



THE  
**WORD**

Winter 2024

**CARDINAL  
EXPRESSIONS**

*Pictorial, Musical and  
Literary Creations*



# FOUNDERS HALL

A Historic Building.  
An Innovative Future.

**U**IW's Founders Hall is an expansive nine-story building on a 10-acre property that has transformed the Broadway Campus and expanded its footprint by 20 percent.

Currently undergoing a careful renovation project that preserves the historic significance of the mid-century constructed building, Founders Hall will serve as a hub of innovative academic programming, and a gateway to global understanding of the community.

UIW recently received a transformative pledge of \$5 million to support this project. The pledge came to UIW from the Elma Dill Russell Spencer Foundation, managed by the family of Jack Lewis III, former chair of the UIW Board of Trustees and longtime supporter of the University.

Founders Hall is the future home of the Liza and Jack Lewis Center of the Americas, also named for the Lewis family. The Lewis Center works to promote better relations and grow understanding among the people and nations of the Americas.

"I am deeply grateful to the Lewis family for their whole-hearted support of UIW and long-time friendship," said Dr. Thomas M. Evans, UIW president. "During his 12-year tenure as a Trustee, Jack co-chaired the capital campaign committee for the UIW School of Osteopathic Medicine, co-chaired the last comprehensive \$100 million campaign and served as treasurer, vice chair and, ultimately, chair of the board. In every role, he helped guide UIW through many challenges and toward even more triumphs, including helping us navigate through the pandemic. In addition to his support of Founders Hall and the Lewis Center, he has also sponsored individual students for whom a UIW education would not have otherwise been possible."

Click the QR code and  
see what's planned inside! 



## THE WORD

Winter 2024  
A publication of the  
Office of Communications  
& Brand Marketing

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*Do you know someone interested in attending UIW? For more information on what UIW has to offer or to schedule a campus visit, go to [uiw.edu/admissions](http://uiw.edu/admissions)*






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# FROM THE PRESIDENT

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Dear Alumni and Friends,

Welcome to the winter edition of *The Word Magazine*. In this edition, we celebrate the vibrant world of the arts at the University of the Incarnate Word and the many forms they take. The arts have long been an integral part of our university's identity and an avenue for expressing our Mission.

In the coming pages, we will introduce you to some of the members of our community who are sharing their creativity with the world in many different ways. Professor Bill Gokelman, a long-time faculty member in our Music department, arranged a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for vocal students to learn from and sing with an internationally known chamber ensemble (p. 4). Our next story highlights alumnus Justin Puente who puts his artistry and eye for design to work promoting our Cardinal spirit on some of our favorite T-shirts (p. 7). Yet another feature story introduces us to some incredible Music Therapy alumni who are serving the community and taking UIW students under their wings to help prepare them for their own meaningful careers (p. 10).

There is so much more to look forward to and many more members of our Incarnate Word family to meet. Each one is doing extraordinary things and are testament to the enduring impact of strong arts education and formation in Mission. I hope that you enjoy this issue and that it serves as a reminder of your own creativity and that it inspires you to let it flourish!

Praised be the Incarnate Word!

Thomas M. Evans, PhD  
President



# GIVE MORE *than* YOU TAKE

## *Lessons from a Masterclass*

by Victoria Reyna Varville, MBA '21

If music is the universal language, then to study music is to learn how to build bridges, connect with those who are different from oneself, and explore what bonds people rather than what divides them. These lessons were on full display when Grammy-nominated vocal chamber ensemble VOCES8 visited the University of the Incarnate Word to work with the UIW Cardinal Singers and two guest high school choirs.

VOCES8 is known around the globe for their gorgeous harmonies, sung in straight tones to ensure perfect tuning and chord locking. In 2023, the ensemble was nominated for a Grammy Award in the Best Classical Compendium category. The group tours globally, and thanks to the work of the San Antonio Chamber Music Society, they returned to San Antonio this fall for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic. After a stunning concert held at Trinity Baptist Church on Sunday, Oct. 13, the musicians

visited UIW the next day to lead a once in a lifetime Masterclass for UIW vocal students and choristers.



Professor William Gokelman, longtime director of choral activities and past department chair, received the invitation for the Cardinal Singers to work with VOCES8 months ago. The call

came from Emily McChesney, a member of the San Antonio Chamber Music Society's (SACMS) educational outreach committee. The mission of SACMS is to address "diversity, equity and inclusion in its artistic planning and programming, in its professional policies and practices, and in support of all of its varied constituencies," and it was this organization that arranged for VOCES8 to perform and instruct students in San Antonio.

"The UIW student body represents the demographics and culture that SACMS attempts to include in their educational offerings," McChesney explained. "Giving our local music students the opportunity to work with world-class music ensembles is an important focus of SACMS. A masterclass can be a unique and positive opportunity for students to receive instruction, particularly when it's conducted by an internationally known educational team like VOCES8."

SACMS had two requests for Gokelman: would the Cardinal Singers like to participate in the masterclass and can UIW host this event? He said yes to both.

"Of course, you say yes," said Gokelman when reflecting on the moment he received the invitation. "It's a once in a lifetime opportunity. I've been a VOCES8 fan forever."

The Cardinal Singers were just as floored when they learned they'd been selected to work with the ensemble.

“There were a couple of students who just gasped when I told them,” remembered Gokelman. “They couldn’t believe it.”

One such student was senior Music major Lizeth Razo.

“Why is this happening here?” she asked with a smile and laugh. “It could be happening at a bigger school, so it’s nice to see that we’re able to get those opportunities at a smaller university.”

Each member of the Cardinal Singers went into the masterclass wanting to take various key lessons away from the experience.

Eric Lange, a soon-to-be music educator, hoped to gain feedback that he could adapt for use in his future classroom for the benefit of students.

Annamaria Massie wanted to learn about how to listen more intentionally in a group performance setting.

Dhazir Walker, a Music Industries student, hoped to learn more about how as a bass singer, he could support the other singers in the group for the benefit of the entire Cardinal Singers ensemble.

As for Lizeth, she most wanted to walk away with a better understanding of how VOCES8 achieves their impeccable blended tone, making eight unique voices come together as one pure sound.

Their answers carried a common theme – *I hope that I can take away how to better contribute to the good of the group.*

VOCES8 delivered.

On the day of the masterclass, the UIW Cardinal Singers watched as choirs from two Northside Independent School District high schools – Warren and Brennan – took the stage to perform for and receive feedback from VOCES8. The moment was especially meaningful for Cardinal Singers member Abel Pedraza – a Brennan High School Choir alumnus – and Lange, who is currently fulfilling observation hours with the Brennan Choir.

With each high school ensemble, Barnaby Smith, VOCES8 countertenor and founder, worked to inspire the students to sing beyond the notes written on the page by tapping into their personal emotional ties to the music, allowing it to inform their artistry.

Then it was time for the Cardinal Singers to take the stage. The high school students and VOCES8 settled in to listen as the group performed an exciting, rhythmic piece titled,



“  
Music is going to be the  
side effect of what we do  
in this community, and it's  
a thing of beauty that we  
can only create what we  
do as a community.”

Duo Seraphim. The song tells a story not only through its Latin lyrics, but through musical choices made by composer Andrew Steffen. Two angels begin singing in praise to the Lord, but soon, their worship becomes a competition, with each angel trying to praise louder and more enthusiastically. The competition is made clear with the different voice parts, representing each angel, attempting to out-sing one another in melodies that sometimes clash both rhythmically and tonally. Towards the end of the piece, the angels realize they have been singing the same thing the whole time: *Holy is the Lord God of Sabaoth. The whole earth is full of thy glory. Alleluia!*

Upon this realization, the angels stop competing and join their voices as one. The song ends with a unified sound, all voice parts united in praise. It’s a piece that encourages listeners to reflect on how much more people can do if they focus on what brings them together, instead of what divides them.

That, to Gokelman, is what music is all about.

“I tell the choirs every semester, you’re in choir, but it’s not primarily about music,” he

explained. “It’s primarily about community. Music is going to be the side effect of what we do in this community, and it’s a thing of beauty that we can only create what we do as a community.”

Though a side effect of a much grander picture, the music the Cardinal Singers performed at the masterclass impressed everyone who had the pleasure of listening.

“They were so amazing,” gushed Lorenzo Ramirez, a junior Warren High School Choir student. “Their piece was very percussive. It was nice to hear the diversity in the voices and how they came together as one to create that music.”

Warren Choir Director Colin Varville shared his student’s sentiment.

“Absolutely phenomenal singing,” he shared of the Cardinal Singers’ performance. “Very, very impressive. I’m just blown away.”

The members of VOCES8 were equally impressed.

“How long did it take to learn that?” asked Smith as he took the stage to work with the singers. “I can hear all the practice.”

Smith encouraged the Cardinal Singers to connect with the music on a deeper level, reminding them that the true essence of performance lies in conveying emotions and stories. He then asked the Cardinal Singers to listen as VOCES8 performed a song in two different styles – the first time, focused intently on the technicality of the piece, the second time, allowing for more fluctuations in tempo, letting the ebb and flow of the rhythm help tell the story.

“Your technical aspects of this were just perfect,” Smith told the singers, who quietly beamed. “But let’s leave that to one side.

What are your opportunities in this piece to do something that’s interestingly different?”

He pointed out that the composer of the piece intentionally wrote the music so that the most notable word sung is “*clamabant*,” which means to call out. He asked them to change the way they sang every other word, making those lyrics more legato, a musical term for smooth and flowing, while keeping “*clamabant*” sharp and rhythmic so that by contrast, it would stand out as the composer intended. This small change took their performance to the next level.

When they were done performing it with all their new feedback accounted for, Smith applauded them and said, “You’ve done the practice that enabled you to do what you just did.”



Without missing a beat, the Cardinal Singers smiled and pointed to Gokelman, crediting him for their success and conveying a message that needed no words... *he brought us to this mountaintop.*

“It’s the reason why I teach,” said Gokelman of the experience watching his students thrive at the masterclass. “I tell my students, remember that you don’t teach music, you teach humans. Music is the tool we use to teach humans. When we have a mountaintop experience like this, and I know that they were only able to get to that mountaintop experience because of their involvement in music, for me, that’s the reward.”

“Your passion is infectious,” Walker said to Gokelman following the event. “And it reverberates with us. Every day that you bring that passion to us, we can reciprocate it back so that we can give it to an audience.”

Following the performance, VOCES8 sat for a question-and-answer session with all students from each of the three ensembles they worked with that day. Hands shot up, with participants eager to learn more from the world-renowned performers.

*Do you still get nervous before performances?*

*What advice do you have for those of us who want to perform professionally?*

*What exercise do you use to learn to listen to one another?*

The final question that the group took was a simple one.

*“Why music?”*

“I think I could be an accountant,” Smith answered. An eruption of laughter followed. “But I think there are fewer accountants who could do what I do. And I think it has a really positive impact on society.”

“We think our job is not to take, but to give,” he shared with the students.

As the day drew to a close, the Cardinal Singers and the visiting high school choirs reflected on their transformative experience, and what they can give to others through music. For the UIW Cardinal Singers, hearing about how they inspired the next generation

of musicians was a powerful reminder of the impact that giving back can have.

“It was surreal,” shared Camila Alonso, Brennan Choir senior. “I grew up indecisive about where I wanted to go to college. I think oftentimes, young people think we don’t have opportunities, but

when you put yourself in programs like these, you get these experiences like we had today at UIW, so being able to be here has shown us that doors are going to open.”

“It’s extremely valuable for students to see that these kinds of opportunities do exist, right here in their hometown,” said Varville of his high school singers. “Even for those who don’t want to major in music – one of my students asked a member of the Cardinal Singers if she can be a Nursing major and continue to sing in choir at UIW.”

“It takes them out of the box that they live in right now,” added Garrett. “They’ve been exposed to a lot more today - getting to see, ‘wow, this is possible in my town,’ was really valuable for them.”

In a world often divided by differences, the transformative power of music shined through as a unifying force inside the Bennack Concert Hall. The masterclass was not just an opportunity to learn about technique, but a celebration of connection, empathy and shared passion. The interaction between the seasoned artists of VOCES8, the collegiate level singers of UIW and the eager young high school students created an atmosphere of discovery and growth. The experience became a reminder that every note played, and every lyric sung holds the potential to foster understanding and compassion among individuals from all walks of life.

“Acknowledging that we do have a gift and it should be used with care and shared with others is what I’m going to take away from today,” said Razo as her classmates trickled out of the hall. “Our gift, used with care, can affect a lot of people in a positive way.”

As participants departed, the sentiment was clear: the lessons learned from VOCES8 – and from one another – would resonate long after the masterclass ended, fostering a commitment to giving back through song.







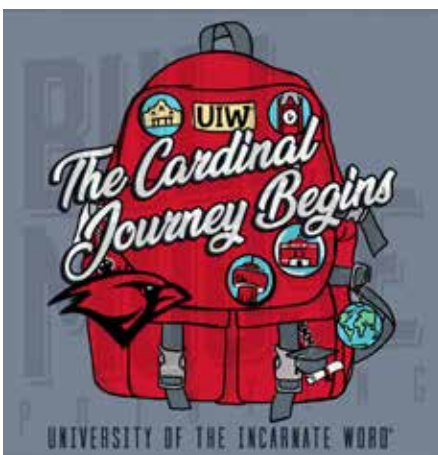
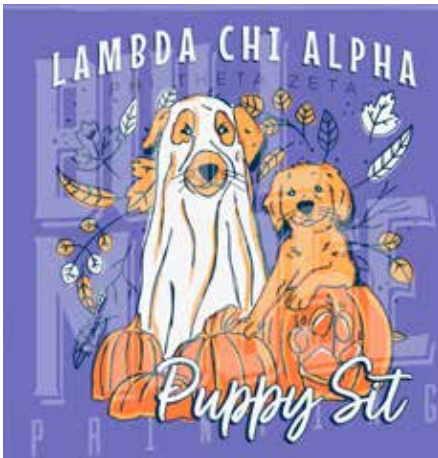
# Start Small and Watch it Grow!

by Clarissa Gauna, MS '23

With two degrees in business, Justin Puente, BBA '15, MBA '17, has skillfully combined his learned expertise with his natural design talent to carve out a niche in the T-shirt design industry, with his beloved alma mater among his favorite customers.

Puente is the proud co-founder of Bull Moose Printing, LLC, a print and design company dedicated to creating one-of-a-kind T-shirts for events and organizations across San Antonio. With Puente at the helm, Bull Moose Printing prides itself on making the process quick and easy, while creating quality designs that stand out from the rest, something that is especially important during Greek life recruitment and other events happening on campus. Look no further than this year's official UIW homecoming shirt and promotional materials to see some of his impressive work.

Puente understands well that the groups with the "coolest T-shirts" tend to attract the largest crowds at their events, as he was part of a handful of clubs and organizations while at UIW, such as Residence Life and



Housing (ResLife), Campus Life, Campus Activities Board (CAB), Student Government Association (SGA) and the Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity. He also served as a peer mentor and orientation leader. When asked about his fondest memories while in school, he shared that tailgating with his fraternity brothers during football games stands out as one of the greatest experiences. He reminisced about the joy of cheering on the Cardinals alongside his friends and the UIW community, a feeling that solidified his sense of belonging and reaffirmed that UIW was truly his home. As the first in his family to attend college, Puente's parents wanted him to choose a university where he could reach his fullest potential, all while remaining close to home. As soon as his family toured the University of the Incarnate Word and met the dedicated staff, they all felt an instant connection and knew it was the right choice. Puente described it as feeling "a sense of family the moment we stepped on campus."

Today, he looks back on his time at UIW knowing that it completely prepared him for life after college. Puente credits H-E-B School of Business and Administration Professor of Marketing Dr. Scott Roberts for teaching him everything he knows about business. Being a co-founder of a small business is no easy feat, but the tools he was given while earning his BBA and MBA have been instrumental to his success. Additionally, he expresses his gratitude to the Campus Life administration team, particularly former dean, Paul Ayala, for encouraging him to explore the interests that have become his career. Puente says that Ayala recognized his talent for design and knack for business and continually gave him opportunities to grow in both fields. This included sending him to educational conferences and training courses and recommending classes that ultimately gave him the courage to open his own business. Puente says, "I owe this man my life, and I cannot thank him enough for giving me a shot on his team."

Though he went to school to learn how to run a business, Puente had a natural ability when it came to design. He says that the

artistic part of him came from his mom who encouraged him and his sisters to express themselves through crafts. When he was younger, his mom even took them to sell their arts and crafts at local art shows, always pushing them to be creative.

Back then, he may not have believed if someone told him that years in the future, his artwork would be proudly worn by thousands of UIW alumni, students and community members. But after designing the official 2023 and 2024 UIW Homecoming T-shirts, that's exactly what has happened. Puente described it for us, saying "Everyone had seen the design and sent it my way

asking if I had made it. The love and support I have received with people recognizing my work is something that I am truly thankful for."

Ana Bribiesca Hoff, director of Alumni Relations, explains, "We love working with Justin because of his timeliness and his talent for executing our vision. Of course, we also

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love the fact that we are able to work with an alumnus-owned business, especially for homecoming, and get a quality product.”

This year’s homecoming theme was “Let Your Spirit Ring”, celebrating UIW’s newly installed Robert C. Crosby Spirit Bell, dedicated in loving memory of a long-time UIW supporter and friend. The Spirit Bell is poised to become a symbol of pride and play a significant role in the University’s traditions, now ringing to celebrate athletic victories and collective achievements. Puente featured the spirit bell in this year’s homecoming T-shirt design, where it joined other iconic UIW landmarks, images and phrases.

When he is not designing the latest and greatest T-shirt or cheering on the Cardinals during football season, Puente can be found running with his wife, Ellie. Together, they have completed 4 marathons, 14 half marathons and too many 10Ks and 5Ks to count.

“We are avid Run Disney participants,” Puente says, “and we enjoy our annual trip every January to participate in the Walt Disney Marathon Weekend.”

Despite his many completed races, his proudest achievement to date is starting his own business. This pride is always emphasized when he is walking around town and sees one of his designs “out in the wild”. Puente says, “Looking at my designs on everything from small stickers on cars to giant billboards across the city, reminds me of how far I’ve come.” Having worked in an apparel company similar to his, Puente knew he had the ability to do this line of work for himself full-time. More than anything, he wanted the freedom to design without limits.

The journey to start Bull Moose Printing, LLC was no walk in the park, as Puente and his business partner opened at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the world was in upheaval, Puente was unsure how his business would survive, let alone take-off. However, he credits his strong relationships with UIW, specifically with departments and organizations on campus, for giving him a chance, despite the uncertainty of what the “new normal” would be.

His advice to anyone who wants to follow a similar career path is to start on something small and watch it grow. Puente explains, “You can start anywhere, just like I did. I went from joining Campus Life and making their brochures and posters, to now doing this as my career.”

Puente’s story is not just about a successful business; it is a testament to the power of dreams, community and the belief that, with hard work and creativity, anything is possible. He may not recall the exact moment his career began to flourish, but he knows it all stems from his experience at UIW.



# Service to Others Through the Arts

## A UIW Music Therapy Tradition of Alumni Supervising Current Students

By Cathy Befi-Hensel, BM '10, PhD, MT-BC



Cathy Befi-Hensel with a class

Music therapy stands at the intersection of artistry and healing, providing a powerful service to individuals through therapeutic music interventions. Simply put, the field of music therapy is one of service to others through the arts. Those proud to call themselves music therapists must undergo rigorous training that involves a study of the musical arts, as well as psychology. To graduate and sit for the national board certification exam, students must demonstrate proficiency in using piano, voice, guitar and percussion to facilitate therapeutic interventions based on individual client needs. As part of their training, students in UIW's music therapy program are also required to complete a minimum of 180 hours of pre-internship fieldwork training across four different clinical placements in the greater San Antonio area, as well as a six-month internship. This structure allows UIW's music therapy students to graduate ready to serve, equipped with extensive hands-on experience from clinical sites that include school districts, medical and psychiatric facilities, community centers, private practice and the Music Therapy Services Center (MTSC) on the UIW Broadway campus.

In the MTSC, located in the Luella

Bennack Music Center, students practice under the supervision of Cathy Befi-Hensel, BM '10, PhD, MT-BC, assistant professor and Music Therapy Program coordinator, offering pro-bono music therapy sessions to clients of all ages presenting a wide variety of needs. As part of the degree program, every music therapy student is assigned a client in the MTSC for at least one semester. In the past three years, the program has grown exponentially, with the weekly client



list increasing from two to nine clients, plus a healthy waitlist of potential clients.

"There's a strong demand for music therapy services in San Antonio," explained Befi-Hensel. "Since our capacity is limited by our number of students, we try to give priority to clients who would otherwise not have access to music therapy services. In addition to expanding access to much-needed services, we give our students an opportunity to truly live the University's Mission and make a difference as part of their studies here."

The music therapy program's impact goes beyond the walls of the MTSC. Students conduct fieldwork across the city every day – some are fortunate enough to be conducting their field placements with UIW alumni, who enjoy mentoring the next generation of the University's future music therapists. Of the 19 UIW music therapy students in clinical fieldwork placements this semester, 13 are practicing under alumni supervision.

"Our alums love to give back," says Befi-Hensel. "We have six alumni supervisors this semester and nearly 10 others who have supervised students in the recent past. In fact, 'when and how do I take on a student?' is probably the most common question I get asked when new alumni start working."

**Courtney Moore, BM '17, MT-BC**, a board-certified music therapist who studied at UIW, is one of six UIW music therapy alumni who are currently supervising the fieldwork placement of current UIW students. She originally chose UIW for her undergraduate studies because she liked the small school atmosphere where professors and students could get to know each other. Her love for the University and its offerings grew as she went further down her degree path and found her passion in the service she provided others during her internships. For her, that spirit of service didn't end with graduation.

"I love being able to be there for students," she says. "I have been supervising for about a year now and enjoy it



Courtney Moore with a student intern

immensely. Helping to mold upcoming therapists has been a true passion of mine."

Her advice to UIW's current music therapy students is to trust their instincts and lean on their supervisors for support. "Everything you have been doing is going to prepare you for your upcoming career."

**Anna Bocanegra, BM '21, MT-BC**, has also been supervising students for about a year. "I really enjoy having new perspectives and guiding others," says Bocanegra. "I always feel like I have the opportunity to not only teach, but learn from those I teach as well."

A first-generation college student, Bocanegra chose UIW because of its proximity to her roots in the Rio Grande Valley and for its robust offerings. "I also wanted a college that would have the time and resources to help me with this journey and to be given opportunities for leadership,



Vanessa Tomlin

service and community." Her advice for current and future music therapy students is to keep going. "Being a student in this field is challenging, especially when some people don't believe in mental health or support the arts, but I know that despite this, our profession is highly sought after and has done wonderful things for people in many populations. Keep going and don't be afraid of any challenges in your way because they are just bumps on this amazing journey."

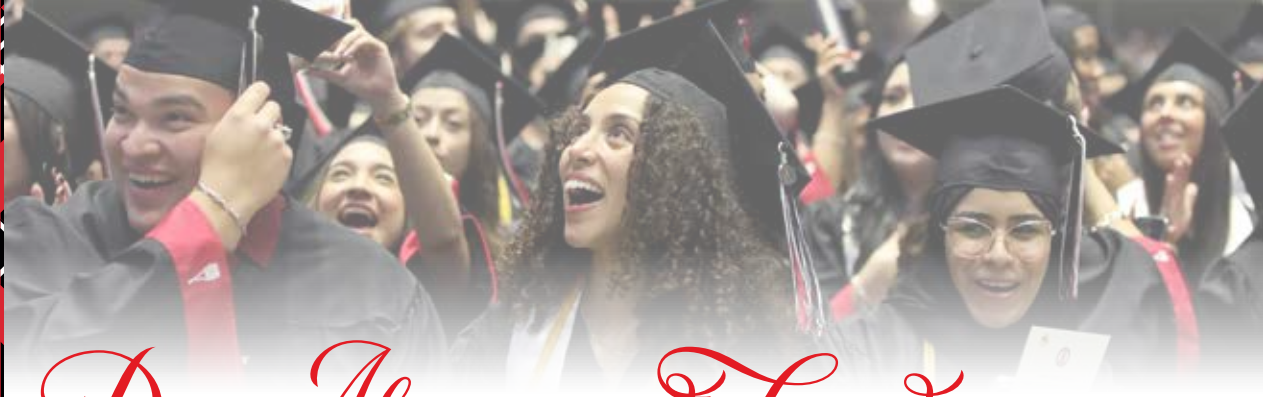
Another proud alumna, **Vanessa Tomlin, BM '10, MT-BC**, has been supervising students for eight years. "In high school, I was interested in counseling and heard about music therapy from my band director," she says. "Being a musician, it was a perfect fit for me. Now, working with students keeps me on my toes and

brings in a fresh perspective."

**Mike Deosdade, BM '12, MT-BC**, has been supervising students for 10 years and shares Tomlin's sentiments on welcoming soon-to-be music therapists from UIW to learn from him. Working primarily with interns, he has found that they inspire him and expand his perspective on clients. "Each intern leaves a small but greatly appreciated and lasting difference in my practice," he says. His advice to current students is to practice from a place without judgement. "I would advise students not to see people with diagnoses as being 'broken and needing to be fixed,' but to see them as whole and beautiful beings who just do things differently."



Mike Deosdade with a client



# Dear Alumni and Friends

of the University of the Incarnate Word

**I**t is with great excitement and a deep sense of responsibility that I write to you as the new Director of Alumni Relations at the University of the Incarnate Word. I am both honored and humbled to step into this role and to serve a University that is not only rooted in rich tradition, but also grounded in a profound Mission that continues to inspire growth and transformation in each of us.

As a Catholic institution founded by the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, UIW has long been a beacon of faith, service and academic excellence. Our shared history, shaped by the vision and compassion of the Sisters, reminds us of the importance of community, the call to serve others and the lifelong pursuit of learning. UIW encourages all of us to be a light in the world, bringing compassion, wisdom and justice to a world in need. As alumni, we carry forward this legacy in our personal and professional lives, and we are immensely proud of the ways you embody the values instilled by this great University.

One of the most beautiful aspects of UIW is that it is more than just a place where you earn a degree—it is always a home. No matter where life may take you, the University of the Incarnate Word will always welcome you back with open arms. Our Incarnate Word family is one that grows stronger over time, and I am committed to ensuring that these bonds remain vibrant and meaningful for years to come.

As I begin this new journey, my goal is to strengthen the ties that bind us together as a community. Whether through meaningful alumni events, networking opportunities or service projects, I am committed to fostering connections that will keep you engaged and inspired. I hope to create spaces for you to reconnect with your alma mater, share your stories and celebrate the many ways UIW has impacted your life.

I also look forward to hearing from you—your memories, your successes and your hopes for the future of our University. Together, we can continue to build on the strong foundation laid by our founders, ensuring that the Mission of the University of the Incarnate Word endures for generations to come.

Thank you for your continued support of UIW and I eagerly anticipate working with each of you as we move forward in faith, unity, and service, always striving to be a light in the world.

*Praised be the Incarnate Word!*

Sincerely,

*Ana Hoff*

BA '12, MA '20  
Director of Alumni Relations



**UNIVERSITY OF THE  
INCARNATE WORD**

OFFICE of ALUMNI RELATIONS

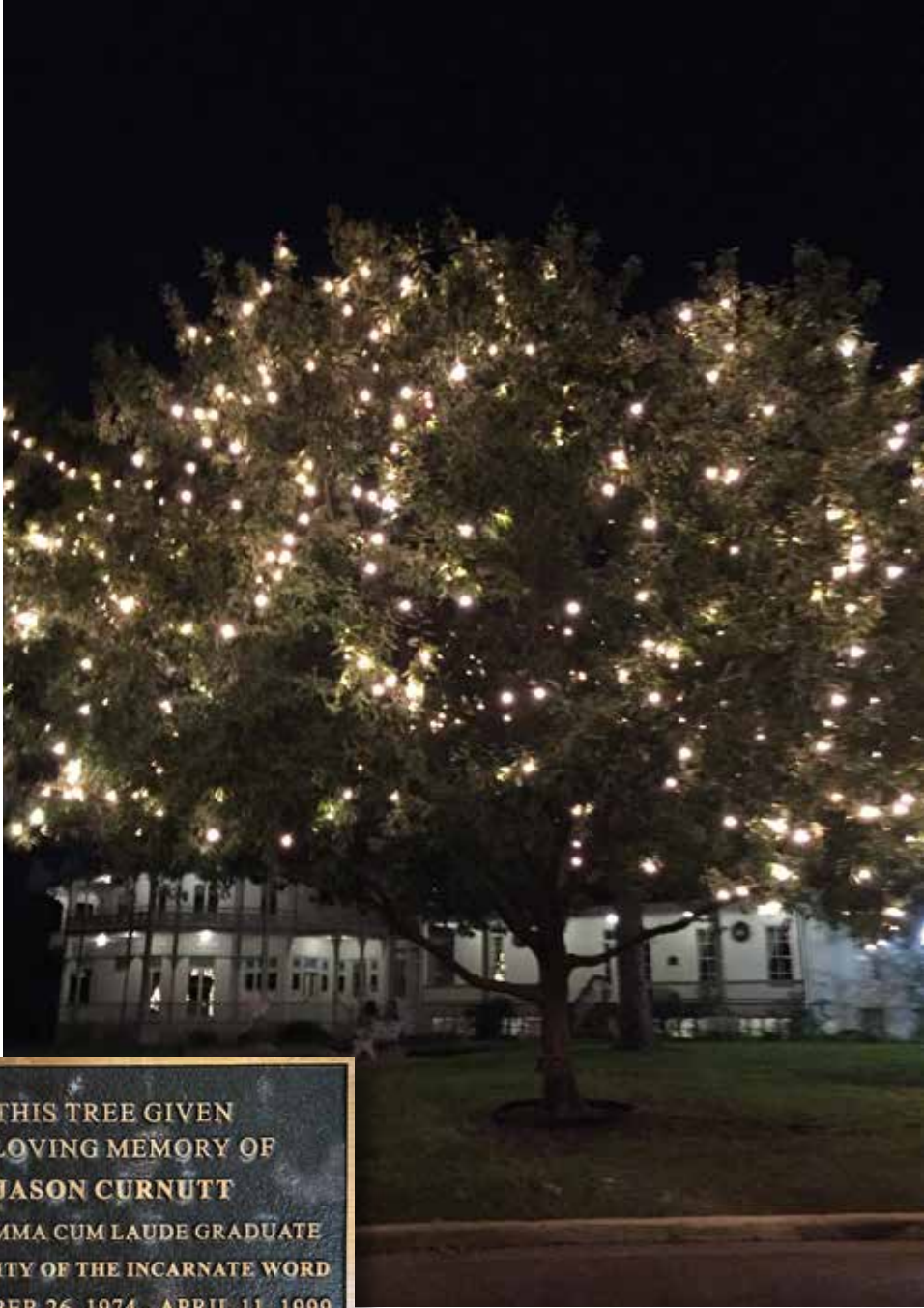


# Endowment Spotlight

## Keeping Memories Alive

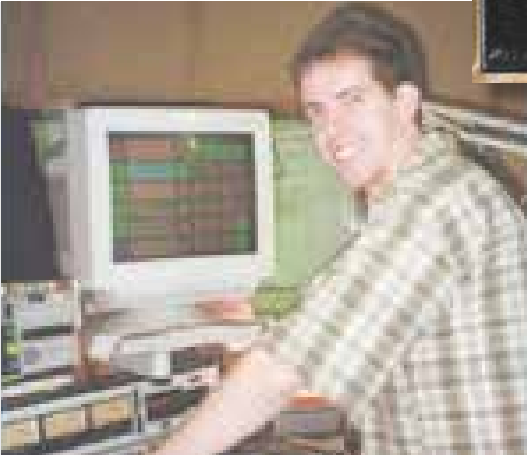
The Jason W. Curnutt Memorial Scholarship in Communication Arts was established in April 1999 by Michael and Joy Curnutt to honor their son, Jason W. Curnutt. Jason was an outstanding student who graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of the Incarnate Word in 1998 with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Arts. Tragically, he passed away suddenly in April 1999.

To keep Jason's spirit and love for communication arts alive, his parents created this endowed scholarship. Each year, gifts to the scholarship fund are made by Jason's family and friends. The scholarship is awarded annually to a Communication Arts major at UIW, providing essential support for students dedicated to their passion for the program. Since 1999, 25 students have benefited from this scholarship, becoming closer to achieving their academic and professional goals in Communication Arts.



*"In the dark moment of Jason's untimely passing came a bright light ... a way to keep his memory alive with the endowed scholarship in his name. This has been a labor of love for our family by continuing to give to his scholarship that helps a student in the field of Communication Arts that Jason loved!"*

*-Joy Curnutt, Loving Mother of Jason*



The image to the left shows Jason Curnutt in the KTSA production control room, operating audio equipment. This picture captures Jason fully immersed in what he loved to do. To the right is a picture of Joy and her late husband, Michael.





# Diehl

# Dan

CLASS OF  
2009

**D**an Diehl has a knack for unraveling complicated communication – or perhaps it’s better described as the ability to simplify complex concepts.

It is a skill he honed early in his career first with Best Buy, then Valero Energy Corp., and later the oil and energy company’s retail spinoff, CST Brands. Part project manager, part IT guy, Diehl’s real gift is in listening to others, identifying gaps, problems or challenges, and then translating those obstacles into something others can understand and help resolve.

“That is when the fun begins,” he said. That’s when he can focus on finding and implementing a solution. That strategy has proven successful for Diehl for over 20 years and has taken him from Best Buy, to Valero, to CST, to now owning and operating two small businesses.

In spring 2018, Diehl and his wife, Jenny, bought the 100-acre River Bend Ranch in Durango, Colorado, taking it on as an event and wedding venue. Then last year, Diehl diversified their interests with the purchase of a solar company, Flatrock Solar.

Diehl credits his success in part to the University of the Incarnate Word’s former Adult Degree Completion Program (ADCaP), now known as the UIW School of Professional Studies (SPS). He graduated in 2009 with a degree in Finance with an emphasis in banking. The program, geared toward busy working professionals offered eight-week courses in the evenings. Diehl said the flexible schedule made it possible for him to earn a bachelor’s degree and get ahead in his career.

“It took five or six years,” he said. “By the time I completed [the program] and graduated I found I was really happy where I was. I never pursued a role outside the IT department.”

### **A humble journey**

Diehl launched his career with tech retail chain Best Buy in 1999. His plan until then was to earn a college degree, but after a year of college in Minnesota and exhausting his scholarship money, he opted to work and pay as he studied.

In 2001, Diehl and his wife moved to San Antonio where he landed a job – first on a three-month contract and later full-time – with Valero Energy Corporation.

Once in San Antonio, Diehl said, he found ADCaP, which was appealing because it worked around his developing career at Valero, where he also benefited





from a tuition reimbursement program.

“College was really important,” he said. “It was a critical component, and I felt pressure, ‘Hey, if I wanted to grow and improve, I needed that.’”

As Diehl’s family grew, he and his wife decided to make a move in 2013 to San Francisco. At the time, CST Brands was splitting off from Valero and was working to implement a new phone system and invest in other technologies that would make working remotely possible.

“I became the guinea pig,” he said, “to see if CST Brands would allow, or enable, workers to work from home. This was really an experiment, and we were trying to figure out if it worked. It was a bit of a trailblazing effort.”

Diehl said they had no trouble assimilating to San Francisco. He and his wife made friends, they found a church and their children, Avery, now 18, and Graham, 16, continued to grow.

Even so, the couple also never intended to stay in San Francisco permanently. “We just never imagined leaving San Antonio,” said Diehl.

### A new adventure

After five years, the couple started talking about returning to San Antonio. They also took a trip to visit Jenny’s sister in Colorado, where they bid on a bank foreclosure.

“Every time we’d come it was sunny,” he said. “Those kinds of winters I could handle.”

He said they were looking for a slower pace and didn’t care where they moved if he could listen to the radio all day and not hear a traffic report.

“We saw a lot of beauty and a lot of opportunity,” Diehl said.

As they drove to San Antonio for a visit, they learned in Jolly, Texas, that Diehl had won the bid. It enabled the couple to move, and later decide exactly where they wanted to live. About six months later they bought River Bend Ranch.

“We saw the potential that it had, and we decided to go for it,” Diehl said.

Ten days after buying the ranch, they hosted their first wedding. Six weeks after they bought the property, they were hosting helicopters used to fight the large 416 and Burrow Fire Complex, two wildfires that merged and burned over



50,000 acres just north of Durango.

“The ‘heli-base’ on the ranch housed six helicopters and about 50 to 60 people over eight weeks,” Diehl said.

Diehl said that in the first summer they learned a great deal about hosting events and fighting fires. He and his wife would coordinate with fire officials to avoid helicopters flying over wedding ceremonies and often guests would take selfies with the helicopters.

“It really was an educational summer for us,” he said, adding the fire officials told him their job was not to put the fire out, winter would take care of that, but to save lives and structures.

“It was just eye-opening to me,” he said.

Another learning experience was the COVID-19 pandemic, he said. Wedding parties reduced their sizes, and many weddings moved outside to observe good social distancing practices.

“We didn’t cancel any [weddings] but we did have some that canceled,” he said. “We didn’t want to force that.”

The pandemic also made Diehl consider the family’s investment and financial well-being.

“It might be good for us to diversify,” he said he remembered thinking. In 2023, an opportunity presented itself. A local, established solar company was put up for sale.

“I understood business ownership with my background in banking and finances,” he said. “I understood the numbers game with my background in IT and project

management. I understood efficiencies, but I needed to know about solar – to understand it.”

### A bright future

One year into owning Flatrock Solar, Diehl said it is providing an alternative income stream, and he is still learning. He hired someone whose expertise is solar to learn all he could including the installation process. His winter project, he said, will be to get a new solar website.

Today, River Bend Ranch hosts on average 75 weddings and events per year. The ranch is also home to a day camp for children with special needs. Plus, Animas Valley Church has been meeting there for the past five years. The ranch employs full-time staff and part-time event crew members.

Diehl said he’s still learning so much. His effective communication skills are still at work managing the team at the ranch and learning all he can about solar. And though his journey has been full of unexpected twists and turns, he’s grateful for the opportunities he’s had to grow, and the education that prepared him to take them on.

“Those shifts (in life) when we make them can be scary,” he said. “I’ve always been fortunate that when we do them it has been better. There is so much that we do in life that we don’t envision for ourselves.”

# Having Grit and a Servant's Heart

*UIW Alumna Reflects on Her Life and Career*

By Devin Castillo

CLASS OF  
2005

For Denise Hernandez, BBA '05, the value of service was demonstrated throughout her childhood by her parents, Jesus and Patricia Rodriguez. She and her brothers watched as their working-class parents ran their molino, a Mexican corn milling manufacturing plant on the Westside of San Antonio. Eventually, the business expanded into a catering company, restaurant and a large food manufacturing plant that supplied tamales to local businesses. Over time, their operation grew to distribute tamales nationwide, even reaching the White House.

Hernandez's parents worked seven days a week, often from the hours of three o'clock in the morning until nine o'clock at night, even during holidays. Amidst non-stop labor, her parents consistently demonstrated a strong sense of responsibility in maintaining their business, respecting their employees,

and recognizing the vital services they provided to their community. In her eyes, their work ethic taught her and her siblings how to be hard-working, compassionate people at a very young age.

At age 10, Hernandez was tall enough to look over the service counter and was officially brought into the business, where she helped take orders and serve guests, just as her parents did. By the time she was 16, she was already running the store and handling payroll for close to 200 people. Hernandez watched her family face many challenges as business owners over the years, yet they were always determined to find solutions. "Instead of giving up, they had resilience and grit that drove them to keep moving forward. I didn't understand then that they were laying down the foundation for who I was going to be," shared Hernandez.

Even then, her aspirations extended beyond her family business; she aimed to one day be a corporate CEO.



After graduating high school, Hernandez attended Alamo Community Colleges where she earned her associate degree in business. Wanting to further expand her academic horizons, she researched local universities to determine where she could pursue her bachelor's degree in business. Her search brought her to the University of the Incarnate Word, where she felt an

immediate connection.

During her years attending UIW, she found a second home at the University, support from faculty members and an extended family through her sorority, Alpha Sigma Alpha. Her sorority experiences exposed her even further to what it means to serve by offering direct opportunities to give back at a community level.

“Being a founder of Alpha Sigma Alpha’s Zeta Sigma chapter was such a pivotal time in my life, because it set me up for a path of leadership,” noted Hernandez. “When I came to Incarnate Word, I saw that there was more than just what I had known. It was life changing for me to be able to volunteer and to do social work with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and the Special Olympics.”

After graduating with her Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), Hernandez began her career in marketing at Daymon Worldwide before joining her husband’s family business, True Flavors Catering. Together, they worked to expand the business while building their own family, much like her parents did.

In 2022, Hernandez established her own women-owned enterprise, The



Eatery Culinary Group, which offers large corporate dining contracts and retail operations. She has since opened five restaurants in Texas locations such as San Antonio Water System Headquarters, San Antonio Independent School District, UTSA School of Data Science, Baylor University and, most recently, University Health.

She is now also the proud owner of MPRESSED Commercial Laundry Service and still serves as a corporate advisor for True Flavors Catering. She has accrued



“  
Blessed people bless  
others, and God has  
truly blessed us.  
”

over 25 years of experience in the food and retail industry and has worked with a wide range of companies marketing private-label brands, developing and implementing strategic business plans, and leading substantial revenue and profit growth.

As a UIW alumna, Hernandez credits her time at the Nest with helping her to develop essential skills such as leadership, time management, and teamwork, all of which have been instrumental in her professional success. Shaped by her parents and the Mission of the University, she has dedicated herself to uplifting and supporting communities by serving on numerous



esteemed boards such as Chair of the Board of Directors for the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, member of the Board of Directors for the Federal Reserve Bank in Dallas and the Board of Directors for Community Bible Church.

In recognition of her notable contributions to the city of San Antonio, she was awarded the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce 2017 Inspiration Award and the 2017 Haven for Hope, HOPE Leadership Award. She and her husband were also named a 2023 Power Couple by the San Antonio Business Journal.

While reflecting on her career and all that she has achieved thus far, Hernandez considered the values and skills that a businessperson must possess to be successful not only as an individual, but also as a team member charged with uplifting those around her. “For me, it’s humility, compassion and tough skin. You’ve got to be tough in this game, but you also have to have a servant’s heart. There has to be a balance.” Moving forward, Hernandez plans to continue the legacy of service started by her parents by positively impacting the communities she passionately serves. She strives to be a role model of selflessness for her four children—Madeleine, Isabella, Andrew, and Joshua Luke. She hopes her genuine belief in giving back will create even more opportunities for others.

“Blessed people bless others, and God has truly blessed us,” Hernandez expressed. “I want my children to witness this, so they, too, can be a blessing. I hope they make a meaningful impact in someone’s life, inspiring that person to pay it forward. That’s how we build a better community and humanity.”



UNIVERSITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD®

**SWING-IN**

AUCTION PARTY AND GOLF TOURNAMENT

# SAVE THE DATE

**AUCTION**

**MAY 15, 2025**

**GOLF**

**MAY 16, 2025**

The Swing-In Auction Party and Golf Tournament is the University of the Incarnate Word's annual scholarship fundraiser.

## **MAY 15 | AUCTION PARTY**

Join us in the Rosenberg Sky Room for live music, delicious food, an open bar and the opportunity to bid on amazing silent and live auction packages!

## **MAY 16 | GOLF**

Meet us at the Hyatt Hill Country Golf Course for an 8 a.m. tee time. Breakfast and lunch are included. Expect exciting contest holes, a UIW Swing-In shirt and a hat!



**Click the QR code to register for the 48<sup>th</sup> annual UIW Swing-In Scholarship Fundraiser**

University of the Incarnate Word  
Office of Alumni Relations  
4301 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas 78209  
(210) 829-6014 | [alumni@uiwtx.edu](mailto:alumni@uiwtx.edu)

*The University of the Incarnate Word provides reasonable accommodation with adequate notice. To request disability accommodation for this event, please visit [www.uiw.edu/ada](http://www.uiw.edu/ada)*

# CLASS NOTES

Celebrate UIW success stories. Keep up with your class, and be part of *The Word* in print and online! Send your achievements to [alumni@uiwtx.edu](mailto:alumni@uiwtx.edu).

*Photos submitted for Class Notes may be included on online alumni platform.*



## 1976

Pictured above l-r: Major General Edward J. Chrystal Jr, Denise Stout, Marcy Carter Lovick, and Suzanne Faught in Washington DC June 28, 2024.

### **Denise Stout, BA '76**

received the Department of Defense Vietnam War Commemoration Award at the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Continental Congress in Washington, DC. She was presented this award by Major General Edward J. Chrystal Jr of the US Army and Director of the Vietnam War Commemoration. He shared, "On behalf of a grateful Nation and the staff of the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration, thank you for your personal efforts and tireless devotion in thanking and honoring our Nation's Vietnam veterans and their families. Your passion, energy and dedication are evident in the work you have done on behalf of the Nation and your state to recognize these patriots' service and sacrifice." Stout has been a 40-year member of the San Antonio de Bexar Chapter and recently became a founding and charter member of the new DAR Honey Creek Chapter in Bulverde.

## 1970s

### **Maria A. Mendez, BS '78**

began her first year at IWC (UIW) in 1974, immediately following high school. She graduated with a degree in Health and Physical Education and a minor in Secondary Art. She also received her teacher certification from TEA the same year. She taught from August 1978 until she retired in December 2020. "UIW gave me the education and training I needed to become a teacher. I loved every minute of my career," she shared. "Thank you to all of my professors for believing in me!"

## 2010s

### **Jena Matzen, OD '12**

has been promoted to Senior Director of San Antonio Regional Pharmacy Operations with HEB Pharmacy. Jena has been a passionate partner for HEB since 2006, where she was promoted from the front end to the pharmacy.

### **Kelsee Jordan Lee, BBA '14, MBA '14**

has accepted the position of Assistant City Manager and began her tenure with the City of Fulshear on October 28, 2024.

Lee previously served as the Planning and Economic Development Director for the City of Cibolo, Texas. During her tenure with Cibolo, Lee received an International City/County Manager's Association Early Career Leadership Award and APA Texas Planning Excellence Recognition. In addition to these honors, Lee served as a member of Steele High School Career and Technical Education Advisory Board Member, and ICMA SheLeadsGov Committee.



### **Jenness Gough Coelho, MBA '16 and Philip Coelho '15**

are pleased to announce their marriage. The couple married on June 8 in Taormina, Sicily. They were thrilled to

celebrate their nuptial in such an incredibly beautiful location with friends and family! They currently reside in San Antonio, Texas where they play golf and enjoy time with friends and family.

**Samantha Lambert, BBA '19** and her husband welcomed their first baby, Valentina Marie Lambert, on May 20.



**2020s**

**Bree Brakebill, BSN '21** is an accomplished Neuro ICU nurse. She has had the honor and privilege of serving as a charge nurse and preceptor, and the opportunity to highlight her leadership and clinical skills in a critical care setting. Recently, she transitioned into a recruiting role at one of San Antonio's only Level 1 trauma centers. In this position, she leverages her nursing expertise to identify and onboard top talent. "I hope that my journey exemplifies the impact of strong education and commitment to healthcare excellence that UIW taught me. I hope to continue to inspire future nurses by sharing my experiences and insights into the evolving landscape of nursing careers," shared Brakebill.

**CONGRATULATIONS**

*to the following Arts graduates pursuing advanced degrees!*

**Olga Aviles, BFA '23**  
pursuing an MFA in ceramics at UTSA

**Ian Manseau, BFA '23**  
pursuing an MFA in sculpture at Texas A&M Corpus Cristi

**Kahsandra Williams, BFA '23**  
pursuing an MFA in sculpture at Texas Tech

**Katrina Macias, BFA '23**  
pursuing an MFA in painting at Texas Tech



**Odette Acosta, BA '24** recently graduated and was quickly hired by Frost Bank. She is proud to have obtained her first position post-graduation and shares that she hopes her fellow alumni have the same positive experience.

**LATIN GRAMMY NOMINEE**

**MAURA NAVARRETE BOJALIL, BM '21**

UIW would like to congratulate **Maura Nava** on her two Latin Grammy Nominations! What an incredible accomplishment!

**SONG OF THE YEAR**

"A La Mitad" (Banda Sonora Original De La Serie "Zorro") – Julio Reyes Copello & Mariana Vega, songwriters (Maura Nava) [Universal Music Latino]

**BEST POP SONG**

"A La Mitad" (Banda Sonora Original De La Serie "Zorro") – Julio Reyes Copello & Mariana Vega, songwriters (Maura Nava) [Universal Music Latino]

## A message from

**Kathryn Hopkins, BA '16**

## WE WILL MISS YOU

Mr. Michael J. Agnese, Former Employee  
 Ms. Mary R. Brown, Friend  
 Mrs. Jane T. Gregory, BA '52  
 Mr. Jesus M. Hernandez, Former Employee  
 Ms. Jean S. Montalvo, Former Employee  
 Mr. Mario Ochoa, Friend  
 Mr. Roland S. Riojas, MA '93  
 Sr. Margaret P. Slattery, CCVI, BA '52, President, Incarnate Word College 1972-1985  
 Ms. Gloria L. Trippe, BSN '57  
 Mrs. Maxine S. Veteto, BS '50

In the years since graduation, I have diversified my retail experience and defined my design aesthetic. I am a member of the Art Leagues and Guilds in New York and Texas. I am a juried/displaying member of the New Braunfels Art League Gallery. I have also participated in juried and open art shows in New York, Texas and New Mexico to include the Southwestern Association for Indian Arts (SWAIA) Santa Fe Indian Market for the last three years. My design experience has led to a concentration in jewelry and accessory design featuring beadwork and embroidery with diverse and upcycled materials.

In 2022 I started a small business, HOUSE OF HOPKINS that features my jewelry on Etsy. I am also a listed indigenous artist with the Indian Arts and Crafts Board. My designs have been featured in a *Teen Vogue* Article about the NDN Girls Book Club and were modeled by Quannah Chasinghorse, who had purchased earrings prior to the shoot.

While studying at UIW, I travelled with the fashion program to London, UK, and learned more about embroidery with Hand & Lock, met an influential milliner as well as a textile designer, and of course explored the city. In the fall of 2023, I returned to Hand & Lock to complete a French Shading class with my sister and assisted her in studying historical indigenous embroidered artifacts at the British Museum archives.



The decision to finish my education in fashion at the University of the Incarnate Word was important in helping shape my future. I take pride in the knowledge gained from the religious studies classes. I am thankful to the faculty for their empathy, as I was a student-veteran who recently parted from the military and was experiencing the loss of my military spouse.  
***Thank you, UIW. Go Word!***



# UNIVERSITY COLLECTIVE

NEWS, ACCOMPLISHMENTS  
AND ACCOLADES FROM OUR  
ILLUSTRIOUS FACULTY AND STAFF



**Dr. Javier Clavere**

Dean

*College of Humanities, Arts & Social Sciences*

Dr. Clavere has been appointed to the 2024-25 Fellows of HACU's (Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities) Leadership Academy/La Academia de Liderazgo. HACU's Leadership Academy/La Academia de Liderazgo is a one-year fellowship program that helps to prepare the next generation of culturally diverse leaders for executive and senior level positions in higher education. Fellows can take advantage of immersing themselves in leadership development seminars and webinars, curriculum that emphasizes current and emerging HSIs and access to the wisdom of national and international leaders in the field.

"HACU is a well-respected and known institution that is dedicated to promoting Hispanic leaders," explained Dr. Clavere. "What is exciting to know is that this fellowship brings together a group of individuals with a common goal, which is to navigate the difficulties of higher education executive leadership, and we are provided with an array of support from across and beyond the country."





**Dr. Charles Fermaintt**  
Assistant Professor, Chemistry  
*School of Mathematics, Science & Engineering*

Dr. Fermaintt has been awarded a breast cancer research grant in excess of \$500,000 over the next three years from the National Institute of Health (NIH). For Fermaintt, the fight against breast cancer is personal. His mother was diagnosed and survived breast cancer in 2016.

"In 2018, when I started my postdoctoral training, I began doing research on Triple Negative Breast Cancer (TNBC) at UT Health San Antonio under the guidance of experts in TNBC research Dr. Susan L. Mooberry and Dr. April L. Risinger," recalls Fermaintt. "Here I uncovered a macrocyclic diterpenoid compound by the name of yuanhuacine from a plant that selectively eliminated a specific subtype of TNBC. I have since continued to work on this class of compounds here at UIW for about 6 years."

The NIH grant will not only advance the work that Fermaintt is doing, but it will also provide a critical training ground for UIW students who are the researchers of tomorrow. Fermaintt involves many students in his research team and calls their work "pivotal."

Dr. Carlos Garcia, dean of the UIW School of Mathematics, Science and Engineering agrees, "I am immensely proud of Dr. Fermaintt's accomplishments. His research not only represents a significant step forward in the fight against one of the most aggressive forms of breast cancer, but it also highlights the critical importance of exploring natural product-derived compounds in innovative cancer therapies. This recognition from the NIH further underscores the impact of his work. Dr. Fermaintt has also demonstrated exceptional leadership in engaging undergraduate students in his research program, providing them with invaluable opportunities to contribute to such an important field. His dedication to both scientific discovery and mentorship exemplifies the Mission of the University of the Incarnate Word."



**Timothy A. Wingert, OD, FAAO, FNAP, FEAEO**  
Retired Dean and Professor  
*Rosenberg School of Optometry*

Dr. Wingert received the American Academy of Optometry Public Health and Environmental Vision Section, Henry B. Peters Memorial Award on Thursday, Nov. 7 during an annual meeting of the American Academy of Optometry in Indianapolis. This award is given to individuals in recognition of their exemplary contributions to public health and/or environmental vision over many years. Beyond his contributions to optometry in the United States, Wingert has been an ambassador for the profession in other countries and worked with multiple groups to advance optometric care and education outside of North America.





Pictured: Participants of the August 21 session titled *The Power of Journaling*.



The Military and Veterans Center recently hosted a series focused on creative content as a source of healing. Monica J. Baietti, UIW PhD candidate, led and directed five Veteran’s Writing Circle sessions. Beginning Aug. 11, with a final open house Dec. 11, these sessions provided an opportunity for UIW Veterans to use storytelling as a tool to deconstruct military service experiences, allowing them to view those experiences from a broader context. For example, following a recent session, Baietti shared the power of a positive prompt.

“I provided positive writing prompts, that would hopefully make people smile or think about someone they met while serving,” she shared. “My best friends are people who I served with in the military.”

The session themes included: The Power of Journaling, The Power of Poetry, Charcoal Sketching, Journaling/Poetry/Art and concluded with an open house to display the final products.





## BASEBALL-SOFTBALL PRESS BOXES AND BLEACHERS

The final touches were completed in early October for the new baseball and softball press boxes and bleachers. The installations included red and black shade structures, which provide well needed protection for baseball and softball game attendees. Additionally, padding was installed at the vertical steel posts near the backstop to protect our athletes. A big high five to everyone involved in this amazing project. Now, LET'S PLAY BALL!



# WHAT'S NEW @ THE NEST

## FACULTY LOUNGE

The recently remodeled Faculty Lounge at the J.E. & L.E. Mabee Library was completed in September. The improvements to the space include upgraded finishes, enhanced lighting, new countertops and cabinetry, and modern furniture. The concept design for this project was initiated two years ago with UIW Interior Design students and faculty, and the UIW Planning, Design and Construction Department and Facilities Management teams. For 18 years, Finnegan's Coffee Shop occupied the space, which now has been transformed into a great place for our amazing faculty to take a break in between classes and enjoy a cup of coffee.



## COLUMKILLE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING COURTYARD

During the summer of 2024, the Courtyard received major upgrades. The improvements included the removal of uneven brick pavers, which were replaced with crushed granite walking surface, removal of a non-functioning water fountain, replacement of underground drainage pipes with new pipes to enhance positive drainage, tree trimming, and potted planters. These improvements make the space more functional and accessible for all.

# CHAMPIONS IN THE CLASSROOM, COMMUNITY AND COMPETITION

Cardinal Athletics is soaring to new heights with each passing year in the NCAA. Let's look at all that has been achieved in recent years.

## 2017-18

- Fall GPA: **3.30** Spring GPA: **3.19** Year GPA: **3.12**
- Fall SLC Commissioner's honor role: **97**
- Spring SLC Commissioner's honor role: **148**  
*Led the Southland Conference*
- Academic Progress Rate: **967**
- Graduation Success Rate: **77%**
- Federal Graduation Rate: **+5**
- Service Hours: **5500**
- Professional Development Hours: **778**
- Conference Championship: Men's Swimming & Diving (CCSA)
- Conference Championship: Men's Tennis
- SLC Commissioner's Cup: **8th** out of 13 Southland teams
- SLC Men's All-Sport Trophy: **8th** out of 13
- SLC Women's All-Sport Trophy: **10th** out of 13
- Learfield Directors' Cup: **246th** in Division I
- Ticket Sales: **\$107,068**
- Pledges, Gifts, & Sponsorships Total: **\$174,101.17**

## 2018-19

- Fall GPA: **3.33** Spring GPA: **3.25** Year GPA: **3.29**
- Fall SLC Commissioner's honor role: **104**
- Spring SLC Commissioner's honor role: **147**  
*Led the Southland Conference*
- Academic Progress Rate: **991**
- Graduation Success Rate: **88%**
- Federal Graduation Rate: **+11**
- Service Hours: **5163**
- Professional Development Hours: **673**

- Conference Championship: **Football**  
*Played in FCS playoffs first time ever*
- Conference Championship: Men's Swimming & Diving (CCSA)
- SLC Commissioner's Cup: **6th** out of 13 Southland teams
- SLC Men's All-Sport Trophy: **4th** of 13
- SLC Women's All-Sport Trophy: **9th** of 13
- Learfield Directors' Cup: Tied for **161st** in Division I
- Ticket Sales: **\$120,698.25**
- Pledges, Gifts, & Sponsorships Total: **\$1,619,074.95**

## 2019-20

- Fall GPA: **3.36** Spring GPA: **3.38** Year GPA: **3.37**  
*All-time high Fall GPA All-time high Spring GPA All-time high year GPA*
- Fall SLC Commissioner's honor role: **100**
- Spring SLC Commissioner's honor role: **175**  
*Led the Southland Conference*
- Academic Progress Rate: **985**
- Graduation Success Rate: **86%**
- Federal Graduation Rate: **+11**
- Service Hours: Pandemic, no hours
- Professional Development Hours: **695**
- Conference Championship: **Men's Swimming & Diving (CCSA)**
- SLC Commissioner's Cup: None due to Covid
- SLC Men's All-Sport Trophy: None due to Covid
- SLC Women's All-Sport Trophy: None due to Covid
- Learfield Directors' Cup: None due to Covid
- Ticket Sales: **\$119,550.50**
- Pledges, Gifts, & Sponsorships Total: **\$568,132.66**

## 2020-21

- Fall GPA: **3.32** Spring GPA: **3.24** Year GPA: **3.28**
- Fall and Spring SLC Commissioner's honor role: **246**  
*This year was combined from both semesters*
- Academic Progress Rate: **973**
- Graduation Success Rate: **80%**
- Federal Graduation Rate: **+6**
- Service Hours 2020-21 **4895** (coming back from pandemic)
- Professional Development Hours: **482**

- **As One We Will** was founded in 2020 (social justice advocacy group for student-athletes)
- SLC Commissioner's Cup: **10th** out of 13 Southland teams
- SLC Men's All-Sport Trophy: **9th** out of 13
- SLC Women's All-Sport Trophy: **9th** out of 13
- Learfield Directors' Cup: **233rd** in Division I
- Ticket Sales: **\$49,861.00**
- Pledges, Gifts, & Sponsorships Total: **\$277,877.94**
- The Ann Barshop Natatorium adds new cutting-edge scoreboard

## 2021-22

- Fall GPA: **3.31** Spring GPA: **3.3** Year GPA: **3.32**
- Fall SLC Commissioner's honor role: **105**  
*Led the Southland Conference*
- Spring SLC Commissioner's honor role: **146**  
*Led the Southland Conference*
- Academic Progress Rate: **987**
- Graduation Success Rate: **83%**
- Federal Graduation Rate: **+13**
- Service Hours: **6540**
- UIW Earns Southland Strong Community Service Award
- Professional Development Hours: **850**
- Conference Championship: **Football**  
*Won first ever FCS playoff game*
- Conference Championship: **Men's Indoor Track & Field**
- Conference Championship: **Men's Outdoor Track & Field**
- Conference Championship: **Men's Tennis**
- Tournament Championship: **Women's Basketball**  
*First NCAA Tournament Game*
- SLC Commissioner's Cup: **1st** out of 8 Southland teams
- SLC Men's All-Sport Trophy: **1st** out of 8
- SLC Women's All-Sport Trophy: **3rd** out of 8
- Learfield Directors' Cup: Tied for **183rd** in Division I
- Ticket Sales: **\$136,262.50**
- Pledges, Gifts, & Sponsorships Total: **\$457,556.76**

## 2022-23

- Fall GPA: **3.29** Spring GPA: **3.33** Year GPA: **3.31**
- Fall SLC Commissioner's honor role: **122**  
*Led the Southland Conference*
- Spring SLC Commissioner's honor role: **138**  
*Led the Southland Conference*
- Academic Progress Rate: **981**
- Graduation Success Rate: **80%**
- Federal Graduation Rate: **+9**
- Service Hours: **6392**

- Professional Development Hours: **670**
- Conference Championship: **Football**  
*FCS Semi-Finals*
- Conference Championship: **Men's Indoor Track & Field**
- Conference Championship: **Men's Outdoor Track & Field**
- Conference Championship: **Men's Cross Country**
- SLC Commissioner's Cup: **1st** out of 10 Southland teams
- SLC Men's All-Sport Trophy: **1st** out of 10
- SLC Women's All-Sport Trophy: **4th** out of 10
- Learfield Directors' Cup: Tied for **157th** in Division I
- Ticket Sales: **\$111,615.00**
- Pledges, Gifts, & Sponsorships Total: **\$865,834.65**

## 2023-24

- Fall GPA: **3.32** Spring GPA: **3.36** Year GPA: **3.34**
- Fall SLC Commissioner's honor role: **122**  
*Led Southland Conference*
- Spring SLC Commissioner's honor role: **160**  
*Led the Southland Conference*
- Academic Progress Rate: Not yet determined
- Graduation Success Rate: **94%**
- Federal Graduation Rate: **+10**
- **Payton Adams** (women's soccer) awarded Southland Conference F.L. McDonald Scholarship
- **Ryleigh Mata** (softball) earns Southland Conference Steve McCarty Citizenship Award
- Service Hours: **5,000**
- Awarded the Southland Conference SAAC Serves Award
- Professional Development Hours: **700**
- National Championship - **Artistic Swimming**
- Conference Championship: **Men's Indoor Track & Field**
- Conference Championship: **Men's Outdoor Track & Field**
- Conference Championship: **Men's Tennis**
- SLC Commissioner's Cup: **3rd** out of 10 Southland teams
- SLC Men's All-Sport Trophy: **2nd** out of 10
- SLC Women's All-Sport Trophy: **4th** out of 10
- Learfield Directors' Cup: **214th** in Division I
- Ticket Sales: **\$117,242.15**
- Pledges, Gifts, & Sponsorships Total: **\$1,122,940.04**
- Launch of **Tartan Society**
- UIW Announces Partnership with Peak Sports MGMT

# CALENDAR

## SPECIAL SERVICES

### CARDINAL COUPLES MASS

Sunday, Feb. 9, 2025

Our Lady's Chapel

If you met your soulmate at UIW and want to celebrate Valentine's Day in a special way, join us for the annual Cardinal Couples Mass!

### BACCALAUREATE MASS

Friday, May 9, 2025

Celebrating the Class of 2025 Graduates.

*Please check the UMM Events Calendar for updates and information on additional services, times and locations.*

Click QR codes to visit:



Alumni Events



UIW Swing-In



UIW Mission and Ministry Website



UIW Box Office

## ALUMNI EVENTS

### 38TH ANNUAL MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. MARCH AND CELEBRATION

Monday, Jan. 20, 2025

3501 Martin Luther King Drive,  
9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Bus transportation will be available from campus to the march, and also from the march back to campus. We ask all guests joining us to wear Cardinal Red to show UIW's commitment to racial justice.

### 15TH ANNUAL ALUMNI EASTER EGG HUNT

Saturday, April 12, 2025

UIW Broadway Campus, 3 - 5 p.m.

Bring the little Cardinals in your life back to the Nest for our annual alumni Easter egg hunt!

### SPRING RING CEREMONY PRESENTED BY HERFF JONES

Monday, May 5, 2025

Chapel of the Incarnate Word and reception at SEC Mezzanine

Join us for the UIW Ring Ceremony presented by Herff Jones as we commemorate academic achievements and present graduating students with their class ring! Registration Required.

## ARTS, MUSIC AND THEATRE PERFORMANCES

### UIW THEATRE PRESENTS "THE MOORS"

Friday, Feb. 21 - March 1, 2025

UIW Broadway Campus - Cheever Black Box Theatre

### ORCHESTRA OF THE INCARNATE WORD

Saturday, March 2, 2025

Diane Bennack Concert Hall, 3 p.m.

Admission: Adults: \$15, Children: \$10, UIW Faculty, Staff and Students: Free with UIW ID

### NOCHE DE MARIACHI

Wednesday, March 5, 2025

Diane Bennack Concert Hall, 7:30 p.m.

### WIND ENSEMBLE CONCERT

Friday, March 7, 2025

Diane Bennack Concert Hall, 7:30 p.m.

### UIW THEATRE PRESENTS "SEE HOW THEY RUN"

Friday, April 11 - 27, 2025

UIW Broadway Campus - Coates Theatre

### FERIA DEL MARIACHI

Wednesday, April 30, 2025

Diane Bennack Concert Hall, 7:30 p.m.

### JAZZ BAND CONCERT

Thursday, May 1, 2025

Diane Bennack Concert Hall, 7:30 p.m.

### WIND ENSEMBLE CONCERT

Friday, May 2, 2025

Diane Bennack Concert Hall, 7:30 p.m.

### ORCHESTRA OF THE INCARNATE WORD

Saturday, May 3, 2025

Diane Bennack Concert Hall, 7:30 p.m.

Admission: Adults: \$15, Children: \$10,

UIW Faculty, Staff and Students: Free with UIW ID

### CARDINAL CHORALE AND CARDINAL SINGERS CONCERT

Sunday, May 4, 2025

Diane Bennack Concert Hall, 3:00 p.m.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### SWING-IN DINNER & GOLF TOURNAMENT

- AUCTION PARTY

Thursday, May 15, 2025

McCombs Center Rosenberg Sky Room

- GOLF TOURNAMENT

Friday, May 16, 2025

Hyatt Regency Hill Country Golf Club

### GRADUATION

Saturday, May 10, 2024

Celebrate the Spring 2025 Graduates at Freeman Coliseum.

## UIW ALUMNI BENEFITS & DISCOUNTS

UIW alumni discounts and free tickets are waiting for you. Visit the Alumni Benefits Page to book these great deals.

**La Quinta by Wyndham San Antonio River Walk** - Receive 15% off your stay by following the link through UIW's site

**UIW Theatre** - Redeem a complimentary ticket to any UIW Theatre production

**J.E. & L.E. Mabee Library** - Access the Broadway campus library and all of its resources

**Broadway Campus Wellness Center & Ann Barshop Natatorium** - Purchase a discounted membership to these excellent fitness facilities

Click the QR code for Alumni Benefits Page with details:



# Melody of the Soul

By: Lena Gokelman, BM '85 &  
Bill Gokelman, BM '85

It is often said that music is the language of the soul. Music can evoke memories, and give expression to emotions, relationships and life circumstances that are inexpressible through words alone. Music has no limits. Perhaps that is why music is such a significant part of our faith lives.

At times, it is obvious that God is working in our lives, giving us direction and revealing truth, whether through encounters with others or in small, almost indistinguishable ways. In these instances, we know what we want to say to God and music enriches that response.

But then there are times when God's presence seems intangible, and music gives breath to the words we don't have. After the tragedy on September 11, 2001, many people turned to something higher for solace. People grappled with the inexpressible. Our words alone were not enough. It was the union of music and text that gave us a means of expression and brought us together. Our faith tells us God is always there but sometimes we are hard-pressed to express the "where" and "how." Just as faith implies a total giving in of oneself to one's beliefs, the power of music lies in its ability to lift us, carry us, transform us and even heal us. Roger Ames' Reflection on Amazing Grace is dedicated to the children of the victims of the 9/11 attacks.

Sometimes music alone, without words, is enough. It is in these moments when we listen to music, and truly open our hearts to it, that we can become more sensitive, more attuned to the experiences of others, and our perspectives are expanded. In the main musical theme from Schindler's List, the solo violin with its languid, aching melody brings us closer to the suffering endured by 6 million Jewish people.

As professional musicians, we have the privilege of doing what we love most every day. It is not just our vocation, it is our joy, passion and ministry. As music educators and music ministers, we are aware of an important distinction: we don't teach music – we teach people, whether in the classroom or the worship setting, and music is the powerful tool we use. More than just learning to read notes or gaining technical proficiency – both of which are important – the study of music enriches lives by increasing self-confidence, helping to deal with complex emotions, teaching collaboration and the creation of beauty within a community, building analytical and research skills, and developing means of self-expression, to name just a few of the many benefits. In the worship setting, music from Medieval chants to the devotional songs of today also expresses the tenets and stories of our faith. It is a means by which we express our praise of the God who created us and who continues to nourish us throughout our lives. Music can carry our lament, express our hope and foster unity. Music expresses the diversity of the global family and reminds us of our call to be the hands and feet of the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ.

Human beings are creative by nature. We don't all create in the same way, but all of us have the ability and the need to express who we are at a core level. Music – whether we are the creators or benefactors of it, whether we experience it in prayer or in the rhythms of daily life – is one of the most profound ways to achieve this expression. It gives voice to our spiritual center, our deepest beliefs, our faith. It helps make us whole, and not limited by our own societal constructs. Through music, we can open ourselves to the boundless message of God's inexpressible love, compassion and presence.

Sometimes, the only way to hear the inexpressible is through a language that has no limits.



PARTING WORDS

Click QR codes to  
music samples:



*Reflection on  
Amazing Grace*



*Schindler's List*



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# *Congratulations*

to the 2024 UIW  
Graduating Class!

*Your Journey.  
Our Mission.*

