Thriving
MSMU Shines in Spite of Pandemic

New Student Affairs VP: A Holistic Approach

Board Chair Supports More Women in Leadership
To say that it has been a unique year is an understatement. After we successfully moved on from the Getty Fire and reopened our beautiful Chalon Campus in January, none of us could have imagined that two months later we would need to leave yet again under the state’s Safer at Home policy in response to the global pandemic.

In traditional Mount spirit, this magazine celebrates our community’s resilience in the face of persistent challenges. If the past year has taught us anything, it is that we are indeed adaptable and open to change. Our faculty, staff, alumnae, Regent’s Council, Board of Trustees and friends and supporters across the community came together in care of our students and in support of their continued academic success. And as we plan for the coming year, we know that this community will live up to the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet—to respond to the needs of the times.

The needs of this time are many. As we deal with the impact of the global health pandemic, we are also called to respond to the entrenched systemic racism so prevalent in our society. As a Catholic University founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph, we must respond to the racial injustice and pain that impacts the lives of communities of color across the United States. Our theme for this upcoming academic year will be an in-depth exploration of the roots of systemic racism, particularly anti-Black racism in our country. We must educate ourselves as a community to deepen our understanding, response and commitment to addressing racism and advancing racial equity. Our Center for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is planning a series of lectures, discussions, films and events for our entire community. I encourage you all to participate in these opportunities.

This is a community that truly cares about each other. I am so proud of the way we have come together, even during a time that requires us quite literally to stand apart. Despite our current challenges, we are grateful for our many blessings. This issue of the magazine is a reminder of how truly fortunate we are.

Sincerely,

Ann McElaney-Johnson
Big-picture approach
LINDA MCMURDOCK
SUPPORTS LIFELONG LEARNING AND WELLNESS

Essential workers
MSMU NURSING ALUMS IN THE THROES OF COVID-19 FIGHT

Resilient Athenians
STUDENTS ADAPT TO VIRTUAL LEARNING, PROVIDE REMOTE SERVICES

Tom Blumenthal
BOARD CHAIR’S GRANDMOTHER WAS HIS ROLE MODEL FOR SMART, STRONG WOMEN

 Updates
 Accolades
 Campaign Update
 Engage
 Alum Community
 Looking Back

Cover
CAROLINE HORNE ’20 ADN WORKS ON A MANNEQUIN “PATIENT” IN THE NURSING LAB. SHE IS NOW PURSUING HER RN-BSN. PHOTO BY JOHN DAVIS.
Mount Provides Student Grants with Federal CARES Act Funds

Mount students, like their counterparts nationwide, are heavily reliant on grants and financial aid during any typical school year. But, unlike at many other colleges and universities, half of our students are the first in their families to attend college, and many of our families struggle to pay for their scholar’s dream of a college education even with financial aid. The global pandemic added unique stresses for our students, and the University quickly assisted them in myriad ways. It refunded fees for housing after students returned home due to Safer at Home mandates, helped supply laptops and wireless capability as needed so students could virtually complete coursework and eliminated a tuition increase for returning students. In addition to this help, students were also encouraged to apply for the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which provides grants to offset expenses incurred by the pandemic. Undergraduate and graduate students who are U.S. citizens, eligible for federal aid (regardless of whether they were current recipients) and enrolled in spring on-campus classes were able to apply for these federal funds.

Brian O’Rourke, vice president for enrollment management, who has overseen distributing the CARES Act grants to students, said, “The pressing need moving forward is to help these students with tuition. Based on federal guidelines, we weren’t allowed to apply any of the CARES Act funds to student accounts. We need to be able to increase the number and size of the scholarships we can award to students, and we’re working with our colleagues in Institutional Advancement to get that done.

“As always, we continue to work with students one-on-one, and most are finding a way to make it work. We just know, however, beyond the short term, that additional funds that can be used for tuition would go a long way with our families.”

Pomp and (Altered) Circumstance

Graduates from the Class of 2020 have received their welcome from the Alumnae Association and are preparing to celebrate the culmination of their years of hard work. “I write to you today with continued wishes of congratulations,” wrote President Ann McElaney-Johnson in a mid-June letter about their August 16 ceremony.

When the University closed its two campuses in March at the directive of Safer at Home orders, the students were hopeful that they could still have an in-person commencement, even at a later date. In an effort to give the students a traditional in-person ceremony, the Mount planned a Commencement for August 16, hoping that the health crisis would subside enough to permit a gathering to honor the students’ many accomplishments.

There will still be a celebration, but in order to protect the health and safety of the Mount community while following county health and safety guidelines, Commencement will now be virtual. “I know that this is disappointing news,” the president wrote, “but I commit to you that we will create an experience worthy of your class. We will provide a ceremony that will engage, inspire and truly celebrate” the Class of 2020.

CARES ACT FUNDS AND MOUNT STUDENTS

$1,567,874
CARES Act funds received for student support
Grant-eligible students: approximately 2,520
Applicants/grants awarded: 1,033
Maximum award: $3,000
Average grant: $1,517

$6,556,560
Total CARES funds distributed to students
Applicants/grants awarded: 1,627
Maximum award: $4,000
Average grant: $2,668

CARES ACT FUNDING

$3,074,800
Total CARES funds to undergraduate students
Applicants/grants awarded: 1,582
Maximum award: $3,000
Average grant: $1,886

$3,481,760
Total CARES funds to graduate students
Applicants/grants awarded: 441
Maximum award: $4,000
Average grant: $2,520

CARES ACT FUNDING

$800,000
Total CARES funds to international students
Applicants/grants awarded: 30
Average grant: $26,667
Quality of MSMU Nursing Programs Recognized

Mount Saint Mary’s nursing department was again nationally recognized for its extraordinary programs when it received reaccreditation by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) in October 2019.

“Accreditation by the CCNE is the gold standard for nursing programs, ensuring quality and integrity,” says Leah FitzGerald, PhD, FNP-BC, dean of nursing and the Fletcher Jones Endowed Chair of Nursing. “Department leadership, faculty, staff and nursing students all contributed to the effort for CCNE accreditation, and I thank them for their continued commitment to Mount nursing excellence.”

All five of the Mount’s nursing degrees or certificate programs received accreditation, which involves a nongovernmental peer review process that holds nursing programs to national standards. The rigorous process included submission of a comprehensive self-study, a three-day site visit by the accrediting team and a thorough review of the curricula and processes. A key to success is showing a direct connection between the nursing department’s philosophy and that of the University. One strength of the Mount’s nursing program is its grounding in the spirit of service of the Sisters of St. Joseph. The program’s mission echoes this philosophy: nursing is a service to humanity.

Also central to the MSMU nursing curriculum is the Roy Adaptation Model, created in 1961 by Sister Callista Roy, CSJ, an MSMU graduate, nursing theorist, former nursing chair and current part-time faculty member. In the Roy Adaptation Model, people are viewed as interconnected bio-psycho-social-spiritual beings who strive to maintain balance between all their facets, even during times of stress. MSMU nurses are well versed in this model and use it as they seek to restore patients to optimal health.

“CCNE accreditation means the University is poised to help in the national effort to address the critical shortage of nurses, nursing faculty, and leaders locally and in the United States,” says FitzGerald. “Our programs prepare graduates to become clinical nurse leaders, nurse educators, and advocates in public policy and health care reform.”

Steps Toward Addressing Anti-Racism

Led by Kari Bolen, EdD, director of the Center for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Mount Saint Mary’s has hosted several events that have addressed historic systemic racism, particularly anti-Black racism. In the days following George Floyd’s death, a virtual conversation between members of the Mount community enabled participants to discuss racism in America.

Two weeks later, a lecture by Edgar Barron, EdD, from Azusa Pacific University, examined the history of Juneteenth and the civil rights and Black Lives Matter movements. That night, a virtual screening of the 2016 documentary, “I Am Not Your Negro,” drew comparisons between the two movements. The film, narrated by Samuel L. Jackson, is based on James Baldwin’s unfinished book titled “Remember This House.” The film provides a stark parallel to today’s environment and exemplifies how little society’s views have truly changed in half a century.

“Such educational opportunities will continue into the fall,” says Bolen, “in the form of workshops and online modules designed to reduce implicit prejudices and bias. These spaces of healing, reflection and dialogue offer an opportunity to engage in critical discussion around community action and efforts to continue to challenge the systemic inequities within and outside of our community walls.”
Mount Awarded $3M Title V Grant

Mount Saint Mary’s received a five-year, $3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education’s Title V program, Promoting Postbaccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans (PPOHA), created in 1998. The current award will enable the Mount to develop financial literacy components for graduate students across several programs.

“This grant will enable us to develop our accounting concentration for our graduate program,” said Michelle French-Holloway, EdD, professor and chair of the MSMU business administration program. “With this grant, we plan to provide even more robust services for our graduate students so they can further their career goals.”

Through the grant’s funding, the Mount will collaborate with Woodbury University to develop an accounting emphasis for the MBA program. The grant will also fund scholarships and paid internships for graduate accounting students as well as those from other graduate programs.

“The grant provides funding to bolster the University’s Professional and Academic Resource Center, which supports graduate students,” said French-Holloway. “We look forward to implementing continuous improvements to our graduate programs.”

This is the fourth Title V award the Mount has received since 2004. The Mount successfully obtained this latest grant through a highly competitive process in which only 20 of the 60 colleges and universities that applied for the grant received funding.

MSMU Recognized for Voter Turnout

At the 2019 ALL IN Challenge Awards ceremony, Mount Saint Mary’s University received a gold seal for achieving a substantial increase in its student voting rate. The ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge is a nonpartisan, national initiative that encourages higher education institutions to help students form the habits of active and informed citizenship and make democratic participation a core value on their campus.

“The Mount is proud to receive this national recognition of our efforts and our MSMU Votes initiative,” said Rosalyn Kempf, EdD, assistant vice president of student affairs. “This is a testament to every member of the Mount community who educated themselves and others on candidates and issues, made their voice heard by casting their ballot, and encouraged others to participate in our democracy in various ways.”

Other research validates the increase in student voting. According to the National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement, an initiative of Tufts University’s Institute for Democracy & Higher Education, voter turnout increased from 19% to 40% between the 2014 and 2018 midterm elections at the 1,000-plus participating institutions.

“We are excited to honor Mount Saint Mary’s University with an ALL IN Challenge gold seal in recognition of their intentional efforts to increase democratic engagement and full voter participation,” said Jennifer Domagal-Goldman, executive director of the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge.

As of June 2020, more than 7.6 million students at 655 institutions have joined the challenge since it was launched in the summer of 2016.
MSMU Awarded $400,000 Grant to Research Chronic Diabetes Progression

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has awarded a fourth R15 Academic Research Enhancement Award grant to Mount Saint Mary’s and Loyola Marymount University to advance research on a potential therapeutic formula that could prevent chronic diabetes from progressing. The three-year $407,000 grant will make it possible for MSMU research students to continue studying naturally occurring peptides that might prevent pancreatic beta-cell toxicity common in type 2 diabetes.

“It’s exciting to know that we’re being funded again,” said Luiza Nogaj, PhD, professor of biological sciences. “This grant will enable us to continue our research on finding a solution for beta cell loss common in a chronic form of diabetes.”

This latest grant is the largest yet for this ongoing research project, with the Mount officially surpassing $1.2 million in total NIH grant funding as a co-principal investigator. NIH grants are some of the most competitive science grants to be awarded.

“Essentially what this means is that Dr. Nogaj’s work is genuinely on the verge of finding a significant solution to type 2 diabetes and potentially has applications to other protein aggregation diseases, such as Alzheimer’s disease and certain kinds of cancers,” said Jennifer Chotiner, PhD, biological sciences department chair. “It also continues the tremendous impact that Dr. Nogaj’s lab has had on advancing our students, our communities and the Mount at large.”

While the Mount students are examining the effect of the natural peptides on beta cells, the Loyola Marymount research team is testing these compounds in vitro (outside a living organism).

Nogaj is hopeful that their research findings will become an important discovery in medical science. Either way, “This project is such a wonderful opportunity for our students because it gives them hands-on experience on how the process of scientific discovery works.”

---

The Mount Launches Dual MBA/MFA Program

Faster and targeted is how Surjeet Baidwan, PhD, director of the graduate MBA program since August 2019, describes the new MBA/MFA (film/television) dual degree program launching this fall. The program trims one semester off both individual degrees and creates a producer-centric, business-oriented entry into the hyper-competitive gauntlet of show biz.

Kelby Thwaits, MFA, director of the film program, says that the concept for the dual-degree program goes back as far as 2015 but the master’s in film, television and photography had to find its own firm footing first. Launched in 2014 as a one-degree program with just two electives, it has added concentrations in producing, directing, writing and editing. “We’ve just been dying on the MFA side to be able to make this happen,” says Thwaits, “and Surjeet is the right person on the business side to be able to make this collaboration work, and we’re ecstatic.”

This dual degree can make the path into the entertainment world less risky. “Students want to do something that connects to their spirits and who they are as people,” says Baidwan, “so for those who find that calling to entertainment, hopefully this is a way that they can live in the light of that passion but still keep their lights on.”

---

Luiza Nogaj, PhD, professor of biological sciences (middle), overseeing lab work with students.
Powerful Women Speak at the Mount (Virtually)

The Center for the Advancement of Women at Mount Saint Mary's University invited California Sen. Holly J. Mitchell to be its first Legislator in Residence in 2018. She has served in this capacity for two years, moderating and participating in timely on-campus conversations with local women leaders.

In one of the University’s first virtual forums, Mitchell hosted a Zoom conference on April 28 with Hannah Linkenhoker, senior political strategist at ICM Partners. Although both women spoke about their careers in politics and advocacy, their lessons could apply to any woman venturing out to create or advance her career trajectory. As Mitchell pointed out at the start of the session, “People think that a career is supposed to be a linear progression, but it’s not. It ebbs and flows.”

Linkenhoker advised listeners not to expect that the job they want will materialize during their searches. Women need to think about what they want to do, develop—and keep—relationships, and in many cases, create their positions themselves. “The harder you have to work for something, the more you value it,” she said. Every experience taught her about the importance of developing a strong work ethic. Mitchell said that she refers to work ethic as hustle. “I can detect hustle from across the street.”

Both women encouraged students to dream big and apply that work ethic/hustle to their careers. As Linkenhoker said, “Lean into what you’re good at, what you care about, and find where the two intersect. It’s a lifelong journey.”

“Be brave, be bold about what you want your life to look like,” said Mitchell. “There are many opportunities out there; you just have to go find them. When we (women) show up, we’ve already upset the status quo.”

The speaker series creates an intimate platform for conversations related to women’s leadership, civic engagement and activism and empowers our students to become engaged with their community at the University and beyond.

Physical Therapy Students Get Politically Active

For the second consecutive year, the Mount’s Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) students won the annual Cub Challenge held by the California Physical Therapy Association’s Political Action Committee (PAC). The goal: to be the program with the highest percentage of students donating to the PAC within the calendar year.

“This win was completely student driven, with our students strategizing and pushing each other the entire way,” said Deborah Lowe, PhD, DPT director and chair. “This challenge has helped our students understand the importance of being an advocate in their profession—not just in clinical practice, but in other areas, such as research and education.”

The competition’s primary objective is not fundraising so much as helping inspire physical therapy students to become active in supporting elected members of the California Legislature who champion their profession.

The competition’s purpose was not lost on DPT student Jordan Stoever ’20, who led the Mount students to their win. Stoever realized the value of professional advocacy early in his doctoral studies, which motivated him to co-found the DPT program’s Student Outreach Committee. “We started this committee so our students can improve their professional development while learning how to become advocates in their profession,” said Stoever, who began his internship at Kaiser Permanente this spring. “We saw this challenge as an opportunity to publicly demonstrate our passion for our profession and broaden our reach in this industry.”

In early 2020, Doctor of Physical Therapy students celebrated their second consecutive Cub Challenge win with a parade around the Doheny Campus.
Center for Cultural Fluency Conference

More than 200 people attended the sixth Critical Teaching in Action conference at the Doheny Campus on February 15. The Center for Cultural Fluency’s one-day conference, “Health, Wellness and Social Justice: Teaching and Practicing Resilience,” was aimed at educators, healthcare practitioners and Mount students.

A presentation opened the conference, in which five women from Alexandria House, a transitional residence for women and children, spoke about the power of community. One woman, Keanakay Scott, became homeless after aging out of the foster care system. Stalked at work, she survived rape and addiction before finding a haven in Alexandria House. A mother of two daughters, Scott is now running for a seat in the state’s 34th Congressional District. “My pastor says, ‘Keep pressing and keep trying until you learn what tomorrow holds,’” she said. “A part of being resilient is acknowledging the pain and embracing it. I have to keep trying.”

Julie Feldman-Abe, PhD, director of the Center for Cultural Fluency, said, “The women of Alexandria House are living examples of resilience...They’re doing amazing things with their lives.”

Sister Judy Vaughn, CSJ, founded Alexandria House in downtown Los Angeles 24 years ago. She accepted the Cultural Fluency Award in honor of the Alexandria House community. “Practice resiliency by being faithful, trustworthy and being impeccable with your word,” Vaughn said. “Against incredible odds, you will get a glimpse of what ought to be. Thank you, Mount Saint Mary’s, for recognizing the importance of community.”

The conference offered 16 workshops, encouraging educators, healthcare practitioners and students to promote others’ resilience while fostering their own. Sessions included self-hypnosis; yoga in the classroom; gender identity; mindful eating; and understanding childhood trauma. The day concluded with a sound bath meditation.

Building a Stronger Community

Mount Saint Mary’s University is committed to building a thriving Alumnae Association and has brought in Tom Arteaga as the new director of alumnae relations and volunteer engagement. Arteaga brings 13 years of alumni relations experience from Loyola Marymount University.

This year, the University has invested in two online platforms to grow its career programs. Mount Connect is an online mentoring platform that enables alumnae to mentor students, share advice and provide informational interviews. The Office of Career and Professional Development has launched Handshake, an online platform for students and alumnae to search for jobs and internships around the country.

“Both platforms are new this academic year,” says Arteaga, “and the need for expanded professional connections is critical during our current economic climate. Whether you are three years or 30 years out from graduation, you have valuable experience to share with our students through these platforms and through our events and programs, hopefully in person in the near future.”

Event planning is another area that Arteaga is heavily involved in, especially now that the university special events team is working on creating engaging and vibrant online programs. Arteaga is working with the Alumnae Association Board and several campus partners to respond to the needs of the alumnae community to provide educational, social and spiritual virtual programs.

Arteaga would love to hear from alumnae. His long-term goals are to make sure more alumnae are involved in the University, whether as a volunteer, a donor or participant in events and programs.

Office of Alumnae Relations and Volunteer Engagement
WEB SITE: alums.msmu.edu
EMAIL: alums@msmu.edu
OFFICE PHONE: 213.477.2767

Tom Arteaga, director
EMAIL: tartega@msmu.edu

Mount Connect
WEB SITE: mountconnect.com

Handshake
WEB SITE: msmu.joinhandshake.com

Facebook: facebook.com/mount.alums
FACULTY

Montserrat Reguant, PhD, professor and chair of the Department of Language and Culture, presented *Tabula Naufragi y Libertad* at the 14th Biennial Conference of the Society for Renaissance and Baroque Hispanic Poetry held at the University of California, Irvine. She also presented *El Quijote y Gesta Grayorum* at the XIV Coloquio Internacional de la Asociación de Cervantistas at the Ca’Foscari University in Venice, Italy.

Advancing Women in Technology has honored Shannon Shank, MSMU senior director of enterprise applications, with the 2019 Outstanding Executives in Technology award following her nomination by an outside mentor who has followed her IT career in higher education. In her nearly 24 years at the Mount, Shank helped establish the first website and online application process for enrollment and also led the 2006 implementation of document management still in use throughout the University. She is always looking at ways to increase process efficiencies, take on digital transformation opportunities and lead others.

STUDENTS

Mount biochemistry major Alicia Mercado ’22 received a UCLA research award for her laboratory work in neural computation and engineering. In the UCLA summer undergraduate research program, she was recognized for her winning poster of a research experiment that studied changes of the mind in decision-making.

The American Physical Therapy Association awarded a scholarship to Mount student Kirsten Hee ’21 to attend the association’s 2020 Combined Sections Meeting Conference. The annual conference is the largest physical therapy convention in the nation.

JOURNAL TO PUBLISH MSMU RESEARCH ON WORKPLACE INEQUITY

The American Journal of Undergraduate Research has confirmed its acceptance of a Mount research article on gender disparities in the workplace. The peer-reviewed journal receives hundreds of submissions each year and accepts less than 20 percent of manuscripts.

The Mount’s article, “Women in Higher Educational Leadership: Representation, Career Progression and Compensation,” reports on the gender gap in higher education. Four Mount psychology students researched and wrote the report to shed light on the inequities that women endure in the nation’s workforce.

“Our article shows that women in higher education have fewer leadership positions, have slower progression in their careers and experience significant differences in compensation levels compared to men in the same roles,” said Michelle Samuel, MA, assistant professor of psychology. “These findings speak to the larger issue of the systemic barriers that women continue to face in the workplace.”

The research students were able to access public data from the University of California annual payroll compensation database to analyze and report how women are represented, compensated and advanced in higher education careers compared to men.

“This article is noteworthy because it serves as a baseline data point,” said Samuel. “We hope to come back to this data in five years to compare figures and see if any real progress has been made.”

Psychology assistant professor Michelle Samuel, MA (second from the left), joins three of the student authors — (from left) Caitlyn Keeve ’20, Carmen Ramos ’20 and Carla Canas ’19—at a student psychology conference where they shared their research work. (Joselyn Rivera ’18, the fourth student author, is not pictured as she had graduated at the time of this conference.)
Meet our new vice president for student affairs

It’s a homecoming of sorts for Linda McMurdock, PhD. After all, the Mount’s mission and traditions are beliefs she’s embraced her entire professional life.

“What has really struck me since I’ve been here is the notion of radical hospitality; the community as a whole permeates the values it puts forward,” McMurdock said. “Every conversation has been led by this and it’s just wonderful.”

McMurdock said she is committed to the education of the whole person and wants to offer student programs that promote intellectual curiosity, a healthy lifestyle, global fluency and a commitment to service and action.

A graduate of Howard University in Washington, D.C., with a bachelor’s degree in psychology and master and doctoral degrees in clinical psychology, McMurdock comes to the Mount from Marymount University in Virginia, where she served as vice president of student affairs for five years.

Earlier in her career, as dean of students and vice president for student affairs at Loyola Marymount University (LMU) in Los Angeles, McMurdock launched initiatives for LGBT students, first-generation Latino scholars and co-led the creation of a student memorial on campus.

At the Mount, it’s important for her to provide an engaged and enlivened student experience to prepare them for life after their academic careers. “Let’s spark an excitement for lifelong learning and make sure our students thrive.”

McMurdock is now guiding the Mount’s Wellness Movement and launching Athenians Care, a health education campaign in response to COVID-19. “This primary initiative will explore holistic approaches to every aspect of health: mental, spiritual and physical,” she said. “I’ve always embraced the notion of holistic development, interdisciplinary approaches to innovative solutions.”

Lane Bove, senior vice president for student affairs at LMU, said McMurdock has all the attributes of a successful administrator: intrinsic motivation, good interpersonal skills, knowledge of and competence in the field and a good sense of humor. “Her greatest strength is her empathy for and understanding of students,” she said.

McMurdock said success in her role means “delivering a transformational student experience, (helping them gain) a better understanding of self, of others and their gifts to the community.”

She added that the Mount is “a great place to be. I’m very happy to be here.”
Mirroring the CSJ’s commitment to responding to the needs of the times, the Mount community rallied together after their campuses closed in response to COVID-19. This special section highlights some ways in which members of the Mount family rose above the challenge. For as long as this lasts and as hard as it might get, the message is clear: We will get through this together and be better for having done so.
In the trenches with COVID-19

Kerrie Klein BSN ’07 is not one to shy away from the action. Before becoming a nurse, she got her adrenaline rush as a paramedic, although ultimately that became old. So did the lack of a steady income and career advancement. As she pondered what to do next, she thought she should take advantage of her background in clinical care, but she wasn’t sure how.

“To be brutally honest, I didn’t want to be a nurse,” Klein admits. “I did not really understand the heavy clinical aspect of nursing and the knowledge and dedication it takes. Now I think that being a nurse is incredible. Nurses are really the machinery that makes the hospital work.”

Although she applied to several programs, the accelerated program at the Mount appealed most to her. However, the biggest draw was its reputation. “Every time I say where I got my degree, people are impressed,” Klein says. “The teachers had high expectations; there was no scooting by. You had to get close to your classmates. You leaned on each other to get through. I’m so proud to be a Mount alum.”

Klein went straight into the ICU and critical care training program out of nursing school, choosing the Sunset/Los Angeles medical center because she wanted the highest acuity and the challenge of the ICU. The faculty at the Mount had always encouraged students to explore their numerous career options and push further, so after three years, Klein decided to try to join the nurse anesthetists, whom she viewed as superheroes. On her first try, she got one of only three spots from a candidate pool of 550.

Since 2012, Klein has worked for Kaiser Permanente in Panorama City. At the start of the COVID-19 battle, Klein dismissed any talk of healthcare workers being heroes. “We chose to do these jobs,” she says. “but we never thought we were going to face something like this. So I’d say we’re reluctant heroes.”

As a nurse anesthetist, Klein is involved in the highest-risk procedures in terms of exposure to the virus, getting a first-hand view of its devastating effects. For example, Klein intubated a patient who was COVID-positive and not responding to treatment, despite being intubated, getting CPR, and having a tube thrust into her chest to decompress air surrounding her lung. Each step added more opportunities for the virus to be aerosolized.

Even before a routine surgery, Klein is on the front lines. She’ll go in and intubate the patient in the OR and sit in the room alone with the patient as the air is being filtered. “We’re like the bomb squad going in by ourselves. ‘Ok you guys, you can come in now, we’ve deactivated the bomb.’”

In May, Klein’s 350-bed hospital was admitting approximately 35 COVID-19 positive patients a day, which she says is probably at the lower end of being impacted. By contrast, Kaiser Permanente Downey was seeing 50 to 60 positive patients a day. “Perhaps 35 positive COVID patients a day doesn’t sound like a whole lot in ratio to our bed size, but most of those patients are critically ill,” she says. “And they’re not the only COVID-positive patients we see; we send the majority of them home.”

All the other patients they admit—those with appendicitis, cancer surgery, etc.—must be treated as if they have the virus. “I was with a case in which a woman had a mastectomy,” Klein says. “The next day, she tested positive. So she was essentially positive when I took care of her.

“I know that I’m helping people,” she says, “and I know that I have the same integrity that I had pre-COVID and that I’ll do the right thing to the absolute best of my ability. Every patient is super important to me; I know they’ve never met me before but they trust me so I continue to do the absolute best job that I can; I just feel sad that we’re limited by supplies. It’s just so aggravating.”

Klein says that Kaiser Permanente has done an amazing job trying to obtain PPE and follow the CDC guidelines that seemingly change from one minute to the next. “I’m very proud to work for them,” she says. “They’re doing the absolute best they can.”

Although Klein refers to herself as a bit of a lone wolf, she says that the social isolation is starting to wear on her. “It’s hard not to see people,” she admits, “but I’m going to be very responsible because I could definitely be a carrier and not know.”

Klein refers to nursing as an important, often underappreciated job. And although she loves her career, she can’t imagine being a new nurse or doctor during this time. “The only thing keeping me going is my experience,” she says. “The intuition that comes from experience. It’s our responsibility as a community to fix the problems associated with responding to a pandemic.”

One positive effect from the coronavirus: “It has reinvigorated a lot of healthcare workers. We feel a solidarity, a cohesiveness. People are kinder to each other.”
As far back as she can remember, Chanell Jackson BSN ‘12 wanted to deliver babies. But her path there was anything but linear. As a premed student in college, her goal was to be an ob/gyn, but during her senior year at her undergraduate institution her career in healthcare was put on hold.

Jackson received emergency teaching credentials after being recruited to teach high school science. “I like teaching, don’t get me wrong, but it’s so underfunded and overcrowded,” says Jackson. “So many things get in the way of the actual teaching.” Ultimately, a college friend recruited her to work as a microbiologist at the Veteran’s Affairs Medical Center in Los Angeles, where Jackson had worked as a phlebotomist throughout college. When she was 32 years old, Jackson started researching midwifery, with the goal to become a midwife by the time she turned 40.

In California, one must be a nurse to be a midwife. An acquaintance, a Mount alum, steered her toward the accelerated BSN program. “I went to an information session and didn’t apply anywhere else,” she said. “The school has the best reputation. It’s really research driven and the clinical placements are very strong. The standards at the Mount are set at such a high level that it brings qualities out in you that you didn’t know you had.”

As focused as she was on midwifery, Jackson didn’t stop to realize that she’d have to be exposed to all aspects of nursing. During her UCLA clinicals, she worked the liver transplant floor and acutely remembers a woman about her same age who was bed bound and suffering from an autoimmune-driven liver failure. “It pushed me to take better care of myself,” said Jackson. “I also realized that nursing is about taking care of not only the patient but their families.”

And when she finally got to that much-anticipated OB rotation? “It was the best thing ever,” she said. “I fell in love. I didn’t want to go home at the end of the day.”

Although she did pursue midwifery, Jackson is happy to be working as a labor and delivery nurse at Kaiser in West LA. “A midwife does her work and leaves,” she says. “I bond so much more with the patient as a bedside nurse. I always joke that if I won the lottery, I’d still want to deliver babies. I still cry sometimes when I deliver babies. I can’t believe I get to do this and get paid for it—and paid well. I’m so grateful.”

Her love for her job emanates from her voice despite the personal loss that her family suffered from the ravages of COVID. In March, her father lost his life to the virus one floor above where she works with her patients. Their journey was chronicled in an April 21 front-page article in the Los Angeles Times.

The chance to talk about nursing, rather than her father’s death, was a welcome respite for Jackson. “The nursing field is ever-changing,” she says. “There are also so many different facets to pursue—administration, teaching, clinical, being a consultant to TV shows and movies. The investment of money in tuition really pays off in terms of salary and work-life balance.”
Of late, however, she can’t escape the specter of COVID-19, which presents unique challenges, not the least of which involves the many layers of personal protection equipment that healthcare workers must wear, including the N95 masks, surgical masks, eye protection shields and isolation gowns.

“Our stress level is through the roof,” Jackson says. “Everyone is scared and stressed out, but we’re a family. We do our best to protect ourselves, our patients and each other.” Jackson’s hospital did have one woman in the ICU, who was COVID-19 positive and pregnant at 34 weeks, but she recovered and they did not have to deliver the baby.

After the discovery that asymptomatic people can carry the virus, Kaiser started universal testing of all patients in the maternity ward. What’s hardest for the families is the inability for most family members to be present for the birth. “We’re having to step up even more to provide a sense of calm during one of the most important times in their lives,” Jackson says.

Although she had once hoped to be a doctor, she has no regrets. “When I get to hand a baby over to a mother, I stand back and see the expressions on the faces of the parents as they gaze at their child for the first time,” says Jackson. “I soak it all in and it really fuels me. I will be a nurse until the end of time.”

“I have a purpose in life. I show love and care to others, especially when they can’t care for themselves.”
CHARGING AHEAD:

Student ambassadors provide a virtual assist with college applications

FRONT LEFT: Melissa Hernandez (manager; Santa Monica Police Activities League), Stephanie Hernandez (Immaculate Conception, fall semester), Kimberly Ganivet (Franklin), Janeet Rodriguez (Roosevelt), Joanna Gamarra (manager; Downtown Magnet). BACK LEFT: Angel Iwuoma (St. Mary’s Academy), Karina Cruz (Variety Boys and Girls Club), Olivia Tieu (Downtown Magnet, fall semester), Michelle Montiel (Bishop Conaty-Our Lady of Loretto), Priscilla Gonzalez (Sacred Heart). Not pictured: Ariana Flores (Immaculate Conception, spring semester) and Angie Ramirez (Downtown Magnet, spring semester).
Since 1991, Mount Saint Mary's student ambassadors have worked to motivate Los Angeles high school students to aspire to a college education. The ambassadors have always met with students in person. This year, after schools closed because of the coronavirus pandemic, the ambassadors rose to the challenge and continued their work online, connecting with high school students in new and creative ways.

The Los Angeles Archdiocese announced the school closures on March 13. “When I first heard, I immediately thought of my students,” says Michelle Montiel ’21, who worked at Bishop-Conaty—Our Lady of Loretto High School, her alma mater. “We bonded as I worked with them and their parents to apply to colleges. A few students were undocumented, and we had to fill out the Dream Act paperwork. One was waiting for a green card. I knew they would still need help even if schools were closed.”

“I wasn’t surprised the student ambassadors still wanted to work with their students,” says Karla Guzman ’13, assistant director of Women’s Leadership and Community Engagement, who oversees the program. “As an alum and a former ambassador, I know what the work means to the students. I knew they would want to finish the year.”

Before the closures, Kimberly Ganivet ’20 gave workshops to 60 students at a time at Franklin High School on topics such as the Cal State application process, the SAT and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). She also met with students to help them with their college applications.

“Like many students at Franklin, I am also a first generation college student,” Ganivet says, “and I had to figure out the application process on my own. It’s an overwhelming process.” She also found that many students could not properly evaluate the financial aid options being offered to them. What if they make the wrong decision?”

The ambassadors also compiled college manuals for their sites. “It’s a big book of everything you need to know when applying to college,” she says. “Ambassadors teach students about the different college systems, about the A-G requirements [sequence of classes that must be completed with a C or better for the student to be eligible at UC or Cal State schools], how to submit a FAFSA, and how to write personal statements.”

Ambassadors also serve high school students at community partner sites, such as the Variety Boys & Girls Club in Boyle Heights. Karina Cruz ’22 helped her supervisor there develop Zoom-based online programming, researched scholarships and kept students up to date on which colleges extended their acceptance deadlines.

Not meeting with students in person was a big change for her. She had been going to the club three or four times a week, editing personal statements for scholarship applications. She continued to help them online, but she missed the personal interaction. “The students felt comfortable asking me what college was really like,” Cruz said, “and I enjoyed our conversations.”

“When I was in high school, we had a student ambassador from Mount Saint Mary’s. She was an amazing mentor and inspired me to do the same thing for other girls.”

- MICHELLE MONTIEL ’21

However, there are some advantages to working online. “I still meet virtually with my seniors one-on-one and my juniors as a class online,” says Montiel. “I especially want the juniors to be prepared to apply when colleges open for applications in the fall, so I’m making PowerPoints for them to watch. And while I only had 40 juniors in the live class I taught, now that we are online all 80 juniors have signed up to receive the information. I see that as a definite advantage.”

Priscilla Gonzalez ’21, an ambassador at Sacred Heart High School, found that the flexibility of meeting online worked better for many students. “When I was at my site, it was often challenging to pull students out of class,” she says. “Now, I have students emailing me on their own schedules.”

“Student ambassadors have a genuine care and passion to serve others, and it shows in how they responded during this difficult time,” says Guzman. “It’s rare for students to put others before their own needs. The ambassadors are going above and beyond to make sure their students have all the tools and resources they need to be successful.”

“Ms. Karina is my foot in the door.
She tells me things I wouldn’t have known,
things my college counselor didn’t tell me.”

- STUDENT AT VARIETY BOYS & GIRLS CLUB IN BOYLE HEIGHTS ABOUT AMBASSADOR KARINA CRUZ ’22
Kelsy Larios ’20 was nervous as she began presenting her Senior Capstone Project, the culminating experience of her college years. But the biology major was not as nervous as she would have been had the year not been altered by the coronavirus. Rather, she said the experience felt more bittersweet.

Larios was tucked away in her childhood bedroom instead of being on stage in the William H. Hannon Theater at the Chalon Campus, and her parents were in their living room watching her PowerPoint slides projected onto the television over Zoom’s conferencing platform. They couldn’t see her, and she couldn’t see them or the 52 students, faculty and University staff who viewed her presentation.

According to Jen Chotiner, PhD, professor and chair of biological sciences, the capstone project requirements normally include developing an original thesis, conducting a research and literature review, writing a 30-page paper, giving a public presentation in the theater and presenting a scientific poster in The Circle, followed by a reception.

Chotiner first learned that things might not go as planned on March 13, during the Mount’s spring break. When the University closed its campuses, students were scrambling as to how to proceed with their projects. Chotiner decided they could still give the oral presentations over Zoom but had to cancel the poster presentations and celebratory reception.

Part of the challenge to completing the senior research project online was that some students were still conducting research in the Chalon lab, which was now closed. Larios had already faced challenges last fall. A key component of her experiments, the extraction of medicinal components from a woody vine known as cat’s claw, was stored in the lab’s refrigerator. When power was shut off because of the fires, the extraction was destroyed.

The idea for Larios’ project, “The Exploration of Cat’s Claw as an Agent of Complementary Medicine in Cancer,” originated in a research trip she did with the Mount the summer after her sophomore year.
“We traveled to Peru and interviewed indigenous women about their use of herbal remedies,” says Larios. “I heard women speak of using cat’s claw as a treatment if they suspected they had cancer. After I came home and analyzed the data, I realized many used the herbal remedy at the same time as conventional treatments, and I wondered how that interaction impacted standard medications, particularly Taxol, which is a common treatment for breast cancer.

“I took my idea to Dr. Luiza Nogaj and she said, ‘Let’s do it!’,” says Larios. Together, they designed a series of experiments using a particular breast cancer cell line (MCF-7) to test her theory that cat’s claw improved the efficiency of the cancer drug.

“It was original research,” Larios says. “Most data from the scientific community had tested cat’s claw with other chemotherapy drugs, but not Taxol.” Before the power was shut off at Chalon, Larios had gathered some supporting evidence that cat’s claw was effective as a complementary treatment, “but my chance to get the depth and nitty-gritty results I was hoping for was ruined.”

Senior Brigitte Solorzano’s project also came from a past summer research trip sponsored by the Mount. Her research on Catalina Island explored whether a certain kelp species could be used as biofuel. “I was interested in presenting something that was applicable to the world today,” she says. “On that trip, my small group worked alongside a professional team of scientists on this major project, and I was really inspired.

“It was super difficult to transition from being on campus to having to finish the thesis at home,” she says. “If I needed an article from the database, each time I would have to make an appointment with the librarian to request the article, which made meeting deadlines extremely challenging.”

Solorzano’s project suggested that a particular species of kelp, called Macrocystis pyrifera (commonly called giant kelp), could be a more suitable species for biofuel than corn or wheat. “It can do photosynthesis much faster because it grows quickly, it grows in the ocean so it doesn’t need land or fertilizer, and through the fermentation process it produces a similar amount of energy as gasoline does,” she says.

Not only did students have to keep up with their writing and research, but they also had to practice online presentation skills through Zoom, learn to navigate the PowerPoint slides, share their screens, and mute and unmute audience members to answer questions.

Not being able to present in front of a live audience was very disappointing for the students. “On the day of the presentation, it felt like going through the motions because I missed (seeing the audience’s) facial expressions,” says Solorzano.

Still, both Solorzano and Larios are proud of what they accomplished. And they’re not the only ones. “The perseverance and grit of these young women are just astounding,” says Chotiner. “We had some of the best projects I’ve ever seen, and I know how much strength it took for them to succeed.

“Normally as master of ceremonies for the presentations, I say a few words about the projects before each talk,” Chotiner says. “But this year I made a point to say something personal about each student, because I wanted to honor these amazing women.”

“My heart breaks for the students and all they’ve experienced this year. To complete these projects given these circumstances was amazing.”

- JEN CHOTINER, PHD, PROFESSOR AND CHAIR OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
Since joining the Mount community four years ago, I have consistently been impressed by the students who call our university ‘home.’ For example, as the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the daily lives of Angelenos, students in my history of medicine course could no longer attend our class at the Doheny Campus. As a means of staying connected, students submitted weekly reflection pieces on how the pandemic was affecting their lives and related their personal experience to our class’ journey through the history of medicine from the ancient world through to the 20th century. The original research project for the class had involved studying an outbreak of bubonic plague in San Francisco at the turn of the 20th century. Students related current events to this earlier public health crisis, noting how political, social, and economic forces affect how individual people and governments react to and deal with disease outbreaks. Their reflections were poignant, insightful and inspirational. I continue to be inspired by the Mount's students and believe them to be unstoppable!

– ROBERT PERRINS, PHD, PROVOST, ACADEMIC VICE PRESIDENT, AND PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

In the face of COVID, the MBA program partnered with Institutional Advancement to fund a new initiative: The Christopher Edward Turner Community Triumph Award. Every MBA student received an award in recognition of the strength and perseverance of our community in spite of COVID. Both Turner and his wife, founding MBA Director Dr. Janet Robinson, have deep roots to the Mount and have done a lot to launch and support the MBA program.

– SURJEET BAIDWAN, PHD, JD, MBA; MBA PROGRAM DIRECTOR, PROFESSOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
Nursing faculty and staff should be recognized for their tireless effort and commitment to our students and nursing education. They responded to the governor’s call for more healthcare workers and ensured progress in their educational programs toward graduation. This enabled senior nursing students to meet program needs, graduate and join the healthcare frontlines.”

– LEAH FITZGERALD, PHD, FNP-BC, DEAN OF NURSING AND THE FLETCHER JONES ENDOWED CHAIR OF NURSING

Going online overnight to teach clinical skills to future nurses was an incredibly difficult journey. The MSMU instructional design team led by Edgar Chabolla was an incredible light in the darkness. They worked nonstop to support faculty to get online in a hurry.

COVID-19 has brought to light some very important areas for improvement—health inequities, public health preparedness, and worker protections being just a few. I worry for my students. And I am inspired by them; their resilience is being tested and strengthened, and this is a skill they will need. Despite hurdles, the ABSN (accelerated bachelor of science in nursing) students were reliably on the call, on time, and ready to contribute. They completed all assignments even when learning one more thing about COVID triggered more stress and anxiety. These future nurses will make excellent team players, and the workforce will be lucky to have them a few short months from now.

– SARAH SHEALY, MSN, CNM, IBCLC, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, NURSING

I’m especially grateful for the hard work of the Mount faculty engaged in global teaching and research. We’re re-imagining our global work and pivoting to building new online communities that will lead to new international learning experiences on campus and abroad. Look for our announcements for the upcoming year! As a faculty member in the Department of History and Political Science, I am impressed—but not surprised—at the strength and tenacity of our students in the face of a difficult year. Y’all’s dedication to making the world a place of equity and justice is truly inspiring. I show up every day because of you.

– LIA ROBERTS, PHD, ACADEMIC DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR GLOBAL INITIATIVES AND CHAIR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE
campaign update

Nearly 6,000 alumnae, foundations, corporations and friends have made gifts to Mount Saint Mary’s Unstoppable Campaign. **We are proud to announce that we have exceeded our $100 million goal!** But we’re not stopping yet—we still have until December 2020 to expand academic programs, fund vital scholarships and support the building of a wellness center on the Chalon Campus. There is more work to be done to ensure an unstoppable future for the next generations of Mount students.

Thank you to everybody who has contributed to the campaign to date.

MSMU.EDU/CAMPAIGN

**Funding progress** as of June 2020

113% to $100 million goal

$113.1 million raised to date

**Other key funding areas:**

*As of June 2020*

- **Wellness Pavilion**: 83%
  - $28,954,144 toward $35 million goal

- **Fund for the Future**: 96%
  - $38,210,098 toward $40 million goal
AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS Gala

Thank you to our donors!

GOLD SPONSORS
THE BIGELOW FAMILY
TOM BLUMENTHAL / GEARYS BEVERLY HILLS
ROBIN S. WRIGHT HERRERA AND GERARDO HERRERA
KATHARINE AND MARY KAY HUGHES
ALLISON LYNCH
JUDITH R. AND STEVE MCDONALD
KATHERINE AND JEFFREY WHITMAN

SILVER SPONSORS
JAMES BELANIC AND FAMILY
BUCK
JANE DELAHANTY
JULIE AND ROY GONELLA
PAULA A. MEICHTRY
MICHELLE MELANSON
JANE HARRIS NADEAU
MARIETTE T. AND ALEXANDER SAWCHUK
DIANNE PLOU SCHAUTSCHICK
SONIA AND NEIL SINGLA
CHASE AND GRACE KADNER WICKERSHAM

BRONZE SPONSORS
SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF CARONDELET
PATRICIA A. CRIBBS
DELTA DENTAL OF CALIFORNIA
FAITH JOURNEYS LLC
ANGELA HAWEKOTTE AND CASEY QUINN
JANET W. AND RICHARD MAULHARDT, JR.
PAYCARD INTERNATIONAL
JAMES W. AND CAROL ROACH
WOODLAND HILLS WINE COMPANY
get involved

AT THE MOUNT

VOLUNTEER

Mount alumnae respond to the needs of the time. Now more than ever, we need to demonstrate the strength of our alumnae network.

Mount Connect

We need alumnae to show students and each other that they are willing to help. Mount Connect is an online mentoring platform designed to bring alumnae and students together to share advice, participate in informational interviews and expand professional networks.

This is a secure environment exclusively for our alumnae and students to learn about and support one another. To sign up, visit mountconnect.com.

Handshake

The Office of Career and Professional Development launched Handshake for students and alumnae to search for jobs and internships. Alumnae with job or internship opportunities are encouraged to share them with the Mount community on Handshake. Visit msmu.edu/careers.

To learn more, please contact Tom Arteaga, director of alumnae relations and volunteer engagement, at tarteaga@msmu.edu or 213.477.2512.

SUPPORT

The Mount Fund and Mount Associates

Contributions to the Mount Fund, the unrestricted fund at Mount Saint Mary’s University, support key priorities like financial aid and faculty initiatives. Those who make annual contributions to the Mount Fund of $1,000 or greater are recognized as Mount Associates members and receive invitations to an annual event hosted by the president. To join the Mount Associates, please contact Kevin A. Barry, senior director of development, at kbarry@msmu.edu or visit msmu.edu/support.

Every Gift Makes a Difference

We hope that you will consider us in your philanthropic plans. If you have not yet made a gift to the Mount in 2020, please consider doing so today and help us get off to a strong start this academic year. You can donate online at msmu.edu/giving or use the attached envelope.

Mount Day of Giving

On May 5, 2020, we held our second annual Mount Day of Giving. Due to your generosity, we raised over $58,000 to support Mount Saint Mary’s students—exceeding our first year’s total. Thank you again for your incredible support. Let’s keep up the momentum next year!

The Heritage Society

In 1992, Mount Saint Mary’s University founded the Heritage Society as a way to provide ongoing gratitude and to acknowledge the generosity of all who have named the Mount as a beneficiary of a will, living trust, retirement plan, or life insurance policy or have set up a life income gift that benefits the Mount in the future. It is composed of alums, parents, friends, faculty and staff. For more information about the Heritage Society and its benefits, contact Maria Solano, gift planning officer, at msolano@msmu.edu or visit msmu.edu/plannedgiving.

Did You Know?

With a charitable gift annuity, you can receive stable payments for life. Gift annuities increase your retirement income as you help shape our future. They also offer you numerous tax benefits. Contact Maria Solano, gift planning officer, at msolano@msmu.edu for more information.
PROFILE OF PHILANTHROPY: TOM BLUMENTHAL

An Ardent Supporter of Women

Thomas Blumenthal, former member of the Regents Council and current chair of the Board of Trustees, has been featured in numerous publications. But for the Mount community, the most newsworthy article was in our own newsroom announcing a partnership between GEARYS Beverly Hills, where Blumenthal is president and CEO, and the Center for the Advancement of Women.

GEARYS, which has been owned by Blumenthal’s family for two-thirds of its 90 years, has committed to a one year Champion sponsorship, assisting in the center’s research, advocacy, and leadership development initiatives.

Blumenthal doesn’t just give lip service—or funds—in his support of women. The majority of his executive staff are women, one of whom has two degrees from the Mount and another who is currently pursuing her MBA here. He brought them all to the Report on the Status of Women and Girls in California™ event. “I spend a tremendous amount of time at the University,” he says, “so I wanted them to see why I’m away from my business. It was also great for people at the Mount to see how many women executives I have within my company.”

Blumenthal credits his grandmother, who graduated from all-women’s Mills College in northern California, for being a guiding force in his life. “She always felt that women deserved to have the same opportunities as men,” he says. “She was way ahead of her time. She was a wife and mother, but she also was a very strong force in our family business. My grandfather never looked at her any differently because she was a woman, and they made every major decision together. I always admired that.”

Blumenthal has interacted with enough Mount students to have formed a strong opinion of them. “I have never met Mount graduates who don’t speak beautifully about their experiences,” he says. “Maybe it’s because they come from a sense of gratitude. It just gives me such a great feeling when we’re helping students.”

The Mount has benefited from Blumenthal’s years of support and decision making, but he feels that he has benefited just as much from the University community. Blumenthal says he’s proud to be a feminist and more men need to be able to say that. “When I look around the room at meetings at the Mount, I’m so proud to be the only man in the room with smart, strong women around the table,” he says. “I’m happy to be there. I’m lucky to be there. I learn from these women.”
GATHERINGS
1) Three unstoppable women received a 2019 Outstanding Alum Award at Homecoming & Reunions. With President Ann McElaney-Johnson (middle): Suzanne Weber Hoffman ’84 (left) for Service to the University, Mary Breden ’73 (2nd from the right) for Professional Achievement, and Naomi Miguel ’09 (right) for Rising Star. Unique to this year, which marked the 70th anniversary of the Nursing Department, we also recognized Marilyn Baumgartner Shirk ’73 (2nd from the left) for the Sr. Rebecca Doan Alum Award. (2) San Diego: Alums gathered in the home of Patricia Cribbs ’85 for an afternoon of fellowship. (3) Washington, D.C.: Alums joined President McElaney-Johnson for a gathering and brunch in D.C. (4) Homecoming & Reunions 2019: A beautiful day of celebrating the reunions (pictured: the Class of 1969 50th reunion) with a special mass, lunch and program.
Homecoming Alumnae Weekend
Oct. 24-25, 2020

All alumnae are invited to join these virtual activities

CLASS REUNIONS
Celebrating class years ending in 0 or 5. Stay tuned for fun happy hours, conversations, and surprises.

LIFELONG LEARNING
Faculty will lead conversations on timely topics. Enjoy the discussion without the homework.

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD
Hear from CSJs, faculty, students and alumnae about the history of the Mount and our path forward.

ADMISSIONS 101 FAMILY WORKSHOP
Alumnae with high school-aged children or grandchildren are invited to learn about the college admissions process.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO VOLUNTEER AS A CLASS AMBASSADOR, VISIT ALUMS.MSMU.EDU
CLASS NOTES

1959 Gloria Travaglini Chess and her husband Ronald celebrated the marriages of their two oldest grandchildren in 2019 and enjoyed traveling out of country to Portugal, Holland, Belgium, the British Isles and Iceland.

1966 Susan Rausch Schanz and her husband Greg joined her lifelong friend Sandra Comouche to visit Wilmington, Del., where they toured the DuPont Hagley Museum and Library. Wilmington is home to the DuPont industries and homesteads.

1987 Claire (Matranga) Noland recently started a new role as the Major League Baseball enterprise editor for The Athletic sports news website. She previously served as an editor of sports and news obituaries during her 21-year career at the Los Angeles Times.

1991 Jane (Hendricks) Cook holds the title for the longest serving civilian nurse in Afghanistan, and she is the second highest decorated civilian. Her work has earned her a NATO Gold Medal Award, a Civilian Combat Award, and numerous military medals. The Johnson & Johnson Endowment nominated her as Nurse of the Year. She also has written two books about her military experiences, one of which was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize.

1992 Joann Fields Ramirez celebrates her marriage to John Fields.

1995 Marie Anne Legaspi currently serves as the dean of the RN program at Carrington College in Sacramento. She also is the assistant director of nursing for the college’s LVN to RN program.

1996 Sherri Miller will start her 20th year as a teacher at First Lutheran Church and School in Torrance, Calif.

1997 Jean Day is in her 13th year of teaching at Georgia Highland College. She also co-hosts the podcast, “Fun, Feisty and Fabulous,” geared toward women over 40.

1999 Sarah Walker Conger has celebrated 20 years of teaching in the Santa Ana Unified School District.

2002 Nina Cole has completed her PhD in cultural studies at the University of California, Davis (UCD). She served as the Postdoctoral Scholar in UCD’s Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies for the 2019-20 academic year.

2003 Reedy Press Publishers has published “Secret Inland Empire,” the second book of Larry Burns. His first book, “Being Wendall,” was published by Mt. Voices Literary Press. He was part of the first cohort of students who graduated from the Mount’s Humanities Weekend Program.

2006 Marissa Smith serves as the director of education for the newly founded Sir John Hurt Film Trust in England, where she resides with her husband, Trevor.

2011 Julia Sauter completed her first year serving as the mission education and ministry office coordinator for Glenmary Home Missioners, a Catholic missionary society headquartered in Cincinnati.

Last summer, she participated in the Given Institute, a leadership institute for young Catholic women. She is an active associate with the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, and she recently spent six months living in community with the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor in Cincinnati.

2011 Sarah (Nichols) Tuttle gave birth to her son, Declan Ryan Nichols, on October 26, 2019.

2014 After serving as a Peace Corps volunteer for more than two years, Alba Arana has received her master’s degree in higher and postsecondary education from Arizona State University.

Elizabeth Kovach-Hayes graduated with an EdD in organizational change and leadership from the University of Southern California.

2015 Merlyn Pena-Solis received a master’s degree in social work from the University of Southern California.

2016 Jasmine Scales has received a master’s degree in post-secondary education and student affairs from the University of Southern California.

2017 Nicole Gastelum has started the master’s program and teaching credential program at California Baptist University in Riverside, California.
Remembrances

Lewis “Lew” Dauber ’09
Adjunct Faculty Member
1949-2019

Lew Dauber was an adjunct faculty member of the Mount’s film, media and social justice department. He also was a recognizable character actor in film and television. Born in New York, he started his career in banking after graduating from the University of California, Berkeley. He left banking to become a professional actor, building a steady career of on-screen parts in such films as “The Island,” “Something’s Gotta Give” and “Jingle All The Way.” His passion for acting led him to serve as a longtime member of the Screen Actors Guild and board member of the SAG-AFTRA Credit Union. He returned to school to earn his master’s degree at the Mount, becoming the speaker of his graduating class. Following graduation, he taught humanities at the University, where he oversaw humanity-themed film screenings and classroom discussions. He is survived by his wife, Paulette, and sons Jeff and Zach.

Sheila Thornton ’57
McCarthy and Coe Libraries Supporter
1939-2019

Sheila Thornton was a generous supporter of the Mount’s two libraries. Her donations funded numerous campus projects, including the Affordable Learning Materials Initiative that helps faculty transition from expensive course materials to low-to no-cost materials; a mass-digitalization project that makes historical Mount publications available online; and new furniture for the reading room in the McCarthy Library. She also funded each library’s first best-seller collections as well as new technology needs, including Kindles and laptops. A librarian herself, Thornton worked at the California State Library for many years before her retirement. As a student, she was a member of the Student Council and a writer for the View Newspaper. She also belonged to the Tau Alpha Zeta sorority, National Federation of College Students, and Young Democrats and was selected for the prestigious Who’s Who in American Colleges and Universities.

IN MEMORIAM

’43 Mary Sibilio Frary
’44 Alice Shannon Guizot
’46 Husband of Garland O’Rourke Parten
’48 Geraldine Cassutt Monahan
’50 Gloria Putman Stoica
’51 Genevieve Weeger Smurda
’52 Eileen Micklish Hempfling
’53 Cecilia Zerwek
’54 Mary Ross Kasimatis
’55 Claire Jones Martin
’56 Joan Green Calder
’56 Miriam Kam Kahalekai
’56 Beverly Gueno Watkins
’57 Husband of Jean Schnieders Burnelli
’57 Constance Bianchi Kelsey
’57 Sr. Margaret McGraw
’57 Sheila Thornton
’58 Audrey Berks Martinez
’58 (est.) Rita Pasqualone
’59 Sally Fanning Hanton
’61 JoAnn Crowley Kelly
’63 Mother of Mary Beynon
’63 Regina Stoner Smith
’65 Husband of Margaret Bush Supple
’65 Daughter of Lawreen Gallagher
’66 Stephen Daly
’66 Sr. Joyce Marie Gaspardo
’66 Maureen Jansen Atkins
’67 Mother of Mary Beynon Bruno
’67 Son of Noreen Emerson Frieling
’68 Husband of Yvonne Burdo Everson
’69 Clare Collins Marquardt
’69 Margaret Brice Adin
’69 Gloria Erbe
’69 Edna Bernal Murphy
’70 Father of Linda Leggett Oldenkamp
’73 Maria Diaz
’76 Claire Oliver
’78 Husband of Patricia Aston Giffin
’79 Telka Penney Kaston
’80 Husband of Phyllis Massino
’83 Celeste Otanez
’83 Husband of Sarah Magana Zepeda
’87 Claudia Ruiz
’89 Father of Michele Starkey, assistant provost at the Mount
’95 Nancy Kussman McFadden
’97 Grandmother of Willow Nardoni-Teays Buno
’08 Cynthia Bland
’11 Husband of Alexandra Erb Albrecht
   – Sr. Maureen Cochrane
Mount Saint Mary’s will host a series of virtual events and activities to learn, engage and stay connected with the Mount community. These virtual experiences are free.

**COMPASSION IN TIMES OF DEEP HEALING**
With Elena Brower, best-selling author and internationally renowned yoga and meditation teacher.
THURSDAY, JULY 30, 2020
10 -11 am FREE

**THE REPORT ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN CALIFORNIA™**
Anti-racism. Intersectional feminism. A path toward equity.
TUESDAY, AUG. 18, 2020
10 -11 am FREE

Join us to take a deeper dive into issues at these Report on the Status of Women and Girls in California continuing conversations:

**Equity and Agency:**
A Historical Look at the Last Century
TUESDAY, AUG. 25, 2020
10 -11 am FREE

**Equity and Agency:**
How Are California’s Women and Girls Faring?
THURSDAY, OCT. 1, 2020
10 to 11 am FREE

**WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**
THURSDAY, SEPT. 24, 2020
9:30 am - 1:30 pm FREE

To learn more about the above events contact Heather Schraeder at hsbraeder@msmu.edu.

**HOMECOMING ALUMNAE WEEKEND**
SATURDAY & SUNDAY, OCT. 24-25, 2020
Visit alums.msmu.edu or contact Tom Arteaga at tarteaga@msmu.edu to learn more.
In the early evening of Ascension Thursday, 1870—May 26 on the calendar—seven weary sisters approached the frontier town of Tucson, the last stop on what had been a risky, 2,900-mile journey by train, steamboat, covered wagon, and on foot. For the final leg of the trek they at least had a carriage, along with a mounted escort of U.S. soldiers and local supporters. They had hoped not to attract attention, but as they entered the city limits a volley of fireworks and the cheers of the crowd crashed around them.

The locals’ enthusiasm grew out of their concerns. The rugged region was now part of the United States and the railroad was passing through Tucson, but there was not a single school or hospital to be found in the Arizona Territory. For two years, church officials had been asking for help from women’s religious orders. The plea had been heeded at the CSJ motherhouse in Carondelet, Missouri, and now the sisters had finally arrived. Despite their exhaustion, they did not take much time to rest, writes Sister Mary Williams, CSJ, in her history, “All Things New: The Story of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in the Los Angeles Province.” Just 11 days after their arrival, St. Joseph Academy for young ladies was open for business.

More sisters continued to arrive from Missouri, and a handful of local women entered the novitiate. In their first decade in Arizona, the number of sisters more than doubled, and they opened six schools and two hospitals. By 1900, there were 20 separate ministries, including seven in California. The need for sisters was acute, so the province moved to even faster-growing Los Angeles, and for most of the next century the CSJ ministries grew at the same heated pace as California. At the time of the province’s centennial in 1970, there were hundreds of sisters serving in more than 100 ministries.

Even as growth slowed down in the 1970s, the CSJs continued to follow the needs of the time. Instead of hospitals and schools requiring large communities of sisters, contemporary projects led by one or two sisters addressed new problems that the Arizona sisters could not have envisioned. The most recent ministries include shelters for homeless and abused women, services for the incarcerated and advocacy for victims of human trafficking.

The CSJs of the Los Angeles Province had hoped to travel to Tucson in May to celebrate 150 years; they can still look back on a legacy of more than 140 ministries—an average of almost one a year—in Arizona, California, Idaho, Washington, Oregon and Hawaii. Not only have they impacted countless communities and individuals, but the CSJs are truly an enduring part of the history of the West.

— Victoria McCargar, University archivist
JOIN US!
Complimentary Online Presentations:

**TUESDAY, AUG. 18 10 - 11 AM**
Anti-racism. Intersectional feminism. A path toward equity.

**TUESDAY, AUG. 25 10 - 11 AM**
A Historical Look at the Last Century

**THURSDAY, OCT. 1 10 - 11 AM**
How Are California’s Women and Girls Faring?