

2022 EDITION

Saint Francis University Magazine

Celebrating
175 Years
of Blessings

INSIDE:

Medical
Mission Trips



Forbes 30
Under 30



2022 Year
in Review

Message From the President

What a blessed year it has been! We have celebrated 175 years of educating students in the Catholic and Franciscan tradition. To God be the glory!

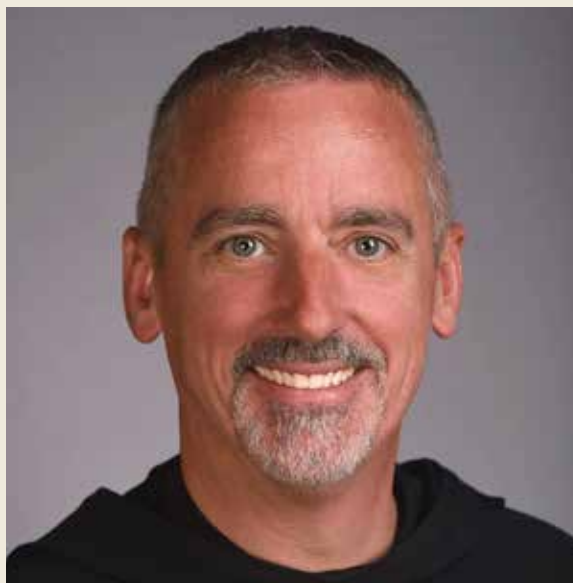
At our Founders Day Mass in October, the Papal Ambassador to the United States, Archbishop Christophe Pierre, was the celebrant and homilist. He brought with him words of greeting from Pope Francis, who bestowed his blessing upon us as we reached this milestone. It was no strange coincidence that Founders Day was on the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. (I think Saint Francis of Assisi would've preferred it that way.) In his homily, Archbishop Pierre said,

*Today we give thanks to God for those brave souls who set out in faith from Ireland to found this University and to all who have contributed generation after generation to handing on the gift of faith here at Saint Francis. **Anniversaries are celebrations not only of great deeds of the past, but they are opportunities to look forward in hope.** May Our Lady of the Rosary help us to see the good things God has planned for us through the eyes of faith, through which we are saved.*

This inspirational message presaged the reception, where we thanked our generous donors. Through the University's history, alumni and friends have been co-workers with friars in the vineyard, helping to build the University community. The building projects in the recent decades, the endowed scholarships, and the hard work of so many have brought us to where we are today. We are grateful to all who have helped us over our 175-year history. I am very appreciative to Archbishop Pierre for celebrating with and for us at the pinnacle event of the *dodransbicentennial*. There was no more fitting way to lift up our hearts in praise and gratitude to God than at that beautiful Mass.

I am grateful, too, to Most Rev. Amando Trujillo Cano, T.O.R., Minister General of the Third Order Regular for his words of support. Due to circumstances beyond his control, he could not receive the Assisi Award in person. In a letter to the University he states,

In the face of a moral and religious crisis, educating and promoting learning with a sense of faith in God equip students to harmonize faith and reason, and help them to preserve the transcendent nature and destiny of each



human being and history. We are grateful to all those who have made this journey possible with their dedicated work, continuous sacrifices, and collaboration – staff, students, donors, and ecclesiastical authorities.

In this anniversary issue of the University magazine, we take the opportunity to spotlight the fruits of our labor by sharing many success stories. Our role is to educate students who will bring light to darkness and build up the Body of Christ. I think you will be inspired by the alumni we feature in this issue. I am impressed by the many and varied ways our graduates succeed and give of themselves, seeing Christ in others.

As we look to the future and journey towards our bicentennial, we *look forward in hope ... to see the good things God has planned for us*. The name of our recently launched strategic plan, *Francis 2026: Thy Will Be Done* is apt. May we seek the Lord's will and ask for His continued blessings upon Saint Francis University.

Sincerely,

**Very Rev. Malachi Van Tassell, T.O.R., Ph.D.
President**

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The SFU Magazine is published by the Office of Communications and Marketing in conjunction with the Office of Alumni Engagement.

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See what SFU alumni around the world have been up to since graduation.

On the cover: The addition of a mosaic depicting the Immaculate Conception is a significant piece of a substantial restoration project designed to thank God for the many blessings granted to the University in its 175-year history. The deeply symbolic work is part of complex iconography of artistic and architectural enhancements which complete the original vision established when the chapel was constructed in the 1950s. The newly renovated chapel was fittingly dedicated on December 8, 2022 during the Feast of the Immaculate Conception as part of the 175th anniversary year celebrations.

Artist: Ioana Belcea, Princeton, NJ, who works in a variety of historic media. Thematically her work is of a liturgical and devotional nature.

Photographer: Chris Jurchak



On A Medical Mission

A heart for service has been a hallmark of a Saint Francis education since the institution's founding in 1847 by six Franciscan Friars from Ireland. The stories featured on the following pages showcase four alumni who have chosen to express Franciscan values as a core part of their identity as healthcare professionals.

STORY BY / Marie Young, University Communications

Friendship, Travel and Service

A Tale of Two Physician Assistant Science Alumni

"I found this Groupon for a trip to China...want to go?" Heather McHenry asked her newfound friend, McKenzie Madore.

The trip to China in 2012 launched their stint as travel companions. Sometimes they selected locations for cultural exploration as in this case, other times, the two physician assistants traveled to a location to provide medical aid.

CALLED TO MEDICAL MISSIONS

For Heather, her first experience with a medical mission trip was with Hugs for Honduras as a junior at Saint Francis. "I grew up in Ebensburg and I never really traveled until I got to Saint Francis. We had family in Ohio and crossing the border there seemed exciting. I was never on a plane until college. I studied abroad in Mexico my sophomore year and it was the first time I flew or was out of the country. It was surreal. To experience a culture so different from my own... I got hooked from there. After I graduated as a physician assistant, I went on two more SFU mission trips and volunteered as a preceptor for the students, Heather explained. "I wanted to do more and experience more."

She found she had a strong drive to go to Africa. "In 2013 I researched companies and I found International Medical Relief out of Denver. They do missions around the world, usually 7-10 days long, and they are extremely focused on the safety and security of the team," she explained.

For McKenzie, the shared trip to Kenya through International Medical Relief became her first medical mission trip abroad. McKenzie was not able to study abroad in college because of her swim schedule and other obligations, although she did other service trips including traveling with SFU



McKenzie Madore '11 and Heather McHenry '09

didn't know each other as PA students, but they've become fast friends through medical mission trips after their graduation.

to Nazareth Farm in West Virginia. "International travel was something that I always wanted to do," she shared. "Now with my PA background I have the chance to see the world in a different way," she shared.

In the brief time they spent in each country, they experienced unique cultures and at the same time glimpsed a life of poverty that few in the United States can

with a young boy who was 11 or 12 who brought his younger sister who was 7 or 8. "Translator medicine is always tricky, but he described her eyes rolling back in her head and shaking. It sounded like she might have epilepsy. We needed their parents' approval to try to get her more extensive care. He said parents were at work, but I got the impression that he was

"You come back home and think how you really touched someone but also that you haven't done enough."

— McKenzie Madore '11

imagine. "People were so grateful for healthcare that we take for granted in the U.S.," explained McKenzie. "They were so excited to see Americans. You could give them ibuprofen or Tums and you made a world of difference to them. You come back home and think how you really touched someone but also that you haven't done enough."

McKenzie recounted a story in Kenya

hiding the fact that they were not around anymore. I was struck by the gravity of the situation and his maturity. We were only in each area for a day so we couldn't do much under the circumstances. You leave feeling like you could do more."

In Zambia they were able to do more for a young girl with malaria. She was delirious with a high fever and needed to be admitted to a hospital. "In Zambia you have



The idea that mission trips can be so rewarding can seem odd to people, but not to these two friends.

to have money up front to check into the hospital and we covered that for her,” McKenzie shared. “The ambulance was a bike, but it did the job and got her to the hospital. If we hadn’t been there that day she would have died.”

One thing McKenzie noted is that these trips are not “all sad and serious.” They can be surprisingly fun. In addition to helping people, they have been able to “ride elephants, pet tigers, and do a lot of cool things too.”

In Brazil they lived on a boat for a week. “We slept in hammocks and when the boat moved you would bump into each other. We looked out over the Amazon while we showered, in bathing suits, of course, watching pink dolphins which you think would be pretty, but they are really kind-of ugly,” she joked.

The idea that mission trips can be so rewarding can seem odd to people.

Heather shared that people think she’s crazy using her paid time off and her own money for medical missions when she could be going on ‘a fun trip.’ “I guess I don’t look at it that way,” she said. “I’ve had some of the most incredible experiences doing these trips. I go there and obviously I want to help as many people as



Heather examines an x-ray with a clinic visitor in Kenya.



McKenzie performs a thorough physical examination on a child with a respiratory ailment.

I can, but it is also eye-opening and valuable to me. It brings me back to earth and gives me perspective.”

Early on she fundraised money to be able to travel but now she is fortunate enough to be able to cover the costs herself.

McKenzie agreed with Heather on the value these trips have had in her life, although she is taking a small hiatus for a new adventure. On March 24, 2022 she and her husband, Paul, welcomed their daughter, Shea, into their family.

“Someday I would love to teach Shea the value of service through travel. I want to show her what we did on the trips and when she’s old enough, it will be a fun thing to get her passport and get going again with Heather,” McKenzie said.

SOME COLLEGE FRIENDSHIPS START AFTER GRADUATION

Even though both Heather and McKenzie majored in Physician Assistant Science around the same time at SFU, the two did not meet until after Heather’s graduation. McKenzie shared how they became friends.

As a swim recruit, McKenzie was close with Heather’s mother, Margie McHenry. Margie was a fixture in University Athletics serving as the ticket manager and administrative assistant until retiring in 2021 after 29 years of service.

“She kept telling me that I needed to meet her daughter because we’d really hit it off, but we just never traveled in the same circles,” McKenzie recalled. “I didn’t meet Heather until she came back to talk to my PA class after she graduated.” At the end of the talk McKenzie introduced herself to Heather who steered her toward a job opening in the ER at UPMC Altoona.

When McKenzie was hired, Heather’s supervisor assigned her to be McKenzie’s orientation mentor since they already knew each other, though in reality, the two were just getting acquainted. By the end of the shadowing period they had become best friends.

Editor’s Note: Heather McHenry is currently working as a Physician Assistant (Cardiothoracic Surgery) at Piedmont Medical Center in Rock Hill, South Carolina. McKenzie Madore is the Lead Advanced Practical Provider at West Penn Hospital in Pittsburgh.

Being There for Ukrainian Refugees

“Every day at 8 a.m. before breakfast they would play the Ukrainian national anthem on a portable speaker,” Heather McHenry ’09 recalled. “Many of them would be holding a flag and crying. The raw emotion that you would see in these people ... it was a lot. I looked around in disbelief and thought, ‘This is their life right now.’”

In late May 2022, Heather found herself in a crowded expo center in Warsaw, Poland filled with more than 3,000 Ukrainian refugees. Heather, a physician assistant, is no stranger to medical mission trips, yet this 10-day stint through International Medical Relief was unlike any other medical trip she had been on before.

“When the war broke out in Ukraine, IMR asked if I would switch my scheduled trip to disaster relief,” she recalled. “It was a little unnerving, but I said sure.” This was her first assignment through the organization’s disaster response team.

She had experienced horrific poverty in the slums of Kenya and treated people in tremendous need of basic medical care but going to Poland to help war refugees struck a whole new chord of emotion in her.



Medical and non-medical volunteers continue to provide humanitarian outreach to the Ukrainians through IMR.

“Poland felt different for me because, in an instant, these people were stripped of their life as they knew it. They were living in limbo ...in pure survival mode. It was heartbreaking to see,” she remembered.

“They were living in limbo ...in pure survival mode. It was heartbreaking to see.”

— Heather McHenry ’09

The mission trip brought her relief team in to support two Polish doctors and three Polish nurses in a large warehouse space that served as a medical zone, sleeping shelter, and staging place for international aid workers. From this Polish shelter, fleeing Ukrainians could seek asylum in Great Britain, Sweden, or Canada.

“Refugees would come in and be greeted by the countries offering Visas. Then they would live in the shelter until they got transportation to wherever they went next. It varied how long they were there,” she explained. “We offered a small no-frills medical clinic for them while they waited.”

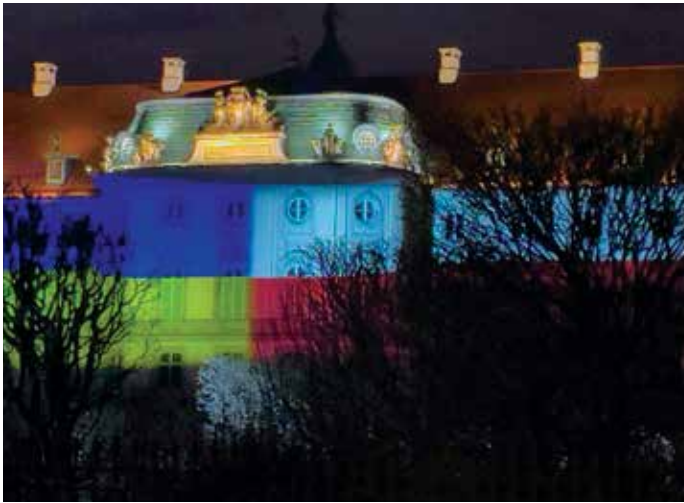
Much of her relief work involved family practice medicine which could be complicated by language barriers that made simple ailments dangerous. “Normally on medical missions, IMR brings the medicine as part of our outreach and everything is in English,” she explained. The nature of war made this response much less organized than her other mission trips.

“People fled their homes and left their medications behind including medication for serious chronic illnesses.” She found herself trying to identify a refugee’s medication from a ripped foil packet that was almost empty. The label was in Ukrainian, and she had to match it to the right thing in the donated pharmacy supply.

“Depending on what part of Ukraine the refugees came from they would speak Russian, Ukrainian or a mix. On my past trips locals helped us with translations, but this situation was more complicated. We were in Poland so the aid workers spoke Polish, not Ukrainian or Russian. It was hard to find the right translator for each person, although Google Translate was very helpful,” she said. The patient intake forms were written in Ukrainian or Polish

“You are not alone, somebody cares, we care...I care.”

— Heather McHenry '09



and many patients would just draw a stick figure and circle the part of the body that was bothering them.

She credits the SFU PA program with giving her the confidence to perform under any conditions including working without the luxury of diagnostic tools such as chest ex-rays or lab values. She shared that on medical relief trips, there are no diagnostic tools beyond a stethoscope and a few basic things to support care which is in stark contrast from her work in the U.S. “I felt comfortable going back to the basic medical skills that I learned as a PA student: getting a good patient history and doing thorough exams.” she shared.

The program also helped her to prepare mentally for the task.

“While I was there, I did my best to separate myself,” she explained stating that in medical care one must learn to see people as patients and resist making a personal connection. “Once you see them as a sister, brother, mother, or father it becomes harder to do your job effectively. Here (in the U.S.) I work in heart and lung surgery, and sometimes you have bad outcomes. I have developed that skill to be able to separate myself so that I can focus and do the work. But in this situation, (in Poland) every day became harder to do that because you can’t help but see what is happening to people personally.”

She carries with her the heartbreak of people she met.

Their stories included tales of both survival and loss. Such as two young men who came into the shelter. They had been hiding out in a bunker in Ukraine when they saw an opening to leave. “They got into a car with their other friends and started driving. But they got stopped in traffic and the Russians started pulling people from cars and shooting them. The two escaped, but they couldn’t locate their friends.” She suspects the others are probably dead.

Human traffickers were also a serious threat to the refugees, she said. “They were in Poland posing as aid workers who are there to



Due to the sensitivity of the refugee situation

photos were strictly prohibited inside the shelter; however, the above left picture displaying both the Ukrainian and Polish flags side-by-side demonstrates the overwhelming support for Ukraine by the Polish government. The top right picture shows the clothing donation area for refugees, and the bottom photograph shows a small area of the shelter with cots waiting to be filled by refugees.

get them out. Women and children fleeing alone are a vulnerable population and they targeted them.” She fears that some of the people she met succumbed to trusting the wrong people. “We heard about a whole bus of children that disappeared,” she shared.

She said of her brief time in Poland, “I struggle with the fact that there is so much need over there and so little I could offer. I felt helpless. The thing I’ve focused on since I’ve been home is that maybe by being there, we gave a message of hope to these refugees – you are not alone, somebody cares, we care...I care.”

Editor’s Note: Heather undertook the Ukrainian relief mission trip without fellow SFU PA McKenzie Madore because a few weeks earlier, her best friend and frequent travel companion gave birth to her daughter, Shea.

A Year Volunteering in the Spirit of Dorothy Day

An interview with Marjorie Mika, Class of 2022

Marjorie Mika '22 earned her bachelor of science degree in nursing this past May. By July she had forgone a 6-figure salary as a travel nurse (and lucrative sign-on bonus) to spend a year volunteering at Casa Juan Diego in Houston, Texas where she helps migrant families.

Casa Juan Diego, is a “House of Hospitality” that is part of the nationwide Catholic Worker community inspired by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin to serve the poor. This particular “House of Hospitality,” has grown from one small house that opened in 1980 to nine houses today that coordinate care for immigrant women, men, and children through donations and volunteers. Marjorie spends three days a week in the Casa Juan Diego Medical Clinic and other days distributing food, clothing, and assisting with immigration paperwork.

In explaining her calling to Casa Juan Diego, Marjorie felt it was the right choice on many levels. For one, the opportunity is providing her with a service experience where she could combine her two majors, Spanish and nursing. “My parents were also a big motivation for me to volunteer. They both served in the Peace Corps after college and instilled in me the value of living simply and sharing your skills with those in need. I had worked at the Dorothy Day Outreach Center during college so when I found out this organization was part of her Catholic Worker movement, the opportunity to serve here stood out to me,” she shared.

DOING WHAT IS NECESSARY

“When I first arrived in Texas, I was completely overwhelmed by the tremendous need at the house. Nearly every day, immigrant families show up at our door looking for shelter. Their stories are painful. I have heard stories of rape and kidnapping, falling from trains, and walking through dangerous jungles. One woman told me she fled her country because, as a police officer there, she was expected to shoot protestors of the government and refused to do so. Because of this, they threatened her life and her three children (also living in the house),” Marjorie shared.

She continued, “In the mornings we serve bags of food to



Marjorie Mika of Alexandria, Va. discovered Saint Francis University on the way home from a cross country road trip. She fell in love with the beauty of campus, the obvious Catholic presence, and the sense of community. During her time at SFU, Marjorie was involved in the marching band, Theta Phi Alpha sorority, Students for Life, and Focus (campus ministry). She offers this advice to current students. “The time goes so fast. Don’t waste your time trying to fit in. Find what you love and put your whole heart into it!”

hundreds of families in Houston. When we aren’t distributing food, we are helping translate immigration paperwork, buying flights for families to be reunited with others in various cities, organizing the chores for each day, and sorting through donations such as clothes and shoes that we give to the women in the house.”



This mural greets migrant families at Casa Juan Diego. For privacy's sake, Marjorie is not permitted to share photos of immigrants taking shelter there.

Next door to the house is the medical clinic where doctors and other medical professionals volunteer three days per week to provide care for immigrant families regardless of documentation status. “As a nurse, I help with intakes, talking to the patients about previous health history and giving information regarding diabetes and other common concerns in the Hispanic population. I cannot express my gratitude to SFU and especially the nursing department for the values that were instilled that enabled me to serve at Casa and in the clinic. While in many ways, this is the most difficult thing I have ever done, what allows me to continue here through the painful and exhausting moments is to see Christ in the poor, as St. Francis once did,” she shared.

For many, particularly recent graduates with student debt, undertaking a year-long unpaid service experience may seem daunting, but Marjorie looks at the situation in an unusual way. She knows that when she leaves Casa Juan Diego, she has many working years ahead of her that will be dedicated to paying off her loans. She believes the best time to do something like this is while she is young and hasn’t settled down yet. “Living here reminds me how, while money has value, there is infinitely more value in experi-

ences with people,” she shared.

She offers this advice to anyone trying to make a difference in the face of such overwhelming need. “It is so important to remember that we are just the hands and feet of Jesus on earth. The more overwhelmed I am, the more I realize I haven’t been trusting God. This is not our work but rather His. Reminding myself of this takes off a lot of the stress and keeps me centered.”

She continued, “Whether or not you chose to do a mission experience, or you go straight into the workforce after college, there will always be the opportunity to live for Christ. I believe missionaries are hidden everywhere—as nurses, as teachers, accountants, etc. While this is where I felt called, others will live out God’s will in more traditional work settings simply by choosing to listen to His voice in the day-to-day experiences of work. Every person has the opportunity to help the needy and spread God’s joy, regardless of the situation they are in. All that being said, if you are able to give a year or even several months to serve in an intentional community as I was able to, I highly recommend it. You will find that what you gain in experience and insight is much more than you are giving.

“Living here reminds me how, while money has value, there is infinitely more value in experiences with people.”

— Marjorie Mika '22

A Decade of Impact in Guatemala

An interview with Dr. Michael Nowak, Class of 2002

Dr. Michael Nowak, who earned his Master of Physician Assistant Science from Saint Francis in 2002, is passionate about having helped 40,000 physician assistant science students and new PAs from around the country prepare for their national board review exams. He is equally proud of his work over the past decade organizing medical mission trips that provide free medical care to the underserved in Jalapa, Guatemala. Through his company Certified Medical Educators, Michael has found fulfillment merging both endeavors.

“I started the company 15 years ago to focus on board review before students take their national certifying exams,” Michael recalled. As a practicing clinician and a medical educator, he recognized a marketplace need for a highly focused didactic review program to help students gain competency and improve national board result performance.

Michael considers himself a clinician who is dedicated to sharing his knowledge with future practitioners. While he uses his lecturing skills to help people expand their level of knowledge through the exam prep courses, he also finds face-to-face clinical



For more than 10 years, Dr. Michael Nowak, a 2002 PA graduate, has been organizing medical mission trips to Guatemala through his company Certified Medical Educators.



These scrapbook pages capture the impact of 10 years of providing free acute and chronic medical care for the small village of Jalapa.

education experiences like the ones students have on medical mission trips an invaluable aspect of teaching.

“When you have someone in front of you and you can show them something, and not just talk about it, that’s when the ‘aha’ moments for the students occur,” he explained. “They aren’t just reading about techniques in a book or hearing about them from someone in a classroom, but they are applying what they are learning and reinforcing the experience. These are the kinds of experiences that have a trickle down effect because hopefully in the future they will share the knowledge with someone else.”

Eleven years ago, he was introduced to the idea of including PAs on medical mission trips by a small physician assistants’ group. “At that time there weren’t many organizations that accepted PAs on these types of medical trips,” he shared. “Doctors without Borders was the big organization hosting trips at the time and they didn’t accept PAs. I took it upon myself to do more research and long story short, I connected with an American family in Guatemala” he said of CME’s entry into medical mission trips.

According to Michael, this American family had an inner calling about 25 years ago that inspired them to leave their home in Texas and move to Guatemala. Now they run an orphanage for battered women and children, and most recently have opened their doors to caring for the elderly.

They coordinated the first medical trip with CME and in the decade that followed, Michael and his team have made 15 trips and taken hundreds of PA students or others interested volunteers

to provide free medical care, in the remote mountain villages and small community hospital nearby. CME pays for medicine and equipment through donations and the volunteers pay a modest fee to cover their expenses.

In 2021, CME celebrated its 10-year anniversary trip, receiving a special humanitarian award from the Governor of Guatemala. On this recent trip, they helped about 700 people and raised money for eyeglasses, medications, canes and wheelchairs for the elderly.

These trips are an incredible learning experience for PA students. To be impactful in such a remote region, he likes to teach students what he calls “Little House on the Prairie,” medicine where they practice as doctors did 100 years ago when they had to base every decision on physiological principles without depending on ultrasounds or x-rays.

While many PA students from across the U.S. have accompanied him on medical mission trips over the years, Michael finds it especially meaningful that he will be able to share this experience with students from his alma mater in 2023. “SFU’s PA program has been using a few organizations to take trips to different parts of the world, but I’m excited to be able to do a trip with Dr. Carrie Beebout, PA Department Chair, in December and then bring the PA students over spring break.”

Anyone who would like to donate to an upcoming trip, or even go on one as a volunteer can find information on CME’s website:
www.certifiedmedicaleducators.com

“These are the kinds of experiences that have a trickle down effect because hopefully in the future they will share the knowledge with someone else.”

— Dr. Michael Nowak '02

An SFU First: Alumnus named one of Forbes 30 Under 30

So much was going right for Pablo Medina in the fall of 2017. He had graduated summa cum laude from Saint Francis University just the year before, and was now working in Investment Banking at Bank of America's Tech, Media & Telecom group in New York. He was top of his class and had worked in high-profile transactions such as AT&T's \$85 billion acquisition of Time Warner. The last hurdle in his path towards building a career and life in the United States was getting the approval for the H1-B visa, which BofA had sponsored him for. He met all the criteria, completed all the necessary paperwork, and every sign was pointing towards him getting his visa extended, so much so his office threw him a party to celebrate his imminent stay.

Just elected to the University's Alumni Association Board of Directors, Pablo was in Loretto for Homecoming 2017 when he received a surprising call from BofA's human resources department. "They just told me my visa had been denied," he says.

"It was totally unexpected," he continues. "I couldn't believe it. There was a big feeling of frustration and sadness because I had built a life in the US, after having lived there for 10 years. All of my closest friends, both from high school and college, were in the US. My family was also living in Houston, at the time. All I wanted was to be able to stay in the country, keep doing my job, and work towards getting my residency, which was something I had dreamed of ever since I first entered the country. The worst thing about it all, was the fact that I was given no concrete explanation for why my visa was denied. I went through all the right channels, jumped all the necessary hoops and met all the requirements but, instead, I was simply told I had to go, or risk being denied future entry into the country."



Pablo was born and raised in Mexico City, Mexico, in what he describes as a middle-class family. His mother, Silvia, is a life-long school teacher who worked hard to provide Pablo and his siblings, Miguel and Ana, access to a great education in the schools where she taught. His father, who is one of fourteen kids and started working at the age of fourteen, worked his way through the ranks to become a Senior Vice President at Banco Santander, "I was very fortunate in that regard," says Pablo. "My mother always nurtured in us a desire to learn, to be curious, and to keep an open mind

Pablo Medina '16
shares his hard-
fought path to
early-career success
in finance and offers
advice to students
who want to follow
in his footsteps.



— very much pushing us to exercise the right side of our brains. While my dad instilled in us an incredible work ethic and a desire to always put our best foot forward, as well as a love for soccer and numbers, in my case. Both of my parents worked tirelessly to make sure we had access to a good education and the best opportunities they could offer us."

While Pablo managed to excel both in the classroom and on the soccer field growing up, it was his passion for the latter that ultimately led to what would end up being a life-changing opportunity for him. "Unfortunately, in Mexico, pursuing your dreams of becoming a professional soccer player and staying in school to get a high school/university degree are often mutually exclusive, rarely do you get the chance to do both. In my case, I was extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to move to the US, where I could pursue both at the highest level possible. Getting an amazing high school & college education while chasing my life-long dream of becoming a professional soccer player."

The summer leading up to his first year of high school, Pablo and his older brother, Miquel, were offered a spot to attend a summer camp at the prestigious IMG Academy in Bradenton, Florida. "What's funny is that most people at the summer camp were there to have a good time. They were having fun at practice, eating pizza and burgers for lunch, going out to the dances at night, etc. Meanwhile, I felt like I was there on a mission, like I was at some sort of tryout and that the only way I would ever be able to go there full-time was if I managed to impress someone enough to get a scholarship. So, I was focused. I made sure I ate well during the day, got my hours of sleep at night, and did everything in my power to make the most out of the opportunity at hand."

This focus and commitment paid off—Pablo and his brother were offered a full-time spot and a scholarship to attend IMG's Soccer Academy. But with this achievement a new set of challenges were introduced. "So now I am thirteen years old, still learning

"So now I am thirteen years old, still learning how to speak English, living on my own in a whole new country far away from my parents."

— Pablo Medina

how to speak English, living on my own in a whole new country far away from my parents. It was not easy, but it was an invaluable and formative experience. It helped me build a lot of character and resilience, and pushed me to become independent from an early age. My time there also allowed me to make some incredible connections and learn from people from all over the world, which is something that has truly shaped the way I think about things today. To this day, some of my closest friends are people who I met during my first year at IMG and, more often than not, no matter what country or city I travel to, I end up knowing someone from the network I built when I was there, which is great."

His next big opportunity came during his junior year in high school when Pablo was invited to play up with the senior U-18 team at a national soccer showcase. "In hindsight, this was another one of those life-changing moments and decisions for me. I had been called up to play with the older (U-18) team but had also been invited to attend a soccer trip in Italy with my current (U-17) team. While the idea of traveling to Europe, somewhere I had never been, to play soccer with my friends and teammates was really exciting, I also knew that I would probably never have the chance to play in that showcase again if I passed up on the opportunity. So I decided to stay and try to earn a starting spot on the older team."

It was at this summer showcase where Pablo was spotted by then-Red Flash Head Men's Soccer Coach, Michael Casper. "I only started one match during that entire showcase, where I played around 60 minutes. That was it. I guess I was lucky that Coach Casper happened to be at that game that day." Following the tournament, a number of college coaches including Coach Casper reached out to Pablo to pitch him on their visions for their respective programs. However, Pablo felt Coach Casper's was the most compelling vision of them all and one where he thought he could play an important role to help build the team.

Pablo accepted an invitation to visit Saint Francis University to see the campus and team for himself firsthand. "I did a handful of college visits, and this was, by far, the most complex one I ever did," Pablo remembers with a laugh. "Coach Casper picked me up at the airport in Pittsburgh and we just started driving. After going

through the Pittsburgh tunnel and seeing the city in front of me I thought to myself 'this is great! We're probably almost there' but, instead, we just kept driving and driving. At one point, I started thinking 'what did I get myself into'. Eventually, after a two-plus-hour drive we finally got to Loretto, where I had the chance to meet the soccer team and some professors during my visit. It was fall and it wasn't even snowing yet, but I recall having to go back to the locker room during one of the practices I got to watch since I couldn't feel my hands. I definitely didn't pick Loretto because of the weather but rather because of the people I met on that trip. Everyone was so nice and welcoming."

Pablo cites SFU's small setting for allowing him to fully pursue soccer and academic success. "People are able and encouraged to explore a bunch of different interests. When I came to SFU, I only did so to play soccer at a D1 program with the goal of entering the MLS draft my senior year. School was a secondary thought back then and it wasn't until after my first accounting class with Dr. [James] Logue that I decided to pursue a major in accounting. Dr. [Margaret] Kealey then convinced me to double major in finance. Eventually, my interest in finance and fascination with technology and entrepreneurship was what led me to pick up a third major in Management Information Systems. I knew it'd be too hard to pull off a triple major with Computer Science, even though that's what I really wanted, so I felt like the next best option was to do something at the intersection of business and technology which is when Dr. [John] Miko encouraged me to go with MIS."

There was one experience, though, far outside the confines of the classroom that would first open Pablo's eyes to the world of banking and investing: "I went on the School of Business's study abroad trip to London, where I got my first glimpse of what the finance industry looked like in one of the biggest cities in the world. Seeing the pace of life in the city and the people on the trading floor is what put that initial itch in me to pursue a career in banking. I figured I'd love to live and work in a city like that." However, that journey to break into investment banking proved to be anything but easy. With less than 2% of accepted applicants, it is well-known to be particularly tough for "non-target" school students to break into the industry. "It was crazy, no matter how many applications I submitted, how many cover letters & emails

"I went on the School of Business's study abroad trip to London, where I got my first glimpse of what the finance industry looked like in one of the biggest cities in the world."

— Pablo Medina



Pablo joined the Red Flash Men's Soccer team as a freshman in 2011 and completed his college athletic career in 2015 as a red-shirt senior. That year he saw action in all 20 games for the Flash including 18 starts and set an SFU record with 26 career assists to his name.

I wrote, I never got any traction. I was a triple major student with a 3.9 GPA, playing a Division I sport, co-founder of a chapter for one of the largest fraternities in the country (Sigma Chi), President of the Student Athlete Advisory Committee, etc. and yet I couldn't manage to get one single response! I didn't understand it."

Faced with a ton of resistance, Pablo decided to start tapping into any warm leads he could find within the SFU network. "I basically reached out to our alumni relations team and asked them for access to our alumni database. It took me a few days to sift through it (my MIS major finally came in handy) but, after that, I had an Excel sheet with a list of >100 relevant names. I spent the next couple of months cold emailing and cold calling all of them. Some replied, others didn't. However, those who did, such as Tony Evangelista '81, were really helpful in facilitating intros to other relevant people in the industry. I felt like every conversation I had only made me more determined to break into the industry." All these efforts eventually led Pablo to apply to the SEO Career Program which, after a rigorous interview process and prep program, invited him to be part of their Investment Banking Program 2016 cohort which opened the door for him to join Bank of America's TMT group in New York.



Back in 2017, Bank of America Merrill Lynch discussed relocation options with Pablo. They wanted him to remain with the company so they offered him three different options in their international offices: Hong Kong, Madrid, and London.

"Hong Kong was an interesting option and actually my first choice. However, after some conversations with a couple of senior colleagues at the firm, I realized that the change would probably be challenging for someone at my level, given that I didn't speak Mandarin. Then there was London. I thought London was the most comparable opportunity to New York and I always had the itch of living there ever since I took that business school trip my sophomore year, so I thought, 'Why not? At least I've been there.'" Once again, Pablo was moving from what he called "home" and starting life in a new country.

Before committing to the move to London, Pablo was approached by Dr. Logue, who had heard about his relocation predicament and told him there was someone he should meet.

Pablo met Dr. Logue and Dr. Randy Frye, Dean of the Shields School of Business, at a pub and was introduced to another alumnus at the table: Paul Malloy '04. Born and raised in Pennsylvania,

“The only reason I’m here doing this ‘interview’ is because other people have believed in me along the way and have provided me with the opportunities to become that someone.”

— Pablo Medina

Paul’s career with the Vanguard Group, an investment management company, had taken him to London, where he routinely hosted visiting students to talk about his career in finance. “We had a great conversation,” recalls Pablo. “I picked his brain on career advice, career progression, and my impending move to London. It really helped me feel confident that it was the decision at the time. It also felt good knowing that I’d have a bit of a network to support me along the way.”

After that conversation, Pablo took to this new challenge with the same enthusiasm as he had the ones in his past. During his time in London, he managed to secure an early promotion to Associate and was working in transactions with tech companies across Europe. His time in London and desire to continue working with tech companies, eventually led him to join EQT as an investor. EQT is one of Europe’s largest private capital firms in the world with more than \$100 billion in assets under management. In 2019, Pablo was extended an offer to help build out the private equity team in Madrid, Spain, with Carlos Santana and Friedrich Reich. It’s something Pablo never saw coming, but “it was a very unique opportunity to join such a fast-growing organization and learn the investor role in an incredibly entrepreneurial setting. It also offered me the opportunity to work on my ‘business Spanish’ skills, which is something I always felt could come in handy if I ever decided to move back to Mexico. When I look back on it, it was clearly a no-brainer and people who know me also know how I feel about Madrid – the quality of life is amazing there. It’s a sunny place, the food is great, and the people are generally nice, so what else was there to consider?”

During his time in Spain, Pablo managed to play an active role in building one of the most successful private equity franchises in the region through landmark transactions such as the acquisition of Idealista by EQT (which was the largest tech buyout in Spanish history), or the firm’s majority investment into Freepik. Deals such as these, or his participation in investments such as Igenomix and Adamo, allowed him to build a strong investment acumen and an increased desire to work with high-growth tech companies. “The truth is, it has never really felt like a job,” he says. “I know that sounds cliché, but I’ve always been genuinely drawn to the different aspects of the investment role. From the qualitative research of sector trends to the commercial and financial due diligence we conduct on companies, to building relationships with the Founders and management teams of these companies and eventually supporting them in their journeys. There are many opportunities and so much to be excited about. However, I think you have to be genuinely passionate about what you do, and curious to learn and have your

mental frameworks be challenged in order to be a good investor and find the right companies you want to back and partner with. It is hard work, but I personally find it to be intellectually stimulating and rewarding.”

Pablo’s passion for technology and investing in high-growth businesses took him to become a founding member of EQT’s Growth team, where, over the course of the last couple of years, Pablo has helped launch a \$2.4 billion fund focused on investing in tech and tech-enabled business around the world. Since the inception the fund has played an active role investing in a number of Europe’s most exciting growth companies. These include Vinted, the leading global online marketplaces for secondhand fashion, or Mambu, a core banking software company that provides core infrastructure for banks and financial service providers around the world.

Building off his time at EQT and an impressive track record, one day Pablo received an email from Forbes saying he had been identified as a potential candidate for the magazine’s annual 30 Under 30 Europe List. “I was excited but didn’t make much of it since I was simply asked to respond to a list of questions covering my background, education, work history, provide a couple of references, and complete a series of prompts which I figured would then go through a panel of judges. But, if I’m being honest, I didn’t think much was ultimately going to come out of it.”

Then one morning Pablo woke to numerous emails and messages, all with the same Forbes link and essentially the same message: “Have you seen this?!” Pablo had been named to Forbes Europe’s prestigious 30 Under 30 List.

The most that can be coaxed out of Pablo to celebrate his achievement is a very humble statement: “It caught me a little off guard, but it’s certainly a nice recognition.” Instead, he talks more about the people in his life who helped him along the way, saying “it’s not an individual recognition. There are a lot of people who have made this possible. I personally think this is a testament and a recognition to the people who have constantly been around me, and those who have given me a chance to prove myself and supported me along the way. I wish I could share this with all of them. From my parents, siblings and friends, who have supported unconditionally along the way and instilled in me a strong set of values and the grit to continue pushing forward even when things are tough, to people like Coach Casper, from SFU, and/or Albert Cruz & Menna Samaha, from the SEO Career Program who took a chance on me when it wasn’t totally obvious. There are also countless professors, such as Dr. Logue, Dr. Miko, and Dr. Frye, and mentors/colleagues, such as Victor Engleson, Carlos Santana,

and Friedrich Reick who have always pushed me to make sure I reach my full potential and have supported me to make a lot of this possible. At the end of the day, these kinds of recognitions are just a great opportunity to take a second to say, hey, this is all because of you. Thank you.”



Beyond viewing the recognition as a testament to his support network, Pablo sees the 30 Under 30 achievement as a platform to help others in pursuing their passions. “In the future, my hope is to continue making a difference by challenging the status quo. Not only in Finance, by inspiring and creating opportunities for other people from underrepresented or unconventional backgrounds, but more generally in all walks of life by empowering others to push the boundaries of what is possible. At a high level and in isolation, my background probably looks very conventional. I speak English like I’m an American, I went to an ‘elite’ boarding school in the US, graduated from a 4-year college in Pennsylvania, started working in investment banking in New York City, only to transition to a buy-side role. But, the truth is that the journey has been anything but straightforward. Up until I was thirteen, I was still living in Mexico with my family and I had no idea what life could be beyond that. No one in my family had ever lived or studied in a university in the US, let alone had any of the opportunities that I’ve been very fortunate to have. But like myself, there are countless others with similar (underrepresented & unconventional) backgrounds and stories who, unfortunately, simply never get those chances – and that’s what I hope to be able to change.”

First, Pablo wants Saint Francis students to know they can compete with graduates from any other universities and succeed in whatever field they choose. “That’s probably my biggest message to the [business] students I talk to at SFU,” he says. “No matter the background of the person next to you, or the school they went to, once you get on the job it really all comes down to how bad you want to be the best at what you do. How passionate you are about the role, how hard you’re willing to work to create the right opportunities for yourself, and how curious/hungry you are to continue to learn along the way. At the end of the day, it’s really all about what you’re willing to put into it. Sometimes, the hardest thing is to get that initial opportunity, but when you do, you just have to make sure you are prepared to make the most out of it – then, I truly believe you can compete against anyone out there.

The second thing Pablo would want to convey to other young students and people reading this is to, above all else, always “pay it forward”.

“I genuinely believe that paying it forward is the best way to lead by example and show appreciation for what others have done for you in the past. The only reason I’m here doing this ‘interview’ is because other people have believed in me along the way and have provided me with the opportunities to become that someone. I would like to do the same for others to come.”

“In other words,” he laughs, “I’d like to make sure that I’m not the last alumnus to appear on the 30 Under 30 list. If I can help someone else achieve their own personal or professional goals, which would be a lot more special and fulfilling to me than any recognition I can ever get.”

3 Tips from 30 Under 30: Pablo’s Mentorship Advice to Students

- 1. Take the shot.** “If you do not try and/or believe you can do it, then it’s probably not going to happen...and there is definitely no way someone else is going to do it for you. Write that first cold email / LinkedIn message, submit that first application, prepare for that first job interview. Sometimes the hardest thing is to get going and you will often find yourself hitting dead ends and banging your head against the wall but, at the end of the day, where there’s a will there’s a way. And you will be surprised to see how many people out there are willing to offer a helping hand. Just make sure that when the opportunity presents itself, that you’re prepared to take that shot – because sometimes one is all you get.”
- 2. It’s all about persistence.** “Salespeople know this best, but if you don’t get a response on your first attempt, make sure to follow up. There is always a fine balance between being persistent and being annoying. However, I think if you are thoughtful and intentional about the way you reach out to people (and who you reach out to) and are then considerate of the time they give you, people will take notice and will likely be more willing to engage in the future. Sometimes people miss messages, forget to respond, etc., so just make sure you hustle.”
- 3. The best mentor/inroad is not always the most obvious one.** “It’s not always about finding the most senior executive in your alumni network or at the firm you’re looking to work in. Sure, if you are able to connect and engage with someone at that level it probably doesn’t hurt and it could prove to be beneficial down the road. However, these people often tend to have a lot on their plate and may even be less inclined to help someone they don’t know. Therefore, instead, I’d also recommend looking for people who may have recently gone through a similar process and/or those who you share a mutual connection with, whether it is the sport you played in high school/college, the fraternity/sorority/academic club you both were a part of, a friend in common etc. A ‘warm’ inroad is always better and these people may oftentimes be better placed to offer relevant/practical guidance and advice.



The 175th Anniversary

2022 Year in Review

Reflecting on 2022

For the University community 2022 was a year to remember on many levels. Within these pages you will find many accomplishments, each of which is worth celebrating. The University has multiple donor-funded building projects underway. Several donors endowed scholarships to make a Saint Francis University degree more affordable. The previous two academic years are the second- and third-best fundraising years in our history. Those two years combine for a total of \$14.3 million dollars! Simultaneously, within those two years, we were awarded \$3.25 million in grants.

The generosity of donors, enrollment increases during the pandemic (yes, increases), and the fine work of our

University community converged, and are illustrated in the 2022 President's Report. It is with (appropriate) pride and gratitude that we tout the successes about which you will read. The now complete Francis 2020 strategic plan may now be categorized as a "fine accomplishment." The University is blessed!

The successes of this past year enhanced the University's 175th anniversary celebration. Thank you for your generous contributions to these efforts. May the Lord continue to bless us.

Sincerely,

Very Rev. Malachi Van Tassell, T.O.R., Ph.D.
President

CELEBRATING 175 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

It all began with six friars from Ireland...

Brother Giles Carroll along with five of his friar brothers from the Archdiocese of Tuam in Ireland requested permission from the Bishop of the Pittsburgh diocese to bring their dream, rooted in sharing the teachings of Saint Francis of Assisi, to fruition in the Americas.

Today we have a premier institution, with innovative programs that build ethical leaders who model Franciscan values.



1880s
Saint Francis College



1947
Saint Francis College



2022
Saint Francis University

Facing page/Top: 175th Anniversary Mass. **Center from left:** 2022 commencement, Homecoming King and Queen and Twelfth Night theatre production. **Bottom:** Class of 1972 gathering during Alumni Weekend, July 28-31, 2022.



In 1942 The Chapel of Mary Immaculate was lost in the fire that destroyed Old Main. A rebuilding process ensued with the construction of a new place of worship, the Immaculate Conception Chapel. The new chapel opened in 1957, yet much of the original design concept remained unfinished due to lack of funds.



COMPLETING THE **VISION**

In honor of its 175th anniversary, the University launched a fundraising campaign to complete the original vision for the Immaculate Conception Chapel. Chaired by Lou DiCerbo '59, the 175th Anniversary Campaign surpassed the goal of raising \$1.75 million. By the close of 2022 more than \$2.75 million had been raised for the chapel as well as scholarships for Alta Via, an intentionally Catholic student community. These generous gifts have made completing the original vision for the Immaculate Conception Chapel a reality.



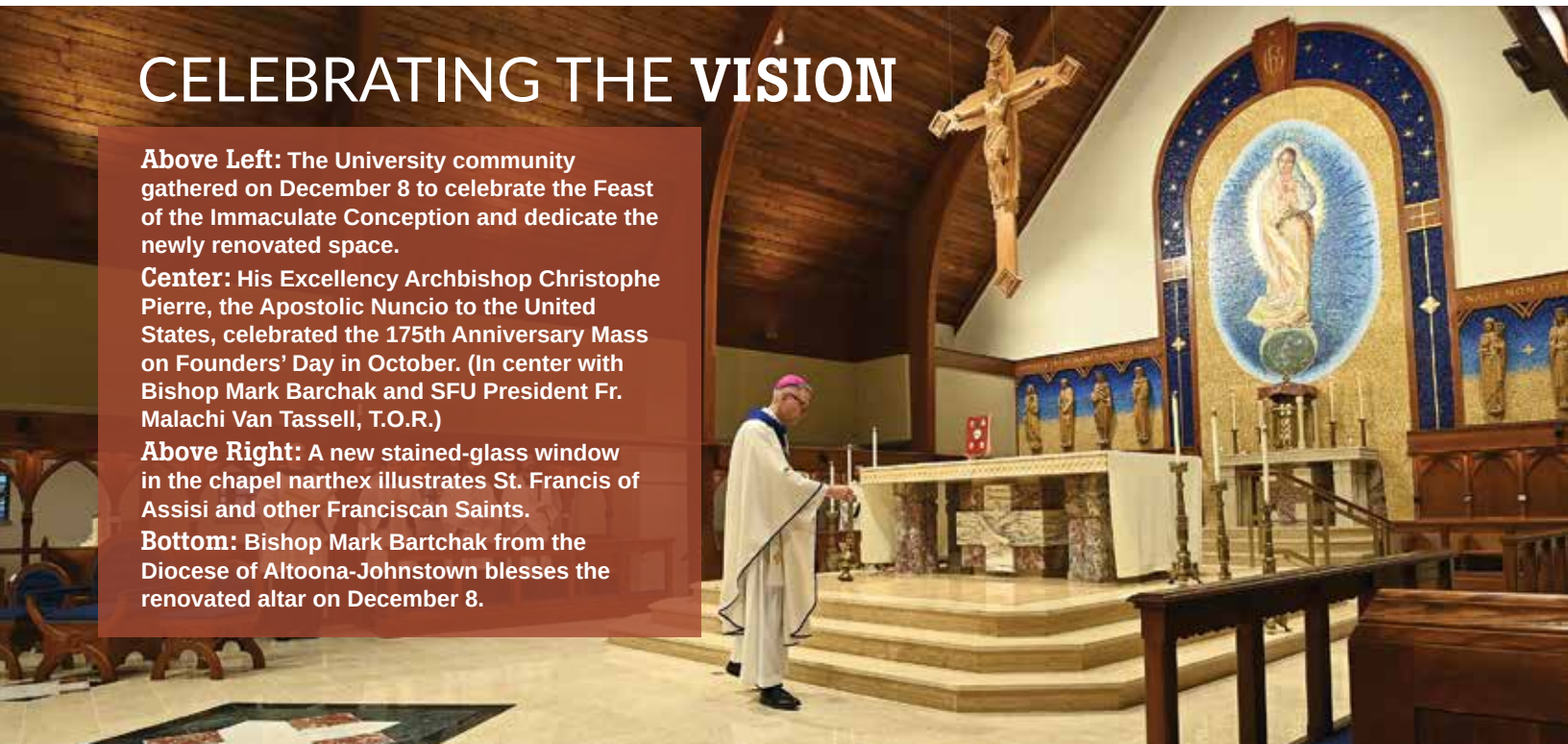
CELEBRATING THE VISION

Above Left: The University community gathered on December 8 to celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and dedicate the newly renovated space.

Center: His Excellency Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, celebrated the 175th Anniversary Mass on Founders' Day in October. (In center with Bishop Mark Barchak and SFU President Fr. Malachi Van Tassell, T.O.R.)

Above Right: A new stained-glass window in the chapel narthex illustrates St. Francis of Assisi and other Franciscan Saints.

Bottom: Bishop Mark Barchak from the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown blesses the renovated altar on December 8.



INVESTING IN **ACADEMICS**

New High-Tech Anatomy Lab Unveiled

Combines the University's traditional cadaver lab with virtual simulation space



Saint Francis University students have immersed themselves in 1000s of simulated learning sessions to prepare for their future careers since the School of Health Sciences & Education's Experiential Learning Commons opened in 2019. Yet the facility was missing one crucial piece: a high-tech anatomy lab. That missing piece is now solidly in place.

When the ELC was constructed four years ago, the University left 3,400 square feet of unfinished shell space for the future anatomy lab. That space is now fully outfitted thanks to donations and a \$1,500,000 PDE Job Training and Education Program Grant secured by State Senator Wayne Langerholc.

The University held a blessing and dedication ceremony for its new anatomy lab to celebrate on Thursday, November 17, 2022. The event included tours of the spacious, modern facility that combines the University's traditional cadaver lab with a high-tech simulation space within the ELC.

► francis.edu/blog/saint-francis-university-unveils-new-high-tech-anatomy-lab

Left: Anatomage tables have a life-sized touchscreen interface to learn human anatomy and physiology. Here Alexa Schmidhamer '21, graduate assistant in the ELC, demonstrates the table's versatility to State Senator Wayne Langerholc.

University Lands \$1 Million Appalachian Regional Commission POWER Grant

Saint Francis University has been awarded a \$1 million grant by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) to launch an Aviation Maintenance Technician School.

The new Aviation Maintenance Technician School will be housed at the John P. Murtha Johnstown–Cambria County Airport and will offer a 14 CFR 147-certified training cur-

riculum for Aviation Maintenance Technicians. It will enable students to gain in-demand skills in a program that is under 18 months long and will help create pathways into secure, well-paying, family-sustaining jobs in the growing aviation industry and related sectors. The University anticipates launching programming in late 2023 through Francis Worldwide School of Continuing Studies.

► francis.edu/aviation

ACADEMIC **EXCELLENCE**

Cybersecurity Program Validated by NSA

March 8, 2022 – National Security Agency, (NSA) validated Saint Francis University's Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity Administration program through 2027. According to the NSA, Saint Francis University's ability to meet the increasing demands of the program validation will serve the nation well in contributing to the protection of the National Information Infrastructure. The National Cyber Strategy addresses the critical shortage of professionals with cybersecurity skills and highlights the importance of higher education as a solution to defending America's cyberspace.

► francis.edu/cybersecurity-administration

Environmental Engineering student named Goldwater Scholar (one of only 417 students nationwide)

March 28, 2022 – Matthew Berzonsky, a junior Environmental Engineering major from Indiana, Pa., was named a prestigious Goldwater Scholar for 2022. The Scholarship Program honoring Senator Barry Goldwater is one of the oldest and most prestigious scholarships in the United States centered on the natural sciences, engineering, and mathematics.

► francis.edu/environmental-engineering



Matthew Berzonsky

A large photograph of two astronauts in white space suits walking on the lunar surface. The surface is covered in grey dust and rocks. The background is a deep red, suggesting the Earth's horizon or a similar celestial body.

NASA Selects Saint Francis University to help Broaden STEM participation

March 2022 – The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) selected SFU to receive a \$24,987 Community Anchor Award. This designation as a community anchor recognizes the University as a local community resource. NASA selected a total of 21 organizations nationwide to receive funding as part of this program. ► francis.edu/science-outreach-center

Biology Pre-Medicine Program Named

July 11, 2022 – Saint Francis University and the Erevelles family jointly announced the naming of the Joseph Erevelles Biology Pre-Medicine Program. Through this named program, University students will be able to receive enhanced support as they pursue placement in medical, dental, optometry, veterinary, and related schools. The Joseph Erevelles Biology Pre-Medicine Program is the first-named program in the University's School of STEAM. The program is named in memory of the son of Dr. Winston and Dr. Christine (Koneski) Erevelles '86. ► francis.edu/biology



Pictured (Left to Right):

Dr. Justin Merry (Professor of Biology and Department Chair), Dr. Winston Erevelles, Michael Erevelles, Dr. Wayne Takacs (Retired department chair and Professor Emeritus of Biology), Dr. Christine (Koneski) Erevelles '86, Matt Julian '16 (family friend), Dr. Susan Reimer (Professor of Biology and Coordinator of Pre-Medicine), Dr. Peter Skoner (Dean of the School of STEAM) gathered on June 19, 2022, to announce the naming of the Joseph Erevelles Biology Pre-Medicine Program at Saint Francis University.

First Research-Based Executive Doctor of Education Program Launched

August, 2022 – The Executive Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership and Innovation program offered through Saint Francis University's Francis Worldwide School of Continuing Studies welcomed its first cohort of students in August. The program is delivered predominantly online with a required in-person residency each semester at the Curry Innovation Center in Altoona, Pennsylvania.

► francis.edu/doctor-education-leadership



(Front from left to Right): Dean Tricia McFadden, Sherri Fredlock, Sherri Link, Father Malachi Van Tassell, Dr. Pat Crawford and Dr. Leah Spangler **(Middle from left)** Jo-Ann Semko, Tammy Miceli, Justin Skipper, Pamela Sprigler, Brandi Penatzer, Nicole Itle **(Back from left)** Douglas Fleegle, Allison Ritchey, Hannah Harley, Joseph Coray, Anthony DeRubis, Mark DeRubeis, Heather Serrano, and Genaro "Chip" Iglesias.



MAKING OUR MARK

22-23 Annual Ranking Lists

The University is honored to have once again passed the vetting process to appear on several competitive college distinctions lists. Here are a few of our favorites.

- “America’s Top 500 Colleges” (Forbes)
- “Best Bang for your Buck: Northeast” (Washington Monthly’s 2022 College Guide)
- “Top Performers for Social Mobility: North” (U.S. News and World Report)
- “Best in the Northeast” (U.S. News and World Report)
- “Catholic College of Distinction” (Colleges of Distinction)
- “A Safety Rating” (Niche)

SFU named one of America’s Top 500 Colleges by Forbes

Saint Francis University celebrated a milestone during the 175th anniversary year: landing on the prestigious list of Forbes 2022 America’s Top 500 Colleges. Forbes’ compilation of top colleges highlights those that the publication believes “offer an excellent education at a great price, graduate high-earners and propel students to become successful entrepreneurs and influential leaders in their fields.”

While Forbes uses several qualifiers to rank institutions, key successes by two Saint Francis University community members helped the

institution make the list:

- Matthew Berzonsky, a junior Environmental Engineering major from Indiana, Pa., was named a prestigious Goldwater Scholar for 2022. (Pg. 20)

- Pablo Medina, a 2016 summa cum laude graduate, who is the vice president of EQT Partners, one of Europe’s largest private capital firms, was named to Forbes “30 under 30” list in Europe in the category of Finance. (Pg. 11)

► For more details on University Ranking & Distinctions visit: francis.edu/blog/category/distinctions

SFU BY THE NUMBERS



Our Student Body

(data from Oct. 15, 2022)

- Total Enrollment: 2,019
- Traditional Undergraduates: 1,397
- Gender: Female 64%, Male 36%
- Geographic Diversity:
34 states and 24 countries
- Ethnic Diversity: 19%
- Student-Athletes: 542
- Degrees Awarded: 685
- First-Year Retention Rate: 85.3%

Francis Worldwide School of Continuing Studies

Undergraduate degree programs: 18
Graduate degree programs: 9
Certificates & Endorsements: 30+
(undergrad, post-bac and graduate)
Students taking online & hybrid programs:
323 from 15 states and deployed in the military

Fundraising Success

(Academic years 2020-21 & 2021-22)

- \$14.3 million raised over 2 academic years
- 2nd & 3rd best fundraising years in University history despite a global pandemic!
- \$3.25 million in grants awarded to SFU during same period

We cherish every single donor who supported

our University's mission through alumni contributions, capital campaign gifts, giving club and society donations, gifts from friends and parents, athletic support, as well as tribute, memorial, and scholarship gifts.

► Visit francis.edu/donor-recognition to see a list of our benefactors.

HISTORIC SEASONS



Rated Top 50 DI Softball Team in the Nation 5-year Consecutive NEC Champs

Softball: SFU was ranked No. 47 by DI Softball in the organization's top-50 programs of 2022 list. The ranking took into account regional appearances and postseason success in the past five years and forecast programs in the best shape for the next decade of play. The Red Flash set a new NEC record with five championships in a row, breaking the previous record of four set by Robert Morris and LIU.

Football: The team won the NEC Championship and advanced to the first round of FCS playoffs for only the second time in program history. Coach Chris Villarrial was named NEC Coach of the Year for the third time. He was also named as a national semifinalist for the Eddie Robinson Award, given to the nation's top FCS coach.



NEC Champs - 2nd Playoff Appearance in Program History

EXCELLENCE BY THE NUMBERS

2022 Fall Postseason Appearances

The Fall 2022 athletic season has been deemed historic at Saint Francis University. For the first time in Red Flash history, all five Fall teams competed in Northeast Conference (NEC) postseason play after their respective 2022 season with one team clinching an NEC championship title.

Football (NEC Champions, advanced to the first round of FCS playoffs for second time in program history)

Men's Soccer (NEC Quarterfinals)

Women's Soccer (NEC Quarterfinals)

Women's Volleyball (NEC Semifinals)

Field Hockey (NEC Semifinals)

Red Flash athletics currently leads the rankings for the 2022-23 NEC Brenda Weare Commissioner's Cup and the Joan Martin Women's Cup. Achieving this status means that SFU has risen above their NEC competition by earning the most points in the NEC.



In addition to a remarkable 2022 athletic season(s), student athletes also excelled academically while making a difference in the community.

Noteworthy Academic Achievements:

- SFU received the NEC Institutional Academic Award for the sixth time, securing the most award wins in the NEC (awarded annually to the top academic institution in the Northeast Conference).
- The College Sports Communicators All-District Team which recognizes the nation's top student-athletes for their combined performances on the field and in the classroom included 14 SFU student athletes: (Women's Soccer) Rita Kendziora, Lauren Pyle, Corinne Renninger, Savannah Schoonmaker (Men's Soccer) Ahmed Abd-Elazem, Lorenz Ender, Maximus Rigby, Dallan Schoenberger (Football) Mark Conrad, Colt Jennings, Justin Sliwoski (Women's Volleyball) Emma Fenton, Maggie Hogan, Maggie Means

Noteworthy Community Achievements:

- SFU became a 3-time recipient of the NEC Building Communities Award for demonstrating the highest dedication to making an impact in the community through the efforts of its student-athletes, coaches and administrators.
- 8,568 total community service hours completed.
- 7,860 canned and non-perishable items collected in NEC SAAC week-long food drive (3-time champion). The number of items collected in 2022 set a record. All items were donated to the Dorothy Day Outreach Center.
- \$7,009 raised in NEC SAAC Money Wars two week-long competition. All proceeds benefit either the Children's Cancer Recovery Foundation or Seedz for Needz.

PARTNERSHIPS OF DISTINCTION

The leadership team at Saint Francis University considers strategic partnerships as a key tool in shaping the next 175 years of the institution. The goal of these substantive relationships with outside entities is to bring the institution new student enrollment in different market segments, increase revenue, enhance the skills of our graduates, and secure the institution's place in the marketplace.

Here are a few examples of Partnerships of Distinction that are already bearing fruit.

University of Pittsburgh Medical Center

- Alignment on workforce development issues benefiting Francis Worldwide School of Continuing Education offerings
- Expanded medical services for SFU employees and students
- Enhanced clinical sites for current students

The Association of Materials Protection and Performance (AMPP)

- Certification and stackable credentialing offerings for current students and new market segments
- Ability to form regional manufacturing council to evolve as regional certification leader

Curry Supply

- Hands-on student research and premier internship experiences
- Workforce development alignment for future programming
- STEM outreach with K-12 populations

Milton Hershey School

- New Student enrollment
- Workforce development alignment and ability to open new market segments

SFU @ The Curry Innovation Center Altoona, PA

This new space is home to SFU's Curry Innovation Lab, STEM youth outreach programs, Francis Worldwide: School of Continuing Studies and the on-site residency for SFU's hybrid Executive Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership and Innovation.

► francis.edu/curry-innovation-center

The Saint Francis University Curry Innovation Center is located on the first floor of the former Vipond Appliance Store building, a facility beautifully rejuvenated by Curry Supply Holdings. The University officially opened its new presence in downtown Altoona with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on April 22, 2022.

Speakers included Father Malachi Van Tassell, T.O.R., Saint Francis University President; Mark Ritchey, Curry President; Steve McKnight, ABCD Corporation; U.S. Representative John Joyce, State Senator Judy Ward and State Representative Lou Schmitt (SFU class of 1984).

Today inside the space, strategic business and educational



collaborations are at work to produce solutions that will impact everything from workforce readiness and STEM literacy to improving advanced manufacturing processes for regional businesses.



University Strategic Plan Francis 2026:



Thy Will Be Done

In Fall 2022, Saint Francis University shared its new strategic plan with the University community. Embarking on this latest journey during the 175th anniversary year, the plan outlines how the University is looking ahead, guided into the future by God's providence. "At the heart of Francis 2026 are our Franciscan values. Our Catholic and Franciscan morals and values set us apart from other campuses, and, at times, even from society," shared University President Fr. Malachi Van Tassell, T.O.R. "At Saint Francis University, one has the opportunity to deepen faith and encounter Christ. We graduate healthcare professionals who are pro-life, business people with strong ethics and morals, scientists who see God as the Creator, and artists who use their talents to reveal the beauty of God."

CATHOLIC AND FRANCISCAN IDENTITY IS OUR FOUNDATION

In all we do, we will compel new and existing community members to deepen, explore, and transform their faith alongside one another and serve as models for student-centric engagement.

FRANCIS THE EDUCATOR

The University will continuously seek new student-centered transformational initiatives that result in knowledgeable, principled, and visionary graduates.

FRANCIS THE INNOVATOR

Through a market-driven lens, the University will develop academic and co-curricular programs and support meaningful, innovative partnerships.

FRANCIS THE GOOD STEWARD

Increase revenue, reduce costs, and grow the endowment, capital, and annual funds as a means of improving financial accountability and vitality.

FRANCIS THE BUILDER

Support quality living and learning environments that increase student demand and satisfaction.

► View the plan: francis.edu/francis2026

The Connors Family Fine Arts Center - Home of the Resinski Black Box Theatre

Alumni and friends have been beyond generous in a grassroots effort to build the Connors Family Fine Arts Center, named in honor of John '64 and Sheila (Widmer) Connors '65. The facility will house the Resinski Black Box Theatre in honor of beloved drama professor and director Kenny Resinski. The space will provide a location where students, faculty, and the community can gather, grow in self-expression, and pursue creative endeavors.



Building on 175 years **Good Things in Progress for 2023**



New Home for Occupational Therapy

A renovation of the University's former Boiler House and Fine Arts Center will allow the Occupational Therapy Department to grow and thrive. Dedicated classroom space and laboratories for pediatrics, hand therapy, industrial medicine and an acute care suite will simulate a hospital setting. The facility will provide students the opportunity to apply their academic knowledge into practical learning experiences and refine their skills.

Francis Worldwide paves way for returning student to complete his degree

While the credits he earned to that point were enough for an associate degree, William “Michael” Welch was unsatisfied when he left Saint Francis University after his sophomore year in 2007. “It really bothered me that I never finished what I set out to do,” he says. “Frankly, I wasn’t ready. If you look at my transcripts, you can see exactly where I fell off the cliff. When I told Dr. [Randy] Frye I was leaving... he discouraged me and tried to do everything to get me to stay, saying he’d help me over the summer and get things right. But I left anyway.”

While Michael found work after leaving campus, the thought of finishing his bachelor’s degree stayed with him. Specifically, though, he wanted to finish with a Saint Francis University degree.

“I think I first thought about going back in 2014, but I didn’t act until my mom said something that really stuck with me, which is that no matter what you do, time will go by. Either time will go by and you’re getting your degree, or time will go by and you’re still going to regret not having it. So, I called Saint Francis, and a couple days later I was in my first two classes in almost a decade.”

Michael finished his degree completely online through the Francis Worldwide School of Continuing Studies. “I’m three and a half hours away from campus, so being able to finish my degree there while still living in Virginia, that was great. And the professors, you can tell they have a lot of experience doing these online courses. A lot of them have been cutting their teeth in this field for over a decade. The overall experience was fantastic. I really enjoyed it, and the challenge was great.”

“I was looking at other schools,” Michael admits, “but with SFU and the credits I already had, plus the alumni discount provided and the big push to bring back folks like me, that meant there was the speed incentive, the accessibility incentive and, frankly, the nostalgia.”

While Michael’s coursework was all online, there was one in-person event he wasn’t going to miss: the 2022 Commencement, his graduation, which brought his Saint Francis experience full circle in one major way.

“When I was at Saint Francis,” he says, “Fr. Malachi was the spiritual advisor to Delta Sigma Phi. That’s how I got to know him, and also because I took his accounting class. At that point he had only been a professor for maybe a year or two. I really liked him back in the day, and the online program allowed me to do something I didn’t think I was going to be able to do. So, I emailed him to just say thank you for always being a great mentor when I was at SFU and for providing the Francis Worldwide program.

“He responded, thanking me and said that he really hoped I would come back for graduation. But this was a year and a half before that! I didn’t think he’d remember. So, when I walked across the stage, I was shocked when he said, ‘Mike, thank you again so much for your email. It meant a lot. You’ve worked hard, you’ve



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earned this, and I’m honored to be handing it to you.”

“And I’ll be honest, that was the part that got me choked up. It really meant a lot to me. This was a day I thought about for years. It’s incredible that he remembered me. It shows how tight knit our community is.”

But it doesn’t seem like Michael’s higher education journey is done. “My sister right now is at Harvard working on a graduate degree, and my wife has her master’s, and I can’t let them be the only ones with advanced degrees,” he jokes. “So, I am heavily considering getting my M.B.A. at SFU. But I’m going to take a break after this first challenge.”

When asked what advice he would give to people like himself—former students on the fence about returning to Saint Francis to finish their degrees—Michael returns to where he started. “Time goes by,” he says again. “The one thing you can’t buy is time. So just do it. It’s worth it. It’s been great.”

Michael mentions that he did not get a class ring after graduation. Instead, he treated himself to a different piece of jewelry. “This is my daily reminder that I did it, that it’s my accomplishment,” he says while holding up a new Rolex watch. “I busted my tail for three years getting my degree, and it reminds me that no matter how many days I didn’t want to do classes after coming home from work, I stuck to it and did it. It proved something. It proved to me what I can accomplish.”

And while he does not draw a direct connection to it, perhaps it serves as a daily reminder for his mother’s words: Time goes by, so go get it.

► **For more information online degree and certificate programs offered through Francis Worldwide School of Continuing Studies, visit francis.edu/worldwide.**

ALUMNI RECOGNITION

Distinguished Alumnus in Business

Francis “Frank” Gemino ’72 was named a Distinguished Alumnus in Business on Saturday, July 30, 2022. The award was presented during the 50th Anniversary Celebration Brunch in the John F. Kennedy Student Center and was part of the larger Alumni Weekend celebrations marking the 175th anniversary of the University’s founding.

Born in Brooklyn in 1950 before relocating to Rockville Centre, NY, Frank was educated at St. Agnes Cathedral School from his formative years up through high school. This is also where he met his wife, Carolyn, who was the first person Frank thanked in his acceptance speech, saying “she’s put up with me, she’s supported me, and she’s kept me pretty grounded.”

His Catholic upbringing helped guide him to Saint Francis



University for his college education, “although my mother was the one to fill out the application,” he quipped. “I think she was more interested in me going to college than I was.”

At Saint Francis, Frank learned that the importance of hard work and the power friendship, teamwork, love, and faith were the ingredients for a successful life. He credits his time at the University for providing him the confidence and gumption to make his mark on the world.

While he said many were responsible for his success at Saint Francis, Frank cited two specific people in his remarks: former accounting professor Dr. Albert Zanzuccki and former athletic director and football coach Art Martynuska. “I want to thank Dr. Zanzuccki. He cared about his students. Probably one of the two smartest people I’ve met to this day. I also want to thank Art Martynuska. He was a great man and a great coach.”

Frank started his career in June of 1972 at NY Life before becoming a Registered Representative for Edwards & Hanley. His career progressed through the 70’s and 80’s from Blythe Eastman Dillon, Oppenheimer & Co, Drexel Burnam Lambert and John Franklin. In 1986, he founded Henley & Company Securities under Raymond James. During this time, Frank earned the distinction of being named one of the top ten outstanding brokers in the United States.

In 2004, Frank Gemino founded Henley and Company, LLC and later Henley and Company Wealth Management, LLC in 2007, a solely operated broker/dealer and registered investment advisory firm. He has been President and CEO through today.

Outside of the world of finance, Frank has used the opportunities provided to him to venture into other entrepreneurial pursuits. He developed 40 acres of property in the Hamptons, New York, where he and his family still spend considerable time. In Bridgehampton, Frank was the owner of a handful of restaurants, earning a very-coveted three-star review in the New York Times. Finally, he was an investor in a number of Broadway shows which “were seen by dozens of people,” he says jokingly.

“I was only here for four years,” said Frank as he closed his remarks, “but I can’t think of a more formulative part of my life. I’ll never forget the school and the people here, and I appreciate it.”

Record-breaking attendance: Frank Gemino ’72 received the Distinguished Alumnus in Business award during the largest Alumni Weekend celebration in the history of the University.

1960s



◆ Andy Karl and Jay Matera attended Paul O'Connell's 50th Wedding Anniversary party held on February 6, 2022, in Aiken, S.C. **L to R:** Andy Karl '68, Paul O'Connell '68, Jay Matera '68

1970s

◆ Dr. Lee Kronert '74 published his latest novel, *Homesick for Springfield, New Jersey: From St. Francis PA*. The book looks back at Lee's student years at Saint Francis, going from reluctant freshman to a sophomore loving "Frankieland." This book and others by Lee are available on Amazon.

1980s



◆ Mellany (Lenz) Armstrong '84 (left) and Becca Johnson '17, '18 (right) met while sharing a picnic table in April 2022

when their bus to the Boston Marathon stopped at a rest stop in Connecticut. Becca ran her first Boston Marathon (fifth marathon overall) in 3:09:16, a personal record for her, and was cheered on by her dad, Michael Johnson. Mellany watched her husband Mike race his fourth Boston Marathon. Becca is an orthopedic physician assistant with Orthopedic Associates of Lancaster, Pa. Mellany is the communications coordinator for Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, Pa.

◆ Dr. Kimberly (Sheehan) Subasic '87 was recently named Professor and Department Head for the Swain Department of Nursing at the Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina. Having spent over 30 years in nursing and nursing leadership, Dr. Subasic began her new role with the Citadel in June of 2021.



◆ Charlie Lamertina '85 (left) and JP Boles '87 (right) met at midfield prior to the 2021 Army-Navy game in East Ruth-

erford N.J. Charlie was the head referee of the college football classic and JP was assisting with Navy photography. Both were members of Phi Kappa Theta and lived together at the fraternity.

1990s

◆ *The Red Glass Cat*, the debut poetry collection from Dr. Matthew Ussia '99, was named a "Great Summer Read" by Pittsburgh Magazine. Pittsburgh praised the poems, calling them "often acerbic and funny... but Ussia is not afraid to confront the darker realities of contemporary America."

2000s



◆ Saint Francis University Alumnus and Cambria County Lawyer Christopher G. Gvozdoch '07 (above) was named to the Pennsylvania Bar Association (PBA) Board of Governors. Gvozdoch began a three-year term on the Board at the conclusion of the association's Annual Meeting on May 13, 2022, in Hershey. One of 12 zone governors who serve on the PBA Board, Gvozdoch will represent Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon, Indiana and Somerset county lawyers. Gvozdoch has been

serving as a delegate to the PBA House of Delegates, the policymaking body of the association since 2011. He graduated cum laude from Widener University School of Law in Delaware. In addition, he received an LL.M. summa cum laude in business transactions from the University of Alabama School of Law.



◆ Maj. Jesse Gonsky, PA-C '12 '13 (left), and Maj. Timothy Schaffner, MD '06 (right) are on active duty USAF, working together on the General Surgery service at Brooke Army Medical Center, San Antonio, Texas.

2010s

◆ Dr. Jessica Schafer '12 successfully defended her dissertation titled "Early vs Late Diagnosis: A Secondary Data Set Analysis of Language-Based Learning Disorders and Importance of Diagnosis Timing" at Drexel University.

Marriages



◆ Brandon Mihalo '18 and Jenna Veres '18 MPAS '19 were married on September 25, 2021 in Cleveland, Ohio. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, they had to host a second wedding reception with vow renewals the following weekend (October 2, 2021) in Windsor, Ont., Canada (where Brandon is originally from). They had five other SFU grads in their wedding party and currently live in Cleveland, Ohio with their dog, Crosby.

Nondiscrimination and No Harassment Policy:

Saint Francis University does not discriminate on the basis of gender, gender identity, age, race, color, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, pregnancy status, veteran status, predisposing genetic characteristic or any protected classification. This policy applies to all programs and activities of the University, including, but not limited to,

admission and employment practices, educational policies, scholarship and loan programs and athletic or other University sponsored programs. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the University's non-discrimination policy: Lynne Banks, Associate Dean of Students, Title IX Coordinator, 814.472.3352, lbanks@francis.edu. Visit www.francis.edu/University-Policies-and-Handbooks/ for full details.

(List includes names submitted prior to Dec. 7, 2022)

Deaths

Kathleen (Jones Ambrose)
Klimchuck M'92
Armand S. Apa M'78
Eric M. Baker '18
Thomas G. Bianchini '75
Paul A. Breen M'63
R. Wayne Callahan '60
Kevin T. Campbell '90
Alfred "Fred" R. Canepale '58
Charlene (Damratowski)
Caracciolo '89
John F. Caramico '70
Mary Joan (Bernard) Cogelia '60
Thomas F. Cusack '59
Elizabeth (Nolan) Davis '57
Harriet "Ginny" (Filban) Davis '70
Art DeBiasi '72
Phillip S. DePolo '60
Leroy J. Debastiani '51
Lawrence E. Desmond III '63
Richard C. Dillon '57
Jay T. Dino '73
Mark A. Ditz '81
James F. Driesch '49
Thomas S. Eschbach '85
Frank R. Filkosky '92
Rev. Msgr. John Fitzpatrick '65
Edward Glancy '50
Helen (Martynuska) Glynn '72

Robert M. Goin M'64
H. Earl Hill '50
Fr. Robert Hilz, T.O.R. '67
David M. Holderman '58
Robert D. Johnson M'88
Dr. Grant A. Julin, Professor
Dr. John Karduck, Professor
Brian P. Kealey '11
Gerald "Jerry" King '70
Timothy J. Krempecki '75
Louis Krisay '73
Dr. Rodrigue Labrie '50
Fr. Ivan Lebar, T.O.R. '54
Glen W. Lenker M'75
Margaret (Spillman) Lepsig '70
Robert Madigan '62
Ernest Mansour '52
Rev. Joseph Markalonis, T.O.R.
Muriel (Shea) Matta '61
Bro. Mark McBride, T.O.R.
Edward McGann M'75
Kevin McGuire '77
James S. Miller M'95
Maureen (Farrell) Monaghan '66
Dale Warren Moon '88
Mary Morrisard-Larkin '90
Thomas Muriceak '62
Michael F. Neidorff M'66
James P. O'Connor '79
Dino J. Perricone M'94
Dino S. Persio '55

Frederick T. Pheiffer '64
Philip J. Plumeri '62
Ruth (Ulrich) Rado '60
Robert J. Regan '60
David Reidy '62
Earl J. Reinhart '67
Laurie (Garay) Roche '72
Roland L. Salvador '58
Ronald J. Sanker '55
Edward F. Schroen '59
Fr. Dominic Scotto, TOR '63
George W. Shannon '67
Rochelle (Shelley)(Stine)
Shevock '94
Frances (Haering) Sicola '62
C. Daniel Skelly '65
Hayes R. Spangler,
NAVY (Ret) '00
Frank J. Stanziola '69
Homer D. Starr M'94
Barbara (Susengill) Susen '91
Leslie (Roberts) Thompson '73
Louis Tucci '62
John L. Tunney M'67
Dennis J. Vandevander '81
John Vargo '66
Michael Vinciguerra '60
James Vizza '71
Fr. Fidelis Weber, T.O.R. '51
Stanley J. Wojciechowski '69
Martin P. Yannario '62

How to Submit a Flashback

We love to hear from our alumni! Please share with us information about career changes, promotions, relocations, volunteer work, engagements, marriages, births, and interesting things.

We welcome photos and will publish them as space permits. High quality digital files are best. A larger file size (300dpi or higher) is better than a smaller file size. Photos submitted by mail will not be returned.

Flashbacks can be sent to:
sfu-alumni-office@francis.edu
OR Fax: 814-472-3044

OR: Flashbacks
c/o Office of Alumni Engagement
Saint Francis University
PO Box 600
Loretto, PA 15940



Saint Francis University
P.O. Box 600
Loretto, PA 15940-0600
www.francis.edu

Programs for Every Stage of Your Journey



Undergraduate

Adult & Continuing Studies



Graduate

At Saint Francis University, we provide a transformational education that prepares leaders to become that person who makes a difference.

- 50+ career-focused majors and a vibrant campus life experience.
- Flexible online programs so you can start or continue your lifelong learning path.
- Professional degrees and certificates that encourage you to become a positive change agent.

Francis.edu/become