

SPRING/SUMMER 2025

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



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ST. MICHAEL'S

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College Alumni Magazine

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FROM FOUNDERS HOUSE

Reflecting on the Educational Enterprise at St. Mike's

IN THE FACE OF THE current wide-spread public and policy narratives about the need for more specialized, market-oriented, outcome-based, (aka 'useful') education, it's becoming a bit fashionable in certain quarters to talk about so-called whole-person education. Do I hear a collective Eureka! ¶ As the head of a university that was founded on the very principle of the education of the whole person, I can only smile—and perhaps chuckle under my breath—to see this emerging realization that we have been leaning too much upon an industrial understanding of the purpose of higher education; or as John Henry Newman had it, that the idea of a university is as a 'factory, a mint, or a treadmill' intended to churn out human widgets, is misguided. Perhaps this would be a good time to revisit what it is we have been doing on this bit of Toronto real estate for the last 173 years, and why.

A St. Mike's education begins with a foundational understanding that human beings are inherently worth something. This starting point has profound implications for how we approach the educational enterprise: the types of programs we offer, and even the research questions we undertake.

A commitment to educate the human person demands a certain pedagogy, or way of teaching. Students are complex, not the sum of their parts, but whole individuals. Truth is not the reserve of any individual subject area but rather can be discovered through different and multiple courses of study. Put these ideas together and you have an education program that breaks down the walls between disciplines in order to achieve a more holistic understanding of problems and solutions. History, psychology, sociology, theology, mathematics, for example, each shed light on a subject in their own way. Bring these disciplines into dialogue and together they can inform each other and, ultimately, provide deeper knowledge and even wisdom. The academic programs at SMC, and especially the One Seminars (Gilson, Boyle and McLuhan) are explicitly designed following the principles of interdisciplinarity and experiential learning, which helps further the connection between knowledge and practice.

The goal of this integrative pedagogy is to educate the

person who can participate in wide-ranging yet complex dialogue, mastering an academic discipline while appreciating how others approach problems, and to seek ways to put this learning into practice. While this is a distinctive way of teaching and researching intended to lead to deeper understanding and empathy, it also has practical advantages for graduates seeking to navigate a life-long journey of multiple careers, and a society marked by accelerating change and consequent political and social challenges.

This respect for the human person is also behind St. Mike's institutional commitment to diversity, to accessibility, to improving mental health supports, and why we should prioritize student services, a comprehensive Campus Ministry serving the entire campus community (regardless of denominational affiliation), and our efforts to answer the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action. While at the core of our social justice initiatives in the classroom and across campus it's also designed to be building up the common good beyond our gates. This outward responsibility explains why St. Michael's aspires to lead in service learning and outreach programs, which connect the classroom with communities in greatest need. All members of this Catholic university community are continually challenged to build professional and personal



relationships based on integrity and respect, and one of the greatest qualities of St. Michael's has been and should be the supportive and respectful nature of this community that has been built over many generations.

Finally, there is a broader dimension to a St. Mike's education that we cannot ignore and that makes it arguably the most relevant and appropriate education available today. I don't need to convince you that, in this moment, we need ethical leaders whether in business, politics, education, media, or in our neighbourhood associations. Our university does not shy away from the premise that we are called to help shape the character of our students through their intellectual, spiritual, physical and, yes, moral development. It is not a doctrinal exercise where students are told how to behave, but an invitation to reflect upon the ethical and moral implication of actions and ideas, through study, reflection, practice, and even prayer. Ethics, as an integrated field of study, should hold a place of pride in every Catholic university, as it continues to do so here at St. Michael's.

So, as the inevitable conversation continues to unfold—that one about what purpose higher education should serve in society—you should know that St. Mike's seeks more. We want our graduates to develop themselves as whole people—job-ready and competent, of course—but we have always sought to prepare our students to be critically minded, compassionate, and unafraid of the bigger questions about the meaning of their lives: in other words, to be fully human. That's what we mean by education of the whole person, and we've been committed to this enterprise for well over a century and a half. Eureka! ♦



David G. Sylvester

*David Sylvester, PhD
President and Vice-Chancellor*

St. Michael's founding motto (Ευσέβεια, μουσική, γυμναστική) refers to the development of the spirit, the mind and the body (loosely translated as piety/faith, music/arts, gymnastics). More recently, the university has highlighted the motto of its founders, the Basilian Fathers, which is Bonitatem et disciplinam et scientiam doce me (Teach me Goodness, Discipline and Knowledge). Both mottos can be found across campus: notably on the crests above the fireplace in Charbonnel Hall and above the south entrance to Brennan Hall and embedded in the floor in South Brennan foyer (i.e., the DeSanti lobby). ♦



Beyond the Headlines: Alumni Reflect on Canada-US Ties

FOR ST. MIKE'S, THE UNITED STATES has always felt like part of the family. Thousands of American students have crossed the border over the years, seeking an excellent education in a beautiful, culturally diverse city, with the added benefits of more affordable tuition and the familiarity of long-standing ties with the Basilian Fathers, who have communities in both Canada and the U.S.

But 2025 has seen a confusing disruption in broader Canada-U.S. relations, so *St. Michael's Magazine* decided to speak with key community members to get a sense of whether talk of the 51st state has altered those school ties. The good news is this: while politics may roil the waters, the bonds alumni feel for their alma mater remain strong, Canadians now living in the United States feel supported by those around them, and there is hope for Canada emerging stronger from the challenges we face today.

"I could see Canada from the front of my house," says alumna **Marianne Sciolino** (SMC 7T3), who grew up in Buffalo, N.Y. and recalls crossing the iconic Peace Bridge with her mother to visit sandy Ontario beaches, Crystal Beach amusement park – and sneaking firecrackers back over the border.

Since Marianne hadn't heard about her St. Mike's application, she planned to be a day student at SUNY Buffalo, where she had been awarded a full scholarship. But in August of 1969, she received a phone call that changed her life.

"I was in the dining room and the phone rang. 'Hi Marianne, this is Fr. Madden.

We have found you a space.' It was a miracle. I had got into St. Mike's!," she recalls.

// At St. Mike's and at U of T you could be the child of Italian immigrants or come from lots of old money. We were all the same. //

Marianne Sciolino (SMC 7T3)

And so she headed to Toronto, in a Canada that was very familiar to her. But it was the middle of the war in Viet Nam, and she met classmates

– and staffers – who were conscientious objectors. She found herself in classes with people from all over the world, learning about local gun control laws she found admirable and impressed by the way various cultures got along.



I went through a kind of culture shock,” she recalls, remembering a Canadian friend telling her that “the strength of a country is measured by its ability to look after the weak.” It is an aspect, she says, that she continues to admire about life in Canada.

Her summer job in Cape Cod underlined her happiness at coming to St. Mike’s. Living in a local bed and breakfast, she found roommates who were from elite American schools. It soon became clear to her that her contemporaries’ lives had very different experiences, depending on family income.

“I am so proud I went to a place that is open to all God’s children,” she says. “At St. Mike’s and at U of T you could be the child of Italian immigrants or come from lots of old money. We were all the same.”

Today, Marianne lives in Manhattan, a successful businesswoman. She feels her opportunities as an entrepreneur were broader there than in Canada but she also sees a progressiveness in Canada, for example on LGBTQ issues, that she admires.

“I have a great life and I feel good about living here. But I follow the news and am concerned for Canada. I take it personally when people criticize Canadians.”

As she ponders current tensions, she remains positive.

“If there’s a silver lining it’s that Canadians are becoming more patriotic in a good way. I am proud that I lived in Canada for six years. I love both countries.”

Fr. George Smith, CSB, who earned his Master of Divinity degree from St. Michael’s Faculty of Theology in 1988, highlights the long tradition of Basilian seminarians studying at

the faculty, including many Americans. Those men would live in Toronto for three years of study, taking that experience back home with them, influencing not only their pastoral approach but also creating a worldview that included a Canadian perspective and appreciation.

The faculty has taught many graduates of the Basilians’ St. John Fisher University in Rochester, and St. Michael’s College has been home to many undergraduate students from The Aquinas Institute in Rochester, NY, as well as Catholic Central High School in Detroit, he notes.

“Often our teachers would say to students,

// **What we need to be looking at are the issues that transcend politics, the values that we revere, such as faith and family.** //

Fr. George Smith, CSB (USMC 8T8)

‘Have you thought about St. Michael’s?’” says Fr. Smith, who holds the Cavanaugh Chair of Catholic Studies at St. John Fisher.

But it wasn’t just the appeal of lower tuition that attracted potential students and their parents. The Basilians were a known entity to American families and a teaching order of priests that offered parents comfort as they pondered their children not only leaving the nest but also studying in another country.

Fr. Smith is confident that the unique nature of St. Michael’s as a school founded by religious communities can play a positive role in these turbulent times.



“I have a sense that religious communities, with their witness of history, can speak to our future,” he explains.

And St. Mike’s, as a liberal arts university, is particularly well placed to help, he adds.

“What we need to be looking at are the issues that transcend politics, the values that we revere, such as faith and family,” he says. “There will be contentious discussions but we need to point to our shared humanity more often in those conversations.”

Because Fr. Smith now lives in Rochester, he is keenly aware of the turbulence in our cross-border relations.

“Canada matters. I struggle greatly with the current situation. But if I am to continue to be here I ask myself what kind of contribution I can make. We are building a new generation who can see things differently.”

His time living in the United States has been positive, he quickly adds, noting, “I can’t tell you the number of times someone has come up to me and said, ‘I am so sorry about this situation. We love having you here.’ This is what unites us,” he says.

He laughs, recalling his drive to Toronto in a car with American license plates, for his first meeting as a member of St. Michael’s Collegium.

“When I came up to my first meeting in March I got some dirty looks on the QEW, but I sense we have turned a corner,” he laughs.

Ray Shady (SMC 7Tr) is blunt about the current climate: “I’m embarrassed by the posturing and the tensions,” he says.

One of the many grads who participated in St. Mike’s renowned Western Year program, offered in the days when Ontario universities required Gr. 13 or an equivalent for full admission, Shady’s positive feelings about

St. Mike’s — and Canada — range from memories of the nearby Sutton Place hotel being one of the tallest buildings in town to developing a taste for hockey, with Canadian dorm mates coaching the then-untutored Americans in Canada’s national game.



// I loved those years because Toronto was international, and I met students from all over the world but I was just three hours from home. //

Ray Shady (SMC 7Tr)

“I loved those years because Toronto was international, and I met students from all over the world but I was just three hours from home,” he recalls, noting that, in part, St. Mike’s felt like home because there were so many American students here.

Today, he is back in Rochester after a career that began by earning a PhD in Renaissance drama at U of T and then teaching English at St. Michael’s and Erindale, then St. John Fisher University, with a later 32-year pivot into the business world. His “encore career” brought him back to the classroom and administration at St. John Fisher University, but this time in the School of Business. His sister, Carol Shady DeMatteis, his cousin, Robert C. Carroll (RIP), his wife Suzanne Flavin Shady and their daughter, Anna Shady Mangual, are all proud St. Mike’s grads.

Today he describes himself as “having hands across the border,” with a tight circle of friends. And those friendships, he notes, are intensely loyal. As an example, he cites the annual Boozer Brown golf tournament that he and Terry Paupst (SMC 6T9) co-founded in 2003, a friendly match that rotates between the two countries, “four Yanks versus four Canucks.” When the Canadians expressed reservations this year about heading south, the Americans came to Canada instead.

The SMC alumni Shady knows are all totally sympathetic to Canadians’ surprise at the “inappropriate comments from the White House”.

The **Hon. David Lametti**, who is also an alumnus (SMC 8T5), has had plenty of opportunity to observe the relationship between Canada and the United States as a former Member of Parliament, who served as Attorney General of Canada and Justice Minister from 2019 to 2023 and, as of July, acts as the Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Mark Carney. He says he is “cautiously optimistic” about how the coming years will play out in terms of Canada’s relationship with the United States.

“I’m not downplaying the significance of the challenge and I am not denying that at times it will hurt, but we may well see stronger east-west relationships (in Canada) and stronger ties with Indigenous communities emerge,” says Lametti, who grew up in the town of Port Colborne, Ontario, just 20 minutes from the Peace Bridge, which connects the town of Fort Erie with Buffalo, New York. As a student, he had summer jobs directing traffic on the bridge.

“I think we still share many of the same principles and values” but the tariff wars,

for example, call Canada to widen its economic trading base, whether industrial or technological, and to move forward with confidence, he says.

Still, like many Canadians with friends and family in the United States, he is mindful of the current unsettled climate, given that he has a child about to begin a fellowship in Pennsylvania.

And he says that one of the take-aways from this era in Canada-US relations should be the personal responsibility to educate ourselves

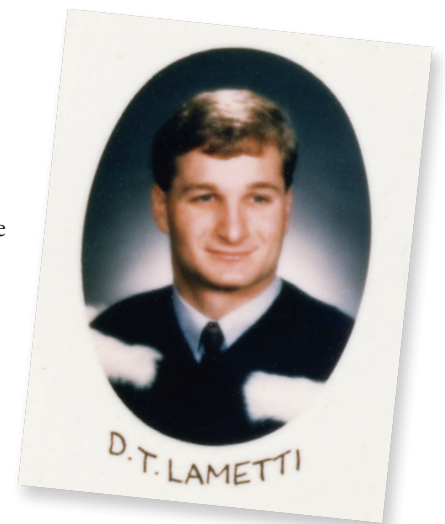
// I’m not downplaying the significance of the challenge and I am not denying that at times it will hurt, but we may well see stronger east-west relationships (in Canada) and stronger ties with Indigenous communities emerge. //

The Hon. David Lametti (SMC 8T5)

about the world around us as well as how our own country works.

“There’s been a rush to the lowest common denominator,” he notes. But, in talking about the growth of a positive nationalism, he mentions having attended one of the hockey games between Canada and the United States during this past winter’s *4 Nations Face-Off Tournament*.

“Twenty-thousand hockey fans belting out the anthem,” he says. “It was great.” ♦



ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE

Undergraduate Research Colloquium Brings Together Academic Community at all Levels

THIS PAST SEMESTER ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM brought student research out of classrooms, exam rooms, and labs and into an exciting public forum. The event invited both presenters and attendees to ask incisive questions, take intellectual risks, and engage deeply with emerging ideas — and thus showcase the curiosity and creativity that define undergraduate scholarship at St. Mike's. ¶ The Colloquium was organized by the Office of the Principal and the John M. Kelly Library and was generously co-sponsored by the Friends of the Kelly Library in recognition of the exciting interactions between these academic and student-facing offices.

“We wanted to give our students an opportunity to share, showcase, and develop their research with each other and with faculty librarians and leading professors across various disciplines,” said Professor Irene Morra, Principal and Vice President. “This opportunity reinforces the excitement of being a part of a supportive academic community dedicated to intellectual

curiosity, learning, and exploration.”

The planning committee was made up of faculty, librarians, and post-doctoral students. “This Colloquium is really about giving students an opportunity to play with research,” said James Roussain, William D. Sharpe Chief Librarian and Director of Special Collections. “Being able to develop and share your ideas among peers

From left: Natalie Barbuzzi, Undergraduate Officer and Programs Promotions Coordinator; Principal and Vice President Irene Morra; Laurette Nehme, outstanding lightening talk winner; Yuchong Wang, outstanding poster winner; Vivian Zhi, outstanding poster winner; Chief Librarian James Roussain; Izzy Chiang, people's choice winner; Emily Neto, outstanding presentation winner. Missing: Emma Ward, outstanding presentation winner.



UNDERGRADUATE COLLOQUIUM

is an important part of the research process and we are thrilled so many students have volunteered to take part.”

“Blending people of different academic backgrounds and roles in the college added to the success of the Colloquium,” said Book & Media Studies Professor Francesco Morriello. “I encouraged my students to get involved and show what they’re working on, whether through primary research in archival materials and rare books or developing their ideas through secondary research.”

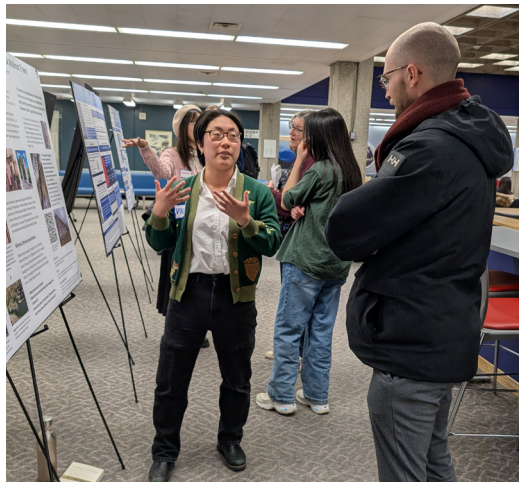
In addition to sharing knowledge across disciplines, students honed

their skills on how to present their findings. Final works were delivered as either an oral presentation, a lightning talk, or an academic poster. The SMC Academic Success Centre, a collaborative venture between the Office of the Principal and the library, supported participants throughout the process with workshops and one-on-one support. “We developed workshops on how to present ideas cogently and effectively through both presentation and academic poster formats. The skills and experience students gained in the Colloquium will give them confidence as they look ahead to graduate

studies or to the professional world,” said Stacy Reardon, Instruction Librarian and Coordinator of the Academic Success Centre. Prizes were awarded for Outstanding Presentations, Outstanding Posters, Outstanding Lightning Talk, and People’s Choice Winner. The judging panel was made up of college faculty and fellows.

Participants walked away with away with a newfound confidence in their abilities and presentation skills that will prepare them for further education and future careers. ♦

The date for the 2026 Colloquium is set for March 5th and 6th in the Kelly Library. All are welcome to attend. Mark your calendars!



Vivian Zhi

Inspired by her eco-criticism course, Vivian Zhi, a third-year double major in English and Book & Media Studies, applied her curiosity about black walnut trees on campus to her academic interest in the archiving of story and historical narrative. Vivian was accustomed to delivering her findings in class as an oral presentation but was selected to do a poster presentation.

“I think a poster presentation worked out better because my project had a huge visual component. The process allowed me to practice my delivery and how I would pitch my story. This was very helpful when I had one-on-one conversations with people who stopped to look at my poster,” she said.

“I had to adjust my presentation based on how much knowledge someone had of the subject and everyone’s different interests,” she said. “It was great seeing which aspects of the story people were drawn to and what questions they had.” Her efforts earned her one of the Colloquium’s awards for Outstanding Poster. ♦



Sun Jaehyun Sur

Sun Jaehyun Sur, a fourth-year student specializing in biology with a double minor in immunology and math, applied to the Colloquium to share his findings from a research project he completed for his human biology course. Using data obtained through magnetoencephalography (MEG), a neuroimaging technique, he sought to understand how a child’s brain changes following a concussion.

“As a scientist, being able to participate and present research is important, and I wanted to have access to those skills early on in undergrad, because I know it’s expected in grad school that you present at seminars or conference. I wanted to gain firsthand experience now so that if I make mistakes, it won’t be catastrophic,” he said.

He received one-on-one help through the Kelly Library to make his STEM-heavy presentation more accessible. “I had the opportunity to make the language more inclusive so that a general audience could understand neuroscience,” he said. Sun was struck by one of the questions he received following his presentation. “It was a question I didn’t think of before and gave me a whole new avenue to research. Having access to a diverse range of knowledge and perspectives really helped me,” he said. ♦



Incoming student Davide Bordegari

The St. Mike's Cycle Continues

Welcome, Class of 2029!

JUST DAYS AFTER WISHING THE CLASS OF 2025 well at two impressive convocation ceremonies, we said hello to the Class of 2029. June 21, 2025 saw our biggest welcome day ever for incoming students. Guests were greeted with a full and productive agenda which included sessions on various degree requirements and finances, as well as campus and library tours, a student and faculty panel on university life, and a session for parents on what to expect. ¶ Faculty, staff and administration were on hand to answer questions, calm nerves and offer an introduction to life at St. Mike's. ¶ Incoming students like Davide Bordegari were impressed by the warm reception they received. "The course info was helpful and I was impressed by the vibrant community," Davide said. "I met some profs and feel very welcome here." ¶ As guest Isabelle Mehta said, "My dad went to St. Mike's. He raved about it!" ♦



CAMPUS NOTES

It's been a fruitful time on campus, with numerous events and activities. Here are some of the highlights.



Honorary Degree Granted Major Archbishop Shevchuk

The University of St. Michael's College awarded **Sviatoslav Shevchuk, Major Archbishop of Kyiv-Halych**, an honorary degree in recognition of his ongoing witness in the heart of war-torn Ukraine and his commitment to theological education. His Beatitude Sviatoslav, Father and Head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, received his degree on Feb. 25, while in Toronto for a synod of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. The ceremony took place in St. Michael's Charbonnel Lounge, and the degree was conferred by the university's chancellor, Cardinal Frank Leo.

Later that evening, the archbishop spoke with noted academic Timothy Snyder, who recently left Yale University to join the Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy at the University of Toronto, at an event St. Michael's co-hosted. ♦

St. Michael's Divests from Fossil Fuels

The University of St. Michael's College is celebrating complete divestment from fossil fuels, five years ahead of the target date of 2030, "The Collegium's decision to begin divesting St. Michael's from fossil fuels was an institutional response to the urgent need to care for all creation, inspired by the university's mission statement," says Chair Susan Helstab. "Sustainability is a key pillar of our strategic plan."

"This decision marks a significant moment in the university's history," says St. Michael's President David Sylvester. "By moving away from investing in fossil fuels we want to demonstrate to stakeholders that we see sustainability not just as a goal but as a principle that guides our lives. This accomplishment is good for our students, good for our university, and good for the broader community," he says. ♦



Duane Rendle to Retire

The University of St. Michael's College is pleased to congratulate Dean of Students Duane Rendle on his retirement in June 2025.

"Please join me in thanking Duane for his exceptional contributions to student life at St. Mike's and wishing him the very best in his well-earned retirement," University President David Sylvester said.

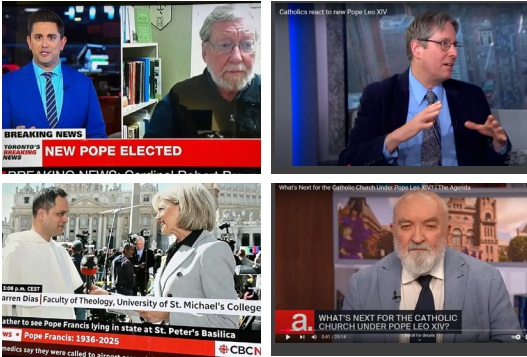
Rendle joined the SMC community as a resident while completing an MA in Industrial Relations in the mid-1990's. In 1998, after serving as a don for two years, he was hired as Dean of Men & Dean of College, overseeing St. Michael's residence operation and serving as the main liaison between the student residence body and university administration, eventually being named Dean of Students. During his nearly 28-year tenure, Rendle worked to animate and improve the part of a student's university experience that takes place outside the classroom. A fund has been established in Duane's honour to celebrate the spirit of involvement and leadership to which he was deeply

committed, with awards that recognise students who are growing into thoughtful, engaged leaders.

"Student life is about the clubs you join, the events you attend, the extracurriculars you engage in, and the leadership roles you assume — all of which help to make friends and memories that will last a lifetime," he says. "It's been an honour for me to foster those things at SMC." ♦

Professors Offer Expert Papal Commentary

From the death of Pope Francis through to the election of Pope Leo XIV, the media turned to St. Mike’s for expert commentary. Professors Mark McGowan and Reid Locklin engaged in multiple radio and television interviews. Regis St. Michael’s Prof. Darren Dias, O.P. provided CBC with commentary from Rome the day of the funeral, while Prof. Michael Higgins, the Basilian Distinguished Fellow of Contemporary Catholic Thought, wrote for the *Globe and Mail* and participated in CTV’s coverage of Pope Francis’s funeral. So many interviews took place that we have created a media mentions page on our website, stmikes.utoronto.ca, so that the wisdom of our community can be shared more broadly. ♦



Gilson Seminar Students in Rome for Historic Moment



Participants in the **Gilson Seminar in Faith and Ideas** — one of St. Michael’s distinctive first-year offerings — found themselves in Rome with **Professor Michael O’Connor** on the very day Pope Leo XIV was elected.

Temporarily paused last year, the Gilson Seminar returned this year with a renewed curriculum, thanks in part to donor support. When the Rome component was scheduled nearly eight months

ago, no one could have foreseen the extraordinary moment in Church history that would coincide with their visit.

“Being there was an unbelievable experience,” said first-year student Peter Zhang.

While the papal election meant parts of the Vatican Museums were closed, including the Sistine Chapel, one student summed it up best: “I’ll take a conclave over the Sistine Chapel any day!” ♦



Donovan Collection’s *Babylon* Returns to Campus

After appearing in a national tour of the works of the late artist Denyse Thomasos, *Babylon* has been re-installed in Fr. Madden Hall. The work’s return home was celebrated with an evening reception which included an expert panel conversation about art, the work of Thomasos, and the **Donovan Collection**. A special guest at the event was Gail Luciano, Denyse Thomasos’ sister. ♦



Scarboro Foreign Mission Society Exhibition

A major exhibition highlighting the Scarboro Foreign Mission Society archives opened in the John M. Kelly Library in January: *The Golden Rule: Social Justice and the Scarboro Foreign Mission Society* began with a lecture from Father Robert Carbonneau, C.P., PhD, who is Research Fellow of the Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History at Boston College and archivist of the Passionist China Collection. The exhibit, which includes a general timeline of the order’s activities and a display of materials documenting the work of SFM ministries around the world, will remain in the lobby of Kelly until August. ♦



Marking Prof. McGowan's Retirement

Family, friends, colleagues, and students both current and former gathered to honour **Professor Mark McGowan** and his contributions to the University of St. Michael's College and the University of Toronto. McGowan retired this

spring after joining St. Mike's in 1991, although he will continue to teach. Attendees celebrated his many accomplishments, including serving as principal of St. Michael's College; as faculty member in Celtic Studies and Christianity & Culture; as co-founder of the Book & Media Studies program; as a member of the Department of History at the U of T; and his recent election to the Royal Society of Canada.

St. Michael's **Principal and Vice-President Irene Morra** noted McGowan's most recent achievement — being awarded St. Jerome's University's Chancellor John R. and Kay Sweeney Award for Catholic Leadership — and then announced the launch of the **Mark McGowan Celtic Studies Fund**, to be awarded to an undergraduate student with a passion for tying archival research to historical research. ♦



Celebrating Our Sponsored Programs

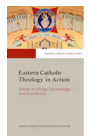
The end of the winter semester saw St. Mike's host a party for all the students in our sponsored programs. Students in Christianity & Culture, Book & Media Studies, Celtic Studies, and Mediaeval Studies joined faculty and staff in an opportunity to relax and socialize after a busy term. ♦

RSM Hosts Major Book Launch

The **Regis St. Michael's Faculty of Theology** celebrated an incredible five publications by four faculty members with an on-campus book launch. Books are available from the **John M. Kelly Library** or from various booksellers.



Professor John Dadosky: *Wisdom of Order: An Exploration of Lonergan's Method of Theology*



Professor Andrew Summerson, co-editor with Cyril Kennedy: *Eastern Catholic Theology in Action: Essays in Liturgy, Ecclesiology, and Ecumenism*



Professor Cynthia Cameron, co-editor with Lakisha R. Rutherford-Rusch and Emily A. Peck: *Nobody's Perfect: Redefining Sin and Mistakes in Adolescent Christian Education*



Professor Jean-Pierre Fortin: *Evolving Grace: The Spiritual History of a Christian Doctrine and a monograph titled Agedah.* ♦



Joint Commissioning Mass for RSM

There were prayers and celebrations for the 26 theology graduates recognized at this year's **Commissioning Mass**, the first year Regis and St. Michael's have held a joint ceremony. **Regis President Father Gordon Rixon, SJ**, who celebrated the Mass, told the graduands, "the Church is waiting for you."

A joint convocation ceremony will be held this fall. ♦



AI Talk Tackles a Challenging Topic

Regis College alumnus **Sheldon Fernandez**

generously gave of his time to help educate us on the intersection of artificial intelligence

and theology, as well as the impact of that intersection. Fernandez met with Regis St. Michael's Faculty for lunch and conversation to share his perspective as an AI strategist and former CEO of DarwinAI, and later participated in a panel discussion with University of Toronto Professor Michael Gruninger and Professor Corey Labreque of Laval University, where topics ranged from the possible impact of AI on prayer to how artificial intelligence may help in the grieving process. Finally, in spite of one of the winter's stormiest evenings, the chapel at Regis College was full for his talk, *Artificial Intelligence: A Theological Perspective from a Soulful Practitioner and Former Student*. ♦



A Busy Spring for Continuing Education

In addition to its fascinating course offerings, Continuing Education delivered two certification sessions for 30 TCDSB students from Loretto College and Cardinal Carter Academy for the Arts in March. With access to St. Mike's resources, students tried their hand at exhibition curation and printmaking in two workshops led by St. Mike's experts.

Two additional certification sessions on event planning and book repair are in the works for October 2025.

Then, in April, Continuing Education hosted an event for 73 participants in collaboration with Young Professional



Catholics of Toronto on 'Good Work: Finding Purpose and Passion in your Career.' This event created a space for young professionals to build connections and become inspired while introducing a new audience to the work of Continuing Education.

Participants had an opportunity to hear from speakers from several professions and to attend a networking reception held at a nearby pub. ♦

For more information on the new general interest and professional interest non-credit offerings in Continuing Education, please visit stmikes.utoronto.ca/academics/continuing-education.



Coming this Fall 2025 and Winter 2026

Wednesday, September 24: St. Michael's Golf Classic at Eagles Nest Golf Club.

Wednesday, September 24 to Saturday, September 27: The Friends of the Kelly Library, St. Michael's College Annual Book Sale, at the John M. Kelly Library.

Monday, September 29: Michaelmas Mass and Celebrations.

Thursday, October 23: Sisters of Service Exhibition with an opening lecture by Prof. Mark McGowan "The Big Maps: The Sisters of Service as Canadian Trailblazers" at the John M. Kelly Library.

Friday, October 24: The Annual Dante Lecture welcomes Prof. Francesco Ciabattini, specialist in Medieval Italian Literature and Director of the Global Medieval Studies Program at Georgetown University. He will be joined by Prof. Michael O'Connor, Founding Director of St. Michael's Schola Cantorum and holder of the W. J. Bennett Family Chair of Christianity and the Arts, to explore the Music of Dante at the John M. Kelly Library.

Sunday, November 23: Santa Claus Parade Event.

Week of November 1: The AI4W Conversation Series.

Thursday, March 5 and Friday, March 6: 2026 Undergraduate Colloquium at the John M. Kelly Library.

For details on these and other events including the Christmas Market and Convocation, please visit stmikes.utoronto.ca. ♦





Swoop by the Dodig Family COOP to see its new bird-friendly look!

THE ST. MICHAEL'S COMMUNITY rallied together recently to protect our feathered friends by decorating the COOP windows with stencils to prevent birds from flying into them. Thanks to a large turnout, the window project was completed in one day — in time for spring's bird migration.

While the large windows of the COOP create a welcoming, inviting atmosphere for students, the reflections they create — and the clear view offered to the inside — create confusion for feathered visitors to campus, and can result in birds flying directly into the windows. Toronto is on a major migratory flyway, and the campus grounds, with their close proximity to Lake Ontario, are a perfect resting spot for those birds after a long night of travel.

"It was encouraging to see so many St. Mike's students come out to assist with painting the COOP windows to make them bird-safe. Knowing that the younger generation cares about this gives me hope for making all buildings bird-safe. We have a beautiful campus and

making it welcoming and safe for our feathered friends is a plus," says Angie MacAloney-Mueller, St. Mike's Physical Plant Coordinator and bird enthusiast.

After being alerted to the danger the COOP's large windows pose for birds, student leaders took action. The initiative brought students, staff, faculty and alumni together over a shared purpose that closed the term with a celebratory event. Volunteers from BirdSafe U of T and Flap Canada offered guidance throughout the process.

"While this initiative on campus was small in scale, its impact has been immeasurable," says outgoing St. Michael's College Student Union President Yusuf Durmus.

The windows now showcase designs created by student Aastha Verma, pictured in the top left photo. "It felt like a meaningful way to contribute to the St. Mike's community — not just visually, but environmentally as well," she says. ♦



HONOURS

A Season of Awards



St. Michael's College Gold Awards

Congratulations to the 2025 College Gold recipients Shuailun Bi, Hanfu Gong, and Elise Cressatti.

Alberto and Caroline Morgan Di Giovanni Centro Scuola Scholarship

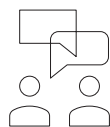
Prof. Michael O'Connor is joined by Caroline Morgan Di Giovanni to present the Alberto and Caroline Morgan Di Giovanni Centro Scuola Scholarship to Alyssa Marie Cordeiro, one of several donor-funded scholarships presented at the recent St. Michael's College Awards Ceremony.



The Fr. Robert Madden, CSB, Leadership Awards

Fr. Robert Madden was a much-admired professor, chaplain and Basilian Superior at St. Michael's College who served as the Director of Alumni Affairs in his retirement. The Fr. Robert Madden, CSB, Leadership Awards are presented to students who have made significant contributions to the University of St. Michael's College community by demonstrating leadership, cooperation, and solidarity in student-run organizations or community endeavours.

Nejat Ahmed	Vidhi Jhawar	Darian Trabold
Catherine Amoguis	Helia Karami	Nidhil Vohra
Aaliya Nadeem Bhambra	Vaishu Koduri	Zhiyi Xu
Elise Cressatti	Min Ji Koo	Jenkin Yuen
Yusuf Durmus	Wing Shan Liu	Nabiha Zubair
Arib Hassam	Daisy Thomas	



ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD

Building the Future, Honouring the Past

Alumni Board Updates and Opportunities



Announcing St. Michael's College 2025-2026 Alumni Association Board.

*Front: Maria Gallo (SMC 9T2), Pia Karrer O'Leary (SMC 6T2), Liz Paupst (SMC 9T2), Catherine Bragg (SMC 7T3), Karen Chambers (SMC 8T8), Victoria Asikis (SMC 1T1)
Back: Matthew McGuire (SMC 9T6), John Schady (SMC 1T9), Hao Chen (SMC 1T9), Jesse Mitsopoulos (SMC 1T7), Nicholas Pagano (SMC 2T1), Larry Cimino (SMC 7T3)
For extended biographies of our board members, please visit stmikes.utoronto.ca/alumni.*

AT THE HEART OF THE University of St. Michael's College is a community bound not just by shared memories but by a lasting commitment to each other, to the community, and to the future of the university. ¶ As your USMC Alumni Association Board, it's our privilege to serve this vibrant community. We are delighted to welcome a new group of dedicated alumni to the Board. These individuals bring not only diverse expertise and fresh perspectives, but also a deep affection for St. Michael's and a strong commitment to service.

Pia Karrer O'Leary (SMC 6T2) has a long record of involvement at St. Mike's. Following her graduation, she completed an MA and taught French. After retirement, she continued to serve French First Language education at provincial and national levels.

Catherine Bragg (SMC 7T5) is a former UN Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs. She previously served 24 years in Canada's federal public service. Her most recent SMC alumni involvement includes serving as contributor to the B.Sc. Psychology table of Orientation Academic Program Social, as a panelist on Grad Panel and Funding, and at Career Month.

Victoria Asikis (SMC 1T1) is a Senior Associate at Norton Rose Fulbright Canada LLP. Victoria serves as a mentor with St. Mike's AMPLify Program and offered the address to graduands at this June's convocation ceremony.

John Schady (SMC 1T9) is a CPA, currently working at Oxford Properties Group as a Senior Financial Analyst. He has served on the SMC Young Alumni Committee.

Marianna Kalaczynski (SMC 1T9) is an information professional, librarian, and archivist dedicated to community building, historical preservation, and equitable access to knowledge. Marianna is active as an SMC AMPLify Mentor. ♦



Nicholas Pagano (SMC 2T1) is a Process Engineer at CIBC. He is also an MBA candidate at the Rotman School of Management in the University of Toronto. He is excited to join the Alumni Association Board and share his passion for service, purpose and giving back with the SMC community.

Hao Chen (SMC IT9) is a Customer Success Manager helping large enterprises optimize efficiency and operationalize excellence in their supply chains beyond graduation. He remains actively engaged as an Alumni Board member and as a member of St. Mike's Young Alumni Committee (YAC).

Thank You

With warmest appreciation we also bid farewell to our departing board members: Stephanie Orange (SMC 6T2); Maureen Hart (SMC 8T9) (Past President); Alistar Vaz (SMC oT6); Justin Jalea (SMC oT7), Giulio Fazzolari (SMC iT4), and Michael Kelly (SMC iT5).

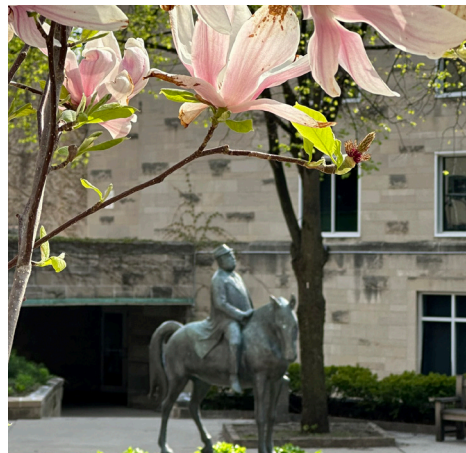
These individuals have given generously of their time, talent, and ideas, laying a strong foundation for those who follow, and we thank them for their service.

Behind every successful alumni initiative are passionate volunteers. To all our committee chairs and members — thank you for your creativity, commitment, and care. Whether helping to organize reunion events, strengthening diversity and inclusion, or mentoring students through career development initiatives, your contributions keep the spirit of St. Michael's alive and thriving.

We welcome alumni to engage in the life of St. Michael's, and we strive to communicate about activities taking place both on and

off campus. Every alumni event strives to be a meaningful way to engage, reflect, and celebrate our shared roots.

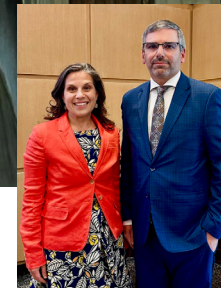
One of our most impactful initiatives has been the AMPlify program, which connects alumni with current students and recent grads for mentorship and career conversations. Whether you have 30 minutes for a phone call or time to build an ongoing relationship, your experience matters — and could make all the difference in a young USMC grad's future journey in their career.



To Every Double Blue Alum

The invitation to reconnect with your St. Michael's community is always open. Whether you help organize an event, attend one, sign up as a mentor, simply update your contact information, or share your story, your involvement helps shape a future rooted in our shared sense of connection. ♦

*The Alumni Association Board,
University of St. Michael's College*



A special thank you to Association Board Chair Maria Gallo, who has led with empathy and a deep commitment to strengthening the ties that bind our alumni family. Thank you, Maria, for continuing to serve with passion and commitment. Maria has graciously accepted the role of Past Chair to help in the transition with the new Chair, Matthew McGuire.

A special thank-you to Larry Cimino (Chair of the Reunion Committee) and Katie Püllella (Chair of the Awards Committee) who have spent countless hours driving the results of each of their committees.



BULLETIN BOARD

Keeping up to Date with Our Alumni

News from Alumni and Friends



Rita-Marie Hadley (SMC 8T5) is a recent recipient of the King Charles III Coronation Medal for her outstanding contributions to the community and dedication to service for her fellow citizens. Executive director of Lansdowne Children’s Centre, Rita-Marie is a dedicated advocate for families and children with special needs and a long-standing member of the Rotary Club. ♦



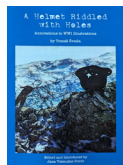
Congratulations to the **Hon. David Lametti (SMC 8T5)**, who has been named Prime Minister Mark Carney’s Principal Secretary. Lametti is the former Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada. ♦



Paul Carson (SMC 6T7) has generously donated a recording of a 1950s performance of *The Dedicated Man by The Mickities*, the St. Mike’s student theatre

group now known as the **Troubadours**, to the St. Michael’s Kelly Library archives. The Mickities started in 1958 with the goal of producing student-written musicals. A budget of \$37 helped make the 1958 show a success. The University of St. Michael’s College Archives has gems like this and more. Please get in touch with the archives to learn more or arrange a visit. ♦

Dufferin-Peel Region, Joann is a member of the Friends of the Kelly Library. She has been married for 25 years to **John Minardi (7T1)**. ♦



Jana Vizmuller (SMC 7T6) is Senior Scholar at the Department of Languages, Literatures and Linguistics at York University. Her most recent publication is a

trilingual edition (English, Italian, Slovak) entitled *A Helmet Riddled with Holes: Annotations to WWI Illustrations* by Tomáš Švaňa. (Soleil Publishing, November 2024). She has also co-edited a book with Roberta Iannacito-Provenzano, a fellow U of T grad and Provost and Vice-President, Academic at Toronto Metropolitan University, on *Social Media: Implications for the University, Roma: Aracne, 2016*, as well as a special number of *Ethics and Social Welfare* (13, 1, March 2019) written and edited in collaboration with Antonio Marturano, entitled *Technology-driven Unemployment and Social Welfare*. Her recent research focuses on food in science fiction, technology and/at work, and the role of language in constructing alternative ontologies. ♦



Natalie Jenner (SMC 9T0), internationally bestselling author of *The Jane Austen Society*, *Bloomsbury Girls* and *Every Time We Say Goodbye*, shared that

her fourth novel, *Austen at Sea*, was released on May 6th in North America. Named a most anticipated title by the CBC, NetGalley, and BookBub, it has sold for translation in France and other countries, is being narrated on audiobook by British actor Rupert Graves, and received a starred review from the American Library Association’s Booklist. Natalie has received high praise for her latest work: “Just delightful.” —*People Magazine’s Book of the Week*, “Anyone seeking an antidote to contemporary chaos will find a welcome respite.” —*The Washington Post*, “This one’s good for the soul.” —*The Globe and Mail*. Photo by Sarah Sims. ♦



Joann Rossitter (SMC 7T8 and USMC 9T8) recently participated in an alumni mentoring panel. She is the winner of a prestigious Arts Award in Peel Region and is

published in a book called “Crazy Cove”, a collection of poems from Courtney Park Writers’ Group, available on Amazon. She is in the process of publishing a historical fiction novelette. Currently teaching Arts & Theology and Special Education at a Catholic high school in the

BULLETIN BOARD



This past August, **Kathy LaFontana (SMC 9T1)**, Ph.D., began her 30th year in Catholic higher education. She was a faculty member at Sacred Heart University

in Fairfield, CT for almost 17 years, then an academic administrator at the College of New Rochelle in New York for almost six years and has been Sr. VP for Academic Affairs and Provost at Ursuline College. She is grateful for the outstanding education she received in the Christianity & Culture program and hopes to reconnect with others in that program and those who lived at Loretto College. Kathy was one of the participants in our most recent A14W panel on the challenges and rewards of being a female academic. ♦



Christopher De Bono (SMC 9T3, USMC 9T9 and USMC 1T2) has been appointed Principal Advisor, Catholic Mission and Ethics at Unity Health. He will continue

to be seconded to the Catholic Health Sponsors of Ontario (CHSO) ensuring strong mission and ethical leadership across both organizations. At Unity Health, his new role and work will focus on: advising and supporting Unity Health's CEO and Executive Team, leading and supporting Unity Health's Board Mission Committee and providing expertise on Catholic ethics in collaboration with the Centre for Clinical Ethics. ♦



Congratulations to alumna **Michelle Alexopoulos (SMC 9T4)** on being appointed external deputy governor of the Bank of Canada. Michelle is a professor of

economics at the University of Toronto, with a cross appointment to the Faculty of Information. ♦



Flavio Volpe, C.M. (SMC 9T7) is a recent recipient of a King Charles III Coronation Medal, awarded to recognize significant contributions to

Canada and its communities, or outstanding achievements abroad that bring credit to Canada. Flavio delivered one of St. Michael's convocation addresses this year, offering equal amounts of lessons learned and good humour. ♦



Katie DiTomaso (SMC OT0) and Principal **Antonio Morsillo (SMC 8T7)** recently brought play

and accessibility to life at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Elementary School (OLS). Katie led a transformative initiative to install a fully accessible play structure at OLS, a project that took seven years to bring to fruition. With a dedicated committee of parents and support from Trustee Teresa Lubinski and former Councillor Mark Grimes, she raised more than six figures. The goal was simple yet profound: to create an inclusive play space that fosters students' physical, social, and emotional development and to nurture resiliency through play. ♦

Steve Figueiredo (SMC OT8) wrote, directed and edited the latest MarvelHQ series. ♦



Kathleen Killin (SMC 1T1) and **Stephen Duffy (SMC 1T1)** joyfully welcomed twin girls, Eileen and Catherine, in January. The twins join big brothers Danny and Patrick in their growing family

which includes Nana **Mary Louise O'Hara (8T1)**. ♦

Ella Tetrault (SMC 2T3) recently received some great news, as she was accepted to the Master of Science in Health Systems at Cedars-Sinai in Los Angeles. She starts the program this September. Ella has been working at Cedars Sinai since 2024 as a Clinical Research Associate in the area of pancreatic cancer, IBS, menopause, and

evaluate effectiveness in health history data collection. ♦

Erica Dutra (Cupido) (SMC OT9), a writer, editor and content specialist recently recognized as a Webby Awards Honoree. Join us in celebrating her accomplishment in being named one of the best in Advertising—Sustainability & Environment this year! ♦



Singer-songwriter, session vocalist, and guitar player **Caroline Brooks (SMC OT4)** won a Juno for children's album of the year as one-third of the critically acclaimed *Good Lovelies for Penny Penguin*, a

collaboration with children's entertainer Raffi. She was also honoured with the ACTRA RACS Recording Artist of the Year Award from the Ontario Folk Music Awards, along with her bandmates. ♦



Meet the Alumni Year Reps for the Class of 2025

Darian Trabold, Arib Hassam, Yusuf Durmus, Elise Cressatti, and Aaliya Nadeem Bhambal.

Send Us Your News!



What's new? We'd love to hear from you! Send your Bulletin Board updates to the Alumni Affairs team at smc.alumni@utoronto.ca. High-res photos are encouraged.



Have you moved? Update your information through U of T's address update form: <https://bit.ly/3BmgvCo>



St. Michael's Pays Tribute

St. Mike's lost some valued alumni members over the past few months, all of them recipients of the University of Toronto's prestigious Arbor Award for their extraordinary contributions to the community, including to St. Michael's. We are grateful to these illustrious alumni for their service, and we extend our condolences to the Sorbara, James, and Broadhurst families.



Joseph Sorbara, (SMC 6T3), who died on Feb. 17, 2025, founded the St. Michael's Chancellor's Club to recognize the generosity of alumni and donors. He received an honorary degree from St. Michael's in 2006 for his service to the community.



The Honourable Joseph C.M. James (SMC 6T7), who died on March 21, 2025, served as president of St. Michael's Alumni Association, as well as heading up U of T's Alumni Association.



William (Bill) Broadhurst (SMC 5T1), who died on April 2, 2025, received an honorary degree from St. Michael's in 2002 for his service to the community, including his time with St. Michael's Alumni Association. ♦

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

Kelley, Marie T., SMC 4T4
 Mary C. A. Burghardt, SMC 4T6
 Marcolin, Rena, SMC 4T7
 Horbatiuk, Phyllis L. M., SMC 4T8

1950s

Cobban, Elizabeth, SMC 5T0
 Broadhurst, William H., SMC 5T1
 Edmonds, Ruth M., SMC 5T1
 Lally, Thomas J., SMC 5T5
 Wingell, Claudette Marie-Odile
 Valentine, SMC 5T6
 O'Mara CSJ, Sr. Mechtilde, SMC 5T6
 Barry, Michael F. B., SMC 5T7
 McDougall, Hugh L., SMC 5T7
 Tonon, Albert P., SMC 5T7
 Learney, John P., SMC 5T8
 Lee, Noreen M., SMC 5T9
 Meyer, William J., SMC 5T9

1960s

Boyce, Jacqueline J., SMC 6T0
 Falchuk, Norman R., SMC 6T0
 Riopelle, Clifford A., SMC 6T1
 Schuman, John E., SMC 6T1
 Smart, Patricia E., SMC 6T1
 Peake, Frances P. M., SMC 6T1
 Sorbara, Joseph D. M., SMC 6T3
 Bernadette A. D. Sulgit, SMC 6T4
 Gris, Anna T., SMC 6T5
 Finlay, Donald F., SMC 6T5
 Madden, Michael G., SMC 6T6
 Bukovac, Rose A., SMC 6T7
 James, Joseph C. M., SMC 6T7
 McLaughlin, Joseph M., SMC 6T9
 D'Amico, Barbara N., SMC 6T9
 Zorzi, Linda M., SMC 6T9

1970s

Langer, Linda J., SMC 7T1
 Bryant, M D., SMC 7T2
 Swift, Karel J., SMC 7T2

Jaklic, Mark J., SMC 7T4
 Kucharzyk, Henry A., SMC 7T4
 Greenberg, Michael L., SMC 7T6
 Duchene, Gayle E., SMC 7T8
 Unterreiner, Franz J., SMC 7T8
 Arrigo, Claudia, SMC 7T9
 Deja, Deedee W. V., SMC 7T9

1990s

Messina, Rosalia, SMC 9T5
 Ballantyne, Daniela M., SMC 9T8
 *Smith, Carole A.M., SMC 9T2 ♦
 *Ms. Smith's name appeared incorrectly in the last issue.
 We regret the error.

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



Special moments: Sr. Mechtilde O'Mara receives her honorary degree from St. Michael's; Fr. Donald Finlay at Mass with St. John Paul II in Toronto.

Remembering Sr. Mechtilde O'Mara, CSJ and Fr. Finlay, CSB

The University of St. Michael's College lost two particularly significant community members this year. Sr. Mechtilde O'Mara, CSJ, a long-standing Classics professor at St. Michael's and the University of Toronto, died Tuesday, July 8, 2025 and Fr. Donald Finlay, CSB, former Chief Librarian of the John M. Kelly Library, died April 6, 2025.



"Sr. Mechtilde was an extraordinary academic who gave constantly to St. Mike's, whether in the classroom or by serving on Collegium, engaging in recruiting, and inspiring the students she encountered while living in the St. Joseph's College residence," says University President David Sylvester.

A 1956 graduate of St. Michael's, Sr. Mechtilde earned her doctorate from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1971 and was appointed an assistant professor in the Classics Department at St. Michael's/U of T that same year.

In 1991, she became St. Michael's first Vice-President, Administration, working to enhance the university's research culture and the funding of faculty travel grants and bursaries. She also served two terms as Vice-Chair of Collegium.

As a member of the leadership team for St. Joseph's College, she was a keen support to hundreds of residents over the years.

In 2007 Sr. Mechtilde received U of T's Arbor Award for her exceptional contributions to the university and in 2022 she was awarded a Doctor of Sacred Letters, *honoris causa*, from St. Michael's. ♦



Fr. Finlay was a familiar face on campus from his time as a student in the early 1960s through his years as Chief Librarian in the 1980s and 1990s.

After entering the Basilian novitiate in 1957, he enrolled in St. Michael's Faculty of

Theology in 1962, receiving his S.T.B. degree in 1965 and was ordained in December of that year.

Upon earning an MA in Library Science, he was appointed Librarian at the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies in 1967, while also being named the local Superior of the institute's Basilians and, later, of the wider community of St. Michael's. He was named Chief Librarian later that year.

Father Finlay also served as a don and was widely respected by the students under his care, many of whom stayed in touch for years after graduating. When he was assigned new duties in the Basilian community in 1992, the university's Collegium, where Fr. Finlay had served, issued a citation that included thanks for his "yeoman's service" as Master of Ceremonies at liturgical functions. That service extended to work on the Liturgy Subcommittee before then-Pope John II visited Toronto in 1984. ♦



*St. Mike's Reunion
 I linger over pictures
 The words once written
 'hope this lasts a long time'
 Was not meant to be
 Lost touch and then
 Some were gone forever
 Over the decades,
 then to now
 Today we come together
 Two and a half score later
 How can that be
 We are the children
 of Aquarius*



*Golden living dreams of
 vision as the song said
 Entering now our
 golden years
 Recalling,
 remembering, reliving
 Youthful days of college life
 Bell bottoms, favorite courses
 Those that weren't
 Lifetimes cherished, endured
 Bringing us here
 A single bond tying
 Years unlike others
 Ours forevermore*



*May 30, 2025
 MK Brennan, SMC 7T5 ♦*



2025 Spring Reunion: Welcome Back!



*“I hope that today as you gather, that it be a day of great joy for you,
a day of celebration. Happy Anniversary!”*

With this upbeat greeting at a morning Mass celebrated by alumnus **Fr. John Huber (USMC 9T0)** in the Loretto Chapel, Double Blue Reunion 2025 was off to a great start.

Friday saw twice the fun at the traditional brunch honoring our golden anniversary alumni, as the guest list included not only the class of 1975 but also the class of 1970, who hadn't been able to come together in person to mark their 50th in 2020 due to COVID.

Reflecting on their time at St. Mike's, guests mentioned a range of reasons why they continue to hold St. Mike's dear, and why they returned for reunion.

“It was a time in my life when I met so many wonderful people—there were many friendships made and lots of fun,” said **Joan Yanch Foley (SMC 7T5)**.

“I remember my wonderful professors who taught not only their subject areas but also a bit about life,” offered **Susan Ficek, (SMC 7T5)**.

Liz Gilbert, (SMC 7T5), agreed, citing the extraordinary grounding she received in English literature and the Western canon that helped prepare her for her career as a librarian.

And **John O'Connor (SMC 7T0)**, who went on to join the English Department at St. Mike's and remains a College Fellow, mentioned everything from the Friday afternoon “scrambles”, which brought together students, staff and faculty for coffee and snacks through to the memory of seeing Marshall McLuhan dancing at the 1970 formal.

In his remarks to brunch guests, President David Sylvester called their alma mater “the most welcoming college at U of T,” adding that St. Mike's role is to help students figure out who they are called to be.

“The world needs St. Mike's grads now more than ever,” he said.

After attendees shared memories of anti-war protests, the Toronto Maple Leafs winning the

Reunion Photos: St. Michael's Communications and Rick Chard.



Stanley Cup — even if it was now more than 55 years ago! — and a poem crafted for the occasion. Guests revisited favourite corners of campus, met author **Celia Wexler (SMT 7T0)** in the Dodig Family COOP, where she chatted about her book, *Catholic Women Confront Their Church*, and then gathered in the lobby of the John M. Kelly Library for a tour titled *Art and Soul: Donovan Collection & Scarboro Foreign Missions Society Exhibit*, highlighting the current display in the lobby as well as pieces from Fr. Dan Donovan's

art collection, one of the hallmarks of the St. Mike's campus. After a fabulous BBQ on the COOP patio, complete with beer tasting to help select what will become St. Mike's-branded beer, partiers headed off to the Young Alumni trivia night and to a classic St. Mike's pub night in the COOP.

Saturday dawned cool but upbeat. You could hear a pin drop as distinguished alumnus **Prof. Douglas Moggach (SMC 7T0)**, spoke on *Freedom and the Modern World: Lessons from Hegel*. In introducing the

keynote speaker, President Sylvester noted that Moggach, who teaches at the University of Ottawa, had an impressive list of accomplishments, with the latest being named this year as a life member of Clare College, Cambridge. You can find Moggach's talk on the St. Michael's Youtube channel.

Then it was off to the *Footprints in Time: A Historical Journey* tour of campus, and a fascinating panel discussion sponsored by the Alumni Initiative for Women (AI4W) group — *Value Added: Appreciating the*

Contributions of Women Academics, where alumnae members **Dr. Gabriella Colussi Arthur (SMC 9T9)**, **Dr. Kathryn LaFontana (SMC 9T1)**, **Dr. Cathy Driscoll (SMC 8T5)** and **Dr. Theresa O'Keefe (SMC 8T5)**, spoke about the challenges and joys of being a woman in academia.

Guests then headed off to the film club's screening of the darkly comedic, offbeat cult classic, *Harold and Maude*, before attending the Annual General Meeting of the University of St. Michael's College Alumni Association



Alumni Award Recipients



Congratulations to this year's volunteer award winners who help make St. Mike's such a wonderful place.

Dr. Richard Alway Award: Katie Di Tomaso (oTo); Spirit of St. Mike's Award: Peter Dellinger (7T4);

Young Alumni Impact Award: Maria Rio (1T7);

Prof. Victoria Mueller-Carson Trailblazer Award: Deborah Livingston-Lowe (8T7);

The Victor Dodig Community Impact Award: Brenda Sweeney (8T4)



Board of Directors. At the AGM, outgoing board Chair **Maria Gallo (SMC 9T8)** was thanked for her dedicated service by incoming Chair **Matthew McGuire (SMC 9T6)**. It was announced that she will remain involved in an advisory capacity as Past Chair. New board member **Catherine Bragg (SMC 7T5)**, whose impressive career includes having served as a former assistant secretary-general for humanitarian affairs and deputy emergency relief coordinator in the United Nations, delivered the AGM's keynote address,

reminding everyone that while our post-St. Mike's lives diverged, we all shared the experience of being part of a caring and formative community.

The traditional Honoured Years Banquet took place Saturday evening in Sorbara Auditorium, where alumni gathered to reconnect and celebrate shared memories. Throughout the evening, guests enjoyed lively conversation and warm company. One particularly memorable moment came when Moggach was approached by a fellow alum who introduced

himself as Doug's former high school teacher. The chance encounter sparked laughter and reflection, as the teacher good-naturedly recalled that Doug — now a distinguished fellow at Cambridge — hadn't exactly stood out as a future academic star in his teenage years. Sunday morning brought one final tour — *Lights, Camera, Action: A Film & TV Sites Tour* highlighting the many corners of campus that have starred — albeit under an alias — in various films, television shows and commercials.

It was a full church at

St. Basil's for the parish Mass, where many alumni were warmly welcomed back to the spiritual heart of St. Michael's.

A busy weekend wrapped up with the alumni awards ceremony and brunch, an opportunity to pay tribute to the extraordinary contributions our alumni members make to the community.

And then, before you knew it, the reunion fun was over for the year. But don't worry: we are already looking ahead to Double Blue Reunion 2026.

Hope to see you there! ♦

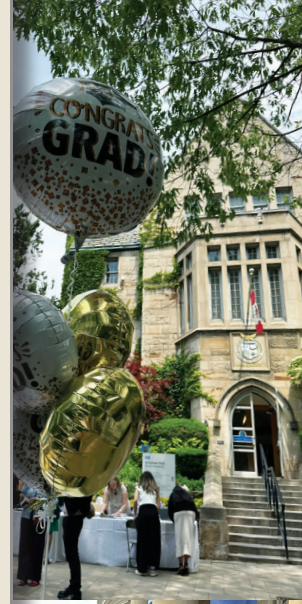
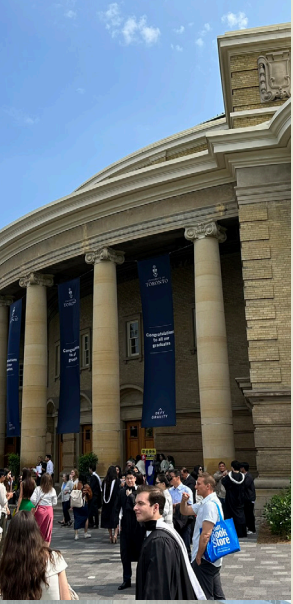
Please see our sidebar on page 20.

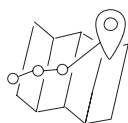




Congratulations, St. Mike's Class of 2T5

CONVOCAATION HALL SAW A RECORD 953 ST. MICHAEL'S STUDENTS cross the stage on June 13, 2025 to become the newest members of our alumni family. ¶ Official ceremonies began on Thursday evening with a Baccalaureate Mass, a reception and an awards ceremony. Friday delivered a particularly pleasant and sunny day as we held two convocation ceremonies, with alumna Victoria Asikis (SMC 1T1), a senior partner at Norton Rose Fulbright in Ottawa, addressing students graduating in the Sciences at the morning ceremony, and alumnus Flavio Volpe, C.M. (SMC 9T7), now president of the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association, delivering an address to arts and commerce students at the afternoon ceremony. A BBQ on St. Mike's campus at noon allowed the two groups to mingle and share the joys of the day. ¶ We can't wait to see what's in store for our newest alumni members. Please keep in touch. We know you'll make us proud!





FROM ALUMNI & ADVANCEMENT

Spanning Borders, Building Bridges



BY LISA GLEVA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ADVANCEMENT

THIS YEAR HAS BEEN AN unusual one. As global headlines swirl and border rhetoric shifts, I've found myself reflecting on how deeply and enduringly connected St. Michael's is to the United States. ¶ For us at St. Mike's, America has never felt foreign. Generations of American students have crossed into Canada to attend the University of St. Michael's College in search of something they knew they would find here: a values-based education at a world-class university, and a city alive with cultural and intellectual diversity. Some came to honour a family legacy or to escape political unrest; others came because a Basilian priest quietly nudged them northward. Whatever the reason, they came—and they became part of the St. Mike's community. And they remain part of it as alumni.

These cross-border ties were palpable at our recent Alumni Reunion, where many American alumni returned to campus. Conversations with and among them brought home just how lasting those connections are. Despite the turbulence in today's Canada–U.S. relationship, there was no mistaking the warmth and clarity with which our alumni reflect on their time at St. Mike's. They spoke of an institution that expanded their worldview, challenged assumptions, and offered not just a place to study, but a lifelong community.

In a time of political uncertainty and polarizing discourse, it's easy to forget that relationships between people—and between institutions like ours and the individuals we serve—often transcend the news cycle. Flavio Volpe, C.M. (SMC 9T7), reminded us of this during his Convocation address to our arts and commerce graduates in June. Many of our alumni still live just hours from campus; others are now scattered across the U.S., Canada, and beyond. But they all spoke of a shared experience—one that shaped their values and continues to anchor their perspectives.

As one alum put it, “St. Mike's was a place where you could be the child of immigrants or come from generational wealth—and it didn't matter. We were

all the same in the classroom.”

St. Michael's is unique, offering a liberal arts university experience within one of the world's top research universities—combining breadth with belonging. Students pursue a wide range of disciplines: arts, science, medicine, business, engineering, and more. What makes St. Mike's unique is how we bring a liberal arts approach—formation of the whole person, critical inquiry, and grounding in shared values and relationships—to students across these diverse fields. Ours is a campus culture rooted in the Catholic intellectual tradition, offering an interdisciplinary education with a strong sense of purpose, community, and formation.

The current political climate may test our assumptions. But our mission as a Catholic liberal arts university—rooted in intellectual freedom, community, and the dignity of every person—is our compass.

So, as we look ahead, let's continue to extend the hand of friendship. Let's listen, learn, and lead with humility and hope. And let's remember that while borders define geography, it is our shared humanity that defines us.

Because the real strength of our institution isn't just that we span borders. It's that we build bridges. ♦



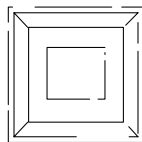
Get your clubs, call your classmates, and register for St. Mike's Golf Classic!

Imagine a top-tier golf course awash in double blue! We hope to see alumni players fill Eagles Nest Golf Course in Maple, Ont. at this year's tournament, taking place September 24, 2025.

The goal this year? A total of 36 foursomes made up of alumni, all playing to support the student experience at St. Mike's. Each foursome is \$1,800 and includes 18 holes of golf, meals and hospitality. And if you don't have a foursome ready we are happy to introduce you to other alumni to ensure you can join us.

A fabulous course, a day full of fun, and a great cause. We hope to see you there!

To learn more and get email updates, visit usmcgolfclassic.com



THE DONOVAN COLLECTION

Home



BY JAMES ROUSSAIN, WILLIAM D. SHARPE CHIEF LIBRARIAN AND DIRECTOR
OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND CHAIR, DONOVAN ART COMMITTEE

IN “BIRTHING THEIR MOTHERS” (2019) by Charlene Vickers, feelings of beauty, warmth, and comfort emerge through layered forms of land, water, and sky — a vivid world shaped by memory, ancestry, and connection. Originally from Kenora, Ontario, and now based in Vancouver, Vickers is an Anishinabe Kwe/ Ojibway artist known for blending abstraction with symbolism to reclaim visual languages rooted in Indigenous tradition: beauty as a political act. She explores identity, belonging, and living histories through vibrant colour and recurring motifs. “It is in beauty and colour I express a visual healing and a statement of futurity,” writes Vickers.¹

Organic shapes and symbolic figures, like the fish and human presence, suggest belonging carried in both body and story, evoking ties to land, memory, and the act of remembering. In this work, Vickers reimagines these symbols, reminding us that belonging is not fixed, but made, carried, and rediscovered in the places we return to, of home — not unlike our shared campus, quietly holding our stories and memories of a place so familiar.

Charlene Vickers’ *Birthing their mothers* is installed in the John M. Kelly Library. ♦

¹ Charlene Vickers, “Where We Gather,” On the Subject of Beauty. Artist’s statement. Macaulay & Co. Fine Art, Vancouver, Canada, 2019.

Caring for the Donovan Collection

THE DONOVAN COLLECTION of modern and contemporary art is one of the special treasures of the University of St. Michael’s College. Built over several decades by Father Dan Donovan, the collection reflects his deep belief in the power of art to inspire, challenge, and connect us to the spiritual and human questions of our time. To ensure the collection continues to thrive well into the future, Father Donovan established a committee dedicated to its care. The Donovan Collection Committee was created to provide leadership and oversight for the collection, especially for the time when Father Donovan is no longer able to do so himself. Its job is to look after everything from maintenance and cleaning to acquisitions, exhibitions,

and most importantly, student engagement. Ensuring students have full access to the collection and an opportunity to engage with its pieces directly is a priority for the committee.

Each year, the committee sets a plan for how to care for and engage with the collection. This might involve adding new works that reflect the spirit of the collection, organizing events and exhibits, and exploring partnerships in the broader arts community. The ongoing inclusion of artworks in the *St. Michael’s Alumni Magazine* is one such example and one that I, as the Chair of the Donovan Collection Committee, am honored to take on.

The committee is composed of three members: a representative from USMC,

the Executive Director and Chief Curator of the Art Museum at the University of Toronto—presently Barbara Fischer—and a representative from the Toronto arts community. Barbara Fischer and Shelli Cassidy-McIntosh, Director and Partner of Olga Korper Gallery in Toronto, have kindly agreed to join me in forming the inaugural committee. Together, we will work hard to keep Fr. Donovan’s original vision alive by ensuring the collection remains a vital, living part of campus life and a lasting contribution to the College’s cultural and academic community. ♦

James Roussain,
Chair, Donovan Collection Committee,
Chief Librarian and Director of Special
Collections, John M. Kelly Library



Birthing their mothers, Charlene Vickers, 48" x 60", Acrylic on canvas, 2019. Image credit: Macaulay + Co. and the artist.



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



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.

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