

SPRING/SUMMER 2023

stmikes.utoronto.ca • @uStMikes

ST. MICHAEL'S

UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO ALUMNI MAGAZINE



**A Student Voice
for Sustainability
and Inclusion**

Driven to make things better



The Regis St. Michael's Faculty of Theology Invites You to Study with Us

Many St. Michael's alumni members opt to further their education with a degree or diploma from RSM. Whether you are seeking personal enlightenment, want to further your education as a Catholic teacher, are preparing to work in ministry, or planning for a life in the academy, RSM has degrees and diplomas to meet your needs.

- Generous funding available for Full-time and Part-time studies
- More online and hybrid courses offered
- Many programs can be taken part-time
- Introducing a Hybrid MDiv program for students who live outside of the Greater Toronto Area
- Exciting experiential learning courses available

Curious but not ready to commit to a program? St. Mike's alumni members can audit up to three select courses for free. Certain conditions apply.

Want to learn more?

Please visit <https://theology.stmikes.utoronto.ca/> or contact Recruitment and Enrollment Officer Erica Figueiredo at rsm.theology@utoronto.ca.



UNIVERSITY OF
ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

ST. MICHAEL'S

The University of St. Michael's
College Alumni Magazine
Spring/Summer 2023

Volume 64 • Number 7

PUBLISHER

Laurie Morris
Director of Communications

MANAGING EDITOR

Catherine Mulroney
Editorial Manager

ART DIRECTION AND DESIGN

Sheila Eaton
*Digital and Graphic
Design Manager*

PROOFREADING

Betty Noakes
*Advancement Associate,
Stewardship*

DISTRIBUTION

Office of University Advancement

Publication Mail Agreement
Number: 40068944

*Alumni, friends, and students
of the University of St. Michael's
College receive this magazine
free of charge.*

CONTACT



Please send comments,
corrections, and inquiries to the
Office of University Advancement
University of St. Michael's College

81 St. Mary St., Toronto,
ON M5S 1J4

Telephone:
416-926-2331

Email:
usmc.communications@utoronto.ca

Visit our website:
stmikes.utoronto.ca

@uStMikes  



7
**Focusing on Academic
Success and Student
Wellbeing**

12
**A Student Voice
for Sustainability and Inclusion**

20
**Dante Garden
a New Campus Must-see**

23
**Spring Reunion:
Welcome Back!**

5 From Founders House

10 Campus Ministry

14 First Person

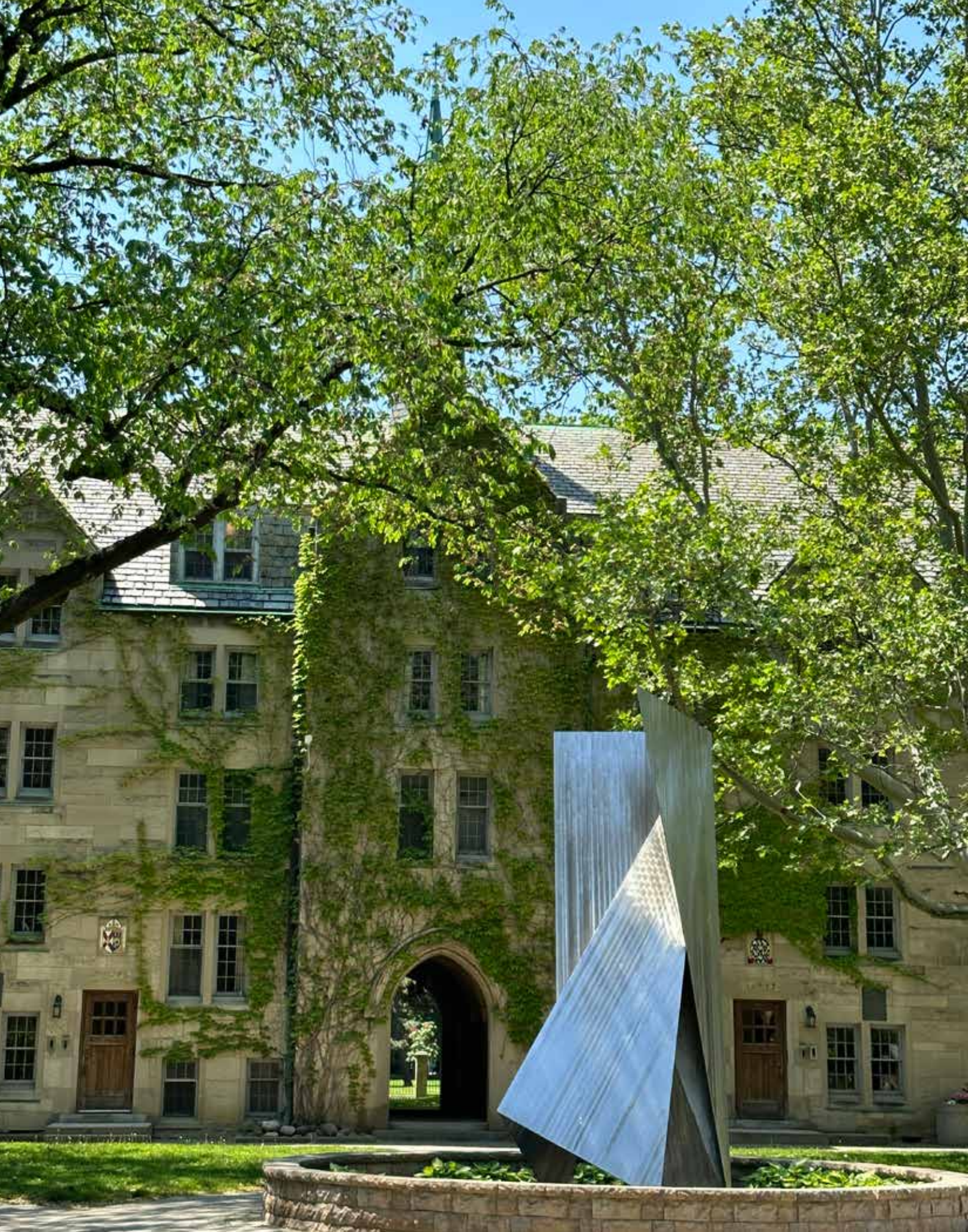
16 Campus Notes

24 Bulletin Board

29 From St. Mike's Alumni Association

31 From Alumni & Advancement

34 The Donovan Collection





FROM FOUNDERS HOUSE

Better Than Books

The many faces of leadership

WHEREVER I TRAVEL, ROAMING MY OWN neighbourhood or visiting lands beyond, I inevitably find myself in a bookstore or library on the trail of books—new books, used books, antiquarian and rare books—and the many mysteries they hold within. Book stacks are one of my happy spaces, and I often indulge, more than I care to admit, in ‘stack-surfing’ the Kelly and PIMS Libraries when I venture out of Founders House, ostensibly for a breath of fresh air or coffee.

While I am drawn to books, there is one subject section I confess I never seek out—that biblio-wasteland on leadership advice. Nothing sends me scurrying back to the tomes of philosophy, fiction, or history faster than endless shelves of John Maxwell, Brené Brown, or Stephen Covey and company. I am quite certain I might learn much from any of these thoughtful authors, but something deep prevents me embracing these gurus of good to great.

Call me a Luddite of leadership lit, but I like my leadership encounters face-to-face, mentor-style. Over my career I have looked to teachers, colleagues, and even poets for the subtle and profound lessons pertaining to my calling. Which brings me to the purpose of this brief reflection: the state of affairs here on St. Mike’s campus and the many faces of leadership.

Since arriving at St. Michael’s five short years ago I have had the privilege of working directly with amazing and diverse leaders: four Collegium Chairs, four Principals, two Alumni Board Chairs, three Deans, six SMCSU presidents, and a host of faculty, students, and staff colleagues who lead in various domains across campus. And from each of them I have learned much.

In this edition of *St. Michael’s Magazine*, you will see examples of these gifted and generous leaders. In particular, meet our new Principal and Vice-President, Professor Irene Morra, and Dr. Maria Gallo, Chair of our



Alumni Board. I invite you to read about them and others through the lens of how they, in their own call to leadership, are continuing to build a vital community here at St. Mike’s and within our alumni community. And then I invite you to take the lead and introduce yourself to them, in the flesh, next time you are on campus. ♦

David G. Sylvester

*David Sylvester, PhD
President and Vice-Chancellor*



Focusing on Academic Success and Student Wellbeing

Celebrating the St. Mike's community

AS PRINCIPAL AND VICE-PRESIDENT IRENE MORRA settles into her office in Odette Hall, she has the title of the University's strategic plan (*St. Mike's 180: Rooted in the Future*) very much on her mind. For Morra, the first woman Principal of St. Mike's, being rooted in the future speaks clearly to the goals she has set for herself in her new role: expanding on the robust traditions of St. Mike's while also working to take the University forward in ways to help students live fruitful, productive lives underpinned by a life-long love for learning.

"One of my missions is to combat the lazy assumption that the humanities are in decline," Morra says. "I'm also dedicated to the importance of the academic environment as one that helps to foster community through informed, interdisciplinary, and nuanced dialogue. We should never be afraid to engage in — and to enjoy — stimulating and challenging conversations."

And that is how a Catholic university, rooted in a confident, open appreciation of the living complexity and engagement of the Catholic social, cultural, and intellectual tradition, can serve the student population and its own community, she explains.

"None of us have all the answers," she says; "our aim should always be to give students the tools to research, to explore, and to make their own informed connections."

One of the realities that pleases Morra most about working at St. Mike's is the strength

of the faculty, and she wants to encourage an understanding that teaching and research are



*Professor Irene Morra, PhD
Principal and Vice-President*

not two distinct activities. Morra points to the richness of the teaching offerings at St. Mike's. The specializations of the professors at St. Michael's range from astronomy to intercultural book history, from music to women in the premodern world, from Celtic mythology to the practical and philosophical questions posed by AI. Often, these interests can intersect in fascinating ways, and professors and faculty librarians have worked together to put together exciting interdisciplinary courses that continue to define the excellence of the teaching and research culture

within the College.

With oversight of the sponsored programs offered by St. Mike's — Book and Media Studies, Christianity and Culture, Mediaeval Studies, and Celtic Studies — Morra is already working with colleagues to further strengthen

these programs, expand their offerings, heighten their profiles, and ensure their continued ability to flourish. She is passionate in her conviction that the humanities, the arts, and the interdisciplinary study for which St. Mike's is justifiably renowned provide an essential foundation from which students can engage critically and creatively with the contemporary world.

An alumna of St. Michael's College, Morra graduated in 1997 with a BA Hons Specialist in English Literature, Major in Musicology, and Minor in French Literature. "My undergraduate experience was essential to the fostering of my academic career," she explains. "I loved being encouraged to think about literature, history, ideas, and the arts across various disciplinary and cultural divides." "I was able to do that because of the knowledge and generosity of the incredible professors (Fred Flahiff, John O'Connor, to name only two!) I encountered while at U of T." This energy, she notes, could often extend beyond the immediate classroom experience and into the extracurricular, where she was inspired by Paulette Collet's direction of *La Troupe des Anciens*, Father Owen Lee's radio lectures on opera, and the stagings of *Poculi Ludique Societas*.

Morra earned her MA in English Literature from Queen's University and her PhD from U of T's Department of English in



A St. Mike's student leaves Odette Hall on the last day of exams.

2002. She is now returning after an 18-year academic career in the UK, where she was Professor and Chair of English at Cardiff University, Wales. Her research has always stayed close to the interdisciplinary emphasis of her undergraduate education, and all four of her books (*Twentieth-Century British Opera and the Rise of Opera in Britain*; *Britishness, Popular Music and National Identity: The Rise of Modern Britain*; *The New Elizabethan Age: Culture, Society, and Identity after World War II*; *Verse Drama in England, 1900–2015*) and the majority of her articles have focused on

how literature, history, politics, and the arts engage culturally and aesthetically with each other. Morra states that she is committed to pushing herself as much as her students into exploring new areas for learning. She has taught across a wide range of subjects, including Mediaeval and Renaissance drama, the Victorian novel, American literature, modern and contemporary drama, popular music, and film. One of the highlights for next year, she says, will be the opportunity to teach in two of the St. Mike's programs: Christianity in Literature and Theatre for Christianity and Culture, and a special topics course on Media and Monarchy (from Elizabeth I to the present day) for the Book and Media Studies program.

But Morra's attention is not just on the

classroom or College programs, and she embraces the fact that her responsibility as Principal focusses on the academic success and overall wellbeing of all St. Mike's students, many of whom are enrolled across a wide array of U of T programs. This student body is more diverse than

ever, comprising many first-generation students, international students, and students whose recent experiences in learning have only just started to see them returning to the non-virtual classroom. Today's students may be busier than ever and face an ever-expanding array of diversions and demands, she notes,

but the need for connection is more vital than ever, and that means pondering new ways to both support and engage students. She is adamant in her commitment to ensuring that that project is collaborative, and she notes how much she has been enjoying meeting with the Registrar, with members of Student Life and Campus Ministry, and with students across a range of program interests and years of study in order to come up with some imminent plans.

Morra is profoundly appreciative of the history of St. Michael's, not least because of the St. Mike's alumni tradition in her family: she counts at least 15 close family members who graduated from the College, including her grandparents Rory Egan and Rita Burke (both SMC '38), her parents, Richard Morra and Sheila Egan (both SMC '67), and her siblings Roy (SMC '00) and Lenore (SMC '02). Her parents both taught at the College for a few years (Sheila in Classics and Richard in German) before moving on to careers in

high school teaching.

"St. Michael's has a rich and valuable history that informs our future directions and that should never be pushed aside or ignored: it is rooted in the tireless commitment of so many religious and lay contributors to the

“St. Michael's has a rich and valuable history that informs our future directions and that should never be pushed aside or ignored: it is rooted in the tireless commitment of so many religious and lay contributors to the ideal of the contemporary Catholic university...”

ideal of the contemporary Catholic university,” Morra says. “This ideal, as so many have always known, is a living one. As such, we embrace the rich diversity of experience and background of those faculty, alumni, and students whose histories may not align immediately with those of more ‘established’ alumni — but whose voices help us move forward together, as a whole community, into the future.”

Morra has an ambitious agenda for a role that requires everything from a healthy understanding of pedagogy and a small-c catholic appreciation of subject areas through to a strong sense of diplomacy. But she has all the skills and talents required to be a success, or, as President Sylvester says, “her background and experience are key to enhancing and expanding our academic programs and will position our graduates for academic and professional success, marked by a search for meaning and commitment to service.” ♦



CAMPUS MINISTRY

A Place of Welcome and Discovery

Creating a culture of belonging at St. Mike's

FOR SONAL CASTELINO, XMCJ, REVITALIZING St. Mike's Campus Ministry has involved many practical, concrete steps: holding broad consultations – a “listening tour,” as she calls it, building a team of empowered student leaders, and re-establishing the Saturday evening Student Mass are just a few examples. Underpinning these efforts, however, is a desire to help students answer a timeless existential question: “What is my place in the world?”

For Sr. Sonal, who is Director of Campus Ministry, the first step in this mission is to create a place of welcome with the opportunity to explore, whether working with Catholic students learning more about their own tradition or Catholics and students of other religious traditions engaging in interfaith dialogue. There's also a standing invitation to “the nones”, those who have no particular

spiritual affiliation, to join the Campus Ministry community.

Each weekday you'll find various team members in Campus Ministry's bright new lounge at the north end of Brennan Hall, where the door is open to a room with comfy chairs and, often, home-baked treats, resulting in a cozy atmosphere. Team members take turns staffing the lounge, with each having specific duties.

But beyond the cinnamon buns and the friendly faces, today's Campus Ministry is also home to a host of activities, from Scripture discussion and exposure to different forms of prayer to getting involved in projects such as co-hosting a multicultural fashion show and planning off-campus retreats

“Culture and spirituality cannot be separated,” says Sr. Sonal,

From Prayer to Action

Marc-Andre Veselovsky SJ, a member of the inaugural team of student campus ministers, tells the story of a Taizé prayer service taking place in Brennan Hall. The music from the service flowed out into the hall and could be heard upstairs. Suddenly, a student appeared at the door, asking about Taizé and thanking the group for the beautiful sound.

It is that spirit of encounter that drives the eight members—men and women, undergraduates and graduate students -- of the campus ministry team.

Reflecting on his experience as

a member of the 2022-2023 team, Veselovsky, a Jesuit scholastic working on his Master of Divinity degree, speaks of how working with students helped him dig deeper into his own understanding of his call to religious life.

Kevin Urbas, who served as Catholic faith formation coordinator, notes that while many students might choose St. Mike's for cultural rather than religious reasons, a strong campus ministry team is a way to offer witness to faith and to help demonstrate what Catholic life is like.

With hospitality a key aspect of Catholic life, various team members cited outreach to all students, for

example, including keeping a room open with a supply of dates and water so that students marking Ramadan can observe Iftar, the meal breaking the daily fast.

Social and community outreach coordinator Anita Rajkumar added that the team was keen to offer opportunities for community service, including food drives and collecting toiletries for those in need, because it was a way for all to get involved, regardless of religious traditions. The entire experience, she adds, has informed the team's suggestions on how to make the 2023-2024 academic year even more of a success. ♦



adding that in everything the team does, “we are asking questions – what does community mean? What does it mean to be belong?”

Upbeat and optimistic, Sr. Sonal notes that the unique pace of pandemic days were a help as she mapped out the direction in which she wanted to take Campus Ministry.

“The pandemic created a vacuum, giving me the time and capacity to think things through, and to build relationships and trust with the people with whom I needed to connect,” she says.

Sr. Sonal believes that the success of Campus Ministry at St. Mike’s is possible only through collaboration. The Christmas Market, which saw various offices and student groups on campus work together, is an example of that collaboration. The result was an afternoon of food, music, and the sale unique hand-crafted goods, many of them created by students, enjoyed by the whole community.

Another example? The creation of a new student leadership program which saw all senior student leaders begin their mandates by going off

campus together for a leadership development retreat, with a goal of unpacking, defining, and exploring what it means to be a student leader at St. Mike’s, weaving in the

involved reaching out to various student groups and clubs, whether it’s SMCSU or Student Life, to help make students aware of the multiple resources Campus Ministry

“Whether a student says, ‘I believe in God’ or ‘I don’t know what I believe in’, we are here for them all.”

mission, vision, and values stated in the St. Mike’s 180 strategic plan. Reflecting on the first year of a full calendar of in-person events, Sr. Sonal points to several high points, including the growing attendance at the Student Community Mass, held at 6:30 p.m. Saturdays during the academic year, with students participating as lectors and in the choir, the addition of Campus Ministry Coordinator Nicole Ferrante and Dr. Christina Labriola as Director of Music, and discussions toward creating a multi-faith prayer room in the near future.

Much of the team’s efforts have

can offer. In the coming year, the VP Spiritual Life on SMCSU will be an active partner with Campus Ministry.

While Sr. Sonal and her student ministers are available for all the prayers and activities traditionally associated with Campus Ministry, their approach also involves finding new ways to reach students who wouldn’t normally visit the Campus Ministry office, letting them know they have a place, too.

“Whether a student says, ‘I believe in God’ or ‘I don’t know what I believe in’, we are here for them all.” ♦



A Student Voice for Sustainability and Inclusion

Driven to make things better

ONE OF ST. MIKE'S NEWEST alumni members, Evangeline Cowie (SMC 2T3) heads out into the world a shining example of student leadership at St. Mike's. Cowie recently wrapped up her duties as President of the St. Michael's College Student Union (SMCSU), a challenging task at the best of times, made all the tougher by the arrival of COVID.

Describing herself as someone drawn to the administrative side of community service, she began that service early, joining St. Mike's Residence Council in her first year, the year the pandemic struck. She joined SMCSU in second year, overseeing the mental health and accessibility portfolio, where her stated responsibilities took on new importance as students struggled with isolation and loneliness.

For Cowie and her SMCSU colleagues, conversations with President Sylvester and St. Mike's administration soon focused on important questions such as hiring a second wellness councilor, given the stress today's students face. Cowie and her colleagues also offered to partner with the University to fund new water fountains on campus as another way to build upon the sustainability goals stated the St. Mike's 180 strategic plan.



“I’m really grateful to the administration at St. Mike’s for creating a space where students can express their opinions, whether on sustainability or on how to make the St. Mike’s experience even more inclusive,” Cowie says.

As she hands over presidential duties to Hedieh Hashemi, who served as Vice-President this past year, Cowie recognizes both the challenges and opportunities facing SMCSU as it works to ensure the student voice is heard on campus.

“I love St. Mike’s inclusive approach. All of us on SMCSU were driven by the questions of what can we fix, and what can we make better. The goal of SMCSU is to make a

difference, assisting students to get involved. I’m comfortable and I want to make sure everyone else is, too.”

Now, the multi-talented graduate, who is also a Varsity rugby star, heads off to the University of Ottawa to work on a Master of Political Science degree, focusing on International Relations, and pondering a future in politics.

With Cowie pondering politics, and Hashemi, well versed in the student union’s planning and decision-making process, serving as President, we know that St. Mike’s students — and many more of us — will be well served. ♦



FIRST PERSON

A St. Mike's Hello Worth its Weight in Gold

Finding a sense of community

BY LYDIA DILLENBECK

THE FIRST PEOPLE I MET at the University of St. Michael's College were not my dons, my orientation leaders, or even my roommate. The first people I met were grounds-keeper John Scarcelli and building operator Mike Graham. They introduced me and my parents to the tight-knit and welcoming community of St. Mike's. (It is worth noting that I am from Deep River, Ontario—an interesting but small town. With a population of 4,000, it is home to possibly the largest concentration of nuclear physicists in the Canadian wilderness.)

You might imagine how moving to Toronto was quite the change. My parents and I arrived in Toronto the day before move-in day. The traffic, the buildings, and the numerous students on campus had me questioning my decision to attend the University of Toronto. We scouted out St. Mike's to be sure we could find parking and get a glimpse of what my life in residence would be like before the chaos of welcome week began.

At first, we couldn't find my building—Teefy Hall—but the man on the riding lawn mower stopped near us and introduced himself as John. He mentioned that he had talked to “David”—the president of St. Mike's—something my dad approved of. It's a good sign when staff and administration have regular conversations with each other. John emphasized that everyone at St. Mike's was so happy to have students back

on campus. He gave us more information, joked with us, and encouraged me to say hi to him whenever I saw him. Then, John started up his lawn mower, leaving us to explore.

It had been about 10 minutes since saying goodbye to John when we met Mike. I was sitting on one of the benches in the quad when he walked up, clearly in the middle of a task, and struck up a conversation with me and my parents. With no hesitation, he set aside the pictures he was going to hang and offered to take us for a tour of some of the buildings. If you ever need a tour of the St. Michael's campus, Mike is your guy. He enthusiastically told us some of the history and introduced me to some of the Canada Room staff, all the while getting to know me and my parents. Because of him, I had a good sense of the layout of the campus before I was even living on it.

At dinner that night, my dad looked at

FIRST PERSON



Above: Lydia Dillenbeck was a first-year Social Sciences student in the 2022-2023 academic year. She plans to major in sociology, and something else—she is currently undecided. Outside of class, Lydia likes to get outside, or play music. Some of the highlights of her week are singing with the Schola Cantorum and for the Campus Ministry Saturday Mass. Right: Mike Graham and John Scarcelli: Always happy to lend a hand.

me. “It gives me a lot of comfort knowing that there are guys like Mike and John working there,” he mused. I agreed. As nervous as I was about this next part of my life, I had made two connections and I knew that Mike and John would be looking out for me. Throughout this year, both have continued to say hi to me. They ask after my parents and ask how my schoolwork is going. Connections with the groundskeeper and maintenance staff are valuable, especially when you need to get a

frisbee out from under the dumpster, or when they tease you about snagging free cake at Michaelmas.

These interactions are not unique to me; I see them conversing with other students all the time. What struck my family when we first arrived, and what continues to be demonstrated through Mike and John’s student interactions, is how much they value having students on campus, making them feel welcome and being a part of a community. ♦

Ed’s note: Normally, we reserve this space for a reflection from a member of our alumni. When we received this submission to our [InsightOut](#) blog, however, it proved so popular that we decided to share it with a wider audience to show that the St. Mike’s you knew and loved while a student is very much alive. If you have a St. Mike’s memory you’d like to share and want to find out how to submit to InsightOut, please contact:

[Catherine Mulroney](mailto:catherine.mulroney@utoronto.ca) at catherine.mulroney@utoronto.ca



CAMPUS NOTES

News from St. Mike's

So much to celebrate



Dr. Sylvester accepts second term as President

The Collegium of the University of St. Michael's College is happy to report that Dr. David Sylvester has accepted a second term as the University's 8th President and Vice-Chancellor.

The appointment, effective July 1, 2023, marks Dr. Sylvester's 6th term as a university/college president, and his 24th year in senior administration since being appointed the Founding President of Corpus Christi College in Vancouver in 1999.

Among his many accomplishments during his first term, Dr. Sylvester oversaw the federation of Regis College and St. Michael's Faculty of

Theology, creating a groundbreaking new theologate. He also worked with the Loretto Sisters to assume the responsibilities of the historic Loretto College women's residence.

"We are delighted that David Sylvester has agreed to serve another term as President," says Rosanne Rocchi, Chair of Collegium, the University's governing board of directors. "David initiated an important mission with St. Mike's 180 strategic plan. We are pleased that he will be able to continue realizing that vision and shepherding the many other initiatives he has stewarded to establish and continue USMC as an educational leader." ♦



Archbishop Leo appointed St. Mike's Chancellor

Toronto Archbishop Francis Leo, an accomplished academic who has served in a variety of roles within the Roman Catholic Church in Canada, the United States and Australia, has been named Chancellor of the University of St. Michael's College.

"We are delighted to welcome Archbishop Leo as our new Chancellor and we look forward to his presence in our community," University President David Sylvester says. "We also extend our gratitude to Cardinal Thomas

Collins for his many years of service in the role."

The Chancellor, who is also a member of St. Michael's Senate, presides at convocations and confers degrees. Archbishop Leo becomes the sixth person to serve as Chancellor of the University.

His appointment was made by the University's Collegium, St. Michael's governing board of directors, and he was installed prior to the June Baccalaureate Mass. ♦



St. Mike's to Run Loretto College Residence

A new chapter has begun in the life of the University as St. Mike's has assumed the management of the Loretto College women's residence. The Loretto Sisters have operated the residence since it opened its doors in 1959, but Sister Evanne Hunter, IBVM, says that handing over the management to the University will help secure a women's residence on campus as well as preserve the IBVM's long legacy at the university.

"It is an honour for St. Michael's to be entrusted with carrying the historic IBVM legacy forward, and extending and enhancing our partnership with the Mary Ward Centre (located on the ground floor of the residence) will provide students with new opportunities to integrate faith and spirituality into their lives and the lives of the community," says President David Sylvester. ♦



St. Michael's Commits to Fully Divest from Fossil Fuels

The Collegium of the University of St. Michael's College has committed to fully divest the University's investments from fossil fuels by the year 2030, or sooner if possible.

St. Michael's has held no direct investments in fossil fuel companies since 2013, and the Collegium's decision, made at its June 14th meeting, will complete the process of removing fossil fuel companies from its indirect investments (pooled and commingled funds).

Complete divestment from fossil fuels builds on St. Michael's established initiative of investing according to its institutional values. Since 2016 the University has collaborated with the Shareholder Association for Research & Education (SHARE) to support and encourage more just and humane environmental, social, and governance practices among investees. In 2021, St. Michael's joined

a coalition of Canadian universities to launch SHARE's University Network for Investor Engagement (UNIE), which engages corporations on climate change risks.

"The Collegium's commitment to full divestment from fossil fuels represents an important next step on a journey this university has been on for over 30 years," says President David Sylvester. "St. Michael's has been a forum of ecological thought and practice since the founding of our Elliott Allen Institute of Theology and Ecology in 1991.

"The Collegium's decision resonates powerfully with that tradition, and with our university's vision to be a recognized leader in promoting respectful dialogue and action to advance the care of our common home, as articulated in our strategic plan, St. Mike's 180." ♦

Donors Thanked at Special Reception

Donors who are members of the Chancellor's Club, the Vice-Chancellor's Club, and the Heritage Donor Society attended a special reception hosted by President David Sylvester and alumnus Tony Comper, Past President and Chief Executive Officer, BMO Financial Group. The February event took place on the 68th floor of First Canadian Place, and offered attendees a glittering view of the city at night. Even more exciting, though, was the opportunity to meet students and hear about their experiences, and to learn more about how St. Mike's 180, the university's strategic plan, is being put into action on a daily basis. ♦





Panel Marks Good Friday Accord

St. Mike's marked the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Accord, a critical step in the move to peace in Northern Ireland, with an impressive panel discussion featuring Janice McGinn, Ireland's Consul General in Toronto (see photo below: centre), MP James Maloney (left), Greg Quinn, the Acting British Consul General in Toronto (third from left), Ciaran Quinn, Sian Fein's representative in North America (right), and Robert Kearns, Chair and Founder, Canada Ireland Foundation. ♦

Making Waves as a Blue Community

Just in time for Earth Day, St. Mike's achieved the designation of being a Blue Community, committing to protect water as a human right and public good. St. Michael's joined Regis College and the Sisters of St. Joseph to adopt a seven-commitment "Blue Community Pledge."

Speaking at the Blue Communities launch event, St. Mike's president David Sylvester noted that becoming a Blue Community is in keeping with the University's long-standing commitment to social justice, as outlined in the St. Mike's 180 strategic plan, and in direct response to *Laudato si'* and *Fratelli Tutti's* call to establish new relationships with the environment and with all humanity.

As a Blue Community, St. Mike's pledges to help protect the planet's water and promote the human rights to water and sanitation by upholding a series of principles, which includes recognizing water and sanitation as human rights, educating the community about human rights to water and sanitation, and banning the sale of bottled water on campus and at sponsored events. ♦



Prof. John Wyver, University of Westminster and St. Michael's Principal, Prof. Irene Morra.

The Return of the Christianity and the Arts Lecture

University of Westminster professor John Wyver gave a fascinating presentation on his BBC television documentary *Coventry Cathedral: Building for a New Britain*, telling the story of the building of the new Coventry Cathedral in 1962 after the destruction of the mediaeval building in WWII. ♦



Listening to Indigenous Voices

Early in the new year, St. Michael's joined with community partners to begin monthly dinners and listening circles at the Mary Ward Centre with the goal of beginning to learn more about Canada's Indigenous history. ♦





Dante Garden a New Campus Must-see

Stunning new installation inspires visitors

THE NEXT TIME YOU ARE on campus, you'll want to stop by and visit The Dante Garden, located in the southwest corner of campus. The art installation, created by renowned Canadian sculptor Timothy Schmalz, reflects poet Dante Alighieri's journey through Hell and Purgatory — and finally on to Heaven — as depicted in his great work, *The Divine Comedy*. The work includes 100 panels, reflecting the 100 cantos of the poem, as well as a sculpture of Dante at work. The acquisition of the sculptures by St. Michael's was made possible by a very generous gift to the University from patrons Maurizio Bevilacqua and family, and Tony and Lina Gagliano and family. ♦

*Above: The ribbon cutting to open the Dante Garden. From left: Margaret Brenman, Alberto Di Giovanni, Caroline Morgan Di Giovanni, Maurizio Bevilacqua, Joseph Tanzola, Marcella Tanzola, Timothy Schmalz, Dr. David Sylvester, Tony Gagliano, and Lina Gagliano.
Opposite page: Dante and the first Canto and details for Inferno, Purgatory, and Paradise.*







Spring Reunion: Welcome Back!

SPRING REUNION 2023 OFFERED SOMETHING for everyone, with lectures, pub nights, and social time in the Dodig Family Coop just part of the agenda for five action-packed days. If you overlook the fact that attendees might be looking just a little different than when they were routinely on campus, it felt just like being back in school.

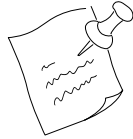
From Wednesday evening's Annual General Meeting of the Alumni Association through to Sunday's Alumni Awards and brunch the campus was buzzing with activity. The many highlights included the Dante Garden party and reception, unveiling this impressive art installation to the community, a brunch for alumni celebrating their 50th anniversary, and a dinner honouring alumni who graduated in years ending in '3 and '8.

Particularly exciting was the launch of the

Alumni Initiative for Women (AI4W), began with a panel discussion featuring three St. Mike's alumnae members — Natalie Jenner, Kate Marshall Flaherty and Laura Rock Gaughan— talking about the writer's life. Information on more AI4W events will be coming soon.

Gee, it was great to see everybody. Before you know it, we'll be talking about Spring Reunion '24. Grads of classes ending in '4 and '9 – stay tuned! ♦

*Above: Celebrating the Class of '73, at the 50th Anniversary Brunch.
Opposite page: From pub nights to lectures, there was something for everyone.*



BULLETIN BOARD

Keeping up to Date with our Alumni

News from Alumni and Friends

David Geherin SMC 6T4 was nominated for Best Critical/Biographical book in the Edgar Allan Poe Awards by the Mystery Writers of America for his tenth book, *The Crime World of Michael Connelly*.



Mary Brennan SMC 6T6, **Margaret Brennan SMC 7T1**, and **Joan Brennan** visited St. Mike's in April for a tour of the Loretto chapel, which was designed by their father, **Frank Brennan 3T4**. They're pictured here with Sonal Castelino, Director of Campus Ministry, USMC President David Sylvester and Lisa Gleva, Executive Director, Advancement.



Fr. Tim Horan SMC 7T1, **Ray Shady SMC 7T1***, and **Peter Sear SMC 7T3** recently came back to St. Mike's for a visit. The three friends live in Rochester, NY and are still close with many St. Mike's alumni across Canada and in the United States.

Fr. Horan graduated from St. Mike's with an Honours History BA in 1971. He moved to Rochester and taught in Catholic high schools before entering St. Bernard's Seminary; he was ordained in 1979. He has been a parish priest in the Diocese of Rochester for four-plus decades, also serving as Director of Priest Vocations for many years. An avid golfer since high school, he is still hitting the links with impressive results: last September he won his division of the Senior Club Championship at the Country Club of Rochester!

Ray graduated from SMC with a BA in English in 1971. He continued at U of T for his MA in 1972 and PhD (Renaissance Drama) in 1975. Before these degrees, he married **Suzanne Flavin**, from East Aurora, NY, (**SMC 7T0**). Ray taught English at St. Mike's and Erindale before he and Sue moved back to Rochester for a teaching position at St. John Fisher College in 1978. Ray then left teaching and embarked on a successful 30-year career in corporate marketing and sales. In 2009, after leaving a company he co-founded, he chose what he called his "encore career," and returned to the classroom at St. John Fisher— this time, 32 years later— in the School of Business, teaching Marketing. He served as Interim Dean of the School from 2014-16.

Ray's family has several connections to SMC: Ray and Sue's daughter, **Anna Shady Mangual**, graduated from SMC in 2001; his sister, **Carol Shady DeMatteis**, graduated from SMC in

1972, and his cousin, **Bob Carroll**, in 1968.

Peter graduated from SMC with a BA in 1973, after a two-year stint in the US Marine Corps. He married **Mary Laderoute**, from Toronto (**SMC 7T1**) and completed his MBA at the Rotman School of Management in 1975. Peter and Mary moved back to Rochester and raised their family, while Peter worked at First Federal Bank, eventually becoming EVP of Finance and Real Estate, as well as Executive Board Member. After retiring, he purchased and operated a classic auto restoration company- always the classiest arrival at alumni events!

** Sadly, Fr. Horan passed away on July 4th. We offer our condolences to his community, friends and family.*

Dr. Imants Baruss SMC 7T4 has a new book coming out this summer published by the APA, *Death as an Altered State of Consciousness*. In this book, Dr. Baruss, who is a Professor in the Department of Psychology at King's University College at Western University, explores diverse phenomena associated with death, such as apparent after-death communication and near-death experiences.



Michael Johnson SMC 7T4 and **Terry Murphy SMC 7T7** have just published a book: *To Treasure All These Things in Our Hearts* (Down Home

Publications, 2022). Research into the families buried in St. Mary's Pioneer

BULLETIN BOARD

Cemetery in Oakville, Ont. uncovered the largely unrecorded story of Oakville's Roman Catholic community. Besides the social and economic history of this community, the book also deals with the history of the cemetery and the artistic aspects of the memorial stones. These are illustrated by many photographs taken by Michael.



Susan Adam Metzler SMC 7T4 received the *Papal Honour Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* in recognition of her legal work in bringing justice and healing to victims of clerical sexual abuse. This Papal Honour is awarded by the Pope to members of the clergy and laity for their service to the Church. Susan received her medal at a Mass celebrated by Thomas Cardinal Collins and Bishop Ronald Fabbro, CSB.



Darlene Madott SMC 7T5 has recently had her ninth book published. *Winners and Losers: Tales of Life, Law, Love and Longing* is a collection

of linked short stories examining the inner workings of the legal profession, told by a feisty narrator finding her way through a hostile and competitive law environment.

John Di Sebastiano SMC 8T6 and **Maureen Di Sebastiano** (née **O'Donnell**) **SMC 8T7** are excited to share an update with the community. This year marks their 35th wedding anniversary, and they are proud parents of three children, Matthew, Thomas, and Elizabeth. In 2022, they celebrated the marriages of their eldest son, Matthew, and daughter, Elizabeth. John is a co-founder of a

Fintech company, which has been in operation for 17 years, and continues to thrive. Meanwhile, Maureen holds the role of Vice President at TD Bank in Toronto. They are grateful for their time at St. Mike's and send their best wishes to all their fellow alumni.



While visiting Ireland in May, President Sylvester met up for lunch in Belfast with **Maria Gallo SMC 9T8**, President of the USMC Alumni Association Board.



Michael G. Allemanno SMC 0T5 and Christine Andrade celebrated the Sacrament of Marriage on October 8, 2022, at St. Gabriel's Parish, in Burlington. Their wedding mass was attended by many St. Michael's graduates. Michael is a former Don, a two year-member of SMCSU, and a recipient of the Father Robert Madden Leadership Award. Michael and his brother David both played on the St. Michael's hockey team for many years. In the summer of 2002, he was asked by Fr. Harry Gardner, CSB, to volunteer on Strawberry Island to

prepare for and to support the visit of Pope John Paul II during World Youth Day in July 2002. He was then invited to the Vatican in November 2002, as part of a Toronto delegation to help plan future WYD events. His Vatican experience was documented in an article he wrote for the Spring Issue 2003, of the *St. Michael's* magazine. Michael, his parents, brother and uncle all benefitted from the residence life experience while attending St. Mikes.



Modele Kuforiji SMC 1T8 is now working as a Student Life Coordinator, Black Student Engagement from Mentorship & Peer Programs in the Division of Student Life at

the University of Toronto. His role focusses on facilitating and creating pathways in which Black students can engage in student life on campus in a way that feels accessible.

Alexandra Assouad SMC 2T0 is part of a team that launched Mind-Easy, an adaptive health platform that provides culturally competent mental health care. Assouad worked along with Akanksha Shelat and Dalia Ahmed, both members of the U of T community, to create the platform, which responds to a shortage of therapists and a lack of cultural competence in mental health services.



LET'S STAY IN TOUCH!



What's new? We'd love to hear about you!

Send your updates to smc.alumni@utoronto.ca
High-res photos are encouraged.



Have you moved? Update your information through U of T's address update form.

Alumni Awards



Spring Reunion 2023 was topped off by the Alumni Awards Ceremony and Brunch, held Sunday, June 4 in Sorbara Hall. From left: Oleh Marianchuk, Victor Dodig, Dr. Richard Alway, Dr. Robert Birgeneau, Sangeetha Punniyamoorthy, Larry Cimino, and Dr. David Sylvester..

This year's recipient of the **Dr. Richard Alway Award**, presented to an alumni member whose significant contributions to society bring esteem to themselves and to the College, was **Dr. Robert Birgeneau (SMC 6T3)**. A physicist and university administrator, he served as the 14th President of the University of Toronto and the ninth chancellor of the University of California, Berkeley. Robert and his wife, Mary Catherine, direct their philanthropy to support eligible students to attend university with a suite of established scholarships and awards, including at St. Michael's College.

Larry Cimino (SMC 7T3) received the **Professor Victoria Mueller-Carson Spirit of St. Mike's Award**, presented to an exceptional member of the alumni community who embodies the values of St. Mike's – Human Dignity, Community, Social Justice, Service, and Sustainability – in their professional, leadership and community impact roles. After a lengthy career with Eli Lilly and Company and serving as president of the Lilly Foundation, Larry retired in 2007 and established a global management and logistics consultancy, ProConsult, LLC, from which he assists both for-profit and not-for-profit multinational

organizations while maintaining a special focus on mental health and the co-occurrence of medical and mental disorders.

Oleh Marianchuk (SMC 1T3) received the **Young Alumni Impact Award**.

The award is presented to an alumni member who graduated in the last 10 years who has made a distinguished and outstanding impact in their professional accomplishments, and contributions of service to benefit society. Oleh was the youngest-ever elected board director of a local financial institution, the Ukrainian Credit Union. An investment advisor at BMO Private Wealth, he placed runner-up in the Investment Industry Association of Canada's (IIAC) Top Under 40 Award this past year. Oleh has a history of using his financial knowledge to help individuals and not-for-profit organizations on a pro-bono basis.

Sangeetha Punniyamoorthy (SMC 0T0) was named the 2023 recipient of the **St. Mike's Trailblazer Award**. Recipients can be described as pioneers, innovators, and trailblazers, making a ground-breaking contribution to improving and enriching the lives of others and creating positive change. Sangeetha is Chair of DLA Piper's Canadian Intellectual Property and

Technology Group and a driving force behind its world-class IP practice. She actively champions the empowerment of female lawyers and generously shares insights from her own professional journey.

Victor Dodig (SMC 8T8) received the inaugural **Community Impact Award**, presented to an alumni member who exerts influence, powerfully promotes innovation as an ally, and demonstrates a substantial impact in advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in their professional lives, in their community, or through dedicated service. Dedicated to EDI both professionally and personally, as President and CEO of CIBC he leads a diverse team of almost 50,000 individuals to meet both its business and diversity targets. Among his many contributions, he was the founding Chair of the 30% Club Canada, whose mission is to achieve at least 30% representation of women on all boards and C-suites globally. His family's generous support of the Brennan Hall revitalization helped upgrade the popular student hangout, the COOP, which is now known as the **Dodig Family Commons** 'The COOP', to recognize Victor and his family. Henceforth, this award will be known as the **Victor Dodig Community Impact Award**.

Rest In Peace

*We acknowledge the passing in recent months of the following alumni,
who graduated from St. Michael's in the class years shown here.*

1940s

Brownridge, Patricia K. M. SMC 4T6
Burnie, Mary Margaret SMC 4T8
Behan, John Kenneth SMC 4T8
Edmondstone, Hon. Justice Harry SMC 4T9
Hayes (née Hogan), Mary Ellen SMC 4T7
Shibley, Richard SMC 4T9

1950s

Bonar (née Leonard), Stephanie SMC 5T9
Burns, Peter Alexander SMC 5T7
Cowan, Barbara Dillane SMC 5T3
Cudmore M.D., John W. SMC 5T8
Gumuly, Freda J. SMC 5T7
Kielty, Frank SMC 5T8
Lauber CSJ, Sister Conrad SMC 5T6
Leon, Joseph SMC 5T1
Mahoney, James Roy SMC 5T1
McLean CSJ, Sister Rita Marie SMC 5T4
O'Connor, John "Arthur" SMC 5T3
Somerville CM, Janet Stuart SMC 5T9
Vallely, Peter SMC 5T0

1960s

Carnovale, Lilian Maria SMC 6T7
Coltrinari, Livio Andrew John SMC 6T6
Cronin, Peter F. SMC 6T5
Durbak, Andrew SMC 6T4

Galiffi, Patrick SMC 6T7
Gooderham, Paul Joseph SMC 6T0
Gormley, Mary Jane Norris SMC 6T1
Jordan, Patrick A. SMC 6T0
Kehoe, Douglas Edward Joseph SMC 6T6
Kelly (née Tosoni), Mary Adele SMC 6T8
Kirby (née Ianni), Nella SMC 6T7
McGivney, Sheila M. SMC 6T1
Mungovan, Michael O. SMC 6T0
Murray, Laurence Corbett Michael SMC 6T6
Owens, Fred SMC 6T9
Peart, Marjorie Jane SMC 6T4
Riley, Paul E. SMC 6T3
Schaefer CSB, Rev. Lester F. USMC 6T0
Schmidt (née Yates), Joan Ann SMC 6T9
Stadnyk, William Steven SMC 6T2
Sunday PhD, Daniel M. SMC 6T7
Toczykowski, Jerry SMC 6T2
Todd, William SMC 6T3
Truchan, John SMC 6T9
Wickens, Sheila M. SMC 6T2

1970s

Acquaro CSB, Rev. Philip USMC 7T0
Baptiste, Michael SMC 7T3
Desimini (née Fasciano), Jean SMC 7T6
Horan, Fr. Timothy SMC 7T1

Kennelly (née Falconi), Deborah SMC 7T7
Kyros (née Carson), Janet SMC 7T8
Molinari, Joseph J. USMC 7T8
Moro (née Zucatti), Rosemary SMC 7T5
Muir, John "Robert" SMC 7T3
Sepulveda CSB, Rev. Thomas William USMC 7T3
Willemse, Conrad A. SMC 7T0

1980s

Lee, John L. SMC 8T2
McCormick, Basil James USMC 8T8
Paul, Winifred A. USMC 8T3

1990s

Kushner, Eva USMC 9T3
Provenzano, Teresa SMC 9T0

2010s

Exton, Adam SMC 1T3

Friends

Goering, Joseph "Butch"
MacNamara, Sean
MacRitchie (née Macdonald), Rhoda
Sherry SFM, Rev. Gerald ♦

*To share an update please
contact 416-926-2331 or
smc.alumni@affairs@utoronto.ca*

LIFE'S WORK

Remembering Janet Somerville



The University of St. Michael's College mourns the death of **Janet Somerville**, a multi-talented alumna who was the first lay woman to graduate from St. Michael's Faculty of Theology.

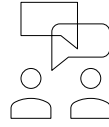
Somerville graduated with a B.A. in English, History, and Philosophy in 1959 and then earned an MA in theology at St. Michael's in 1965, the first Roman Catholic lay woman in Canada to earn a graduate degree from the Toronto School of Theology.

She went on to a storied career, including time working on CBC's radio program, *Ideas*, and as a senior editor at Catholic New Times. In 1997, she became the first Roman Catholic — and the first woman — to be appointed General Secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches.

Among her many honours, Somerville was awarded the Order of Canada in and received an honorary doctorate from Regis College.

We offer our prayers and condolences to Janet Somerville's friends and family. ♦





FROM ST. MIKE'S ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Alumni: The Reflection of St. Mike's Impact



BY MARIA GALLO, PRESIDENT, USMC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

MANY YEARS AGO, WHEN I WAS A ST. MIKE'S STUDENT, I remember reading an article about alumni involvement in student life. How strange, wondered my student self. I found this to be a curious prospect: what could alumni, who graduated many years before me, know about the day-to-day life of a student? As it turned out, alumni knew a lot. They had the benefit of hindsight and the ability to reflect on their university experience. Alumni offered students relatable role models as students considered various careers for life after graduation.

While things have changed, they also stay the same. We are at a pivotal moment at St. Mike's. We need to engage our full university community – including alumni – to build on the key pillars of education, community and sustainability articulated in the St. Mike's 180 strategic plan.

Re-engaging alumni – you, me, and everyone else – into the St. Mike's community requires attention and strives for balance in our ecosystem. There needs to be a mutually beneficial proposition. In some places, engaging with alumni is a nice to have. I believe that, for St. Mike's, our involvement as alumni is essential. We need to foster and create genuine alumni belonging.

Our starting point is with our alumni governance structures. We are streamlining the structures in our Alumni Board so that we can concentrate our efforts on strategic engagement of alumni across the St. Mike's community. At the latest annual general meeting, we included seven new members joining us from their diverse St. Mike's experiences, locations, and knowledge. In a future newsletter I look forward to a dynamic feature on this alumni leadership. There are exciting



alumni engagement opportunities, including through the Young Alumni Committee and the Alumnae Initiative for Women (AI4W). We have a robust Alumni Awards program that intends on growing strength to strength, depending on your nominations of outstanding alumni. There are opportunities for mentorship, inspirational alumni stories,

lifelong learning and so much more.

Sometimes our St. Mike's experience rests on nostalgia. Now it's a chance to grow this connection. Be a mentor to a current student. Tell your story (ordinary extraordinary stories encouraged!). Offer your expertise to St. Mike's through its next stage of development. Enhance your network based on a special shared experience. Explore these infinite opportunities at every age and stage!

When St. Mike's wants to explore its impact in the world, it's us, the alumni that are the true measure of this success. ♦



Do you have inspired ideas? Please contact Maria Gallo by e-mail: m.gallo@alumni.utoronto.ca, or via St. Mike's at: smc.alumni@utoronto.ca.





FROM ALUMNI & ADVANCEMENT

Time, Talent and Treasure

Philanthropy and the St. Mike's community



BY LISA GLEVA, CFRE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ADVANCEMENT

DONORS MAKE ADVANCEMENT WORK “VERY FULFILLING”. Our role in Advancement is to bring together philanthropy and University priorities. I’ve been reflecting on what we’ve been able to do together over the past year. It’s astounding! A few examples come to mind, and this is just scratching the surface.

The Kelly Library celebrated the opening of a new Multipurpose Room (105) earlier this year. This renovation was made possible with a donation from the Friends of the Kelly Library, a group of energetic volunteers who spend hours upon hours of their time organizing the annual St. Michael’s College Book Sale (mark September 27th to September 30th in your calendar for the 2023 sale!). The ‘Friends’ invest the money raised from the Book Sale in projects that benefit Campus life. Students love this new space for quiet study, and the room can be configured for presentations

and lectures, complete with built-in technology. It is a fantastic addition to the facilities here at St. Mike’s.

Back in February, we celebrated donors who are recognized as members of the Chancellor’s Club, Vice-Chancellor’s Club, and Heritage Donor Society. This reception, hosted at BMO Financial Group by its former President and Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Tony Comper (6T6), was an opportunity to say ‘thank you’ to donors, in person for the first time since 2019.

The St. Mike’s Alumni Association Board introduced a new Alumni Awards Program this year.

Meet St. Michael’s Alumni Association: Michael Kelly, Dr. Maria Gallo, Dr. David Sylvester, Alessia Colavecchia, Larry Cimino, Alistair Vaz, Cesare Plastina, Chris Wheeler, Katie Pullella, Stephanie Orange, and Matthew McGuire.





Scenes from Alumni Reunion.

They invested a significant amount of time to develop this program. Thanks to their efforts, it launched during Spring Reunion on June 4th, honouring five individuals who have exemplified excellence and leadership, true to our collective commitment to service of the common good.

St. Michael's, our peaceful Oasis in the City, is now home to The Dante Garden, which was unveiled earlier this spring and features statues that detail Italian poet Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*. This garden is the only full representation of the *Divine Comedy* in sculpture in the world, and it sits at the corner of St. Joseph Street and Queen's Park Circle, beside Carr Hall. This garden is coming to life thanks to the support of donors.

We depend on donations to support student scholarships, awards, and bursaries. Over the decades, donors have established award funds that are endowed to generate money each year, in perpetuity, to support our students. In some cases, these funds have been established with a current donation, and in other cases they were established because a donor included St. Mike's in their estate plans. Last year, more than \$1.2 million was awarded to St. Mike's students from these donor-funded endowments.

The Young Alumni Committee, in partnership with Student Life and the Advancement team, has launched AMPLify St. Mike's: Alumni Mentorship Program. It will provide upper-year students and recent graduates with opportunities

to connect with mentors through micro-mentorship and networking events.

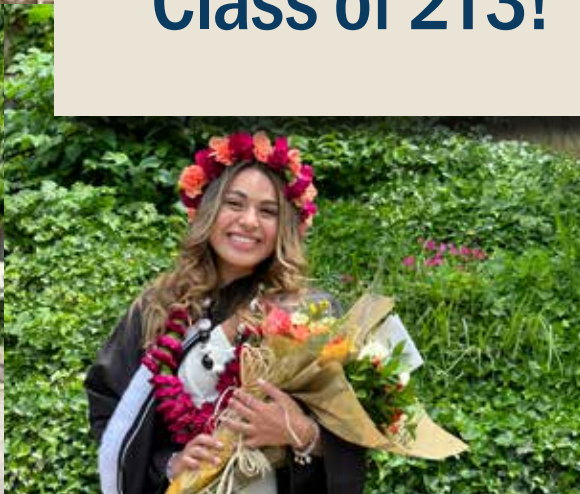
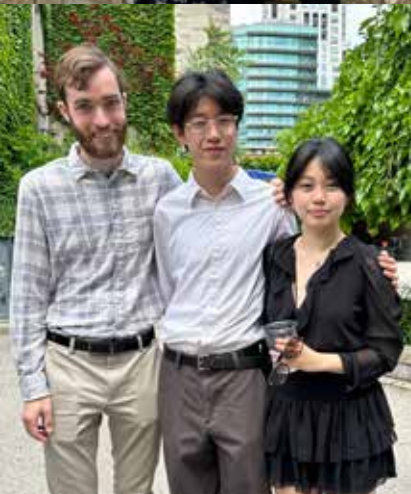
The Being Well at St. Mike's Campaign, which launched during Spring Reunion 2022, has been embraced by a great number of supporters. Combined with a generous five-year commitment, this support has allowed us to add a second wellness counsellor to support our students physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually, and equip them with tools that will last a lifetime.

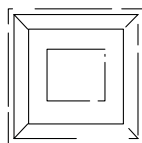
Philanthropy is the voluntary contribution of time, talent, and treasure to foster the well-being of others. You make our work very fulfilling—the St. Mike's community is extraordinarily philanthropic! ♦



GRAD SNAPSHOTS

Congratulations, St. Mike's Class of 2T3!





THE DONOVAN COLLECTION

Honouring Alumna Denyse Thomasos

Work from Donovan Collection in cross-country tour



BY FR. DANIEL DONOVAN



ANYONE WHO HAS BEEN IN Fr. Robert Madden Hall for even a brief time over the last 15 or more years couldn't help but see a large (11 by 20 feet) painting on its north wall entitled "Babylon." It is the work of Denyse Thomasos, a Caribbean-born, and Canadian and American educated artist who died tragically some 10 years ago in a medical mishap. ¶ "Babylon" has been included in a major year-long retrospective of her work with four-month stops in Toronto at the AGO, in Saskatoon at the Remai Modern, and in Vancouver at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

The exhibition has made evident Denyse's continued growth as a creative and talented painter right up to the end of her life. It also revealed her commitment to social justice, especially in relation to the treatment of Black people, both in the past (the ships bringing slaves from Africa to the Caribbean) and in the present (American prisons with their disproportionate number of Black prisoners).

The painting recognizes and to some degree celebrates the ambiguity of the modern city with its chaos and energy, its violence and its beauty.

Denyse has a special relation to USMC and to St. Basil's church. We celebrated both her wedding and, a few years later, a Memorial Mass to mark her death. On both occasions receptions were held in Madden Hall in the presence of "Babylon."

I made several visits to the exhibition when it was at the AGO. It deepened my appreciation of the breadth and depth of her work. I am delighted to have had the opportunity to see "Babylon" in relation to so many other remarkable paintings. My one regret is that Denyse was not there to enjoy it. ♦

An endowment fund has been established to generate funds that will support the ongoing care and maintenance of The Donovan Collection. To contribute, contact the Advancement Office at (416) 926-7281



*Denyse with "Babylon", taken at
her studio in New York City, 2005.
Photo: The Estate of Denyse Thomasos.*



The Annual Fund is central to our work in educating the whole person. Please join us in supporting St. Mike's students' physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual development.

STAY IN TOUCH

What's new? We'd love to hear about you! Send your updates to smc.alumniaffairs@utoronto.ca. High-res photos are encouraged.

SUBSCRIPTION

Manage your "St. Michael's Alumni Magazine" subscription. <https://bit.ly/3XJyyJq>

To donate, please visit engage.utoronto.ca/stmikes

To learn more or for other giving options, please contact our Annual Campaign Team. 416-926-1300 • 1-866-238-3339 smc.annualfund@utoronto.ca

Office of University Advancement
University of St. Michael's College

81 St. Mary Street, Toronto, ON M5S 1J4
smc.alumniaffairs@utoronto.ca
[@uStMikes](#)  



UNIVERSITY OF
ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO