

# ST MARY'S

COLLEGE of MARYLAND

*The National Public Honors College*



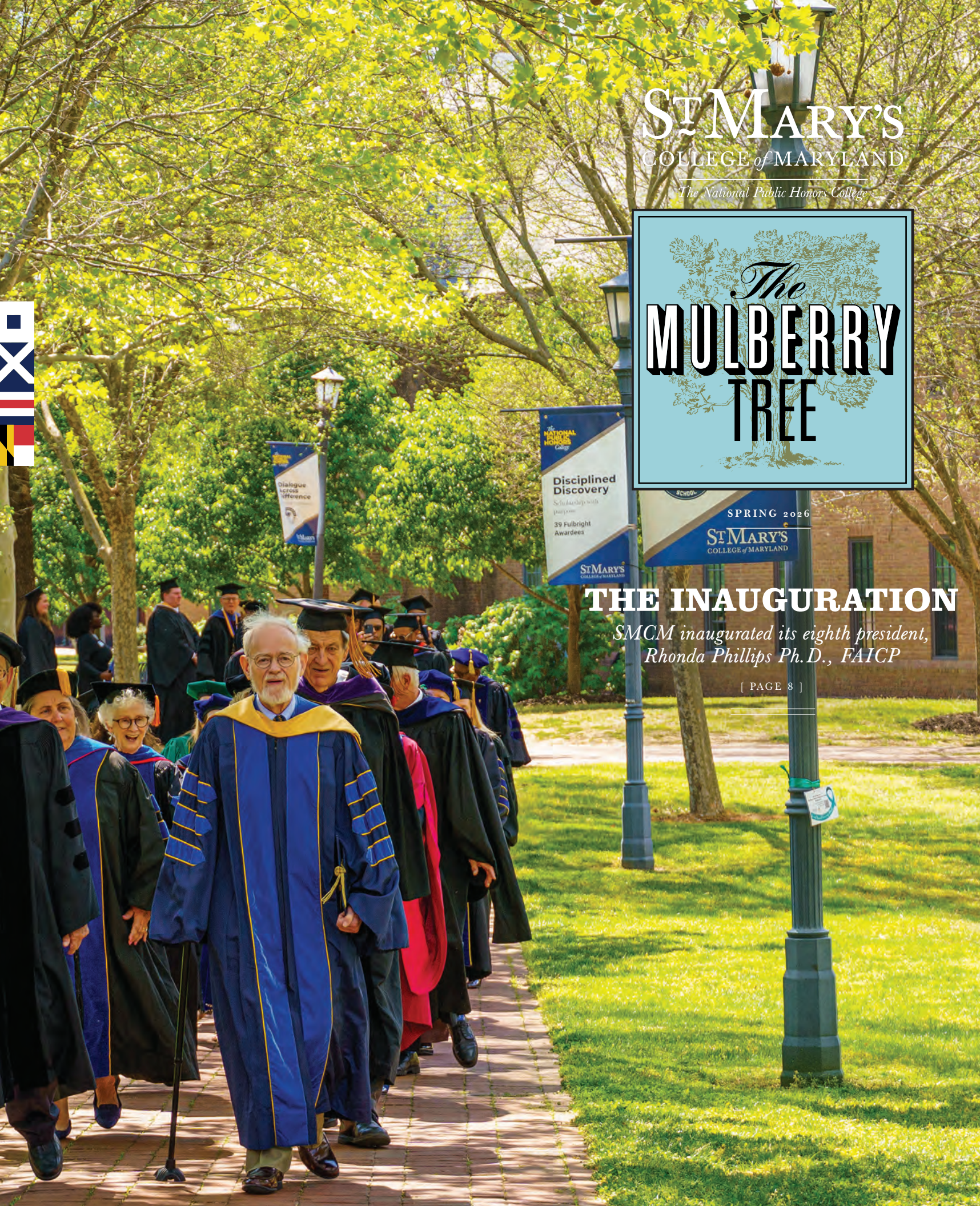
**Disciplined Discovery**  
Scholarship with purpose  
39 Fulbright Awardees

SPRING 2026  
ST MARY'S  
COLLEGE of MARYLAND

## THE INAUGURATION

*SMCM inaugurated its eighth president, Rhonda Phillips Ph.D., FAICP*

[ PAGE 8 ]



ST. MARY'S COLLEGE  
*of Maryland*



*The*  
**MULBERRY**  
**TREE**

SPRING 2026, VOL. XLVII, NO. 2

[www.smcm.edu/mulberrytree](http://www.smcm.edu/mulberrytree)

*Editor*

Lee Capristo

*Alumni News Editor*

Holly Fabbri '12, MAT '13

*Design*

Jensen Design

*Editorial Board*

Karen Anderson,

Karen Raley '94,

Cathy Hernandez Ray '78

*Publisher*

Office of Institutional Advancement

St. Mary's College of Maryland

47645 College Drive

St. Mary's City, Maryland 20686

240-895-4795

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

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

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

Copyright 2026

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

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

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



# CONTENTS

SPRING 2026

## ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND

July 2025 — June 2026

### ALUMNI COUNCIL

#### Executive Board

Kate Fritz '04, *president*  
Michele Shipley '92,  
*exec. vice president*  
Hans Lemke '93, *secretary*  
Kevin Roth '93,  
*parliamentarian*  
Morgan Lum '96, *treasurer*  
Ken Benjes '11, *vice pres. of chapter activities*  
Vacant, *vice pres. of affinity networks*

#### Elected Voting Members

Ben Casto '10  
Geoff Cuneo '10  
Serra Erbas '15  
Leslie Fields '03  
Sean Floyd '06  
Mike Greer '01  
Valerie Gregorio '19  
Jim Harvey '83  
Kevin Hill '89  
Barbara Kimmelschue-  
Kearns '63  
Michael Mellinger '18  
Alexandra Minor '24  
Erin O'Connell '91  
Tae-shi Savage '24  
Meg Gesner Shernisky '17  
Lindsey Siferd '13  
Nancy Yannayon '75

#### Student Members

Victoria Mathis '26  
Mary Govan '27  
*Student Member in Training*

#### Regional Chapter Presidents

*Annapolis:*  
Sara Morgan Watters '10  
*Baltimore Metro:*  
Sophia Macek Rowe '19  
*Boston Regional:*  
Megan Erikson '99  
*California Bay Area:*  
Vacant  
*Chicago Regional:*  
Vacant  
*Denver Regional:*  
Vacant  
*New York City Regional:*  
Vacant  
*Philadelphia Regional:*  
Colin Woods '05  
*Southern Maryland:*  
Cathy Hernandez Ray '78  
*Washington, D.C. Metro:*  
Catherine Skinner '11  
*Western Maryland:*  
Alex Hutt '05

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

#### Chair

John J. Bell '95

#### Vice Chair

Paula Collins

#### Treasurer

John Chambers  
Wobensmith '93

#### Secretary

Nicolas Abrams '99

#### Trustees

Susan Perkoff Bass  
Anirban Basu  
Peter Bruns  
Donny Bryan '73  
Antoinette Coleman  
Susan Dyer  
Judith Fillius '79  
Kate Fritz '04  
*Alumni Association*  
Elizabeth Graves '95  
Kristen Greenaway  
Tim Heely  
Talib Horne '93  
Steny H. Hoyer  
Kimberly Kelley  
Micheline Lopez-Estrada  
Heidi Murdy-Michael  
Jesse Price '92  
Melanie Rosalez '92  
Aaron Tomarchio '96  
Danielle Troyan '92  
Raymond Wernecke  
Summer LaRocco '26  
*Student Trustee*

### PRESIDENT

Rhonda Phillips, Ph.D., FAICP



[ PAGE 8 ]



[ PAGE 15 ]



[ PAGE 19 ]

OPPOSITE:

*Who can resist the Garden of Remembrance decked in spring finery? From the College's collection.*

## FEATURES

PAGE 8

### The Inauguration of Rhonda Phillips, Ph.D., FAICP

Read how we are reimagining excellence at this remarkable standalone public honors institution.

PAGE 15

### Navigating Leadership

A new pilot program connects industry leaders with students exploring leadership styles and community service.

PAGE 19

### JED Campus

Supporting overall student wellness, the JED Campus initiative at SMCM has yielded positive results in a range of measures.

## DEPARTMENTS

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

COVER: *Dr. Richard Estes, professor emeritus of the University of Pennsylvania, led the procession of academic delegates to begin the inauguration of Dr. Rhonda Phillips on April 17.*

**T**HIS SPRING MARKS A DEFINING MOMENT IN THE LIFE OF ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND.

Our inauguration was more than a ceremony; it was a reflection of who we are and what we are becoming. Over the course of the week, we welcomed alumni, students, faculty, staff, and friends of the College to celebrate not only a new chapter in leadership but the enduring strength of this community. From the processional and investiture to the conversations and connections that surrounded them, the week captured the spirit of St. Mary's, grounded in tradition, energized by purpose, and focused on the future.

This issue of *The Mulberry Tree* highlights that moment and the momentum it represents. You will find a closer look at the inauguration and the many individuals who helped bring it to life, as well as stories that reflect the depth and diversity of the St. Mary's experience. Our feature on the Navigators program underscores our commitment to supporting students as they find their path and build community. Updates from across campus, from faculty achievements to student milestones, illustrate the vitality of our academic environment and the strength of our shared mission.

We also remain focused on the priorities that will shape our path forward. The insights gathered during my 100-Day Listening Tour continue to inform our work and are now reflected in our strategic plan, *Reimagining Excellence: Honors at the Helm*. This plan sets a clear direction for the College, grounded in our strengths and focused on elevating the distinct value of a public honors education.

As we look ahead, I am also mindful that my first year at St. Mary's is approaching. This moment offers an opportunity not only to reflect on all we have experienced together, but to continue building on the momentum we have created as a community.

Thank you for your continued support of St. Mary's College of Maryland. Whether you are engaging as an alum, a parent, a partner, or a friend, you are part of what makes this institution strong.

It is a privilege to be part of this community and to share in all that we are building together. I hope you enjoy this issue and see yourself reflected in the story of St. Mary's College.

Sincerely,

Rhonda



RHONDA G. PHILLIPS, PH.D., FAICP  
President, St. Mary's College of Maryland

---

### Editor's Note

---

**I**N AN AI QUERY FOR "INAUGURATION addresses" the resulting description is "a formal, optimistic speech outlining a vision for the institution's future while honoring its history and traditions." Within that template, President Phillips' address both checked the boxes and stood apart. You can read excerpts from her address beginning on p. 12, reinforcing her theme that "education is most powerful when it is connected to people, purpose and place."

Indeed, "people, purpose and place" certainly are the drivers at St. Mary's College of Maryland.

Listening to the student Navigators speak about their experiences, one takeaway was how they enjoyed getting to know each other while working on their team service projects together (p. 15). They formed friendships with one another and developed professional connections with their industry-leader mentors during the semester. If careers depend on relationships and networking, these Navigators are well positioned for success. Their practical application of leadership skills in a community-facing service project benefiting the new YMCA in Lexington Park, Maryland, exemplifies the ethos of the St. Mary's Way.

The JED Campus initiative (p. 19) was the right thing to do and good has come from doing it, in the obvious positive ways one would expect in improving overall student wellness. But the effort also brought the campus community together and a collective good emerged as we worked to achieve a climate committed to prioritizing wellness. Current studies show that individuals feel more socially connected when helping others. How fortunate we are that our "#13 Friendliest Students"\* attribute provides outside evidence that what we all love about St. Mary's College of Maryland is, in fact, observable by all.

LEE CAPRISTO, *editor*

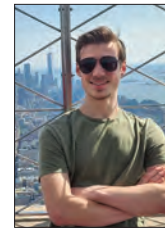
\*The Princeton Review. Used with permission. TPR Education IP Holding LLC. The Princeton Review is not affiliated with Princeton University.

# COLLEGE NEWS

## CAMPUS & COMMUNITY NEWS



**O**n April 20, **St. Mary's College of Maryland** welcomed Maryland Governor **Wes Moore** during a campus tour and visit as the governor launched his statewide "Delivering for Maryland" tour in the state's first capital, St. Mary's City. During his visit, the governor highlighted a \$2 million increase in FY27 operational funding for the College plus a \$3.2 million investment in capital funding to address infrastructure needs and support the renovation of Montgomery Hall to alleviate space deficits for the arts and English programs.



**Tyler Campbell '25** has been named a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant (ETA) in Moldova through the Fulbright U.S. Student Program.

Campbell majored in history and political science and works with Heartly House in Frederick County, Maryland. A second recent St. Mary's College graduate and one current student have been named as alternates for Fulbright ETAs, while a fourth student is an alternate for a Study Award to pursue a doctoral degree in Ireland. The Fulbright U.S. Student Program provides recent graduates and young professionals with opportunities to conduct research, pursue graduate studies, or teach English abroad.

- **Nicole Gibson '24:** alternate for an ETA in Spain. Gibson majored in political science and public policy with a minor in Spanish. She was a semi-finalist in 2025 for an ETA in Argentina. Currently, Gibson serves as a legislative assistant for Delaware State Senator Dan Cruce.
- **Allison Thress '26:** alternate for an ETA in Colombia. Thress is a Spanish major with a minor in art. She has spent the past three semesters studying abroad in Grenada, Spain and Costa Rica.
- **Bechorah Aguru '26:** alternate for a Study Award at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. Aguru is a neuroscience major with a double minor in philosophy and Spanish. She previously studied abroad in Grenada, Spain.



**St. Mary's College of Maryland's Communications & Marketing team was recognized with a pair of awards in the 41st Annual Educational Advertising Awards competition, the largest educational advertising awards competition in the U.S. A gold award went to a printed admission brochure with poster; a silver award went to the Spanish language version of the admission viewbook. Both pieces were designed by Jennifer "Jo" Oliver '99, senior graphic designer on the Communications & Marketing team, in collaboration with members of the Admission team.**

**BOARD & FOUNDATION NEWS**

At its two-day meeting Feb. 20-21, the Board of Trustees approved a modest three percent increase in tuition, fees and meal charges for the academic year 2026-27. This action was taken to ensure the College remains strong, mission-driven, and sustainable for current students and future generations. The Board also approved a new technology fee of \$100 per semester.

The technology fee will be used solely to enhance student-facing and academic technology services. The Board approved \$1.6 million in capital projects for necessary maintenance and updates and authorized summer work to commence on Caroline Hall, the second in a series of residence hall modernization projects.

**PRESIDENT'S NEWS**

During her inaugural remarks on April 17, **President Phillips** announced a renewed Educational Partnership Agreement with the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD) at Patuxent River and The Patuxent Partnership (TPP), building on a successful collaboration first established in 2011. This updated agreement enhances the partnership with new opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to engage in advanced research, applied learning, and career pathway development in science, technology, engineering,

and mathematics (STEM) fields, as well as business and related professional disciplines. The partnership provides a formal framework for collaboration across research, academic programming, and workforce development. Through the agreement, SMCM students, faculty, and staff will gain access to specialized facilities, technical expertise, and real-world applications in naval aviation and related systems, experiences not typically available in a traditional academic setting.



**President Phillips kicked off Bay to Bay Service Days at the local day of service held on Saturday, March 28, joining more than 100 students volunteering for service projects with nearby Historic St. Mary's City, St. Mary's Trinity Episcopal Church, St. Mary's River Watershed Association, Lexington Park Community Gardens and the College's own Kate Chandler Campus Community Farm. The staff of the Office of Alumni Relations supported service days coordinated by alumni during the month of April in Annapolis, Baltimore and Frederick, Maryland; as well as in Washington, D.C.; Philadelphia; Boston and Seattle**

## FACULTY & STAFF NEWS

Physics professors **Anish Agashe** and **Shalini Ganguly** attended the American Physical Society Global Physics Summit 2026 in Denver, Colorado, from March 14 -19. Topics ranged from advances in fundamental physics to new results in astrophysics and cosmology. Agashe presented his research to recover the equations of general relativity from a well-defined variational principle when working with a non-Riemannian geometry.

Professor of Psychology **Aileen Bailey**, Associate Professors of Psychology **James Mantell** and **Jennifer Tickle**, Assistant Professors of Psychology **Anandi Ehman** and **Jessica Leffers** and student collaborators had their research presented at the 2026 Annual Conference of the Eastern Psychological Association in Boston in February.

**Betül Başaran**, professor of history, was a writing fellow at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts between April 6-20. Başaran is currently working on a book of creative nonfiction based on her research about Princess Niloufer (1916-1989), previously funded by a Fulbright Global Scholar Award.

Assistant Professor **Abby Beatty** and Visiting Assistant Professor **Jacob Botello**, in collaboration with former SMCM faculty **Daniel Tobiansky** and **Jenna Pruett**, were awarded a National Science Foundation (NSF) Improving Undergraduate STEM Education grant. The project titled: “What’s in a ‘Game’? The use of evolution-based video games to enhance biology education.” Through this grant, four students will be supported each year

in research training that includes video game design, data collection and analysis, in the preparation of scholarly publications. Additionally, one postdoctoral researcher will be funded.



Professor of Political Theory **Diana Boros [1]**, along with co-authors M. Mookie C. Manalili (Boston College) and David M. Goodman (Boston College), has published a new book with Routledge titled “Aesthetic Ethics: Towards A Moral Imagination.” In this volume, the authors expand the boundaries of how we conceive ethics and morality and propose that the realm of the arts are essential for re-imagining a more just and compassionate world.

Assistant Librarian **Haley Galloway** presented a storytelling session at the 2025 STEM Librarians Collaborative Conference. Her presentation, titled “Out of My Field, In My Lane: Reflections on Mentoring Undergraduate Research as a First-Year STEM Librarian,” examined her mentorship role with St. Mary’s Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) program. The session high-lighted early-career

growth, interdisciplinary collaboration, and early-career librarian-faculty mentorship.

Provost **Katie Gantz** attended the 2026 American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) national conference in February, where she was part of the panel, “Thinking Consortially: An Overview of a Values-Based Collaborative Culture.” Along with three other Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC) administrators, Gantz presented case studies of how affiliated institutions have been able to amplify advocacy, pool resources, and share best practices in support of the campus community. SMCM was also represented by **President Rhonda Phillips**; Associate Vice President for Inclusion and Belonging **Rafael Zapata** and Associate Deans **Randy Larsen**, **Kelly Neiles** and **Sahar Shafqat**, who all participated in the three-day event.

**Eliza Garth [2]**, instructor of music, has released a new album and documentary film. The album, “By the River,” centers on Brahms’ Six Choral Preludes and also includes music written for Garth by the late composer David Froom as well as Scott Wheeler and Sheree Clement. The documentary film, “Shall We Gather,” captures the relationship of congregations of two historic churches in Southern Maryland—one traditionally Black, the other traditionally white—coming together for the first time to share stories and extend their hands in reconciliation and friendship.



Visiting Assistant Professor **Christina Goethel** was awarded a National Science Foundation (NSF) Arctic Research Collaborative Grant. This grant is a collaboration between SMCM, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Clark University and the University of Washington. Through this grant, a sophomore and senior will be funded to either join a two-week-long July research cruise in Alaska or work with field data and present at the Alaska Marine Science Symposium.

**Sayan Goswami**, assistant professor of computer science, recently co-authored a pioneering study in the journal, *Bioinformatics*, titled “Rawsamble: Overlapping Raw Nanopore Signals using a Hash-based Seeding Mechanism.” The research introduces a novel method for analyzing genetic data that drastically reduces the time and computing power required for genome assembly. In modern genomics, Nanopore sequencing works by passing DNA strands through a microscopic pore and measuring the resulting electrical current. Usually, these “raw” signals must undergo a computationally intensive translation process called “basecalling,” converting electrical

squiggles into the familiar DNA bases before scientists can begin piecing the genome together. Goswami and an international team of collaborators developed Rawsamble, a mechanism that allows researchers to skip the basecalling step entirely. The study’s evaluations have shown that Rawsamble can be up to ten times faster than current state-of-the-art tools while maintaining high accuracy.

Visiting Professor of Anthropology **Sarah Hlubik** received a prestigious research fellowship from the Leakey Foundation for her project, “Understanding fire incidence in the Early Pleistocene of Koobi Fora, northern Kenya.” Hlubik will use her stipend to investigate how early fire ecology shaped human evolution. The Leakey Foundation, founded in 1968, is a donor-supported nonprofit organization “on a quest to answer profound questions” about what it means to be human.

Assistant Professor of Psychology **Kyle Lorenzo** attended the Society for Social and Personality Psychology (SPSP) 2026 Annual Convention in Chicago in February and the Society for Research on Adolescents (SRA) Biennial Meeting in Toronto in April.



Assistant Professor **Jeannine Ortega** [3] attended the Latinx Studies Association Conference (LSA) at the University of Texas at Austin on March 26-29. The conference brought together students, artists, writers, filmmakers and community activists whose work is dedicated to supporting understanding and engaging issues relevant to Latino/a/x/e people in the U.S.

An invited exhibition co-produced by Environmental Studies faculty members **Parisa Rinaldi** and **Barry Muchnick**, brought together students, artists and community members in an exploration of climate resilience through creative collaboration. “Climate Affect Collective: Puppets with a Purpose” was on view March 6–29 at Annmarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center, a Smithsonian Affiliate in Solomons, Maryland, and featured multi-media artworks generated through coursework, workshops and community partnerships.



Assistant Librarians **Stephanie Reyes** and **Haley Galloway**, with **Elisia Lewis '25** and **Brynn Desmond '25** presented at the Association of College and Research Libraries New York Symposium in December 2025. They presented their work on and reflections about the collaborative project created for Black History Month highlighting spaces in Maryland dedicated to preserving and showcasing Black History.

Assistant Professor of Biology **Lorena Torres-Martínez** was awarded a research grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) Organismal. The project is a collaboration between SMCM, the University of Texas, Corpus Christi and the University of South Alabama. Through this grant, six research assistantships will be funded each year of three and a post-doctoral researcher will be funded during the third year. The main result of the grant will be a public database of the combined marsh plant and fungal genotypes that are resilient to increased environmental variation.



**Amber Verbic** [4], assistant director of health services, recently graduated from Frostburg State University, earning her Master of Science in Nursing degree. Through the University System of Maryland’s institutional tuition waiver program, she completed the Family Nurse Practitioner program designed for RNs living and working in medically underserved areas. Verbic also successfully passed the national certification examination through the American Nurses Credentialing Center, earning her board certification as a Family Nurse Practitioner.

**Diego Villada** [5], assistant professor of theater, dance, and performance studies, gave several invited workshops at Elon University in Elon, North Carolina, in April. The workshops were focused on practical strategies for building inclusive theater rehearsal rooms and classrooms. Working with students across all levels—from first-year performers to advanced majors—as well as faculty, Villada facilitated interactive sessions that combined embodied practice with critical dialogue.

## STUDENT NEWS

Psychology students **Daniel Ake '27**, **Mary Govan '27** and **Emma Schneider '26** presented their research posters at the 2026 Annual Conference of the Eastern Psychological Association in Boston in February.

**Isabella Batarseh '27 [6]** has been selected as one of only 20 students nationwide to be a 2026 Partners in Peace Student Ambassador. The Partners in Peace program is a collaboration between the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) and the Nobel Peace Center, which offers selected students the opportunity to study peacework techniques used by Nobel Peace Laureates. As a Partners in Peace (PiP) ambassador, in the fall Batarseh will attend a weekly virtual course centered around peacework studies. In November, she will also attend the NCHC conference in New Orleans along with her cohort of PiP ambassadors. At the conference, she will participate in a panel discussion about the work of Partners in Peace and



will represent the program as a student ambassador. With her PiP ambassador cohort, she will also travel to Oslo, Norway, in December to participate in festivities associated with the awarding of the 2026 Nobel Peace Prize. Batarseh majors in political science and public policy, while also minoring in economics and women, gender and sexuality studies. Following graduation, she plans to attend graduate school and pursue a career in Middle Eastern foreign policy.

In January, theater students **Jackie Miller '27**, **Jay Valdesere '26**, **Kelsie Schlichting '26** and **Hannah Marron '26** presented at the American College Theatre Festival (ACTF) Region 2 conference. All four students took part in workshops and competed in the tech Olympics (a timed competition including costume changes, theatrical lighting and sound system setups), for which they won first place as a team effort with State University of New York (SUNY) Brockport.

The St. Mary's College of Maryland Ethics Bowl team, coached by Associate Professor of Philosophy **Michael Taber**, competed in the national Association for Practical and Professional Ethics (APPE) Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl. Held on March 7-8 in St. Louis, Missouri, they finished as a quarter finalist with teams from Harvard University, Macalester College and Utah Valley University. Out of 172 schools, SMCM finished ahead of 164. Team members at the competition were **Bechorah Aguru '26**, **Ian Baughman '27**, **Philip Eisen-**



*The St. Mary's College of Maryland Ethics Bowl team in action at the national Association for Practical and Professional Ethics Bowl in St. Louis in March.*

**stein '28**, **Argyrios Tasikas '26**, **Mason Lipczenko '26** and **Lainey Shankle '26**.

On April 15, physics students **Henry DeGrave '26**, **Bethel Habtegiorgis '25** and **Henry Thomas '28** presented a talk on research done under the supervision of Professor **Charles Adler** at the AirTalent Undergraduate Research Symposium. Their talk, which won the award for most innovative research, was titled, "Measurement of Light Scattering from Rough Surfaces" and is part of an ongoing research collaboration with the Non-Traditional Maritime Sensing branch at the Naval Air Warfare Center – Aircraft Division (NAWCAD). The AirTalent program is sponsored by NAWCAD and The Patuxent Partnership (TPP) to promote STEM research for undergraduates and high school students.

The Braniacs, a group of SMCM neuroscience and psychology students, worked alongside Associate Professor and Neuroscience Program Chair **Elizabeth Leininger**, to organize and run the 18th Annual Southern Maryland (SOMD) Brain Bee on March 7. The Brain Bee is a neuroscience competition for high schoolers that encourages students to explore neuroscience and to learn more about neuroscience academic opportunities. **Julia Gaevsky '26** emceed the event. **Em Allan '27**, **Josie Gibbons '27**, and **Presley Pickeral '26** were scorekeepers. **Wendy Contreras '26**, **Nasir Howard '28**, **Gerardo Morales '26**, **Veronica Velez '27**, and **Brooklyn Kimball '27** also volunteered at the event.

# *The* **INAUGURATION** *of* **RHONDA PHILLIPS,** *Ph.D., FAICP*

BY GRETCHEN PHILLIPS,  
COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

## **ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND, INAUGURATED**

**Rhonda Phillips, Ph.D., FAICP**, as its eighth president during a formal investiture on Friday, April 17, marking new leadership at the National Public Honors College.

The ceremony, held at the Nancy R. and Norton T. Dodge Performing Arts Center, included Provost **Katherine Gantz** presenting the presidential medallion to Dr. Phillips, symbolizing the formal transfer of leadership and the start of the College's next chapter.



**John J. Bell '95**, chair of the St. Mary's College of Maryland Board of Trustees, who presided over the ceremony and delivered the presidential charge, said: "Today marks the eighth presidential investiture in the College's history—a milestone that connects this moment to a legacy that began in 1840, here at the site of Maryland's first capital. The College's mission—rooted in rigorous and innovative learning, close mentorship, and a commitment to access, integrity, and service—continues to guide our work and shape the experience of our students. Today, we affirm that mission, and we look ahead with confidence."

In her address, **President Phillips** spoke of the value of a public honors college, a liberal arts education and the importance of community. She said, "Our identity as a public honors college is both a legacy and a responsibility. It calls us to uphold the rigor that defines this place while ensuring that the opportunities we offer remain within reach for the students we are here to serve."

"The value and purpose of this College is not found in any one feature, but in the way it all comes together: a deep sense of connection, a commitment to academic excellence, and a shared belief in the distinctiveness and diversity of this community," Phillips said.

Friday's inauguration ceremony began with a traditional academic procession of 160 higher education leaders from across the country, along with faculty, staff, and members of the campus community. The procession also included local and state representatives including Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD 5th) who gave the keynote address.

"You understand as we do, that the liberal arts college remains a bulwark against liberalism, inequality and injustice. When others question the value of a liberal arts education, you will now carry the banner of St. Mary's College and hold it up as an exemplar," Hoyer said. "As you have already started doing in your first 100 days and beyond, ask the tough questions and challenge us. Continue to make this institution, led by the St. Mary's Way, a beacon of inquiry, discovery and wisdom for Maryland, our country and the world."

"Dr. Phillips, as you embark officially on your tenure as the eighth president of St. Mary's College, I hope you will do so with the comfort and reassurance that you have our blessings and our support," Hoyer said.



*"As you have already started doing in your first 100 days and beyond, ask the tough questions and challenge us. Continue to make this institution, led by the St. Mary's Way, a beacon of inquiry, discovery and wisdom for Maryland, our country and the world."*

*The Honorable  
— STENY H. HOYER —  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Maryland 5th District*



Author and essayist W. Ralph Eubanks, faculty fellow and writer in residence at the University of Mississippi, provided remarks during the ceremony as well.

The entire College community, representatives from faculty, students, staff and alumni offered

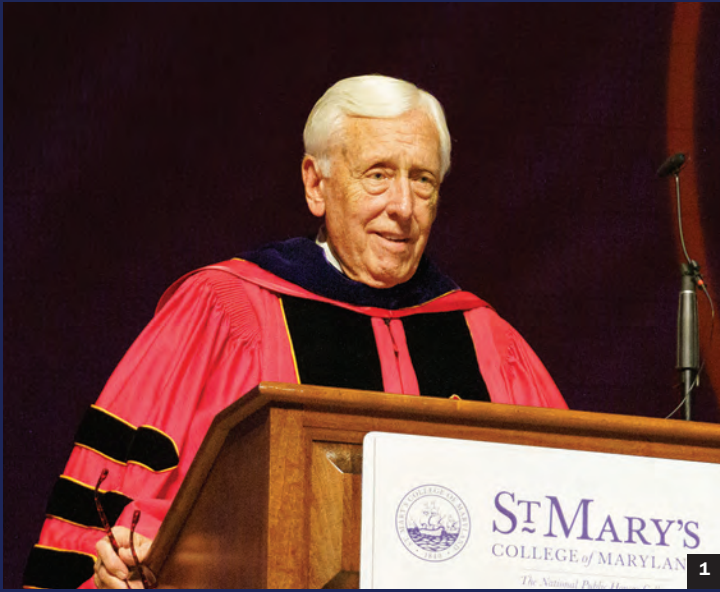
greetings early in the ceremony. The event was distinctive in how it embodied the St. Mary's Way, demonstrating the College's ethos in action.

A series of events throughout the week brought together leaders from higher education, government, the arts, and media, reflecting the breadth of the College's impact and partnerships. A student-athlete focused Seahawk Spirit Celebration started the festivities at the Jamie L. Roberts Stadium on Tuesday, April 14.

A commissioned piece from American pop artist Burton Morris was unveiled on Wednesday, April 15 in tandem with an art walk of campus. Highly acclaimed pianist and artist-in-residence Brian Ganz performed at a special dinner on the eve of the Inauguration ceremony. Brian Kelly, editor-at-large and executive vice president of U.S. News & World Report, addressed the community at a special luncheon.

PHOTOS THIS PAGE: [1] Provost Ganz presents the Presidential Medallion to President Phillips. [2] Provost Ganz, President Phillips and chair of the SMC Board of Trustees John J. Bell.

PHOTOS ON OPPOSITE PAGE: [1] The Honorable Steny H. Hoyer, U.S. House of Representative, MD 5th gave the keynote address. [2] Highly acclaimed pianist and artist-in-residence Brian Ganz performed at a special dinner on the eve of the inauguration ceremony. [3] Provost Ganz holding the Presidential Medallion. [4] The Phillips Miller family following the ceremony. [5] David O'Donnell, executive director of Historic St. Mary's City, provided the keynote speech at the dinner the night before the inauguration. [6] President Phillips being robed before the ceremony. [7] A Seahawk Spirit Celebration at the Jamie L. Roberts Stadium kicked off the week of celebrations. [8] President Phillips explores the paintings on display at the art walk held on campus April 15. [9] Author and essayist W. Ralph Eubanks at the special luncheon on the eve of the inauguration ceremony. Eubanks later provided remarks at the ceremony. [10] Guitarist of the Groove Band performing at the reception. [11] Students cut-a-rug at the reception following the inauguration. [12] W. Ralph Eubanks shares a laugh with President Phillips following the ceremony. [13] The inauguration ceremony began with a traditional academic procession of 160 higher education leaders from across the country, along with faculty, staff, and members of the campus community. The procession also included local and state representatives. [14] President Phillips with, left to right, Dr. Kris Bross (Ohio Univ.); Dr. Dwaine Jengelly, Dr. Natasha Duncan and Dr. Rosanne Altstatt (all of Purdue Univ.). [15] President Phillips unveils a commissioned piece by American pop-artist Burton Morris. [16] Rev. Charity Humm (left) and Rev. Dr. Asa J. Lee (right) offered the inauguration's invocation and benediction, respectively.





# PEOPLE, PURPOSE *and* PLACE

The following is excerpted from President Phillips' inaugural address on April 17, 2026.

**L**et me explain why the inauguration is today, nine months after I joined St. Mary's College of Maryland. In my first months on campus, I spent time listening and hearing ideas, challenges and opportunities across campus and the community to better understand what defines this institution and what is held dear by those who call it home. This continuing process is to ensure that our people, purpose and place are understood and how we can "reimagine the excellence" we already experience to shape it for addressing needs of the rapidly changing environment of higher education. Taking this time to learn and reflect on what St. Mary's College is today will empower us to move forward and consider the future, including the next phase of development and growth in a new strategic plan to be announced soon. One thing that became clear to me over and over again is that the strength of this institution is rooted in our people and in their shared commitment to our mission.

**So today is not simply a celebration — it is also a commitment.**

- ❖ A commitment to build on the work of those who came before us.
- ❖ A commitment to one another to respect and value our differences while working towards our goals.
- ❖ And a commitment to the future we are called to shape together.

This moment also comes at a time when higher education receives more questions about value, relevance and trust. For public institutions especially, those questions matter deeply. We must be able to demonstrate not only who we are, but the value we create for our students, our communities, and the future that we are charting.

As the first standalone honors college in the nation—hence the name The National Public Honors College—St. Mary's holds a distinctive place in higher education. We are ranked 5th in the nation by U.S. News & World Report in Top Public Liberal Arts Colleges, among other accolades.

At its best, a liberal arts and sciences education prepares students for careers, complexity and



**T**he value and purpose of this College is not found in any one feature, but in the way it all comes together: a deep sense of connection, a commitment to academic excellence, and a shared belief in the distinctiveness and diversity of this community.

change. It equips them to ask meaningful questions, connect knowledge across disciplines, and navigate a world that demands both adaptability and judgment. These are essential capabilities for success, citizenship and meaningful engagement in the world ahead.

**At St. Mary's, our work is not theoretical. It is lived.**

- ❖ You see it in our classrooms.
- ❖ You experience it in creative expression.
- ❖ You apply it in undergraduate research.
- ❖ You live it through public and community service, and in the daily interactions that shape each student's experience.

That is what we do here, and it is reflected in our Honors College Promise and LEAD—Learning Through Experiential and Applied Discovery—that provides every student who becomes part of this community opportunities to engage and grow with internships, study away and study abroad, or conduct research. And what opportunities! Fulbright and many other prestigious awards are continually being won by our students.

The value and purpose of this College is not found in any one feature, but in the way it all comes together: a deep sense of connection, a commitment to academic excellence, and a shared belief in the distinctiveness and diversity of this community.

Our identity as a public honors college is both a legacy and a responsibility. It calls us to uphold the rigor that defines this institution while ensuring that the opportunities we offer remain within reach for all our students we are here to serve.

Situated along the Chesapeake Bay, at the mouth of the St. Mary's River, this historic campus is not simply where we are, it is who we are. Here, place shapes the educational experience from its historical roots as the birthplace of religious freedom before our nation was founded, to archaeological sites, to modern research facilities and a commitment to preserving the integrity and health of the Chesapeake Bay watershed ecology. Students connect their learning to the world around them through research, community engagement, public service, and interdisciplinary study. This setting deepens

**T**hat is the value of a public honors college in this moment: not simply readiness, but the capacity to lead, to contribute, and to make meaning in a complex world.

learning and reinforces the core truth I mentioned earlier: education is most powerful when it is connected to people, purpose and place.

Because of this foundation, we are well-positioned for what comes next.

**As we look ahead, our focus and priorities are clear as we reimagine excellence:**

1. We will clarify who we are and ensure others understand it. We will strengthen our national and international visibility and elevate our voice as a leading example of what a public honors college provides.
2. We will strengthen the student experience from access to outcomes, ensuring that students are supported from enrollment through graduation and beyond, and that they leave St. Mary's prepared to contribute, lead and make an impact.
3. We will invest in the environments where learning and life happen, modernizing our campus, adopting new technologies, and creating conditions for an even higher level of excellence and connection.
4. We will continue to build a community where people want to be and choose to stay involved, one that supports faculty, staff, students, alums, partners and friends with a culture of community well-being, collaboration, belonging and shared purpose.



5. We will enhance community relations and existing partnerships while building new ones—locally, in the state, the U.S., and beyond.

Looking ahead, I am confident in what St. Mary's College of Maryland is and all that it can become. We have the opportunity to be even better known for our impact on our students, our communities, and on higher education itself.

**We are building:**

A place where academic excellence and access are not competing priorities, but complementary strengths.

- ❖ A place where the liberal arts and sciences are not simply preserved, but advanced in ways that meet the needs of today and tomorrow.
- ❖ A place where students are prepared not only for what comes next, but to shape what comes next.

That is the value of a public honors college in this moment: not simply readiness, but the capacity to lead, to contribute, and to make meaning in a complex world.

**And this work belongs to all of us.**

- ❖ To our faculty and staff, who shape the daily experiences of our students.
- ❖ To our alumni, who carry the St. Mary's story into the world.
- ❖ To our partners and supporters, who help us extend our reach and deepen our impact.
- ❖ And to our students, who remind us why this work matters.

On a tour of the new YMCA building during construction on March 31, **Soleil Paul '28** and her teammates captured video interviews with YMCA executive director Jenifer Lehn and other student members of the Navigators program.



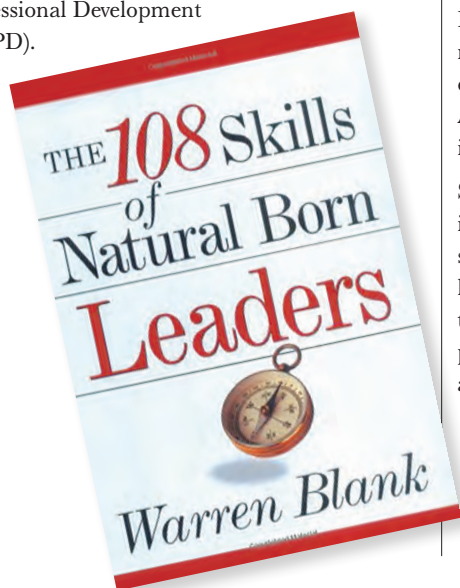
# THE SMC NAVIGATOR LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Preparing Students to  
Chart Their Own Course

BY LEE CAPRISTO, EDITOR

**A** new leadership program piloted this spring at St. Mary's College in partnership with Leadership Southern Maryland (LSM) and Leslie Taylor Consulting Services. It rolled out in January as a non-credit leadership development initiative for SMCM students within the College's professional pathways program administered by the Center for Career Development and Community Engagement. The program is designed to develop leadership skills, provide mentorship, facilitate engagement with industry experts, and guide students through a community-based project involving design, development, implementation, and sustainability. For the pilot rollout, the community-based project focused on ways and means to promote the June 2026 grand opening of the YMCA in Lexington Park, Maryland.

Leslie Taylor was the Navigator program's designer, developer, and primary deliverer of the in-class Navigator Leadership Certificate program curriculum. "This grew from earlier collaborations between SMCM and the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD)," she explained. "In 2022, after retiring as Vice Commander of the Naval Air Systems Command—and previously serving as NAWCAD's Executive Director — I was approached about helping to create a "Discover Navy Careers" course in response to a request from the College's Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD).



TOP LEFT: **Soleil Paul '28** interviews YMCA executive director *Jenifer Lehn*. TOP RIGHT: SMCM's Navigators touring the new YMCA building under construction. BOTTOM LEFT: "108 Skills of Natural Born Leaders" by Dr. Warren Blank was part of the "Leadership Matters" seminar. OPPOSITE PAGE: **Bonnie Green '74** (in blue) with YMCA founding members *Beverly and Bert Johnston* (third and fourth from left) at the YMCA groundbreaking ceremony.

"At the same time, I interviewed with then-CCPD Executive Director Cindy Greb to serve as an adjunct instructor at SMCM. During that conversation, she encouraged me to not only support "Discover Navy Careers" but also to create a leadership course for students. I accepted her challenge and designed "Leadership Matters" as part of SMCM's LEAD program, which debuted in the fall of 2023.

"When CCPD's Kristen Pennington later proposed the idea of a leadership certification — the Navigator — Cindy, Kristen, Dr. Sybol Anderson, and I met to bring it to life. As a Leadership Southern Maryland (LSM) lifetime member and alumnus (Class of 2024), I was especially excited for the roles LSM and Dr. Anderson [as its executive director] would play in shaping the program."

Students applied to be part of the program and interviewed with LSM alumni for 16 available slots. Those selected were matched with regional leaders (also LSM alumni) who agreed to mentor their students over the four months of the program. The students met with their mentors at least four times during the semester, to review their leadership skills development plan and explore leadership styles and interests.

Students came together on campus for the "Leadership Matters" seminar, led by Leslie Taylor Consulting, twice per month, to work their way together through an array of leadership topics stemming from the required reading of Dr. Warren Blank's "108 Skills of Natural Born Leaders" and its companion self-assessment.

They also embarked, in teams, on complementary service projects aligned to promote awareness of the new YMCA to the local community:

- ❖ **Marketing:** develop a social media communications plan for educating the community about the YMCA tied to its June opening
- ❖ **Administration & Operations:** develop a supplement for the YMCA's employee training manual with key information about the St. Mary's County community
- ❖ **Community Resource Mapping:** compile a directory of St. Mary's County resources in key areas complementary to the mission of the YMCA
- ❖ **Capstone Documentation:** produce a short video with fact sheet about the service projects, including lessons learned.

FUTURE HOME OF THE  
ST. MARY'S COUNTY FAMILY YMCA





TOP LEFT: *The first class of the Navigator Leadership Program with their certificates.* TOP RIGHT: *Debriefing session following the documentation team's tour of the new YMCA building.*

Jenifer Lehn, executive director of the new YMCA, credits the Navigator Leadership Program cohort of students, mentors and LSM leadership with helping her learn quickly about the Southern Maryland community to which she was a new arrival in December 2025. Her previous YMCA tenure was in Cambridge, Maryland, where she worked for 11 years in a facility built in 1929. "I learned a lot about bats and about plumbing as part of that work," she said.

Bert and Beverly Johnston are founding members of the new YMCA, having been with the project from its conception as co-chairs of the St. Mary's County YMCA capital campaign. A former NAVAIR vice commander with 32 years of U.S. Navy service, a 2007 Leadership Maryland graduate and founding sponsor and past president of Leadership Southern Maryland, Bert Johnson mentored the students on the community resource mapping team.

**Isabella Batarseh '27** was part of that team. She appreciated the challenge of reaching out to community members via phone and email to propose connecting their talents with potential audiences via the YMCA. "We got

to practice those skills that go with meeting people for the first time in a professional setting," she said. "We were reaching out to see if they would bring their expertise from their field or office to help the greater community and by doing so, be a more impactful leader."

**Soleil Paul '28** helped with the documentation team. On a tour of the YMCA building during construction on March 31, Paul and her teammates captured video interviews with Jenifer Lehn and other student members of the Navigators program. These were later edited and combined into a short but comprehensive overview video about the project. For Paul, the semester-long experience had one key takeaway: realizing the work she and her teammates did was appreciated by the YMCA. "We heard from [Jen] specifically, how the SMCM teams helped to aid the development of the YMCA and cement it as a community resource in the area."

**Li Rizek '26** was part of the marketing team, mentored by **Kelley Hernandez '08** (and 2025 LSM LEAP program graduate). Rizek said of the experience, "We had a fun time learning about how a marketing schedule works and about the marketing field in general." The team came up with five categories of marketing messages or posts that the YMCA could use during its 30-day countdown to the grand

opening. The YMCA team is working to build a Facebook base of 3,000 followers this year.

**Summer LaRocco '26** was part of the administration and operations team. A highly visible campus leader as the student appointee to the College's Board of Trustees, LaRocco enjoyed learning about different leadership styles as part of the Navigator program. "The program really helped me refine some of my leadership skills, especially the concept of leading from behind. I initially thought of leadership as the front and center role, but through this program I tried to lead from behind to see how I could support my team members to rise to the challenge of leadership."

To close their certificate ceremony on April 28, SMCM's Director of Professional Pathways **Kristen Pennington** offered this charge to the Navigators:

"As you move forward, I hope you hold onto this: You don't need to wait until you feel completely ready. You already know how to step into something, figure it out, and lead through it. You've done it here. And I have no doubt you'll keep doing it wherever you go next." ❖

# JED CAMPUS

FOSTERING A CAMPUS OF WELLNESS





**O**n May 5, the campus celebrated the success of the St. Mary's College JED Campus initiative designed to improve overall student wellness. The College began the program in the fall of 2022, led by co-chairs **Jess Jolly** (director of counseling) and **Libby Williams** (professor of psychology), who, with a working group of students, staff and faculty, set out together to implement the JED Campus program. After four years working as a JED Campus program participant, the College now joins the ranks of JED Alumni.

JED Campus is a signature program of The Jed Foundation (JED), designed to guide schools through a collaborative process of comprehensive systems, program and policy development with customized support to build upon existing student mental health, substance use and suicide prevention efforts. It has partnered with more than 550 higher education



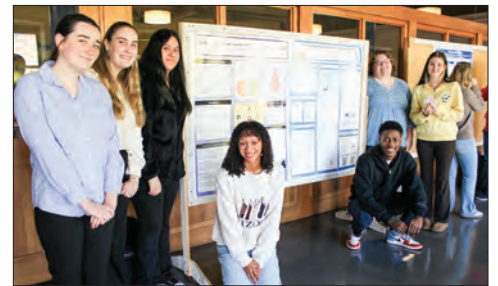
**FROM 70% TO 82%**  
The percentage of students who feel mental health is a campus priority.

**FROM 53% TO 76%**  
The percentage of students who agree that administration is listening to the concerns of students around health and wellness.

**FROM 64% TO 82%**  
The percentage of students who feel they lead a purposeful and meaningful life.

**FROM 73% TO 89%**  
The percentage of students who feel their social relationships are supportive and rewarding.

**Above are some of the highlights of the progress made between the two administrations of the Healthy Minds Survey from 2022 and 2025.**



institutions in support of evidence-based mental health programs. JED Campuses embark on a strategic partnership with JED that not only assesses and enhances the work that is already being done, but helps to create positive, systemic change in the campus community. JED uses proprietary assessments to understand each school's programs, systems and challenges, and gathers student data directly through the Healthy Minds Survey, both at the outset of the JED Campus program and again as a comparison measure three years later. During the four-year program, JED works with the school to develop a mental health strategic plan for implementation.



JED's final report on the significant progress made by the St. Mary's College JED Campus initiative is available online at [isu.pub/bvz2nFR](https://isu.pub/bvz2nFR) or by scanning the QR code.



“ It is exciting to see the changes the JED Initiative has helped us make for the betterment of our students. I am proud of the work we have done and thrilled to see the evidence of our success from our students’ perspectives. It is my hope that, as a campus, we continue to focus on the wellbeing of our students moving forward. It takes a village, and SMCM is a great village! ”

Libby Williams, co-chair

“ JED brought the campus together. Students, faculty, and staff came together to work on the mutual goal of improving wellness across campus and reducing the risk of suicide. Conversations were had with campus partners that would not otherwise be possible. The outcome led to a shared understanding of goals for the betterment of the campus community which are reflected in the results of the JED objectives as well as the Healthy Minds Survey. ”

Jess Jolly, co-chair

# ALUMNI CONNECTION

## CLASS NOTES

### 1990s

**Ashani Weeraratna '91** was highlighted by eLanka, a news site dedicated to Sri Lankan excellence, for her significant contributions to understanding cancer biology, particularly in the areas of melanoma and aging, as well as the role of the tumor microenvironment.

She is the current E.V. McCollum Chair of Bio-chemistry and Molecular Biology at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health; a Bloomberg Distinguished Professor; and co-leader of the Cancer Invasion and Metastasis Program for the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center. She is also a professor of oncology at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine; current



president of the Society for Melanoma Research; and a member of the board of directors of the American Association for Cancer Research.

**Greg Godbout '95** was named chief innovation officer of Global Clean Energy, Inc.'s newly formed Artificial Intelligence (AI) Division. He will lead the creation of renewable infrastructure to support AI development.



**Elisha Harig-Blaine '99 [1]** received the Outstanding Public Service Award from County Executive Stuart Pittman. He received this award for his work with the Arundel Community Development Services team, applying recreational cannabis tax revenue to support programming for housing and homelessness, education, workforce development, substance abuse and mental health.

**Andre Jackson '04** completed his first feature-length documentary, "Beyond Banners," about the basketball program at Gwynn Park High School in Prince George's County. The film explores legacy, mentorship and the responsibility of sustaining excellence for over 50 years. The project features previous Gwynn Park High School coaches **Michael Glick '88** and **Spencer Way '07**.

Earlier this year, Brandon was sworn in as president of the board of trustees for the African American Mayors Association for the 2026-27 fiscal year. He previously served as that organization's first vice president.

**Barbara Tidd '08, MAT '09** was named principal of Tulls Creek Elementary School in Moyock, North Carolina. She has 13 years of educational experience, and was previously named Currituck County Schools' 2023-2024 Principal of the Year. She will be instrumental in guiding the opening of Tull Creek Elementary School this fall.

**Brandon M. Scott '06 [3]** delivered the Commencement address for the Class of 2026 of his alma mater on May 16. He is the 52nd mayor of Baltimore. First elected in 2020, Brandon made history in 2024 when he became the first Baltimore mayor in 20 years to win reelection.

### 2000s

**Whitney Poole '00 [2]** published his third novel, "Finding the Beat," with Liminal Books. The novel tells the story of Johnny Cabreza, who struggles to regain his rhythm while being tugged by a society coming to terms with a growing psychic awareness of Eastern and Western ideals blending together.





4

### 2010s

**Gus Weinkam '10** was selected as counsel with Arnold & Porter, an international law firm with 16 offices worldwide. Gus specializes in the firm's tax practice in its New York City office.

**Brendan McCarthy '11 [4]** was granted tenure by Utah Valley University (UVU), becoming an associate professor of history. Brendan has been with UVU for six years and has received many awards, including the Honors Mentor of the Year Award in 2026; the Innovative Teaching with Technology Award in 2025; and an Honors Faculty Fellowship in 2022. Brendan specializes in using digital approaches to reveal insights on the ancient world. His published scholarship includes an article on brokerage in ancient Roman elections and a chapter on traumatic brain injury in Roman war. He has also consulted for TedEd on YouTube.

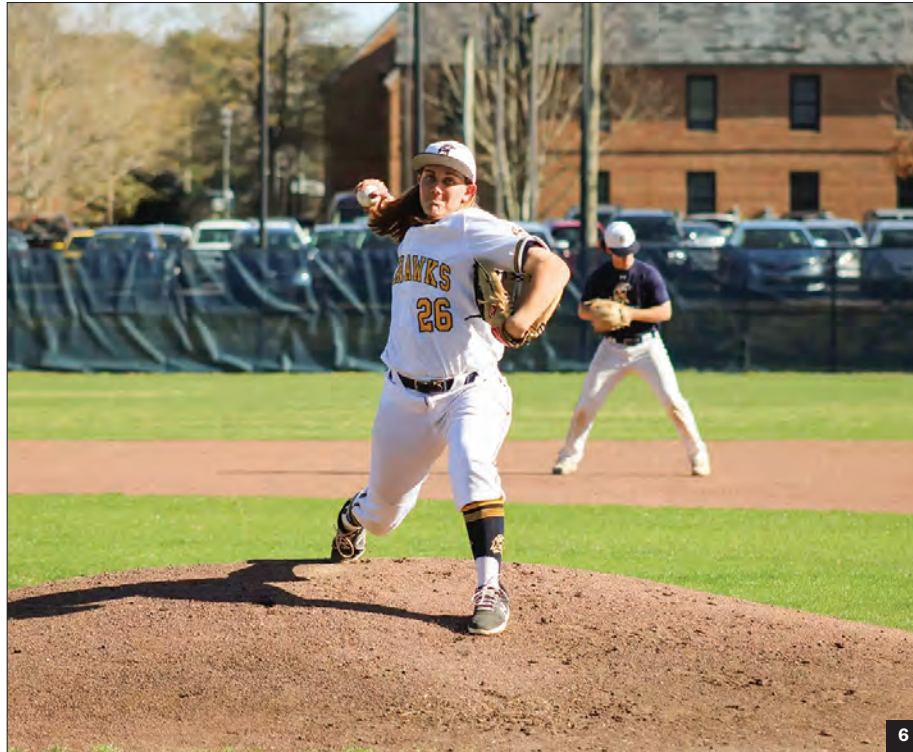


5

### 2020s

**Kathleen Barthelmes '21 [5]** was featured in an article published by Boston College about her service work for Guatemalan orphans. She recently founded Robles de Justicia (Oaks of Righteousness), a nonprofit designed to empower Guatemalan teenagers aging out of orphanages and to help them reintegrate into society through housing, life skills classes, mentorship, education and vocational training. Kathleen's current title is co-director of Robles de Justicia, and she hopes to replicate the nonprofit throughout Latin America.

**Julia Fitzpatrick '23** recently published an article based on her St. Mary's Project in the journal, *Eating Behaviors*, along with collaborators Associate Professor of Psychology **Jennifer Tickle** and researchers from Stanford University. Data collection for the project ran across three semesters and also involved psychology research assistants **Lorelai Symmes '25**, **Madeleine Carter '25** and **Elaina Barbour '25**, who are acknowledged in the paper. Julia is currently a third-year clinical psychology Ph.D. student at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.



6

**Tae-Shi Savage '24** accepted a full-time position at Goucher College as a residential life coordinator.

**Skylar Kaplan '25 [6]** was selected in the inaugural draft for the Women's Pro Baseball League (WPBL), which holds its first season this year, with teams in Boston, Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco. Skylar was a Round 3 pick for San Francisco as a left fielder.

**Luke Schwenk '25** had research published in the peer-reviewed journal, *Palaeontologia Electronica*. The article investigates the spatial distribution of zinc across the enameloid of fossilized megalodon teeth. Luke's undergraduate work on the project earned him the Myron G. Marlay Award for Science. He is currently studying at the University of Bristol in the United Kingdom, where he is

pursuing a Master of Science degree in paleobiology before returning to the U.S., where he plans to pursue a Ph.D. in that field.

**Alex Stornelli '25**, a physics major and mathematics minor; along with Assistant Professor of Physics **Anish Agashe**, recently published a research article titled, "Static Charged Polytropic Spheres with a Cosmological Constant: Physical Acceptability and Trapped Orbits," in *European Physical Journal Plus*. As an undergraduate, Alex was awarded the Geneva Boone Award for Outstanding St. Mary's Project as well as the Physics Department Research Award.

**Michael Wade '25** presented his St. Mary's Project research for scientists and researchers at the Scientists Serving Communities (SSC) conference in January. His research, conducted under the direction of Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies **Parisa Rinaldi**, documented the differences in understanding of shoreline management policy between coastal communities and shoreline management professionals.

## Alumni Council Profile

By Cathy Hernandez Ray '78

**Alexandra “Alex” Minor '24**, has been a member of the Alumni Council since June 2025. As a voting member of the council, her role is to help plan and implement programs that engage with the St. Mary's College of Maryland Alumni Association and support the College's recruitment and philanthropic goals. She is one of two council members from her class, part of a movement that is attracting participation from younger alumni.

Alex graduated as a biochemistry and biology double-major and a music minor. Right after graduation, she spent time backpacking in Europe and visiting family in Poland. She resides in Perry Hall, Maryland, and currently works as a research coordinator with the pediatric infectious disease research team at The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. This position will serve as “gap years” while she prepares to eventually continue onto medical school. In five years, she aspires to be finishing medical school and beginning a career in maternal and family medicine.

Alex said, “I loved being an active member of the SMCM community!” Outside of the classroom she devoted her free time supporting a variety of activities, including Pre-Health Club, Outdoor Adventure Club, and SMACS Biomolecular Organization of St. Mary's Students (BOSS). She spoke at an off-campus regional admitted student event in White Marsh, Maryland, and lent her support to Giving Tuesday. One of her favorite roles was working as the Residence Hall Coordinator (RHC) of Caroline Hall and the Townhouses. As a member of the Student Government



Association (SGA) she served as student body vice president and club coordinator.

A seat on the Alumni Council allows Alex to remain active and engaged. “I was really missing clubs and community involvement postgrad. The Alumni Council gave me this wonderful opportunity to take part in a passionate organization again, to connect to other grads, and serve as a voice on the council! As a newer grad, I hope I can help improve communication and engagement with the younger classes (who may not know the council even exists). Plus, having an excuse to visit campus a few times a year for meetings is always appreciated.”

She feels her St. Mary's education and the flexibility it afforded was impactful in developing her career and personal interests. Taking classes in different disciplines expanded her interest in science while still pursuing expressive interests, like piano. She was able to

transfer and apply the skills developed through the St. Mary's Project (SMP) experience, such as protocol writing, data analysis, and presenting findings directly into her current job.

It was the natural environment of St. Mary's that influenced her the most. “As cheesy as it sounds, by living on such a beautiful campus, it was difficult not to be in a better mood. Sitting by the water and walking through the woods were also great motivations and mental health resets.” Two of her fondest memories were “watching a thunderstorm roll in on the docks at sunset after a long sunny Saturday spent with friends outside, then running back to our dorms as the pouring rain started” and, “the countless hours I spent in the Prince George

Resident Assistant (RA) office with the best RA staff ever, laughing until we couldn't breathe, sharing drama and Wawa slushies.”

Alex emphatically responded, “the people!” when asked what makes St. Mary's unique. “Every St. Mary's alum knows the excited feeling of finding another St. Mary's alum out in the wild. Everyone's dedication to the St. Mary's community and the people they met during their time on campus keeps St. Mary's unique and so special. Even among the multiple generations of alumni on the Alumni Council, we are all still able to connect over our memories from campus and the things we love about St. Mary's. The St. Mary's community is timeless.”

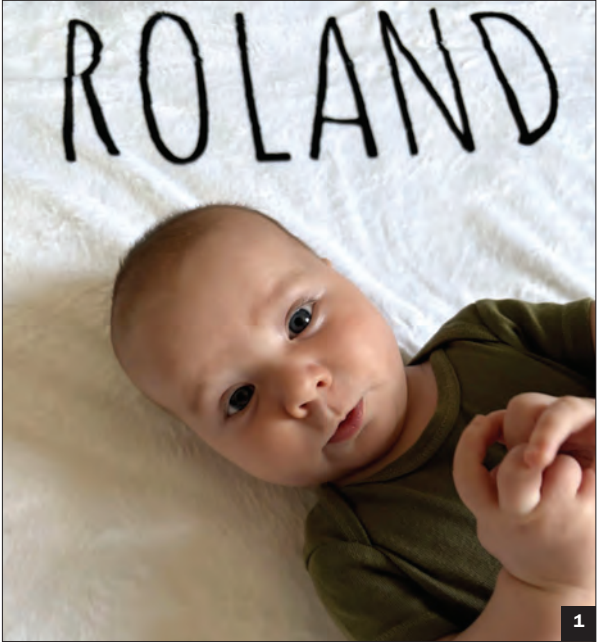


REPRESENTING THE CLASS OF 2024, LEFT TO RIGHT: *Evan Bistline-Arnold, Onalee Anderson, Alex Minor, Elias Howe, William Christophel, Michael Boden and Leah Whitehouse.*

**BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS**

**Paul Shinkman '06** and Sarah Shinkman welcomed a son, Paul Robert “Ro” DeGrandpre Shinkman, on May 19, 2025. He joins his older brothers Fritz, age 7, and Gus, age 4. The family resides in Brunswick, Maine.

**Hallie Colegrove McCarthy '12** and **Brendan McCarthy '11 [1]** welcomed a son, Roland Elias McCarthy, in April 2025. He joins his older sister Esther. The family resides in West Valley City, Utah.



**IN MEMORIAM**

**Johanne Thompson Coleman '47** died on Oct. 31, 2023, at the age of 94, in Tucson, Arizona. She attended St. Mary’s Seminary for high school and later earned a degree in art from the Maryland Art Institute. Johanne was successful in many art forms, and especially favored bronze statues and busts. Her “Lakota Woman” is on permanent display at the Umatilla Heritage Museum in Pendleton, Oregon. She is survived by her son, Russell Paine, and her daughter, Lina Paine Powell.

**Brigid Brown Cobbs '78** died on Dec. 9, 2025, at the age of 70, in Annapolis, Maryland. She was raised in Baltimore and attended Mercy High School. After graduating from St. Mary’s College of Maryland, Brigid moved to New York City and worked as an international flight attendant for over 35 years. She is survived by her daughter, Paige Cobbs Starke; her son-in-law, Jake Starke; her grandson, Patrick Starke; her brother and sister-in-law, Daniel and Mary Brown; and her two sisters, Kathleen Wirtz and Monica Shano.



**Orbridge**

**ST MARY’S**  
COLLEGE of MARYLAND

**PACK YOUR BAGS WITH ST. MARY’S COLLEGE!**

We’re excited to introduce SMCM Adventures, our new travel program for alumni and supporters, in partnership with Orbridge. Book your spot today for the **Southwest National Parks tour** this fall (**Sept. 30 - Oct. 8, 2026**), with registration also open for the **Galápagos Islands** and **Tuscany** in 2027.



Ready to go?  
**Scan this code to learn more and register!**

**Daniel (Danny) Charles Krane '13** died on June 12, 2025, at the age of 34. Danny was born in Boston and raised in Newton and Westborough, Massachusetts. He played many sports as a youth; his favorite was lacrosse, which he played at both the varsity and club levels during his time at St. Mary's College of Maryland. Danny majored in economics and after graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree,

he worked in financial services in the Baltimore area. He nurtured his love for sports by playing lacrosse and ice hockey, as well as coaching youth ice hockey. Danny often spent his summers in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, with his family. He is survived by his parents, Ian and Maryann Krane, and his sister, Sara Krane.

**FRIENDS OF THE COLLEGE**

**Harry J. Weitzel Jr.**, a devoted champion of St. Mary's College of Maryland and its mission, died on March 9 at the age of 87. For more than three decades, Harry's leadership, generosity, and steadfast commitment helped shape the College in enduring ways. He first joined the Board of Trustees in 1992, where he served as vice chair

and as a member of several key committees, including Academic Affairs and Finance, Investment, and Audit. He later continued his service as a member of St. Mary's College Foundation Board, where he held roles as president, treasurer, and chair of the Joint Investment Advisory Committee. During 2020–2021, he returned to the Board of Trustees to fill a one-year vacancy, a reflection of the deep trust placed in his leadership.

Harry's contributions extended well beyond governance. He

chaired the Center for the Study of Democracy Advisory Board and established the Weitzel Research Award, which continues to support student scholarship across disciplines. In recognition of his extraordinary service, he was named an Honorary Alumnus and awarded the distinctions of Trustee Emeritus and Foundation Director Emeritus. In 2017, he received the College's highest honor, induction into The Order of the Ark and Dove.



**OWN A PIECE OF HISTORY!**

**About the Artwork**

Created to commemorate the inauguration of President Rhonda Phillips, this original piece reflects the spirit, history, and forward momentum of St. Mary's College of Maryland.

Drawing inspiration from the campus's waterfront setting and student experience, the work blends iconic elements with symbolic imagery.

**About the Artist**

Burton Morris is an internationally recognized pop artist known for his bold, high-energy style and vibrant visual language. His work has been

exhibited in galleries and museums worldwide and has been featured in major cultural and commercial campaigns.

**Limited Edition Print**

A limited edition print of this commemorative artwork will be made available for purchase. Visit the Inaugural Commemorative Artwork webpage for order options.



*A Bold Horizon*

**ST. MARY'S**  
COLLEGE of MARYLAND



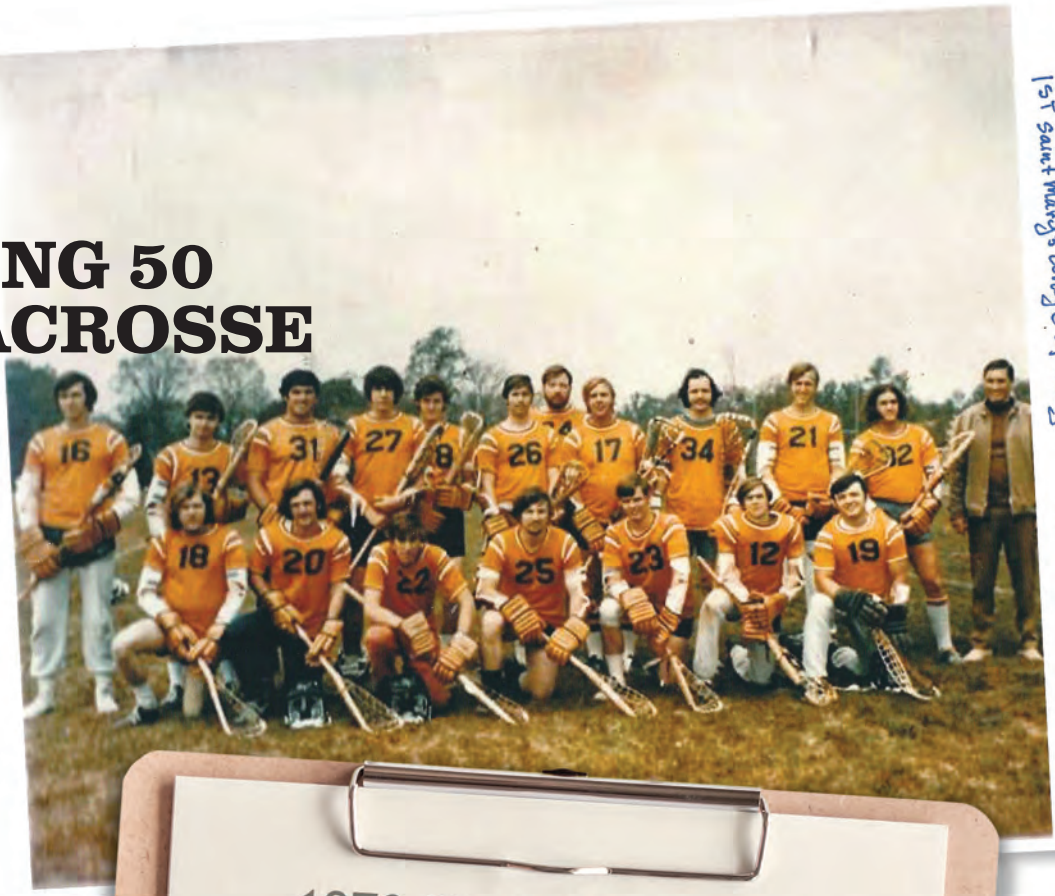
# REMEMBERING 50 YEARS OF LACROSSE

By Allen Hicks '72 and Krystal Shirley '28, communications & marketing intern

Allen Hicks '72 uncovered a photo of the first lacrosse team at St. Mary's College from 1970-71. As Student Government Association (SGA) treasurer, Allen helped secure funds to start the team. Additionally, Tom Rowe, a former professor of art, was instrumental in the team's inception, including recruiting coaches Roger Kissel and Fred Lewis from the Patuxent River Naval Air Station, who had previously played lacrosse at the Naval Academy. The men's lacrosse team celebrated its 50-year anniversary on campus at Spring Break-a-Sweat in 2023.

To help preserve this significant piece of the College's athletic history, the Alumni Association is asking for help in identifying four members of the team in this photo. They are wearing numbers 13, 28, 24, and 32. If you know who they are, please email the Office of Alumni Relations at [alumnioffice@smcm.edu](mailto:alumnioffice@smcm.edu).

To make a game of the names for the players who can be identified, try your hand at this crossword puzzle. The word bank includes names from the team roster as reported in the March 30, 1971, issue of The Point News.



**1970-71 Lacrosse Team**

**Across**

7. Who is Number 21
9. Who is Number 31
11. Who is Number 22
13. Who is Number 23
14. Who is Number 25
15. Who is Number 12

**Down**

1. Who is the Coach
2. Who is Number 19
3. Who is Number 16
4. Who is Number 17
5. Who is Number 26
6. Who is Number 27
8. Who is Number 20

**Word Bank**

Jack Brandenburg	Fred Lewis	Jack Doherty	Clinton George
Fred Bennett	Pat O'Neill	Bob Thornton	Al Hicks
Roland Hauser	Randy Rowland	Mike Kelly	Ron Palchinski
Rob Collins	Wayne Gordon	Jeff Pitts	

# SUMMER EVENTS AT SMCM



THE WAILIN' JENNYS



JEFF SILBERSCHLAG



GOVERNOR'S CUP CELEBRATION



RIVER CONCERT SERIES



GOVERNOR'S CUP CELEBRATION



**ST MARY'S**  
COLLEGE of MARYLAND

*The National Public Honors College*



FULL EVENT SCHEDULE:  
[smcm.edu/events](http://smcm.edu/events)

**FRIDAY, JUNE 19**

**BLUES/JAZZ WITH STACY BROOKS | 7 P.M.**

Free outdoor concert. Food and beverages for purchase from Southern Maryland food trucks.

**FRIDAY, JUNE 26**

**RIVER CONCERT SERIES | 7 P.M.**

Free outdoor concert series featuring the Chesapeake Orchestra, Jeffrey Silberschlag, director. Food and beverages for purchase from Southern Maryland food trucks.

**FRIDAY, JULY 3**

**RIVER CONCERT SERIES | 7 P.M.**

**FRIDAY, JULY 10**

**RIVER CONCERT SERIES | 7 P.M.**

**FRIDAY, JULY 17**

**RIVER CONCERT SERIES | 7 P.M.**

**FRIDAY, JULY 24**

**RIVER CONCERT SERIES | 7 P.M.**

**SATURDAY, AUG. 1**

**GOVERNOR'S CUP YACHT RACE presented by PNC Bank CELEBRATION** | Celebrate shoreside at the finish of the annual Governor's Cup Yacht Race from Annapolis to St. Mary's City. Bands, food, vendors on site all day.



**SATURDAY, SEPT. 5**

**THE WAILIN' JENNYS | 7 P.M.**

International folk trio to perform in the Nancy R. and Norton T. Dodge Performing Arts Center concert hall. Tickets on sale now.



# Alumni Weekend

June 11-14, 2026

We're excited to welcome you back to campus for Alumni Weekend! For those celebrating milestone reunions with class years ending in '1' or '6,' you're in for a special treat.

