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The Mount

VOLUME 13 NUMBER 1 | SUMMER 2024

The Mount is a publication of the Mount St. Dominic Academy Development & Alumnae Relations Department.

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ON THE COVER:

2024 Valedictorian Erin Araneta, Commencement speaker Vincia Jackson '10 and Salutatorian Anna Cacciacarne gather In celebration after graduation.

LEFT: The MSDA Class of 2024 processes as new members of the Mount Alumnae Community.

PHOTO CREDITS: Graduation photos by Pushparaj Aitwal



"Be who God meant, you to be, and you will set, the world on, fire."

Dear Friends:

Penned by St. Catherine of Siena in her writings of the 14th Century, the quote above speaks uniquely to the mantra, the mission and the magnitude of Mount St. Dominic Academy.

Be who God meant you to be: A call to self discovery, to authenticity, to finding your place, your people, your voice, your **truth**.

...and you will set the world on fire: Impact isn't about fitting into what someone else's idea of success looks like; it's about being your best self and using your gifts to the fullest to make a difference, to care, to lead, to **love**.

Veritas and Caritas. Truth and Love.

For generations, families have entrusted The Mount to provide their young women with a rigorous education as well as the opportunity to discover and deepen their understanding of the world around them (and their place in it). Fueled by the energy of the Dominican Sisters, and inspired by their faith-filled commitment to social justice and ministry in response to the needs of our time, the Mount has continued to carry on traditions that tie back to 1892 while constantly innovating to support the far-reaching goals of our students. It is an honor to share with you, on the pages that follow, some of their stories, as well as news from our alumnae and news you can use about school updates, events and more.

The Mount is a school of learning and leadership, and a community of love and empathy; providing a springboard toward continuing education and career, as well as bonds that enrich our souls. Below is a photo of members of the MSDA Class of 1962, who first met as 9th graders 66 years ago and gathered together recently in celebration of their 80th birthdays - a true testament to the bonds of sisterhood formed on the hilltop in Caldwell. Sincerely,

lates.

Kate Sullivan '88 Director, Development & Alumnae Relations Editor. The Mount



Mini Pivots

PRESERVE MOUNT TRADITIONS











'he schedule for this year's Senior Week Celebration experienced its fair share of challenges, all courtesy of two acronyms familiar to the Mount community: AP and FAFSA. For the past few years, the AP (Advanced Placement) exams administered by The College Board have caused a bit of chaos where senior festivities are concerned. However, compounding the calendar this year were the FAFSA (free application for federal student aid) snafus that saw many colleges move their traditional May 1 decision day to later in the spring.

Not to be deterred, senior class leaders polled their classmates, and new dates for the affected festivities were confirmed. Sweet treats to start the celebrations, a bagel breakfast and ice cream social with their little sisters, along with leaps on the front lawn celebrating college selections and shirt signing with Lexylicious ice cream truck made the exciting transition from Mount student to alumnae much to celebrate.



Legacy families gathered after the Baccalaureate mass (from I. to r.): Liana Gumpel and her mother, Jennifer Gonzalez '93; Bridget Castano and Sister Fran Sullivan lovingly representing June Dwyer Castano '51, Bridget's grandmother; Gabriella LaMarca and her mother Nicole Brochu LaMarca '92; Giuliana DeSilva and her mother Anna Maria lemmello DeSilva '86; and Kimlani Tanella and her mother Kimlani DeGrezia Tanella '87.

Bucknell University \Rightarrow Clemson University Colgate University County College of Morris **Drexel University** Elon University Fairfield University \bigcirc Fordham University \bigcirc Indiana University \bigcirc Jacksonville University Juniata College Lafayette College Lenoir-Rhyne University Loyola University Maryland Marquette University Monmouth University New Jersey Institute of

Technology

New York University

Ohio State University

Pennsylvania State University Providence College **Rutgers University** Sacred Heart University Salve Regina University Savannah College of Art and Design Seton Hall University Syracuse University The College of New Jersey University of Connecticut University of Delaware University of Michigan University of Richmond University of Scranton University of South Carolina Villanova University

Washington University

in St. Louis







#13+
million
in grants
and
scholarships

BACCALAUREATE AND SENIOR AWARDS

For achieving highest honors in the Class of 2024, a gold medal for achievement was awarded to Valedictorian **Erin Araneta**. Erin also received the LINDA ARNDT AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN SOCIAL STUDIES, and a gold medal of honor for receiving first honors in all marking periods throughout high school. Erin will be attending Seton Hall University.

A silver medal for high achievement in the Class of 2024 was awarded to Salutatorian, Adrianna Cacciacarne. Anna was also presented with a silver medal of honor for receiving first or second honors in all marking periods throughout high school, and the F. TODD MILLER AWARD for her well-rounded excellence and for making a positive impact. Anna will be attending Lafayette College.

DONNA HAUPTVOGEL MATHEMATICS AWARD: **Rebecca Hess**

EILEEN HIRCE SCIENCE AWARD: Caitlyn Tagliareni

MARY PAT EVANS AWARD: **Madeline Dolan**

MSDA PARENTS' ASSOCIATION ARTS SCHOLARSHIP: **Bridget Castano**

THE SISTER DORIS ANN BOWLES AWARD: **Ava Ciauro**

NATIONAL AFRICAN AMERICAN RECOGNITION AWARD: **Elise McGirt**

NATIONAL HISPANIC RECOGNITION AWARD: **Ava Ciauro**

NEW JERSEY KEY CLUB TED HORDICHUK MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP:

Madeline Dolan

THE BETTY STEVENSON SCHOLARSHIP: Giavanna Forte



n June 2, 2024, the 60 young women of the Mount St. Dominic Academy Class of 2024 laughed, cried, sang, cheered, and embraced each other warmly. What may seem like relatively standard protocol for a close-knit class of graduates, these moments stood in stark contrast to how their time at the Mount began - face masks, social distancing, and hybrid learning groups.

Despite what may have started in a somewhat disjointed fashion, this Mount journey was concluding in a cohesive and bonded way. Collective resilience, strength, flexibility and determination brought this group of young women together, and powered them through to an extraordinary conclusion to their meaningful and impactful days as students of The Mount.

Sister Marie Mueller, OP, welcomed the gathered group of graduates, families, friends, faculty and staff, followed by class Salutatorian Adrianna (Anna) Cacciacarne. Anna shared a heartfelt prayer, expressing gratitude for the journey, knowledge, friendships, and memories formed over the past four years. She prayed for guidance in future endeavors and emphasized the importance of Dominican values learned at the Mount.

"As we gather here today to celebrate the many achievements of our 2024 graduates, we give thanks for the journey that has brought us to this moment. We are grateful for the knowledge gained, the friendships formed, and the memories created

within these buildings. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we pray for guidance in all new journeys ahead and to help us remember the Dominican values that we have gained during these past four years," she prayed.

Continuing with a prayer for bright futures and a call for God's continued guidance and light, Anna concluded, "We offer this prayer with hearts full of gratitude and hope for the bright futures that await all our graduates. May God Creator bless us, may God Redeemer heal us, and may God the Holy Spirit fill us with light. Amen."

Next, the Honorable Madeline Cox-Arleo, Chairperson of the Mount's Board of Trustees, introduced the MSDA 2024 Commencement Speaker Vincia Jackson, MSDA Class of 2010. A Senior Operations Manager with Amazon, Ms. Jackson has dedicated the last several months to successfully launching one of Amazon's newest facilities in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Her expertise in developing teams and strategic planning contributed to 2,500 new job opportunities within the Fredericksburg community. Previous roles with The Clorox Company, Hormel Foods, General Mills, PepsiCo, and Sonoco Products followed after earning her B.S. in Chemical Engineering from NJIT, with double minors in Environmental Policy and Studies, and Business, while competing as an NCAA Division 1 collegiate runner.

With remarks that reflected on her own experiences at the Mount, Ms. Jackson began by



noting what made the day particularly special. "The Mount is a place where lifelong friendships are forged, personal passions are discovered, and leadership skills are cultivated. By graduating from MSDA and forever being a Lady Lion, you each have a tribe rallying behind you that is deeply invested in your journey towards academic excellence, personal growth, and lasting memories."

Ms. Jackson's message was clear and powerful, including the personal mantra she follows: keep the main thing the main thing. "To me, it's a reminder to focus on what really matters. It's about staying grounded in your core values, goals, and dreams, even in times of uncertainty or challenge." She also stressed the importance of intentionally seeking out diverse perspectives, cherishing the bonds with those who share your background, and being true to yourself: "Don't compare yourself to others. Engineer the life you desire and remember who you are. The future is truly yours."

After the conferring of diplomas, Valedictorian Erin Araneta '24 offered a heartfelt address, emphasizing the importance of memories and connections made at The Mount.

Erin shared how her senior year memories box symbolized cherished moments and relationships, particularly with her MSDA "little sister" Jillian. "I've always been sentimental, attaching memories to items. This led to creating a senior box filled with bits and pieces of senior year—tickets to

games, musicals, and trinkets from various school events," she explained.

She reflected on the growth and resilience of her class, highlighting shared experiences from volleyball games to musical performances and retreats. "One item that is not inside my senior box, but rather next to it, is my junior ring. I remember when we were practicing for our junior ring ceremony, Sr. Peggy Ann Clinton reminded us that the junior ring ceremony and graduation were the last two events we would ever walk as an entire class together," she recalled, underscoring the significance of these milestones.

Celebrating the bonds formed and expressing excitement for the future impacts her classmates will make as alumnae, Erin continued, "Witnessing and being a part of a group of empowered young women has motivated me to step outside of my comfort zone, both in and far beyond Rosary Hall. Growing and experiencing a different and challenging, to say the least, first few years of high school with such a resilient and adaptable group of leaders has been awe-inspiring."

Concluding with gratitude and pride, Erin expressed her heartfelt appreciation. "As we leave these halls and begin to call ourselves alumnae, I'm beyond honored and blessed to have been a member of this class and made my own memories like so many graduates before me."

From Kansas City to Colombia to Morocco, Lena Tusche '26 Takes Her Soccer Game on the Road

arrying her passion and talent for soccer to the national stage, Lena Tusche '26, Mount Varsity soccer midfielder, was named to the U.S. U-17 Women's Youth National Team training camp roster in the spring of 2024. Lena was one of 24 players named to the team in preparation for the 2024 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup, slated to take place October 16 to November 3 in the Dominican Republic.

Throughout her time away from the Mount during the school year, Lena kept up with her studies while participating in the training camp, alongside players from 12 other states. Her time with the Women's Youth National Team followed an exciting history-making season for the entire Lady Lions soccer team, culminating with a win for the Mount in the New Jersey Non-Public A North Final after a regular season that saw Lena score 19 goals and make 21 assists.

The break from school this summer has not meant a break from soccer, with Lena continuing her pursuits on the field, with club team playoffs, followed by one week in Colombia and another week in Morocco practicing with the Colombia U-17 Women's Youth National Team.

"During the playoffs with my club team in June, I was scouted by the Colombian U-17 national team and quickly came to find out I'd be leaving in just a few days to play in Colombia," Lena shared. "Arriving in Colombia was an exciting yet interesting transition, something I had never experienced before. But I focused on the fact that I was going to do something that I love, play soccer."





Lena went into the experience knowing very minimal Spanish, but by the third day, she felt like she had a second home away from home. She made friends, acclimated to the language, and played her best. After one week training and playing with the team in Colombia, followed by a 15-hour travel day, Lena arrived in Morocco, ready to expecience another culture and show what she had to offer.

"Throughout my time away from my family and friends, I realized how my transition to the Mount was very similar to this feeling," Lena continued. "Coming to the Mount taught me to adapt even when feeling uncomfortable, to put my best foot forward, to work to make new friends, and find my fire."

Lena has several goals she is striving for to live out her dreams and capitalize on all of her hard work and dedication to her sport: win a state championship with the Mount, commit to a Division 1 soccer program, represent either the USA or Colombia on the world stage, and make it to the professional level.

To remain grounded and strong in her athletics, academics and life, Lena concluded by sharing some of the things she focuses on to help her reach her dreams and help others along the way, "The things I keep in my mind at all times, on and off the field, are to work hard, have fun, be a leader, and most importantly be humble."

With Her Community in Her Corner, A Mountie Takes on NYU

Alessandra St. Ledger '26, earned a place in the ultra-competitive NYU Tisch School of the Arts for Dramatic Writing summer program. Below she shares a glimpse into her experiences, and how she leveraged some of her learnings from 2022 as an incoming freshman at the Mount to successfully make the journey into Manhattan.

y name is Alessandra St. Ledger. I'm a junior at the Mount, involved in theater, the golf team, and I hold a position in several clubs, such as ASL Club, Model UN, and The Golden Fleece. This past summer, I decided to do a four-week summer program at NYU Tisch School of the Arts for Dramatic Writing.

I applied for the program in January of 2024. I'm very interested in going into the film and television industry, so I did a lot of research and found that Tisch's program would be my best option. I didn't expect much, because it's one of the most prestigious film schools in the country, and they were only accepting 25 people. However, with wonderful support from my friends and teachers at the Mount, I decided to go for it – and I got in!

I moved in on July 7th. "Nervous" doesn't begin to describe how anxious I felt about beginning classes, and meeting new people, and my professors. Not only that, the new environment was so much to take in! I found myself navigating subway lines, budgeting on food, and gaining an overall sense of direction; I really learned how to hold myself accountable.

That brings me to the work I did as a Dramatic Writing student. During this four-week-long intensive, I studied playwriting and screenwriting from industry professionals and some of the most knowledgeable and insightful professors I've ever had. I had playwriting every morning for three hours, then screenwriting in the afternoon for three more. In playwriting, we each wrote a monologue series spoken by ten characters that all tie into one another and fit into an overall category.

My series was about "family dynamics," and when my final three monologues were complete professional actors were brought in to read and perform them. In addition, we wrote 10-minute plays as our final project. All 15 students in the department wrote a play, and acted in each other's plays, which was a grueling process but so much fun. In screenwriting, we read multiple screenplays,

dissected TV pilots, and wrote a few screenplays, the final one being ten minutes long. We also came up with concepts for full-length feature films, and several TV show ideas. My friend Leah and I worked collaboratively on one of these show concepts, and we're currently writing the pilot episode. While I feel as though the coursework helped me grow and evolve immensely as a writer and human being, what I believe shaped my experience the most was the people I met.

The friendships I made at Tisch are incredibly valuable to me and run so deep. Some of my closest friends from the program are from Maryland, California, Connecticut, even Beijing – it's really cool to know people from all over. Having the chance to bond with students that share my interests and passions was life changing, and that, to me, was the highlight of the month.

I am beyond blessed to have had this opportunity. I'm also so grateful for the sense of community I have from Mount St. Dominic, because without it, I'm not sure I'd be prepared to live in New York City by myself. When I came to the Mount, I was the only girl from my town; I hardly knew anyone. I was terrified of not being able to make any friends, and stressed about the stress I might have from being alone. But all of that went away within the first two days of Rookie Camp. I made friends instantly, and immediately understood what everyone kept saying: the sisterhood here is completely unmatched. So when I was accepted to NYU, I knew I'd be in a similar situation (on a larger scale); and I felt fully prepared to take that on. I have the Mount to thank for that. Because of the summer I had and everything I've learned from the Mount, I feel extremely prepared for college, and I cannot wait to see where this journey takes me!



The Mount Welcomes New Principal, Dr. Karen D'Avino

impressive experience, passion, and a forward-thinking vision, Dr. Karen D'Avino

officially stepped into her role as Principal on July 1, 2024. Known for her commitment to fostering academic excellence through inquiry and experiential learning, she aims to cultivate the culture of lifelong learning at the Mount. Her extensive career spans over three decades, marked by innovative practices in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, making her an ideal fit for the Dominican mission of MSDA.

From the early days of her career in education, which began as a music teacher in 1994, to her recent tenure as an educational consultant, Dr. D'Avino's journey has been one of continuous growth and dedication. She has held pivotal roles, such as Superintendent of Schools for the Vernon School District and the Barnegat Township School District, and Principal of the Emma C. Attales School in Absecon, equipping her with a profound understanding of educational leadership, curriculum development, and student engagement.

Passion for Music Fuels Early Path

Music has always been an important part of Dr. D'Avino's life, intertwining with her family's history and shaping experiences across generations. Growing up,

66 I am passionate about creating an environment where students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally ""

her home was filled with music, especially on Sundays when her mom made traditional Italian pasta and meatballs while her dad's band, The You Know Who Group, played in the garage. Her maternal grandfather also played the guitar, adding to the rich musical heritage that influenced her education and career.

As a tenor saxophone player while earning her Bachelor of Arts in Music Education at

Montclair State University, Dr. D'Avino performed at Carnegie Hall and many other venues. During that time, in a stroke of serendipity, she was cast in a video for Whitney Houston, MSDA '81, appearing in the background choir for "All the Man That I Need." Following in her footsteps, her daughter, a junior in high school, plays tenor sax in the marching band and sax in the jazz band, while her son, a freshman at Loyola University in New Orleans, is pursuing a major in musical theater. Having just returned from a 12-day tour of Europe with the American Music Abroad Community Band, playing on stages in Prague, Vienna, and Budapest, Dr. D'Avino hopes to share her talents with the Performing Arts program at the Mount.

A Passionate Educator Focused on Impact

Holding a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of Pennsylvania and a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership from New Jersey City University, Dr. D'Avino's academic credentials are as impressive as her career milestones with diverse talents and interests that enhance her leadership style.

"I am passionate about creating an environment where students

can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally," shared Dr. D'Avino. "I am excited to be part of the Mount and contribute to its rich tradition of empowering young women in the Dominican tradition, while continuing to expand access to the school's incredible signature programs in entrepreneurship, health sciences, social justice, and capstone research. In public schools, I noticed that girls often hesitate to speak up and engage with high-level content in coed classrooms. They can feel reserved, as if it's not their place to contribute. At the Mount, those barriers are removed. Our students are encouraged to have their voices heard, to engage confidently, and to speak their authentic truth. This environment fosters their growth in ways that co-ed settings sometimes cannot."

As a hands-on, collaborative leader, the opportunity to work in a smaller, more intimate academic environment is part of what drew Dr. D'Avino to the Mount. "I believe this approach is most effective in a setting where I can authentically engage with faculty, students, and staff, and the Mount offers a unique opportunity to integrate deeply into the school's culture."

Highlighted by the topic of her UPenn dissertation, "The Underrepresentation of Female Superintendents

in New Jersey: What are the Personal and Societal Considerations that Contribute to Underrepresentation?" Dr. D'Avino also brings a deeply rooted interest in elevating representation for women and expanding gender equity. A true passion project, Dr. D'Avino was able to identify actionable steps to remove barriers for women

that the Mount has become known for," noted Kelly King '84, P'16, '23, Chair, MSDA Board of Trustees. "We are excited to welcome her into our family to share that passion as well as her extensive knowledge and experience with our students, faculty, and the MSDA community."

With Dr. D'Avino's dedication to curriculum innovation, as well



to make the path to success in school leadership a level playing field for men and women.

"Dr. D'Avino brings not only the skill, but the passion for academic leadership needed to continue to provide our community of young women with the unique blend of faith exploration, traditional liberal arts coursework, and innovative, real-world learning opportunities as the professional development of the teachers who make up the inspired faculty of the Mount, the Mount's legacy of excellence will continue, nurturing the minds and hearts of future generations of empowered young women.

ummer trips showcase MSDA's powerful blend of driven exploration and Dominican values. For many students of

the Mount, the summer break is a chance to explore their passions more deeply. Whether through internships and jobs, summer courses or self-discovery, the minds of Mount students are always at work. The Mount strives to provide students with opportunities to further their interests and knowledge in ways that connect with the school's mission of empowering young women, and this summer was no exception, with trips to Washington D.C. and Adrian, Michigan. Each group of students hoped to make connections and expand their understanding of the world around them and their important role in it.

MSDA's Fifth L.E.O. Cohort Embraces Leadership in D.C.

A group of 17 rising seniors who are part of the Mount's fifth cohort of the L.E.O. Program, one of the Mount's signature electives focused on entrepreneurship, leadership and creating opportunities, embarked on an unforgettable journey to Washington, D.C., sponsored and hosted by The Leonidas Foundation. Established in memory of Leonidas "Leo" Vagias, brother of MSDA alumna Alexandra Vagias '18, the L.E.O. Program, offered exclusively at Don Bosco and the Mount, aims to empower students through an intensive business incubator program that complements classroom learning with mentorship, site visits, and real-world learning experiences.

For three days in June, the Mount students accompanied by program moderator Mrs. Christine Victori, joined their Don Bosco counterparts for the 2024 L.E.O. Summer Leadership Conference. The conference focused on the intersection of business and government offering opportunities to meet and learn from some of the most accomplished professionals in the nation's capital.

Students took part in an intensive George Washington University (GWU) Entrepreneurship Bootcamp led by Kate Heath, the Director of Student Entrepreneurship at GWU and a judge at the Mount's 2024 LionWorks "Shark Tank" Competition. Mount students learned pitch skills, professionalism, and networking, with lessons in lean innovation and value proposition design. The students workshopped their elevator pitches, receiving direct, open, and challenging feedback from the moderators mirroring real-world business conditions, pushing the students to evolve quickly and objectively.

Throughout the conference, students had unprecedented access to a diverse group of esteemed professionals who

provided insights into various high-level roles and industries. Thanks to The Leonidas Foundation and Mr. Vagias, the professionals the students learned from and networked with included the Director of Cybersecurity Risk Management and Compliance at the Department of Energy, the Chief Information Officer and Chief Privacy Officer at the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, and the Chief Information Security Officer of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Rising senior Mary Hladik remarked, "The shared experiences and advice provided will be invaluable as we create our own pathways. Learning about the highest highs and lowest lows gave us a sense of how to handle failures, overcome obstacles, and celebrate our best moments."

"The Leadership Conference is a truly transformative experience for Mount students; from learning the soft skills of business to hands-on presentation skills and confidencebuilding, not to mention the opportunity to network with fivestar generals and business leaders," stated to Mrs. Victori. "We are so grateful to the Vagias family, to Ms. Rhonda Clarke and The Leonidas Foundation for providing our students with these opportunities, skills, and connections that they will carry with them for years to come."

A Journey of Faith and Community; Dominican **Preachers Visit Michigan**

Students from the Mount's Dominican Preachers program embarked on a spiritually enriching trip to Adrian, Michigan from June 27th to July 2nd to take part in the Dominican High Schools Preaching Conference. Since 1999, students from Dominican high schools across the country have gathered to deepen their preaching skills and explore the Dominican Charism. Held at Siena Heights University and welcoming 50 attendees from 10 U.S. high schools, including three student preachers from the Mount, the conference was a melting pot of ideas, experiences, and community spirit.



Mrs. Victori, who in addition to her role as lead L.E.O. teacher is also Head of Ministry at MSDA, accompanied the students on the trip, and remarked, "This conference aptly reminds us that when we combine our strengths, we are stronger together—this is the essence of being Dominican."

Speakers at the conference shared insights on the Dominican tradition, emphasizing the importance of preaching through words, arts, music, and action. Attendees learned about various Dominican saints and engaged in unique prayer exercises designed to help them reflect on their spiritual journey and understand the broader implications of their faith.

Discussions of St. Dominic emphasized his approach to meeting people where they are and making the Gospels relevant – a key teaching for Mount students who build connections between scripture and their peers' lived experience. Students learned that "preaching from the pulpit of our lives," and combining God's story with our own illuminates both and allows God's love to shine through.

A session themed "Preaching the Signs of the Times" explored topics such as "Undoing Racism," "Developing the Full Potential of Girls," "Immigration," and "Welcoming Persons with Disabilities." Mrs. Victori noted that, "As Dominicans, we are always encouraged to look at the issues of our world and how we can make an impact for justice. Each presentation left us with ideas and inspiration for making these issues present in our schools."

Putting prayer into practice, the conference also delved into the theme of "Preaching in Action," focusing on community service. Groups visited Daybreak, a day program for older adults who need a safe place to go during the day, and Hope Center, which provides support for adults with developmental disabilities. They also enjoyed a permaculture experience with the Adrian Dominican

Sisters, learning about living in fellowship with creation and sustainable living practices. These hands-on experiences allowed students to witness the impact of their service firsthand and understand the diverse needs of different communities.

Melia Hillman '25 said, "The Preaching Conference was an experience I will never forget. I gained lifelong friendships with students from other Dominican schools, learned about the true power of prayer, and was empowered to make a difference by getting involved in specific social justice issues. My service experience at the Hope Center helped me recognize that God represents love, and to grow stronger in our faith, we as Dominicans are called to serve others with compassion and empathy."

In the end, students presented an action plan that included enhancing the MSDA Day of the Girl celebration, improving reflections training in preparation for preaching at Mass, and increasing the school's involvement with the Sisters at St. Catherine's Healthcare Center.

The students returned with a renewed sense of purpose and a

deeper understanding of the Dominican tradition. As they share their experiences with their peers, they will inspire a ripple effect of compassion, empathy, and a commitment to service.

"The conference taught me what it truly means to attend a Dominican school," Regina Salandra '25 reflected. "It's more than just praying every day; it's focusing on social justice issues, finding other ways to pray, and performing acts of service in our community."

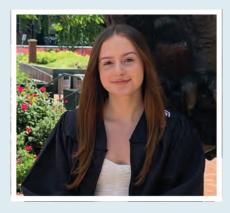
Mounties making moves

Undergraduate degrees, graduate studies, new roles and awards, Mount graduates are following their dreams and making an impact.



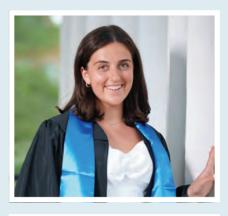
Maria E. Agostinelli '15

received her Doctor of Pharmacy from the School of Pharmacy & Health Sciences at Fairleigh Dickinson and was accepted into the PGY1 Pharmacy Community Residency program, where she will take on the role of clinical pharmacist.



Amanda Baldyga '20

graduated from Temple University with a BA in Advertising, aiming to work in the advertising industry with a focus on brand marketing.



Emma Hladik '20

graduated from Gettysburg
College with a BA in
Interdisciplinary Studies
focusing on business, media,
and communication. Emma is
currently a Marketing Analyst at
Inca Digital.



Catherine Morales '20

graduated from Purdue
University with a BS in Computer
and Information Technology,
with a minor in Design, and
Innovation and a certificate
in Entrepreneurship. Cat is
now a Consulting Analyst with
Accenture in New York City.



Breanna Munoz '20

graduated from Penn State University with a BS in Nursing. After completing the NCELX exam, Breanna plans to use her skills working as a Pediatric or Emergency Department Nurse.



Kelsey O'Driscoll '12

was named Asthma Care
Coordinator in the Pediatric Clinic of
the Albany Medical Health System.
As someone who deals with severe
asthma herself, Kelsey shares a
unique bond with her patients.
Her own blinged out wheelchair,
which she uses for mobility support
demonstrates to her patients there
isn't anything they can't do.



Sabrina Palumbo '20

graduated magna cum laude from Villanova with a BS in Biology and minor in Sociology. Sabrina is now a Clinical Research Coordinator at Columbia University Medical Center in the Department of Anesthesiology and is preparing to apply to medical school.



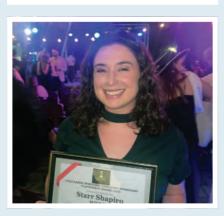
Emily Sartori '19

graduated in May 2023 from Bucknell University with a BS in Biomedical Engineering, summa cum laude. Emily works at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai as a Neurosciences Associate Researcher in the Blanchard Lab.



Julie Schramm '20

graduated from Lafayette College with a BS in Neuroscience and minor in Math. Julie will be spending the next year in Japan, teaching English through the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program (JET), and plans to attend graduate school for Math upon her return.



Starr Shapiro '17

received the Loud Karma Emerging Female Playwright Award at the 2024 Hollywood Fringe Festival. Starr and her play, OBSESSED, were selected out of 82 eligible playwrights and plays. OBSESSED played to sold out crowds in June in L.A.. Starr is a Writer's Assistant at Netflix.



Juliet LIttle '00

PGA Certified Professional, LPGA Teaching Professional and former MSDA golf coach, was awarded the 2023 LPGA Professional Leadership award for the Northeast Region.



Monica Wharton '94,

EVP and COO of Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare, was appointed to the American Hospital Association Regional Policy Board in Region 4, where she will work to provide guidance on public policy issues, help guide policy development, and identify needs unique to her region.

Anastasia at MSDA

The 2024 MSDA Spring Musical, "Anastasia," which is based on the beloved 20th Century Fox animated film, featured a captivating score and lyrics by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty, complemented by a compelling book by Terrence McNally, was a smash hit! It was expertly directed by Michael Restaino, with help from associate director Michelle Posner P'13, Director of Performing Arts at the Mount, and produced by Kelly Sullivan King '84, P'16, '23, with musical direction by Stephanie Mangioglu. Set against the backdrop of the Russian Revolution, the story follows Anya, masterfully portrayed by Madison McAllister '25, as well as dashing conman, Dmitry, brilliantly played by Bridget Castano '24. Together, they scheme to convince the last remaining Romanov, Dowager Empress Marie, who was beautifully depicted by **Emily Mokris '24**, that Anya is the lost Anastasia. The talented cast supported by the Mount stage crew running lights, sound, costume design, stage management, and so many other intricacies of the production, enchantingly transported the audience from the Doris M. Byrne '40 Performing Arts Center to the ballrooms of Russia and the streets of Paris.

FOXY Nominations and Awards

The Mount St. Dominic Academy Performing Arts Program received several Foxy Award Nominations from the 2024 Montclair State University (MSU) Theatre Night Awards. Congratulations to Mount theater students and faculty for receiving the following nominations:

ANYTHING GOES

- Outstanding Achievement by a Student Technician for a Musical: Natalie Steele '24, and Olivia Szumita '24
- Outstanding Achievement by a Student Makeup Technician: for a Musical:

Kimlani Tanella '24, Nicky Higgins '25, Annaliese Abboud '25, Dylan Graf '26, and Laura Capezio '26

- Outstanding Achievement of a Dance Ensemble
- Outstanding Achievement in Choreography
- Outstanding Achievement in a Period Musical Michelle Posner P'13

IT'S A MADHOUSE

- Outstanding Achievement by a Student Technician for a Play Natalie Steele '24, Olivia Szumita '24, and Jazmine Daniels '27
- Outstanding Achievement of an Ensemble in a Comedy





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Z Щ H MOUNT

2023-24 Lady Lions Highlights

SOCCER

The MSDA Varsity Soccer team (20-3) won the 2023 Super Essex Conference Liberty Division, and the 2023 Non-Public A North Sectional Championship, for the first time in school history, ending the season ranked #16 in the state.

ALL-STATE TEAM

Lena Tusche '26 - All-State 3rd Team

ALL NON-PUBLIC

Lena Tusche '26 1st Team; Gianna Camporeale '26 3rd Team

TENNIS

SEC LIBERTY DIVISION CHAMPIONSHIP

Varsity Tennis won the 2023 Super Essex Conference Liberty Division Championship.

ALL-STATE

Rebecca Hess '24 was named to the All-State 2nd Team.

SWIMMING

Sophia Liwanag '25 was named the Essex County Champion in the 100 Butterfly and set a new MSDA record in the 100 Breaststroke.

LACROSSE

NJIGLL INDEPENDENCE WHITE DIVISION CHAMPIONSHIP

Varsity Lacrosse won the 2024 NJIGLL Independence White Division Championship.

SOFTBALL

The MSDA Softball team (30-2) concluded its amazing season ranking #2 in the state and #17 in the nation. The Mount won the Essex County Tournament for the 11th time, secured the Non-Public A North Sectional Championship for the third consecutive year, and triumphed in the Super Essex Conference American Division for an incredible 10th consecutive time.

ALL-STATE

Ava Kelshaw '27, and Jill Cianfrocca '26 2nd Team; Gianna Stern '24, 3rd Team.

ALL NON-PUBLIC TEAM

Ava Kelshaw '27 and Jill Cianfrocca '26 - 1st Team; Gianna Stern '24, Nava Martinez '24, and Olivia Bibbo '24 - 2nd Team.

SPRING TRACK & FIELD

SEC COLONIAL DIVISION ALL-CONFERENCE

Riley Merklinger '24 (200m, 4x400), Lorelei Middleton '25 (400m, 4x400), Anna Cacciacarne '24 (Shot Put and Javelin), Emma LaBrunda '27 (4x400), and Allie Loch '26 (4x400) were named to the 2024 SEC Colonial Division All-Conference Spring 1st Team. The 2nd Team honorees included Riley Merklinger '24 (100m), Lorelei Middleton '25 (800m), and Ciaran Fernandez '27 (Shot Put).

ALL NON-PUBLIC TEAM

Anna Cacciacarne '24 (Shot Put) was named to the All Non-Public 3rd Team and set a new MSDA record.

BASKETBALL - CELEBRATING AN HISTORIC SEASON

In 1994, Mount basketball won the NISIAA Tournament of Champions title, and was ranked #1 in the state. Congratulations Mounties and coaches!







All Athletic Photos by Jeff Stiefbold

Alumnae Births & Bonds



Kelly Whelan Crump '06 and her husband, Patrick, welcomed their second baby, Oliver Killian, in September 2023, joining big sister Cecilia.



Danielle Painter Zacoum '09 and her husband, Rob, welcomed Sadie June in March 2024.



Elizabeth Hanrahan '06 and her husband, Dan Sutich, welcomed their second baby, Abigail Rose, in September 2023, joining big brother Charlie.



Christina Bunce Fleming '10 and her husband, Chris, welcomed Gioia Jane in January 2024, joining big brother William.



Arabella Rabbat Riascos '08 and her husband, Christian, welcomed Francesca Gloria in May 2024.



Allison Zabady Caldwell '10 and her husband, Chris. welcomed their daughter, Quinn Marie, in April 2024.



Ashley O'Connor Johnson '09 and her husband, Rob, welcomed Teddy Shea in June 2024, joining two very excited older brothers, Jett and Madden.



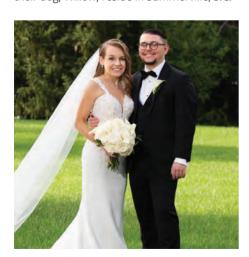
MSDA Faculty member Mike Vigil and his wife, Alexis, welcomed Vincenzo Robert Vigil born in July 2024.



Sabrina Fruci '11 married Mike Golman on May 18, 2024, at Holy Family Church in Nutley, followed by a reception at The Venetian in Garfield. Sabrina and Mike reside in New York City.



Sarah Liss '14 married Dylan Belida on April 6, 2024, at The Daniel Island Club in Charleston, South Carolina. Sarah, Dylan and their dog, Willow, reside in Summerville, S.C.



Sophia Polifonte '15 married Dr. John Walters on September 15, 2023, after being introduced by their Maid of Honor, Maria Agostinelli '15. The couple celebrated at Macaluso's in Hawthorne, after having their ceremony at St. Bonaventure's Church in Paterson.



Kathryn Wypasek '15 married Jake Roberts on October 13, 2023, in Saluda, South Carolina, supported by four MSDA alumnae bridesmaids: Krystyn (Wypasek) Sherman '12, Jada Wypasek '18, Joanna Wypasek '20, and Ava Pizarro '21. Kathryn also recently started in a new role with her college alma mater, Lander University, where she's been working since graduating in 2019, in the University Advancement office as the Stewardship and Scholarships Coordinator.



Sierra Colon '17 married Gaurav Chawla on May 25, 2024, at The Ryland Inn in Whitehouse Station. Sierra and Gaurav reside in Hillsborough, N.J.

IN MEMORY

The Mount extends its deepest sympathy to the loved ones of alumnae, family, and friends who have been called home to God. Submit the names of loved ones for special remembrance on All Saints Day at www. msdacademy.org/support/prayer-intentions.

MSDA Alumnae

Andrea Francis "Kiki" Kilby '94, sister of Claudia DeRosa '92 and Karen-Jean Kilby '97

Mary Lou Lytle '51

Jacquelyn Ryan Novak '72, sister of Jennifer Ryan '75

Sisters of St. Dominic

Sister Mary Amelia Cetera OP, '39 Sister Helen Francis Coakley OP, '46 sister of Sister Christine (Patricia) Coakley OP '49

Sister Ruthann Williams, OP

Family

Jason Clemente, husband of Darlene Cavilhas Clemente '92 and brother of Jennifer Clemente Jameson '99

Scott Collins, father of Jackie Collins '15

Marie Corke, mother of Kathleen Corke Marhold '87

Rose Marie DeGeorge, mother of Rosemary Celestino '71, Bernadette DeSimone '73, Marilyn Havrilla '78, and Geralyn Kovach '80

Eugenia Dolores Enderle, mother of **Nicole Ahrens** '84 and **Kristen "Kiki" Enderle** '88

Louise C. Foran, mother of Tara Foran Funari '96 Kevin Michael McCoy, father of Evelyn F. McCoy '09

Diana Leticia Morett de Gonzalez, mother of Sandra Gonzalez-Morett '05 and Diana Gonzalez-Morett '06

Catherine Shaljian, mother of Lara Shaljian Arocho'96

Rita Sidawi-Radici, mother of Antoinette Radici '15 and Gabriella Radici '18

Thomas John Sullivan, father of Kelly Sullivan King '84, P'16. '23

Mary Traynor Trella, mother of Katie Trella Zinsmeister '93

Born to the angels... Luca David Glaubman, precious son of **Gina L. Capozza '07** and Benjamin D. Glaubman, was born into the arms of angels on June 5, 2024. He is survived by his loving parents and his big sister, Camilla.



CLASS REUNIONS

MSDA CLASS OF 1974 50TH REUNION - CELEBRATE AT THE SHORE!

October 11 - 13, 2024

For more details, reach out to Ellen Heavilon '74 at ellen@heavilon.net

MSDA CLASS OF 1999 25TH REUNION - CELEBRATE AT THE MOUNT & CALANDRA'S! Friday, September 27, 2024

6pm Bishops' Dining Room at the Mount & 7:30pm Calandra's Italian Village For more details, reach out to Lauren Connell Madia '99 at lbconnell@gmail.com.

MSDA CLASS OF 1975 50TH REUNION - SEE YOU IN 2025!

Save the Date - April 12 & 13, 2025

For more information, reach out to Marion O'Neill MarionChristina1102@gmail.com

Other reunions in the works. or need help planning yours? Reach out to alumnae@msdacademy.org so we can assist you!

Celebrating Class Years Ending in 4 and 9

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16 6PM Bishops' Dining Room at MSDA SAVE THE DATF!



Attention all Mount alumnae with a graduation year that ends in a "4" or a "9" - Save the Date of November 16, 2024, for the MSDA Milestone Reunion. This reception and tour of the Mount will celebrate these wonderful milestone anniversaries, and can serve as a class reunion, or, as a springboard for a dinner later that same evening with classmates. Invitations with full information and RSVP details will be sent via email and mail. Email alumnae@msdacademy.org with any questions.

Milestone Class Years: 2019, 2014, 2009, 2004, 1999, 1994, 1989, 1984, 1979, 1974, 1969, 1964, 1959, 1954, 1949, 1944 and so on!







s the graduates of the MSDA Class of 2024 begin their college journey, they take with them countless special moments that blend together - uniquely for each young woman - creating their own "My Mount" experience. Infused with opportunities for self-discovery, each student's experience - past, present, and future - is supported by the strength of a 130-plus-year history, and each is uplifted by the Mount's core values of Veritas and Caritas - **Truth and Love**,

Thanks to our Mount community, a beautiful tapestry of students, current parents, staff, faculty, alumnae, alumnae parents, friends and foundations, we not only reached, but exceeded our fundraising goals for the 2023-24 fiscal year. Gifts to The Mount Fund, grants and donations in support of financial aid, testamentary gifts from alumnae and their families for scholarships, as well as incredible support for our Mount events, illustrate your belief in our talented and inspirational students and your faith in our mission of empowering young women in the Dominican tradition.

Because of your overwhelming generosity, your gifts to the Mount will enable us to welcome more young women to the Mount and enrich the experiences for each and every student that calls the Mount home - this year and for years to come.

Every dollar donated, every hour volunteered, every prayer raised in the name of our students and our school makes an impact. Your belief in the Mount, our students, and our mission means more than you will ever know, and we thank you.

The Mount Fund 2024-25 will launch in the fall. Thank you in advance for your continued support of the students of Mount St. Dominic Academy.



THE MOUNT FUND 2023-2024

WE ARE PLEASED TO PRESENT A PREVIEW OF OUR 2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT.

It is with great appreciation that we recognize the generosity of those who have contributed to The Mount Fund annual fund campaign. This list has been prepared to ensure the accuracy of the information. Please accept our apologies for any errors and email corrections to ksullivan@msdacademy.org.

The gifts listed below were compiled as of June 30, 2024. A complete Annual Report will be posted online in Fall 2024.

SOCIETIES

DOMINIC DEGUZMAN \$20,000+

The Estate of Kathleen Milsop Battis '57 The Estate of Mary Tyms Bryan '55 The Cestone Family Foundation Mr. and Mrs. John Fio Rito P '25, '27 The Estate of Eileen Murphy Flynn-D'Aprix '60 Mrs. Margaret Karl Geraghty '65 The Estate of Patricia Ann Gleason / Hugh Gleason and Mary Sharkey Gleason '75 John F. Byrne Family Foundation, Inc. Mr. Sidney McDuff

CATHERINE OF SIENA \$10,000 - \$19,999

The Marino Education Fund, Inc. Mrs. Maura Clarke Perier '77

THOMAS AOUINAS \$6,000 - \$9,999

The Diaco Family Foundation Dr. Mary Rodgers Gentine '89 The Hyde & Watson Foundation

ALBERTUS MAGNUS \$3,500 - \$5,999

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ROSE OF LIMA \$1,100 - \$3,499

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