MOMENTS

MISERICORDIA UNIVERSITY

WINTER 2025



MISERICORDIA UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

The path forward is paved by those who embrace their dreams and the power of comMUnity.

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Message from President Dan

Our Mercy Thrives Centennial celebration has been epic so far. From our Opening Convocation, time capsule reveal, Trustee Associates Gala, combined Homecoming and Reunion, and our Winter Commencement featuring former President of Ireland Mary McAleese, we enjoyed an incredible slate of commemorative events.

Providing accessible, private higher education with a student focus in the Mercy tradition for over 100 years is worthy of a year-long festival. I had the privilege of being present for most of our centennial events so far, and what I observed is what is so special about Misericordia University. We are a community that supports one another, challenges one another, enjoys the fellowship of our colleagues and fellow students, and embraces the core value of hospitality by gleefully welcoming our friends and neighbors to campus – a community realized.

Higher education is under great pressure today. Declining demographics of high school and college-age students results in declining enrollment at many institutions. In fact, dozens of smaller, independent colleges closed their doors in the last few years. But Mercy Thrives at Misericordia. We welcomed our second largest first-year class last fall and are working diligently on another noteworthy class to enter in fall 2025 to be a capstone on our centennial year.

Another pressure point facing higher education is the declining value that many Americans assign to a college degree. Is it truly worth it? Yes, it is, and I can testify that at Misericordia it certainly is. Our students graduate with extensive professional competency in their chosen fields and the critical thinking skills they need to excel as leaders. Additionally, they are imbued with the other values - mercy, service, justice, and hospitality - given to us by our founders, the Sisters of Mercy. We retain and graduate students at a higher than expected rate, saving them time and money as they work to build their future through education. Help us spread the word and expand our enrollment so that more students can benefit into the next 100 years.

I encourage you to join us on campus this winter and spring for the remainder of our Mercy Thrives Centennial celebration. Visit www.misericordia.edu/centennial for info on past and future centennial events. Congratulations to everyone involved in planning our marvelous centennial.

Best wishes,

Daniel J. Myers, Ph.D.
President

MERCY THRIVES 100 1924 – 2024

A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE: LOUISE BEATTIE @ MISERICORDIA UNIVERSITY

This fall, **Louise Beattie '26**, a junior environmental science major, was among the second-largest incoming class in Misericordia University's history. Beattie is unique among that large group as she hails from Dromore, Northern Ireland. Her journey to Misericordia was made possible through the prestigious Study USA program, which selects students from Northern Ireland for a year of study at U.S. colleges. Misericordia, one of her top choices, quickly became a home away from home.

Beattie's transition from Dromore, a small rural town, to Dallas, Pennsylvania, has been transformative. Shortly after arriving on Misericordia's campus, she was immersed in the bustling activity of Welcome Week, a distinctly American experience she described as "surreal and impressive." She embraced campus life wholeheartedly, from participating in the Dance Ensemble to exploring local gems like the Luzerne County Fair, and taking in a Broadway performance of Water for Elephants. Beattie also enjoyed outdoor adventures such as hiking at Ricketts Glen and spotting the Northern Lights during fall break.

Beattie's passion for sports and an active life includes over a decade of competitive Irish dance, cricket, and badminton, for which she earned the Jim Allen Merit Award. Beyond sports, she is an avid traveler, entrepreneur, and budding photographer. Her entrepreneurship class at Misericordia inspired her to pursue a wedding photography business back in Ireland as a professional complement supporting her ambition to combat climate change through glaciology research.

Though her time at Misericordia is limited to one year, Beattie's vibrant personality and global perspective have made a lasting impact. The Sisters of Mercy were founded in Ireland by Catherine McAuley. Welcoming an Irish student to study on campus reflects Misericordia's Centennial celebration, where students from all backgrounds are welcomed and supported in achieving their goals. As Beattie prepares to return home, she carries with her cherished memories and a strengthened sense of purpose, embodying the spirit of the Misericordia community.



Centennial Celebrations



There was an 'old fashioned picnic,' an anniversary cake, Irish dancers, a 'comfortable cup of tea' in the spirit of Catherine McAuley, and the opening of a time capsule – just the start of the celebrations as Misericordia University turned 100 years old on September 24, 2024.

The university's highly anticipated Centennial year began during "Mercy Week," Sept. 23-29, 2024. The week offered a look back on the extraordinary history of what was a fledgling women's college founded by the Sisters of Mercy, with tribute paid to those who have followed in their footsteps over the past 100 years. The Centennial also provided the impetus to look forward into Misericordia's second century and thank those who helped the college transition to the nationally recognized university with more than 24,000 alumni and 2,250 students that it is today.

A special Centennial Trustee Associates Gala on September 28 offered the opportunity to honor the university's most generous donors and recognize a group of special friends and alumni who stand out among those who have had the greatest impact over the past ten decades. President Emeritus Michael A. MacDowell and First Lady Tina MacDowell, both honorary alumni, were awarded the 2024 Trustee Associates Award for their leadership and support of the university during his tenure as 12th president from 1998-2013. Dr. MacDowell oversaw unprecedented growth in student enrollment, student quality, athletics, and academic programming, resulting in the college's evolution into a university in 2007. Mrs. MacDowell was recognized for spearheading numerous campus events, art installations, and outdoor beautification projects. MacDowell Hall was named in their honor in 2012.

Trustee Emeritus Sandy Insalaco, Sr., received the Mercy Mission Medal for his hard work and generosity for the benefit of the university during his 26 years on the Board of Trustees. His generosity led to the construction and naming of Sandy and Marlene Insalaco Hall, and later, his fundraising prowess helped drive support for the Frank M. and Dorothea Henry Science Center.

In addition, the university honored in absentia alumna Virginia 'Ginger' Donlin Emershaw '62, with a Founders Medal, which is periodically bestowed upon individuals whose generosity 'significantly transforms the university's ability to serve its students and advance the mission of its founders and sponsors, the Sisters of Mercy.' The lifelong teacher is among the university's most ardent supporters, with gifts that include the Virginia Donlin '62 Scholarship funding designated for students in the Bourger Women with Children Program or those studying education.

A highlight of the Gala was a commemorative tribute to the Sisters of Mercy and words of congratulations and thanks from Teresa Bednarz, RSM, a member of the Institute Leadership Team of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, who traveled from the order's headquarters in Maryland for the event. "We all hold dear to Catherine McAuley's vision to

extend loving care to persons who are poor, to tend with compassion those who are sick, and to educate those who long to make a difference in the lives of their families, their communities and the world. From all the Sisters of Mercy, South and Central America, the Philippines, Guam, Jamaica, and the U.S., we celebrate this momentous occasion with you and offer a heartfelt thank you for being Mercy," said Sister Teresa during the event.

Service to the community has been a hallmark of Misericordia since its inception. These contributions were chronicled in the Centennial presentation "Windows of Mercy & Service: Past, Present, and Future," on September 23, featuring Dr. Cindy March, RSM; Dr. Joseph Cipriani, professor of occupational therapy and Mercy Associate, and Jiselle Rodriguez '25, biology student and Mercy Leader. Exemplifying the mission in the community, nearly four dozen students spread out on a variety of projects during a special Centennial Service Day on September 28, volunteering at the Back Mountain Food Pantry, Hillside Farms, Habitat for Humanity, and the Catherine McAuley House.

Also bringing the Misericordia mission to life are murals throughout Mercy Hall that offer a view of campus life since its inception.

Curated by Archivist Maureen Cech and designed by Heather Outwater and the Cougar Prints graphics team, the topics include:

- A look at the Sisters of Mercy over the past 100 years
- Misericordia service around the world.
- A representation of each decade on campus from 1920-today.

Cech was instrumental in gathering the hundreds of featured pictures, ensuring that a wide variety of Misericordia people and events are represented. Visitors to Mercy Hall can tour the various floors to see the amazing new murals, as well as many other artifacts from the university's history including the Founders Room and Hall of Presidents on the second floor, and numerous donor displays, academic awards plaques, and framed posters of famous guest speakers over the years.

MERCY THRIVES 100 1924 – 2024

Photo Captions | Left Top:

A sampling of the contents inside the time capsule.

Archivist Maureen Cech and President Dan Myers. Maureen gave a presentation on the contents inside the time capsule.

Senator Lisa Baker presents a congratulatory letter from the Senate of Pennsylvania on Misericordia's centennial achievement.

The time capsule was tucked behind the cornerstone of Mercy Hall, the first building to be built on campus more than 100 years ago.

Misericordia University presented the 2024 Trustee Associates Award to President Emeritus Michael A. MacDowell and Mrs. Tina MacDowell. Taking part in the ceremony, from left, are Deborah Smith-Mileski, D.Ed., chair, Board of Trustees; Daniel J. Myers, Ph.D., president; Tina MacDowell and Dr. Michael A. MacDowell, Roger Howell, chair, Advancement Committee of the Board of Trustees; and Tanya Easton, Ed.D., vice president of University Advancement.

Bottom Right:

Spectators view the contents of the time capsule.

Students participate in a centennial event on campus.

Irish step dancers put on a show during a "comfortable cup of tea" event.

Viewers discuss the "Windows of Mercy" exhibition in the art gallery.

To learn more: misericordia.edu/centennial



A Summer of Scientific Exploration

In academic research, the National Science Foundation's Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program at Florida State University (FSU) stands out as a transformative opportunity for aspiring scientists. This prestigious initiative invites students from across the country and around the globe to immerse themselves in cutting-edge research, fostering both intellectual growth and collaboration among diverse peers. One standout participant in this year's program is **Taylor Walker '26**, a junior at Misericordia University (MU) majoring in Chemistry with a focus on Secondary Education.

In her recent research experience at FSU, she delved into the vast world of chemistry, gaining invaluable skills and insights that will shape her future academic and career aspirations. She worked under the guidance of **Dr. Susan Latturner**, REU supervisor **Dr. Edwin Hilinsk**, and graduate student mentor **Amirhossein Zareihassangheshlaghi**. Taylor focused on the synthesis of barium calcium magnesium silicide zintl phase crystals grown from magnesium flux. When asked about her motivation to apply for this program, Taylor said it stemmed from an inspiring advising meeting with her advisor at MU, **Anna Fedor, Ph.D.**, who instilled in her the belief that she could undertake such a significant challenge. Encouraged by Dr. Fedor and **John Morgan, Ph.D.**, who wrote her recommendation letters as a key member of MU's Chemistry faculty, Taylor felt empowered to pursue this opportunity.





According to Taylor, the most surprising aspect of the research experience was discovering the vastness of chemistry as a field. Taylor described her own work as focusing on “shake and bake” chemistry, involving solid metals rather than the acids commonly associated with lab work.



During her time in the program, Taylor learned to work independently and to approach problems with a critical mindset, which was crucial for her research. She learned the importance of collaboration and asking for help, particularly in a new environment filled with unfamiliar faces and equipment. Embracing constructive criticism became a vital part of her research journey, as she understood that setbacks are inherent to the scientific process. Taylor’s experience underscored the idea that persistence is vital: when experiments don’t go as planned, the focus should be on learning and improving, a lesson she found particularly meaningful.

Looking back, one of Taylor's favorite moments from the program was the sense of camaraderie among her fellow research students. She described them as some of the most incredible people she has ever met, noting how much fun they had together. Taylor reflected on how it didn’t matter what they were doing; being together brought joy and created lasting relationships.

Moreover, she emphasized the importance of support from her peers. "No matter what happened in the lab that day, even if experiments went awry, returning to a group filled with love and compassion was incredibly reassuring," she shared. "It was crazy to think we were all strangers before this, and now we have this deep connection." Taylor also expressed profound gratitude for Dr. Fedor, stating, "I couldn’t have done it without her. She is truly incredible, and I give her all the praise in the world because I would be nothing without her."



A Lasting Tribute:









PHOTOS FROM TOP TO BOTTOM

1. Members of the Class of 1968
2. Nurse and students using autoclave machine to sterilize equipment, circa 1960-1965
3. Students advertise career guidance tours in nursing education,1969
4. Nursing students and administrators outside Wilkes-Barre City Hospital building, 1893

Honoring the Legacy of Nursing in Northeastern Pennsylvania

The Wilkes-Barre General Hospital School of Nursing Alumni Association presented a donation to the Center for Nursing History of Northeastern Pennsylvania at Misericordia University on October 22, 2024. The Center for Nursing History was chosen to receive the gift through the vote of active members and consisted of the final balance in the Association treasury.

The Wilkes-Barre City Hospital (which became Wilkes-Barre General Hospital in 1925) Training School for Nurses opened in 1887, making it the first in the region and one of the original "Nightingale schools" in the United States. The Alumni Association was established in 1895 and disbanded in 2024, marking nearly 130 years.

In the 19th century, hospitals in the United States began to transform the nursing workforce significantly. Before being situated in colleges and universities, hospital-based nursing schools trained and educated the workforce of professional nurses ready to staff the attached hospitals.

The Center is dedicated to preserving local nursing history. As nursing schools and hospitals in the region merged and closed over the course of the 20th century, interested faculty and alumni took it upon themselves to save materials documenting their school activities and student and work experiences. The Center was founded in 2005 to address the need to preserve this rich—and quickly disappearing—local history. Material from the Wilkes-Barre General Hospital School of Nursing comprises the largest portion of the Center's collections; the School of Nursing was in operation for nearly a century, graduating its last class in 1974. The Center's analog collection comprises correspondence, diaries, photographs, memorabilia, textiles, books, ephemera, medical instruments and equipment, oral histories, audio/visual material, and printed matter, dating approximately between 1897 and the early 2000s. The materials in the collection are acquired largely through the donations of nurses and their families.

For more information about the Center and its collections, please scan the QR code.

CHEERING FOR CHARITY





Every November, the Anderson Sports and Health Center at Misericordia University comes alive with the spirit of competition, teamwork, and generosity during the Cougar Cheer Challenge. This annual cheerleading competition, which attracts over 50 teams, is not just about routines and stunts—it is also home to the Charity Cup, an inspiring food drive that makes a significant impact in the local community.

Now in its ninth year, the Charity Cup began in 2016 as a heartfelt response to a pressing community need. When the Back Mountain Food Pantry at Trucksville Early Childhood Education Center struggled to stock its shelves, Misericordia's cheerleading program saw an opportunity. "We had so many athletes and spectators visiting campus; it just made sense," said Tara Sinclair, head coach. "We met with the captains and decided to make a difference." The premise is simple yet impactful: teams and spectators are challenged to bring as many non-perishable food items as possible. The effort culminates in announcing two winners, one recreational team and one high school team, who earn free registration for the following year's competition. While the bragging rights are fun, the real reward is the mountain of donations collected to fight hunger and support local families.

The 2024 Charity Cup surpassed expectations, with 5,203 non-perishable items collected in 12 hours. Senior team member Isabella Davis, who spearheaded this year's effort, managed the collection, sorting, and delivery with her teammates. "It is a leadership opportunity for our athletes," explained Davis.



Following the event, the donations were delivered to six local organizations: Sweet Valley Church of Christ Food Pantry, Fellowship Church Food Pantry, Back Mountain EMS, McAuley Market, The Back Mountain Food Pantry, and The Wilkes-Barre City Fire Department. Each delivery carried the practical gift of nourishment and a message of compassion and care.

For the athletes involved, the Charity Cup is about more than winning trophies or perfecting routines. "It is important to give back to the community," Sinclair said. "Our college athletes have the opportunity to reflect on their personal blessings while lending a hand to those who are struggling. It is a humbling experience that helps them grow as athletes and individuals."

This annual tradition has become a cornerstone of the Cougar Cheer Challenge, reminding participants and spectators alike of the power of collective action. What began as a small act of kindness has evolved into a powerful combination of athleticism and altruism. As the cheerleading program looks ahead to its 10th year of the Charity Cup, the goals remain the same: to spread hope, inspire leadership, and bring people together.

A Legacy of Learning: *The Augustine Family's* MU Journey



For the Augustine family, Misericordia University is more than an institution of higher education — it is a second home. This December, the family's legacy deepened as Francesca Augustine '24, crossed the stage, becoming the sixth member of her family to graduate from MU.

Francesca follows in the footsteps of her mother, Lailani Augustine '16, '23, Misericordia's director of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving, and her siblings: Jeffrey Augustine '19; Dominic Augustine '20; Giovana Augustine-Boroch '18, '21; and brother-in-law Dr. Christopher Boroch '15, '18.



In 2007, **LAILANI** and her husband moved back to Northeast Pennsylvania from the Lehigh Valley with their children. With about two years of college completed, Lailani discovered Misericordia while seeking local employment. She was inspired to complete her undergraduate degree while raising three children through her work in the Center for Adult and Continuing Education. "I am grateful for that journey because my children were able to watch me not only be a working professional woman, but also understand that your journey in life is not a straight shot," Lailani said.



DOMINIC Augustine '20, whose graduation occurred during the height of the global pandemic, emphasized how Misericordia's values carried him through challenging times: "As a member of the Class of 2020, our graduation wasn't traditional because of the global pandemic. However, we faced adversity together and persevered by finding strength in one another and the values of Misericordia — Mercy, Service, Justice, and Hospitality. These core values are more than just words; they are living principles that helped us as students and continue to guide me today as an alum. Misericordia will always hold a special place in my heart."

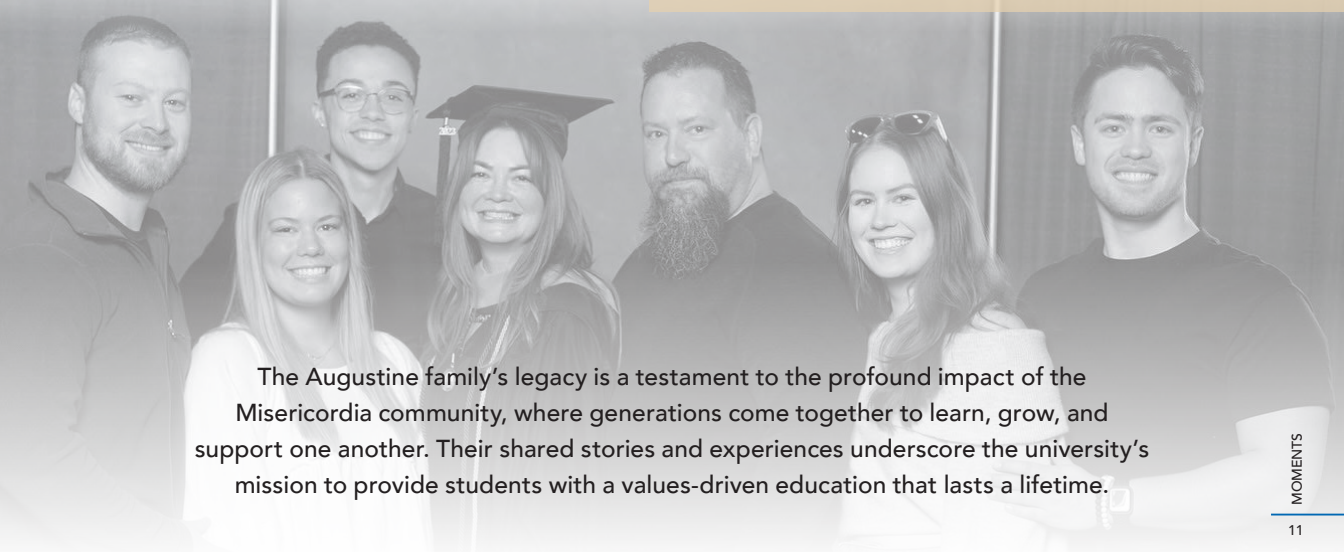
Growing up, Lailani's children spent much time on campus and became accustomed to its family-oriented environment. "So, when they began their college journey, it felt like home," Lailani said. "It really, truly is."



Reflecting on her time at MU, **FRANCESCA** shared how her experience shaped her personally and professionally: "Representing MU as an admissions ambassador, I have been able to share my journey and build amazing friendships with future students and their families. I know the bonds I have forged will last a lifetime, and I will forever be grateful to MU for providing me with an education and giving me 'my people' — the ones who helped make my journey truly unforgettable."



For **GIOVANA** Augustine-Boroch '18, '21, her time at Misericordia was transformative: "Misericordia is more than just a university to me. It is a place of new beginnings, endless possibilities, and where my family grew. To say I am thankful for my experience is an understatement. My biggest takeaway is from Catherine McAuley herself: 'We must strive to do ordinary things extraordinarily well.' Misericordia cultivates a community of people doing extraordinary things together, and I'm blessed to have had that opportunity."



The Augustine family's legacy is a testament to the profound impact of the Misericordia community, where generations come together to learn, grow, and support one another. Their shared stories and experiences underscore the university's mission to provide students with a values-driven education that lasts a lifetime.

MERCY THRIVES 100 1924 – 2024

A CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION WEEKEND TO REMEMBER

The weekend of October 18-20 at Misericordia University was more than an event - it was an unforgettable journey through 100 years of history, tradition, and togetherness as part of Mercy Thrives, our anniversary celebration. The campus resonated with alumni, students, faculty, staff, families, and friends celebrating a century of Mercy education. From the nostalgia of the past to the exciting visions of times yet to come, this milestone weekend personified that special spirit which makes Misericordia a unique and cherished community.

Friday kicked off with the Brassington Athletic Dome Dedication, followed by the 100 Years of Legacy and Learning event in Sandy and Marlene Insalaco Hall. Hallways became galleries displaying the latest in student-faculty research including topics such as brain injuries and global education strategies. Alumni mingled with students to share experiences and marvel at how different the university has become as lively conversation filled the air. The blend of past achievements and future possibilities helped people from multiple generations relate to each other in a true "community realized" spirit, emphasizing the university's current marketing tag line.

Friday night's activities concluded with the 22nd Annual Athletics Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony at the Anderson Sport-Health Center. The evening celebrated the Class of 2024 inductees' phenomenal accomplishments and the spirit they brought onto the field. Cheers and laughter filled the room as alumni reminisced about athletic victories and moments of camaraderie. The evening's reception inspired lively conversations and heartfelt toasts that rekindled bonds of Cougar pride.

Saturday began with Archie's "Tailgating"—a raucous gathering full of laughter, the sizzle of the grills, and an all-embracing Misericordia blue and gold sea in the North Parking Lot. The Homecoming spirit was alive and infectious. Traditional tailgate fare was shared among the stories of yesterday and today. New among the many favorite events was the "Crown the Cougar Cubs" contest, where the little ones—many children and grandchildren of alumni—

competed for the titles of Cougar Cub Prince and Princess, stealing the show with smiles and cheers all around. This year, Avery Gorel, great-grandson of Anne Marie Yeager '65, was crowned Cougar Cub Prince, and Emily Dieffenbacher, daughter of Lesley Dieffenbacher '03, '07, was crowned Cougar Cub Princess.

Later, Rory Scialabba, '25 and Skylar Bianchi, '25 were named Homecoming King and Queen.

Adding to the excitement, the football team capped off the day with a thrilling victory, energizing the crowd and cementing a memorable Homecoming celebration! The weekend concluded with the Alumni Memorial Mass celebrated at the University Chapel. This was a time to remember those who have passed on, with homilies and moments of silence. The Mass served as a poignant reminder that Misericordia, at its core, is a supportive, spiritual community linked by mercy with and an unbreakable bond among all alumni.

Homecoming Centennial Weekend was more than a celebration; it was a continuing story of a community that has lived and thrived for 100 years. Memories created and stories shared during those three days will continue to ring in every heart present, motivating another generation of caring, motivated students to join our Misericordia family.



BRASSINGTON ATHLETIC DOME

Among Misericordia's most prominent legacy families, there have been 11 members of the Brassington family, including those connected by marriage, in 10 graduating classes, ranging from 1957 to 2024.

Flanked by more than 100 Misericordia University student-athletes, Athletic Director Chuck Edkins welcomed members of the Brassington family, friends, and campus community to the dedication of the Brassington Athletic Dome, named in memory of Linda Zebrowski Brassington '98. Known for showing kindness to everyone she met, the Misericordia physical therapy alumna lived a life of hope, love, and resilience before passing in the spring of 2024 after a courageous 15-year battle with breast cancer.

Linda's husband, Jonathan A. Brassington '95, a former member of the Board of Trustees, and their sons, Luke and Cole, were joined by Linda's parents, Robert and Elizabeth Zebrowski, and sister, Sue, for the October 18th ceremony. Other family members attending included Jonathan's mother, Esther Brassington; his brothers, Patrick; Peter '92 and his wife Kirsten Landis Brassington '93 and their son Christian; William J. '93, and his wife, Anne McGinnis Brassington '93; and sister June Anne Brassington '97. The MU alumni family also includes Richard A. '88, Leann Fino Brassington '91, and their daughter Sarah A. Brassington '16.

Growing up in Guyana, South America, the Brassington family's Misericordia connection started with aunt Lucia Brassington, RSM, '57, whose ministry included working at the St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in the capital city of Georgetown.



Photo above left: Misericordia University Athletic Director Chuck Edkins, right, presents a plaque honoring Linda Brassington to family members Luke Brassington, Robert and Elizabeth Zebrowski, Jonathan Brassington '95, and Cole Brassington.

Photo below: More than 100 student-athletes were among those who attended the dedication ceremony.

DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF
LINDA ZEBROWSKI BRASSINGTON '98



Her influence sent the five of the six Brassington siblings more than 3,000 miles to northeastern Pennsylvania and the Sisters of Mercy sponsored College Misericordia for their higher education.

A native of Philadelphia, Linda met Jonathan at Misericordia. Honored for athletic prowess, Linda was the starting right fielder on Misericordia's 1994 Pennsylvania Athletic Conference (PAC) championship softball team. She earned greater accolades as a point guard for the women's basketball team from 1993-1997, helping the Cougars to four straight PAC playoff appearances. At the time of her passing, she ranked in Misericordia's top ten in career assists, free throws, steals, single-season assists, and single-season free throws made.

Called a 'game-changer' by Edkins, the multi-purpose dome was inflated on November 20, 2023, and provides off-season training opportunities for many of Misericordia's 31 varsity sports. The facility features an artificial grass field for football, soccer, field hockey, and lacrosse practice and training. The dome also opens additional opportunities for intramural sports and other campus events. "Linda's competitive spirit, her passion, joy, and love of play can be felt in this space. Our students and student athletes will feed off of her presence, passion, and energy for years to come," Edkins added.

Jonathan and Linda's friends and teammates who traveled to Dallas for the dedication included Kristen McGettigan '98, Scott M. Hein '95 and Dana Dantonio Hein '97, and Paul A. Zaengle, Jr. '97 and Rachel Zaengle.

In blessing the new facility, Reverend Michael Bryant, member of the Board of Trustees, former campus chaplain, and friend who married Jonathan and Linda, recognized her as someone who "taught us how to trust and have confidence during times of difficulty and sorrow." He offered, "May the Brassington Athletic Dome inspire all with a desire for greatness to wisely use their gifts and talents that God has generously given to us. May it create in athletes and coaches the right attitude to excel in the classroom and in life, the firm belief in God, themselves, their families, and their teammates, to have great expectations for their future, and the enduring commitment to persevere, to never quit no matter what the score, to never give up no matter what the odds."



Photo above right: Jonathan Brassington '95, a former member of the board of trustees, shared memories of time on campus with his late wife, Linda, during the dedication of the multi-purpose dome named in her honor.

WELCOME 2024 WEEK

100 YEARS IN THE MAKING

The 2024 Welcome Week at Misericordia University was an unforgettable way to kick off the new academic year, and it all started long before the first event began. Planning for Welcome Week begins as soon as spring commencement wraps up in May, with the Campus Life team aiming to raise the bar each year. The result? A week full of exciting events, opportunities to connect, and memories that will last throughout the semester.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS YEAR

The Welcome Week Postcard
Dominick de Matteo, assistant director of Campus Life for Student Engagement, and Jen Martin, lead postal clerk in the Post Office, get together every summer and discuss what the postcard will look like for that year's Welcome Week celebration.

Early Mornin' Pancakes
This breakfast treat was new for Welcome Week 2024. Prepared by campus staff under the tent on the patio outside of the Banks Center, at least 60 lbs. of pancakes, and 18 lbs. of chocolate chips were consumed by hungry students.

Welcome Back Bingo with the President & Vice Presidents
The VPs and the President hosted six rounds of bingo, with awesome prizes on the line and a bunch of snacks for all. While calling bingo and serving popcorn, they also served popping boba drinks!

Glow Golf & The MU Chicken Bowl
The large tent on the patio transformed into a black-light, neon mini golf experience and the 'Famous MU Chicken Bowl' meal was the featured food item!

S'mores of the Yard
This has been a staple event since Welcome Week began in 2018. It's in partnership with The Student Success Center, and the turnout is always nearly 300 students.

Does Your Milkshake Bring All the Cougars to the Yard
Attendees got a milkshake topped with a whole donut. It was a chilly late summer evening and not necessarily milkshake weather, but more than 300 students enjoyed the frosty treats.

Campus Life, led by Dominick, is at the heart of Welcome Week, but the entire campus community comes together to make it a success. Dominick and a dedicated group of student helpers are responsible for the incredible decorations around campus—most notably the large hand-painted sign that hangs in the lobby of the Banks Student Life Center. Each year, they go all out to make sure the space feels festive and welcoming.

During Welcome Week, there were over 60 events, starting as early as 8:00 a.m. and going well into the evening, past 10:00 p.m. Throughout the week, students, staff, and faculty came together to create an atmosphere of excitement and camaraderie. “There was always something going on, and it really made the start of the semester feel special,” shared one student, echoing the sentiment felt by many.

“Welcome Week at Misericordia University is a cherished tradition that offers a unique opportunity for all new and returning students to connect with one another, embrace the campus community, and immerse themselves in the charisms that define our university. It’s the perfect way to begin an educational journey, form lasting bonds, and rekindle friendships, all while engaging in the activities that make our campus vibrant and welcoming," says Dominick.

















MERCY in Action:

Advocating for Non-Violence and

In October, Misericordia University students participated in the Mercy Justice Advocacy Conference in Washington, D.C. This event focused on non-violence and how it is interrelated with the Sisters of Mercy's other critical concerns. Hosted by the Sisters of Mercy and Mercy schools across the country, the conference offered attendees the chance to engage in discussions with peers, hear from influential speakers, and speak to advocates for social justice causes, primarily non-violence. The students also had the opportunity to meet with representatives and share their perspectives. Ava Rockey '26, one of the attendees from Misericordia, shared that the conference was, "An analysis of where there is violence in our world, and teaching us how to live through non-violence, not just the absence of violence, but a cultural and societal change where we do not accept violence or incorporate it into our daily life. For example, language, we have much colloquial language that invokes violent images without us realizing it, such as 'killing two birds with one stone.'"

One of the most impactful aspects of the conference was the opportunity to connect with students from other Mercy institutions. "Everyone from the other schools was absolutely fantastic," said Rockey. "We learned so much being in discussions with others and hearing from their experiences."

Amanda Prinzi '26, shared that they did small group sessions about the critical concerns and how they can be addressed on campus. These exchanges deepened the students' understanding of how different regions are affected by violence. Prinzi was struck by the story of a 15-year-old boy living in an area where violence has been normalized, and it is common for guns to go off during conversations while he is outside with his friends. "It is so horrible to hear that is someone's, especially a child's, reality so close to home," she said. "Everything is so local, and it is eye-opening that you do not know what someone is going through until they talk about it," she added.

The students were also able to learn about the community programs they have in place to stop violence in the community." Abby Mosteller '26, shared, "We got to make a lot of really nice connections with the Sisters of Mercy and hear about a lot of the work they do."

A highlight of the conference was the opportunity to meet with









congressional aides on Capitol Hill. "We were able to talk to Regina, an aide for Sen. Bob Casey, who was absolutely fantastic," Rockey said. "She genuinely cared about the issues and wanted to hear from us." Prinzi shared how the experience deepened her commitment to action. "I have always been a social justice advocate, and there is a lot to be done, but as Catherine McAuley says, 'small steps,' so I think I can now see the impact of small things more than I was able to before, even if it is just a phone call or text message, you are making a change," says Prinzi.

The conference gave students a chance to reflect on their lives. "It is a personal journey of cultural change," Rockey said. "Laws can be changed, but it has to start with you deciding that you want to live nonviolently." The students also discussed ways to address Mercy's critical concerns on their own campuses. The students offered advice for others considering attending similar events: "Embrace being uncomfortable," Prinzi said. "Don't be afraid to go to a conference about a topic you do not know about."







Justice in D.C.

MISERICORDIA SPOTLIGHT
STAFF AND FACULTY



Jennifer M. Black, Ph.D.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AND CHAIR OF HISTORY

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT WORKING AT THE UNIVERSITY?

I love working with my students and seeing them mature as scholars between the first and fourth years. Teaching at Misericordia has allowed me to wear many different hats—both in terms of my roles here and the classes I teach—but I always enjoy creating opportunities for students to grow intellectually.

WHAT WORK OR PROJECTS HAVE YOU BEEN MOST PROUD OF DURING YOUR TIME AT THE UNIVERSITY?

I am very proud of the work I've done with the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) program, both as a faculty mentor and now as the Director.

DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE THAT YOU WOULD SHARE TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR PROFESSIONAL LIFE?

Do not be afraid to try new things, even if it means taking a class outside your major, just for fun. Sometimes, those are the best and most memorable classes. My second piece of advice is to be open to opportunity. You make impressions on people wherever you meet them; it is important to always put your best foot forward and network, network, network!



Dominick de Matteo

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF CAMPUS LIFE

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT WORKING AT THE UNIVERSITY?

One of the highlights is being in an environment that allows me to tap into my creativity and design memorable events for our students. I love collaborating with the Cougar Activity Council (CAC) to bring their ideas to life, combining them with my own to create unique, fresh activities that stand out from those offered at other universities and colleges. Another aspect I appreciate is the opportunity to work with a diverse group of students. This role allows me to connect with students I might not have had the chance to engage with otherwise.

WHAT WORK OR PROJECTS HAVE YOU BEEN MOST PROUD OF DURING YOUR TIME AT THE UNIVERSITY?

There are so many events that I could mention, but one project I am particularly proud of is the creation of our annual Welcome Week celebration during the first week of school. We started this event seven years ago, and it has since become a beloved tradition that kicks off the new academic year. It brings together various campus departments to organize over 60 events throughout the week, creating an exciting and engaging start for our students. Another event that holds a special place for me is our Five Days of Giveaways during the Christmas season. It is one of the most wonderful times of the year!

McGlynn Kids Day









The McGlynn Kids Day, hosted by Misericordia University's Mission, Ministry, and Service Office, was a vibrant celebration of community and support for local youth.

This year's Kids Day brought together 52 children from the McGlynn Learning Center and 35 Misericordia University volunteers. Numerous clubs and teams at Misericordia organized activities, including crafts, games, sports, and relay races. Creative projects like "I'm Thankful" crafts and turkey hats added to the fun. With games like Chuck-a-Duck and freeze dance, the event embodied the spirit of joy, connection, and the McGlynn Center's commitment to enriching young lives.

The McGlynn Center, founded in 1988 by the Sisters of Mercy and the Wilkes-Barre Housing Authority, is dedicated to providing educational, cultural, and recreational opportunities for children living in the Boulevard Townhomes and Mineral Springs Village. This donation-funded initiative offers a safe and welcoming space for youth.



PASSAN HALL

Recently completed renovations and upgrades to Misericordia University's John J. Passan Hall provide cutting-edge facilities for both the Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) and Nursing departments in the College of Health Science and Education.

The newly renovated SLP department now offers a fully integrated learning and clinical environment, expanding its services and capabilities. Key upgrades include:

- Two SLP classrooms with advanced technology for dynamic learning experiences.
- Four Student Resource Rooms designed to encourage individual study and collaboration.
- The Specialized Pediatric Gymnasiums and Sensory-Motor Spaces for hands-on therapy.
- A Snoezelen Room for sensory experiences during therapeutic interventions.
- A Center for Literacy designed to enhance literacy programs for diverse populations.

"Our on-campus Speech-Language and Hearing Center is a hub of innovation and comprehensive care," says Lori Cimino, M.S., CCC-SLP, assistant professor and clinical director of the Speech-Language Pathology Department at Misericordia University. "From our SharePoint networking system that streamlines case coordination to our four student resource rooms that foster collaborative learning, every element is designed to enhance student training and client outcomes," explains Cimino. SLP's pediatric and sensory-motor gymnasiums, Snoezelen room, and Center for Literacy provide diverse, state-of-the-art environments for tailored interventions. Additionally, emerging technologies—like Movia's Kebbi Robot for children with autism and VR applications for stuttering and cluttering—are integrated to meet varied client needs. "Through the SLP-Connect program, we are extending support to clients with dementia and aphasia and their families, ensuring continuity of care. With 10 clinical rooms and over 5,000 client sessions each year, we are fully committed to advancing the science and practice of communication and swallowing disorders, all while cultivating the next generation of skilled, compassionate clinicians," adds Cimino.

A highlight of the renovations is the SLP-Connect Program, which provides support and therapy for individuals with dementia, aphasia, and their families. This program, and other resources, strengthen the department's commitment to community outreach.

In addition to the SLP advancements, the renovations also focus on elevating the Nursing program, ensuring students have access to high-fidelity, hands-on learning experiences. Key nursing updates include:

- Updated Simulation Labs offering realistic healthcare scenarios to prepare nursing students for real-world practice.
- Low-Fidelity Simulation Space providing a space for practice before stepping into more advanced scenarios.
- Virtual Reality Simulations allowing nursing students to simulate patient care in a controlled, virtual environment.

A before and after look at one of the new student lounge and study spaces.



President Dan Myers

Mike Balonis
Sordoni Construction
Superintendent



RENOVATIONS



The Specialized Pediatric Gymnasiums and Sensory-Motor Spaces for hands-on therapy.



Students in the new nursing simulation lab.

- A Geriatric Simulation Room designed to support the growing need for competent geriatric care. It includes a state-of-the-art geriatric simulator and additional equipment to enhance care for older adults.

In addition to the clinical and simulation upgrades, the renovation created new study rooms and a nursing coffee bar with a space for students to relax, collaborate, and recharge between classes and clinical shifts.

Annette Weiss, Ph.D., RN, CNE, associate professor, assistant dean of Nursing, and chief nurse administrator at Misericordia University, shared her perspective on the physical enhancements in Passan Hall. She says, "The newly renovated spaces in Passan Hall are a game changer for our Nursing program. By expanding our simulation labs and adding advanced technologies like virtual reality and a dedicated geriatric simulation room, we ensure our students gain hands-on, real-world experience in a safe and controlled environment. These enhancements elevate the educational experience and reflect our commitment to providing exceptional training that prepares future nurses to meet the ever-evolving healthcare needs of our community and beyond."

The renovations also focus on fostering collaboration between departments and engaging with the local community. The SLP and Nursing departments are positioned to strengthen their outreach programs, offering services like speech therapy, healthcare screenings, and other community-driven initiatives.

"Our move to the newly renovated Passan Hall has truly transformed the Speech-Language Pathology Department into a premier learning and research environment," says Glen Tellis, Ph.D., professor and department chair of the Speech Language Pathology Department at Misericordia University. "Doubling our space to 20,000 square feet, we have integrated advanced wireless capabilities, state-of-the-art labs, and a cutting-edge Anatomage Virtual Dissection Table—making every aspect of communication science fully accessible. Our classroom now features voice-activated, facial recognition cameras and dynamic switching technology that bring in-person and online learners together in an immersive, interactive setting. Faculty are free to move about, students are highlighted as they contribute, and online peers appear on large screens, all working seamlessly to foster real-time engagement. This is not just a technological upgrade; it is a bold step forward in how we teach, learn, and innovate in speech-language pathology."

With these expansive renovations, Misericordia University is better positioned to provide students with the advanced skills and knowledge they need to serve the community and succeed in their careers. As these departments continue to innovate and expand, both students and the local community will benefit from the enhanced learning environments and improved healthcare services.

Icons of

Holy Brazenness

Teresa of Avila, Catherine McAuley of Dublin, and Mother Teresa Walsh of Wilkes-Barre

A Historical Perspective from Sister Noël Keller



Catherine McAuley

Statues and icons are a visual part of the Christian faith for many denominations, enabling believers to connect with the figures they portray. Even in secular circles, powerful figures from history are often immortalized in stone or paint to ensure the memory of their contributions persists. These symbols invite viewers to see the person depicted as an example for living their own lives and challenge viewers to replicate, in their own way, what the revered figure has accomplished. Misericordia University has a trapezoidal representation of icons to emulate, for in the area near the arcade that connects Mercy Hall to McAuley Hall and Walsh Hall, three brazen women invite reflection: Teresa of Avila, Catherine McAuley of Dublin, and Mother Teresa Walsh of Wilkes Barre. Indeed, words above the archway as one enters Misericordia's campus introduce them; "College Misericordia, Sisters of Mercy, Provincial House, Villa, St. Teresa." The virtue of 'Holy Brazenness' connects all three.

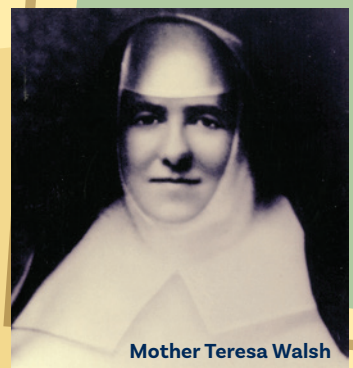
Misericordia exists thanks to Mother Mary Teresa Walsh (1864-1920) for whom Walsh Hall is named. Her dream to start the first four-year Institution of higher learning in Luzerne County began with her surreptitiously facilitating the purchase of property in Dallas, Pennsylvania in 1913. For in using businessmen to represent her, the owner of the property never knew he was selling land to a Catholic order of nuns, which would likely have prevented the sale. The onslaught of World War I plus the Pandemic of 1918 delayed her endeavor, and she tragically died in a fire at St. Mary's

Convent, in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. in 1920. Antoinette Ozark, RSM, a sister who was with her as she lay dying from the fire's burns, recalls she kept saying, "Dear St. Joseph, please don't forget my request." How many Catholics have buried statues of Joseph on properties they wished to purchase?! Here, she was asking him to do something on a property she had control over and a deep vision for its future. And he did, as her land was spaded in 1921 on the feast of the Sacred Heart to initiate Misericordia's construction.

"Dear St. Joseph, please don't forget my request."

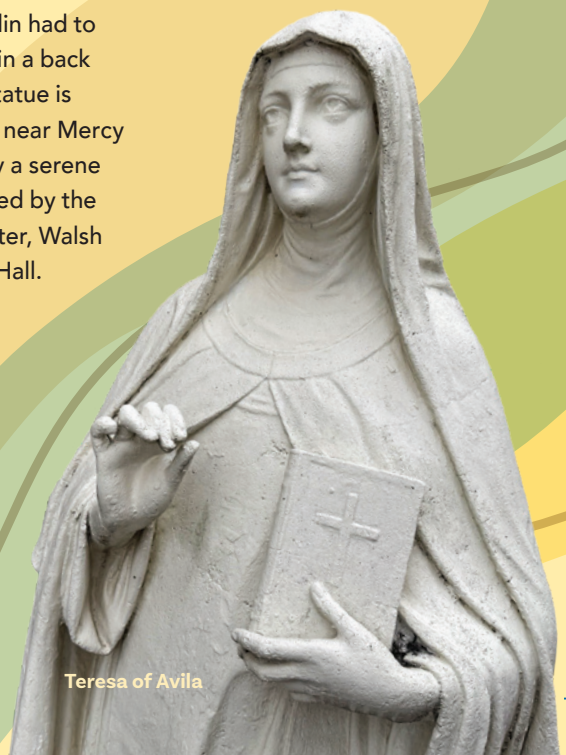
At first, College Misericordia educated only women, including the daughters of coal miners as well as other young women, no matter their faith. In the beginning, Misericordia's property housed a College, a Provincialate (center of administration for the Sisters of Mercy), and a Novitiate (training center for nuns). As the entrance arch tells us on its stone facade, the property was called Villa St. Teresa. It was named after St. Teresa of Avila., Mother Teresa's patron Saint. Teresa of Avila was a feisty 15th-century Cloistered Spanish nun who was a powerful advocate for women. She also planted medals of Joseph on properties she wished to purchase to house her nuns. Some internet sources claim she was responsible for starting this practice. Teresa, the first woman to be proclaimed a Doctor of the Church in 1970, is only one of four women so proclaimed. Recently, her statue, which now stands by the arcade, was hit by lightning elsewhere on this campus, but it survived!

Catherine McAuley (1778-1841), the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, lived at a time in Ireland when Catholics were poor and not allowed to be educated. With money she inherited, she opened the House of Mercy for women and children in Dublin in 1827, two years before the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829. She also made sure her house was in an upscale neighborhood so that the women who lived there could be seen and then employed by their upper middle-class neighbors once they were trained, and she did this at a time when even the Archbishop of Dublin had to build his cathedral in a back alley. Catherine's statue is located on campus near Mercy Hall, surrounded by a serene grassy area bordered by the Henry Science Center, Walsh Hall, and McAuley Hall.



Mother Teresa Walsh

An oil picture of Mary Walsh, commissioned by her parents after she entered the convent, now hangs outside the Founders Room on the second floor of Mercy Hall. It depicts young Mary, a dreamer, who saw beyond her time and who thereby ensured countless students would benefit from her dare to start College Misericordia. Teresa and Catherine dreamed too: with Holy Brazenness enough to make things happen. All three women beckon us in our own way, to go and do likewise!



Teresa of Avila

FROM Campus TO Career





AN INTERNSHIP ON THE PATH TO LEADERSHIP

> AT MISERICORDIA, WE ARE TAUGHT TO BE **Adaptable & Resilient,** AND MY INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE REALLY REINFORCED THAT."

Meet Connor Bevan '25, a senior at Misericordia University who is turning heads both on and off campus with his leadership, service, and commitment to professional growth. Majoring in business administration and specializing in health care management, Connor holds prominent roles as president of the Business Professional Association, captain of the men's lacrosse team, and a member of the newly formed men's wrestling team.

Last summer, Bevan took what he learned at Misericordia into the professional world during an internship with Enterprise Rent-A-Car, where he earned the title of Top Intern in Group 57 of Northeast Pennsylvania. The experience reinforced the same core values the university instills in its students. "Misericordia emphasizes leadership and service, and I saw those same values reflected during my time at Enterprise," Bevan said. Their focus on customer service and leadership development helped me to grow in ways that complement the additional leadership training I have received here on campus at Misericordia quite well.

Service to others was also part of his summer. He participated in a local food bank project, where he and the other interns packaged over 400 boxes for families in need.

"It felt great to apply our Mercy values in a professional setting, working for a company that values giving back as much as we do at MU," says Bevan.

He credits the internship with helping him exercise the resilience and adaptability-qualities instilled in Misericordia students. "At Misericordia, we are taught to be adaptable and resilient, and my internship experience really reinforced that," he said. "Working in a fast-moving environment showed me the importance of being able to pivot quickly and handle challenges, and I think that's a lesson every student here can take with them."

As Bevan heads into his senior year, he is already thinking about how to bring his summer experiences back onto campus. Whether through leading on the lacrosse field or in his roles with student organizations, he is prepared to continue to live out Misericordia's mission of leadership and service in everything he does.



Faith in Focus: The Dr. Marie Noël Keller, RSM Institute on Sacred Scripture

The Dr. Marie Noël Keller, RSM, Institute on Sacred Scripture has been a tradition cherished by people of all faiths and educational backgrounds for nearly 60 years. Founded in 1968, the institute captured Dr. Marie Noël Keller's attention in 1970 as she pursued a master's degree in theology. Over the years, she has held many roles with the institute, growing from entertainment coordinator to liturgist and ultimately being named executive director in 1980. For her tireless work to bring national recognition to Misericordia through the scholarly work at the institute, the Board of Trustees named the institute in her honor in 2017.



"Everybody might not hear the same thing, but everybody walks away with a new appreciation of the Word of God."

The institute was traditionally held in-person on campus at Misericordia University during the summer. "The institute here has always been where the best scholars in the world have come, Catholic and non-Catholic," said Sister Noël. Distinguished speakers would address audiences made up of attendees from across the United States and Canada. Topics discussed included women's ministry in the New Testament and the biblical grounding of Pope Francis. Many attendees returned year after year, forming countless friendships. "One of the things that made this institute so important is that we put flesh on the Word. It was not just the head, but it was the heart. We prayed, played, and were interested in one another's lives," Sister Noël said.



Since the pandemic, the institute has been held virtually, but the mission remains the same. "What we attempt to do is expose people to the Bible—Old Testament, New Testament, the four Gospels, and Paul—and we try to let people see how relevant Scripture is to their lives," Sister Noël said.

MISERICORDIA ALUMNI EVENTS 2025!

ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME NOMINATIONS

WHO WILL BE NEXT?

Nominations are now open for the **Athletics Hall of Fame Class of 2025.**

Help us honor their legacy and be part of celebrating 100 years of excellence in Cougar Athletics.

For more information or to submit your nomination online, scan the QR code.

MERCY THRIVES 100 1924 – 2024

MISERICORDIA UNIVERSITY MILE TOUR

January 31
North Carolina

February 2
California

February 27 – March 6
Florida

Get ready to celebrate 100 Years of Mercy with Misericordia alumni and friends. We'll be getting on the road soon and we just might be coming to a city near you.

Don't miss your chance to connect with MU Alumni & Friends! Visit **misericordia.edu/AlumniEvents** to stay updated on additional stops or to RSVP for an event near you.

SAVE THE DATE

REUNION HOMECOMING 2025

We're honoring MU Reunion classes ending in 0s and 5s, the Class of 2024 returning for their first reunion, and the 50th Reunion Class of 1975 as they are inducted into the Golden Anniversary Club.

Come back and be part of our memories – because MU is part of you!

APRIL 3

OT ALUMNI AND FRIENDS CENTENNIAL RECEPTION

(Invitation only event)

OT Alumni & Friends Centennial Reception

Get ready to rock 100 years of Misericordia! Alumni, faculty, staff, and friends are invited to a special reception during the **Annual AOTA Conference**. Enjoy an evening of conversation and classic rock vibes as we toast 100 years of academic excellence.

APRIL 26

BROADWAY WITH BECKY Act 2

An exclusive MU Centennial event! Alumni and friends are invited to a showstopping Broadway revival of Shakespeare's "Othello" at the Barrymore Theatre (2 pm, Saturday, April 26th), starring Denzel Washington and Jake Gyllenhaal. Directed by Tony Award winner Kenny Leon, the event promises a contemporary performance of classic Shakespearean literature.

MAY 28

Faces of Ireland

Misericordia alumni and friends are invited to celebrate the University's 100th Anniversary with an unforgettable tour through Ireland, guided by Noël Keller, R.S.M., a Sister of Mercy! Don't miss this once-in-a lifetime opportunity from May 28 to June 6, 2025, to explore Ireland's emerald landscapes and learn more about the inspiring legacy of Catherine McAuley, foundress of the Sisters of Mercy. Space is limited. For more information and to reserve a spot, visit **misericordia.edu/MU100-Ireland**

MARCH 27

CHEERS TO ALUMNI VOLUNTEERS

Calling all MU alumni volunteers to help celebrate with the May Graduating Class of 2025. It's your chance to make a difference for the next generation of MU Alumni. Share your wisdom, favorite memories, and help our soon-to-be graduates practice their networking skills and win some amazing prizes. RSVP online at **misericordia.edu/MUCheersVolunteer** by March 24th.



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Save the Dates

MARCH 25 | MARCH 26 | MARCH 27

MISERICORDIA GIVING DAYS

