



Saint Peter's
UNIVERSITY

Magazine
SUMMER 2023

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS AS A **HISPANIC SERVING INSTITUTION**





A Royal Visit

The Saint Peter's University community welcomed His Majesty Osagyefuo Amoatia Ofori Panin, the King of Akyem Abuakwa (Ghana), beneath the umbrella, to the Jersey City campus on April 24. A rapt audience of students, faculty, alumni and guests listened to the monarch present his vision for Ghana at an event organized by the Guarini Institute for Government and Leadership. Story appears on page 6.

Nobody Does it Better



This University and the world looked very different in 1998, the year the U.S. Department of Education designated Saint Peter's a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). We were a college. The rebirth of Jersey City was just getting underway. And HSIs were a nascent idea among colleges and universities.

With enrollment of Latinos expected to exceed four million students by 2026, the largest growth rate of any racial-ethnic group according to the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, HSI status is a distinction institutions now actively strive to achieve. The effort includes two-year community colleges. Large public universities. Small liberal arts colleges. Even fellow Jesuit colleges and universities.

Earlier this year, Regis University became the second federally designated HSI in the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (guess who was the first!), and emerging HSIs named by Excelencia in Education, the advocacy organization for Latino student achievement, include Fordham University, Loyola University Chicago, Loyola Marymount University, Loyola University New Orleans, Marquette University, Santa Clara University and University of San Francisco.

Undeniably, Saint Peter's University is uniquely positioned to lead in this arena. I say this not because we were first, but because of who we are and all we stand for. We've welcomed students representing every immigrant community in Jersey City and Hudson County for more than 150 years.

Cura personalis, the intentional care that is provided to each student, is part of our DNA. So is creating possibilities for first-generation students driven to succeed and lead. Attaining HSI status 25 years ago allowed the University to build upon these strengths.

We harnessed more than \$17 million in federal HSI grants that advanced technology, STEM programs, internships and experiential learning opportunities for targeted Hispanic and low-income students. Created affordability initiatives for community college graduates to attain a bachelor's degree. In 2019, we were named a national finalist for the Seal of Excelencia by Excelencia in Education and adopted the organization's framework to ensure we continue to prioritize the serving aspect of Hispanic Serving Institutions.

"Undeniably, Saint Peter's is uniquely positioned to lead in this arena. I say this not because we were first, but because of who we are and all we stand for."

I'm proud that Saint Peter's has been known as one of the nation's leading HSIs for 25 years. I'm even prouder of the fact that our long commitment to embrace the diversity around us has made us a better and stronger institution. Our entire campus community has grown from including more perspectives and worldviews. It has compelled us to recognize untapped potential, innovate and better serve our students, who go on to serve others. Nobody does that better than Saint Peter's University. This milestone anniversary is cause for celebration and a big point of Peacock pride.

Sincerely,

Eugene J. Cornacchia, Ph.D.
President



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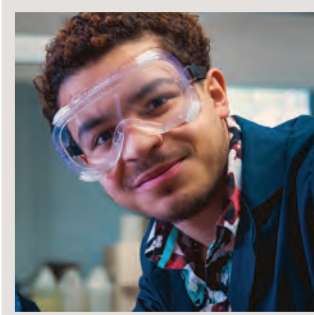
Mission Statement:
Saint Peter's University, inspired by its Jesuit, Catholic identity, commitment to individual attention and grounding in the liberal arts, educates a diverse community of learners in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs to excel intellectually, lead ethically, serve compassionately and promote justice in our ever-changing urban and global environment.

CONNECT



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You've Got This, Peacocks!

Undergraduate speaker Bailey Canela '23



The Class of 2023 was all smiles as they filed into PNC Bank Arts Center for the University's 132nd commencement exercises on May 19.

The class of undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students weathered adversity and loss throughout the coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic to attain a Jesuit education. "You certainly found your way to connect and support each other," Michelle Miller H '23, the award-winning broadcast journalist, told graduates in a rousing commencement address. "And despite the physical distance you remained committed, and here you are. That's a feat within itself."

Miller's enthusiasm for the Saint Peter's University mission was encapsulated in her main message to graduates, "Peacocks, you've got this and a whole lot more." She advised graduates to remember the lessons of the pandemic because every generation has encountered crisis. "You are strong enough, resilient enough. Challenges are not just road blocks, they are growth opportunities."

Saint Peter's University celebrated 889 graduates from the Class of 2023 and awarded 452 bachelor's degrees, 405 master's degrees and 32 doctoral degrees. The University awarded an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*, to Miller, a national correspondent for CBS News and current co-host on

Continued on next page

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Michelle Miller H '23, national correspondent for CBS News



Graduate speaker Sali Ali, Ed.D. '23

CBS *This Morning*. In addition, the University bestowed an honorary degree to Richard J. Ensor, Esq. '75, H '23, former commissioner of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC). Ensor, who became the MAAC's third commissioner in 1988, oversaw the conference's growth in sports and championships. He retired at the end of the 2022-2023 year.

Bailey Canela '23, who graduated with a bachelor's degree in cybersecurity, served as undergraduate speaker. Citing the opportunities that shaped his career path and life, Canela said that lasting relationships were the greatest gift from his time at Saint Peter's. "I have met people from all walks of life, each with their own unique story and perspective, who challenged me to be more empathetic, understanding and accepting of ideas that had previously been unknown to me."

Graduate speaker Sali Ali, Ed.D. '23 spoke about the impact of Ignatian values and how Saint Peter's inspired her to serve the Jersey City community. She pointed out the fallacy, often stated on graduation day, that a single individual can change the world. "One person can only change themselves," Dr. Ali observed. "And when you change yourself, things around you change. And when things around you change, the world around you begins to change. And that my friends, is the Jesuit way."

Commencement 2023 was preceded by the annual Delaney Reception for graduates on May 17 and Commencement Mass at St. Aedan's: The Saint Peter's University Church on May 18.

CORE FLEXIBILITY AND CREATIVITY

Saint Peter's University will introduce a revised core curriculum in fall 2023 that provides greater flexibility to students, while maintaining the broad-based academic rigor that distinguishes Jesuit education. A centerpiece of the new core is an Ignatian Seminar, which creates an intentional pathway to immerse incoming students in the University's mission and rich educational tradition.

The revised curriculum of 45 credits supports the four desired outcomes of the University's general education program: intellectual and communication skills; leadership; understanding of STEM; and critical thinking across a variety of cultural contexts, as well as moral and ethical discernment. Saint Peter's existing core of 57 credits was among the highest of the nation's Jesuit colleges and universities and the highest in New Jersey, limiting opportunities for curricular exploration and interdisciplinary study.

An important consideration for the Core Task Force was providing opportunity for students to broaden their studies with a second major or minors, which is currently difficult in some fields of study. The task force—which included faculty, administrators and students—concluded that the existing core's large size also made recruitment of new and transfer students more difficult.

Eugene J. Cornacchia, Ph.D., president of Saint Peter's University, said, "Curricular innovation is a key component of our strategic plan, *Vitality, Value and Viability*. I believe the new core will enhance the *Value* of a Saint Peter's education, will help us achieve greater enrollment (*Vitality*) and improve the *Viability* of our great University." Further supporting a mission-based curriculum, the new core also requires a course that focuses on service, Ignatian ideals or leadership and that addresses at least one social justice issue.

SEEING IS BELIEVING

GUARINI CIVIC SCHOLARS GET A FIRSTHAND LOOK AT GOVERNMENT



The inaugural group of Guarini Civic Scholars spent the spring semester crisscrossing New Jersey in an immersive new seminar that connected students with local, county and state government. "We spend a lot of time talking to students about government but there's no substitute for actually bringing them there," said Ginger Gold Schnitzer, J.D., executive director of the Guarini Institute for Government and Leadership.

Schnitzer developed the seminar based on a theory. If students could see firsthand what goes on at caucus before a city council meeting, or meet with state legislators in chambers, they'd gain a deeper appreciation for local government while realizing they have a place in the political process. In addition to bi-weekly seminars that took students to public meetings of the Jersey City Council, Newark Board of Education, Hudson County Commissioners and state assembly, participants completed eight-week internships in local, county and state government and worked with Taina Cutler, CEEL's (Center for Career Engagement and Experiential Learning) executive director on resume writing, interviewing and networking. Fidelity Investments sponsored the inaugural program.

"I had no knowledge of how local government worked," said Ralph Sylvester Olibrice '24, a

psychology major who interned for Jersey City Council President Joyce E. Watterman. Olibrice was nervous his first day but felt immediately welcomed by Watterman's staff. He shadowed the Council President to community meetings and conducted research on issues of gender pay equity and rent control, which he later presented. Even after the internship ended, Olibrice continued to investigate issues for Watterman's office and decided to apply for a state internship sponsored by the New Jersey Legislative Black Caucus Foundation.

The program also changed Olibrice's perspective of government. In an age when civic discourse has devolved into 120-character tweets, Guarini Civic Scholars are discerning the context and nuance of public policy issues. "Seeing a caucus in progress or attending a pre-meeting on how to finance a park was eye opening," he explained. "You realize the majority of elected officials genuinely love serving the community, which has inspired me to go into government."

"We spend a lot of time talking to students about government. But there's no substitute for actually bringing them there."

Other Guarini Civic Scholars are volunteering on election campaigns, taking a second major in political science or using the knowledge and insights gleaned to apply to future professions in health care, business and media. "Their confidence grew immensely," Schnitzer observed. "By the end of the seminar our students were not shy about going up and talking to elected officials or staff members." In turn, the nine Guarini Civic Scholars who completed the program may go on to change the mindsets of others. "Their enthusiasm grew," Schnitzer added. "They weren't just talking to each other about government. They were talking to friends and family about who they met and what they did."



KENNETH MOORE, CFA, '91 NAMED CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The University Board of Trustees elected Kenneth Moore, CFA '91 as chair effective July 1. Moore is executive vice president and chief operating officer of Jennison Associates, an investment firm in New York. Prior to joining Jennison as chief financial officer in 2003, he was CFO of J.P. Morgan Asset Management's U.S. business.

Moore, a graduate of Saint Peter's Prep, grew up four blocks from Saint Peter's University. He graduated *summa cum laude* from the University with a B.S. in accounting, holds a M.B.A. in finance from New York University and is a Chartered Financial Analyst®. A member of the Board of Trustees since 2018, Moore succeeds Frank L. Fekete, CPA '75, who served two terms as board chair.



NEW KPMG DEAN FOR THE FRANK J. GUARINI SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Saint Peter's University appointed Kimberly Reeve, Ph.D., as KPMG dean of the Frank J. Guarini School of Business. An academic with decades in industry leading development and marketing teams at national and global organizations, Dr. Reeve previously held the post of dean of academic affairs at The King's College, a Christian liberal arts institution in Manhattan's financial district. There, she also served as associate professor of business and chair of the business and finance program. In that role, Dr. Reeve grew the business and finance program to be the largest major in the school and collaborated with departments to revamp career services, which resulted in a 100 percent placement rate of business and finance majors.

Dr. Reeve started her new position at Saint Peter's on August 1. She and her husband reside in Newark, N.J.

TRADITIONAL LEADER OFFERS NON-TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP



Scenes from a historic day (clockwise): His Majesty Osagyefuo Amoatia Ofori Panin, President Eugene Cornacchia, Ph.D., dignitaries and University officials gathered before the King's address.

"Speaking changes things," His Majesty Osagyefuo Amoatia Ofori Panin, monarch of Akyem Abuakwa in Ghana told the Saint Peter's University community during a historic visit to the Jersey City campus on April 24. "You may not have guns, you may not have an army, but speak and someone will hear." Speak His Majesty did at the well-attended event organized by the Guarini Institute for Government and Leadership.

The King presented his vision for Ghana, which encompassed a wide range of issues including health care, poverty, economic development, sustainability and education. The 35th monarch of the continent's second-most populous region was introduced by Rev. DeForest R. Soaries Jr. H '22, who called his good friend a traditional African leader who leads in a non-traditional way. "His leadership does not seek to bring attention to himself or to garner fame and fortune for himself but rather he is focused on education, on economic uplift, on environmental integrity and on family unity," said Rev. Soaries, who was instrumental in bringing King of Akyem Abuakwa to campus.

The monarch, who once lived in New Jersey before ascending the throne in 1999, was eager to see how students of limited means in the U.S. find and make the most of opportunities. Education is a key policy initiative for this ruler because, "The countries that made impressive strides in their socio-economic development have done so not because of what the country has, but by what the country knows." African leadership he asserted needs to build sustained international solidarity, "To learn what you're learning here, and let you give us some of the experience you have," in the effort to uplift humanity.

Osagyefuo and University President Eugene J. Cornacchia, Ph.D., exchanged gifts at the event held in The Duncan Family Sky Room of the Mac Mahon Student Center. The monarch was presented with a commemorative campus print commissioned for the Sesquicentennial and a Peacock golf shirt since he is an avid player of the game. The kingdom gifted a traditional mask to the University.

DYNAMIC DUO!

UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT AND PROVOST NAMED ROI-NJ HIGHER EDUCATION INFLUENCERS



Dr. Bonato, who has served as provost since 2017, was lauded for establishing new academic programs intended to both attract and address the needs of emerging students. Those programs resulted in a 67 percent increase in graduate student enrollment since 2018 and an increase in international-student enrollment from 72 to more than 700 over a five-year period.

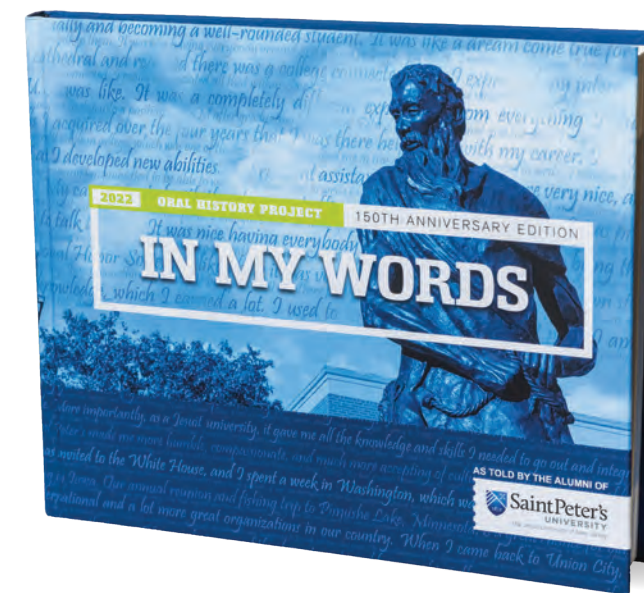
ROI-NJ named two Saint Peter's University leaders, President Eugene J. Cornacchia, Ph.D., and Provost Frederick Bonato, Ph.D. as top influencers in higher education in New Jersey for 2023. Noting the obsession with college rankings, ROI-NJ pointedly looked for leadership, "obsessed with other issues—such as keeping tuition low and access high," and highlighted institutions focused on serving students while teaching students to serve their communities.

Dr. Cornacchia, now a widely known figure since men's basketball danced to the Elite Eight in the 2022 NCAA Tournament, was recognized for the seize-the-moment run and success in setting another fundraising record with more than \$70 million secured thus far for *Peacocks Rise: The Campaign for Saint Peter's University*, which launched its public phase in December 2022.



WHAT'S GROWING ON THE HYDROPONIC FARM?

Lettuce, cabbage and other leafy greens are growing inside the Center for Urban Research in Agriculture, a hydroponic farm located on the first floor of the Mac Mahon Center. A \$4.8 million STEM-PODER grant established the innovation center in 2022, enabling students to gain hands-on experience in plant research, water chemistry, computer technology and more.



THE PRINTED WORD

Alumni stepped up in a big way to share memories of their time as Saint Peter's University students for the collection of stories, *In My Words*. More than 1,000 Peacocks, from the Class of 1948 to the present day, contributed to the commemorative book published for the University's Sesquicentennial.

A copy of the 150th anniversary edition is available at the Guarini Center for Community Memory at the Theresa and Edward O'Toole Library.

LAURELS

STEM LEAPS PROGRAM PROFILED ON MATH VALUES BLOG



Rebecca Conley, Ph.D.

Michael Finetti, Ed.D.

Brandy Garrett-Kluthe, Ph.D.

When *DUE Point*, a Math Values blog published by the Mathematical Association of America, wanted to highlight programs connecting commuter students to scholarly activities outside of class, they spoke to **Rebecca Conley, Ph.D., Michael Finetti, Ed.D., and Brandy Garrett-Kluthe, Ph.D.**, the faculty members behind the Leaders Emerging and Pursuing STEM (LEAPS) program at Saint Peter's University. Launched in 2021, the program provides scholarship funding, monthly seminars, a summer program, research and internship opportunities to prepare high-achieving, low-income students for STEM careers.

Asked what they've learned since launching LEAPS the team responded, "Students might have a long-term goal in mind (like going to medical school or becoming a software engineer), but they need academic and professional guidance about how to get there. The LEAPS program has built-in supports that allow students to effectively network in their field

and receive the guidance needed to attain those goals."

Dr. Conley is an associate professor of mathematics and director of faculty research and development at the University. Dr. Kluthe is an associate professor of biology and director of the environmental studies program. Dr. Finetti is an associate professor of education and director, special education programs in the Caulfield School of Education. In March, he delivered a virtual presentation to 100 second year, pre-service teacher candidates at Mary Immaculata College in Thurles, Ireland.

UNPACKING CONSPIRACY THEORIES



Conspiracy theories are as old as the founding of the nation, according to **Barna Donovan, Ph.D.**, professor and director of M.A. in communication &

public relations. A recognized expert on conspiracy theories in American culture, Dr. Donovan delivered the keynote address on the topic to the New Jersey Mensa organization on March 4. The presentation, "The Eternal Conspiracy Theory," discussed the history and danger of conspiratorial belief systems and highlighted ways the concept is used to shut down debate and open discourse.

The author of four books, including two novels, *Confirmation: Investigations of the Unexplained* and *Fatal Pose*, Dr. Donovan moderated a panel at the 33rd annual Left Coast Crime literary conference in March. He also partook in a panel on the senior sleuths in crime literature at the conference, which was held in Tucson, Ariz.

TWO ARTICLES BY ENGLISH PROFESSOR SLATED FOR PUBLICATION

Research in African Literatures, the premier journal of African literature studies, will publish an article by Associate Professor of English **Michael K. Walonen, Ph.D.**, "The Cultural Work of Animal Narrators in the Contemporary Sub-Saharan African Novel," in its next issue. A second article by Dr. Walonen, "Agency, Mobility, and Constraint in Neoliberal Fiction of Female Labor" will soon appear in *LIT: Literature, Interpretation, Theory*. The author of two books on world literature and post-colonialism, Dr. Walonen was invited to present, "The Corporation as Villain (Antagonist) in Contemporary African Fiction" at the European Conference on African Studies: African Futures conference in Cologne, Germany, in June.

OSCARS: SO WHAT?



Noted film scholar and Professor of English **William G. Luhr, Ph.D.**, delivered a lecture on the Academy Awards to the American Association of University Women, Cabrillo-San Diego Branch, on February 18. The subject of Dr. Luhr's virtual talk, "Oscars: SO WHAT? The Academy Awards and the Constantly-Changing Industry They Champion," was timed for Hollywood's biggest awards night of the year.

Dr. Luhr has authored books on the films of Blake Edwards and Raymond Chandler among others. He is the co-author of *Thinking About Movies: Watching, Questioning, Enjoying*, now in its fourth edition.



ART PROFESSOR EXHIBITS IN VENICE

"Sisyphus" a sculpture by **Meryl Taradash, M.F.A.**, adjunct faculty of fine arts, was exhibited in *Personal Structures*, a biennial contemporary art exhibition organized by the European Cultural Centre in Venice, Italy. Professor Taradash is an internationally exhibited, award winning kinetic sculptor, noted for works that make use of natural elements.

"Sisyphus" was installed in Marinaressa Gardens overlooking Venice's Grand Canal. "The unpredictability of natural forces is essential to my work as a sculptor," said Professor Taradash in the artist's statement for the biennial exhibition. "I want people to see and feel reflected wind and light."

WOMAN OF ACTION



Anna DePaula, assistant vice president for campus services & facilities, is a 2023 Woman of Action honoree. The annual award recognizes two extraordinary women leaders from every ward in Jersey City and one student representative to highlight accomplishments in community leadership. The 17 honorees were recognized at an award ceremony in Council Chambers on March 30.

COMING TO AN IMAX THEATRE NEAR YOU



Legends of the Starry Realm, a film written, directed and co-produced by **William Gutsch, Ph.D. '67**, distinguished professor of the College of Arts and Sciences, will premiere in Europe this summer and debut in the United States and Asia soon after. Scheduled for worldwide distribution to IMAX type theaters, the film surrounds audiences with the heroic sights and sounds of romantic sagas from Ancient Greece and Rome. The film is narrated by actor John Billingsley, best known for his role as Dr. Phlox on *Star Trek: Enterprise*. 

SAINT PETER'S JESUIT COMMUNITY ADDS TWO NEW MEMBERS



Say hello to the newest members of the Saint Peter's University community. Rev. Joseph Costantino, S.J., (above) assumed the post of Jesuit superior for the community last year. Prior to Saint Peter's he served as pastor of The Jesuit Parish of Saint Ignatius Loyola in Chestnut Hill, Mass., an active center of parish life for area residents and the Boston College community. Fr. Costantino was president of Canisius High School in Buffalo, N.Y., and prior to that, pastor of St. Francis Xavier Church in Manhattan.

Trevor Kelly, S.J., (below) a Jesuit Scholastic in his fifth year of formation, became director of campus ministry in July. He entered the USA East Province of the Society of Jesus in 2018. Kelly most recently served as campus minister at Arrupe College, a two-year degree program at Loyola University Chicago. A graduate of Sacred Heart University, he holds a master's degree from the Institute of Pastoral Studies at Loyola University Chicago and is working on a second master's from the Institute for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University of Louisiana.



FIVE JOIN BOARD OF TRUSTEES

SAINT PETER'S ELECTED FIVE NEW MEMBERS. THE TRUSTEES ARE SERVING A THREE-YEAR TERM THAT BEGAN ON JULY 1.



Marilda L. Gándara, Esq. '72 emigrated from Cuba to the United States with her family as a child. After attending Saint Peter's and earning a B.A. in history, she earned a J.D. at University of

Connecticut School of Law and began a 30-year career at Aetna. Her roles included serving as an attorney specializing in real estate and manager of a \$5 billion real estate portfolio, and she ultimately became president of the Aetna Foundation from 1998-2008, when she retired. Gándara has been inducted into the Immigrant Hall of Fame, and currently serves on the UConn Board of Trustees. She and her husband, Scott O'Keefe, live in Hartford, Conn.



Thomas M. Luddy '74 began his career at J.P. Morgan Asset Management in 1976, when he started as an equity research analyst before he became a portfolio manager in 1982. He ultimately

held a variety of positions within the firm, including global head of equity, head of equity research and chief investment officer. He retired in 2019 and started a family office with his son. He has served on the University's Frank J. Guarini School of Business Board of Advisors for two years. Luddy earned his B.S. in economics and mathematics from Saint Peter's and his M.B.A. from Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, where he met his wife, Janice, and with which they maintain an active relationship. He is also engaged with a number of charities, including Yonkers Partners in Education and Year Up. He

and Janice split their time between New Canaan, Conn., and Naples, Fla.



Rev. James Miracky, S.J., was born in Milwaukee, Wis., and spent his teen years in Minneapolis, Minn., and Buffalo, N.Y. In the latter he attended Canisius High School, which

was the inspiration for his Jesuit vocation. He earned a B.A. in English and philosophy from Fordham University, an M.Div. and S.T.M. from the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, and a M.A. and Ph.D. in English (20th Century British Fiction) from Rutgers University. Fr. Miracky spent most of his priestly ministry in Jesuit higher education, at the College of the Holy Cross and Loyola University Maryland. Most recently, he was the Provincial Assistant for Higher Education in the USA East Province, serving as liaison between the Jesuits and the 11 Jesuit colleges and universities on the East Coast. He currently serves as associate pastor at the Church of St. Francis Xavier in New York City.



Elnardo J. Webster II, Esq., son of the late Elnardo J. Webster, Ed.D. '69, '83, is a partner at Connell Foley LLP, where he focuses his practice in the areas of real estate and regulatory matters

and government affairs. He has represented clients such as the Department of Health, the Casino Control Commission, the Department of Insurance, the Economic Development Authority, the Board

of Regulatory Commissioners, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Environmental Protection and Energy and the Army Corp of Engineers before governmental agencies and local and municipal zoning and planning boards. Jesuit educated at Saint Peter's Prep, Webster earned his B.A., M.B.A. and J.D. from Rutgers University and has served on numerous boards, including Rutgers Board of Overseers, Independent College Fund of New Jersey, Team Walker, Saint Peter's Prep, Cross Roads Theater and Cathedral Healthcare System. He is also the co-founder of Sports Futures, a nonprofit organization benefiting inner-city youth.



La Toro Yates, Ph.D. '94, '98 brings 20 years of leadership in strategic enrollment management and student affairs to the Board of Trustees. He currently serves as the vice president

of student development and enrollment management at Eugenio María de Hostos Community College and is the founder of Yates Educational Solutions, which helps parents/students and organizations with educational planning and decision-making during the college-choice process. Dr. Yates previously held positions at York College/CUNY, Valley Forge Military Academy & College, William Paterson University and Saint Peter's University. He earned a B.S. in accounting and a M.B.A. from Saint Peter's and earned his doctorate in educational leadership, management and policy from Seton Hall University.



Matthew Rodriguez '26

PROUD TO BE A HSI AT 25

2023-2024 will be a year to celebrate Saint Peter's standing as a leading Hispanic Serving Institution and the many contributions of our Latino/a/x students, faculty and alumni.



NOBODY DOES IT BETTER

For more than 150 years, the Saint Peter's story has always been about providing opportunity to students who need it most. As an anchor institution in Jersey City—one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the nation—the University has been a gateway for those seeking pathways to better, purpose-fueled lives. As Hispanic communities, and in particular the Cuban-American population in Union City, grew in the 1960s, '70s and '80s, so did the numbers of Latino/a/x students on our campus. In 1998, the U.S. Department of Education named Saint Peter's University a Hispanic Serving Institution, a designation given to accredited public or private, nonprofit institutions of higher education where Hispanic or Latino/a/x students compose 25 percent or more of full-time undergraduate enrollment.

Enrollment numbers are just one facet of HSI status. Institutional pride and the recognition the University has garnered as a leading HSI stems from our history and mission to advance the success of promising students. Here is a snapshot of facts, distinctions and achievements Saint Peter's has attained since achieving the HSI milestone.

1st

among private colleges and universities in New Jersey to attain HSI status in 1998.



1st designated HSI among the 27 Jesuit colleges and universities in the U.S. in the AJCU (Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities), and for nearly 25 years the only designated HSI among Jesuit institutions of higher learning.

\$17M+

awarded to Saint Peter's across six federal grants from the U.S. Department of Education and National Science Foundation since 2000 to support the success of Hispanic and low-income students. These investments have funded:

-  Technology, Classroom, Laboratory and Library upgrades
-  CELAC (Center for English Language Acquisition and Culture)
-  STEM Engagement and Empowerment Center
-  Student research assistantships
-  STEM internships and experiential learning
-  Online learning training and course development initiatives
-  Extensive faculty professional development



Celebrating 25 Years as a HSI

The milestone anniversary of Saint Peter's University becoming a Hispanic Serving Institution is more than a celebration, according to Jennifer Ayala, Ph.D., professor of education and co-chair of the HSI 25th Anniversary Task Force. It's an opportunity to showcase the historical and cultural significance of HSI status, recognize contributions of faculty, students and alumni of Hispanic heritage, enhance pride and promote the University as a leading HSI institution.

The task force of faculty, administrators, alumni and students will focus on three areas: programming and events; the history, development and impact of the University's status as an HSI; and communicating and promoting the history and points of pride to the Saint Peter's community and a wider audience. The group is also thinking beyond the 25th anniversary. "One of the important things for the task force is, how can we make this last," said Dr. Ayala. "We're interested in finding ways to keep the energy behind [the 25th anniversary] alive."

Task force members include Dr. Ayala, Alicia D'Amato, director of the Center for English Language Acquisition and Culture; Virginia Bender, Ph.D. '78, special assistant to the president for institutional planning and task force co-chair; Daria Allen, assistant dean of students; Silvia Cabreja, senior assistant director, admissions; Taina Cutler, executive director, CEEL; Ernabel Demillo, M.S., chair and lecturer of communication; Maryellen Hamilton, Ph.D., professor of psychology; Liliana Huerta Murcia, M.B.A. '23, assistant director of alumni engagement; Devin Heyward, Ph.D., assistant professor of sociology and director of DEI; Tamara Massay-Trotz, M.P.A., associate dean academic engagement and student success; Frank Rivera, M.S., director of military & veterans services; University Jesuit Associate Rev. Luis Tempe, S.J.; Carlos Tapia, Ph.D., assistant professor of modern & classical languages; Maria Torres Menes '24; Edgar Valdez, Ph.D., associate professor of philosophy; and Michelle Perez '16, alumni board president. Details on 25th anniversary events and initiatives will be announced this fall with special events planned for National HSI Week (September 11–17) and National Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15–October 15).

47%

of full-time undergraduates at Saint Peter's are Hispanic hailing from 13 Latin American countries. The threshold for federal HSI status is Hispanic enrollment of 25% of full-time undergraduates. In New Jersey, Hispanic students represented 23.4% of the total undergraduate college and university population in 2021-2022, according to the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities.

Saint Peter's University was named a national finalist in 2019 for the Seal of Excelencia

a designation awarded by Excelencia in Education, the advocacy organization for Latino/a/x student achievement. The University adopted the Excelencia framework to intentionally serve Hispanic and low-income students by focusing on data, evidence-based practices and leadership.



HIGH ACHIEVERS

The true impact of the University's service to a growing Latino/a/x population is best understood in the stories and accomplishments of alumni.

The Value of Diversity

Navigating diversity is key to career success for Nikki E. Mederos '07, '10 and Nick Mederos '15. The mother-son duo, who are Cuban American, work for the same health system, Nikki as director of community health and external affairs for Hackensack Meridian Palisades Medical Center and Nick as a gift planning manager for Hackensack Meridian Health Foundation. Nikki explains, "When you work in healthcare, relationships are very important. With an emphasis on men and women for others, Jesuit education helps us to better understand our diverse community."

As an undergraduate, Nikki juggled classes at Saint Peter's University with a full-time job, a side gig and caring for her family. Over several decades, she rose through the ranks at the health system, while earning a Bachelor of Professional Studies and then a M.B.A. from the University. She was elated when Nick chose to attend her *alma mater*. Soon after arriving on campus, Nick became involved in a variety of activities, from college musicals and plays, to serving as an editor of the student newspaper, orientation team leader and resident assistant.

After graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in English, Nick taught high school for several years before gravitating toward the fundraising field—a decision influenced by a student job he held with the University's Office of Advancement and External Affairs. He explains, "Saint Peter's has a way of pulling talents from people that you didn't know you had. The diversity of the student body was everything to me, and *cura personalis* taught me to consider the whole person. That's been a cornerstone of my career in development."

Today, they maintain strong ties with the University—Nikki serves on the Board of Trustees and is an adjunct professor, while Nick is on the Alumni Board. They've witnessed firsthand the opportunities Saint Peter's creates for the Latino/a/x community, as well as many others. Nick says, "Diversity, equity and inclusion only recently made it into the national zeitgeist. Frankly, it's surprising to me that a lot of organizations waited so long. Saint Peter's has always had a tremendously diverse student population, not only racially and ethnically, but also socioeconomically."



Blazing New Trails

Change was everywhere when Marilda Gándara, Esq. '72 arrived at Saint Peter's University in 1968, long before Saint Peter's achieved HSI status. An influx of Latin American immigrants had just started arriving in Hudson County, and in 1966 the University had accepted its first class of women to the day session. Gándara recalls, "Everything was evolving very rapidly and the University made me feel at home."

Gándara and her parents emigrated from Cuba, where her father had been briefly detained as a political prisoner. Arriving in the United States at age 10, Gándara spoke no English. A school principal demoted her two grades, adding that she was "too small." The determined youngster learned English watching television and was soon promoted, taking her place at the head of the class. In high school, Gándara graduated as valedictorian and earned an academic scholarship to Saint Peter's.

There were approximately 40 Latino/a/x students at the University, and they were welcomed with open arms. Saint Peter's even created a comprehensive new Spanish major celebrating Latino/a/x culture. "Through the Spanish major, we had the privilege, at an American college, to learn all about Latin American literature, theater, arts and community," says Gándara, who graduated in three years with majors in history, Spanish and education. "It was rather amazing."

When she took the LSAT for law school admission, Gándara was the only woman among 100 men in the room, one of whom asked why she was there. After teaching for several years, she retook the LSAT. This time, there were lots of women—and no one balked at Gándara, who was nine months pregnant. She earned a Doctor of Law from the University of Connecticut School of Law and took a job with the Aetna Foundation. Thirty years later, Gándara retired from Aetna following a successful career, which included serving as foundation president.

Today, Gándara is a member of the Saint Peter's Board of Trustees and is proud of the University's status as a HSI: "Saint Peter's taught me to think clearly, with a real emphasis on ethics. I'm so grateful that the University gave me a place to call home."

Recognizing the Power of HSIs

Milton Javier Bravo, Ph.D. '07 understands the power of Hispanic Serving Institutions personally and professionally. Twenty years ago, Dr. Bravo, who emigrated from Ecuador with his family at age 10, was the first in his family to attend college in the U.S. He wasn't familiar with HSIs but certainly felt the impact of a Jesuit university that welcomes the world and feels like home. "As a student, the experience that I lived at Saint Peter's was one of belonging," Dr. Bravo recalled. "I was seen. I was heard. And I was included in the history of the University."

A Latino/a/x theologian and champion of Catholic social teaching, Dr. Bravo became the vice president for mission and identity for Loyola University Maryland on July 1. He'd previously served as vice president for mission, values and inclusion at Edgewood College, a Dominican Catholic institution in Madison, Wis. There, he created intentional partnerships that increased the diversity of the student population.

The Ignatian values he experienced at Saint Peter's continue to inform his work as a lay leader. "There's an element of discernment the Jesuits have given the world that I bring into decision making to ask fundamental questions. It's inviting a big tent approach in understanding all the different experiences and how those experiences can inform the life of the institution."

Dr. Bravo has also written about Catholic Hispanic Serving Institutions and described Saint Peter's as a trailblazer among HSIs. "Saint Peter's wasn't afraid to embrace the diversity of Jersey City. They really saw it as a strength to learn from students, do cultural programming and wrestle with big questions," he explained. "Saint Peter's has been and will continue to be a home for many of us."





Stepping Into the Unknown, and Succeeding

Since she first stepped foot on the Saint Peter's campus more than 20 years ago, Gloria Candelario Hossri's path to success has been defined by her willingness to bravely step into uncomfortable situations. Such is often the case for first-generation college students who cannot rely on their parents' past experiences for guidance, or their networks for things like internships and jobs.

"A lot of the movement in my career, it wasn't like I had it all planned out," said Hossri '00, '05, who recently left the pharmaceutical giant Johnson & Johnson after decades of service to take on a new challenge at Merck. "It was more being flexible and not being afraid to jump into things. As a first-gen student that was something that I just had to get comfortable doing."

But at Saint Peter's University, where 53.5 percent of undergraduates are the first in their family to graduate from college, Hossri found a community that gave her

the support and the confidence to take each next step. "When your parents are immigrants to this country, you want to make them proud and make their sacrifices worthwhile. I had a lot of that in me. And I saw it in my classmates, too."

It's possible that without such support, Hossri's life might look a lot different. As a senior marketing major, she was considering applying to what would become the first of many roles at Johnson & Johnson, but there was a problem. Hossri didn't have a driver's license, and company headquarters in New Brunswick was a long way from JFK Boulevard.

"It's very scary to learn to drive on the New Jersey Turnpike, but Saint Peter's encouraged me to apply and they basically said, 'Just apply, it's a great company, and you will learn to drive,'" Hossri recalled. "I'm grateful that I took that advice and had the courage to do so because I can't even think of how different my life would be."

Not to mention how Johnson & Johnson would have managed without her. Over the course of nearly 23 years, Hossri worked in numerous divisions of the company, notably those concerned with information management, supply chain logistics and health care technology. Her final position before moving to Merck was senior director of supply chain technology strategy.

In her new role, associate vice president of digital supply chain, Hossri leads a team responsible for bringing together technologists and business experts to streamline automation of the company's supply chain. She also plans to continue devoting time to the diversity, equity and inclusion work she began at Johnson & Johnson. For more than 10 years, she was on the senior leadership team of the company's Hispanic and Latino/a/x Employee Resource Group, ensuring that all employees had the same level of support and mentorship.

Hossri is a member of the Association of Latino Professionals For America—while at Johnson & Johnson, she helped establish a student chapter at Saint Peter's—and serves on the board of directors of the Hispanic Technology Executive Council. She is also on the University's Board of Regents and the Board of Advisors of the Frank J. Guarini School of Business.

"There are a lot of individuals who helped me find my way to Johnson & Johnson," said Hossri. "I just want to pay that forward."



Elevating the Work of Latino/a/x Stars

The last time *Saint Peter's University* profiled Lee Hernandez '07, he was one of the top Latino/a/x voices in entertainment journalism. But having chronicled the life of high-profile celebrities like Sofia Vergara, Selena Gomez and Eva Longoria

for publications including *People* magazine, *Latina* magazine and *Huffington Post Latino*, he's since moved on to helping new rising stars.

"As soon as I started in public relations, I felt there was a need for a publicist in the Latin market," Hernandez said in a recent interview. "The storytelling aspect is similar to journalism, I'm just on the opposite side now. Before I was receiving the pitches, now I'm making the pitches."

Hernandez established The Lee Agency eight years ago and has since become one of the premier voices in public relations when it comes to elevating the work of Hispanic stars. The agency works with a range of actors, comedians, entrepreneurs and athletes. Current clients include the Spanish-American comedian Carmen Lynch and Jersey City-raised actor Berto Colon, who has appeared on shows like *Power Book II: Ghost* and *Orange is the New Black*.

"I'm not really interested in an influencer who has billions of views but doesn't have a skill," Hernandez said. "We look for people who we feel have a good story to tell."

Hernandez's own story is a good one. Majoring in communication and media culture, Hernandez benefited from a "broad range" of courses on things like journalism, film and ethics in media. He studied under professors who left a lasting impression, like William Luhr, Ph.D., who still teaches literary and cinema studies at the University today.

He also credits the University for nurturing young, talented Latino/a/x students from Hudson County and beyond. "It's a testament to the fact that when the right resources are available to them, Hispanic students do very well," Hernandez said. For many Hispanic students, there are also financial barriers. Hernandez, who made his way through Saint Peter's thanks to scholarships and other financial assistance from the University, is proud of the University's continued support to Hispanic students. "Between the high Latino/a/x enrollment and the support provided to students, Saint Peter's is obviously doing a great job of guiding students." 🏆

Leading Lights

Decades before Saint Peter's University formally became a Hispanic Serving Institution, it was a springboard for two Latino/a/x, first-generation college students who became leading lights on the national political stage.



The origin story of U.S. Senator Robert Menendez '76 is a quintessentially American one. The son of Cuban immigrants who grew up in Union City, N.J., Menendez' ascent in politics began at age 19 when he won a seat on the Union City Board of Education. He was elected to

Congress in 1992 and is currently serving a third term in the Senate, where he chairs the Foreign Relations Committee.

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities applauded Menendez in 2019 for his leadership on a bipartisan resolution recognizing the work of HSIs. "Having experienced the positive impact of attending one of New Jersey's Hispanic Serving Institutions, I know first-hand just how important these institutions are to the overall success of the Hispanic community," Menendez said. He pointed out the critical impact of HSIs, "In preparing our nation's Hispanic students to thrive economically and among the workforce, and to become our next generation of leaders."



U.S. Rep. Albio Sires '74, now mayor of West New York, attended Saint Peter's on a basketball scholarship. As a lawmaker and government official, Sires blazed a trail of many firsts. He was the first Hispanic mayor of West New York and the first Latino/a/x to serve as speaker

of the New Jersey General Assembly. Sires was elected to Congress in 2006 and served eight consecutive terms representing New Jersey's 13th and Eighth congressional districts. Representing a mostly urban district of nearly 750,000 people, Sires championed mass transit and made affordable housing a legislative priority.

In 2022, Sires announced he would not seek re-election to Congress. He was elected mayor of West New York in 2023.

Stephanie Squires, Ph.D.
Dean of the
Caulfield School of Education

Moving Forward



It's been a busy year for Stephanie Squires, Ph.D., who began the post of Dean of the Caulfield School of Education on July 1, 2022. Before the close of her first academic year, Dr. Squires sat for a conversation about School of Education accreditation, plans moving forward and the specialness of leading a school that is beloved by alumni.

You were appointed Dean of the Caulfield School of Education last July. How would you describe your first year at Saint Peter's?

It's been wonderful. Saint Peter is a very welcoming place and I've been very fortunate to be welcomed by an incredible team of educators and students across the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral levels. It's been a very busy year. We are in our accreditation year with AAQEP (Association for Advancing Quality in Education Preparation). When I came in, we needed to prepare a self-study that was due in October. The process, which involved

me, our new Director of Assessment for the Caulfield School of Education, Andie DiMarco, and a group of faculty, allowed us to really look at the history of the School of Education, our programs and how we were doing overall. I learned a lot over the course of the year through that accreditation experience.

What did you learn from the accreditation process?

We learned that we are absolutely meeting our targets and doing the things our accreditor expects us to do. The Caulfield School

of Education has a very strong, qualified group of faculty, adjunct faculty and staff who serve our students well. We learned that we are very effective in preparing diverse groups of students to serve the diverse communities all around us. And we learned that our students are successful. They get jobs and they are out there teaching and changing the lives of children and families in their own communities.

Did anything emerge from the accreditation process that will inform your priorities as dean going forward?

One of things we learned is that we need to do more to support our graduates. The types of support may be different because every teacher is different. Some graduates might need more support with managing a classroom, others may need help teaching an academic subject or with time management and pacing. We have put in place plans to establish the Teacher Resource Center, which will be a support system for our graduates and educators who teach in nearby communities. The goal is to match the teacher to a faculty member or consultant who can provide the technical assistance or resources needed. We're able to launch the Center through a new congressionally appropriated grant awarded to the University by the U.S. Department of Education. Provost Fred Bonato is the project director. There will be dedicated space in Dinneen Hall for the Center, but it will also have capacity to deliver assistance virtually.

»» **“One thing I learned this year is how loved Saint Peter's is by its alumni and its mission of *cura personalis* and service to community.”**

We also developed a concentration in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for our doctoral program to better prepare educators for leadership in public school districts. A faculty group led by our Associate Dean Dr. Anna Cicirelli just finished that work and we will begin implementing the concentration next year. Finally, we will get the results of our accreditation decision and we're expecting a favorable review. From there, we will meet as a team to develop a strategic plan for the Caulfield School of Education.

You have a background as a classroom teacher and administrator. How do those experiences inform your leadership as dean?

When I think about who I am as a person I don't think of myself as a dean or administrator. I think of myself as a teacher and an educator; that's my identity. I look at everything I do from the perspective of, “How did I feel in my first year of teaching when I walked in and didn't know what to do with this group of children in front of me?” Even though I came from a great program, when you're out in the field for the first time, it's a totally different experience because you don't have a supervising teacher next to you

to model or guide you through the day. I think about that a lot. I think it's important to have that identity as a classroom teacher of children or of high school students to be an effective administrator in this field for sure.

New Jersey teachers retiring or leaving the profession altogether has been in the news a lot lately. Is there a shortage of qualified teachers and, if so, what role can the Caulfield School of Education play in addressing it?

The data is out there—a lot of teachers are retiring. And we'll see a lot of school superintendents retire over the next five years. I think part of what we need to do in the Caulfield School of Education is revitalize the partnerships we had with local school districts prior to the pandemic. We've spent a lot of time this year meeting with different superintendents and representatives from school districts on creating or bringing back the network of partnerships with schools. If we know what the need is in school districts, we can design a program to meet that need.

The State of New Jersey, too, is interested in providing some teacher training to get high school students interested in becoming teachers. We're in conversation with some school districts about a “Grow Your Own Program,” where students can take dual college credit for teacher education courses during their junior and senior year in high school. Hopefully, that will be motivating. It will give them an experience in the classroom working with children so they can really get a feel for how exciting the profession is before they move on to university.

A lot of the University's alumni are education graduates. Anything you'd like them to know?

I want our alumni to know that we are continuing to do the excellent work we've always done and are moving forward. One thing I learned this year is how loved Saint Peter's is by its alumni and the institution's mission of *cura personalis* and service to community. I can't tell you how many times I've gone to a meeting or have been in an interaction with someone and find out that he or she is a graduate of our teacher education program. We have faculty members who have been here 15, 25, 40 years and our alumni remember their professors and ask about them by name. What a special place. That doesn't happen everywhere, but it happens here.

We also appreciate our alumni. Many alumni teach for us, some are student-teaching supervisors so they do stay engaged and we hope that more would be interested in doing the same. 🙏

Prior to Saint Peter's University, Stephanie Squires, Ph.D., served as director of teacher education at the College of Mount Saint Vincent. She has been a faculty member and administrator in higher education and taught students with autism in public school settings.

RENAISSANCE MAN

A legend of *The New York Times* newsroom, the memory of the late Joseph Vecchione '59 is honored with a new scholarship that will impact Saint Peter's students for generations to come.



In many ways, Joseph Vecchione '59 was the quintessential newsman. In the office, the longtime sports editor for *The New York Times* had a no-nonsense demeanor buttressed by a wry sense of humor and an extraordinary work ethic. Beneath that tough exterior was a deeply spiritual Renaissance man shaped by the Jesuit education he received at Saint Peter's University. The veteran sports editor passed away on June 17, 2022, several years after being diagnosed with Lewy Body Disease.

Vecchione enjoyed a storied career at the *Times*, rising through the ranks from an entry level job—known during the era as “copy boy”—to makeup editor, photo editor and eventually sports editor, a position he held for a decade. Along the way, he became a go-to guy whenever the paper sought to introduce a new section. Vecchione's news sense, creativity and experience helped to shape sections of the *Times* that are still mainstays today, including SportsMonday and Science Times.

Yet, the biggest story of Vecchione's career transcended words on a broadsheet. It was his impact on people: Opportunities he created for women and reporters of color, as well as Saint Peter's University students. His widow, Elizabeth Vecchione, recalled, “Joe had a real sense of fair play that I do believe comes from the Jesuit education he received at Saint Peter's, which was very grounded in ethics.”

In her husband's memory, Elizabeth recently established The Joseph and Elizabeth Vecchione Family Scholarship at Saint Peter's. Funded through a generous gift over three years, the contribution creates an immediate scholarship, as well as an endowment that will assist students for years to come. The gift represents a meaningful way to continue Vecchione's vision of opening doors for others, while supporting *Peacocks Rise: The Campaign for Saint Peter's University*. During his lifetime, the Vecchiones also established the Joseph F. Sullivan '52 Memorial Endowed Scholarship and a Michaelmas award in honor of Sullivan, a colleague of Vecchione's at the *Times*.

< Joseph Vecchione '59, second from the left

A first generation college student, Vecchione worked his way through school like many Saint Peter's students. His father passed away when Vecchione was 12 and money was tight. Saint Peter's awarded him a scholarship—something the veteran editor never forgot. Elizabeth said, “Joe's mother had a tough time getting the money for Saint Peter's. He had a number of part-time jobs to scrape together the money for tuition. In his senior year, he got a scholarship. They struggled, but managed with the help of Saint Peter's, and he was always so appreciative.”



The Vecchiones met in 1963, when Joe was a young journalist and Elizabeth had arrived in Jersey City from Canada to further her nursing studies. A year after being introduced by a mutual friend, the couple married and settled in New York City. Since Joe often worked late into the night, Elizabeth handled most of the daily childcare duties for the couple's two daughters. Despite his schedule, Joe was very supportive of Elizabeth's nursing career, jumping in whenever possible so his wife could earn her Ed.D. in Nursing at Columbia University.

True to his Jesuit education, Vecchione viewed faith, the arts and continued learning as essentials to a full life. After Saint Peter's, he attended the Parsons School of Design, studying photography, drawing and graphic design, skills that came in handy when the *Times* sought to redesign its appearance with more photos

and graphics. When life became hectic, the couple unplugged at jazz and opera performances in the city and in upstate New York, where they owned a vacation home. “Joe had a special place in his heart for opera,” Elizabeth said. “One year we saw 13 operas.” Their Catholic faith was also important to the Vecchiones. Even when his memory faded as his illness advanced, the Vecchiones recited the Lord's Prayer together every evening before bedtime.

In 1980, the *Times* named Vecchione sports editor. For the next decade, he directed coverage on a host of high-profile events, including two Olympic games, the Rose Bowl and Wimbledon, as well as major New York teams. Vecchione also began a concerted effort to diversify the sports desk, breaking down barriers in the newsroom for women and reporters of color. In an obituary for Vecchione, former *Times* sportswriter and editor Lawrie Mifflin, who was hired in 1982, wrote: “It was still rare then for papers to have female sportswriters; Black or Hispanic writers weren't much more common. In his decade as sports editor, Joe made sports one of the most diverse departments in the newsroom. And he didn't just hire women and people of color—he made sure they felt as valued as anyone else and pushed them to excel.”

Vecchione also hired Bill Rhoden, one of the first Black sports columnists at major newspapers. Former *Times* colleague Ira Berkaw quoted Rhoden in another obituary for Vecchione in the *Silurian News*: “‘He diversified that department before it became the vogue,’ Rhoden said recently, referring to hires in gender, race and political viewpoints. ‘Joe believed in people. He believed in you more than you believed in yourself.’”

That belief will live on in the opportunities provided to Saint Peter's students through The Joseph and Elizabeth Vecchione Family Scholarship. Sharon T. Morrissey, M.B.A., M.Ed. '13, director of planned giving, said, “This scholarship is a beautiful and meaningful tribute to a man who was dedicated to advancing others.”



Since publicly launching *Peacocks Rise: The Campaign for Saint Peter's University* in December 2022, the University has raised an additional \$5 million for the most ambitious fundraising campaign in the University's history. Saint Peter's is grateful and would like to acknowledge the donors who help make so much possible for our students.

Want to learn more about *Peacocks Rise* and hear from students, faculty and alumni about what Saint Peter's means to them? Visit campaign.saintpeters.edu/peacocksrise or scan the QR code below.




Hearts Minds

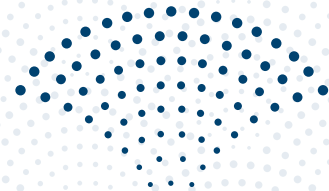
The Saint Peter's University Scholarship Celebration

An enthusiastic crowd of Peacocks celebrated distinguished honorees and raised nearly \$500,000 for hardworking students at this year's *Hearts & Minds: The Saint Peter's University Scholarship Celebration*, held on May 11 at The Grove in Cedar Grove, N.J. Transformational scholarships are a core priority of *Peacocks Rise*, the capital campaign that publicly launched in late 2022, and the University's commitment to help promising students attain Jesuit education and all the opportunities it affords.

The honorees included Bigyan R. Bista, Ph.D. '07, a biotech investor with Rock Springs Capital and recipient of the Rising Star Award; Robert C. Garrett, CEO of Hackensack Meridian Health, recipient of the *Magis Award*; and Sandra R. and Charles M. Lizza, Esq. '77, the couple honored with the Service to Community Award. The Lizzas believe strongly in scholarship support and have endowed scholarships at both Saint Peter's Prep and Saint Peter's University.

Ernabel Demillo, lecturer and chair of the Department of Communication and Media Culture, served as emcee for the evening while Trustee Eugene Flinn '80 and Leah Leto, vice president for advancement and external affairs, co-hosted and engaged with the audience for the fund-a-scholar auction, which alone raised over \$100,000.

Hearts & Minds provides financial support to the General Scholarship Fund, a critical source of funding for the University's undergraduate student population, 100 percent of which requires scholarship and other aid to access a Saint Peter's education. 



PEACOCKS RISE



ADVANCEMENT



1. Guests gathered at The Grove 2. President Eugene Cornacchia and Robert Garrett, CEO of Hackensack Meridian Health 3. Trustee Charlie '77 and Sandy Lizza 4. Bigyan Bista '07 and Elina Pradhan 5. Julie (Delaney) '73 and Regent Emeritus Warren Fristensky '74, Trustee Eugene Flinn '80 and University Director of Music Joseph Hill, Jr. 6. Emilio Ortiz '23 spoke about his experience as a Saint Peter's student thanks to the generous scholarships that he received 7. Trustee Elnardo Webster II pledges support during the fund-a-scholar auction 8. Co-hosts Leah Leto, vice president for advancement and external affairs, and Trustee Eugene Flinn '80 engaged with the audience for the fund-a-scholar auction 9. Saint Peter's students enjoyed meeting and networking with alumni and friends of the University 10. Trustee J. Paul Schaetzle '75, Regent Catherine Carnevale '83, Regent Emeritus William Armbruster '71 and Rev. Rocco Danzi, S.J.

EVAN KOUTSOPETRAS IS UPPING HIS GAME



Golf is a mental game. A split second of distraction could cost hundreds of yards on a drive or a crucial inch on a putt. Success requires intense focus, and most golfers spend their entire careers learning to replicate their everyday peace of mind in high-pressure situations.

For Evan Koutsopetras '25, a member of the Saint Peter's University men's golf team, it's the opposite. Koutsopetras is autistic and has spent most of his life working on his ability to focus, stay organized, and become a more independent and confident person. Since he first picked up a club at age four, golf has served as a catalyst for that growth.

"I don't think about other things when I play," Koutsopetras said in a recent interview. "My main focus is the game. And that helps me in other areas."

The evidence is clear. Koutsopetras, who commutes to Saint Peter's from his home in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, studies Health and

Physical Education and was recently named to the 2023 Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) All-Academic Team.

But he's not in it only for the life skills. He's also a great golfer, and he's never satisfied. "When I was a kid at the driving range, people used to give me a lot of weird looks," said Koutsopetras. "But then I got better and better."

By the time he arrived at Fort Hamilton High School in Brooklyn, Koutsopetras was winning regularly. He became a two-time MVP and captain, and never lost a regular season match.

As a Peacock, Koutsopetras is again being challenged to up his game. This past season he qualified for his first two varsity tournaments, including a trip to the Binghamton University Matthews Auto Intercollegiate Tournament. A major achievement for Koutsopetras, the tournament also laid bare the areas of his game he must still improve to reach the next level.

The Peacock golfer's strength

is his short game—chipping and putting—and he uses it to his advantage. But he has work to do on his driving. At the Binghamton tournament, Koutsopetras struggled to compete because the course was 7,000 yards long, 500 yards longer than the course where Saint Peter's golfers typically practice. He left the tournament determined to add distance to his swing and has since adopted a rigorous strength-training regimen to help him do so.

His positive attitude and desire to improve is infectious among his teammates, said Saint Peter's Head Coach Jonathan Kulas. "Evan keeps people in the moment. If someone has a bad shot, he doesn't let them focus on it or get ahead of themselves. He's just a joy to play golf with and he's everything you look for in a student-athlete."

The mental fortitude that golf has provided Koutsopetras is clearly on display in practice and tournaments, Kulas added. "Any

time you suggest that he work on something, he goes out there and tries to get it done. He works hard and loves a challenge, on the golf course or in the classroom."

The team has also provided Koutsopetras a tight social circle at Saint Peter's. He eats lunch with his teammates, and through his health and physical education classes he has bonded with students that have similar interests. He also participates in the University's TRiO program, which provides student services for students who are first-generation college students, students from low-income households or students with disabilities.

"From the perspective of our family, it's been an amazing place for him," said George Koutsopetras, Evan's father. "Every aspect of the school, from academics to athletics, has been very inclusive for Evan. We're very happy with the choice we made."

Looking ahead to his junior and senior years, Koutsopetras is focused on success on and off the golf course. He wants to qualify for more tournaments and increase his distance off the tee to 250 yards, but he also wants to focus on mentoring new members of the team. After completing his degree, he plans to stay at Saint Peter's for a fifth year to earn a master's in education.

When he graduates, he wants to coach golfers with special needs. Asked what message he has for other autistic student-athletes, Koutsopetras had a simple piece of advice. "Just persevere," he said. "Turn every negative into a positive. And be clear that you just want to be treated like everyone else." 🏆

MID-MAJORS GET A VOICE

RACHELLE PAUL APPOINTED TO NCAA DIVISION I MEN'S BASKETBALL COMMITTEE



the remarkable run of the men's basketball team to the regional finals during the 2022 NCAA Basketball Championship.

"As a mid-major, that run to the Elite Eight was so exciting," she said in an interview following the announcement of the appointment. "As a committee member just being the voice of mid-majors and representing the mid-major experience is one that I think is important."

Named as the 2022 Women Leaders in College Sports NCAA Division I Nike Executive of the Year, Paul is in her fourth year as director of athletics. During her tenure, Peacock teams have grown more competitive, and Paul oversaw the renovation of the Run Baby Run Arena. During this same period, the Graduate Success Rate of the University's student-athletes was 95 percent for two consecutive years and 444 student-athletes were named to the MAAC Academic Honor Roll. 🏆



PEACOCK NATION DAY SETS NEW RECORD

The 2023 Peacock Nation Day topped its 2022 record with \$87,810 raised from alumni and friends to support the University's student-athletes and 16 Division I teams. The annual online fundraiser, now in its third year, was held March 2 and bolstered by a matching gift challenge.

Nadine (Davis) Augusta '93, a former women's basketball player, Kevin Downes '73 and La Toro Yates, Ph.D. '94, '98, a former football player, matched the first \$25,000 raised. This was followed by a bonus challenge. Augusta, Yates and Sharon Pastore '73 teamed up to match the next \$10,000 raised with their own gifts toward Saint Peter's Athletics.

The Athletic Director's Challenge, a \$5,000 bonus, was awarded to the men's basketball team for raising the most dollars. Participation in Peacock Nation Day came from all corners of the country, including New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, Colorado, California and Texas.

Send us your NEWS!

Have you...

- Landed your first job?
- Retired from your last job?
- Met the love of your life?
- Celebrated a milestone anniversary?
- Welcomed a child?
- Welcomed a grandchild?
- Reminiscid with friends from Saint Peter's?
- Received a promotion or honor?

Saint Peter's University welcomes any and all news about your career, education, family life and reconnecting with other alumni. Submit class notes to: alumni.saintpeters.edu/newsandnotes or send to: Office of Alumni Engagement, 2641 John F. Kennedy Boulevard, Jersey City, NJ 07306.

1961

Kenneth Johnson celebrated 53 years of marriage on May 16.

John Pallen retired as an elementary school principal in Toms River after 35 years in education. He also celebrated his 57th wedding anniversary with his wife, Gail.

1962

John Petrozzi, M.D., and his wife, Dottie, will be celebrating their 55th wedding anniversary with a 14-day cruise from Tokyo to Hong Kong in October.

1967

Col. Richard Cardillo, USA (Ret.) recently attended a reunion of the 12th Cavalry Regiment in Branson, Mo. Cardillo served with the 12th Army unit in Vietnam. He was able to reunite with his platoon sergeant, whom he had not seen in 53 years. Cardillo was commissioned a second lieutenant from Saint Peter's Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) in 1967.

Anthony Ianni participated in the annual Saint Peter's Band Company Reunion in July 2022. The event was also attended by **Nick Fugaro**, **Doug Contreras**, **Martin**

Heagen, Richard Finch and Rene Bassi, wife of **Jack Bassi**.

William Lorenzo became a great-grandfather to three boys in the past two years.

1969

Hon. Kevin G. Callahan, J.D., J.S.C. (Ret.), **Hon. Daniel A. D'Alessandro, J.D., J.S.C. (Ret.) '71** and **Hon. Paul M. DePascale, J.D., J.S.C. '71** visited Saint Peter's Preparatory School in February to speak with freshmen and seniors about their individual paths to judicial life. All three have served on the Hudson County Superior Court.

Richard J. Jackson, M.D., is happy to have received the David Rall Medal for his work with the National Academy of Medicine in 2022 and to offer the lecture at the Dr. John J. Williams Endowed Lecture Series at Saint Peter's University in March.

1971

J. Mark Korey and his wife, **Diane L. (Dabrowski) Korey**, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on February 18.

1974

John (Tony) Dora is a retired English as a Second Language teacher for adults. Prior to becoming a teacher, he was a commissioned officer in the U.S. Air Force, where he was a chaplain candidate ministering to the troops. He also worked for the Catholic Archdiocese of New York as director for Spanish language communications. In that capacity, he produced and directed syndicated television and radio programs that were broadcast nationally via Univision and the Catholic Television Network. He was a member of the

American Federation of Television and Radio Artists and the Writers Guild of America. His book, *A Boy, an Orphanage, a Cuban Refugee: The Road to Freedom*, (Köehler Books, 2023) is available on Amazon, Barnes & Noble and Books-A-Million. His website is tonydorabooks.com.

1977

Stephen Andrews is happily retired and spending his leisure time with his wife, **AJ '78**, his family and his five grandchildren.

1982

Mark Curtis, Esq., and his wife, **Diana (Mazza) Curtis**, are proud of their son, **Zachary A. Curtis '20**, for passing his CPA exam on his first try. Zachary holds a master's in accounting from Saint Peter's University.

1993

Michael Voicu officially retired as a firefighter from North Hudson Regional Fire and Rescue on January 1 after 26 years of service. He considers it a privilege to have served the residents of North Hudson.

1997

Brian McCabe accepted the position of director of engagement and planned giving at Xavier High School in New York City. He has served as a member of the school's administration and faculty since 2006.

1999

Jay Akselrud is proud to announce the marriage of his son, Moshe, on May 30 in Israel.

2001

Sean McNamara, former member of the Saint Peter's men's soccer team, has been named vice captain of the U.S. National FootGolf Team that competed in the 2023 FIG FootGolf World Cup from May 27 through June 6 with nearly 1,000 athletes from 40 countries. He competed in both the men's individual and team categories.

2004

Deirdre McNamara completed a playwriting residency at the Herbert Berghof Studio (HB Studio) in May with a presentation of her new play, *Archipelago*. The play was staged free of charge through the generosity of the New York State Council of the Arts and the HB Studio residency.

2005

Nelida Santiago is proud to announce that her daughter,

Chayanne Hyde '17, got married on May 26.

2008

Danielle Spina has been working as a consultant in the financial services industry, providing digital marketing content management and production globally and in the United States. She implements advertising campaigns for travel and retail, as well as the services sector. She credits the Master of Business Administration she earned from Saint Peter's and 10+ years of digital marketing experience as contributing factors to her successful career.

2009

Yadiris Marmolejos, is currently a senior manager in New York City in the audit sector of the insurance industry.

2011

John V. Salierno, Esq., started a new job.

2016

Siyuan Cao has joined Yili Group, one of the top five global dairy companies, as a cross-cultural manager responsible for the company's globalization efforts. He is grateful to Saint Peter's for broadening his horizons and knowledge, providing him with the opportunity to contribute to the globalization of Chinese enterprises.

2020

Lisbeth Romero started a new position as an academic advisor for graduation and senior support at New York University. She also got engaged in March.

2021

Gloria Boateng is proud to have landed an amazing job at Virginia

Florida Events

Alumni gathered in the Sunshine State in February to learn more about *Peacocks Rise: The Campaign for Saint Peter's University*. Thank you to Annette Corbin '84, Russell Stern '70 and Josephine and Thomas O'Reilly '69 for hosting the receptions in Stuart and Naples, respectively.

Naples, Fla.



Eugene Cornacchia, Ph.D., Thomas O'Reilly '69, Rev. Andrew Downing, S.J., Josephine O'Reilly and Deacon Edward F. O'Connell '66

Stuart, Fla.



Annette Corbin '84, Emilio Ortiz '23, Eugene Cornacchia, Ph.D., and Russell Stern '70

Theological Seminary as a staff accountant.

2022

Brian Carvalho landed a job as an information technology analyst, after graduating last year with his master's in cybersecurity from Saint Peter's University.

Jessica Fagnoli, Ed.D., earned her doctoral degree in education from Saint Peter's University in May 2022. She was awarded a Medallion Award through the National Council for Marketing & Public Relations for a communica-

tions success story campaign she directed last October and was promoted to assistant director of public relations at Bergen Community College in December 2022.

Since graduating in May 2022, **Nicole Ferlise** has gotten married, landed a principal position and is expecting her first child with her husband in July.

Danielle Officer was promoted to interim assistant vice president and dean of students at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, which is part of the City University of New York.

Joosep Raim is six months into the Shell Graduate Program.

Daniela Small-Bailey, Ed.D., published her first book, a devotional prayer journal entitled: *Your Prayer for Today* (DanielaSmallBailey Publishing, 2022). It is available on Amazon.

Engagements

Sean Manning, Jr. '18 got engaged to **Alba Holguin '20**. They were criminal justice majors and met thanks to the late Associate Professor of Criminal Justice Raymond Rainville, Ph.D.

Marriages

Jennifer Hernandez '22 recently married **Nelson Hernandez '19**.

Demiana Shaker '21 got married in November 2022.

CATCHING UP WITH...

Kayla Paz '17



Fairleigh Dickinson University School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences with a Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) degree. Today she is a staff pharmacist at Hackensack Meridian Health.

"I'm the first doctor in my family, which is incredible," she said. "There are moments where I just can't fathom that this is my reality, that I achieved it. It's been a long, hard road to get here."

Working within an institution like Hackensack Meridian Health, Dr. Paz's day-to-day experiences look a little different from your average neighborhood pharmacist. She is primarily behind the scenes, assessing the safety and efficacy of medicinal orders for everything from a simple Tylenol to complicated drug cocktails for patients with serious conditions.

of reassuring me that they would take care of anything internal so that I could focus on everything else," she said. "And it was always clear they had done this many times for students from similar backgrounds."

Life on campus also provided opportunities to balance academics with creative interests, which in turn helped her bond with peers who would become close friends. She was heavily involved in the Argus Eyes Drama Society and the Aidan C. McMullen Chorale. She was also president of the English Club, which "wasn't quite a book club. It was certainly centered around literature, but it was mostly an outlet to get everyone's creative juices flowing," Dr. Paz said. "One time we hosted a Hobbit-themed party where

It's safe to say that for a theater enthusiast who once sang in a choir and hosted Lord of the Rings-themed book parties to end up a doctor, they'd have to be a well-rounded person.

Luckily for medical patients throughout northern New Jersey, **Kayla Paz, PharmD '17** is exactly that.

"I loved art and music as a kid, medicine wasn't really something I wanted to do," Dr. Paz said in a recent interview. "It just so happened that I also excelled at math and science."

It didn't take long for the alumna to change her mind. "Pretty much right after my first chemistry course in 10th grade I was like, that's it, I love this and this is what I want to do," she said. "And I just kind of set sail."

Dr. Paz stayed the course at Saint Peter's, majoring in biology. Then, last year, she graduated from the

"I'm the first doctor in my family, which is incredible. There are moments where I just can't fathom that this is my reality, that I achieved it. It's been a long, hard road to get here."

"Safety and efficacy are the primary things we look for, as well as any drug interactions for patients taking multiple medicines that might block the healing process or bring about a negative outcome," said Dr. Paz. "The goal is to always deliver the best and safest patient care."

She credits much of her success to Saint Peter's University. As a first-generation college student from out of state, profiled in the Winter 2015 issue of this magazine, Dr. Paz dealt with added stressors in college. "Saint Peter's did an incredible job

we talked about the books, watched the movies and everyone made Hobbit-themed food."

All of these experiences Dr. Paz looks back on warmly. But no memories are so fond as those of falling in love with **Nicholas Mederos '15**, whom she is marrying in September. She estimates there will be 15 to 20 Peacock alumni at the wedding.

"I met my best friend at Saint Peter's," she said. "And I think that's like the best thing that I could have ever done." 🍷

Alumni Affinity & Identity Survey Results

Thank you to the 1,612 alumni who answered the call and responded to the survey earlier this year.

Recommend



71% of respondents would recommend Saint Peter's to college-bound family and friends because of Jesuit values, academic excellence, affordability and more.

Geographic Location

Respondents reside in:

- 37 states
- 1 district
- 1 territory
- 5 international countries



Connection

76% of respondents feel connected to Saint Peter's.



Men & Women for Others



72% of respondents volunteer in their community one or more times a year.

Diverse and Inclusive Community



Respondents suggest engaging alumni across class years, geographic locations, ethnic and economic backgrounds and personal interests to create a more inclusive community.

Involvement

The top three ways respondents want to get involved are by making a gift, speaking to a class and providing career mentorship to students.



The Office of Alumni and Donor Engagement welcomes your thoughts and ideas. Reach us at (201) 761-6122 or alumni@saintpeters.edu.



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REMEMBRANCES

Man for Others

Remembering Thomas Carver, Esq. '58, H '08



Tom Carver dedicated his life to public service. A prominent attorney, respected New Jersey state official and proud alumnus of Saint Peter's University, Carver devoted most of his career—nearly 40 years—to improving business, transportation, economic opportunity and working conditions in the state. He passed away on January 10 at the age of 86.

"Tom was a great example of what Jesuit education is all about," said **John B. Wilson '70, H '18**, a member of the Board of Trustees. "He was a person for others. Outside of what he achieved in his own career, he was always open to providing advice, assistance and counsel to others."

Thomas D. Carver, Esq. '58, H '08 was born in Teaneck, N.J. in 1936. He graduated from Xavier High School, attended Georgetown University, graduated from Saint Peter's and New York Law School. His career began as a reporter at *The Record*. Carver moved on to The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, where he spent 23 years in various roles including operations manager and assistant general manager of Newark Liberty International Airport. A highly

skilled negotiator, Carver played an instrumental role in the expansion of the airport in the 1960s, '70s and '80s, according to Wilson. He recalled walking through Newark Airport when Carver served as assistant general manager. "Tom knew everyone—the baggage handlers, the ground crew—and everyone knew Tom."

In 2004, Gov. Richard Codey appointed Carver Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Colleagues described him as the consummate professional who always thought about everyday workers and fairness in employment matters. He later became Executive Director of the New Jersey Casino Reinvestment Development Authority, a role Carver relished since he'd served 10 years as the president of the New Jersey Casino Association.

Carver was equally committed to Saint Peter's. He mentored students, supported athletics and was a longtime Regent and Trustee *Emeritus*. Awarded an honorary degree by the University in 2008, he told graduates, "Over and over you will have the opportunity to make a difference." It wasn't a platitude. Over and over, by his empathy, actions and leadership, Thomas Carver made an indelible difference.

He is survived by his wife, Sheila, children Thomas D. Carver, Jr., (Tara), Deirdre Carver and Erin Granata and five grandchildren. 🇺🇸

Requiescant in Pace

Saint Peter's University wishes to extend its prayers and condolences to the families of alumni, members of the University community and friends who have passed away.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Robert J. Barry '61 | James F. Dronzek, Esq. '71 | Raymond P. McKernan '66 |
| Bertrand F. Barry '51 | Robert J. Fabiny M.S., Ph.D., M.D. '53 | James R. Moran '52 |
| Catherine B. Bender '73 | Andrew L. George '57 | John A. Paolini '69 |
| Alice S. Bolger | James F. Hague | James M. Polisin '72 |
| Margaret M. Bosold | Dennis J. Hayden '84 | Bruce H. Poniatowski '71 |
| Joseph M. Bredehoff, Esq. '74 | Hon. Raymond A. Hayser '67 | Richard J. Porfido '81 |
| Thomas E. Butler '68 | Luz M. Hernandez '18 | Rev. Brendan H. Quinn '68 |
| John P. Cannon | James F. Hughes, CPA '66 | Thomas D. Quinn '67 |
| John F. Cardillo '78 | William E. Kaffka '63 | Patrick J. Ryan, Ph.D. '72 |
| Thomas D. Carver, Esq. '58, H '08 | Kenneth F. Kunzman | Stanley N. Sarama '69 |
| James P. Cassidy '63 | Herman Lieberman | Rosemary Sekel |
| Robert J. Castle '62 | Col. David J. Lynch, USA (Ret.) '59 | John A. Tuzzolino '73 |
| Anthony F. L. Coccaro '19 | Jerald J. Maksymowicz '74 | David R. Wall, Esq. '68 |
| Julian E. De Lia, M.D. '68 | Robert J. Matura '55 | Thomas J. Whalen, Esq. '60 |
| John S. De Stefano '73 | Paul J. McGovern '68 | John J. Williams, M.D. '62 |



How to Make a Gift in Memory of a Loved one

A gift made to honor a loved one who has passed is a meaningful way to ensure their memory lives on. Such gifts offer a lasting tribute while providing family and friends the satisfaction of knowing they have helped future students. For more information on ways to honor a loved one through a current gift or planned gift, please contact Linda Moore, J.D., assistant vice president for individual giving, at (201) 761-6128 or Imoore2@saintpeters.edu.

Go Forth and Teach

by Steven Llanes, Esq. '02



“Go forth and teach.” It’s the key principle of Jesuit education, rooted in St. Ignatius of Loyola’s call to the first Jesuits nearly 500 years ago. The call led to the founding of Jesuit schools in places like Spain, St. Ignatius’ home, and then spreading throughout the world, including other Hispanic American origin countries, such as Cuba, where my parents were born.

Jesuit education also found its way to places like Jersey City in Hudson County, N.J., where immigrant families have long emigrated seeking a better life. So, it makes sense that generations of Hispanics—from those who recently arrived to those who are first-generation born in the United States like me—chose the institution that chose to serve students from that community, hungry for opportunity.

Indeed, long before a Hispanic Serving Institution became a recognized designation, Saint Peter’s—rooted in the calling of a Spanish-born Jesuit, was doing just that. The “serving” part of HSI is in our DNA—both for Saint Peter’s and for the driven students this institution is built to serve. And so, the celebration of our 25th anniversary as a HSI is an opportune time to reflect on why Saint Peter’s merits such a designation. Beyond “going forth and teaching,” what is it about that education?

The answer can be found, I believe, in the degree to which *cura personalis*, or care for the entire person, is so freely given and deeply felt at this institution. My own Saint Peter’s journey was a transformative experience. Growing up, my goal was to attend a Jesuit college, an objective I wasn’t sure was entirely possible until Saint Peter’s awarded me a full academic scholarship. Soon after I arrived, I found a mentor—a professor who inspired me—and I declared my major, political science, the very day after my

first class with Dr. Eugene Cornacchia, who, in the years ahead, became president of this great institution. He and the whole of Saint Peter’s encouraged me, provided access and opportunities—like seeking an internship on Capitol Hill, and pursuing graduate school admission to Harvard University, among other experiences, which eventually led me to becoming a White House appointee serving in the administration of a U.S. president. Today, Saint Peter’s continues to inspire me to serve.

My story is hardly unique. No matter your background, Saint Peter’s is a place where who you are and where you are from is celebrated as a force for empowerment. In particular, I believe it’s defined by *opportunity*, to better one’s circumstances; *faith*, to learn in an environment rooted in the Jesuit ideals of service; and *community*, because we are all in it together at Saint Peter’s.

“Beyond ‘going forth and educating,’ what is it about that education? The answer can be found, I believe, in the degree to which *cura personalis*, or care for the entire person, is so freely given and deeply felt at this institution.”

Recently, I was elected chair of the Board of Regents, a responsibility for which I am honored and proud to give back to Saint Peter’s as it embarks on its next chapter of growth and service. Guided by those core values of *opportunity*, *faith* and *community*, I’m committed to advancing key programs—enrollment and outreach, career preparedness and strategic planning to infuse Ignatian values into all that we do—that, in essence, underscores the spirit of Saint Peter’s status as a HSI and as The Jesuit University of New Jersey.

The Saint Peter’s community lifts us up and we pay it forward to our broader community. This is who we are, we rise together. 🏰

Steven Llanes, Esq. '02 is a nonprofit executive and leader who presently serves as the general counsel for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Newark. Earlier in his career, he served as a White House presidential appointee at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Llanes was later named a presidential leadership scholar by the institutes of various former U.S. presidents. He holds a bachelor’s degree in political science and communication from Saint Peter’s, a master’s degree in public policy from the Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government and a J.D. from Seton Hall University School of Law. Llanes was elected chair of the Board of Regents in July 2023.

Look Who’s Joined the Legacy Challenge!



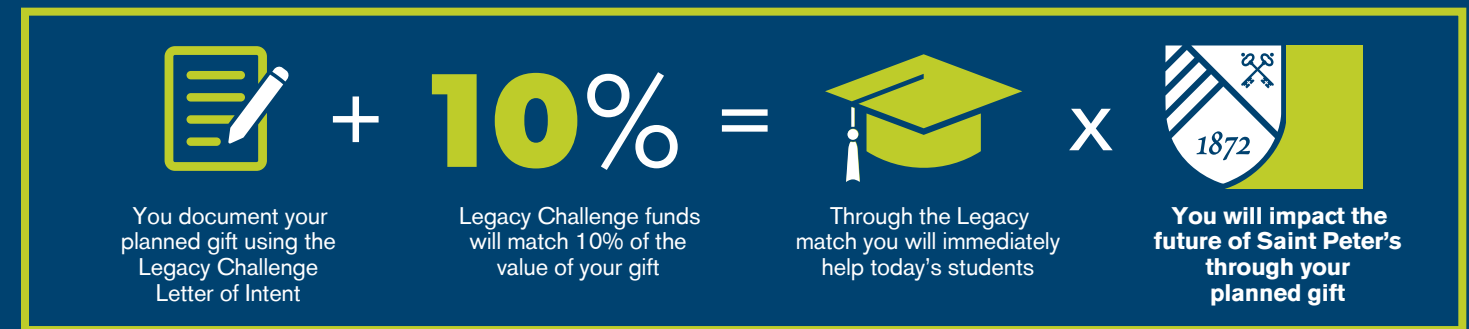
Catherine A. Nealon '73

“By including Saint Peter’s University in my estate plan, my hope is that students in future generations develop the skills to succeed in their chosen careers, form friendships that sustain them throughout their lives and embrace the challenge of the future with open minds and compassionate hearts.”

Cathy Nealon is one of many to join the *Peacocks Rise* Legacy Challenge.

Her future estate gift unlocks an immediate 10% cash match that helps today’s students by supporting our General Scholarship Fund.

How It Works



By sharing your estate plans, you will be benefiting students both today and tomorrow. Your planned gift can include gifts by will, trusts, charitable gift annuities or beneficiary designation of financial accounts such as IRAs, investment accounts, donor advised funds or life insurance policies.

Contact Sharon Morrissey, director of planned giving, at smorrissey@saintpeters.edu or call (201) 761-6126 to see how you too can make a gift through your estate and be next to join the Legacy Challenge.



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of teachers
Salsa dancer
Founder of Latin Fire dance team
A Peacock, ever after.

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