

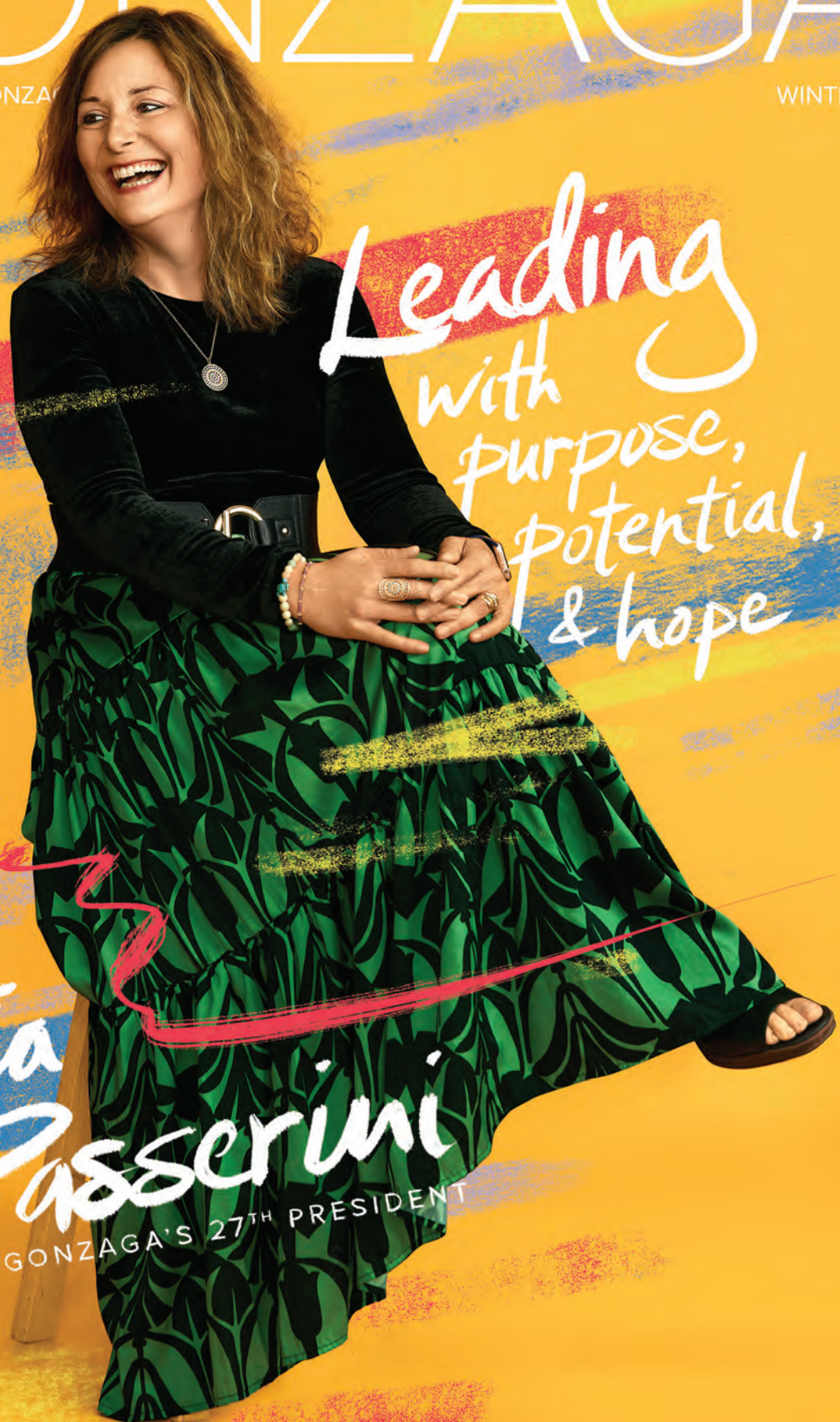
GONZAGA

THE MAGAZINE OF GONZAGA

WINTER 2025

Leading
with
purpose,
potential,
& hope

Katia
Passerini
GONZAGA'S 27TH PRESIDENT





Connor Flanagan ('13) taking a trip down memory lane for the 100th anniversary of DeSmet Hall.

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THE MAGAZINE OF
GONZAGA UNIVERSITY

WINTER 2026

Vol. 15 No. 2

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On the Cover:

President Katia Passerini; photo by Zack Berlat ('11)
Design by Julie Smetana ('08)

Website

gonzaga.edu/magazine

Gonzaga Magazine is an opportunity for alumni, parents and friends to stay connected to one another and to the University's Mission. We are dedicated to building community with our readers through authentic storytelling and beautiful images. This publication is our gift to you. If you would like to help offset the costs, please consider a donation to the Fund for Gonzaga at gonzaga.edu/givenow.

The opinions expressed do not always represent the views of the administration, but are intended to foster open dialogue and lifelong learning in the Jesuit tradition.

Have a response to a story?
We welcome your feedback.
gonzaga.edu/editor

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



From the Spring 2025 issue

40 YEARS OF KENNEL MADNESS

My freshman year, we made that fantastic run to the Elite Eight for the first time, and by 2002 Gonzaga was well on its way to becoming a mispronounced household name. I was housemates with Neil Tocher, co-president of the Kennel Club for 2001-2002. I would help out with things from time to time, including fulfilling the friends and alumni KC shirt orders. That season we got to meet some former players and former Kennel Clubbers when they stopped by the house to get shirts, which was pretty fun.

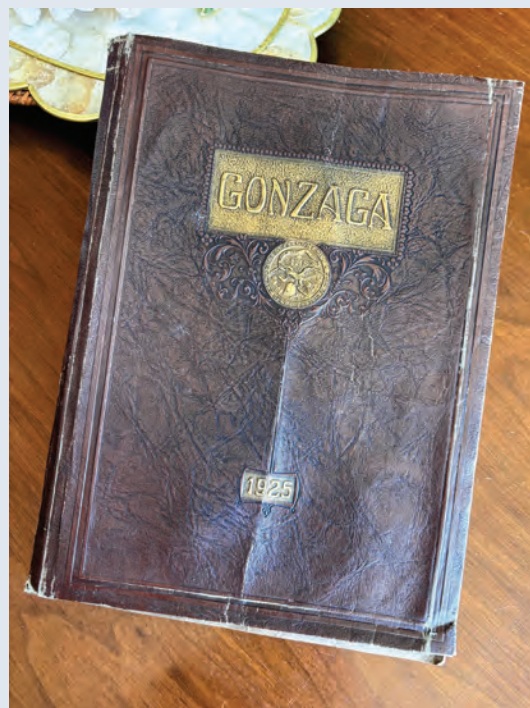
One day, the house phone rang and the voice on the other end said, "Hi, this is Mark Few. I'm the coach of the Gonzaga men's basketball team." I said, "I know who you are, Coach." He was calling to see about getting some Kennel Club shirts to Dick Vitale, Digger Phelps and I believe Jay Bilas. I took my shirt wrangling responsibilities very seriously and asked what size he thought Digger might need.

Louis Moore ('02)
Salem, Ore.

REMARKABLE LEADER

I am a parent of a current Zag and have been impressed with Thayne McCulloh as University president. After reading this most recent issue of Gonzaga Magazine, I am even more impressed.

Aimee Fiorito
Morgan Hill, Calif.



1925 YEARBOOK

I recently came across a special family heirloom – an original 1925 Gonzaga yearbook. With this year marking its 100th anniversary, I thought it would be fun to share in the magazine. Thanks for all the ways you continue to connect and celebrate the Gonzaga community.

Hannah Johnson ('22)
Spokane Valley, Wash.



Stories to Lift Our Spirits

When an email was sent to Zag families with a link to see the May issue of Gonzaga Magazine online, I asked readers to share about the goings-on in their world. The replies in my inbox were inspiring.

Njal Lundbert ('06, '08) shared about the creation of a sleepover rental company that provides all the essentials of a fabulous sleepover party – keepsake mementos included! Scott Companario ('14) reached out about a client who is helping communities make measurable reductions in homelessness and how his Jesuit education shapes the way he thinks about these complexities. Kristina Alnajar ('07) wanted to tell fellow alumni about how she and Zags Patrick Jones ('20) and Kate Cherrington ('04) all work for Washington Association for Community Health to provide advocacy and workforce development around the state.

No doubt, the magazine crew may be turning some of those responses into stories for you.

I'm also thrilled whenever people reach out to ask if I'll forward a note to a professor or fellow alum they'd like to reconnect with. Like when Henry Rawsone ('71, 75 J.D.) wanted to catch up with Tom Miller ('72). Or when folks share Gonzaga memories that live on as lore in their families. And when college roomies get together for mini reunions 30 or 40 years after graduation. Or when readers notice the subtle things we include that aren't really a part of any major story,

like Larry Murillo ('79) commenting on a photo in which one of our editors was jokingly poring over a pretend issue of Mad magazine.

Perhaps more than ever, people need those reminders of their connections to special people, places and times in their lives. Encouraging stories about Zags making a difference – even amid the unexpected detours life brings – provide a little dose of happiness to lift our spirits. We all need that, don't we?

So, if you're ever wondering whether a recent experiment or chance encounter would "make the cut" for a Gonzaga story, the answer is simple: Send it! I can't promise that it will make the pages of Gonzaga Magazine, which we now publish only twice a year, or that it will make a huge splash on the website or go viral on social media. But I can guarantee your effort to share some joy will be appreciated and passed on to others, in the least. Who knows – your simple note could appear in a message that inspires a financial gift to GU. The possibilities are many.

Visit this link to drop me a line: gonzaga.edu/editor

Sending sunshine,



Kate Vanskike ('22 M.A.)
Editor

CONNECT WITH US

Is it time to update your records?

Have you moved, changed names or marital status, or prefer to receive GU publications differently? Please let us know! gonzaga.edu/update

Phone: 800-463-6925, option 4

Want to share your family or career updates?

Submit weddings, births/adoptions, promotions and accolades here: gonzaga.edu/alumninews

Place, Purpose and People



Dear Gonzaga Readers,

I'd like to share with you some of the remarks I made at my inauguration in September, which was truly a remarkable and life-changing experience.

As I told the audience in the McCarthy Athletic Center, I had played this moment in my head for so long, so many times. People tell you that if you visualize getting to the place you want to be in life, how to get there, and who will help you get there, it can become your reality. Competitive athletic teams practice these visualizations before big games. The Gospel encourages this practice: "Ask and you shall receive," says Matthew 7:7.

When I thought about this moment in my life, I did not know the place. But I visualized speaking to a large audience about the importance of higher education and the role of the university. And here I am.

Being in this incredible place, in a region plentiful with everything one could need, is beyond a dream. And for this, I am thankful to God. Finding myself in this position is thanks to so many people, starting with my family: my parents, Giovanna and Bruno, my husband Arturo, and our kids, Luis, Michelangelo and Diego.

There are many mentors who have walked alongside me, shaping the past, forming the present or helping me envision the future. They have illuminated my purpose, empowered my potential, opened many doors and shown me what happens when you lead with hope.

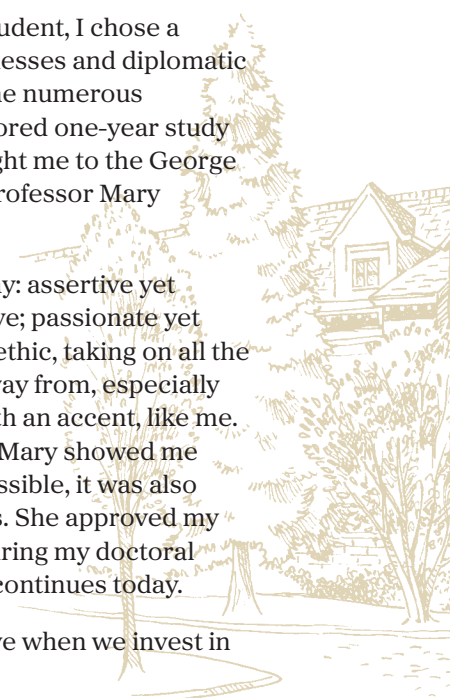
Empowering Potential

Growing up in Rome, I started at a public elementary school, continued with a religious middle school, returned to a public high school and eventually landed at a private university. I was blessed to receive an outstanding free education for most of my schooling and I think this public investment helps me serve as an ambassador of the power of supporting education at all levels.

When it was time to be a university student, I chose a private institution connected to businesses and diplomatic and international milieus. It offered me numerous opportunities, including a fully sponsored one-year study abroad program in the U.S. that brought me to the George Washington University where I met professor Mary Granger.

Mary was the definition of a dichotomy: assertive yet graceful; independent yet collaborative; passionate yet realistic. She had an incredible work ethic, taking on all the tasks that others might have shied away from, especially those tasks of mentoring students with an accent, like me. A pioneering woman in a STEM field, Mary showed me that not only was work in this field possible, it was also enjoyable. She supported all my ideas. She approved my first internship and my co-op work during my doctoral studies. She started a trajectory that continues today.

We must not forget the impact we have when we invest in others – particularly our students.



Opening Doors

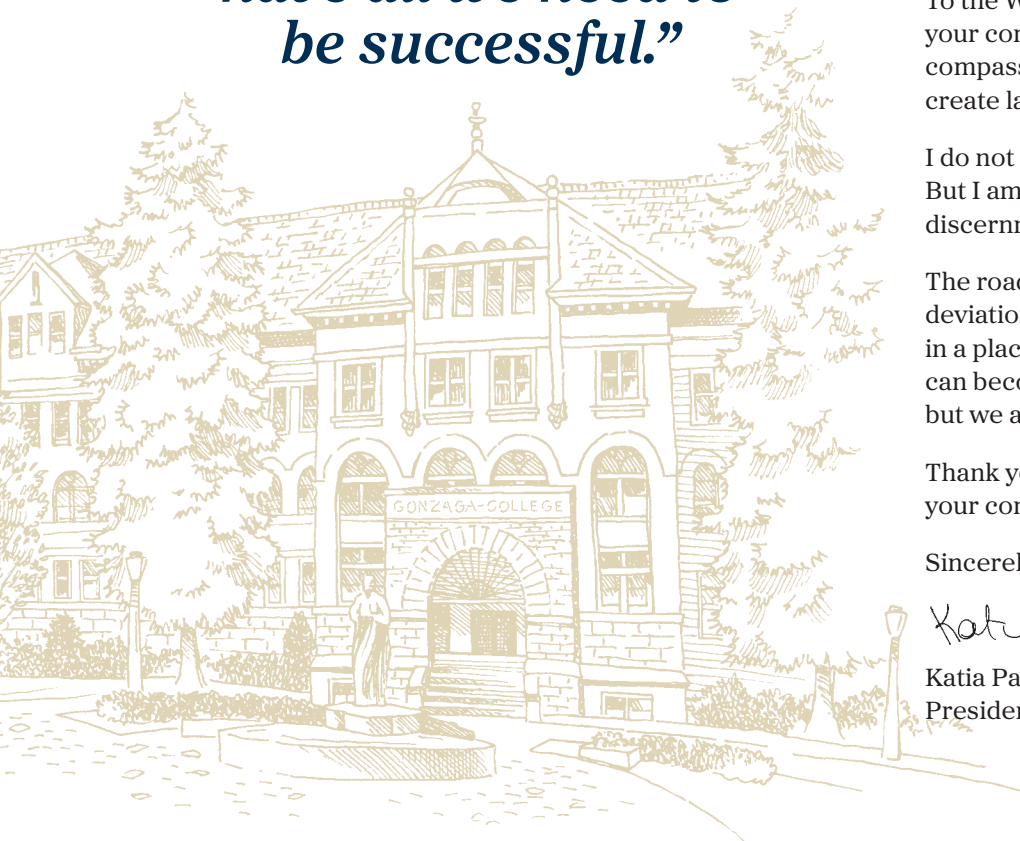
From the beginning of my interactions with Zag Nation, the importance of relationships has been very clear to me. It's almost magical: The love you all have for this place is captivating, and I know it is one of the primary reasons that our institution is stronger than ever.

At Gonzaga, we have all we need to be successful. We have networks of support from our friends, alumni around the world, colleagues, local community, and the larger Catholic Church behind us.

The Jesuit Order started in 1540 and is still going strong, and we will continue to be a fundamental part of a story initiated by St. Ignatius of Loyola, who established educational practices and a pedagogy that transcends time and place, a way of living and seeing God in all things.

This has guided Gonzaga for 138 years, guides us today, and will continue to guide us into the future.

***“At Gonzaga, we
have all we need to
be successful.”***



Leading with Hope

Generally, at an inauguration, guests want to hear a big vision, a new agenda. How the common good compels us to think about the significant challenges we face and how these challenges are interconnected. Things like launching new programs, new locations and new initiatives, reinvesting in our current facilities, building new ones, and beginning a campaign to support our goal of being a premier global university, powered locally but known globally.

It is my privilege as your 27th president to announce that, yes, we will do all those things.

I am honored to announce two gifts that showcase all that can be made possible through a shared belief in what our students can do for, and in, the world.

With support from alum Tom Woodley and his wife, Nancy, Gonzaga is establishing the Woodley Institute for Civil Engagement and Humanistic Dialogue. And thanks to Scott and Emily Scelfo, parents of GU alumni, Gonzaga will strengthen its deep commitment to transformational experiences in Opportunity Northeast, our place-based community engagement initiative.

To the Woodley and Scelfo families, because of your commitment, Gonzaga can plan boldly, act compassionately, and work side by side with its partners to create lasting change.

I do not know precisely what the future will look like. But I am here, committed to building it together, with discernment and with hope.

The road ahead has a lot of turns and may also have some deviations, but it will take us exactly where we need to be, in a place where we understand who we are and who we can become when we bring not just our university forward, but we advance our greater community by doing so.

Thank you for being a part of this journey and thank you for your continued support of this beloved community.

Sincerely,

Katia Passerini, Ph.D.
President

Biomedical Engineering
Takes Root

“Biomedical engineering is one of the most interdisciplinary programs at Gonzaga. We’re pulling in expertise from health sciences, chemistry, biology, math and other engineering disciplines to allow students to enter many fields.”

- Brandon Sargent, assistant professor

The School of Engineering and Applied Science welcomed its first cohort of biomedical engineering majors in fall 2024. Designed to support diverse career paths, including medical device design, biomaterials, bioelectronics and pharmaceuticals, the curriculum offers flexibility in the junior and senior years for students to tailor their studies. For those interested in health care, the program provides a pathway to medical school and the UW-GU Health Partnership connects Gonzaga undergrads to UW School of Medicine faculty and medical students.

A state-of-the-art biomedical engineering laboratory suite in the Bollier Center includes a large teaching lab, a tissue culture lab, and two faculty research labs, supporting hands-on learning and faculty-led research across a wide range of biomedical engineering topics.

U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT

RANKED AS A
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY (TOP 24%)
(SEVENTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR)

#15
SERVICE
LEARNING

#17
UNDERGRADUATE
TEACHING

#48
MOST
INNOVATIVE
SCHOOLS

TOP 34%
BEST COLLEGES
FOR VETERANS

TOP 35%
“BEST VALUE”
SCHOOL

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS:

- #14 CIVIL ENGINEERING** (non-doctorate)
- #20 FINANCE**
- #21 UNDERGRADUATE ENGINEERING** (non-doctorate)
- #26 ACCOUNTING**
- #29 ENTREPRENEURSHIP**
- #59 UNDERGRADUATE NURSING**
- #88 UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS**



The Gray Ghost of Gonzaga

Undefeated since 1941. Sadly, that isn’t about the basketball team.

Gonzaga fans from the past few decades know superstars by the name of John Stockton, Kevin Pangos, Rui Hachimura and Drew Timme. But what about Tony Canadeo? The unknown Italian from Chicago put Gonzaga football on the map.

Canadeo was known to teammates and fans as “the Gray Ghost.” He owed the nickname, in part, to his gray hair, which changed color prematurely at age 20, but also because his moves were so fast, few could tackle him.

Canadeo had plenty of real stats to back up his success. Legend has it his performance in a 13-7 upset against Detroit University, in which he scored all of Gonzaga’s points, prompted the Green Bay Packers to draft him.

His professional career spanned 11 years, with a break to serve in World War II, and eventually led to his induction into the NFL Hall of Fame in 1974.

For decades, Canadeo seemed to be the forgotten Zag. The war, the end of football at Gonzaga and his time with the Packers wiped away his history as one of the University’s original superstars – until now.

Gonzaga Athletics honored Canadeo in August with a well-deserved plaque in the Hall of Honor. Nearly 90 years after his senior season, he’s certainly earned it.

This is a condensed version of “Get to know the Gonzaga superstar athlete you’ve probably never heard of: Tony Canadeo” by David Parks, which ran in The Inlander in January 2025.

GENEROUS GIFT

Fosters Civil Engagement and Humanistic Dialogue



A transformational gift from **Tom ('69) and Nancy Woodley** establishes at Gonzaga the Woodley Institute for Civil Engagement and Humanistic Dialogue to prepare students to lead with wisdom, humility and integrity in an increasingly divided time. Rooted in the Jesuit, Catholic and humanistic tradition, the Institute will elevate civil discourse, interdisciplinary dialogue, and the literacies of conflict and digital engagement, while accompanying Woodley Scholars of political science as they grow into principled public servants.

Tom Woodley understands what steady leadership demands. As a political science graduate who went on to Georgetown Law, federal service and a 45-year career representing firefighters and public-safety professionals, he has seen how rhetoric can either harm or heal.

"Unfortunately, our country has a lot of deep divisions that are not constructive," Woodley says. He hopes this Institute can contribute to easing that.

"Tom and Nancy Woodley's investment allows us to form leaders who build trust across difference," says Gonzaga University President Katia Passerini. "Through the Woodley Institute and

Woodley Scholars program, students will connect scholarship with civic practice and develop the habits of learning, reasoning and service that democracy urgently needs."

The Institute will formalize work already thriving on campus while expanding partnerships with public schools and libraries, Tribal Nations and local nonprofits. It will serve as a convening hub for respectful dialogue across difference, grounded in the Ignatian practices of deep listening and discernment. It will provide public lectures, workshops and community partnerships, with programs helping students, faculty and neighbors practice evidence-based reasoning, navigate an evolving media landscape and engage across worldviews with empathy and rigor.

The Woodley Scholars — political science students supported by the Woodley-endowed scholarship fund — stand at the heart of this vision. The Institute will allow them priority access to immersive learning; mentored, public-facing projects; opportunities to research, write policy briefs and collaborate with civic partners; and receive micro-credentials in Ignatian Dialogue, strengthening preparation for roles in federal, state and local government.

From his early insight into laborers' struggles to decades representing firefighters, Tom Woodley's life reflects a commitment to the common good. He credits Gonzaga — and formative Jesuits like Fr. Pat Twohy, S.J. — for strengthening his communication and moral compass.

"We need qualified people to serve the public interest," he says, urging graduates to consider government service, even for a season. His hope for the Institute and the scholars is simple and bold: to nurture leaders whose words, actions and decisions bring light — not division — to public life.

» Join the Cause

Tom Woodley extends this invitation to those who believe civil discourse still matters: *"Step up and support the school, the students and the teachers"* and be part of growing this Institute.

Contact Jeff Geldien, assistant vice president for academic development: **509-313-6213** or geldien@gonzaga.edu



AI

IN THE CORE

“

Students learn foundational reasoning and critical thinking skills that are needed to shape and sharpen their minds in their intellectual journeys to become leaders who serve the common good. The Jesuit approach entails a reflective and critical examination of the most pressing challenges of the day. Some of the most pressing challenges of the day involve AI.

- Anthony Fisher

”

As a Catholic, Jesuit and humanistic university, how do we educate students to become people for a more just and humane global community?

This question is the anchor for Gonzaga’s core curriculum, a roadmap for all undergraduate students to cultivate understanding, learn what it means to be human, develop principles characterized by a well-lived life and imagine what’s possible for their roles in the world. It’s a curriculum housed in a liberal arts context and the Jesuit tradition, preparing individuals in any major to take on any career.

Ann Ciasullo, director of the University Core, believes coursework about artificial intelligence (AI) is a natural fit for core courses like English, philosophy and communication studies.

“Because a commitment to inquiry and discernment serves as the foundation of our core curriculum, students engage with AI in ways that are both practical and critical,” says Ciasullo. “They will not only explore how AI works but also analyze the implications of the content it produces. Given our Mission, Gonzaga is in a unique position to frame questions about AI and digital literacy in meaningful ways.”

« The images here and on p. 12-13 are the result of an assignment in Chase Bollig's English course. On day one, students review the syllabus, then work in small groups using AI to generate an image that illustrates the course goals. Bollig challenges the class to consider authorship credit, which, he says, sparks an interesting exploration of notions of ownership. "The individual images are a reflection of the students' input, but even those who craft extensive prompts didn't make the image, so is it theirs?" he asks.

Gonzaga Magazine asked a few faculty members who teach core courses why the discussion of AI in their discipline is critical, how they address challenges and opportunities of AI, and how they believe students will benefit.

Here are their responses, edited for space.

Kris Morehouse **Communication Studies**

Our discipline examines the ways communication creates the social world by exploring power, meaning making, and representation. When you ask Google a question, it offers an answer generated by artificial intelligence. These AI answers provide clear insights into how power works, what explanations are being told and by whom, and who is represented in the answers and how they are being represented. Ask ChatGPT or any other large language model to create an image of a beautiful woman, and it will give you a specific Westernized image of what might be considered "traditional" (or white) beauty. Ask a question about American history and generally you have an answer that highlights the stories of those with power without any reference to those whose stories are infrequently told.

It is imperative that all users understand how AI creates its own social world and provides a narrow view of human culture – AI's world is limited by the perspectives of its creators and the information they provide for its development. As a Jesuit, Catholic institution providing a humanistic, liberal arts education, we encourage students to work for justice, and to be in "solidarity with the poor and vulnerable." Our faculty is focused on helping students understand how power, meaning making, and representation are at work each time they use artificial intelligence, so how can we make it more representational and egalitarian?

Students need to know when and how to use AI critically and responsibly, how to challenge its destruction of our environment, and how to interrogate and transform its flaws.

Anthony Fisher **Philosophy**

In philosophy, especially in PHIL 101 Reasoning, the reflective study of thinking is paramount.

One pedagogically powerful way to bring AI into the classroom is to introduce an AI chatbot as the ultimate reasoner that knows everything. However, after spending some time with it, students are encouraged to critique its outputs, and thereby strengthen their own reasoning and critical thinking skills. Students then realize that AI technologies don't "think" the way we do and they don't have a serious concern for the truth. Students will also become less inclined to defer to it as an oracle or over-rely on it for producing their own reflective and critical work.

AI can very quickly take over and complete pretty much every reasoning task in critical thinking. With AI tools at the student's fingertips, it is all too tempting to use them for argument identification and argument evaluation assignments. The general problem is that the use of AI leads to de-skilling, and worse still, no-skilling.

But AI can expose students to transformational ideas about identity, meaning and justice, if used in the right way at the right stage in the learning process. Students can also learn reasoning and critical thinking skills through AI, so long as their learning experience demands that they use these skills when interacting with AI. So it is possible for students to encounter AI at college, without AI doing the work for them.

Chase Bollig English

In “writing with AI” explorations, students and I have sought to better understand what AI is good for and why it’s important to keep hold of the human elements of writing. These explorations have included activities for generating and critiquing AI essays, creating custom bots through prompt design, or engaging with public writing by both boosters and critics of AI.

Often the AI models are sensitive to how we ask our questions or state our goals. Many of the best practices in writing with AI are recognizable as best practices for writing in any scenario: articulating a clear goal or purpose, understanding what essential context we need to draw on to achieve that goal, thinking through the form an idea should take, and evaluating a text against our internal standards.

As AI has become increasingly prominent, it has also become more polarizing in schools and media coverage. When students have only had teachers ban AI or have been told that AI is only a cheating tool, they often come to Gonzaga with impressions that make it harder for them to meet goals for discernment and critical thinking. Similarly, students who have developed habits of reflexively reaching for AI have difficulty gaining the distance necessary for discernment. Part of the project of the new learning outcome for ENGL 101 is to create opportunities for us to slow down and reflect on the role AI should play in our thinking, writing or learning.

Few are the problems we solve by ignoring them.

» Read the professors' full responses:
gonzaga.edu/ReadersCare

“

What it means to be a writer doesn’t change with technology. We don’t only write to prove what we know; we often write to discover what we think. Those practices persist whether we’re writing by hand, posting to a discussion forum, or designing a bot through custom instructions.

- Chase Bollig

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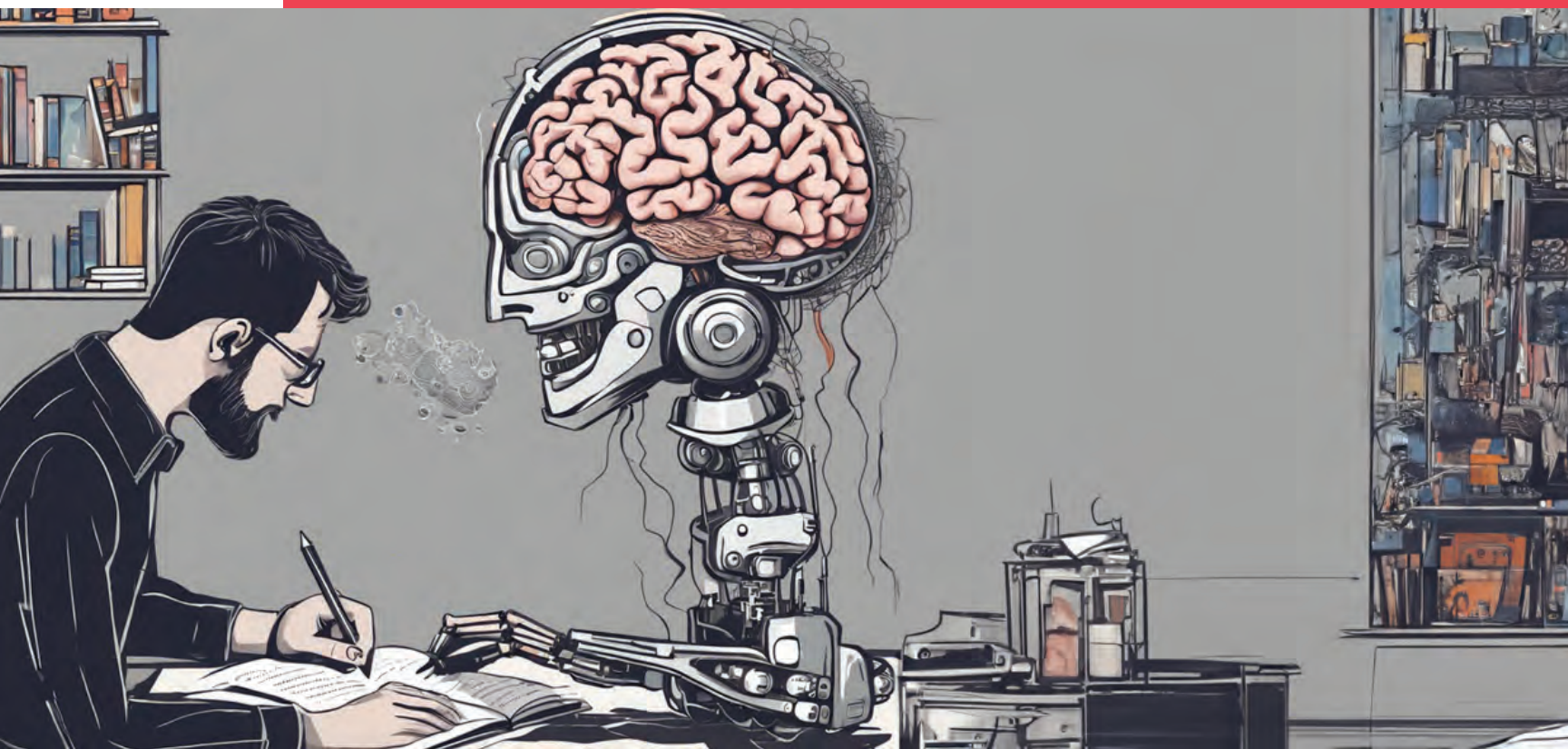
College students are encountering AI in the increasingly difficult search for a job after college. Students need to understand that while they might be able to use AI to write a cover letter for a job application, that letter will be devoid of the flair and creativity only the applicant can highlight. Being human, at least for now, is something only humans can do.

- Kris Morehouse

”

ZagAI

Chase Bollig, Josh Anthony and Yuki Kang, all of the English department, are working with AI engineer Chris Lopes and student researchers from GU's Institute for Informatics and Applied Technology to develop a custom AI app, ZagAI. With ZagAI, faculty can create AI-powered learning experiences, and students will deepen their engagement with course concepts and writing practices by using AI that's been prompted to give feedback, to serve as an intellectual sparring partner, or to simply ask questions that encourage students to explain their thinking about their writing.



Comprehensive AI Work Across Campus

Gonzaga's Institute for Informatics and Applied Technology, which opened a new collaborative space in the Herak Center this fall, is poised to assist faculty and staff across the disciplines with the responsible implementation of AI. Beyond exploring the tool from the standpoint of studying and learning, Director Jay Yang and his staff also help with the implementation of AI processes that can help departments achieve operational efficiencies. This is not to suggest that AI could replace workers, but instead free up time for people to focus on aspects of the work that truly need interpersonal insights.

The Institute's priorities are to be a catalyst for transformative learning, interdisciplinary research and collaborative innovation through partnerships with industry, government and community.

» Learn more: [**gonzaga.edu/AI**](https://gonzaga.edu/AI)

The Sweet Science of Boxing Legends

By Dale Goodwin ('86 M.A.T.)

Hollywood screenwriters couldn't have captured a story any better than the tale lived out by three Gonzaga boxers and their coach, Joey August.

It was 75 years ago that this undermanned but voraciously determined team of three – Carl Maxey, Eli Thomas and Jim Reilly – and their father-figure-of-a-coach defied all odds and brought home Gonzaga's only national athletic championship, the 1950 collegiate boxing title.

Gonzaga didn't have all the accoutrements of the big schools of that time. Coach and his wife, Norma, housed several student-athletes in their basement, the school's training facilities and weight room were archaic, and a small band of Bulldog backers – the Ringsiders – canvassed downtown business owners to raise funds for travel when Maxey, Thomas and Reilly each captured their Pacific Coast Collegiate weight-class championships and qualified for the nationals. According to news accounts at the time, it was close to midnight before the team's scheduled flight to Pennsylvania that the goal was met and the team was assured their trip.

The three-man team was pitted against larger schools and odds for the Bulldogs were low. But Reilly, a local kid who grew up admiring August and the Gonzaga program, won his first bout and the points he received would prove essential for what was to follow.

Thomas completed his first of two undefeated seasons and captured the 155-pound title, setting up the final bout between 1948 Olympian Chuck Spieser and Maxey.

Maxey, a precision puncher who grew up in a Tacoma orphanage, spent two years at Spokane County Juvenile Detention Center when the board at the orphanage decided Blacks were no longer welcome there. Two years later, Father Neil Byrne, S.J., gave Carl a place he could call home at the Coeur d'Alene Indian Mission School.

Maxey had been targeted with prejudice and harassment most of his young life, but in the ring, it was man vs. man. In

Jim Kershner's book, "Carl Maxey: A Fighting Life," August recalls Maxey coming to his corner between rounds in this close title fight, saying, "I haven't trained all these years for nothing, Joey. I'm going to go out there this round and win."

He did so, helping the Bulldogs win the team championship, tying the University of Idaho for the national title.

The Spokesman-Review ran photos of a crowd swarming the team as they deboarded the airplane at Geiger Field upon their return home. A motorcade escorted the team through town to a high-energy rally back on campus. Kershner wrote that this national title put Gonzaga on the map.

But this story is far more than a sports yarn. It's about the virtuous lives these three boxers and their coach lived in service to humanity.

Maxey completed a law degree at Gonzaga and championed the rights of underrepresented people both locally and across the nation. He was one of the country's foremost civil rights attorneys, throwing punches to strike down prejudice and inequality. When he died in 1997 at 73, he left behind his wife, Lu, and attorney sons Bill and Bevan, who continue Carl's practice.

Thomas' early life wasn't easy either.

"Dad was severely dyslexic," says Michele Thomas, Eli's daughter who is creating a documentary about

his life and the success of this boxing team. "Eli was raised in Butte, Montana, but was required to go to Gonzaga High School for his first semester and get a 2.5 G.P.A. or better before he could enroll in college and join the team. So, Norma August worked with him every night to overcome his learning obstacles."

Following college, Thomas operated his dad's menswear retail store in Butte and a similar store in Anaconda, Montana, before opening Eli Thomas Menswear in San Jose, California, which is still in business 66 years later. He was commissioner of the California State Athletics Commission for seven years, and started the Police Athletic League in Santa Clara County, staging an annual golf tournament to raise money to help build gyms and baseball fields for underprivileged children. Eli died in 2022. He and wife, Dorothy, had 11 children.

*This story is
far more than
a sports yarn.
It's about the
virtuous lives
these three
boxers and
their coach lived
in service to
humanity.*



Hoisted by fans upon their return to Spokane following their capture of the 1950 national boxing championship are, left to right, Eli Thomas, Jim Reilly, Coach Joey August and Carl Maxey.

Reilly grew up on a ranch near 29th and Regal in Spokane, where he milked the cows every morning before school. The chiding by school kids about his milk-stained shoes followed him into parenthood so he made sure to shine and polish his kids' shoes every Sunday, his daughter Kathleen Reilly says.

Reilly coached and counseled at a free gym he and fellow boxers opened for youth and was volunteer director of the annual Inland Empire Boxing Tournament. He had a long career in beer sales and distribution and remained steadfast friends with Thomas and Maxey. Reilly died in 2017. He was 88. He and wife, Shirley, had five children.

The common denominator in the success of these three Zags was their mentor, Coach August.

A boxer himself in amateur bouts as a young adult, August brought out the best in those he coached. Reilly gave him credit for opening the door for countless young men who benefited from the "sweet science," as Joey called boxing.

No one understood "sweet science" better than Maxey, who was big and strong, but also had finesse.

"From Joey I learned more than a good defense and a good jab," Maxey is quoted as saying. "I learned discipline, individualism and integrity."

August went on to own and operate Joey's Tavern, a legendary pub now known as Jack and Dan's. He later bought a local beer distributorship and often employed Gonzaga part-time coaches and athletes to help them make ends meet, always reaching out to help others.

Here's a salute to the men who lifted up a team, a university and a community. Happy 75th anniversary to one of Gonzaga's greatest triumphs.

» Recommended reading: "*Carl Maxey: A Fighting Life*," by Jim Kershner, University of Washington Press, 2011.

» Have a topic you'd like Dale Goodwin to highlight in a future *Then & Now*? Share it here: gonzaga.edu/editor

Local CHANGE



The heat dome that descended on Spokane and the greater Pacific Northwest in summer 2021 was the sort of catastrophic weather event that will be remembered for generations.

Record-setting temperatures — reaching 109 degrees Fahrenheit — caused at least 19 deaths in Spokane County and 157 across Washington, making it the deadliest weather-related incident in state history.

Gonzaga's Institute for Climate, Water, and the Environment, established the same year as the heat dome, has put mitigating the risks of extreme weather at the center of its work since its formation.

At its start, the Institute consisted only of Director Brian Henning and one undergraduate student. In the last year, 18 students helped champion climate literacy and resilience, teaching more than 1,700 elementary and middle school students through the Climate Literacy Fellows program, and hosting more than 2,400 guests at various lectures.

Climate Resilience Project Manager Dante Jester says it can be easy to feel like you're not doing enough, especially when the scope of the problem is so broad. "It's hard to remember that small impacts locally are significant impacts," they say, emphasizing that right within your own community can be a great place to make real change.

In fact, that idea drives the Institute's mission, "to engage in regional capacity building, scholarship and teaching to

promote the flourishing of Inland Northwest communities, waters and lands in the face of a changing climate."

So, how exactly does the Institute do that?

Karli Honebein, climate literacy project manager, is most proud of the implementation of the previously mentioned Climate Literacy Fellows. This program hires and trains Gonzaga students to deliver high-impact climate science lessons in elementary and middle school classrooms.

"Climate change is this huge global issue, but it's so much easier for everyone, especially kids, to think about climate change in their backyard," Honebein says. "It also gives a hopeful lens to climate education, making sure students understand the problem so they can be agents of change."

Additionally, the Institute has conducted extensive research in the form of air quality monitoring, extreme heat surveys and community insight reports, and helped form the Spokane Community Resilience Collaborative.

That collaborative, which includes the city of Spokane, Avista Utilities and the Spokane Regional Health District, released the first drafts of two community resilience plans for public review — one on extreme heat and one on wildfire smoke.

"Extreme heat and smoke are not just inconveniences, they are deadly," said Spokane Mayor Lisa Brown. "These new resilience plans will save lives, protect our most vulnerable neighbors and make Spokane stronger in the face of a changing climate."

Lasting IMPACT



Four years after the heat dome, the Spokane area continues to set record high temperatures during the summers. In addition to extreme heat, wildfires are becoming more frequent and severe across the western United States and Canada, leading to worsening air quality even for those far from the actual fires.

“These resilience plans have been created by the Spokane community, for the community, with the belief that different organizations have different abilities, solutions to contribute and levels of responsibility,” Henning says. “To successfully protect our community from future climate-induced events, everyone has an important role to play. In working together, our community will increasingly be more resilient to our rapidly and dangerously changing climate.”

Facing new hardships

In December 2024, the Institute was awarded a three-year \$19.9M grant to advance community resilience in Spokane, the largest grant in Gonzaga’s history. A few months later, the new federal administration targeted the grant for termination; the fate of the funding rests in the courts. Washington state’s sales tax-dependent budget has been impacted by national and international economic turmoil, leading the Legislature to shrink or eliminate several previously reliable state climate grant programs.

“We have in front of us a multigenerational task,” Henning says. “But despite the challenges, we are not deterred from our mission. We can and must continue to do as much as we can to address the climate crisis.”

The Climate Resilience Project

Created in response to the 2021 heat dome, this ongoing project works to increase research and community action in a collaborative way.

A look at some of this year’s accomplishments:

Heat Health and Safety Ordinance

Assisting Spokane City Council in creating this ordinance so landlords cannot prohibit tenants from installing air conditioning

Planning for Heat and Smoke

Drafting citywide Extreme Heat and Wildfire Smoke Resilience Plans to improve preparedness for climate-related hazards

Infrastructure Improvements

Nearly half a million dollars of improvements to Northeast Community Center’s HVAC system

Smoke Education

Creating a citywide wildfire smoke education campaign in collaboration with Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency



**Institute for Climate,
Water, and the Environment**

» Contribute to this vital work:
gonzaga.edu/climate-institute/donate

For such
a time
as
this



BY

Gonzaga's 27th president is poised to keep GU grounded firmly in Jesuit values while facing higher ed challenges head-on and building the University's international brand.

Her strategy:
Collaborative innovation and collective action.

How did Katia Passerini first learn she had a penchant for seeing needs, identifying solutions and moving into action?

It wasn't when she first became a professor. Or earlier when she discovered she was ill-prepared to use the technology needed in her MBA program. It was way back in elementary school that young Katia – a child of educators – saw an opportunity to put chaos at bay with a reasonable intervention.

Katia's teacher at a public school in Rome, Italy, often stepped out to visit with the neighboring teacher, leaving the children unattended for far too long to expect there wouldn't be mischief. Katia, who surmised there had to be a way to keep some order, led her fellow students in a game of throwing wadded up paper balls around – the goal being to keep friends occupied while remaining quiet. Anyone who made noise or attracted attention from the principal down the hall was out.

It's a charming preview of a future Dr. Katia Passerini, president of Gonzaga University.

A month after her official first day as a GU employee – and a month shy of her presidential inauguration – I sat down to learn more about the inspiration and resolve behind a woman already known for her intellect and vision as well as her humor and energetic charisma.



Faith in Action

Taking a sip of espresso from a tiny cup, Passerini says she's been reading and learning much about the life of St. Ignatius and Gonzaga's connection to someone who had such "transformational power." But long before she knew of Ignatius of Loyola, who founded the Society of Jesus, which developed universities intent on helping students develop as people with and for others, she received inspiration by two other saints.

"One was St. Vincent de Paul because of his understanding of the fact that charity and philanthropy, as beautiful as they were, needed to be organized," Passerini says. "He took it upon himself to convince noble women and ladies of charity to open orphanages and hospitals."

She recounts the story of St. Vincent de Paul celebrating Mass in France during a pandemic when he asked for food donations for a particular family that had lost several members. By the end of the Mass, there was a substantial pile of food, and it dawned on de Paul that food is perishable – that generosity is wasted without organization.

"That inspired me," Passerini says, "because I also like to see a problem and figure out what must be done. I don't necessarily have the solution – that comes from working with others – but I really like that action-oriented faith."

Her other favorite saint is Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton, a non-Catholic woman of nobility who became Catholic after her husband died from tuberculosis. While tending to him in Italy where he was quarantined, Seton saw how the Catholics interacted and cared for those in need. She returned to the U.S. having lost her husband and children and founded a system of Catholic schools where all children were accepted, regardless of their families' ability to pay for parochial education.

"What I like about them both," Passerini says, "is they're change-makers and entrepreneurs."

Those virtues have grown in Passerini specifically through her experiences in Catholic higher education.

Today, her view of the connection between a higher mission and education is broad. "Even if you're not committing to a life dedicated to Christ, you can still have a commitment to changing people's lives through education."



Saint Vincent de Paul, Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton

Practically Speaking

Judicious use of time resonates with the 50-something-year-old mother of three in many ways. After one month living on the west side of the U.S. compared to a couple of decades on the East Coast, a sense of practicality is a welcome find in the lifestyle of the Inland Northwest.

“My first impression of this area – going back to how I like to get things done – is that people tend to want less drama for getting things done,” says Passerini. “In New Jersey and New York, there is more political positioning, but what I’ve noticed here is people just want to say, ‘OK, let’s figure it out.’”

“I really love the orientation to doing good, doing well and doing it without wasting too much time.”

A major perk for herself and her husband, Arturo Pagán, is Spokane’s small airport and being able to get through security in mere minutes. Despite already having experienced the challenges that come with a small airport – like not having many options if a major flight is canceled, as happened when she went to Mexico – she still says, “I love coming back and everything is so much simpler here.”

But relative to knowing her new city’s features and places to visit – she relies on Arturo for that. During the summer when she had relocated to Spokane and he was still on the East Coast, Arturo was texting her suggestions for places in Spokane to eat.

“He is always sending me information,” Passerini says. She laughs that it’s been comically annoying at times, especially when he was in Rome – her hometown – and he was informing her of things she should see there.



HER STRONGEST SUPPORTER

As often as possible, Arturo Pagán appears in places where President Katia Passerini is. He’s recognized easily with his charming smile and beaming pride as Passerini’s husband of 25 years.

While earning his master’s in international affairs at the George Washington University, Pagán embarked on a three-week excursion to the Caribbean with an environmental policy class. A student named Katia would be arriving from Rome in time to depart from Washington, D.C., with the class – a flight Pagán missed due to oversleeping. Fortunately, he made it on a later flight and the two finally met that night on the dance floor.

“She was brilliant, smart, engaging and a great dancer,” Pagán says. “That was it, I was in love.”

A Brooklyn native and the son of Puerto Rican migrants who came to New York in the ’60s, Pagán grew up inspired by the deep Catholic roots of his family.

He has built an impressive career over the past 24 years as the deputy director for human resources at the United Nations Population Fund. Pagán supports 5,000 HR business partners across 150 countries.

“A huge motivator for me is to be able to help people that I don’t even know,” he says. “I’m not running the programs myself, but every time I travel, I get to see the impact of the work we’re doing.”

Pagán and Passerini watch movies on the rare occasion they’re home at the same time, and he takes time off to accompany her to conferences, wherever they may be.

As for life in Spokane, Pagán says: “One of the beauties of living in a smaller place is you feel like everyone knows each other, and it just makes this place really special.”

The couple’s youngest son, Diego, lives with them and attends Gonzaga Prep. Older sons Luis and Michaelangelo live in New York and Chicago, respectively.

Driving Potential

Asked how she'd like to be known or remembered as a leader, Passerini ponders only a short moment before answering, "Innovative and collaborative."

But the professor of management information systems who became a department leader, grew into a provost and is now Gonzaga's president says, she is equally interested in helping others find their potential.

"I know this may be controversial," she says, "but a business leader I have admired is Steve Jobs, specifically for how he pushed others to think differently. It got to a point that he was obnoxious, but there are also these stories of how people would present him with an idea and he would obsess over the aesthetics as well as the

functionality of a product. They would tell him something couldn't be done and he would tell them to come back with a solution. And sure enough, they did."

She continues, "I did not know what my potential was until someone pushed me to think differently, and then, sure enough, I was able to do things."

That person was Mark Somers, dean of the business school at New Jersey Institute of Technology where she first taught as an assistant professor – someone she describes as a brilliant person who knew how to engage people in questions that led them to solutions on their own.

"He never once told me what to do or gave me an opinion or just an answer to a question," she recalls. "And he always saw a potential that I didn't see in myself."



CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

President Passerini shared that mentor Mark Somers “pushed” her to see potential she didn’t know she had. He agreed to share his reflections with Gonzaga Magazine.

Did you see something different in Katia that made you sure she already had the potential to excel as a leader, or were you guiding her the same way you might with any person?

I hired Katia as an assistant professor when I was dean of the School of Management at New Jersey Institute of Technology, and from the very beginning it was clear to me that she was going to be very successful in whatever career path she chose to pursue. Katia is authentic, sincere, has a strong commitment to others and to community, and demonstrates humility while, at the same time, is committed

to achieving challenging goals. Research has consistently demonstrated that this is the most desirable leadership profile and also not common, so Katia

is different in a very good way. She is pretty much self-motivated so to the extent that I pushed her it was to keep her from falling into the trap of doing ordinary things very well. I can assure you that Katia does not want to be ordinary and she is very open to new ideas and points of view even when they might be seen as unconventional.

As you’ve seen her career path develop, what strikes you?

Before I became an academic, I worked in management development and then in market planning and analysis. As managers’ careers advanced, I noticed that far too many became different people and lost their way by becoming arrogant and self-important. What strikes me about Katia is that she has not lost her sincerity or humility as her career has advanced. As president of Gonzaga, I can see Katia advising a

student in much the same way she did as an assistant professor or discussing new educational initiatives with faculty as a colleague rather than as “the boss.”

What are your hopes for her in this presidency?

Katia will define her success in terms of the success of Gonzaga’s students, faculty, alumni and other key stakeholders. My hope and expectation is that Gonzaga will continue to progress and Katia will be remembered as a leader who navigated a challenging environment while ensuring that no one was left behind.



Getting Techy

“I like to see how it changes organizational processes.”

President Passerini’s interest in technology piqued when she arrived in the U.S. for graduate school at the George Washington University.

“I had always loved organizing processes, but there was more of a culture of technology and our student teams were using Quattro (or was it Lotus?) and collaborating on charts and I had no clue what to do. I was so embarrassed,” she says. “And so I realized I needed to learn more about technology, and then I loved it.”

During her MBA, Passerini worked at the World Bank and loved seeing how people interacted with technology.

As an expert in management information systems, it is unsurprising Passerini also has keen interest in the growth of artificial intelligence, a hot topic for colleges and universities. In spring 2025, she authored an article for Seton Hall’s Stillman School of Business, titled “Reluctantly Innovative: Will Universities Survive the GenAI Learning Revolution?” and co-presented “Not So Fast: Mapping the Learning Speed and Sophistication in GenAI,” at the Hawaii International Conference on System Science.

These interests and related skillsets will no doubt serve Passerini well at Gonzaga. This year, University

Advancement and Information Technology Services have launched a customer relationship management system that will improve how databases across campus work with one another. GU continues to strive for funding to move ahead with the Tech Hub with Lakeside Properties to open an aerospace manufacturing facility. The new Institute for Informatics and Applied Technology is systematizing – among other things – how artificial intelligence is used responsibly and woven into the core curriculum. There are facilities upgrades to orchestrate, global branding to achieve, enrollment cliffs to mitigate – and technology will be at the forefront of those evaluation processes and outcomes.

Those are the kind of challenges Katia Passerini finds invigorating.

THINKING GLOBALLY AND INCLUSIVE

Where Passion & Expertise Meet

President Passerini's career has included a number of opportunities to highlight her areas of personal expertise and passion. Among them: global engagement and women in leadership.

Passerini doesn't just enjoy traveling internationally – she thrives on connecting with other leaders and learning how collaboration can benefit all involved. In previous positions, she has been a champion for global engagement, international business development and Fulbright scholar programs. While at Seton Hall University, she hosted the president of the United Nations General Assembly, discussing priorities for peace, prosperity, progress and sustainability.

During her interim presidency at Seton Hall, she wrote in the university magazine: "With nations, peoples and cultures growing ever closer, the time is right for our University to further advance its ideals across the globe."

She brings that same perspective to Gonzaga, hoping to continue making GU an internationally known name. And within her first month as GU employee, she took a first step to making it happen. Gonzaga is now a member of the Federation of International Catholic Universities. She has served on its administrative board since 2022 and became vice president this year.

As early as 2015, she was a champion for the expansion of women's roles in science and technology, seeking and receiving funding from the National Science Foundation to attract and retain women faculty in STEM fields at St. John's University. While a dean there, she was a panel speaker at the 2018 United Nations International Council for Small Business Forum, where she said the UN's sustainable development goals "cannot be achieved and will not be sustainable without increased women's involvement and participation."



In July, Passerini participated in a panel at the International Association of Jesuit Universities in Colombia.

Learning How to Zag



Amid the operational functions of the University, acclimating to a new city and continuing her leadership in international Catholic higher education consortiums, President Passerini is most excited about learning “the Gonzaga way.”

She marveled at the turnout of staff members and faculty who volunteered to help students move into dorms and the assortment of activities planned for new Zags and their families on Welcome Weekend. When she commented on this to the chief mission officer, Ellen Maccarone replied, “It’s the Gonzaga way.”

Witnessing students in the Kennel during a game last winter, she saw the familiar stomping and chanting that is crucial in “how to Zag” for basketball.

She’s looking forward to her own newness wearing off a bit so she can sneak into a lecture or a performance or a group of students hanging out and not have to be formally introduced. “I want to enjoy those experiences,” she says.

And the new president is very aware of the incredible network of Gonzaga alumni, too, who can demonstrate how strong the community is even miles away from campus. She’s hoping that business trips to other cities where there are Zags will include opportunities to have dinner with small groups and get to know people personally.

Unsurprisingly, Passerini has also learned that connecting with Zag alumni and fans across the country and around the world is as simple as wearing a Gonzaga shirt in the airport.

“It’s crazy, absolutely crazy!” she says. “Every time I wear a Gonzaga sweatshirt anywhere I travel, I’m going to meet someone with a Gonzaga story.”

Based on early interactions with students and lively exchanges with alumni and parents, plus Passerini’s boundless energy and enthusiasm, all signs point to Gonzaga’s new president fully embodying what it means to Zag.

» Stay current with Katia’s work through social media!



Gonzaga_Prez



Katia Passerini



A key moment in the official installation was the transfer of the presidential chain of office. As President Emeritus Thayne McCulloh and Board Chair D. Michael Reilly placed this symbol of leadership around Passerini's neck, McCulloh said: "President Passerini, may this be a symbol of the generations of presidents you join who have served Gonzaga with faith, courage and devotion, and a reminder of the commitment you have made to this community that now looks to you with trust and hope."



KATIA PASSERINI, PH.D.

Opening Doors, Empowering Potential, Leading with Hope

These themes – representative of Gonzaga's Mission – guided the Inauguration of Katia Passerini as the 27th president on Sept. 26, 2025. They also came to life throughout Inauguration Week through a number of activities celebrating the good work of Gonzaga students, faculty and staff, shown here and the following page.

“When I thought about this moment in my life ... I visualized speaking to a large audience about the importance of higher education and the role of education. And here I am.”

KATIA PASSERINI, PH.D.
27TH PRESIDENT OF GONZAGA UNIVERSITY



Mariana Acfalle ('26), a student leader in the Zags Volunteer Corps, showed up to serve root beer floats to residents of the O'Malley Apartments.

Love for Community

“This is a week full of celebrations and gatherings, but you being here today, dedicating your time and talents to serve others, that is emblematic of the entire Gonzaga community,” said Ellen Maccarone, vice president of Mission integration, to the 70 faculty, staff and student volunteers who gathered on Sept. 23 to kick off Inauguration Week. The Center for Community Engagement connected them to six sites within GU’s place-based initiative, Opportunity Northeast.

Mission in Motion

Faculty, staff and students presented a showcase of the University’s Mission through research, education and community engagement. Nichole Barta, acting associate provost for faculty affairs, praised the collaborative efforts in support of Gonzaga’s strategic priorities.

» Scan the QR code to explore how Gonzaga faculty contribute to this impact through their teaching, scholarship, and service.



Human-AI Collaboratory

On Sept. 24, members of Gonzaga’s Board of Trustees and President Passerini cut the ribbon signifying the opening of the Human-AI Collaboratory within the Institute for Informatics and Applied Technology. David Reisenauer, whose family gift made the Institute possible, shared his passion for teaching students about ethical and responsible use of AI to help Gonzaga in its “commitment to preparing students to help shape the world that we so need.”



Left to right: Jay Yang, director; John Hemmingson, trustee; President Katia Passerini; David Reisenauer, donor and adviser; Mike Reilly, Board of Trustees chair

Global Connections

Passerini's passion for global impact bolsters the good work taking place in GU's Center for Global Engagement. Director Tina Isabelli hosted a Global Engagement Faculty Development Showcase to highlight the creativity, scholarship and impact of faculty, and to "foster further exploration of how global perspectives can continue to shape our community."

Voices of Faith

A panel of Catholic leaders discussed their work and the complexities of holding onto their faith during divisive times. Included were: Father Sam Sawyer, S.J., editor-in-chief of Catholic publication (and website) America Media; Peggy Haun-McEwen, director of community engagement for Gonzaga Family Haven for Catholic Charities of Eastern Washington; and Nate Tinner-Williams, co-founder and editor of the digital publication Black Catholic Messenger.

"The words of Jesus link us together and really give us confidence that when we function as a Catholic community, meet each other in faith and have conversations rooted in faith, we're also encountering the Lord."

FR. SAM SAWYER, S.J.

A Blessing

*An excerpt from the benediction by
Father Tim Breen, S.J.*

God of wisdom, we continue to ask for your guidance. Draw near to us, walk with us, grant us your Spirit.

May you abundantly bless Dr. Passerini as she seeks to lead: Grant her wisdom in the face of challenges, courage in times of uncertainty, peace in times of discord.

Continue to reveal to us how we may accompany one another in friendship. Kindle in our hearts a love that extends to those around us.

Guide and bless especially our students as they grow in their life journeys with us.

Sustain us all that we may witness to hope, even when the journey becomes difficult to navigate.

With great gratitude for all your many gifts, in trust we ask for your continued blessing, today and for the years to come.

Transforming Our Societies Together

“For us as academics ... contemplating on the world as God does, with a loving gaze, also challenges the way we teach,” Jesuit Father General Arturo Sosa said to his brothers in a 2018 world meeting of Jesuit universities.

He talked about the challenges of the world and the Jesuits’ call “to understand reality more fully, discover the roots of injustice, and help come up with different solutions to help transform our societies and our economies.”

His message resonates with the vision the Society of Jesus has held for 485 years, to offer education as a tool to create citizens who are people “with and for others.”

The following stories contain just a few of the countless examples of this ethos carried out in classrooms at Gonzaga and exemplified in the lives of graduates who lead the way.

Prevention and a Bit of Kindness

By Kate Vanskike ('22 M.A.)

In 2024, there were 276 deaths from drug overdoses in Spokane County, according to the Spokane Regional Health District. Of those, 84% were from opioid painkillers and heroin, mostly from fentanyl.

Sam Carroll, manager of the Health District’s Syringe Services, says outreach volunteers are a critical part of helping to lower the risk of HIV by providing information on overdose prevention, safe injection practices and referrals to treatment services. Keeping those volunteers long-term is a challenge, so Gonzaga alum **Matt Lumsden ('21)** was an exception, staying throughout college and into his training in medical school.

Lumsden, a biology major, says he was interested in the possibility of pharmacy school “because I like trying to figure out how medications affect people and how we come up with meds that can help with diseases. Those are some amazing achievements of humanity.”

His experience as a volunteer with the Health District – particularly the role of trying to rebuild some trust and openness with clients – inspired him to apply to medical school, and to pursue that training in Spokane at the University of Washington School of Medicine (UWSOM).

“UW, very similar to Gonzaga, offered a very service-based program,” he says.

Through his relationship with Carroll, Lumsden received a running grant for 50 doses of nasal Narcan each month, which he and other medical students distributed in the community.

What Lumsden gained, he says, is “a unique skill in talking to people and being nonjudgmental.” Given the stereotypes of a drug user, being nonjudgmental can be tough. “Everybody has this implicit bias,” Lumsden says.

He recalls a time talking with a man who shared that he wasn’t using heroin because of an addiction or craving, but because he had a late-stage cancer and, without family or friends in the community, was afraid to go through treatments alone. He used opioids to cope.

“I think it’s a situation that needs more kindness,” Lumsden says.

With his textbook education at UWSOM complete, Lumsden is now in the clinical phase, starting with an internal medicine rotation at Seattle’s Harborview Medical Center.



The Power of Language in Education

By Hannah Mumm

“It’s a major to meet the moment,” says **Anny Case**, professor of teacher education.

The Bachelor of Education Community, Culture and Language (CCL) offers two concentrations: one for elementary classroom use and the other for community education outside the walls of a school. Students in both learn to be responsive to linguistic, cultural and racial differences within all areas of education.

In the elementary education track, students experience theoretical and practical modalities, participating in two language-learning experiences, typically taught by Indigenous educators.

“You’re not just learning nouns and verbs, you’re learning the culture,” Case says. She cites examples of learning about Tlingit and Marshallese languages that have been threatened by colonization.

The community concentration, developed by **James Hunter**, professor of teacher education, linguist and teacher of English as a second language, emphasizes community education and engagement.

“CCL taught me how to be a part of a community that is holding language and culture up as something that is an advantage,” says Halle Aparicio (’25). “It has taught me the way to make change is not to reach for power, but to reach for each other’s hands.”

Courses include “Policy and Advocacy,” “Language, Society, and Power,” “Immigrant and Refugee Perspectives,” “Community and Place-Based Education” and “Community Languages.”

Hunter says, “Lots of undergrads have the best intentions in the world and have never had experiences with anyone who doesn’t speak English.”

As a result, students complete internships to work with children, immigrants and refugees, retirees, and all populations in between. And this year, Hunter took a group of students to Zambia to study leadership and earn their Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) certificates.

Case says: “Our students had the opportunity to discover new, deep and beautiful ways of seeing the world – but also, they learn new ways of seeing themselves.”

Kiko Macias: Heritage & Heart

By Cheston Knapp

Kiko Macias ('25 J.D.) is a lot of things – ambitious, compassionate, generous, hopeful. But, above all, he is resilient.

Born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Macias spent much of his childhood reflecting on his ancestral history. His family were migrant farmworkers from Mexico and their lives centered on the changing seasons and crops. He remembers the stories of his family's involvement in the Chicano movement and the many lawyers and activists who fought for basic civil rights for their fellow immigrants and Latino colleagues. These stories set the tone for his destiny.

At 16, after a series of heartbreaking conflicts at home, Macias was emancipated from his family. Upon graduating from high school, he decided to replace dreams of playing professional soccer with a college degree.

While in college in San Antonio, Macias worked a summer internship with a nonprofit called RAICES to help asylum-seekers detained at the border. This experience, combined with those from his childhood, led him to contemplate ways to streamline the immigration process. As part of a competition for entrepreneurs, he launched Monarch Migration, an app designed to help individuals navigate the incredibly complex immigration bureaucracy. It advises users on the best country and legal path to pursue, guides them through the application process, and even supports their integration through education, employment and social services.

"We have an inherent right to migrate," he states. "However, it is essential to establish a system that promotes legal migration and makes it appealing. We utilize modern technology along with humanitarian principles to foster that."

Macias chose Gonzaga for law school in part because Spokane is so friendly to tech start-ups like his. He has his sights set on politics – state, national or both – but first, he'd like to become a diplomat, maybe even an ambassador.

For Macias, the answer to so many of the world's problems is right out in the open. It's love and mutual respect.

"I have seen and experienced so much hate in this world," he says with tears in his eyes. "In the end, we are all the same. We are one family."



“This is Somebody’s Real Life” ***Student research brings focus*** ***to rural health needs***

By Thea Skokan ('22)

Just 80 miles from Spokane, Grand Coulee's population lacks easy access to health care. It's an ideal place for **Sarah Matousek** to lead research in public health, seeking to identify patterns in patient needs and explore possible solutions.

Matousek, assistant professor of public health at Gonzaga and faculty at the University of Washington School of Medicine's campus in Spokane through the UW-GU Health Partnership, partnered with Coulee Medical Center to guide two McKinstry Fellows.

Those Fellows, **Kendall Scipio-Shepherd ('26)** and **Emma Swenson ('27)**, embarked on their first research project to find a link between chronic physical illness and mental illness, and if one worsens the other, specifically in a rural community like Grand Coulee. The program also allowed them the opportunity to work with two UW-GU Health Partnership students: **Lydia Larson** and **Alex Wilmoth**, medical students in UW's Targeted Rural and Underserved Track (TRUST) program.

Perhaps the most important reason Scipio-Shepherd and Swenson took the time to venture to Grand Coulee each

week was to be immersed in the environment and be near the people they could potentially help.

“We’ve done the reading and the research,” Scipio-Shepherd said, “But once you’re actually working with data from real people and seeing that it’s affecting real lives, it’s different. It makes you tune in a bit more because you know you’re actually helping someone and could make their conditions better.”

“This is a really unique opportunity for undergraduate students,” Swenson agreed, “because we’re learning about this in class, we’re learning research methods. But it’s interesting to put all that together and see how it actually applies and synthesizes in real time.”

They both credit Matousek for being an integral part of their research experience, saying they wouldn’t have been in the position to make these big realizations without her.

It was an experience unlike anything either had ever done before, but when they would open someone’s medical records, searching for an answer to their problems, Scipio-Shepherd says she was struck with a powerful thought: “This is somebody’s real life, and I could really change it.”

L to R: Emma Swenson (GU '27), Alex Wilmoth (UW), Kendall Scipio-Shepherd (GU '26), Lydia Larson (UW), and Sarah Matousek work together at the Coulee Medical Center.

The McKinstry Fellows program brings together UW and GU students thanks to the generosity of Dean and Vicki Allen.



ARTISTIC



INSPIRATION

Upcoming Exhibition at Jundt Art Museum January 10 to May 9, 2026

PERMANENT COLLECTION:
RECENT ACQUISITIONS, 2015–2025

In celebration of its 30th year (1995–2025), the Jundt Art Museum at Gonzaga University presents an eclectic selection of more than 100 objects it has acquired over the last 10 years from generous donations. Many of the objects focus on women and artists of color, and by artists of the American West. The museum has also continued to strengthen the quality of its extensive “Old Master” print collection, initially given by Norman and Esther Bolker to help found the museum in 1995.

◀ **Helen A. Loggie**

(American, 1895–1976)

From Goat Mountain, 1932

Etching on paper

John Ferguson Weir ▶

(American, 1841–1926)

*Basilica of San Francesco
d'Assisi, Italy, 1902*

Oil on canvas



How to Win Against Hate

By Thea Skokan ('22)

“Carla Peperzak doesn’t just warn us about what happened during the Holocaust. Hatred is out there, and she’s trying to tell us how to win against hate through love and respect.”

– Clement Lye



Clement Lye and Kristine Hoover, below, produced “Carla the Rescuer” and hosted film previews for the Gonzaga campus, with Carla herself available for Q&A.



Preserving the Words of a Truth Teller

“Hey, I have an amazing friend I want you to meet. Her name is Carla. Can you bring your camera?”

That’s how **Kristine Hoover**, professor and chair of the School of Leadership Studies’ organizational leadership program, approached **Clement Lye**, director of production and emerging media in Instructional Design and Delivery, the Gonzaga department that helps faculty members bring their coursework to life online.

And so the work began, to preserve the story of Carla Peperzak, a 101-year-old Spokane resident most known as a Holocaust survivor and a Jewish member of the Dutch resistance who risked her life to save countless others.

Hoover’s seemingly simple question for Lye became a three-year project involving dozens of interviews culminating in a 90-minute documentary called “Carla the Rescuer.”

“I took every bit of film gear I had, every light, every camera,” recalls Lye. “We went to Carla’s home and interviewed her for three days.”

“Carla is a truth teller, and truth-tellers from that era are becoming few and far between,” she says. “It’s important for us to know their history and for us to live our lives intentionally because of what we know.”

They recognized their own responsibilities in taking on this project. To have someone’s life story in their hands, especially one of this magnitude, meant a commitment to truth, transparency and purpose.

“I hope everyone has a chance to know someone like Carla,” says Hoover. “Someone who truly exudes warmth, care and a commitment to human dignity. She is one of the best examples I have ever known of someone who, decade after decade, continues to want to make the world a better place.”

The film is one step closer to achieving the goal of its namesake – for this story to reach as many people as possible. “Carla the Rescuer” is now available to stream for free.

» Find the link to watch “Carla the Rescuer” at gonzaga.edu/ReadersCare

Who's this ZAG?

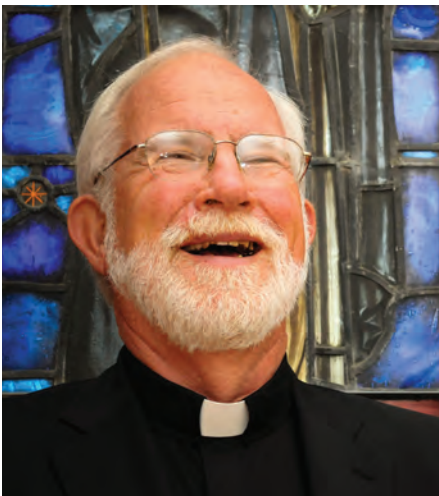


This Zag was guided by two principles: listen well, then do the right thing. Although the Women's and Gender Studies Program was not formally recognized as an academic department until 1991, under her leadership, it was this sociology professor's course on gender and society that got the ball rolling soon after her arrival in 1974. Throughout her distinguished teaching career she was a social justice advocate, encouraging Gonzaga to deal openly with gender equality

issues. She was consistently voted by graduating seniors among GU's most influential faculty members. She retired in 2015 as professor emerita.

» If you know this Mystery Zag, please share a favorite memory: [Visit gonzaga.edu/editor](https://gonzaga.edu/editor), or write Editor, Gonzaga Magazine, Gonzaga University, 502 E. Boone Ave., Spokane, WA 99258-0070.

Our Mystery Zag from the Spring 2025 issue is . . .



Fr. Steve Kuder, S.J.

Professor, Chaplain, Rector, Honors Program Director, Trustee

Fr. Kuder was one of those guys you could chat with endlessly. His storytelling was legendary, making his homilies particularly engaging. He was one of Gonzaga's longest-tenured faculty members and Jesuit priests. And he was deeply loved. He died in 2021.

Readers Reply

Father Kuder taught me (among many things) something essential: "Every moment is a new and shocking evaluation of what is and what will be," meaning to give each person and experience the benefit of being new and different in each and every day and moment. This has allowed me to have so much growth, grace and patience with both myself and those around me throughout my life. It invariably makes me a better human every single day.

Madison Navarro ('19)
Seattle

On my home office wall, I have photographs of four priests, including my friend Steve Kuder. Each priest meant much to me because of what he said in a conversation, during the sacrament of reconciliation, or from a sermon in Mass. Next to Steve's picture is something he said when preaching on the Good Samaritan. Steve described a Good Samaritan as "someone willing to enter into the chaos of another person's life." Ever since that sermon I have tried and occasionally succeeded in being willing to enter into the chaos of another person's life. Besides many long walks and a few great dinners together, Steve and I also skied together many times. He skied fast and seemingly without ever tiring. I had a heck of a time trying to keep up. I miss my friend very much.

Judge Rick White (Ret.) ('73, '80 J.D.)
Spokane

Father Kuder is unmistakable. One of the most difficult core classes to pass was written communications. The final requirement was delivering an essay (and rewriting it) until his minimum standards were met. He was fair and honest with unwavering toughness. Great class!

Leigh Morehouse ('83)
Charleston, W. Va.

Father Kuder was very special to my husband Tony and me. We met in his class – Old and New Testament. We planned to be married right after we graduated but Tony was diagnosed with cancer during our senior year. Father Kuder was very supportive and on the day that was supposed to be our wedding, he performed an Anointing of the Sick. The next year he married us after Tony completed chemo and radiation. In later years we would see him when both our kids went to Gonzaga and up at Schweitzer skiing with our family. He will always be a part of our family.

Ann Waltier ('85)
Kirkland, Wash.

This man was the embodiment of JOY. He brought joy to us when we were running late for his morning class from crew practice at Liberty Lake, teasing us for being smelly and scruffy but applauding us for at least showing up to his class on the third

floor of the AD building. This same man, years later, brought my family joy after my dad survived a heart attack, giving him anointing of the sick at Holy Family Hospital and leaving my dad out of breath from laughing so much. All the while, our dear Father Kuder was himself dying from cancer, unbeknownst to all. His smile was contagious, and if you listen carefully in the quiet of the now College Hall, you can hear his roaring laughter continue to flood the halls, bringing us all joy.

Lisa Browne-Banic ('90)
Boynton Beach, Fla.

As a member of the Honors Program, 1998-2002, I was blessed to know him well. He was our chaperone for all things Hopkins House and our annual retreats. He was definitely a kind father figure for all of us. It was great to see his cheerful smile in the pages of Gonzaga Magazine!

Laura Sheppard ('02)
San Diego, Calif.

I have so many fond memories of Father Kuder. One of my first memories

of Gonzaga was freshman theology class when he appointed a student the class "whiner" and all complaints and whines to Fr. Kuder were to come from that student. I still recall his teachings on the Old Testament and how it helped me to better understand scripture.

Anne St. Mary ('88)
Ridgefield, Wash.

Fr. Kuder was the Old and New Testament professor in the Honors Program while I was at Gonzaga. I was dreading that class, since I am not Catholic, but he had such an interesting take on the lessons. It was more history than religion, and I found myself truly engaged (although he would cover up the clock and call out anyone who yawned in class).

Alison (Short) Gillispie ('12)
Centennial, Colo.

Glad to see Steve Kuder featured as the Mystery Zag. Father Kuder was my adviser for two years in the Honors Program. I still remember many of his sayings and nuggets of wisdom. More than once, he took our class through a

whiteboard exercise where we divided our commitments and activities into four quadrants: "urgent" versus "important," and along the other axis, "To Me" versus "To Others." He urged us to prioritize things that were important to us, rather than things that seemed urgent or important for others. I still remember that framework as I juggle all my commitments as a working parent.

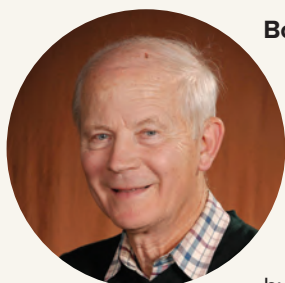
Mary Fontana ('04)
Seattle

Fr. Steve Kuder was one of my most favorite teachers at Gonzaga; he was also my adviser. I took at least one class a semester from him. I especially loved his Irish Literature class and his Death and Dying class. When senior year rolled around and I was procrastinating on deciding what my thesis was going to be, Steve sent me a note that said, "1 senior thesis theme = 1 free drink at Clinkerdaggers!" That sure helped speed up my decision. (And yes, he actually did buy me that drink!)

Maureen Koezuna ('82)
Nome, Alaska

Accounting for What Matters Most

PLANNED GIVING SPOTLIGHT



Bob Cysewski ('67) and **Kristi Mathisen** saw their legacy not in children of their own, but in the students whose lives they could shape at Gonzaga and beyond.

Both accounting professionals, Bob and Kristi shared a passion for numbers – yet it was Bob's remarkable career, marked by sharp insight and a gift for the field, that reflected his true genius. Bob spoke often of how much his Gonzaga experience meant to him. It shaped his friendships, values and career, including trading the pursuit of a future in engineering to a passion for accounting after a casual conversation with a classmate. Together, and before Bob's passing – drawing on Kristi's leadership in planned giving – they chose to dedicate their estate to causes they cared about through a gift in their will and beneficiary designation of their retirement accounts.

Kristi continues to carry that legacy forward, committing to both annual giving in her lifetime and a planned provision for the future. Once Kristi becomes age-eligible, she plans to make qualified charitable distributions to support her annual giving.

"It's a way for Bob's values to live on and for me to keep investing in something bigger than ourselves," she says.

Their generosity ensures Gonzaga students will continue to learn, serve and thrive, carrying forward the mission that meant so much to Bob, and still inspires Kristi today.

» Have you included Gonzaga in your estate plans? Please let the University know or request more information: Call **509-313-6141** or email plannedgiving@gonzaga.edu.



Dan Cummins

You're Gonna Laugh!

Every comedian's path to the stage is unique, but there are a few common traits: A desire to make people laugh. An inquisitive mind. An ability to look at a situation from a perspective most wouldn't consider.

For **Dan Cummins ('99, psychology)**, all of those traits are certainly part of what's led him from growing up in small-town Riggins, Idaho, to four years at Gonzaga, to performing comedy across the country and hosting massively popular podcasts from his Coeur d'Alene studio. Cummins credits his years at Gonzaga with expanding his world outlook in a way that made his comedy career possible.

"What I'm really thankful for is Gonzaga's educational style, the focus on diverse core classes where you have to take critical thinking, theology, philosophy classes," Cummins says. "Just the overall well-rounded education has served me really well."

In a 2023 stand-up special, Cummins tells the packed theater that despite all our differences, we need to keep talking to each other as human beings. That enthusiasm and advocacy for leaning into tension and communicating respectfully is something that resonates with anyone familiar with a Gonzaga education. And Cummins' popular podcast "Timesuck" – a weekly deep dive into history, conspiracy theories and mysteries – certainly benefits from the liberal arts education and research skills learned while he was a student.

"'Timesuck' is built on being curious," Cummins says. "It's built on critical thinking. It's approaching topics analytically, with humor. I owe a tremendous debt to Gonzaga for shaping my mind in a way to want that, because who I was when I showed up at Gonzaga and who I was when I graduated are wildly different. I grew up a lot and became more of a global citizen thanks to the Study Abroad program."

And More to Laugh About

'21 Isabel Thurston and her husband, Ryan, opened Goof's Comedy Club in Boston, after meeting in the comedy scene and running a show from their basement.



In Print

These Zags are proud to share recent publications they've authored.

You're published, too? Send a copy and we'll add it to the Alumni Bookshelf in University Advancement. Mail to Gonzaga Magazine, AD 70, 502 E. Boone Ave., Spokane, WA 99258.

'74 James J. Welsford: "Teaching Jesus and His Paschal Mystery"

'76 Michael Fox: "Lifelong Mentorship: Touching All the Bases"

'91 Bernie Beck Jr.: "The Drama-Free Business: From Inception to Succession"

'09 Paul Condon: "How Compassion Works: A Step-by-Step Guide to Cultivating Well-Being, Love, and Wisdom"

'13 Chelsea Caslie: "Smoke Screen"

'21 Kevin Carver: "The Forbidden Parallel," a novel with a 12-song soundtrack

» Share YOUR News!

Upload your photos and tell us what's new:
gonzaga.edu/AlumniNews

Promoted!

'01 Scott Peters was elected to the bench of the Pierce Co. Superior Court in Washington.



'03 Josh Gana is assistant vice president for student life and the executive director of housing and food services at the University of Washington.

'06 Jill Fitzgerald achieved full professor, the highest academic rank, at the United States Naval Academy.

'11 Ryan Candee is assistant professor of medicine at the University of Colorado. He also received an award from the Department of Internal Medicine for Excellence in Education.



'23 Matthew Loutsis is an operations procurement agent at Boeing.

'23 Ph.D. Nicky Freeburg is president of Escuela de Guadalupe, Denver's only dual-language Catholic school.

Of Note

'69 Tom Woodley and wife Nancy have funded the creation of GU's new Institute for Civil Engagement and Humanistic Dialogue. (See p.9)

'02 Jaymie Fuentes, '03 Stephanie Hartsog and **'13 Kaitlin Monnahan** work in leading roles at Seismic, an AI-powered revenue enablement platform. All three credit their

foundational education at the Gonzaga School of Business Administration, particularly from professor Peggy Sue Loroz, with shaping their customer-first approach.

'04, '16 Brenda (Proznick) Hulett completed her Ph.D. in nursing at Washington State University and now teaches nursing at Eastern Washington University.

'13 Erik Fuentes founded True Edge Engineering, the first and only state-certified, minority-owned firm dedicated to civil engineering in Spokane.

'14 Alicia Wolfe and her husband opened a co-working community gathering center in Cambutal, Panama, called La Colectiva.

'16 Karrie Miyamoto joined Animal Urgent Care in Denver, where she specializes in surgery for small animals.



'21 J.D. Justin Meyer joined the Portland office of Baker Sterchi as an associate. His practice focuses on mass tort, personal injury, complex litigation and legal malpractice.

'22 M.A. Chris Schnabel became the senior manager of content for the Houston Texans football team.



'23 Max Friedli launched Summit Media, a digital marketing agency in Alaska, promoting concerts and nightlife.

Crowning Victory

After winning Miss Spokane in February, **Amber Pike ('23, '25 M.B.A.)** went on to be crowned Miss Washington 2025 in June. She's raised more than \$28,000 in scholarships for the Miss Washington Scholarship Organization.



Beyond 50

In 1992, **Debra (Bailey) Whitman** left Gonzaga with a degree in economics, minors in math and international studies, and fond memories of experiences at Gonzaga in Florence. Over the following decades, she'd complete master's and doctoral degrees in economics and find her way into the field of aging. She was staff director for the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging – a role that allowed her to advocate for retirement security, lower health care costs and better protection for seniors.



For the last decade, Whitman has further served seniors through AARP, where she is executive vice president and chief public policy officer, leading policy development, analysis and research, as well as global thought leadership advancing the interests of individuals age 50-plus. She serves on several boards, including the National Advisory Council on Aging for the National Institutes of Health's National Institute on Aging, the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, the National Coalition on Health Care, and the Pension Rights Center.

As Whitman approached her own 50th birthday, she dove deeper into questions of aging from a more personal perspective. Last year, the economist-turned-expert-on-aging authored "The Second Fifty: Answers to the 7 Big Questions of Midlife and Beyond."

Lovebirds Celebrate!

'90 Mark Tedin and **Wynne Earle**

'14 Gene Dawydiak and **Margaret Wehner**

'14, '17 M.A. Matt Eastman married Mary Jean Spafadora at Bozarth Mansion. Matt and "M.J." both work in GU's Information Technology Services; Matt is president of Staff Assembly.

'15 Taylor Simkins and **'20 Craig Maunder**

'15 Kelsey (McGinnis) and **'14 Andy Hilsenkopf**

'15 Emily (Meggison) and **'15 Brayton Kline:** Littleton, Colo.

'16 Samantha Polayes and **'16 Anthony Zucca:** Pebble Beach, Calif.

'17 Claudia (Huerta) and **'18 Matthew Howard:** an intimate New Year's Eve wedding

'17 Morgan Winter and **'17, '21 M.A. Steve Ponce**

'17 Nick Geraci and **'18 Milan Shahi:** San Francisco

'17 Kaitlin Polacheck and **'17 Leigha Warner**

'18 Kelsey (Forman) and **Abhishek Herle:** The International Spy Museum in Washington, D.C.

'18 Lauren Uhl and **'18 Brian Grob:** Seattle

'19 Kennedy (McMahan) and **'19 Alex Reding:** Puyallup, Wash.

'19 Melissa Davies and **'19 Corey Fusick:** Green Bluff, Wash.

'19 Maddie (McGregor) and **'19 Nick Walls**

'19 Jeff Varness and **Johanna Bailey:** Smith Rock State Park in Oregon

'19 Sam Stewart and **'19 Vanessa (Fisher):** Black Butte Ranch, Ore.

'20 Sara Skornik and **Jake Greenbaum:** Ancala Country Club in Scottsdale, Ariz.

'20 Makenna Morris and **'20 Cooper McCoy:** San Juan Capistrano, Calif.

'21 Jessie (Lunceford) and **'21 Michael Martin:** Belle Chapel in Snohomish, Wash.

'22 Katrina (Springer) and **'22 Jarrett Wright:** Cle Elum, Wash.

'21, '22 M.A. Allison (Avaiusini) and **'21 Brandon Duax:** Puyallup, Wash.

'23 Allison (Pelstring) and **'23 Trystan Vrieling:** Trezzi Farm Winery at Green Bluff, Wash.

'24 Sally (Allaire) and **'24 Tyler Zabolio:** Capitol Lake in Olympia, Wash.



'17 Chelsea Carey and **'15 Brandon Pitzer**, Orange County, Calif. The dance floor was filled with Zags and the photobooth featured plenty of GU swag.



Former Gonzaga Alumni Director **'71 Marty Pujolar** and **Carol Gallegos**, San Diego. Marty maintains a close tie to his fellow classmates who will commemorate their 60th anniversary of arriving at GU in 2027.



'15 Laura Regester and **'14, '15 M.A. Neal Urbaniak** were married in Sedona, Ariz., surrounded by friends and family. The bride's veil was something of a Zag relic, having been worn by multiple generations of Gonzaga brides since 1913.

These submissions were received between January and July 2025. Where available, locations of ceremonies are included.

» See all photos and details: gonzaga.edu/magazine

Congrats to these growing families!

'95 Glen Cronk and Lisa: a daughter, Mary Catherine

'02 Marcus Weber and Aurora Weber: a son, Valentino

'03 Jack Chadwick and Kristen: a son, Benjamin

'10 Christina (Gardner) and **'10 Matthew Delsman**: a daughter, Madeline

'11 Danielle (Bienz) and Jeremiah Gunder: a daughter, Remington

'11 Lauren (Hunter) and **'11 James Spaeth**: a son, Wilson

'12 Catherine Van and Adam Schwartz: a daughter, Lenni

'12 Kenna (Shutz) and James Day: a daughter, Rory

'12 Liz Slamkowski and Tony DiTommaso: a son, Anthony

'12 Courtney (Butler) and **'12 Jeremy Lazzara**: a daughter, Sofia

'13 Sarah (Katz) and **'13 Nicholas Hardin**: a son, James

'13 Shelby (Mason) and **'13 Connor Barth**: a son, Elliot

'13 Virginia (Whalen) and Jim Boonyaratanakornkit: a son, Asa

'13 Brigitte (Pinsoneault) and Jason Curry: a son, Jacob

'13 Patrick Spencer-Rios and Maria Lourdes Tamés: a son, Alonso

'14 Emily Zupsic and **'15 David Hensle**: a daughter, Zoey

'14 Cameron Stahl and **'17 Abbie (Salter)**: a son and a daughter, Rory and Ansel

'15 Eric Kohan and **'16 Molly Miram**: a son, Calvin

'15 Taylor (Jordan) and **'14, '24 M.B.A. Matt Lyons**: a daughter, Kit

'15 Libby Young and **'15 Chris Birmingham**: a son, Elliott

'15 Kelsey Focht and Christopher Dieda: a son, William

'16 William Woodbery and **'18 Dottie**: a son, Calvin

'16, '23 M.A. Lacey (Konopaski) and Jordan Negus: a son, Major

'17 Bridget (Brady) and **'17 Patrick O'Rourke**: a son, Brady

'17 Emily Mincin and **'17 Richard Pfluger**: a son, Hudson

'17, '22 M.A. Alexa (Salvador) and **'17 Ryan Gaske**: a daughter, Amelia



'13, '15 Victoria Fallgren, Gonzaga's assistant women's golf coach, and **Conor Murphy** (and dog, Boba) welcomed a son, Bodhi.

'17, '20 M.A. Holli Higgins and **'20 Brad Lyman**: a son, Rory

'18 Alexa (Buono) and **'18 Quinn Connolly**: a son, Nico

'19 Laura (McConahy) and **'19 Andrew Zenoni**: a son, Owen

'19 Tony Knebel and **'23 Kaleigh (White)**: a son, Noah

This includes submissions received between January and August 2025. See all photos online: gonzaga.edu/magazine



Kara Hertz welcomed guests to the Grotto to remember and pray for lost loved ones during the Zagapalooza reunion.

The following list reflects notices Gonzaga received from October 2024 to July 2025.

'48 Darrell Smith, U.S. Marine Corps officer and veteran of WWII and the Korean War; became a graphoanalyst, sharing his ocean knowledge on select cruise lines. Feb. 6 – Port Angeles, Wash.

'51 J.D. Frank Johnson, GU basketball player, veteran and dedicated attorney who taught a semester of business law at Gonzaga in Florence. Feb. 18 – Spokane

'51 Klaus Mai, a well-traveled chemical engineer who spent his career with the Shell Oil Co.; an avid sailor in his free time. Feb. 1 – Houston

'51 James Fake, worked many years in the utility trailer business and enjoyed traveling to Puerto Vallarta and hosting tailgates for family and friends. Oct. 19 – Denver

'52 Richard Rose, veteran and banker who helped fund farming operations and enjoyed golfing and bowling. June 9 – Marysville, Wash.

'53 James Finlen, veteran, was a Capitol Hill police officer and later worked for the Internal Revenue Service; showed love by example and was a Kansas City Chiefs fan. Feb. 21 – Olathe, Kan.

'54 Keith McDuffie, lifelong educator who taught Spanish to high schoolers and eventually college students; loved music and was an avid concertgoer. Feb. 21 – Portland, Ore.

'54 Joseph Lapham, a decorated Navy commander and pilot who later worked in real estate, finance and business. June 28 – Sandpoint, Idaho

'55 Helen Greenan, known as the backbone of her family, was a steadfast volunteer and enjoyed traveling – especially around Florence, Italy. May 5 – Seattle

'56 Michael Harwood, a distinguished graduate from Gonzaga's ROTC who spent 20 years serving in the U.S. Army. Feb. 20 – Estes Park, Colo.

'56 Mary Nordale was assistant U.S. attorney and assistant district attorney for the state of Alaska. Dec. 12 – Fairbanks, Alaska

'57 James Wagner, an engineer who loved performing in community musical theater productions. June 1 – Victor, N.Y.

'57 Fr. Bernard Tyrrell, S.J., devoted Jesuit priest, scholar and GU professor remembered for his inspiring ministry and influential writings including "Christotherapy." Feb. 2 – Los Gatos, Calif.

'58 Joseph Thomas, veteran, career in civil engineering included work on the Stevens Street bridge in Spokane. An avid runner, he completed several Bloomsdays. Feb. 4 – Spokane

'58 J.D. Mark Rotchford, attorney and judge known for his booming laugh and big heart. May. 4 – Spokane

'58, '60 M.A. Janet Wollersheim leaves behind memories cherished by the community and a strong spirit. March 19 – Missoula, Mont.

'58 Ernest Vollmer, veteran, beloved teacher known for his kindness, humor and decades of community service. May 21 – Spokane

'58 Roger Roman, veteran, longtime Montgomery Ward store manager who was dedicated to his community. April 30 – Stockton, Calif.

'58 John Courtney, U.S. Navy veteran and career civil engineer remembered for a lifetime of service and hard work. May 1 – San Mateo, Calif.

'58 Willard Gray Jr., proud to have grown up in Nespelem, Wash., was a star on GU's basketball team and spent the later years of his career in education. Dec. 19 – Walla Walla, Wash.

'58, '59 M.A. Kenneth Caouette, a track and field official for more than 50 years, serving in two Olympic Games. July 15 – Turners Falls, Mass.

'59 Raymond Benoit, an academic and an avid reader who enjoyed teaching, his Catholic faith and watching sports. Jan. 24 – Seattle

'59 Maurice Foisy, a professor who believed in the importance of advocating for the protection of teachers' rights. Jan. 13 – Bellingham, Wash.

'59 William Warren, founder of Warren's Drug, a family operation full of memories and friendship; devout Catholic and grandfather. Dec. 14 – Reno, Nev.

'59, '60 M.A. William Kerley, veteran, member of GU's renowned Glee Club that toured the Pacific Northwest and Canada, recorded albums and made TV appearances. April 26 – Spokane

'60, '64 M.A. Bill Boyd, a teacher and principal who touched the lives of thousands of students. April 11 – Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

'60 Henry Lipovski, a dedicated supporter of the Catholic church, a skilled photographer and an avid sports fan. June 29 – Calgary, Alta.

'61, '62 M.A. Martin O'Grady, a lifelong educator who was shaped by his time as a Jesuit. He also had a passion for long-distance cycling. May 4 – Oakville, Ontario

'61 Burdell Anderson, veteran, was a medical technician before a career that took him across the country and eventually to the Hanford National Lab. Jan. 8 – Carlsbad, N.M.

'61 Col. Leland Prentice, veteran who served in Germany and Vietnam. He enjoyed baking, reading and watching his grandchildren play sports. Feb. 21 – Portland, Ore.

'62 Charles Esposito, a Boeing systems analyst who spent more than 50 years advancing the nation's defense programs. Jan. 27 – Rathdrum, Idaho

'63 John Quinlivan, recipient of the Gonzaga Distinguished Alumni Merit Award in 2004 and retired Boeing vice president of several commercial airplane programs. April 10 – Palo Alto, Calif.

'63 Terrance Matz, a successful stockbroker remembered for his love of golf, his faith and his Montana roots. June 13 – Seattle

'64 Richard Egge, avid fisherman who started his own fishing-guide company. Remembered as a strong and generous man. Dec. 4 – Langley, Wash.

'64 Cathy (Miller) Colver, helped found the fundraising auction for St. Joseph's Grade School; later was director of education for the Diocese of Yakima and helped to land a \$1.3 million grant from the Gates Foundation. Aug. 13 – Yakima, Wash.

'64, '67 J.D. Matthew Kissane, Feb. 25 – Independence, Ore.

'65 Lawrence Miller, accountant who graduated top of his class at Gonzaga; a devout Catholic. Jan. 19 – Spokane

'66 Bryan Macdonough, veteran, U.S. Army platoon leader, special forces Vietnam veteran; received two Bronze Stars and a Purple Heart. Jan. 4 – Laurel Springs, N.J.

'66 Veronica Mratinich, elementary school teacher who studied language and dance with the Croatian National Dance Ensemble. Dec. 22 – Seattle

'67 John Swenson, passionate educator who was an elementary school counselor in Spokane for more than 40 years, caring deeply for his students. Dec. 24 – Spokane

'67 Richard Numata, benefits analyst for Standard Oil who enjoyed current affairs and spending time with family. April 26 – Spokane

'67 Robert Cysewski, an accomplished CPA who later led diverse business ventures. He had immeasurable influence on his friends and family. March 19 – Bainbridge Island, Wash.

'67, '71 M.A. Francis Cheyney, professor and car aficionado who spent his later years as a personable car salesman, sending cards to each client. Dec. 8 – Spokane

'68, '74 M.A. Dianne Hammer, passionate about children's needs, she worked in the foster care system with Catholic Charities. Dec. 31 – Spokane

'68 Herbert Ayers, Air Force veteran who worked for the Red Cross and was a mental health counselor. Dec. 20 – Pasco, Wash.

'68 Kathleen Keeney, devoted Zag who spent time in Ireland after graduating college before settling into a career in telecommunications. Dec. 12 – Brier, Wash.

'68 Marjorie Polley, elementary school teacher who volunteered as a "radio reader" for the visually impaired. July 27 – Anchorage, Alaska.

'69 Dennis Maloney, editor and publisher of Human Research Report for nearly 40 years. Jan. 18 – Omaha, Neb.

'69 B.A., M.A. Dennis O'Neill, a former Jesuit who cared deeply for others, serving as a social worker and eventually as a drug and alcohol counselor at Boeing. April 19 – Bellevue, Wash.

'69 David Korn, teacher for more than four decades in a classroom his students fondly dubbed "Korn's Cave." Dec. 31 – Daly City, Calif.

'69 Gene Unger, career engineer who later explored wine and travel with his wife, as partners of Camaraderie Cellars. Port Angeles, Wash.

'69 Jerry Neal, a distinguished attorney who served on several boards including the Spokane Transit Commission. Jan. 22 – Spokane

'69 Karen Mayer, a talented musician who built up the music program at her local parish. May 6 – Santa Clarita, Calif.

'70 Paul Dunigan, Jr., worked for the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission for more than three decades, advocated for the Hanford Reach National Monument. Jan. 9 – Richland, Wash.

'70 J.D. Richard Langabeer, an attorney with deep integrity, compassion and steadfast commitment to his clients. April 7 – Birch Bay, Wash.

'70 Daniel Dempsey, engineer whose career spanned naval shipyards and the CIA. March 22 – Bainbridge Island, Wash.

'71 Peter Anderson, U.S. Army Reservist, railroad switchman, and lifelong learner who was full of curiosity and joy. July 15 – Spokane

'71 Larry Kimmel, a natural salesman who "never met a stranger and could learn someone's life story before they were done checking out at the grocery store." April 4 – Missoula, Mont.

'71 Rush Caley, lifelong teacher at heart and spiritual guide to many; celebrated for weaving wisdom and love into the lives of others. May 11 – Port Orchard, Wash.

'72 Mark Rehberger, an enduring legacy of love, patience, humility and grace. May 2 – Tacoma, Wash.

'73 Judith Ann Scully, an adventurous educator who taught five years in Australia before returning to the U.S. and teaching P.E. for four decades. May 8 – Denver

'73 Brian Deichl, longtime Pacific Northwest Bell employee who cherished staying connected with family and friends. Dec. 14 – Puyallup, Wash.

'74 Edward Davis, April 11 – San Francisco

'74 Anthony Maucione, Gonzaga Prep history teacher and cross-country coach. March 19 – Spokane

'75 Gary Nickolaus, traveled the country as an inspector and field engineer at nuclear power plants before retiring to write poetry and paint. Dec. 30 – West Richland, Wash.

'75, '82 M.B.A. Phyllis Okello, former director of student accounts at GU who enjoyed reading, playing cribbage and watching the women's basketball team. Feb. 15 – Spokane

'75, '90 M.A. Douglas Day, veteran, schoolteacher, coach and avid Zags basketball fan. April 22 – Spokane

'76 J.D. Peter Lineberger, Vietnam War veteran; became a reputable family attorney and chairman of the Washington State Bar Association. Feb. 19 – Spokane

'76 J.D. Mickey Krom, attorney for nearly 50 years, driven to help those who couldn't help themselves. May 17 – Yakima, Wash.

'76 M.B.A. '78 J.D. Barry Ryan, U.S. Coast Guard veteran and attorney who ran his own practice for 20 years; an Administrative Law Judge and mentor to young lawyers. Aug. 28 – Syracuse, N.Y.

'77 M.A. John Brumbaugh, a teacher for more than four decades, a legacy of love and dedication. Dec. 16 – Libby, Mont.

'77 J.D. the Hon. John Paternoster, an intellectual and an expert litigator, he was a state prosecutor, an assistant attorney general and a municipal court judge. Dec. 26 – Raton, N.M.

Continued

'77 J.D. Stephen Waller, attorney whose career spanned 30 years. He was known to help anyone who needed it, even fostering dogs who needed homes. April 23 – Lawrenceville, Ga.

'78 M.A. Joseph Fisher, an Air Force veteran, polygraph expert and lifelong mentor known for his service and devotion to family. June 5 – Spokane

'79 Garry Ratliffe, veteran who gave two decades to his country, studied Vietnamese, was an intelligence analyst assigned to the Pentagon and wrote press briefings for the president and the vice president of the United States. Jan. 1 – Spokane

'80 J.D. Mark Staples, attorney; talented singer and composer who released four albums and performed at sold-out concert halls across the Inland Northwest. Feb. 20 – Missoula, Mont.

'80 Philip Cowan II, software engineer who loved watching baseball, hockey and, of course, the Zags. May 30 – Camas, Wash.

'81 Mark Fries, U.S. Army who served in Guam; was a bank loan officer and enjoyed water skiing, snow skiing, snowmobiling and camping. Dec. 19 – Las Vegas

'82 Joan Archer, a distinguished attorney who coached GU's debate team. She was an advocate for the law and enjoyed traveling with her daughter. April 17 – Prairie Village, Kan.

'81 Patrick Corn, a teacher who loved the outdoors, politics and was deeply committed to his faith. May 13 – Adrian, Ore.

'81 M.A., '01 Ph.D. Donna Caldwell, a fierce advocate and compassionate leader who spent decades working in education and disability services. May 8 – Calgary, Alta.

'83 M.A. Kathleen Madsen, valued education, theology and politics and had a love for dogs and humor. April 3 – Spokane

'84 Patricia Wolfe, an adventurous spirit who loved traveling and a dedicated nurse inducted into Sigma Theta Tau honors society. Dec. 17 – Spokane

'96 John Morrison was one of two firefighters tragically killed in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, on June 29. He was dedicated to his work, an inventive entrepreneur, and a family man whose humor, generosity and passion for service enriched his community.

'84 J.D. Hollis Anderson-Haldi, attorney who served her community for decades both in the courtroom and through volunteer work. June 23 – Wallace, Idaho

'84 Matthew Boccaccio, March 4 – Spokane

'85 J.D. Dennis Cronin, a career attorney with deep roots in Spokane's legal community, represented late civil rights icon Carl Maxey and helped found the Sandy Williams Justice Center. Jan. 16 – Spokane

'86 J.D. Matthew Rutt, an attorney for more than three decades who took pride in representing those who needed help in difficult times. Feb. 7 – Richland, Wash.

'86 Mary O'Toole, known for her infectious laughter and unwavering kindness; also a creative cook and a dedicated Zag fan. Feb. 15 – Spokane

'86 James Brantingham, veteran, poet and author celebrated for his love of classical literature and his constant pursuit of knowledge. May 30 – Seattle

'87 Linda Battello, a lifelong learner, advocate for community service and a dedicated pastor. May 8 – Fort Collins, Colo.

'88 M.A. Lynn Schutte, a thoughtful nurse dedicated to the care and well-being of others. March 19 – Spokane

'89 M.A. Michael Prosciak, a career counselor in schools and his community who enjoyed music, reading, and having philosophical conversations with anyone he met. March 5 – Ottawa, Ontario

'89 Paula Shaw, co-owner of outdoor retail store Second Ascent in Ballard, Wash., and a lifelong recreational athlete. March 5 – Ottawa, Ontario

'89 Rev. Leon Desjardins, a young farmer-turned-savvy-businessman who later found his spiritual calling as a Catholic priest. May 30 – Morinville, Alta.

'89 M.A. Stewart Windrum, lifelong educator who also worked in the funeral service industry, helping establish the Canadian College of Funeral Service. May 30 – Red Deer, Alta.

'90 Maria Heineman, financial analyst and social worker who loved to help others, spend time with her family and embrace a good adventure. March 1 – Richland, Wash.

'90 Loren Miller, martial artist and compassionate chiropractor admired for his perseverance and generosity. April 20 – Cottonwood, Idaho

'90 M.A. Donna Brown, an educator for nearly 40 years, she touched countless lives with her joyful spirit. April 14 – Calgary, Alta.

'91 M.A. Donald Kesteven, spent 35 years in the Canadian oil industry before earning a master's in counseling and dedicating his later years to helping others. May 1 – Calgary, Alta.

'91 Dina Patrick, a lifelong advocate for helping children and families. May 25 – Spokane

'91 Kelly Heffernan, an insurance claims adjuster also known for his love of music, traveling and gardening. June 29 – Spokane

'92 Elsie Brannigan, a woman of many talents who spent time as a Catholic emissary in Africa and enjoyed traveling. Jan. 4 – Olympia, Wash.

'92 Fr. James White, S.J., U.S. Army veteran who served in Vietnam, later ordained as a priest and a served as a Jesuit for more than six decades. Feb. 12 – Kansas City, Kan.

'92 M.B.A. John Peterson, worked in governmental budgeting and accounting, enjoyed baseball, even trying out for the Toronto Blue Jays. Dec. 2 – Stevensville, Mont.

'92 M.A. '98 Ph.D. Nienke Crick, a career educator and an avid square dancer who also loved crafting and making homemade gifts for friends. Dec. 25 – Spokane Valley

'93 Marlene Todd-Lippert, built a meaningful career in social work and community service, remembered for her compassion and generosity. Nov. 22 – Spokane

'93 J.D. James Crowe, Marine Corps veteran and homebuilder whose efforts created a nationally used program. He later earned his law degree, helping clients pro bono. Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

'93 Susan Thompson Cowin, Feb. 1 – Eugene, Ore.

'94 M.A. Helen English, nurse and educator whose sharp wit and sense of humor lit up a room. March 9 – Calgary, Alta.

'01 M.A. Jeanne Givens, a member of the Coeur d'Alene tribe, a fierce advocate for Native American rights and the first Native American woman elected to the Idaho House of Representatives. She is remembered for her tireless efforts, leadership and deep devotion to her family and community. May 13 – Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

'94 Iris Jones, a switchboard operator who facilitated communications for the Allied Forces by coordinating calls between military leaders and personnel. May 12 – Bellevue, Wash.

'95 M.S.N. Tana Hartmann, worked for several decades as a compassionate nurse, leaving a positive impact on anyone who came into her care. Jan. 2 – Boise, Idaho

'95 J.D. Sarah Seaborg, internationally recognized defense attorney known for integrity and fierce advocacy for the underserved. May 12 – Marinette, Wis.

'95 Jennifer Sprute Proctor, active member of the PTA at her sons' school who didn't hesitate to lend a hand, even nannying for close family friends. Feb. 22 – Hillsboro, Ore.

'96 '98 M.B.A. Davina Canale-Achen, a brilliant and creative woman whose passion for art and music brought joy to others. June 20 – Spokane

'96 M.A. Ian Phelps, dedicated ER physician with an adventurous spirit and unwavering devotion to both his family and patients. March 18 – Medicine Hat, Alta.

'97 M.A. Marianne Iksic, a teacher for nearly 40 years and an avid sports lover. May 13 – Irby, Wash.

'97 J.D. Steven Kaufman, founded and maintained a successful law firm for 40 years with the goal of training lawyers to create trust in the profession. May 6 – Ogden, Utah

'99 Lynette Hamilton, a financial specialist with the U.S. Bankruptcy Court who also enjoyed reading cooking, quilting and watching hockey. Oct. 13 – Spokane

'99 Patrick Foster, computer programmer who worked for Apple Computers and enjoyed guitar building. June 30 – Spokane

'99 M.A. Susan McCaig, a hardworking single parent known for her kind, nurturing nature and distinctive laugh. May 4 – Red Deer, Alta.

'01 J.D. Tracy DiFillippo, a dedicated lawyer who maintained her practice through a long, valiant battle with cancer. Jan. 17 – Las Vegas

'01 M.A. Carol Werner, a counselor and crisis intervention specialist whose lifelong commitment to service reflected her deep compassion. July 10 – Grand Prairie, Texas

'01 Carole Tabakman, described by friends as a radiant light in the world, she had an unwavering zest for life, adventures and traveling. Jan. 27 – Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

'02 Constance Smith, a nurturing and compassionate woman who channeled her warmth into homemaking. She also enjoyed reading and singing. May 15 – Spokane

'07 Donald Baribault, educator who made a lasting impact on the Northport School District and spent summers as a firefighter. May 26 – Northport, Wash.

'08 Meghan Borker, business analyst with sharp intellect and a love for travel. She faced cancer with courage and left a lasting impact on all who knew her. June 20 – Kingman, Ariz.

'09 M.A. Alyson Ryan-Gilbertson, executive, teacher and dance instructor whose passion for education and generous spirit touched all who knew her. July 16 – Spokane

'09 M.A. Kathy McNight, educator and rancher who, in her later life, enjoyed teaching other teachers to bring compassion and skill to the classroom. May 6 – Calgary, Alta.

'13 Betty Horak, March 21 – Spokane

'15 M.A. Margaret Meyers, a lifelong Catholic who touched the lives of many on her mission to grow and strengthen the faith community. March 10 – Westernport, Md.

'23 Cameron Williamson, a passionate musician whose love for music created unwavering connections. Jan. 22 – Portland, Ore.

FACULTY & STAFF

James Beebe, former leadership studies professor who was dedicated to global understanding, first in the Peace Corps and later as a USAID foreign service officer.

Bill Hayes, exemplary professor of sociology and criminology for two decades. One of his greatest achievements at the University was a summer study abroad program in South Korea. He is survived by his wife, Nicole, his son, Nicholas, and, his dog, Chorong.

Mary Ann Johnston McDonald, a beloved GU switchboard operator for 25 years who loved to laugh and was always helping those in need.

Steven Silliman, a visionary engineering educator and former dean of Gonzaga's School of Engineering & Applied Science. He is remembered for his deep Christian faith and devotion to mentoring students and guiding future generations in STEM.

Kelly Wentz, beloved director of Financial Aid who made a lasting impact on the University's student employment program. She was known for her strong leadership, technical expertise and unwavering commitment to students.

FRIENDS

Stan Hooper, a longtime Gonzaga Regent who played a crucial role in the design of the John J. Hemmingson Center and whose generosity and guidance helped shape the community.

Duff Kennedy, a former Trustee, he believed in making a GU education accessible to all. He and his wife, Dorothy, generously gave the University the Dale Chihuly collection on display in the Jundt Art Museum. The Kennedy Apartments on campus were dedicated to Duff to honor his profound legacy.

Gonzaga's all-class reunion

Zagapalooza

brought more than 500 alumni and friends to campus in September on the heels of the presidential inauguration. Attendees represented classes from 1965 to the present and attended more than 30 events across campus, ranging from tours and socials to academic celebrations.

Special highlights included:

- Bing Crosby! 2025 is the 100-year anniversary of Bing leaving Spokane and becoming one of Gonzaga's most notable alumni. Crosby family members came to campus to enjoy sharing history.
- Alumni Relations launched the Gonzaga in Florence Affinity Group, featuring the reveal of a newly designed work by Zag artist Ben Joyce ('01). GIF fans can purchase a commemorative art piece that is now displayed on the Florence campus.
- Volunteer leaders from regional alumni chapters, affinity communities and the alumni scholarship council joined advisory boards, regents and trustees for networking.
- Guests joined President Passerini and the Alumni Relations team at the Grotto to remember and pray for lost loved ones.



A Toast to Bob Finn

Bob Finn – a man of connection and service – has retired after 20 years as a cornerstone of Gonzaga University's alumni community.

After graduating from GU in 1988, Bob's career took him into teaching, but he never fully left Gonzaga. He stayed in touch with his former coaches, teammates and mentors, building a network that would eventually call him back to campus. When the director of alumni relations announced his retirement, Bob saw an opportunity to return.

He became a beloved figure at Gonzaga, known for his humor, humility and tireless commitment to alumni.

One of his proudest achievements is the Gonzaga Alumni Scholarship Benefit, which has awarded more than \$3 million to thousands of students. If you've been touched by Bob's connection, consider a gift to the Alumni Scholarship in his honor.

» To donate to the **Alumni Scholarship** scan this icon:



The 100th anniversary of DeSmet Hall drew decades of alumni into the famed residence hall for trips down memory lane.



The Hogan Entrepreneurial Leadership Program 25th Anniversary Alumni celebration featured a panel of alumni, a social and a video message from former Gonzaga president Fr. Robert Spitzer, S.J. ('74).

Journeying together as friends

By Sr. Raffaella Petrini, FSE
President of the Pontifical Commission and the
Governorate of Vatican City State

(Adapted from the keynote address at the inauguration of Katia Passerini as president of Gonzaga University, September 2025)

Your new President and I have a few important things in common. First, although we were both born in Italy, our lives developed further in the United States, where we built relationships and became rooted in family, religious community and professional environments. Second, we both studied at the LUISS University in Rome, imbued with such values as respect for the human person, professional competence and growth, accountability, and sustainability. Third, we both have strong connections with the Jesuit religious family. Fourth, Katia and I are the first women presidents in the history of the institutions we love and serve with gratitude and dedication. We both firmly believe that collaboration, teamwork, loyalty and transparency are the pillars of human-centered organizations which, inspired by Catholic Social Teaching, strive to pursue the common good.

Katia and I are friends. In fact, friendship is the main reason I am here today. My hope is that you will continue to cultivate friendships at Gonzaga University under the guidance of your new president and her remarkable staff. All of you gathered here are the leaders of today or tomorrow, called to give back what you generously received through your family and the people that God's Providence placed in your path. Friendship tills the soil

where the seed of dialogue among people and disciplines can grow.

Empowering Potential

Classical philosophy held that friendship played an important role in human existence, assuming that a person without friends cannot be truly happy, because no one can grow spiritually and morally alone. For Aristotle, friendship implied a sincere desire for the other person's good and a mutual awareness of these feelings. Christian anthropology shares this conviction: Human beings depend on God and others to satisfy their basic needs, but they also need others to develop their skills and inner talents; they need others to empower their potential. They need education, mentorship, support and care.

Pope Francis reminded us that no one can face life in isolation: We need a community that helps us to look to the future. This August, Pope Leo XIV reiterated to the youth gathered in Rome that "human relationships are essential for each of us," because "it is through relationships that we grow."

Friendship is also a relationship among those called to spend time together as members of the same community. You are called to be part of the wider community of

Gonzaga University. You are here to be and to become leaders who are ready to pursue the good of others, leaders who are willing to sow the seeds of unity.

Together, you can aspire to something greater. You can cultivate the desire to improve yourselves and society as a whole, and to make the world more human and more fraternal.

Opening Doors

True friendship is open to sacrifice. It breaks through the narrow boundaries of individualism and competition to pursue higher goals and become an expression of love and solidarity. Pope Leo specified that true friendship can be found in Jesus Christ, and that while “the path of dialogue, the path of friendship, may be challenging, it yields the precious fruit of peace.” In the Christian tradition, like Aristotle, St. Augustine too identifies a strong connection between friendship and happiness. Since happiness finds its ultimate source in God, however, friendship has a transcendent dimension. It is unbreakable, because not even death can separate true friends.



The friendships cultivated at Gonzaga profoundly impact your individual journey and your life in community. In his encyclical “Fratelli Tutti” (2020), Pope Francis discussed the importance of social friendship, emphasizing that “our love for others, for who they are, moves us to seek the best for their lives.” Social friendship is rooted in the “acknowledgment of the worth of every human person, always and everywhere.” Only by cultivating this way of relating to one another can we foster fraternity, the structural framework of peace.

“The path of dialogue, the path of friendship, may be challenging, but it yields the precious fruit of peace.”

– Pope Leo XIV

Leading with Hope

Catholic Universities are meant to offer a space for encounter and to promote a culture of hospitality in the spirit of this Jubilee Year of Hope. In this space of encounter, we are exposed to the mystery of otherness. Here, you can truly learn how to be receptive, how to make yourselves more vulnerable to others, how to take risks, and how to stay open to the unknown. These are all dimensions of friendship.

One of the main purposes of higher education – and especially of your Jesuit education at Gonzaga under Katia’s guidance – is to build community. This community is not tailored only to satisfy individual needs but also to define common goals. Higher education becomes an essential means of integration; it accomplishes its primary task when it can form people who are ready to journey together as friends. It shapes leaders who can bring people together and care for them – servant leaders who wish to promote the well-being of those entrusted to them.

Education that nurtures true friendship becomes a peace-making force that can help heal fractures, protect the vulnerable, and bridge cultural and generational gaps.

I truly believe that fostering dialogue among all who are involved in the Mission of this University will inspire you to pursue greater life goals that require courage, honesty and integrity. May the spirit of true friendship that you cultivate here guide your freedom, direct your will, strengthen your hope, and help build a better future together.



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What is a chain of office?

The large gold chain and medallion worn by Gonzaga presidents represents the leadership, authority and trust invested in them by the Board of Trustees. It's also a symbol of the generations of presidents who have served Gonzaga with faith, courage and devotion.

As President-emeritus Thayne McCulloh transferred the chain to President Katia Passerini, he added that it is “a reminder to the bearer that the community now looks to you with trust and hope.”

» Find all inauguration related galleries and more:

