Where College of Saint Mary and Alumnae are Today

Tools of the Trade
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WITH A UNIVERSITY YOU KNOW!

As a College of Saint Mary graduate, you know the academic excellence and caring atmosphere that resonates throughout campus. Why not take the next step in your education and career with a trusted friend and familiar face?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Online Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master of Arts in Teaching</td>
<td>Dr. Claudia Wickham '00, D'15</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cwickham@csm.edu">cwickham@csm.edu</a></td>
<td>402-399-2630</td>
<td>Learn more at CSM.edu/MAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Science in Education</td>
<td>Dr. Merryellen Towey Schulz</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mschulz@csm.edu">mschulz@csm.edu</a></td>
<td>402-399-2432</td>
<td>Learn more at CSM.edu/MSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Science in Nursing</td>
<td>Dr. Virginia Tufano D’10</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vtufano@csm.edu">vtufano@csm.edu</a></td>
<td>402-384-5299</td>
<td>Learn more at CSM.edu/MSN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Science in Physicain Assistant Studies</td>
<td>Shaun Grammer, MS, PA-C</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sgrammer@csm.edu">sgrammer@csm.edu</a></td>
<td>402-399-2384</td>
<td>Learn more at CSM.edu/MSPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Science in Organizational Leadership</td>
<td>Dr. Susan Joslin</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sjoslin@csm.edu">sjoslin@csm.edu</a></td>
<td>402-399-2420</td>
<td>Learn more at CSM.edu/MSOL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Occupational Therapy</td>
<td>Dr. Yolanda Griffiths</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ygriffiths@csm.edu">ygriffiths@csm.edu</a></td>
<td>402-399-2317</td>
<td>Learn more at CSM.edu/MOT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paralegal Studies Certificate</td>
<td>Sally Bisson-Best, J.D.</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sbisson@csm.edu">sbisson@csm.edu</a></td>
<td>402-399-2418</td>
<td>Learn more at CSM.edu/PBPL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Doctor of Education</td>
<td>Dr. Kristi Preisman</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kpreisman@csm.edu">kpreisman@csm.edu</a></td>
<td>402-399-2602</td>
<td>Learn more at CSM.edu/EdDonline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Studies Admissions Advisor</td>
<td>Kelley Miller</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kmiller@csm.edu">kmiller@csm.edu</a></td>
<td>402-399-2444</td>
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College of Saint Mary graduate programs are open to both men and women, with the exception of Master of Occupational Therapy. College of Saint Mary is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, 230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500, Chicago, IL, 60604-1413. 800-621-7440.
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In keeping with the Christian principles upon which the University was founded and is operated, College of Saint Mary does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, disability, age, marital status or national origin. Although it is a university for women, College of Saint Mary is in compliance with applicable federal and state laws prohibiting sex discrimination.

STAFF
Greg Fritz
Vice President for Strategic Marketing & Communications

Brittney Long
Director of Public Relations & Communications

Allison Kuklis
Graphic Designer & Publications Coordinator

Chris Kasel
Media Relations Coordinator/Writer

ON THE COVER
Studying flower morphology in CSM's greenhouse, from left: Dr. Phyllis Higley, associate professor of biology, with Mindy Phan '18 and Hannah Pauley '18, pre-physician assistant studies students.

8 LANE CHANGE
While his earlier truck driving gig may be ruled a false start, Ben Porter is ready to coach CSM swimming for the long haul.

12 TOOLS OF THE TRADE
The weird, the wonderful, the cutting-edge. Frog research, NASA experiments, 3-D dissection tables – CSM resources provide a rich learning experience for students in the health professions and sciences.

17 A TIME OF CELEBRATION
Reunions provide an opportunity for rejoicing. That was the feeling at the annual Alumnae Reunion and Founders Day events. A full weekend of recognition, fun, food and fellowship for all who attended.
Come gather 'round people / Wherever you roam / And admit that the waters / Around you have grown / And accept it that soon / You'll be drenched to the bone / If your time to you is worth savin' / Then you better start swimmin' or you'll sink like a stone / For the times they are a-changin'

Bob Dylan penned these words in 1964 as anthem of change for that tumultuous decade. I chose to open with them not because we feature our swim team in this issue of JOURNEYS but, because the times are still changing – rapidly. The song’s message of change resonates just as strongly in this new millennium.

Pope Francis is changing the perception of the Catholic Church in the world. Climate change is altering our environment and, all around us people are on the move seeking to change their life circumstances as immigrants and refugees. Technology is also changing the way we facilitate learning (we no longer talk about “teaching,” rather, we facilitate learning. The learner is the subject, not the object of our efforts).

This issue of JOURNEYS highlights CSM’s commitment to providing our students with the latest in technological equipment and its leadership in bettering the environment. In Tools of the Trade you’ll read about how that technology helps students become the best in health professions. You’ll also find out how students in the physical sciences produce grant-funded research that could help in mending the earth.

It’s a fast-changing world and CSM is adapting quickly. We are asking faculty, staff and students to adapt, as well. We want to see more cognizant of our energy use, and take steps to conserve with a refuse, reuse and recycle frame of mind. As we become more and more active in the greater Omaha community, we will become, more and more, a standard for the types of changes called for by Pope Francis.

We are also thinking more deeply about mercy, about what it might mean as we anticipate College of Saint Mary’s 100th anniversary in 2023. We want to continue our journey of educating women in an environment that calls forth potential and fosters leadership and, we want to not only be perceived as affordable, but truly be affordable. No woman should be denied a College of Saint Mary education because of lack of financial resources.

I hope you enjoy this issue of JOURNEYS, it not only reflects upon where we’ve been, but also provides glimpses into where we are going. It’s a journey, after all!

– Dr. Maryanne Stevens, RSM

For a complete list of CSM Board Members and their company/community affiliates, visit CSM.edu/AboutUs/BoardofDirectors.
DECEMBER

Friday, Dec. 4 - Saturday, Dec. 5
Flames Swimming
UNO Invite at University of Nebraska at Omaha

Friday, Dec. 4
Lessons & Carols Christmas Concert
7 p.m. | Our Lady of Mercy Chapel (seating is limited)
$10 admission. Buy tickets at CSM.edu/Christmas.

Saturday, Dec. 5
Cookies with Santa
9-11 a.m. | Mercy Hall Dining Room
Free admission. RSVP at CSM.edu/Santa

Saturday, Dec. 5
Advent Waiting & The Saint John’s Bible
Presented by Dr. Aline Paris, RSM
1:30-3 p.m. | Hillmer Art Gallery
Free admission. RSVP at CSM.edu/Advent.

Saturday, Dec. 12
Flames Basketball vs. Northwestern College
2 p.m. | CSM Lied Fitness Center

Saturday, Dec. 12
Flames Swimming vs. University of Nebraska at Kearney
6 p.m. | CSM Lied Fitness Center Pool

Saturday, Dec. 19
Graduation
5 p.m. • Baccalaureate Mass | Our Lady of Mercy Chapel
6 p.m. • Reception | Mercy Hall Dining Room
7:30 p.m. • Graduation | Lied Fitness Center

Thursday, Dec. 24 - Friday, Jan. 1
Winter Break
CSM Closed

JANUARY

Saturday, January 2
Flames Basketball vs. Dordt College
2 p.m. | CSM Lied Fitness Center

Wednesday, Jan. 13
Flames Basketball vs. Concordia University
6 p.m. | CSM Lied Fitness Center

Saturday, Jan. 16
Flames Basketball vs. Mount Marty College
2 p.m. | CSM Lied Fitness Center

Thursday, Jan. 21
Love, Loss and What I Wore
Omaha Community Playhouse Preview Night
6 p.m. • CSM Alumnae & Friends Reception
7:30 p.m. • Performance
Complimentary admission.
RSVP to 402-399-2453 or gthompson@csm.edu.

Wednesday, Jan. 27
Flames Basketball vs. Hastings College
6 p.m. | CSM Lied Fitness Center

Saturday, Jan. 30
Flames Basketball vs. Morningside College
2 p.m. | CSM Lied Fitness Center

FEBRUARY

Wednesday, Feb. 3
Flames Basketball vs. Midland University
6 p.m. | CSM Lied Fitness Center

Wednesday, Feb. 10
Flames Basketball vs. Doane College
6 p.m. | CSM Lied Fitness Center

Saturday, Feb. 13
Flames Basketball vs. Dakota Wesleyan University
2 p.m. | CSM Lied Fitness Center

MAY

Saturday, May 14
Graduation
5 p.m. • Baccalaureate Mass | Our Lady of Mercy Chapel
7:30 p.m. • Honors Convocation | Our Lady of Mercy Chapel
7:30 p.m. • Certificate Ceremony | Gross Auditorium
7:30 p.m. • Masters Hooding Ceremony | Lied Fitness Center

Sunday, May 15
Commencement
10:30 a.m. | CenturyLink Center

CSM Closed
COMMUNITY SPIRIT

PRESIDENT STEVENS AT POPE’S HISTORIC VISIT

Preferably, President Dr. Maryanne Stevens, RSM, travelled to the nation’s capital in September to witness Pope Francis’ historic presentation to the U.S Congress. Stevens’ trip was at the invitation of Nebraska Sen. Deb Fischer.

It was an emotional event for Stevens, who surprised herself by tearing up when Pope Francis entered the Congressional chambers. The occasion was miraculous, she says. “Fifty years ago we were, as a country, afraid to elect a Catholic to the presidency. The public was afraid that the pope would be able to tell the president what to do. And here we were, with Congress welcoming the pope with a standing ovation!”

His message to the audience was simple, says Stevens, “that all may be one.”

Stevens says that the pope’s message was that we are in this world together; we are at our best when we care for one another and the earth, as well. But realizing that simple message will be complicated and difficult.

Stevens joined with at least 95 other leaders in U.S. Catholic higher education in supporting Pope Francis’ message on climate change and social justice. The pope’s encyclical, Laudato Si’, identified those crises as defining characteristics of our time, and a serious threat to our future.

The pledged universities will work together as institutions of higher learning “to study, promote and act on Pope Francis’ ideals and vision of integral ecology, and to provide influential leadership in addressing climate change and social justice.”

CSM NAMED TOP COLLEGE FOR PARENTING STUDENTS

College of Saint Mary (CSM) this fall was named the nation’s #1 college for parenting students by Students for Life of America (SFLA).

CSM “tops the list by a milestone with their nationally-renowned Mothers Living & Learning (MLL) program,” according to SFLA, which also described the program as “unique.”

The organization determined that CSM offered an academic experience that allows students to choose parenting along with an education, rather than sacrificing one for the other. SFLA recognized colleges and universities that put a premium on offering pregnant and parenting students the resources they need to succeed as parents while pursuing their education.

STANDEVEN NAMED NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MISSION INTEGRATION

Marian Standeven has been named College of Saint Mary’s (CSM) executive director of mission integration. Standeven has more than 27 years of experience in mission integration. She served as division director at CHI, and operations leader at Alegent Health.

“The rich Catholic tradition at CSM and the inspiring legacy of the Mercy heritage offer wonderful opportunities to make our mission and ministry alive in the world today,” says Standeven.

Standeven’s work will complement the efforts of CSM’s senior leadership team in ensuring that the University’s mission is integral to every decision and activity undertaken by the college.

College of Saint Mary is a Catholic university providing access to education for women in an environment that calls forth potential and fosters leadership.

CSM mission revised June 2015
COLOMBIAN STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM MOVING FORWARD AT CSM

The student exchange program between College of Saint Mary (CSM) and the University of Francisco de Paula Santander (UFDS) continues to blossom.

In July, Dr. Virginia Tufano, director of the master of science in nursing program, and Dr. Kathleen Zajic, division chair of health professions, traveled to Cucuta, Colombia to further relations between the two institutions.

The trip allowed the two to explore the university’s facilities and simulation labs, as well as venture into the community clinics, where UFDS nursing students spend two full years participating in service learning. It’s also where Tufano and Zajic hope to send CSM nursing students in a cultural exchange program.

The duo returned to Omaha with a formal agreement of cooperation between CSM and UFDS in academic efforts and research activities. In October, CSM President Dr. Maryanne Stevens, RSM, named a committee that will assist in implementing the partnership.

MERCEY HALL DINING ROOM RENOVATIONS COMPLETE

The grand re-opening of the Mercy Hall dining room was held on Tuesday, Sept. 4. Renovations included new serving stations, including a pizza station and Mongolian style grill, buffet islands, furniture and contemporary décor.

Several green initiatives were also put in place. Foam-style glasses were replaced with hard plastic glasses. The dining hall is now trayless, which cuts down on food waste and water usage. The kitchen now boasts a pulverizer, which composes food and paper.

Renovations for both the first and second floors conform to LEED Silver standards. Completion on the first floor of Mercy Hall is expected to be in late fall 2015.

RECORD RETENTION RATES POSTED THIS FALL

Chances are great that a freshman who entered College of Saint Mary (CSM) in fall 2014 is back on campus for fall 2015. The University posted a record high retention rate of 83 percent for first-time, full-time students who enrolled in fall 2014 and returned to CSM this fall.

“Our retention rate for first-time, full-time students has been increasing steadily for the last five years from 60 percent to this year’s 83 percent,” says Angela Fernandez, CSM assistant dean for retention programs. CSM also posted an impressive 93 percent over-all retention rate, spring 2014-fall 2015.

“The most recent peer benchmark for first to second year retention among institutions similar to CSM is 78 percent,” says Dr. Tara Knudson Carl, vice president for student development, “so we’re especially pleased to reach 83 percent this fall.”

Knudson says a retention plan created four years ago focused on adding academic assistance where it was most needed, and providing increased opportunities for student engagement. “We are thrilled to see the efforts result in increased student success and progress at CSM.”

Faculty and staff also work hard to ensure student success. “We consider each student’s situation and get to know them so that we can better help them succeed,” Fernandez says. “Students want to be where they are heard and recognized,” she adds. “At CSM we strive to do that every day.”

CSM FAST FACTS

2015 ENROLLMENT SNAPSHOT

1,001 Total Students

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<tr>
<td>Part-Time Undergraduates</td>
<td>266</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate Students</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Degree Seeking Students</td>
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Where are our students from?

- 81% Nebraska
- 10% Iowa
- 9% Other states and countries

Student-to-Faculty Ratio

10:1

Full-time Faculty: 62
Adjunct Faculty: 90
Staff: 106

Top 5 Majors

1. Occupational Therapy
2. Nursing
3. Sciences
4. Education
5. Business

Ethnicity & Religion

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<td>Latina/Hispanic</td>
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<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-White/Unknown</td>
<td>13%</td>
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Student Population: 42% Catholic
Ben Porter’s professional prelims as an over-the-road trucker stalled when he agreed to anchor the College of Saint Mary swim team.

It’s the heat. And the humidity.

Step onto the deck of any indoor practice pool and within seconds the hair curls and foreheads bead up and the Under Armour threatens to go way under. You can imagine tropics, yet the anticipated scent of gardenias is bulldozed by the Eau de Chlorine. It’s like standing in a laundry room on steroids.

But for eight young College of Saint Mary swimmers and their two fervent coaches, this biting swamp air swirls above the road to success. Nearly every day since Sept. 14, these student athletes and their taskmasters have gone the distance to prepare for another swim season.

Head Coach Ben Porter determines his coaching style daily based on team mood. If his athletes are tired or anxious, his is a calm, steady cadence of “straighten your arms” or “sharpen your turns.” If it’s Friday and exams are done for another week, the Omaha-area native cranks up his volume poolside to match his students’ exuberance.
“I want them to be excited,” Porter, himself an all-American swimmer, says. “I’m vocal – I want them to always be prepared to swim their best any time. Some days it’s a huge challenge to work with eight completely different personalities. But I’ll do anything I can to keep them excited about swimming.”

Some days that’s a lot of racing and fast splits. Other days it’s dry-land with a twist – kick boxing, yoga or spin classes. Swim videos to study share students’ desk space with textbooks and planners. A team nutritionist routinely counsels the women on the best foods for pre-meet and recovery. ("Coach Ben always has that chocolate milk waiting for us after practice," laughs nursing major Carolyn Hanus ’17.)

When Porter inherited the program in 2013, one senior remained from the previous team. “We were a small program still searching for an identity,” he recalls. But he hit the recruitment trail and brought in a talented class for his first season. Each year the seasons have welcomed impressive talent, Porter and Assistant Coach Bob Henchal pushed harder and increased expectations.

“Before coming here, I’d never focused on moving through the water the best way I can. He’s teaching us techniques that have helped me get past that plateau I’d reached by the end of high school.”

– Sidney Drew ’18

“I’ve learned so many different ways to train,” says Sidney Drew ’18, an occupational therapy student from Lee’s Summit, Mo. “Before coming here, I’d never focused on moving through the water the best way I can. He’s teaching us techniques that have helped me get past that plateau I’d reached by the end of high school.”

**From Ralston, to the Horn of Africa, out of Lincoln and on to CSM**

Ben Porter slammed into his first plateau at 13, five years after he began swimming for Oak Hill swim club in nearby Ralston, Neb. Porter grew up in a swimming family, but by the time he turned teen, he “didn’t have a lot of love for it anymore,” he said. “I think I really just wanted to go get myself into trouble.” So Coach Louis Demetriades came to Porter’s house, picked him up and drove him to practice. Demetriades helped the young swimmer set goals that led him to a standout swim career at Omaha Creighton Prep for four years, each of those seasons resulting in a state championship.

But as his buddies were packing up for college, Porter yearned for a different challenge. A visit to a U.S. Navy recruiting office convinced him to use his sport to serve on military search-and-rescue teams. So for the next five years, Porter worked as an air crewman in the back of Bravo SH60B helicopters, manning anti-submarine warfare operating systems. He trained as part of a two-man team to both operate the rescue hoist and go into the water for the save. And especially while deployed on the Horn of Africa, he searched for drug and human trafficking between Somali and Yemen. Though assignments also took
him to the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea, Porter was fortunate never to have to perform an actual rescue.

By 2007, Porter was homesick and ready to leave behind 1,200 helicopter hours. He enrolled in general studies at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) and managed his boyhood Oak Hill Pool part time. Previously, while stationed at the U.S. naval base in Mayport, Fla., Porter joined a master’s swim team but realized he spent more time out of the water coaching others than actually performing. “I realized I may have had some unfinished business with swimming,” he says. So he picked up coaching courses at UNO and assisted Tom Beck, his high school swim coach, at Greater Omaha Aquatics.

Porter’s networking paid off in the classroom as well. During spring semester 2010, he noticed nursing student Abby Fitch sitting across the room. As he recalls, “It took me the entire semester to work my way over to her.” He finally asked for her number on the last day of class and she jotted down his on a gum wrapper. The number she gave him didn’t work. He thought she’d dissed him. She finally called him to complain that he’d never called her. Ben still thinks she may have misled him intentionally. Abby denies it. They’ve been married since 2012.

Shortly after graduating from UNO, Porter’s dream of coaching his own team was realized when he was hired at Lincoln (Neb.) Southeast High School. After one season, he left Lincoln, assuming he was better cut out for a different career. So he enrolled at JTL Truck Driving School in Omaha.

“I learned how to drive a semi, and I got my Class CDL [license],” Porter says. “Just before I graduated from the school, a good friend told me about the coaching job at College of Saint Mary. I’d always said I’d go for that job if it was available because I knew it would be an excellent place to coach. And everyone – my friends, my family – they all convinced me that’s what I was meant to do. They told me I had to take a shot at it.”

“This entire school is made up of incredibly intelligent young women who take school so seriously. They don’t come here on a whim. The result is that you get extremely focused academic students who know how to balance school and athletics.”

– Coach Ben Porter

Academics and athletics swim side by side with Coach Porter

Under Porter’s coaching, the CSM Flames swim team has broken 24 school records. Thirteen women have qualified for the national meet. In 2014, the team snagged its highest-ever NAIA National Meet finish in 14th place. And its swimmers have earned among the highest grade-point averages of all swim teams in the U.S.: an impressive 3.6 out of 4. “This entire school is made up of incredibly intelligent young women who take school so seriously,”
Porter says, “They don’t come here on a whim. The result is that you get extremely focused students who know how to balance school and athletics.”

All eight of this year’s swimmers are majoring in science- or health-related programs. Last year’s team captain, Colleen Bernal ’17, studies in the college’s pre-physician assistant program. When she’s not studying and swimming, she’s coordinating science outreach programs for Omaha elementary schools. And taking piano lessons. Teammate Hanus is a nursing major (“It’s hard – I’m not gonna lie”) whose most recent injuries have come from her desk, not the pool.

“My wrist hurt so bad, and the doctor told me I had tendonitis,” Hanus says. “But not from swimming – it was from copying down all my notes to get me through midterms.”

To accommodate his swimmers’ intense academic challenges, Porter now schedules a flexible practice regimen. He and Henchal are available at the pool weekdays from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., and team members show up once they’re out of class. Joining them this year is graduate assistant Victoria Schopp, a former four-year swimmer at UNO. She works extensively with potential recruits and helps Porter better communicate with his charges.

“This year, I’m working harder on being more aware and more understanding of the swimmers’ other stresses,” Porter says. “We’re talking more each week about what challenges are ahead of them. I really want to keep building their confidence. Victoria has just finished the life they’re living, so she can provide me lots of input I don’t think about.”

“We’re talking more each week about what challenges are ahead of them. I really want to keep building their confidence.”

– Coach Ben Porter

But it’s Henchal, Porter’s longtime mentor and friend, who provides the encouragement and stability Porter relies on. “The day I got this job, I wanted Bob to be a part of it, too,” Porter says. Bob just naturally knows the right thing to do – he lives his life the way you should. In a lot of ways he’s coaching me as he’s coaching the swimmers.”

Henchal, retired from IBM, has led Porter’s former Oak Hill swim club since shortly after he moved to Omaha in 2001. Like Porter, he wants to build confidence and character.

“One of my favorite movies to use for training is The Wizard of Oz,” Henchal says. “At one point, Dorothy scolds Glenda the Good Witch for not telling her she could have gone back home any time. So Glenda reminds her that sometimes, you just have to find out things for yourself. All our swim practices just convince our athletes that they can swim. The mental piece of the game is the most important.”

**Flames streamline their efforts, sighting for 2016**

The team kicked off its season Oct. 31 with an impressive showing against University of Nebraska at Kearney. Freshmen nursing student Regina LeMense ’19 and occupational therapy major Sage Porter ’19 are poised to contribute significantly to this year’s squad. And Porter is already making big plans once next year’s recruiting class moves onto campus.

In the meantime, the Flames will stretch and flex and dive and breathe. They’ll go out for ice cream and cram for tests. And, come May 2016, they’ll most likely fight to babysit once Ben and Abby add a new leg to the Porter family relay.
Dr. Amanda Roe, assistant professor of biology, reviews the muscles of the arm with students.
**BLOW FLIES, AND PIGLETS, AND CADAVERS – OH MY!**

Dr. Amanda Roe has studied blow flies for seven years. “If it was not for blow flies and their maggots (baby flies),” says the College of Saint Mary (CSM) assistant professor of biology “we would be up to our necks in dead, stinking carcasses.” That’s one reason she encourages her students to take an interest in them. It’s also why she uses blow flies to impart a basic understanding of general biology.

“Flies impact almost every facet of human life – disease, pollination, decomposition and food,” she says. “My lab focuses on blow flies and animal (including human) decomposition and how it impacts the ecosystem.” Roe’s students learn why and how blow flies are used in forensic science to help estimate time of death in crime scene investigations.

Students learn a great deal in the classroom,” says Dr. Jeff Keyte, division chair of arts & sciences at CSM. “However, hands-on experiences are closest to what students will actually do. By having students integrate what they know with real-time situations, the brain is able to learn in the way it learns best – by doing, problem solving, succeeding and even failing.”

To engage students in the learning process, Roe uses lab research to show differences in maggot growth rates. One of Roe’s former students, Kara Fletcher ’15 was interested in learning if maggots have a preference for different substrates, such as sand, soil or wood chips. The biology major, who graduated in May was also interested in how cycles of light and dark impact the speed of maggot development. Roe worked with Fletcher to develop her experiment.

Each day Fletcher measured the number of maggots in the different substrates, timing developmental differences in containers exposed to either full or partial light. “She found that sand extended development,” says Roe. “There wasn’t much difference between the light treatments.” Fletcher received the Albertus Magnus Award funded by alumna Barbi Hayes ’89, for her research titled *Lucilia sericata’s Developmental Response When Introduced to Different Substrates*.

Roe also takes her students on field trips to examine road kill, and has them study decomposing pigs to capture blow flies and monitor the fly populations. “The absolute best thing in the world for me to hear,” she says, “is ‘I thought maggots were disgusting, but now I think they’re cool’!”

It’s an epiphany, says Roe. “It’s that moment when a student gains appreciation for an organism that they didn’t know anything about, or had a lifetime of preconceived negative feelings toward. “It makes me smile every time.”

Roe’s students can easily capture flies off decomposing pigs – because the pigs are on campus grounds. Dr. Phyllis Higley, associate professor of biology, says the experiment fascinates her students.

The dead piglets, excellent models for human remains, are set out for in-depth study of decomposition, a critical aspect of nutrient cycling in the ecosystem. “Decomposition of skeletal muscle is used forensically to estimate time of death,” she says.

Carrion flies come immediately to dead animals to lay their eggs, which hatch into maggots, pupate and develop into the adult form. “The developmental stages are regulated by environmental conditions,” says Higley, "so the speed of fly development can be used to figure back to when the animal died.

“Students observe over time the process of decomposition through fly development,” she says. “They hone their scientific observational skills and are exposed to a graphic understanding of decomposition.”

Students also set up field studies with the pig carcasses, varying treatments that either allow flies to lay eggs or to prevent flies from laying eggs. In doing so, “students learn how to design and set up a controlled experiment,” she explains.

**GOING WHERE THE GREEN THINGS (AND FROGS) GROW**

The opportunity for experiential learning goes beyond the cadavers on campus. Higley also takes her students off-campus for field trips. “Biology is the study of life,” she says. “There’s no better place to learn about it than outside.”

“We can talk about plants, and observe them in the University’s greenhouse all year long, but it’s best to experience where and how they grow.” That often means meandering Little Papio Creek or

Karen Saavedra ’17, biology major, inoculates a plant to study root rot disease.
visiting Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo, which boasts a rare plant lab and amphibian conservation area.

She coordinates with the zoo so her zoology students can learn more about the alarming decline of amphibians around the world. “They learn more about why this is happening, including loss of habitat, pollution, climate change and the increased prevalence of chytrid disease,” says Higley. They also join the zoo and many global conservation programs in surveying frogs for the disease.

Higley's students perform their surveys on the banks of the creek, which is located behind the University. Pairs or small groups of student-researchers survey a broad area, engaging in collaborative learning; they learn not only from the professor, but each other, as well.

The creek is useful for students in a many different disciplines. Biology students use the area to learn field techniques, such as capture-mark-recapture. Students in the environmental sciences learn how to test for water quality levels, and ecology students learn how to develop eco tours.

Off-campus field work complements on-campus lab experiments. After observing frogs in their natural habitat, students then collect specimens for dissection. They quickly learn that catching them is not as easy as it sounds, but the exercise has its own rewards.

“My students come back from these collecting trips as if from a quest,” she says. “They tell tales of the physical obstacles they overcame and the trickiness of the frogs.”

“They also take great pride in the contribution they are making to science, and they realize that science is a community endeavor.”

In addition to lab work, students also take advantage of CSM's teaching greenhouse on the east side of campus. Members of the Green Team (a student group focusing on environmental issues and community involvement) grow plants and sell them to raise money for their activities. Stock plants in the greenhouse provide propagation material to grow more plants, which are used in botany and other classes. The plants are also used by students conducting research experiments funded by a NASA Nebraska Space Grant.

The NASA student research evaluates the risks of pythium root rot in hydroponically-grown plants. This research could have application on the International Space Center as more food is produced in space.

The student researchers also gain valuable research and presentation skills by presenting their findings at the Nebraska Academy of Science meetings.

Dr. Jeff Keyte, division chair for arts & sciences, operates CSM's new Anatomage Table.

IRREPLACEABLE CADAVER RESEARCH AND CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY

When it comes to education in the health professions, says Keyte, “there is quite literally no replacement” for using human cadavers. Few colleges or universities in Nebraska or surrounding states have even one cadaver. CSM presently has two and, by August 2016, the University will have eight.

“There is no way to learn the detailed and complex structure of the human body without working with cadavers.”

The latest in cutting-edge technology complements the cadaver research. CSM’s new Anatomage Table is a technologically advanced anatomy visualization system used in the world's leading medical schools and institutions.

The table resembles an operating table or hospital bed and provides opportunities for virtual dissection. The 3-D views come from human dissections, as well as MRI and CT scans and create real-patient contents. They perfectly illustrate the anatomical realism of a living human.

“One of the most important things students learn at the table is cross-sectional...
“Anatomy,” says Keyte, “which is very difficult to get with cadavers but which the new table easily provides.

“Students will need to know how to read these images and make clinical decisions based on them,” says Keyte. “The table is an exquisite tool for this kind of learning.”

CSM students “have ample access to a depth of incredible resources,” adds Keyte. “It’s one of the things that makes our pre-physician assistant (Pre-PA) program unique.”

In addition to the cadaver lab and 3-D dissection table, CSM students also have access to the Health Professions Skills and Simulation Center. “It provides amazing opportunities for students to think on their feet,” he adds. “Students can then apply what they have learned in real-world-like circumstances.”

In the labs students run “codes,” resuscitation and advanced life-saving and life support drills, with lifelike simulators (mannequins) of adults, children, infants and a pregnant woman. “Students experience in real time how their actions affect patients,” says Keyte, “providing valuable lessons about what to do and what not to do that are not easily forgotten.”

“It’s similar to sports,” says Shaun Grammer, M.S., PA-C., physician assistant studies program director. “Practice the way you want to perform. The simulations allow students to practice in situations as close to real life as possible.

“When students start rotations in a clinical setting, they feel more prepared, and more importantly, less nervous,” says Grammer.

All college programs include patient-simulated encounters, he says, but CSM combines its teaching tools with simulations that take place twice a week for seven or more months. “This level of preparation is a unique aspect of our program,” he adds.

Students also use simulators to learn about heart and breath sounds, and laparoscopy, a surgical procedure in which a small incision is made and a small camera (laparoscope) is inserted for examining inside the body.

The depth of teaching tools extends to the nursing and occupational therapy programs.

REALISTIC SIMULATIONS + SKILLS LABS = REAL WORLD EXPERTISE AND CONFIDENCE

“Therapy labs engage students in their learning experience,” states Dr. Alicia Oldham, assistant professor of occupational therapy and lab coordinator.

“Our pediatric OT lab simulates actual clinics,” says Oldham, “so students can readily connect what they are learning to real life.

“We bring in children from the community to the lab, and have our students go out into the community to develop their observation skills and entry-level clinical reasoning skills,” says Oldham, “that are necessary for decision-making during the evaluation and intervention processes in the field.”

The OT department features a home health lab that simulates an apartment with a bedroom and kitchen, as well as living, bath and laundry rooms. “Students use this space regularly to practice their skills, solve case study problems and develop their clinical reasoning skills,” adds Oldham.

The main OT lab includes a hanging mat table that allow students to practice positioning and transferring patients; mobility devices that are used in the field; and a large variety of adaptive equipment and splinting materials.

“Clinicians report that our students are well prepared, creative and demonstrate strong clinical reasoning skills,” adds Dr. Yolanda Griffiths, occupational therapy program director.

“We are most proud of the personal growth we witness, from

Assisting a child in CSM's pediatric occupational therapy lab, from left: Mia Gilreath ’16, occupational therapy major, and Dr. Alicia Oldham, assistant professor of occupational therapy.
students who barely knew what occupational therapy was when they first started – to graduates walking across the stage at commencement,” says Griffiths. “These are women who demonstrate knowledge, skills and the demeanor of professionals.”

CSM is known for producing some of the region’s best nurses. Dr. Christi Glesmann ’04, ’06, M’08, D’14, director of undergraduate nursing, says she knows why.

“Our Health Professions Skills and Simulation Center offers many great opportunities for learning,” she says. The skills labs predominantly used for nursing have 18 medium-fidelity simulators that allow students to practice vital signs, head-to-toe assessments, medication administration, insertion of nasogastric tubes and urinary catheters.

“All of the simulators are in hospital beds with their own supply charts and computers,” says Glesmann. All the learning materials students need are at their fingertips.

CSM also has four rooms that provide higher-level simulations with high-fidelity simulators; two medical-surgical/ICU rooms; one pediatric room; and a labor and delivery suite where the simulator even gives birth. All rooms are equipped with recording software to allow the students and faculty to review the simulation.

Glesmann says it’s rewarding to watch the growth of each student from enrollment to graduation. The faculty see a student’s growth “personally, academically and professionally,” she says, adding that she was humbled when a student told her how grateful she was for the unique learning experience at CSM.

“She said the opportunity taught her what it meant to be happy and successful in her career,” added Glesmann.

Higley recalls similar comments by a recent biology graduate. The student told her “the experience that sticks out most for me at College of Saint Mary is the learning environment.

“I got to know myself better and I increased my confidence as a woman and a leader on social and academic levels. I feel prepared to be a well-rounded professional.”

“The skills labs predominantly used for nursing have 18 medium-fidelity simulators that allow students to practice vital signs, head-to-toe assessments, medication administration, insertion of nasogastric tubes and urinary catheters.”
A Time of Celebration

ALUMNAE REUNION & FOUNDERS DAY

In the spirit of community and recognition of service, alumnae, donors, friends, faculty and staff gathered together in fellowship during Alumnae Reunion Weekend to celebrate and honor their own.

This was a time to remember the past and explore the future. The weekend began with live music, wine tasting and superb art by CSM alumnae and friends.

On a beautiful Saturday evening, the community gathered together for our Founders Day Dinner where we thanked those generous donors who help make a College of Saint Mary education possible for so many of our students. We also honored six outstanding alumnae who have continued to live out the CSM mission in all aspects of their lives.

Sunday concluded with a special Liturgy where the class of 1965 was inducted as CSM Figures of Wisdom. Our Lady of Mercy Society and Figures of Wisdom members celebrated after Mass with brunch to honor the new inductees.
Alumnae Reunion Weekend

REMEMBER THE PAST. EXPLORE THE FUTURE.

Alumnae of all ages joined us for a fun-filled, beautiful September weekend full of friendship, conversation and most of all celebration. Kicking off the festivities was An Evening of Culture where 30+ alumnae and friends featured their exquisite art work. With 120+ in attendance the Hillmer Art Gallery was bustling.

On Saturday, alumnae enjoyed morning coffee and a campus tour, followed by a number of informative educational sessions. Attendees learned about CSM’s Anatomage Table, the fine arts department, education program and our St. John’s Bible collection.

The weekend concluded with the annual Figures of Wisdom Liturgy. Alumnae celebrating their 50th class reunion were inducted and honored at Mass. Members from both the Figures of Wisdom and Our Lady of Mercy Society joined together for brunch and great conversation to close the reunion.

Daniela Juan-Rojas ’15 was one of 30+ alumnae and friends who exhibited their artwork during Alumnae Reunion Weekend. Daniela is pictured with President Dr. Maryanne Stevens, RSM.

Patty Stodola O’Bryan ’91
2015 Athletic Hall of Fame Inductee

Patty O’Bryan is one of College of Saint Mary’s most decorated softball pitchers. She was also known for her tremendous work ethic and ability to play anywhere on the field. In 1990, her junior year, O’Bryan had a 32-6 pitching record, which tied for the most wins that year by any NAIA pitcher.

Among her many honors, she was named an NAIA Academic All-American, District 11 Player of the Year, and earned first team All-District honors three times.

Currently, O’Bryan is the director of political relations with rural Media Group in Gretna, Neb., and remains active in the local softball community. She leads the select fast-pitch program at Omaha Suburban Athletic Association and also coaches her daughter’s softball team.

Peggy O’Neill ’65

Peggy O’Neill received her bachelor’s degree in English from College of Saint Mary (CSM) in 1965.

After graduation, the Clarion, Iowa resident taught in Nebraska, Iowa and Nevada. She served as president for both the Bellevue (Nebraska) Education Association, and the CSM alumnae board; as well as board member of the Nebraska State Education Association.

The Washoe County (Nevada) Teacher’s Association in 1990 recognized her for outstanding service and dedication.

O’Neill served as a Nevada State Senator (89-90), and as president for the Sparks Nevada Chamber of Commerce. In 1996, the chamber named her Member of the Year.

O’Neill retired in 2008, but continues serving her community by working with the Clarion (Ia.) Chamber of Commerce. She is also especially involved at St. John’s Catholic Church in Clarion.

She currently serves on its social justice committee.

Suzanne Liebentritt Garcia ’70

After graduating with a degree in elementary education, Suzanne Garcia taught in Omaha for two years before moving to the West Coast. The Huntington, Calif., resident earned a Master Catechist Certificate from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Orange, and she continues to teach and serve in her church and community.

In 2008, Garcia was named to the first Pastoral Council for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Orange, which advises the Most Rev. Kevin W. Vann, JCD, DD, bishop of Orange. She continues in that capacity today. Garcia also currently serves as a volunteer docent for Christ Cathedral.

“I think that going to College of Saint Mary continued to encourage me, and revealed to me that giving was the way to live,” says Garcia. “That has carried through my entire life.”
Alumnae Achievement Awards

AND ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

College of Saint Mary’s (CSM) culture and ideals have a greater impact on a student than just their academic and professional achievement – it weaves into the fabric of their life. It impacts how they live. It impacts their service to their family and to their community.

This year during our Founders Day Dinner, we honored six alumnae who have lived out CSM’s ideals and are stellar examples of what it means to be a walking woman. They reveal in their own lives the values of CSM and the importance of service, leadership and community.

Beth Tacke Black ’75

Beth Black, owner of renowned Omaha bookstore, The Bookworm, graduated from College of Saint Mary (CSM) with a degree in early childhood education.

Black’s bookstore has been honored numerous times. The Metropolitan Reading Council recognized the bookseller for promoting literacy; it’s twice won Best of Omaha; and in 2014 it was awarded with Nebraska Center for the Book’s Jane Geske Award for exceptional contributions to literacy, books and reading.

Black captained The Bookworm during a time when many locally owned bookstores crumbled; first under the pressure of large corporate booksellers, and then online retailers. It even caught the eye of Warren Buffet. By invitation, each year the non-Berkshire Hathaway company sets up a shop at its annual shareholders meeting.

CSM helped her to “fully understand and believe” that she could do anything, says Black.

Amy Gaughan McAuliffe ’90

Amy McAuliffe graduated from College of Saint Mary (CSM) in 1990 with a degree in business administration.

The Omaha resident has served as a marketing consultant and project manager for clients in the high-tech business sector. She also served as global marketing events manager for an international software solutions company based in California.

McAuliffe has volunteered her time with St. Patrick’s Elementary School in Elkhorn, Neb., and served as both general and class chair for Mercy High School FIESTA Annual Fund. She began volunteering as a trainer and wish granter at the Make-a-Wish Foundation in 2013 and continues in that position today.

McAuliffe credits CSM as a major force in her professional career and volunteer efforts. “Both the academic excellence and culture at CSM has been the ongoing foundation of my career and personal life,” she says.

Orlanda Whitfield ’05, M’06, D’12

Orlanda Whitfield began her life of service to others as a senior in high school, where she mentored at-risk youth and conducted a summer program through the Omaha Public Schools.

She has received several recognitions during her 15-year career at CenturyLink; Pride Award, 1999 and 2001; an employee service award in 2000; and a 2006 Circle of Excellence. Since 2006 she has served as adjunct faculty in the College of Saint Mary business leadership and management program.

Whitfield currently is establishing a non-profit that will assist single mothers to build their leadership skills, and help them secure funding for college. The non-profit will also work with at-risk youth in developing leadership skills, and provide them with positive outlets for creativity.
Founders Day Dinner

AN EVENING TO REMEMBER

It was a perfect match of environment and event. The early fall evening provided a beautiful setting sun, balmy temperatures and a soft breeze for those attending the annual College of Saint Mary (CSM) Founders Day Dinner.

The event honored donors who make a CSM education possible for so many students. Six alumnae were also recognized.

The Mercy Hall dining room was transformed for the formal dinner. The magical evening provided attendees with appetizers, live music, fine food, fellowship and lasting memories.
From left: Leslie Jeffries; Rick Jeffries, J.D., CSM board of directors chair; Deborah Macdonald, J.D., CSM board of directors treasurer; and Dr. Aline Paris, RSM, CSM professor of theology.

From left: Emmet Root; and Fran Root, former CSM board member.

From left: Dr. Jeoffrey Deeths; and Lenore Baburek Deeths ‘62.

From left: Peggy O’Neill ‘65; Dr. Sally O’Neill; and Dr. Kathleen Zajic D’10, CSM division chair for health professions.

From left: President Dr. Maryanne Stevens, RSM; Kathleen Dodge, CSM board of directors vice chair; and Sandy Dodge.

From left: Jerry Janssen; and Sarah Kottich, CSM vice president for finance and administrative services.

From left: Lorraine Chang, J.D., CSM board member; and Marilyn Bombac.
“ADVANCING” MY CAREER

After 12 years in public higher education as a faculty member, division chair and academic dean, I decided a little over seven years ago to try administration at a private, Catholic college. It was not just any Catholic college, it was College of Saint Mary (CSM), whose mission is dedicated to the education of women, and provides an environment that calls forth potential and fosters leadership. And for me, in the words of Robert Frost, “that has made all the difference.”

Once again this past summer, my road forked as I chose to leave nearly 20 years in academic affairs to pursue leading alumnae & donor relations at CSM. To some this seemed an odd choice, I suppose, but I was itchy for a new challenge. What better choice, it seemed, than to convey the many stories that I have accumulated over these years at CSM to the friends and supporters of the college.

I have always believed that education has the power to change lives. This has never been more evident to me than at CSM. Not only do the best, brightest and most gifted succeed at this university, but also those students whose life path has been more difficult are given opportunities. This happens because donors and alumnae of the college provide scholarships that allow high school graduates, transfer students, single mothers, undocumented women and students of all ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds an equal opportunity for an education.

How can I resist telling the story of the student who “just had to be a nurse” and became one; or the occupational therapy student without enough food to feed her children, who has graduated and now has a wonderful job. What greater fulfillment is there than seeing students understand immigration challenges through firsthand service learning trips; or watching them rediscover their spirituality in a theology classes they weren’t sure they wanted to take? So, it seemed logical to make this transition from creating academic programs to telling the story of the good they do.

With my transition complete we’re off to a great start this fall in alumnae & donor relations and I’m very proud of our team. First, we renamed the CSM Fund, the ACCESS FUND because the name focuses on what the financial support does….it provides access to education. Secondly, we completed our community drive (where we ask the campus faculty and staff to contribute to the college) and received 100 percent participation. This is very impressive given that few schools achieve anything close to this percentage of giving, but I think it tells why people work at CSM. Our faculty, staff and administration are proud of our University, the work they do here and the difference it makes for our students.

Our graduates tell us their program of study was challenging and they are pleased with their degree. Surveys show that alumnae, a year after graduation, are thrilled with the education they received and their employers tell us they are some of the best employees they have hired. Our academic programs are accredited, our student retention is hitting record highs and our campus is beautiful! Is there really a better story to tell?

If my brief recounting of student stories and college successes has piqued your interest and you want to hear more let me know, because I have many left to tell and there is nothing I love to recount more (well except perhaps tales of my new grandbaby)!

I look forward to meeting all of you in the coming months. Please join me in this great adventure of changing lives through education.

– Dr. Christine Pharr
Vice President for Alumnae & Donor Relations

CSM.edu/HonorRoll
This year provided a very special homecoming for me. Like all College of Saint Mary (CSM) alumnæ, I was once a daily part of the university’s flow, and the university was part of my daily life. But that changed after graduating in 2008 with my master’s degree in organizational leadership (MOL).

Life is a river; its currents will pull you from one bank to another. It certainly pulled me away from campus. Despite my deep connection to CSM, I only made it back a handful of times. Until this year, those visits were brief. This year, I returned as CSM’s new director of annual giving.

Coming home to CSM has brought me great joy. Every task I undertake, from supervising the phonathon team to grabbing coffee in the morning at Christina’s – they just feel right.

At CSM I’m surrounded by creative people and dedicated faculty and staff who truly believe in the mission of CSM – providing access to education for women in an environment that calls forth potential and fosters leadership. That’s the kind of place where I want to work, and that’s the experience I had when I attended school here.

While a student on campus, I was a single parent (to twins!) working fulltime, but because the MOL program conducted classes on Saturdays, I not only was able to obtain my degree, I became part of a wonderful cohort of women. My classmates, like many of yours, remain to this day some of the greatest friends and professional associates.

Of course, life – that river – pulls us all after we graduate. We travel on new currents, starting our careers, growing families, serving in our communities and making time for new and old friends. Even if we remain close, most of us just don’t have time to come back to campus. We don’t get to see the marvelous changes made to older buildings, or new ones rise. We don’t have time to reconnect with beloved faculty, much less connect with current students.

Coming home to CSM, to witness, to visit, to reconnect, should be joyous and easy. It should be worth the time taken out of your river of life. That’s why I’m encouraging you to take an alumnae survey.

I want to know how to help you make your own homecoming. I want to know what sparks joy for you when you think about CSM. What inspires you to come back and reconnect with a college that gave you more than just a degree? Would you come back to campus to tour new buildings? Meet classmates off campus for happy hour? Have coffee and professional networking meetings in the commons? Participate in a service project with current students?

I really look forward to seeing the results of the survey. I can’t wait to read your thoughts and suggestions. I also look forward to meeting you on campus at one of our outreach events and saying, “welcome home.”

– Janelle Domeyer M’08
Director of Annual Giving

Help us create your next connection to College of Saint Mary: service opportunities, networking and social gatherings, athletic events, entertainment and more.

Take the quick, three minute survey and you’ll be automatically entered to win a CSM gift basket.

CSM.edu/Survey

We look forward to hearing from you!
On Tuesday, Oct. 6, John Gottschalk and College of Saint Mary (CSM) dedicated the new Connie Spellman Nature Classroom. The former Omaha World-Herald CEO and publisher, together with the Dr. C.C. and Mabel Criss Memorial Foundation donated the funds for the classroom, located at the Spellman Child Development Center on the CSM campus.

Gottschalk, joined by Connie Spellman, children from the center and their parents, faculty and staff for a blessing and ribbon-cutting ceremony. The new outdoor space creates another opportunity for the children to discover and learn outside of the classroom. The open area includes green space, as well as planted areas with spruce trees, daylilies, hostas and native grasses. The design of the space incorporates a rich mix of activity areas. A winding path meanders through Messy Material, Movement and Music, Nature Art and Climbing areas, which promote healthy interaction with the natural world. A wrought iron fence encloses the classroom overlooking Aksarben Village and Little Papio Creek greenway.

Research has shown that children’s interaction with nature helps them develop powers of observation and creativity, and fosters language and collaborative skills. In fact, children who learn in nature classrooms learn skills across all learning domains. The new Connie Spellman Nature Classroom is one of only a handful of its kind in the Omaha area. Paperwork is being filed to have the classroom certified by Nature Explore, a collaborative program of the Arbor Day Foundation and Dimensions Educational Research Foundation.

If you’d like to help us stock our nature classroom with fun and educational items to help our children learn and grow, please contact Gail Thompson at 402-399-2453, or gthompson@csm.edu. Thank you for your generous donation!

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<td>Infant/Toddler Cactus Shaker</td>
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Connie Spellman and John Gottschalk on Oct. 6, cut the ceremonial ribbon on the new Connie Spellman Nature Classroom. Gottschalk donated the funds to honor his long-time friend’s work in early childhood education.
FLAMES ATHLETICS
NEW SCHOOL YEAR, NEW CONFERENCE & NEW COACHES

CSM WELCOMES NEW HEAD COACHES FLANAGAN AND BRAY

Two new head coaches are patrolling College of Saint Mary (CSM) sidelines this year. Jesse Flanagan was hired as the CSM head basketball coach and Carolyn Todd Bray as both head softball coach and sports information director. Both were hired in August.

Flanagan says he’s thrilled to lead the basketball program. “I’ve found all the student-athletes and administration to be enthusiastic, hard-working and supportive.”

This summer Flanagan served as CSM’s interim head coach. Prior to that he worked with the Gretna, Neb., high school boys’ basketball program and taught third grade at Gretna Elementary School.

Bray was assistant softball coach for nine seasons at Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota, an NCAA Division III Institution. She coached 33 All-MIAC selections, 11 All-Region student-athletes and was the head recruiter for the program.

Bray was drawn to the CSM position’s dual responsibilities. It combines softball coaching with the sports information director duties – and Bray has more than 15 years of experience as sports writer, reporter and paginator at the Red Wing Republican Eagle newspaper in Red Wing, Minn.

“This position allows me to pursue two of my passions – coaching collegiate softball and sports journalism,” says Bray.

The 15 soccer players who lead this year's CSM Flames soccer team take time out from practice on a beautiful fall afternoon for a senior photo shoot near the Heritage Park soccer fields.

To view complete schedules, rosters, results and more, visit CSMFlames.com.

FLAMES SOCCER TEAM KICKS OFF STRONG FIRST SEASON IN GPAC

Fall 2015 kicked off with College of Saint Mary (CSM) athletic program’s official membership in the Great Plains Athletic Conference (GPAC). The Flames made the announcement in October 2014 that they would join the 12-institution GPAC league.

Crowds at volleyball and soccer games have been exceptional, says CSM Athletic Director Jim Krueger. “We’re looking forward to the same kind of turnout at basketball games this winter.”

Flames soccer on Sept. 24, notched its first GPAC win. The team posted a third straight shutout in as many games before posting a 3-0 win over fellow GPAC member Mount Marty College. A loss on Sept. 27, failed to knock them off track; the team steamrolled on to defeat both Doane and Briar Cliff. As of print time, the team was looking forward to GPAC playoffs.

“We’re really excited about the opportunities this conference provides our student-athletes, as well as the great visibility” says Krueger. “The competition is top notch and we’re in a good position to recruit the best student athletes in the region.”

Physical updates included giving the gym a major facelift by sanding, repainting and sealing the floor. The GPAC logo is now included with the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics and Flames logos on the floor design.

The Flames basketball team takes on Nebraska Wesleyan at home on Nov. 18, in its first GPAC game. Other GPAC teams on the Flames’ home schedule include Briar Cliff, Nov. 21; Northwestern, Dec. 12; Dordt, Jan. 2; Concordia, Jan. 13; and Mount Marty, Jan. 16.
MILESTONES

Your classmates are eager to hear about you! Please share births, adoptions, marriages, employment news, retirements and other joys of life with our readers. Send your news to JOURNEYS, College of Saint Mary, 7000 Mercy Road, Omaha, Nebraska, 68106, or email news to JOURNEYS@CSM.edu.

NEW BEGINNINGS—MARRIAGES

Kimberly Mihulka ‘09, M’10 to Benjamin Messman. Mihulka is an occupational therapist at Southlake Village Rehabilitation & Care Center in Lincoln, Neb.

Jamie Lee McDermott ‘10, ’11 to Matthew Baker. McDermott is a pediatric nurse practitioner at Children’s Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, Mo.

Kiley Johnson ‘12, M’13 to Conrad Connealy. Johnson is an occupational therapist at Immanuel Medical Center in Omaha.

Joanna Drumme y ‘14 to Eric Weber. Drumme y is an elementary special education teacher in the Council Bluffs Community School District.

Christin Molaek ‘14 to Tim Zbylut. Molaek is in marketing operations at Children’s Hospital and Medical Center in Omaha.

Emily Jarecki ‘15, M’16 to Kyle Varon.

Abby Miller ’16, M’17 to Wade Walters.

CLASS NOTES

Sisters of Mercy who celebrated Jubilee years as Sisters include: Sr. Margaret Sutton ’62 (80 years); Srs. Evangela Dorris ’55 and Jeananne Sutton ’58 (75 years); Srs. Mary Ellen Devereux ’59, Helena Naviaux ’52 and Karen Yarkosky ’60 (70 years); Srs. Diane Davidson ’65, Michon Rozmajzl ’65, Susan Severin ’64 and Lisa Staudacher ’59 (60 years); and Sr. Elaine Lopez Pacheco (50 years).

Joanne Kuhl VerBockel ’55 wrote to share how much her CSM education meant to her. She is very involved in her church in Appleton, Wis.

Sophia Grochala Kock ’71 retired as principal at Holy Name Elementary School in Omaha.

Mary Kay Esser ’71 received the Archdiocese of Omaha Educator of the Year for Elementary Schools during the Archbishop’s Dinner for Education. She teaches at Mary Our Queen in Omaha.

Sybil Yutesler Finken ’72 retired as elementary music instructor at Glenwood Community School District, Glenwood, Iowa.

Sheila Griep Haggas ’74 retired as head of school at Duchesne Academy in Omaha.

Toni Watkins ’88 authored Swinging-out & Chicago Style Steppin’ into Love and Quiet as It’s Kept.

Jennifer Shuman ’93 is the program services director at Make-A-Wish Nebraska.

Michelle Copsey ’94 was named director of home care services for the Good Samaritan Society Home Care in Omaha.

Debra Brockelsby Hoag ’99 graduated with her Master of Science in Nursing from the University of Cincinnati for women’s health nurse practitioner program and works for Metro OB-GYN in Omaha.

Suzie Antoniak ’01 was named head volleyball coach at Elkhorn High School in Elkhorn, Neb.

Susie Spethman Sullivan ’03 was named principal at Marian High School in Omaha.

Jackie Barber D’08 was named dean of graduate nursing at Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa.

Sarah Miller ’15 received the Daisy Award for Extraordinary Nurses for her work at CHI Health Immanuel Medical Center in Omaha.

Martine Quartey M’09 and her husband Sam are leading “Back to Our Roots A Journey to the Motherland” travel groups to Ghana, West Africa.

Cynthia Buettner Gamerl ’84, ’09 was honored with a 2015 Alice Buffett Outstanding Teacher Award. Gamerl is an early childhood education specialist at Skinner Magnet Center in Omaha.

Dr. Kari Wade D’11 was inducted into the Northeast Community College Alumni Hall of Success. Wade taught nursing courses at CSM and served as the director of the master degree in nursing program.

IN MEMORIAM

FACULTY, STAFF & FRIENDS

Meg Cardella, friend of the University, Feb. 3.

Sr. Elaine Delaney, RSM, June 5.

Kathleen Gurnett, former health information faculty member (mother of Patrick Gurnett ’80), July 10.

Carlynn Hartman-Kurtz, former director of career services, Sept. 1.

Barbara Rippey, former English professor, July 28.

ALUMNAE

1930s

Helen Machacek Tomek ’33, (mother of Marilyn Tomek Lindquist ’61), March 29.

1940s

Claire Schemel Hauptman ’40, April 8.

Jane Knight Tell ’42, Jan. 6.

Marjorie Thorton Wiles ’42, April 13.

Patricia McNamara ’45 (sister of Kathryn McNamara Von Seggern ’53), June 23.


Cecilia Stilmock Teshack ’48, Feb. 20.

1950s

Sr. Mary Norbert Flesch, RSM, ’53, Aug. 27.

Dolores McManaman Murphy ’53, May 19.


Mary Cacioppo ’57, Aug. 15.

Sr. Rita Jane McCarron, RSM, ’58, June 25.
MILESTONES

FALL 2015

1960s
Patricia Collins Fitzgerald ’61, April 20.
Katherine Shonka Nosal ’62, July 16.
Sr. Adele Mondragon, RSM, ’64, Oct. 10.
Sr. Lois Mary Morrissey, RSM, ’64, July 8.
Kathleen Cardwell ’66, April 27.
Joan Turner Hamilton ’67, March 7.

1970s
Kathleen Kenney Maloney ’72, June 28.
Therese McCoy Rosse ’72, July 10.
Kathleen Kenney Maloney ’72, June 28.
Therese McCoy Rosse ’72, July 10.

If you know alumnae who have passed away and you want to share this news with our readers, please send a printed obituary to JOURNEYS, College of Saint Mary, 7000 Mercy Road, Omaha, Neb., 68106. Death announcements must be accompanied by a memorial service program or published newspaper obituary.

Sister Mary Mechtilde Hill, RSM
1923-2015

Sister Mary Mechtilde Hill, RSM, former College of Saint Mary (CSM) professor and dean, died Friday, July 17. A memorial service and funeral Mass were held at the Sister of Mercy Retirement Villa. The beloved chemistry and physics professor was a mentor and friend to many faculty and staff.
Sister began teaching chemistry at CSM in 1951. She left briefly to work on her Ph.D. and returned as chair of the chemistry department.
Sister was later named vice president for academic affairs and dean. Over the years, she hired and mentored many faculty. She lived in Walsh Hall for a great deal of her time at CSM, and could be found everywhere on campus.
Although officially retired, Sister served for many years on the alumnae phonathon raising money for the College scholarship fund. Responses to her phone calls were overwhelming and positive.
In 2000, CSM established an endowed scholarship fund in her name. She was most proud of the fund, because she knew it would assist students far into the future.
Memorials may be made to the Sister Mary Mechtilde Hill Endowed Scholarship Fund, College of Saint Mary, 7000 Mercy Road, Omaha, Neb., 68106 or to the Sisters of Mercy Retirement Fund.

Angela Haggas Kruszynski ’93
1970-2015

Angela Haggas Kruszynski graduated from College of Saint Mary (CSM) with a paralegal degree in 1993. Kruszynski was the daughter of Sheila Griep Haggas ’74. Sheila served as CSM’s director of enrollment and most recently head of school at Duchesne Academy in Omaha. After graduating from Creighton Law School in 2000, Kruszynski practiced child welfare law in Arizona. She was diagnosed with osteosarcoma in 2010 and returned to Omaha for cancer treatment. Kruszynski taught in the CSM paralegal program for several years. Survivors include her husband, three children and parents.

From the program at Angela’s Vigil Rites and Visitation, Our Lady of Mercy Chapel

I attended College of Saint Mary from 1991-1993, when I graduated with my bachelor’s degree in paralegal studies. While my professors and classmates taught me much, I truly learned more about myself, and the woman I wanted to be, while I sat in the Chapel. The Chapel, this Chapel, is my very favorite sacred space. Anywhere.

As a student, and later as a teacher, I so frequently sought out the cool and quiet peace that exists here. It was my reliable respite from the chaos or hustle filling my life. Whether I was a single mother, an anxious bride, an eager teacher or a searching cancer patient, any and all of my burdens were relieved as I crossed its threshold.

When I lost my faith, I found it here. When I was filled with jubilation, I gave thanks here. When I was in a fierce trial, I was granted solace here. When I was wandering aimlessly I found a compass here. Even during times when I could not be physically within the Chapel’s walls, I could always close my eyes and see the mosaic of the Blessed Mother before me, smell the wax and polish, feel its soothing and healing energy.

My life was filled to overflowing with gifts, blessings. Each of these gave my life a meaningful richness that made my days all the more beautiful. Among these innumerable blessings of mine, is this place. This place with the calming and constant peace that is found only in a place of love.

– Angela Haggas Kruszynski ’93
College of Saint Mary Christmas Concert

Lessons & Carols

Featuring the students and faculty of the CSM Fine Arts Department with special guests:
Gretna Middle School Women’s Select Ensemble
and area church choirs.

Friday, December 4 at 7 p.m.

College of Saint Mary, Our Lady of Mercy Chapel
7000 Mercy Road, Omaha, Neb. 68106

A beloved Christmas tradition, Lessons & Carols is a beautiful, engaging depiction of the Christmas story. $10 per person. To purchase tickets in advance go to CSM.edu/Christmas. Seating is limited.