

SAINT MARY'S SCHOOL

Alumnae Profile Series

by Chelsea Ward '09

Lilly Bennett '09

**Director, Paramount Motion Pictures
Los Angeles, CA**

Raleigh Born and Raised

Raleigh native Lilly Bennett '09 grew up near Saint Mary's and learned about the opportunities young women could find at 900 Hillsborough Street from her parents and her aunt (and Saint Mary's alumna) Terry Bennett Vares '80HS. She also knew her great-grandmother, the late Lillian Forbes Joyner Flanagan '1921HS, was a graduate.

But it was the school's legacy of strong academics propelled in 2005 Lilly to enroll as a student. "A good education was always important to my parents and both were aware that Saint Mary's could provide just that," she explains.

As a student, Lilly participated in a variety of extra-curriculars including volleyball, track, and swimming. She was also involved for two years on the school's Judicial Board and was a technology prefect and member of the Granddaughters Club.

She also recalls the relationships she forged with her teachers. "I enjoyed spending time in any class Dr. Steve Esthimer taught because he made learning fun and the subjects come alive," she explains. "But one class has remained on my mind all these years! The hardest class I've ever taken in my life – *even including college* – was Ms. Susan Down's Western Civilization class. That class helped me prepare for college in such an important way."

Making it in the Music Industry

After Saint Mary's, Lilly received a B.S. in Communications from Elon University. While there, she interned for a record label in Raleigh called Deep South Entertainment.

"That's where I discovered my love for music," she recalls. "I was also able to spend several months in New York City, interning at Clear Channel Radio."

After graduating from Elon, Lilly knew she wanted to have a career in music and was open to relocating anywhere in the United States.

"The first place I received a job offer from was at Creative Artist Agency where I worked in contracts, learning the legal side of the music business, and also in the music cross-over department working with composers, music supervisors, and musicians who wanted to be actors."

Lilly stayed at Creative Artist Agency for two and half years before heading to Capital Records for a year. For the next three years, she worked in Paramount's music department and recently received a promotion.

"I'm now a director in the Department of Motion Picture Music and Marketing," she explains. "My job includes getting assigned movie projects and then making sure things are going well with the



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composer and the director's vision is being captured. I also read scripts, create music breaks, lead discussions about music budgets, and review scenes and song placements in the movies."

Still an East Coast Girl at Heart

Though Lilly has spent several years on the west coast in Los Angeles, she's still an east coast girl at heart who will always remember her time at Saint Mary's.

"I will be forever grateful for the friendships and education I received at Saint Mary's," she says.

If you ask Lilly what her advice is for current Saint Mary's girls, she shares a similar sentiment like many other alumnae.

"You'll never again have an experience like the one at Saint Mary's," she says. "So, enjoy this time in your life because it flies by and deserves to be cherished."

Though Lilly wishes she was closer to Raleigh and could spend more time back at Saint Mary's as an alumna, she does have a few wishes for the school.

"I hope it doesn't change too much and I want it to continue to keep the academics rigorous, hire and retain great staff, and embrace making physical and mental health a priority," she shares. "I also hope alumnae continue to have high expectations of their alma mater and our school expect the same of its graduates."

Lilly's profile is a testament to all Saint Mary's women, that if you work hard enough you can achieve anything professionally or personally, and we're delighted to share her story.

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