finalizing contracts in the entertainment industry.

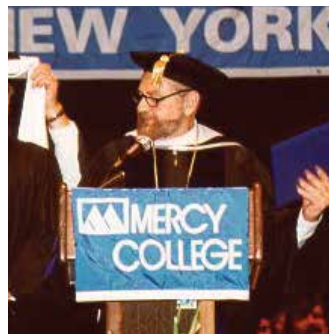
Q: Why do you think it is important to remain connected with Mercy and give back to the college community?

Jennie: It's imperative to stay connected with Mercy University in order to motivate the next generation to achieve similar goals. I look forward to connecting with Mercy students and providing them with a roadmap to success!



In Memoriam

Tributes



Dr. Jay Sexter (1936-2024)

Dr. Jay Sexter, seventh president of Mercy – a driven leader whose commitment to education left an indelible mark on our institution – passed away on May 21, 2024.

Dr. Sexter spent his professional career in various positions in education. Before joining Mercy, he served as a teacher, guidance counselor, principal, district school superintendent, university department chair, a dean at Fordham University and the provost and academic vice president of CUNY’s John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

During his nine-year tenure as president from 1990 to 1999, Mercy experienced significant growth with the student population nearly doubling to 9,400. Under his leadership, Mercy became known for its community-based outreach efforts, effective partnerships with New York City agencies including the Board of Education. Numerous graduate programs were introduced and expanded, including ones in health care, business and education. In addition, government and private grants increased by 30% and the endowment more than tripled.

After he left Mercy, Dr. Sexter continued his career in education at Touro University and worked to expand programs in California, Nevada and New York. He retired in 2015.

W. Bruce Fulton (1951-2024)

W. Bruce Fulton, associate professor emeritus and long-time Library faculty member, passed away on April 6, 2024.

Over the course of 24 years at Mercy, Fulton took a keen interest in systems development and deployment, steering the library through an era of dramatic advances in library informatics, including several major system upgrades and a successful transition from primarily print to electronic resources.

He will be remembered for his gentle nature, highly developed curiosity, storytelling skills and love of people and conversation.

Dr. Evan Imber-Black (1944-2024)

Dr. Evan Imber-Black, professor and program director of the Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) master's program, passed away on May 29, 2024.

Throughout her internationally recognized career, Dr. Imber-Black made significant contributions to various models of MFT practice, particularly in the areas of family dynamics and larger systemic interactions, family rituals and the handling of family secrets. She is the author of over 75 original papers and several influential books, including "The Secret Life of Families" (Bantam, 1998), "Secrets in Families and Family Therapy" (WW Norton, 1993), "Rituals for Our Times," co-authored with Janine Roberts (Jason Aronson, 1998), "Rituals in Families and Family Therapy," co-edited with Janine Roberts and Richard Whiting (WW Norton, 1988; second edition, 2003) and "Families and Larger Systems" (Guilford Publications, 1988).

Martin C. Kelly (1942-2024)

Martin C. Kelly, retired lecturer who taught Sociology courses in the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences (SSBS), passed away on May 29, 2024.

Professor Kelly had been an integral part of SSBS since 1994, bringing wisdom and enthusiasm to his teaching roles. Before joining Mercy, he served as the junior director at the Boys' Club of New York. Kelly was a brilliant educator and exceptional storyteller who earned the admiration and appreciation of many colleagues and students alike. Even after retiring, he continued to be engaged in the Mercy community as the spouse of Dr. Mary Knopp Kelly, SSBS associate professor.

Dr. Christine Sullivan (1951-2024)

Dr. Christine Sullivan, former associate professor and director of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program (OTA), passed away on May 16, 2024.

Dr. Sullivan was a beloved member of the Mercy community, esteemed for her impact on her program and unwavering commitment to students and colleagues. She led a successful career in occupational therapy before arriving at Mercy in 1997 when the OTA program started. She first served in a faculty role as associate director and clinical education coordinator of the OTA program, starting in 2002. Four years later, she was appointed as program director. In that role, she re-organized and revitalized the program, hiring new faculty and increasing enrollment. She retired in 2017.



Photo by Kenneth Gabrielsen

In Memoriam

Alumni & Friends

COLLEGE OF NEW ROCHELLE

Mary Lynch Schneider SAS '44
 Dorothy Los Fedus SAS '47
 Patricia Carey Gareri SAS '48
 Margaret Giesler Chappell SAS '48
 Marie Lauricella Krumeich SAS '48
 Helen Ginniff Bublitz SAS '49
 Suzanne Bennett Bradley SAS '50
 Rosalie Pedalino Jacobs SAS '50
 Dolores DePalmer Karl SAS '51
 Katherine McGrath Kelley SAS '51
 Sr. Dolores Yanshak, OSU SAS '51
 Florence Horgan SAS '52
 Donna Matthews Walcott SAS '52
 Sr. Jane Mennis, OSU SAS '52
 Rose Marie Murray Verrilli SAS '52
 Kathleen Neary Howard SAS '52
 Patricia Walsh Berntson SAS '52
 Betty Ann Wymbbs Finneran SAS '52
 Norma Fazia Elser SAS '53
 Joanne Hall Norbert SAS '54
 Virginia Walsh Furtwangler SAS '54
 Trudy Zawacki Kendrew SAS '54
 Claire Fordrung SAS '55
 Sr. Joan Bretz, OSU SAS '56
 Sr. Regina Kehoe, OSU SAS '56, GS '88
 Phyllis Kiely Sullivan SAS '57
 Mary Keenan Hart SAS '58

Donna McAuley Kelly SAS '58
 Sr. Claire Smith, OSU SAS '58
 Kathleen Fredrick SAS '59
 Katherine Johnston Ferrari SAS '59
 Geraldine Taylor Garrett SAS '60
 Maureen Moffatt Myers SAS '61
 Mary Crawford Reining SAS '62
 Margaret Priest MacDermott SAS '62
 Jane Spillane Courtney SAS '62
 Dana Greene SAS '63
 Virginia Murphy D'Isidori SAS '63
 Donna Daly Willson SAS '64
 Sr. Mary Anne Holmes, OSU SAS '64
 Jackie Strumpen-Darrie Pasheluk SAS '66
 Marilyn Dempsey McGill SAS '68
 Joan Godfrey Zaleski SAS '68
 Anne Hoey Logan SAS '69
 Vincent Fusco GS '75
 Kathleen Hilpl GS '75
 Christine Marino McKeever SAS '75
 Elizabeth Hayes GS '76
 Gerda Pintauro SNR '76
 Camille Gervino Romita SNR '77
 Joseph O'Mara GS '77
 Susan Ratnoff GS '78
 Gerald Schachner SNR '78
 Richard Kronberg GS '79
 Deborah Tuttle SAS '80
 Michael Gordon SNR '83

Joan Stack Trantolo SAS '83
 Mari-Louise Hanley GS '84
 Valerie Galdau GS '85
 Margaret Sirot Hobl GS '85
 Mary Lynn Iwanowicz Whitaker SN '86
 Doris Weiner GS '89
 Elizabeth Mahon Mauro SN '90
 George Martin GS '18
 Joseph Reilly-Antalec, *CNR Friend*

MERCY UNIVERSITY

Eileen Golden '65
 Joanne Vandagna '68
 Florita Hernandez '77
 Emanuel Karlson '78
 William Delaney '80
 Philip Mastroeni '80
 John Owen '80
 Naomi Isaacs '81
 Joseph Mangione '82
 Michael Keehan '87
 Dianne Devine, M.S. '97
 Anne Russell-Lindblom, M.S. '98
 Christina Wilson, M.S. '98
 Kim Garner McClafferty, M.S. '01
 Barbara Straniero '04
 Kathleen Garrison, M.S. '05
 Delores Harris '10



Making a Planned Gift to Support Mercy University

There are multiple ways to secure the future of the university and keep higher education accessible to all those who seek it. Planned gifts or estate gifts will have a profound impact on students and their futures. Here are some simple ways that you can support Mercy University through your estate plans:

Designate Mercy University in any of the following assets:*

- 1 YOUR WILL**
Designate Mercy University as beneficiary or co-beneficiary.
- 2 LIVING TRUST**
Include a donation in your revocable trust. At the time of your passing, Mercy University receives the amount you specified.
- 3 LIFE INSURANCE POLICY**
Name Mercy University as a beneficiary of your life insurance policy. You can determine if this is the entire value of the policy or a specific percentage of it.
- 4 INDIVIDUAL RETIREMENT ACCOUNT (IRA)**
Name Mercy University as a full or partial beneficiary.
*If you are 70½ or older, you can make a direct charitable gift from an IRA. The amount given to Mercy University will count toward your minimum required distribution, but does not increase your taxable income.
- 5 401(K) AND/OR 403(B) ACCOUNTS**
To help reduce the income tax burden to your loved ones, consider donating all or part of your 401(K) and/or 403(B) to Mercy University upon your death.
- 6 CHARITABLE REMAINDER TRUST AND/OR CHARITABLE LEAD TRUST**
The Trust will make payments to your designated beneficiaries as directed, while providing a tax benefit to your estate.
- 7 BROKERAGE ACCOUNT**
Your stock account can be donated to Mercy University when you list Mercy as a beneficiary.
- 8 WRITE ON ANY BANK ACCOUNT**
"PAY ON DEATH, MERCY UNIVERSITY TAX I.D. 13-1967321"
Funds in this account are paid on your passing directly to Mercy University. This avoids probate in many states.

Do you need to create a will? To further our dedication to you, Mercy University has partnered with FreeWill, a free online estate planning tool. Scan the QR code to link to the website to begin creating your will.



Contact **Hanna Gyory** from the Office of Planned Giving at **914.674.7385** or via email at **Lgyory@mercy.edu** for a confidential discussion on how to make a difference in the lives of Mercy University students.

**This is not professional tax or legal advice; consult a qualified tax advisor or attorney about your specific needs.*

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More information to be announced at
alumni.mercy.edu