THANK YOU SO MUCH
It has been a busy and productive spring, as you will see in the pages ahead.

We celebrated Black History Month in February, and our students, faculty from various departments, and the Center for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion hosted lectures, film screenings and seminars on a variety of topics focused on racial justice and anti-Black racism. March was Women’s History Month, which coincided with the 10th anniversary of the Report on the Status of Women and Girls in California. The Mount is full of women accomplishing amazing things in the classroom and in their careers.

In this issue alone, there is a profile on Jennifer Vanderpool, PhD, a professor in our art department who was awarded a prestigious Fulbright scholarship to work with the University of Liverpool in the UK. And alum Patricia Cribbs ‘85, who received this year’s Unstoppable Supporter award, turned her cherished time at the Mount into a fulfilling nursing career. She not only wants to see others succeed but directly supports others’ dreams with scholarships and participation in many Mount events where she can encourage current students.

Our students continue to #StayMountStrong as they near the end of this academic year. We are excited to welcome back students, faculty and staff to our campuses next fall for as much in-person learning and living that is permitted by the state and county health and safety guidelines. We miss seeing our students, and I know that the faculty and staff join me in anticipating their return.

As we head toward our centennial in 2025, we are embarking on an ambitious oral history project to capture stories of the Mount throughout its history. This project’s success will depend on your participation, so please consider sharing a story or two about your time as a student.

I am pleased to be a part of the Mount’s story and give thanks every day for this vibrant community. Thank you for making the Mount’s past, present and future something we can all treasure.

Sincerely,

Ann McElaney-Johnson
Profile of Philanthropy
PATRICIA CRIBBS ’85 RECEIVES UNSTOPPABLE SUPPORTER AWARD

Filled with Gratitude
STUDENTS CELEBRATE MACKENZIE SCOTT’S GENEROUS $15 MILLION GIFT TO THE UNIVERSITY

Happy Anniversary
IT’S BEEN 10 YEARS SINCE THE FIRST REPORT ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN CALIFORNIA™

Fulbright Scholar
JENNIFER VANDERPOOL’S EXAMINATION OF POST-INDUSTRIALIZED CITIES TAKES HER TO LIVERPOOL

Cover
STUDENT SIDNEY ROSE ORTEGA ’23 DPT DEMONSTRATES THE PREVAILING SENTIMENT THAT DESPITE THIS PAST YEAR’S CIRCUMSTANCES, OUR COMMUNITY HAS MUCH TO BE THANKFUL FOR.

Updates
Accolades
#StayMountStrong
Engage
Alum Community
Looking Back
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Mount students worked seven different clinic days between December 29 and January 14, with several students participating as many as four times. The nine-hour shifts started at 5:45 am and saw between 600 and 650 vaccines administered each day.

“Mount nurses are absolutely improving the health of the Los Angeles community and reflecting the charism of the sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet,” says Marie Seitz ’98 BSN, director of the TBSN program. Their efforts are not going unnoticed. Eric Garcetti, Los Angeles mayor, tweeted a photo of Jamie (Wells) Robledo ’08 BSN, a supervising clinic nurse for the COVID-19 vaccine clinic at Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center. In her retweet, she wrote, “Thank goodness for my GREAT nursing education from @msmu_la!!!”

“With COVID, everything’s ever changing,”

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“With COVID, everything’s ever changing,”
Grant Roundup

Since last fall, the Mount has been the recipient of several grants to support scholarships and direct aid as well as specific programs.

The U.S. Department of Education’s office of special education programs awarded a five-year, $1.25 million federal grant in support of the Mount’s Education Specialist Program in Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH), a master’s program conducted in partnership with the renowned John Tracy Center. The funding will provide tuition support and curriculum enhancement for 55 graduate scholars — preparing them to effect positive outcomes for young children with hearing loss and their families.

California faces a shortage of qualified educators and audiologists who can provide vital early intervention. Also, 60% of children with hearing loss statewide come from Latinx households. Mount Saint Mary’s is well positioned to prepare graduates who can offer culturally competent care.

Through the years, the Bill Hannon Foundation has provided a cumulative amount of $10.75 million in capital funding and renovation support to the Mount, including lead funding for MSMU’s future Wellness Pavilion and Hannon Hall student residence at the Doheny Campus.

The foundation also provides funds annually for scholarships; this academic year, it doubled its giving with an additional $150,000 emergency COVID-relief fund.

Finally, the education department has received a grant for $375,000 as part of a three-year program with Branch Alliance for Educator Diversity to ensure that future educators are well versed in best practices for educating the diverse population found in many K-12 classrooms.

Studies show that young students of color benefit from being taught by educators who represent our society’s diversity. The Mount is part of BranchEd’s second cohort of higher education institution grant recipients that the organization is assisting not only financially but also with technical assistance, training and support services.
Women’s Studies Major Debuts in Fall

This fall, Mount Saint Mary’s University will begin offering an interdisciplinary Women and Gender Studies major that focuses on leadership, policy and undergraduate research in partnership with various centers of research and support.

Two political science faculty members spearheading the development of the major are Emerald Archer, PhD, associate professor and director of the Center for the Advancement of Women, and Lia Roberts, PhD, the history and political science department chair, as well as academic director of the Center for Global Initiatives.

The Mount has had a women’s studies minor for decades, but Roberts says that students have requested a major, and now is the right time to add it. “We have to recognize the social and political changes that we’ve seen the last couple of years stemming from the #MeToo movement” she says. “We definitely need to expand our offerings to be relevant to this generation of students.”

Although numerous other universities have women’s studies majors, MSMU is primarily a women’s institution — and it has the Center for the Advancement of Women behind it. “We apply a gender lens to virtually everything that we do at the Mount,” says Archer. “Other programs lack the connection to centers that are really engaged and can link students to projects within their communities.”

“This is a really great program if you want to engage in a more intensive way. If a student comes really excited and motivated to learn and tap into all of this infrastructure, then their experience will be that much richer.”

Campaign Encourages Mount Community to Stay Engaged

Mount Saint Mary’s kicked off the spring term with a new campaign, led by our Athenians Care committee, to keep the Mount community engaged and connected throughout the semester as we continue to be safer at home. Under the hashtag #StayMountStrong, the campaign shares inspiring messages from Mount students, faculty and staff, as well as helpful tutorials with academic tips and announcements from the University.

“2020 was a challenging year on many fronts, but as a Mount community we came together to care for each other,” says Ann McElaney-Johnson, PhD, president of Mount Saint Mary’s. “With science on our side, we look forward to the time when we will all be together in person. Let’s remember we are an incredible community that always works best together, and we will continue to care for each other.”

The campus-wide initiative will also include a celebration for the entire Mount community toward the end of the term with fun challenges and prizes for students throughout the spring semester.

Helen Umana, Student Government Association president, was one of the numerous students who shared words of encouragement with the community:

“During this time, it is crucial for us to be there for one another,” she says. “Remember, Athenians, to Stay Mount Strong.”
#STAY MOUNT STRONG

#STAY MOUNT STRONG
This year’s ADthenians, the team that competes in the National Student Advertising Competition (NSAC) in which teams create an advertising campaign for a company, are looking forward to the District 15 championships this spring. In their district, they compete against the likes of UCLA, USC and UC San Diego.

Such large schools’ teams are likely comprised of all business majors. Some may even be getting a concentration in advertising. Because the student body at Mount Saint Mary’s is considerably smaller at under 3,000, the ADthenians are an exciting mix of visionaries and hard workers from all different types of backgrounds and majors. And they know how to hold their own.

But they do have big shoes to fill. In 2020, the ADthenians placed third in the district competition. Last year’s creative director, Josie DeBellis, said, “We never let anything stop us. I knew we were winners because I have never seen so much resilience manifest among such a small group of dedicated women.”

DeBellis’ team dealt with the Getty fire and had their work toward this competition interrupted by the pandemic. This year’s team has never been able to work together. This year’s ADthenians are scattered across the globe, relegated to communicating with each other via Zoom meetings twice a week. Despite the challenges, they have refused to give up. This past year has taught the world that the future is uncertain, but one thing that is steadfast is the dedication the ADthenians have to their future success.

Only 11% of the nation’s creative directors are women. The ADthenians hope to increase that statistic upon graduation.

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Virtual Unstoppable Scholarship Celebration

Social distancing did not put a damper on the President’s Scholarship Virtual Celebration held February 26 via Zoom. Despite missing the annual luncheon and opportunity to mingle, the mood was festive as attendees honored this year’s scholarship award recipients and donors.

Alexis Sio ’21 was named the year’s Unstoppable Scholar for her unwavering resolve to go beyond mere academic excellence. She is active in a number of student organizations and shares her passion for nursing by mentoring younger nursing students. A co-president of the California Nursing Students’ Association, Sio plans to become a registered nurse specializing in pediatrics. She is the recipient of the Patricia A. Cribbs Expendable Nursing Scholarship, which assists nursing students in the last years of their program.

Coincidentally, Patricia Cribbs ’85 was honored with the Unstoppable Supporter Award for helping students achieve academic success through the Mount’s scholarship program.

“With my donations to the Mount and with the nursing scholarship, my hope is to help students achieve their goals of college graduation and continued success as Mount grads,” says Cribbs.

Cribbs continues to dedicate her time and talent to the University, having served as a college fair representative, a speaker at admitted students’ day, and a mentor for undergraduate students, among other roles.

This year’s celebration was hosted by Helen Umana, student body president — the second year that the student body president has served as emcee.

“It’s important to show our appreciation to the donors who are investing in our education as well as to celebrate the unstoppable students,” says Umana. “Personally, I came to the Mount because of the generous scholarship I am receiving. Without it, I probably would not be here.”

President’s Invitation to Serve

Nearly 70 students, alums, faculty and staff answered Mount Saint Mary’s president’s call on a Saturday morning in January to participate in the first virtual Invitation to Serve, in which participants spent several hours serving others or discussing ways to effect changes within one’s community.

Participants could attend a workshop on writing letters to congressional representatives; a civic engagement session on how to be actively engaged in government even when there’s no election looming; a letter writing campaign to sisters at the Carondelet Center as well as seniors at various assisted living programs or hospice; and a spring cleaning session encouraging donations of unwanted, gently used items to various nonprofits.

The remote aspect of the event did little to dampen people’s enthusiasm. Danielle Rose Steele ’08, former Alumnae Board member and regional ambassador for Arizona, did both spring cleaning and letter writing.

"Once I decided what stationary to use — some cards made of a photo I took at Havasu Falls near the Grand Canyon — it was pretty easy to share my experience hiking," says Steele. "I hope it gives the sisters a brief window into another world for a bit. The day gave me a few moments to connect with others, for which I’m grateful!"

Giante Gonzalez ’22 attended this event for the first time. "I could see how everyone was interested in wanting to help others," she says. "The President’s Invitation to Serve also radiated the Mount’s mission statement of gaining knowledge to better ourselves, the environment and the world.”
Mount Saint Mary’s University’s new events calendar on the MSMU website is a great way to learn, engage and stay connected to the Mount. Many activities are open not only to current students, faculty and staff but also to alums and friends of the University. Viewers can see all calendar entries or filter events by the following categories: alumnae; career services; conference/workshops; spiritual life/community engagement; sports and wellness; student life; and featured events. It’s also possible to have event updates, information and reminders sent to you via email or text and to forward event information to others.

Read All About It!

For more in-depth coverage of many of the stories here in Updates, as well as coverage throughout the year, check out msmu.edu/newsroom. If you don’t see what you’re looking for on the main page, click on “All News” or put the topic or person’s name in the search function. You don’t want to miss reading about:

- Unity Through New Black Student Union
- Work that Sister Helen Prejean, CSJ, did with a group of Mount students
- Business professor Eddie Loussarian’s book, “64 Life Hacks for Success”
- Johnny Payne, director of the MFA in creative writing
- The Mount’s Counseling and Psychological Services department
- Profiles on numerous Mount students and alums

The Votes Are In

Mount Saint Mary’s University was the winner in the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities’ division for the campus with the most creative approach to registering students in the 2020 Ballot Bowl.

To select the winner of the most creative category, the Secretary of State’s office reviewed the participants’ submitted voter outreach plans.

The Mount’s “Why I Vote” initiative received a lot of attention from students, staff and faculty alike. This year, MSMU Votes shirts were delivered to students, staff, faculty, trustees and friends of the Mount, and the MSMU Votes Zoom backgrounds were extremely popular.

“We are incredibly proud of our efforts for the election,” says Chinako Belanger, interim director for women’s leadership and student engagement. She noted that the University received a small grant from the California Secretary of State’s office to assist with outreach efforts.

The Ballot Bowl, an initiative of the California Students Vote Project, had an overwhelming response with 95 campuses taking part in 2020 compared to 46 campuses during the inaugural competition in 2018. The inaugural event led to nearly 11,000 student voter registrations. Fast forward to 2020’s campaign, in which that tally reached 82,634, a nearly 87% increase.
FACULTY

Language and culture professor Nancy Ballesteros, PhD, published an OER (open educational resources) manual of intermediate Spanish. OER materials are openly licensed text and digital assets for teaching, learning, and research.

Sandra Gamson, PhD, adjunct professor, language and culture, presented a paper, “Algerian History Silenced and Recovered by Fire in Assia Djebar’s ‘L’Amour, la fantasia,’” at the Centre for Comparative Literature’s 30th conference at the University of Toronto in November.

Michelle French-Holloway, EdD, professor and chair, business administration, presented a paper, “Experiences of Clergy Managing Church Finances with Varying Degrees of Financial Literacy Training,” for a virtual session of the 2020 annual meeting of the Academy of Management. The paper’s abstract was also published in the conference proceedings.

Professor emerita of education, Nancy Pine, PhD, has completed her second book, “One in a Billion: One Man’s Remarkable Odyssey through Modern-Day China.” Published in December by Rowman & Littlefield, the book is the tale of one man’s success despite the authoritarian environment in China. Learn more about it at nancypine.info.

An article by associate professor Lester Reams, JD, DPA, “Impact of the Business Mindset on Student Perception on the Non-Compete Agreement,” was published in the March issue of The Bulletin of Tara Shevchenko National University of Kyiv.

Derrick Spiva Jr., MFA, Mount instrumental ensembles director, was featured in the Washington Post article “21 for ’21: Composers and Performers Who Sound Like Tomorrow.” Additionally, his new work, “The Mother of All Bravery,” was part of a Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra event in January.

The Mount’s curriculum committee approved a new course, “Global Culture for Business” (BUS 147), to be offered online starting this fall. Designed by Christian B. Teeter, EdD, associate professor of business administration, the course aligns with the Liberal Arts Core Education curriculum’s global awareness and understanding and integrative scholarship criteria.

Kim Terrill, MA, GCDF, director of career and professional development, presented at the International Leadership Association’s virtual conference last fall as part of a panel titled, “Women of Color Pushing the Edges of Predominately White Institutions: Lessons from Research and Life Experiences.”

Education professor Shelly Tochluk, PhD, is a co-author of a Western States Center six-part series of online posts titled, “My Child Is Sharing Conspiracy Theories and Racist Memes. What Do I Say?” Western States Center works nationwide to strengthen inclusive democracy.

ALUM

Dannielle Carr ’19 MFA had a poem, “An Afternoon,” published in The Curator magazine. Carr is a poet and writer who explores the daily life of death, grief and faith. Her work has also appeared in ArtAscent and FULLER Magazine.

STUDENTS

A short story, “Programmed,” by MFA creative writing student Tricia Lopez ’22 was published in The Acentos Review in December.

Biochemistry major Alicia Mercado ’22 has been accepted into Caltech’s summer research program that aims to foster future diversity in science and engineering PhD programs. Alicia will be working in Dr. Ellen Rothenberg’s immunology lab that studies the molecular mechanism for how stem cells differentiate into T lymphocytes. The 10-week program requires WAVE Fellows to submit two interim reports, a research abstract and final paper in addition to giving an oral or poster presentation. Participants also receive a stipend and supplement for campus housing.

Samantha Vasquez ’21 was awarded a fully funded PhD-preparation research assistantship at Emory University last summer, which continued into the academic year. Vasquez also won a best poster award in sustainability at the Southern California Conference for Undergraduate Research based on original research she did at Mount Saint Mary’s in the GWSTEM program.

Pianist and composer Emily Webster-Zuber ‘24 premiered her composition, “The Sun Shines Fair” for string trio, during a Luna Lab Meets LACO (Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra) event in February. Founded in 2016, the organization addresses the gender imbalance in classical music by providing aspiring female-identifying musicians a year of mentoring, performance opportunities and recordings of young composers’ works.

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Prestigious Fulbright Scholarship Awarded to Faculty Artist

"Untold Stories" centered on Jennifer Vanderpool’s hometown and has crossed the pond to Liverpool

The route to Jennifer Vanderpool’s Fulbright scholarship traveled through her hometown within Mahoning Valley, a rural area between Cleveland and Youngstown, Ohio. Vanderpool, who holds an independent, interdisciplinary PhD in trauma studies from the University of California, Santa Barbara, has been an instructor at Mount Saint Mary’s since 2017.

Vanderpool creates community-specific, site-responsive exhibitions that she researches the way an art historian goes into a museum or an archive and reads about the type of work that they’re going to cover in an article. When she finished her PhD, Vanderpool was offered an exhibition at the Butler Art Institute of American Art, a large museum in Youngstown, Ohio, that was started by the family that founded U.S. Steel. “I took this opportunity to start doing research on this city which was very close to where I grew up yet really knew nothing about,” she says.

She discovered that Youngstown’s Mullins Manufacturing made steel kitchens that were the epitome of modern architectural design during the decades following WWII. Vanderpool worked with elements from the Mahoning County Historical Society to include parts of a kitchen in the exhibition, as well as historic films, TV commercials and print advertisements. “I made my own works sort of tongue in cheek in response to this historic material,” she says.

The exhibit created a response that Vanderpool wasn’t expecting. “At the opening, families came that had a grandparent who had worked for Mullins Manufacturing or U.S. Steel, and they came with their children and grandchildren to tell their stories about working there.”

“I took this opportunity to start doing research on this city which was very close to where I grew up yet really knew nothing about.”
Thus her project Untold Stories was born, which are case-study exhibitions of disinvested communities. Vanderpool uses her own photographs, historic photojournalist imagery and ephemera advertisements that she finds in archives as well as textile designs from relevant time periods to create prints. She also created documentary films, storytelling to be seen in the exhibition.

“My idea was that the people and workers in communities like Youngstown should tell their own stories about how they’re rebuilding or reimagining their cities in the postindustrial era.”

In the fall of 2019, Vanderpool applied to the Fulbright Commission to do a transnational narrative with the deindustrialized cities in the industrial north of England. “The thing about applying for a Fulbright is that it’s not like getting a grant from the Ohio Arts Council which funded the development of the Untold Stories exhibition,” she says. “You have to have a project that is related to the community where you’re going to be doing the research, and you have to have an affiliation with an institution in the country. Your research has to have a very specific narrative; it’s not just going to study abroad. What they’re asking is have you done enough work so that you can take advantage of this great opportunity.”

Vanderpool is working with the department of art, esthetics and philosophy at the University of Liverpool. For now, the work is all remote because the Fulbright has been deferred because of the pandemic, but likely will take place sometime in 2022.

The “Untold Stories” exhibit by Jennifer Vanderpool, a US-UK Fulbright scholar fellow. The top two images, “Akron to Youngstown,” 2020, total 36” x 84,” whereas the bottom two panels, “Pittsburgh to Liverpool,” 2020, total 168” x 84.” They are all archival photographic intervention digital prints.
Thank you for your generosity!

Thank you so much for supporting me!

Thank you for your support!

Thank you so much for this opportunity! This means a lot!
Mount Saint Mary’s University received a transformational $15 million gift from author and philanthropist MacKenzie Scott last December. The unrestricted donation, the single largest gift in the University’s history, will support the Mount’s efforts to reach goals outlined in its new five-year strategic plan expected to be approved this spring.

“I am thrilled Mount Saint Mary’s is the recipient of this generous gift,” says President Ann McElaney-Johnson, PhD. “Ms. Scott has been strategic with her philanthropy and laser-focused on the areas that reflect the ideals and values of a diverse, equitable and inclusive society. The Mount has a long tradition of being on the forefront of women’s education and leadership development. This donation will allow us to grow programs to help our students succeed, especially during these difficult times. These funds will be instrumental as we implement new and creative ways to continue graduating future leaders.”

Mount Saint Mary’s is among 384 nonprofits across the country, and the only educational institution in Los Angeles, to receive this gift. In a public announcement, Scott said that her team carefully selected organizations, from a starting group of more than 6,000, with “strong leadership teams and results (that are) addressing long-term systemic inequalities that have been deepened by the crisis,” including education for historically marginalized and underserved communities.

“The vast majority of our students come from vulnerable communities, and their lives are transformed at Mount Saint Mary’s. Our faculty and staff are integral to their success. This gift is a testament to the hard work and determination of our entire community. It will make an immediate difference in our students’ lives and success.”

– LINDA MCMURDOCK, PHD, VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS
Celebrating a decade of data-driven advocacy with The Report on the Status of Women and Girls in California™

A “blueprint for change”

by Phillip Jordan
By year two, in 2013, attendance at the Mount’s public release event had swelled to more than 850. A massive tent had to be set up on the University’s Doheny Campus to accommodate the crowd. By 2015, the annual convening moved to the Skirball Cultural Center, where approximately 1,000 attendees gather each year.

Geena Davis, Academy Award-winning actor and past chair of the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls, has often served as a featured speaker at the Report’s public release. Davis is also founder of the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, which is a partnership with financial and administrative support from the University.

“Over the past decade, I’ve seen up close how the Report’s research motivates people to advocate for more equitable opportunities for women and girls,” Davis says. “It’s a heartening thing to see 1,000 people gathered in one place to talk about how to make the world a better place for all of us.”

The Report’s impact isn’t limited to its usual Women’s History Month release each year. It serves as a vital policymaking and advocacy tool year-round for gender equity advocates in California and provides support for similar research being conducted across the state and around the country.

Sacramento, California

The Report remains a pivotal source of information for the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls, equipping its commissioners to champion policy solutions in the state legislature that make California a more equitable and inclusive place for all. That’s especially true with this year’s Report, which focuses on the impact of COVID-19.
“Mount Saint Mary’s has been doing an extraordinary job to really develop leaders to find the path that they choose. The Report on the Status of Women and Girls in California is indispensable in this task.”
— Mayor Eric Garcetti
City of Los Angeles

“As we grapple with a pandemic and the associated economic downturn, this year’s Report confirms for us that the existing inequalities for women and girls of color make it necessary to immediately focus our attention on Black women, Latinas, working mothers and frontline workers who make up the majority of those hit hardest by COVID-19,” says Alisha Wilkins, PhD, chair of the state commission. “Women are leading the charge for change at every level, and we know that partnerships such as ours with Mount Saint Mary’s will help to inform our decisions for change every step of the way.”

City of Los Angeles

In 2015, Mount Saint Mary’s was commissioned to create a local Report on its hometown of Los Angeles, the second-largest city in the United States. Funded by the Los Angeles Commission on the Status of Women, the Report’s areas of focus were developed in partnership with First Lady Amy Elaine Wakeland and the office of Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti. The resulting research provoked immediate change. Shortly after its release, Garcetti issued an executive directive aimed at achieving gender equity in all city operations.

Among other things, Garcetti’s Executive Directive No. 11 created a Gender Equity Coalition, made up of liaisons from each city department who would work to promote gender equity throughout Los Angeles.

Five years later, MSMU’s hometown impact is evident.

There’s now full gender parity on all city boards and commissions. Record numbers of women have advanced to leadership positions as general managers, deputy mayors and directors. Twice as many girls participate in the city’s sports leagues and fitness programs. Domestic abuse services for survivors are available citywide. And a once-glaring gender pay gap in the mayor’s office is no more.

“The Report on the Status of Women and Girls is a blueprint for change,” Wakeland says. “Using tools like this, we can ensure that women always have their fair share of seats at every table and an equal voice in all important conversations…This is what we can achieve when we are intentional and we collect data about the largest gaps in the resources and opportunities available to women and girls — and when we then hold ourselves accountable for closing those gaps.”

Los Angeles County

In 2016, the Los Angeles County Commission for Women asked Mount Saint Mary’s to conduct the first of three county-level Reports. Each one offered insights to elevate the work of the county’s Initiative on Women and Girls — a group that’s tasked with applying a gender lens to how the county hires personnel, provides public services and contracts with external vendors.

“Mount Saint Mary’s Reports have really shifted the perspective on the importance of data and the ways in which commissions like ours can advise legislators around policy,” says Karriann Farrell Hinds, president of the Los Angeles County Commission for Women. “We’re not empowered to act independently so our advisory function is significant.”
How has the Report affected the Mount? “The answer to that question was clear,” says McElaney-Johnson. “It had to affect us in every way if we were to live out our mission.” The University founded the Center for the Advancement of Women, reshaped the Women’s Leadership Program for students, and created the Center for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Through the years, the Center for the Advancement of Women has expanded public programming and funded more research opportunities: An annual Women’s Leadership Conference; nonpartisan campaign training workshops to prepare more women to run for office; and Collectif, an original research companion to the Report that further explores some of the most crucial topics and trends related to equity and access. “Collectif allows us to dig deeper on certain topics in a way we can’t within the broader Report,” says Emerald Archer, PhD, director of the Center for the Advancement of Women. “Food insecurity, for example, might be a couple of paragraphs in the Report. With Collectif, we can commission a whole paper on that one topic.”

The Center enhances student life and learning on campus, too. Archer co-developed the Mount’s new Women and Gender Studies major, launching this fall, structured around leadership, policy and undergraduate research. In recent years, the Center also established a Legislator in Residence program to bring timely policy conversations to campus, along with mentoring opportunities for students. Former state Sen. Holly J. Mitchell — now a supervisor for LA County — is the program’s first Legislator in Residence. “The Legislator in Residence program has been particularly successful modeling what good leadership looks like for students,” says Archer. “It also puts students in proximity to power, which is crucial for young women.”

Julia Vanella ’18, a history and political science graduate of the Mount, had the chance to speak with Mitchell during a class her senior year. The experience changed the course of Vanella’s life. “Having that exposure to someone in public office opened my eyes to pursuing a career in public service,” she says. Today, Vanella is pursuing a master’s degree in public policy at The George Washington University in Washington, DC. “Representation matters,” says McElaney-Johnson. “That’s what this Report was all about 10 years ago when we got started — and it remains so today.”
Women and girls make up 50% of the state’s “population (19.9 million).

42% of working women are employed in essential jobs.

Women working full-time, year-round earn 88 cents for every dollar all men earn.

Women own an estimated 1.58 million businesses; and women of color own 59% of them.

The 2021 Report on the Status of Women and Girls in California™ was unveiled on March 31. The theme of this year’s Report event, “Women and the Pandemic: Impact, Resilience and Moving Forward,” is the most recent comprehensive study in California that explores how women and girls are faring in the wake of COVID-19 and discusses the possible setbacks in our post-pandemic reality.

A panel on “The Pandemic: Women on the Front Lines, in the Workforce and at Home,” provided an in-depth, big-picture look at what many of us experienced firsthand during the past year.

“There’s no doubt the pandemic will have long-lasting repercussions for women and girls across the state,” said Ann McElaney-Johnson, PhD, president of Mount Saint Mary’s University. “In the last year, women have delayed medical care and experienced increased anxiety, all while holding their families and communities together. This report shines a light on how these challenges will impact women for years to come.”

Three of five Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors — Kathryn Barger, Sheila James Kuehl and Holly J. Mitchell — concluded the event with a conversation on how women leaders are changing the course of history in Los Angeles. The three women, along with Janice Hahn and Hilda Solis, comprise the first all-women board of supervisors for the county.

To download the Report or to view the event, go to msmu.edu/statusofwomen.

(From left, top row) Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Alisha Haridasani Gupta, Maria Hinojosa, Mekala Krishnan and Supervisor Sheila James Kuehl. (From left, bottom row) City Council President Nury Martinez, Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell, Michaela Pereira, Maria J. Prados and Jane Wurwand.
An Unstoppable Campaign for Mount Saint Mary’s Finale Celebration

Saturday, June 12, 2021
4-5 PM (PST)

Join us to celebrate our Unstoppable Campaign, students and the Mount community. Spend an hour with us to learn how your gifts have impacted our students’ and alums’ lives, as well as future plans. Your support enabled us to exceed our overall campaign goal by raising $132 million ($132% of our goal).
#StayMountStrong represents different things to different people. For some, it’s a state of mind. For others, it’s embodied by doing specific actions or from the comfort of a keepsake that helps keep them going when things get tough. Here’s what some in our community said helps them #StayMountStrong.

We are wearing our masks, social distancing and completing the MSMU Health Screen each day to #StayMountStrong as we eagerly await the day we can all return to campus.

– TREEMONISHA SMITH, MA, DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

I #StayMountStrong during these times knowing that there are always brighter days ahead, and we are a people who overcome. Focusing on what I can control and truly focusing in on my passions and dreams. I am staying motivated because no matter what goes on, the world will continue to move, and you must not let obstacles/challenges make you forget your end goals. I am wishing the Mount community love, peace, wisdom and health. Remember, your fellow Athenians are here for you!

– SUMMER WOODS ’21
PRESIDENT, BLACK STUDENT UNION
This is a message I received in January:

I just wanted to let you know that I finally did it! I have completed my degree, and I will be starting grad school in March. I will never be able to express how much you have impacted my life professionally and personally. There were many times I thought that I wasn’t smart enough or strong enough and thought about changing my major, but you always reassured me. Your guidance will stay with me, and I cannot thank you enough. I will miss you dearly.

When things get tough, those messages are gold. This is what keeps me going every day.

— LUIZA NOGAJ, PHD, CO-DIRECTOR OF GWSTEM AND PROFESSOR OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

I am inspired by our University community’s commitment to graduate students who will be leaders focused on the good of all humanity. Our students and their tenacity inspire me to remain Mount Strong!

— LINDA MCMURDOCK, PHD, VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS

The pandemic has challenged me emotionally, mentally and physically. To #StayMountStrong I had to learn to forgive myself and hold myself to a more flexible standard. I go to therapy, I meditate, I exercise, and I do things that don’t require a lot of thinking to keep me going strong. I encourage others to put their mental health first and be forgiving to themselves as well.

— HELEN Umana ‘21 PRESIDENT, STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
Help us preserve our rich history as told by those who lived it.

Your contributions to the Mount's oral history project will preserve your memories and create a cherished memento of our evolving community. To participate, please visit alums.msmu.edu/history.
Support
THE MOUNT

The Wellness Movement
Mount Saint Mary’s University has created a comprehensive wellness initiative centered on the principles of inclusion, empowerment and personal well-being. The new Wellness Pavilion will house special programs for healthy nutrition, physical activity, health and stress reduction — everything our students need to master the art of living well. Visit msmu.edu/wellness to learn more.

COVID-19 Relief Fund
Students at the Mount are not only unstoppable — they are resilient, courageous and determined. However, the pandemic and economic downturn have severely impacted a large portion of our student body and their families. Gifts to the COVID-19 Relief Fund support students in need by providing additional scholarship support, loaner laptops, mobile WiFi hotspots and funds for books, among other educational necessities. For more information, contact Kevin A. Barry.

Mount Fund and Mount Associates
Contributions to the Mount Fund, the unrestricted fund at Mount Saint Mary’s, support key priorities like financial aid and faculty initiatives. Annual contributors 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.

Heritage Society and Planned Giving
Established in 1992, the Heritage Society is comprised of alumnae, friends, faculty and staff who have made plans to provide for the university in their estate plans. For more information on the Heritage Society, please visit msmu.edu/plannedgiving or contact Maria Solano.

Sisters’ Memorial Funds
Every sister is dear to Mount Saint Mary’s, but we recently lost three who were indelibly intertwined with the University. Memorial Funds have been set up for each of them, and gifts of any size in their memory will be gratefully accepted. Visit the websites for each fund below or contact Kevin A. Barry.

A more detailed memorial of each sister can be found in Remembrances on page 26.

Sister Imelda D’Agostino, CSJ, ’58
Former Mount Trustee and Professor Emerita of Education 1938–2020
The Sister Imelda D’Agostino, CSJ, ’58 Memorial Scholarship Fund supports current Mount Saint Mary’s students who are pursuing a degree in education with specific interests in early childhood education. To make a donation, visit: tinyurl.com/SrImelda.

Sister Mary Constance Fitzgerald, CSJ, ’47
Educator in English literature and writing 1913–2020
Sister Constance spent 52 years in education, primarily teaching English literature and writing. Sister Constance was always a teacher at heart. In retirement, she started a creative writing class for the CSJs living at Carondelet Center. Celebrate her life and legacy by making a gift in her honor to MSMU’s CSJ institute, helping to ensure that all our CSJs and their legacies live on. To make a donation, visit: tinyurl.com/SrConstance.

Sister Annette Bower, CSJ, ’59
Professor Emerita of Biological Sciences 1933–2020
A $30,000 Sister Annette Bower Endowed Scholarship for students in biological sciences was established by Mount Saint Mary’s in 2006 at the time of her retirement. Donations given here will be applied to this scholarship. To make a donation, visit: tinyurl.com/SrAnnette.

COVID-19 Relief Fund
Mount Fund and Mount Associates
Sisters’ Memorial Funds
Kevin A. Barry,
senior director of development
kbarry@msmu.edu
msmu.edu/support
213.477.2875

Gift Planning
Heritage Society
Maria Solano, gift planning officer
msolano@msmu.edu
msmu.edu/plannedgiving
310.709.4376

Alumnae Relations/Reunion Giving
Tom Arteaga, director of alumnae relations
tarteaga@msmu.edu
alums.msmu.edu
213.477.2767

The Wellness Movement
Mount Saint Mary’s University has created a comprehensive wellness initiative centered on the principles of inclusion, empowerment and personal well-being. The new Wellness Pavilion will house special programs for healthy nutrition, physical activity, health and stress reduction — everything our students need to master the art of living well. Visit msmu.edu/wellness to learn more.

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PROFILE OF PHILANTHROPY

Patricia Cribbs ’85

Patricia Cribbs ’85 made her first donation to Mount Saint Mary’s in 1985, right after she graduated from the nursing program. Philanthropy was a value she was raised with. “My parents said, ‘The Mount changed you. Think of the Women’s Leadership Program. Think of how much your professors gave to you. Why not continue that giving?’”

Her little seed gift has blossomed into a lifelong passion to support the University. At this year’s Scholarship Celebration, Cribbs was awarded the Unstoppable Supporter Award for her commitment to help the Mount and its students achieve success in their endeavors.

Mount Saint Mary’s has woven threads of friendship and giving throughout her life. At her first job at LAC + USC Medical Center, she met Vivian Burgess ’52, who recognized Cribbs’ Mount nursing pin, and the two struck an instant friendship. Two years later, when Cribbs enrolled in the nurse practitioner program at the University of San Diego, she met Natalie (Harris) Martinez ’79, who was also enrolled and lived only a block away from her. And Sister Carlotta DiLorenzo, CSJ, whom Cribbs knew from Chalon Campus Ministry, ran the Campus Ministry at USD. “My life is a series of chance encounters with the Mount that have confirmed my path,” she says.

Cribbs has worked as a family nurse practitioner in the Sharp Rees-Stealy Medical Group in Rancho Bernardo, California, since 1997. That same year, she was invited to be a Mount Associate. When Cribbs became a Mount Regent in 2006, she attended her first scholarship luncheon. “I was in awe of all the scholarships available for students and wanted to be part of that scholarship family,” she says. “But I thought I would have to retire first. I didn’t realize I could make it happen right away.”

In 2018, she took the leap and began both the Patricia A. Cribbs Expendable Scholarship and the Patricia A. Cribbs Endowed Nursing Scholarship. “I realized that every scholarship is helpful, big ones and small ones, even if it is only $200 or $500. Students are overwhelming grateful to have received the gift.” Cribbs is pleased to be able to provide significantly more.

Throughout the years, Cribbs has also supported the University in other ways, including contributing to a COVID-19 relief fund, the Mount Fund, Mount Giving Day and renovation projects at Chalon.

“I’ve always been willing to give wherever the need is greatest,” she says. “But the Scholarship Luncheon is one of my favorite events because I get to see the quality, the professionalism and the strength of Mount students. The Mount changed my life and to see that continue is wonderful.”
Black Alumnae Association

Building on the success of the African American Alumnae Network created by alumnae volunteers in 1994, Mount Saint Mary’s announced the establishment of its Black Alumnae Association in February. The focus of the Association is to strengthen the Black community at the Mount, build a professional network for alumnae and students and serve as important voice for our community. For Ann McElaney-Johnson, Mount Saint Mary’s president, the creation of the Black Alumnae Association is part of her commitment to fostering an anti-racist University.

The Center for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, under the leadership of associate vice president Bernadette Robert, hosted dialogues with Black students, staff, faculty and alumnae in the early summer of 2020. Through these conversations, the Center developed recommendations to help address and deepen our understanding of systemic racism and racial equity.

McElaney-Johnson engaged our alumnae, hosting four learning sessions with Black alumnae during the final months of 2020. Through these conversations, she reaffirmed her commitment to being an anti-racist University and gathered input on the areas of focus for our Black Alumnae Association prior to its official launch.

The Black Alumnae Association’s volunteer alumnae advisory board provides input and guidance on programs and outreach. The new board members are Linda America ’95, Joelle Balthazar ’16, Erika Jones ’00, Remmington Junior ’01, Agasia Lanier ’05, Yahi (Macali) Soto ’07 and Shelli Amber Weekes ’84.

“It is exciting to work with this new association,” says Tom Arteaga, director of alumnae relations. “The long-term positive impact our alumnae have on each other and on our students will last for generations to come.”

The dedicated group of volunteers who established the African American Network in 1994 included Karen (McKnight) Compton ’87, Leslie Cunningham ’90, Brenda (Chappell) Tucker ’65, Denise Goosby ’88 and Nina (Carter) Senovia Brown ’88. Several of these alumnae were involved in the conversations with McElaney-Johnson in the development of the Black Alumnae Association.

To learn more about the Black Alumnae Association, please visit alums.msmu.edu/BAA or contact Tom Arteaga, director of alumnae relations, at tarteaga@msmu.edu.

Class of 2005

Class Ambassador Volunteers

Do you enjoy reconnecting and staying in touch with your classmates? Are you excited about your next class reunion?

The MSMU Alumnae Association is recruiting alumnae volunteers to serve as Class Ambassadors and fulfill three essential goals in reaching out to their classmates: Communicate, Support and Motivate.

Class Ambassadors serve as a liaison between the Mount and their classmates. They work with the Alumnae Relations team to keep classmates informed of the Mount’s priorities, the latest news and updates, as well as programs and events.

Is your five-, 10-, 25- or 50-year reunion coming up? Successful reunions depend on active Class Ambassadors getting the word out and building excitement. Save the date for the 2021 Alumnae Weekend on Oct. 16–17. If your undergraduate class year ends with a 1 or a 6, it is your reunion year!

Class Ambassadors are needed for all class years. To learn more about the Class Ambassador program, visit alums.msmu.edu/volunteer/class-ambassadors or contact Brittany Skiles, manager of alumnae relations, at bskiles@msmu.edu.
Remembrances

José Alvarado, 1951–2020
Mount Staff
José Alvarado of Facilities passed away on December 23. A groundskeeper for more than 20 years, José and his brother Emidio were a familiar sight keeping the Chalon Campus beautiful. Their nephew Ernesto was also part of the Alvarado landscaping team for 15 years, while two nieces continue to work in the Mount Libraries — Claudia ’15 and Lorena, a Weekend/Evening & Online College student. José was an avid baseball fan and enjoyed talking about the season with Mount colleagues. He is survived by his wife, Maria, and seven children.

Sister Annette Bower, CSJ,’59, 1933–2020
Professor Emerita of Biological Sciences
Sister Annette Bower, CSJ, ’59 had an outstanding reputation as an educator and scientist. She earned a master’s in cell biology and a PhD in neuroendocrinology before returning to the Mount where she spent the next 42 years, the first two years as an instructor and the next 40 as chair of the biological sciences department. She was also a consultant to the National Institutes of Health. A grant awarded to Bower from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences ultimately brought more than $10 million to the Mount’s scientific research-training program. “I was so blessed to be a biology pre-med major under the guidance of Sister Annette,” wrote Nancy LaMear ’86. “She was so proud when I got accepted to medical school. I have thought of her often and will never forget her.”

Katherine Brueck, 1951–2020
Retired professor and chair of the English department, Kathy Brueck taught at the Mount for 37 years until she retired in 2018. Students enjoyed the conversational aspects of her classes and her vast knowledge of the subject matter. In retirement, she kept busy writing fiction, poetry and a scholarly work, “The Redemption of Tragedy: The Literary Vision of Simone Weil,” about the French philosopher. The family asks that any donations in her name be made to Doctors Without Borders.

Ricardo Carrasco, 1954–2020
Mount Staff
A systems technician and programmer for the Mount Libraries from 1998-2019, Ricardo Carrasco passed away after battling cancer for more than a year. An Army veteran, his first Mount job was as a security guard on the Chalon Campus. He was well known as a champion pingpong player. He was also known to love sharing his bad jokes with Mount students and playing basketball with the sisters during lunch.

Sister Imelda D’Agostino, CSJ,’58, 1938–2020
Former Mount Trustee and Professor Emerita of Education
Before becoming professor of education and director of the Early Childhood Education program at Mount Saint Mary’s, Sister Imelda D’Agostino, CSJ, ’58 taught all grade levels, from preschool to university. Her ministry later shifted to the Los Angeles Archdiocese, where she served first as director of Holy Childhood Association programs in the Mission Office, then as coordinator of Archdiocesan Preschool programs in the Catholic education department. Until recently, she was the religion teacher at St. Cyril School in Encino. Former student Deborah Faciane ‘87, ’97 BA says, “I loved her so much. She was a huge inspiration as I obtained my child development and psychology degrees.”

Sister Mary Constance Fitzgerald, CSJ,’47, 1913–2020
Sister Constance Fitzgerald, CSJ, ’47 had a love for literature and language that lasted her entire lifetime. She spent 52 years in education, primarily teaching English and writing. Her ministries took her from elementary schools in California and Arizona to Central California migrant camps and homeless men’s shelters in Guaymas, Mexico. But her happiest days were spent teaching high school English. Students from nearly every school where she had taught attended her 80th Jubilee celebration in 2011. Even in retirement, Fitzgerald started a creative writing class for the CSJs living at Carondelet Center. When she passed away at the age of 107, she was the oldest sister in the congregation.
Mark Rubin, 1937–2021
Regent
Mark Rubin, a regent for Mount Saint Mary’s along with his wife, Pam, was a successful businessman and dedicated board member or trustee for multiple organizations. Growing up in Czechoslovakia during World War II, he was in hiding for a time before his family was sent to a concentration camp. He and his brother Emery and two cousins were four of 102 children liberated by the Russians in 1945. Three years later when the Communists took control of the country, the family moved to New York, where they lived before settling in Los Angeles in 1953. The two brothers started a general contracting business. Rubin also founded Great American Bank, which became First Regional Bank in 1979, and was the vice chairman of the board and chief operating officer until he sold his interest in 1998. Donations in his memory can be made to the Los Angeles Jewish Home, the National WWII Museum or the US Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Gabriel A. Gutierrez, 1937–2021
Board of Trustees (2012–2021)
The Honorable Gabriel A. Gutierrez was a Los Angeles Superior Court Judge who served with the Los Angeles County courts for more than 25 years and continued as an arbitrator, mediator and private judge after retiring from the superior court. Even with four sons and seven grandsons, he found time to volunteer with the YMCA, Boy Scouts, Little League and Junior Tennis Clinic. Gabriel was also a true sports fanatic and loved rooting for the Dodgers, Rams, Lakers and Loyola High School Cubs, where he never missed a football game and announced the varsity basketball games. He was close to his sisters despite being quite a bit older, playing with and mentoring them when he came home from college. Family, colleagues and friends note his kindness and sense of humor: “larger than life with a quick smile and hearty laugh.” Donations should be made to the Dolores Mission (dolores-mission.org), where Gutierrez served as a sponsor and mentored many students for more than a decade.

Norma (Marcus) McIntyre ’57, 1936–2020
Norma (Marcus) McIntyre ’57 was an art major whose time at the Mount was a joyful experience that had a profound and lifelong impact on her. Kay Kemp ’55, a fellow art major, remembers McIntyre as a bright, articulate woman from her sister Micki’s class, “whose bright smile engulfed all those around her.” McIntyre remained involved with the Mount with her husband, David, who predeceased her, for the rest of her life. David was a Mount Trustee for several decades. Frequent donors, the couple sponsored students and made a significant gift to the Mary Chapel renovation. Her five children requested that any donations in her honor be made to the University.

IN MEMORIAM
'43 Mechtild Gerber
'47 Sr. M. Constance Fitzgerald
'48 Mary Martin McCullough
'51 Mary Ellen Gray Delagrange
'51 Husband of Susan Robertson Gerard
'51 Husband of Anne Wong Yee
'52 Dorothy O’Hara Norris
'55 Rita Angerman
'55 Ellen Joseph Russell
'56 Clare Heumphreus Handcock
'56 Husband of Margaret Nester Walters
'57 Barbara McConnell
'57 Norma Marcus McIntyre
'58 Sr. Imelda D’Agostino
'58 Rita Lutz Gallagher
'58 Josette Temple
'58 Husband of Mary Lynch Tschirhart
'59 Sr. Annette Bower
'59 Husband of Gloria Madrid Lewis
'60 Marilyn Marcus Allen
'60 Julia Mary Farley
'63 Husband of Olivia Webber
'64 Husband of Susan Kolp Curtis
'64 Husband of Michelle Pierrong Klepper
'67 Suzan Taylor Cooper
'68 Barbara Wood
'69 Husband of Kathleen Kent Garvey
'70 Donna Jonas Finn
'71 Father of Monica Spellane
'78 Brother of Catherine Pugel
'80 Mother of Susan O’Neill Ferris
'91 Jeanne Yugar
'95 Irene Najera
'98 Lois Ann (Jackson) Kurt
'00 Husband of Cheryl Ann Bennett
'04 Mother of Perla Rodriguez-Magana
'21 Maria Gonzalez
'22 Jalyin Algordo
CLASS NOTES

1959  A retired RN in Honolulu, Ruth Freedman learned to play the harp while at the Mount from Sister Timothy. It was a hobby for many years, but after retiring as nurse, she worked with the University of Hawaii Symphony to learn harp therapy, and she has played for patients at the Straub Hospital once a month and on holidays for more than 20 years.

Freedman recently had 12 American Spirituals published by Lyon & Healy Publishing. She created the harp arrangements for spirituals originally arranged by H.T. Burleigh.


1965  Diane de Anda has recently published two children’s books. In “Mango Moon,” the young narrator describes the changes and emotions she and her family experience after her father is placed in detention for deportation. Her mother teaches her that love has no borders: “She tells me love is like the orange moon, that Papi and I feel its glow no matter where we are.” In “The Day Abuelo Got Lost,” a young boy describes his interaction with his grandfather as his dementia progresses and the loving manner in which his family cares for him. In both stories, parents cannot “solve” the problem for the child. However, the parents explain what is happening to the child in an age-appropriate way and help the child maintain the relationship.

1969  The Holstein Award, given by the Ignatian Solidarity Network (ISN) each year, was awarded to Sister Simone Campbell. The award is given to individuals who have demonstrated a significant commitment to leadership for social justice grounded in the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits).

Campbell is the executive director of NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice — a federal advocacy organization founded by Catholic sisters to lobby in Washington, DC, for policies that mend the gaps in income and wealth in the United States. Campbell has received numerous awards, spoken at the 2012 Democratic National Convention, and appeared on “60 Minutes,” “The Colbert Report,” and “The Daily Show with Jon Stewart.”

1977  After 36 years in educational publishing, Pamela (Kennedy) Oborski is happily retired. One of her favorite pursuits is catching up with Mount grads on both coasts. In the East, she keeps track of Carrie (Philpot) Lawrence ’77, Gail (Anthony) Lawrence ’77 and Diane O’Donnell ’75. Out West, her connections include Cathy (Callahan) Roze ’77, Mary (Barich) Byers ’77, Arlene (Dominguez) Genzel ’77, Joan Cashion ’79, Carla Esling ’76, Cindy Barnes ’79 and Kathy (Centola) de Lorimier ’79.

1988  In 2020, Nina (Carter) Sonovia Brown co-founded the Women of Color Making a Difference Fund through the Denver Foundation. As it grows, the fund will serve nonprofits that improve women’s lives in Colorado.

Additionally, Nina is a long-standing Power of Extended Philanthropy member (PEP) of the Colorado Women’s Foundation of Colorado (WFCO).

1995  Governor Newsom’s office reappointed Alicia Rabena-Amen to the Physical Therapy Board of California (PTBC) for another term. She was initially appointed to the board in 2014 by Governor Jerry Brown, who reappointed her in 2016. Rabena-Amen has served as the board president for the past three years and is thrilled to continue to serve the consumers of California.
1996 At the beginning of 2020, Maria Lapinid reached her 25th anniversary working at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA). She has worked in pediatric oncology since the start of her nursing career and is currently working at CHLA’s infusion center in the Cancer and Blood Disease Institute.

Lynne (Dastous) Morse moved her entire voice studio online due to the pandemic. She says it’s been an amazing and positive change. “Something good can come from hardship.” LynneClaireMorse.com

1997 Jean Day is co-authoring her third book, “ Whispered Messages: 365 Days of Love, Life Gratitude,” scheduled for publication March 2021. “The Mount is very special to me. The Sisters and faculty were so good to me. I credit the Mount for nurturing me.”

1998 Brenda (Canales) Marrero was named the Public Interest Law Center’s executive director. Marrero came to the center having spent her career as a public interest lawyer. She will become the second woman and the first person of color to lead the center.

2004 “One of my goals became a reality,” wrote Blanca Gil. “I was able to purchase a home in my dream location.” Gil now lives in Ventura, California.

2005 Teaching virtually in 2020 has been quite an adventure, according to Vanessa (Argueta) Ordaz, and something new to add to her teacher resume. She completed extra training to become a Future Ready Educator and leader with the Los Angeles Unified School District. She knows a few other Athenians who have also dedicated themselves to teaching and being leaders within their school sites. “I am so happy to have had the opportunity to complete my teacher training at the Mount. I’m passionate about what I do and hope to make a difference for our future leaders.”

2007 Yahtina (Macali) Soto began her tenure as a teacher librarian for Sonia Sotomayor Learning Communities Los Angeles in August 2020. She provides library programming services, literacy instruction and extracurricular community activities at three secondary school sites.

2010 Double the joy: Nicole (Que) Convento joyfully announces the birth of twins Matteo Raphael and Bosco Giovanni.

2011 Evelyn Oyuela-Kowalski started her EdD program in higher education leadership at Regis College in Weston, Massachusetts.

2012 Maria Morales has used her master’s degree in education to serve her community as an advocate. She has self-published four books about the importance of education and to offer hope to women and children who have been mistreated.

2013 A director at AltaMed Health Services, Monica (de la Cruz) Guardian wrote, “During these trying times, I have had the privilege to administer and support programming that allows for students — ranging from high school to graduate and health profession students — to reach their educational goals. For those pursuing careers in public health, medicine, nursing, healthcare administration, advocacy, etc., take advantage of every opportunity to learn about social determinants of health, learn to be culturally competent and empathetic and change the way care should be provided. Most importantly, practice self-care, mindfulness and gratitude as you venture into critical roles for the community.”

Totran Radke was recently appointed by the mayor and city council to serve a four-year term as commissioner of cultural arts for Torrance, California. In this role, Radke will assist the city council in providing for and promoting opportunities for the artistic and cultural development of the city’s citizens.
2014 Angela Mooney gave birth to a beautiful, healthy, strong and smart baby girl on June 2, 2020. The proud mother says that her daughter is the biggest blessing in her life.

2016 After graduating from the Mount, Andrea (Sierra) Cregier married her high school sweetheart, who serves as a 1st Lt. in the Air Force. They relocated to Dayton, Ohio, for his job and for the past two years she has been a program director for El Puente, a nonprofit that “serves as a bridge and connection point for Latino students and families to academic success, well-being, and increased integration into the Dayton community.” Cregier was recently featured in the November issue of “Hispanic Impact” by the Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs (OCHLA), highlighting what El Puente has accomplished so far. “I feel that my experience at the Mount prepared me with the knowledge, skills, and resilience to persist and truly be UNSTOPPABLE!”

In December, Cecilia (Urwin) Rogers wrote, produced and directed her play, “The Ladies Remember: Eleanor Roosevelt Uncovers the Road to the 19th Amendment.” Written for the Palos Verdes Peninsula branch of the Readers Theater of the American Association of University Women, the play had originally been scheduled for an in-person performance in March 2020. The production was revamped for Zoom and presented live to a large online audience. The play is an exploration of historical American women and their thoughts on women’s rights — and human rights in general — along with their struggles and the in-fighting in the movement. It also had a few fun surprises.

2017 After Melanie Sava graduated from Yale Law School, she was part of the first class to take the California bar exam virtually as a result of the pandemic.

2018 After attending the Mount from 1996-2000 and leaving due to an injury, Maricela Renteria de Rivera received an AA in December 2018 for prior work done. This spring, she is finishing the last two classes she needs to earn the bachelor’s degree she began more than 20 years ago. This time around, she attends classes virtually with her daughters in tow. Her 10-year-old, Rosita, loves the classes. “She especially enjoyed Women and Gender in Music last semester. Rosarita dutifully listened to everything Dean Zaferes shared.” Renteria de Rivera is excited that she will soon obtain her degree and that her girls now love the Mount as much as she does. #unstoppablewomen

Calendar of Virtual Events

Join Mount Saint Mary’s virtual events, programs and activities to learn, engage and stay connected with the Mount community. For more information, visit our new Events Calendar at msmu.edu/events.

Reflecting on a Past Pandemic: The Bubonic Plague in California, 1900-1904
Thursday, April 29
10-11 am
Bob Perrins, PhD, provost, Mount Saint Mary’s University
NO CHARGE. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

An Unstoppable Campaign for Mount Saint Mary’s Finale Celebration
Saturday, June 12
4-5 pm
NO CHARGE. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.
At Mount Saint Mary’s, we graduate leaders who make a lasting impact on the communities they serve. Unconstrained by convention or other peoples’ expectations, they are free to make their own choices and forge their own paths. They are, as we say, UNSTOPPABLE.

With your continued support, there is no limit to what Mount Saint Mary’s students can achieve. Renew your gift to the Mount Fund today at msmu.edu/about-the-mount/give-to-the-mount

If you would like to make a planned gift, please contact Maria Solano at msolano@msmu.edu.
looking back
Our Collection of Rare Bibles

When President-Elect Joseph R. Biden prepared to take his oath of office, he rested his hand on a gigantic, much-repaired old Bible, described by newscasters as a Biden family heirloom and a Douay-Rheims “Catholic Bible.”

Visitors to the Mount’s rare books in the Charles Willard Coe Memorial Library can view several big Bibles just like Biden’s and every bit as distinguished. Weighing upwards of four pounds, bound in leather with nickel clasps, embossed in gold and richly illustrated, Bibles like the Bidens’ were popular with Americans in the late 19th and early 20th centuries because they were relatively affordable and honored a family’s Catholic faith as well as its middle class status.

In its 96 years, the Mount has received many gifts of these family heirlooms from faculty, alumnae and CSJ sisters, helping to build a fascinating Bible collection. MSMU Special Collections holds editions of all sizes and in more than a dozen languages, from the ancient scripts of the Middle East to the Native American language Ojibwa. Several have traveled to other universities for exhibits on Bible history.

Among the most treasured of the Mount Bibles is the London Polyglot, given to the college library in 1952 by Estelle Doheny. The six-volume Polyglot (“many tongues”) was printed starting in 1657 and eventually comprised some or all of the Old and New Testaments in Latin, Arabic, Aramaic, Ethiopian, Hebrew, Persian and Syriac. It is still considered a remarkable achievement in publishing and was used for centuries by Scripture scholars to compare ancient translations.

Heavier by far than the Bidens’ Bible is the bulky 1532 Biblia Sacra published in Paris by Robertus Stephanus, one of the early printers of the Protestant Reformation. Controversially, his Bible incorporated commentary in the margins. One of the Bible’s earlier owners evidently took issue with Stephanus and added his own tiny, handwritten cursive comments to the pages.

But by far the gem of the Mount’s Bible collection is a single page from the Book of the Prophet Hosea. It is known as a Noble Fragment, the name assigned to any leaf from the first printed book in the West, the Gutenberg Bible (1450-1455). It too was a gift from Estelle Doheny.

In the first decades of Mount Saint Mary’s College, it was donations of treasures such as these Bibles that gave stature to the young school and its library.

— Victoria McCargar,
University archivist and special collections librarian
Share Your Stories

See page 22 for more information.