

ST MARY'S

COLLEGE of MARYLAND

The National Public Honors College



SPRING 2025

THE LEGACY OF PRESIDENT JORDAN

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ST. MARY'S COLLEGE
of Maryland

The MULBERRY TREE

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

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

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Tuajuanda C. Jordan, PhD



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Strengthening SMCM

President Jordan's impact can be measured in many ways.

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COVER: Portrait of Tuajuanda C. Jordan.

COVER PHOTO: Beth Graeme Photography

“ONCE I SAW A PRIZEFIGHTER BOXING A YOKEL. THE FIGHTER WAS SWIFT AND amazingly scientific. His body was one violent flow of rapid rhythmic action. He hit the yokel a hundred times while the yokel held up his arms in stunned surprise. But suddenly the yokel, rolling about in the gale of boxing gloves, struck one blow and knocked science, speed and footwork as cold as a well-digger’s posterior. The smart money hit the canvas. The long shot got the nod. The yokel had simply stepped inside of his opponent’s sense of time.”* This is how I began my inaugural address 11 years ago. I concluded, “SMCM is not the yokel. We may be the underdog. YET, we are an underdog with experience of quietly beating the odds... It is our time to step into the opponent’s sense of time. It is time, at this place that has a conflicted history of toleration and enslavement... to be the model of what 21st-century higher education must embrace – inclusivity, diversity, affordability, relevancy, and entrepreneurialism... It is time to do what some may believe to be impossible, and to make visible this hidden gem... The path may not be easy. However, the woman known as Moses, whose home is preserved not far from here, was able to lead countless numbers to a better place. The path was clear to her. I am no Moses, but I can see the future and I am ready to take you there.”

Sitting here at my desk 11 years later, I can say confidently that the vision has been fulfilled. This hidden gem has become more visible, our campus community is more diverse, respectful, vibrant and richer, our ties to the broader community are tighter, and our financial health is much stronger. This transformation is the result of the community believing in the dream and working together to make it real.

I believe leadership is a calling. Some want to be leaders because of the perceived fame, fortune and power associated with a position. Not me. I lead not to be in power but rather to empower those I have been called to lead to live lives of purpose in a manner they believe to be best. We are the model of 21st-century higher education. It has been my privilege and honor to serve this community as its seventh president. There is wind beneath our wings. Soar, Seahawks, soar!



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

**Excerpt from the prologue of “Invisible Man” by Ralph Ellison*

Editor’s Note

COLLEGE PRESIDENTS COME AND GO. Remnants of their tenure linger on.

Walking with colleagues past the Montgomery Hall Fine Arts building on our way to meet incoming **President Rhonda Phillips**, Senior Graphic Designer **Jo Oliver ‘99** commented on the peacocks that were a fixture at that spot when she was a student here. The peacocks were a gift to the wife of **President Ted Lewis** (1983-1996). Though they’ve been gone from campus for over 20 years, and though it was Lewis who got St. Mary’s College its honors college designation and its first listing in U.S. News & World Report rankings, it’s the peacocks that people remember.

The Governor’s Cup Yacht Race is attributable to **President Renwick Jackson** (1969-1982), though as often he is remembered for the infamous footprints in the snow which foretold his resignation.

President Maggie O’Brien (1996-2009), by most accounts the busiest building president since **President May Russell** (1948-1969), might think she is remembered for the countless bricks that built Goodpaster and Glendening Halls, along with Waring and Lewis residences, the Muldoon River Center, plus a new Campus Center and athletics facility. Does she realize that her name comes up more frequently over her curious signage on campus light poles pointing the way to The Gambia and the Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies in Oxford?

Lesley Urgo, wife of **President Joseph Urgo** (2010-2013) invigorated a campus arboretum. Arboretum placards adorn and identify trees throughout campus.

As with the peacocks, the students of **President Tuajuanda Jordan’s** tenure (2014-2025) may long remember their daily encounters with a cat named “Meatball,” but the obvious frontrunner for her presidential legacy is the Commemorative to Enslaved Peoples of Southern Maryland. Time will tell.

LEE CAPRISTO, editor

CAMPUS & COMMUNITY NEWS



PHOTO: RPHILLIPS/APRIL 2025

New President Named

Rhonda G. Phillips, PhD, was selected by the St. Mary's College Board of Trustees to become the College's eighth president, effective July 1. Phillips was chosen after a four-month national search, guided by a 14-member search committee led by Trustee Ray Wernecke and composed of trustee, faculty, staff, student, alumni and community members. Most recently, she

served as president of Chatham University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, leading an intensive restructuring effort to achieve long-term financial stability. Prior to Chatham, Phillips was the inaugural dean of the John Martinson Honors College at Purdue University. Before that, she was associate dean of Barrett Honors College at Arizona State University.

Read more at www.smcm.edu/presidential-search.

SMCM Observes National Service Month

For nationwide service month in April, the Office of Alumni Relations coordinated 12 group projects with over 300 volunteers (comprised of alumni, students, faculty, staff, friends of the College) throughout Maryland, but also in Washington, D.C. and Massachusetts. The "Bay to Bay Service Days" effort also included alumni doing individual service projects in seven other states plus Tokyo, Japan.



On March 19, the campus community received the preliminary draft recommendation by the site visit team for St. Mary's College of Maryland's reaffirmation of accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). According to President Jordan in a message to the campus, the preliminary report out by the site visit team of the seven accreditation standards appeared to be highly positive. MSCHE makes its reaffirmation of accreditation decision in May.

“What Does Justice Look Like?”

A robust and timely panel discussion titled “What Does Justice for All Look Like?” was held April 9 on the campus of St. Mary’s College of Maryland, drawing local community members and students for a conversation on the state and future of civil rights in America. The College’s Center for the Study of Democracy and Office of Community Outreach and Engagement co-sponsored the event with Historic St. Mary’s City, Historic Sotterley, the St. Mary’s Branch of the NAACP (#7025) and the United Coalition for Afro-American Contributions. The event served as a platform for reflection and community engagement around pressing issues of justice, equity and inclusion under the new administration.

The College’s Institutional Advancement marketing team won seven different awards across a range of categories in the 40th Annual Educational Advertising Awards, announced March 11. The awards included three gold, one silver, one bronze and two merit awards for total digital marketing program, digital videos, logo design and print publications. The publications team, headed up by Director of Writing & Content **Lee Capristo** and Senior Graphic Designer **Jo Oliver ’99**, received a Gold Award for the Nautical Flag Quick Facts card, a Silver Award for the Admission Location

brochure and a Merit Award for viewbook design. Marketing & Publicity Manager **Ashley Hardy** received two awards for projects she oversaw: a Gold Award for the Nancy R. & Norton T. Dodge Performing Arts Center logo design and a Bronze Award for the 2024 Mulberry Music Festival promo video. The entire marketing team earned a Gold Award in the Total Digital Marketing Program category for the fall admission recruitment campaign. Video Intern **Anthony Lanzano ’25**, was recognized with a Merit Award for his editing of the Chiles Homesite Anthropology Excavation video.



BOARD & FOUNDATION BOARD NEWS



The St. Mary’s College Board of Trustees conveyed the College’s highest honor, the Order of the Ark and Dove, to **Michael P. O’Brien ’68** on Jan. 31. Created in 1972 to honor those who have given distinguished service to St. Mary’s College, O’Brien’s steadfast familial care for SMC’s steadfast familial care for SMC has long been recognized by the campus community.

O’Brien served on the St. Mary’s College of Maryland Foundation Board of Directors from 2002 to 2005; the Board of Trustees from 2005 to 2017, including chairing the Buildings and Grounds Committee; and again, on the Foundation Board from 2017 to 2023, which included chairing the Joint Investment Advisory Committee.

The following members of the Board of Trustees completed their service terms and cycled off the Board at the May 9 meeting: Carlos Alcazar, Lex Birney, Peg Duchesne, Gail Harmon, Sven Erik Holmes.

PRESIDENT’S NEWS

President Jordan was one of hundreds of college and university presidents who signed “A Call for Constructive Engagement” on April 22 hosted by the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) on its website. According to the website, the call is to “speak with one voice against the unprecedented government overreach and political interference now endangering American higher education.”



President Jordan met with alumni in Florida, Oregon, Washington and Massachusetts during the first 100 days of 2025 as part of the Seahawks on the Road program coordinated by Institutional Advancement’s Development and Alumni Relations teams.

President Jordan was interviewed on the IngenioUs podcast, hosted by Melissa Morriss-Olson. The episode, “Leading with Vision, Grace and Grit: The Transformative Leadership of Tuajuanda C. Jordan,” aired on Feb. 18. In the interview, President Jordan reflected on the forces that shaped her, the challenges she faced and her hopes for the future.



On March 24, the Maryland Senate adopted a resolution recognizing **President Jordan** for her distinguished service as president of St. Mary’s College of Maryland and her commitment to excellence in higher education.

FACULTY & STAFF NEWS

Assistant Professor of Physics **Anish Agashe** with **James Ripple '24** published a research article titled, "The Tolman VII space-time in the presence of charge and a cosmological constant," in the European Physical Journal C. Ripple graduated summa cum laude and works as a photogrammetry software engineer. He is also collaborating with Agashe's research group at SMCM and plans to apply for PhD programs next year.

Professor of Psychology **Aileen Bailey** and Associate Professor of Psychology **James Mantell** had their article "Undergraduate Psychology Programs Should Teach Advanced Data Science Skills" featured in the American Psychological Association's Psychology Teacher Network. Mantell and Bailey, principal investigators on a 2023–2026 National Science Foundation grant, "Developing Modernized Data Science Instruction in Psychology Curricula" (NSF IUSE 2235645), maintain that as demand for data science skills continues to grow it is prudent for psychology programs to be on the forefront of enhancing data science skill instruction including data management, data visualization using data science toolkits and coding of statistical analyses in a variety of their courses. Building in the time to teach data science skills, of course, requires a tradeoff of presenting content, but the payoff is better preparing students for a future where data science skills are increasingly important.



Governor Wes Moore announced the appointment of **Kelsey Bush '94**, community affairs liaison at SMCM, to the Judicial Nominating Commission for Calvert and St. Mary's Counties. The commission, one of 16 such regional bodies in Maryland, plays a critical role in the selection of judicial candidates. Bush has served on a number of local and statewide commissions, including the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture, the St. Mary's County Human Relations Commission, and the St. Mary's County Teen Court Inc. Oversight Committee. He received his J.D. from the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law.

Associate Professor of Philosophy **Barrett Emerick** is serving a five-year term as editor of "Feminist Philosophy Quarterly" (FPQ). The online journal is open-access, peer-reviewed and dedicated to promoting feminist philosophical scholarship. Additionally, Emerick's article, "The Limits of the Rights to Free Thought and Expression" was republished in the new edition of *Living Ethics*, an ethics textbook published by Oxford University Press.



*Musician-in-residence **Brian Ganz** was featured throughout February on "WETA Arts." The show focused on Ganz's nearly 15-year quest to perform the entire catalog of 240 works by composer Fryderyk Chopin.*

Haley Galloway, assistant librarian, **Stephanie Reyes**, assistant librarian and **Amanda VerMeulen**, director of the library and archives, recorded a podcast episode for the Forward Libraries 2025 Spring Forward conference March 10-20. The episode featured conversations around accessible hiring practices in academic libraries from the perspective of job seekers and hiring managers.

Musician-in-residence **Brian Ganz** was featured throughout February on "WETA Arts." The show, a portion of which was recorded at the Nancy R. & Norton T. Dodge Performing Arts Center on campus, focused on Ganz's nearly 15-year quest to perform the entire catalog of 240 works by composer Fryderyk Chopin. Ganz has appeared as soloist with such orchestras as the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, the National Philharmonic, the Baltimore and the National Symphonies, the City of London Sinfonia and L'Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte Carlo.

Argelia González Hurtado, associate professor of Spanish, has been awarded a \$19,136 Connection Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). In collaboration with colleagues from the University of Lethbridge and St. Francis Xavier University (StFX), this grant will support a colloquium at StFX from July 1-3. Titled "Cinematic Mothers: Mothering and Motherhood in Contemporary Latin American Cultures," the event will critically examine and challenge traditional conceptions of motherhood. Scholars from six countries and diverse academic backgrounds will participate, including **Jeannine Ortega**, visiting assistant professor of English at SMCM.

Associate Professor of Psychology **Kristina Howansky** and **Nicholas Ashenfelter '23** recently published an article (based on Ashenfelter's St. Mary's Project) in the *Psi Chi Journal of Undergraduate Research*. Ashenfelter is pursuing a master's degree in psychology at Villanova University.



Professor of Art **Sue Johnson's** "Symmetrical Bodies" artwork is the solo exhibition at gallery neptune & brown in Washington, D.C. through June 14.

Brittany Johnson, assistant professor of performing arts; **Alise Maxie**, coordinator of multicultural programming and **Kelsey Bush '94**, community affairs liaison, joined volunteers on Feb. 14 in a celebration of African American literature and culture at Great Mills High School during its annual African American Read-In. Volunteers visited classrooms throughout the day, sharing books, poems and personal stories that highlighted African

Americans' contributions to the nation's cultural fabric.

Professor of Art **Sue Johnson's** "Symmetrical Bodies" artwork is the solo exhibition at gallery neptune & brown in Washington, D.C. through June 14. Johnson also has 15 of her works from "Hall of Portraits from The History of Machines" in COLLECTive Concerns: Collage and Assemblage, a traveling exhibition through 2026 sponsored by the Association of Academic Museums and Galleries.

Assistant Professor of Biology and Neuroscience **Sarah Latchney** published a research article in the *Journal of Neuroimmunology*, co-authored with **Anjali Raheja '26** and **Brayan Ruiz Lopez '24**. The article explores how changes in neuron production and glial activity might be linked to seizures and epilepsy and points to a possible role for glial cells in the pathophysiology of seizure activity and epilepsy.

Associate Professor and chair of the Neuroscience department **Elizabeth Leininger**, with the help of the "Brainiacs" (**Leonardo Montenegro '25**, **Hara Collins '26**, **Em Allen '27**, **Alba Gonzalez Ventura '25**, **Jayden Washington '25**, **Christina Rutherford '25**, and **Elise Kinyanjui '25**) hosted the 17th Annual Southern Maryland Brain Bee on March 1 at St. Mary's College. The Brain Bee is a neuroscience competition that promotes interest in and learning of neuroscience at the high school level. Participants competed in individual and team rounds, each designed to challenge their understanding of the brain. Allie C. from Great Mills High School earned first place in the individual competition and was awarded \$500 to cover registration and travel expenses for the USA Brain Bee at Rutgers University. Additionally, the Great Mills High School team won the group competition. The Southern Maryland Brain Bee, an officially sanctioned event of the International Brain Bee, was founded by **Anne Marie Brady '93**.

Director of Public Safety **Felix Martinez** was named a finalist for Campus Safety magazine's Director of the Year Award. Through this program, the magazine honors executives in hospital, university and school security, law enforce-



ment and emergency management. Since joining the College community in July 2023, Martinez has implemented a campus public safety advisory board; increased security camera coverage; expanded the campus body-cam program; improved lighting and expanded the campus card access control center; and introduced license plate recognition cameras. Martinez was also responsible for securing a grant from the Maryland Higher Education Commission's Campus Safety Initiative totaling \$375,000. The grant will help fund initiatives already in progress that were previously identified in the comprehensive campus safety and security review conducted in 2022. Winners of this year's Director of the Year Award will be announced at this summer's National Campus Safety Conference, taking place in Austin, Texas, July 21-23.

Victor Perez, visiting assistant professor of environmental studies, was co-author on four scholarly articles published this spring. Three were about fossilized teeth of the megalodon shark; the fourth was about the role of artificial intelligence in middle school science education. In the journal *Palaeontologia Electronica* the article provided new evolutionary insights into the megalodon shark's gigantism, life history strategies, ecology and extinction. In

Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology (Vol. 661, March 2025), the takeaway is that marine strontium isotopes preserved in fossilized shark teeth provide a means to better estimate the age of fossil sites, allowing for more precise correlation with known global events throughout Earth history. In *Acta Palaeontologica Polonica* (Vol. 69 (4) 2024), the article documents serrated bite marks preserved on fossilized megalodon teeth and projects what might have caused the serration. Perez is co-principal investigator on an AI research project funded by the National Science Foundation and an outcome of that research was a paper published in the *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*. His research team is developing a middle school curriculum that integrates AI and paleontology to teach students and teachers how to design and evaluate computer vision models that can identify images of fossil shark teeth.

Assistant Professor of Physics **Digesh Raut** served as chair of the organizing committee for the BCVSPIN conference: Particle Physics and Cosmology in the Himalayas, held from Dec. 9-13, 2024, in Kathmandu, Nepal. BCVSPIN (which stands for Bangladesh, China, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India and Nepal) aims to support early-career scientists from South/Southeast Asia by providing opportunities to learn from and network with fellow scientists on particle physics and cosmology. The conference featured 70 talks from experts, early-career scientists and major experimental collaborations. Topics included collider physics, gravitational waves, dark matter, neutrinos, particle astrophysics, physics beyond the Standard Model and machine learning.



Associate Professor of Psychology **Jennifer Tickle** was named president-elect of the Eastern Psychological Association (EPA) in February. The position has a 3-year term and begins in June. She has been a member of EPA since 2004 and a Fellow since 2020. She coordinated social psychology programming as program chair from 2016-2019, and served on the Board of Directors from 2020-2023 as the organization addressed the pandemic's impact and re-emerged from its wake.

Assistant Professor of Theater, Dance and Performance Studies **Diego Villada** was guest choreographer for "Clyde's" by Lynn Nottage and William Shakespeare's "Romeo & Juliet" at the University of Evansville in Evansville, Indiana.

Professor of Psychology **Libby Nutt Williams**, a member of the American Psychological Association (APA) Council of Representatives, was part of the APA delegation to Capitol Hill on Feb. 20. The delegation met with senate and house representatives in Washington, D.C. to advocate for issues important to psychology.

STUDENT NEWS

Emily Friedman '25, Aidan Glover '25, Tamani Kingsland '25 and Isabella Schindler '25, with Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry **Pam Mertz**, presented research at the 2025 Annual Meeting of the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology in Chicago, Illinois, from April 12-15. In addition to presenting research, the students presented posters on their St. Mary's Projects.

Ari Lecouras '25 and Henry Russell '25 presented their research on April 4 at the 3rd Annual Association for Environmental Studies and Sciences (AESS) Student Research Symposium, a virtual event that brought together graduate and undergraduate student researchers from around the world to showcase their original work and engage with the broader environmental community.

Elisia Lewis '25 won first prize at the Phi Alpha Theta conference at Bowie State University on April 12 for her paper, "Rebranding Racial Integrity: The Veil of Progressivism in the Relentless Pursuit of White Supremacy in Virginia." Phi Alpha Theta is the history honors society of which Lewis is a member. After graduation, she plans to pursue a dual graduate degree in history and library science.

In March, **Nadia Lonnberg '25** was awarded a \$1,471 Psi Chi Undergraduate Research Award to support her St. Mary's Project, titled "Pop Cultural Videos and Their Impact on Multimedia Learning," which is being conducted under the mentorship of Assistant Professor **Nayantara Kurpad**. After graduation, Lonnberg plans to pursue a master's and/or PhD in counseling psychology.

Sadie Gryzmalski '26, Lorelai Symmes '25 and Jayden Washington '25, with Professor of Psychology **Aileen Bailey**, Associate Professor of Psychology **James Mantell** and Associate Professor of Psychology **Jennifer Tickle** shared their research at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association in New York in early March.

Luke Schwenk '25 became St. Mary's College's first-ever national champion in an NCAA-sponsored sport as he posted a school record time of 19.53 and was crowned the 2025 NCAA Division III 50-yard freestyle national champion on March 19 at the NCAA Division III men's swimming and diving championships in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Di Wanamaker '25, earned honorable mention for her research presentation at the TriBeta Research Conference held at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania in March. The work, titled "The Impact of Testosterone Level Variation in Female Anoles on Color Signaling and Social Behaviors" is part of Wanamaker's St. Mary's Project.





AN INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT JORDAN

Tuajuanda C. Jordan, PhD, became the seventh president of St. Mary's College of Maryland on the seventh day of the seventh month in 2014. She has been a tour de force when that was what was needed. President Jordan brought a vision for what 21st-century public liberal arts education should be. She negotiated a new funding formula with the state and found a way to freeze tuition for five consecutive years to improve the College's affordability and access. She drove, through strategic planning efforts, curricular changes that produced the Learning through Experiential and Applied Discovery (LEAD) initiative and new academic programs in marine science, neuroscience, business administration and management and the performing arts, plus varsity rowing and track and field teams. To bolster retention and inclusion, she overhauled co-curricular student support efforts for better partnership and delivery of the academic mission. Tied to this objective was the Honors College Promise – for every student – of the opportunity for directed research, internships or international experience.

THE INTERVIEW

A national voice in higher education, President Jordan set the bar high when she challenged SMCM that “to remain viable and vibrant, we must be willing to see beyond the traditional; be able to assess and be willing to take calculated risks; innovate, collaborate, communicate and support one another.”

With just a month left in her tenure, President Jordan took time to reflect on what the past 11 years have meant in what she has described as the toughest job of her career.

Thinking back to 2014, what excited you most about joining the SMCM community?

I was excited by its potential to be the best higher education institution in the nation. Liberal arts is the best form of education; it is/should be a holistic approach to understanding and feeding the soul of the world in which we live. The College is a public institution with the most perfect mission. Being public means that the depth of our responsibilities is greater than those who are not. If you can offer the best to all students, why not find a way to do it? It was a daunting task, but I was determined and excited to try to make it happen.

When you first arrived, how did you assess the institution's needs?

I met with as many individuals as I could during those first few months. I met with each trustee to try to get an understanding of what they saw as the critical needs; staff to learn what was top of mind for them; and legislators to learn their impressions of the College. Over the summer, I met with individual vice presidents numerous times to get an understanding of the workings of, and challenges faced by, the College. Once the fall semester started, I met with academic departments on campus and many of the faculty campus leaders at my home to learn what was top of mind for them; I met with student affinity groups to learn from them. I listened to my colleagues who had no affiliation with the College and read op-eds and other articles they sent me about the institution.



TOP: President Jordan welcomed Governor Larry Hogan and First Lady Yumi Hogan to campus in 2016. MIDDLE: Celebrating the opening of the Jamie L. Roberts Stadium in 2019 with the Roberts family and Board of Trustees. BOTTOM: Unveiling the naming of the Dean Learning Commons in 2024, assisted by Chris Rodkey '10, MAT'11.

Did you have any immediate concerns?

Yes. I was concerned about the enrollment, the most significant source of revenue for the College; the perception of the faculty as to the meaning of shared governance; and the social stratification of the staff, in the presence of the faculty, deferring publicly to the faculty with respect to opinion and/or what should be the goals for any particular thing, even regarding what the staff wanted or needed. The latter point was quite pronounced very early on in my tenure when we couldn't give raises to anyone, but I really wanted to provide the College's employees with some kind of pick-me-up just before the winter break. I worked closely with the chief financial officer at the time to develop an equitable strategy to ensure that everyone, except the executive team, could receive a bonus [which did happen]. As this was being worked out, a group of faculty took a “collection” for the staff, said that the faculty, not the administration, cared about the staff, and publicly presented the staff with an envelope of money. The staff senate president and leadership team of the staff senate brought the money to me the next day, told me how this made them feel, and asked me to use the collected money to support students.

As a first-time president, were you prepared to jump into the politics of Annapolis? Who were your advisers?

I was not prepared to jump into the politics of Annapolis. I had been at private institutions my entire life and, in the realm of getting funds to support the institution, you interacted, for the most part, with individuals who were aligned with the institution in a way that simply is not possible in the public sector. Political influence isn't solely about funding; it also affects policies and processes in a manner that doesn't occur

REFLECTIONS ON A PRESIDENCY

In a conversation with a staff member from SMCM, we were told that President Jordan starts out each staff meeting with the question, "What have you done for your community lately?" We met her through our work in the community as educators and community activists and can attest that the impact of her tenure as the first African American president of SMCM is tangible and will be remembered from generation to generation. One very tangible "awesome" accomplishment is the erection of the Commemorative to Enslaved Peoples of Southern Maryland. Like President Jordan, those of us who have visited the Commemorative are humbled to stand before it and we see it as a lasting legacy that was erected to inspire future generations. Built during her tenure, the Nancy R. and Norton T. Dodge Performing Arts Center deepens the College's partnership with the community and is enriching the lives of many people in our rural region.

Elfreda Talbert Mathis & Janice Talbert Walthour

*Sisters and retired principals from St. Mary's
County Public Schools*

REFLECTIONS ON A PRESIDENCY

My very dear friend President Jordan leaves behind a legacy of great accomplishment, perseverance, vision and leadership not only on campus but also in the community. From guiding our College through the challenges of COVID-19 to putting SMCM on a path toward sustainable growth, she has been more than just SMCM's president; she has been its greatest champion. ...She has also acted as our school's moral center, spearheading the Commemorative to Enslaved Peoples of Southern Maryland. Today, some people try to deny, erase and misrepresent challenging parts of our past. President Jordan did the opposite. She confronted our history in all its complexity head on. She knew that preserving our history and reflecting on its lessons helps our community grow. ...As a fellow graduate of Suitland High School, I have long admired President Jordan's service to our state and our people.

I have no doubt that her commitment to service will remain strong as ever in the years ahead.

Steny Hoyer

*U.S. Representative (D-Md 5th) &
College trustee (1995-Present)*



THE INTERVIEW

in the private sector. Who were my advisers? Chip Jackson, who served as the College's vice president for business AND as the government relations liaison, was one. Larry Leak, trustee and the Board's government relations chair, was another. Larry had been a high-level administrator at a University System of Maryland institution and had worked in education for a very long time. He was and remains well-respected in Annapolis. Delegate John Bohanan, who held a powerful legislative chairmanship before leaving the general assembly and joining a government relations group as a consultant, was another.

You were asked in 2014 if you had a model for what you wanted to see the College become during your presidency and responded this way:

St. Mary's College of Maryland is a public honors college steeped in the tradition of the liberal arts. There are only two such institutions in the country and we are the "senior statesman," so in that respect, there is no model. We are unique. Our mission is very clear: we must provide an excellent liberal arts education that is accessible and affordable to diverse populations. The



ABOVE: *President Jordan with U.S. Representative and College Trustee Steny Hoyer (D-Md. 5th) at her inauguration in 2014.* LEFT: *Associate Professor of History Garrey Dennie with President Jordan during the Sacred Journey in November 2023.*

challenge is the apparent juxtaposition between liberal arts excellence and affordability and accessibility. There is also the question of curricular relevance and the essential need to help our students easily translate this intellectually stimulating and diverse experience into practical applications relevant to the world beyond the banks of the St. Mary's River. The beauty of the situation is that we are a hybrid institution. And, if we think about the science of biology, it is the hybrid organism that has the greatest chance of long-term success as long as it is able to continue to adapt and evolve in the dynamic environment in which it finds itself. St. Mary's College of Maryland has shown it can adapt, and I assure you it will continue to adapt and evolve under my leadership.

Would you answer that question differently in 2025?

No. There is no model. This institution's history and potential for higher education innovation is such that we should be the model of providing what students need for lifelong success.

REFLECTIONS ON A PRESIDENCY

Tuajuanda Jordan has achieved many remarkable feats during her presidency. Academically she has reinvigorated the curriculum, not only by the addition of successful new majors, but more significantly by creating a culture which now endorses program prioritization. In the administrative arena she has brought rigor to the development of strategic plans. However, I believe that her accomplishment which is most dear to her heart is the creation of a culture of inclusion and belonging essential to the success of historically underrepresented and/or marginalized students. ... President Jordan's concern for these students is palpable and she has inaugurated many programs to help them thrive. To mention just a few: targeting recruiting to identify talented students from under-resourced schools; developing culturally appropriate enrichment programs; and transforming advising and placement functions into a rigorous office of student success. ... Significantly, she has honored the bravery and determination of African Americans by commissioning the design of the compelling Commemorative to Enslaved Peoples of Southern Maryland and inaugurating the Sacred Journey memorial event. To broaden the College's cultural and extra-curricular offerings, she has brought nationally recognized intellectuals to the Center for the Study of Democracy; introduced new voices and styles to the Dodge Performing Arts Center repertoire; and created a poetry series in honor of our own Lucille Clifton, a poet laureate of Maryland.

Gail Harmon

*Member (2007-2025) and chair (2014-2017)
of the College's Board of Trustees*





REFLECTIONS ON A PRESIDENCY

President Jordan's legacy at St. Mary's College of Maryland is one marked by progress, compassion and a commitment to student empowerment. Her dedication to improving the campus is evident in the tangible developments she championed, from the construction of Anne Arundel Hall (home to language classes, anthropology and museum studies); to the creation of the Nancy R. & Norton T. Dodge Performing Arts Center (for music); and the Dallas P. Dean Learning Commons (home to educational studies). These additions not only enhanced the physical landscape of the College but also expanded opportunities for academic exploration and artistic expression. ...Yet, her impact extends far beyond infrastructure. One of the most profound moments of her presidency was her respectful and ethical handling of the discovery of the remains of a dwelling place of African American enslaved individuals during the construction of the Jamie L. Roberts Stadium. Rather than proceeding without pause, President Jordan halted construction and formed a committee composed of staff, faculty and a student to decide how to best commemorate those who had lived and toiled on the site. I was lucky enough to be the student selected for the committee. To this day, the project remains one of my greatest honors. The art piece chosen to commemorate the enslaved is a profound piece that that causes onlookers to reflect on the past and present of what our historic grounds symbolize, embodying a triumph that our ancestors overcame and continue to work toward. Organizing the Commemoration Committee demonstrated President Jordan's deep reverence for history and social justice, and her commitment to honoring the stories that shape our institution. ... Equally important was President Jordan's dedication to student voices. Through holding forums, she created spaces where students could speak openly and be heard. Many students, including myself, found the courage and platform to express our ideas and passions under her leadership. Personally, it was during her presidency that I embraced my love for advocacy. With her encouragement, I was able to explore and grow, finding my niche in the broader world. That is what a college experience should be—transformative, challenging and empowering. ... President Jordan leaves behind a legacy that will be felt for generations to come: one of inclusion, vision and unwavering support for both the campus and the individuals within it, forever embodying "The St. Mary's Way."

Jada Ward '19

*Lobbyist and former student representative
for diversity and equity*

THE INTERVIEW

You led the College through the pandemic. What was going through your mind when you had to make tough decisions often with little information at your disposal?

That I cannot fail. Fail what? The students, the people who give so much in support of our students, in support of the institution, in support of me. SMCM would not be part of the conventional “wisdom” the pundits were espousing: “small, under-resourced liberal arts colleges will close.” Provost Mike Wick, then-VP for Business and Finance Paul Pusecker and I were oftentimes the only “non-essential personnel” on campus during those times and we three came and worked all day in Calvert Hall. Every day. I had to be visible and accessible to the staff who worked every day. I read everything the state public health officials distributed; attended every webinar sponsored by the state that I could; answered every email and answered every phone call from alumni who had access to resources and were offering their help. From that activity, I was able to identify who the experts and players were. I reached out to every one of them to ensure that SMCM remained on their respective radar. I spoke with Bruce Jarrell (now president of University of Maryland, Baltimore) at least



TOP: *The Blackistone Room of Anne Arundel Hall, dedicated in 2016, is a popular space for seminars and showcase events.* BOTTOM: *President Jordan poses with Professor of Art Carrie Patterson (center) at the opening of her “Sight to Site” exhibition in the College’s Boyden Gallery in 2023. From 2020-2023, Patterson was the Steven Muller Distinguished Professor of the Arts. Muller’s widow Jill McGovern (left) attended the opening.*

once a week; this helped us think about how to bring our community members back safely and keep the infection rate down. My outreach to the finance experts at the University System of Maryland put the potential of the College applying for a Federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) grant on my radar. We did and not a single employee was furloughed or lost their job during the time when we had no significant source of revenue coming in. Although there was some turnover in my team during this challenging period, the team remained committed. We accepted every offer of help that came our way, and we reciprocated whenever we could. It was tapping into and expanding our networks that got us through an incredibly stressful period of time.

Amid this, the business of the College needed to continue. How did you personally stay motivated, and how did you motivate the community to keep moving forward?

I know from whence I came. In my view, although my beginnings are incredibly modest, I am standing on the shoulders of giants: family members who were never presented with the opportunities that I have been given. I cannot let

REFLECTIONS ON A PRESIDENCY

President Jordan’s commitment to diversity and belonging to me is her key accomplishment of her presidency at SMCM.

This is witnessed throughout so many realms of the institution, from hiring practices and the noticeable diverse people teaching, leading, mentoring and committed to the work of the College, to the expansion of program offerings both academic and co-curricular. The addition of track and field, specifically from an athletic perspective, has been critical to diversifying our institution, bringing in people from different ethnicities, backgrounds and perspectives who might not have seen St. Mary’s College of Maryland as the place to extend their education or professional journey. Lastly, I would say my ability to have a visible presence as a woman of color within athletics and the institution speaks to President Jordan’s commitment to showing all students, faculty and staff what they can be and what they can achieve. She believed in me and my ability to lead a diverse group of staff and students, and I am forever grateful for the opportunity.

Crystal Gibson

Director of athletics and recreation





REFLECTIONS ON A PRESIDENCY

When President Jordan arrived, we were in the top five of most expensive public institutions in the country. We are now in the lower 40s, which is an accomplishment that is difficult to achieve anywhere. A lot of private institutions would love to be able to do that and they cannot. She has been very strategic as to how that has happened. Garnering partners in the state to begin to make that happen and keeping our tuition flat for the past five years have really improved our accessibility to the broad population in the state of Maryland. ...President Jordan has united the campus community on the LEAD initiative. That initiative is designed to provide a liberal arts education for the whole student, in and out of the classroom. So, faculty and staff work together to help students think about careers, not just within the context of their academic discipline but as a whole, through internships, directed research, study abroad, cross-disciplinary coursework. Her "Honors College Promise" to make these opportunities available to all students, reinforces the mission to be accessible and affordable to a diverse population of students.

...How fortunate we were to have as president a nationally respected thought leader in higher education.

We became the National Public Honors College with President Jordan at the helm.

Jeff Byrd, PhD

Professor emeritus of biology

THE INTERVIEW

them down and I must lift up others as I climb. This is my motivation. How do I motivate the community? Lead by example, serve with grace, integrity and humility.

Your achievements are many. For which would you most like to be remembered?

When I was a professor, I had very high standards that I held my students to, and I helped them reach and/or exceed those standards. I sincerely believed that pushing them to do and assisting them in doing their absolute best in all things would benefit them in the long run. They always said then and continue to say today that I am tough but fair. This is who I am, and it is evident throughout my tenure here at the College. I have touched every aspect of this institution and everything I have done has been aligned with our mission and a deep respect for all, encouraging every individual to use their voice, not to complain or disparage, but to make us all, individually and as a community, stronger and better.

Now, as you retire, what excites you about the SMCM community?

That we've not yet fully realized the potential of the LEAD initiative, but we are close to harnessing the momentum and taking the College to new heights. I am also excited that the campus



has come to actively embody and embrace every aspect of our mission.

What comes next for you?

Rest, rejuvenation, refocus and relaunch.

What is a particular image of SMCM that will stay with you?

There are several that will remain with me for a very long time. 1) The number of participants – internal and external to the College – for the Sacred Journey procession in 2024, was astounding and overwhelming. It was at that point

that I felt I could address the question Marcia Greenberg asked of me during my interview [for the presidency]: “What is the role of the College in the community?” 2) I have a photo taken from the second floor of Calvert Hall during the early days of COVID. The parking lot is empty save for three vehicles “COVID-spaced” apart: mine, the provost’s, and the VP for Business’. 3) The week Trump was first elected, and the dean of students and I held a student forum in St. Mary’s Hall. The hall was filled with students: angry, scared, uncertain, questioning. Public Safety Officers were standing at the ready with tissues...it was such an emotional moment, trying to address their concerns and questions, just giving them space to be. 4) The campus-wide discussion about finding the artifacts, what it meant for the stadium complex, and what do we do to acknowledge the history. The event was held in the old gym; the space was filled, and you could feel the energy in the air filled with questions. “What is the purpose of this meeting?” from the participants; “How are they going to respond?” was my question.

Were you hoping to be asked a particular question that hasn’t been asked? If so, what is that question and what is your answer?

Is St. Mary’s weird? No. The rest of the world is!

REFLECTIONS ON A PRESIDENCY

With heartfelt gratitude, we celebrate Tuajuanda Jordan on her retirement after eleven years of extraordinary leadership as our president. Her presidency has been defined by bold vision, steadfast dedication and transformative impact.

... In 2017, her tireless advocacy during the Maryland General Assembly led to a historic enhancement of the College’s funding formula—the first since 1992—advancing financial sustainability, employee compensation and student access. When the College’s funding formula was slated for elimination by Maryland’s governor in 2025, she once again rose to the challenge, mobilizing support and restoring this vital state funding. ... Through strategic engagement, political skill and deep integrity, President Jordan positioned St. Mary’s as a respected voice in Maryland’s higher education landscape.

Her legacy is one of courage, commitment and enduring influence.

Lawrence “Larry” Leak ’76, PhD

Trustee emeritus

Strengthening SMCM

President Jordan's impact can be measured in many ways: the great leaps in alumni engagement; the success of fundraising campaigns; the growth in applications; the overwhelming support of student internship experiences by the campus and local community; the range of capital projects that have made SMCM the cultural hub of Southern Maryland. Among the big numbers of the Jordan presidency:

824

alumni mentored 1200 students in the Mentor-a-Seahawk program between 2023-2025

1,327

student internships supported by the Center for Career and Professional Development since July 2022

\$7,900,000

raised for scholarships through the Taking the LEAD Campaign (2019-2025)

\$23,200,000

raised in the Taking the LEAD Campaign (2019-2025)

342%

increase in alumni donors on Giving Tuesday since 2014 (211 to 932)

1721%

increase in unique donors on Giving Tuesday since 2014 (215 to 3915)

\$3,200,000

raised on Giving Tuesday since 2014

\$1,700,000

investment made to fund internship experiences for students through the LEAD initiative since July 2022

\$2,500,000

raised for the building challenge campaign (2016)

A smiling woman with short grey hair, wearing a dark blazer over a light blue collared shirt, stands with her arms crossed in front of a large brick building with white window frames and balconies. The scene is outdoors with green bushes and a brick path.

71%

increase in undergraduate
admission applications
since 2014

30%

increase in first-generation
students since 2014

20%

increase in historically
underrepresented and/or
marginalized students
since 2014

4

new varsity athletic programs
since 2014 (men's and
women's rowing, track & field)

4

new facilities completed
(Anne Arundel Hall,
Dodge Performing Arts Center,
Dean Learning Commons,
Jamie L. Roberts Stadium)

4

new majors launched:
business administration and
management, marine science,
neuroscience, performing arts

2

consecutive Presidents' Cup
Awards for NCAA athletics
performance in the United
East conference (2023-
2024)

0

increase in tuition for
five consecutive years
(2020-2025)

ALUMNI CONNECTION

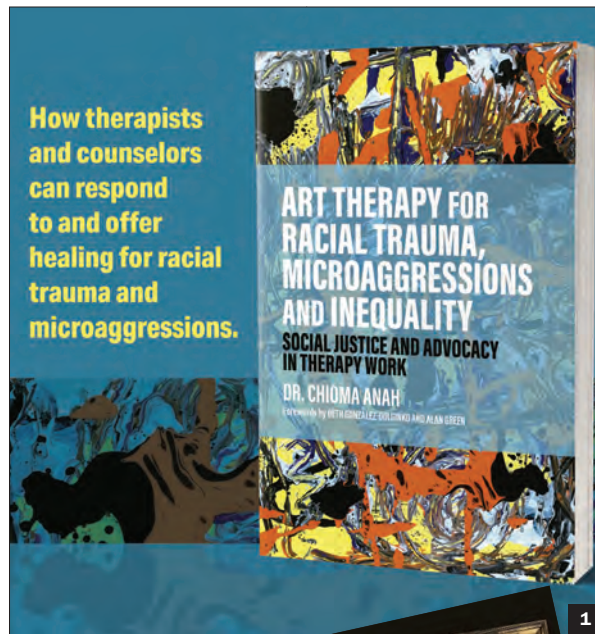
CLASS NOTES

1990s

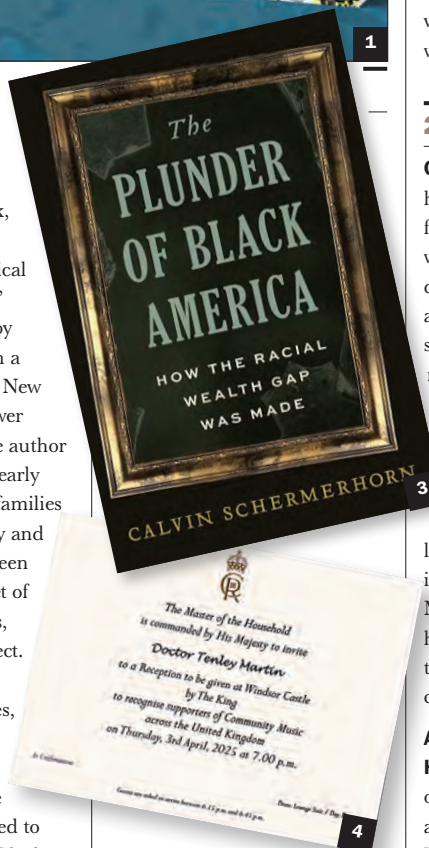
Chioma Anah '92 [1] released her first textbook, "Art Therapy for Racial Trauma, Microaggressions and Inequality: Social Justice and Advocacy in Therapy Work" last November. Chioma is the founder and CEO of PerceptA Therapeutic and Training Center, LLC, a private mental health practice in Maryland for over 20 years. She is also the founding member and executive director of Maryland Counselors for Social Justice and an adjunct professor at the Johns Hopkins University School of Education.



David Cabrera '95 [2] was elected president of the Association of Independent Research Institutes, a national society of nonprofit biomedical and basic science research organizations.



Jack "Calvin" Shermerhorn '98 [3], professor of history at Arizona State University, had his book, "The Plunder of Black America: How the Radical Wealth Gap Was Made" published in February by Yale University Press. In a March 6 review on The New Republic website, reviewer Eric Herschthal says the author "defly illustrates how nearly every attempt by Black families to advance economically and pass down wealth has been undermined by a thicket of racist laws and practices, whether by intent or effect. Following multiple generations of Black families, including the Rivers, Schermerhorn shows how racially exploitative policies were not confined to the South but followed Black families to every corner of the country."



2000s

Tenley Martin '03 [4], professor of music at Leeds Beckett University, was invited to Windsor Castle by King Charles III

for a reception held on April 3 to recognize supporters of community music across the United Kingdom.

Jackie Whisman '05 [5] was elected commodore of the Cambridge Yacht Club, the oldest yacht club on Maryland's eastern shore. The club hosts the annual Admiral Byrd Regatta, Annapolis to Cambridge Lighthouse Challenge and the Governor Hicks Log Canoe Races.

Jae Lim '09 was inducted as a Nashville Bar Foundation Fellow, a designation limited to just two percent of the bar in Nashville. His spouse, Jessica, was also inducted. Jae is Nashville's assistant U.S. attorney.

2010s

Olivia Caretti '14 [6] defended her dissertation and graduated from North Carolina State University in 2024 with a doctoral degree in marine, earth and atmospheric sciences. Her dissertation evaluated how oyster restoration siting and habitat design determine restoration success. Olivia has worked at the nonprofit Oyster Recovery Partnership since 2021, where she oversees all large-scale oyster restoration in Maryland, including the St. Mary's River. Olivia loves that her career has brought her back to the river and has come full circle.

Anna Hain '14 and **John Henry Hain '14** [7] had the pleasure of introducing their sons, ages 1 and 3, to St. Mary's College of Maryland last November for a weekend vacation to celebrate the couple's 10-year graduation anniversary. They spent their time showing their sons the campus where their parents met and married.



JR Rhine '15, **MAT '17** has had what began as his St. Mary's Project transformed into a walking tour of local punk history in Washington, D.C. by the DC History Center and Off the Mall Tours. The hour-long tour offers the opportunity to "discover the major contributors to the DC punk scene, what made it distinct and its lasting impact on local music today." Registration information can be found on the DC History Center's website at www.dchistory.org/event/walking-tour-punk-dc/.

Alumni Council Profile

By Cathy Hernandez Ray '78

Morgan Lum '96 joined the Alumni Council in 2024 as an elected member; this year he was elected to its Executive Committee as treasurer. Since joining the Council, he has been busy volunteering at several campus events, notably Alumni Weekend, Governor's Cup and Giving Tuesday. As a student at St. Mary's College, he majored in economics and although not declared as a minor, studied Spanish for the four years he was there. He served as a resident assistant in Dorchester Hall his sophomore and junior years and as its coordinator his senior year. He also participated as a member of the Offshore Sailing Club team and was an SMCM sailing camp counselor.



Morgan's career life spans 25+ years in domestic and global wealth management, leading client services, middle office and strategic initiative teams. Currently, he is chief operating officer at PNC Private Bank, part of PNC Financial Services, Inc.

Morgan's home is in Georgetown on Maryland's Eastern Shore, where he lives with his wife, Fiona (*shown here departing by seaplane after a day at Dry Tortugas National Park*). They are parents to three children, twins Abigail (Abbey) and Finlay (Finn), 18, and Charles (Charlie), 16. Abbey and Finn are high school seniors. In the fall, Abbey will be joining SMCM's Class of 2029 to study business administration or economics and play

field hockey and lacrosse. Finn has accepted an appointment as a cadet in the Class of 2029 at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and will major in business administration and management and play soccer. Charlie is a high school sophomore who plays varsity lacrosse and is an avid outdoorsman. In his spare time, Morgan acts as chauffeur and cheerleader for his children's high school and travel soccer, track, swimming and lacrosse practices and events. His other interests include paddleboarding, waterskiing, fishing, boating on the Sassafra River and Chesapeake Bay, snow skiing and travel.

When asked why he decided to join the Alumni Council, he says it gives him "the opportunity to give back beyond financial contributions to an institution that I credit with helping develop me and many others into well-rounded and compassionate individuals. It also gives me an opportunity to be more closely connected to the College during the time my daughter will be attending!" Part of that giving back also includes representing his previous employer at several career fairs and working with his current employer to identify and implement corporate sponsorships for SMCM events, such as the Mulberry Music Festival. At present, he is involved as a mentor to two students through the College's LEAD initiative, helping them with career preparation and sharing his encouragement, insight and perspective.

Finally, it was at St. Mary's College where he learned to sail and become part of the Offshore Sailing Club team. His experiences racing on boats, including "Challenge America" (80 ft. maxi ketch) ignited his love of sailing that carries to this day. In the coming years, he is looking forward to having more free time to re-engage in racing and the camaraderie it brings.



MARRIAGES & UNIONS

Karen Binder '92 married **James "T" Thieler '91 [1]** on June 16, 2024, at Blithewold Manor, Gardens and Arboretum in Bristol, Rhode Island, where Karen serves as the executive director. The couple met back in 1987 at SMCM, when Karen was told to find a guy named "T" to drive the sailing team to the U.S. Naval Academy and found him in the men's bathroom on the first left of Caroline Hall. Always remaining close friends after college, they continued to share many monumental moments in their lives over the last few decades and surprised themselves and others when they decided to embark on a deeper relationship a few years ago. The couple continue to sail together with their most recent



regattas, including last summer, racing on "NEITH," a 1907 Herreshoff sloop that "T" has captained since 2011, and racing DN ice boats all over the country during the winter season. Still SMCM sailors at heart, the couple look forward to road tripping to the next regatta as newlyweds.

Harper Denhard '09 [2] and Noel Bassett were married on Nov. 2, 2024, at the Palisades Community Church in Washington, D.C. Their wedding reception took place at Maggiano's Little Italy. Bridesmaids included **Rachel Ali '10** and **Stephanie Johnson '10**. Joan McFarland, an SMCM vocal music instructor, sang at the ceremony. Other alumni in attendance were **Jamie Haydel '10**; **Chris Rodkey '10**, **MAT '11**; **Meghan Sullivan-Martin '10**; **Jamie Gardner Yurgaitis '10**; **Melanie Zuckerman '10** and **Jaclyn Fiackos Seidl '11**. The couple honeymooned in San Juan and currently reside in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Serra Erbas '15 and **Davis Holland '16** [3] were married on Oct. 19, 2024, in Nashville, Tennessee. **Cameron Keyani '16** officiated the ceremony. Alumni in attendance included **Michael Pyle '14**, **Alex Jones '15**, **Haley Rizkallah '15**, **Scott Bradley '16**, **Ally Dahlen '16**, **Peter Flynt '16**, **Kendal Fosbaugh '16**, **Marco Hamins-Puertolas '16**, **Ryan Mahoney '16** and **Quy-Bao Ngyuen '19**. The couple currently reside in Ashland City, Tennessee.

Rachael Ulrick-Sowers '16 and **Scott Ulrick-Sowers '17** [4] were married on Oct. 19, 2024, in the Outer Banks of North Carolina. **Aaron Glase-Stock '16** officiated the ceremony. Bridesmaids included **Natalie Schinse '14**, **Rachel Baker '17** and **Brianna Glase-Stock '17**. Groomsmen included **Nick Frascarella**, **Sean Jeffers '17** and **Matt Smeriglio '17**. Other SMCM alumni and guests in attendance were **Rusty Trench '15**, **Jordan O'Yenik '16**, **Shelly Thompson '16**, **Michael Anania-Bernal '17**, **Maria Cole '17**, **Ron**

Drescher '17, **Genia Gavin '17**, **Amy Gorovoy '17**, **Femi Oyenusi '17**, **Chris Techentin '17** and **John Zavrotny**. The couple currently reside in Laurel, Maryland.



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Alexandra Schoen '17 [5] and Eric Mullen were married on May 25, 2024, in Kingsville, Ontario. The maid of honor was **Caitlin Schoen '18**. Alumni in attendance included **Aman Afsah '16**, **Simone Levine '16**, **Natalie Bellanton '17**, **Ben Lee '17**, **Adam Scrivener '19** and **Nhu Chau '20**. The couple currently reside in Canada.

Emma Green Ewing '18 [6] and Sean Ewing were married on Sept. 1, 2024, in Annapolis, Maryland. The bride's brother, **Luke Green '14** was a groomsman and **Nora Howard '18**, **Rachel Sonnenberg '18** and **Becca Sonnenberg '20** were bridesmaids. Alumni in attendance included the bride's

sister-in-law, **Jessica Konecke '15** as well as **Andrew Braun '17**, **Joey Haavik '17**, **Elizabeth Straatof '17**, **Matt Walchuck '17**, **Kieran Broder '18**, **Cara Freibaum Homick '18**, **Katie Huerta '18**, **Aine White '18**, **Shannon Haina '20**, **Andrew March '20** and **Jacob Rosenzweig-Stein '20**. With so many alumni in attendance, it seemed only fitting to call on an SMCM tradition and capture the couple's special day with a mock "ponding" photograph. The couple currently reside in California, Maryland.

THE TIME IS NOW!

Your gift to the Taking the LEAD Campaign fuels a dynamic, experiential liberal arts honors education that ignites the next generation of leaders. With just a few weeks left until the campaign ends on June 30, now is the time to make a lasting impact.

Visit go.smcm.edu/taking-the-lead/ to learn more about what the campaign has accomplished so far.

We ask that you make a gift today and make a difference tomorrow — the St. Mary's Way.

The **NATIONAL PUBLIC HONORS** *College*

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The Campaign for St. Mary's College of Maryland



How HIGH Can We FLY?

GIVE TODAY



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BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Kimberly Johnson Wedlock '06 [1] welcomed her second daughter, Lark Catherine Wedlock, on Jan. 12, 2023. Lark joins older sister Sage Evelyn. The family resides in Frederick, Maryland.

Paul Shinkman '06 [2] and Sarah Shinkman welcomed a son, James Augustus "Gus" DeGrandpre Shinkman, on Jan. 7, 2022. Fritz, age 6, is very excited to be a big brother. The family resides in Brunswick, Maine.

Jill Clemmer Seyum '09 and Esrael Seyum '09 [3] welcomed their youngest child, Ruth Saba Seyum, in December 2023. Ruth joins her loving older siblings,



1



3



5



2



4



6

Jonah, age 8, and Lydia, age 5. The family resides in Lexington Park, Maryland.

Antigone Grillakis Peck '11 and **Ted Grillakis Peck '11 [4]** welcomed a daughter, Artemisia Helen Grillakis Peck, on Aug. 23, 2024. The family resides in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Verioska Torres Jaatsy Tominak '12 [5] and husband Mark welcomed a daughter, Teresa Trudy, on Dec. 5, 2024. Teresa joins older sister, Alina Clara, age 2. The family currently resides in Mechanicsville, Maryland.

Holly Gonzales Paesch '15 [6] and Matthew Paesch welcomed their first child, Gwendolyn Avril Paesch, on Dec. 28, 2024. The family resides in Baltimore, Maryland.

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JUNE 20

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JULY 4, 11, 18, 25

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IN MEMORIAM

Elizabeth Anne "Liz" Passarelli

'66 died on Jan. 26, 2024, at Hospice House in Callaway, Maryland, after a long and courageous battle with cancer. Originally from New York, she moved to St. Mary's County, Maryland, with her family when she was a young girl. Prior to attending St. Mary's College of Maryland, Liz grew up in Piney Point and graduated from St. Mary's Academy. Over the years, she worked for numerous judges, state's attorneys, county commissioners and lawyers, as a dedicated legal secretary. Liz was a devout Washington Commanders fan and volunteered her free time for St. Mary's Animal Welfare League (SAWL).

Thomas Leonard "Tommy"

Courtney '74 died on March 2 at his home with his loving family by his side. Tommy is survived by his beloved wife, Julie; her children, Kathy Tayman and Henry Harrison; sister, Dorothy Joanne Thompson; grandchildren, Alex Harrison and Nicholas Tayman; great-granddaughter, Malaya Lewis; and many extended family and friends. Tommy was raised on the water in St. Mary's County, where he began crabbing and fishing at a young age. Drafted by the U.S. Army, Tommy served his country during the Vietnam War. During his service, he earned the following awards: the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Good Conduct Medal and Sharpshooter Rifle (M-14) Badge. Upon his honorable discharge and return home, Tommy attended St. Mary's College of Maryland and studied biology. His affinity for

the water brought him back to his boat and launched his lifelong career as a waterman, where he gained a wealth of knowledge on the many species of fish native to the Chesapeake Bay. Tommy also owned and operated Courtney's Restaurant with his wife, Julie. Known for having the freshest seafood and hospitality around, Tommy spent his days catching and cleaning the seafood, while Julie cooked it fresh for their customers. Tommy had a great respect and admiration for nature and enjoyed the beautiful sunrises on the water as he went to work and the sunsets that ended his day.

Carolyn Falls Koehler '74 died on Oct. 28, 2024, after a brief illness. She retired as a librarian for Fairfax County, Virginia, and lived in Florida. She was so happy to attend her 50th reunion in June 2024.

Gregory Alvin "Greg" Bowen

'75 died on Feb. 25. From an early age, Greg worked on his family farm and grew to love the county where he was raised. He studied mathematics during his undergraduate years at St. Mary's College of Maryland and later attained a Master of Science degree in urban planning and policy management from Johns Hopkins University in 1986. During his time at SMCM, Greg was involved in student life, playing lacrosse, competing in water sports and serving as president of the Student Government Association (SGA).

Patricia "Pat" Caya '77 died of cancer on Jan. 3 in Tennessee at the age of 69. Pat was born on July 28, 1955, and grew up in Bowie, Maryland, where she met her future husband, Steve Erwin. In 1973, Pat entered St. Mary's College, where her interests in

performing, theater, literature and music bloomed. She was a favorite among her professors and was known for her sense of humor and expansive personality. After college, Pat pursued her love of vocal music and trained in Vienna and Helsinki. She worked for various nonprofits, performed with choirs, taught vocal music students and finally married Steve. They lived in Baltimore, Maine and Tennessee, pursuing their respective music careers. She is survived by her husband, sister Pam, niece Anastasia and close friends from her time at St. Mary's College.

William "Bill" S. Karp '77

died on Sept. 16, 2024, from ocular melanoma. Bill was born on April 1, 1955, and grew up in Maryland and Colorado. He majored in human development at St. Mary's College and went on to earn a master's degree from George Washington University in special education. In 1991, Bill's life changed completely when he met his future husband, Bill Wiley and they relocated to Hollywood, Florida. The Bills were married on Sept. 26, 2008, the start of the happiest chapter of both their lives. Bill worked with young children and families, becoming a supervisor for Broward County day care centers. Bill loved laughing and was the font of silliness. He was surrounded by devoted friends and family, where he lived in the center of their hearts. He is survived by his widower, Bill; his sister, Freddie and brother, Ricky; his nephew, Matt; and foster sons, Rob and John Grimm.

Tammy-Lynne "TL" Wible

Guglielmo '93 died on August 4, 2024, after a long and hard-fought battle with cancer. She is survived by her mother, Linda Wible; her husband Gus Guglielmo; her

two beloved dachshunds; and a network of St. Mary's College of Maryland friends. Gifted in theatrical lighting, TL was a part of the industry for over 30 years and had extensive knowledge of all things theatrical and lighting related. She was the sales manager for Parlights and worked in the tri-state area, partnering with schools, including SMCM. A devoted friend and dog lover, TL's laugh lit up the room, and she kept her wicked sense of humor despite her long health battle. Her SMCM friends plan to hold a celebration of life for her at Alumni Weekend 2025.

FRIEND OF THE COLLEGE

Michael S. Glaser, professor emeritus of English and former poet laureate of Maryland, died Jan. 24 at his home in Hillsborough, North Carolina. During his nearly 40 years of service to St. Mary's College of Maryland, Michael co-founded the VOICES Reading Series and the Lucille Clifton Legacy Award, honoring a fellow Maryland poet laureate, SMCM faculty member and dear friend. A Maryland State Arts Council poet-in-the-schools for more than 25 years, he also served on the Maryland State Department of Education's Arts Advisory Committee, the Maryland Humanities' Board of Directors and the Board of Directors for the Kirkridge Retreat and Study Center in Bangor, Pennsylvania. He was a recipient of the College's Homer Dodge Endowed Award for Excellence in Teaching. Michael also received the Columbia Merit Award from the Poetry Committee of the

Greater Washington, D.C. area for his service to poetry, and Loyola College's Andrew White Medal. He was Maryland poet laureate from 2004-2009 and published nine collections of poetry.

Arc

I

Illumined by the arching light,
translucent wisps of clouds

float just off the island's edge
and hang suspended until

catching the wind they dissolve
imperceptibly into air.

II

I hope it's like that for me when I go,
the molecules of my spirit released

as delicately as that wisp of cloud,
then gathered up and embraced
by the gentle arms of grace.

**from "The Threshold of Light:
Poems by Michael S. Glaser"
(Bright Hill Press, 2019), reprinted
by permission*

COMMENCEMENT BY THE NUMBERS (1886 – 2025)

By Lee Capristo, editor, with Chuck Steenburgh,
AVP of integrated marketing

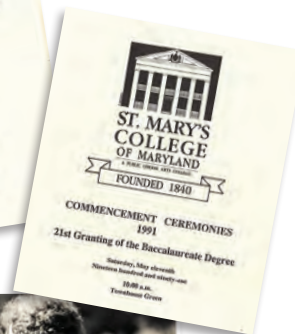
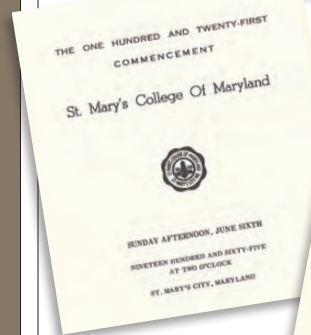
“St. Mary’s” are the two words that have remained constant throughout the life of this institution in its various names and permutations from seminary to junior college to four-year college. This same “St. Mary’s” has had variability with respect to Commencement as well.

Using the College Archives’ collection of Commencement programs as source material, here is a snapshot of Commencement by the numbers.*

- 60 The number of times Commencement has been held on a Saturday: It was on a Saturday in 1886 but not again until 1966 (and it’s been on a Saturday ever since).
- 59 The number of times it’s been held in June
- 52 The number of times it’s been held in May
- 19 The number of times it’s been on a Monday
- 16 The number of times it’s been on a Sunday
- 12 The number of times it’s been on a Thursday
- 9 The number of times it’s been on the eleventh (11th) day of the month
- 8 The number of times it’s been on the eighth (8th) day of the month
- 5 The number of times it’s been on a Wednesday
- 1 The number of times it’s been on a Tuesday: That was in 1930, when the first four students graduated from the new junior college program.
- 1 The number of times it’s been in July: That was in 1924, the year that fire burned Calvert Hall to the ground.
- 0 The number of times it’s been on a Friday

The two most popular dates for Commencement at “St. Mary’s” have been May 11 and June 8.

For the modern, always-Saturday era, the most common Commencement dates are May 11, 14 and 16, followed by May 12 and 13.



**The first printed diploma was in 1874; the first Commencement program in the archives is from 1886. There are 26 years missing from the Archives’ Commencement program collection.*

PHOTOS/ILLUSTRATIONS: various historic Commencement program covers and photos.



BIG EVENTS AT SMCM



RIVER CONCERT SERIES



MULBERRY MUSIC FESTIVAL



GOVERNOR'S CUP YACHT RACE CELEBRATION

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



Join us in the intimate and acoustically optimized Nancy R. and Norton T. Dodge Performing Arts Center concert hall for a world-class experience.

Our summer lineup includes free, family friendly, outdoor concert programs as well.

ST MARY'S
COLLEGE of MARYLAND

The National Public Honors College

SATURDAY, MAY 31

TRIBUTE TO WOMEN OF COUNTRY MUSIC | 7:00 P.M.

In the Dodge Performing Arts Center concert hall.

SUNDAY, JUNE 1

ST. MARIES CHORAL ARTS PRESENTS "LOVE SONGS" | 3:00 P.M.

In the Dodge Performing Arts Center concert hall.

**FRIDAY, JUNE 6 &
SATURDAY, JUNE 7**

BALLET CALIENTE: THE VELVETEEN RABBIT | 6:00 P.M.

In the Dodge Performing Arts Center concert hall.

JUNE 12-15

ALUMNI WEEKEND

FRIDAY, JUNE 20

MULBERRY MUSIC FESTIVAL | 6:00 P.M.

Featuring Dumpstaphunk, Kelly Bell Band and Carly Harvey.

Hosted by Carly Harvey '07. Food trucks on site. Plus: fireworks!

**FRIDAYS, JUNE 27,
JULY 4, JULY 11,
JULY 18 & JULY 25**

RIVER CONCERT SERIES | 7:00 P.M.

Free outdoor classical music concert on Townhouse Green, featuring the Chesapeake Orchestra directed by Professor of Music Jeffrey Silberschlag. Food trucks on site.

SATURDAY, AUG. 2

GOVERNOR'S CUP YACHT RACE CELEBRATION | ALL DAY

Live music, food trucks, awards ceremony at the waterfront.



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

