Faithful ’til the end

Hispanics grow personally, professionally

No longer the dog’s fault: the new homework excuses
Dear Friends,

Dec. 14, 2010, was a year ago in time, yet the date remains remarkably vibrant in my memory. It was on that chilly morning that I was formally approved by the Board of Trustees as Stritch’s new president.

I have many treasured memories of that day. The moment I first came through the doors of Bonaventure Hall, I was greeted with smiling faces and words of introduction. But what stood out the most was not just the welcome, but the enthusiasm that each person had for Cardinal Stritch University. Whether it was an inspirational story of personal transformation, or even an observation on how we can improve, there was no shortage of energy within the corridors of Stritch. And with every step and every interaction, the decision I made to join the Stritch community was reaffirmed.

That energy was and still is an incredible gift to me. Indeed, my own enthusiasm has only grown since that date of announcement and since I formally began work here on July 1. There is no doubt in my mind that Cardinal Stritch University can be the premier Catholic, Franciscan university, transforming lives through innovation, creativity, and excellence in all that we do.

As I have learned about our rich history, there is no doubt that we have much to build upon. Our patron saints, Francis and Clare, were both humble servants, ready to accept the life that God called them to live. The key for Cardinal Stritch University – to be like Francis and Clare and to live out our call – is this: be humble in spirit, but not humble in action.

In Francis and Clare, we see two individuals who effected change and who modeled their lives in the image of Jesus Christ. They were bold in taking their message to the cities, in ministering to the poor, and tending to the lepers. But as they reshaped their communities, they remained eternally humble in spirit.

We will do the same – remain humble, but boldly respond to and meet the ever-changing educational needs of Milwaukee, the Midwest, and beyond. Within our classrooms and in all the communities we serve, we will reaffirm our dedication to transform lives through value-centered education. This is a unique opportunity and a great challenge, one that we are well-suited to continue into our 75th year in 2012 and beyond.

As my wife, Irene, recently observed, “What Stritch does is serve the underserved. That’s Catholic, and that’s Franciscan!” That is the work we must continue! That work of God, in the spirit of Francis and Clare, is represented in this issue’s main article, which tells the story of how one inspirational graduate has made an extraordinary commitment to the care and comfort of those who are at the end of their life’s journey. Sam Erchen is a young woman with tremendous resolve to minister to those who most need our support. I was deeply moved by her story, and I think it provides some beautiful perspective for all of us as we discern the true meaning of this Christmas season.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to lead this fine university, and look forward to what the collective efforts of our students, alumni, faculty, staff and friends can achieve.

I wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas season!

James P. Loftus, Ph.D.
President
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WEB Exclusives

>> Roman Missal – It’s been several weeks since the Roman Missal changes became official at Catholic churches throughout the world. Learn what a Stritch expert has to say about the reasons behind the updated English translation.

>> “This I Believe” – The first-place “This I Believe” essay, written by Samantha DeRidder and chosen from more than 140 entries by first-year Stritch students, appears on page 36 of this issue along with a few more details about the essay competition. Second-place essay “Thinking Outside the Xbox” by Michael Cattani and third-place essay “This I Believe” by Kenny Fritz Jr. appear online. Congratulations to all three students on their award-winning entries.

>> Gift Guide – Looking for gift ideas for now or in the new year? Visit our online Gift Guide, featuring products made or sold by businesses run by Stritch alumni. To submit information about your products or business for possible future gift listings, send details to alumni@stritch.edu with the subject line “Gift Guide.”

>> The Fall 2011 issue of Reaching Forward, an electronic publication of Stritch’s College of Education and Leadership, is available at www.stritch.edu/reachingforward. It serves as a tool for sharing news, promoting programs, recognizing individuals connected to the college, and extending the reach of Stritch’s Franciscan values beyond the classroom and into the community.

WWW.STRITCH.EDU/MAGAZINE
A long-held dream of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi was finally realized Oct. 4, when Cardinal Stritch University formally dedicated its modern worship space, the Saint Francis of Assisi Chapel.

The Most Rev. Jerome Listecki, archbishop of Milwaukee, presided over the Mass, which capped Stritch’s annual Mission Week and coincided with the Feast of St. Francis. An appropriately sized, centrally located chapel has long been deemed a need for the University. In May 1962, when Stritch was moved from the city of St. Francis to its current campus, the chapel was located in the basement of Serra Hall. In 2007, it moved to a converted lounge/meeting room on the first floor of Bonaventure Hall, the University’s main administration building. It can accommodate 160 people, or four times the capacity of the former space.

Construction was possible due to several generous donations that provided the necessary $610,000 in funding, including a $20,000 donation by alumna Suzanne Felan that allowed several pieces of stained glass from St. Coletta of Wisconsin, which like Stritch is a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, to be refurbished and installed above the doors to the new chapel.

A happy reunion: Sister Camille reconnects with former First Lady Barbara Bush after 30 years

Due to the generosity of Stritch friend and May 2011 commencement speaker Joe Sweeney, Sister Camille Kliebhan, OSF, enjoyed a recent visit with former President George H.W. Bush and his wife, Barbara, in Kennebunkport, Maine. For Sister Camille, chancellor and former president, this opportunity was actually a reunion. In May 1981, Barbara Bush, who was the second lady at the time, was Stritch’s commencement speaker and the recipient of an honorary doctorate of law degree.

The University’s relationship with Barbara Bush began a year earlier in 1980, when Stritch was chosen to host the second lady, whose social outreach centered on the promotion of reading instruction.

Barbara Bush and her team arrived and spent hours on campus in the Reading Clinic, talking with instructors and clinicians about literacy issues. She later wrote about the visit in her memoir. The two women reconvened the following spring, after Barbara accepted Sister Camille’s written invitation to receive an honorary degree and speak at commencement. The two continued their correspondence over the years, exchanging Christmas cards and letters, which are now housed in the University archives. Their reunion was initiated by Sweeney, author of the best-selling book “Networking is a Contact Sport,” who accompanied Sister Camille on the trip.

For the past 10 years, Stritch’s Dial-A-Prayer service has become a bright light on a dark day, a friendly voice during a bout of homelessness, a calm moment in the midst of final exams, or a profound reflection when little else makes sense.

By dialing (414) 410-HELP (4357), the Stritch community – both on campus and off – can connect each day to a recorded reflection and prayer. Each call ends with the caller having the option of leaving a prayer request or noting a special blessing. Those who leave contact information receive a follow-up call.

“The Bushes were delighted to have us, and they were so warm and gracious,” she said. “We talked politics, had lunch, looked at our photos from 30 years ago, and exchanged gifts.”

Sister Camille recalled to George Bush the joke he made when they first met a year after his wife received her degree from Stritch.

“So you’re the sister who gave my wife the honorary degree? There’s been no living with her since.”

For Sister Camille, chancellor and former president, this was a moment she won’t soon forget.

“My impression of Stritch – that it was an institution that had a ministry of the Sisters of St. Francis, that their missions were the needs of the community,” said the Rev. Dr. Trinette McCray, who launched the call-in line while working in Campus Ministry. “Today she is executive director of the Center for Calling and Engagement, which now sponsors Dial-A-Prayer.”

For the first five years, McCray personally recorded the majority of messages. Then about five years ago, she turned the ministry over to Joyce Shiels, ’99, a former employee of Stritch who is now an ordained minister and was appointed a captain for the Salvation Army in Chicago. The messages change daily during the academic sessions and weekly during breaks. For significant observances or times of crises, the reflections may follow a theme or speak directly to a moment in time.

“When it’s just prior to exams week, we begin to prepare the caller for taking the exams, and we have special prayers for students particularly,” McCray said. “Otherwise, during Black History Month or Franciscan Mission Week, we try to tie in to those events. During times of crises like 9/11, we’ve made it known that this is an available, 24-hour source and we were careful to put messages on that would meet the need that was around us.”
‘On Equal Ground’
Stritch programs, alumni develop strong ties within Hispanic community

BY SCOTT RUDIE
“Donde hay bambre, no hay mal cocinero”
The quotation above is a favorite of Father Niles Kauffman, OFM Cap., coordinator of formation for the Saint Clare Center for Catholic Life. This Spanish saying translates to, “Where there is hunger, there are no bad cooks.”

For Father Niles, it speaks to an insatiable appetite that exists within the Hispanic community, one to seek education, and grow, both personally and professionally. With Wisconsin’s Hispanic population growing by 74 percent between 2000 and 2010, some Stritch alumni, faculty and staff with an acute understanding of this desire for knowledge and opportunity, launched a new outreach specifically targeting Hispanic men and women.

Nurturing the Hispanic community’s Catholic identity is one key area of opportunity. According to an October 2011 report by the National Catholic Reporter, Hispanics make up 35 percent of non-Hispanics but 35 percent of non-Hispanics have a college degree or more.

Saint Clare Center for Catholic Life
The Saint Clare Center, which provides education and formation for lay Catholics, has greatly enhanced its ability to offer its programs to Hispanic populations since its founding in 2007.

When it began operation, the center had few Hispanic students. That began to change with the Pentecost Mission Program, which is aimed at adult Catholics who may not intend to go into formal lay ministry but want to deepen their knowledge of their faith and the Church. Hispanic populations were new to the Saint Clare Center as well, but slowly but surely, Father Niles Kauffman and the center’s staff welcomed them into the fold.

In 2010-11, 29 students earned a certificate in lay ministries, and 16 of these graduates received their programming entirely in Spanish. Since spring of 2009, the first year that Saint Clare Center certificate students graduated, 81 students have earned their certificate in lay ministries. Of that number, 41 have earned the certificate through the Spanish language program.

“We asked the question, ‘Would people come to Stritch?’” Father Niles said. “Or should we go to a parish hall? One of the first things we found out was our Hispanic students liked coming to Stritch. They liked saying, ‘I’m studying at the University’. There are people who are actually outside of our diocese that make the trip to study here.”

Diana Trush is one of them. A catechist at St. Benedict Catholic Church in Fontana, Wis., Trush first learned of the Saint Clare Center’s Certificate in Lay Ministries from an ad in the church’s bulletin.

“Church was a primary part of my life and continues to be,” she said. “In the past, we didn’t understand we could participate because there wasn’t that outreach. I think that is part of our culture – we come from a very religious background.”

Survey data indicates that, when it comes to the role of the church in society, Hispanics, more than non-Hispanics, embrace the notion of an active role, so programmatic outreach has naturally found an enthusiastic audience.

“These are things that connect quite well with the Latino community,” said María Borda Wiener, director of Spanish language education programs at the Saint Clare Center. “The Latino community identifies with being Catholic, but the Latino community will not embrace a place that does not feel safe for them.”

Accordingly, the center has made a concerted effort to engender a welcoming environment. The Saint Clare Center has said, ‘We’re open for business,’” said Father Niles. “And students have said that this is a nice place, and not a scary place.”

Trush experienced that sense of comfort first-hand.

“That warmth and welcome, you feel like this is your second home, she said of her Stritch experience. “In our own way, it can be difficult to integrate with English speakers. But at Stritch, they know where we come from and it made us really feel there for you for life. María and Father Niles still help me.”

The perspective represented in the classroom strengthened that support. Amongst Trush’s group of Spanish-speaking students, the ages ranged from those in their late teens to those in their early 70s.

“The members of the group could never envision that we could get there and be successful there,” she said. “It was a great opportunity for all of us. Together, we learned such things as how to stand up in front of a crowd, how to converse, and how to take our own faith and make it come alive.”

Discipulos de Cristo
A Stritch alumna has engaged in work similar to that of the Saint Clare Center, and with similar results of helping to empower the Hispanic population to become lay leaders in the Church.

Sister Jane Riha, ‘79, helped launch the Discipulos de Cristo program for the Green Bay Diocese in 2006, and her work in Hispanic ministry has allowed the diocese to expand its outreach ministry to Latino Catholics in northeastern Wisconsin.

A parish director at the time, Sister Jane was approach by the director of lay ministry at the Green Bay Diocese to help coordinate the new program.

Much like the lay ministry certificate of the Saint Clare Center, Discipulos de Cristo is a lay ministry formation program for Hispanics in northeast Wisconsin. The program, offered in Spanish, covers the Church, morality, and other topics, but also emphasizes the skills necessary for ministering in the Church.

“The program evolved over many years and we started out on a very grassroots level,” Sister Jane said. “We had to search for materials because there just wasn’t anything available in our diocese.”

Discipulos de Cristo is a three-year, nine-course program with a curriculum that includes retreats, one-on-one review sessions, workshops, and seminars.

“’It’s about the empowerment of the Hispanic community – helping to create a sense of confidence,’ Sister Jane said. “I would have sessions with them to review their progress and I would hear about their struggles. What emerged was a deeper sense of self-worth and the ability to fit in a multicultural setting. It’s been very enriching for those of us who participated in the coordination of it – to see the sense of confidence.”

Marycarmen Fabian, a graduate of Discipulos de Cristo, is one person who can speak to the life-changing qualities of the program. As a result of her studies, her life’s journey ventured off on a new but rewarding path.

A graduate of both a Catholic high school and college near Vera Cruz, Mexico, Fabian received a bachelor’s degree in business administration before immigrating to Wisconsin. Despite her education, she searched high and low for materials because there just wasn’t anything available in the Green Bay area.

Volunteer work within the Green Bay Diocese led to conversations with Sister Jane, who encouraged her to consider the program.

“The first year I was there, she made the program so interesting,” she said. “I went through the three years, and then I ended up working for the Church. My mother is very Catholic and my
The Leadership Center
The Stritch Leadership Center also has made significant connections with the Hispanic community, providing its unique expertise on leadership development to previously underserved populations. This work began in 2005 with the Latino Nonprofit Leadership Program (LNLP) – a partnership with the Roberto Hernandez Center at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

“We had found that there is a dearth of leadership in non-profit organizations in Milwaukee,” said Peter Holbrook, executive director of the Leadership Center. “To meet that need, we felt there was a tremendous opportunity to assist in building Latino-Hispanic leadership to be actively involved in improving the human condition of our neighborhoods.”

The LNLP is designed to help participants enhance their leadership capacity, sharpen their management skills, and strengthen their connection to the Latino community. The Leadership Center helped develop the program’s curriculum and provides instructors and other support for the program.

Gladyce Manzanet, who helped develop LNLP and who serves on the Leadership Center Advisory Board, is especially proud of how the program embraces Hispanic culture and uses it as the basis for meaningful conversations about leadership.

“It is a program that is very aware that culture plays a key part in leadership development,” she said. “In other programs, culture is often left on the sidelines. Sometimes people really didn’t need help. You must listen, but help them to find their own way. You cannot say that these people have less and therefore we must help. You have to walk with the people on equal ground.”

The Leadership Center has developed a similar philosophy. “You have to provide environments in which people feel affirmed,” Holbrook said. “When we design our programs, we know that the participants have to find their voices amidst the culture that people who are like themselves, so as they learn their own voice, they can do so in a safe environment.”

Father Niles is pleased with the work of the first graduating Saint Clare Center class and that they are spreading the message that Stritch is a supportive, non-inimidating environment.

“They are serving the community and are ambassadors on the front lines,” he said.

Manzanet sees a similar effect with the LNLP. “Sometimes I thought I knew where people were coming from knowing. But with the LNLP, we found that the LNLP is a complex figure. He is very intellectual, very heady.”

For Nitschke, filmmaking is one way she not only finds enrichment, but earns credibility and recognition for her work outside the classroom. Her film, “Philip Pearlstein: Naked Vision,” which she directed and produced with Jen Dietrich and Jamie Lustberg, won Best Documentary Short at the Sundance New England (SNE) Film, Music and Arts Festival, in Providence, R.I., in April.

Nitschke first met Philip Pearlstein in New York in 2004 and felt privileged to encounter someone so influential in art history. She said the students are embracing the new curriculum and seeing the impact of the coursework. “The caliber of students’ work is the best testament to the value of the program,” Holbrook said. “We had people with university-level education from their countries of origin to those with middle-school education in our culture,” she said. “But the overall perspective of the students was this sense of, ‘I am capable of doing this.’”

The 2010 U.S. Census shows that one quarter of Hispanics live in poverty, and offering programs designed to address such issues is a responsibility for Catholic leaders, Sister Jane said.

“This is a program that is very aware that culture plays a key part in leadership development,” she said. “In other programs, culture is often left on the sidelines. Sometimes people really didn’t need help. You must listen, but help them to find their own way. You cannot say that these people have less and therefore we must help. You have to walk with the people on equal ground.”

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The Leadership Center also has formed a partnership with the 600-member Hispanic Professionals of Greater Milwaukee (HPGM) to create programming that is geared toward developing Hispanic leaders in the region. Newly designed leadership and management offerings use networking, seminars, assessments and coaching to help improve the effectiveness of Latino leaders in corporate and non-profit roles.

Access and opportunity
The work of the Saint Clare Center, Sister Jane Riha’s Discipulos de Cristo program, and the Leadership Center all have helped to redress a critical issue in Hispanic communities: educational access and opportunity.

More than a quarter of Hispanic Catholic millennials have less than a high school education (29 percent). Nearly 40 percent of Hispanic Catholic millennials have a high school education (38 percent), and less than 10 percent have a college degree. In contrast, more than a third of non-Hispanic millennials (35 percent) have a college degree and 39 percent have some college. In 2010, more than a third of non-Hispanic millennials (35 percent) have a college degree and 39 percent have some college.

“The Latino Hispanic community is very committed to doing this,” Holbrook said. “By strengthening the members that comprise their community, they are strengthening their community as a whole. If you give people the ability to participate in leadership development, you’re raising their standard of living, their families, and what they do for their community.”

Although the majority of the students in Discipulos de Cristo spoke only Spanish, their level of education would vary enormously, especially among immigrant participants, Sister Jane said.

“We had people with university-level education from their countries of origin to those with middle-school education in our culture,” she said. “But the overall perspective of the students was this sense of, ‘I am capable of doing this.’”

College of Arts and Sciences
Student’s passion for social justice emerges after work with abuse victims 
BY CHARLENE ENGBERG

“For Fiona, social justice is as much about uplifting a broken spirit as it is about fighting for victims,” said Sean Lybeck-Smoak, director of vocational programs and experiential learning in Stritch’s Center for Calling and Engagement. Fiona Frimpong, a political science and sociology major, needed to complete 60 hours of internship experience, which is required for her political science major. After evaluating options, she decided on the confidential courthouse advocacy program offered by the Sojourner Family Peace Center.

Before long, her passion for social justice emerged. As a volunteer for the program, Frimpong works with victims of abuse and said she feels blessed to be able to build a trusting relationship with clients and compassionately walk them through all the steps of their case as well as educate them about resources available to them for safe shelter and services.

She said her responsibility “is all about supporting the victim.” Her work has had a profound effect on her and she is inspired by the advocates she works with who are passionate about helping victims.

“Every time, I learn something new,” Frimpong said of why she stays involved with the program even though her required hours are completed. “Everyone has a unique story to tell.” Frimpong discovered this unique opportunity after meeting with Lybeck-Smoak to learn about opportunities available through the Urban Fellows program.

“Urban Fellows is an experiential-learning program that blends service-based placements and internships with reflection/personal growth opportunities,” Lybeck-Smoak said. “We sat down with Fiona and talked about her major, her interests, her hopes, her dreams, even what angers her about the world.”

She told Lybeck-Smoak, “I learned that sometimes a simple smile or a call can uplift the spirit of a broken and hurt person.”

“Fiona was not just there to learn about the judicial system; Fiona was there to learn about herself and how to connect with people who experienced tremendous pain in their lives,” Lybeck-Smoak said. Originally from Ghana, Frimpong came to Stritch in 2009 with a keen interest in law. The internship helped her learn about the legal system and narrow down the type of law she wants to practice.

“I was working with cell culturing and basically adding different pieces of lab equipment and validated her career interest. She said classes and lab experiences she had at Stritch provided a good foundation for the research work she did. “I had taken classes in bioinformatics and DNA profiling, and I’ve done a lot of laboratory work before,” Woehlke said. “So this was a microbiology lab that they put me into at the University of Delaware and I did a lot of cultivation work, but I also did some genomic work. And, because they could see I already had experience doing that, they knew that they wouldn’t have to sit down and explain the whole process to me but I’d be able to jump right in.”

In recognition of her outstanding work this summer, the program invited Woehlke to present her work this coming February at the American Society of Limnology and Oceanography Ocean Sciences meeting in Salt Lake City.

All three students said their experiences validated their love of science and helped solidify their future career goals.

“I guess that’s the beauty of the internship,” said Kennedy, who is considering a career in a health profession. “You broaden your horizons and the other talents that you have to make you see different options. It’s all about getting a feel for what you can do.”
Driven to build

Tim Dixon is a lot of things – savvy developer, committed entrepreneur, avid motorcyclist, studious foodie, doting father, and passionate Milwaukeean. But above all else, he is an idea man.

Dixon, ’89, is the owner of The Iron Horse Hotel and Dixon Development LLC, and is the founder of Build, a nonprofit organization that pairs students and mentors to learn life skills while restoring vintage motorcycles. His passion for these endeavors is leading not only to his own success, but also to brighter futures for students interested in exploring skilled trades and possible careers through Build.

Embraced by the industry

The Iron Horse Hotel opened in 2008 and is garnering major accolades for much more than just its proximity to the iconic Harley-Davidson Museum a block away.

“When I bought the building, I knew what it could be,” said Dixon. “We’ve created a destination.”

In 2010 and 2011, the Boutique & Lifestyle Lodging Association (BLLA) named The Iron Horse Hotel “Boutique Hotel of the Year.” In addition, The Business Journal of Milwaukee named it the best new development of 2009, and the hotel garnered a slew of other hospitality industry awards, including Dixon being named the BLLA’s “Hotelier of the Year.”

Perhaps most significant among the hotel’s accolades is its most recent – Condé Nast Traveler named The Iron Horse Hotel the 10th best hotel in America in its 2011 Top 100 Gold List.

“With this place, we nailed it,” said Dixon. “We’re No. 10 in the nation, and we’re in Milwaukee, the smallest market ever to be in the top 10. That’s a reflection of what we did, how we did it, the people that are here, and the fact that Milwaukeeans have embraced this place as their own.”

Dixon, 50, has developed apartments, condominiums and restaurants for 20 years, and displayed a knack for turning gritty warehouses, forgotten blocks and old factories into residential and commercial properties that retain more than a hint of their origins.

He also owns and operates Stack’d Burger Bar in Milwaukee’s Fifth Ward, and built and owns a building in the city’s Brewer’s Hill neighborhood that houses Roots Restaurant and Cellar, consistently ranked as one of Milwaukee’s top restaurants.

But what underpins Dixon’s considerable passion for building is a desire to make the communities better than he found them. To him, this means more than just revitalizing bricks and mortar; it means helping young people.

Inspired to build a future

“I’m a carpenter by trade,” he said. “I worked all the time. I was a ski instructor. I was a roofer. I was a swim instructor. I was always doing something. So I told my kids, all of them - ‘You’re going to college, and you’re graduating. Period. But you’re also going to develop a skill. I don’t care what it is, but master a skill.”

Brett Kell

By Brett Kell

Jack-of-all-trades developer starts nonprofit to help teach skilled trades
A notion of how to help other young people master a skill came to Dixon when he traveled to the annual Sturgis motorcycle rally in South Dakota two years ago. He met a high school shop teacher nicknamed “Teach” who built custom motorcycles in his garage. The two got to talking about the value of skilled trades – painting, welding, woodworking, motor maintenance – and how shop classes are disappearing from school curricula as funding is slashed.

Upon hearing that Teach used his garage as a shop class for his high school students, an idea formed in Dixon’s mind. “What if we got these old forgotten bikes, brought them to a shop class, got some mentors, some master bike builders, and teach these kids about rebuilding a bike?” he said. Dixon brought the concept back to Milwaukee, but it didn’t get traction. He was about to give up when he visited Bradley Tech, Port Washington, St. Francis, Cudahy and Cedarburg – in tandem with faculty advisors from each school. In short order, Build was born.

Each team was given from Feb. 15 to May 15 and a budget of $2,000, including the value of the bike, to rebuild their motorcycle to American Historic Racing Motorcycle Association (AHRMA) racing standards. They used video cameras to document their work. “Some of the stuff those kids did was just amazing,” said Dixon. “They stayed late after school, met evenings and weekends, worked hard, and got really into it.” The finished motorcycles were displayed and judged at a showcase event held at the hotel this summer. Soon after, the bikes were raced by program mentors at the AHRMA Vintage Motorcycle Classic at Road America in Elkhart Lake, Wis., and later displayed at Chicago and Milwaukee shows and at Discovery World in Milwaukee, which co-sponsored Build’s showcase event held at the hotel this summer. Soon after, the motorcycles were displayed and judged at a showcase event held at the hotel this summer. Soon after, the bikes were raced by program mentors at the AHRMA Vintage Motorcycle Classic at Road America in Elkhart Lake, Wis., and later displayed at Chicago and Milwaukee shows and at Discovery World in Milwaukee, which co-sponsored Build’s inaugural program. Of the six motorcycle builds, three were funded privately and the rest in Minnesota and the Chicago area. To grow the program, Dixon is hoping to raise $150,000.

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“We affected lives,” he said. “Parents are telling us, ‘You re-engaged my kid.’ One of the program mentors even took a drawing designed by the students on his team and had it tattooed on his arm.” Dixon recounted how one of the Bradley Tech team members, an at-risk African-American teen, said; “Mr. Dixon, you changed my life. I know what I want to do. I want to be a master welder.”

“BEST EDUCATION I EVER HAD”
In much the same way as Dixon has helped change the lives and fortunes of others, Stritch changed his. “I was dyslexic, and I had a 2.3 cumulative GPA in high school. My counselor said, ‘You may want to think about doing something else.’ I thought I was dumb.”

But Dixon was an athlete and earned scholarships to wrestle at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. In his first year there, he earned a 3.85 GPA. He quit wrestling and loaded up on credits in an effort to finish early. But something was missing. “I wasn’t getting anything out of it. Memorizing facts to regurgitate on multiple-choice tests didn’t do me any good.”

He had been working while going to school, and saved about $20,000. The money was burning a hole in his pocket, so he took a break from school to start a restaurant, Timothy’s, in his hometown of West Bend, Wis. He spent a semester at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, during which the restaurant foundered and closed. He didn’t return to the restaurant business or to school for years. When he did, he found Stritch, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in business management. “It was the hardest, best education I ever had,” he said. “I literally learned to read, write and articulate my thoughts all over again at Stritch. It gave me the tools to do what I do best, which is this,” he said, gesturing around the grand lobby of his hotel.

“WHAT IF WE GOT THESE OLD FORGOTTEN BIKES, BROUGHT THEM TO A SHOP CLASS, GOT SOME MENTORS, SOME MASTER BIKE BUILDERS, AND TEACH THESE KIDS ABOUT REBUILDING A BIKE?” – Tim Dixon

“A notion of how to help other young people master a skill came to Dixon when he traveled to the annual Sturgis motorcycle rally in South Dakota two years ago. He met a high school shop teacher nicknamed ‘Teach’ who built custom motorcycles in his garage. The two got to talking about the value of skilled trades – painting, welding, woodworking, motor maintenance – and how shop classes are disappearing from school curricula as funding is slashed.

Upon hearing that Teach used his garage as a shop class for his high school students, an idea formed in Dixon’s mind. “What if we got these old forgotten bikes, brought them to a shop class, got some mentors, some master bike builders, and teach these kids about rebuilding a bike?” he said. Dixon brought the concept back to Milwaukee, but it didn’t get traction. He was about to give up when he visited Bradley Tech, Port Washington, St. Francis, Cudahy and Cedarburg – in tandem with faculty advisors from each school. In short order, Build was born.

Each team was given from Feb. 15 to May 15 and a budget of $2,000, including the value of the bike, to rebuild their motorcycle to American Historic Racing Motorcycle Association (AHRMA) racing standards. They used video cameras to document their work. “Some of the stuff those kids did was just amazing,” said Dixon. “They stayed late after school, met evenings and weekends, worked hard, and got really into it.” The finished motorcycles were displayed and judged at a showcase event held at the hotel this summer. Soon after, the bikes were raced by program mentors at the AHRMA Vintage Motorcycle Classic at Road America in Elkhart Lake, Wis., and later displayed at Chicago and Milwaukee shows and at Discovery World in Milwaukee, which co-sponsored Build’s showcase event held at the hotel this summer. Soon after, the bikes were raced by program mentors at the AHRMA Vintage Motorcycle Classic at Road America in Elkhart Lake, Wis., and later displayed at Chicago and Milwaukee shows and at Discovery World in Milwaukee, which co-sponsored Build’s inaugural program. Of the six motorcycle builds, three were funded privately and the rest in Minnesota and the Chicago area. To grow the program, Dixon is hoping to raise $150,000.

“We affected lives,” he said. “Parents are telling us, ‘You re-engaged my kid.’ One of the program mentors even took a drawing designed by the students on his team and had it tattooed on his arm.” Dixon recounted how one of the Bradley Tech team members, an at-risk African-American teen, said; “Mr. Dixon, you changed my life. I know what I want to do. I want to be a master welder.”

“BEST EDUCATION I EVER HAD”
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“What if we got these old forgotten bikes, brought them to a shop class, got some mentors, some master bike builders, and teach these kids about rebuilding a bike?” – Tim Dixon
ImaginAction began as an idea in Wilson's head, but became a reality after he became a student teacher at Golda Meir School in Milwaukee while pursuing his Master of Arts in Teaching degree at Stritch. Working alongside teacher Mark Horowitz, Wilson accompanied Horowitz's 4th grade class to Copenhagen and Amsterdam and learned the potential that students have to learn outside the classroom. He took those lessons to his first full-time teaching assignment at Racine Montessori School in Racine, Wis., where he organized several overnight trips with his students. ImaginAction allows him to continue this educational vision.

"This was meant to be," Wilson said. "Everything just fell into place."

Trip preparations start in summer school
This summer was the maiden voyage for the Pacific Northwest Program, a four-week summer school program that culminates with a six-day trip to Olympic National Park. From the Olympic Peninsula, the students would travel to the Midwest and the Pacific Northwest. From those experiences grew his ambition to start his own program.

Wilson's ImaginAction is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization created to run the Pacific Northwest Program, a four-week summer school program that culminates with a six-day trip to Olympic National Park where students can apply what they have learned in summer school. According to Wilson, the program not only provides them with a once-in-a-lifetime travel experience, but the instruction they receive helps reduce the "falling back" that often happens during school breaks.

"I hope to inspire students with the meaning of the name ImaginAction."

"Imagination plus action can create a positive change," Wilson said. "An idea sitting in your head doesn't do anything for anybody. But if you take your idea and put it into action, you can make a positive impact." ImaginAction began as an idea in Wilson's head, but became a reality after he became a student teacher at Golda Meir School in Milwaukee while pursuing his Master of Arts in Teaching degree at Stritch. Working alongside teacher Mark Horowitz, Wilson accompanied Horowitz's 4th grade class to Copenhagen and Amsterdam and learned the potential that students have to learn outside the classroom. He took those lessons to his first full-time teaching assignment at Racine Montessori School in Racine, Wis., where he organized several overnight trips with his students. ImaginAction allows him to continue this educational vision.

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“Multimedia Text Sets: Changing the Shape of Engagement and Learning”

Several years ago, a Canadian publisher at the International Reading Association in Toronto attended a presentation by Dr. Janice Marcuccilli Strop, associate professor of Language and Literacy at Stritch, and her colleague Dr. Jennifer Carlson of Hamline University in Minnesota. Following the session, the publisher approached Strop and Carlson.

“She stopped us and said, ‘You need to write a book about this. No one is doing this. You need to do this.’” Strop said.

That conversation prompted Strop and Carlson to take the framework they presented at the conference and continue to develop it. In late 2010, that Canadian publisher – Portage & Main Press – published their joint book “Multimedia Text Sets: Changing the Shape of Engagement and Learning.”

“George toward middle and high school teachers, the book focuses on methods for incorporating print, video, music, the Internet, photographs, cartoons, and any other “texts” used in today’s society to teach students how to approach a topic or question from multiple perspectives.

“Because of reading all these different kinds of texts from different points of view produced in different ways and communicating different messages, they start to learn how to read and critically analyze diverse forms of text and understand that there is more than one way to look at a question,” Strop said.

The book is now used as a text for the “Young Adult Literature and Learning with Multimedia Texts” course at Stritch. Strop said use of the book is spreading among schools of higher education, including schools in Australia.

“The book is an absolute must-have,” said Dr. Robert Marzano, a research-based model to talk about what effective teaching practice looks like,” said Dr. Tony Frontier, assistant professor of doctoral studies in education leadership at Stritch, about his first book, “Effective Supervision: Supporting the Art and Science of Teaching” that he co-authored with renowned education researcher Dr. Robert Marzano and Dr. David Livingston, an associate with Marzano Research Laboratory in Denver.

Published in May by ASCD, the book is aimed at educators in supervisory positions at all levels, emphasizing how teachers can refine their expertise throughout their career.

“To really become an expert in something as complex as teaching, it takes a lot of time and very deliberate practice,” Frontier said. “Too often the assumption is if you’re teaching for three years and they grant you tenure, that you’re at an expert level. We would argue it takes many years to really become an expert, not as a teacher in general, but in the components of teaching.

So someone absolutely can spend a career getting better and have more to learn.”

Using a comprehensive, research-based model for effective practice as a foundation, the book proposes a collaborative, developmental approach where teachers gather data from a variety of sources including video analysis, student surveys, observing other classrooms and principal observations where teachers can receive focused feedback on their teaching strategies and establish goals to improve.

“When teachers have that data, it really puts them in a position to establish some good intrinsic goals, which are far more motivating than a principal or someone from the outside telling them what they need to do,” Frontier said.

“Effective Supervision: Supporting the Art and Science of Teaching”

Books by Stritch faculty inform education practice

College receives national recognition

Stritch named model institution; U.S. Department of Education visits

The College of Education and Leadership received national recognition this fall from both the National Council on Teacher Quality and the U.S. Department of Education.

NCTQ

In August, the college was named one of only 10 colleges/universities nationwide as a “model” institution for its student teacher program, as determined by the National Council on Teacher Quality. Stritch is the only institution in the state of Wisconsin to be recognized.

NCTQ began a comprehensive review of the student teaching experience nationwide about three years ago. Their review examined 134 higher education institutions offering an undergraduate student teaching program to elementary teacher candidates and approved by their states to prepare public school teachers.

The institutions were selected using a random sampling designed to include approximately three teacher preparation programs in every state and the District of Columbia. As one of the 10 institutions categorized as having “model design,” Stritch was commended for “playing a strong role in selection and requiring that cooperating teachers (from partnering school districts) have strong instructional and mentorship skills.”

“The College of Education and Leadership is both thrilled and honored to receive this recognition,” said Dr. Freda Russell, dean of the College of Education and Leadership. “Stritch has a reputation for designing effective models that respond to the dynamics facing urban, suburban, and rural schools, and I am pleased that the excellent work of our faculty, staff and students has been highlighted.”

U.S. Department of Education

In September, the college hosted a roundtable discussion on the state of education in the United States in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Education’s “Education & the Economy” Back-to-School Bus Tour, which took Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and senior Department of Education staff to more than 50 events throughout the Midwest.

U.S. Department of Education Teaching Ambassador Fellows Claire Jellinek and Leah Lechleiter-Luke led the roundtable discussion at Stritch’s City Center, 1037 W. McKinley Ave., Milwaukee. Approximately 15 teachers, teacher mentors, principals, superintendents, and Stritch faculty took part as panelists at the event, which was attended by about 40 people from the Milwaukee educational community. The purpose of the discussion was for the teaching fellows to meet with and listen to educators about the current state of education. Although Secretary Duncan could not attend, the discussion was videorecorded and later viewed by Duncan.

The event was hosted by Stritch’s Southeastern Wisconsin New Teacher Project – a program that offers classes and training that supports mentors of new teachers and the new teachers themselves in southeastern Wisconsin school districts. SEWNTP is sponsored by Stritch and the New Teacher Center, a national organization dedicated to improving student learning by accelerating the effectiveness of teachers and school leaders.

“This is outstanding recognition for our College of Education and Leadership,” said President Dr. James J. Loftus. “Stritch’s commitment to exemplary teacher training dates back to the very founding of this University in 1937, and the NCTQ report and Department of Education visit provide new examples of how, 75 years later, our commitment to outstanding education programs continues.”

For more details about these two recognitions, visit www.stritch.edu/reachingforward to view the latest issue of Reaching Forward, an online publication of the College of Education and Leadership.
Collaboration unites students of different disciplines

Alumna Jean Pirkey, ’07, refers to it as a “perfect storm.” Thanks to several happenstance encounters, four Milwaukee-area institutions of higher education joined forces with each other and with the National Kidney Foundation of Wisconsin in November to implement the Kidney Early Evaluation Program (KEEP) at Agape Community Center, an agency providing community meals, health initiatives, and family programming in an urban Milwaukee neighborhood.

“We heard comments like, ‘This was such a blessing,’ ‘I will bring my family next time,’ and ‘I can’t believe the doctor took so much time with me. My own doctor will only spend two minutes,’” said Agape CEO Ann Bachrach of the reactions of screening participants.

Nursing students from Stritch’s Ruth S. Coleman College of Nursing, medical students and nephrology fellows from the Medical College of Wisconsin, dietetic program students from Mount Mary College, and medical assistant students from Sanford-Brown College screened more than 40 Agape participants with diabetes or high blood pressure or with parents or siblings with diabetes, high blood pressure or kidney disease. The free screenings helped participants determine whether they are at risk for kidney disease and provided information about risk factors and treatment plans so they can prevent or delay kidney damage. The testing involved screening of blood pressure, height, weight and body-mass index as well as blood and urine tests.

“It’s exceptional to have so many partners involved in a community service project such as this,” said April Folgert, chair of Stritch’s Bachelor of Science in Nursing-Completion program. “Many service-learning projects are done through a one-to-one partnership.”

The partnership formed when Bachrach and Pirkey submitted a proposal to implement KEEP at Agape as part of the Medical College of Wisconsin’s Community and Urban Initiatives Pathway, which develops opportunities for medical students to become involved in the community through collaborative, interdisciplinary service projects.

“The Institute of Medicine just put out a report that gave recommendations for improving health care, and one of the suggestions for improvement is having collaborative projects for all the different fields of practice to work together rather than working in silos,” Pirkey said. “So having medical college students, nursing students, dietetic students, and medical assistants from four education programs come together for KEEPs at Agape is a wonderful demonstration of how they can learn together while addressing a vital community need.”

Pirkey said Stritch and its partners intend to offer the screenings again next year and, through the National Kidney Foundation of Wisconsin, expect to collect ongoing aggregate data about the Agape neighborhoods based on the screenings to better understand the needs of the local residents and allow the partners to design interventions to specifically address those needs.

Nurses out and about

BY SARA WOELFEL

Nurses study ways to improve veteran care

As nurses working within the V.A. Great Lakes Health Care System (VISN), the 13 men and women in Stritch’s latest Bachelor of Science in Nursing-Completion program already focus a great deal on the issues confronting veterans of all ages. But as part of their final project for their bachelor’s program, they narrowed their focus to the needs of Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans and how the V.A. can continue to improve and build awareness of the unique needs of this growing population.

These “change projects” challenged the students to examine how nursing practice could be improved to provide better care for veterans by focusing on specific issues or processes within their workplace. Among the V.A. nurses, topics included: raising awareness of the link between cardiovascular disease and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder to ensure more veterans receive mental health assessments when warranted, changing the assessment tool used in the treatment of alcohol-withdrawal symptoms, alerting veterans of their higher risk for testicular cancer, and understanding the reciprocal relationship between sleep disturbances and the chronic pain so many veterans experience.

“Most nurses are implementing their projects on a specific unit for piloting,” said April Folgert, chair of Stritch’s Bachelor of Science in Nursing-Completion program. “It will then be brought to the appropriate committees for hospital-wide implementation approval, leading to new initiatives or policies.”

The nurses’ participation in the program is made possible through a two-year congressionally directed grant awarded to Stritch in 2009, which is earmarked for the purpose of increasing the number of baccalaureate-prepared registered nurses caring for the veteran population and retaining nurses in the V.A. system. Classes were offered on site at the Milwaukee V.A. Medical Center and taught by the University’s nursing faculty.

“Nurses are expected to commit at least two more years within the V.A. system and provide leadership on their units based on the knowledge they have gained within the BSN-Completion program,” Folgert said.

She also noted some nurses intend to publish their change projects in a reputable nursing journal.

“By doing so, the grant not only benefits those nurses directly involved in the implementation of the change, but also other nurses caring for veterans throughout the United States.”
SACRED SPACES

YOUNG CHAPLAIN FOCUSES ON PURPOSE, END-OF-LIFE JOURNEY

BY SARA WOELFEL

For a 24-year-old, Sam Erschen, ’09, ’11, spends a lot of time contemplating death.

And yet her easy laughter, sunshine smiles and youthful exuberance are undiminished by the tears, grief and loss that so often define her work as a chaplain at an assisted living home for the elderly. In fact, she said her relationships with the residents are a source of much joy and fulfillment for her, as she works with about 75 people of various faiths to explore their spirituality, find their purpose and confront end-of-life issues.

Hired by St. Camillus in Wauwatosa, Wis, at age 21 even before she technically met all the educational requirements to become a chaplain, Erschen is one of the youngest Catholic chaplains working in the U.S. today. According to the National Association of Catholic Chaplains, the average age of active chaplains is 63. Typically, people must possess a master's degree and complete at least four units of Clinical Pastoral Education—a rigorous 400-hour program combining classroom and on-the-job training—to become a chaplain. At the time of her hiring, Erschen had just graduated with her bachelor's degrees in religious studies and psychology.

“Why would God do this? And Jon said, ‘Sam, right now as you have this experience, God is planting a seed in your heart. You can choose to nourish this seed, water it, give it sunlight and let it grow. Or you can choose to ignore the seed, as many people do. The choice is yours.’ So that’s when I decided. That’s it! I’m going to go to college and study theology to change the world.”

By the time she enrolled at Stritch as a sophomore transfer student, Erschen felt resolute in her call to youth ministry. Active at her home parish St. Anthony on the Lake in Pewaukee, Wis., she came to Stritch with a lot of experience and passion for her vocation. She discovered the RSVP and immediately applied. Created to help students discern their call to religious vocations, RSVP provides peer and mentor support, field experiences, journaling exercises, and ongoing reflection opportunities for students throughout their time at Stritch.

When the time came for her RSVP internship her junior year, Erschen expected to continue on her youth ministry track, full steam ahead. But, by her account, Sean Lybeck-Smoak,
Stritch’s assistant director of vocational programs, steered her in a different direction.

“He said, ‘Unless you leave your comfort zone, you will not grow.’” Erschen said, remembering how upset she felt at being told not to pursue youth ministry for her internship. Yet, Lybeck-Smoak tells a different version of the story. He said, while he did tell her to leave her comfort zone, that only meant she was supposed to choose somewhere other than her home parish to do her internship in youth ministry.

Through what may have been a misunderstanding, Erschen discerned a new twist in God’s calling for her.

“I was praying about it and thinking about what it was I love so much about working with the youth,” Erschen said. “And the answer was that the youth are voiceless in our society. …And then I thought, ‘Who else is voiceless in our society that we could learn from?’ And that’s when it dawned on me – the elderly.”

**DISCOVERING HER GIFT**

Erschen’s first internship involved shadowing Father Jerry Herda for visitation ministry with the sick and homebound from St. Monica’s Parish in Whitefish Bay, Wis. After six months, she moved on to a new assignment at Ruth Hospice where terminally ill residents received care and comfort in their final days. At age 19, this certainty fell outside her “comfort zone.”

“The first day at Ruth Hospice, I was absolutely terrified,” Erschen wrote in her final RSVP reflection paper. “I had no idea what to expect, how to talk to dying people, what to say, or how to act. My palms were sweaty and butterflies swarmed my stomach.”

Under the guidance of the chaplain at Ruth Hospice, Erschen learned some important coping mechanisms to help her handle the intensity of the experiences she shared with the residents.

“I was just following where God was leading me,” said Erschen of how she handled confronting end-of-life issues at such a young age. “Every night before I went to bed, I was like, ‘OK, God, I don’t know what kind of adventure you’re taking me on, but I’ll follow.’ So it’s a lot of trust in God with this whole process.”

“She was vulnerable to the process,” Lybeck-Smoak said. “She opened up and told herself, ‘I don’t have to be the strongest, I don’t have to know everything, but I need to open myself up and be able to be exposed to learn about who I am, but also to teach me how to play cribbage,” Erschen wrote in her RSVP paper. “We sat there for nearly two hours as he wrote every direction down of cribbage and then beat me in our first game.”

Some of her most uplifting encounters at the hospice happened in “Susan’s” room, whom Erschen described as “a fiery and spunky old woman.” The two women discovered they had a lot in common – including degrees from Cardinal Stritch University – and spent hours sharing stories.

“She was much more than just a resident to me – she was my friend,” Erschen wrote. “I brought joy to her life, and she brought even more joy to mine.”

They talked, they prayed, they joked, and they laughed. Erschen remembers one visit that ended with a squirt gun fight. The fun they had and the closeness they shared deepened Erschen’s understanding of the ways she could serve people in their final days.

“This is what the dying need,” Erschen wrote. “They need sparks, laughter, and fun. Even if it is something simple, like a cheesy joke, I believe humor can lift spirits and aid in the dying process.”

**LIVING HER VOCATION**

The summer after she graduated from Stritch with her bachelor’s degrees, Erschen accepted a friend’s last-minute invitation to join him for afternoon Mass at St. Camillus. When Mass ended, the two helped push residents back to their rooms and stayed to talk. The conversation turned to the topic of dancing, so Erschen and her friend demonstrated some swing dancing moves until they were interrupted by the director of nursing, who wanted to know who they were and if they had permission to be there.

Erschen apologized profusely for breaking protocol, and the nurse continued to ask for more information. When she found out Erschen just graduated, was unemployed and hoped to become a chaplain after graduate school, the nursing director invited her to apply for a job opening at St. Camillus as a chaplain.

“She said, ‘You’re the type of person we want here, someone full of energy with passion and a huge heart to serve these people,’ said Erschen, recalling the unexpected turn of events. Since starting at St. Camillus, she has returned to Stritch to earn her master’s degree in ministry and is now working on her second unit of Clinical Pastoral Education, so she’s nearly qualified for the job she’s been doing for more than two years.22

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"I was just following where God was leading me. Every night before I went to bed, I was like, "OK, God, I don't know what kind of adventure you're taking me on, but I'll follow." So it's a lot of trust in God with this whole process." – Sam Erschen
Sister Gilchrist Cottrill, CE, ’92, is starting to talk of retirement. However, she has one final project in mind before settling in a rocking chair and taking in the scenery from her screened-in porch: she intends to open a new college. This is not a new or unusual endeavor for Sister Gilchrist, who was one of only six people nationwide inducted into the Catholic Education Foundation Hall of Fame this year.

In fact, Sister Gilchrist founded three special education schools in southwest Florida and serves as director of one of the schools, Ave Maria Preparatory School, for students ages 6 to 22 with learning and emotional disorders. She also created the Dreams are Free education model used in 16 states and 900 schools nationwide, an opportunity to really show off the great work that alumna Bethany Fobia, said David Snieg, director of sports information. “Along with that, it gives us a chance to hopefully bring in more people who would not normally come to our games,” Snieg said.

“From the first game, there was a feeling that this is an opportunity to really show off the great work that alumna Bethany Fobia did,” Snieg said. “In fact, it was a way to show the community what we’re about and to bring fans to our games.”

Fans of Stritch sports teams now can watch and listen to live game action and follow-to-the-minute stats during designated home games via the Wolves Sports Network, as presented by Game Central with Stretch Media.

“Where fans can follow the WSN on their computer, there’s more to the package,” said David Snieg, Stritch’s director of sports information. “Fans that are always on the go can take these same services with them on their favorite smartphone or tablet. One of that, all of the items we produce through the WSN are automatically archived so fans that miss the events are able to watch them at their convenience.”

At www.stritchwolves.com, team schedules are marked with the WSN logo in the “coverage” column if they will be available via live broadcast. Audio and stats feeds are free, while video feeds are available for a fee of $5 per game, $40 for a season pass for a single sport, and $80 for a season pass for all Stritch sports.

Eight of Stritch’s 10 teams will be featured in live feeds this year. Eventually the University hopes to add the men and women’s cross country teams to the coverage.

Leading the way as WSN broadcasters are Snieg, Don Wojczulis, Steve “Nellie” Nelson, and Scott Wegener, with more broadcasters to be added to the roster.

“The group of individuals that we have on as broadcasters are all top-notch people of diverse abilities,” Sister Gilchrist said. “They have been such a big part of our success as a religious community and they are working toward receiving papal recognition. In the meantime, the women are focused on starting that final school Sister Gilchrist is envisioning – an agricultural college offering two-year associate degrees to people of diverse abilities.”

And then it’s time to pull up that rocking chair.
The University recently added four new members to its Board of Trustees: Kelly A. Brown of Waukesha, Wis., Susan A. Lueger of Shorewood, Wis., William R. Michaels of Milwaukee, and David L. Shrock of Whitefish Bay, Wis. Brown is a co-managing partner at the American Deposit Management Company. Prior to starting the American Deposit Management Company, she was co-founder of First Wisconsin Bank & Trust Company and has more than 20 years of experience in senior management and leadership positions in local, regional and national banks. She has a M.S. in organizational behavior/leadership and a B.S. in management, both from Stritch.

Lueger has more than 30 years of experience in management and human resources. Most recently, she was vice president of human resources with Northwestern Mutual. Prior to that, she served in various human resources positions with We Energies before serving as vice president of human resources. She holds a Ph.D. and a M.A. in applied social psychology from Loyola University of Chicago and a B.S. in psychology from Western Illinois University.

Michaels is a partner with Deloitte, an audit, financial advisory, tax and consulting firm. He heads the Midwest Regional Consumer and Industrial Products Practice, serving as lead client service partner for many Deloitte clients. He has more than 30 years of experience in supply chain and operations management, logistics, and the selection and implementation of leading technologies. He holds an M.B.A. from the University of Oregon and a B.S. from Purdue University.

Shrock, an experienced educator and administrator in higher education, joined Marquette University in July 1999 as dean of the College of Business Administration and professor of transportation. He stepped down in 2008, serving as interim provost until his retirement in 2009. He previously served as dean of the Moore School of Business at the University of South Carolina and as dean of the College of Business at Iowa State University. He began his academic career at Arizona State University, serving as associate dean of the College of Business Administration and assistant dean of the ASU Graduate School in addition to his academic work. He has a doctorate in business administration and MBA degrees from Indiana University and a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from General Motors Institute.

STRITCH ADDS FOUR TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Inauguration of Dr. James Loftus

Stritch’s 75th anniversary celebration will begin on Jan. 13, 2012, with the inauguration of Dr. James Loftus as Stritch’s eighth president. The inauguration will include a Mass presided over by the Most Reverend Jerome Listecki, archbishop of Milwaukee, as well as an installation ceremony and reception. The theme of the inauguration is “service, faith, excellence,” which reflects the University’s legacy.

The inauguration is the first of many events to highlight the University’s rich history. See below for a partial listing, and visit the 75th anniversary page of Stritch’s website, www.stritch.edu/75th. This issue page includes details on events, exhibits, performances, volunteer activities, and other details.

Jan. 13: The Inauguration of Dr. James Loftus
March 16–April 5: Alumni Art Exhibition (opening reception March 16)
March 29: Alumni night at the Milwaukee Ballet
April 25: Alumni Awards Celebration
May 20: Spring Commencement
June 3: Weldpack Open golf tournament
June 25: 75th Celebration Picnic (Jubilarian Reunion, celebrating classes 1937-1962)
Sept. TBA: Mass of the Holy Spirit and Picnic
Oct. 3-10: Franciscan Mission Week
Oct. 9: Stritch Showcase fundraiser dinner
Oct. 26-28 and Nov. 2-4: “Irena’s Vow” theater performance
Dec. 16: Winter Commencement

Further details and additional events will be featured in 2012 editions of Stritch Magazine.

Help us showcase 75 years of history

What greater way to highlight the University’s history during the past 75 years than to profile those who helped make that history – our alumni! We are looking for alumni to share their stories for future issues of Stritch Magazine. If you are interested in sharing your story, please contact us at alumni@stritch.edu and be sure to include your graduation year and a few details about your Stritch and life experiences.

www.stritch.edu/75th
CALL FOR ALUMNI AWARD NOMINATIONS

The Alumni Association’s Nominations and Awards committee is seeking nominations for the annual Alumni Awards. The awards program on April 25, 2012 will honor Stritch alumni for their exceptional professional achievements and community involvement. Below are the award categories. The nomination application can be found at www.stritch.edu/alumni.

AWARD CATEGORIES:

- Distinguished Alumni Award for Service to Stritch – This award recognizes an individual who personifies the Franciscan values through leadership, volunteerism and service to Stritch.

- Distinguished Alumni Award for Professional Achievement – This award recognizes individuals who have merited recognition, and thus brought honor to Stritch through their professional achievements, and who received degrees from Stritch within the last 10 years and whose lives and character have earned the respect and admiration of professional colleagues.

- Spirit of St. Francis Distinguished Alumni Award for Community Service – This award honors an individual who has performed exemplary volunteerism and leadership while serving his or her community.

- G.O.L.D. Alumni Award (Graduate Of the Last Decade) – This award is given to two alumni each year – one each from the undergraduate and graduate levels – and recognizes alumni who received degrees from Stritch within the last 10 years and meet the following criteria:
  - Individuals who have distinguished themselves through early excellence in their professions, service to their community and/or service to Stritch;
  - Individuals whose achievements have brought honor to their service organizations; and
  - Individuals whose recognition by the University would reflect well upon Stritch.

- The Alumni Association’s Nominations and Awards committee is seeking nominations for the annual Alumni Awards. The awards program on April 25, 2012 will honor Stritch alumni for their exceptional professional achievements and community involvement.

- The majority of funds raised from the phonathon go directly to the Annual Fund, which supports the greatest needs on campus including facility improvements, technology upgrades and, most importantly, student scholarships.

- Our student call team put together a special thank you video that can be viewed at www.youtube.com/stritchuniv.

- By age 14, I landed my first job as a teen peer helper at a local elementary school. However, it was my dream. I am reminded of hot, summer days during my childhood when neighbors would gather on my front porch steps and anxiously await another school lesson taught by their “teacher.”

- I never truly reflected on a deeper purpose. In the past, my work has been akin to local programming. Oddly, through all of the accomplishments, but I am indebted to Stritch for challenging it.

- In a nutshell in Durban, South Africa, I conducted research and taught at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, visited and taught at private and public schools, and completed a capstone project.

- Inspired by a passion for entrepreneurship and education and intrigued by the strong integration of economics into South African 4th-12th grade curriculum, my work centered on preparing teachers to teach the curriculum.

- I was one of 19 U.S. educators to be given a grant to impact education abroad. Chosen to spend 6 weeks in Durban, South Africa, I conducted research and taught at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, visited and taught at private and public schools, and completed a capstone project.

- Inspired by a passion for entrepreneurship and education and intrigued by the strong integration of economics into South African 4th-12th grade curriculum, my work centered on preparing teachers to teach the curriculum.

- As a recipient of the Distinguished Fulbright in Teaching Award, I was one of 19 U.S. educators to be given a grant to impact education abroad. Chosen to spend 6 weeks in Durban, South Africa, I conducted research and taught at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, visited and taught at private and public schools, and completed a capstone project.

- Inspired by a passion for entrepreneurship and education and intrigued by the strong integration of economics into South African 4th-12th grade curriculum, my work centered on preparing teachers to teach the curriculum.

- WHAT WAS YOUR CHILDHOOD DREAM JOB? As far back as I remember, becoming a teacher was my dream. I am reminded of hot, summer days during my childhood when neighbors would gather on my front porch steps and anxiously await another school lesson taught by their “teacher.”

- By age 14, I landed my first job as a teen peer educator. Countless jobs working with young children followed throughout high school and undergraduate education. I guess the days pretending to be a teacher paid off, and I continue to love it.

- WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST PAYING JOB? I started working for a local supper club (The 5 O’Clock Club of Pewaukee) as a dishwasher at the age of 13 and worked for them throughout high school and college.

- WHAT IS YOUR PASSION? Serving people and being the best Christian, husband, father, and friend that I can be.

- WHAT IS THE ROAD TO SUCCESS? The road to success is always a two brothers. This relationship has given us the opportunity to be direct and honest with one another – good or bad.

- WHAT MAKES YOU GOOD AT YOUR JOB? First, I seek God’s advice through prayer, reading the Bible, and self reflection. Then, I seek outside counsel from different trusted advisors and family.

- WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST PAYING JOB? I started working for a local supper club (The 5 O’Clock Club of Pewaukee) as a dishwasher at the age of 13 and worked for them throughout high school and college.

- WHAT IS YOUR CHILDHOOD DREAM JOB? My childhood dream was always to own my own business. But, at that time I wanted to own my own restaurant. I wanted my own 5 O’Clock Club.

- FAMILY? Wife, Nicole, and children Alexis and Lucas

- WHAT IS YOUR PASSION? Serving people and being the best Christian, husband, father, and friend that I can be.

- BOOK YOU’RE READING NOW? “Visioneering: God’s Blueprint for Developing the Gifted" by Andy Stanley

- FAVORITE QUOTE? “The road to success is always under construction.” This quote is special to me because the road that I took to get to this point in my life. There were many hurdles to overcome. You’ve got to be mentally prepared for the emotional roller coaster of life… I cannot stress enough to never give up.

- ADVICE FOR PEOPLE SEEKING JOBS IN YOUR INDUSTRY? Make sure that you do as much as possible to change with the times, by educating and training yourselves appropriately.

- DISTINCTIVE STRITCH MEMORY? TEAMWORK! Enough said.

- Thank you for taking our call.

- On behalf of our student call team, we thank all alumni who made pledges during this year’s Fall Phonathon, held Oct. 2-27. With your support, students raised $17,716 for the University.

- The majority of funds raised from the phonathon go directly to the Annual Fund, which supports the greatest needs on campus including facility improvements, technology upgrades and, most importantly, student scholarships.

- Our student call team put together a special thank you video that can be viewed at www.youtube.com/stritchuniv.

- Want to get involved with the Alumni Association? E-mail alumni@stritch.edu to find out how to get involved and reconnect with Stritch!

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Werner Wolf, OFM Cap. (M.A. Reading/Language Arts, ’91) retired after 60 years with the Capuchin Order, Detroit, Mich.

Sister Florencia Deacon, OSF, Ph.D. (B.A. Psychology, ’09) presented for the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) in Milwaukee. She has served as a leader for the past 10 years at the regional and national levels.

Dianna Sims (B.A. Psychology, ’76; M.A. Educational Leadership, ’02) is an adjunct professor at Concordia University in Mequon, Wis.

Ellen Dieringer (B.A. Foreign Language/ Philosophy, ’95; M.A. Teaching English as a Second Language, ’96) was elected to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) in Detroit, Mich.

John Gerlach (M.S. Educational Leadership, ’90) celebrated his 60th year with the Capuchin Order, Detroit, Mich.

Gerry Lapid (B.A. Psychology, ’79) is a professor of English at Marquette University in Milwaukee.

Mary (Bauer) Thompson (M.A. Educational Leadership, ’94) was elected as a vice president, director of change leadership for Associated Bank in Madison.

Denise Doh-Kiefer (B.S. Management, ’95) has been named a 2011 “Top Woman in Finance Circle of Excellence” by Finance & Commerce for her work as the chief financial officer at SALO LLC, in Minneapolis.

Troy Freund (B.A./Art, ’95) serves on the board of directors of Our Milwaukee, a business alliance that advocates for locally owned businesses.

Donald Zapfel (B.A. Education, ’81) is associate dean of the School of Business at Fox Ridge Middle School in Aurora, Colo.

Dr. Diane (Gabriel) Bergsneider (Ph.D., ’96) is president and owner of Diane Bergsneider Inc., a professional business consulting firm in Bayview, Wis.

Clay (Plamann) Erb (M.S. Health Administration, ’96) is an occupational therapy program director at Brown Mackie College in Greensville, S.C.

Carol (Fischer) Killian (A.S. Business, ’96; B.S. Business Administration, ’98) is a workplace strategist/health coach at BSI Building Service Inc. in Appleton, Wis.

Jedd Lapid (B.A. International Business, ’96; M.A. Religious Studies, ’06) is director of development and donor services for The Greater Milwaukee Foundation in Milwaukee.

Yelena (Drosyos) Clavson (B.A. Psychology, ’97; M.A. Clinical Psychology, ’02) is long-term care support supervisor at the Disability Resource Center of Milwaukee County in Milwaukee.

Kate (Landa) Cummings (B.A. Theatre, ’97) is a teaching artist with the Wisconsin Center for the Arts and Culture in Milwaukee.

Ron Garlet (B.A. Business Administration, ’97) is director of operations for Toyota Financial Services in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Ted Neitzke (B.A. History, Political Science Geography, M.S. Educational Leadership, ’94) is superintendent of the West Bend School District in West Bend, Wis.

Meredith Reeves (M.A. Writing, ’97; M.S. Educational Leadership, ’00; M.A. Clinical Psychology) is writing coordinator for the College of Professional Studies and an instructor at Marquette University in Milwaukee.

Jennifer Underly (M.S. Management, ’97) is director of human resources at Frontier Airlines in Milwaukee.

Jonathan McKellips (B.A. Communication, ’98) is general manager of Menasha Packaging’s Neenah complete care facility in Neenah, Wis.

Mary Lozy (M.S. Educational Leadership, ’99) is director of instruction at the Wisconsin School District in Sheboygan, Wis.

Jennifer (Golwitzer) Sutton (B.A. Education, ’99; M.S. Professional Development Teaching, ’02) had three articles published in the Rasin Association for Gifted Children professional journal and served as contributing author for the book “Igniting Creativity in Gifted Children.”

We Cotton (A.S. Business, ’00; B.S. Business Administration, ’03) is director of aftermarket sales—West Coast at Bergstrom Inc. in Rockford, Ill.

Jerry Eudy (M.A. Huac, ’01; M.A. Clinical Psychology, ’08) is a career counselor at Marquette University in Milwaukee.

Maria (Patterson) Sorce (B.A. Theater, ’79) received the 2011 Tony Award for Outstanding Achievement from the Educational Theater Foundation Center for the Arts for her work as props mistress in Waukesha, Wis., for Catholic Memorial High School’s production of “Guys and Dolls.”

Victoria (Hueneman) Stirmak (B.A. Business, ’01) is business director of the Milwaukee School of Engineering and a senior administrator for the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in Milwaukee.

Patrice (Barsky) Frede (M.A. Business Administration, ’02) was elected into the East Carolina University’s Honorary Society.”

Mary (Bauer) Thompson (M.A. Educational Leadership, ’94) was elected as a director of the Milwaukee Community School District in Wauwatosa, Wis.

Denise Doll (B.A. English, ’96) has been named a 2011 “Top Woman in Finance Circle of Excellence” by Finance & Commerce for her work as the chief financial officer at Froedtert Memorial Lutheran Hospital in Milwaukee.

Monica (Smith) Cooper (B.A. English, ’86) is principal and director of the Sunny North America in Delafield, La.


Sarah (Sherwood) Kornor (B.A. Education, ’95) is director of the Children’s Theatre Company in Milwaukee.

Jeffrey Montoya (M.A. Religious Studies, ’07) is a president with the Universal Anglican Church Oct. 14.

Richard Murray (B.A. Accounting, ’10) works with the financial leadership development program for Rockwell Automation in Austin, Texas.

Laura Zumdahl (Ph.D., Leadership, ’10) is vice president of Nonprofit Services and is a former director of the American Cancer Society, organizing Relay for Life events in Milwaukee.

Jill (Kincade) Oelsteg (M.A. Business, ’09) is an assistant principal at Burlington High School, Burlington, Wis.

Anna Schmeling (B.A. Accounting, ’10) works with the financial leadership development program for Rockwell Automation in Austin, Texas.

Jacquelyn Endsay (M.S. Sport Management, ’11) is an account manager of corporate facilities for the 2012 U.S. Women’s Open in Kohler, Wis.

Julie Fliss (M.A. Clinical Psychology, ’01) is a polysomnographic technologist at Froedtert and the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee.

Angela Klemm (M.A. Clinical Psychology, ’02) is a program coordinator for the IRS program and is running her own business doing person-centered planning in the county of Waukesha for the Wisconsin Department of Mental Health and Counseling.

Krause (B.A. Theater, ’11) was the cast member in “Skylight,” the Greater Milwaukee Theatre’s fall touring school production of "Skyfall" and "SingScape." He appeared in the ensemble of Skylight’s fall production of “The Music Man” in Milwaukee and appeared this summer in “Cabaret” as Cliff Bradshaw at Theatre-on-the-Nine in Oconomowoc, Wis.

Carol Zumdahl (M.A. Educational Leader, ’11) is vice president at Oconomowoc High School in Oconomowoc, Wis.

Andrew Thorson (M.B.A., ’09) is facilities engineer for the Neenah Joint School District.

Jeffrey Zimpel (B.A. Graphic Design, ’09) is a graphic design teacher at Shorewood High School and was one of the first contestants on Bravo TV’s 2011 Open Book Project in July.

Stephanie Abbe (M.A. Clinical Psychology, ’10) is a staffing manager for the American Business Coletta of Wisconsin in Milwaukee.

Michelle Goualis (B.A. Interactive Media Development, ’10) works with youth initiatives at the American Business Coletta of Wisconsin in Milwaukee.

Sarah (Sherwood) Kornor (B.A. Education, ’95) is an elementary-school teacher at the Milwaukee Public Schools.

Aaron Malzecw (M.S. Education, ’07) is an elementary-school teacher at Oconomowoc, Wis.

Carlos (McKee) Whitehorse (M.E. Education, ’08) received a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. He attended the 2011 TEDx Women conference in Seattle.

Laurie (Ehlen) Embs (B.A. Business, ’04) works at Robert Half International in Charlotte, N.C.

Robert Rapid (M.A. Business, ’81) is a financial analyst at Shorewood High School in Sheboygan, Wis.

Angela Klemm (M.A. Clinical Psychology, ’02) is a program coordinator for the IRS program and is running her own business doing person-centered planning in the county of Waukesha for the Wisconsin Department of Mental Health and Counseling.

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ANSWER THE QUESTION, WIN A PRIZE!

WAITING FOR MARY WITH CLASS YEARS

Can you describe this photo from the Stritch Archives? Give as much information as possible about the picture, and enter for a chance to win a $25 gift card to the Stritch bookstore (useable on site or online). The winner will be the person who submits the most accurate and complete information to University archivist Sister Margaret Ruddy, Cardinal Stritch University, #524, 6801 N. Yates Road, Milwaukee, WI 53217; or at mruddy@stritch.edu.

Congratulations to Matthew Middlemas, ’89, winner of the photo contest from the summer issue. He helped identify the photo of the cast of “The Importance of Being Earnest,” performed in the Walter Schroeder Auditorium on March 28-April 1, 1990. The show was directed by Ruth Hovland, ’97, who also played Lady Bracknell (center) for 44 years, having joined the faculty in 1967, served as chair of the biology and chemistry departments (1988-2002), and served as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (2002-2007).

SISTERS CELEBRATE MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES

Fourteen Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi who earned degrees from Stritch or during their active ministry, served at Cardinal Stritch University, celebrated their anniversaries of religious profession as a Mass in July at St. Rita Parish in West Allis, Wis. While many worked and ministered in other places throughout their careers, these are the ways they contributed to Stritch:

75 years

Sister Cheryl Hertel served in the music department for 34 years.

70 years

(B.A. English, ’52) served as a librarian (1958-90) and in the reading clinic (1982-90).

Sister Elaine Vander (B.A. Education, ’66)

60 years

Sister Mary Ann Polasek worked at Stritch for 44 years, having joined the faculty in 1967, served as chair of the biology and chemistry departments (1988-2002), and served as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (2002-2007).


Sister Eleanore Harkins

Sister Joan Bolland

Sister Kenan Rebholz (B.A. Education, ’64)

Sister Leonia Steilen (A.A. Education, ’74)

50 years


Sister Ruth Mary Costello (B.A. Sociology, ’70)

Sister Theophilus (B.A. History, ’69; M.A. Special Education, ’75)

Sister Helen Anne Kennedy (B.A. Education/History, ’69)

CLASS NOTES

Bojana Puskar (M.A. Clinical Psychology, ’11) is a case manager at Bell Therapy in Milwaukee.

Kathryn (Foley) Zimpel (B.A. English, ’11) is an English teacher at Hartford Union High School.

Personal News


Jessica (Sindric) Mathias (B.A. International Business, ’99) had a daughter, Layla Anne, June 22.

April Scheinhofer (B.A. Communication, ’02) and husband Scott D. Dcimp had a son, Storm, June 30.


Laura Labrec (B.S. Education, ’05) married Derek Hartwig May 21 in Sturgeon Bay, Wis.

Carol (Stewart) Ramos (M.A. Clinical Psychology, ’03) was married in August.


Kevin Moore (M.A. Teaching, ’08) married Kelly Warren Aug. 9 in St. Ignatius Lake, Wis.


In memory of…

Vaughn W. Hailing (B.S. Management, ’90), June 6

Barbara (Heimann) Kuhn (B.A. Education, ’53), Sept. 19

Margaret A. Manus (B.A. Home Economics, ’53), Nov. 9

Barbara (Quinlan) Mancuso (B.A. Religious Studies, ’86), Nov. 1

Stephen Sahs (B.F.A. Art, ’95), Sept. 30

Karl P. Scott, Jr. (M.A. Reading/Language Arts, ’71), Nov. 29, 2010

Sister Virginia Weiss, OSF (B.A. Biology, ’55; M.A. Reading/Language Arts, ’71), June 4

Stay connected online

Stay connected to fellow members of the Stritch community from the other side of town or the other side of the world. Learn about Stritch news and events in real-time; keep up with fellow alumni, colleagues and friends; watch videos; and stay engaged with the University.

If you don’t already receive the monthly Alumni E-Newsletter, which keeps you updated on what’s new at Stritch, sign up at www.stritch.edu/alumni.

Visit the BOOKSTORE

The Cardinal Stritch University Bookstore provides everything from textbooks and course materials to apparel and gifts at the Milwaukee campus or online at www.csu.bkstr.com. Orders may be placed online or via phone at (414) 410-4035 or fax at (414) 410-4159. Show your Stritch pride with the latest merchandise or get a bargain by checking out today’s clearance sales! For a chance to win a $25 gift card to the bookstore, see the contest on page 34.

Stay connected on site or online

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www.stritch.edu/Stritch-e-newsletter
www.csu.bkstr.com

If you don’t already receive the monthly Alumni E-Newsletter, which keeps you updated on what’s new at Stritch, sign up at www.stritch.edu/alumni.
UPCOMING EVENTS

For more information about these and other events, visit www.stritch.edu/calendar.aspx, where new events and updates are posted often.

Jan. 20-Feb. 19
“Vivid Notes” Exhibition
Northwestern Mutual Art Gallery

Jan. 22, 28, 29
“Charlotte’s Web” theater production

Tuesday, Jan. 24
Servant Leadership series: “Building Community” with facilitator Tim Valley

Friday, Feb. 10

Sunday, Feb. 12
Faculty recital, featuring Stritch faculty artists performing chamber literature

Tuesday, March 6
Servant Leadership series: “Commitment to the Growth of People” with facilitator Sean Lansing

Wednesday, March 7
Building a Better Milwaukee Series: “Recognizing Abundance in Milwaukee”

March 16-April 5
Alumni Exhibition
Northwestern Mutual Art Gallery

Sunday, March 18
New Music Concert, featuring original student compositions

Friday, April 20
Forum on Faith and Work, featuring Father Thomas Massaro, SJ

April 20-April 29
B.A./B.F.A. Exhibition I
Northwestern Mutual Art Gallery

Wednesday, April 25
Building a Better Milwaukee/Helen Bader Leadership Speaker Series: “Leading for an Abundant Milwaukee” with Ann Goggins-Gregory

April 27-29, May 5-6
“Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure” theater production

Friday, May 4
Spring choir concert, featuring the Concert Choir

Wednesday, May 9
Piano showcase, featuring Stritch piano performance majors

May 11-20
B.A./B.F.A. Exhibition II
Northwestern Mutual Art Gallery

July 20-Aug. 12
MARN Mentors Exhibition
Northwestern Mutual Art Gallery
How can you make a tax-free gift to Stritch?

Are you 70½ or older? Do you have an IRA?

If so, federal government guidelines enable you to contribute up to $100,000 per year to Cardinal Stritch University without tax implications by transferring the donation right from your individual retirement account.

How does it work? Simply choose the IRA from which you’d like to make your donation, select the amount of your gift, and contact your IRA administrator for the necessary forms for making your gift.

In the past, money taken from an IRA was considered taxable income. You could claim a charitable deduction, but only up to 50 percent of your gross income, so, at times, donors ended up paying more in income taxes because they gave a charitable gift.

Now, that penalty no longer has to deter donors who would like to make gifts to their favorite charitable organizations while they are still living and can see the benefits of their generosity.

Questions? Need assistance? Please contact Stritch’s Director of Planned Giving, Chris Lange, at (414) 410-4207.
In fall, more than 140 first-year Stritch students wrote essays sharing their personal, core beliefs in the spirit of “This I Believe,” a 1950s National Public Radio show that led to a 2007 book of the same name. The students read the book in the summer, discussed it during the first two weeks of school and culminated their experience by creating their own “This I Believe” essays. A committee of faculty and staff chose the top three essays, awarding bookstore gift certificates to the winners. The first-place essay, written by Samantha DeRidder, appears below. Second- and third-place essays, written by Michael Cattani and Kenny Fritz, Jr., appear online at www.stritch.edu/magazine.

CARPE DIEM FOR LONGEVITY
BY SAMANTHA DERIDDER

The engine rumbles as my pilot gives Neels, the 180 lb. man strapped to my back, a two-minute warning. Neels instructs me to pull the goggles down over my eyes and swing my legs onto a tiny platform made to appear even smaller by the endless amount of sky and earth below it. The wind violently thrusts my legs back, making my muscles tense to compensate. My surprise at this makes me wonder why I wasn’t expecting it: the wind resistance when traveling 65 mph on the interstate alone is enough to make ripples of the skin of my hand; surely this would happen when traveling 90 mph. As I am squatting at the edge of the apparatus holding me 10,500 feet above the ground, I take a moment to reflect on why I’m about to jump. I smile as I think, “This is going to be an awesome story to tell my grandkids.”

My experience skydiving proved to be more than just an exhilarating thrill ride by providing me with a deeper understanding of who I am and how I choose to live my life. Many people mention “carpe diem” and living like there is no tomorrow. I fully understand this mentality; because, for a while I had believed carpe diem should be my motto. The more I thought about it, however, the more I came up with questions like, “If I am truly living like I would die tomorrow, what keeps me from cashing out my bank account and making unhealthy decisions that could provide me with instant pleasure?” And “If tomorrow never comes, what point is there in working hard to improve myself and upholding my morals and values?”

The conclusion I came to is this: instead of living like there is no tomorrow, I should plan for longevity. By planning for longevity, I make choices today that will make me happy and proud 60 years from now. It means planning on living a long, happy, and healthy life.

My plan for longevity involves carpe diem. What makes me happy is making the most of every moment in my life. The difference between my old belief of carpe diem and my current belief of carpe diem for longevity is that my first way of thinking involved taking each breath as if it might be my last, whereas now, I try to experience everything to the best of my ability while remembering my morals. I went skydiving the first chance I could because I knew it would be something I will look back on and be proud of.

Neels asks me if I’m ready. I hear his South African accent say, ”Big smiles and happy days,” as we take the leap. This is for you, future grandkids. Make decisions that will help you make the most out of every moment of your life because one day, you, too, will have grandkids of your own. What will you want to share with them?