



ST MARY'S
COLLEGE of MARYLAND

The National Public Honors College



FALL 2024

**HOW HIGH
CAN WE FLY?**

*Taking the LEAD
Campaign Impact*

[PAGE 8]

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE
of Maryland



The
MULBERRY
TREE

FALL 2024, VOL. XLV, NO. 3

www.smc.edu/mulberrytree

Editor

Lee Capristo

Alumni News Editor

Daniel Pindell '10

Design

Jensen Design

Editorial Board

Karen Anderson,

Karen Raley '94,

Chuck Steenburgh,

Cathy Hernandez Ray '77

Publisher

Office of Institutional Advancement

St. Mary's College of Maryland

47645 College Drive

St. Mary's City, Maryland 20686

The Mulberry Tree is published by St. Mary's College of Maryland, Maryland's public honors college for the liberal arts and sciences. It is produced for alumni, faculty, staff, trustees, the local community and friends of the College.

The magazine is named for the famous mulberry tree under which the Calvert colonists signed a treaty of friendship with the Yacocomico people and on the trunk of which public notices were posted in the mid-1600s. The tree endured long into the 19th century and was once a popular meeting spot for St. Mary's College students.

The illustration of the mulberry tree on the cover was drawn in 1972 by Earl Hofmann, artist-in-residence when St. Mary's College President Renwick Jackson launched the magazine.

Copyright 2024

The opinions expressed in *The Mulberry Tree* are those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of the College. The editor reserves the right to select and edit all material.

Manuscripts and letters to the editor are encouraged and may be addressed to Editor, *The Mulberry Tree*, St. Mary's College of Maryland, 47645 College Drive, St. Mary's City, MD 20686.

Photographs and illustrations may not be reproduced without the express written consent of St. Mary's College of Maryland.



CONTENTS

FALL 2024

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND

July 2024 — June 2025

ALUMNI COUNCIL

Executive Board

Kate Fritz '04, *president*
Michele Shipley '92,
exec. vice president
Sean Floyd '06, *vice pres.*
of operations
Hans Lemke '93, *secretary*
Kevin Roth '93,
parliamentarian
John Ahearn '76, *treasurer*
Erin O'Connell '91, *vice pres.*
of chapter activities
Vacant, *vice pres. of affinity*
networks

Elected Voting Members

Aman Alsah '16
Matt Baden '11
Kenneth Benjes '11
Thomas Brewer '05
Geoff Cuneo '10
Serra Erbas '15
Leslie Fields '03
Meg Gesner '17
Mike Greer '01
Valerie Gregorio '19
Angie Harvey '83
Kevin Hill '89
Barbara Kimmelshue-
Kearns '63
Morgan Lum '96
Michael Mellinger '18
Kate Monahan '12
Lindsey Siferd '13

Student Members

Joey Carson '25

Regional Chapter Presidents

Annapolis:
Sara Morgan Watters '10
Baltimore Metro:
Sophia Macek Rowe '19
Boston Regional:
Vacant
California Bay Area:
Vacant
Chicago Regional:
Vacant
Denver Regional: Vacant
New York City Regional:
Vacant
Philadelphia Regional:
Colin Woods '05
Southern Maryland:
Cathy Hernandez Ray '77
Washington, D. C. Metro:
Vacant
Western Maryland:
Alex Hutt '05

Affinity Network Chairs

Black Alumni:
Janssen Evelyn '01

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chair

John Bell '95

Vice Chair

Paula Collins

Treasurer

John Chambers
Wobensmith '93

Secretary

Nicolas Abrams '99

Trustees

Carlos Alcazar
Anirban Basu
Arthur A. "Lex" Birney Jr.
Peter Bruns
Donny Bryan '73
Peg Duchesne '77
Susan Dyer
Judith Fillius '79
Kate Fritz '04
Alumni Association
Elizabeth Graves '95
Kristen Greenaway
Gail Harmon
Sven Erik Holmes
Talib Horne '93
Steny H. Hoyer
Kimberly Kelley
Jesse Price '92
Melanie Rosalez '92
Danielle Troyan '92
Raymond Wernecke
Hudson Christensen '25
Student Trustee

PRESIDENT

Tuajuanda C. Jordan, PhD



[PAGE 8]



[PAGE 13]



[PAGE 16]

OPPOSITE:

Queen Anne Hall overlooking St. John's Pond.
From the College's collection.

FEATURES

PAGE 8

Taking the LEAD

See the impact of the fundraising campaign to support President Jordan's vision to make St. Mary's College "the college of choice."

PAGE 13

A Friend to All

Dallas Plugge Dean '60 fostered family and friendships with her St. Mary's College connections for six decades.

PAGE 16

No Ordinary Summer

For eight weeks each summer, SURF students work with their faculty mentors on intensive research projects and present their findings.

DEPARTMENTS

- 2 President's Letter
- 3 College News
- 22 Alumni Connection
- 28 From the Archives

COVER:

Osprey, or seahawk, in flight.
Photo by Chuck Steenburgh.

DONNING MY REGALIA FOR OPENING CONVOCATION NEAR THE END OF AUGUST, it hit me that this was my final opening ceremony. Next month, it will be my last time to welcome families at Hawktoberfest & Family Weekend. I suspect each “last time” event will be a blend of pride and poignancy – proud that the College shows well and that we’ve worked together to accomplish that.

At Opening Convocation, I welcomed one of our most diverse classes yet, a fact of which I am proud. These students come from 22 countries, 20 states and 22 of the 23 Maryland counties plus Baltimore City. They represent 219 different Maryland high schools plus home schools and 34 four-year and community colleges. This class includes 22 who continue their family tradition of choosing St. Mary’s College and nine who have served in the military. Of the 484 new and transfer students, 112 are first-generation students and 154 are from historically underrepresented groups. This rich tapestry of cultures, nationalities and socioeconomic backgrounds is evidence of the diverse and inclusive community of scholars St. Mary’s College strives to be.

The College is stronger than it has been in many years. Freezing tuition rates for five years has required discipline, but it has focused us and made us more competitive in the marketplace. Rightly so, our national rankings are up (see p. 3) for value and impact. Our Learning through Experiential and Applied Discovery (LEAD) Initiative has grown stronger in ensuring graduates are prepared for both that very first job or careers that require post-baccalaureate degrees, bolstered by faculty-guided research opportunities, a growing number of international experiences, and a robust Mentor a Seahawk program supported by nearly 400 alumni who help with internships and networking.

We’ve done much but there’s still much to do. The hard work of implementing the goals of *The Rising Tide* strategic plan continues unabated. Details on those transformative efforts and our upcoming reaffirmation of accreditation will be the focus of the winter issue of this magazine. I’m pleased with what we’ve accomplished and the energy with which they’ve been done. That same energy fuels our efforts to complete the tasks at hand.

This academic year, I look forward to the busy schedule of events like never before. Each is an opportunity for me to thank you for your part in making St. Mary’s College, the National Public Honors College, the college of choice.



TUAJUANDA C. JORDAN, PhD
President, St. Mary’s College of Maryland

Editor’s Note

EVERY AUGUST, THE SCENE REPEATS. New students and their families arrive on campus. Though they arrive together, they soon part ways, each left to discover new truths on their own. Welcomed by a flock of orientation leaders and resident assistants, the new students quickly learn the necessary “how-to’s” for starting college. Structured activities in a jam-packed orientation program yield competent, if not confident, first-year students by the first day of classes.

Fast forward a year or two and some of those who were unsure as first-years are now outgoing sophomores and juniors eager to welcome the next class of new students to their St. Mary’s College family. When it’s time to graduate, they wonder how they’ll ever leave their SMCM home on the river.

Dallas Plugge Dean ’60 fostered family and friendships with her St. Mary’s College connections for more than 60 years (see page 13). She was an inspiration to those who knew her. Her deep affection for students and teachers lives on in the naming of the Dallas P. Dean Learning Commons this month.

There’s a familiar expression used by alumni of a certain era – “peace, love, St. Mary’s” – and while that suits the friendly campus vibe, it misses the kickass academics that show up again and again. The sampling of research projects undertaken by students in this summer’s SURF cohort (see page 16) provides solid evidence of sharp minds, as does the rising number of Phi Beta Kappa, Fulbright and Hayes scholars that are SMCM students. Pairing intellectual probing with a supportive family atmosphere makes the hard work collaborative and sometimes, silly fun!

Huzzah to the SMCM family, in all its permutations.

LEE CAPRISTO, *editor*

CAMPUS & COMMUNITY NEWS



SMCM at the Olympics

Markus Edegran '16 competed in the Paris Olympics in the first-ever men's formula kite event. He made it to the semi-finals, placing ninth after the preliminary races, but did not reach the medal races.

Welcome & Best Wishes to New and Retiring Faculty

Welcome to new faculty joining campus this fall: **Brittany Johnson** (performing arts), **Jessica Leffers** (psychology), **Catalina Morales Lema** (economics), **Kenny Nguyen** and **Ming Lei** (business administration & management), **Emily Barranca** (mathematics), **Digesh Raul** and **Anish Agashe** (physics), **Matthew Breece** (marine science), **Haley Galloway** (library). Farewell with many thanks and best wishes to those faculty who recently retired: **Beth Charlebois**, **Karen Crawford**, **David Ellsworth**, **Jingqi Fu**, **Joe Lucchesi**, **Rachel Myerowitz**, **Elizabeth Osborn**, and **Larry Vote**.

PHOTO COURTESY / U.S. SAILING



Tess Ovington '24 has been named a teaching assistant by Fulbright Austria for the coming year. Ovington, of Gaithersburg, Maryland majored in economics and international languages and cultures, while at St. Mary's College of Maryland.



The Princeton Review named St. Mary's College #4 on its Top 20 Best Schools for Making an Impact (public schools), a rise from #11 last year. SMCM is the only Maryland college, public or private, on that list. The ranking is based on student survey responses to questions covering government, sustainability efforts, and on-campus student engagement.

From The Princeton Review. Used with permission. ©TPR Education IP Holding, LLC. The Princeton Review is not affiliated with Princeton University

BOARD & FOUNDATION BOARD NEWS

John Bell '95 stepped into the role of chair of the College's Board of Trustees on June 1, taking over for Susan Dyer, whose three-year term as chair concluded. Bell is the first alumnus to hold the chair position. He joined the Board of Trustees in 2017, after having served on the College's Foundation Board as vice president. Bell is employed by Wells Fargo's Corporate & Investment Bank as managing director and head



of senior relationship management. Prior to joining Wells Fargo in 2021, he spent nearly 15 years at Bank of America and Merrill. Alongside his distinguished career activities, Bell is also a founding sponsor of The GLBT History Museum in San Francisco, the first stand-alone LGBTQ+ history museum in the U.S. He has helped create and lead numerous corporate inclusiveness initiatives at both Bank of America

and Wells Fargo; he currently serves as the chair of the latter's CIBOut initiative focused on cultivating a more welcome culture for LGBTQ+ colleagues and allies.

George Anas, **Kenneth Bryan '74**, **Meredith Davis '92**, **Amir Reda '11** and **Nikola Sutherland '87** are the newest members of the Foundation Board. Their bios and other board member information can be found at www.smcm.edu/giving/smcm-foundation.

PRESIDENT'S NEWS

St. Mary's College of Maryland collected its second straight United East Conference Presidents' Cup when Commissioner Stephanie Dutton presented the award to St. Mary's College **President Tjuana C. Jordan** at the Presidents' Council meeting on May 23.

In addition to winning the Presidents' Cup, the Seahawks also captured the honors for both Top Overall Athletic Program – Men's Teams and Top Overall Athletic Program – Women's Team. The 2023-24 year marks the inaugural presentation of the men's and women's titles as these awards are holdovers from the former Colonial States Athletic Conference, which merged with the United East on July 1, 2023.

The Presidents' Cup annually recognizes the athletic achievements of its members. The Presidents' Cup is determined by a scoring system which rewards a school for success during both regular season and postseason competition. SMCM finished as the runner-up for the Presidents' Cup in its inaugural year (2021-22) in the league.



St. Mary's College hoisted United East tournament championship trophies in four different sports – women's cross country, men's soccer, men's lacrosse, and women's lacrosse. Along with their four tournament championship titles, the Seahawks claimed three regular-season crowns in men's lacrosse, women's lacrosse, and men's tennis.

Additionally, the men's indoor track & field, women's indoor track & field, and women's outdoor track & field teams placed second at the United East Championships while baseball and men's tennis made their way to the Volt Division final.



SMCM held on to No. 1 in the Presidents' Cup standings for the entire year, remaining in the top spot after the completion of each season.

SMCM Director of Athletics & Recreation **Crystal Gibson** noted, "Our student-athletes continue to set the standard in the classroom, the competition field and with their work throughout the inner and outward community. This honor is a culmination of all these efforts and support, and we couldn't be more grateful to represent the United East at its highest level."

President Jordan hosted the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC) Summer Summit 2024 at SMCM on June 9-10. Her two-year term as president of COPLAC concludes in June 2025, concurrent with her planned retirement from St. Mary's College. The theme for the summit was "Democratizing Opportunity: The Power of the Public Liberal Arts." Leaders from public liberal arts colleges across the country participated in the summit.

FACULTY & STAFF NEWS

Professors of History **Chris Adams [1]** and **Chuck Holden [2]** were published in TIME magazine’s “Made by History” column on the same day, July 17, for separate submissions. Adams’ piece was titled “What History Suggests About the Political Fallout from the Trump Assassination Attempt”; Holden’s piece was titled “The Republican National Convention that Shocked the Country.” On Aug. 7, Holden had a second piece, titled “How Vice-Presidential Nominees Became ‘Attack Dogs,’” published in the same outlet.

Tristan Cai, associate professor of art, had a solo summer exhibition, “Imagined Spectres,” at the Ionian Center for the Arts and Culture, Kefalonia, Greece. The exhibition featured Cai’s photography as well as immersive video installations.

Asif Dowla, professor of economics and holder of the Landers Endowed Chair in the Liberal Arts, [2] was quoted in a story in Sourcing Journal about the consequences of the early August toppling of the government on the Bangladesh garment industry. Bangladesh’s garment industry directly employs 4 million



people, the majority of whom are women. Professor Dowla is working on a book about the Bangladesh garment industry and its impact on the economy and society.

Michael Dunn, professional pathways director for the Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD), earned a Presidential Citation in recognition of outstanding service provided to the Eastern Association of Colleges and Employers at the organization’s annual conference held in June. Dunn also gave a presentation titled, “AI and Career Services: Opportunities and Questions,” to approximately 90 career services professionals and employers. Last year, Dunn and his CCPD colleagues were awarded the Excellence in Program Development & Innovation Award for the Professional Pathways program.

Crystal Gibson, director of athletics & recreation, [4] has been named the third vice president of the National Association of Division III Athletic Administrators (NADII-IAA) for 2024-25. This puts Gibson in the NADIIIAA presidential rotation after joining the organization as an at-large board member in 2022. She will serve as president for 2027-28. Gibson also began a four-year term with the NCAA Division III Management Council in January 2024. That council oversees NCAA policy implementation and reports directly to the Division III Presidents’ Council.

Christine Goethel, visiting professor of biology and marine science, is the first of 27 women in STEM featured in a new book, “Determined to Be Extraordinary: Modern Women in STEM” by Dawn Heimer (Bradway Publishing, 2024).



Associate Professors **Argelia González Hurtado** (Spanish) and **James Mantell** (psychology) have been named to the College’s distinguished Aldom-Plansoen Honors College Professorship. The two-year term of the professorship recognizes accomplished mid-career faculty with funds to sustain and enrich their scholarly contributions.

Melissa Golowski, assistant director of residence life, [5] graduated from Leadership Southern Maryland’s LEAP Class of 2024 on June 21. The LEAP program is specially designed for emerging leaders to refine individual leadership understanding and abilities via structured course curriculum focused on self-discovery, teamwork, and networking.

Julia King, professor of anthropology and the George and Willma Reeves Endowed Chair in the Liberal Arts, with co-authors **Scott Strickland '08** and Chief Anne, earned the Robert F. Heizer Article Award from the American Society for Ethnohistory for their article, “Rappahannock Oral Tradition, John Smith’s Map of Virginia, and Political Authority in the Algonquian Chesapeake.”

George MacLeod, associate professor of French, with former student Isaac Ekobo, published a co-authored article in the peer-reviewed journal *French Cultural Studies*. The article is the first academic study of the cult French sitcom “H,” and one of the first publications to analyze race-based humor in French television.

Pam Mertz, professor of chemistry and biochemistry, published two peer-reviewed articles this summer. In June, she was a co-author on an article published in *Essays in Biochemistry*, “Phosphorylation of mammalian cytosolic and mitochondrial malate dehydrogenase: Insights into regulation.” This article will be part of a special 16-article issue, focusing on malate dehydrogenase. In July, Mertz was the first author on “Transforming undergraduate education: Meeting report from the 2023 ASBMB summer education conference,” published in *Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Education*.

Jeffrey Silberschlag, professor of music, [6] was featured in the sixth edition of *Marquis Who’s Who Insight* magazine, summer 2024. Silberschlag was interviewed about his long and illustrious career as a trumpet soloist, conductor and professor of music. His takeaway quote from the article: “The challenge for all arts is to let people know the secret of the process and what people go through – not just the final product.”

Antonio Ugues Jr., associate professor of political science and public policy and director of the Center for the Study of Democracy, [7] served in Mexico City as an accredited



7

foreign visitor for the 2023-2024 Mexican electoral process in June. In this role, Ugues took part in election observation and met with officials from Mexico’s electoral authorities, as well as candidates for office and political party representatives. The election, held on June 2, 2024, featured contests for the presidency, all 500 seats in the Chamber of Deputies (Mexico’s lower house of Congress), 128 senate seats and gubernatorial and state-level elections in nine of Mexico’s 32 states. The election was particularly significant since voters elected the country’s first female president, Claudia Scheinbaum.

Mary Wince, Wellness Center CRNP, was the recipient of the American College Health Foundation’s Kathy Mac Nurse Scholar Travel Funding Award to attend the 2024 American College Health Association conference in Atlanta, Georgia from May 28 – June 1. Wince was selected for demonstrating a strong interest in improving the well-being of the students of SMCM. Director of Health Services Deborah Bello and Assistant Director **Amber Verbic**, joined Wince at the conference.



6

STUDENT NEWS



Gabrielle Blew '24, Angelie Roche '24 and Katya Scott '24 presented their individual St. Mary's Projects (all conducted under the mentorship of Professor of Psychology **Libby Nutt Williams**) at the L. Starling Reid Undergraduate Psychology Conference held at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia, on April 26.

Briana Corbin '24, psychology major, presented research at the Anxiety and Depression Association of America Conference in Boston, Massachusetts in April.

Shelby Dittman '24, Brittney Douglas '24 and Sara Dapp '25 [8] presented their research at the Patuxent Environmental and Aquatic Research Laboratory (PEARL) in St. Leonard, Maryland, as part of the 2024 Summer Internship Symposium on Aug. 2. Dittman and Douglas were both members of the first class of graduates of the marine science major.

Esther Markov '25, English major, interned at the Law Library of Congress this summer. Her work included organizing information for Congress and gathering research for articles in the law library's blog and legal news publication.

Henry Marks '26, political science major, **[9]** represented young voters as an at-large delegate for Washington, D.C. at the Democratic National Convention held in Chicago, Illinois, during August.



Michael Wade '25, environmental studies major, is the third student in the same number of years to be awarded a Mel Fellowship in Natural Resource Careers with the Maryland Forestry Foundation. It is the Mid-Atlantic's largest college fellowship in natural resources, awarding \$10,000 annually to four Maryland college students. **Peyton Eppard '25 and Sydney West '23** were previous awardees.

TAKING THE LEAD CAMPAIGN IMPACT

BY **KAREN CLARKE RALEY '94**, ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT OF DEVELOPMENT

Quietly, yet boldly, we began a fundraising campaign in July 2020 for the National Public Honors College – a comprehensive initiative aligned with President Jordan’s vision to become “the college of choice.” With boundless energy and momentum, the College then launched the public phase of the campaign, Taking the LEAD, in September 2023. And thanks to the incredible generosity of our alumni, families, faculty and staff, friends,

**HOW HIGH
CAN WE
FLY?**

Taking the
LEAD
The Campaign for St. Mary's College of Maryland

foundations and corporations, we reached a major milestone, surpassing the \$20 million mark, a year ahead of schedule!

We are fortunate to have a dedicated community that believes St. Mary’s College is a worthy investment: as of June 30, 2024, we have received over 20,033 gifts. Taking the LEAD

has already had a significant impact as you will read. However, the journey does not end here. We aim to soar even higher. As such, we have launched the final phase of our campaign: How High Can We Fly? to conclude in June 2025. There is tremendous leadership in our community in which engagement and financial support will continue to translate into value for current and future students. Here is a sampling of what we can achieve together.



SMCM Foundation Treasurer **Scott Raspa '86** wholeheartedly understands the value of the Learning through Experiential and Applied Discovery (LEAD) initiative. “It’s right on point for today. Experiential opportunities are differentiators for students,” said Raspa. “As a college student, I took advantage of a wide range of opportunities outside of the classroom and I want to help today’s students.” This is why he continues to support the College through his philanthropy and made the largest planned gift commitment in the College’s history. “I want growing the College’s endowment to be my legacy.”

In addition to creating a scholarship fund at the very beginning of the quiet phase of the campaign, Nancy Dodge made the biggest outright gift in the College’s history, for the LEAD Fund and the Nancy Ruyle Dodge Music Fund, to name the Nancy R. and Norton T. Dodge Performing Arts Center. “Without a fine education, especially in the liberal arts,

one is handicapped socially and intellectually it seems to me. The better educated we are, the better we are able to contribute meaningfully to society,” said Dodge. Her contributions refurbished a concert grand piano and will be providing support for private instrumental, vocal and composition lessons to enhance the performing arts program.

Long recognized for her leadership, dedication and philanthropy to the College, **Dallas Dean '60** – a champion of educational studies and the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program – made a gift to the LEAD Fund to name the Dallas P. Dean Learning Commons. “Ms. Dean has been a consistent, engaged and very generous supporter of our educational studies and MAT programs for many years,” said Associate VP for Academic Affairs and Professor of Educational Studies **Katy Arnett '00**.

Raspa paid tribute to family members – SMCM alumni and educators – in the Learning Commons. [1]

Dodge cuts the ribbon at the Nancy R. and Norton T. Dodge Performing Arts Center grand opening in September 2022. [2]

Dean receives the Order of the Ark and Dove, which honors those who have exemplified distinguished service to the College, in October 2023. [3]

Cindy Broyles '79, trustee emerita and member of the Taking the LEAD campaign steering committee, made multiple campaign gifts, augmenting the LEAD Fund and providing funds to help finish the Landers Challenge. To recognize Larry Vôte’s retirement from the College after 43 years, Broyles re-dedicated the recital hall in the Dodge Performing Arts Center in April 2024. [4]

✳ In lieu of a 2024 Annual Report, we will be publishing a Taking the LEAD report after the campaign concludes in June 2025.

Taking the LEAD Campaign Impact

Since Taking the LEAD began, the College has raised over \$7.54 million in scholarship support!

(As of June 30, 2024)

After successfully completing the Landers Challenge in June 2023 – with the College raising over \$600,000 to receive a \$1 million investment from the Landers Trust – the College secured an additional commitment of \$500,000 to expand the Landers Scholars program, growing from four to six first-year students selected each year. The program supports students who are from low-income backgrounds; the first in their families to attend college; or who are underrepresented in higher education. Landers Scholars receive fully funded, four-year scholarships (tuition, fees, room and board), including first-year mentoring and community service opportunities.

“The confidence and opportunities afforded by the Landers Scholars program have been instrumental in my academic journey. The scholarship has allowed me to focus entirely on my education and research, paving the way for a fulfilling and productive summer dedicated to my project on mental health help-seeking behaviors in the Hispanic community,” said

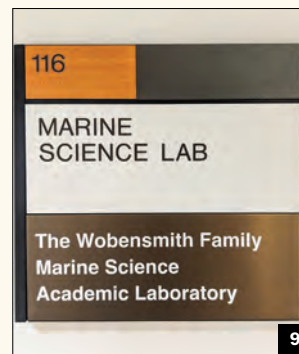
Wendy Contreras '26. [5] Contreras participated in the 2024 Seahawk Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) program and symposium; learn more about SURF on pages 16-21.

Professor Emeritus of the College **Don Stabile**, and member of the Taking the LEAD campaign steering committee, made two significant commitments – one to get the quiet phase of the campaign started, and one to get the public phase of the campaign launched. His gift is funding 40 Stabile Scholars a year at \$3,000 each. [6]

Since Taking the LEAD began, the College has raised over \$3.65 million in programming support for academic departments and programs such as the Center for the Study of Democracy.

(As of June 30, 2024)

The LEAD Fund provided over \$600,000 to renovate space in Goodpaster Hall for the



biochemistry program, including four labs (teaching, lab preparation, faculty research and cell culture) as well as a small conference room and enhanced classroom. [7]

The Sherman Fairchild Foundation and the LEAD Fund provided over \$400,000 for scientific equipment for the chemistry & biochemistry, math & computer science, museum studies and neuroscience programs.

Trustee **John Wobensmith '93** supported marine science with a gift to renovate and name a lab in Schaefer Hall: The Wobensmith Family Marine Science Academic Laboratory. [8] [9]

Trustee Lex Birney made a gift to retrofit a research vessel – a “C-hawk” 25’ nonetheless! – for the marine science program. Additionally, the LEAD Fund provided \$150,000 to purchase scientific equipment for the marine science program. [10]

Former College Trustee and SMCM Foundation Director Bill Seale generously answered the call multiple times; in recognition of his philanthropy, the William E. Seale Rowing Center was dedicated in his honor in September 2023. [11]



12



13



14



15



16



17

Jumpstart the new business administration & management program

“Our business administration & management program develops essential competencies for the future of business. We educate adaptable leaders who are technically skilled, excellent with people, critical thinkers and socially responsible decision makers. Our classes combine rigorous theory with hands-on experience, fostering a strong understanding of business practices, ethical issues and global perspectives,” said Professor **Silvio Borrero**.

The new program is rapidly growing: 2022-23 culminated with 35 majors, 2023-24 with 105, and just over 150 projected for 2024-25. The College’s first business administration & management majors graduated in May 2024.

William Seale Professor of Business **Silvio Borrero** and Vice President for Academic Affairs & Dean of Faculty **Katie Gantz**, at the public launch of the Taking the LEAD campaign. **[12]**

Enhance the track, helping enable the College to become a varsity venue for track & field competition

Thanks to a generous gift by William Seale in 2020, the track and field enhancements enabled varsity status during the 2021-22 season. **Ty Tindal '27** brought home the 2024 United East Conference Outdoor Track & Field Men’s Rookie of the Year Award after medaling in four events at the United East Championships. **[13]**

Install new tennis courts

The Somerset Tennis Complex will be used during the 2024-25 season. **[14]**

Purchase another brand-new rowing shell for the program

“The investment in our varsity sport is an investment in our drive to go fast and have fun,” said **Meara Johnson '24**. Both men’s and women’s rowing competed in the 2024 Mid-Atlantic Rowing Conference (MARC) Championships, with women’s rowing advancing to the NCAA Rowing Championships in which the Seahawks placed 8th overall. **[15]**

Champion success

Funds were raised to purchase new equipment for Seahawk athletic programs and the LEAD Fund supported the Pep Band – because SMCM has spirit, yes we do! **[16]**

Augment the fleet

Funds were raised to purchase an ADA-compliant van to transport students, employees and visitors with accessibility needs. **[17]**

A Special Note of Thanks

*Along with the many donors who believe in the promise of St. Mary’s College of Maryland, the ongoing success of the Taking the LEAD campaign has been guided and shaped by **President Jordan**; the Campaign Steering Committee led by **Helen Wernecke**; the SMCM Foundation Board led by **Bonnie Green '74** and **Dan Schiffman '91**; the Board of Trustees and its Institutional Advancement Committee led by **Gail Harmon**; the Vice President of Institutional Advancement **Carolyn Curry**; and the dedicated Development team.*

Taking the LEAD Campaign Impact

A Taking the LEAD fundraising priority is the Honors College Promise: a commitment to provide every student with an internship, undergraduate research opportunity or international experience.

Internships

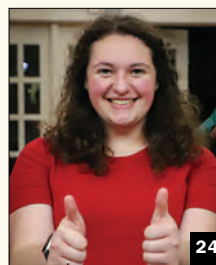
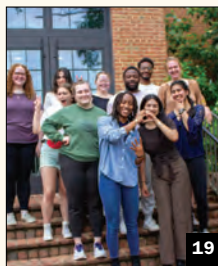
“Private support for internship programs is critical, providing students with enhanced learning opportunities, professional development, networking and increased employability,” said **Cynthia Greb '87**, executive director of the Center for Career and Professional Development. “It’s also an investment in communities, whereas a skilled workforce fosters economic growth and innovation and the students who benefit from internships are more likely to give back to their communities.” The program is growing; students participated in a total of 535 on- and off-campus internships in 2023-24.

Established in 2021 by Julie and John McAllister, former College trustee, the Internship Fund for Historic St. Mary’s City supported two summer 2024 interns: **Emma Bourne '24** who worked in data analysis and public relations and **Jason Sprague '25** who worked in education and interpretation.

Established in 2023, the Colonial Dames Field School in Historical Archaeology at Historic St. Mary’s City Fund supported four summer 2024 interns in the field and/or lab: **Julian Hilser '25**, **Catherine Judge '26**, **Natalie Krozack '26** and **Sophie Reed '27**. [18]

Undergraduate research opportunities

Established by Jeff Byrd, professor emeritus, and Beth Byrd, honorary alumna (and campaign steering committee members), the Byrd Seahawk Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) Fund supports the selective eight-week annual summer SURF program. Learn more about SURF on pages 16-21. [19]



College Trustee Emeritus and SMCM Foundation Director Emeritus Harry Weitzel supports two annual Weitzel Research Awards. At the 2024 Awards Convocation, the award for the humanities was given to **Mahree Annan '26** [20] and the award for the sciences was given to **Anjali Raheja '26**. [21] Both recipients participated in the 2024 SURF program and symposium. Read more about their SURF projects on pages 16-19.

The Flores Undergraduate Research Award in Biology Fund supports two students per year at \$5,000 each. **Morgan Kresslein '24** and **Anjali Raheja '26** were selected to receive 2024-25 awards.

Laraine Glidden, professor emerita and member of the Taking the LEAD campaign steering committee, and William Glidden continue to support their named undergraduate research fund, which benefits psychology and history majors.

International experiences

“Despite cost being the top perceived barrier to studying abroad, the College has been able to continue to expand its participation numbers and demographics due to the generosity of its donors,” said Director of International Education **Aurora Margarita-Goldkamp**. “We are fortunate and humbled to be able to provide funding from the Nicholas Talarico Paskowsky Memorial Scholarship, for study abroad in Spanish speaking countries, and the Justin Bates Memorial Scholarship, an exchange program with the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia.”

Matthew Bragg '24 participated in the spring 2023-fall 2023 exchange at Akita International University in Japan. “The experience gave me better insight into people outside of the United States.” [22]

Victoria Chazin '25 participated in the fall 2023 program in Thailand. “A highlight of the program was being able to do an internship in the heart of the mountains in Chiang Mai with the Forest Restoration Unit of Chiang Mai University. I was able to learn traditional Thai medicine, which is a priceless skill to have, and bring back holistic methods and materials to my home. I learned so much and met so many amazing people.” [23]

Summer LaRocco '26, an Asian studies and English double major with minors in Chinese and educational studies, is one of two SMCM students to have received a Fulbright-Hays Fellowship for Advanced Overseas Chinese Language Study in Taiwan for summer 2024. A 2024-25 award from the Dave and Erna Brown China Studies Fund will help support LaRocco’s experience in Taiwan. [24]



Learn more:
go.smcm.edu/taking-the-lead



Family is What & Where You Make It

Dallas P. Dean '60 was a Friend to All

BY LEE CAPRISTO, EDITOR

Born and raised in Washington, D.C., Dallas Plugge was familiar with St. Mary's County and Southern Maryland as a child, having spent family vacations there, along the Patuxent River. Interestingly, her father had spent parts of his childhood summers at Summerseat Farm in Mechanicsville, Maryland, while his parents were in Europe.

She attended St. Mary's Seminary Junior College, graduating with an associate degree in 1960. She was involved in Future Teachers of America and was crowned Queen of the May in 1960. She went on to American University to earn her B.A. and, after a short stint as a ballroom dancing instructor, became a fifth-grade teacher at Rogers Heights Elementary School in Bladensburg, Maryland. She taught there for 30 years. During that time, she was active in the Lutheran Church in Washington, D.C. and as a chaplain for the American Legion in Silver Spring, Maryland.

In 2002, she established the Dallas P. Dean Master of Arts in Teaching Scholarship to benefit students enrolled in the MAT program who demonstrate academic merit and financial need. In 2014, she created the Dean Current Fund, enabling the educational studies department to make emergency assistance awards to educational studies undergraduates or students in the MAT program. In addition, she was a major donor to the Taking the LEAD Campaign.

In 2023, Dallas was recognized for her more than 60 years of service to the College with the Society of Distinguished Alumni Award. The Board of Trustees honored her with the 2023 Order of the Ark and Dove, an award created in 1972 to honor those individuals who have exemplified distinguished service to St. Mary's College.

On September 27, the new home for educational studies and the MAT program will be named the Dallas P. Dean Learning Commons in her honor.

Jim Wood '61, who knew Dallas since being her classmate at St. Mary's Seminary Junior College starting in 1959, says Dallas was "an inspiration to us all. She was a faithful alumna and friend to many." Together, they featured in many photos over their six decades of Alumni Weekends.

Chris Rodkey '10, MAT '11 (assistant principal at Hollywood Elementary School in Hollywood, Maryland) met Dallas and her longtime partner, Arnold Toller, during an SMCM study tour to Normandy in 2008. The tour was led by Professors **Chris Adams, Charles Holden** and **Gail Savage** and was one of several that Dallas and Arnold took with the College in the late 1990s and early 2000s. "The trip was memorable in



[1] Dallas Plugge, on the right, as she was known in her collegiate days at St. Mary's Seminary Junior College in 1960. [2] Dallas and her longtime partner Arnold Toller, at Alumni Weekend in 2018. [3] Dallas tours Anne Arundel Hall in 2016. [4] You were sure to find Dallas somewhere in the crowd in every River Concert Series concert.

a myriad of ways, notably as my first time in an airplane and my first trip overseas," he recalls. "What began as some free-time conversation led to a friendship that feels like a lifetime family bond."

Three years later, Rodkey received the Dallas P. Dean Scholarship during the MAT program. He learned the news while student teaching in Gambia. "We may have been an unlikely pairing with exactly 50 years between our graduations," he admits, "but Dallas and I quickly found common themes with her being a retired teacher and me being a pre-service teacher. The cornerstone of our lifelong friendship has been our love of St. Mary's College and our commitment to education. In the years following graduation, she would always introduce me as 'her boy' and I think when she 'adopted' me this solidified the truly unique relationship that has endured ever since."

Janet Wood Varner '91 (lecturer in educational studies) met Dallas when she was married to Raynor Dean, who was Varner's uncle. Varner was a young child at the time. It wasn't until she completed her PhD and joined the MAT program in 2019 that she learned that the same Dallas Dean was the MAT program's main benefactor. "She came to see the new Learning Commons building and saw my name on my office door and wrote me a nice note," Varner recalls. The two reconnected at the 2022 dedication of the building.

Angela Johnson (professor of educational studies and chair of that department) says that Dallas was the 'fairy godprofessor' of the MAT program. "Not only did she fund a scholarship for decades, but her Dean Current Fund helped students out of emergencies the past 10 years," Johnson explains. The Dean Current Fund is for students already in the MAT program to help them in an emergency situation that might otherwise derail their completion of the program. Some real examples are:

- Helping a student whose car was wrecked during the MAT program and couldn't complete the program without it



- Helping several students whose families lost their jobs during COVID
- Helping with medical emergency expenses

“The existence of this fund means that students can just concentrate on learning to be teachers, even when they face financial disasters that would otherwise be uppermost in their minds,” Johnson says. “It gives me such peace of mind knowing that our department can offer them peace of mind.”

Katy Arnett '00 (associate vice president for academic affairs) had this memory of Dallas:

“I remember one year at Alumni Weekend – probably 2013 or 2014 – educational studies faculty hosted an event for our alumni during that weekend. We didn’t know who to expect, and about halfway through Dallas showed up. She joined us as we were reminiscing with students who have been in our program over the years, even before we had the MAT, but definitely in the arc of time that she has been funding her eponymous scholarship and the emergency fund. She very quickly jumped into the conversation with a twinkle in her eye, and clear delight in being around fellow educators, current or former. She encouraged them all to make connections with other alums across the years and impressed us with her amazing network.”

[5] Dallas and **President Tuajuanda C. Jordan** chatting at the \$2.5 million campaign celebration. [6] Dallas, **Arnold Toller** and **Chris Rodkey** met during an SMCM study tour to Normandy in 2008. [7] Dallas and “her boy” **Chris Rodkey '10, MAT '11** after she was honored with the 2023 *Order of the Ark and Dove*.

Holly Fabbri '12, MAT '13 (associate director of alumni relations; formerly social studies and special education teacher in St. Mary’s County Public Schools) was a Dallas P. Dean Scholarship recipient during the MAT program. She met Dallas and Arnold as an undergraduate, working with the Office of Alumni Relations and helping with Alumni Weekend. “Dallas was young at heart, loved being around energy and passion, and was open to connecting,” Fabbri explains. In addition to the River Concert Series and overseas travel trips with the College, Dallas always came to Alumni Weekend and to MAT graduations and final presentations. Her excitement in connecting with current students was the energy in those friendships.

In 2023, when Dallas was hospitalized and no longer able to care for her dog, Fabbri adopted it. “Dallas set the example,” Fabbri continues. “It’s the St. Mary’s Way – it’s genuine, and you want to be just as good.” ❖

Dallas P. Dean
March 8, 1941 - August 28, 2024

“Her mind was a Rolodex of people she had met throughout life with a special affinity for other educators and those from St. Mary’s County or Southern Maryland. Her ‘family’ was huge.”

Chris Rodkey '10, MAT '11
on Dallas Dean



2024 SURF students and their mentors

SURF: EIGHT W



WEEKS OF WOW!

BY LEE CAPRISTO, EDITOR

THE SEAHAWK UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP (SURF) PROGRAM IS A SELECTIVE EIGHT-WEEK ANNUAL SUMMER PROGRAM WHERE STUDENTS FROM INTENTIONALLY VARIED DISCIPLINES ENGAGE IN DIRECTED RESEARCH OR A CREATIVE ENDEAVOR, WORKING CLOSELY WITH THEIR FACULTY MENTORS. WHILE FOCUSING FULL-TIME ON THEIR PROJECTS, STUDENTS ALSO PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVITIES TO SHARPEN THEIR PROFESSIONAL SKILLS.

Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry **Pam Mertz** co-directed this summer's program with Assistant Professor of Neurobiology **Sarah Latchney**. For Mertz, SURF's built-in professional development activities are a bonus. "In addition to giving students the opportunity to work on independent projects,

SURF provides a community of scholars and professional development activities," she notes. "Students had multiple opportunities to practice presenting their research." Latchney appreciated the intersection of many of the College's priorities, including student-faculty engagement in producing original research and creative works. "The program's

interdisciplinary nature enhances the experience for both students and faculty as they come to appreciate what research looks like across a wide range of disciplines."

All of the 2024 SURF projects are listed in the sidebar. What follows is a closer look at three of them.

MAHREE ANNAN '26



It's a struggle to lasso the range of activities and involvement and the passion for them all in the person of **Mahree Annan '26**. This St. Mary's County, Maryland, scholar-activist is a triple major in political science, public policy and environmental studies, with a minor in French.

In 2024, Annan's scholarship earned them the Weitzel Award for Research in the Humanities and the Emerging Environmental Scholar Award. On campus, Annan is active with the Public Art Collective and the Student Government Association's environmental protection committee. They're also a student member of the College's Middle States reaffirmation of accreditation workgroup. In the community, Annan is a part-time member of the St. Mary's County Economic Development Commission and former intern for the St. Mary's County Community Development Corporation. In April, they joined the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area's Youth Summit Planning Committee and will lead that summit planning effort.

Annan's SURF topic built on the foundation of research they presented at the Dimension of Political Ecology (DOPE) Conference in February at the University of Kentucky. The opportunity came from a nudge by Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies **Parisa Rinaldi**, who also presented. Rinaldi explains, "I was impressed early on with the level of Mahree's commitment to their research, as well as the unique perspective they contributed as someone doing ethnographic fieldwork and archival research in their own home community....Having the abstract accepted for DOPE became a motivator to further develop the work and put together a convincing and coherent presentation."

During the conference, Annan received the Best Undergraduate Paper Award for a paper they'd written for a comparative politics class taught by Professor **Sahar Shafiqat**. The paper explored how international institutions can disrupt climate resilience and village cultural heritage in African countries with colonial legacies.

[1] Annan filming *Meatball*, the campus cat. [2] Annan with SURF mentors Wilfong and Rinaldi. [3] Rinaldi and Annan at DOPE conference at the University of Kentucky.

Annan's SURF project abstract opens this way: "Scholarship on critical rural geographies has grown recently, but few studies have addressed the legacy impacts of military-led development in rural areas of the US." Annan asserts that the presence of the Naval base increased the demographic and cultural diversity of St. Mary's County residents, while involvement in development initiatives and community-owned businesses declined. Using film as their creative medium to capture the experiences and stories from 25 local residents and business owners, Annan's project aims "to create a common space for dialogue and understanding in addressing inequitable decision making and planning processes that reduce both civic engagement and a sense of belonging. By fostering awareness and dialogue around these issues, we can work towards more equitable and inclusive development practices that promote intercultural heritage of rural communities that depend on military installations."

Annan's SURF mentors, Rinaldi and Visiting Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies **Matt Wilfong**, divided their areas of mentorship. Wilfong was the main go-to for all writing assignments, creating structured writing prompts to aid Annan in thinking through the literature review, central arguments and research findings. He also helped Annan prepare for the SURF presentations, offering extensive feedback on the abstract, PowerPoint and other SURF requirements. Rinaldi helped in planning and executing the fieldwork, along with the technical and logistical components that went with filming 25 interviews. Rinaldi also accompanied Annan on some of the field visits.

Annan hopes to present their 20-minute film at the American Association of Geographers Conference in November at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. On their LinkedIn profile, Annan sums up their year's experiences with hope: "The experience of community engagement and collaborative learning enabled me to imagine the possibilities of active participation to address global, state, and local issues facing humanity. By using creative research methods, I was able to accomplish this, and I will continue to pursue this path in my future work."



With career interests in psychopathology, clinical neuroscience and psychology, **Wendy Contreras '26** has interned at the National Cancer Institute and was the 2024 recipient of the College's Lisa Zsebedics Memorial Award, recognizing an outstanding student committed to understanding the human development process. This Landers Scholar from Frederick, Maryland, is a neuroscience and psychology double major. On campus, Contreras works as a student ambassador for the Office of Admission.

Contreras' SURF project investigated, through multicultural psychology, how cultural beliefs, values and attitudes shape individuals' willingness to seek professional help for mental health concerns. Contreras reported that in the U.S., the Hispanic population severely underutilizes mental health counseling. For Hispanics, several key factors influence mental health and help-seeking behaviors. Her project focused on six factors: familism, acculturative stress, religiosity, perception of mental health, stigma and structural barriers.

Contreras created a 10-minute online survey, in both English and Spanish, that asked six

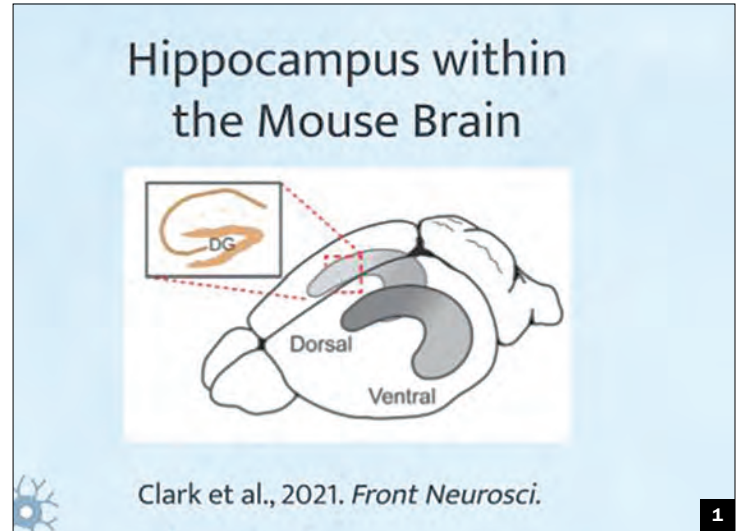


Likert scaled questions (1=strongly disagree to 4=strongly agree) and two open-ended questions. She used Prolific (an online website that helps spread surveys to people that have been filtered to match the survey's criteria) and snowball sampling through Instagram, encouraging friends and family to take the survey and share the link with their friends to do the same. Contreras paid participants to respond. Through these methods, she collected 295 survey responses with qualitative and quantitative data from a diverse sample of Hispanic adults living in the U.S.

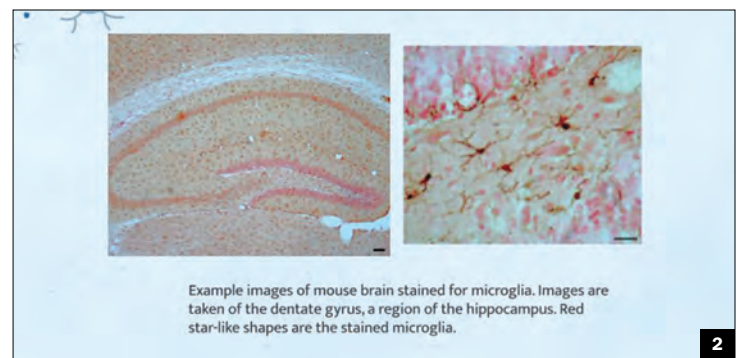
The responses to the open-ended questions gave Contreras ideas for further research and investigation. "I would like to look into different factors such as social class since a lot of participants had a financial barrier to seeking help according to the open-ended questions," she explains. "Also, there was a significant difference on gender for psychological distress and help-seeking attitudes, which is something very interesting to look into." Since Contreras plans to pursue graduate study in psychopathology, clinical neuroscience and psychology, expect more to come from this savvy social media influencer and scientific researcher.



ANJALI RAHEJA '26



1



2

This DeSousa-Brent Scholar has a double major in biology and neuroscience with a minor in Spanish. In 2024, **Anjali Raheja '26** of Lexington Park, Maryland, earned the Flores Award for Undergraduate Research in Biology and the Weitzel Award for Research in the Sciences. She has interned with the St. Mary's County Health Department and volunteers with her local rescue squad. On campus, Raheja is a peer mentor, a member of SMACS/BOSS and active with the College's chapter for the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life. Her career interests are in medicine, possibly as a physician assistant or cancer researcher.

Raheja's SURF project was born in Assistant Professor of Neurobiology **Sarah Latchney's** research lab. It builds on work begun by **Brayan Ruiz Lopez '24** (now a PhD candidate at Duke University). Latchney explains: "It was some unexpected findings from Brayan's work that paved the way for new research questions for Anjali

to explore. I am proud of the work that Brayan started in my lab back in 2021 and of Anjali for taking over and continuing this line of research. This continuity is a natural part of scientific research, particularly in the type of research I do, where the findings of one project often spur new research questions, thereby sustaining the cyclical nature of scientific inquiry."

Raheja researched the role of microglia in hippocampal neurogenesis by studying brain tissue from mice with epilepsy. In her project abstract, she explains it this way: "Epilepsy is a chronic brain disease that results in seizures. Epileptic seizures are caused by abnormal electrical activity in the brain; they also increase the risk of having more seizures. The hippocampus is the part of the brain most sensitive to seizure activity and the most likely for abnormal growth of new neurons following a seizure. Pten is a molecule that regulates neuronal proliferation and its loss via a genetic mutation is implicated in the development

of temporal lobe epilepsy. Pten deletion increased cell proliferation in hippocampal areas typically devoid of neurons but rich in non-neuronal glial cells. Preliminary results showed that in mice with Pten-deficient brains, they had increased numbers of glial cells in the hippocampus. This should be studied further to see how glial cells may contribute to the development of seizures. By investigating different types of glial cells, such as microglia, it could reveal how the cellular makeup of the hippocampus is modified with recurrent seizures and provide a new pharmaceutical target for epilepsy treatment."

[1] Front view of the mouse brain showing the hippocampus. [2] Mouse brain samples stained to show the microglia.



2024 SURF PROJECTS:

TAMANI KINGSLAND

(Mentor: Pam Mertz)

Investigation of Quercetin-Induced Apoptosis in a TNF- α Pathway Utilizing Liposome Vesicle Transport: An In Vitro Study

APRIL ANDERSON

(Mentor: Antonio Ugues Jr.)

Executive Aggrandizement and Democratic Backsliding: A Comparative Study of Nicaragua and El Salvador

ANJALI RAHEJA

(Mentor: Sarah Latchney)

Exploring the Role of Microglia in the Dysregulation of Hippocampal Neurogenesis in a Mouse Model of Epilepsy

WENDY CONTRERAS

(Mentor: Ayse Ikizler)

Cultural Influences on Help-Seeking Behaviors in Hispanic/Latinx Communities

JOANNA CLEAVER

(Mentor: Elizabeth Hamman)

What's In the Neighborhood: Effect of Spatial Contagion on Oyster Reef Colonization

JULIA THOMAS

(Mentor: Torry Dennis)

Investigating the Effects of Environmental Enrichment on Opiate Withdrawal Symptoms and Anxiety-like Behavior

ROMEO PHILIPPE

(Mentor: Bill Roberts)

Black Students' Strategies and Coping Mechanisms at a Predominately White Institution

JAIR JACKSON

(Mentors: Andrew Koch & Dan Chase)

Synthesis of Cobalt Bis(phenolate) Aza-Dipyrromethene Chelates Toward the Exploration of CO₂ Valorization via Ring-Opening Copolymerization (ROCOP) Catalysis

ABBY HUSTON

(Mentor: Todd Eberly)

Reloading the Way Firearms Exist in American Society

NADIA LONNBERG

(Mentor: Nayantara Kurpad)

Mapping Motivation in College Students: Integrating Psychological and Philosophical Perspectives on Intrinsic Meaning and Self-Determination

MAHREE ANNAN

(Mentors: Parisa Rinaldi & Matthew Wilfong)

Influencing the Formation of Cultural Heritage amidst Disassociation and Militarization: A Case Study of St. Mary's County

ALUMNI CONNECTION

CLASS NOTES

1950s

Karen Yochim '58 released her twelfth Cajun crime novel, “Only if Two are Dead.” The book is available on Amazon and was inspired by a surge in home burglaries happening while families are away from their house attending a funeral.

1980s

Daniel Kessler '87 has a new private psychology practice, Veritas Psychology Partners. While Daniel still lives in Minnesota, the practice serves clients across the country, including Maryland.

1990s

John Wobensmith '93 [1] was Inducted into the International Maritime Hall of Fame on May 15 in New York City, sponsored by the Maritime Association of the Port of New York and New Jersey. He received the International Maritime Hall of Fame Lookout Award as a thought leader for the future of the maritime industry. John has worked hard to recruit and hire the first female crew members to sail on Genco vessels, creating opportunities for women in a traditionally male-dominated market.



1



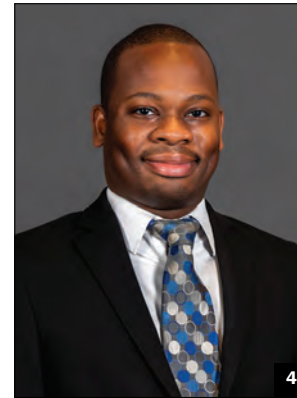
3



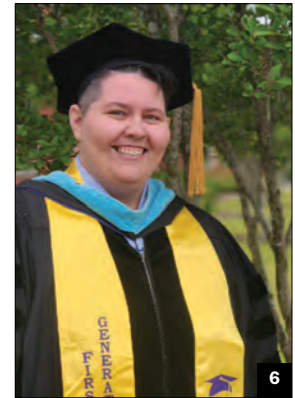
5



2



4



6

2000s

Kevin Beanland '02 and **Gabriel Beanland '27 [2]** shared a special SMCM legacy family moment down at the point at sunset at Alumni Weekend in June.

Tesfaye Negussie '05 received a DuPont Columbia Award for Broadcast Journalism from Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism for his part in ABC News' “Power of Water” series. Tesfaye produced a piece about the Flint, Michigan, water crisis.

Abby Meatyard Thompson '05, Holly Fabbri '12, MAT '13 and **Emma Green '18 [3]** graduated from Leadership Southern Maryland's LEAP Class of 2024 on June 21. The LEAP program is specially

designed for emerging leaders to refine individual leadership understanding and abilities via structured course curriculum focused on self-discovery, teamwork and networking.

Ifeani Ezeigbo '08 [4], a member of the Goodell DeVries's Medical Malpractice Group, has been selected by the National Black Lawyers (NBL) for the 2024 “Top 40 Under 40 in Maryland.” This is the fifth consecutive year that Ifeani has received this honor. The list recognizes 40 of the most talented Black attorneys from each state or region who have demonstrated an outstanding reputation, notable achievements and leadership and membership in specialty lawyer organizations.

2010s

Lauren Gill Runkles '09, MAT '10 [5], was named Teacher of the Year by St. Mary's County Public Schools and is currently under consideration for the Maryland Teacher of the Year Award. Lauren has been teaching in the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program at Great Mills High School since 2020; this is her 14th year in the classroom. A math major with minors in Spanish and educational studies at SMCM—and certified in secondary mathematics via the MAT—Lauren was in the first cohort of students to take an experimental course taught by Professor **Katy Arnett '00** that became EDUC 491: ESL Across the Curriculum. Lauren is one of several MAT alums who have since combined their content expertise with pedagogical exper-

tise in making content curricula more accessible to students still learning English.

Joe Meringolo '11 was featured in May on the WorldStrides “Changing Lives through Education Abroad” podcast in the episode, “Study Abroad & Artificial Intelligence: Meaningful Background for Transformative Practices.” In March, prior to the podcast, Joe led a virtual presentation on the same topic as a part of the 20th Annual Forum on Education Abroad.

Monty Fowler '12 [6] started a new role as associate director of advising and student services at The University of North Carolina at Charlotte. They graduated in May from East Carolina University with a doctorate in educational leadership.



7



8

Alumni Council Profile

Hans Lemke '93 is the secretary for the Alumni Council. He currently lives in ElkrIDGE, Maryland with his wife, former council member **Missy Beck Lemke '92** and their 17-year-old daughter, Siena. Hans was a biology major and has since earned an MS in entomology from the University of Maryland and an MDE in distance education from the University of Maryland, University College. While at St. Mary's College he was a DJ at WSMC, a member of the Coffeehouse Club, and spent his free time sailing and playing Frisbee. He has worked at the University of Maryland since 1995 and is currently the lab coordinator for the Principles of Ecology and Evolution Laboratory course. Hans joined the Alumni Council because he wanted to support the place that made such a positive difference in his life and to meet new people who are as passionate about St. Mary's College as he is. As a bonus he gets to spend more time with some old friends, including his college roommate **Kelsey Bush '94**. While on the council, Hans has chaired the Scholarship Committee and is the brainchild behind the Alumni Weekend Seahawk Shuffle 0.2K. All proceeds raised from the 0.2K go towards the Alumni Scholarship Fund. It was a gamble asking folks to rise at an early hour on Saturday morning of Alumni Weekend to participate in a 0.2K, but it worked. He is excited to see how much the event has grown in popularity, especially knowing it helps generate scholarship funds for deserving students. Hans tries to get down to campus a few times a year and treats Alumni Weekend as the official start of summer. He hopes to see everyone back at the waterfront in June.



Sam Coomes '14 started a new role as academic adviser within the College of Science and Engineering at University of North Carolina Wilmington.

Marilyn Hucek '14 [7] returned to perform at Alumni Weekend for her 10th anniversary, documented wonderfully by fellow alum **Molly Malarkey '14**. Marilyn returned to songwriting during the pandemic and her efforts culminated in her debut single, "Memories," a special song dedicated to her father. Marilyn's music has collectively hit over four million streams on Spotify and she has an EP due to be released in 2024.

Angela Wilt Laaro '15 assumed duties as master of the Maryland Dove during a change-of-command ceremony on July 13 at Historic St. Mary's City (HSMC) waterfront, taking over for Captain Will Gates. The Maryland Dove is HSMC's floating ambassador and one of its most popular exhibits. The wooden ship design is based on the original Dove, a 17th-century trading ship that sailed to the Maryland colony with Ark in 1634. Angela volunteered as a teen on the Maryland Dove under the mentorship of Gates. She previously captained with Paradise Yacht Management, offering all-inclusive trips in the U.S. Virgin Islands. She also captained sailing vessels with Buffalo Boat Tours on Lake Erie

and served as chief mate aboard the tall ship Lynx, a replica War of 1812 square topsail schooner.

Carolyn T. La Rocco '15 [8] published "Making space in the Visigothic Kingdom Church founders in sixth- and seventh-century Iberian epigraphy" in the Routledge volume "Lived Spaces in Late Antiquity," in April. She was elected to a research fellowship at the University of Oxford for a four-year career development research fellowship in early medieval history, to work on her project, "Female patronage in the late antique and early medieval west, 4th-9th centuries CE."

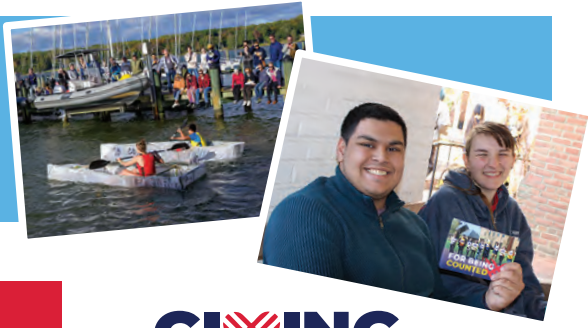
MARRIAGES & UNIONS

Rachel Hotchko '10 and David Miller [1] were married on Oct. 20, 2023 in Lake Arrowhead, California, and honeymooned in Bora Bora. Alumni in attendance included **Bobby Wiley '09, Anna Chiplis '10, Monika Disque '10, Beth Macinko '10** and **Ken Tai '10**. The couple currently reside in San Diego, California.

Brooke Oliver Fortescue '21 and **Peter Fortescue '22** [2] were married on April 6 in Easton, Maryland. The couple currently reside in Clements, Maryland.



SEE YOU THERE




REGISTER NOW!



**HAWKTOBERFEST
OCTOBER 18-19**

Join over 1,500 alumni, parents, students and community members for our combined family weekend and homecoming celebration! Enjoy a weekend full of festivities and fun, making the most of the beautiful autumn weather.



LEARN MORE!

GIVING TUESDAY
#SMCMGIVES
12.03.2024

**GIVING TUESDAY
DECEMBER 3**

Since 2014, St. Mary's College of Maryland has raised over **\$2 million** on this global day of giving thanks to supporters like you. Join us to make a difference in the lives of our students through your contributions.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Shelby Mullennix Sashkov '14 and husband Artem Sashkov [1] welcomed identical twins, Elyse Magnolia and Zoey Peach, born 11 minutes apart on Aug. 18, 2023. Eleanor, age four, is very excited to be a big sister. The family resides in Hollywood, Maryland.



CREATE A BETTER FUTURE FOR OUR STUDENTS. IT'S EASIER THAN YOU THINK.

Leave a legacy for tomorrow with a commitment today: making a planned gift through your will or trust can make a difference in the lives of tomorrow's students.

ST MARY'S
COLLEGE of MARYLAND
The National Public Honors College

For more information, please contact Rich Edgar at **240-895-4282** or rjedgar@smcm.edu

IN MEMORIAM

Margaret “Peggy” Carter ‘48 of Catonsville and Ellicott City, Maryland, died on July 6 at the age of 94. Peggy is survived by her son Robert and his wife Linda; her son James; grandsons Bobby, Dan, Drew, Collin, and Evan Carter; and great grandchildren Brayden, Christian, Kacie, Ava, and Cruz; as well as her brother James A. Fowler Jr. and his wife Nancy. Peggy attended Sparrows Point High School, the St. Mary’s Female Seminary Junior College and the University of Maryland. In 1968, Peggy was one of the creators of an innovative special

education program called Home and Hospital School, where her talent and passion to motivate, encourage and teach homebound teenage children enabled her to directly influence the lives of many Baltimore County youth for over two decades. Peggy was an active volunteer with the Maryland Historical Society and, along with her husband Bob, was an avid collector of antiquities.

Patricia “Pat” Gardner Clements ‘67 of Covington, Virginia, died on Sept. 24, 2023, after a brief but brutal fight with cancer. She worked as an executive assistant, most recently working at GLAD and

Sweet Briar College. She is survived by husband Andrew T. “Tommy” Clements; brothers Alan and Roger Gardner; nieces Taylor Dougherty and Rachel O’Leary; stepchildren Andrew T. Clements III and Brenda C. Young; as well as three grandchildren.

Kenneth Ryan Nugent ‘10, of San Antonio, Texas, died on July 7 in a car accident at age 36. Kenny is survived by his wife of five years, Angelique Snyder, expecting their daughter Emma; daughter Norah; parents Michael and Maryellen Nugent; brothers James and Sean; nephews Eamon, Patrick, and Grady; and many aunts,

uncles, cousins and extended family. Kenny was a proud graduate of Pocomoke High School, where he was named a Maryland Distinguished Scholar and a Maryland Tennis All-Star. He continued his academic journey at St. Mary’s College of Maryland, majoring in biochemistry, graduating in the top 5% of his class. His collegiate tennis career was equally exceptional; he set school records and served as tennis team captain his senior year. Kenny earned his medical degree at the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore, Maryland. He was hired as the medical director of the Methodist Hospital Emergency

Department in San Antonio, helping to lead the South Texas Medical Center. Kenny was an avid hiker and trailed across numerous national parks. He enjoyed traveling, with Costa Rica and Thailand as favorite destinations. He loved being outside and running was a passion. He had recently completed the Big Sur Marathon on the California Coast.

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS OF THE DECADE CHALLENGE!

Sincerest thanks to the 1,451 alumni who took part in the Challenge between July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024! Special thanks to each of the Decade Ambassadors for inspiring their peers to contribute to the Decade Challenge, especially those who led their decades to victory:
Nancy Yannayon ‘75, Erin O’Connell ‘91, Taylor Minor ‘21 and Emily Shipley ‘23.

DECADE CHALLENGE WINNERS

- The greatest % of donors 🏆 2020s
- The most \$ raised 🏆 1990s
- The greatest % of gifts to the LEAD Fund 🏆 1970s

Standings as of June 30, 2024



The Most Surprising Place I Met a Fellow Seahawk...

St. Mary's College alumni live in all 50 states and around the globe. Where is the most unusual place you've bumped into a fellow Seahawk? Send your story (photos encouraged) in for a possible future feature! Use one of the methods shown below.

FROM KAREN CLARKE RALEY '94:

"I ran into **Leah Anderson Magana '02** on a beach in Hawaii in 2008 — she was returning to shore from kiteboarding!"

SUBMIT YOUR STORY TODAY:

Go to <https://www.smcm.edu/alumni/submit-alumni-news/> and choose "submit news for the Mulberry Tree": you'll be able to include a photo with your news.

OR

Mail your story to:
 Lee Capristo, editor
 Mulberry Tree Magazine
 St. Mary's College of Maryland
 18952 E. Fisher Rd.
 St. Mary's City, MD 20686

What's New with You?

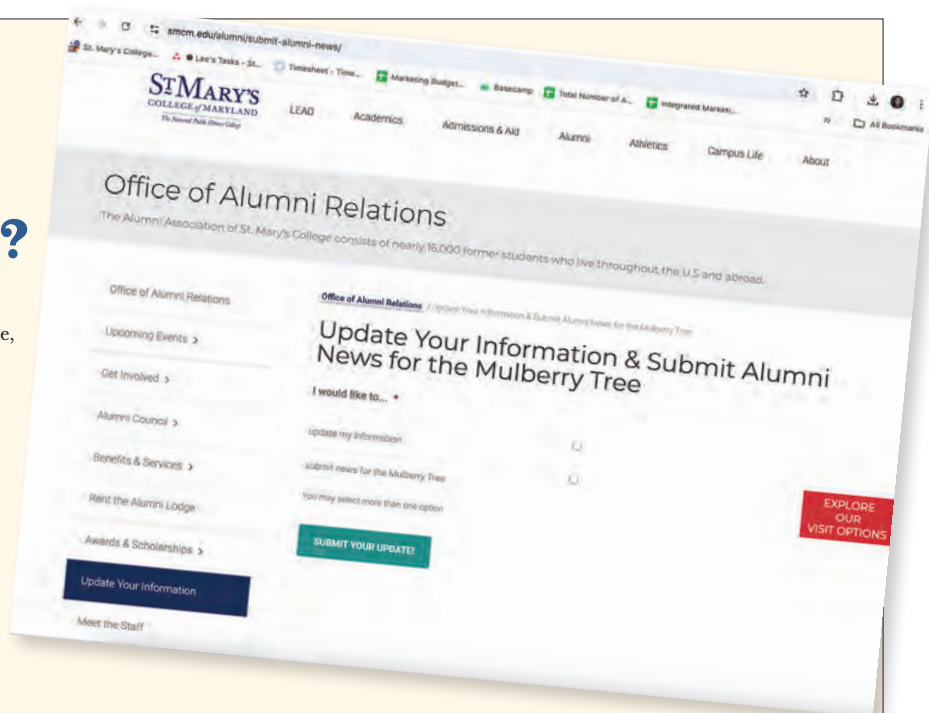
Let your fellow Seahawks know what's new in your life.

Here's an easy way to share your news (with photos) of a job change, a new adventure, a new family, a new address. We'd like to include you in a future issue of the magazine.

Go to: <https://www.smcm.edu/alumni/> and choose "update your information" from the left navigation. Then choose "update my information" or "submit news for the Mulberry Tree" or both!

YOU CAN ALSO MAIL YOUR NEWS TO:

Lee Capristo, editor
 Mulberry Tree Magazine
 St. Mary's College of Maryland
 18952 E. Fisher Rd.
 St. Mary's City, MD 20686



THE HOUSE ON THE HILL

BY LEE CAPRISTO, EDITOR

The gray house on top of the hill that has long been used by the Office of Admission was built in 1936. For many years it was known as the Chapman house, for the family that owned the property.

The College purchased the Chapman house in 1974 in conjunction with the Historic St. Mary's City Commission, who put up part of the purchase price in exchange for which a future land parcel would be deeded to the Commission.

College administrators lived in the house until 1982 (Administrative Dean Dean Reynolds and family; Academic Vice President Alison Baker), during President Renwick Jackson's tenure.

In February 1983, the Alumni Association got busy soliciting furnishings from fellow alumni for converting the Chapman house to the Conference House. It would be used as a guest house and conference center. Chris Cihlar of the president's staff kept detailed correspondence documenting donations of silver candlesticks, a cherry dining table, a fireplace tool set, books, drapes, linens and the like.

It wasn't until May 1983, under Interim President Richard Weigle, that formal action was taken on that 1974 land parcel promise to the Commission. The resultant action divided the land on which the Cobb House sat being divided in half with half deeded to the Commission for the St. John's Site, along with adjacent parking in the lot behind the Chapman property, by this time called the Conference House.

A promotional flyer about the Conference House from 1983 suggests that it was used, briefly, as such. But in 1985 and 1986, it was used as a residence hall for women. Since late 1986 or early 1987, it has been the Office of Admission.

Through it all, from its first coat of paint to its most recent coat, this house has had in its front yard a cypress tree unlike any other. It's a hinoki cypress, *Chamaecyparis obtusa*, native to Japan and most often grown in dwarf variety in the U.S. There is nothing



GRETCHEN PERRY



dwarfish about this specimen: in 2019, when it was measured by Maryland Big Tree Program, its circumference was 93 inches; its height 46 feet; its spread 41 feet. These numbers made it worthy of nomination to the Maryland Big Tree champions list.

Sources: St. Mary's College Archives

Data from Maryland Big Trees website (mdbigtrees.org). The measurement team in 2019: Joli McCathran, John Bennett, Samatha Berenschot-Bucciero.

The hinoki cypress at St. Mary's College has a nomination identification number of BT-3352.

TOP: Sketch of the house with tree from 1983; TOP RIGHT: Conference House flyer 1983; LOWER LEFT: photo of the Admission Office from 2021; LOWER RIGHT: Recent grads and students sitting in the hinoki cypress.

BIG EVENTS AT SMCM



NOBUNTU, A CAPPELLA QUARTET



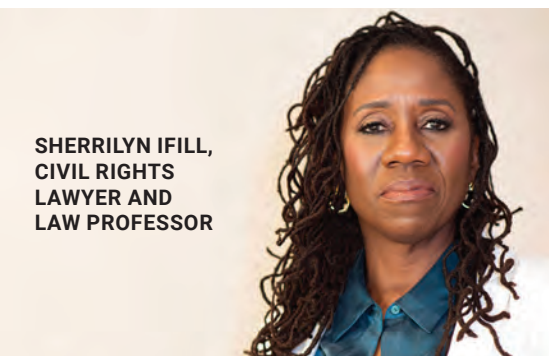
SMCM ORCHESTRA & CHESAPEAKE ORCHESTRA



TWAIN LECTURE
COMEDIAN
MATT FRIEND



BRUBECK BROTHERS QUARTET WITH CAMILLE THURMAN



SHERRILYN IFILL,
CIVIL RIGHTS
LAWYER AND
LAW PROFESSOR



AT THE
**NANCY R. AND
NORTON T. DODGE
PERFORMING ARTS
CENTER**

Featuring a diverse array of performances, including our own Jeffrey Silberschlag, leading the SMCM Orchestra and Chesapeake Orchestra.

ST MARY'S
COLLEGE of MARYLAND

The National Public Honors College

- TUESDAY, SEPT. 17 CONSTITUTION DAY: SHERRILYN IFILL | 7:00 P.M.
- FRIDAY, SEPT. 27 TWAIN LECTURE: LAUGHING TO THE POLLS WITH MATT FRIEND | 7:00 P.M.
- FRIDAY, OCT. 4 NOBUNTU | 7:00 P.M.
- FRIDAY, OCT. 11 CHESAPEAKE ORCHESTRA CONCERT | 7:00 P.M.
- SUNDAY, OCT. 13 COSMIC SYMPHONY CONCERT | 3:00 P.M.
- FRIDAY, OCT. 25 SMCM ORCHESTRA CONCERT | 7:00 P.M.
- FRIDAY, NOV. 1 BRUBECK BROTHERS QUARTET W/CAMILLE THURMAN | 7:00 P.M.
- FRIDAY, NOV. 8 CHESAPEAKE ORCHESTRA CONCERT | 7:00 P.M.
- FRIDAY, NOV. 15 SMCM JAZZ CONCERT | 7:00 P.M.

This is a paid admission event. This event is free with required ticket registration.



Find out the latest on these performances and more at: smcm.edu/events

DID YOU KNOW?

The Arts Alliance membership program has a new perk; become an Event Ambassador and earn exclusive rewards. Learn more at www.smcm.edu/AALL

ST MARY'S
COLLEGE of MARYLAND

The National Public Honors College

Non-profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #10001
Leonardtown, MD

Fabulous weather and a gorgeous sunset marked the 50th Anniversary Celebration at the James P. Muldoon River Center on June 7 during Alumni Weekend. That view never gets old!

