

MARQUETTE



Inside Marquette Mentors Alumni National Awards

From MU to the Majors

A PRESIDENT'S TRUE NORTH

A Historic Inauguration

The inauguration of Dr. Kimo Ah Yun as president of Marquette was as joyful as it was historic, marking his installation as the university's 25th president and the first person of color to serve in that role. The event was a combined installation ceremony and sacred Catholic Mass celebrated by the Most Rev. Jeffrey S. Grob, Archbishop of Milwaukee. Rev. James Prehn, S.J., Socius of Midwest Jesuits, led the commissioning of President Ah Yun and greeted him (right).

"We ask God to send the Spirit on this friend, this leader, this scholar, this man of faith. I have come to know Kimo as a man of extraordinary talent, of great faith, a wonderful sense of humor, and a deep devotion to all that Marquette seeks to be," preached Rev. Patrick McGrath, S.J., pastor of Old St. Patrick's Parish in Chicago and a Marquette trustee, in his stirring homily.

In his address, President Ah Yun emphasized the centrality of Marquette's Catholic, Jesuit mission and the importance of Marquette being a "student-first university" made accessible through generous scholarship support. He also spoke of the call to servant leadership reflected in the inauguration's theme: Open Your Heart. Find Your Compass. Change the World.

"Changing the world can seem like an impossible task. There are so many things that get in our way. But I'm fortunate; I get to see people change the world every day," he said. "The world needs a strong Marquette. It needs passionate and compassionate leaders. It needs individuals who believe faith and reason can and should coexist. It needs thinkers and dreamers; the faithful and the curious. It needs Marquette."





MARQUETTE

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On a Mission

Irish Jesuit Brendan McManus, S.J. (above), led a retreat session at Marquette's 2024 Mission Week and liked it so much that he returned in February for Mission Week 2025. This time, he participated in 10 events, including helping Rev. James Pribek, S.J., celebrate a morning Mass at St. Joan of Arc Chapel and a Mass and blessing for members of the Marquette University Police Department. A respected leader of retreats and pilgrimages, McManus also launched the Marquette community on a Camino Walk around the track at the new Wellness + Helfaer Recreation facility. "God is always trying to reach you, to communicate with you," he encouraged walkers, "so be open to that, turn off your phone, put aside distractions and just listen."



A Leadership Legacy Lives On

Beginning this fall, four outstanding students will begin their development as dynamic servant leaders, deepening their faith with humility, while pursuing rigorous academic schedules and serving the broader community. In key ways, these Michael R. Lovell Presidential Scholars will embody the values and shining legacy of Marquette's late leader. Created in partnership with the Lovell family, who contributed a gift to make it possible, and endowed through a leadership gift from alumni couple Chris and Mary Swift (read about them on page 34), this new scholarship program covers full tuition, housing and fees and will grow to support 16 scholars at a time when fully funded through additional donor support.

Many Happy Returns

Coming back to Marquette to become women's basketball head coach felt like a homecoming for Cara Consuegra, who served as an assistant coach here from 2004 to 2011 (and met her alumnus husband during that period). That familiarity may help explain how quickly and successfully she settled in. Her hungry, hard-working Golden Eagles blew past expectations all season long, making her the third first-year coach in program history to guide a team to 20 wins. "We are truly a team that is for and with each other. And that's what matters," she told the student-athletes on her team after their elated response to another honor, Consuegra being named Big East Co-Coach of the Year by her peers.

"It fills my cup to be a part of Mentors. It's a small way of making a difference, but I get in return this feeling of community that's so obviously Marquette."

— MARQUETTE MENTOR ALEISHA (PALANIUK) JAEGER, ENG '03

If You Rebuild It ...

Traces of the old "Rec Center" are nowhere to be found in the university's bright new Wellness + Helfaer Recreation facility. Students, meanwhile, are everywhere in the facility, which has been dramatically expanded and reimaged to accommodate medical services, counseling, wellness programming and recreation options ranging from spin classes and treadmills to weight circuits, pickleball and a turf ramp. In its first month, the facility averaged 2,400 daily recreation visitors, a 93 percent increase from a year earlier.



PHOTOS ON OPPOSITE PAGE BY ALEX NEMEC (TOP) AND MARQUETTE ATHLETICS; ON THIS PAGE, BY PATRICK MANNING (NEAR) AND RYAN YOUNG.



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FEATURES

Compass in Hand

On the remarkable journey that took him from his early days to his new role as the university's 25th president, Dr. Kimo Ah Yun found his calling as a servant leader dedicated to seeing students transformed by their Marquette experiences. *Page 24*

Embodying the Difference

It's time to shine a light on this year's Alumni National Awards All-University recipients, five individuals driven by mission and service who thoughtfully improve the world for others. *Page 32*

Never Far From Home

For alumnus Ben May, the view from the top as a major league umpire is made sweeter by the journey it took to get there. *Page 36*

Guiding Lights

Partnering with alumni mentors is making all the difference for these Marquette undergraduates as they build confidence and determine the best path forward for their lives and careers. *Page 40*



SUPPORT THE ANNUAL FUND

Be The Difference *students need now.*

Support for The Annual Fund is a top priority at the university. Your generosity has power to immediately change student lives, with funds distributed in the same fiscal year as your gift or annual pledge. It also allows Marquette to nimbly respond to student, faculty and university needs and strategic opportunities in real time. Walk with our students on their Marquette journeys by committing to The Annual Fund today.



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One of the privileges of serving as president of Marquette University is meeting our outstanding alumni during travels. Learning how their Marquette

experience was transformational and contributes to living a fulfilled life as they cultivate their desire to serve others deepens my love and gratitude for our university.

I enjoy hearing how our alumni remain connected with their college roommates, classmates and friends; how they maintain relationships with faculty and staff who continue to provide counsel and mentorship; how they give back to their communities; and how they have grown to be women and men for and with others.

Upon graduation, our students are “career ready,” thanks to rigorous academic studies that

include internships and research. But it is not and never has been about simply having a career. Any university can serve that purpose. I appreciate that Marquette graduates are “life ready,” thanks to a Catholic, Jesuit education that is grounded in the liberal arts and built upon deep introspection. Our graduates are ethically minded, lead with a caring heart and take action to make the world a better place — precisely the kind of people we need in the world.

There’s a common thread that connects Marquette alumni, no matter when they graduated, which degree they earned, where they live, or what kind of work and community service they are involved in: It is the call to Be The Difference.

In April we honored nearly 50 incredible graduates during the annual Alumni National Awards celebration. It is a joyous occasion to welcome the honorees and their families home and recognize how they are bringing our mission to life by contributing to the common good.

Our alumni successes affirm our university’s rich and proud legacy and prove that there is a great need for a place like Marquette. I have great optimism for the future because of the students we have on campus now who will be our future leaders and the next caretakers of our world. The momentum we are experiencing on campus will continue to propel us forward, and we could not do that without our inspiring students, faculty, staff and each of you.

We Are Marquette!

Dr. Kimo Ah Yun
President

Flying Our Colors

When tens of thousands of basketball fans from around the country descended on Fiserv Forum for first-round NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament games in March, 82 flags on downtown's busiest bridges gave them a warm Marquette welcome. Milwaukee looked as good as ever decked in blue and gold — don't you agree?

Works from an anniversary exhibition: Keith Haring created Untitled, right, during a 1983 campus visit. Pieta with Angels Bearing the Instruments of the Passion by Diogo de Contreiras, below, is so attributed thanks to sleuthing by Haggerty curators. Elizabeth Murray's Down Dog, bottom right, is printed on layered paper to create an intricate reinterpretation of a familiar subject.



ARTS AND CULTURE

Treasure Trove

The Haggerty Museum honors 40 years of art and education with an exhibition showcasing many standout works.

BY LINDSEY ANDERSON RIOS

Turning 40 is a big deal, whether you're a person or a cultural institution. So, when curator Dr. Kirk Nickel learned that the Haggerty Museum of Art would be celebrating its 40th birthday, he knew he needed to dig deep to put together a major exhibition worthy of such a milestone anniversary.

The main challenge, according to Nickel, was the staggering scale of the Haggerty's collection, which encompasses 10,000 objects, ranging from 500-year-old European Renaissance paintings to modern American masterpieces. "We didn't want it to be a



straightforward highlight reel," says Nickel. "But we also knew there were standout pieces that needed to be included."

After several months of scouring their collection, Nickel whittled down the exhibition roster to under 150 artworks, which he decided to install in two parts, one each semester. Works by artists such as Keith Haring and Diego Rivera are represented, alongside some underrepresented gems. "Not everyone finds everything interesting, but the show's diversity ensures there's something for everyone," Nickel says, adding that the exhibition's breadth and depth — like the collection itself — foster engagement opportunities for students, who visit the museum to learn about art history topics related to their course work.

According to John McKinnon, the Haggerty's director since August 2024, the exhibition has given him a chance to get acquainted with the strengths of the museum's collection. "I imagine the same must be true for new audiences as well," he says. "And even for those who already know the collection well, there are great reasons to visit, including rarely shown works on paper and newly conserved artworks." ◉





STUDENT SUCCESS

Loud and Clear on Careers

A prime new location, proactive outreach and more support for graduate students means the Career Center is helping more students than ever reach for their postgraduation goals. **BY SHANNON SHELTON MILLER**

Grace Sviland called it her freshman-year crisis. Not long into her first year at Marquette, Sviland realized she didn't know what she wanted to do with the rest of her life, even as she pursued a double major in psychology, and criminology and law studies.

A presentation in her English class delivered a breakthrough. The speaker, a staff member of the Career Center, encouraged students to visit and take advantage of the many resources available to help them define and achieve their postgraduation goals. "It's a free benefit for students, so why don't I use it?" Sviland thought.

Classroom visits are among the efforts Career Center staff have undertaken to get more students like Sviland through their doors. There's also been special attention for students in majors that fall below the university's 85 percent benchmark for

achieving fully engaged career outcomes — defined as full-time employment, continued education, engagement in a service year or military service within six months of graduation.

Career Center Director Courtney Hanson, Arts '98, PT '00, Grad '06, says each of these "focus majors" are assigned to a career counselor who connects with faculty in the major to learn more about that student population — their strengths, their struggles and how career education is currently integrated in the major's curriculum. Career Center counselors also use advanced software to help students in focus majors understand the transferable skills they're developing in the classroom that are also the top skills employers seek.

"During career counseling appointments with students, I found they're not often aware of the many skills they build

through their course work," Hanson says. "By infusing points of reflection throughout a course, students make those connections and learn how they can communicate these skills to future employers."

It's been a busy year for the Career Center, which moved in the fall to a prominent location in the new Lemonis Center for Student Success, where it regularly hosts events to attract more students. Since the move and the increase in proactive outreach, the Career Center has seen an 11 percent increase in student drop-ins and a 12 percent increase in class presentation requests. The center also drew 931 unique users to a new photo booth where students and alumni can take free headshots.

And that's not all. The Career Center has also increased its outreach to graduate students, creating a career counselor role specifically focused on their needs. Last fall, the Graduate School added three career skill requirements for all incoming doctoral students — career discernment; communication; and diversity, equity and inclusion — with the goal of better preparing doctoral students for any career path they choose. "While the Career Center has always supported graduate students, this specialized role brings more visibility to the services and resources available," says Lizzy Machado, Arts '14, career counselor for graduate students.

Sviland, a sophomore from Escanaba, Michigan, says she's visited the center at least five times in her first three semesters, getting help with resume writing, interviewing techniques and figuring out her career path. As a student in one of the focus majors — psychology — she used special software to talk through multiple career options with a counselor.

Now, she's a psychology major with a minor in neuroscience and plans for a career in clinical psychology after earning her doctorate. "They set you up to be the best student you can be, and set you up to succeed," she says. "It's one of the best resources on campus." ☺

"READING ROOM, MEMORIAL LIBRARY, 1964." BY JOHN AHLHAUSER. A-4.5 SERIES 10, NO. 00830. ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS, INSTITUTIONAL REPOSITORY, RAYNOR LIBRARY

There and Back Again

In the '60s, the spacious reading room of Memorial Library was the perfect spot to study. Students gathered at these long reading tables to pore over encyclopedias and dense reference materials. Over time, the room shifted to store stacks and offered less student seating. But what once was old is new again in the refurbished Lemonis Center for Student Success. Its Ask Me desk, a kind of human encyclopedia ready to answer questions about campus services — sits where students are pictured here. Comfortable seats in cozy window nooks overlook Wisconsin Avenue, and new tables — including picnic tables inspired by donor Marcus Lemonis' leadership of Camping World — encourage students to settle in for hours of prep to ace their next exam.



History on Foot

Every year, students hit the pavement, where eye-opening examinations of local history begin with the study of Milwaukee murals, statues and historical markers. It's all part of the honors course Engaging the City, which prompts deeper explorations of the historical context informing such symbols. Then-freshman Katlyn McVey (pictured) trekked to Milwaukee's Third Ward to analyze the mural *Bridging Milwaukee's Heart*, painted on the underside of the freeway system. Faculty founders of the course are excited to see it fulfill its promise. "We knew if we could create a course where students actively went out into the city, it would prepare, inform and challenge them to be thoughtful, hungry and serious about their learning," says Dr. Robert Smith, Harry G. John Professor of History, an architect and early teacher of the course.



COMMUNITY SAFETY

Protect, Serve With Empathy

Under Chief Edith Hudson, Marquette's police force embraces servant leadership. **BY DIANE BACHA**

Everyone in the Marquette University Police Department is given a simple yet challenging goal: listen. For the subjects of police calls or encounters, it could mean the difference between a night in a jail or a shelter, a visit with a court official or a mental health counselor.

"We do things a little bit differently here," MUPD Chief Edith Hudson says. "We try to slow things down and figure out, OK, are there any root-cause issues here?"

That is how one MUPD officer realized someone in distress was suffering from an allergy attack, then drove the student to a late-night pharmacy for medicine. And how another realized a woman and her infant needed shelter on a frigid night, then went the extra mile to get them to a safe place.

Active listening is rooted in a principle Hudson has followed since she was a Milwaukee patrol officer: servant leadership. Simply put, it means putting the needs of others first. While unusual in law enforcement, committing to this approach is "not a heavy lift" at a Catholic, Jesuit institution,

she says. "It is very consistent with seeing God in all things and in all people."

Dispatchers, public safety officers, patrol officers, student employees and every other member of Hudson's 80-person staff are trained in servant leadership practices. As they serve the campus and surrounding neighborhoods, they are asked to treat people with respect, empathy and eagerness to understand their situation. "Chief Hudson is fostering a culture of service within the force, creating officers who are not just protectors but true servants of the community," says Dr. Meghan Stroshine, Arts '94, chair and associate professor of social and cultural sciences.

And it's spreading. When Lieutenant of Support Services Jim Hensley joined Hudson's team in 2021, he learned servant leadership so he could train the MUPD staff. After that, requests started coming. Hensley estimates he's trained about 600 people in law enforcement outside MUPD, including at the Milwaukee Police Department, where servant leadership is now a formal part of the curriculum for new recruits. ☉

A decade improving safety:
In May, MUPD celebrated its 10th anniversary as a fully commissioned police department.

ATHLETICS

Development Minded

A familiar figure on Marquette Athletics sidelines — and its leadership suite — has a new title. After 18 years as deputy director of athletics, Mike Broeker, Grad '12, was recently promoted to vice president and director of athletics. He succeeds Bill Scholl, who retired after a decade at the university. Once a student-athlete himself, Broeker came to Marquette in 2003 after stints in communication with the NBA and Women's Tennis Association. In leading Marquette Athletics, the former Siena College pitcher is focused on what he says college athletics is about: coaches and administrators shaping lives. "It's not just about winning games," Broeker said in his introductory new conference. "It's about developing student-athletes into the people they are meant to be, both on and off the field." —Christopher Stolarski



PHOTOS ON OPPOSITE PAGE AND THIS PAGE (UPPER) BY PATRICK MANNING

CURA PERSONALIS

First Wellness Chief

The late President Michael R. Lovell long championed a culture of wellness at Marquette. Now, a new university leader is working to galvanize student fitness, health and well-being efforts — with a new facility in which to make it happen. Luis de Zengotita is Marquette's first-ever chief wellness officer, and the former executive director of the Center for Well-Being at the University of St. Thomas. He now oversees programs in Marquette's new Wellness + Hel-faer Recreation facility, which includes the **LOVELLSTRONG** Center for Student Well-Being. "Marquette's commitment to *cura personalis* extends to how we design our campus environment to help students flourish," de Zengotita says. "A truly healthy campus doesn't just treat illness — it proactively supports well-being." — Christopher Stolarski



ATHLETICS

The Mother of All Fan Groups

Taking cues from their stick-together sons, "Marquette Moms" forge lasting bonds and go all in on the Marquette community.

BY MAUREEN LEWIS, JOUR '84, GRAD '12

When Lisa Joplin moved fans with her singing of the national anthem before the men's basketball game against Creighton in January — and the Jumbotron captured her son, senior forward David Joplin, overcome with pride and giving her a fist pump — it capped off a week that's unique in college basketball: Marquette Moms Week. Featuring 17 mothers of student-athletes on the men's basketball team engaging in everything from team dinners to on-court shooting contests, the week expressed the strong bonds these women feel for each other and the identity they've formed over several years.

The "Moms" came together organically three years ago — and stuck together. Lisa Joplin gives a nod to team members themselves, who stayed together despite the draw of the NCAA transfer portal and personal licensing deals with other teams. "I truly feel our group is special because of the fact there are no transfers. No one has left other than going to the NBA, and that

gives us more years together, more time to become friends and then become family." The mothers established a WhatsApp chat, then a Facebook group and Instagram presence. A graduating senior's mom has managed their online presence and will hand the reins to a rising senior's mom for next season. Even the idea of a "Moms Day" at a home game grew in the group chat, where each mom volunteered how she could be involved.

Lisa Joplin's rendition of the national anthem at Fiserv Forum was not her first. She performed at her graduation from the Milwaukee Police Academy years ago. Stephanie Mitchell, mother of senior guard Stevie Mitchell, became her biggest advocate, working with Head Coach Shaka Smart to make it happen at the game. "These very special families are part of what make the young men on our team so special," Smart said after the game. "Everyone in attendance shared that feeling: Marquette is about relationships." ☺



PHOTOS BY PATRICK MANNING

Marquette Style, No Sweat

All hail the humble sweatshirt. When temperatures dip and Marquette pride flows, it's hard to imagine a wardrobe option that feels more comfortable, more vibe-worthy or more right. From blue to yellow and classic gray, from vintage to sleek and modern, there's a style to suit every Golden Eagle on campus or in Fiserv Forum, and nothing too humble about their expressions of spirit through clothing. Find your sweatshirt match at spiritshop.marquette.edu.



Leading in Water Quality Solutions

A distinguished collaborator guides the latest phase of Marquette's huge interdisciplinary research partnership. *BY JENNIFER WALTER, COMM '19*

Collaboration is Dr. Brooke Mayer's superpower. "If I look at all the work I've ever done, everything is collaborative," says the professor of civil, construction and environmental engineering. She has a proven record with major water research initiatives, currently serving on the leadership team of Science and Technologies for Phosphorus Sustainability (STEPS), a National Science Foundation-designated center through which top scientists from 11 academic institutions focus on phosphorus sustainability.

At Marquette, Mayer recently stepped into the role of principal investigator of In Defense of Water, one of the university's largest collaborative research projects ever. The partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers received a \$4.2 million grant in 2024 to launch its third phase with Mayer at the helm. She follows in the footsteps of Dr. Daniel Zitomer, chair of

the Department of Civil, Construction and Environmental Engineering, and Dr. Krassimira Hristova, professor of biological sciences, who each led earlier phases of the \$11.8 million overall project.

In phase 3, lead investigators from biological sciences and several engineering disciplines are joining with faculty members from diverse disciplines on seven initiatives addressing water quality and safety. These include both new and continued efforts targeting topics such as PFAS remediation and detection, decentralized water reuse, and disinfection of waterborne pathogens.

As colleagues learn to navigate the methodology and terminology differences between their fields, Mayer says, In Defense of Water's collaboration "really brings about better, deeper solutions to the problems that we're addressing — in really cool ways that you'd never think about before."

ARTS AND SCIENCES

A Nobel — and Valuable — Lineage

"Victor won the Nobel!"

A text message at 6 a.m. from a colleague alerted Dr. Allison Abbott, associate professor of biological sciences, to the news that Abbott's postdoctoral research adviser Dr. Victor Ambros was co-recipient of the 2024 Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine for discoveries relating to microRNAs. As a postdoctoral fellow at Dartmouth College from 2001-2006, Abbott worked with Ambros to advance research revealing how microRNAs act as important developmental regulators. She continues to lead microRNA research at Marquette while training undergraduate and graduate students to pursue careers in medicine and research science.

Ambros has spoken at Marquette, lunched with students here and has provided feedback to Abbott's students at conferences over the years. "Connections like mine with Dr. Ambros are invaluable, not just for me but for the entire Marquette community," Abbott says. "I owe much of my career to his mentorship."



NURSING

The Epigenetic Legacy of the NICU

Humans are born with approximately 3 billion DNA pairs spread across 23 chromosomes, a complete instruction manual for the makeup of a person. However, these



instructions are hardly static, thanks to epigenetic changes. "Think of your genes as a recipe book; epigenetic changes decide which recipes are read and how much they are used," says Dr. Kathryn Malin, assistant professor of nursing.

With support from a three-year, \$447,300 grant from the National Institutes of Health, Malin will study the impact of social and environmental health factors and toxic stress in the neonatal intensive care unit on epigenetic alterations in preterm infants and their mothers. The grant is a K23 award for early career faculty, which provides intensive, supervised, patient-oriented research experiences.

"These epigenetic changes can turn genes on or off or adjust how strongly they work," says Malin, who looks forward to advancing understanding of the complex relationship between life stressors and genetics in vulnerable infants and their mothers. — Andrew Goldstein, Comm '18

HEALTH SCIENCES

Retaining "Flexible Behavior" Amid Chronic Stress

"Flexible behavior — the ability to adapt in response to changing environmental contingencies — is a critical component of everyday life," says Dr. Matthew Hearing, H Sci '03, associate professor of biomedical sciences. But stress-related conditions, including major depressive disorders, are associated with impaired cognitive flexibility, leaving people struggling with problem solving and other coping responses.

Supported by a \$2.42 million R01 grant from the National Institutes of Health, Hearing is investigating the relationship between chronic unpredictable stress and cognitive flexibility

deficits in mice. In particular, Hearing and partner Dr. John Mantsch of the Medical College of Wisconsin are examining the role of a protein called REDD1, which has been found in elevated levels in individuals with major depression and in mice exposed to chronic stress.

Since REDD1 regulation appears to play a role in how promising but limited treatments such as ketamine help alleviate depression, researchers can better understand the protein's effects on neural cell structures and contribute insights that may lead to more precise therapies. — Stephen Filmanowicz



LAW SCHOOL

Data-driven Voice

The headlines were clickbait: "Milwaukee Housing a Bargain!" and "Milwaukee Rent Rising the Fastest." Looking deeper, John Johnson, research fellow at the Law School's Lubar Center for Public Policy Research and Civic Education, found the stories relied on "selective statistics that just didn't hold up." In response, he partnered with Mike Gousha, senior adviser in law and public policy, to produce their nuanced 2024 Milwaukee Housing Cost Trends Report. It reveals how home prices have risen steeply since 2019; how it's now often cheaper to rent than buy; how workers in many occupations are priced out of homebuying, and more.

Johnson, who arrived in 2016 to help administer the Marquette Law School Poll, uses data science to answer questions about elections, housing and demography. After the 2024 presidential election, for instance, he responded to reports of soft Milwaukee turnout with evidence of the opposite, adjusted for a recent population dip. Positioned between academia and journalism, Johnson creates scientifically sound analysis for a broad audience and leads Lubar Center policy discussions. What he appreciates most about Marquette is that it prioritizes "answering questions that matter to the people in this community." — Tracy Staedter

BUSINESS

Sights Set on Disruptive Excellence

Marquette's AIM investment finance program turns 20, innovating again and leveraging a stellar alumni network.

BY ANDREW GOLDSTEIN, COMM '18

Long before she was a director at RBC Capital Markets, a top-tier global investment bank, Colleen Osborne got an advance look at her future career in finance while still a student in Marquette's AIM program. "AIM laid a good foundation for the time management and prioritization necessary to succeed in the New York City banking industry," says Osborne, Bus Ad '12, who graduated with a joint degree in finance and information technology. "It smoothenes the transition from college life to analyst life."

Now in its 20th innovative year, AIM provides customized applied learning experiences for high-achieving finance students. Originally known as Applied Investment Management, it was renamed Accelerating Ingenuity in Markets in 2023 to reflect the addition of a new financial technologies track — Applied Fintech: AI and Business Intelligence. Students can choose between it or the original track for chartered financial analysts — CFA: Investments.

Students in AIM build technical skills and apply them in impressive ways. CFA learners manage a portion of the university's endowment portfolio and are tasked with making stock recommendations to a panel of program alumni every week. The fintech concentration delivers high-level skills training in key areas such as agentic AI and business process automation, while guiding students in generating disruptive business intelligence and leveraging tools such as AI, data analytics and multiple coding languages in applying and valuing financial technologies. AIM was already setting the standard for undergraduate investment management education when it added fintech in 2023 to stay abreast of the fast-advancing field. "The experiences our students have in AIM should be directly applicable to their careers and prepare them to add value for their future employers," says Dr. Joe Wall, Grad '06, executive director of AIM and the Donald F. Flynn and Beverly L. Flynn Chair of Accounting Ethics and Disruptive Technologies.

A fall break trip to New York City has been a cornerstone of the AIM program for years. Alumni host dozens of Marquette students at their firms, sharing tips on job applications and providing opportunities for face time with company decision-makers. For alumni, it's a chance to get in touch with their roots.

That industry-to-student connection is also important to Wall. He leads his pitch to prospective students with AIM's strong job placement rate and starting salaries well into the six figures. Every year, however, the competition for those positions gets stiffer. Program alumni are Marquette's key to the most prestigious companies on the street. "Our alumni are very generous when it comes to opening doors for those who come after them, and the current students benefit immensely from their

willingness to share expertise," Wall says.

Alumni guidance is especially valuable as internship application timelines come earlier and earlier. Many in-demand banks are asking students to apply in the fall of their sophomore year for internships that won't even start until summer of their junior year, a full 18 months later. Students will have been in AIM for only a few months before they need to make decisions affecting their long-term plans.

Alumni experts like Osborne serve as a stress-reducing resource for students by answering questions, giving them a preview of what group interviews will be like and helping them discern which sector of the financial field is the best fit.

"Students have to adapt to the industry landscape by focusing on preparation and gaining real-world experiences that help them stand out," says Stanley Nunoo, Bus Ad '09, vice president at BlackRock, the world's largest asset manager. He makes connecting with AIM students a priority because of the "profound impact" the program and the university had in shaping who he is today.

Students find the trip equally valuable. Sophomore Jermauri Hall had never been to New York City before and felt intimidated by the city and its financial scene. However, mentors at Société Générale and other firms proved reassuring. "That first night, I had a phone call with my mom, and I told her that something felt off, like I didn't belong there," Hall says. "But by the end, I'd met with so many great alumni and made amazing connections. Now I feel like I definitely belong."

With its educational excellence, its proactive approach to disruptive technology and its alumni-enabled transformations, AIM is positioned for 20 more years of innovation. ☺

Students on the AIM program's fall break trip to New York City visit Goldman Sachs (left) as part of four days of immersive learning and networking with alumni at Wall Street investment firms.

PHOTO BY ANDREW GOLDSTEIN



Dr. Gabriel Velez
Associate Professor
of Educational Policy
and Leadership



Dr. Nakia Gordon
Associate Professor
of Psychology

How Anxious Is Today's Generation?

Two faculty experts exchange views on the mental health struggles of young people and how to respond to them.

BY STEPHEN FILMANOWICZ

How much strain are today's young people feeling? Quite a bit, unfortunately. National statistics say rates of depression and anxiety have soared, while closer to home, admissions officers revealed that one in three applicants to Marquette this year referred to mental health struggles in their personal essays. As parents, educators and students themselves have searched for answers, Dr. Jonathan Haidt, a New York University ethics professor, struck a chord with his book, The Anxious Generation, which argues the rise in mental health struggles is closely tied to soaring rates of smartphone and social media use in youth. With others citing the lingering effects of the pandemic and other causes, Marquette Magazine reached out to two faculty members from different disciplines — both known for their work on student mental health and wellness — for their opinions and thoughts on how to respond to this crisis.

How concerned are you about the mental health of today's high school and college students?

Nakia Gordon: I think we have all seen more mental health issues, especially since the pandemic, but it may have started a little before that. And I don't think that we've gotten back to some earlier baseline. Especially at Marquette, you see students reporting in everyday conversations that they're overwhelmed with stress and anxiety. I feel like a

bright side is that the younger generation talks about their struggles more openly. Whether or not there are issues to consider with self-diagnoses and the social aspect of talking about mental health, I do appreciate that it is something they can now talk about and search for services or support even from friends.

Gabriel Velez: What Nakia said really resonates. With these questions, there's the data, and we can see numbers that show this is real. And then there's the lived experience of that. And when you talk to folks at Marquette who have been around for a while, to high school educators and to parents, the moment you bring up young people and mental health, everyone has an experience of knowing someone who is struggling. It feels like it's everywhere. Nakia really hit it on the head too, that young people are certainly experiencing this in different ways, and they're also able to talk about it a little more openly and advocate for themselves too. That's powerful. It's a bit of a strength amidst the growing numbers who are struggling.

Screen time and social media have been mentioned as possible causes of this trend. Which factors most concern you?

GV: Because this is such an acute and deeply felt concern for so many people, I think a lot of people are looking for the silver bullet. *The Anxious Generation* really resonated with people and it allows us to point to a couple of concrete things and say: It's social media and smartphones, right? But in considering what this generation is facing, I think there's a lot more depth and complexity in there. I'd throw in some other factors as all kind of contributing. Economic uncertainty and climate change add some underlying layers. There's political discord and uncertainty too.

And as Nakia mentioned, I think the pandemic is a part of this, but it's not everything. Sometimes people say these struggles are because of smartphones

and totally leave the pandemic out of it. ... Or people say it's just the pandemic that disrupted things for all young people, and now we're struggling with that. I think we need to be willing to say it's a lot of things and it can look different for individual youth.

NG: Uncertainty was the word that popped into my mind and Gabe used it in a couple of ways. I think about college students and the students in high school now, and I feel the landscape has been shifting. For my generation, people were celebrating that you might go to college and get a well-paying job. But the language in our country has shifted away from that, which leaves a lot of current students or those considering college uncertain about whether that is a path that will be fruitful. So, I think trying to figure out what this shifting landscape means for them is something that contributes to that sense of, "Where do I go from here?"

How has Marquette responded to this challenge?

NG: Dr. Alyson Gerdes and I have been leading a wellness program for Marquette undergraduate and graduate students for the last three years. We meet in small groups of about six or eight for six weeks, once a week. We've had a chance to hear how students think, to hear them explore some of our wellness strategies and what might be barriers to them. I see students semesters afterward, and they are still keeping up with some of the strategies. And then, we also hear other things — that are not even about being a student — that serve as barriers to wellness. And some of it is just basic human stuff that people struggle with. For instance, one wellness module is self-compassion — the ability to think positively and appreciate things about yourself. At the start of this work, I had no idea it would be something that people really struggled with. It's not clear whether this is because of social media or the "shifting landscape." It may

just be a human thing that people have not learned to do consistently.

GV: If we didn't have Nakia here, I was going to say the work she is doing is a good example, and we need to bring her into the conversation. But two other interconnected efforts immediately come to mind. One is the university's emphasis on student success. When you look at a lot of literature on student success, we measure it with numbers such as retention and graduation rates. But a number — 96 versus 98 percent — hides what's going on in students' lives. And as I've talked to some folks who have been a part of the Student Success Initiative, there's recognition that this involves a deeper sense of student well-being. Part of the need is academic support, but it's also recognizing that well-being is a big challenge a lot of young people face that determines their success in higher education. And that ties into the other point: our new (Wellness + Helfaer Recreation) complex that sits right across from us here in Schroeder Hall. To bring together physical and other types of wellness supports is powerful. It was eye opening for me to see those elements together on a college campus. That speaks to the university's commitment. When you spend that much money on a building, and you're saying "this is about a holistic perspective on wellness," I do think that both offers concrete resources to students — it brings them together in a way that's effective — and it sends that message that we care about this. ☺

The conversation continues online with more on Gordon's involvement in the Student Success Initiative and ideas from both experts on steps families and friends can take to support the young people in their lives. Visit mu.edu/intersection-anxious for the extended interview.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAVIA NICELY

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Marquette's Prison-to-College Program: An Illustrated Guide

The Education Preparedness Program has served nearly 600 students from Marquette's campus and Wisconsin correctional facilities. It offers incarcerated students new pathways to their degrees. BY DIANE BACHA

An idea sparked 10 years ago by a philosophy course blending students from Marquette and the Milwaukee Women's Correctional Center has burgeoned into a program aimed at nothing short of transforming lives. Supported by \$3.2 million in grant funding, including \$2 million from the Mellon Foundation, the Education Preparedness Program has brought together 280 incarcerated and formerly incarcerated students and 310 campus-based undergraduates for 16 different credit-earning courses. It offers classes and programs at four prison facilities and on Marquette's campus.

Demand for the courses is strong. At the Racine Correctional Facility alone, 200 incarcerated people applied for 40 available seats this spring. "We do not have enough spots to meet the demand. There's a hunger for this," says Dr. Darren Wheelock, associate professor of social and cultural sciences and director of the McNeely Prison Education Consortium, an umbrella initiative that connects Marquette and other southeast Wisconsin universities and colleges to offer justice-impacted learners more options for pursuing degrees.

Student survey responses tell the story of the program's impact on individuals. One incarcerated student described a course experience as "an enormous help raising my moral and mental health." Another concluded, "More classes [like this] should be introduced that would allow humans to undergo positive growth."

The courses are popular with Marquette undergraduates too. "Unexpectedly one of the best classes I've ever taken at MU," reported one student. Another said: "Best environment for open dialogue I've experienced."

Dr. Theresa Tobin, Arts '97, associate professor of philosophy, is director of EPP, which is housed within Marquette's Center for Urban Research, Teaching and Outreach, directed by Dr. Robert Smith, Harry G. John Professor of History. Leading the courses are Tobin, Smith, Wheelock and other veteran faculty members including Dr. Manoj Babu, Grad '02, of business, Dr. Angela Sorby of English, Dr. Ed de St. Aubin of psychology, Wendy Volz Daniels of social and cultural studies, and Dr. Gabriel Velez of education.

As a portion of the 23,000 incarcerated men and women in Wisconsin prepare for their release, research shows that prison-based higher education programs reduce recidivism by as much as 40 percent. So, the vision for EPP calls for expanding current course offerings, enabling the earning of four-year Marquette degrees inside prison facilities and leveraging the consortium so students can transfer credits across institutions to earn degrees. The result: a robust and affordable "education pipeline" to help people thrive after reentering the community.

"We've got legs and we've got roots," says EPP Director Theresa Tobin of the program's progress to date. "We're working to ensure it is long-lasting. It's a real leadership opportunity for Marquette and a real opportunity for impact in our city."

Marquette University Campus

Courses have been taught in English and philosophy, including Creativity and Community, and Contemporary Ethical Problems. On-campus courses blend traditional students with formerly incarcerated adults of various ages, whom EPP assists with advising, peer mentoring, tutoring and more. "There's a special kind of learning that happens because of the interaction across generations, across life experiences," Tobin says.

Milwaukee County Community Reintegration Center

Courses here have been taught in education and history, including Restorative Justice in Education. "There were things that I didn't know about my history as I know them now," says a student from the facility who took Smith's African American History course. "Everyone should get the opportunity to take the class."

Racine Correctional Institution

Courses at EPP's most active site have been offered in biology, criminology and law studies, management, philosophy, psychology, social welfare and justice, and theatre arts. "I have seen my incarcerated students grow in self-esteem, their ability to communicate and their sense of belonging," says Dr. Jonathan Shailor, a UW-Parkside professor who has taught Reading and Performing Shakespeare through EPP.

Racine Youthful Offender Correctional Facility

This facility for 18-to-24-year-old men has hosted an African American History course taught by Smith.

Sturtevant Transitional Facility

Programming at this facility includes a noncredit beekeeping course coordinated by Dr. Chelsea Cook, assistant professor of biological sciences.

ILLUSTRATION BY GWEN KERAVAL





BY STEPHEN FILMANOWICZ
PHOTOGRAPHS BY PATRICK MANNING



Compass in Hand

A lifetime of striving and succeeding in remarkable ways has led Marquette's 25th president, Dr. Kimo Ah Yun, to his true north — the opportunity to guide the university in achieving an even more transformational student experience.

Find your compass.

The phrase has been visible on campus this spring, featured on websites and printed in thousands of programs for the inauguration of Dr. Kimo Ah Yun as the 25th president of Marquette.

Before it became part of the theme for the event — Open Your Heart. Find Your Compass. Change the World — the phrase was on Ah Yun's own lips, inspired, in part, by the words of Pope Francis.

It reflects his conviction that transforming students' lives is Marquette's most urgent calling. True to Marquette's Catholic, Jesuit traditions, this process starts with students opening their hearts to the needs of others and culminates in purposeful action to improve life for others. "That's a key piece; it's what the Jesuits teach us," President Ah Yun says. "Be The Difference. Set the world on fire." In the middle is the essential bridge: finding your compass to guide you as a moral, ethical person as you seek your purpose and potential.

"When students are here, they likely do not realize their lives are being transformed," he says. "Then they get to their late 30s — they may be married, have a house, a family and a career. They reflect on how they got there, and say, 'My Marquette education gave me this foundation that allows me to be who I am today.'"

Find your compass.

The words resonate with Ah Yun not only as a dedicated teacher-scholar and leader known for connecting students with vital growth experiences; educational transformation for him is also deeply personal.

Born in Compton, California, he moved as a young child with his family to Sacramento, where he'd become first in the family to graduate from college. He was far from finding his life's purpose in those early years, instead just trying to find his way.

There were setbacks — the deadlines for college applications

that no one told him about — and turnarounds, including the competitive debate career that started woefully before leading to national success. He rose from a delayed start at his local state university alongside many other first-generation and commuter students to study with distinction in one of the nation's top doctoral programs in communication studies. At Marquette, he has progressed from dean to provost to president.

He did more than just weather his most difficult transitions; he owned and overcame them, until he became a specialist in turning challenge into a springboard to something bigger.

Benefiting from strong mentors and his Catholic faith, Ah Yun did find his compass. And so often, it has pointed him in the same direction: toward a calling to make a difference in students' lives.

This calling is what brought him to Marquette in 2016 to be dean of the Diederich College of Communication — what changed his mind after he'd spent much of his time as a candidate for the position unable to envision asking his wife and three children to leave California, where he was associate dean of his alma mater, California State University-Sacramento. Then, Ah Yun met with then-President Michael R. Lovell, at a round table in Lovell's office offering soaring views of Church of the Gesù. The two leaders connected over the vision they shared for making students and their experiences exceptional. Ah Yun felt the presence of faith in the room, which felt like a door opening, a passion deepening. "At a state institution, you park your religion at the door; your goal is to train and graduate students so they can be employable. But at a Catholic, Jesuit institution, you think about the larger context of developing a person so when they leave here, they leave with a tool set that informs and shapes who they are for the rest of their lives."

In an hour's time, everything had changed. "When I left his office, I got to the door and I called my wife, and said, 'This suddenly got very real. I can see myself working for this president.'"

Nine years later, he realizes the bittersweet honor it is to serve every day in that same Zilber Hall office, as Lovell's successor following the former president's passing last June after a three-year struggle with cancer. "Sometimes this still doesn't feel like my office," Ah Yun shares. "But the benefit of it is being in a place where the best way I can honor him is by carrying on and doing the work that I know he cared about."

Ah Yun's compass points stronger than ever toward opportunities at Marquette that have been a lifetime in the making. "Education changed the trajectory of my life. It changed the trajectory of my children's lives," he says. "I do believe education is the great equalizer and great advancer of all we do."

"He came out of very humble beginnings," says Dr. Gary Meyer, professor of strategic communication at Marquette, of Marquette's president, his friend and professional sounding board dating back to their graduate school days together. "He was transformed through education in authentic and inspiring ways. If a kid like him can rise up to be a president of a top 100 university, then anything is possible. He knows that. He believes in that. And I think he wants to share that with every student on this campus."

Ah Yun is back in his old neighborhood again.

He's on Wilmington Avenue, two miles from downtown Sacramento, looking out on the big grass yard where he played baseball with Curtis Park Little League. Beyond the outfield wall and an adjacent alley, he sees what he's looking for — the tiny, faded cottage-style house where his family lived for years.

Leaning in to get a closer look at the images Google Street View is bringing to his computer screen, he zooms in to reveal a simple stucco box with a front canopy supported by 4x4s, moss growing between roof shingles and a front fence heavy with vines. "That's the house," he says, turning from the screen momentarily with excitement, then turning back to zoom in further. "See, that's a door. If you look at the width of the house, it's not many doors wide. It's just super narrow."

The setting inspires warm memories and frank assessments. "I lived there with my four sisters and mom and dad," he says. "It always seemed big enough for our whole family, but later on, I looked it up on Zillow and saw that it was an 880-square-foot house."

Ah Yun's parents, James and Leialoha, both hailed from Hawaii and shared with their children a heritage of Hawaiian, Chinese and Portuguese roots. Since he was James Jr., Ah Yun's grandmother asked that he be called Kimo — Hawaiian for James — as he has ever since.

His parents' time on their island, Oahu, took them through their early 20s. After finding their way to California, they worked various jobs. "My mom cooked, worked the tomato fields, cleaned houses," he recalls. His father laid flooring for a living — until his knees gave out. "I spent a lot of my early years learning how to lay carpet, linoleum and tile," Ah Yun shares.

With Google Maps still up on his screen, he explores the limits of his world in those days. His elementary school was a short bike ride from home; the church his family attended, St. Rose Catholic Church, was a mile south down Franklin Boulevard.

Using his cursor, he follows a path he took hundreds of times as a child, north up the alley to the area's namesake, Curtis Park itself — then as now, a crossroads for children from all directions, including the Spanish-tile bungalows and Tudors to the north and the run-down duplexes and apartment buildings to the east.

"It wasn't like it was the roughest neighborhood," he says, "but gang activity existed." It was there on the edge of Curtis Park that Ah Yun, then in middle school, ran into Billy, a good friend of his from grade school. "He was that kid who was shaving in the sixth grade, a guy with muscles who you didn't mess with. He'd gone to that side; he was in the gang."

"I remember him telling the other gang members: 'Hands off this guy. He's going someplace, OK?'" Ah Yun relates. "I wondered what he meant by that. But that was it. He had the ability to tell people: This guy is off limits. And suddenly, I was off limits to everyone." His knack for friendship and the vague sense he carried of having a purpose in life had spared him.

In the years that followed, Ah Yun's family moved from the little house next to the baseball field — and moved again. "We rented all our lives," he explains. "At some point, that house was sold, so you move to another house. And then that house was sold, and you move again. My parents would do things to make the house nicer, and the landlords would think, 'Oh, now I can sell it.'"



Ah Yun now feels fortunate for all that his parents were able to share with him. They introduced him to a faith in God that has grown through the years. They emphasized the importance of hard work. And they insisted on personal integrity. In a life lived worrying about the next paycheck, the value of your word can be counted on more than anything.

Education could play a beneficial role in their children's lives, they saw. They just weren't sure how. "They would say: Go get an education," Ah Yun reflects. "But, on the other hand, they had not been there. They did not know much about it."

Fortunately, school came easily for him. In high school, after falling in initially with the group that gathered outside to smoke cigarettes, he extended his network and found new friends who were other good students. Still, his pathway in education remained murky. He and his friends all seemed to be looking forward to high school graduation his senior year, when he was taken aback by the news from some of them of the acceptance letters they were receiving from University of California–Berkeley, Brown and other universities. He hadn't known to apply.

"My reaction was, 'What are you talking about?'" he recalls. "If you don't know anyone who has gone to college, then you don't even know the steps you're supposed to ask about. In high school, you just kind of show up at the beginning of the year. I had no reason to think college was much different."

To sort things out, he worked for a year. "I got a job at a Shell gas station making \$3.35 an hour," he says. His gap year was spent as a local distributor in the petroleum industry, he has joked.

Still, despite this undeniable setback, Ah Yun had already found a vehicle that would lead him to unmistakable success and distinction — the debate team. He can't now recall what led him to try debate as a high school sophomore; he can only say that he wasn't very good at it. Today, he's known as a good storyteller and speaker with many qualities that would make him seem a natural for competitive persuasive public speaking. "He has a tremendous ability to synthesize and make sense of complex information," Meyer says. "When he gets in front of a crowd, it seems like he's just talking. But he's prepared, and he'll cover multiple points and sub-points without notes."

But back in high school, the seeds of those abilities were nowhere in evidence. "I was scared and awful. It's quite likely I didn't win a single debate that first year," Ah Yun acknowledges. "Yet, for some reason, I thought: I think I need to be good at this in life, this whole speaking thing. So, I stuck with it."

For Ah Yun, early-round losses became opportunities to stick around and observe. "You are in hundreds and hundreds of debates," he notes. "I would watch the winners and ask, 'What is it about them that makes them so good? What can I emulate?' And then, 'What is it about me that will help me find my own voice?'"

By his senior year, he had turned himself into a successful debater. And when he finally enrolled at hometown California State University–Sacramento, debate eased the disorientation he felt navigating this new foreign environment — the sense of uncertainty about what to expect or where to turn for answers that still helps him relate to first-generation students he meets on campus and drives his passion for Marquette's signature student success efforts.



Ah Yun responded to early struggles in high school debate by studying successful strategies and committing to improvement. After enrolling at California State University–Sacramento, he emerged as "probably the best debater" in school history. He and partner Mark Jones are shown here with a plaque recognizing them as national quarter finalists.

As he found friends and mentors — his people, as he's come to call them — through debate and his courses, there was no stopping him, competitively speaking.

Lacking the big reputations of universities such as Berkeley and Stanford, Sacramento State and its debate team existed in their shadows, until Ah Yun helped change all that. Described by his mentor and former debate coach Dr. Nick Burnett as "probably the most successful debater in Sac State history," he and his partners excelled in California and beyond — earning their way to the quarterfinals of collegiate debating's national tournament, the equivalent of basketball's Elite 8, in back-to-back years in the late 1980s. "This was a small school from Sacramento, right? I think it caught everybody by surprise," Ah Yun remembers.

His future wife, Catherine Puckering, joined Sacramento State's debate team the year he left for graduate school, and witnessed the huge impression he'd made. "When I joined the team, all I heard the entire year was 'Kimo this, Kimo that.' He was very good at debate, and he had this really big personality," she says with a smile. "I was curious to meet this guy I heard so much about."

Their meeting came — predictably enough — at the next national debate tournament. It was her first trip and his fifth, this time as an assistant coach of Kansas State University, where he was a master's student. Puckering was practicing with her debate partner, who happened to be his former partner, when Ah Yun barged into the room, said "Hello" with a flourish, pivoted and walked out.

The glare she sensed coming off the debate guru in his element could only have been compounded by the results of the next few days: Kansas State was crowned national champion, earning the young assistant coach and his debaters a subsequent trip to the White House. "I had to wonder: Is this the same guy I'd been hearing so much about? But he obviously charmed me later," Puckering says, describing a quick turnaround from that first meeting to their first date a few months later when he was

back visiting family in Sacramento, an afternoon at the California State Fair sweetly chaperoning his 5-year-old niece.

Debate had led Ah Yun to his partner in all the subsequent steps they've taken together, including raising their three children: Benjamin, a 2025 graduate of Marquette, Molly, a 2025 graduate of the University of Southern California, and Haven, a graduating high school senior. "Catherine is my best friend," he says. "There's nothing in life that I would want to go through without her. I do not have the ability to be successful without her."

"It's like anything," Ah Yun often says in describing these episodes from his life.

It's a surprising phrase from someone whose journey — from avoiding gangs on city streets to achieving debate glory and rising

Call me President Kimo

Make no mistake: Marquette's 25th president takes his role seriously — President Kimo Ah Yun understands the great privilege of leading a top Catholic, Jesuit university. But the man behind the mantle has an obvious playful side; he quickly eschews formalities that don't fit his affable personality.

Bump into him on the sidewalk and "Hello, President Ah Yun" won't do. "Call me President Kimo," he'll insist.

It's something he says on his near-daily walks around campus, his time to interact with students and learn from them about Marquette. Indulge him for a few moments, and President Kimo, also at his insistence, will buy you a coffee — he'll even place the order for you on the app.

"I want students to talk to me," President Kimo says. "If I say, 'I'll buy you something to drink; all you have to do is tell me two things: What is going well for you at Marquette? What is something that I can do to make Marquette a better experience for you?' It's my way of doing a little bit of data collection.

"The good thing is students like Starbucks — especially when it's free."

This notion of the approachable president isn't for show; there's no veneer.

It's a contrast that's authentically President Kimo: the data wonk who's as comfortable in a suit, walking the Board of Trustees through enrollment projections, as he is in Marquette gear and face paint, making playful Instagram videos with the school mascot.

"It's just fun," President Kimo says of the light-hearted social media collaborations that showcase his wicked comedic timing — and frequently catch fire with young audiences. "If you can bring a little sunshine into someone's life, why not? When you're the president, people see you as separated. This humanizes you. It gives students the freedom to be themselves and see we're all similar at the core."

— Christopher Stolarski



to lead a major research university — is altogether his alone. But for him, there came to be something similar connecting every unfamiliar transition or towering challenge. Each could be studied, taken apart, addressed with a plan, conquered and turned into a success, with benefits for him and others.

Debate? "Like anything," he says, "it taught me that you could be awful at something, but if you put time into it, focus on it, you can get better." And as Ah Yun got better, his vision changed. Rather than simply focusing on individual arguments that appealed to him, he started seeing a range of possible arguments and the likely rebuttals from his opponents to each. Seeing debates unfold before they started, he could steer them onto favorable terrain, like a chess master on a chessboard. "At some point, my mind just opened. I could see everything at once," he says.

Another leap forward came at the start of his doctoral studies. By then, Ah Yun had flourished in the master's program in communication studies at Kansas State and gained an appreciation for the methods of academic scholarship: conceiving an idea, grounding it in theory, designing a study to answer key questions, and collecting and analyzing data to produce replicable findings.

At a graduate studies fair, he ran straight into the table featuring the doctoral program in communication studies at Michigan State University, where professors had pioneered a rigorous, quantitative approach to communication research and made their doctoral program one of the highest-rated in the country. Thrilled at the prospect of building his skills alongside these research titans, he applied and was selected to become part of the program's elite student cohort.

Arriving in East Lansing, Michigan, in the fall of 1993, Ah Yun felt excited and generally well prepared but soon also a little uneasy. "You get there, and it's like anything. There were five or six people in our cohort. You look around and realize you are around really, really smart people," he says with an open shrug. "If I had to think about it, I was probably the one who was farthest behind in getting this stuff. So, I sat and thought, 'OK, I know the problem. I know the point I need to reach. What's my plan to get there?'"

For the next few months, he answered that question early every weekend. "There was a bookstore in town, and every Saturday or Sunday, I would show up when they opened. I would get a cup of coffee in the coffee shop. I'd get a book off the shelf, and I'd just sit and read it from cover to cover," he says, smiling at the memory and repeating motions from his routine — coffee cup, book, pages. "I started on one end and thought, 'I'm just going to work this shelf. And when I get to the end, I'm going to start on the next shelf.'"

Like others before it, this tirelessly executed plan bore dividends. "Ah, I get it now," he'd say after reading the same concept from 10 different perspectives. Professor Frank Boster had done the most to establish the program's research prowess and taught its No. 1 research course. "To become his teaching assistant was a big thing. And I ended up becoming his TA for the research course," Ah Yun recalls. "When students did not understand something, I could draw upon those 10 books that I read on the concept. I could find the explanation that worked for each person. It helped me with my teaching."





Care for students runs deep in President Ah Yun, making him an enthusiastic participant in conversations with them about their interests and plans — and where Marquette excels or needs improvement. He is also a fan of family time with wife Catherine Puckering and children (l to r) Haven, Benjamin and Molly.



The episode is “so quintessentially Kimo,” Puckering says. “If he had just taken the class and done what everybody does, he would have been proficient at the end. But that wasn’t enough. He needed to be an expert at research methods. So, he knew he was going to invest the time and just grind it out.”

Remarkably, he did this grinding while remaining his genial, generous self. He was “bright ... very goal-directed ... and focused,” Boster recalls. “He was universally liked, popular with students (great teacher), his fellow grad students and the faculty.”

And oh, the professor adds, “He was and maybe still is a world-class Scrabble player. Tournament player!”

Across three decades, Puckering has seen her husband use this playbook repeatedly. “He’s done this as he’s moved into various positions. He devotes himself to really trying to understand the role. He reads. He talks to people who have done the role, trying to learn from them things to do, things not to do.”

For his first faculty position after doctoral studies, Ah Yun was called back to his alma mater, Sacramento State. In addition to giving his relationship with Puckering the opportunity to go the distance, he wanted to be at a university where he’d serve as a true teacher-scholar with opportunities to grow as a teacher as well as a researcher (publishing on topics such as more effective strategies for encouraging organ donation). Back at Sac State those first few years, he taught exclusively evening courses to students of various ages and backgrounds. “They would work eight hours. Then they would take a three-hour class with you. So, you’d have to rethink how you teach, how you keep them engaged,” he recalls. Relatable yet strategic, he calibrated his teaching to the unique needs of his students. “I thought I’d be a professor my whole life, so I thought: I want to be the best assistant professor I could be. I just focused on that.” It’s the strategy he’s updated for every role he’s assumed since then, including those at Marquette.

Cue his new position. “The difference this time,” Ah Yun says, “is there’s not a single book that says, this is how to be a successful university president.” Not letting that slow him, he’s been having meals and meetings with top executives he respects, including Peggy Troy, Nurs ’74, Hon Deg ’24, who ran and grew the massive Children’s Wisconsin health care system, and Vincent Lyles,

executive director of Milwaukee Succeeds. From his early days at Marquette, he has sought out individual Jesuits as mentors and guides, observes Rev. Patrick McGrath, S.J., pastor of Old St. Patrick’s Parish in Chicago and a Marquette trustee. “Through his friendship with them and his experiences at Marquette, he deepened his appreciation of the pragmatic mysticism of Ignatian spirituality and the sensibility of the Jesuit way of proceeding.”

And Ah Yun continues to draw on his participation in the leadership master class led by his predecessor, President Lovell. “He really helped me think about how to integrate my faith into my work,” Ah Yun says. He learned from Lovell to reflect more — to take a day or a weekend before making a big decision — and to listen more. “When I go into meetings, I’m successful when I talk the least and just listen to what others are saying,” Ah Yun says.

What kind of presidency lies ahead for “President Kimo,” as he prefers to be called, as he aims to build Marquette’s momentum amid challenges such as declining numbers of Midwest high school graduates in coming years?

Those who know him well have very high expectations.

Longtime colleague Meyer has seen Ah Yun’s singular life experiences load up his leadership quiver with valuable qualities: integrity, authenticity, courage, conviction, generosity, a drive for excellence and evidence-based results, a strong faith. “These are all gifts, truly,” he says.

“I think of resilience in leadership with respect to President Kimo,” says Dr. Manoj Babu, Grad ’02, assistant professor of practice in management and a member of Marquette’s Academic Senate. “No matter what transpires, nothing deters him from the guiding principles and organizational success of Marquette. His love for the Marquette community seems to have no limits.”

“As provost, acting president and throughout the search process, Kimo demonstrated confidence and a deep knowledge of Marquette, its people and the challenges we face,” says Father McGrath, who served on the search committee that recommended Ah Yun to the Board of Trustees. “He demonstrates a calming equanimity even in the most trying circumstances.”

Dr. Sarah Feldner, acting provost and executive vice president for academic affairs, appreciates his respectful, purposeful and reflective way of making decisions and working with disagreement, and adds: “He is a meticulous researcher. He has taught me how important it is to know the data, and he does not ask others to summarize it for him — he consistently digs in and does the work.”

Student-centered and data-driven since emerging from grad school and beginning his faculty journey, Ah Yun uses these lenses in his most impassioned descriptions of his work at Marquette, including the collaborative crafting of *Guided by Mission, Inspired to Change: Marquette University’s Strategic Plan for 2031*.

That process began with the essentials. “You start with a blank page and ask the question: What is not optional? I remember mission was one of the first things we put on the page,” he says. “The plan had to reflect the voices of our community and their understanding of our purpose, and we had to be able to execute on it.” That last concern inspired work on performance-based goals and metrics that he sees as particularly valuable — including specific plan targets that define progress in mission-focused areas such as student success and academic research: retention, graduation, high-impact educational experiences, engagement in meaningful vocations after graduation, research centered on the Universal Apostolic Preferences identified by the Society of Jesus. “What I would say, and Mike would say, is Marquette has evolved in its sophistication in how we move, think and function. That sophistication means getting better at using specific language that we all understand, so we know what we’re working toward and can achieve accountability.”

Focus and intentionality are driving his work with Marquette’s leadership team and broader community. And the results — evidence-based, he’s sure — will be advancements in Marquette’s most important work. “The most important thing we do is to serve God. And we serve God through transforming the lives of our students and then contributing to knowledge that makes the world better.”

Strengthening the transformations students experience at Marquette, that is where his compass now points him, as he sits in the office that will eventually feel like his own. When he’s not meeting with Marquette alumni, Milwaukee leaders or members of the Marquette community, he’s there making plans, determining what Marquette needs most from him, gladly doing the work as always, often with a favorite tune drifting out the doorway, maybe Garth Brooks, the Eagles or Matt Nathanson.

As his inauguration ceremony

approached this spring, Ah Yun found himself considering the 24 presidents who have come before him. “We are here today because of the work of those presidents with the Marquette community — the students, faculty, staff, alumni and the Board of Trustees, all working to get us to where we are,” he says. “So, when I think about it, I ask, ‘How do you continue to honor everything that’s been done in the past and then figure out what is that next big step that you take?’”

In the lead-up to the event, his wife felt pride. “I know where he began. I’ve seen the elementary schools that he went to, the neighborhood he lived in, the stories of his family, and for him to have gone from where he started to where he is now, it’s a remarkable story,” she says. “I’m proud of him for who he is and how he has taken these opportunities that have been put in front of him and done something with them. It is truly remarkable.” ☉

“I think of resilience in leadership with respect to President Kimo. No matter what transpires, nothing deters him from the guiding principles and organizational success of Marquette.”

— Dr. Manoj Babu, assistant professor of practice in management and secretary of Marquette’s Academic Senate

Marquette's Alumni National Awards honor alumni, parents and friends who embody Marquette's mission of being the difference through their service, achievements and leadership.

Awarding the Difference



Joined by more than 1,000 guests at multiple ceremonies this April, Marquette honored 50 Alumni National Award recipients across all schools and colleges. Here, we introduce you to the five recipients of the All-University Awards.



ALUMNI OF THE YEAR AWARD

Mary Bruggeman Swift, Dent Hy '83, and Christopher J. Swift, Bus Ad '83 Connecticut

Chris and Mary Swift embody Marquette's call to Be The Difference through their dedication to inclusion, wellness and mental health advocacy. Chris, chairman and CEO of The Hartford, is a leader committed to creating stigma-free, inclusive workplaces. Mary, a devout Catholic and devoted mother, anchors their family's shared mission of giving back. Their philanthropy has supported initiatives like the **LOVELLSTRONG** Center for Student Well-Being at Marquette's Wellness + Helfaer Recreation facility. As Chris reflects, "Marquette taught me to strive for more — not just for myself, but for others." Together, the Swifts inspire others to lead with purpose, authenticity and empathy.

SERVICE AWARD

William J. Krueger, Eng '87 Tennessee

Bill Krueger's career reflects a lifelong commitment to faith, service and leadership. After 35 years in the automotive industry, he embraced an encore career as COO of the Americas for The Greenbrier Companies, where he mentors and inspires the next generation of leaders. His dedication to service began with observing his parents' example in Janesville, Wisconsin, and developed at Marquette. It has grown to include participating in parish ministry, feeding the homeless, serving on the board of several nonprofits, championing the Marquette Mentors program, and helping develop and launch a mentorship program with the Catholic Business League of Nashville. "Marquette taught me to not squander the gifts God has given us," he says. "A tangible expression of my faith is to serve others in need. As St. James taught, I try to be a doer of the Word and not just a listener."



SPIRIT OF MARQUETTE AWARD (ACHIEVEMENT BEFORE AGE 40)

Jenna Santoianni, Comm '06 California

As president of television at MRC, Jenna Santoianni builds community — both on screen and off. A dedicated Marquette alumna, she was one of the founding members of the Marquette Entertainment and Communications Alumni (MECA) network to mentor students breaking into West Coast entertainment, media and communication industries. Her passion for mentoring and guiding students stems from her own Marquette experience, where a mentor's generosity shaped her career. "We're taught to give back," she says. Santoianni is proud to offer guidance, networking opportunities, and even a place to stay for students relocating to LA. It's just one way she continues to live out the university's core values every day.

PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Lisa Osborne Ross, Jour '84 Maryland

Lisa Ross is a trailblazing communication leader whose 30-year career addressed complex challenges and amplified voices as she served as one of the few Black women to helm a global public relations and marketing firm. Guided by Marquette values and her openness to God's plan, she has dedicated her life to creating meaningful social impact, from advancing human rights and workplace equality to mentoring future leaders who can carry forward the same values and outlook for others. She credits Marquette for inspiring her to embrace purpose-driven leadership. "I've been blessed and should continue to live and give as much as I can," she says. Through her work and faith, Ross continues to Be The Difference.



Be Inspired and Nominate

The Marquette University Alumni Association is accepting nominations for future Alumni National Awards, honoring recipients from all colleges and schools. Visit marquette.edu/awards to read about this year's recipients or nominate an alumnus/a.



Never Far From Home

BY JACK GOODS, COMM '17

After earning his degree in sociology, Ben May followed his baseball dreams, setting out on a quest that has made him one of the top umpires in the majors.

Suited up to call a game at the Pittsburgh Pirates' spring training facility in Bradenton, Florida, May steps into his fourth season as a full-time Major League Baseball umpire. Photo by Ryan Young.

Ben May hadn't quite reached the major leagues yet, but it felt like it.

The Marquette alumnus scanned his surroundings within the friendly confines of Wrigley Field, laying eyes on the iconic ivy along the outfield wall and the scoreboard that has been hand-turned by a stadium employee since this sports cathedral opened in 1914.

He was living any baseball fan's dream. And as a professional umpire, he was getting paid to do it.

"I grew up watching Cubs games all my life on WGN," says May, a native of Racine, Wisconsin. "You step back and picture what it used to look like on TV, the Budweiser roof and the Torco sign. And seeing my number on the manual scoreboard out there, it's surreal. Just crazy."

That first game was just a taste; May was working a minor league matchup upgraded to the famed facility. But now, not much more than a decade later, he spends nearly every day from March to October inside baseball's great venues. After a 14-year journey rising through the ranks, including eight shuffling between Triple-A and the majors, he was hired full time by Major League Baseball in 2022.

"I was hell-bent on becoming an umpire by the age of 18," says May, who first began officiating Little League as a middle schooler. "And probably by age 10, I came to that idea."

MARQUETTE CONNECTIONS

May, Arts '05, comes from a true Marquette family. His father, Jim May, Jour '64, was recruited to Marquette on a football scholarship. Five of the seven May children graduated from Marquette, with Ben rounding out the group. "I loved Marquette," May says. "It played an integral role in me getting a job in Major League Baseball."

But even while pursuing a degree in sociology, he was in tune with his true calling. He belonged behind home plate. "I didn't really make it a secret that I wanted to be an umpire," May says. "Even during the summertimes before I was in professional baseball, I was umpiring on the weekends out in southeastern Wisconsin, doing recreational ball."

Like other major league umpires, May spent years working minor league games in small cities around the country. When his first major league call-up came in 2014, he jumped at the chance. "I don't think my feet hit the ground till the seventh inning," he says.

One day during his sophomore year, he decided it was time to act. He called his dad and told him he wanted to enroll in an umpire school and attempt to turn a hobby into his livelihood.

"My first thought was, how much does that cost?" Jim May recalls.

Umpire school came with a \$2,500 price tag covering everything from tuition to the uniform, and Ben had been saving up to pay for it. So, Jim agreed, but requested he still complete his degree. That recommendation was echoed by those at the Florida-based umpire school Ben chose, especially after his first trip through the three-week program left him outside the select group of graduates (about the top 10 percent) cleared for professional duty.

By the time he received his Marquette degree, he had saved up for another trip to the Sunshine State and a second stab at umpire school. This time he made the cut, but his journey to the majors was just beginning.

RIDING THE BUS

Much like ball players, most umpires must pay their dues in the minor leagues before you'll ever see them calling balls and strikes on national television. This was especially true when May entered the system. Umpires were required to prove themselves on every rung of affiliated baseball, starting out with rookie ball in either the Arizona Complex League or the Florida Gulf Coast League.



Successfully reaching the majors was no promise either; the MLB employs only 76 umpires on a full-time basis. One out of every 100 students who attend umpire school climbs to the top.

So, May endured the transient nature of the job, the constant shuffling from town to town and hotel to hotel, sometimes not knowing his next destination until days before — all in service of a dream. As he puts it, he was resolute in his determination, knowing the sacrifices that would come with it.

"Living in Wisconsin, the summertime is when everybody hangs out and does everything. Not me," May recalls. "I'm hearing from all my friends, 'Oh we did this! The Fourth of July was great. Wow, this concert was awesome.' I missed it all, but I signed up for that."

That commitment was rewarded when he got the call for his first major league assignment, a doubleheader between the Toronto Blue Jays and Minnesota Twins on April 17, 2014. He battled nerves and the weather — Minneapolis was a balmy 29 degrees that day.

"I don't think my feet hit the ground until the seventh inning," May says.

THE RIGHT CALL

May, who lives in Milwaukee, was driving down Water Street with his wife when he finally got the call offering a full-time position in 2022. By then, he'd been receiving regular short-term call-ups to the majors, learning to handle the pressure of calling balls and strikes behind the plate in giant ballparks and going face-to-face with angry MLB managers.

He's now considered one of the most reliable in the game. May was ranked among the top 10 umpires in accuracy as part of a 2018 study conducted at Boston University, an endeavor that required researchers to pore over 350,000 pitches from the previous regular season. Umpire Scorecards, an online platform that measures the accuracy, consistency and favor of umpires,

In addition to developing a thick skin, May has earned a stellar reputation at the plate, ranking in the top 7 percent among his peers for accuracy and top 3 percent in consistency. He has worked the last three postseasons and joined the officiating team for the 2024 MLB All-Star Game.

graded May in the 93rd percentile for accuracy and 97th percentile for consistency during the 2024 season.

His strong performance has brought added opportunity. He was on the left field line for his first MLB All-Star Game in 2024 and has worked each of the last three postseasons. He entered a heated rivalry for his first playoff game behind the plate, a duel between the Philadelphia Phillies and Atlanta Braves. "That was one of my proudest moments," May says.

He's umped games in Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Germany and most recently in Japan, when the country hosted the World Baseball Classic. "It's one of my favorite parts of the job," May says of the travel. "I've been afforded so many opportunities because of this job to go to different parts of the world and get paid to do it."

NEW-WORLD BASEBALL

Advances in technology have made it easier than ever to criticize May and his colleagues. Fans at home can spot missed calls on their high-definition televisions, and managers can now ask for a video review to check whether an umpire's initial call was correct. America's time-tested pastime has evolved for the 21st century.

"It's made our jobs a little bit nicer when it comes to not making us the story," May says of the video reviews. "The other side of it is that when you're overturned, it's just about the most humiliating thing that can happen to you. It's like your pants are around your ankles in front of 40,000 people. You find your humility quick."

The misses stick with you. May still loses sleep thinking through his performances, especially when he's positioned behind the plate. You're on display just like the players, except no one is hooting and hollering for you when you succeed. Well, almost no one.

A dozen of May's family members were watching from the stands, enjoying a rare opportunity during the 2019 season to see him work in Milwaukee's American Family Field. The game was tight, with the Brewers facing a one-run deficit, when May called a member of the Crew out on a bang-bang play.

The replay team was summoned as boos rained down from the crowd. They scrutinized each angle, digging for conclusive evidence that the tag was applied in time.

Turns out, May was right.

"What did my family do?" Jim May remembers. "Stand up and cheer. All the folks around us were like, 'What are you doing? I thought you were for the Brewers!'" ☺



BY ANNA FUNK & RACHEL GINTNER ORLANDO
ILLUSTRATIONS BY LUKE BEST

Guiding Lights

A year in the life of the prospering Marquette Mentors program reveals students setting the goals and agendas, alumni leading dialogues to illuminate the path forward, and caring relationships proving to be a unique advantage of our community.

As Marquette Mentors celebrates its 12th year, its growth deserves to be recognized for what it is: phenomenal.

The program that started as a pilot in 2013 with 30 students, each paired with an alumni mentor, reached 200 annual matches this year — an achievement stewarded by Dan DeWeerd, Marquette Mentors' Radtke endowed director and senior director of alumni engagement, and Assistant Director Cecilia Heffernan, Arts '18, Grad '22.

Since the pilot, more than 1,400 students have been matched with mentors across the country and in Europe. Recognized by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education for setting the "gold standard" in alumni-student mentorship, this Marquette University Alumni Association program from the Office of University Advancement continues to draw significant interest — this year alone, 550 students applied for the opportunity, and there's another competitive waitlist full of alumni wishing to mentor, as almost all alumni return year after year.

Why is it so popular?

Part of the program's success is its discipline: Students drive each pair's conversations and goals, owning the relationship touchpoints and setting the course for the year. Mentors are Marquette alumni with memories of their student experiences and the seasoned perspective that comes from being established in their career

for at least five years. That experience is vital to current undergraduates and graduate students hungry for career guidance.

"Students quickly understand this is an excellent professional development opportunity," DeWeerd explains. With their mentors, mentees have the floor to voice their goals, insecurities and curiosities with the best sounding board: highly successful professionals in the field they're targeting.

Alumni engagement with students is one of the "defining characteristics" of the Marquette community, says Tim McMahon, vice president for university advancement. "And there is perhaps no better example of this than Marquette Mentors. It helps our students build important one-to-one relationships with alumni who care, who help them explore their strengths and lean into meaningful career and life pursuits."

RAISING THEIR HANDS — TIME TO APPLY

When recently graduated senior Ahmoni Gonzalez first heard about Marquette Mentors, he assumed it was just another of Marquette's 300-something programs and activities. The extroverted Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, native was already participating in more than half a dozen extracurriculars. But he ran into a friend at the fall student organization showcase, O-Fest, who persuaded him to apply. After hearing what it entailed, the then-sophomore knew the value a professional connec-

tion could bring, especially with law school applications on the horizon. “I’m first-gen for my entire family,” Gonzalez explains. “I’m trying to be a lawyer, and I don’t have any family who have been that.”

Rising senior Morgan Gallagher, an engineering student from St. Paul, Minnesota, has always known where she was going and how she was going to get there. There was just one problem: She needed to learn how to slow down.

“I came into Marquette wanting to run as fast as possible,” she explains. By her first semester, she’d declared her major: construction engineering. By her second, she’d planned out her entire course load for her tenure at Marquette.

As she found herself enjoying but rushing through college, a few insecurities had started to bubble to the surface. “I was really needing someone to talk to about my career path, who knew the engineering perspective, that wasn’t, well, my mom,” she says, “or professors who had their own bias and personal stake in me.”

She applied to Marquette Mentors right after Dr. Mark Federle, associate dean of the Opus College of Engineering, recommended it to all sophomores in the college. “If Dr. Federle is telling me to do this, it means I should definitely do it,” she says with a laugh.

This was her chance, Gallagher hoped, to get clarity on her next steps, such as deciding which company to choose for her participation in the college’s signature co-op program. She could learn from a professional who had been in her shoes before.

COMMITTING — THE INTERVIEW

Gonzalez says he was sold on the program after the application asked him to wrestle with the question: Why will you make Marquette Mentors a priority? He hadn’t engaged this deeply with his other extracurriculars.

His interview with DeWeerdts and Heffernan further drove home the importance of committing to the mentoring relationship to make the most of the program. Despite being intimidated initially by the selectiveness of the program, he felt confident coming out of his interview. That’s no surprise to anyone who has experienced Gonzalez’s winning personality. “I’m an extroverted person, once you get me talking,” he says.

Similarly anxious, Gallagher remembers her nerves as she entered the interview, “I didn’t want to apply and not get in, you know?” she shares. Fortunately, not only did DeWeerdts and Heffernan put her at ease with their supportive tone, Gallagher’s intensity came across

to her benefit. “I told them I’d be going home and immediately connecting with both of them on LinkedIn — I think they liked that!” she says with a laugh.

BECOMING A PAIR — IT’S A MATCH

When DeWeerdts had approached Aleisha Jaeger, Eng ’03, years earlier about serving as a mentor, she felt a clear call to join. “I knew I was all in, and have been ever since,” she says. “I have a bit of a hand-raising disease when it comes to Marquette.”

Jaeger, a Chicago native, serves as director of engineering for foundational technologies, North America, at Kerry, “one of the largest sustainable nutrition and ingredients developers you’ve never heard of,” she says. With Marquette Mentors for 10 years, she credits her passion for mentorship in part to wishing she’d had a mentor during the early years of her own career.

“After graduating from Marquette, I was working in an office full of men, and I really felt outside of my element,” she says. “I connected with a professional community of women — a safe place to go ask life’s more curious questions. Since joining that group, it really lit a fire in me to work with young women in the industry.”

As DeWeerdts and Heffernan worked behind the scenes to match the year’s 185 pairs, they thought Jaeger’s personality and early career in construction engineering would make her a great mentor for Gallagher. Notified by email of her match, Gallagher was thrilled, immediately looking up Jaeger everywhere possible online.

Gonzalez was exactly the type of student that Harvey J. Anderson II, Eng ’84, retired chief legal officer and corporate secretary at HP, hoped to mentor. “With Ahmoni, I identified with his path because when I started out, I didn’t have any people in my world who were lawyers at all, who could say, ‘Here’s what it looks like, here’s what to watch out for, here’s what you don’t need to do,’” Anderson reflected early last December. “If you can’t see it, it’s hard to be it.”

Anderson was first-generation himself, a student in Marquette’s Educational Opportunity Program. By the time he met Gonzalez, Anderson had tied a bow on his multi-decade career at the intersection of law and tech, where he served in executive leadership for Silicon Valley mainstays like Mozilla, AVG and HP.

Anderson checked another box for Gonzalez, too — location. “It was really cool that the program was able to pair me not only with somebody who’s had all this experience in the field I want to go into, but also somebody geographically where I want to be, in California,” Gonzalez says. “After I was paired with him, I did a little internet digging, and I was very intimidated, because he’s done a lot and held an extremely high position. I thought, ‘Wow, this guy’s gonna be my mentor? That’s crazy.’”

GAME, SET, MATCH — GOAL SETTING

Many mentees meet their mentors for the first time at an on-campus kickoff breakfast, and then the pairs get to work. Their first one-on-ones are scheduled and discussions begin.

“I got on the phone with Harvey, and I was freaking out,” Gonzalez says, remembering his first call with Anderson. “But,

at the bare minimum, we both went to Marquette, right? So, we talked about school a little bit, and that definitely eased my nerves. I realized, this guy’s pretty cool.”

A core element of Marquette Mentors is the student-led, mentor-guided process of setting goals and tracking progress. Student mentees are entirely responsible for driving the ship: What do they want to learn from their mentor? What is salient in their lives right now, where advice would be welcome? Are they debating adding a minor, deciding where to intern, or learning how to network? Gonzalez’s goals were to learn about the legal industry, potential job opportunities and law school choices, how to get experience in public policy, and what would be important for his law school application.

Anderson had a goal of his own, too. “I like to be someone mentees can add to their own personal board of trustees,” he said. “Someone that they can talk to about their growth and development and what they’re doing, to have a place to check in and get an opinion, and encouragement that they’re on a good path.”

“At that age, you have a lot of fear and uncertainty, a lot of anxiety over success or achievement — at least I did — and just knowing that someone sees what you’re doing and thinks you’re on a good path is everything,” Anderson said. “To say, I know you can’t see it all right now, but you know you can’t win the game in the first quarter, right? Someone to be there to give them some reassurance that they’re doing fine.”

While the pair often chatted in virtual meetings, Jaeger drove up from the Chicago area a handful of times to meet with Gallagher on campus over coffee. As for her goals, Gallagher had a few top priorities in mind. “My first goal was for her to help me

review my co-op options. I was so lost,” Gallagher shares. Construction engineering majors must interview and choose a preferred company for their co-op; the firm then becomes their new home for the next three terms — often three sequential semesters or three summers. This is where student engineers gain valuable experience in industry, and effectively start their careers. Students can feel a lot of pressure to make the “right” decision.

“Aleisha ended up guiding me by not telling me what to do, not necessarily even holding my hand. She allowed me to bounce thoughts off of her, so I didn’t feel so alone going through the process,” Gallagher says.

Her mentor would channel what Gallagher needed back to her. “She’d say, ‘I care about you, and I care about what you care about, and I want to help you be successful in the way that you want to be successful,’” Gallagher says. Deploying the Socratic method was the key, gently posing Gallagher’s questions back to her for reflection. “It was the right kind of relationship for what I needed at the time,” Gallagher says.

SHADOWING — THE VISIT, THE TRAVEL

Students in the program are encouraged to apply for a travel stipend, made possible by donations from mentors and former mentees, to visit their mentor and shadow them at work. Gonzalez got approved to travel to California, and Anderson graciously invited him to visit during spring break.

But they had a challenge: Anderson was retired. Instead of the traditional job shadow, he set up meetings with professionals in various legal fields, including a partner at the prominent firm Morrison Foerster, the vice president of intellectual property at



Google, district attorneys, corporate lawyers and more. The trip provided a tremendous opportunity for Gonzalez to begin building professional relationships all across his field.

Meanwhile, the two continued to solidify their connection. Anderson said Gonzalez would join in surfing, family dinners and even daily ice baths. “He just fit right in,” Anderson said. “It felt like he was part of the family. When he left, I felt like one of my kids left and had gone back to school.”

Gonzalez says one particularly memorable moment from the trip was a conversation he had with Anderson. After he remarked about loving all the networking they were doing, Anderson advised, “Networking is a very transactional term. You should take with you in your life that you want to be building relationships with people.”

“Now I make a conscious effort to refer to it that way,” Gonzalez says. “It’s so much more valuable.”

Jaeger took Gallagher to Kerry’s North American headquarters in Beloit, Wisconsin, a unique facility containing smaller units of every national business function within one ecosystem — labs, research, production, you name it. “Our visit helped introduce her to the thought process she’ll go through in how she will build buildings in her career,” Jaeger says.

Gallagher enjoyed learning about a large-scale, multipurpose facility, saying, “I found it fascinating. I was taking classes on mechanical and electrical systems for buildings. We’re walking around a massive food processing plant and I’m asking them, ‘How do you guys even ventilate this space?’ Questions like that.”

BUILDING A LASTING CONNECTION

At program’s end, staff hold a grand finale where mentees and mentors gather to reflect, network, celebrate their successes and look to the future of their relationships.

“When I first met Morgan, she wanted to make sure everything for the next five years was checked off. And look, I was that way too,” Jaeger shares. “My focus became reinforcing with her: We prepare as best we can. You do what you can do, and you don’t have to have it all figured out.”

Gallagher confirms Jaeger’s advice rubbed off on her. “I’ve since slowed down and learned to appreciate everything more,” she says. “After matching with Aleisha, I realized how grateful I was to have her as my mentor. Everything I was nervous or curious about, she had a way of reassuring me or providing an answer.”

“Morgan’s a rock star. I’m just really proud of her,” Jaeger says. “It fills my cup to be a part of Mentors. It’s a small way of making a difference for them, but I get in return this feeling of community that’s so obviously Marquette.”

After the program ended, the two still caught up on campus at their usual place — over coffee in The Brew in the Alumni Memorial Union. “We have a less hands-on relationship now,” Gallagher says, “but I know I can reach out to her if I have something going on. I like knowing I always have her in my corner.”

“It’s odd now to think we ever called them ‘one-on-ones,’ because Harvey and I technically still had those, even after my official time with the program was over,” Gonzalez says. “But it was just a phone call to a friend, really.”

The graduating senior was in Washington, D.C., this spring participating in the Les Aspin Center for Government program, something Anderson encouraged. Not surprisingly, the two texted regularly and would catch up monthly before Anderson’s passing. Gonzalez remembers the messages they exchanged the day he returned from his California visit. “I let Harvey know when I touched down in Milwaukee, and thanked him for everything. He replied, ‘The fam misses you.’ It felt like I was leaving home.”

“Harvey was an amazing man, and I’m so glad to have gotten as close with him as I did,” Gonzalez says. “He was a beautiful soul and a brilliant guy, and he made everyone and everything he was around better. The world needs more people like him.” ☺

The Circle of Mentorship

Many students in Marquette Mentors find their experiences so valuable that they serve as mentors themselves once they’re established in their careers. Here are three who give back:

Cole Blazer, Eng ’18, advises his mentees to find their North Star. “You don’t need all the answers right away — just know what’s guiding you,” he says. Similar advice from his own mentor, **Jeff Richlen**, Grad ’07, vice president of consumer products at Briggs & Stratton, helped Blazer discover his passion for solving macro rather than micro problems in engineering. The realization helped Blazer, a former member of Marquette’s men’s lacrosse team, shape his career, leading to global supply management roles at Tesla and now Apple.

Jacqueline Hackmon, Arts ’16, was aiming for a Ph.D. in clinical psychology until minoring in economics sparked an interest in business. To this then-senior unsure of her next steps, mentor **John Shusterich**, Arts ’11, director of the global transformation and change program at Clarios, suggested a business master’s designed for arts and sciences graduates. “It was perfect for me,” she says. After graduation, Hackmon returned to Chicago, where she is a strategic project manager at Blue Cross Blue Shield. A Marquette Mentor since 2020, she says, “It’s pretty cool to watch someone very bright and driven, unsure of where to direct that energy, figure out where they want to go and what they want to be.”

Mary Hanna, Comm ’21, co-leads the Marquette Mentors Incubator Program, which connects mentees with alumni from recent graduating classes who offer insights on entry-level positions and the current job market. “It’s incredibly fulfilling to see students benefit from mentorship,” says Hanna, manager at Golin, a global PR agency in New York City. Hanna’s own mentor, **Jackie Avial**, Comm ’07, director of content at the National Organization for Rare Disorders, was instrumental as she navigated the job market her senior year. “Seeing how much the program impacts each mentee never ceases to amaze me,” she says.

MU Class Notes

News from fellow alumni

Marquette Magazine *and the Alumni Association accept submissions of news of personal and professional achievements and celebrations for inclusion in “Class Notes.” Visit classnotes.marquette.edu/submit to share your news or milestones photo. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit for content, accuracy and length. Publication of the news, events and milestones of our alumni does not constitute endorsement by Marquette University.*

REUNIONS

Alumni Reunion Weekend was May 30 – June 1, 2025. We celebrated undergraduate class years ending in a 0 or 5 and our First Reunion (Class of 2024)! Get connected at marquette.edu/reunion.

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Jerry Gantar, Eng ’64, published a four-season travel guide titled *Visitor Guide to the White Mountains*. His book is listed on Amazon and sold in bookshops and retail stores throughout New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

REUNION YEAR

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Thomas Bellino, Arts ’65, published his second novel, *The Fisherman’s Ring* (Greenway Press, November 2024), a thriller in which the first Black, African pope is elected in conclave.

66

Bruce Dickman, Bus Ad ’66, has been working in Christian education since he retired from Nabisco Brands Inc. in 1999 after 32 years. Along with his wife, **Madonna (Vogt) Dickman**, Arts ’67, now deceased, he worked at Victory Christian High School in Neosho, Wisconsin, for 19 years as principal and humanities teacher. Madonna was the math and science teacher. Bruce still teaches two English classes at another school.

Dr. Anthony J. Duben, Arts ’66, published a textbook, *Case Studies in the Virtual Physical Chemistry Laboratory*, with Springer International Publishing. The book includes datasets and simulation software for Windows, Mac and Linux. He is a retired professor of chemistry and computer science.

68

Francis Rutkowski, Eng ’68, and Rosalie (Beck) Rutkowski celebrated their 64th wedding anniversary on June 11, 2024.

69

Mike Fagan, Arts ’69, published his second novel, *Murders on Fraternity Row*, a sequel to *Murder on the 16th Green*.

Dr. Michael Nolan, PT ’69, was named 2024 Honored Member of the American Association of Clinical Anatomists. Nolan was specifically recognized for outstanding contributions in the areas of neuroanatomy and gross anatomy. He is a professor and former assistant dean of basic science education at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine in Roanoke, Virginia.

71

Jack Kowalczyk, Eng ’71, and Karen (Pippen) Kowalczyk celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Oct. 19, 2024. They celebrated the event with their family: Sons Mark and David, their spouses, Jennifer and Sarah Ann, and five grandchildren, Kai, Gage, Walter, Calvin and Anne.

73

Mary Louise (Harmon) Neugent, Arts ’73, and her husband, Gerard, were recently honored as Sages Over 70 in Des Moines, Iowa. Sages are recognized for demonstrating leadership, contributing to the betterment of their community, and serving as role models and mentors.

76

Gregory P. Harrison, Arts ’76, retired in December 2024 after living in Yokohama, Japan; Hong Kong; Singapore; Kuwait; Riyadh and Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; and the San Francisco Bay area. In addition to building four companies in Saudi Arabia, he created a service delivery system for uninterruptible power supply adopted by Schneider-Electric throughout the U.S. and Canada. Now he and his wife, Pam, are spending time with three grandchildren in Malibu. He is also helping rebuild Malibu and finding donations for medical equipment and supplies for disabled children affected by the fires in Pacific Palisades, Altadena and Malibu.



Kate (Sternke) Tretow, Arts ’10, and *Zac Tretow*, Arts ’10, welcomed son Connor Daniel Tretow on Aug. 9. The Tretows enjoy taking Connor’s older brother, Jack, to campus, including to St. Joan of Arc Chapel where they got engaged, and will soon visit with Connor in tow. Share your own Milestones moment at classnotes.marquette.edu/submit.



Honor Role

After a decade of service as an educator in Milwaukee's public schools, **Darnell Hamilton**, Bus Ad '06, is developing leadership opportunities for Milwaukee youth beyond the classroom. He received a 2024 Governor's Service Award from Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers for his work increasing the impact of Milwaukee Future Urban Leaders, where he is executive director. FUL serves students as young as K4. For high schoolers, it leads tours to historically Black colleges and universities and introduces students to professional worksites. Examples include learning business and printing at Anchor Press, Paper & Print in Milwaukee and meeting Black engineers at NASA in Huntsville, Alabama. "That's my vision for Future Urban Leaders — to make sure we have explored every option for these young people, whether it be academic, or holistic advancement of who they want to be as a person," Hamilton says.

Rick Paiva, Sp '76, a nine-time national Emmy Award winner as a television director and creative executive, has published his debut novel. *Loincloth: Murder by Media* is a murder mystery that explores the power of modern media and the viral effect it can have on national opinions.



Lauren Opielinski Ortega, H Sci '19, Grad '20, and **Edgar Ortega**, Arts '19, wed on June 29, surrounded by Marquette alumni of all ages. The couple met freshman year in Abbottsford Hall and started dating in 2016.

78

Rich Agnello, Sp '78, published a poetic short story dedicated to the young victims of the Uvalde, Texas, tragedy, *Where Did You Go, Olivia Uvalde?* His author profile has also been published in the 2024 online version of the University of Pennsylvania Journal of Arts and Sciences.

79

Daniel F. Ertl, Arts '79, was entered into the Fellows of the American Institute of Certified Planners in April 2024 in recognition of his contributions to the field of urban planning as a city planner for the cities of Kenosha and Brookfield, mentor to many interns and advocate for creation of Wisconsin laws supporting housing options.

Jim Keppler, Sp '79, received the Lifetime Achievement

Award from the International Association of Speaker Bureaus, its first such award. He recently retired after more than 40 years as the founding CEO of Keppler Speakers.

David M. Murkowski, Sp '79, chief judge of the Kent County Probate Court, was named the 2024 Jurist of the Year by the Michigan Guardianship Association at a ceremony in September 2024. Steve Burnham, an executive board member of MGA, stated: "Judge Murkowski is a no-nonsense judge whose expertise in probate and trust law is well-known and well-regarded throughout Michigan. But Judge Murkowski's work extends well beyond the docket. He is a passionate educator who regularly lectures to colleagues and practitioners and works to improve and deliver quality training and education to professional fiduciaries."

Mary Wagner, Jour '79, Law '99, won a first-place award in the National Federation of Press Women's 2024 communication contest for her blog essay, "The Rescue," about adopting a shelter cat at the end of a trying year of grief and loss.

REUNION YEAR

85

Kate Klise, Arts '85, author, and **M. Sarah Klise**, Arts '84, illustrator, received an Outstanding Achievement Award in Children's Literature from the Wisconsin Library Association for their most recent



A standout at ESPN, *Sports Illustrated* and his own high-impact startup, *Citius Mag*, **Chris Chavez** received running reporting's top honor, the *George Hirsch Journalism Award*, in 2024.

source for all things track and field, marathons and the running industry. Recently, he earned running journalism's top honor, the George Hirsch Journalism Award for "excellence in the reporting, writing and broadcasting of marathons and the sport of running."

At Marquette, Chavez got his start as *The Tribune* beat writer for the track and cross-country teams, which led to reporting internships, including one at ESPN. "Those were the first reps I got in track and field storytelling," Chavez remembers of that collegiate experience.

After covering the Rio de Janeiro Olympics for *Sports Illustrated*, Chavez started *Citius Mag* in 2017 as a passion side project — to "geek out on track and field," in his words. It soon comprised a blog, newsletter and podcast, all featuring commentary, analysis and chats with athletes. In 2021, he left *Sports Illustrated* to go all in on *Citius*, and it paid off with the record-setting attention around the Paris Olympics.

"Running is having a moment," Chavez says. "Our mission is to make it easier and way more fun to be a track and field fan, and we hope that our passion and excitement for the sport are contagious." ☺

During his time at ESPN, *Sports Illustrated* and the podcast he now runs, **Chris Chavez**, Comm '15, has interviewed several famous Olympians: Usain Bolt, Alysson Felix and Cole Hocker to name a few.

Topping the memorable list for him is running in Kenya with Eliud Kipchoge, widely regarded as the greatest marathoner ever. "It hit me later on that it was sort of the equivalent of Michael Jordan inviting you over for pickup basketball at his house," Chavez says.

It's this access and enthusiasm that made Chavez the leader in his field. As the founder and face of *Citius Mag*, he leads the go-to news

ALUMNUS IN MOTION

Running Away With It

From *The Marquette Tribune* to the Olympics, **Chris Chavez** has set the pace in making running news exciting and accessible.

BY TIM CIGELSKE COMM '04, GRAD '18, '20



MIDWEST TROUBADOUR

Wholesome Chaos

Equally a rugged rocker and family man, Ike Reilly channels his unique life experiences into his music.

BY IKE REILLY, ARTS '84, AS TOLD TO CLAIRE NOWAK-FOLTZ, COMM '16

When you go to 200 funerals by the time you're 18, you develop a brutally honest outlook on life. Throughout high school and college, I worked summers as a gravedigger in my hometown. It exposed me to a ton of sorrow, but also beauty in making the most of the short time we have. That dynamic inspired a lot of the music I've released over 40 years. I'm drawn to the struggle and romance of the working class, finding pockets of joy amid suffering. Case in point: My song *Born on Fire* poses deep questions like "Where are we going when

we die?" set to an upbeat folk melody. I first caught the thrill of performing at Marquette, when I joined a garage rock cover band that played at now-extinct bars like The Avalanche. But my real passion was creating my own music. I scrapped my plan to go to law school and began my music career, all while raising a family in Illinois with my wife, Kara. It's been far from glamorous. Tours meant time away from my young kids. I battled alcoholism and financial calamity. We hosted shows at our house because we needed the money, which was

fitting. Family has been my one constant in a fickle industry, so I share my love for them through song, odes to Kara and to childhood memories of my three sons, who are now following in my footsteps and performing with my band. I've played all over the country and even performed with my heroes like The Pogues and Joe Strummer from The Clash. But writing and touring with my kids is better than selling 10 million records. The 2024 documentary *Don't Turn Your Back on Friday Night* captures the resulting mayhem of the life I've chosen. The directors say the exposure could increase my fan base, but I don't need to be a household name (although it'd help pay the bills). As long as I'm authentic in my work, I'm successful. Pursuing what fulfills you is worth the sacrifice. That's truly living. ☺

PHOTO BY LUIS A. LOPEZ

book, *How Mr. Silver Stole the Show*. Read more about the sisters' prolific partnership on page 53.

Kay (Schuler) McMahon, Sp '85, Grad '87, and **Mark McMahon**, Arts '83, celebrated their 35th anniversary in September 2024. They met during the spring semester of 1983.

86

Dr. Julio Rivera, Jour '86, received a Fulbright Scholar award. Read about his experiences researching and teaching in Iceland in the spotlight to the right.

Tracey (Bice) Stroeh, Jour '86, became a consultant/practice partner with SalesStar after more than 25 years in sales and marketing for companies across the U.S. She resides in Hubertus, Wisconsin, with her husband, Jake, and has two grown children.

88

Gene Kannenberg, Jr., Arts '88, Grad '90, published *Here Comes Charlie Brown: A Peanuts Pop-Up* (Abrams ComicArts, 2024). He colored and paper-engineered the very first "Peanuts" comic strip as a pop-up book.

89

Mike Baxendale, Comm '89, hosted Springfield, Massachusetts' annual Mayflower Marathon food drive in support of the Springfield Open Pantry, which runs an emergency food kitchen for a region that faces up to 48

percent food insecurity. This year, "Bax," host of the morning radio show on WAQY/Rock 102 in Springfield, raised a record \$238,000 in food and cash — enough to fill five 50-foot trailers.

♥ **Jennifer Roethe**, Comm '89, and Mark Nelson wed July 6, 2024, in a small ceremony at American Family Field. She is a business law franchise paralegal at Quarles & Brady. He manages the Glendale location of Stan's Fit For Your Feet. The couple make their home in Glendale, Wis.

Leslie (Loftus) Van Buskirk, Law '89, an administrator with the Division of Securities of the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions, became president of the North American Securities Administrators Association at its 2024 fall meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia.

REUNION YEAR

90

Lauri Jones, Comm '90, hosted and produced "Rock 'n' Roll Poet: A Reitman Retrospective" to celebrate the radio career of fellow Marquette graduate, Milwaukee radio icon and retired WUWM co-worker **Bob Reitman**, Arts '63. The hourlong special featured conversations with Reitman, his son, and longtime WKTI cohost Gene Mueller. It also featured Reitman reciting his poetry and some of his favorite songs. It aired in November and December. It's available at wuwm.com.



Timothy Strauss, Eng '90, achieved Notable Inventor status at NXP Semiconductors for earning the 10th U.S. patent issued in the field of microelectronics design, reliability and test, flash memory, security and safety.

91

Beatriz Terry, Dent Hy '91, was recognized with the Florida Dental Association President's Award for her role in advancing oral health care and dentistry in Florida.

94

Jennifer (Ament) Moeller, Law '94, was elected Door County circuit judge for Branch 1 in the spring and was sworn in in August 2024.

95

Tom Schuettelpelz, Arts '95, was promoted to vice president/trust officer for National Exchange Bank & Trust. He works from the bank's South Main Street office in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

Road Less Traveled

Dr. Julio Rivera's classroom and life looked different with an Icelandic backdrop last fall. After more than two decades teaching, he left his faculty position at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin, to answer the question: Why don't more business schools teach geography? "Only 15 percent do globally," Rivera, Jour '86, says. That's what took him to Iceland as a 2024 Fulbright Scholar. The professor sees the business world spatially, which reveals stories. His map-based market research generates data and insights relating to supply chains, management, human resources and marketing. Now, he's applying that research on an international stage. Iceland's topographical beauty was a draw, but so was understanding how GIS technology could help support the country's sustainability goals amid climate changes. "I obviously miss home because it's home, but it's been an adventure every day," he says. — Drew Dawson, Comm '16



Greater Good

After just a year working as an infusion nurse at the Aurora Sinai Vince Lombardi Cancer Clinic in Milwaukee, **Maria Bunczak Schmidt**, Nurs '20, won the Rising Star Award, presented to one young nurse in the Aurora Cancer Care system. Then, after being nominated eight times by patients during the preceding year, she won the Daisy Award, which hospitals present in partnership with the international Daisy Foundation to honor nurses for clinical excellence and compassion in the line of duty. "I treated each nomination as a victory, so I was absolutely dumbfounded when I won the real award," says Bunczak Schmidt, whose husband and parents are also Marquette alums. Said one nominator, "She deserves a dozen daisies."
— *Mary Schmitt Boyer, Jour '77*

98

Nicole (Truog) Jennings, Bus Ad '98, was elected president of the Association of Academic Surgical Administrators. AASA is the association for administration and physician leaders in the field of academic surgery administration. Jennings is the chief administrative officer of the Department of Surgery at the University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Medicine and Public Health.

Elizabeth Rendfleisch, Comm '98, is the co-editor of *Coollest American Stories*, a prize-winning annual anthology of short stories now in its fourth year with the publication of *Coollest American Stories 2025*. In addition, in March she was named vice president, director of design at Random House.

99

Colleen Carol Casey, Arts '99, retired in November 2024 from a 45-year career as a health physicist and radiation specialist, including 40 years as a nuclear materials inspector and license reviewer for the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Region III in Warrenville, Illinois. Her plans include spending more time on church volunteering, water aerobics, and family and friends, and creating a journal of anecdotal family stories.

Daniel McLaughlin, Arts '99, was sworn in as a U.S. magistrate judge for the Northern District of Illinois on Sept. 30, 2024. Before taking

the bench, McLaughlin was a staff attorney with the Federal Defender Program in Chicago for over 16 years. He started his legal career at Jenner & Block's Chicago office, where he was a litigation associate for about four years. He is a proud alumnus of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps (1999–00, San Francisco).

Mary (Rude) Morse, Grad '99, published *English Birth Girdles: Devotions for Women in "Travell of Childe"* in May 2024. Morse also started a small business, Mary Morse Writing, Editing and Indexing.

REUNION YEAR

00

Lindsay M. Morris, Comm '00, recently published her debut historical fiction novel, *The Last Letter from Sicily* (Storm Publishing, January 2025). The former *Hilltop* editor and *Marquette Tribune* writer's second World War II-era novel is due to arrive this June.

03

Garritt Bader, Eng '03, was inducted into the Hall of Fame of Notre Dame Academy of Green Bay, Wis., in the business category. The school's Hall of Fame provides recognition to alumni who have contributed to the advancement of the school and/or greater Green Bay community.

Stacy (Krubsack) Dooley, Arts '03, was promoted to partner at Lagasse Branch Bell + Kinkead LLP in San Diego. She specializes in the defense of catastrophic per-

sonal injury claims and other significant damages claims.

04

Stacie Lamb, Bus Ad '04, Law '11, has been promoted to counsel at Faegre Drinker in Chicago. She is a member of the firm's Investment Management practice group.

REUNION YEAR

05

Dr. Amy (Branam) Armiento, Grad '05, received the J. Lasley Dameron Award for Outstanding Essay Collection for her co-edited book *Poe and Women: Recognition and Revision* (Lehigh University Press, 2023). She also published a second edited collection titled *More Than Love: The Enduring Fascination with Edgar Allan Poe* (Mercer University Press, 2024).

06

Christine (Bestor) Townsend, Arts '06, was promoted to office managing shareholder of the Milwaukee office of Ogletree Deakins, a national labor and employment law firm. In addition to litigation, she devotes a substantial amount of her practice to proactively assisting employers in complying with state and federal employment laws, navigating complex leave and accommodation situations, and handling personnel issues. She also co-chairs the firm's Unfair Competition and Trade Secrets Practice Group.

07

Michael Nelson, Prof St '07, Grad '09, was appointed president of Uncle Giuseppe's Marketplace in New York.

✦ **Trevor Owen**, Arts '07, and Regina Leaño: daughter Lenore born in October 2024.

Kierra (Jackson) Stuvland, Arts '07, started a new position as an advanced practice clinician (nurse-midwife and women's health nurse practitioner) at Multnomah County Health Department in Portland, Oregon. She will also be supporting their Healthy Birth Initiatives program.

08

Dr. Cassie Brownell, Arts '08, was promoted with tenure to associate professor at the University of Toronto. Additionally, she was named a 2024 National Academy of Education / Spencer Research Postdoctoral Fellow, which allows her to continue researching children's civic and rhetorical development in presidential election years.

Matthew Lutz, Grad '08, was honored on the Independent Bankers of America's annual 40 Under 40: Community Bank Leaders list. He is employed at First National Bank & Trust in Iron Mountain, Michigan.

Courtney N. Moran, Arts '08, has championed numerous hemp-related laws in the U.S., including at the federal level, where she drafted and negotiated the Hemp Farming Act of 2018. Her commitment to

advancing hemp legislation has earned accolades like the Oregon State Bar Cannabis and Psychedelics Law Section Leland R. Berger Lifetime Achievement Award, the highest recognition that the section bestows on a member. Moran is the first woman and only the second individual to receive the award, handed out in November 2024.

09

Holly Caretta-Weyer, M.D., H Sci '09, was appointed associate dean of admissions and assessment at the Stanford University School of Medicine.

REUNION YEAR

10

Alison (Ballweg) Gorham, Eng '10, was promoted to vice president of McShane Construction Co.'s Wisconsin regional office in Madison. Gorham joined McShane in 2012 as a project engineer and was subsequently promoted to project manager. In 2018, she established McShane's Madison office and was promoted to director of Wisconsin operations.

✦ **Kate (Sternke) Tretow**, Arts '10, and **Zac Tretow**, Arts '10: son Connor Daniel Tretow born Aug. 9, 2024.

Alana (Wauneka) Yazzie, Bus Ad '10, wrote and published a cookbook, *The Modern Navajo Kitchen*. Read more about her book and her online influence on page 59.

12

✦ **Mikhaila (Norton) Carbajal**, Bus Ad '12, and **David Carbajal**, Bus Ad '13: son Boden "Bodie" Samuel Carbajal born Jan. 29, 2024. He joins big brothers Charlie, Wade and Gus.

Micah Ogé, Comm '12, has been appointed vice president of global trade and investment at the Wisconsin Economic Development Corp.

13

♥ **Jason Braun**, Comm '13, and Eryn Jacobs wed Nov. 2, 2024, in West Allis, Wisconsin. They spent time at St. Joan of Arc Chapel for photos.

✦ **Coady (Ahern) Morrissey**, Nurs '13, and **Emmett Morrissey**, Bus Ad '12: son Colin

born Nov. 26, 2024. Future Golden Eagles and big siblings Rory, Marty and Séamus look forward to showing Colin around campus soon!

✦ **Jacob Schlindwein**, D.D.S., H Sci '13, Dent '16, and **Lexi (Lozinak) Schlindwein**, Comm '13, Grad '20: daughter Francine Amy born Nov. 9, 2024. She joins big sister Penelope Rose.

14

Aaron Jay Ledesma, Comm '14, was recently promoted to director of creative strategy for YES Prep Public Schools.

♥ **Patrick McGinn**, Arts '14, Grad '19, and **Abigail (Cole) McGinn**, Comm '16, wed Nov. 2, 2024, at the St. James 1868 in Milwaukee. Many Marquette alums were in



Marissa (Wurster) Paranal, H Sci '18, Grad '21, and **RD Paranal**, H Sci '19, PT '21, wed Oct. 12 at Church of the Gesu. The couple met in 2015 and kick-started their relationship while studying at Cudahy Hall. They love attending Marquette basketball games and returning to campus.

Cheering for a Cause

Marquette basketball has a way of bringing people together and inspiring a spirit of service. Last fall, Marquette's Black Alumni Association sent up more than cheers during its Golden Eagles vs. Badgers men's basketball game-watching event. The group organized a food drive to support the university's Urban Scholars program, which helps students who demonstrate financial need and show great academic promise. The event collected hundreds of food items. "These donations made a big impact for Urban Scholars without a university meal plan, especially as students were going into finals week," said BAA Vice President **Kaleb Tatum**, Comm '22. "The generosity of this community is so inspiring. We are always ready to help Be The Difference."



attendance. They stopped for photos on campus.

REUNION YEAR

15

🌟 **Brittany (Boncuore) Haberkorn**, Arts '15, and **Joel Haberkorn**, Eng '15: son Brewer Haberkorn born Aug. 20, 2024. Big sister Margot, 2, loves her baby brother.

🌟 **Christiane (Taylor) Lancieri**, Arts '15, and **Marco Lancieri**, Arts '15: son Malcolm Michele Lancieri born April 17, 2024.

Jackson Seagrist, Eng '15, recently published his first book, *California: Sierra Nevada Mountain Towns*. This project was born from a shared love of the mountains and a appreciation for California's Sierra region by three friends, Wisconsin natives turned Californians, who've explored the hidden gems and natural wonders of Sierra mountain towns. As civil and environmental engineers, they bring their passion for the outdoors into every adventure.

16

Gadeer Ayesh, H Sci '16, and **Omar Jaber**, Bus Ad '16, welcomed their second daughter on Jan. 30, 2024.

Avery Flyte, Bus Ad '16, earned his Master of Business Administration with a concentration in finance from Southern New Hampshire University in November 2024.

17

♥ **Stephanie (Zimmer) Moon**, Comm '17, and **Daniel Moon**, Arts '17, wed June 22, 2024, in Chicago. They briefly met at Lollapalooza two weeks before freshman year began and had no idea the other was attending Marquette. They were surprised when they ran into each other in McCormick's elevator and found out they lived one floor apart. Friends throughout college, they didn't date until after graduation.

18

♥ **Marissa (Wurster) Paranal**, H Sci '18, Grad '21, and **RD Paranal**, H Sci '19, PT '21, wed Oct. 12, 2024, at Church of the Gesu in Milwaukee. See page 51.

♥ **Ben Zellmer**, H Sci '18, and **Emily Lustig** wed in fall 2024. They met in Marquette's South Africa Service Learning Program in the fall of 2016. They were married by their best friend **Justine Shanner**, Bus Ad '18, Emily's roommate in Cape Town, and reunited with the rest of their Kimberly House classmates, all alumni from Jesuit universities across

the country. They celebrated with many other Marquette graduates, including Ben's grandfather, **Jim Zellmer**, M.D., Arts '60, Med '64, and his father, **Chris Zellmer**, Arts '86.

19

Heather Dorfler, Bus Ad '19, has joined Cushman & Wakefield | Boerke in Milwaukee as a member of its investment sales platform. With a strong background in the retail and industrial sectors, Dorfler has completed over \$160 million in deals. She previously served as a senior capital markets adviser at Colliers and began her career at CBRE.

♥ **Lily (O'Leary) Franz**, Comm '19, and **Ian Franz**, Bus Ad '18, wed Sept. 21, 2024. They met on Halloween in 2015 at Marquette.

Ellie (Vonderhaar) McCullough, Comm '19, Grad '20, was named Breakout Marketer of the Year in Milwaukee by the Milwaukee Digital Marketing Club, known as MKE DMC. Breakout Marketer of the Year recognizes a standout newcomer in Milwaukee's digital marketing scene.

♥ **Lauren Opielinski Ortega**, H Sci '19, Grad '20, and **Edgar Ortega**, Arts '19, wed June 29, 2024. Read about their wedding on page 46.

REUNION YEAR

20

♥ **Maria Bunczak Schmidt**, Nurs '20, and **Eric Bunczak Schmidt**, Eng '21, wed Dec. 2,

2023, in downtown Milwaukee after meeting through the Marquette Ballroom Dance Club in 2018. Maria's parents, **Paul Bunczak**, Bus Ad '92, and **Julie (Karpinski) Bunczak**, Comm '92, also met at Marquette. Maria also received the Rising Star Award for nursing as an oncology infusion nurse. Read more on page 50.

♥ **Shannon O'Connor**, Arts '20, and **Christopher J. Alaimo**, Eng '18, wed in June 2022. They had their first date in November 2017 at the Starbucks on campus.



Gadeer Ayesh, H Sci '16, and **Omar Jaber**, Bus Ad '16, welcomed their second daughter on Jan. 30, 2024, and celebrated their fifth wedding anniversary on Nov. 3, 2024.

22

♥ **Lourdes Galido**, Nurs '22, and **Peter Diamond**, Eng '21, met when she was a senior and he had recently graduated. They never met while at Marquette in college, even though he lived at The Marq and she lived in Mashuda. They are engaged to be married in August 2025.

♥ **Madi (Ernst) Lewis**, Arts '22, and **Valerie (Lynch) Lewis**, H Sci '21, wed August 2024 in Riverside Park in Milwaukee. They moved to the East Coast just days after the wedding.



Prolific Sisters

M. Sarah Klise, Arts '84, and her sister, **Kate**, Arts '85, started making books together as kids in their bedroom in Peoria, Illinois. Their first book was a Christmas gift for one of their sisters. Kate wrote the story and Sarah illustrated. Even then the two knew they'd eventually team up as adults. "As kids I needed Sarah's help with book report covers, so I assumed I'd need her help with a career," says Kate, above right. "And I needed Kate's editorial eye — it was always terrific," Sarah says. Starting with their first book, *Regarding the Fountain*, in 1998, the sisters have used that formula to create more than 30 award-winning children's books. Books in their spooky-funny 43 Old Cemetery Road series and circus-oriented Three-Ring Rascals series have received raves from *Kirkus* and *School Library Journal*, and been selected for Amazon and Junior Library Guild best lists. Read about the recognition bestowed on their latest book, *How Mr. Silver Stole the Show*, on page 46. — *Guy Fiorita*



In Memoriam

40s

Sr. M. Placida Anheuser, Jour '40; Ilene F. (Graber) Doll, Dent Hy '45; Adell M. (Polczynski) Murphy, Jour '45; Patricia (Branks) Westphal, Arts '46; Gladys H. (Rose) Bovee, Jour '47, Grad '49; Mary A. (Zeltinger) Neuwald, Arts '47; Donath L. (Mawrock) Kurz, Arts '48; Donald K. Peck, Eng '48; Ruth O. Bauer Bohms, Jour '49; John O. Chamberlain, Arts '49, Med '52; Francis J. Jennik, Arts '49; Estelle M. (Betner) Merlin, Dent Hy '49; Dale H. Nixon, Bus Ad '49

50s

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ALUMNA SPOTLIGHT

Go, Kate, Go!

As the NFL Draft takes over Green Bay, one alumna is on the front lines helping to shape the experience.

BY DREW DAWSON, COMM '16

Growing up in Glenbeulah, Wisconsin, **Kate (Kuehl) Burgess**, Comm '91, wasn't always a die-hard Green Bay Packers fan. She knew of the state's green and gold pride but wasn't fully immersed in it — at least not at first. That changed in the early 2000s. After taking over as owner and CEO of Elevate97, a major Green Bay-based marketing firm, she found herself in the middle of a holiday story. In need of a last-minute partner to deliver ownership shares to new shareholders before Christmas, the Packers turned to Elevate97 for assistance. Without hesitation, Burgess' team canceled their holiday party and got to work.

She never expected that single moment would spark a long-term partnership with the team, let alone lead to her joining the board of directors in 2022 or serving as vice chair of the team's host committee for the 2025 NFL Draft. "Green Bay is a pretty magical city," she says. "People give a lot back here, and I want to do the same."

This was not the journey Burgess initially envisioned as a Marquette communication major. Yet, the university's holistic approach led her to explore new ideas and discover her knack for elevating others and enhancing brand partnerships.

Those talents played a key role in bringing one of the NFL's biggest annual events to its smallest market. The draft is expected to double Green Bay's population, and it took masterful storytelling about the city, the team and its passionate fan base to sell the destination. Getting picked was just the beginning. With three others on the host committee, Burgess helped spearhead the raising of \$8.5 million in just 18 months to cover hosting costs and create an unforgettable experience for both local and visiting fans. She credits Packers President/CEO Mark Murphy and Gabrielle Dow, Packers vice president of marketing and fan engagement, for extraordinary leadership in not only bringing the draft to Green Bay but also ensuring it remains an inclusive, community-driven celebration.

As the late-April event approached, Burgess hoped the city and state would shine on the national stage. "It's taken a lot to get us to the finish line," she says. "The Packers are built and owned by the community, and the community is delivering." ☺

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Sharing Heritage

Tradition With a Twist

When **Alana (Wauneka) Yazzie**, Bus Ad '10, started blogging about food and lifestyles 10 years ago, many of her followers referred to her Indigenous recipes and their presentation on the plate as "fancy." So, in 2014, the *thefancynavajo.com* website was born. Last year Yazzie published her first cookbook, *The Modern Navajo Kitchen: Homestyle Recipes that Celebrate the Flavors and Traditions of the Diné*, one of the first modern cookbooks written by a Navajo woman. Yazzie credits Marquette for teaching her the importance of networking in becoming a popular blogger and influencer. But her biggest influence was her mother, who started teaching her about cooking when she was just a toddler.

— Mary Schmitt Boyer, Jour '77



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