MOMENTS

MISERICORDIA UNIVERSITY

WINTER 2026



14

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY STUDENTS EXPERIENCE ENGLAND

MISERICORDIA UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

STAFF & FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



ALIAH McPHAUL '22

Manager of Multicultural & Inclusion Initiatives, Misericordia University

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT WORKING AT MISERICORDIA?

The Misericordia community is truly unmatched—you feel its mystique the moment you walk through the arch. Being able to connect and work with a variety of unique people who genuinely care, celebrate, and support you beyond measure is an incredible blessing.

WHAT PROJECTS HAVE YOU BEEN MOST PROUD OF DURING YOUR TIME AT MISERICORDIA?

It's really hard to choose! Some of my favorite projects are the Native American Powwow show, the Dr. Martin Luther King Awards, the United Black Brothers (UBB) Black Male Initiative student program, Pride Night with Women's Volleyball, the Cougar Comfort Kitchen, and the creation of Project C.A.R.E. (Caring Actions Receiving Everyone), with the help of student Ella Utt.

DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE TO GIVE TO STUDENTS AS THEY TRANSITION TO PROFESSIONAL CAREERS?

Remember to give yourself grace as you start a new chapter in your life. Create a solid support system, whether it be through mentors, friends, family, etc. The community you build will help you keep moving forward. You got this!



ANGELA ASIRVATHAM, B.V.Sc., Ph.D.,

Associate Professor of Biology at Misericordia University

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT WORKING AT MISERICORDIA?

I enjoy working with students and making them aware of their academic potential and learning from them in the process. I also appreciate having colleagues who are like-minded and working towards the common goal of making the academic environment a fruitful experience for the students.

WHAT PROJECTS HAVE YOU BEEN MOST PROUD OF DURING YOUR TIME AT MISERICORDIA?

I am most proud of mentoring students through hands-on, multi-semester research experiences that promote academic growth, resilience, and lifelong learning. I am also proud of developing the premedical health professions program, which creates strong career pathways through early assurance and medical school affiliations.

DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE TO GIVE TO STUDENTS AS THEY TRANSITION TO PROFESSIONAL CAREERS?

Always ask questions, persist and don't give up, and be ready to learn from every experience.

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PRESIDENT MYERS ON FIRST-GEN STUDENTS

Misericordia University is privileged to serve students who are the first in their families to pursue a bachelor's degree. Our recognition earlier this year as a **First-Gen Forward Network Member** underscores that privilege. Joining a community of nearly 500 institutions nationwide, every network member commits to transforming experiences, strengthening outcomes, and building structures where first generation students thrive.

The impact of earning a bachelor's degree on long-term prosperity isunmistakable. Nationwide, adults with bachelor's degrees earn an average of **75% more over a lifetime** compared to those with only a high school diploma. Within six years of enrollment, **59% of continuing-generation students—and 24% of first-generation students—** earn a bachelor's degree, according to First-Gen Forward's 2024 data.

"Graduation isn't just about completing a degree—it's a catalyst for upward mobility," says Daniel J. Myers, Ph.D., president of Misericordia University. "Median lifetime earnings jump, and bachelor's degree holders enjoy more opportunities for graduate school, better employment, health, and civic participation. At Misericordia, we are known for our focus on retention and our supportive campus environment where students are challenged to do their best. First-generation gain meaningful momentum with that support and can succeed through hard work and focus."

Committing to first-generation student success also makes campus life more robust and clearly serves our Mercy inspired mission to provide "...a transformational educational experience that promotes intellectual curiosity and critical thinking in a supportive and inclusive community...".

Welcoming students shaped by their role as pioneers in higher education enriches Misericordia's collective perspective and builds resilience and empathy. First generation students all share a similar goal while coming from a wide variety of backgrounds.

"This honor is both a privilege and responsibility. At Misericordia, we embrace that responsibility wholeheartedly. Because when first-generation students succeed, their families, our campus, and broader society flourish," adds Myers.



Alumni

CARRY MERCY FORWARD

at the McGlynn Learning Center

Since its founding in 1988 by Sister of Mercy **Miriam Francis Stadulis '62**, the McGlynn Learning Center has provided a safe, nurturing space for children living in low-income housing communities in nearby Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. The Center provides after-school tutoring, recreation, and cultural activities in a safe environment at no cost to children who live at either Boulevard Townhomes or Mineral Springs Village. Today, two Misericordia University (MU) alumni continue Sister Miriam's legacy, reflecting the university's commitment to compassion, service, justice and hospitality.

Helene Solovey-Hrichison '03, who holds a bachelor's degree in education, has served at the McGlynn Learning Center for more than 10 years. Working alongside her is **Karla Carrasco '25**, who joined the center after completing her degree earlier this year. Both play important roles in the center's ongoing programming and support for children and families, and their dedication reflects the values emphasized in Misericordia's mission.

"Education for children from low socioeconomic backgrounds is an evidence-based pathway out of poverty," said **Lindsey Riddell '06**, assistant director of Mission, Ministry and Service at MU. "The Mission, Ministry, and Service Office is thrilled to support the children at the McGlynn Learning Center through volunteers and programming, while honoring Sister Miriam Francis Stadulis."

Carrasco said her service experiences at Misericordia shaped her career choice.

"I wanted to continue to do the work of service, and thanks to the McGlynn Learning Center, I get to do exactly that," she said. "These students know how much they matter to us, and they have taught us how important we are to them. The McGlynn Learning Center is more than just a job. It is a place where our impacts can lift others and where the students around us continually lift and shape us."

Through their dedication, Solovey-Hrichison and Carrasco demonstrate how Misericordia alumni continue to carry forward the university's mercy mission in the communities they serve.



McGlynn center











FAMILY WEEKEND *fun*

A soft autumn breeze drifted across Misericordia University as families arrived for a fall weekend overflowing with activity, excitement, and tradition. With a packed schedule offering something for every age and interest, the campus hummed with energy—these are a few standout moments from a weekend filled with unforgettable experiences.

Festivities began with a campus favorite: **Legends, Lore & Landmarks: A Walk-Through Misericordia's Past**. Families gathered eagerly as MU's archivist, **Maureen Cech**, welcomed them into a world where storytelling meets time travel. Lantern in hand, she guided guests along familiar paths while sharing the university's most cherished histories and whispered campus legends. From stories of visionaries to tales that sent playful shivers down the spine, the tour offered a deeper understanding—and appreciation—of the heart of Misericordia.

Later, laughter echoed through Lemmond Theater as families settled in for **John Cassidy Live!** Cassidy's whirlwind mix of comedy, magic, and world-record balloon artistry captivated the entire audience. His rapid-fire humor and astonishing tricks kept everyone—from parents to small children—leaning forward in delight. Every twist of a balloon and every impossible illusion sparked joy, making his show one of the weekend's most memorable highlights.

The next morning brought out the competitive spirit, as the **Corn Hole Tournament** invited teams to test their tossing skills. Beanbags sailed through the air as cheers rose from families gathered around the boards. Whether aiming for the top prize or simply enjoying the sunshine and community spirit, participants embraced the friendly rivalry that made the event a lively part of the day.



Just steps away, families found a uniquely charming experience in **Unfor'goat'able Yoga**, where gentle yoga movements mingled with the calming presence of friendly goats. Whether participants were confidently striking a pose or simply soaking in the joy and serenity around them, the session offered a warm, lighthearted break in the day. Mats dotted the lawn, goats wandered happily, and smiles stretched across every face.



Creativity continued to shine inside **Sandy and Marlene Insalaco Hall**, where families joined **Back Mountain Makery to Make an MU Night Light**. Acrylic panels bloomed with personal designs—cougar silhouettes, campus landmarks, initials, and abstract art. Once placed on their LED bases, each piece transformed into a glowing keepsake infused with school pride and shared memories.



And still, these moments represented only a glimpse of the many offerings throughout the weekend—activities, workshops, games, gatherings, and traditions that brought the MU community together in fun and meaningful ways. As families wrapped up their time on campus, carrying handcrafted lights and replaying stories from the night before, they left with full hearts and lasting memories of a truly special Misericordia Family Weekend.







Camille Mann '26

Leading with MERCY:

At Misericordia University, student leadership is more than a title—it is a commitment to service, advocacy, and community. At the center of that commitment is the Student Government Association (SGA), a group of dedicated student leaders working to ensure every voice on campus is heard and valued.

Camille Mann '26 serves as president of SGA for the 2025-2026 academic year, leading the organization with a focus on connection and purpose. Originally from Guatemala, Mann moved to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, at the age of 15. Since high school, she aspired to be involved in student government, a goal reinforced by a close friend who encouraged her to join SGA at Misericordia. She became a member during her junior year and quickly discovered the impact student leadership could have on campus life.

Mann is a Business Administration major with a specialization in Marketing and a minor in Mass Communication, academic pursuits that complement her leadership role. She leads a five-member executive board alongside **Adithya Hanakere Virupaksha '27**, vice president; **Isabelle Romano '25**, policy liaison; **Connor McGee '27**, treasurer; and **Keira McCaffrey '28**, administrative coordinator. The executive board works closely with a 13-member cabinet, with each member representing a segment of the student body to ensure diverse perspectives are included.

"The Student Government has become a major reason why I



How Misericordia University's Student Government Association Empowers Student Voices

feel so connected to the Misericordia community," Mann shared. "By organizing events, advocating for students, and being a voice on campus,

I am constantly looking for ways to make the student experience at Misericordia better."

As president, Mann emphasizes that SGA's work is rooted in Misericordia's mission.

"Although we are here to create events, have fun, and encourage student engagement, we are also here to represent students and advocate for them," she said. "Our work must be full of mercy, justice, service, and hospitality."

Each year, SGA identifies three key goals to guide its efforts. Priorities for the current academic year include improving campus safety through additional lighting, signage, and security measures, enhancing the transfer student experience, expanding accessibility across campus, and advocating for greater inclusivity—such as allowing children of students in the Bourger Women with Children Program to participate in graduation ceremonies.

Beyond advocacy, SGA oversees a wide range of student clubs and organizations, offering opportunities across academic interests, special interests, pre-professional development, advocacy, creativity, and community service. Students looking to get involved and build meaningful connections are encouraged to explore these opportunities.

To learn more about the Student Government Association and discover student clubs and organizations on campus, scan the QR code below or contact **sga@misericordia.edu**.

misericordia.edu/sga

CLOSING THE GAP

MISERICORDIA UNIVERSITY TEACHER EDUCATION FACULTY MEMBERS



THEIR WORK PROMISING



Roberta Yeager, D.Ed. and **Colleen Duffy, Ed.D.,** created a tool that reshapes how future teachers learn some of the most challenging parts of their profession—skills that are hard to see yet can define a teacher's effectiveness. Their recent study, "Assessing the Development of Professionalism in Teacher Candidates," published in Intelligent Human Systems Integration, examines how Mixed Reality Scenarios (MRS) can help preservice teachers develop the professional dispositions outlined in Domain Four of Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Effective Teaching. Typically, teachers acquire these skills after they enter the workforce.

Their work centers on their own custom-designed simulation that marries human and artificial intelligence and requires special education teacher candidates to facilitate an Individual Education Program (IEP) meeting, with digital avatars representing a general education teacher, a speech-language pathologist, and a parent. In this immersive environment, candidates must communicate, collaborate, interpret data, and make informed decisions to establish annual goals and specially designed instruction to meet a student's specific academic, social, behavioral, or emotional needs. The MRS mirrors the complexity of real school-based collaboration within a multi-disciplinary team.

The simulation impressed students. Ninety-three percent of participants found it to be a valuable learning experience, and 87 percent said it felt authentic to what they expect to encounter as professionals.

93%
VALUABLE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

87%
FELT AUTHENTIC

HOW MIXED REALITY IS TRANSFORMING TEACHER PREPARATION

POINTS TO A PATH FORWARD



Moving beyond perception, the researchers sought to understand whether the experience truly strengthened candidates' development of professional skills. While scientific significance was not found between students who completed the simulation and those who did not, effect sizes revealed meaningful gains. Preservice teachers who participated in the MRS demonstrated medium to large increases in self-efficacy related to documenting student progress, engaging families, and acting in service of students—competencies that are rarely practiced in typical field placements.

Yeager and Duffy's study offers compelling evidence that mixed reality can close long-standing practice gaps by giving teacher candidates access to authentic experiential learning opportunities that they otherwise would not have access to. As educator preparation programs nationwide grapple with how to better prepare and support new teachers, their work points to a promising path forward—one where mixed reality helps build real-world professional experience long before candidates step into their own classrooms.

FALL 2025 ATHLETIC

"Misericordia University men's and women's athletics enjoyed an exciting and successful 2025 Fall campaign at both the team and individual levels. Every team qualified for MAC/MAC Freedom championship play. Individual honors stretch across multiple sports and include student athletes that qualified for the MAC All Conference Team and the NCAA All American Team, as well as MAC Conference Defensive Player of the Year and MAC Conference Player of the Year award winners. Team and



Brenna Field '26 – First-team All-MAC Freedom, MAC Freedom Defensive Player of the Year, First-team United Soccer Coaches All-Region, Fourth-team United Soccer Coaches All-American, United Soccer Coaches Scholar All-Region, Second-team United Soccer Coaches Scholar All-American. The women's soccer team finished second in the MAC Freedom, qualified for the NCAA Tournament and ended the season ranked 20th in the nation.



Madison Hedglin '29 – MAC champion, MAC Rookie of the Year, All-Region, All-American. The women's cross country team finished second at the MAC Championships and fourth in the region.



The field hockey team finished second in the MAC Freedom. **Sarah Bogina '26** ended her career in the top five in school history in several statistical categories among goalies.



The men's soccer team qualified for the MAC Freedom championships. **Max Jamieson '26** was named second-team All-MAC Freedom.



Keira McCaffrey '28 and **Jenna Schuda '26** - Schuda was first-team All-MAC Freedom, MAC Freedom Player of the Year, American Volleyball Coaches Association All-Region, American Volleyball Coaches Association honorable mention All-American.



Ryan Weber '26 – First-team All-MAC, All-Region, NCAA Championships qualifier. The men's cross country team finished third at the MAC Championships.



Gavin Morris '26 – First-team All-MAC, Second-team D3football.com All-Region, set school records for single-season tackles and career tackles. The football team finished 7-4 overall and tied for second place in the MAC. The Cougars qualified for a MAC-Centennial Bowl Game.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

individual accomplishments provide recognition at the local, regional and national levels. Our coaches and staff have done an incredible job of providing quality leadership to our student athletes as people, students and highly competitive athletes. These successes help us tremendously on the recruitment front. Quality high school student athletes seek to further their academic and athletics careers at schools which attain high levels of success in both the athletic and academic spaces, and Misericordia athletics will continue to be dedicated to producing well-rounded and accomplished student athletes"

~ Athletic Director **Chuck Edkins**



CAPSTONE

COMES FULL CIRCLE FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY DOCTORAL STUDENT

For occupational therapy doctoral student **Emma Katzman '23, OTD '26**, a capstone project is more than an academic requirement. It is a full-circle moment shaped by years of connection, reflection and service alongside the Sisters of Mercy.

During her undergraduate years at Misericordia University, Katzman was drawn to volunteer opportunities that placed her alongside the Sisters, whose compassion, wisdom and quiet strength left a lasting impression.

"As a Jewish student, I was initially drawn to the Sisters' way of life — the sense of community, shared purpose and care for one another," Katzman said. "Their emphasis on service, spirituality, and community sparked my interest from the start and continues to influence how I think about health, wellness, and aging. This project feels like a meaningful way to honor the Sisters and reflect the values that Misericordia has instilled in me."

Those early experiences, along with her growing interest in the intersection of spirituality, identity and well-being, inspired Katzman to dedicate her capstone to honoring the community that helped guide her path.

Her project, Aging with Mercy, Thriving in Place, responds to a gap in both practice and research surrounding aging religious communities. Centered on honoring the Sisters' lived experiences and evolving roles, the project is designed to support connection, purpose and quality of life as the Sisters continue to age within their community.

Through group-based programming and individualized home visits, Katzman's work prioritizes health, wellness, and social connection — areas often overlooked in conversations about aging in religious life. A complimentary mixed-methods research study seeks to elevate the voices of aging Sisters and expand understanding of how occupational roles, identity and quality of life evolve over time.

At its core, the project reflects Misericordia University's mission and the enduring bond between campus and convent. With many Sisters continuing to live in residence and influence university life, Katzman views the work as both a privilege and a way to give back to the community that helped shape her journey. Through her capstone, she hopes to honor the Sisters' legacy while supporting their continued flourishing.

Blue Envelope CAMPAIGN



Misericordia University and the Dallas Township Police Department recently launched the Blue Envelope Program — a community initiative designed to support autistic and neurodiverse drivers by making traffic stops safer, clearer, and more compassionate. The program provides a specially marked blue envelope where drivers can store their license, registration, insurance, emergency contact information, and a brief note explaining their communication needs or sensitivities. When the driver presents the envelope during a traffic stop, it sends a subtle but important signal to officers that the person may benefit from calm, clear communication and extra time to respond.

Lori Charney '93, OTD, OTR/L, CAS, CLA, associate professor and chair of the Occupational Therapy Department, said the program reflects the heart of occupational-therapy values. "The Blue Envelope Program represents the heart of what occupational therapy strives for — empowering individuals to engage safely and confidently in everyday life," she said.

The initiative is voluntary and free; envelopes are available at the Dallas Township Police Department, and residents may also request them by mail through sponsoring partners. While the program is especially intended for people on the autism spectrum, it also may benefit drivers with other communication or processing-related conditions.

Orley Templeton '14, OTD, OTR/L, who helped lead the collaboration, emphasized its community-wide significance. "I was honored to work on this project with Gina Kotowski, Dr. Lori Charney and the Cougars for Autism Awareness Club," she said. "This project highlights the importance of clear communication among all community members to make our communities accessible and safe."

Local students from the university's Cougars for Autism Awareness Club conducted outreach and education around the program, giving them hands-on experience that reinforces the school's mission of service and inclusion. By providing a simple, practical tool for communication during stressful situations, the Blue Envelope Program seeks to ensure that all drivers — regardless of neurodiversity — and law enforcement officers can interact with respect, empathy, and safety.

If anyone is interested in receiving a Blue Envelope for themselves or a loved one, feel free to reach out to Dr. Charney at 570-674-3330 or Dr. Templeton at 570-674-8154.



SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY STUDENTS EN *Experience*





engaged in scholar

Six Speech-Language Pathology students—**Ava Laukaitis '27, Megan Aaron '26, Lauren Dowd '28, Margaret Koester '27, Kayla Montemarno '27,** and **Emma Maley '27**—presented their research at the 14th Oxford Stuttering and Cluttering Conference in Oxford, England, in September 2025.

The international conference brings together researchers, clinicians, and individuals from around the world who stutter or clutter to share current research and clinical practices related to fluency disorders. The Misericordia students presented original research developed through the University's Speech-Language Pathology program.

The students were split into two teams of three. **Glen Tellis, Ph.D., CCC-SLP,** professor and department chair, coached the first team; however, he was unable to travel to England. The second team was led by **Kathleen Scaler Scott, Ph.D., CCC-SLP,** professor, who accompanied the students to the conference.

Each team presented research addressing contemporary topics in fluency disorders, including the use of virtual reality and video game play in stuttering and cluttering therapy, physiological responses during moments of stuttering, and the application of stages-of-change models to cluttering treatment. Through their presentations, the students engaged in scholarly discussion with international researchers and clinicians and gained experience presenting at a global professional conference.

Laukaitis, a junior in the Speech-Language Pathology program,



NGLAND

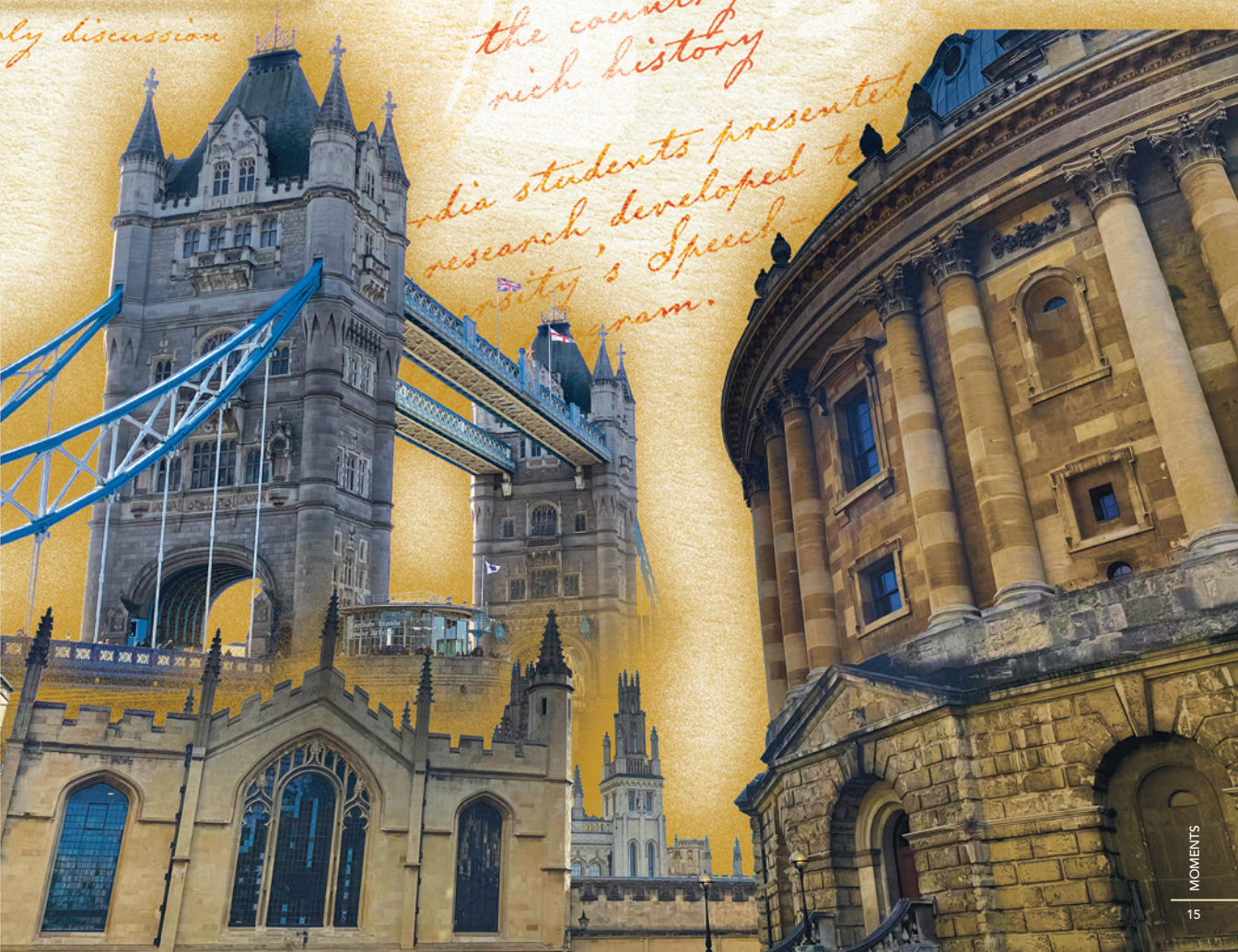


said she and her colleagues enjoyed many activities outside of the conference, including visiting tourist destinations in both Oxford and London.

"We went to the Tower of London. We got tickets to see that, and it was really interesting, because I feel like I don't know a lot about European history," said Laukaitis.

The students saw the British Crown Jewels and toured portions of the Tower that were used as a prison from 1100 to 1952. Laukaitis said her favorite part of traveling to England was experiencing the country's rich history and seeing older structures, some of which date back to the beginning of the Common Era.

"I feel like we don't really get that experience as much here in the States," Laukaitis said. "It was shocking to see just how old things were."



Classmates

MARJORIE HENRY MARQUART '85 AND DAVID PAYNE JR. '85

Selected to Lead *Mercy Transforms: The Next 100 Years, the Campaign for Misericordia University*



Misericordia University is building on the momentum of its 2024 Centennial with the announcement of the next phase of fundraising, ***Mercy Transforms: The Next 100 Years, the Campaign for Misericordia University.*** The expanded philanthropic initiative was unveiled during the University's annual Trustee Associates Gala on October 18, 2025.

A highlight of the evening was the announcement that classmates Marjorie Henry Marquart '85, of Shavertown, PA, and David M. Payne Jr. '85, of Dallas, PA, will serve as campaign co-chairs. President Daniel J. Myers, Ph.D., Roger Howell, chair of the Board of Trustees Advancement Committee, and Todd Anthony Sloan, vice president of University Advancement, introduced the campaign's forward-looking vision and explained the rationale for selecting Marquart and Payne for the leadership roles.

"A bold vision requires equally bold investments," Myers said. "This next campaign phase focuses on priority capital projects, including revitalizing the College of Business, enhancing academic and athletic programs, providing immediate-impact support through the Misericordia Fund, and growing our endowment. Few understand the value of a Misericordia education better than Marjorie and David — two deeply dedicated alumni and highly respected community leaders. They are exceptionally well-positioned to help us succeed."

Marquart is a consultant for Martz Bus and a magna cum laude graduate of Misericordia, where she earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education. She also holds a bachelor's degree in business management from the University of Tampa. The daughter of the late Frank M. and Dorothea Henry, Marquart and her family have long been recognized for their leadership, business acumen, and philanthropy at Misericordia and throughout the region.

The Henry family established the Henry Family Scholarship in 2004, funded the renovation of the former Black Top Lounge on campus, and committed the most significant gift in University history to support construction of the Frank M. and Dorothea Henry Science Center, dedicated in 2021. Marquart also gifted a lecture hall within the science center and has served as a member of the Misericordia Board of Trustees since 2013, reflecting the same commitment exemplified by her mother.

"I believe Misericordia has a unique niche because of the Sisters of Mercy, its mission and its charisms, and because it is forward-thinking," Marquart said. "A reinvigorated College of Business would be impactful in many ways, particularly through collaboration with local businesses. That kind of partnership creates networks for employment and opportunity across the University, including philanthropy."

Payne is managing director of PNC Capital Markets in Scranton, PA and is widely respected for his nearly 40-year career in investment banking. He earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Misericordia, an MBA from the University of Scranton, and a graduate banking degree from the Stonier Graduate School of Banking at the University of Delaware. As a Misericordia undergraduate, he was a founding member of the Alpha Kappa Delta fraternity and



Vice President of University Advancement Todd Anthony Sloan, left, and President Daniel J. Myers, Ph.D., right introduce alumni, David M. Payne, Jr. '85 and Marjorie Henry Marquart '85 as co-chairs for Mercy Transforms: The Next 100 Years, the Campaign for Misericordia University.

served as president of the Student Government Association during his junior and senior years.

Payne's connection to Misericordia began in childhood. His father, the late David M. Payne, Sr., was a beloved English professor and longtime dean of admissions who served the University for 37 years before being named professor emeritus. He died unexpectedly in 2004. Payne's four sisters are also Misericordia alumni: Allison Payne '83; Ellen McLaughlin '86, Ed.D., OTR/L; Susan Payne Ferentino '87; and Catherine Payne '88. His daughter, Sarah Payne Zapoticky '18, also is an alumna. McLaughlin serves as a faculty member and director of the occupational therapy doctoral program.

Payne received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree as speaker at the Academic Convocation in 2006. He has served on the Board of Trustees since 2022 and currently holds the role of vice chair.

"Remaining strong and competitive in private higher education today is absolutely critical," Payne said. "When I look at what has occurred over the last five years under President Myers' leadership, I see an opportunity to maintain momentum. Despite significant headwinds in private higher education, Misericordia has not only met those challenges but has succeeded."

"The Mercy Transforms campaign allows us to continue advancing new degrees and programs, strengthening our already successful athletic programs, and — most importantly — focusing on the student experience and student achievement after graduation," he added.

Reflecting on his role as co-chair, Payne said the opportunity is both meaningful and personal.

"To be asked to serve by an institution my family dearly loves is an honor," he said. "Serving alongside Marjorie, whose family's commitment to the University mirrors my own family's history, makes it even more special. We share a deep appreciation for Misericordia and are excited to help tell its story as we move forward."

Mercy Transforms
OUR NEXT 100 YEARS
The Campaign for Misericordia University

For more information about
Mercy Transforms: The Next 100 Years, the Campaign for Misericordia University,
contact Todd Sloan at tsloan@misericordia.edu or 570-674-6368.

Making Memories

WELCOME Week '25



Misericordia University welcomed new and returning students to campus this fall for Welcome Week 2025, centered on the theme "Memories Await." The slogan encouraged students to embrace the excitement of their first days on campus while building moments that will stay with them throughout their college experience. Throughout the week, the Banks Student Life Center was transformed with colorful decorations and a vibrant Welcome Week logo that established a cheerful atmosphere. A team of Welcome Week leaders helped guide participants, answer questions and create a friendly, inclusive environment. Two standout events drew especially large crowds. Light Up the Arch, a revived campus tradition, allowed students to illuminate the iconic arch in any color they chose, creating a backdrop for photos and social media posts. More than 250 students attended, enjoying walking tacos and the chance to connect with one another. Another popular addition was the Cougar Citrus Shack, where students lined up for fresh-squeezed lemonade with a variety of flavor options — a new idea introduced by Diversity and Inclusion Manager **Aliah McPhaul '22**. "I can't express enough the joy and excitement that Welcome Week brings to our campus community," said **Dominick De Matteo '16**, assistant director of Campus Life. "Seeing the joy on every student's face truly captures the spirit and heart of Misericordia University."



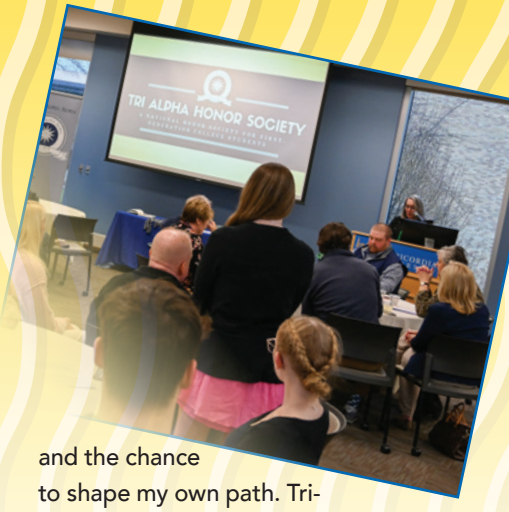






CELEBRATING FIRST-GENERATION PRIDE AT MISERICORDIA

National First-Generation College Celebration Day on November 8th honors students who are the first in their families to pursue a college degree. The day also marks the anniversary of the Higher Education Act of 1965, which expanded access to higher education for first-generation and underrepresented students. Misericordia University celebrated with two days of events. The First Year Readiness Experience (FYRE) program hosted a kickoff in Archie's Lounge with games, music, and food. The first 30 first-generation attendees received gift bags, and all were entered into a raffle for a $100 gift card. Morning pop-ups shared first-generation resources and information about a peer mentorship program launching in the spring. Activities continued at Mangelsdorf Field during the home football game, where students, faculty, staff, and allies visited a First-Gen tent for giveaways, information, and opportunities to connect. A recognition moment during halftime honored first-generation members of the Misericordia community and highlighted their achievements. **Jasmine Talbot '27**, an English major, was inducted into the Tri-Alpha First-Generation Honor Society in April 2025. "Being a first-generation college student means a lot to me," Talbot said. "It represents resilience and the chance to shape my own path. Tri-Alpha has strengthened my sense of belonging and motivates me to keep working toward my goals." Through these events, the university celebrates the resilience, courage, and achievements of its first-generation students and the legacy they are building for those who follow.





MELTING THE ICE



During the fall semester, **Joey Souder '28**, a second-year biochemistry major, contributed to a laboratory project that helped a nearly 100-year-old local business strengthen its foothold in an industry increasingly dominated by national companies.

The project began when **Leo Carr '87**, M.S., the College of Arts and Sciences laboratory manager, received a call from the Center for Workforce Development and Talent Solutions about Milazzo Industries, a manufacturer of ice-melting products founded in 1929. The company had developed a new formulation, Polar Express Ice Melt, and needed to determine whether it could melt ice at minus 16 degrees Fahrenheit. The findings would help Uline, a major national distributor, decide whether to pursue a contract with Milazzo. Although the company reached out to other agencies, none could perform the specialized testing required.

Carr saw the request as an opportunity for meaningful, community-focused research. Before joining Misericordia University, he worked as an analytical chemist and developed a universal method for testing ice melt products. Souder adapted the method for Milazzo's needs, refined the procedures, and conducted testing throughout the fall.

"The project was a unique opportunity to help a local company and demonstrate what I have learned at Misericordia so far," Souder said.

The results confirmed that Polar Express Ice Melt performed successfully at extremely low temperatures. Carr compiled the findings into a formal report and delivered it to **John Wesolowski '91**, CEO of Milazzo Industries, who expressed deep appreciation

for the University's support.

"They were very professional, very accommodating, and they went out of their way to go above and beyond for the project," Wesolowski said. "Prior to speaking to them, I reached out to other agencies to perform the tests, and none of them had the ability to perform them or be as accommodating as Misericordia University."

Shortly after receiving the results, Wesolowski shared that Uline would move forward with the contract. The agreement marks a significant opportunity for Milazzo Industries, offering national exposure and increased stability at a time when many small, family-owned businesses face pressure from large competitors.

For Carr, the project reflects Misericordia's mission in action.

"This project was about more than science — it was an opportunity to mentor future talent and strengthen our community," Carr said. "Together, we helped a well-known local company turn innovation into national success, proving that collaboration can transform tradition into progress."

What began as a semester assignment grew into a regional success story — one shaped by partnership, expertise, and student-led discovery.

A SUCCESS STORY SHAPED BY PARTNERSHIP, EXPERTISE, AND **STUDENT-LED DISCOVERY**

ON A BIG CONTRACT

SUPPORTIVE ATMOSPHERE at Misericordia Helps Adult Student ACCOMPLISH LIFELONG DREAM



Many people have heard the expression, "It is never too late to go back to college." Few students embody this phrase more than recent Misericordia University graduate **Sally Smith '25.**

Smith is now 51 years old, and she graduated from Misericordia University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration with a specialization in Management last May. Smith's collegiate journey started in 1992 at Mansfield University, but she had to stop during her first year to raise a family. Smith worked in warehouses and in retail until 2011, when she took a different path.

Smith said, "In 2011, I had my first office job, and there were many things that didn't make sense to me. I decided to go back to school at Luzerne County Community College, (LCCC) took a few classes, and really started to enjoy it. I earned my associate degree while working full-time and raising my family, which made the process take a bit longer. I graduated from LCCC in 2020 and decided to continue my education at Misericordia in January 2021 because I had always wanted to earn my bachelor's degree, even though I had paused my studies for my family."

A full-time job and a family were not the only hurdles that Smith had to overcome to finish her bachelor's degree.

"I have an invisible disability, which made things very difficult for me," Smith said. "To look at me, people don't know I have a disability. My disability is cognitive, and at times I struggled to understand even the syllabus that professors provided." Smith credits Misericordia for giving her the support she needed to succeed in college with a cognitive disability. "I struggled at first, but I received support through the Student Success Center and the Office of Disabilities. That support is what helped me understand what I needed to get through the rest of my classes successfully," Smith said.

Smith feels her Misericordia professors understood her unique situation as an adult student with a full-time job and a family, and they were willing to work with her. Smith further explained, "The faculty were very accommodating to me. I couldn't have gone to a better school to find more understanding people." While attending Misericordia, she also used the Student Success Center, which provides academic support, tutoring, and guidance to help students reach their goals. Smith said every university should have a student success center and praised the staff who helped her succeed.

Smith, who is now the first member of either side of her family with a bachelor's degree, has a message for anyone who is considering going back to college to get their degree:

"EVEN TAKING A FEW CLASSES IS WORTH IT.

I started my college journey at 17 and earned my bachelor's degree at 50. It's worth it."

FROM **BELGIUM** TO THE **U.S.**

STUDENT ADJUSTS TO LIFE AFTER OVERSEAS SCHOOLING







For Penelope Gomlak '29,

a first-year mass communications and design major, moving between continents was simply part of growing up. After spending all four years of high school on U.S. military bases in Italy and Belgium, she became accustomed to an international lifestyle long before arriving at college.

Gomlak is the daughter of Colonel Matthew Jacob Gomlak, a colonel in the U.S. Army who serves as the executive officer for the Supreme Allied Commander Europe on a NATO base in Belgium. His role placed their family within an international military community that shaped Gomlak's upbringing and worldview.

She spent her first two years of high school at Vicenza American High School in Vicenza, Italy, and her final two years at SHAPE American High School in Mons, Belgium. Although the schools followed an American curriculum, Gomlak said academic expectations were more demanding, often requiring students to work independently and manage long-term assignments.

During her years overseas, Gomlak noticed cultural differences that extended beyond the classroom. She lived among predominantly bilingual populations and learned alongside students from a wide range of backgrounds. Gomlak estimates that roughly 35 countries were represented by students at the schools she attended. Living abroad also required Gomlak to develop independence at an early age. She said navigating daily responsibilities and adapting to new environments helped her mature quickly, skills that continue to support her transition to college life. Her family remains stationed in Belgium, and Gomlak said adjusting to the distance from them has been one of the most difficult parts of returning to the United States.



"I saw my mom in October, my dad in early November, and I don't see my sister until I go back in December," she said. "I don't know the next time I'll see either of them after that."

Despite the challenges, Gomlak said her international background has helped her connect with others on campus and approach new experiences with openness as she begins her first year at Misericordia.

CAMPUS TRAVEL
THROUGH THE YEARS

When College Misericordia opened in 1924, the Back Mountain was a quiet, rural community. The ways students traveled to campus over the past century reflect not only technological advancement but also an evolving culture. From dirt roads to campus shuttles, each era tells a story of change, growth, and student life.

Misericordia's location offered both charm and challenges to get up the mountain. The Lehigh Valley Railroad operated a station in Dallas, and the Wilkes-Barre Railway Company ran a trolley line from Public Square in Wilkes-Barre to Harveys Lake, with a stop near campus. The Misericordia station was constructed around 1925, providing new access to the growing college.

Academic catalogs from 1924 through 1932 highlighted the train and trolley as convenient means of reaching campus. **Sister Marianna Gildea '28** recalled that the first commuter students were picked up by a dark blue "College Misericordia" bus driven by Mr. Tully.

By the 1940s, local bus routes regularly served the campus, and the college often chartered Martz buses for longer trips. The university still uses Martz for many transportation needs today. After World War II, rising prosperity brought more automobiles to campus. Parking areas began appearing near the Administration





Building (now Mercy Hall), and driver's education was offered in the late 1940s. Many commuter students—known then as "day-hops," since they came to campus only for the day—carpooled with nearby classmates.

The admission of male students in the early 1970s led to a surge in commuters. Misericordia expanded its parking lots, and bus service continued, but personal vehicles quickly became the dominant mode of travel – a reflection of American culture.

In the 2010s, the university introduced campus shuttles to accommodate growth and move students about, including to and from the new John J. Passan Hall and the expansion of other university facilities on Lake Street into what is now known as lower campus.

For 100 years, transportation to and from Misericordia has reflected student life, community connections, and the progress of a college continually on the move.



Making a Difference: Alumna Honored for Career Fighting for Social Justice



Few alumni embody the mission of Misericordia University and the Sisters of Mercy with as much passion and devotion as **Rosemary Dvorsky Gido '67, Ph.D.** A sociology and education major, Gido knew from the start that she wanted to confront social injustices, and she has spent her entire professional career doing just that.

A lifelong student of criminology, Gido advocates for incarcerated individuals and the eradication of poverty. She learned mercy, service, justice and hospitality as a college student and those values remain central to her life's mission.

In recognition of her dedication to Misericordia and her willingness to share both expertise and resources in support of the University's core values, the Board of Trustees presented Gido with the 2025 Mercy Mission Medal at the Trustee Associates Gala on October 18, 2025.

During the emotional program, Gido reflected on the unexpected support that led her to Misericordia. Despite being valedictorian of the G.A.R. High School Class of 1963, the Wilkes-Barre native was never encouraged to attend college. Her path changed when she met Mary Hildegarde, RSM, a Misericordia education professor, who offered her a scholarship to attend full time — a life-changing encounter.

One of her favorite memories as a student still brings a smile: meeting her future husband, John, at a dance at King's College, a popular gathering place for Misericordia students at the time. After she graduated magna cum laude in 1967, the couple married and moved to New York state. There, Gido earned a master's degree in sociology and a doctorate in the sociology of crime and deviance



Rosemary Dvorsky Gido '67, Ph.D. , in pink, is flanked, from left, by Katherine Pohlidal, director of the Ruth Matthews Bourger Women with Children Program; Sandy Johnson, Bourger Program coordinator; and Jean Messaros '73, RSM, Bourger Program founder.



On hand for the presentation of Misericordia's 2025 Mercy Mission Medal, from left, are Jeffrey M. Gido; Todd Anthony Sloan, vice president of University Advancement; Daniel J. Myers, Ph.D., president; Wilkes-Barre native Rosemary Dvorsky Gido '67, Ph.D., honoree; R. Gregory Collins, '82, chair, Board of Trustees, and Roger Howell, chair, Advancement Committee, Board of Trustees.

from SUNY Albany.

As director of the Office of Policy and Research for the New York State Commission of Correction, Gido conducted the nation's first study on inmate mortality related to the AIDS epidemic within the state prison population. That work was recognized by the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. She later received an outstanding teaching award for helping revamp the criminology program at Penn State University.

In 1996, her professional accomplishments earned her Misericordia's Mother Mary Catharine McGann Alumni Award. She later joined the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where she was named professor emerita upon her retirement in 2011. Her husband, John, died in 2017 after a courageous battle with cancer.

Gido has since conducted research on concentrated poverty in four Pennsylvania counties, which led her to establish the Rosemary Gido Scholarships for Pennsylvania Rural Young Women through the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education Foundation. With the support of her sons, Stephen and Jeffrey, she has also become one of the largest benefactors to Misericordia's Ruth Matthews Bourger Women with Children Program (WWC), establishing scholarships grounded in mercy and justice.

Considering Misericordia a home away from home, Gido returned to campus in 2023 to lead a master class in empowerment storytelling for students in the Bourger WWC program.

In honor of his mother's 80th birthday, Jeffrey, an employee of Goldman Sachs, helped establish the Gido Family Empowerment Scholarship through the Goldman Sachs Gives Program. The endowed scholarship will be awarded beginning in 2026 and will support students from Pennsylvania school districts with high levels of cumulative disadvantage — Gido's current research focus.

Gido lives in Boalsburg, Pennsylvania, and says she is blessed by the love of her sons, their wives Teresa and Wendy, and her five grandchildren: Matthew, Alex, Allison, Meghan, and Sophie. She continues to work with Misericordia administrators to develop new academic programming aimed at preparing the next generation of empathetic, merciful and inspired social leaders.

A Year of Moments...













Remembering Yesterday. Cherishing Today. Transforming Tomorrow.

www.misericordia.edu/alumni

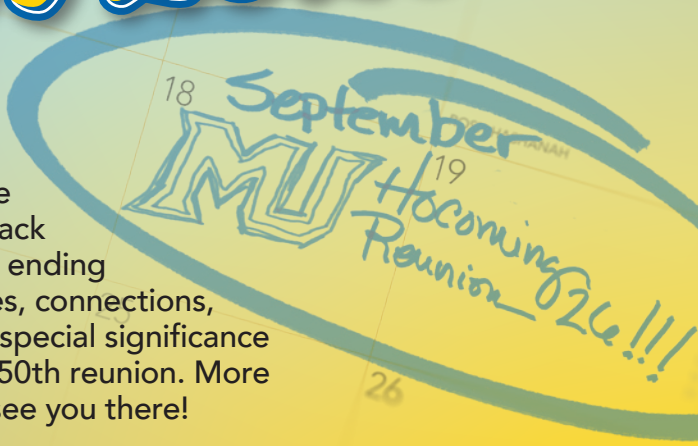
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Homecoming Reunion 2026

Mark your calendars

for September 18 & 19, 2026, and come home to celebrate! We're welcoming back our milestone reunion classes (all those ending in 1s and 6s) for a weekend of memories, connections, and campus traditions. This year holds special significance as we honor the Class of 1976 on their 50th reunion. More details coming soon. We can't wait to see you there!



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