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LUCIEN  
BOURCIER ('26)

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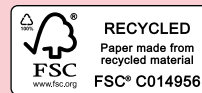
## Painting This Place

Renowned Spokane artist **Ben Joyce ('01)** took a nostalgic stroll back through his time at Gonzaga for the first piece in his University Collection. Joyce, known as the "Painter of Place," celebrates what makes this campus so special, incorporating even the tiniest of details.

The piece now hangs in the Hemmingson Center as a tribute to the place that builds Zags. Prints of "Gonzaga" are available for purchase with 25% of each sale benefiting student scholarships.



Online: [gonzaga.edu/magazine](http://gonzaga.edu/magazine)







## Responses to the Fall 2024 issue

### FOND MEMORIES

Through his public relations classes, Dale Goodwin instilled in me a great deal of knowledge, insight and hunger for storytelling, but most of all confidence. During my sophomore year, we had to write a sample press release and I chose to write about an automotive event I helped manage. After returning everyone's work at the end of class, Dale asked me to stay and chat. He was holding my press release and politely asked, "Mr. Teske, did you write this?" To which I replied, "Of course!" Dale simply smiled and said, "Well, this is one of the best press releases I've read from a student; keep it up."

That moment was a perfectly planted seed to help me know I was on the right track. I always enjoyed the opportunity to visit with Dale when I happened to be in Spokane. I wanted to share my growth with him, to let him hear about and see the results of his mentorship. Dale's genuine care was about the lives his students were leading both during and after GU, who they were growing to be as "people the world needs most." Dale's mentorship embodied that message.

**Matt Teske ('03)**  
Portland, Ore.

Dale Goodwin (Fitz, too) was so kind to me when I was beginning my sports broadcasting career at KREM-TV and later when I returned to Spokane as a talk show host and eventual MA pastoral ministry grad. I'm forever grateful to Dale and to some of the others mentioned (Father Tony). Thank you, Gonzaga, for your role in formation and helping me become ordained in the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. as a minister and storyteller.

**Paul Seebeck ('04)**  
Louisville, Ky.

### FASCINATING STORIES AND INSPIRING ALUMNI

Your latest magazine is my favorite so far. So many fascinating people and stories. I really enjoyed the report on the anniversary of the World's Fair. I was in Spokane and every night from my house I saw the fireworks. I was especially happy to read about the merry-go-round; when I was at Gonzaga Prep, I worked on the merry-go-round two summers. I walked to Nat Park and back every day.

**Robert Roberg ('66)**  
Zephyrhills, Fla.

Reading through the last issue, I came across the tribute you wrote to Raymond Reyes. He has touched my life as well. I look forward to receiving the magazine and marvel at the achievements and life stories of so many Gonzaga alumni.

**Barry Andrews ('68)**  
Bainbridge Island, Wash.

### BRINGING BACK CHILDHOOD

I really enjoyed reading the Fall 2024 section on Expo '74 – the memories! I can't believe it has been 50 years. I was 14 years old when my brother and I were given season tickets to the fair for Christmas, and it was possibly the best thing that happened during my youth. I couldn't get enough of exploring all the pavilions and enjoyed the mimes and other random entertainers on the grounds. I saw

the IMAX movie "Man Belongs to the Earth" in the U.S. Pavilion at least 14 times.

**Helen Scherer ('83)**  
Shawnee, Kan.

### MORE TO REMEMBER

My issue concerns the comments of those Zags who have passed. The narratives seem so generic, leaving the reader with so little information as to make the passing of a life sterile. Better research (e.g. military service) might bring us closer together to remember our cherished friendships at Gonzaga.

**Jerome Watson ('69)**  
Nokesville, Va.

*Honoring Zags "In Memoriam" is perhaps the toughest part of the magazine, as representing each life is important. We try to include distinguishing details, but in the example you provided, we missed the military service and have created a reminder to double-check our work for those. — Editor*

### INSPIRING GRADS

I recently had the privilege of listening to a talk by Gonzaga grad Michael Larsen at the Providence Institute for a Healthier Community conference. He is so impressive and is doing such good work. He embodies the values of Jesuit education with his creative, thoughtful commitment to social justice. Perhaps you have already featured him in the magazine and I missed it. I am always gratified to see the ripple effect of Gonzaga's mission.

**Julianne Dickelman ('92 M.A.)**  
Bellingham, Wash.

*Thanks for the great idea! Michael came to show his documentary on campus just after we received your letter. You'll be happy to see his story in this issue (page 38). — Editor*



## The Hope of Gonzaga Stories

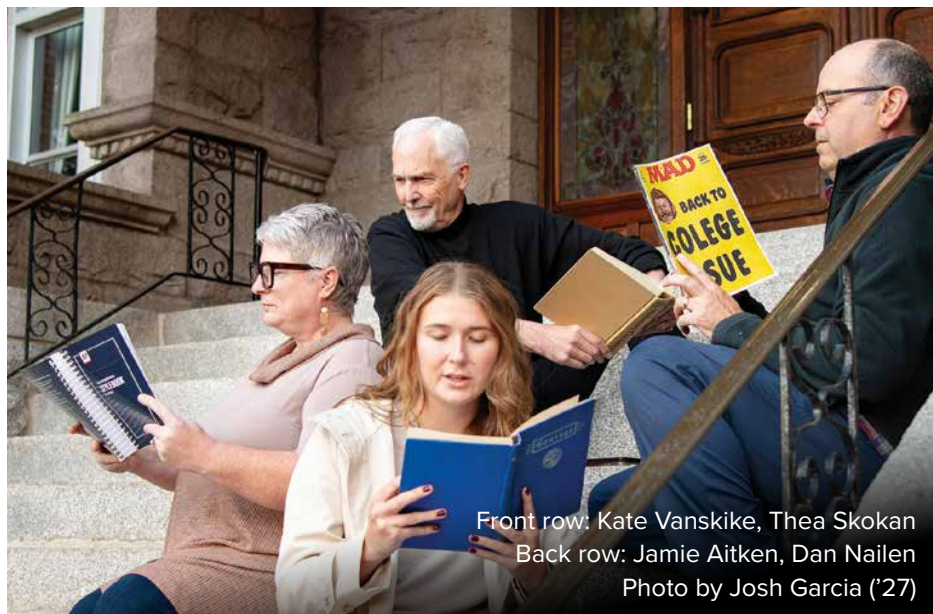
When I was a student worker in the admission office at my college, I used an electric typewriter that had one or two form letters stored in its very limited memory. All I had to do was insert the sheet of paper, type the recipient's name and hit a button, and the typewriter completed the message on its own. (If you understand this reference, you might be old.)

When the recruiters had scholarship offers to make, letters became more personal and as I typed them out and later filed responses, I felt like I was getting to know the incoming students before they even arrived. Naturally, when I transferred to the PR department, I had a little insight on what stories and themes might resonate in our publications.

It was a small school and relationships were everything. Story ideas rolled easily because of the closeness of faculty members and students. Quite a bit like Gonzaga, actually.

The crew pictured here – our “Core Four” of the content team in Gonzaga’s Marketing & Communications department – thrives on those connections and weaving together meaningful stories found in the Zag community. We chuckle when people ask whether we have a hard time thinking up things to write about.

When student photographer Josh Garcia ('26) wanted some extra practice shooting groups, we decided on evoking a bit of self-deprecating humor, as if we sit around soaking up news, perusing the AP Stylebook or humoring Jamie’s ridiculous play with Photoshop to create a spoof magazine



Front row: Kate Vanskike, Thea Skokan  
Back row: Jamie Aitken, Dan Nailen  
Photo by Josh Garcia ('27)

cover. But also, camaraderie in telling Gonzaga stories.

Whether pulling together the details of a presidential legacy, as with the primary feature of this magazine, sharing alumni pride in love and parenthood, offering up brief words of honor for those who have passed, highlighting faculty expertise in national outlets or crafting thoughtful messages in times of crisis, we truly consider this work a privilege.

Being a part of the Gonzaga community is special, period. But being part of the Zag network in times of such national divisiveness is, actually, inspirational. While many people are removing themselves from social media or changing how they choose their news, the reality is that the Gonzaga experience has yielded generations of people whose stories are worth telling; there are thoughtful, considerate, reflective people out there doing good for our communities.

Spoiler alert: The life-changing work GU grads are accomplishing is what

has mattered most to President McCulloh, who shares his insights of 34 years at this institution. I’ll bet it’s what President-elect Katia Passerini will value most as well, when she takes the reins in July.

Zag stories matter. And not just the rises to fame, the insanely fast successes or the impressive awards we often write about, but also the job pathways riddled with potholes and the lessons learned along life’s swampy messes. When you’re ready to share your story, our team is here to tell it with integrity, diligence, humor when appropriate, and always with bright hope.

Because we all need to read more stories like that. Drop me a line with yours and I’ll plug it into that old electric typewriter and give it a spin.

*Kate*

Kate Vanskike ('22 M.A.)  
Editor

### CONNECT WITH US

#### Is it time to update your records?

Have you moved, changed names or marital status, or prefer to receive GU publications differently? Please let us know! [gonzaga.edu/update](https://gonzaga.edu/update)

Phone: 800-463-6925, option 4

#### Want to share your family or career updates?

Submit weddings, births/adoptions, promotions and accolades here: [gonzaga.edu/alumninews](https://gonzaga.edu/alumninews)

# *The Power of Choice*

## **Dear Alumni, Friends, and Supporters,**

The ability to see options and make choices is reflective of free will and an important expression of human nature, but it is not lost on me that it is still a rare privilege to be able to make choices that change the trajectory of one's life. The ability to make choices only happens if opportunity allows it, and more often than not, opportunity is created by those who choose to make a difference.

When I was 22 – after a disastrous high school experience followed by a three-year active Army enlistment – I chose to attend Gonzaga. Thankfully, Gonzaga had chosen to take a chance on me, as well. Our mutual choices forever changed my life. Gonzaga is where I learned what it truly meant to be intellectually curious and capable, where my partner Julie and I found one another, and ultimately where together we raised a family and chose to dedicate 30-plus years of our professional and personal lives. Across that span of time, we've had the privilege to be part of many powerful experiences, and to meet, know, and work with many wonderful and talented individuals.

A university, at its best, is a place where many different people, each with diverse and unique backgrounds and perspectives, come together dedicated to the common project of seeking and generating knowledge and understanding – however challenging and complex that search may be. This search has many expressions and outcomes, ranging from foundational learning to cutting-edge discoveries, all of which lead to the expansion of individuals' intellectual and social capacities. In the context we endeavor to create at Gonzaga, it is also in service to the growth and development of better human beings, as well as a better world. Our Catholic, Jesuit, and humanistic identity compels us to frame our work with attentiveness to values and aspirations that attend to our relationship with God and transcend self-interest. From our community-focused ethos to active engagement with society and the professions, we are constantly asking the question, "What is the world asking of us?" The answers are, quite literally, limitless.

Over time, many people have asked me, "What exactly does a university president do?" I've given several responses, depending upon the situation. In one sense, a university might be thought of as a small municipality, with the president as its mayor.

Presidents do occasionally give speeches, issue proclamations, and cut ribbons or make appearances at

events. But much of the work involves supervision and collaboration with colleagues in the administration, as well as engagement and advocacy with many external constituencies – public officials, CEOs, associations and organizations, the media (to name a few). Often the work involves listening to concerns and working to solve problems. The role of the president is to act as spokesperson, and to promote and protect the university, advancing its aims and strengthening it against the inevitable challenges that all organizations face.

The president of a Jesuit university must also pay attention to its health and vitality as a sponsored work of the Society of Jesus and the Catholic Church. The maintenance of an active, thriving relationship between the University and the Jesuits at all levels is an essential component of Gonzaga's constitution, and I am thankful that Spokane and Gonzaga are blessed with a robust community of active Jesuits. I am also grateful for the rich collaboration with so many Jesuits that has been a significant hallmark of these past decades.

During my time at Gonzaga, while our core values and identity have remained constant, much has changed as well. Some of these changes have been for the better, others a bit more challenging. The world of higher education is itself changing and evolving, which demands a willingness on the part of universities to make sometimes difficult choices. As the ways individuals gain access to information evolves, and the needs of society, organizations, and professions change, choosing to stand still is simply not an option. It is not what our students deserve, what our families invest in, or what our alumni and supporters believe is the best path forward for our University. Fortunately, Gonzaga understands this, and is continually looking to innovate and create opportunities that will better position its students for success post-graduation.

Over the course of a career, there are inevitable moments of reflection and self-evaluation. A sign of good leadership is understanding what an organization needs and assessing one's own capacities in light of the current needs and opportunities. Effective leadership is partly measured in successful accomplishments, to be sure; but it's also about knowing when it's time to step aside to make way for the next successful leader. I am truly excited for Gonzaga's next phase. As noted in this edition, our Board of Trustees announced the decision to appoint Dr. Katia Passerini as Gonzaga's 27th president in January. It has been a privilege to work with Dr. Passerini these past months; I am so excited



## 66 Years and Nearly 20 Titles

*From student body president to university president, Thayne McCulloh ('89) has had many titles. In 34 years since his graduation from Gonzaga, an associate professor of psychology, resident life director, housing director, assistant dean of students, dean of student academic services, dean of financial services, associate academic vice president, vice president for administration and planning, interim academic vice president, interim president and finally president.*

*Julie (Lopach) McCulloh ('92, '97 M.B.A.) developed a career pathway at Gonzaga lasting 32 years. A psychology major, she had a penchant for organizational psych, and focused her roles on admission: transfer counselor, assistant dean, associate dean and dean, followed by associate provost and vice provost of enrollment management, which combined undergrad and graduate recruitment as well as student financial services and the Center for Lifelong Learning under one umbrella.*

*As they move on from Gonzaga, the McCullohs are eager for the additional opportunities they will have to fill other important roles, namely Papa and GoGo to two grandchildren.*



for all that she will do for our Gonzaga community, and I look forward to watching as the community, with true Zag Spirit, embraces her.

As I and my colleagues prepare for Dr. Passerini's arrival this July, there are still many tasks to be accomplished. But I do want to say "thank you" to all of my partners in leadership – past and present – for your dedication to and belief in our institution. Together, we have accomplished so much, and I am thankful for the many successes our university has experienced as a result. Thank you for choosing to be a part of this important project, and for creating the environment within which so many of our students and colleagues have succeeded and flourished.

Fifteen years ago, Gonzaga's Jesuit Community endorsed my nomination, and the Board of Trustees chose to elect me, as Gonzaga's 26th president. That choice – risky though it was – also changed my life. As I conclude my service, I want

to say "thank you" to our boards, our alumni, families, friends and benefactors, and to all who have supported Gonzaga during my tenure. I especially want to thank my family for their love, support and encouragement along the way. And I ask that you – our supporters and champions – please choose to continue supporting this amazing University, and the students who choose to make Gonzaga part of their life's journey. In so doing, you are choosing to create the opportunity that changes lives.

May God bless you and may God bless Gonzaga University.  
With very best wishes,

Thayne M. McCulloh, D.Phil.  
President

# Keeping Up with the Zagfluencers

*How Gonzaga's social media trendsetters are shaping the future of college recruitment*

By Thea Skokan ('22)

It happens fast. Internet trends come and go, seemingly overnight.

Social Media Specialist **Grace McElligott ('23)** graduated from Gonzaga less than two years ago but already says keeping her finger on the pulse of what is relevant to students is somewhat of a guessing game.

Instead of playing the game, she and fellow Social Media Specialist **Erin de Silva ('19, '21 M.A.)** are leaving nothing to chance and going straight to the source.

## *Meet the Zagfluencers.*

Six students – varying in years, majors and interests but all incredibly trendy – are employed by GU's Marketing and Communications Department to be the faces of Gonzaga's social media platforms.

It may be hard to imagine a world where Instagram and TikTok dictate which university a student chooses to attend, but McElligott

says that's becoming more of a reality every day.

"A video on a university's social media page will go viral, and suddenly prospective students who didn't even know that school existed are clicking on its profile, just because they saw one video," she says. "If we know that and we're strategic, we can create content that specifically targets those students and puts Gonzaga on their radar."

"The University's social media has become incredibly relevant," de Silva agrees. "We know when prospective students are researching schools, the first place they go is the website, but right below that are social media pages."



MADDY CAMPBELL ('26)

SUMMER LUMA ('27)

THALILA BOUTDAVONG ('25)



The internet's most rapidly evolving platforms are now critical recruitment tools in higher education.

So, why does it work? How are six students able to skyrocket interaction and comments on Gonzaga's social media channels with fun, silly videos? De Silva says it's a matter of relatability and connection. The group meets biweekly to brainstorm content ideas and how to communicate with students and prospective students in a way that will actually resonate with them.

"People want authenticity," Zagfluencer **Maddy Campbell ('26)** says. "They want to see what the inside of a dorm room looks like, they want to see campus on a good day and a bad day, they want to see what a classroom looks like. The only way to really capture that is to be a student, to pull your phone out and get that raw, authentic footage."

Her favorite video this year was a running interview with GSBA President Maddie Ediger ('25).

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ZAMARRIPA  
(28)

Campbell used a mini microphone and asked Ediger questions about her time at Gonzaga as they ran (and walked a little) along the Centennial Trail. The video introduced potential students to a prominent person on campus, but it was also a good visual aid to show just how close campus is to downtown Spokane.

In the fall, current students may have seen another Zagfluencer, **Jenna Johnston ('26)**, cruising around campus on a golf cart rigged with a karaoke machine, enticing anyone who dared to sing along and be featured on Gonzaga's social media. Johnston says those goofy videos serve a higher purpose than just good fun.

"It's a pretty clear indicator of student life," she points out. "If you have students who are comfortable hopping on a golf cart and singing karaoke, dressing up in a full princess outfit in the middle of campus or just doing ridiculous things in the name of making content – that shows prospective students the type of community we have here. At the end of the day, it's a safe, inviting space."

JOHNNY  
VERCELES  
(25)

They call it the fastest four years – and in that time trends will change a thousand times over, but here to capture it all are the Zagfluencers. And who knows, they may recruit a few new Zags along the way.

"My parents and I both say coming to Gonzaga was the best decision I ever made," Campbell says. "I've found a community here, I've found people that I love, and I hope we show that in the videos we make."

JENNA  
JOHNSTON  
(26)



## The Retirement of a Generation

*As the 2025 academic year closes, several leaders who have dedicated their entire careers to Gonzaga say goodbye to office hours and hello to weeks void of meetings. Here are just a few of many.*



1997 near Lake Arthur  
(University Archives and Special Collections).

### Master Builder: KEN SAMMONS, 55 YEARS

**Ken Sammons**, assistant vice president of Plant and Construction Services, worked behind the scenes, quietly ensuring the 100 buildings and 150 acres of beautiful grounds were in tiptop shape. He'd pick up every piece of garbage he passed on his daily walks, and trim shrubs or pull weeds along the way, often on the weekends.

Sammons oversaw the design and construction of, or major renovations to, more than three dozen buildings and fields and was known for shifting the credit to others. He knew every heating and cooling system, where every water main and electrical vault was housed, where every underground tunnel system led and what each one housed, and the kind of windows and doors in every one of Gonzaga's buildings.

"Ken cared for our campus as if it were his personal responsibility. To him it was not just a job. He was a true servant-leader in every way," says Chief Strategy Officer Chuck Murphy.

### Political Guru: BLAINE GARVIN, 53 YEARS

Oh, the stories **Professor Blaine Garvin** could tell of five decades in political science, a field requiring not only critical thinking, but courage and conviction. His influence on students over the decades is vast, from advising grads who would become strategists to inspiring countless Zags to move on to law school and lives in public service.

As he steps into retirement, Gonzaga Magazine shares this tribute from Benjamin Halverson ('08) who contributed it when Garvin appeared as our Mystery Zag.

*"He was instrumental in molding my worldview and building a foundation that led directly to my career in public service. American Political Thought of the Founding Era was the single most important class I took in undergrad or law school. Rather than just reading the Constitution, Dr. Garvin forced us to understand the context leading up to its writing. I continue to rely on lessons learned in that class almost every day, both to understand the current strain on our political system, and as I prosecute domestic violence cases for the city of Billings, Mont. Every single person who takes his class is one more informed citizen in a world that increasingly devalues higher education and perspective."*







## Finding and Keeping Students

JULIE MCCULLOH AND JOLANTA WEBER

**Jolanta (Kozyra) Weber ('91, '94 M.A., '16, Ph.D.)** and **Julie (Lopach) McCulloh ('92, '97 M.B.A.)** have inhabited the strategies of student recruitment and academic success at Gonzaga for more than three decades.

For Weber, a student job in the admission office turned into a full-time job as a sophomore, a role she kept through graduation. Thirty-eight years later, she's retiring as vice provost of academic affairs.

McCulloh took her first Gonzaga job in '93 in admissions and retires this year as vice provost of enrollment management.

Though neither envisioned staying at GU their whole careers, they appreciate how higher education provides ample opportunities to learn new skills. They have seen their fair share of growth and change at Gonzaga, each of them in critical areas for development as the University hit a growth spurt in the late '90s and early 2000s.

"There were multiple things happening and there was synergy to make them happen," McCulloh says. "It's easy to say it was basketball, because that was most public. But there was also population growth in college readiness ages and we finally had the technology that let us get on the common app system. Father Spitzer (president) was very entrepreneurial, and there were all of us – including Thayne – with energy, just saying, 'Ok, let's go!'"

In her role as Institutional Research director, Weber often took calls from other school

leaders across the country who wanted to know the secret of GU's success. "People assumed we were going to say it was basketball, but we'd say, 'We're so thankful for basketball, but there were also many other institutional strategies and initiatives being implemented, including a significantly revised financial aid strategy to help us achieve higher yield in enrollment,'" she says.

What do these two legendary leaders hope for the next generation of Gonzaga administrators?

"One thing I hope is held onto is our high-touch culture – how much we value the relationships with each other as employees and with our students," Weber says. "I'll forever be thankful to Thayne for giving us the room to do whatever it takes to be good to our students. It doesn't mean we give the store away. It means using our best judgment to determine what's best for a specific situation and have the courage to defend that approach."

McCulloh's hopes also surround deep care for members of the community. Pointing to the GU mission statement, she says, "It's about appreciating each other, our cultures, our language, religious traditions. It's not Democrat or Republican, right or left, liberal or conservative. Jesuit philosophy transcends those."

» Read the full stories on all of these Zags: [gonzaga.edu/ReadersCare](https://gonzaga.edu/ReadersCare)

## In Case You Missed It

The **Pac-12** Conference and Gonzaga University announced in October that the Zags will join the century-old conference in 2026.

The **Phi Beta Kappa** society voted to establish a chapter at Gonzaga, making GU among fewer than 300 institutions across the country recognized for academic excellence. Founded in 1776, ΦBK is the most prestigious academic honor society in the U.S..

Gonzaga and Lakeside Companies have been leading work toward a **Tech Hub** designation to develop an aerospace materials manufacturing center, alongside higher education institutions, industry groups, regional governments, civic organizations and cultural communities across Eastern Washington and North Idaho.

**More headlines here:**  
[gonzaga.edu/news](https://gonzaga.edu/news)

# Best Foot Forward

## 25 Years of Dance with Suzanne Ostersmith

By Kate Vanskike ('22 M.A.)



Nicaragua, North Carolina, California, Seattle and Spokane: These are places where the artistry of Suzanne Ostersmith has literally danced across stages, as she choreographed for conferences of the American College Dance Festival, directed professional theater and taught collegiate courses.

One could suggest that Ostersmith's era at Gonzaga has mimicked the very moves she has choreographed a thousand times: From "barre" – the warm-up while holding on to the ballet bar of program development – to the "glissade" – the slide linking motions together as with interdisciplinary achievements – to the final "rèverence" – the bow of respect at the end of a moving performance.

"I could never have imagined the glorious ride that lay ahead when I arrived at Gonzaga in 2000," Ostersmith says, as she celebrates the quarter-century anniversary of GU dance alongside her own retirement.

She watched the program morph from an elective in communication studies, to a minor, to a full-fledged major, while she herself flowed through roles of adjunct instructor

to associate professor in a newly developed department, and eventually the founding chair of Gonzaga Dance. Likewise, the places for her work expanded from the Martin Centre to a studio to the dream space of the Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center.

"Dance" in Ostersmith's view is not only expressive art. Dance itself is also science, education, philosophy, biology, community, service and more. The programs and partnerships she developed embody those things – from bringing to life the research of biologist Brook Swanson to offering Dance for Parkinson's to families living with this disease. There have been big-name Broadway productions with the theatre department, student-choreographed shows and annual spring concerts, and campus visits from esteemed dance leaders.

As the curtain closes on Ostersmith's career at Gonzaga in May, she says: "With our theme of 'The First 25 Years' at the spring dance concert, it's hard to imagine a better mic drop than celebrating all that has come before, with enthusiasm for all that can come next for Gonzaga Dance."



**In Her Own Words: Suzanne's Top 25 Moments**



Interdisciplinary arts minor  
 TEDx Talk on ZagDance (2014)  
 Directing "Jesus Christ Superstar"  
 for nine sold-out performances  
 "Beautiful Weapons" school tour  
 with Brook Swanson, biology



Teaching my first class (2000)  
 Founding the dance minor (2006)  
 ZagDance – a free after-school  
 program through Strategies for  
 Dance Instruction course



Cultivating a presenting-partners  
 relationship with the Myrtle Woldson  
 Performing Arts Center  
 "Leadership and Dance"  
 with the amazing Derek Hough



Creating the dance major (2018)  
 The grand opening of the  
 Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts  
 Center (2019) and touring its debut  
 show in Italy  
 A dozen new courses and directing  
 hundreds of productions



"Weaving Our Sisters Voices"  
 partnership with religious studies  
 and music colleagues  
 Designing the Theatre and  
 Dance Studio building  
 Creating Dance for Parkinson's



Serving as Robert and Marion Oster  
 Endowed Chair of Dance at GU and  
 on the national board of the American  
 College Dance Association  
 Teaching in London and touring  
 with students in Florence



The Suzanne Ostersmith  
 Dance Endowment  
 Hosting the American College  
 Dance Association Regional  
 Conference (2020)  
 Presenting Pacific Northwest  
 Ballet, Mark Morris, Ririe Woodbury,  
 Spectrum Dance Theatre,  
 Khambatta Dance, etc.



Becoming the Theatre and Dance  
 department (2010)  
 Welcoming more than 60 registered  
 dance majors and minors

Dance Science and Wellness  
 lab with Human Physiology

Guest Artist residency on Loie Fuller  
 Hiring a second tenure-track faculty  
 member, Cynthia Gutierrez, to take  
 Gonzaga Dance forward

# Seeking Solutions

## Exploring More through Research & Creative Inquiry

Using augmented-reality goggles to evaluate safety risks for senior adults. Safeguarding drinking water from the impacts of wildfires. Increasing climate resilience. Understanding the impact on youth by exposure to violence. Improving the performance of hydrodynamic tilting-pad thrust bearings in hydropower plants.

These – plus several highly technical endeavors too complicated to convey adequately – are among the many research projects underway at Gonzaga, where benefactors and grant funders are putting students and faculty members together for rigorous exploration and testing this summer.

New this year in the School of Engineering and Applied Science, **Gonzaga Research Opportunities in Math, Engineering and Computer Science** – “GRO-MECS” – provides funding for 10 students to work alongside faculty for six to 10 weeks. Orchestrated by Interim Dean Jennifer Shepherd, the program allows students to gain valuable experience before their senior year when they are immersed in senior design capstones.

College of Arts and Sciences Dean Jacqueline Van Hoomissen hosted a **research nexus workshop** funded by the National Science Foundation to expand understanding of grant processes and to share resources to support creative academic inquiry. Participants came from colleges and universities across the Pacific Northwest.

Gonzaga's Office of **Sponsored Research and Projects**, under the direction of Jackie Van Allen, grew from a staff of one to three this year, to secure funds and oversee compliance and regulatory processes.

Submitting 35% more grant applications than the prior year, the team helped campus partners bring some exciting dreams to life.

These include:

- Tribal Relations' college preview program for Native American youth (Northeast Community Center and the Gates Foundation)
- Biology and chemistry's new faculty members (M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust)
- The Institute for Climate, Water and the Environment's projects to reduce pollution and increase community climate resilience (Environmental Protection Agency)
- Sociology faculty member Angela Bruns' inquiry into the role tax credits for families play in reducing adolescents' involvement in and exposure to violence (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention)
- Upgraded STEM equipment for the School of Engineering & Applied Science and the College of Arts & Sciences (National Institute of Standards and Technology)

In more good news, the McKinstry Fellowship Research Program, funded by Dean and Vicki Allen, has expanded the scope of health-related inquiry to include more faculty and students from the University of Washington – Gonzaga University Health Partnership.

It all sounds like success to Interim Provost Mia Bertagnolli ('88), who was working with faculty fellow Jennifer Shepherd on evaluating how to improve coordination of and access to research funding across campus before taking on her current role. She handed over the reins to Marianne Poxleitner ('21 M.B.A.), interim associate provost for research and creative activities, who is driving momentum in that effort. Monthly, Poxleitner draws together the stakeholders – deans and faculty, donor relationship managers and the various offices that touch research – to explore ways to redefine how people think about research at Gonzaga.

» Support their success:  
[gonzaga.edu/ReadersCare](https://gonzaga.edu/ReadersCare)





Martin Schiavenato

## Global Good

### Environmental Intersections in Nursing

Nurse, researcher and professor **Martin Schiavenato, RN, Ph.D.**, was one of 10 finalists from among 78,000 applicants representing 203 countries vying for the Aster Guardian Global Nursing Award. He traveled to India in December for the final ceremony, following what he called a “long and grueling vetting process.”

Themes in Schiavenato’s research include pain assessment, technology in care, and the environment. His latest work details the long-term repercussions of the 1973 fire at the Bunker Hill mine in Idaho’s Silver Valley. Rather than replacing burnt filters, company officials kept the mine running, increased production and dumped

noxious gases directly into the surrounding area. It was one of the largest single lead-poisoning events in U.S. history.

A former newborn intensive care unit nurse and alumnus of the Robert Wood Johnson Nurse Faculty Scholars Program, Schiavenato says he is passionate about “educating the next generation of nurses and advanced practice nurses in the context of a health care system that sorely needs competent, innovative, compassionate clinicians with a fire for social justice.”

“This noteworthy honor reflects Dr. Schiavenato’s important efforts to gain insights and create new dialogue around the intersections between public health, nursing technology and ethics in solving the health challenges of our communities, both regionally and internationally,” says Julie Wolter, dean of the School of Health Sciences. “He exemplifies our school’s commitment to interdisciplinary learning for students who will go on to become health professionals and make a meaningful impact.”

» **What’s new in nursing, public health and physical therapy at GU?**  
[gonzaga.edu/health-sciences](https://gonzaga.edu/health-sciences)

# Formation: The Work of Flourishing

By Kate Vanskike ('22 M.A.)

## Words v. Works

Through mission formation programs, there has been a clear shift across Gonzaga's campus. Staff and faculty have moved from knowing the words of the written mission statement to working in ways that embody the Mission.

Early efforts began with Joe Mudd and Kevin Brown (both religious studies professors) who gathered faculty to discuss topics grounded in Jesuit and Catholic traditions. When **Beth Barsotti** joined GU as senior specialist for faculty and staff formation, she helped support the launch of programming for staff, adding active forms of engagement with the Ignatian traditions, such as more practice of the Examen, a Jesuit reflection tool. Plus, there would be opportunities to apply the topics of discussion to real-world work at GU.

Participants hear from Barsotti and her colleague **Lauren Hackman-Brooks**, director of mission formation, questions they likely haven't heard in usual work environments: "What am I drawn to? What am I resisting? What am I curious about? What unsettles me?" And of course: "What do I understand of these Jesuit ideals of cura personalis and magis, and how do I breathe them into my role at GU?"

Coined with terms reflective of key names in Jesuit history (Cardoner and Arrupe, for example) the groups have regular opportunities to practice discernment individually but also as a part of our shared responsibility. That discernment, Barsotti clarifies, is "more than decision making. It's paying attention to the interior movement of the Spirit."

In the final component of formation, faculty and staff come together in the Manresa Collective, a capstone experience where participants create projects to integrate the Mission more fully into their work.

"All of us at Gonzaga participate in and are co-responsible for the Mission," Barsotti says. "This program provides scaffolding for faculty and staff to more deeply engage with the Mission and bring it to life in ways particular to their gifts. Bringing together staff and faculty in this final phase honors the way we partner in living the Mission."

To date, **70 faculty**  
and **50 staff members**  
have completed at least  
one year of formation.

## Practical Application

In May 2024, the first participants to complete the multi-year journey became Mission Advocates. Here are some of the ideas they presented as capstone projects.

**Love:** Two faculty members adapted or created first-year seminars related to formation topics: Noralis Rodriguez Coss (women's and gender studies) on love, with a focus on Fr. Pedro Arrupe; and Tyler Tritten (philosophy) on Jesuit tradition, pedagogy and mission.

**Reflection:** Trena Redmond (nursing) developed a standard for including Ignatian practices in meetings. And because some individuals who are asked to lead reflections want support in finding appropriate materials, Rebecca Larson (organizational development), Tara McAloon (College of Arts and Sciences) and Max Kwenda (institutional research) curated meditations and prayers from campus partners and built a searchable library.

**Art:** Aaron Danowski (admission counselor) is championing the Jesuit Universal Apostolic Preferences through an art project to engage students and prospective students alike.

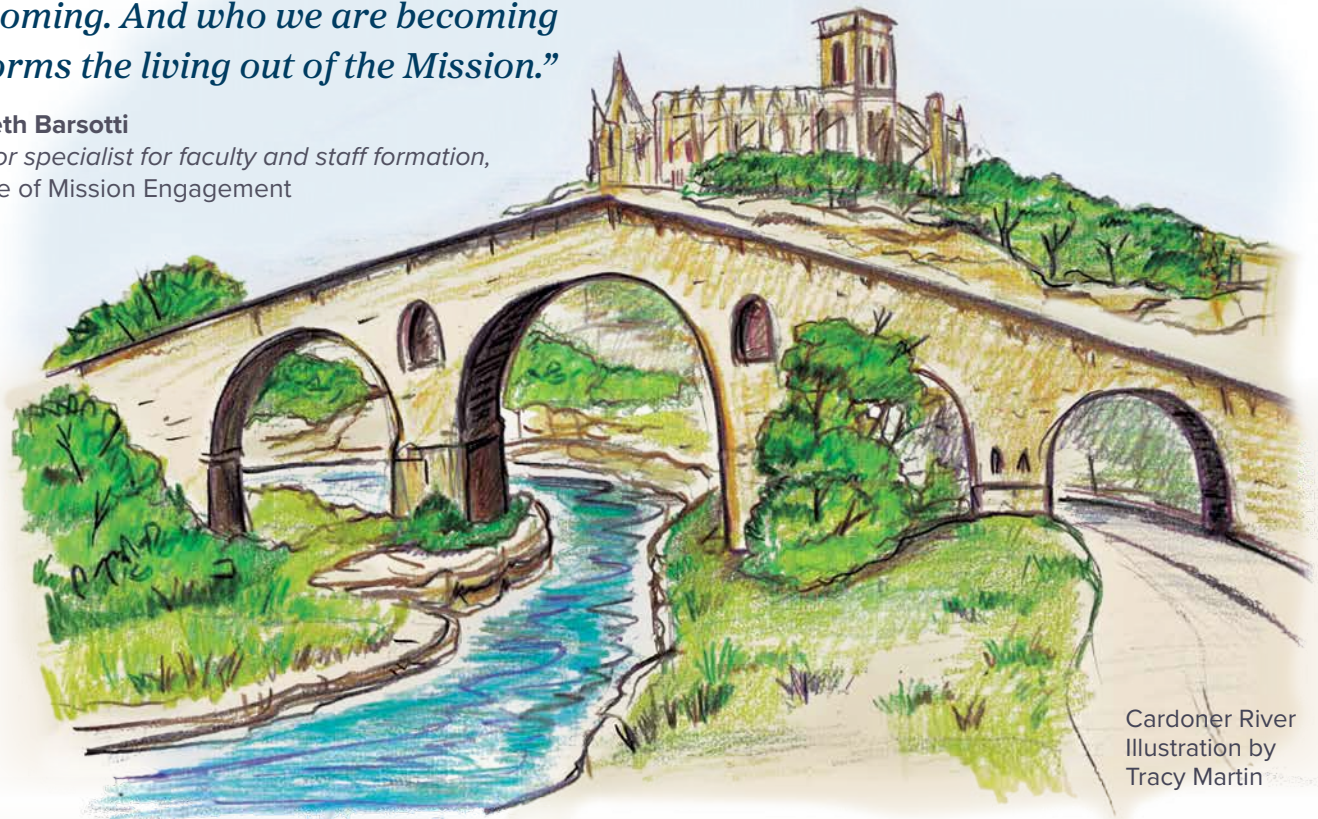
**Ease:** Jacqueline McCormick (marketing for the College of Arts and Sciences) sought ways to tag web content with the characteristics of Jesuit higher education for easy identification.



*“The Mission informs who we are becoming. And who we are becoming informs the living out of the Mission.”*

— Beth Barsotti

Senior specialist for faculty and staff formation,  
Office of Mission Engagement



Cardoner River  
Illustration by  
Tracy Martin

**Did You Know?**

Faculty and staff formation programs are named after places from Ignatian history.

**Arrupe:** Father General Pedro Arrupe led the Jesuit order, the Society of Jesus, 1965-1983

**Cardoner:** the river in Spain where St. Ignatius received clarity on his life’s purpose

**Manresa:** the town where St. Ignatius formed the Spiritual Exercises

**Dignity:** Joshua Somrah (housing and residential life) developed training for “identity conscious supervision” among students.

**Care:** Jim Simon (sustainability), Jenn Klein (institutional assessment) and Tomson Spink (plant services) all presented ideas related to achievement of environmental goals – including a plan for the campus community to plant trees in neighborhoods the University is already supporting.

*From the library to science, the creativity of embodying Jesuit mission ideals came through every participant.*

Brenda Warrington (instructional design and delivery) thought it would be helpful to have a repository for all Mission Formation exercises and materials. As an

instructional technologist, she knew exactly how to create that. She used the structure of an academic course, including a syllabus and modules with reading assignments, reflections, discussion guides and more.

The project was an act of gratitude for Warrington, who says: “Thank you for the opportunity to participate in Cardoner, where I was able to learn more about the Mission of Gonzaga, how to incorporate it into my work, and share it with my colleagues.”

Barsotti says that’s only one piece of the vision.

“The Mission is bigger than our institution,” she says. “It’s about who people are becoming. If they leave Gonzaga, our hope is they continue to live more integrated lives wherever they go – that is the fullness of flourishing.”







PRESIDENT THAYNE MCCULLOH

# This Work Changes the World

By Kate Vanskike ('22 M.A.)

**“T**he *Road Less Traveled*” – the 1978 inspirational classic by psychiatrist M. Scott Peck – kept peeking out from a bookshelf behind President Thayne McCulloh’s shoulder as he and I sat in his office to discuss the guiding philosophies of his 16-year presidency in 90 minutes.

He wove together the common themes of Gonzaga history and accomplishments – namely the acknowledgment that all good work requires teamwork – and as I listened, “The Road Less Traveled” remained in my line of vision.

Apropos, I decided. If there is a way to represent the path McCulloh took as a layperson leading a Jesuit school during its rise to national limelight, “The Road Less Traveled” could be it.

Peck’s work describes the attributes of a fulfilled human experience – “the ability to delay gratification, accept responsibility

for oneself, a dedication to truth, and balancing” as well as “reconciling multiple, complex, possibly conflicting factors that impact an important decision on one’s own behalf or on behalf of another.”

In my decade writing stories about McCulloh, nothing has brought such light to the workings of his mind and heart as this outlook from “The Road Less Traveled.” All the descriptors – the responsibility, commitment to truth, evaluating complexities for the greater good (my words) – represent his presidency quite accurately.

**See the trajectory of  
Gonzaga’s 26th president  
and learn why he believes  
that “What Gonzaga does is  
more important than even it  
realizes – for individuals, for  
our culture, for the world.”**

## The Pursuit of Excellence

Relentlessly pursuing excellence is a focus Thayne McCulloh ('89) adopted early in his tenure as president of Gonzaga University, first as interim in 2009 and then formally in 2010. That pursuit of excellence wasn't his to claim; he says it was the foundation of predecessors like Father Edward Glynn, Harry Sladich, Father Robert Spitzer and Father Bernard "Barney" Coughlin – the pulse of Gonzaga as president and chancellor for 42 years.

"In the early '90s, Barney said we have to be more selective and more focused on becoming a higher-quality institution, and he set us on a path towards pursuing that," McCulloh says.



Fr. Bernard Coughlin, S.J., was McCulloh's greatest champion and dear friend. (2013).

McCulloh worked for Fr. Spitzer, S.J., throughout his 11-year tenure as president.



His relationship with Fr. Coughlin went back to his early days as a nontraditional student, having first served in the Army as a way of paying for his education. Coughlin, originally from Galveston, Texas, had heard McCulloh's home state of record was Texas and quickly sought a connection.

Their ties would deepen as McCulloh took his first job at Gonzaga in student life, and when he questioned whether to return to Oxford for a second year of graduate studies, Coughlin was quick to assure him he would still have a job at the University when he returned.

McCulloh did so, picking up where he left off, adding teaching classes in psychology to his slate. Stints in financial aid, academics

and administration followed, and in 2009, when McCulloh was serving as interim academic vice president, board leaders looked to him to be president on an interim basis before offering him the permanent role. At just 44 years old with three young children, McCulloh was hesitant to accept. But Coughlin again offered assurance, acknowledging the sacrifices of the role and promising to support him.

The trajectory set, and pursued, by his predecessors was essential for McCulloh's leadership of Gonzaga's continued – and deepened – focus on becoming a premier national institution. Because, as he says, "The peril of not relentlessly pursuing excellence is that we're not going to survive. It's just that simple."





# Together, We Are Gonzaga

At McCulloh's 2010 inauguration in a packed McCarthy Athletic Center, delegates representing the boards, Jesuits, alumni, benefactors and community leaders all presented their challenges and hopes for his presidency: McCulloh was to serve, inspire others to serve, and to do so selflessly.

If McCulloh had considered an escape route (he was, after all, cloaked in the Oxford gown he calls his "Dracula cape"), he was soon reassured by another consistent message ringing loud and clear from each speaker that day: This is a community. Together, we are Gonzaga. We are a team.

That notion became McCulloh's rallying cry.

"I have always been conscious that this is a 'we' project, not an 'I' project. If we don't collaborate, the work is not going to be as effective," he says. "You could look at a list of Gonzaga's major accomplishments, and there's nothing that would be there without a dependence on a lot of other people to get it done."



McCulloh's presidential inauguration took place in 2010.

New facilities, advanced programs, building the endowment – those are all important pieces of growing in national prestige and points of progress over the course of McCulloh's tenure (see page 24 for examples). But equally significant to him are the ways

***"It's the teamwork required for Gonzaga to be its best self."***

THAYNE MCCULLOH, D.PHIL.  
GONZAGA'S 26TH PRESIDENT

the University responds to the national challenges facing higher education, everything from questioning its value to ensuring it is addressing pressing issues like shortages in health care providers and an alarming housing crisis.

"We have our moments when we're like, 'Is this going to work?' But then we go to an arena for something like December's Battle in Seattle men's basketball. Twenty-thousand people show up and most of them are there for GU and even people who aren't alums are enthusiastic and supportive of us," McCulloh says.

From the exuberant cheering of basketball fans, to the benefactors who translate their financial support into bold ideas, to the faculty and staff modeling for students what it means to be a responsible and caring member of society – collectively, this propels us as a team.

And McCulloh believes, "It's the teamwork required for Gonzaga to be its best self."



John J. Hemmingson Center



On the day of his inauguration, McCulloh receives hearty support from Father Steve Kuder, S.J., with whom he developed a deep friendship.

McCulloh would later comment that one of the most challenging parts of his presidency was delivering eulogies at the funerals of Jesuits, and dear friends, like Frs. Kuder and Coughlin.

## Being Jesuit, *Without Being a Jesuit*

McCulloh was the first president not to be a Jesuit since Gonzaga's founding in 1887, other than two short interim stints by the beloved Harry Sladich, who served the University in other roles for 40+ years. Some supporters questioned: How could a Jesuit university retain its deep Ignatian mission under a lay leader?

But he had a strong circle of Jesuits around him – several who taught him in classes, others who knew him as a young staffer – who liked to say they watched him grow up.

Gonzaga Jesuits are some of McCulloh's biggest fans, as it turns out. He represents the Society of Jesus as well as some who wear the collar.

Father Michael Graham, S.J., former president of Xavier University,

Cincinnati, met McCulloh at a time when there was an influx of lay people becoming presidents at Jesuit schools and says, "I always had a soft spot in my heart for them, because they were coming into such a different world."

"There are all kinds of people who claim to be servant-leaders, and we know they're really leader-leaders.

***"There are all kinds of people who claim to be servant-leaders, and we know they're really leader-leaders. Thayne is a servant-leader."***

FR. MICHAEL GRAHAM, GONZAGA TRUSTEE

Thayne is a servant-leader," says Graham, who joined the Gonzaga Board of Trustees at McCulloh's invitation. "I can't begin to tell you the number of times where it's clear that Thayne likes deflecting the

attention from himself to the people around him, to the folks who do catering, or the folks in residence life, or fill in the blank. He doesn't need to polish his own reputation. He prefers to shine the spotlight on unsung people."

Father Bob Lyons, S.J., longtime broadcasting professor and current chaplain at GU, says, "People see

Thayne as a leader and relate to him as a friend. Thayne brought people together. Even when they did not agree, he created a climate of civility and respect."

Lyons credits McCulloh with updating and defining the relationship among the University, the Society of Jesus, the Jesuit Community and the Board of Members (GU Jesuits) with language that "shifted the relationship from seeing Jesuits as watchdogs over



the University's operation to one of active collaboration."

"I believe that's a big deal," he says.

Perhaps, says Joe Poss ('97), vice president of University Advancement, it took having a layperson in the president's seat to ensure GU had the mission formation opportunities needed to maintain Jesuit values in an era of rapidly declining numbers of priests.

"If you look at where we are today in terms of Jesuit formation – all the programs for faculty, staff and students – that's an important part of Thayne's legacy," Poss says. "It took a person who didn't go through the practice of becoming a Jesuit, but who is very Jesuit, to understand the importance of having those programs in place."

Poss also believes McCulloh modeled a new focus on work-life balance that inspired faculty and staff. "Thayne's experience as a dad and husband brought new perspective we hadn't seen before."



Dr. McCulloh with Julia Bjordahl during a pilgrimage with the Board in Italy.

***"It's clear to me that if he could do everything, he would. Everyone and everything is important to Thayne, and he wants to be as present and supportive as humanly possible."***

JULIA BJORDAHL,  
DIRECTOR OF PRESIDENTIAL  
OPERATIONS

No one understands the responsibilities, demands and requests of Gonzaga's president better than Julia Bjordahl, McCulloh's director of presidential operations and chief of what they refer to as the "office of problem solving."

After 15 years at his side and available on speed dial 24/7, Bjordahl has seen it all: the never-ending requests for meetings and events, travel commitments, speaking arrangements, messages to write, fears to allay, people to recognize, crises to avoid or mitigate, milestones to celebrate – AND to be present for students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, donors and friends. Still, she says, McCulloh doesn't complain about the volume of work, even though she knows he's working long hours.

"It's clear to me that if he could do everything, he would," Bjordahl says. "Everyone and everything is important to Thayne, and he wants to be as present and supportive as humanly possible."

For Bjordahl, there's no question why McCulloh is highly respected and trusted. It's because his leadership style is centered on two primary characteristics: being patient, and listening first.

"Every day I observe how – through his patience, thoughtfulness and discernment – the outcome is always better than if he had rushed to respond," she says. "His leadership has taught me about the power of listening, especially when times are tough."



2013 President's Fall Staff Appreciation BBQ.

## High Praise

"Here's what I like about Thayne," says Blaine Garvin, professor of political science at GU for 54 years. "He is open and approachable. What other university has a president that everybody calls by his first name?"

Garvin recalls clearly how campus felt back in 2009. "Let me be frank. We were dispirited," he says. "Thayne took on the presidency at a time of discontent and forged a happier, more productive university."

Another professor was overheard saying to a new faculty member, "He is healing us," Garvin recalls.

Ann Ciasullo ('92), professor of English and women, gender and sexuality studies, was an undergraduate student at the same time as McCulloh.

"Everyone knew Thayne," she says. "To quote a recent movie title, he was 'everything, everywhere, all at once.' He was a resident director and student body president, but more than that – even then – he was a person who embodied the values and spirit of Gonzaga."

Ciasullo continues: "I've had many interactions with Thayne over the years, some of them on difficult or controversial issues, and in every circumstance, I knew he did not arrive at his decisions lightly. His thoughtfulness and his willingness to listen and learn – from students, from faculty, from staff – distinguishes his leadership."

Interim Provost Mia Bertagnolli ('88) agrees. A remarkable characteristic of his leadership, she says, "is the way in which he has navigated truly challenging times. He is steady, optimistic, people-, community- and Mission-focused."

Bertagnolli cites the Catholic Church sex abuse scandal and its widespread impact, plus major

***"He is steady, optimistic, people-, community- and Mission-focused."***

MIA BERTAGNOLLI ('88),  
INTERIM PROVOST

McCulloh, John Hemmingson and GSBA President Taylor Kratochvil ('16) enter the John J. Hemmingson Center, a facility that marked a new chapter in Gonzaga student life and support (2015).







Much of a presidency involves time with community leaders, business partners, board members, alumni and supporters. But it also demands facetime with students, which McCulloh did through campus events, including activities showing solidarity with those on the margins (International Day of Tolerance, 2010).

changes in the higher education landscape that impacted enrollment and finances. And then the COVID-19 pandemic response plan. “His

dedication to the experience of our students and to the well-being of our community has been consistent and powerful and has earned him a level of trust that is rare for an academic leader.”



Professor of English Tod Marshall recalls McCulloh taking time out of his busy schedule to visit students in a first-year seminar on visionaries. “He joined us late in the semester, when the anxious newbie students of late August had transformed into jaded scholars who moved with confidence and had figured everything out. Not

everything: When they realized the president was coming to chat with them about the question ‘What is a visionary?’ and, most importantly, listen to them, they were a bit awestruck and remembered why they came to Gonzaga.”

McCulloh meets with student leaders RHA President Alyssa Guzman-Johnston, left, and Maddie Ediger, GSBA president, right, in the new Mantua Hall (2024).





# Markers of the McCulloh Presidency

## MISSION

As the institution's first lay president, McCulloh knew how important it was to embody Jesuit priorities in every way possible. This began with creation and adoption of the Statement of Affirmation and the revision of the University mission statement. Ellen Maccarone, vice president of Mission Integration, says that under McCulloh's guidance, the new mission statement became "the who, what, when, where, why and how of Gonzaga University."

Another priority was the increased exposure to Ignatian traditions, which came to life through new mission formation programs. Deepening allegiance to the pope's 2015 encyclical and the Jesuits' Universal Apostolic Preferences occurred through the development of these new offices, among other initiatives:

- Office of Sustainability
- Gonzaga Family Haven
- Native American Cultural Center
- Opportunity Northeast
- Institute for Climate, Water and the Environment
- Office for Inclusive Excellence



## ACADEMICS & ENROLLMENT

"Jesuit education considers the students' backgrounds, experiences and needs, and educators use the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm to create learning environments that are engaging and reflective," says Julie McCulloh, vice provost for enrollment management. That was the focus President McCulloh continually urged faculty, staff and administrators to keep central to the work.

The president also fostered innovation, encouraging leaders to anticipate future needs and ways to prepare students to embrace the always-changing world.

GU's schools morphed accordingly. Adopting a provost model of administration integrated academics with student affairs for a seamless whole-person approach to the educational experience. The Center for Lifelong Learning launched to cater to demands of a changing workforce, and the University partnered in developing a

major regional tech hub, plus formed the Institute for Informatics and Technology. McCulloh also forged a collaboration with the University of Washington School of Medicine which resulted in the UW-GU Health Partnership.

Additionally, expansion of the Center for Global Engagement and a partnership with Shorelight for the recruitment of international students flourished during McCulloh's term. Meanwhile, study abroad programs also thrived.

## GROWING IN SUPPORT

During McCulloh's presidency, the University endowment rose by 350%, from \$106 million to \$492 million, ensuring aid for many deserving future Zags. He prioritized nurturing relationships and ensuring benefactors that investing in Gonzaga is advancing the common good.







**Left to right:**

Fr. Bernard Coughlin converses with students, including Thayne McCulloh (1989); International student support is one of many Global Engagement programs housed in the Hemmingson Center; McCulloh sported a Przemek Karnowski-style beard, which was as popular as the Zags themselves during the first year they went to the national championship (2017); Jane Goodall visited GU (2013).

The “Gonzaga Will” capital campaign in 2018 – GU’s largest ever, at \$355 million – helped fund these great additions to the campus and more:

- Boone Avenue Retail Center (2013)
- John J. Hemmingson Center (2015)
- Della Strada Jesuit Community (2017)
- Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center (2018)
- John and Joan Bollier Family Center for Integrated Science and Engineering (2021)
- UW – GU Health Partnership building (2022)
- Mantua Residence Hall (2025)
- Athletic facilities: Stevens Center, Pat and Sandy Volkar Center for Athletic Achievement, Fritz and Jeanie Wolff Family Hall of Fame, John and Donna Luger Soccer Field, Scott and Liz Morris Baseball Indoor Training Facility and Johnson Family Boathouse

**NATIONAL RECOGNITION**

Alongside the success of men’s and women’s basketball and other teams growing their national profile, Gonzaga took to the world stage with McCulloh’s Presidential Speaker Series, which featured notable personalities such as Jane Goodall and Thomas Friedman, plus Archbishop Desmond Tutu for the 2012 commencement.

In 2018, Gonzaga made its debut as a Top 100 national university, moving up from previous status as a regional institution.

Becoming an exemplar of quality Jesuit education aligned with McCulloh’s hope that the University would grow in prestige.

Today, other institutions that once were peers of equal stature now aspire to rise to Gonzaga’s prominence, says Jolanta Weber, vice provost of academic affairs.

“We receive calls from other colleges and universities across the country asking how we do our work and what we think has been particularly effective in achieving our national reputation,” she says.

**“We receive calls from other colleges and universities across the country asking how we do our work.”**

JOLANTA WEBER,  
VICE PROVOST OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Student retention and graduation rates of students are the envy of most GU competitors, and that’s a topic Weber says others continually admire.

“Through these conversations, we have come to appreciate our president’s leadership and his trust in us not only to do things right, but to do the right thing,” Weber adds, offering an example of caring for students and families especially during difficult life circumstances. The recognition of many accreditors includes consistent commendations, too.

“These,” says Weber, “are the results of McCulloh’s leadership and guidance.”



**Left to Right:**

Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center; 2011 Flash Mob at the President’s Office; John and Joan Bollier Family Center for Integrated Science and Engineering; The Gonzaga Will campaign raised \$355 million; The UW-GU Health Partnership opened its facility (2022).



## Serving the Common Good

Blaine Garvin, one of Gonzaga's longest-serving faculty members, says, "I almost said that I can't imagine a better president. But there was Fr. Coughlin. Coming in second to Fr. Coughlin ought to be honor enough."

For all who knew Coughlin, that message is clear. But for those less familiar, Marshall adds this perspective: "During his tenure, Thayne navigated Gonzaga through economic challenges, conflict driven by hate, anxiety about the future of higher education, and grief about the loss of members of our community. In all these circumstances, his manner was measured yet thoughtful, transparent and steady."

He continues, "That's what's moving to me: I always felt his compassion, how much he loved this place, how much he really cared."

McCulloh's care is evidenced by the length of time he offered the board to find his successor. Months before the new president would be named, McCulloh was putting frameworks in place, documenting structures and preparing donors and the campus community.

"McCulloh has been an incredible president," says Christy Larsen ('88), who, as chair of the Board of Trustees when he announced plans to retire, led the process to find his successor. "He has done amazing things for the University, and he cares about this institution. Our job wasn't to replace him or remedy the things we think he didn't do well. It was to find someone else who understands the landscape."

Katia Passerini, Ph.D., fills that bill (see story, p. 28), and McCulloh stands ready to support her.

"I want to be of service to Dr. Passerini and for her to feel like she has a resource


***"I always felt his compassion, how much he loved this place, how much he really cared."***

TOD MARSHALL,  
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH

at the ready that is going to be authentic and confidential," McCulloh says. "I just want to optimize her success."

He knows the risks and the responsibilities of trying to lead a place where 18-year-olds come to discover who they are while their parents have expectations of what the University will do to safeguard their every move and ensure their success. He understands the demands of regulations and the dwindling public support of higher education. He gets the complexities of following enrollment trends and the nuance of being prestigious but also accessible.

To McCulloh, all those things are in service to the common good.



McCulloh and President-elect Katia Passerini, after her first introduction to campus in January 2025.



“There are a lot of people struggling in our society and across the array of dimensions of existence, you know? We were supporting students who were technically non-citizens before DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) ever came on the horizon. There are others who would never have been able to finish if we had not provided support. There are students who lost parents, whose families had to make hard decisions about what to do next. With our support, some of them stayed. What we do here changes people’s lives,” McCulloh says.

“And when we change people’s lives, we change the opportunity for society,” he continues, “because Gonzaga grads are going to go out and do work that changes others’ lives.”

That’s a perspective McCulloh continually brought himself back to amid criticism or frustrations. He recalls a period while serving on the board of Providence Health Care when he would occasionally go to Spokane’s Sacred Heart Medical Center’s Children’s Hospital and stand at the nursery window where the tiniest infants struggled with their beginnings.

“All of a sudden, my own issues were a little different,” he says. “And then I realized that we teach the people who take care of those babies, and some day in the future, I may be taken care of by a GU nurse.”

## *“What Gonzaga does is more important than it even realizes. This work changes the world for people, it changes the trajectory of their lives.”*

THAYNE MCCULLOH, D.PHIL.  
GONZAGA’S 26TH PRESIDENT

“I believe that what Gonzaga does is more important than even it realizes. This work changes the world for people, it changes the trajectory of their lives,” he says. “Our culture needs well-educated people who bring with them a sense of dignity for human life. Gonzaga’s work is in service of the belief that this is a noble purpose, a great goodness worth doing.

“Take GSBA President Maddie Ediger (’25). Listen to her talk so passionately about her experience and the things she’s concerned about and how much she loves this place and what Gonzaga has done for her,” McCulloh says.

Pulling a notecard off his bookshelf, he continues:

“Take Michael Larson (’21), a former foster child who came to GU and explored his studies on the streets of Spokane and then went on to create a nonprofit dedicated to raising



Sending forth Gonzaga grads into the world is a joy and responsibility McCulloh says serves the greater good.

That’s why holding commencement during COVID-19 was important – even if that meant changing locations and creating new protocols. (Mead High School football stadium, May 2021).

awareness of housing challenges and solutions. He recently wrote a note to me that says, ‘As you finish out your last year as president, I hope you know that what you did helped to catalyze my work of doing justice for the world.’”

As McCulloh places the handwritten card back on the bookshelf among others next to “The Road Less Traveled,” he says, “This is why we do this work. This is our call.”

» Join us in thanking Thayne for his many contributions! You can view details of his legacy, leave a thank-you note and even contribute to student scholarships in his honor: [gonzaga.edu/26](https://gonzaga.edu/26)

# Introducing Katia Passerini, Ph.D.

## GONZAGA'S 27TH PRESIDENT

**ON JANUARY 15,** Gonzaga Board of Trustees Chair D. Michael Reilly announced Katia Passerini, Ph.D., as successor to President Thayne McCulloh. A native of Italy and a lifelong Catholic, she is an accomplished academic and a seasoned university administrator and leader, Reilly said.

Only the second layperson to serve as president of Gonzaga, Passerini joins eight other women currently serving as presidents of the 27 Jesuit colleges and universities in the U.S.

At a reception for board members, search committee representatives and campus leaders, GSBA President Maddie Ediger and Reilly presented President-elect Passerini with an inscription of Gonzaga's Mission Statement and – appropriately – a GU jacket to wear proudly on the East Coast until her official move to Spokane in July.

To an enthusiastic crowd, Passerini shared a bit of her experience coming from Italy to the U.S. as a college student and the lessons learned as she began her career in academia. With warmth and humor, she expressed her excitement about becoming a Zag and helping to further the Mission of Gonzaga.

“I am looking forward to hearing your ideas and to stimulating conversations,” Passerini said. “We are guided by an incredible mission statement that helps us discern which ideas should move forward. I would like to listen to as many of you as possible and then to shape our future together.”

“All I have to do, really, is to amplify you,” she said, “because there are many jewels and gems here and many of them are already visible regionally and nationally. Our next step is to strengthen Gonzaga as a global brand.”

*“She has the skillset and the heart to chart our path into the future.”*

MADDIE EDIGER, GSBA PRESIDENT

A senior and campus leader, Ediger represented her student body on the search committee for GU's new president. She said what excites her most about Dr. Passerini is “not her vast accomplishments, renowned reputation or impressive resume; it's how she leads.”

Passerini “already understands the importance of community and relationships,” Ediger said. “She has the skillset and the heart to chart our path into the future. I am so excited to welcome Gonzaga's first female president into our Gonzaga family.”

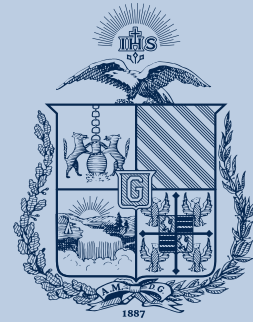
### ABOUT THE PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH

Shortly after President McCulloh's April 2024 announcement of intent to retire in July 2025, then Board of Trustees Chair Christy Larsen led a presidential search with the support of leadership firm Russell Reynolds Associates. The 18-person search committee included representatives from Gonzaga's Boards of Trustees and Regents, faculty, staff, students and the Jesuit community, who unanimously selected Passerini as president-elect. In December 2024, incoming Board of Trustees Chair D. Michael Reilly then took the reins to guide the leadership transition.





» Learn more about Passerini and send her a note of welcome: [gonzaga.edu/27](https://gonzaga.edu/27)



## Dr. Passerini: At a Glance

### LEADERSHIP & ACADEMIC ROLES

**Seton Hall University:** Interim president, provost and senior executive vice president

**New Jersey Institute of Technology:** Dean of honors college, endowed chair and professor of management information systems

**St. John's University:** Endowed dean of professional studies, professor of computer science, business analytics and information systems

**George Washington University:** Instructional designer, adjunct faculty in information systems and knowledge management

### EDUCATION

#### George Washington University

- Ph.D., Information and Decision Systems;
- M.B.A., International Business

#### LUISS University (Rome)

- B.A./M.A. (Laurea Magistrale), Political Science

#### University of Rome II – Tor Vergata

- M.A., Economics (Laurea Magistrale in Economia e Commercio)

# When the Student Becomes the Teacher

First as mentors, then as educators, grads help fulfill the mission of Gonzaga Family Haven

By Mary Joan Hahn

Jacob Mitchell admits he had a rough time in high school. When his family relocated from Denver to Spokane in 2021, they moved into Gonzaga Family Haven (GFH), an affordable housing complex for formerly houseless families.

“I was skittish at first,” he says of starting out at Rogers High School. “My transcripts had been lost and I found out I was two years behind. I had big packets to complete to redo all that work. I was depressed and frustrated.”

Luckily, he also had two future friends awaiting at the Haven.

**Sophie Kuhn ('22) and Matt Braatz ('22)** were GU students in the teacher education program, with majors in mathematics and English respectively. They had joined the Haven as educational achievement coordinators and were ready to coach Mitchell through the challenge of achieving a high school diploma.

“They showed me how to read things and highlight key points and analyze information,” Mitchell explains. “Sophie helped me with math assignments and prepping for tests. We worked together one to two hours every day to prepare for tests and complete essays.”

“They helped me so much – it was really touching to me,” he shares. “Now, I think of them as family – always with a smile on my face.” Mitchell indeed graduated from Rogers and went on to Spokane Community College where he completed a certification in welding.

“We were able to help a handful of Haven residents complete work to graduate on time, who otherwise were at risk of not finishing,” says **Peg Haun-McEwen ('86, '90 M.A.)**, director of community at Gonzaga Family Haven. “We’ve also celebrated three community college graduates.” Peg attends every graduation.

“Jacob’s stepmom was so inspired by his example,” Haun-McEwen says, “she completed her high school equivalency after Sophie helped her find the right program, and bring her math skills up to date. She was the first in her family with a high school diploma!”







Jacob Mitchell, Sophie Kuhn ('22) and Matt Braatz ('22).



**Gonzaga students support the Haven in numerous ways:**

a weekly community dinner, mentoring, sports outreach, and essential skills workforce development for women.

Several GU Schools participate formally:

- free legal clinics (School of Law)
- financial literacy (School of Business Administration)
- health care services (School of Health Sciences)
- family engagement programs (School of Education)

An average of 100 Zags volunteer at the Haven each year, with experiences tied to learning objectives and the values of Catholic social teaching.



“Families are learning the importance of better school attendance and our team at GFH helps bridge the communication between home and school,” Haun-McEwen explains.

**ANIMATING THE EDUCATIONAL MISSION**

Gonzaga Family Haven opened in September 2021, during Kuhn and Braatz’s senior year at GU. The effort among Catholic Charities Eastern Washington, Gonzaga University, Gonzaga Preparatory School and St. Aloysius Parish provides 73 apartments with a mission: Build on the partners’ strengths to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty through education.

The design team challenged with making that vision reality could not find other low-income housing programs with models to follow, so members of the partnership worked together to create one. What resulted included the expertise of faculty from GU’s School of Education and staff from the Center for Community Engagement, Catholic Charities’ Haun-McEwen, and Lori Wyborney, former principal at Rogers High, who brought keen insights into working with low-income families.

“We were building the plane while flying it,” Haun-McEwen says, “which required a lot of ongoing reflection about what was working and what wasn’t.”

They began with after-school snacks and activities for youngsters, moving quickly into a customized tutoring program designed to keep students from failing or dropping out.

“Peggy always stressed that ‘Success looks different here,’ ” Kuhn says. “These families need different supports. And there’s no one-size-fits-all to tutoring. That said, we do find it important to incentivize reading, particularly with middle-schoolers who don’t identify with it. Reading is key to a successful education.”

“It’s also important to get parents on our side,” she continues. “Many of our parents had negative personal experiences in school. It’s vital to help them pivot their perspective and understand that – for their kids and often themselves – school matters.”

Braatz reached out to teachers to find out what was needed for students to catch up, then developed plans and pathways. Where they saw evidence of adverse childhood experiences, they explored ways to encourage more positive behaviors.

“These kids have been through so, so much,” Braatz says. “They’ve seen so many people come and go in their lives – it was hard for some to even want to participate. We made sure to be there every day and reminded ourselves that the anger



we sometimes saw was not about us – it was simply how they were experiencing emotion.”

Simple rewards and signs of progress began to show: Students would seek out Kuhn and Braatz to share about their day or suggest a book to read together. “To see them express genuine kindness was encouraging,” Kuhn says.

### DEEPENING INVOLVEMENT BY PREP STUDENTS

After graduating from GU, Braatz and Kuhn became educational achievement coordinators, roles created by Catholic Charities and Gonzaga Prep. Later, they joined the faculty at Prep full-time, deepening its ties with the Haven, which is right next door. They hosted events to talk with teachers about the program, and became moderators of Prep’s GFH Club, an important part of the high school’s community service options. Like other Jesuit schools, Prep students are required to invest at least 40 hours in community service to graduate.

“Matt and Sophie arrived at Prep with positive and infectious energy,” says **Elizabeth Slamkowski DiTommaso (’12)**, director of the Office of Service and Justice at G-Prep. “They’ve created a lot of excitement about service for our students and colleagues. We are so blessed to have them.”

High schoolers have embraced the emerging opportunities. In addition to after-school activities and tutoring, they work on numerous drives – for food, cleaning supplies, hygiene items and more. It’s not uncommon to see a handful of students present a pop-up clothing cart offering second-hand clothes for families at the Haven, or an athletic team spending afternoons playing with the GFH kids.

“We work to help Prep students recognize that the resources and support most of them have are not the same as what others have,” says Braatz. “Students see that Haven kids have a different life experience, and they come to understand why some behave as they do, and what it takes to heal. Many Prep students come to understand their own implicit bias and the need to lead with mercy and understanding before judgment.”

Kuhn underscores: “Our Prep students actually experience the social justice strength of Jesuit education. Each of us has a positive light to share. We owe it to others to treat them with dignity and respect. They are, literally, our neighbors.”

Haun-McEwen estimates that since opening, more than 300 Prep students and volunteers, sports teams and clubs have interacted with GFH families.

*“Working at Gonzaga Family Haven has made us better teachers, and also better people.”*

— Sophie Kuhn (’22)

### REFLECTIONS

As expected, the rewards for Braatz and Kuhn are also personal.

“Working at GFH has made us better teachers, and also better people,” Kuhn reflects. “We know that most young teachers don’t get this opportunity – the chance to develop and progressively modify a program, to help youngsters who are struggling, to introduce these terrific high school students to the challenges that others face and to the joys of service to others. We’re so grateful.”

“Without the Haven, it would have been more difficult – and taken longer – to see the value and rewards of working with families focused on overcoming poverty,” Braatz says. “We’re still learning, of course, but the perspective we’re experiencing gives us a clear picture of the complexities our society is facing and underscores the importance of the work we’re doing to help others – our students – better prepare for challenges of today and tomorrow.”

They’re inspiring others as well, as Jacob Mitchell explains: “I’ve been working for some time now, and I’m thinking about going back to school. I’m looking at fire science (to become a firefighter) or maybe counseling – helping to save lives, one way or another.”

» Every aspect of the Gonzaga Family Haven ministry is funded by benefaction. You can join the effort and support students like Sophie and Matt, plus find more about Gonzaga Family Haven and GU’s teacher certification program [gonzaga.edu/ReadersCare](https://gonzaga.edu/ReadersCare)

# Firsthand Experience

## Career Treks Spark Invaluable Student-Alumni Connection

By Thea Skokan ('22)



The only thing scarier than starting college is leaving it.

After four years of structured classes, friendships and community, the future is suddenly wide open without clear direction on where to start.

Fortunately, Gonzaga has a massive network of successful alumni. Ensuring they're connected with students in a fruitful way was a challenge, but Treks are providing a solution.

Erin Shields, director of alumni and employer engagement, says the idea behind Treks came from this realization: "Many of the top employers most desired by our students aren't coming to our campus career fairs to recruit. So what if we brought the students to them, leveraging our incredible alumni leaders at these organizations?" she says.

That was the start of a partnership between Alumni Relations and Career and Professional Development, taking students on immersive excursions in major markets across the country, particularly those with big industry and high numbers of Gonzaga alumni. The first was Seattle, adding nine other cities over the past 24 years, including New York and Los Angeles. Pushing beyond perceptions of exclusivity to business and finance majors, treks support other interests, like theater (hello, London!) and STEM disciplines.

The success, though hard to measure in numbers, can be seen in stories like **Charlie McPhail ('24)**. A marketing major, McPhail knew she wanted to move to New York but had no idea where to start. Her mom sent her information about the New York trek, and well, "I wouldn't have the job I have today if I hadn't gone on that trek," she says.

While visiting McCann/MRM, a digital marketing agency, McPhail met fellow Zag **Nate Williams ('09 M.A.)**, a senior vice president there. After her return to Spokane, Williams continued to be a resource for McPhail, reviewing her resume and preparing her for interviews. That support eventually led to a job offer.

"It was an invaluable connection," she says. "When else would you get an experience to go to a major company, talk to people you most likely would never meet otherwise and form bonds that will last a lifetime." Now settled in New York, she still meets Williams for coffee regularly, just to catch up.

"In college, you learn to understand an industry," Williams agrees, "but on treks, you get to experience it firsthand."

While earning a master's degree in communication and leadership from Gonzaga, he participated in the Portland trek. Now he hosts students on the New York trek, knowing just how valuable the experience can be.

"I host because I want students to understand the marketing industry, but more than that, I want them to build real connections," Williams says. "You just need someone to talk to you, coach you, and help you get started when you're coming out of college."

And, Williams says, it's not just students who benefit. "Selfishly, it gives us access to top talent. We want the best people. Hiring always comes with risks, but the students I meet through the treks are consistently top-tier talent from a school I trust."

» Discover more about the Zag network:  
[gonzaga.edu/alumni](https://gonzaga.edu/alumni)





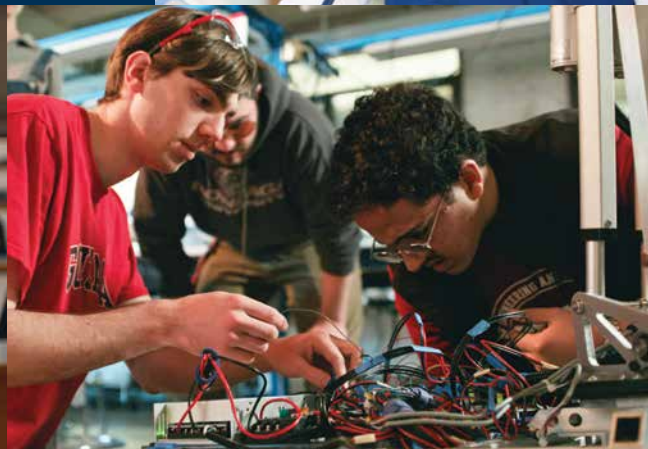
# LEAD THE WAY

We asked Zags far and wide to help us create a short film capturing the spirit of Gonzaga.

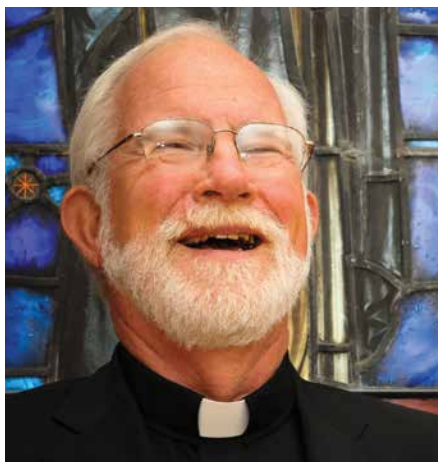
They took us to the places where they venture – an art studio, a medical simulation, a Hollywood set and a robotics lab, to name just a few. And we moved alongside them, paddling kayaks, climbing rock walls, peering through microscopes and dancing under bright lights.

The result? A celebration of their journeys and assurance that you, too, are ready to lead the way.

» Scan the QR code or visit [gonzaga.edu/LeadTheWay](http://gonzaga.edu/LeadTheWay) to watch the short film and explore stories of Zags leading the way



## Who's this ZAG?



This professor and priest was a storyteller who used his tales to make important points about life. He taught English and religious studies over his 43-year GU career before his death in 2021. He was a hard worker, teaching a full load and celebrating weekend Masses on Schweitzer Mountain because he loved to ski. He was a resident-hall chaplain, worked student retreats and served as an adviser for those taking the Spiritual Exercises. He served as rector of the Jesuit community during trying times and took his turn directing the Honors Program. He was cherished for spreading love, joy and hope.

» **If you know this Mystery Zag**, please share a favorite memory: Visit [gonzaga.edu/editor](http://gonzaga.edu/editor), or write Editor, Gonzaga Magazine, Gonzaga University, 502 E. Boone Ave., Spokane, WA 99258-0070.

## Our Mystery Zag from the Fall 2024 issue is . . .



### Fr. Kevin Waters, S.J.

Music Professor, Dean and Chaplain from 1983 to 2017

Fr. Kevin Waters is a modern-day renaissance man. Trained by the masters, he is an accomplished composer of operas, organist and fine art connoisseur. During his Gonzaga tenure, he was a gifted professor who helped build up the music department, a respected dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, a beloved hall chaplain and, first and foremost, a devoted priest. He now resides at the U.S. Jesuit West Province headquarters in Los Gatos, California.

### Readers Respond

My fondest memories include Fr. Waters' History of Opera class on my first day at Gonzaga, his unique Sunday evening Mass, and his genuinely caring personality. When my brother Shane (ROTC '09) visited in 2004, Fr. Waters took us to visit Mt. Spokane. He has had an indelible impact on Gonzaga and members of this community.

**Brendan Kolding ('05)**

Seattle

It is no mystery what a great Zag Father Waters is. He was a fantastic mentor and leader during my two years as RD of DeSmet. When we

were getting to know each other, he noted that we were both from ranching backgrounds and he was "pretty good on a horse." So I invited him to join me at our Wyoming ranch. He immediately backed up his claim, saddling his own horse and doing a great job of rounding up cows for a solid 10-hour day. A true renaissance man!

**John Bertagnolli ('87)**

Spokane

He was like a father to all of us at DeSmet. I was invited to his Dean's List Reception my freshman year, where we got to know him better. He stopped to talk to me during his daily visit to the pool where I was a



lifeguard. I became an RA, based on his recommendation. Not a Catholic myself, he gave me an appreciation and respect for Catholicism and the Jesuit tradition. An incredible example and kind man who lived his faith daily.

**Andrew Trout ('90)**  
Libertyville, Ill.

### Comments from Facebook

Fr. Waters was my spiritual director while a student discerning God's will in my life. His holiness, patience and kindness were inspiring. Also, who can't love a man who composed operas? – **Bridget Ann**

It's Father Waters! He was a kind teacher and really took the time to make sure you were understanding the material. – **Kara Brown**

Fr. Waters hired me in 1986 and later I became the first associate dean for the College of Arts and Sciences under him. He's an inspiration for us all to live our faith. – **Colleen McMahon**

Truly wonderful kind man who loved to help kids adjust to the struggles of college! Love Fr. Waters. – **Tina Thompson**

He was a genuinely great chaplain in DeSmet. – **Ryan Mullarky**

Fr. Waters was in Florence when I was there. He somehow convinced most of the students to join a choir that toured around and actually sang in the Gonzaga family chapel in Mantua. None of us were music majors but we sounded great, thanks to his coaching. A kind, lovely man! – **Elaine Padgham Cullen**

I'll never forget the way he said "Die Zauberfloete" during World of Opera class. Always elongating the "flooooooooooeeeete." – **Matt Johnson**



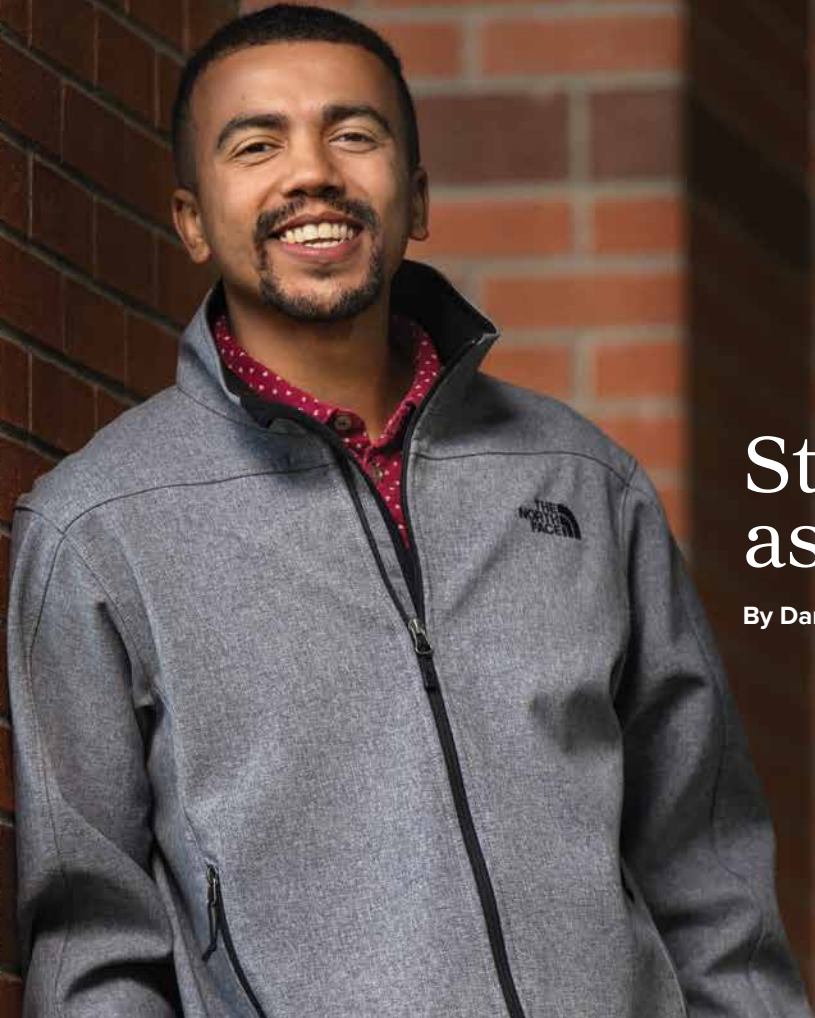
### Team Player

**Eddy Birrer, Ph.D.**, has been a dedicated supporter of Gonzaga Athletics and a longtime member of the University community. A former accounting professor and avid sports enthusiast, Eddy spent decades shaping the lives of students with his wit, wisdom and unwavering commitment to excellence.

He recently established a charitable gift annuity, which will provide him income for life, with the remainder to benefit men's and women's basketball and women's soccer. This reflects his deep gratitude for the role Gonzaga has played in his life and career, as well as his love for the teams that bring the Zag spirit to life. The success of Gonzaga sports programs contributes to name recognition of the University, aids in faculty and student recruitment, and helps build community spirit.

His generosity ensures that future generations of student-athletes will have the resources they need to excel in the classroom, the community and in competition. Birrer also has helped further opportunities for students through the Dr. Eddy Birrer Endowed Scholarship, which former students established in his honor at his retirement.

» Have you included Gonzaga in your estate plans?  
Please let the University know or request more information:  
**Call 509-313-6141 or email [plannedgiving@gonzaga.edu](mailto:plannedgiving@gonzaga.edu)**



# Storytelling as Social Justice

By Dan Nailen

It's not unusual for someone's personal background to influence their professional pursuits. But the extent to which **Michael Larson ('21)** has turned his challenging childhood and passion for social justice into a fulfilling career in service of others is not just rare, it's incredible.

Just a few years after graduating in sociology along with minors in leadership studies and solidarity and social justice, Larson founded an organization dedicated to helping some of the least fortunate among us.

Humans for Housing, a Portland-based nonprofit Larson started in summer 2023, is dedicated to storytelling, community engagement and advocacy on behalf of people living on the street. The organization grew out of Larson's work both in the classroom and the community while at Gonzaga, volunteering to serve those who are homeless in Spokane while studying the complex web of issues that make housing a national crisis. As a senior, Larson co-produced a film, "Humanizing Spokane," that took viewers inside the lives of people living on the

streets, and he led a "Humans for Housing" march through downtown.

It's no accident the name of his new nonprofit draws on those intense years of learning about America's most marginalized communities while serving meals to housing-challenged friends in Mission Park, just east of campus.

"Gonzaga was pivotal in being the training ground for everything I'm doing now with Humans for Housing," Larson says. "The opportunity to produce short documentaries about issues I was learning about in sociology, then hosting events where people come and engage in conversations about these issues, and also my leadership classes, learning how to better manage people and build a team – without those experiences, I may have never gotten to this point, so I feel really deeply grateful."

Larson's passion to help stretches back to a childhood of bouncing between his biological family and the foster care system, between Washington and California, before he and



two of his siblings were adopted by a single mom in Everett, Washington.

Larson credits the “village of support” that came into his life around middle school with putting him on a path toward college instead of one that is all too familiar: becoming one of the many foster-care cases who experience homelessness themselves, fall into addiction or suffer mental health illnesses.

At Gonzaga, he jumped right into sociology courses. Researching issues around race, class and gender sparked something that has only grown hotter through the years since.

“I remember being really fired up about these issues and statistics,” Larson says. “And all these things are still around today.”

Larson put his social justice passion into action through his love of filmmaking, something he discovered in high school. When he arrived at Gonzaga he turned his camera toward addressing the complex issues he was learning about in class.

During his first year, he helped produce a documentary, “Zag Stories,” about microaggressions suffered on campus by students of color. His sophomore year, Larson made a film about healthy masculinity; the next year, one about his study abroad experience in Chile. Those ultimately led to the “Humanizing Spokane” film that Larson and his peers showcased at Gonzaga, Eastern Washington University and Whitworth University last fall.

“That’s kind of when the seed was planted for a nonprofit organization to do this consistently and share these powerful stories that humanize people while also advocating for longer-term solutions,” Larson says.

That’s where his new Humans for Housing organization comes into play. Post-graduation, Larson worked in videography and marketing for a Seattle education company, CharacterStrong, but he was also laying the groundwork for the organization of his dreams. He met with mentors, learned all he could about the nonprofit and business worlds, and eventually was able to launch Housing for Humans.

Its first project is a film, “No Place to Grow Old,” that delves into the crisis of elderly homeless, a population that’s growing as the Baby Boomer generation hits retirement age.

“This is a national problem,” Larson says. “We need to raise awareness so we can better protect this population, to make sure people aren’t retiring and then entering into homelessness.”

- » View “No Place to Grow Old” at [HumansForHousing.org](https://HumansForHousing.org)
- » Share your thoughts on Michael’s work: [gonzaga.edu/editor](https://gonzaga.edu/editor)

## A Return to Service

By Thea Skokan ('22)

Retirement proved too restful for **Marj Humphrey ('74, '75 M.A.)**.

Having stepped down from her role as director of missions for Maryknoll Lay Missioners in 2022, the tireless advocate is returning to on-the-ground work in Africa. Over 20 years in Kenya and in southern Sudan, she honed her skills as a physician assistant, providing care in areas that often lack basic resources.

When she returned to the United States in 2007, she joined the Maryknoll Lay Missioners’ board of directors, eventually becoming director of missions.

But Humphrey longed to reconnect with the communities that shaped her. Her new role in restorative justice focuses on teaching members of Ugandan and Kenyan communities about violence prevention.

She graduated from Gonzaga with a bachelor’s degree in communications and religious studies, later earning a master’s in counseling. In 2012, Gonzaga awarded her the DeSmet Medal for Christian Service, one of the University’s highest honors.

Whatever she’s doing, Humphrey hopes to never stop trying to make the world a more peaceful place.



Photo: Maryknoll Lay Missioners

## In Print



**'60 Gary Hordemann** published two new books: "Deer Park Days: Memories of an American Sport" and "Stories My Brother Told Me." Hordemann previously published and sold locally as a fundraiser for Hospice of Spokane. More than 600 books were printed, raising more than \$20,000.

**'95 Marcie "DD" Haeg** published "BLOSSOM in the Beauty of Being," a guide experiencing love through the simple beauty of flowers. It features more than 150 full-color images taken by Haeg across the U.S. and abroad, along with poems. Nearly 80% of the funds raised through Kickstarter came from former Gonzaga classmates!

**'99 Sarah Small** released a memoir entitled "A Sea of Lego and Lavender," which recounts her struggle with mental illness amid personal upheaval. The book highlights the challenges of the mental health system and the healing power of self-care and resilience.

**'99 Sandy (Gere) Zimmerman** may be known best for her historic run on American Ninja Warrior, but that isn't her whole story. She authored "Get Out of the Car: Inspirational Stories for Cultivating an Empowering Inner Voice," based on her life experiences with abuse, poverty and instability. She also went on to play basketball at Gonzaga, which, she writes, "was an integral part of me being able to change my family tree."

**'02 James Morgante** published "The Yogi Diet: Spirituality and the Question of Vegetarianism," a guide to a balanced way to eat within the context of world religions and spirituality.

**'02 Joe Wilkins** published his second novel, "The Entire Sky," a work of fiction about a troubled runaway boy, an old rancher and his daughter, who form an unexpected bond and find comfort in the family they create.

**'11 Julia "Julie" Morris** authored an undergraduate sociology textbook titled "Introduction to Sociology Through Comedy," to show how comedy influences people to question their own assumptions about society.

**'15 David Corisis Jr.'s** second book is "Spine-Tingling Tales to Read Before Bed," an anthology of short horror stories. David lives and works in Boise as a programmer and enjoys writing in the evenings. The book is illustrated by fellow Gonzaga graduate **'15 Sara Vasquez**, a Seattle-based website designer.

**'21, '24 M.A. Gerry Rogers** published "Tempest Trilogy," a novel about members of the same family through five generations of changes. A longtime resident of the Pacific Northwest, he spent more than 20 years managing software design and discovered his love of writing in graduate school.

### Have you published a book?

Submit info to [gonzaga.edu/AlumniNews](mailto:gonzaga.edu/AlumniNews) and mail a copy: Editor, Gonzaga Magazine  
AD 70, 502 E. Boone Ave., Spokane, WA 99258



## Accolades



'04, '06 **M.A. Kali Wicks**, board chair of the Montana chapter of HOSA, a health professionals' organization, received the national Future Health Professionals Government Leadership Award in Houston. This honor recognizes Wicks' advocacy for funding to support career and technical student organizations, while expanding career access to rural and tribal communities in Montana. She is the first Montanan to receive the award.

## Moving Up

'98 **Chris Dorrington** is head of the Montana Department of Transportation, Gov. Greg Gianforte praising him as a "changemaker" with a strong track record having previously managed the governor's housing task force.

'99 **Heather Rosentrater** is CEO of Avista Corp., becoming the first woman to lead the utility in its 135-year history. After joining Avista in 1999 as an electrical engineer, she rose through the ranks, most recently serving as president and COO. Rosentrater has been instrumental in positioning Avista at the forefront of energy innovation and is deeply committed to the company's legacy of supporting community vitality and advancing clean energy goals.

**Want to share your family or career updates?**  
Submit weddings, births/adoptions, promotions and accolades here: [gonzaga.edu/AlumniNews](https://gonzaga.edu/AlumniNews)

## Of Note

'01, '04 **J.D. Jennifer Porto** is chief operating officer at Stokes Lawrence, a law firm recently named one of Washington's top 100 fastest-growing companies. The company says Porto's unique blend of experience will be instrumental in advancing the firm's cohesion and operational agility.

'05 **Chase Perrin** is vice president of WE Communications in Seattle.

'05 **David Uhl** joined Cristo Rey High School (Seattle) as vice president of advancement and marketing.

'06 **Jonathan Dingle** joined Columbia University as a tenured associate professor of economics. He and his wife, Amy, are moving to New York City for the position.

'07, '10 **J.D. Andrew Lawhon** and his wife returned to Spokane in August, accepting jobs at Albrecht Law and Chesterton Academy of Notre Dame.

'21 **J.D. Justin Meyer** joined the Portland office of Baker Sterchi as an associate. His practice focuses on complex civil matters, including mass tort, personal injury and legal malpractice.

## Second-hand Knowledge



'07 **Jessica (Lightfoot) Billings** turned her passion for thrifting into a small business. Second Hand Styled in Spokane provides personalized shopping and styling through thrift stores, consignment shops and secondhand sources.

# We do!

Following are all submissions received between July and December 2024. Where available, locations of ceremonies are included. See all photos and additional details at [gonzaga.edu/magazine](http://gonzaga.edu/magazine).



◀ **'14, '18 M.S. Caileen Cullen** and **'15 Danielle Doolittle** had plenty of Zag flair at their wedding. The couple met as one helped the other move in to Madonna Hall in 2011.



**'17 Kristin Gunderson** and **'17 Connor Coombs**

**'18 Kelsey (Forman)** and Abhishek Herle: International Spy Museum, Washington, D.C.

**'18 Marielle Manila** and **'18 Collin Jurenka**

**'18, '24 J.D. Mareval Ortiz-Camacho** and **'18 Frankie Piccolo**: Beacon Hill, Spokane

**'18 Kelley (O'Toole)** and Jerod McCrory: Billings, Mont.

**'18, '19 Alec DeLucia** and **'20 Alena Zurcher**: Swiftwater Cellars in Cle Elum, Wash.

**'18, '22 M.A. Sandra Vance-Keetch** and Zach Keetch: Deer Park, Wash.

**'19 Anna (Stember)** and **'19 Nick Pullen**: Maple Falls, Wash.

**'02 Laura Sheppard** and Stephane Giraud: San Diego

**'13 Kylie Orizotti** and **'14 Zach Damby**: Butte, Mont.

**'14 Danae (Devine)** and **'09 Cory McCoy**

**'14 Samantha Olsen** and Kurt Harris: Poulsbo, Wash.

**'16 Julia (Gats)** and **'16, '17 Cameron Chase**: St. Aloysius

**'17 Katie Moore** and **'17 Ty Smith**: Denver

**'17 Ned Skinner** and Lacey Skinner

**'17, '18 Keely (Costello)** and **'17 Zachary Parker**: Mount Rainier National Park



▲ **'19 Margaret (Steiner)** and **'19 Joseph Wilson** celebrated at Arbor Crest Wine Cellars with **Ben Thacker ('19)** officiating, after an intimate ceremony at the GU student chapel by Father Peter Byrne, who presided over the wedding of Margaret's parents 35 years ago.



# Congrats

*to Zags adding to their families!*

'19 Lauren Balerud and '19 Samuel Johnson: Bainbridge Island, Wash.

'19 Morgan (Byrne) and '19 Atlas Ikaika Flagg

'19 Megan (Dillon) and '18 Ryan Fox: San Anselmo, Calif.

'19 Kristen Gonzalez-Farris and '19 Luis Gonzalez-Flores: San Diego

'19 Justine Linneman and '17 David Kirske: St. Aloysius

'19 Rebecca (O'Sullivan) and '19 Nick Corigliano: St. Aloysius

'20 Breanna (Bang) and '19 Timothy Regan: Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

'20 Amanda Oliver and '20 Simon Forinash: Snohomish, Wash.

'20 Kristen Lillie and '22 Jake Lillie: Hillside Farms

'21, '22 Kalleigh (Wagner) and '20 Sean Leriche: St. Aloysius

'21 J.D. Rachel (Platin) and '18, '21 J.D. Quinn Stanley: Coeur d'Alene Resort

'21 Morgan (Wald) and '21 Anthony Larrañaga: Tacoma, Wash.

'23 Kenzie (Devening) and '22 Ethan Cady: Crooked Willow Farms, Larkspur, Colo.

**Want to share your family or career updates?**

Submit weddings, births/adoptions [gonzaga.edu/AlumniNews](http://gonzaga.edu/AlumniNews)



▲  
'08 Ellen (Caletti) and '08 Jessica Joyce: a daughter, Nola, joining big sister Aurora

'06 Jill Fitzgerald and Jeremy Wear: a son, George

'11 Cathy (Caputo) Cooper and Evan Cooper: a daughter

'11 Derek Long and Karin Allen: a son, Chet

'12 Amanda Dawson and Kevin Tongue: a son, Milo

'12 Courtney (Harris) and '12 Andrew Dremlyuga: a daughter, Layla

'13 Kate Stoltz and '11 Russell Craven: a son, Milo

'13 Lauren (Berry) Sheppard and '13 Conner Sheppard: a son, Graham

'13 Samantha (Blake) Wootten and Elijah Wootten: a son, Arthur

'13 Kevin Stratton and Anna Stratton: a daughter, Charlotte

'13 Lauren (Tallarida) Yoon and '15 Andrew Yoon: a son, Emerson

'14 Meghan (Roletto) and '14 Jonathan Mora: a son, Canon

'16, '19 Mackenzie Roberts and '16 Trevor Obrinsky: a daughter, Violet

'16 Elisa (Wilson) and Brandon Heide: a daughter, Madison

'17 M.B.A Natalie Pluskota-Hamberg and '21 M.A. Robert Hamberg: a daughter, Jacey Clementine

'18 Tyra (Graney) and '17, '18 Trey Hardy: a daughter, Halle



▲  
'12 Katherine Pontarolo-Maag and TJ Park: a son, Leo Joon, who shares a birthday with his uncle '09 Chris Pontarolo-Maag

This includes submissions received between May and December 2024. See all photos online at [gonzaga.edu/magazine](http://gonzaga.edu/magazine).

**'50 Harold Himmelsbach**, a veteran, helped build the First Allied airstrip in France before returning home and starting his own company. Oct. 5 – Danville, Calif.

**'50 Richard Kirkendall** served in the Korean War before teaching history at universities in Missouri, Indiana and Iowa. Aug. 26 – Spokane

**'51 Gladys (Cerenzia) Peretti**, played a key role in establishing Meals on Wheels in Spokane Valley and was deeply involved in her community. July 31 – Spokane

**'51 Janet (Taufen) Weigelt**, a longtime educator who took care to know all students by name, had a flare for fashion and delivered food to friends in need. Nov. 12 – Spokane

**'52 Barbara (Brown) Brundage** was one of the first three women to graduate with a nursing degree from Gonzaga and spent her career at Cascade General Hospital and St. Anthony's in Wenatchee. She and her husband loved exploring the continent in their motorhome. June 18 – Wenatchee, Wash.

**'52 Roberta (Turnbull) Prettyman**, an adventurous traveler who worked as a Pan Am Airline stewardess and later a travel agent for more than four decades. Sept. 22 – Orange, Calif.

**'52 Edna (Lapke) Rickman**, a kindergarten teacher with deep community involvement. May 11 – Sublimity, Ore.

**'52 Anthony Vetre**, a WWII Marine Corps veteran, teacher, coach and physical trainer for the U.S. boxing team. June 18 – Wethersfield, Conn.

**'53 Patricia (Griffin) Carbaugh**, known for her prolific letters always

accompanied by a \$2 bill and a newspaper clipping. Patty also enjoyed huckleberry picking, fishing and camping. Nov. 7 – Spokane

**'53 '63 M.A. Fredrick Owen**, a baritone who sang at weddings and was recognized for his efforts at evolving equal pay. Sept. 7 – Bellevue, Wash.

**'54 Frank Pignanelli**, an avid traveler who set foot on six continents and loved woodworking, gardening and family. Oct. 24 – Spokane

**'55 Patrick Kenney** was Washington state's longest-serving active real estate agent. As an Army Reserve veteran, he made headlines selling the Paulsen Building in downtown Spokane for \$10 million. He was a fixture at V.F.W. Post 51 and a vibrant figure in Spokane's civic life, from the Lilac Festival to the City Council. June 2 – Spokane

**'56 M.A. Robert Scholie Sr.**, Air Force, career teacher, co-owner of Hancock Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Jan. 13 – Naples, Fla.

**'57 '64 M.A. James Dawson**, a longtime educator and guidance counselor who spent more than 25,000 hours volunteering at Holy Family Hospital. Oct. 8 – Spokane

**'57 J.D. The Hon. Justin Quackenbush**, U.S. District Court judge for whom a Gonzaga Law lecture series is named to promote leadership, ethics and civil discourse. Oct. 27 – Spokane

**'57 George Weller**, a beloved educator teaching everything from math to photography, and an avid sports fan. July 14 – Seattle

**'58 Patricia (Alexander) Davis**, a dynamic educator, journalist and pistachio

*May you continue to inspire us to enter each day with a generous heart, to serve the call of courage and love until we see your beautiful face again in that land where there is no more separation.*

JOHN O'DONOHUE

farmer. Sept. 22 – Grand Junction, Colo.

**'58 J.D. Richard Montecucco**, Air Force National Guard and distinguished lawyer with four decades at the Attorney General's office. July 7 – Olympia, Wash.

**'58 M.A. Robert Morrison**, known for joy in teaching, love of learning and adventurous spirit. April 1 – Wenatchee, Wash.

**'60 J.D. Richard Ayres Jr.** resided in St. Ignatius, Mont., for 36 years before moving south. June 19 – Tucson, Ariz.

**'60 Dan McCanna**, educator and horse trainer, renowned for rehabilitating racehorses. May 18 – Lincoln County, Wash.

**'60 Sue Ann (Sister Roland Marie) Peterson, O.S.F.**, loved music, parades and spending time with children. June 1 – Hamilton, Mont.

**'61 M.A. Wallace Brown**, volunteered at the Council on Aging and St. Vincent de Paul Society, helping people working to obtain housing. July 9 – Palm Springs, Calif.

**'61 Patrick Reynolds**, an ardent outdoorsman who never turned down a project around the house. His wit and humor delighted those who knew him. Oct. 9 – Portland, Ore.

**'62 Joanne Backer**, a social worker known for her love of jazz and dedication to peace. Sept. 15 – San Francisco

**'62 Gary Bumgarner**, known for his leadership in the WA Optometric Association and founding Spokane River Expeditions. Aug. 11 – Spokane

**'62 J.D. Jean Dacres**, Korean War veteran and insurance agent who played basketball and loved supporting his favorite teams, including the Zags. Dec. 3 – Sioux City, Iowa

**'62 Aaron Patrick Hoerner**, gardener, woodworker, sportsman. May 30 – Dickinson, N. Dak.

**'62 Mary (Johansing) Litchfield**, kind and loving, worked with underserved communities in Madrid and later enjoyed traveling with her husband Jim. Sept. 6 – Ventura, Calif.

**'62 The Hon. R.A Jim Randall**, a Marine and Minnesota Court of Appeals judge, dedicated to community service. Aug. 9 – Lindstrom, Minn.

**'62 Gerald Smith**, a veteran guided by a strong work ethic, described as a chivalrous and loyal man. Nov. 2 – Quincy, Wash.



**'62, '69 M.A. James Wahle** spent over 30 years teaching in the Puyallup School District. He had a passion for film, literature and the theater. July 6 – Orting, Wash.

**'63 '68 M.A. Raymond Feucht**, educator who taught high school and GED courses before eventually working as a custodian at Gonzaga for more than a decade. Oct. 26 – Spokane

**'63 Carol Palencar**. July 10 – Williamsburg, Va.

**'64 Judith (Kirkbride) Conant**, June 9 – Canyon Country, Calif.

**'64 Daniel Day**, educator and passionate sports fan. June 7 – Yorba Linda, Calif.

**'64 Jerilynn (Root) Pitts**, active at her church and member of the USA Navy League and the Spokane Council. Nov. 14 – Spokane

**'65 Joseph Peter Bauer Jr.**, U.S. Air Force and computer programmer for 38 years while active in his parish. May 27 – Santa Barbara, Calif.

**'65 Chuck Boehmer**, April 30 – Fountain Hills, Ariz.

**'65 James Grant** was a personnel specialist with the U.S. Forest Service before a career with the IRS. A member of the U.S. Ski Association, he remained an avid skier until 2000 when he sustained life-threatening injuries. Dec. 5 – Ogden, Utah

**'65 J.D. Frederick Smith**, known for his fierce courtroom presence and deep intelligence, and mentoring fellow attorneys. May 29 – Puyallup, Wash.

**'65 Dennis Roberts**, a veteran who spent his civilian life in public and private accounting. Sept. 9 – Spokane

**'65 Marguerite (Olson) Tipton**, lover of debate and literature that shaped her insightful conversations and humorous outlook on life. June 4 – Marysville, Wash.

**'66 Thomas Chapman**, former president of the IEFF Club, storyteller and ragtime pianist. March 21 – Gilbert, Ariz.

**'66 Linda Fisher** marched in President John F. Kennedy's inaugural parade with the U.S. WAF Band, later in the Iowa City New Horizons Band. June 26 – Walford, Iowa

**'66 Ann Sheridan**, cherished teacher known for her vibrant family dinners, bridge games and volunteer work. Aug. 25 – Tempe, Ariz.

**'67 M.A. Sister Elizabeth McLellan** taught and led at Sacred Heart's Cataldo School, guided the Associates' program for her religious community. May 25 – Spokane

**'67 Joseph Peters**, a clinical psychologist who served in the U.S. Army. His caring nature brought comfort to his patients and family. Oct. 1 – Pueblo, Colo.

**'67 Mary (Foley) Pettigrew**, accountant of more than 30 years in Spokane. July 1 – Edmonds, Wash.

**'68 J.D. Robert Baumann**, a dedicated lawyer remembered for his love of soccer. Oct. 14 – Rockville Center, N.Y.

**'68 Gregory Valdez**, remembered for his love of sports, music and philosophical conversations. Aug. 12 – Bend, Ore.

**'70 Michael Kurtz**, Vietnam veteran who played on the Gonzaga basketball team and later loved spoiling his grandchildren with Froyo. Dec. 2 – St. Louis, Mo.

**'70 Richard Pope**, had extensive rock collections and a passion for learning. July 9 – Olympia, Wash.

**'70, '75 J.D. Duane Schofield**, engineer and lawyer with a positive and humorous spirit. April 30 – Cusick, Wash.

**'71 James Bresnahan** (shown below), a standout basketball player at Gonzaga who balanced his career in finance with woodworking and travel pursuits. Like many other dedicated Zags, Jim included the University in his estate. Gonzaga was named the beneficiary of a life insurance policy and the Bresnahan designated the funds to the Jim and Pauline Bresnahan Gonzaga in Florence Scholarship, which supports students pursuing global engagement through the University's flagship study abroad program. Aug. 29 – Spokane Valley



**'71 J.D. The Hon. George R. Nethercutt Jr.**, a lawyer who facilitated more than 2,000 adoptions and was a founding member of the Vanessa Behan Crisis Nursery in Spokane. In 1994, he became the second person in history to defeat a sitting Speaker of the House, serving the 5th Congressional District from 1995 to 2005. June 14 – McLean, Va.

**'73 J.D. Fred Palmer** and his wife enjoyed world travel and skiing, following his career as a personal injury attorney in Idaho. Dec. 4 – Sandpoint, Idaho

**'73 Jane (McNulty) Towle**, an attendance secretary for 27 years whose endless supply of candy made her a beloved figure. Aug. 8 – Portland, Ore.

**'74 Joseph Columbus** studied for the priesthood in Rome, returned to Anchorage to contribute to family business and was a talented musician and chef. April 6 – Anchorage, Alaska

**'75 George Hart** attended Jesuit schools in Missoula before studying criminal justice at Gonzaga. He spent his career working in state and federal penitentiaries across the U.S. before opening a flower gardening business. Nov. 28 – Missoula, Mont.

**'75, '76 J.D. The Hon. Darwin Zimmerman** was a prosecuting attorney and then a district court judge for 35 years. He launched the Clark County Veterans Court to support veterans facing legal challenges due to substance abuse or mental health issues. Oct. 27 – Ridgefield, Wash.

**'76 J.D. The Hon. Gordon Godfrey**, a Navy veteran and Wayne State Hall of Famer, had a distinguished legal career where he focused on juvenile reform. June 30 – Grapeview, Wash.

**'76 J.D. Floyd Ivey**, dedicated to community through Bethlehem Lutheran Church and the Pasco-Kennewick Rotary Club. Aug. 9 – Kennewick, Wash.

**'76 M.A. '78 J.D. Barry Ryan** – Homer, N.Y.

*Continued*

**'76 Michael Wysgoll**, a former software engineer at Lockheed Martin. Aug. 29 – Putnam, Conn.

**'77 J.D. James Borchers**, a devoted basketball fan, avid gardener and active church member. Aug. 25 – St. Charles, Mo.

**'77 David Desmarais** loved everything from wrestling and fishing to jewelry-making and cookies. Sept. 11 – Naches, Wash.

**'77 M.A. Judith Harper** enjoyed golf, tennis and skiing, while always finding ways to serve her community. Aug. 13 – Spokane

**'77 M.A. Robert Mostek**, “Coach Bob” was a teacher, principal, counselor, coach and mentor. May 16 – Spokane

**'77 J.D. Kurt Salmon**, June 16 – Gig Harbor, Wash.

**'77 Jacqueline Specht**, advocate for literacy and community service with Mukilteo Library, YMCA and Domestic Violence Services of Snohomish County. April 15 – Everett, Wash.

**'78 J.D. The Hon. James Pelkey** had a big heart, love of family, and passion for cruising and sports. Aug. 26 – St. Albans, Vt.

**'78 M.S. Bobby Trott**, Air Force sergeant during Vietnam, received the Air Medal for Meritorious Service in Aerial Flight and later became a Baptist pastor. July 8 – Roaring River, N.C.

**'78 Michael Zanol** enjoyed trivia competitions and the downtown Wenatchee social scene. Sept. 27 – Wenatchee, Wash.

**'79 Josh Burrows**, president/CEO of his own company for 35 years, he funded Gonzaga’s Josh Burrows Performance

Athletic Center and the bronze bulldog statue in front of McCarthey Athletic Center. June 20 – Spokane

**'79 M.A. Joseph Kunkel**, a hospital chaplain with keen intellect and an infectious sense of humor. Oct. 10 – Omak, Wash.

**'79 Wendy Miller**, a devout Catholic who homeschooled her five children and loved literature and faith. Aug. 29 – Phoenix

**'79 M.A. Frank Oliver Jr.** served 20 years in the Air Force and later with the Mesa Police Department. June 20 – Mesa, Ariz.

**'79 M.A. Douglas Walsh**, longtime football coach who loved all-day golf outings and chance run-ins with old friends. Oct. 20 – Great Falls, Mont.

**'80 M.A. Terry Cicero**, clinician, educator and leader who served in the Army Nurse Corps and later volunteered for Big Brothers of Spokane. Oct. 28 – Seattle

**'80 M.A. Elaine Gray**, educator who produced memorable musicals and stunning art installations at Southview Community School. July 4 – Medicine Hat, Alberta.

**'80 Stephen Olivet**, a kind soul with a deep passion for history, old music and classic movies, helped students with disabilities in the Spokane Public School District. Aug. 18 – Spokane

**'81 M.A. Clive Lloyd**, born in Trinidad and Tobago, enjoyed gardening, making wine and moonshine. May 16 – Calgary, Alberta

**'81 Barbara Smith**, a stockbroker for whom watching the Zags play was always a highlight. Oct. 29 – Shrewsbury, N.J.

**'82 M.A. James Rudolph**, a CPA known for his humanitarian work with the Valley Food Bank, his church and Habitat for Humanity. Dec. 7 – Spokane

**'83 Heidi Ghods**, a passionate Italian student who spent her junior year abroad at Gonzaga in Florence and passed her love for the culture and language on to her daughter Sarah Ghods (\*17).

**'83 J.D. Felix “Ari” Landau**, a U.S. Air Force veteran deeply committed to Holocaust education and community service. Aug. 21 – Arden, N.C.

**'83 Timothy McCartin**, a proud supporter of his favorite sports teams including the Denver Broncos and the Zags. Sept. 6 – Phoenix

**'83 M.A. Francis Nolan** excelled in opera and academia, taught philosophy and religion, enjoyed cycling, kayaking and triathlons. June 8 – Los Osos, Calif.

**'83 J.D. Timothy Randolph** balanced a distinguished legal career with adventure. April 16 – Reno, Nev.

**'84 J.D. Ruth (Bauer) Bohms** raised four children before deciding to attend law school. She was the only woman of eight attorneys admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court. Oct. 26 – Anchorage, Alaska

**'84 M.A. John McLaughlin**, educator and administrator who enjoyed hiking, curling and volunteering. Aug. 9 – Calgary, Alberta

**'84 Gerald Seubert**, an Eagle Scout, chef and outdoor enthusiast. June 27 – Bellevue, Wash.

**'85 M.A. Robert Hayes** was a lifelong educator and genealogist in Canada. Nov. 20 – Kelowna, B.C.

**'85 Anthony Michels**, known for his humor, compassion, and selflessness. Aug. 17 – Spokane

**'85 M.A. Russil Rilcof**, educator and school administrator, embodied a zest for life. May 15 – Surrey, B.C.

**'86 Gregory McDonnel**, New York

**'88 Charles Esposito**, skier, mountain biker and runner, completed his first marathon at 50. May 19 – Layton, Utah

**'88 Pamela (Mahoney) Fritterer** was an artist-in-residence in GU’s ceramics department for 23 years and a regional expert in pit fire pottery in the Native American tradition.

**'88 '93 M.A. Lorraine Shank**, a passionate educator for students with special needs. Her unwavering support and dedication was apparent to all who knew her. Oct. 10 – Spokane

**'89 M.A. Tommie Flugel**, a teacher, bus driver and referee, logger and construction worker. June 23 – Colville, Wash.

**'89 Sue Ann Julian**, known for her generosity and the art of pie-making with younger generations. May 20 – Coeur d’Alene, Idaho

**'89 J.D. Claude Montecucco**, mathematician who loved puzzles, bowling and especially Christmas. June 26 – Cheney, Wash.

**'90 J.D. Carolyn “Kay” Leclaire** spent her childhood traveling the globe due to her father’s work with the State



Department, living in places like Nepal, Nigeria and Panama. Kay loved the outdoors, competitive ballroom dancing and culinary skills. She achieved her dream of climbing Mt. Everest in 2009. March 30 – Cheney, Wash.

**'90 M.A. Mary (McCloskey) Soulis**, an English teacher and counselor who loved language, words, puzzles and writing. Sept. 25 – Orange, Calif.

**'91 Lewis Eyman**, an engineer and explorer. July 18 – Austin, Texas

**'92 M.A. Darrel Johnson**, teacher who wanted students, and later his grandchildren, to connect with the real world. Oct. 3 – Kamloops, B.C.

**'94 M. Ed. Karen Cowan**, co-founder of Focused Fitness, made lasting contributions to health education. Aug. 3 – Spokane Valley

**'94 M.A. Huia Martin**, originally from New Zealand, moved to Canada with his passion for rugby and teaching. June 12 – B.C.

**'94 Mark Perkins**, U.S. Army veteran, skilled Chinook helicopter repairman and an IT operations officer. June 13 – Cordova, Tenn.

**'95 M.A. David Kinkela**, a diverse career teaching, coaching and driving long-haul trucks. July 23 – Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

**'95 J.D. Yale Metzger**, paralegal, investigator and attorney who explored remote Alaskan landscapes and restored a cottage in the Scottish Highlands. June 1 – Anchorage, Alaska

**'95 John Power**, a deep and reflective thinker, a warm and engaging person who loved getting together with family. Nov. 13 – Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

**'96 M.A. Joan Balenzano**, teacher and chaplain who touched many lives with her wisdom and compassion. Aug. 17 – Spokane

**'96 Jacob Hartsoch**, known for creativity and scientific acumen, he excelled in debate and was a writer. Sept. 8 – Bellingham, Wash.

**'96 M.A. Judith Stringer**, traveler who loved to meet new people. Sept. 14 – Sorrento, B.C.

**'97 M.A. Joanne Green**, nurse and entrepreneur who lived to heal and was a teacher in every sense. Nov. 18 – Butte, Mont.

**'97 Kevin Svenson**, a talented musician with the band Shannondoah, pursued advanced degrees with dedication. July 24 – Spokane

**'97 M.A. Nancy Whaley-Bagley**, accountant and educator, taught computer classes at Spokane Community College. June 18 – Spokane Valley

**'00 Heather Davis**, a teacher whose warmth touched everyone she met. Oct. 11 – Vancouver, Wash.

**'01 M.A. John Buckmaster**, a teacher who enjoyed woodworking, playing the drums and collecting clocks in his free time. Oct. 31 – Spokane

**'02 Paul Ditter**, born at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., was a longtime Oregon resident. July 16 – Beaverton, Ore.

**'02 J.D. Christopher Neal**, outdoorsman, Eagle Scout and writer, enjoyed river rafting, publishing books, and serving in his church. Aug. 30 – Yakima, Wash.

**'03 J.D. Michael Corry**, an administrative law judge for Washington state, known for his sharp wit. Aug. 7 – Colbert, Wash.

**'03 M.A. Aaron LyBarger**, nurse anesthetist and avid hiker, camper and soccer player who cherished time with his family. June 26 – Hayden, Idaho

**'05 M.A. Barbara Carrara**, spent over 40 years caring for veterans at the Spokane VA Hospital and visited five continents. Sept. 9 – Newport, Wash.

**'05 J.D. David McIntosh**, a beloved middle school history teacher. Oct. 4 – Palm Harbor, Fla.

**'06 Ph.D. Howard Haller**, a radio DJ, a screenwriter and the youngest officer at the national division of Bank of America. Nov. 29 – Centerville, Utah

**'06 Sydney Marino**, an event coordinator for Meta who lived a life full of love and laughter. Sept. 23 – Seattle.

**'07 M.A. Gary Maitland**, a beloved volleyball player, coach and referee who loved camping, traveling and reading. Sept. 23 – Nanaimo, B.C.

**'18 J.D. Grant Reynolds**, described by friends and family as stubborn, intelligent, strong and kind, was an attorney after passing the Multi-State Bar exam in the top 10% nationally. Sept. 30 – Knoxville, Tenn.

This list reflects notices Gonzaga received between June 1 and December 31, 2024. If you'd like to ensure an alum's passing is included in the next issue, please email [alumni@gonzaga.edu](mailto:alumni@gonzaga.edu).

## FRIENDS

**John Byrne**, an Irishman who was Jesuit-educated at Fordham University, spent nearly 40 years at Gonzaga as a physics professor. He also was chair of the physics department and dean of the graduate school, in addition to serving the Catholic Diocese of Spokane as a deacon for many decades. Sept. 11 – Spokane

**Sister Liz Cole, SP**, a Sister of Providence who taught psychology, 1975-91, and was a coordinator of spiritual programs, 2004-06.

**Mary "Joann" Jundt** embodied what it is to be a steward of the arts. She and her husband, Jim ('64), were longtime patrons of several Minneapolis groups, The Kennedy Center, and the Jundt Art Museum at Gonzaga. Their enduring legacy is reflected in scholarship support for students and funding the James R. Jundt Chair of Economics. Dec. 17 – Scottsdale, Ariz.



# What is an Ignatian Leader?

Father Tim Breen, S.J. ('25 M.A.)  
Gonzaga Athletics, Zags360 Program Director

One of the most profoundly formative experiences of my undergraduate Jesuit education at Loyola Chicago was my time as a member of the Ignatian Leadership Learning Community. I especially learned about how to form and be in community, and what it means to lead in an Ignatian context.

Even though I did become a Jesuit, probably the biggest lesson I gained from that time was how the approach to leadership is shared across the Ignatian tradition, belonging to Jesuits and committed lay colleagues alike.

Here are three elements of Ignatian leadership any of us can use in any role.

**An Ignatian leader is contemplative.** The Ignatian tradition invites us to be “contemplatives in action,” being reflective and being active, decisive. The invitation here is to a continual awareness of how God is moving and how we are called to respond to the needs of the world and community around us. At its best, this contemplation includes honest self-reflection and awareness of one’s

limitations that can get in the way of pursuing the mission to which God still calls us, as loved sinners.

**An Ignatian leader is a discerner.** More than simple decision-making, this is prayerfully seeking the best path forward. Discernment, then, requires careful listening: to God, to oneself, but also to other members of one’s community. Ignatian leaders do not discern alone, but in common, in collaboration. St. Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, describes God as laboring and active, inviting us to collaborate in a shared mission, and so we are similarly called to collaborate with one another.

**An Ignatian leader also has a clear sense of direction,** guided by certain key principles. Some of these phrases and concepts may be more familiar (such as AMDG, the Latin abbreviation for *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*, “for the greater glory of God”) or less so (such as the Principle and Foundation, a key meditation from St. Ignatius’ *Spiritual Exercises*). In recent years, after a long communal discernment process, the Society of Jesus settled on four universal apostolic preferences meant to orient Jesuit





ministries throughout the world. One especially guiding in our Gonzaga context is “accompanying young people in the creation of a hope-filled future.” In a world where hope might feel thin for our young people, there is a particular call for us as an institution to accompany and support our students while they are with us and prepare them to be hope-filled agents for change in this world.

A beautiful way Gonzaga has done this for generations has been building community powerfully and intentionally. Time and again, Zags of all ages share that Gonzaga is special because it is a community, a family. And so, one of the most important calls for an Ignatian leader in our context is to continue this not only here on campus, but also to model for our students how to build community themselves out in the world as Ignatian leaders.

Dr. McCulloh: Thank you for your Ignatian leadership and collaboration. We so appreciate the many ways in which you have been a contemplative in action, discerning and directing this endeavor, and especially in the way you have so attentively continued to build the Gonzaga community.

And, to Dr. Passerini: *Benvenuta!* We are so thankful for your missionary spirit in coming to take on the mission of being an Ignatian leader for this community and continuing the legacy of Gonzaga’s first lay president. We look forward to this ongoing collaboration with you; please be assured of our prayers and support throughout this transition.

And so, in the words of the book of Numbers, we ask God’s abundant blessing on you, your families, and all of Zag Nation:

*May the Lord bless you and keep you*

*May the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you*

*May the Lord look upon you with favor and grant you peace.*

*Amen.*

*(And Go Zags!)*

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