

Simone Connolly '24



They say diamonds form under pressure. Keeping cool during stressful moments is something Simone Connolly '24 has mastered.

Like in those moments when she is airborne, body soaring over the high jump bar, as onlookers watch her compete in Track and Field. When she sits at her desk to take an important math test. When she was faced with the decision of which college or university to attend after graduation. In these pivotal moments, Simone stays cool, calm, and collected. According to Simone, her experience as a student at Ursuline has taught her to trust herself and to have faith that life will unfold as it should. It is during times of pressure, when, like a diamond, Simone truly shines.

At Ursuline, Simone is captain of the winter and spring Track and Field teams, President of the Forensics Club, a member of the Racial Justice Club, a Peer Minister, and a member of the soccer team. It is easy to befriend and admire Simone; she has a positive attitude, genuine kindness, a love of life, and an infectious sense of humor. She is incredibly grounded. As Simone puts it: "I don't sweat the small things."

One of Simone's favorite aspects of her time at Ursuline is the friendships she has created across grade levels. As a senior Peer Minister, Simone and her classmates organize and lead retreats for the lower grades. "I love talking to the younger girls," says Simone. "Organizing the retreats and getting to know the girls is so fulfilling." Regarding Peer Ministry as a class, Simone says, "I admire that our teacher, Ms. Losey, treats us as equals. She reminds us that we deserve to be in this class and encourages us to invest our full selves into the program."

Another avenue through which Simone makes connections across grade levels is athletics, specifically soccer and track and field. Referring to her responsibilities as captain of the winter Track and spring Track and Field teams, Simone says, laughing: "I try to show the new girls the fun side of track. It is rewarding to reassure and reaffirm them, especially during our first track meet of the season when no one knows what heat they are in and can't find their bib number." Simone remembers when she was a seventh grader and was nervous to join the team herself; this experience influences her leadership style. She adds: "I also remember being inspired by the seniors on the soccer field when I tried out for soccer the summer leading into seventh grade." Simone wants to be that inspiration, and she so clearly is.

Before Simone started at Ursuline Academy in the fall of 2018, she was a dedicated gymnast who competed on an extremely competitive Junior Olympic team. At her elementary school, Simone was also the star of her sixth grade math class.

During her transition to Ursuline, Simone remembers realizing two important lessons: "First, I learned the importance of time management and determining the right balance of what I can handle in terms of academics and sports. Second, I learned that there is always going to be someone better than me. I went from being the best at math in elementary school to someone who had to put in extra effort in math. I realized that it is not about being the best, it is about doing your best." Simone says this with a smile.

Simone will graduate from Ursuline in the spring of 2024 and go on to study Philosophy and compete in Division I Track and Field at Stonehill College. Stonehill recruited Simone for the high jump, though she also competes in the 400 meter hurdles, the 55 meter hurdles, and the 4x4 relay. During her junior year, Simone broke Ursuline's record for the high jump with a result of 5'2". She is a decorated athlete, having received the Outstanding Women's Performer in the Catholic Central League's Field Events in 2022 and having earned numerous Coaches Awards and Awards of Excellence each sports season. Simone is inspired to pursue a Philosophy major because of her experience in Dr. Baker's Philosophy in Literature class.



Shown: Simone and Ursuline's Athletic Director, Mr. O'Connor, when Simone signed her Letter of Intent to compete at Stonehill College.

Simone will miss Ursuline's community most when she goes off to college. "I love talking to my peers and I also love connecting with the faculty and staff here," Simone shares. "I love going in to chat with Mrs. MacLeod, Nurse Smart, and the guidance counselors. I appreciate that I don't need an appointment to go in to talk with them. They appreciate my presence and they want to take time out of their day to speak with me." Additionally, Simone refers to the community on the Track and Field team as "the kindest people I have ever met."

No matter where Simone's future takes her, she will always have a home at Ursuline. We are so proud of her for her hard work and dedication to her academics and sports. Most importantly, we are proud of a young woman who so embodies St. Angela's traits of kindness, camaraderie, and compassion. Simone will continue to be a shining light in the lives of everyone she meets. We are confident she will continue to soar and reach unbelievable heights, both when competing in high jump and in life. Watch her clear bar after bar after bar...