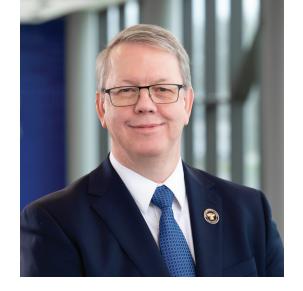
saint francis

A Magazine for Alumni and Friends of the University of Saint Francis





LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

"Shout joyfully to God, all the earth; sing of his glorious name; give him glorious praise."

Psalm 66:2 (NABRE)

Dear Alumni and Friends,

As we close the chapter on another academic year, I reflect on the tremendous beauty around us. Not just the physical charms of the University of Saint Francis campus, which are considerable, but the exquisite way God created each one of us to be part of this community. There is truly endless beauty in learning, collaborating, serving and supporting the Catholic culture of our institution.

I was honored and privileged to be entrusted with shepherding Saint Francis on an interim basis, and am humbled to be asked to continue as president by the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, our sponsoring congregation. I pray we will continue to rely on God's guidance as we move forward together. Now more than ever, the world needs the excellent, faith-based education for which Saint Francis is known and loved.

In this issue of Saint Francis magazine, you will find multiple examples of service, devotion, dedication and, most importantly, commitment to the Franciscan values. Everywhere I turn, I encounter alumni living out these values.

Faith will always be a common denominator of our successful alumni. As you'll discover in this issue, Xiaoxue Cui found her faith and her home in the U.S. after growing up in China, Dr. Alex Giltner meets and connects with Saint Francis students along their faith journeys and Nicole Hahn directs communication for the Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

And what about our Sisters on campus? You can daily see their dedication to faith but you should enjoy taking this issue's fun quiz for more insight into their unique personalities.

In addition, profiles of Justin Groves, Jim Bolint and the late Tony Davis shed further light on how Saint Francis shapes and helps students find their purposes in life. Finally, there is no doubt the late Tom Henry devoted his life to faith and service. President Emerita Sister M. Elise Kriss, OSF, and Coach Kevin Donley share memories of Tom in this issue.

Don't miss the opportunity to leave your legacy on campus with a customized brick as we forge forward on Trinity Hall Plaza, a place for the Saint Francis community to meet for coffee and conversation. We would love to have you be a part of this project.

May the coming summer months be filled with just the right mixture of sun and reflection—as you enjoy beauty in your everyday lives while striving to make a positive difference in the world.

God bless,

Dr. Lance Richey





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MARKETING AND CREATIVE DIRECTOR Carla (Satchwell) Pyle, BA '00, MOL '22

EDITOR AND FEATURE WRITER Reggie Hayes

GRAPHIC DESIGNER Hannah Fowerbaugh, BA '19

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Tony Didier, BA '00 Sister M. Benedicta Duna, OSF William "Willie" Romero

PUBLISHER

University of Saint Francis 2701 Spring St., Fort Wayne, IN 46808 go.sf.edu/magazine 260-399-7700

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"Saint Francis becomes a part of you."
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Legacy of service. The late Tom Henry launched his career with two degrees from Saint Francis and became Fort Wayne's longest-serving mayor. Kevin Donley and Sister Elise remember him fondly.

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Fun facts with Sisters. Learn more about the five Sisters who serve our students and the Saint Francis community. The answers to our fun quiz might surprise you.



"Groovy" moves. Justin Groves became a barber to earn a few extra bucks in college. His entrepreneurial spirit turned his side gig into a flourishing career. A healthy journey. After leaving her homeland and her family to explore the world, Xiaoxue Cui found faith and purpose. She can't say enough about her change of perspective. Diving into life. Jim Bolint is never far from discovery or adventure, whether as an environmental consultant, an expert diver or a dad. He's always searching for more.

On the cover. Dr. Lance Richey stepped in as interim president last May. Now, the "interim" tag is gone and he's ready to lead Saint Francis into a bright future.



"It's an opportunity to live out the values of the Church. The Second Vatican Council spoke of the universal call to holiness and the responsibility all members of the church have to carry out its mission. In my capacity, I'm working closely with the Bishop, the Sisters and the board to make sure—whether ordained or lay, religious or secular, Catholic or not Catholic—we're all working together to help us thrive as a Catholic, Franciscan university. It's very exciting."

Dr. Lance Richey

11th President of the University of Saint Francis

Dr. Lance Richey looks at his calendar full of deadlines, meetings and urgency, and doesn't see a moment's rest. Downtime? Not on his current planner. Perhaps a free day will eventually arise. The 4th of July, maybe?

Such is the life for a man whose job title changed by one word—and by leaps and bounds—when the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration appointed him as the 11th president of the University of Saint Francis. In March, he was named president and will be inaugurated on June 7.

Richey had been at the helm as interim president since May 2023, stepping up when Rev. Dr. Eric Albert Zimmer stepped down. Removing "interim" from the title added levels of responsibility and decision-making that are challenging and exhilarating.

"Being appointed to the role permanently has been a big change because many decisions that had been on hold now need to be made," Richey said in mid-April. "It's been a very busy time over the last few weeks, meeting with people across campus about possible ways to move the university forward. That's exciting, too. I'm pumped with adrenaline to have everything moving forward to an exciting future."

After serving as vice president for academic affairs, Richey originally planned to return to teaching theology. Asked to serve as interim president, he accepted the role with a servant's heart. He helped lead the way on several projects, including a daunting budget overhaul aimed at making the most of Saint Francis' available financial assets. Tough decisions were made with finality shortly after he was appointed president.

"I'm excited about the opportunity to serve the university in a way that can better communicate our message and values to the larger world and to drive changes internally that will strengthen those values as the basis for everything we do," he said. At the top of the agenda is a new strategic plan. The Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, along with the Board of Trustees, also reemphasized the goal of championing the university's Catholic, Franciscan identity.

Some might see irony in that task of boosting Catholic identity falling upon the first lay person to serve as university president. The first nine presidents were Sisters; Fr. Zimmer was the first priest to lead Saint Francis. Richey, a devout Catholic, said he believes lay people are called to service in the Church and its areas of influence.

"It's an opportunity to live out the values of the Church," Richey said. "The Second Vatican Council spoke of the universal call to holiness and the responsibility all members of the church have to carry out its mission. In my capacity, I'm working closely with the Bishop, the Sisters and the board to make sure—whether ordained or lay, religious or secular, Catholic or not Catholic—we're all working together to help us thrive as a Catholic, Franciscan university. It's very exciting."

Richey and his wife, Carol, have five children. Four have degrees from Saint Francis, and a fifth is earning a degree. While they are not natives—Lance is from South Carolina and Carol is from Nebraska—they have embraced Saint Francis and, in turn, Fort Wayne, as their home.

"I'm meeting lots of new people and I'm always amazed by how respected Saint Francis is in the community and how much people want to be part of the great things we're doing," Richey said. "The Board of Trustees has asked us to undertake the strategic planning process and it really opens up a lot of exciting things for us to think about as a community—what our opportunities are and how we go about achieving them."

Long-range goals will take time. They'll take dedicated work. And, they'll take up even more space on the president's calendar.



A CUT ABOXE

Thanks to his entrepreneurial spirit and business administration education from Saint Francis, Justin Groves (BS '21) thrives as a barber and a businessman. But he's always looking for more.

Justin Groves (BS '21) owns and operates Diligent Hands Barber Lounge in Fort Wayne, with plans to open another barbershop in South Bend and eventually his own barber school. His ongoing clients include several University of Saint Francis and University of Notre Dame football players. When he doesn't have a set of clippers in his hands—or even when he does—he's calculating what comes next.

The man whose friends call him "Groovy" stumbled onto his entrepreneurial adventure in hair care by accident. Or maybe necessity.

"I never thought I'd be a barber," Groves said. "I was looking for something to put a little change in my pocket. You know how it is being a broke college kid. I was trying to figure out something because I was tired of asking Mom and Dad for gas money. I found a way, built a passion for it and ran with it."

Bryce Mejer, Groves' best friend, was his first customer.

"I said, 'Let me give you a cut; it can't be that hard," Groves said. "He wanted a mohawk, but I scalped him completely. He gets free haircuts to this day."

Groves kept practicing, earned his bachelor's degree in business administration at Saint Francis while playing defensive line on the football team and honed his barbering skills at Recalibrated Christian Beauty and Barber College in Fort Wayne. Using his business



education and his cutting skills, he opened Diligent Hands Barber Lounge at 5525 Coldwater Road.

The barbershop's name comes from the Bible.

"Proverbs 10:4 states, 'A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich," Groves said. "My whole life has been faith-driven, and I enjoy having a faith-driven business.

"People always ask me about 'Diligent Hands," Groves said. "I could have called it 'The Groove' or something like that, but I wanted it to have a deeper meaning. I think it sounds elegant as well, and I haven't heard of another barbershop named that."

Groves, 24, searched for the right spot for his shop before settling on its location, which is near Walmart and attracts a nice share of foot traffic. The design is modern, with a black, white and gray color scheme. Groves aimed for "sharp and classy," and succeeded. His father Keith played a major role in the shop design, Groves said. Diligent Hands employs five other barbers.

Groves keeps urging his father and mother, LaTonia, to move to the Fort Wayne area, but they have remained in South Bend, where Groves grew up. Groves and his fiancée Brooke Herron (BS '21) have a son, Ezekiel, and live in Fort Wayne. Herron works as a public accountant at Katz, Sapper & Miller (KSM).

"I've always been an entrepreneur," Groves said. "My major was science entrepreneurship before I switched over to business administration. I really enjoy the city of Fort Wayne. It reminds me of South Bend but a little bit bigger. I built a clientele while in college, so why would I leave? It allowed me to open my own shop."

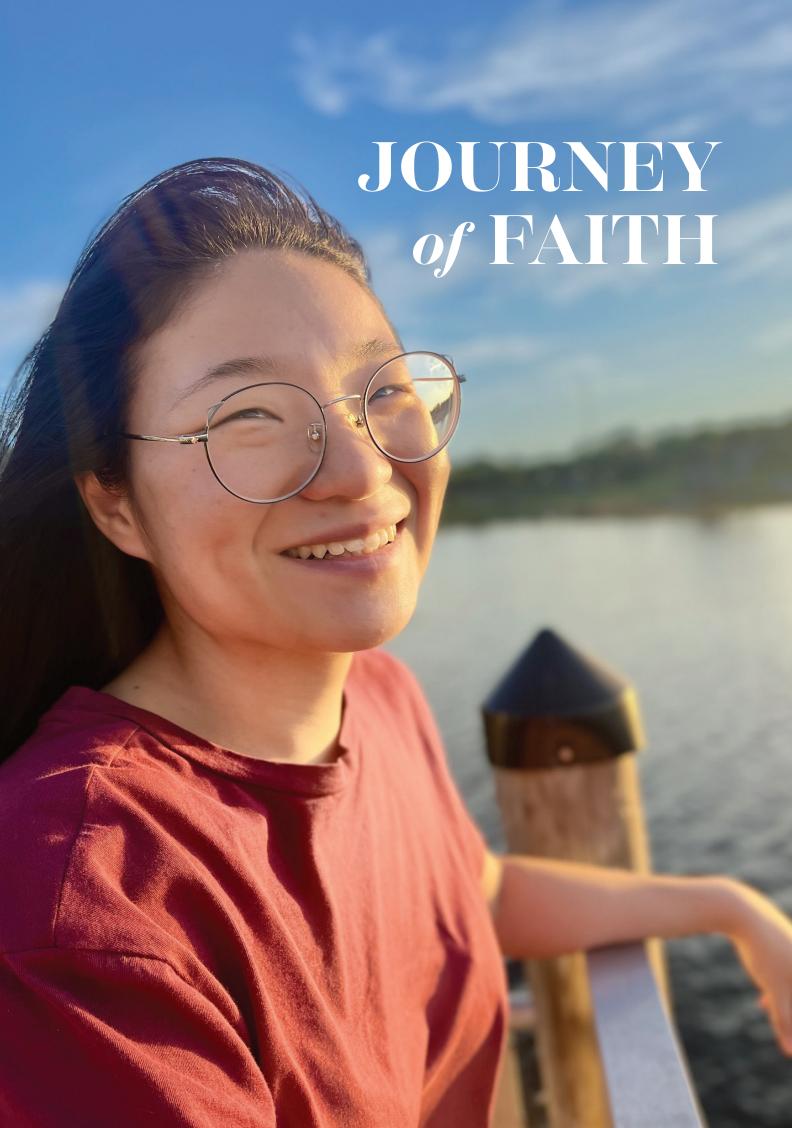
Groves' entrepreneurial skills extend beyond the barber chair. He owns a seasonal fireworks business (Groovy's Fireworks) and an apparel business (God Does Blessings). He also delivers motivational speeches for middle school and high school students, urging young people to take advantage of opportunities and to strive toward their dreams.

There's little time to slow down for Groves, who keeps pursuing his entrepreneurial dreams.

"As soon as I graduated college, I walked across that stage and told myself, 'I'm going to go for it." Groves said.

Saint Francis helped spur his desire to be a business owner.

"Every presentation I did in college was about my barber shop," he said. "The assignment and the willingness of the professors to help me with my goal and my vision are what got me to this point. I created my LLC sitting in the classroom, talking with professors about how to do it. College was the incubator that allowed me to get to this point. If you put everything into it in college, you will benefit from it. Saint Francis was a huge part of making this all happen."



Xiaoxue Cui grew up in China and worked as a neurologist, but a move to the United States put her on a new path. Her time at Saint Francis changed her life in more ways than one.

Xiaoxue Cui (BSN '22) found her faith in Fort Wayne. When she came to the United States from China, her goal was to see another part of the world, explore continued medical education and find direction for her life. She succeeded in unexpected ways. Today, Xiaoxue is living in Loxahatchee, Florida, married and expecting a child, and considers herself an entirely different person due to her belief in Jesus Christ.

Her road to Christianity wound through Saint Francis, as well as the International House, a nonprofit, nondenominational Christian organization in Fort Wayne.

"I knew nothing about religion," Xiaoxue said. "When I transferred to the University of Saint Francis (from the University of Alabama-Birmingham), theology class was required. It was really confusing to me. Ann Heign (executive director) at the International House helped me understand. She helped me to read the Bible and understand it, and I began seeking the truth of life and everything.

"People who believe in Jesus are very different," she said. "They are friendlier and nicer, and they share their love with others. I could see the light in them. And, as I went along, I could see the brightest light that is God."

Xiaoxue had spent many years studying in China, ultimately pursuing neurology. But as she grew older, she felt a strong desire to explore life outside of her home country. She initially landed in Birmingham, Alabama.

"I was there for one semester and my parents started to worry about me," she said. "They have friends in Fort Wayne, and they asked me if I would like to transfer to Saint Francis and live with their friends. So that's what I did, and they took care of me."

Saint Francis' nursing program was a major draw. "This was a great opportunity to do clinicals and see how the hospital system works in America," she said. Xiaoxue faced a learning curve improving her ability to English fluently. In China, English is a focus with reading and writing, but not with speech. Her classroom and clinical work helped her rapidly improve her oral communication. As she developed more skills in the nursing program, she also found a change emerge in how she interacted with patients. In China, the interaction between healthcare professionals and patients is cold; literally, it can be clinical.

"How I work, how I think about patients—the University of Saint Francis influenced me a lot," she said. "Not only do they teach you knowledge, but they teach you how to take care of patients in a Catholic way. A lot of times, not only do patients have physical needs, but if they are happy, it's very helpful for the whole process of healing. It's very important to show kindness and you don't see that kind of culture in China in healthcare."

Once she graduated, Xiaoxue landed a position in Florida and ended up meeting her husband David Frost at a local park while she attended a church small-group meeting. The couple, married last May, expects their first child soon.

Xiaoxue's experience at Saint Francis changed her as deeply as a person as it did as a healthcare professional.

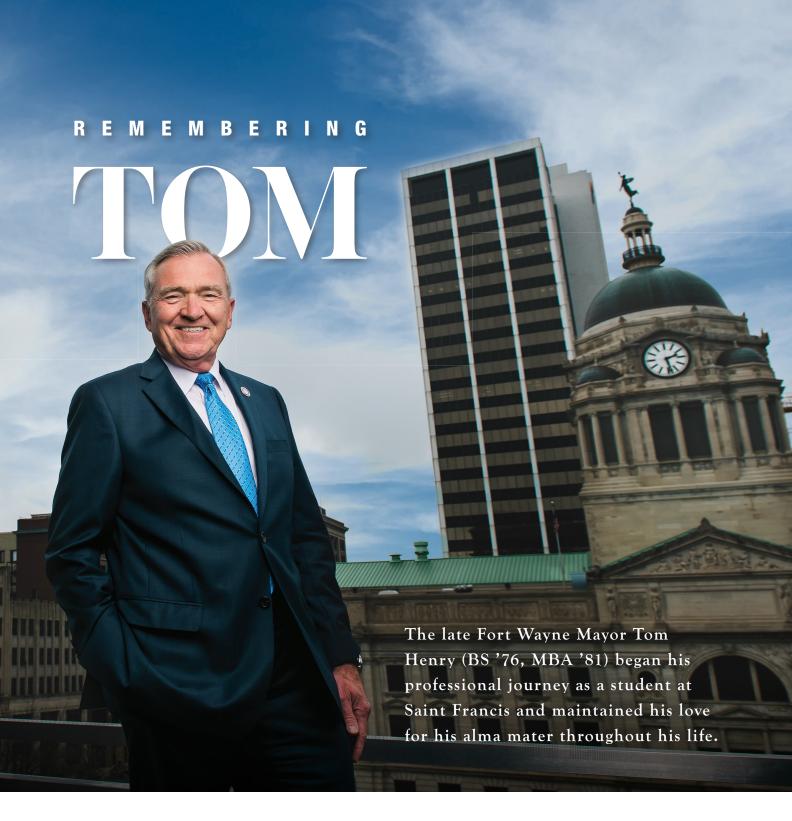
"I am much more patient. I was not patient before I came here; I was a spoiled only child," she said. "I can understand people's feelings better. I respect other people more. I think about other people more-not just their physical needs but their spiritual needs. That part is what Saint Francis taught me."

Xiaoxue credits her time at Saint Francis and in Fort Wayne with shaping her spiritual walk, and with making her a better person as she navigates her life as a wife and soon-to-be mother.

"Jesus is the solution that I've found, and the solution to save the culture of the world," she said. "If you love other people and share that love, it's contagious. People recognize that and appreciate that."

"When you look for me, you will find me."

JEREMIAH 29:13 (NABRE)



Kevin Donley moved to Fort Wayne in 1997 to start the University of Saint Francis football program completely from scratch. That meant long hours on campus. In fact, he lived out of a room in Trinity Hall. A couple of times a week, Donley would grab a meal at the Green Frog Inn. That's where he met Tom Henry.

Henry's wife, Cindy, owned the Green Frog, and Donley quickly became friends with the couple.

Fast forward 20 years to a football stadium in Daytona, Florida. Donley is coaching what will be his first national championship team. Tom Henry is walking the sidelines as a proud alumnus and the mayor of Fort Wayne.

"They had pretty tight security," Donley said. "Our fans went out at halftime to tailgate, and they wouldn't let them back in. Tom went over there, said, 'I am the mayor of Fort Wayne, and they will come back in!' By gosh, he got them back in. After the game, he and (then-Saint Francis President) Sister Elise (Kriss) had a great time down there celebrating."

Henry, who died on March 28, was a passionate, dedicated friend and supporter of his alma mater. Over the years, Henry regularly attended games and other campus events as his schedule allowed. He championed Saint Francis at every turn. As his political accomplishments increased—with well-documented success in leading the growth and modernization of downtown Fort Wayne—he never abandoned his roots.



"I just so appreciated his friendliness and informal approach. He was always very open and communicative and shared a lot. There's nothing I can say that hasn't been said. We were privileged that the University of Saint Francis was in his town, and he was so supportive of us."

Sister M. Elise Kriss, OSF University of Saint Francis President Emerita Even in the week prior to his death from stomach cancer, Henry stopped by Saint Francis to catch a glimpse of spring football practice.

"We became close when I first got here and suddenly, he's the mayor," Donley said. "He remained a good friend. He would come out every summer to talk to the team in team meetings. I don't think I ever asked him to do something that he didn't do. He was such a great guy."

Sister Elise also met Henry long before he became mayor. The two later worked together as mayor and university president, but also with various community boards and charities.

"I just so appreciated his friendliness and informal approach," Sister Elise said. "He was always very open and communicative and shared a lot. There's nothing I can say that hasn't been said. We were privileged that the University of Saint Francis was in his town, and he was so supportive of us."

On Aug. 14, 2018, Henry joined Donley and Sister Elise in unveiling the "Avenue of Champions" sign near Bishop D'Arcy Stadium as a tribute to the success of the football team, which won back-to-back NAIA championships.

"I'm encouraged by the unique way we're recognizing the special accomplishments of the University of Saint Francis," Henry said that day. "I admire the football program's commitment to good sportsmanship, teamwork and respect. We're fortunate to live in a community that values education and the way athletics can bring out the best in people."

Donley asked Henry to be an honorary coach for the 2024 spring game, but the mayor died before the game arrived.

"We'll miss Tom," Sister Elise said. "There will be a hole in the hearts of a lot of people."

JIM BOLINT'S LOVE OF SCIENCE AND PASSION FOR DIVING HAVE TAKEN HIM ON UNENDING ADVENTURES AROUND THE WORLD

Let's go underwater with Jim "Gunner" Bolint (BS '99). He's a professional diver, adept at exploring marine life 125 feet or more below the surface. He has explored as deep as 3,000 feet below in a submarine. The experiences, always exhilarating, occasionally become more than he bargains for.

"I've had the great fortune to travel throughout the world and see many things most people only see on the Discovery Channel," Bolint said.

Bolint has encountered—up close and personal—a giant isopod, a jumbo octopus and too many other species of fish to count. Those encounters are fascinating and memorable, and generally without any extreme danger.

Tiger sharks are a different story.

Tiger sharks of 14 or 15 feet in length have charged Bolint twice—once off Andros Island, Bahamas, and once in Kona, Hawaii. "It really just shows you how out of your element you are; you're basically a primate in the water and you just have to sit there and take it," Bolint said. "I don't have the ability to defend myself or escape. I just have to play it out and remove myself from the situation."

Bolint finds few places where he's out of his element. He's comfortable as an environmental consultant, inventor, biologist, adventurer and family man. Bolint works as principal scientist at Environmental Works, Inc., in Indianapolis. He and his fiancée Amanda "Mandy" Gruesbeck have two daughters, Kelsey and Cameron, and live in Zionsville, Indiana.

Bolint traveled a circuitous path to environmental science. Coming out of Portage High School, he planned to play soccer collegiately and study commercial art. After considering Ohio State University, Manchester University and the Art Institute in Chicago, he chose Saint Francis.

His friend and fellow player Mike Samaniego from "The Region" kept his Gunner nickname alive as teammates at Saint Francis. (The nickname came from Bolint's knack for long-range goals as a teenager.) Bolint's career path changed course after a course with Saint Francis professor Larry "Doc" Wiedman. "Doc Wiedman got me into the sciences," Bolint said. "I went from commercial art to biology to environmental science. I was grateful to him for introducing me to a whole new realm."

After graduation, Bolint worked at Shedd Aquarium in Chicago, and carries a particularly vivid memory of guiding rock star Rod Stewart and his supermodel wife Rachel Hunter during a visit. The \$20,000-a-year salary didn't cut it, even with celebrity encounters, so he moved on to work at SECOR International, Inc., launching a career which took him to a variety of companies, studies and adventures.

Among many fascinating experiences, Bolint worked at the site of the Selendang Ayu oil spill in western Alaska's Aleutian Islands, the second-largest spill to the Exxon Valdez. That assignment took 12 hours a day. One memorable anecdote: "Going back to the command center one day, there was all this ruckus going on, people saying, 'We need a biologist!' Technically, that was me. There was a beached whale on the north side of the Dutch harbor," Bolint said.

The whale, an 8-foot juvenile, weighed just shy of a ton. Bolint and his coworkers managed to ease her back out to sea.

A few years later, Bolint spent three months "hopping around Central America." He even bought a bungalow. "I was going to live down there, be a scuba bum, basically. Then I met Mandy."

Love pulled him back to Indiana, and he resumed his environmental consulting career. Gruesbeck is also an environmental consultant. The couple



has been planning to marry since before their first daughter but keep seeing their plans interrupted by life circumstances. "The wedding will be later this year," he said.

Bolint still loves his work, even if it can be tricky to explain his job to the average person.

"I figure out how to clean up soil and groundwater," he said. "When somebody spills something, the guys in the suits and the fire departments come, addressing the immediate concerns. My stuff has been in the ground for years, if not decades."

Bolint has two inventions, with others in the developmental phase. He's also prepping his daughters for science interest by introducing them to the works of legendary oceanographer Jacques Cousteau and others. "They're into Barbie and Paw Patrol, but I'm gently persuading them in the direction of the sciences."

Bolint credits that spark lit by Wiedman more than 20 years ago.

"I don't think other colleges pay as much attention to the individual," Bolint said. "I've been able to have a good melding of my personal interests and my education—and yet I can still somehow have a profession and make some money."



SISTERS QUIZ

A: Sr. Mary Joseph | B: Sr. Anita | C: Sr. Elise | D: Sr. Benedicta | E: Sr. Maria Gemma

1.	Match the Sister with her favorite non-Saint Francis sports team:	2	Which Sister's first car was an old police car and everyone could still see where the police
	Alabama, "Roll Tide!"	decal used to be?	,
	Chicago Cubs (two Sisters)	3	Which Sister's secret talent is making kombucha and speaking Hungarian?
	Gryffindor Quidditch team	4	4 Which Sister was a missionary in Hondura
	Nephew's soccer team		Central America?

5. ____ Which Sister lists White Chedder Cheez-It crackers as a favorite snack?



6	Which Sister names her two favorite places to
	visit as Indiana small towns and New York City?

- 7. ____ Which Sister's favorite cartoon character is Goofy?
- 8. ____ Which Sister loves "Star Wars"?
- 9. ____ Which Sister was briefly a telemarketer?
- 10. ____ Which Sister never gets tired of eating ice cream?
- 11. ____ Which Sister's favorite movies are "Marie's Story," "Elf" and "Cool Runnings"?
- 12. ____ Which Sister once sold knives for Cutco?

6. C: Sr. Elise 12. E: Sr. Maria Gemma 7. B: Sr. An<u>ita</u>

5. E: Sr. Maria Gemma 11. D: Sr. Benedicta

3. D: Sr. Benedicta 9. D: Sr. Benedicta 4. B: Sr. Anita 10. C: Sr. Elise

2. A: Sr. Mary Joseph 8. A: Sr. Mary Joseph

1. Alabama—A: Sr. Mary Joseph Cubs: C: Sr. Elise and B. Sr. Anita Gryffindor Quidditch: E: Sr. Maria Gemma Nephew's soccer team: D: Sr. Benedicta

:S19WSNA



Associate Vice President for Catholic Culture Dr. Alex Giltner enjoys good conversations about values, mission and the meaning of life—and how the University of Saint Francis lives out its Catholic principles.

Giltner encourages students to engage him with the big questions. He's not supplying easy answers, but he'll do everything he can to steer them in the direction of discovery.

As the new Associate Vice President for Catholic Culture, Giltner invests daily in conversation, discussion, the occasional "Star Wars" sidebar and finding ways for Saint Francis students to uncover where their lives go from here—as people, not just workplace professionals.

"We call them the big questions in class," Giltner said.
"They're universal. Everyone has them: Is there a God? Does truth exist? Does my life matter? What happens when I die? What should I do with my life? What does it mean to be a good person? These are the questions everyone asks."

The big questions repeat, generation after generation. The college-age years—formative whether a person pursues higher education or goes straight into the workforce—inevitably lead young people to question their beliefs. No longer simply regurgitating their parents' beliefs, good or bad, they develop their own. While the questions are timeless, the current societal landscape is a particularly difficult one to navigate, Giltner said.

"People are hungry for truth," he said. "We're living in a world where truth, in many ways, is under assault. I don't mean any particular social issue. But truth itself—that there can be a truth and we can know it."

Giltner enjoys meeting young people where they are, presuming nothing and avoiding preaching. A married father of two (he and Mary Beth have sons Jack and Eli), he has never forgotten his path as a young person searching for answers. The direction of his life is strong and grounded in the Catholic faith today, but it was quite a journey to get there.

Giltner's youth was spent living in St. Louis, Missouri, and he eventually went on to study at St. Louis University.



"Happy the one who finds wisdom, the one who gains understanding!"

PROVERBS 3:13 (NABRE)

"I did not grow up in the church; I did not even grow up Christian," Giltner said. "I became Christian at 20 but had a double-edged struggle with substance abuse and a real existential angst about what is the purpose of life."

His search for answers led him to multiple degrees—a bachelor's in theology, a master's in church history and a doctorate in historical theology—and solidified his belief that faith and reason work together to make sense of the world we live in.

"As Pope John Paul II says in his encyclical, *Fides et Ratio*, 'Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth," Giltner said. "They both lead us to truth, and they don't contradict. In Catholic theology, faith and reason are bedfellows and they complement each other.

"Not that I'm in my class proselytizing, but I do share what I think is true and why I believe it is true," Giltner said. "I've had students who came into my class as atheists and leave thinking God does exist, and that's where they are on their journey. It's amazing and I give all glory to God."

Giltner's new role with Catholic Culture within the Student Life department sets a goal to help Saint Francis integrate its Catholic mission and integrity more faithfully and intentionally. The idea is to help students—alongside faculty, staff and administration—pursue Saint Francis' mission and values.

Giltner's office décor reflects his "Star Wars" fandom, and he also enjoys "Lord of the Rings." Both cultural interests can prompt conversations circling back to the big questions. "Not that I would agree with everything in the mythological framework of 'Star Wars,' but it does really get down to those big questions. Plus, it has light sabers and spaceships and really good characters—and makes for incredible Lego sets."

Legos are requisite tools in being a father, and in that role, Giltner has further deepened his faith and his ability to guide others.

"Nothing has taught me more about the love of the Father than being a father," he said. "Nothing has taught me more about how much I don't have to strive for the love of God because that love is just there. It's not there because you earned it. Fatherhood has taught me a lot about the love of God."

K E E P SAINT FRANCIS



Steppin' Up Physical Therapy makes the most of a connection with the University of Saint Francis. In the last few years, over 15 Saint Francis alumni joined the Steppin' Up team. "Saint Francis does a really good job with the screening process for their students," Steppin' Up Founder and CEO Jason Hazelett said. "They keep producing good graduates."

Hazelett started Steppin' Up in 2004 and, with the help of a great team, has developed five locations: 9823 Auburn Road, 4025 Sage Bluff Crossing, 4303 Lahmeyer Road, 6520 E. State Boulevard and 3805 S. Calhoun Street. All five places have Saint Francis alumni taking care of physical therapy patients.



The connection was strong from the start: The first two people Hazelett hired 20 years ago were Saint Francis alumni.

"I have such an amazing team from top to bottom—therapists, front desk, administrative staff, directors in each office—and they're good people," Hazelett said. "I have been fortunate to surround myself with good people and that's why we are successful."

After nearly 25 years in the television news business, Nicole (Rahr) Hahn embarked on a communications career path where she shares and celebrates Catholic faith and values each day.

Whether "Live On Air" or in life off air, Nicole (Rahr) Hahn (BA '94) has always adhered to one modus operandi—fully focused and committed.

Hahn spent 21 years at WPTA 21Alive, a "21 at 21" symmetry at the Fort Wayne television station where she worked as a news producer and forged a fount of fond memories.

One of those memories remains especially vivid in her mind.

In February 2013, Hahn arranged to air Bishop John D'Arcy's funeral live on 21Alive, an unprecedented move by a secular television station. She loves breaking news and cherishes her Catholic faith, and that day captured both. "That was pretty special," she said. "Being invited to Bishop D'Arcy's home in Boston with (anchor) Melissa Long and chief photographer Brian Gillett was another great memory."

Today, Hahn serves as director of the secretariat for communications at the Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. Her boss is Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, and the drive that kept her going in the news business continues to sustain her as she handles communications at the Diocese, including its publication, Today's Catholic.

"I worked in news for 24 years, in a place with no windows and no view of the outside," Hahn said, looking out her current window-filled office. "I tell people this is God's reward to me—a seventh-floor corner office with a view of downtown Fort Wayne. The Bishop is fantastic. Father Mark Gurtner (Vicar General) is phenomenal. My background in media is very helpful."

Hahn's mother, MaryLou, came to the United States from the Netherlands as a teenager. She and her husband, Dale, lived in Pennsylvania and upstate New York before Dale was transferred to Huntington, Indiana. Hahn attended St. Mary School and Huntington North High School. High school was a challenging time as she navigated public school and dealt with the death of her father in a semi-truck accident. "As the oldest of three, I became more of a parent than a sibling," Hahn said. "Since my mom was from another country, my dad always took care of things. I had to grow up quick."

After high school, she worked overnight in a grocery for a year to save money and then enrolled at Saint Francis College to study communications. "I just loved it," Hahn said. "Even now, just walking on the campus makes me feel so happy. You could live out your faith every day, which was fantastic."

Hired by 21Alive as an assistant producer while a senior, she became a full-time producer after graduation. "I liked the responsibility of being in charge and running the show. Breaking news was my favorite, making split-second decisions. You're going on the air at 6 o'clock, ready or not."

After two decades-plus with 21Alive, Hahn accepted a Toledo, Ohio, news director position, returning home on weekends to husband Jim and children Cota and Tess for three years. "That got to be too much, and I had some health issues to deal with. After I took time off, I decided TV wasn't what I wanted to go back to."

Hahn worked at IPFW (now Purdue Fort Wayne) in communications and then moved to Pathfinder Services. When the Diocese position opened, several friends told her she'd be a perfect fit. Hahn is approaching three years and feels at home. She recently became a board member at A Mother's Hope, which provides shelter for pregnant homeless mothers.

A trip to World Youth Day in Portugal last summer cemented Hahn's feelings about being called to the right place at the right time.

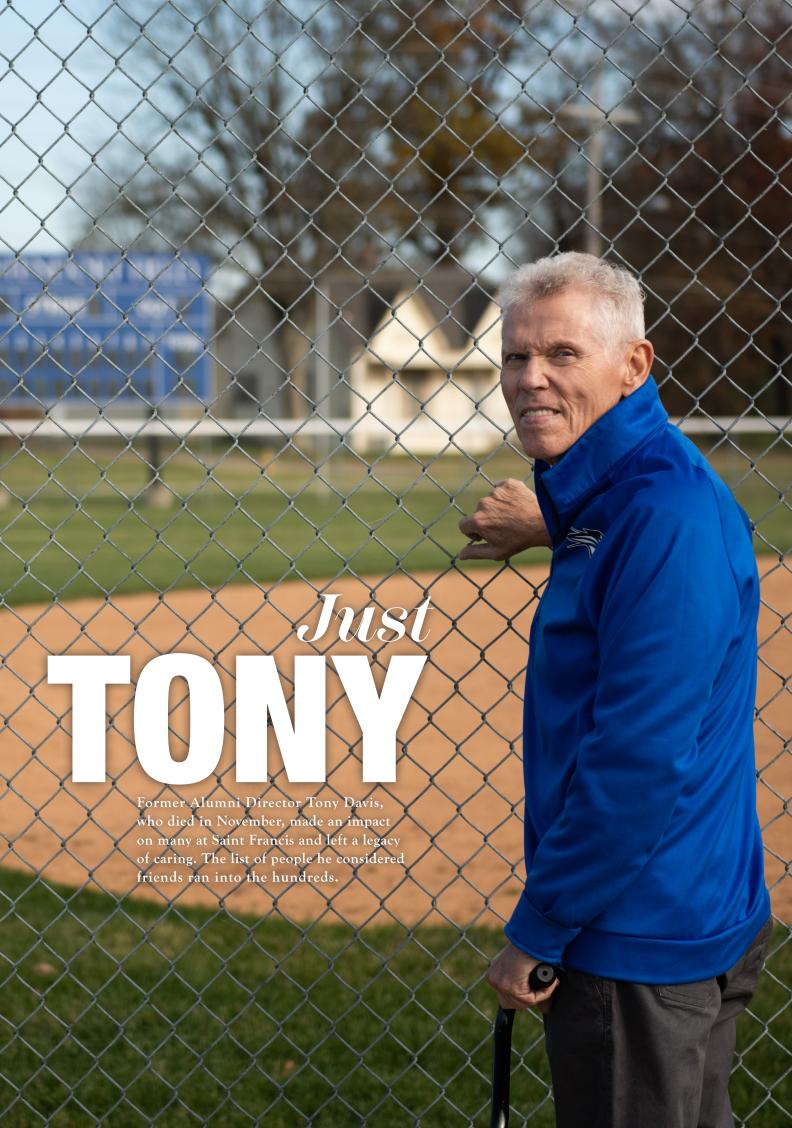
"One of the greatest moments was when Pope Francis rode through Edward VII Park in Lisbon so that we could all get a close look at him," she said. "I ugly cried because I was overwhelmed with happiness, and I could feel my mom (who died in 2021) and her parents—my Oma and Opa, which is Dutch for Grandma and Grandpa—with me because their faith was so strong.

"I was also grateful to God as I thought about how I never would have imagined that the little girl who stood in the government cheese line with her mom, and who—despite her parents working so hard—was sometimes unsure if there would be enough food on the table, was now standing in Portugal watching the Pope go by and hearing him speak."

PROMOTING COOCIONALISTA

"He said to them, 'Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature.'"

Mark 16.15 (NABRE)





"YOU CAN SEE THE FRANCISCAN VALUES IN EVERY PROFESSOR, EVERY SYLLABUS AND IN ALL THE PEOPLE ON CAMPUS. THOSE VALUES AREN'T JUST WORDS."

Tony Davis (BLS '96)

Tony Davis (BLS '96) lived his life as an old-school salesman. When he believed in something—as he believed in the University of Saint Francis—he sold it and sold it and sold it until his audience bought in.

Davis worked more than a dozen official years for then-Saint Francis College in the 1980s and 1990s, helping to usher in an era when athletics blossomed, the campus bloomed and the full university experience came to life.

Davis, 73, who died on Nov. 24 after a long battle with cancer and other health issues, continued to pitch the virtues of Saint Francis long after he was on the payroll. "Saint Francis becomes a part of you," he said in an interview three weeks before his death.

Davis worked as alumni director, but also spent time in student life, athletics, development and just about every aspect of Saint Francis.

Asked to name his favorite title, he said, simply, "Just Tony."

"We put up the first Homecoming tent, we had the first bonfire, all of those things," Davis said. "To see what Saint Francis has now is incredible. There's an old saying in the business: You squirt a lot of vinegar on a cucumber before it becomes a pickle. We did a lot of squirting."

Davis said he was proud of the strides made in bringing alumni back on campus. He recalled stretching a limited alumni budget to stage 40 events outside of Fort Wayne—"Twenty-nine cities, up and down highway 75, including Florida," he said—to engage with alumni and promote Saint Francis. His team's efforts received a national award from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). Davis organized a wedding vows renewal service for alumni and an "adopt a student" program to help student needs, and he worked tirelessly to interact with local media to promote Saint Francis in all areas.

Davis became close friends with the late Larry Westendorf, the softball coach whose name

graces the field. The two shared a passion for Saint Francis and did everything they could to promote all aspects. Davis later became close friends with current softball coach Ryan Bolyn, who Davis said is "like a son to me."

"I've put my life in three places: Life before Saint Francis, life at Saint Francis—which is the most significant part of my life, shaping who I am—and life after Saint Francis," Davis said. "Even my life after Saint Francis was shaped by my life at Saint Francis. Of everything I've ever done in my life, the most important stuff was right here at Saint Francis."

Reminiscing about his days at Saint Francis, Davis said, helped bring back into focus how much he valued the students and wanted to spur them to be the best they could be.

"All I care about now is their successes in life,"
Davis said. "We expected them to have four good years here and then 40 great years of life. I tried to look at those students back in their day and I saw them as the professionals they are now. They never disappointed me. I could go down a list of kids and see what they've done and not be surprised."

Davis struggled with cancer and Parkinson's disease in his later years, noting that Parkinson's had diminished what had been his recognizable, booming voice. But, as his friends would attest, he never stopped sharing stories or being a compassionate person. And he was still selling the merits of Saint Francis to the very end.

"You can see the Franciscan values in every professor, every syllabus and in all the people on campus," Davis said. "Those values aren't just words."

Davis, a U.S. Army veteran who served as a medic during the Vietnam war, said he tried to carry the values he cultivated at Saint Francis with him wherever he went. He is survived by his wife Sally, children Heather, Barry and Russell, and grandchildren Harrison, Colin and Everly.

"Life is about passing something forward," he said. "Hopefully, I passed Saint Francis forward with patience, love, respect and dignity. That's what matters."

CAMPUS NEWS

Saint Francis adds bowling program for 2024-25

Men's and women's bowling will join Saint Francis' roster of athletic programs, beginning with the 2024-25 academic year.

Saint Francis hosts first Anatomage Tournament

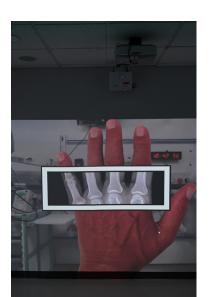
High school teams from Indiana, Ohio and Michigan competed in the first Saint Francis Anatomage Tournament, held Feb. 23 at the Achatz Hall of Science and John and Toni Murray Research Center. The winning teams were from Toledo Pre-Med and Health Science Academy, and they advanced to the national tournament.



Immersive Learning Lab opens up possibilities for students

The new Doermer Family
Foundation Immersive Learning
Laboratory at Saint Francis
offers a virtual experience like
few others for students across
campus. The lab, located in the
Doermer Family Center for Health
Science Education, offers an
endless possibility of simulated
environments for learning. It is
the first at a university in Indiana.

In addition to the Immersive Lab, Saint Francis invested \$1.23 million to complete a project last fall that includes improvements to its Nursing Resource Center, Graduate Health Sciences classrooms, Acute Care classroom, Sonography Lab, Simulation Lab and other areas. Additional funds were used for equipment and technology.





Hundreds work to solve 'Murder in the Mansion' case

More than 230 Saint Francis alumni and friends put on their detective caps in February for this year's "Murder in the Mansion" and worked hard to solve the mystery of "Who Dunnit?!!" Detective Inspector Dick Lacey arrived at the end of the evening to reveal that it was none other than Minuet Johnson, the maid! Many of our exuberant alumni and friends dressed to the nines in 1920s attire.

Making moves for Public Health

Amelia Clark, DrPH, executive director of the Center for Integrated Public Health Education and Research (CIPHER), was appointed to the executive board of the Indiana Department of Health (IDOH) by Governor Eric J. Holcomb. Clark will begin her four-year term in November. Through her appointment, she will join community, clinical and professional representatives to advise IDOH on efforts to promote, protect and improve the health and safety of Hoosiers.



Saint Francis launches Rick Miller Scholarship

Saint Francis will honor the late Rick Miller's dedication to his faith and his students through the creation of the Rick Miller Faith and Integrity Scholarship. The scholarship will support books, tuition, and room and board for awarded students. Alumni and others can contribute to the Rick Miller Faith and Integrity Scholarship Endowment Fund through the Saint Francis Giving Page at sf.edu/give.



Our alumni among 'Forty Under 40'

Saint Francis is proud to celebrate two alumni who were named to the Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly's annual "Forty Under 40" list of achievers. Congratulations to Kristy Lindeman (MOL '16) and Adam Blakey (BSW '08) for being selected.



Saint Francis mourns the loss of Jayden Morris

The Saint Francis community mourned the death of student Jayden Morris. On Feb. 3, Morris was the victim of a homicide behind a home north of downtown Fort Wayne. President Dr. Lance Richey shared the university's sympathy and prayers with a public statement:

"The University of Saint Francis community is heartbroken with grief over the passing of Jayden Morris, a freshman and member of our football team. We offer our condolences to Jayden's family and pray for them during this unimaginably difficult time. We also pray for, and offer our support to, the many teammates and friends who knew and loved Jayden. May Jayden rest in the love of our Heavenly Father, and may all those who mourn him be comforted by God's healing grace."

Servus Omnium returns

Saint Francis, in partnership with Catholic Charities of Fort Wayne-South Bend and the Catholic Community Foundation, presented Deacon Larry Oney as guest speaker for the Servus Omnium 2024 breakfast and lecture, "Called and Sent for Such a Time as This." The event marked the first Servus Omnium in three years.

IN MEMORIAM

Friends of Saint Francis Willis Eugene "Bill" Brand George Eickhoff, Doctor of Humane Letters '16 Joshua Todd

Saint Francis Student Jayden Morris

1950s

Margaret Rorick '53* Nancy Boylan '54 Mary Ann Patrick '54 Richard Butt '58

1960s

Joyce Schelling '62 Father Gregory Poser '65 Ann Lebrecht '66, '75 Wanda Carpenter '68, '73 Daniel Howe '68 Mary Ann Schieferstein '68 Ruth Sprunger '68 Ernest Daggett '69 Joseph Foy '69, '74

1970s

Judith "Judy" Jordan '70 Charles Belch '71 Marilyn Bennett '71 Sr. Mary Kay Leuschke '71 John Robert Malkoski, Sr. '71 Teresa Ann Weicht '73* Shirley Powell '75, '82 Tom Henry '76, '81 James Wright '77

1980s

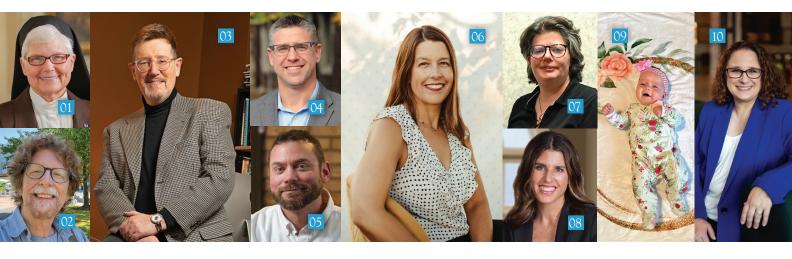
Doris Yerger '80 Walter Malicki '81 Randy Short '85

1990s

Margaret Lortie '93 Tony Davis '96

2000s Jeremy Steele '08, '18

* St. Joseph School of Nursing



class notes

keeping connected with alumni and friends

1960s

Thalia Tejeda Taylor (BA '69) received the 2023 Women Celebrating Women award for service and volunteerism in the St. Peter, Minnesota, community.

1970s

old Sr. Elise Kriss, OSF (BSE '72, MSE '78) received a Women in American History Award from Daughters of the American Revolution National Headquarters. old Dr. John "Jack" Teeple (MS '74) celebrated his 50-year anniversary as a psychologist.

1980s

Alan Nauts (BA '82, MA '06) received the 2023 Bill Leisman Volunteer Award from Positive Resource Connection of Northeast Indiana. This award recognized Alan's dedication to HIV/AIDS education, service and advocacy. Joni Schmalzried (BS '84) is the chief program officer for AWS Foundation.

1990s

Dr. Joseph Steensma (BS '94) has been inducted by the Royal Academy of Engineering as a visiting professor of innovation and entrepreneurship. Jennifer (Beatty) Poole (BSN '97) is director of behavioral health services at Methodist Hospitals. Jim Bolint (BS '99) became principal scientist at Environmental Works, Inc. Danielle (Vonderau) Kiefer (BA '99) will teach at Concordia Lutheran High School starting in fall 2024. She will teach photography, graphic design, 2D composition and yearbook.

2000s

7 Erin Schwartz (BA '00) joined Saint Francis as associate registrar of transfers. 8 Emily (Patterson) Szaferski (BS '00, BBA '00), partner at Barrett McNagny LLP, completed the Family Law Certification program and is now a Certified Family Law Specialist. Andie Hines-Lagemann (BA '01) was promoted to director of engagement at Elevate Ventures. DE Eric J. Johnson (BBA '01) is an F.C. Tucker-Keystone realtor and received the MIBOR Northside Division Realtor of the Year award. Also, Eric and his wife, Keely (Gladieux) Johnson welcomed their second child, Ryley Marie, on Sept. 29. 10 Vanessa Jones (BA '03, MS '09) is the executive director and CEO of Headwaters Counseling. Molly (Johnson) Ross (BSN '04) and her husband Adam bought the Zesto at Coldwater Crossing. Their adventure began when they both worked at the Zesto on Broadway in high school. Jeremy Swonger (BBA '04) finished in 11th place at the 2023 World Championship of the Decathlon of Functional Fitness (DEKA) in Dallas, Texas, in the male 40-44 age group. 12 Cam Smith (BLS '06) began a new position as quarterback trainer at Optimum Performance Sports on Nov. 27. Jennifer Atienzo-Fisher (MBA '09) joined Greater Fort Wayne Inc. as the director of marketing and communications.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

HAVE A CLASS NOTE? To update information, simply go to alumni.sf.edu and click on "Stay Connected" or send information to alumni@sf.edu or mail it to the University of Saint Francis Alumni Office, 2701 Spring Street, Fort Wayne, IN 46808. Thanks for keeping in touch with your alma mater!



2010s

13 Paige Adamo (BBA '12), national accounts business manager at DePuy Synthes, has obtained a new certification, Coaching for Performance-Bronze Award, from Performance Consultants International. 14 Tony Moore (BBA '12) joined Summit Financial Group as a private wealth advisor. Levi Rouch (BBA '12) joined the Rea Magnet Wire Lafayette plant as operations manager. Christopher Graham (MBA '14) was promoted to senior vice president of the Flat Roll Steel Group at Steel Dynamics. 15 Corey Smith (BS '14, MBA '16) became director of respiratory therapy and sleep center at Dupont Hospital. 16 Mike Zawahri (MBA '14) started a position at Fort Wayne-Allen County Airport Authority as director of finance and administration. Jasmine Bejar (BA '15) graduated from Greater Fort Wayne Inc.'s 2023 Leadership Fort Wayne class. 17 Paul Hernandez (BA '15, MOL '18) was promoted to director, regional development at the University of Notre Dame. 18 Grace (Geha) Potosky (BBA '15) welcomed her first child, Francis "Frankie," on Jan. 23. 19 Kenan Habibic (BS '16, MBA '20) became director of community engagement at Ivy Tech Community College. Zack Kittaka (BA '16) is the manager of performance creative at GrapevineAI. 20 Nicholas Asher (BSW '17, MOL '20) became project and communications associate at Special Commission to Advance Macro Social Work. He also started a new position as behavior consultant at Pure Abilities Therapeutic Services. 21 Elle (Hey) Helm (BA '17) and her husband, Matt, welcomed baby Raymond on June 30, 2023. Ben Ogden (MAT '17) was promoted to credit analyst officer at Crossroads Bank. 22 Ashley Roby (MBA '17) is accounting services onboarding manager at Katz, Sapper & Miller's Fort Wayne office. 23 Hannah Elzinga (BS '18) is human

resource manager at Vanlaan Concrete Construction.

Morgan Hubble (BSN '18, MSN '20) is an American Nurses
Credentialing Center (ANCC) board certified family nurse
practitioner. 4 Jenna Nichols (BSN '18, MSN '23) joined
Parkview Physicians Group Family Medicine in Auburn.

Megan Quigley (BA '18) is a graduate teaching assistant
at University of Notre Dame for Foundations of Theology.

Valorie (Flick) Wells (BS '19) is head coach of the volleyball
program at Wapahani High School in Selma.

Colin White
(BA '19, '23) is a Saint Francis graduate assistant/resident director.

2020s

27 Sherman Flucas II (BS '20) is the director of outreach programs at Reach For Youth, Inc. Conlan Martin (BS '21) is an assistant coach for the Ottawa University men's basketball program. 28 Francine Muhlenkamp (BA '21) is a leasing agent for CYM Living in Fort Wayne. 29 Samantha Wissel (BS '21) is an assistant competitive gymnastics coach at Richmond Gymnastics Training Center and a part-time nanny. Cydney Kemp (BA '22, BS '22) was published in a medical case report. She is in her second year at Campbell University School of Osteopathic Medicine. 30 Gabrielle North (BS '22) is an administrative assistant at Optimum Performance Sports Ash Center. 31 Emma Bachtel (AA '23) added a position as podcast coordinator at Orr Fellowship. Denise Blane (BA '23) received the \$10,000 grand prize at the 32nd Heartland International Film Festival in Indianapolis for her upcoming film, "Justice 4 Three." Cassidy Crawford (BS '23) was promoted to management assistant at Enterprise. 32 Haylea Sorrell (BA '23) became assistant sports information director at Marian University Indianapolis.



FALL/WINTER 2023/2024

COUGAR SPORTS

RECAP

Basketball | MEN

Junior guard Zane Burke and sophomore guard Branden Northern earned Second-Team All-Crossroads League, freshman guard Luke Almodovar earned honorable mention and was joined by Isaiah Malone on the allfreshmen team.

Basketball | WOMEN

Junior guard Chloe McKnight, sophomore center Ally Madden and freshman guard Isabella Gizzi earned Second-Team All-Crossroads League honors. Freshman guard Taylor Fordyce and junior guard Emily Parrett earned honorable mention, Gizzi was on the all-defensive team and was joined by Fordyce on the all-freshmen team.

Volleyball

Junior Paige Fortkamp earned First-Team All-Crossroads League with senior Alexis Gregory, senior Ellie Ferris, sophomore Hannah Sweeney and junior Addison Shafer earning honorable mention. Freshman Kate McMullen was named to the all-freshmen team.

Football

Senior offensive lineman Jared Almeida, senior linebacker Nate Talhelm and senior long snapper Jake Burton earned First-Team Mid-States Football Association Mideast Team honors. Second Team: graduate student O'Vauntay Vickers, junior Reeve Muncie, freshman Olan Neligh, senior Eli Patchett, sophomore Nate Newcomer and sophomore Kevin Ford. Honorable Mention: senior Cam Peterson, senior Connor Price and freshman Marquise Cross.

Cross Country | MEN

Freshman Dylan Anspach took 33rd place in the NAIA Marathon Classic as the first Saint Francis runner to ever compete in the event.

Cross Country | women

Graduate student Alex Ebetino earned an All-American honor, marking her fourth All-American honor in cross country. Freshman Victoria Clibon was a national qualifier.











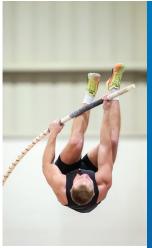














Indoor Track and Field | MEN

Senior Joe Painter finished fifth in the pole vault in the NAIA Indoor National Championships. Freshman Alvin Keter qualified for nationals in the 5,000 meters.

Indoor Track and Field | women

Graduate student Alex Ebetino finished seventh in the 3,000-meter run in the NAIA Indoor National Championships. The distance medley relay team of Ebetino, junior Mariah Maley, freshman Kiara Bahena and freshman Victoria Clibon finished in 8th place in their race. Clibon finished 17th in the 3,000 meters. Freshman Kiara Bahena finished 13th in the 800 meters.

Soccer | MEN

Senior Guilherme Girotto Franco earned Honorable Mention All-Crossroads League honors.

Soccer | WOMEN

Freshman Grace Hein earned Honorable Mention All-Crossroads League honors.



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