MOMENTS

MISERICORDIA UNIVERSITY

SPRING 2026





14

MISERICORDIA
MOCK TRIAL TEAM

STAFF & FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



MAUREEN CECH, MA, MLS

University Archivist and Special Collections Librarian, Misericordia University

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT WORKING AT MISERICORDIA?

Being at a mission-oriented school. The Mercy mission and charisms of the Sisters of Mercy gave me something I was looking for, but didn't know it until I got here. I also enjoy being at a small school after having worked only at large, public schools before. I'm able to be part of campus, be with students, and spend time with the Sisters.

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

As the University Archivist, I'm responsible for caring for Misericordia's history–so there's been a lot I've uncovered or set straight over the years. But probably I'm most proud of the times when the Sisters compliment my work. I remember being very nervous to talk about the Mercy Hall time capsule in front of the Sisters during the centennial year, since there was a lot of damage to the contents. I said it's the immaterial things the Sisters have given us that endure most, and Sister Deirdre Mullan said I was "a poet." That validation from the Sisters means a lot to me, and I feel like I'm doing right by them.

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

Be sure you know how to write a professional email; err on the side of being too formal at first. If you want something, you have to know how to ask for it! Be clear and polite.



ORLEY A. TEMPLETON, OTD, OTR/L, CAS

Associate Professor - Teaching Faculty
Program Director for Master of Occupational Therapy (MSOT)

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT WORKING AT MISERICORDIA?

I have truly appreciated many aspects of my time at Misericordia, but the experiences that stand out most are those that allow me to form meaningful, authentic connections with students. At the core of this university is a commitment to fostering a learning community where learning is enriched through shared experiences and engagement. These genuine interactions with both students and colleagues have significantly shaped my understanding of how to best support learners and meet them where they are on their educational journey.

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

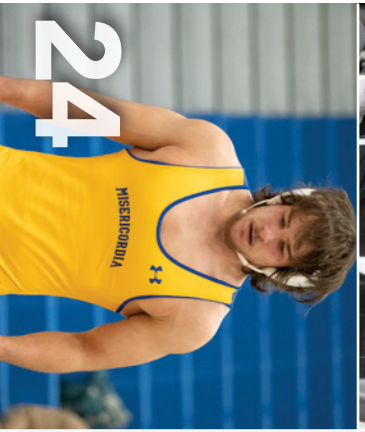
I am most proud of the opportunities where I have, independently or in collaboration with others, developed educational opportunities that promote students' application of their knowledge and skills while also providing meaningful services to our larger community. I am also incredibly proud to be part of the administration of the Integrated Studies Program at Misericordia. This certificate program is designed to provide greater access to higher education learning opportunities among those with disabilities. These opportunities have been pivotal in my path of becoming a better educator.

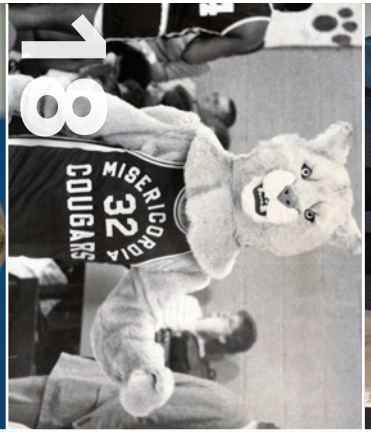
DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE TO GIVE TO STUDENTS AS THEY TRANSITION TO PROFESSIONAL CAREERS?

It is important for every student to remember that knowledge is fluid and ever-changing. Developing critical-thinking skills is paramount for success in any profession as it allows us to remain knowledgeable and relevant in our fields. While we constantly acquire information, what is most important is how we apply our existing and new knowledge. Never be afraid to seek mentors that can help you to further your critical thinking skills.

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A Pathway BUILT ON PARTNERSHIP

One of the most meaningful responsibilities of a university president is helping to remove barriers between students and their goals. This winter, Misericordia University took an important step forward in that work through an innovative new transfer agreement with Luzerne County Community College (LCCC)—a partnership grounded in trust, shared mission, and a deep commitment to our region's learners.

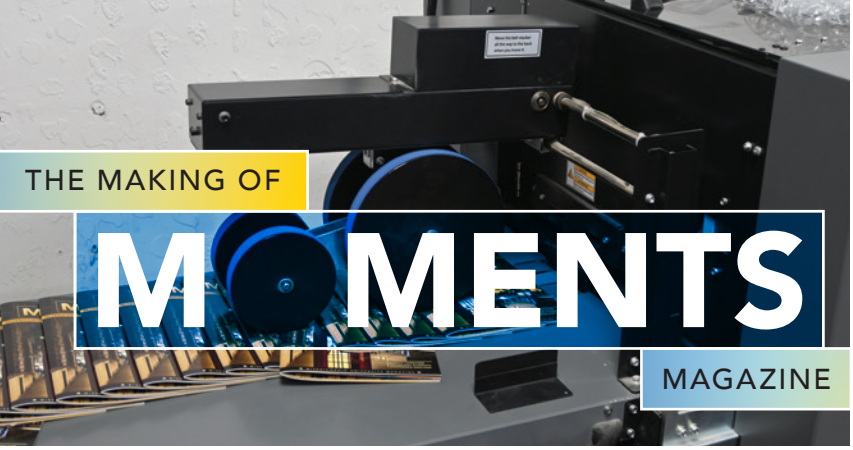
Under this agreement, students who complete an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree at LCCC can transfer to Misericordia with our core curriculum requirements fully satisfied. In practical terms, that means students are recognized for the academic rigor of their associate degree and can move immediately into coursework for their chosen major. Students can save time and money on their progression towards a bachelor's degree.

"This policy reflects what we know to be true: education is strongest when institutions collaborate rather than compete. LCCC prepares students exceptionally well, and Misericordia proudly builds on that foundation," says Daniel J. Myers, Ph.D., president of Misericordia University. **"When students start at LCCC and continue with us, they are not starting over—they are building upward,"** he adds.

As higher education faces financial pressures and shifting perceptions nationwide, agreements like this offer a hopeful and necessary response. By simplifying pathways and reducing unnecessary coursework, institutions create more affordable routes to a bachelor's degree while maintaining academic excellence.

"This partnership reflects Mercy values in action by meeting students where they are and honoring their persistence and ambition," says Myers. "I am grateful to President John Yudichak and the LCCC leadership team for their collaboration, and I am proud that Misericordia continues to lead in creating student-centered solutions. Together, we are opening doors—and helping more students walk confidently through them."





THE MAKING OF MOMENTS MAGAZINE



Students currently working or interning with the University's Marketing and Public Relations department recently visited Independent Graphics, a one-stop custom print shop located in West Wyoming, Pennsylvania, to learn more about the printing process and how materials are produced from start to finish. Independent Graphics, which prints *Moments* magazine for Misericordia University, provided students with a firsthand look at how the publication comes to life.

During the field trip, students observed how printed products are produced, from blank materials to finished publications. Seeing the process behind *Moments* magazine gave students a deeper understanding of the craftsmanship and precision required to bring a publication from concept to completion.

Independent Graphics, led by President Lou Ciampi, has been in operation for more than 40 years. The company works closely with Misericordia University, including its role in printing *Moments* magazine. Ciampi welcomed students and explained how partnerships with organizations like Misericordia help connect the printing industry with future communications professionals.

"It's great people to work with, it's a beautiful school. I love coming on campus, and we have a very good partnership," Ciampi said.

Throughout the tour, students gained valuable insight into how a print shop operates day to day. They learned about the many types of products that can be printed, including magazines, brochures, and other promotional materials





commonly used in marketing and public relations.

The experience also helped students better understand the full production process behind the materials they may design or promote in their future careers. Connecting their classroom work to the real-world production of *Moments* magazine reinforced the importance of collaboration between designers, marketers, and print professionals.

The visit highlighted the importance of collaboration between local businesses and universities in providing hands-on learning opportunities.





ALUMNI RELATIONS

SPRING RECAP

The last few months have been busy! Alumni, students, families, and friends gathered for a season of memorable moments at Misericordia University. From the family fun of **Bunny Brunch** to the warmth and conversation shared at **Alumni Tea** and the celebration of new beginnings at **Last Call**, Class of 2026, each event reflected the welcoming spirit and strong sense of community that define Misericordia. Together, these gatherings created opportunities to reconnect, celebrate traditions, and build new memories—strengthening the lifelong bonds that make the Misericordia community so special.

LOOKING AHEAD!

- **Homecoming/Reunion** September 18–19 2026
- **Healthcare Symposium: Connected Care:** Aligning Education, Innovation, and Community Health. Friday, October 23, 2026
- **The Misericordia Society for Justice's** first event will take place on Thursday, October 29, 2026, on the campus of Misericordia University.

See page 28 for this exciting initiative.



Alumni Tea 2026





Bunny Brunch 2026





Last Call, Class of 2026





UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION AND STAY CONNECTED WITH MU

Keeping your record current ensures you receive invitations to Homecoming, class reunions, career events, exclusive alumni programming, and more.









SPORT MANAGEMENT STUDENTS GAIN HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE AT FIESTA BOWL

Students and staff from Misericordia University's Sport Management Association kicked off 2026 with a five-day immersive experience in Arizona, gaining hands-on exposure to the sports industry while building professional connections.

The highlight of the trip was volunteering at the College Football Playoff Semifinal Vrbo Fiesta Bowl at State Farm Stadium in Glendale. Students served as volunteer leads for guest services and information centers, assisting fans with directions, answering questions, and supporting event operations during the game and surrounding festivities, including concerts and interactive activities.

Misericordia alumnus **Austin Zawicki '21**, a ticket sales account executive for the Fiesta Bowl, praised the students' efforts. "The students were some of the first interactions fans had, and we had plenty of positive feedback from those working the information table," he said.

Students also had the opportunity to speak directly with Zawicki about careers in sports. He encouraged them to take initiative, advising,

"Be proactive. Don't wait for opportunity to come to you."

One student participant, **Riley Piontkowski '25**, had nothing but great things to





say about his experience at the Fiesta bowl.

"Engaging with tens of thousands of fans from across the country, along with the electric atmosphere inside the stadium during the game, will be one I will never forget", Piontkowski said. He noted the opportunity to connect with so many different people with similar interests, all through the world of sports.

Beyond the game, students visited the Fiesta Bowl Museum and met with representatives from Oak View Group, who led a behind-the-scenes tour of athletic facilities at Arizona State University. The experience provided insight into the operations of major collegiate athletic programs.

The group also attended an NBA game between the New York Knicks and Phoenix Suns in Phoenix, offering a broader look at professional sports operations, from event management to fan experience.

"The industry is competitive, but trips like this allow students to see the different career paths available and start building relationships early," Zawicki said.

Overall, the trip provided valuable real-world experience, reinforcing classroom learning through direct industry engagement. "Seeing firsthand the amount of preparation and communication that takes place behind the scenes for a game or event to be successful is invaluable", Piontkowski explained.

From volunteering at a premier postseason event to networking with professionals, students gained practical insight into careers in sports and began developing connections that can shape their future.





BLOOMBERG NEWS CO-FOUNDER SHARES INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Matt Winkler, co-founder and editor-in-chief emeritus of Bloomberg News, offered rare, high-level access and insights into financial news reporting during a recent Alles Distinguished Speaker Series event hosted by the College of Business. The talk was held March 11, 2026, in the McGowan Room of the Mary Kintz Bevevino Library, drawing students, faculty and staff for a discussion on journalism, leadership, and global financial news.

Winkler, who co-founded Bloomberg News in 1990 with Michael Bloomberg, spoke about building one of the world's most influential financial news organizations. Under his leadership, the newsroom grew into a global operation with more than 2,700 journalists across more than 150 bureaus in 70 countries, producing thousands of stories each day.

He emphasized the importance of accuracy, speed and accountability in today's fast-moving media landscape, particularly during periods of financial and geopolitical uncertainty. Winkler noted that even small errors or delays in reporting can have significant consequences for markets, businesses and decision-making.

Throughout the presentation, Winkler shared stories from his career and offered advice to students interested in journalism, business and global affairs. He stressed that information carries real power and that journalists must use it responsibly. He encouraged students to write with transparency and clarity to demonstrate credibility to those in positions of authority.





The event concluded with a question-and-answer session, giving attendees the opportunity to engage directly with Winkler on topics ranging from media credibility to career pathways. His visit highlighted the importance of strong, accurate reporting and provided students with valuable real-world perspective.



FROM REYKJAVIK TO COMMENCEMENT

Growing up in Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, **Eyglò Haraldsdottir '26** considered a few possible career paths. "I remember that it was between becoming a teacher or SLP (speech-language pathology)," she said.

Her decision became clearer during a visit from family members who live in the United States. "I had this game where each day I would teach them three Icelandic words, and how to pronounce them correctly," Haraldsdottir said. "I remember absolutely loving that whole thing, so that really made me think that this is something I should be pursuing." The experience highlighted her love for language and teaching, and it gave her a sense of the impact she could have in helping others communicate.

Haraldsdottir enrolled in the online Master of Science program in Speech-Language Pathology at Misericordia University, completing her coursework from Reykjavik. Our online SLP program is innovative and still relatively rare but opens great opportunity to students from around the world. Studying remotely involved time-zone differences, but the biggest challenge was finding clinical placements in Iceland, where only eight American Speech-Language-Hearing Association-certified speech-language pathologists were available. Securing a placement required persistence, research, and multiple communications with potential supervisors, and the process helped her gain confidence in her ability to navigate obstacles.

Despite the challenges, she said the program was very positive. "My experience in an online program has been really, really good," she said. "Yes, there was a bit of a time-zone issue, but they always accommodated me. I never felt left out." Haraldsdottir also valued the opportunity to get to know her classmates through group work, which helped her feel connected despite the distance.

For students considering an online program, she emphasized utilizing the support of faculty and other students. "If you're feeling overwhelmed or confused, they are your best resource, and you should definitely use it," she said.

In May, Haraldsdottir traveled to Pennsylvania with seven family members to attend commencement after completing her Praxis and comprehensive exams. "I am just so proud that I got to take my family on this trip to see the school and attend a traditional American graduation." she said. "I feel like in the end, I am just so proud for my family to be able to be a part of this, because this has been such an amazing adventure." The experience of celebrating her achievement with her loved ones made the milestone even more meaningful.

Looking ahead, she plans to work as a speech-language pathologist in Iceland, focusing on fluency and articulation, while exploring opportunities to work remotely and travel. Reflecting on her journey, she shared a personal takeaway: "Just believe in yourself and don't give up, I think that's the whole thing."



TWO ROADS, ONE MISSION

The Mercy Transforms: The Next 100 Years Campaign has many stories to tell. This is the first, and throughout this series, we will explore its mission through the eyes of its students, alumni, faculty, and friends, starting where the mission is most alive: the student perspective.

This past March, two groups of Misericordia University students did something not many college students do over spring break, which was showing up for someone else. One group headed south to Belmont, North Carolina, with co-chaperone Vice President of University Advancement Todd Sloan, while the other drove north to Benson, Vermont, with another co-chaperone Assistant Director of Alumni Relations Jordan Mellon '27. North and south, clinic hallways and farm fields, hands held in comfort and seeds pressed into soil. Both groups came home different, carrying the quiet, certain knowledge that mercy, once set in motion, changes everyone it touches.

In Belmont, Todd and his group discovered something that can't be taught in a classroom: that being present fully for another person is mercy.

Working alongside residents of Holy Angels, the students facilitated Bible studies and other in-person programs. They also visited the town's retail store, operated by Holy Angels' residents and featuring their handmade crafts and artwork. Most importantly, the students and chaperones brought something no organized program can provide — the gift of simply being present and sharing themselves with others. There is a quiet courage in that, in choosing to be present, unhurried and undistracted, for someone carrying a heavy load. On that same trip, Todd had the pleasure of meeting alumna Anne Jurchak '95, a living reminder of what a Misericordia education plants in a person and how it blossoms over the years.







Todd Sloan and Anne Jurchak '95

Anne now serves at Catherine's House Inc., the very place the students served. At Catherine's House, the students cooked for and served dinner to the residents. That moment carried deep personal weight for Anne: "I was reminded that my own foundation in service began there." That foundation was written all over the students she met. "It was powerful to witness these students embody the Works of Mercy with such compassion, humility, and dedication. It was a privilege to engage with Todd and the students, and to see the mission of Misericordia so vibrantly alive in the next generation. Go Cougars!"

Up north in Benson, Jordan and her group settled into the Mercy Ecospirituality Center, a place rooted in the same quiet intentionality that defined Catherine McAuley's life and work. The group worked alongside local farms and community organizations, and somewhere between the soil and the people, something shifted in them. Senior Taylor Walker '26 felt it too: "Beautiful things happen when community comes together. The feeling Benson, VT, brought to me will stay with me forever." She added, "How connected we are to the earth and Mother Nature is something that shines true. You can feel it."

These service trips are not footnotes in a student's college experience. They are the education itself, but most importantly, the living embodiment of the charisms of Mercy, Service, Justice, and Hospitality that have guided this university for more than a century. Supporting experiences like these is how the Mercy Transforms: The Next 100 Years Campaign moves from vision to reality, one student, one community,

ONE ACT OF MERCY AT A TIME.









BEHIND EVERY TRIP LIKE THIS ONE IS A TEAM THAT

MAKES IT POSSIBLE.

The Department of Mission, Ministry, and Service organizes, supports, and funds these experiences so that every student who feels called to serve has the chance to go. By making a gift in support of experiences like these, you are not just funding a trip. You are helping fuel a student's call to service and the moments of mercy that transform lives. To learn how you can be part of that, contact:

LINDSEY RIDDELL, MS '06
Assistant Director for Mission, Ministry, & Service
(570) 674-8041
lriddell@misericordia.edu

STUDENT-ATHLETE TO STATE LEADER

When **Alaska Gov. Mike Dunleavy '83** walked back onto Misericordia University's campus this spring, he wasn't arriving as a governor first. He was returning as a former student-athlete.

A member of College Misericordia's Class of 1983 and a former player on the men's basketball team, Dunleavy spent two days reconnecting with the university community that helped shape his early years. Throughout his visit, he shared stories, encouraged students and reflected on the experiences that guided him from northeastern Pennsylvania to public service in Alaska.

Inside the McGowan Room of the Mary Kintz Bevevino Library, students, faculty and staff gathered for a "Meet the Governor" session where Dunleavy spoke candidly about his time at Misericordia. He reflected on the lessons he learned as a student-athlete, the mentors who influenced him and the importance of remaining open to unexpected opportunities.

The visit also brought Dunleavy back to familiar territory — the basketball court. Meeting with members of the Misericordia men's basketball team, he shared memories from his own playing days and encouraged current student-athletes to embrace the challenges and responsibilities that come with balancing academics, athletics and leadership.

For students, the experience offered more than a chance to meet a public official. It was an opportunity to see how the values emphasized at Misericordia — service, perseverance and community — can shape lives far beyond campus.

Dunleavy's visit continued during the university's spring open house, where he connected with prospective students and their families. As he spoke with visitors, his story served as a reminder that a Misericordia education can open doors to unexpected paths and meaningful careers.

Throughout the visit, there was a clear sense that Dunleavy's connection to the university remains deeply personal. Conversations often returned not to politics, but to relationships formed on campus, lessons learned in classrooms and memories created as a student.

For many in attendance, the visit became a reflection of what makes the Misericordia experience unique: a community that continues to shape its students long after graduation.





Whether graduates pursue careers in healthcare, education, business, service or government, they carry those experiences with them — sometimes all the way to the governor's office.

That spirit of lifelong connection and learning continues across campus today. Misericordia University will further celebrate innovation, leadership and collaboration this fall during the College of Health Sciences and Education's 2026 Health Symposium, which will bring together healthcare professionals, educators, students and alumni for conversations focused on the future of healthcare and community impact. Among the featured panelists will be **Sandra J. Federo**, DNP, FNP-BC, director and nurse practitioner at Student Health Services and a member of Misericordia's Class of 1997, whose career reflects the university's longstanding commitment to service and healthcare leadership.

Watch highlights from Gov. Mike Dunleavy's campus visit

Learn more about the CHSE Health Symposium



Alaska Gov. Mike Dunleavy '83

MISERICORDIA MOCK TRIAL TEAM



CONCLUDES STRONG



The Mock Trial program at Misericordia University recently completed its inaugural season, marking an impressive first chapter for the university's newest competitive academic team and signaling a promising future for the program.

A mock trial is a courtroom simulation in which students take on the roles of attorneys and witnesses to argue both sides of a fictional legal case. Each season, teams across the country receive identical case materials — including witness statements, exhibits, and legal authorities — and must prepare arguments for both the prosecution or plaintiff and the defense. During collegiate tournaments, teams compete in head-to-head trial rounds scored by practicing attorneys, who evaluate opening statements, witness examinations, and closing arguments on a point-system rather than issuing a traditional verdict. The competition season runs from October through March, with invitational tournaments in the fall followed by regional and national competition in the spring.

The activity requires extensive preparation, discipline, and adaptability. Once a trial round begins, students must respond to objections, adjust strategy in real time, and present persuasive arguments before legal professionals. Beyond courtroom skills, mock trial develops critical thinking, teamwork, and confident communication — abilities that translate to nearly any career field.

Misericordia's team entered regional competition this season alongside 26 programs, including



INAUGURAL SEASON

Ivy League institutions and universities with long-established mock trial traditions. Only six teams advanced to the Opening Round Championship Series, and Misericordia faced three of them during the tournament.

"For a first-year program, simply stepping into that arena with confidence was significant," said head coach Kristen Rodriguez, an accomplished attorney and experienced mock trial coach. "But we did more than that; we proved we can compete. We won ballots, including against one of the schools that advanced. Judges and competitors were genuinely surprised to learn this was Misericordia's inaugural season. Our students didn't present themselves as a new program. They looked prepared, disciplined, and like they belonged.

"I'm incredibly proud of what we accomplished in year one," Rodriguez added. "And we're coming back stronger next season — sharper, deeper, and even more prepared."

Students say the experience offered both challenge and growth, even for those new to the courtroom. Junior Mass Communications major Jordyn Jarrett joined the team in early January and took on the role of the defendant.

"I had so much fun, and I learned so much even with no prior courtroom experience. I had the opportunity to work on my public speaking along with gaining acting skills and knowledge of legal terms," Jarrett said.

With its first season complete, the Mock Trial program now looks ahead to building on its foundation, expanding participation, and continuing to strengthen its competitive presence. For Misericordia, the inaugural season proved the team not only belongs on the regional stage — but is poised to grow into a formidable competitor in the years to come.

For more information about Misericordia's Mock Trial team, please contact Coach Kristen Rodriguez at krodriguez@misericordia.edu or visit **misericordia.edu/mock-trial.**







The new artificial intelligence major provides students with a strong foundation in computer science, mathematics, and machine learning, while also emphasizing responsible use of these tools. The program highlights the importance of building AI systems that are fair, transparent, and respectful of human dignity. Students learn not only how to design and improve AI technologies, but also how to consider their broader impact on society.

Graduates will be prepared for careers as AI engineers, machine learning engineers, data scientists, and research software engineers. These roles involve creating algorithms, improving models, analyzing data and helping organizations use AI in ethical and effective ways. The program's mission is to prepare students to use technology to solve real problems and contribute positively to their communities.

A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

NEW PROGRAMS

Misericordia University is expanding its academic offerings with two new programs. Both additions reflect the university's commitment to preparing students for careers that make a real difference in today's world.

ADULT-GERONTOLOGY ACUTE CARE NURSE PRACTITIONER (AGACNP) PROGRAM

The university is also launching the AGACNP program, designed for experienced registered nurses seeking to advance their careers. The program prepares nurses to care for adolescents, adults, and older adults with serious, complex or rapidly changing health conditions. Students learn to provide advanced, evidence-based care in hospitals and other demanding clinical settings.

BY ADDING THESE TWO PROGRAMS, MISERICORDIA UNIVERSITY IS BROADENING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS WHILE ADDRESSING CRITICAL WORKFORCE NEEDS IN TECHNOLOGY AND HEALTH CARE.





Hitting the Refresh Button on MU's Youtube Channel

@MisericordiaU • 1.52K subscribers • 129 videos

Welcome to Misericordia University's YouTube Channel, where we bring our campus to you! We have been revamping our page and are proud to share it with you! Visit our page to find content about our academic world, campus life, success stories from alumni, admissions info, special events, and an insider view of our athletic programs.

Scan this QR code to visit our page

Home Videos Shorts Live Playlists

We have been busy producing new content! ▶ Play all





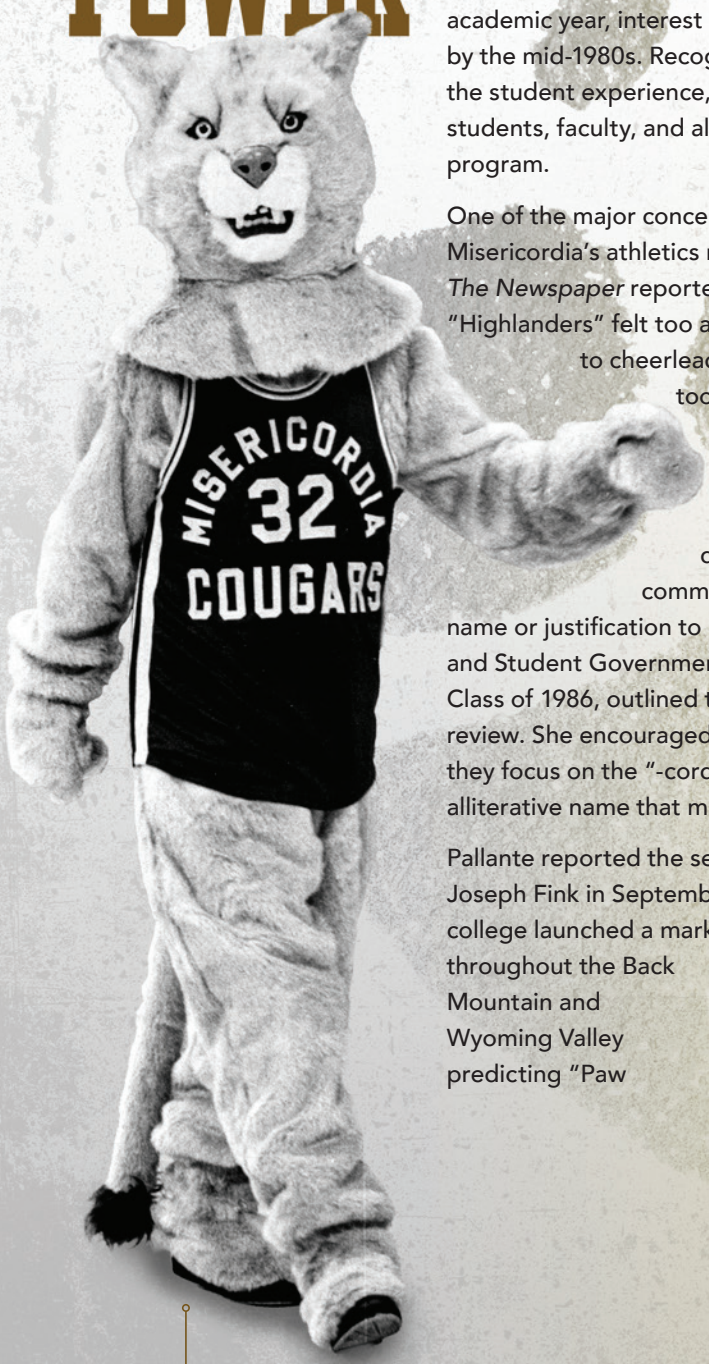








FOUR DECADES (AND COUNTING) OF PAW POWER



Whether cheering on students from convocation to graduation or welcoming alumni home, Archibald McGrowl is a beloved fixture of the Misericordia community. His 40th birthday on January 17, 2026 offered the perfect opportunity to look back at the origins of the university's favorite feline.

Despite the introduction of men's varsity sports in the 1979-80 academic year, interest in athletics across campus was declining by the mid-1980s. Recognizing the importance of athletics to the student experience, the college convened a committee of students, faculty, and alumni to examine the issues facing the program.

One of the major concerns identified by students was Misericordia's athletics nickname. The November 1984 issue of *The Newspaper* reported that students wanted a change. "Highlanders" felt too abstract and confusing — and, according to cheerleaders who wrote a letter to the editor, too hard to rhyme — while the local moniker "Misery" did little to encourage school spirit.

In February 1985, *The Newspaper* distributed a poll to the Misericordia community seeking suggestions for a new name or justification to keep Highlanders. Newspaper editor and Student Government Association President Maria Pallante, Class of 1986, outlined the process, which included committee review. She encouraged respondents to be creative, suggesting they focus on the "-cordia" portion of Misericordia to avoid an alliterative name that might keep "Misery" in circulation.

Pallante reported the selection of "Cougars" to President Joseph Fink in September. After administrative approval, the college launched a marketing campaign throughout the Back Mountain and Wyoming Valley predicting "Paw



1924–1984
MISERICORDIA HIGHLANDERS

1979–1980
ATHLETICS IDENTITY CRISIS

1984
IDENTITY DEBATE

Power" would soon arrive at Misericordia. On campus, gold paw prints were painted on sidewalks and cafeteria windows to generate buzz. Bob Lizza, Class of 1985, designed the first Cougar logo.

The Cougar debuted on January 17, 1986, during a standing-room-only doubleheader basketball game against Keuka College in McGinty Gym. Writing in *The Newspaper*, Pallante described the scene: "Everybody rose to the occasion. Student groups yelled wildly and enjoyed more fun than we can remember. Alumni cried for victory. Cheerleaders proudly unveiled new COUGAR chants and teased the mascot."

The first costume was created by Pierre's Mascots & Costumes of Philadelphia, known for designing mascots for colleges and corporations. The original Cougar head is still held in the university archives and is currently on display on the third floor of the library. Over the years, the Cougar's appearance has evolved, featuring varying degrees of fierceness and either blue or yellow eyes.

The mascot was not officially named until 2012, following another campus wide contest. Erika Dekard, Class of 2015, submitted the winning name: Archibald "Archie" McGrowl, a nod to another iconic Misericordia symbol, the arch. Archie made his debut during the 2012 Homecoming Talent Show to much fanfare including the cheerleaders and raucous crowd.







1985
WE ARE COUGARS

1986
MASCOT DEBUT

2012
MASCOT GETS A NAME

From Classroom TO CORNER OFFICE:

STEPHEN POREMBA '04 LEADS WITH ADAPTABILITY



Stephen Poremba '04 didn't arrive at Misericordia University with a rigid career plan. Like many students, he was still discovering where his interests might lead. What he did have was curiosity, a love of sports, and a willingness to explore—a combination that would carry him from Misericordia's emerging Sport Management program to the general manager's office at Mohegan Arena at Casey Plaza.

Originally from Alden, Pennsylvania, Poremba graduated from Greater Nanticoke Area High School in 2000 and earned an associate degree from Luzerne County Community College (LCCC) before transferring to Misericordia. A single course project at LCCC helped crystallize his direction. Tasked with organizing a campus floor hockey tournament, he realized he loved bringing people together around events. "After completing that event, I realized just how much fun I had doing this and thought it would be great to do something like this for a career," he said.

When he encountered Misericordia's newly launched Sport Management major at a college fair, the decision came quickly. "Within minutes, my mind was made up," Poremba recalled. "This was the career I wanted to pursue, and Misericordia was the place to do so."

As a member of the program's first graduating class, Poremba immersed himself in coursework that blended theory with application. Faculty mentors challenged students to think beyond the playing field. One standout project required students to plan a full franchise relocation. "We had to review finances, build a stadium, create a logo, and develop a brand," he said. "It guided me in learning there was so much more to the sporting world than just being a great athlete."

During his senior year, Poremba took a part-time box office job at what was then Wachovia Arena in Wilkes Barre while completing a full-time internship with the arena's marketing department. The pace was demanding, but the experience was transformative. "Seeing the diversity of events and an ever-changing daily routine was something I never pictured myself embracing, but I did—and I loved it," he said.

That internship turned into a full-time marketing assistant

role weeks after graduation in 2004. Nearly 22 years later, Poremba is the venue's general manager, overseeing operations, booking, finance, marketing, and guest experience for events ranging from hockey games and concerts to graduations and high school championships. "There is no 'typical' day in this industry," he said. "The people are what make this venue."

Now living in Honesdale with his wife, Kara, and their two children, Poremba remains grateful for the foundation Misericordia provided. The University's balance of support and challenge helped him discover a career grounded in leadership and adaptability—qualities he now looks for in the next generation of professionals.

"This was the career I wanted to pursue, and Misericordia was the place to do so."



RENOVATIONS LEAP AHEAD



FORMER PRINTERY TRANSFORMED

Substantial renovations are underway at the nearby Dallas Township building formerly known as the Payne Printery on Route 415, which was acquired by the university several years ago to offer options for future expansion as part of the university master plan. Currently known as the LEAP Center (Learning, Education and Performance), the updated facility will host the exercise science program beginning in fall 2026, marking a significant expansion of campus academic and fitness spaces.

The project most recently underwent the fit-out phase, during which contractors constructed new interior walls to create dedicated classrooms, lab spaces, and a fitness area for athletics. During spring and summer 2026, the ceilings, paint, carpet, tile, rubber flooring, and indoor field turf will be installed. Other improvements, including skylights to bring natural light into the building and exterior canopies to improve accessibility during inclement weather, are under construction.

Once completed, the facility will feature four lab spaces and classrooms, an open collaborative area for students, and a planned juice bar. While those key sections are expected to be ready within the next few months, additional areas in other parts of the building will remain unimproved as part of a longer-term plan involving other campus buildings.

Future phases of the project will enhance the surrounding space with expanded parking, updated exterior lighting, improved landscaping, and new signage along the nearby highway.

As one of the largest buildings at Misericordia, the LEAP Center ranks just behind Mercy Hall, the Henry Science Center, and the Anderson Center in total size, signaling its importance as a future hub for student learning, wellness, and collaboration.







For more information on the university's growing Exercise Science program, please scan the QR code.

CHUCK EDKINS RECEIVES MIDDLE ATLANTIC CONFERENCE LOU SORRENTINO AWARD



The Middle Atlantic Conference recently honored **Chuck Edkins** with the 2026 Lou Sorrentino Award in recognition of his leadership in collegiate athletics and commitment to the NCAA Division III philosophy.

The award, established in 2012 and named for former Lebanon Valley College athletic director Lou Sorrentino, is presented annually to a conference athletics administrator who has demonstrated influential service in conference and national affairs while embodying the values of Division III athletics.

For Edkins, Misericordia University's Executive Director of Athletics and Recreation, the recognition carried personal significance.

"It was a great surprise, and it's quite humbling," Edkins said. "Sorrentino is an outstanding role model, and he really set the bar high for so many of us. It's an honor to be recognized."

Edkins joined Misericordia in 1991 as head coach of the men's soccer and baseball programs. During his 25 seasons leading the men's soccer team, he compiled a 283-159-35 record, won seven conference championships and guided the Cougars to six NCAA Tournament appearances.

After serving 11 years as assistant athletic director, Edkins was named Director of Athletics in 2015. Since then, he has overseen the addition of several athletics programs, including men's volleyball, ice hockey, esports, STUNT, and men's and women's wrestling, while also helping lead facilities improvements, including the Brassington Dome.

Edkins also credited department staff members for helping create a positive experience for student-athletes.

"I want to thank and acknowledge the folks within our athletics department," he said. "It's really important for me that we provide the best experience possible for our student-athletes, and they help make that possible."



MISERICORDIA
MEN'S WRESTLING

BUILDS EARLY SUCCESS IN YEAR TWO



The Misericordia men's wrestling team is only in its second year, but it is already making a name for itself. What typically takes new programs years to build, this team is accomplishing right away. It has demonstrated hard work, toughness, and a commitment to improvement.

From the start of the season, the team showed it was not afraid of tough competition. It stepped onto the mat with confidence and a strong work ethic. Despite being a young program, Misericordia competed as if it belonged among the best teams in the region. Each match, practice, and workout contributed to the team's growth.

Misericordia finished the season with a 6-3 record and won several matches by wide margins, including 52-3, 60-0 and 50-0. The team also performed well in tournaments, placing 10th at the NCAA Region 3 Championships and producing five All-Region wrestlers — an impressive feat for such a young program. **Michael Williams '28**, **Aiden Hidlay '27, Anthony Matas '28, Jaydin Barreto '28** and **Robbie Anderson '28** all played key roles in the team's success. Overall, the season showed that Misericordia is improving quickly and emerging as a contender in Division III wrestling.

One of the program's biggest accomplishments came in the classroom. Misericordia honored four Scholar All-Americans: Robbie Anderson, Anthony Matas, Aiden Hidlay, and Mikey Williams. This achievement is notable for any team, but especially for one in only its second year. The honor requires strong academic and athletic performance, reflecting the athletes' success both on the mat and in the classroom.

A significant part of the team's early success comes from head coach **Josh Roosa**. Roosa pushes his athletes to excel both athletically and academically. He emphasizes discipline, hard work and confidence. His practices are demanding, but they prepare wrestlers for competition. The team has embraced his expectations and mindset.

"I want wrestlers that I am able to connect with and get along with on my team," Roosa said. "We are not only looking for great potential wrestlers, but also for guys who excel in the classroom. Anthony, Robbie, Aiden, and Mikey represent what we want all of our wrestlers to embody — success in the classroom and on the mat."

Roosa said he is encouraged by the program's progress.

"I felt like we had a great year, with a lot of guys performing well, and we have instilled a strong culture to build on over the next couple of years," he said.

Scan learn more about the program



GLOBAL COLLABORATION EXPANDS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IN GUYANA



Misericordia University's (MU) Department of Occupational Therapy recently welcomed four pioneering clinicians from the nation of Guyana for an immersive professional development experience aimed at strengthening the growing field of occupational therapy within the country's Ministry of Health.

Deoranie Babullal, Ashley Singh, Errica Canterbury, and Afeeza Khan visited Northeastern Pennsylvania from February 3–10, 2026, participating in a week of coursework, clinical observation, and hands-on training. As some of Guyana's earliest occupational therapists, the group is helping build national capacity for rehabilitation services and patient-centered care.

Hosted by the Department of Occupational Therapy and Chair **Lori Charney**, OTD, OTR/L, CAS, CLA, the experience introduced the clinicians to best practices across a range of practice settings in the United States.



Throughout the visit, the clinicians explored acute care, outpatient rehabilitation, pediatrics, geriatrics, and mental health services. Training sessions included transfer techniques, ambulation strategies, dementia care frameworks, and sensory-based pediatric interventions. The group also visited regional outpatient therapy sites to observe specialized programs such as hand therapy and LSVT BIG treatment approaches.

Workshops on cultural competence, interdisciplinary collaboration, and leadership development further supported the clinicians' goal of expanding occupational therapy services in Guyana and preparing future practitioners. In a joint message following their visit, Babullal, Canterbury, Khan, and Singh wrote, "The experience proved to be both enlightening and affirming. Observing your service delivery models and clinical approaches provided valuable insight and reinforced that occupational therapy practice in Guyana is progressing in alignment with international standards."

Misericordia has a long affiliation with the people of Guyana and the works of the Sisters of Mercy in that country through multiple service learning and volunteer experiences for faculty, staff, and students. The visit of that nation's OT professionals to MU reflects Misericordia's ongoing commitment to global engagement, professional education, and partnerships that support improving health care worldwide.

MISERICORDIA STUDENTS INSPIRE YOUNG READERS DURING

READ ACROSS AMERICA WEEK





Abigail Christman '27, Nadia Peimany '26

Misericordia University students and staff participated in Read Across America Week at a local elementary school, promoting literacy among young students while continuing a long-standing tradition.

Abigail Christman '27, a diagnostic medical sonography major, volunteered as a reader at St. Nicholas-St. Mary School in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

"I remember Read Across America when I was a kid, and my teachers and readers made it memorable, so I hope I did that for the kids," Christman said.

Nadia Peimany '26, a business administration major specializing in marketing, was also on-site to interact with the kids. Students read The Day the Crayons Quit, completed corresponding coloring sheets, and met Misericordia's mascot, Archie McGrowl. They also signed a large thank-you card for the volunteers who helped make the day special.

Misericordia built a strong partnership with the National Education Association through its continued participation in Read Across America Week. Each year, the program grows, helping students understand the importance of literacy while strengthening the university's connections within the community.



LIVING THE CHARISMS:

INTRODUCING THE MISERICORDIA SOCIETY FOR JUSTICE

Justice is not an abstract ideal for Misericordia alumni. It is lived out every day in the work they do.

The University is proud to launch the Misericordia Society for Justice, a new alumni affinity group connecting graduates across the legal profession. From advocacy and public service to corporate and private practice, Misericordia alumni are leading with integrity, compassion, and a deep commitment to justice.

The new Misericordia Society for Justice creates an opportunity for people to engage with one another in meaningful, mission-centered ways. Members will have opportunities to connect across practice areas and regions, share insights, mentor students and young alumni, and explore the role of ethics, service, and justice in today's legal landscape.

More than a professional network, this is a community rooted in purpose. It is an opportunity to reflect on how your work continues the values formed at Misericordia.

The Misericordia Society for Justice is the first in a series of mission-centered alumni communities, with future groups planned in healthcare, business, and education.

The Misericordia Society for Justice's first event will take place on Thursday, October 29, 2026, on the campus of Misericordia University. The event features time with current Misericordia students and plenty of networking opportunities.

Attorney **Mark Oberstaedt '89** is spearheading this initiative.

"The Society is open to everyone who works in the legal profession, including lawyers, judges, paralegals, and legal staff," said Oberstaedt, who also serves on the Board of Trustees. "I have spoken to so many Misericordia alumni who are eager to have a vehicle to connect with classmates and others who likewise chose to make their careers in the law. I am particularly excited to share my experiences in the law with my fellow alumni and with current students who are working hard to join our shared profession."

For our alumni working in law and legal-adjacent fields, this is an invitation: reconnect, share your experience, and help shape the next generation—while continuing to live mercy and seek justice in your daily work.

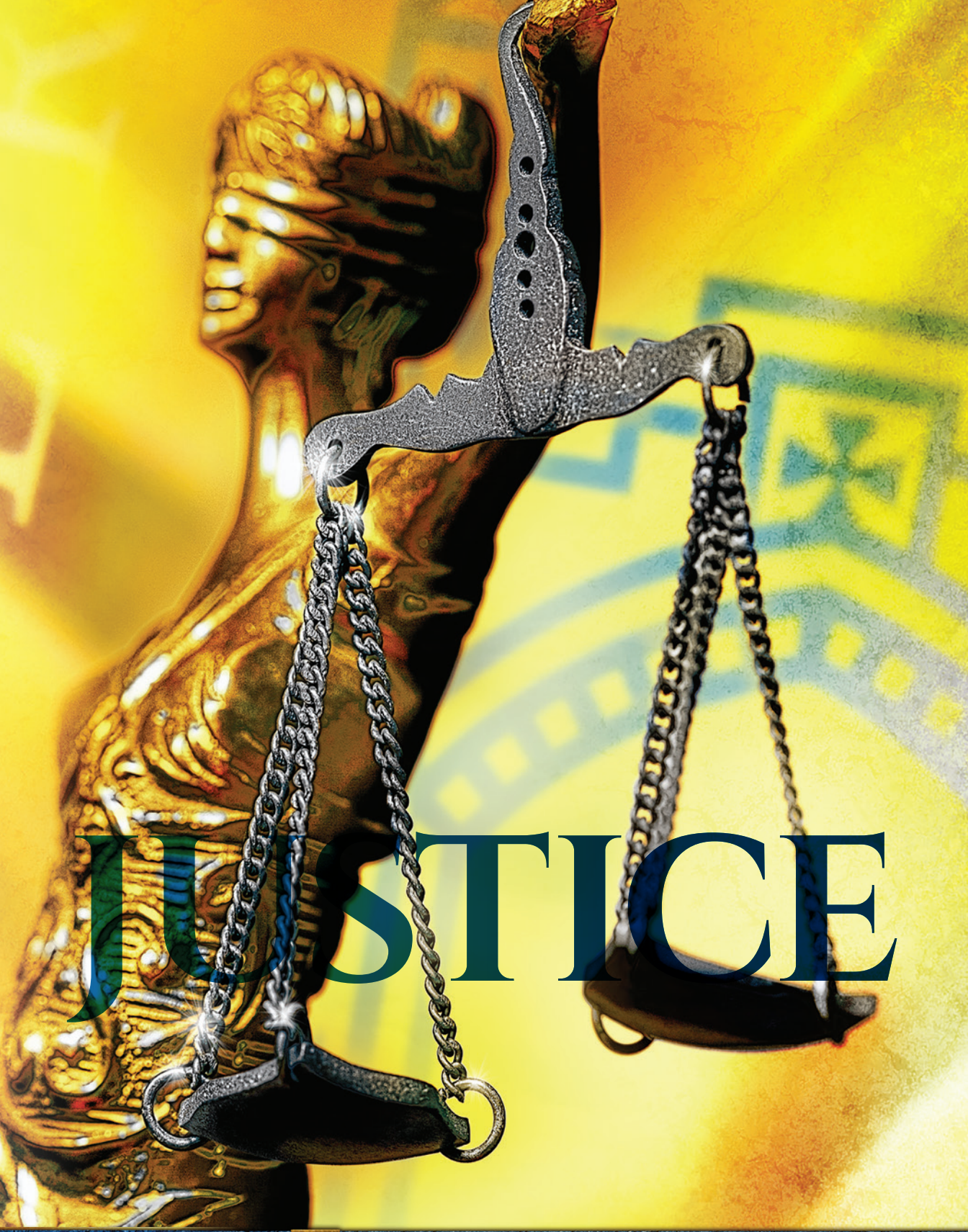
Misericordia Society for Justice! - Misericordia University

Save the date for first event on campus. Thursday, October 29, 2026.

Details coming soon!

Complete this form and we'll put you on the invitation list.

Please contact the Office of Alumni Relations at **570-674-6764** or **alumni@misericordia.edu** for more information.


JUSTICE

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