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USD Magazine

USD News

Spring 2022

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UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

USD MAG

Spring 2022

CHANGING THE APPROACH TO BUSINESS EDUCATION

USD Board Chair Don Knauss and his wife, Ellie, have generously increased their giving to \$50 million. In honor of their gift, we have named the business school after them. The Knauss School of Business will provide a unique, holistic, world-class experience for its students.

DEAR TOREROS



BARBARA FERGUSON

That pledge means we are officially committed to developing action plans guided by the goals of *Laudato Si'*: Responding to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor, fostering ecological economics, adopting a sustainable lifestyle, offering ecological education, developing ecological spirituality and supporting local communities.

In addition, at its September meeting, the Board of Trustees unanimously adopted an amended investment policy in full alignment with *Laudato Si'*, positioning USD as one of the first universities in the world to take this step. Of particular note is that while the university has made no new direct investments in fossil fuels since 2016, reducing our exposure to this category by 60%, under the new policy, by no later than 2035 the university will find alternatives to entirely eliminate our investments in fossil fuel companies.

In the opening paragraphs of *Laudato Si'*, Francis invites us to approach nature and the environment with “awe and wonder” so that we may be moved to “speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world ... and feel intimately united with all that exists.”

This is an incredibly exciting time to be a part of the USD community as we continue to cultivate that sense of awe and wonder in our students, as well as educate Changemakers ready and willing to create a sustainable common home for future generations.

Michael Lovette-Colyer, PhD
Vice President for Mission
Integration

One of the best things about welcoming our community back to campus has been the chance to witness firsthand the countless ways that our mission and Catholic identity are blossoming across the university. As has become customary, USD students, faculty and staff are engaged in numerous initiatives that exemplify the vision of our founders, Bishop Buddy and Mother Hill.

Walking across campus, the excellent work of the Mulvaney Center for Community, Awareness and Social Action, the Humanities Center and the Changemaker Hub stands out. Likewise, the impressive projects in the Knauss School of Business, the Hahn School of

Nursing and Health Science, Shiley-Marcos School of Engineering, Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies and School of Law are impossible to miss. Not to mention the ways the core curriculum delivers a first-class experience of the liberal arts and the Catholic Intellectual Tradition.

While these and so many other aspects of USD are inspiring, one of the most dramatic examples of our mission in action is the recent commitment to become officially recognized as a University of *Laudato Si'*.

Published in 2015, *Laudato Si'* is a letter (officially known as a papal encyclical) addressed to “every person living on this planet.” In it, Pope Francis calls

the church and the world to take urgent action to care for our common home as well as the poor and vulnerable who are disproportionately impacted by global environmental problems, such as climate change, pollution and access to clean water.

As a part of responding to Francis’ call, in the Spring of 2021, we launched a seven-part speaker series on *Laudato Si'*, exploring each of the chapters and central principles of the encyclical. That was followed in the fall by President Harris signing a commitment for USD to officially embrace those principles, becoming one of the first Catholic universities in the United States to receive this recognition by the Vatican.

Answer the call!



When a USD student calls, it's about more than fundraising. It's also your chance to share your USD experience with a current student and hear about campus life today. Of course, your pledge will put a smile on their face by helping to fund a scholarship or program that's most dear to you!



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STAFF BOX

[president]

James T. Harris III, DEd

[vice president, university advancement]

Richard Virgin

[associate vice president, university marketing and communications]

Peter Marlow

petermarlow@sandiego.edu

[editor/senior director]

Julene Snyder

julene@sandiego.edu

[senior creative director]

Barbara Ferguson

barbaraf@sandiego.edu

[editorial advisory board]

Sandra Ciallella '87 (JD)

Lynn Hajar Hoffman '98 (BBA), '06 (MSGL)

Minh-Ha Hoang '96 (BBA), '01 (MA)

Michael Lovette-Colyer '13 (PhD)

Kristin Scialabba (PhD candidate)

Rich Yousko '87 (BBA)

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[class notes]

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Please note that content for USD Magazine has a long lead time. Our current publishing schedule is as follows: Class Notes received between Feb. 1-May 30 appear in the Fall edition; those received June 1-Sept. 30 appear in the Spring edition; those received between Oct. 1-Jan. 31 appear in the Summer digital-only edition.

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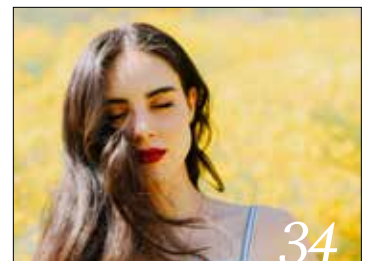
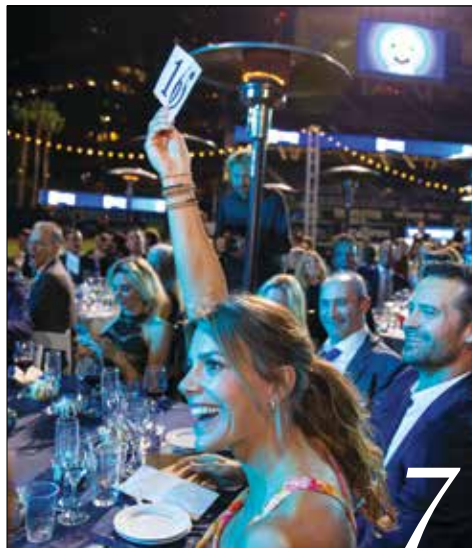
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[be blue go green]

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Photograph of Don Knauss, chair of USD's Board of Trustees, and his wife, Ellie, by Zachary Barron.

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TORERO NEWS



NICK PORTER

[renewal]

A TRUE RENAISSANCE

New and renovated spaces celebrated on campus

by Kelsey Grey

Inspiring surroundings date back to the first days of the University of San Diego. More than seven decades after its founding, USD is proud to have rededicated several spaces that foster campus beauty.

In the fall of 2021, the USD

community watched as both the new Learning Commons and the renovated Helen K. and James S. Copley Library were officially opened.

The two-story Learning Commons, which houses the USD Writing Center and the

Honors Program offices, is 36,000 square feet of classroom and collaborative spaces that provide students with places to study and connect throughout their college experience.

Copley Library now features two entrances and more than

20 study rooms. Even the all-too-familiar to students Camino Stacks area was renovated and now includes 10 new study spaces.

A celebration marking the renovation of Camino, Founders and Sacred Heart Halls was held to mark the occasion this past fall.

"This marks the refurbishment of the center and the heart of the university," said College of Arts and Sciences Dean Noelle Norton. She added, "We're excited to celebrate our new space over the next semester."

After the ceremony, attendees explored the renovated buildings

on self-guided tours. Major changes include dedicated space for theater and visual arts students in Sacred Heart Hall that will allow them to showcase their work. In addition, communication studies students now have a lab where they can conduct interviews or collaboratively work on digital projects. Cozy couches and chairs have also been added to the new liberal studies students office to create a welcoming space.

Above the classrooms, even more changes have been made. The first-year residence halls in Camino and Founders Halls feature new heating, lighting, windows, ceiling fans, custom closets and furnishings, all of which create a homey feeling for incoming students.

The Camino and Founders Lounge (pictured) has also been updated, featuring appliances for light cooking as well as dining room tables for friends to gather and enjoy each other's company. A newly added craft room is another space for residents to utilize.

"I'm sure there are hundreds of faculty and thousands of students who went before us who would be very proud of what we're doing today," said President Harris during his remarks at the celebration.

The completion of the renovation of Copley Library, Camino, Founders and Sacred Heart Halls and the new Learning Commons mark a major milestone in the university's Renaissance Plan, a 10-year initiative to build, renovate and restore academic spaces by the university's 75th anniversary in 2024.

The first phase of the Renaissance Plan is almost complete. The finish line will include the new three-story Knauss Center for Business Education plus the renovation of Olin Hall, scheduled to be completed by Fall 2022 and 2023, respectively. 🌐

[driven]

UP FOR THE CHALLENGE

Senior reflects on life-changing internship

by Nick Stineman

Some might expect this sort of interaction from an internship: "I need 10 copies of this and a grande decaf with no cream right away!"

But Andrew Davidson '22 (BBA) had a decidedly different experience. As a USD senior minoring in entrepreneurship and finance, Davidson landed a sales analyst internship with Nasdaq, one of the largest and most prominent global electronic marketplaces for buying and trading securities. He was tasked with selling software to top-level executives, generating leads, prospecting candidates, scheduling meetings along with other duties.

The competition for this role was fierce. Davidson went up against 19,000 global candidates for his position. After four rounds of intensive Zoom and phone interviews, he got the good news. "I knew it was going to be competitive," he says. "But I always like a challenge, so I was up for it," he says.

When asked to speculate upon what set him apart from the rest, Davidson thinks the company "appreciated my drive." He's hoping that he'll be offered a full-time position with Nasdaq by the time he graduates in May 2022.

While waking up in San Diego at 5 a.m. to attend virtual meetings in Boston was most likely exhausting, Davidson raved about his remote internship. He sees Microsoft Teams and emails as the new version of walking down the hall and

knocking on a colleague's door. "It was such a good experience, even being remote."

Davidson says that his weekly projects were shared by teams across the country and were praised and utilized in everyday applications. "Everybody praises each other for the work that they do, no matter how big or small."

He's quick to praise the resources offered by USD's Career Development Center, when talking about his own opportunity. "USD sets you up so well on a professional level," he notes. Through taking advantage of LinkedIn workshops,

resume revisions, career fairs and other offerings, he felt fully equipped with the tools and experience needed to succeed in his internship.

On National Interns Day, Davidson and his fellow interns were honored with an awe-inspiring gesture that was seen by thousands. Alongside his fellow interns, his photo was featured on the Nasdaq billboard in the middle of Times Square. "I can't think of another company that does that," he says.

His beaming face on that glowing billboard in the Big Apple is a potent symbol of what hard work and drive can lead to. 🌐



COURTESY OF ANDREW DAVIDSON



[a d v o c a c y]

AGENTS OF CHANGE

Alumni Honors celebrates Torero Changemakers

by Allyson Meyer

Powerful agents of change were celebrated at the University of San Diego Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice on Friday, Oct. 15, for the 2021 Alumni Honors event.

For more than two decades, the USD community has come together each year for an evening that honors Torero Changemakers. This year, the event was all the more poignant, as it signaled the first time it had been held in person since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Senior Director of Alumni Rela-

tions Charles Bass presided over the festivities, donning a secret agent alter ego persona to announce the honorees for the Bishop Charles Francis Buddy and Mother Rosalie Clifton Hill Awards and the salute to six Torero Changemakers.

"Tonight, we are celebrating USD's 'agents of change,' and in true Bond fashion, we'll do the right thing and honor these amazing folks," said Bass. "007 was, of course, a secret agent. Tonight, we'll make sure the work of the 'agents of change' we're celebrat-

ing is anything but secret. The work they do in their communities, through advocacy and involvement, on the front lines of social challenge to forge social change, deserves more than our attention; it deserves our respect and our gratitude."

The Bishop Charles Francis Buddy Award, an honor presented annually to an alumnus/a in recognition of a commitment to humanitarian causes, was awarded to Mou D. Riiny '11 (BS/BA). The founder and CEO of SunGate Solar, Riiny has dedicated his

professional career to improving the standard of living in his native South Sudan. The idea for Sun-Gate Solar — a solar power design, installation and maintenance company — began while Riiny was a student at USD. Since then, the company has helped transform the solar industry in South Sudan.

Ronson J. Shamoun '98 (BAC), '02 (JD), '03 (LLM) was awarded the Mother Rosalie Clifton Hill Award, an honor presented to an alumnus/a to recognize service and commitment to USD. Shamoun, the founder and CEO of RJS Law, A Tax Law Firm, serves as an adjunct professor in USD's School of Law and regularly supports business and law scholarships. In addition, Shamoun serves on the USD School of Law Board of Visitors and the USD School of Business Board of Advisors.

The evening also featured a salute to Torero Changemakers — six alumni who have demonstrated over the past two years a commitment to their communities in the midst of a global health crisis and a national reckoning of social justice.

Deena Drake '13 (MSN), '19 (PhD), a palliative care clinical nurse specialist at Sharp Chula Vista, worked throughout the pandemic to change hospital policies to enable terminally ill patients to communicate with their loved ones.

An associate reporting officer of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Afarin Dadkhah Tehrani '14 (MA) helped provide life-saving aid and protection to refugees.

Creating a space of courage and voice, Anthony Lê '18 (MA), the deputy director of the Asian Pacific American Leadership Institute, led efforts to promote API equality in the USD community.

Through work with Casa Alitas, Ally Ramona '20 (BA) helped serve migrant families seeking shelter in the United States.

Chief of Policy and Education for the San Diego Housing Federation, Laura Nunn '08 (MA) has spent a decade advocating for affordable housing in the San Diego region.

Josh Williams '16 (BA), a district engineer with San Diego Gas and Electric, has been at the forefront of efforts in San Diego to address equity and social justice.

A special tribute to those among the Torero community who spread the changemaking mission worldwide, the evening's salute was, for Bass, the first in a series dedicated to honoring those "in the corner office, those on the front lines and folks from all walks of life." 🌍

Pictured: Ronson J. Shamoun '98 (BAC), '02 (JD), '03 (LLM), Mou D. Riiny '11 (BS/BA), Deena Drake '13 (MSN), '19 (PhD), President James T. Harris, Josh Williams '16 (BA) and Laura Nunn '08 (MA).

[i m p a c t f u l]

AN ELECTRIFYING NIGHT

Founders Gala raises a net \$2.3 million for students

by Allyson Meyer

The night sky was a collage of colors as fireworks went off above Petco Park, the home of the San Diego Padres. The celebration lit up the skyline and dazzled the more than 600 guests in attendance at the University of San Diego's Founders Gala, "Field of Dreams."

After a year postponement due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the USD community came together on November 13 for the university's signature fundraising event.

"In 2020, we were presented with a unique challenge and opportunity when we faced the global pandemic," said USD President James T. Harris III, DED. "Many of you helped us remain committed to delivering high-impact educational practices and to a values-based education by

offering financial assistance to support our students through your generous philanthropy."

The evening surpassed expectations with a record-breaking net \$2.3 million raised to support student scholarships.

Andrew Firestone '98 (BBA), the founder and principal of StonePark Capital, presided over the event, which included an appearance by San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria '00 (BA).

Featuring a live auction and raffle, the event also included a Fund-A-Torero paddle raise, which gave attendees the opportunity to donate directly to the Founders Endowed Scholarship Fund, which supports undergraduate and graduate students who have documented financial need.

An impactful moment came

when USD trustees Mike Persall '02 and Chair Emerita Darlene Marcos Shiley each donated \$500,000 as part of the paddle raise.

The record-breaking evening was an inspiring event, showcasing USD's commitment to ensuring access to learning for current and future Changemakers.

Perhaps President Harris summed it up best with his closing comments. "Let me end by proposing a toast," he said. "To USD, a university where dreams come true. A place grounded in the belief that faith and reason can co-exist. To an engaged, contemporary Catholic university committed to the common good. And, to the belief that we have not even come close to reaching our full potential as a university." 🌍



ZACHARY BARRON



[safety first]

OBSTACLE COURSE

Baja sponsors take buggy for a spin

by Elisa Lurkis

The Shiley-Marcos School of Engineering was thrilled to host long-time Baja car sponsors, Richard and Susan Pennington, on campus in October 2020 for what proved to be a fun test-drive.

The couple has been involved with the Baja car program since their son, David Pennington '17 (BS/BA), was a student at USD. He and fellow alumnus Brock Wilson '17 (BS/BA) started the Baja car program as a Capstone Design project during their senior year.

Since then, a senior design

team has led the Baja car program each year. Although the program is small compared to many of the Society of Automotive Engineers' (SAE) programs at universities across the country, it continues to thrive each year.

SAE International's mission is to "advance mobility knowledge and solutions for the betterment of humanity." One way this is accomplished is by holding annual regional Baja car-racing competitions, which take place over a three-day period. There are static and dynamic components of the

competition, culminating in an endurance race as the main competitive event.

For four hours, all vehicles race wheel to wheel on a track riddled with obstacles, including trees, jumps, logs, railroad ties, boulders and ditches. The track is designed to push vehicles past their limit; it is extremely rare for any vehicle to make it through the race without stopping for repairs.

Back in 2017, when the USD team participated in the regional competition, the Penningtons attended to watch their son com-

pete, but soon found themselves busy searching the Bakersfield area for gear and equipment that would meet the strict safety standards set by the SAE judges.

"It was so much fun to watch the competition, and we were grateful for the strict safety standards as we watched other cars flip over, fall apart and collide on the course," Susan Pennington recalls.

That first year, USD's Torero Racing team placed 30th in the overall competition out of 94 teams. Not bad for a small team's first attempt.

Over the years, the Penningtons have remained key sponsors of the program. Sponsorship provides critical support for parts, tools and travel costs to bring the team and the car to the competition each year. So it was with great delight that the 2020-21

team hosted the Penningtons for a test-drive on the gravel lot to the west of campus.

Both Susan and Richard took turns driving the car, wearing the required helmet and cramming themselves into the very small driver's seat. They both enjoyed taking the car for a spin around the parking lot.

But then, as with the competition itself, the unexpected happened. One of the students took a turn too quickly and plowed head-on into a closed garage door of a storage unit at the end of the lot.

Everyone ran to see what had happened. Although the car's nose was sticking vertically up in the air, the student remained strapped in his seat and was completely unharmed. That's because SAE places safety first, with many rules of compliance that must be followed.

Steve Saxer, mechanical shop manager for the Shiley-Marcos School of Engineering, was not worried that the student would be hurt in this incident or in any situation that may arise in the competition.

"Our team has done extensive finite-element analysis of the frame design to ensure that the driver's compartment can withstand a 5G incident without compromising the driver's compartment."

Still, engineers sometimes have to try to break a product to test it. And even though this test was accidental, the car passed with flying colors.

Susan Pennington was thrilled to have been back on campus to test drive the car and meet the current team — who placed first in the sled pull at the 2021 SAE Collegiate Design Series competition.

"We love supporting this program and seeing each year's students embrace the challenge of designing, constructing and ultimately getting in the driver's seat and racing their engineering achievement!" 🏆

[creativity]

MAKING THEIR MARK

Student curators select artwork for exhibition

by Allyson Meyer

Walking through the Honors Program suite is an artistic journey for University of San Diego senior Juliana Guerra. A finance major pursuing minors in French and art history, Guerra was part of the inaugural Art Illuminated project, a year-long collaboration between the University Galleries and the Honors Program. The first-of-its-kind partnership was a student-led curatorial endeavor, with three students tasked with creating an art exhibit for the Honors Program suite.

"As an art history student, I'm really interested in the curatorial process that goes on in museums," says Guerra. "I thought this would be a really amazing opportunity to get firsthand experience working in a curatorial role and the decisions that go into selecting artwork."

Guerra, along with fellow students Marielle Krivit '21 and Jacqueline Crane '21, chose works from four BIPOC artists — Fred Wilson, Shahazia Sikander, Khalil-Jibade Huffman and Leonardo Drew — with the goal of showcasing contemporary works that create an "intentional, inclusive and thought-provoking exhibition."

"It was very important to us to support the artists who are still active in their careers, who are actively responding to social concerns," says Guerra.

Beginning in October 2020, the three students worked with Derrick Cartwright, PhD, associate professor of art history and

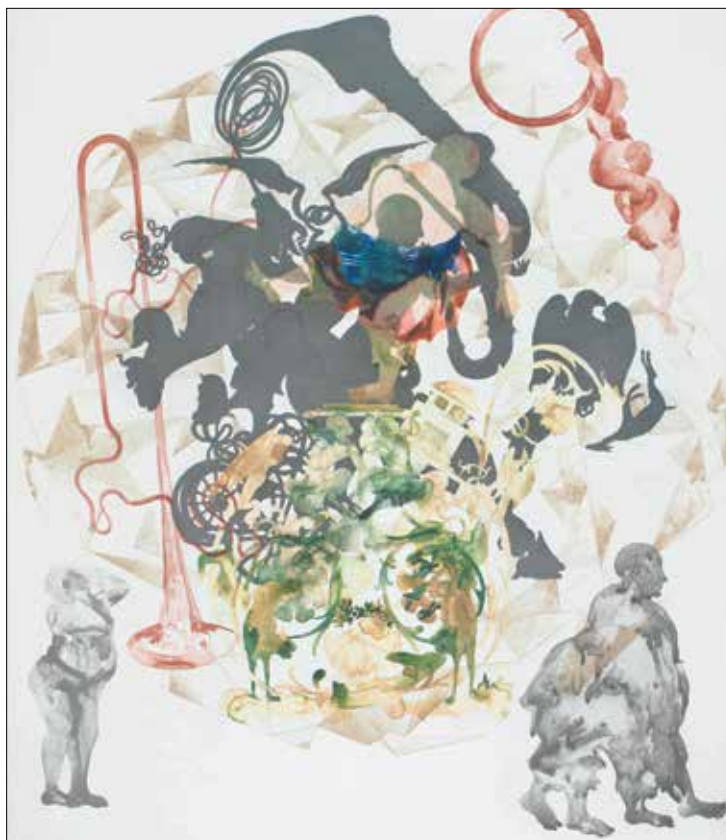
director of University Galleries, and Susannah Stern, PhD, professor of communication studies and director of the Honors Program, to identify the artists for the exhibit. Guerra, who served as a Spring 2021 intern with the University Galleries Print Room, found herself immersed in the curator role, spending time researching art and reviewing prints in the USD collection.

"Ever since I was little, I've loved creating art, I've loved looking at art," says Guerra. "It speaks to me on a deeper level to see all the different forms of human creativity. It's really exciting to see how people are interpreting their

emotions and their feelings and translating them onto paper."

In Fall 2021, the exhibition was officially installed. As students take in the art showcased on the Honors Program walls, Guerra is aware of the unique opportunity she had.

"I don't think this is a project that would have taken place at a larger university," says Guerra. "One of the things I love about being a USD student is having such close relationships with professors and other students, and being able to have these opportunities to really make your mark on the school and really feel like part of the community." 🏆



SHAHAZIA SIKANDER, ORBIT, 2012, PRINT COLLECTION, UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO, PC2013.04



[faith in action]

A GLOBAL COLLABORATION

Theology course brings students from Vienna and USD together

by Kelsey Grey

At this point, most people are all too aware that Zoom has its challenges. The video conferencing platform freezes when there's a bad Wi-Fi connection, the mute button seems to be a challenge for some users, and a few folks have issues with proper etiquette for passing the proverbial online mic.

But for one University of San Diego theology class, Zoom is a

tool that's expanding their educational experience, providing increased resources, flexibility for students and valuable global interchange.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, if you asked theology professor Russell Fuller if teaching a virtual course with students from both the United States and a European country was feasible, he would've laughed. "We would have been

required to physically travel to the location with the students, take up residence and orient them to the area and how to get around," says Fuller.

But with Zoom, that was no longer the case.

Fuller was intrigued by the idea of pushing the limits of higher education through virtual learning. His long-time friend and colleague, Armin Lange at the University of Vienna in

Austria, was also interested.

The pair decided to teach a class, leveraging the Zoom technology to teach a course focused on anti-Semitism and the Bible. Students from both USD and the University of Vienna would work together to meet and work as one class.

Fuller is a specialist in the Hebrew Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls. His research has focused on the textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible, specifically the biblical and non-biblical Dead Sea Scrolls. Lange is also a specialist in Judaism, particularly anti-Semitism. It only seemed natural that the two would create and co-teach this particular course.

Through a partnership with the Austrian National Library, students have access to digitized versions of picture Bibles from the 13th to 15th centuries. Fuller explains the books often-times illustrate stories from the Old Testament and pair them with New Testament typology.

By using these Medieval picture bibles, the professors are encouraging the students to look for the ways Jews were depicted and presented throughout that time period. The students are then asked to take it one step further and find ways in which these portrayals of Jews might have been passed down through time and still exist in the 21st century.

“Going back to the Black Death during the Middle Ages, Jews were accused of poisoning the wells and intentionally spreading the illness,” says Fuller, before pivoting to a modern-day example.

“Well, guess who’s been accused of spreading the coronavirus? You can draw a straight line from one to the next. That’s what this class is doing, looking at these old accusations, none of which are true, but their persistence and application persists among anti-Semitic groups today.”

When starting this course, both Fuller and Lange knew there would be some challenges to overcome. The first was working in two different time zones; Vienna is nine hours ahead of San Diego. Fuller went to the dean’s office and requested a special class time that would allow both USD and the Austrian students to be “in class” at the same time. They settled on Wednesdays from 8 a.m. to 10:50 a.m.

The second challenge was to figure out a central platform where students could have access to texts and information

needed for class. USD uses the course management system Blackboard, while the University of Vienna uses Moodle (pronounced similarly to “poodle”). As it turns out, no changes were made on this front. USD students continued using Blackboard and the Austrian students continued using Moodle. The two professors shared and exchanged course materials with one another and uploaded them to their respective platforms to give students access.

Minor bugs are still being worked out. In the first class, the professors and students discovered quickly that everyone would need their own laptop and set of headphones to prevent echoing or feedback in the classroom. Since the Austrian students are all fluent in English, that’s the language in which the class is taught.

Fuller and Lange are currently in talks with the Austrian National Library in the hopes it will host a virtual exhibit based on the students’ work throughout the semester.

The two also hope their model of a virtual, global course inspires others to test the waters.

“This would be like a second generation of international studies, a different model, that would allow us to move forward with our work in spite of anything like a pandemic,” says Fuller.

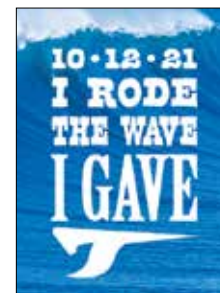
The professors also hope to write a paper on their experience of running this virtual course, have it peer-reviewed and ultimately published in an academic journal.

Whether they are able to teach the course again or not, Fuller hopes their effort has inspired colleagues to expand beyond the limitations of the normal classroom environment and collaborate on a global scale. 🌐

[AROUND THE PARK]

A Wave of Giving

Supporters joined together to make an impact at the sixth annual Torero Tuesday. USD’s largest day of giving saw more than \$1.1 million raised through more than 2,200 generous gifts. The overall total was enhanced by \$112,500 in bonus funds, thanks to the generosity of Karen and Tom Mulvaney ‘77 and USD Trustee David Hale. The gifts will go toward academic and extracurricular programs, athletics and scholarships.



Deepening Cross-Border Collaboration

The Tijuana Hub is a new multi-purpose space housed at the Business Innovation and Technology Center for USD students, faculty, staff, alumni and community partners to collaborate with Tijuana partners on projects, deepening the university’s history of community engagement in the region. The purpose is to facilitate and improve cross-border alliances in entrepreneurship, education, arts and human rights.



Senior Named Top Tennis Singles Player

In December, redshirt senior August Holmgren of USD’s men’s tennis was slotted as the No. 1 singles player in the nation, according to the Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA). In early November, Holmgren had won the ITA Fall National Championship, defeating Stanford’s Arthur Fery. The Denmark native was the first Torero in program history to advance to the ITA All-American championship match.



Changing the World for the Better

Pope Francis’ 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si’*, has informed classroom discussions, new faculty fellow programs and can be seen in USD’s newly adopted investment policy. “This change reflects the university’s commitment to social justice, stewardship of the planet, protection of human life and dignity, and promotion of the common good into its investments,” said President James T. Harris, DED in a message to the campus community this fall.



TORERO ATHLETICS



BARBARA FERGUSON

[cutting edge]

PASSION MEETS PURPOSE

Ungricht leads USD baseball forward

by Mike Sauer

We've all heard it before. Love what you do, and you'll never work a day in your life. But in reality, everyone has those days where the workplace challenges and obstacles far outweigh the rewards and opportunities, right?

Not if you're new USD Baseball

Coach Brock Ungricht. No way.

He can barely contain his excitement when talking about his position at the helm of a team he is already very familiar with, having served as USD's hitting coach under previous manager Rich Hill.

"Can it get any better than this?," he exclaims. "I get to man-

age a team with a really talented core group of players, a group of guys I know and care about."

Ungricht's infectious energy is driven by his love for the game. To hear him tell it, it's a love that was evident from a very tender age.

"My dad was a baseball coach, and he had me swinging a whiffle

bat when I was still in diapers — at least that's what my mom tells me," he says, laughing. "My dad recalls that he would let me hit off a tee in the house after mom had gone to bed. He just had one rule: 'Don't break anything!'"

As years passed, those indoor batting sessions transitioned into nine-inning games with the other kids. Ungricht consumed every bit of baseball knowledge he could from his dad, and when he wasn't playing, he was thinking about how he could get better when he did.

"I always wanted to learn from

my mistakes, correct the issues I could, and continue to grow and improve. I had really great coaches who challenged me to get better every day. I still think about those lessons now as a coach, and I really appreciate their support and mentorship.”

Speaking of mentors, Ungricht had one of the greatest hitters in the history of baseball — as well as one of San Diego’s favorite sons, Tony Gwynn — oversee his development as a player at San Diego State University. He learned countless lessons on the diamond from Gwynn, but it was his connection with the players that made a lasting impact.

“When he first spoke to the team, he talked about ‘always being in our corner,’ which is not something unique in coach speak,” Ungricht says. “What made it so impactful from Tony was that he walked the talk; he would watch video with me on my swing and talk about what he saw and what I could work on. He had this innate ability to find a way to connect with each of us on a personal level. He made you feel like you mattered.”

His playing days would end shortly after he graduated from SDSU in 2008, but he wanted to stay connected to the game he loved. Gwynn had told Ungricht he thought he would make a great coach, and provided him the opportunity to join his coaching staff in 2009.

In the 12 years since, Ungricht has distinguished himself as both a coach and scout at the collegiate and professional levels. That impressive resume, along with his familiarity with the USD program, made him USD Athletic Director Bill McGillis’ first choice for a job that had no shortage of top-level candidates.

“Our competitive goals are really high, and I believe Brock can provide the leadership to achieve those goals,” McGillis says. 🌐



ZACHARY BARRON

GETTING TO KNOW ... GRACE FROHLING

CREDENTIALS: At 6’5,” Frohling has been an intimidating front-court presence for the Toreros since she was a first-year. She started all 27 matches for the Toreros in 2021 and led the team with 392 kills, which ranked third in the West Coast Conference. Despite her considerable individual success, she’s all-team, all the time. “We win and lose together, and we’re committed to getting better every day. I’m excited to see how far we can go.” **CULTURE SHOCK:** It was evident to Frohling’s parents that if Grace and her older sister Hannah were to reach their full potential on the volleyball court, they’d need to relocate to a place where they could face top-level competition on a daily basis. “Growing up in Oklahoma and playing on club teams there is much different than here in California in terms of competition. It was tough to leave my friends, but I knew it would work itself out.” **SISTERS OF SWING:** Sister Hannah is an outside hitter for Pepperdine University, and the two have already had several on-court battles as WCC rivals. “The first time we played against each other, it was weird for both of us, since we grew up playing on the same teams. Hannah wants to win and so do I, but we’re pretty good at separating the on-court stuff from our regular lives.” **BERLIN OR BUST:** A junior communications major, Frohling doesn’t have post-graduation plans set in stone. She’s currently taking German and there are several professional volleyball leagues in Europe, including one in Germany. Hmm. “There’s a lot of opportunity overseas to play professionally, and it would be really cool to give that a try. I’m already speaking the language, so why not sample the culture, too?” — Mike Sauer

The PHILANTHROPISTS

Don and Ellie Knauss in Conversation with Knauss School of Business Dean Tim Keane

Don Knauss, chair of USD's Board of Trustees, and his wife, Ellie, have generously agreed to increase their philanthropic giving to USD to \$50 million as their investment in educating ethical and compassionate business leaders. In honor of their remarkable gift, our business school will be known as the Knauss School of Business. The following is an excerpt from a wide-ranging conversation between Dean Tim Keane, PhD, and Don and Ellie Knauss. To hear the entire interview, visit sandiego.edu/knauss_video.

Dean Keane: You have been so generous with your time and resources over the years in support of various philanthropic causes. What motivates you to give so much of yourselves?

Ellie: Education is the great equalizer. We've felt that in our bones since we started looking at how can we use what we've been blessed with to help other people.

Don: The only way to get at this core issue in our society today — which is inequality — is people have to get educated. There's talent everywhere. There's not opportunity everywhere.

Dean Keane: Your support of USD and the Knauss School of Business has been incredible. Why do you feel compelled to invest in us?

Ellie: The support that we're giving USD comes from a place where we have trust in the fact that they have their finger on the

pulse of not only what's happening on campus, but what's happening all over the world.

Don: If you look at the vision and mission of this university, it is anchored in creating leaders who engage in ethical conduct and compassionate service. That is very consistent with our values.

Dean Keane: How have your experiences shaped your values?

Ellie: People always ask us, 'What was the most incredible thing in your career?' It's pretty easy to say that the biggest growth and the best opportunities came out of those several years in South Africa.

Don: When I was sent to South Africa, the head of Coca-Cola said to me, 'Your job is to train Africans to take over this business, because they've been shut off from opportunities for decades.' What I realized very

early on, was that these tenets of leadership — integrity, humility, compassion for people — exist in every culture.

Dean Keane: At the Knauss School of Business, we believe in the concept of Kairos, which refers to a time when forces come together that demand bold action. In early 1990 when Nelson Mandela was released from prison in South Africa, it was the Kairos moment that signaled the end to Apartheid. You met Nelson Mandela — I know that must have affected you deeply.


Ellie: It was a Kairos moment for our family as well, because I think all of our children grew as a result of that. It was a phenomenal experience and I think we all came out of it closer to understanding what was important.

Don: It gave us a much more global mindset. You know what? We're much more alike than we

are different. So what are we going to do to create opportunities for people who have that talent around the globe?

Dean Keane: Our aspirational vision in the Knauss School of Business is to drive business stewardship of the world through values-driven free enterprise. Stewardship requires business, arguably the most powerful force in society, to be intentional about protecting and caring for that society. Your charge from Coca-Cola in South Africa was a perfect example of business stewardship. Our vision is different from other business schools, but what else makes us different from your perspective?

Don: When I think about the vision for the business school here, what separates it, in our minds, is a combination of world-class academics along with real, practical work experience.



"We are a very global society now, so you have to trust that the people who will spend the money [we gave to USD] will maximize it, and make sure that they understand the needs of the campus. That they'll look at what's going on in the world and marry the two in an ethical way that brings out the best in everyone."

– **Ellie Knauss**



The Knauss Center for Business Education opens in Fall 2022. Each space within the 120,000-square-foot complex is intentionally designed to create an innovation and collaboration ecosystem that empowers student experiences. From groundbreaking technology that enables active learning classrooms, data analytics labs, a production studio and student start-up incubator spaces, Knauss School of Business students will learn what it takes to remake the future of business.

Ellie: It's a different way of doing things now. So much more is collaborative now, than it's ever been before.

Dean Keane: Your investment in the Knauss School of Business includes the construction of our new, state-of-the-art business school complex, and the Knauss Center for Business Education building. In your view, how is our vision enabled through the Knauss Center for Business Education?

Don: That building's going to be a world-class facility to enable that kind of interaction with people. How things are structured, the openness, the lightness, the ability to innovate with each other, that design was, I think, critical to creating that kind of atmosphere.


Every student who wants those opportunities is going to have access because of this investment. Not if they can afford to do it, but now it can be made available to them, and I think that's going to create a whole ripple effect.

Dean Keane: Everything we do in the Knauss School of Business is focused on our students' success. We deliver learning through the highest quality curriculum, reinforced and integrated with multiple experiences that help our students grow their business toolbox skills and their soft skills. This generation of students face tremendous stress, exacerbated by the pandemic. How will they thrive in the future?

Ellie: This generation, I'm so

excited by them. I see so much enthusiasm, I see so much intelligence, I see so much thinking outside the box. They're going to solve the problems of the world. I'm confident of that. We just have to make sure they have the opportunity and the tools to do it. And I think they can get a lot of that here.

Dean Keane: As I mentioned when we started this interview, you have been so generous with your time and resources over the years. How would you sum up the legacy of that generosity?

Don: A life is not important except for the impact it has on other lives. And that's the way, I think, we'd like to be remembered. This has an impact. 

James T. Harris, DEd

President
University of San Diego

“The Knauss School of Business aspires to provide every business student with equal access to unparalleled experiences that enable them to make a positive impact wherever their career journey takes them. Don and Ellie’s vision and philosophy of business stewardship through values-driven free enterprise aligns well with USD’s mission. Both Don and Ellie are true servant-leaders; their lives have been dedicated to making the world a better place.”



“

THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO HAS THE BEST BUSINESS SCHOOL IN SAN DIEGO AND A FANTASTIC PROGRAM FOR VETERANS, SO IT MADE FOR A SEAMLESS TRANSITION WHEN I LEFT THE MILITARY TO COMPLETE MY UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE. I RECEIVED A 90% DISCOUNT ON MY EDUCATION THROUGH SCHOLARSHIPS, WHICH HAS BEEN A HUGE FINANCIAL BLESSING. MORE IMPORTANT, BEING AWARDED THESE SCHOLARSHIPS GAVE ME A GREAT SENSE OF PRIDE AND HONOR.”

- Cameron Markowitz '18 (BBA)

#1

#1 Business School for Undergraduates in California
— Poets&Quants

Gail F. Baker, PhD

Vice President and Provost
University of San Diego

"It is inspiring to be a part of these moments in USD's history and to see the spirit of our Torero community lifted during incredibly challenging times. The exceptional generosity of USD Board Chair Donald Knauss and his wife, Ellie, amplify the power of philanthropy and faith in our mission. Their actions and steadfast support will enable us to achieve the highest potential of our institution, create tremendous opportunities for our students and faculty members, and deliver on the promise of our mission. Their generosity provides us with a path of hope and a new horizon of possibilities for all that is to come. We are incredibly grateful."



"Throughout the Knauss Center for Business Education we have so many spaces dedicated to supporting our students, starting with our Student Success Center, which serves as a hub for all student-support programs and people – including advising, career services, mentoring and internships."

– Talia Gorman '22 (BBA)

"To me, the most exciting part of the new Knauss Center is our active learning classrooms that feature updated room designs, cutting-edge technology to enhance the learning experience. I'm also excited about furniture that can be moved, rearranged and completely reconfigured to better serve group dynamics and whatever activity, discussion, lesson or challenge is planned for the day."

– Carl Dumesle '21 (MBA)

"The endowment will provide a lasting gift to current and future generations of students and scholars; to Changemakers and business leaders who see business as a force for good. Don and Ellie clearly articulated their vision for the school in their presentation and I cannot imagine a better fit between USD's core values and their vision for the Knauss School of Business. It was wonderful to hear and I am proud to be a member of this school!"

– Steve Conroy, PhD

95.7% of Knauss School of Business undergraduates received their first job offer within three months of graduating.

95.7%



THE TEAM BUILDER

Kelli Bagley

Assistant Dean of Finance and Administration
Knauss School of Business

Kelli Bagley provides leadership and oversight for non-academic resources including finance, human resources and facilities for USD's Knauss School of Business. She's excited to continue serving students with the wealth of resources that will be made possible in the months and years to come.

"In the new Knauss Center for Business Education, the Center for Student Success will be prominently placed," she explains. "This will be the home to our incredible team of dedicated staff and administrators who provide academic advising and student professional development services."

Each of the team members specializes in a different business discipline and collaborates closely with faculty members within that discipline.

"This approach allows staff to create a more customized, personal and intentional approach to our students' success. Under one roof, a student will receive academic advising as well as co/extra-curricular guidance, career coaching, expansive access to internships and mentorships specific to their industry of interest."

This approach sets the Knauss School apart from others. "Our students will build an extensive network of relationship highways prior to graduation, which will guide them in their career journey toward a life well-lived. This is really founded in our commitment and conviction to the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. One of our goals is to educate and prepare our students to approach business as a pursuit of a greater good."

Like her colleagues, she is devoted to the principles of ethical and compassionate leadership.

"In addition to our robust academic programming, all business students have experiential learning activities embedded into their education. This translates classroom lessons into practical understanding of how academic theories can be applied to their own career aspirations and how those aspirations can be used to serve the greater good."

— Julene Snyder

Stath Karras

Executive Director
Burnham-Moores Center for Real Estate

“I’m incredibly excited that we are now the Knauss School of Business. We’ve been talking about the importance of a named school of business since I arrived at USD 20 years ago. If you think about all the schools around the country that have named programs, they bring a level of prestige to their university — as well as honor to the students and the alumni who graduate from those great schools — whether it’s Wharton or Sloan or Kellogg or Tuck.

Having a name associated with USD’s business school — which will identify it over time as one of the top-quality business schools in the country — is very important. Because if you’re associated with the name, it brings a new sense of pride for students and alumni. So, the intangible psychological impact will be pretty enormous.”



#1 MBA PROGRAM IN SAN DIEGO

#60 in the U.S.
— Bloomberg Businessweek

#1

THE ENTHUSIAST

Priya Kannan-Narasimhan

Associate Dean of Faculty and Accreditation
Knauss School of Business

Associate Dean of Faculty and Accreditation and founder of USD's Innovation and Entrepreneurship Catalyzer Rangapriya ("Priya") Kannan-Narasimhan, is also a professor of strategy, innovation and entrepreneurship at the school as well as an affiliate faculty member at the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies.

Her reaction to the news of the \$50 million gift made by Don and Ellie Knauss was over-the-top excitement. "It wasn't very professional," she says with a laugh. "I sent an email or text to the dean that said, 'OMG! OMG! OMG! OMG!!!!' I was literally jumping up and down."

She's confident that the Knauss School of Business is poised to become one of the top business schools in the nation. "San Diego as a region is a huge, booming ecosystem. Now, especially in the local innovation and collaboration ecosystem, we are playing in the major leagues, with cities like Boston and Los Angeles," she enthuses.

Priya credits Dean Timothy Keane's vision for the sense of possibility embodied by faculty members and students. "He is an entrepreneurial dean with an impressive vision, and it's built on years of work. We're circling back to the values that were exciting when the school was established in the first place. This is a historic moment for our school."

Given the shift for many employees to become self-employed or entrepreneurs in the wake of the pandemic, Priya sees the school's focus as particularly timely.

"The world seems to be coalescing around what we believe at the Knauss School of Business: innovation, ethical leadership, sustainable business models, stewardship — all of those things. This gift is going to bring a lot of momentum; people are going to want to be a part of what's happening here."

— Julene Snyder

Sioma Waisburd '03 (BBA, BA)

Co-Founder/Director,
Chosen Foods

"I believe that doing good and doing well go hand in hand, really. I believe that doing business right means doing good economically and doing good for the environment and society. One area should elevate the other. It's not a zero-sum game. When a company authentically makes a positive impact, that's felt by customers and retailers. This creates a connection with a brand that is stronger than any marketing campaign. Customers will ultimately 'reward' the companies they feel that connection with by making a purchase."



“

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE MSEL PROGRAM ARE CENTRAL TO WHO I AM. I LIVE THOSE VALUES EVERY DAY AND APPLY THEM IN MY CAREER TODAY, ESPECIALLY AROUND THE ISSUES I CARE SO MUCH ABOUT - ADVANCING RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.”

-Pamela Gray Payton '16 (MSEL)

2022 marks the 50th anniversary
of USD's School of Business.

2022



THE RIGHT FIT



Pamela Gray Payton

Chief Impact and Partnerships Officer and
Vice President of Community Impact
San Diego Foundation

Looking back, Pamela Gray Payton '16 (MSEL) credits the Knauss School of Business, and specifically the Master of Science in Executive Leadership program, with helping her build confidence to be the type of leader she always wanted to be — one who successfully prioritizes both profit and people.

“Through the MSEL program, I learned to see things in a different way. And for me, that really helped in my career, but even more so, it helped me as a person,” says Payton.

As chief impact and partnerships officer and vice president of community impact at the San Diego Foundation, she is eloquent about her professional path to advance the quality of life for San Diegans.

“I got clarity on my purpose and was reaffirmed that it’s OK to care about people and to also care about the bottom line. You can do both and you can really build an organization using both principles.”

Today, Payton sees her role at the San Diego Foundation as a match made in heaven. It’s a place where she can be true to herself, grow even more as a leader, and work to advance just, equitable and resilient communities.

“At work, I don’t have to leave any part of me at home, literally or figuratively. I get to bring all of me into my workplace and I’m valued for doing so. And that means everything to me. I get to truly be my authentic self and that person is someone who others respect. I’m so grateful to have found such a perfect professional fit.”

— Bridget Breitenberg

Tim Keane, PhD

Dean
Knauss School of Business

“Through the support from Don and Ellie, our value proposition promises a rich combination of knowledge and experiences designed to help improve the quality of our students’ lives, as well as the lives of those they touch. We are increasing scholarship funds to ensure lower income students and their families have the opportunity to experience our value. We are investing in diversifying our faculty who will invent new methods for delivering on our promise. We are forging partnerships to enable all students to gain work experience. We are developing new ways for students to experience cultures around the world.”



“ THIS IS OUR INVESTMENT in educating ethical and compassionate business leaders. Leaders who enable a free enterprise system that creates wealth on a fair and equitable playing field.

Without the creation of wealth, no society can take care of its most vulnerable, lift the standard of living of its citizens or make the investments needed to preserve this planet for future generations.”

-Don and Ellie Knauss

#10

#10 Best Green MBA in the U.S.
— Princeton Review



THE PRAGMATIST

Tomas Vargas

Account Manager
Qualcomm

An ongoing program at USD is challenging students to learn firsthand about entrepreneurship at the micro level, while giving them a chance to impact the local community.

The Access Mentorship program is a collaboration formed between the Knauss School of Business and Access Community Center, a local organization that aims to serve vulnerable populations in San Diego. As part of its suite of free services, Access offers a micro-enterprise program to help low-income San Diego residents develop business plans, obtain licenses, learn essential business skills and more. But due to its popularity, the program would often find itself stretched to capacity. The Access Mentorship program was created to fill that gap.

In the fall of 2020, then-MBA student Tomas Vargas partnered with Maria Figueroa to help develop her taco business. Figueroa's Street Tacos operated out of her home as a catering service without a formal storefront, and her major goal for the semester was to begin operating at the Poway Farmers Market.

"In our classes, we learn to take a business objective and derive all of the intermediate steps you need to accomplish it," says Vargas '21 (MBA). In this case, the first step to cooking in a certified kitchen meant obtaining the required health permits and insurance — and even before that, navigating the city website. Figueroa, like 80% of business owners that utilize help from Access, speaks Spanish as her first language.

"I translated the city's food vendor website for her into Spanish, and created a flowchart for her to follow," says Vargas.

Students also gain something valuable from their time mentoring. "As MBA students, our heads are often in the clouds," explains Vargas. "When you try to help someone, it brings you to reality. This is not just theory anymore. You apply those concepts, and you see the struggles."

— Daniel Telles

CLASS NOTES



BARBARA FERGUSON

[multitasker]

IT'S ALL A BALANCING ACT

Alumna adds to full plate with Balboa Park role

by Kelsey Grey

University of San Diego School of Law alumna Allison Soares '09 (LLM) has perfected the art of juggling.

A partner and tax attorney at Vanst Law LLP in San Diego, a professor of accounting at San

Diego State University and a wife and mother to two young boys, Soares is a busy woman. As if all of those duties weren't enough, she was recently appointed by Mayor Todd Gloria '00 (BA) to be co-treasurer of

the Balboa Park Committee.

It sounds like a lot, but for Soares, being active and involved in her community is just how she was raised.

She grew up in a town that was north of Madison, Wisconsin, and

went to school at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. Soares' early years in proximity to a college town had a profound impact on her, inspiring her to complete her undergraduate work there.

But she wanted to see more of the world.

After graduating finance degree, she moved to Sao Paulo, Brazil, and worked with professionals to prepare business presentations for English-speaking audiences.

Despite falling in love with the work, Soares felt called to

move back to the United States. She set her sights on San Diego, where she got a job in the accounting department at Rady Children's Hospital. It was also around this time that she married her husband, Cesar, who she'd met while in Brazil.

After three years at Rady Children's, Soares knew she wanted to do something more and decided to apply for law school outside of California.

"I wanted to see what else was out there, so I ended up going to law school in Miami. We loved it, but Miami is not a place you want to raise your family," Soares says with a laugh. Not all that surprisingly, the couple settled on their first home together — San Diego. Soares took the bar exam and passed with flying colors, quickly landing a job at a boutique firm in North County.

"I was really fortunate because I loved the work that I was able to do there; 2008 was a rough economic time."

In spite of her passion on the job, she felt herself being pulled back to academia.

Soares applied to USD's School of Law to earn a master's degree in tax law. After a year and a half, the full-time professional and mother of two young boys earned her LLM degree. "It was definitely a juggling act, but the more work I had on my plate, the better off I was," she says. "I kept organized and loved that I could work full time with the flexibility of the classes."

She says her School of Law experience was a dynamic opportunity, with a focus on both academics and real-world application. That environment created a strong bond between students and the community, something that Soares continues to explore today.

A regular visitor to San Diego's

Balboa Park, Soares joined the Friends of Balboa Park, becoming the organization's treasurer. In January 2020, the Friends of Balboa Park merged with the Balboa Park Conservancy and, in July 2021, Soares became co-treasurer of a newly named nonprofit, Forever Balboa Park. The organization was behind the creation of the new viewing platform for the Moreton Bay Fig tree, an iconic, century-old landmark that has been a part of the park since being planted during the Panama-California Exposition of 1915.

As an active member, Soares submitted an application to sit on the Balboa Park Committee — a group of individuals appointed by the councilmember for District 3 and approved by the mayor. They act as an advisory board to the city council to discuss and review what's going on in Balboa Park. Soares went through the process and was confirmed to sit on the committee in August 2021.

"Being on this committee really gives me the opportunity to make a difference, to use my education and skill set and make sure that the work that needs to be done in the park is getting done," she explains.

Keeping Balboa Park accessible to all San Diegans is one of her biggest goals.

"I love that the park is free and open to everyone, and doesn't hinder anyone from using it. We don't want to have just people who live in the neighborhood visiting the park, we want to attract people from all throughout San Diego."

Although she's thrilled to take on this new endeavor, Soares says she won't be adding more to her plate anytime soon. "I feel very happy with where I am in my life and career. It feels like I'm at the beginning of a new chapter." 🌿

1960s

[1965]

MARY (WILLIAMS) SCHALLER (BA) writes, "My latest book, written during the COVID pandemic lockdown, was released in June 2021. It is titled, *The Most Improbable International Cricket Team Ever*. It is the true story of a group of teens who wanted to learn how to play cricket and then to actually play a game in England — all in five months. I was the manager for this team. Both the Library of Virginia in Richmond, Virginia, as well as the global cricket headquarters at the Marylebone Cricket Club in England requested copies of my book for their permanent collections. I am absolutely thrilled by this international response."

[1966]

VERN SCHOOLEY (JD) reports that he is still practicing IP law full time and is having fun. He says he was recently presented with the prestigious A. Sherman Christensen Award at the U.S. Supreme Court, CAFC Judge Richard Linn presenting. He also acts as counselor for the Ball/Hunt/Schooley Inn of Court in Long Beach and the Judge Paul R. Michel Intellectual Property Inn in Los Angeles. He continues to blend his professional life with his social life, including recent travel with the Long Beach State basketball team to his alma mater, Michigan State University, weekly games of tennis, and ski trips this winter to Park City, Utah and Aspen, Colorado, as well as scuba diving in the South Pacific and Caribbean.

1970s

[1974]

EUGENE ALKANA (JD) writes, "My twins, Robert and Rebecca, finished law school. Rebecca took the February bar and is now practicing. Robert is awaiting his results from the July bar. I am awaiting retirement!"

[1975]

GILBERT CARRASCO (BA) has been appointed visiting professor of law to teach Constitutional Law I and II at Southwestern Law School in Los Angeles, California.

[1976]

ALICE GONZALEZ (BAC) writes, "I've lived in beautiful San Diego all

my life. I retired from being a Catholic school teacher. I'm enjoying re-discovering San Diego, traveling and volunteering in my community!!!"

DAVID MOUSSETTE (BBA), '81 (JD) is still living in Williamsburg, Virginia, near his grandsons, who are now 9 and 11 years old. He is involved in the York County Historical Committee in the local area, which also contains Yorktown and Jamestown. "Staying healthy and close to home due to the pandemic," he says.

JAMES E. STANT JR. (MA), '78 (Med) writes, "After 20 years in the Marine Corps, I became a high school teacher in the Oceanside Unified School District, working at both Oceanside (15 years) and El Camino (14 years) high schools. I coached girls basketball at both schools as well as at The Bishops School, San Dieguito Academy, Mission Vista, Fallbrook and Tri City Christian. I retired from teaching at El Camino in 2005. In 2006, I was recruited to be the conference commissioner for the North County Conference. I served in this position until June of 2020. I cannot believe how much USD has grown since I was there. My community service, after 63 years, is finally over."

[1977] 🎓

JOAN STEIDINGER (BA) has been named a fellow of the Association of Applied Sports Psychology. "My second book on female athletes was released during the pandemic," she writes. It is titled, *Stand and Shout Out: Women's Fight for Equal Pay, Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities*

1980s

[1982] 🎓

ED MCPHERSON (JD) says he was once again honored in *Billboard* magazine as one of the top music lawyers for 2021. He reports that he also recently celebrated an important victory for Travis Scott in a copyright infringement case.

[1986]

PAUL DAVIS (BA), '08 (MS) is living in Waukegan, Illinois, an hour north of Chicago. He is the owner and operator of Spotless Cleaning, a residential and commercial cleaning business.



[opportunity]

BLOOMING IN PLACE

The Tamarindo Foundation is changing lives in El Salvador

by Krystn Shrieve

San Salvador archbishop Óscar Romero knew that he irritated people. In fact, he was reviled by many for his stance against poverty and oppression. The government found him exasperating, the Catholic Church worried he was always making waves and political groups felt he shouldn't stick his nose where it didn't belong.

Romero once said, "If you live out a Christianity that is good, but that is not sufficient for our times, that doesn't denounce

injustice, that doesn't proclaim the kingdom of God courageously, that doesn't reject the sins humankind commits, that consents to the sins of certain classes so as to be accepted by those classes, then you are not doing your duty, you are sinning, you are betraying your mission."

"The church was put here to convert humankind, not to tell people that everything that they do is all right; and because of that, naturally, it irritates people. Everything that corrects us

irritates us. I know that I have irritated many people, but I know that I am well liked by all those who work sincerely for the conversion of the church."

Death threats against Romero were on the rise; he was slain on March 24, 1980. His death sparked the beginning of the Salvadoran Civil War — lasting 12 years, resulting in the deaths of an estimated 75,000 people and displacing thousands more.

Romero eventually became a saint. He was beatified on

May 23, 2015, canonized on Oct. 14, 2018, and remains an inspiration to those at the Tamarindo Foundation, located in Guarjila, El Salvador.

The foundation is named in honor of the tamarind tree, which produces brown, pod-like fruits filled with a sweet, tangy pulp used in cuisines around the world. Following the end of the civil war in 1992, it is said when residents returned to Guarjila, the tamarind tree was the only thing left standing. The Tamarindo Foundation's name symbolizes strength, resilience and hope.

The foundation's executive director, John Giuliano, served in Latin America for 35 years. He was sent as a Jesuit novice to Tijuana, Mexico, where he

worked in a prison and established a house for Central American refugees. He later went to El Salvador. Although no longer with the Jesuit order, he worked with the Jesuit Refugee Service to establish what became the Tamarindo Foundation.

Steve Nasman '71 (BS) — who is active in the University of San Diego's Orange County Torero Club and the Alumni Association's national Board of Directors — also serves as president of the Tamarindo Foundation's board. His wife, Vicki Nasman '74 (BS), is the board's secretary.

Nasman says the foundation's goal is to break the chains of poverty and forced migration in El Salvador so residents can bloom in place. "We want to stem the migration of people who feel forced to move from their country to find a better life," Nasman says. "We want to provide the programs and skills for them to thrive in their own country."

Programs develop life skills, study habits, vocational opportunities, learning skills, job readiness, college readiness, micro-business loans, sports, health and wellness and even address gender equality to combat the machismo mindset. With the belief that education is the weapon needed to break the chains of poverty, the Tamarindo Foundation opened a learning center in 2020 and soon hopes to build a children's library, with dual-language books in both English and Spanish.

"We know that speaking a second language, such as English, is a huge tool and opens the doors in El Salvador," Nasman says.

The foundation also offers tutoring and scholarships named in honor of Jon Cortina Garaigorta, S.J., a Jesuit priest, engineer and activist dedicated to searching for the missing children of the civil war. The

goal is to prepare children to attend a university or a technical school, which offers courses in engineering, food services, electronics, mechanics and many other programs. Students wear different colored shirts to signify their area of study.

The Tamarindo Foundation is also connected to USD's Eileen Daspro, DBA, a clinical professor of international business. The foundation provides seed money for both men and women to start cottage businesses. Workshops, led by students, teach women all aspects of running a successful business — marketing, pricing, accounting, understanding supply and demand and preparing projections.

"Professor Daspro developed a curriculum with her students and conducted virtual workshops," Nasman says. "The instant rapport between the women and the students was magical."

Residents can also receive loans, from \$1,500 to \$4,500, and repay them at an interest rate of 3-5%, versus the 26% that individuals are charged at many of the country's banks. As money is repaid, it's loaned again to other members of the community.

One woman now runs a successful beauty salon with plans to expand. Another resident has started a pig farm, a growing industry in the region, and other residents received funding to open a car wash and a restaurant.

"The premise is to keep people in their country," Nasman says. "They want to stay, but they have to have opportunity to prosper and take care of their families. If they don't have to pay a coyote \$5,000 to find a life elsewhere, you never know what could happen for them." 🌱

 tamarindofoundation.org

MARK HOEKSTRA (BBA) is in his second year as a member of cohort 22 of USD's Master's in Executive Leadership (MSEL) program.

JANINE MASON (BA), '11 (MA) recently created and launched the Nonprofit Board Exchange to expand and equalize opportunities for nonprofit board recruitment and service. The site also lists local training opportunities on board governance and other resources for those wanting to learn more about serving as a volunteer board member.

[1988]

CHRISTOPHER WELLBORN (JD) was sworn in as second vice president of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (NACDL) at the association's annual meeting in the summer of 2021. He is a solo criminal defense practitioner defending people in South Carolina accused of crimes ranging from misdemeanors to felony charges in state and federal courts throughout the country.

[1989]

ROSEMARY COATES (MBA) is the executive director of the Reshoring Institute. "We help companies bring manufacturing back to America," she says.

STEVE SLOCUM (MEd) retired from 35 years in public education working as a teacher, counselor and administrator. "I will be forever grateful for the time I spent at USD and the education I received there, which helped make my time as an educator fun, personally fulfilling and successful," he writes.

1990s

[1991]

HOLLY (WOODRUFF) LYONS (JD) is retiring from public service after nearly 20 years of working for the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Aviation as staff director and senior counsel. She adds, "Now off to Florida!"

[1993]

SCOTT MAXWELL (BBA) has joined the Thomas More Society as director of development. He reports that the society is a "not-for-profit, national public interest law firm dedicated to restoring respect in

law for life, family and religious liberty. They provide high quality pro bono legal services from local trial courts all the way to the United States Supreme Court."

[1996]

TERENCE BANICH (BA) has been practicing law in Chicago since 1999 and is a partner at Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP, focusing on insolvency, restructuring and related litigation. "My wife, Katherine, and I live in Winnetka, a northern suburb of Chicago, and have two daughters, Sadie (8) and Eloise (6)," he writes.

RICHARD STOUT (JD) reports that on Sept. 1, 2021, he was appointed to the position of county counsel for the County of Colusa.

[1997] 🎓

JULIE BAIRD (BBA) was promoted to president of First American Exchange Company, a division of First American Title Company.

JENNIFER BOWHEY (BA) writes, "My husband and I moved from Seattle to the Virginia Coast with our daughters for a new lifestyle! We started Lighthouse Family Services Inc., then bought Visiting Angels Kilmarnock. We are the largest in-home care company in the area and the third largest employer in the region. We love people care! We strive to be the best with both our clients and our employees. If you have loved ones needing care, call us. If you're simply in town, we'd love to see students or alumni any time!"

REGAN MOLATORE (BA) writes, "I finished my eighth and final year as a twice-elected member of the West Linn-Wilsonville School District in Oregon in June of 2021. I have greatly valued the education I received in this district, at USD and at the University of Oregon School of Law. I was glad to have earned this opportunity to give back in support of the public K-12 education of the students in my community."

GUADALUPE RODRIGUEZ CORONA (MA), '10 (EdD) is the director of the Office of Student Equity Programs and Services at Southwestern Community College.

[1998]

BRUCE PLEAT (MBA) has joined Randstad Technologies as a client partner.

[1999]

DINA DAVALLE (JD) heads up Booz Allen's general legal team, overseeing global real estate, international sourcing and corporate affairs.

2000s

[2000]

MANDI URBAN-LESTER (JD), '03 (MED) was selected as the College of Lake County's (CLC) Outstanding Adjunct Faculty of the Year for 2021. In June, she was awarded the prestigious Illinois Community College Trust Association's 2021 award for Outstanding Adjunct Faculty of the Year. She is an adjunct faculty member and specialist writing tutor at CLC and teaches a specialized section of critical thinking focused on U.S. Supreme Court cases.

[2002] 

JUSTIN ALMEIDA (BA) graduated with a master's in divinity from Seattle University and was ordained as a Unitarian Universalist minister serving as a palliative care/hospice chaplain.

[2003]

JESSICA BECK (BA) is a BBC producer who was honored with a Gracie Award for best producer for "Snapshots from Black America" for World at One on BBC Radio 4. The Gracie Awards recognize exemplary programming for, by and about women in radio, television, cable and interactive media. She is currently working for the BBC World Service as the producer for National Public Radio's London correspondent, Frank Langfitt.

BASIL KONGWAH CONSIDINE (BA) writes, "The Society for American Music has awarded me its John and Roberta Graziano Fellowship, as well as the Hampsong Education Fellowship in American Song!"

JENNIFER PRETAK (BA) writes that she became "a newly employed full-time faculty member at USD, beginning August 2021!"

GEORDIE RAUCH (BA) sends this note: "Yo, just trying to get back with some of you. T-Bone! Pat Cates! Doug Warren (you called me for a reference), Dan, Justin, all you people I have no contacts for. I'm not on the social stuff!"

MELISSA SHOTELL (BA) reports that she and her husband, Michael Scherer, were chosen to represent the technology revolution in dentistry. In June of 2021, they became the first husband-and-wife team to pose for the cover of Dentistry Today, a leading dental periodical. Melissa is an orthodontist and practices with her husband, who is a prosthodontist, in Sonora, California. They spend much of their time teaching digital advancements in dentistry.

[2004]

ROBERTO A. FIERRO (BA) says he was recently named a partner at a Washington, D.C., government relations firm, and adds, "We welcomed our second child last year."

[2005]

LT. COL. RYAN LITTLE (JD) recently returned from a deployment to Saudi Arabia, where he served as the senior attorney representing the U.S. to the Saudi military as it responded to a series of attacks by Iran. Ryan currently serves as the chief of international humanitarian law for U.S. Central Command, which commands all U.S. forces across the Middle East and Afghanistan. Previously, he served as deputy general counsel and assistant professor at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

[2006]

CALEB HELDT (BA) recently had a book on the early philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre published with Palgrave-MacMillan entitled, *Immanence and Illusion in Sartre's Ontology of Consciousness*. He says, "The book offers a novel interpretation of Sartre's fundamental philosophy of being, challenging the orthodox views, which have predominated in both the Francophone and Anglophone worlds for the better part of three-quarters of a century."

[2007] 

SPENCER HOLLISON (BA) reports, "I have two children, Burke (3) and Ingrid (6). My wife is a high school teacher. I own a business franchise on the California central coast. Apex Leadership Co. is a leadership and fitness fundraising organization that helps schools raise funds across the country."

IROQUOIS JOHNSON (BA) reports that she had her first child, a girl named Peyton, on July 28,

2018. She received her master's of science degree in regulatory affairs and services on December 20, 2019 from Saint Cloud University. She says she married Denis Johnson in Kauai, Hawaii on February 2, 2020. Her second child, Kai, was born on April 22, 2020.

[2008]

CLAYTON AUSTIN (BAC) says that he continues to work in health care administration. He spends his free time coaching his sons' youth sports year round: Football, basketball and baseball. "I use sports to teach our youth life lessons and to build character," he notes.

CLAUDIA LLAMAS (BA) graduated in June 2021 with a certificate and associate's degree in American Sign Language (ASL). "I am excited to continue to use this language to communicate with the deaf community!" she writes.

SHEENIKA SHAH GANDHI (BA/BBA) reports that she and her husband bought their first home in Whittier, California.

KIMBERLY WRIGHT (BA) reports, "On Aug. 19, 2021, my husband, Jason Wright '09 and I welcomed our sweet baby girl, Tera Anne Wright, into this world!"

[2009]

KAILA MANGRUM (BA), '12 (MA) started the doctorate of occupational therapy program at the University of Nevada Las Vegas in May 2021. She will be part of the 2024 graduating class and plans to work in pediatrics and specialize in athletic prosthetics.

2010s

[2010]

MICHELLE CHAVEZ (BA) earned her PhD in higher education from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in August 2020.

SERENA ROMERO (BA) was named news director of the ABC affiliate in Rochester, New York.

[2011]

JOHNNY CUSHING (BA) reports that he is a F-35 Contract Instructor Pilot at Miramar with Lockheed Martin.

NICOLE (DEFELICE) DRZAL (BA) says that she and Brandon Drzal welcomed their first child, Liliana "Lily" Mae Drzal on Feb. 4, 2021. Lily is niece and goddaughter to Jeffrey DeFelice '16.

JOHN MORENO (BA) says he retired from the United States Marine Corps on January 1, 2022 after "23 years of faithful service." He is excited to begin his next career serving as a program manager for the nonprofit, Advanced Technology International, located near Charleston, South Carolina.

MAGGIE SAMUELSON (BBA)

writes, "Just got married in July 2021 after postponing our 2020 wedding date. Currently the assistant director of operations for the family business and eventually going to take over the company."

JUDY (JARNIGAN) WHITE

(MSN), '15 (PhD) writes, "After 42 years in nursing, I am now using that knowledge to start my own health coach business. I love helping others and I get to make wonderful new relationships that last far beyond the hospital stay. Taking care of others does take a village, and I am excited that I have such an active role in moving our world forward!"

[2012] 

KELLI HAGAN (BA), '20 (MED) graduated from USD's Master's of Education program in May 2020 and is teaching a class this semester at USD on public speaking, having previously taught a public relations and social media pop-up course.

DIANNE MCCAFFERTY (MSN) Relocated to Midland, Texas, for a new position as a clinical informationist II for Cerner Corporation.

CHEYENNE MCCARTHY (BA) reports that she graduated as valedictorian from Palmer College of Chiropractic in March 2021 and works as a Doctor of Chiropractic in San Diego's North County. "I look forward to establishing an integrative, multidisciplinary health care campus in the future," she says.

[2013]

LISA HAWTHORNE (PhD) reports that she accepted the job of director/dean of nursing education at Louisiana State University in

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[serendipity]

AN EXCITING TRAJECTORY

Passion for people and technology becomes lifelong mission

by Allyson Meyer

As a child, Maritza Johnson '05 (BA) must have been driven past the University of San Diego “a million times.” With her parents working at a car dealership off of Interstate Highway 8 in Mission Valley, Johnson’s daily car trips took her right past the campus.

When it came time for college, Johnson — who was born and raised in San Diego — applied to two schools: University of California, San Diego and USD. Coming to campus for

the first time as a prospective student, Johnson stopped by the mathematics department to speak with a professor.

“It felt so much like a collegiate movie,” she says, remembering the warm atmosphere and the professor’s willingness to talk with her.

Starting her undergraduate education at USD, Johnson enrolled in 17 units and was determined to pursue a mathematics degree. However, it was an introductory computer science course that first semes-

ter which piqued her interest.

“I had a lab credit for Intro to Programming,” she recalls. “Seeing a programming language for the first time can be a totally foreign experience.”

But Johnson is quick to admit that it didn’t all click right away. “I failed the midterm,” she says, laughing. “Then I took the final and my professor emailed me afterwards and said, ‘You got the highest grade on the final.’ She kind of took me by the shoulders and said, ‘I think you should major in computer

science and, if you agree, I’ll be your advisor.’ From there, everything fell into place.”

After finishing a PhD program at Columbia University, Johnson’s path led her to Google, Facebook, and then back to her undergraduate alma mater. In Fall 2017, Johnson relocated to her hometown and began teaching in the USD Computer Science department. One class turned into three and Johnson was determined to be there for her students, just as she had been supported by her faculty mentors.

“I always wanted to be a professor like my professors at USD were — warm, welcoming, supportive and there for you. And I told all of my students for all three of my classes, ‘I want to know all of you. I have office hours and I’m going to be

sitting there anyway. If my door is open, come by and say hello,” Johnson recalls.

“After the first software engineering lecture, a student came by and she said, ‘thanks for being the first female professor I’ve had in computer science.’ This was the fall semester of her senior year and all her professors in computer science had been men. It was a really quick reminder that first week of how important it is to be there and show up.”

In Spring 2021, it was announced that Johnson would be founding a new center for data, artificial intelligence and society led by the Shiley-Marcos School of Engineering. Named the Center for Digital Civil Society, Johnson is excited to position the center as a place to bring together stakeholders in the technology industry.

“We are at an inflection point,” she says, noting that technological advances need to be civic in nature — focused on the whole of society having a say in what comes next.

While the center takes shape on the USD campus, Johnson continues to make a name for herself as an expert in the field. In September 2021, she was asked to join the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, Medicine Forum on Cyber Resilience. One of roughly 20 cybersecurity experts from around the nation, Johnson will serve as an advisor to governmental agencies related to technological innovations. For her, this opportunity will enable her to continue a path towards ensuring that technology is equitable, accessible and representative for end users.

As Johnson looks ahead, her belief in “a new social contract” that was fostered during her Changemaker education at USD is sure to inspire the next steps in her career trajectory. 🌱

January 2019. In that role, she manages the associate of science in nursing program at the Eunice and Lafayette campuses.

KATE (PARTYNSKI) EMERY (BA '13) and Joe Emery '11 (BS/BA) tied the knot in San Diego in October 2021. Many Toreros were in attendance, including mom Maureen Partynski '82 (a past president of the USD Alumni Association) and several of the wedding party and guests.

JACQUELINE RODIO (MSGL) received her doctorate in education from the University of Southern California and currently serves as the director of Business Administration at the University of California, Los Angeles. She reports that she and her husband, Jared '14 (MSRE), live in Orange County with their two daughters, Allie and Areline.

VANESSA RYAN (MSN) reports, “Our first baby boy was born in June 2021 (hopefully a future USD student!)” She is currently working as a diabetes care coordinator at Kaiser San Marcos.

JONATHAN SALT (JD) was promoted to partner at the education law firm of Fagen Friedman & Fulfroft, LLP.

WAYNE WAGNER (MS) sends well wishes to his MSEL cohort from 2013. He says, “A finer group of Toreros you will not come across.”

[2014]
QUINTIN BROWN (BAC) reports, “My wife and I upgraded from a condo to a house this summer, then we welcomed our long-awaited twin babies into our new home shortly thereafter. USD football training camp adequately prepared me for this level of sleep deprivation.”

KATHY PENICHE (BAC) has been working at SDG&E since graduating with her accounting degree. She writes, “I have moved away from accounting and am currently a regulatory case manager working on clean energy policy initiatives for SDG&E.”

ROCIO TISDELL (MS) writes, “I recently made the leap from the nonprofit sector in agency-oriented recruiting and staff training programs to an in-house role with

Birchbox’s people and culture team. It’s a remote, six-month contract, so I’m treating it like a graduate internship experience as I figure out where it will take me next!”

[2015]
EBTESAM ALTENEIJI (MA), '20 (PhD) was recently appointed as the director of the UAE University Center for Public Policy and Leadership.

ERIC JACOBS (MA) reports, “My wife and I just had our first child, a little boy. So a new adventure in our lives has begun.”

TAYLOR RICHARDSON (BBA) married in August 2020 and celebrated with family and friends at a one-year anniversary party in August 2021.

ALLISON SOARES (LLM) was recently appointed by San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria to the City of San Diego’s Balboa Park Committee and was officially confirmed by the San Diego City Council in August 2021. (See story on page 26.)

[2016]
ELIZABETH (STENGER) BALBIN (BA) reports that she married Maxwell Balbin on September 18, 2021 in the couple’s home church in Oakland, California. She adds, “after teaching middle school for five years, I transitioned into the nonprofit sector as a learning and evaluation associate, working with the unhoused and unsheltered in San Francisco.”

KAYLA DENNIS (MSN) writes, “I cannot begin to express my gratitude for the training I received at the USD School of Nursing. I am the nurse I am today because of the MEPN program. Thank you, thank you, thank you!”

HENLEY DOHERTY (BA), '20 (Med) was recently hired as a seventh-grade English Language Arts teacher at R. Roger Rowe Middle School in San Diego, after completing her master’s in education at USD.

KEENAN O’CONNOR (JD) joined the San Diego office of Liebert Cassidy Whitmore in July of 2021.

JOLINE MANN (BBA) writes, “Since graduation, I’ve worked in the B2B software market and medical industry in various roles and projects.”

LORI SILVA (MS) has relocated from her home in San Diego to Roy, Utah.

[2017] 🎓
GRISELDA ESCOBEDO (MSN) writes, “I’m working in my new job at Sulpizio Cardiovascular Center with UCSD Health! I am a registered nurse in a progressive care unit that cares for patients with cardiovascular disease.”

INDIRA GALVEZ (BA) is the press secretary for Ally Dalsimer, a progressive Democrat who is running for Congress in VA-11.

CONOR P. McLAUGHLIN (PhD) began a new role as the program coordinator for the College Student Personnel program in Bowling Green State University’s Department of Higher Education and Student Affairs. Conor has been serving as a faculty member in the department since 2018.

MONSERRAT LOPEZ (BA) writes, “I published my first song as an artist regarding my experience leaving my long-term abusive relationship. I want to empower people to understand that no relationship is the same and some people are able to leave their relationships faster than others, and that’s OK. Nothing is wrong with you, it’s a difficult cycle, but you do have the power to break it.”

[2018]
JESSICA POLAK (BA) recently completed her third year in optometry school at the Southern California College of Optometry at Marshall B. Ketchum University in Fullerton, California. “I’m excited to share that I have passed the NBO Part 1 of board certification with flying colors and am now a fourth-year student completing my first clinical rotation in Tucson, Arizona,” she writes.

ERNESTO REYES (BA) reports that his first child was born on May 1, 2021.

DOMINIC RIOS (Med) writes, “I recently appeared on *Jeopardy!* It was the thrill of a lifetime and something I will not soon forget!”

RAMONA WALLACE (BA) was admitted to the Global Field Program at Miami University in Sum-



VERONICA ST. CLAIR

[intrepid]

THE PLOT THICKENS

La Brea's Veronica St. Clair is ready for what's next

by *Julene Snyder*

It seems hard to believe that the radiant, articulate Veronica St. Clair '16 (BA) could ever suffer a moment's self-doubt, but to hear her tell it, she did not initially envision her future life's path as an actor.

Which is sort of surprising, when she relates that she grew up on the stage as a singer and dancer.

"I was part of the show choir in high school in Burbank," she says. "It's really a big program there, and is considered essentially a varsity sport." She's not kidding.

The premiere mixed show choir, Powerhouse, at John Burroughs High School actually inspired the megahit TV show, *Glee*.

"We practiced from 7 a.m. until 9 a.m. every day," St. Clair recalls. "On Wednesdays, we'd stand in a line, two by two, and run around the school singing our songs. It was a very competitive, weird underground world." In fact, Ryan Murphy, who created the TV show, actually filmed the show's pilot in her high school's choir room. "When the show was picked up, they emu-

lated almost exactly the choir room that you see in the show."

And the popularity of *Glee* led to some amazing moments. "We basically started gigging after school," she says. "We were on *Oprah*, *Dancing With the Stars*, *Cupcake Wars*. I was on *Ellen* dancing behind Harry Connick Jr.'s daughter. Isn't that funny?"

Since St. Clair grew up visiting USD with her dad, Rey Sanchez, Jr. (BA) '88, she says it was a "no-brainer" to choose the University of San Diego when it came time to apply for college.

Apparently that sentiment runs in the family; her younger brother, Trey, is a first-year on campus. "We're a legacy family," she says with some pride.

"Halfway through my first semester, I declared myself a theatre major, which is funny because I actually had never properly done theatre or acting training. But I used to walk by the theatre department in Camino Hall on the way to a jazz class that I was taking. It always felt like everybody in there was so full of joy; they seemed so liberated. One day, I just stopped dead in my tracks, then walked in and said, 'I'm here to declare as a theatre major.'"

She didn't tell her parents about that decision for a month.

That's partly because St. Clair had always assumed that she'd join the family business, Chulada Spices, Inc., since that's where both of her parents worked. "The company sells wholesale spices, herbs and snacks along the coasts throughout Southern California to smaller, mostly, Mexican markets," she explains.

"I grew up in that warehouse. It just seemed an obvious choice to follow their footsteps." She pauses for a moment, thinking. "Actually, that was something that they had never articulated to me. In many ways, I think I projected it onto them. Also, maybe I had my own little judgments about how finicky the industry is and how maybe impossible it felt to be an actor."

She admits that she was "really nervous" that they weren't going to be supportive. "But I knew that I just had to rip the band-aid off. I sent them a group text: 'Hey, I'm a theatre major now.' A few minutes later, I hesitantly checked my phone. And they'd texted back, 'Great, be a good one.'"

She took that advice to heart. "I told myself, 'If this is what you want, throw yourself in. If you're

going to be here, be here 100%. Train, learn the craft.' That was my whole mission statement as a student at USD: 'I will not have a plan B.'"

By any definition, St. Clair has proven that she made the right decision. She landed the principal role of Riley Velez on NBC's new series, *La Brea*, a very literal big break. The premise of the show — which debuted as the fall's top-rated new series — is that a massive sinkhole opens in the middle of Los Angeles, with dozens of people pulled into it. The survivors wind up in a mysterious land filled with many plot twists and turns.

Although she had auditioned for a smaller role, she got a call-back for Riley, a much more prominent part of the story.

"I read for Riley one time, and was offered the role about a week later, which is not the conventional audition experience at all," she recalls. As it turns out, St. Clair had become well-versed in the art of bouncing back.

"I actually kept a tally of how many auditions I was going on, because I always looked at the industry like a numbers game. I had 183 auditions before I booked *La Brea*. I wanted to know how many auditions it was going to be before I got a big yes. Of course, I had many smaller victories before that, but this was obviously a big one."

It was a pop the champagne and call everyone you know moment. "It felt too good to be true, to be honest," St. Clair says, with a rueful laugh. "When the pandemic hit, I had my bags packed, ready to fly to Vancouver, where we were shooting the pilot. Then I got a call saying that we were pushing back production two weeks." Of course, those weeks turned into months as the global pandemic's seriousness became apparent.

The good news for St. Clair

was that in June of 2020, NBC extended the option for the actors, a positive indication that the production might be moving forward. "There was so much uncertainty in the industry and in the world that I wasn't holding my breath at all," she says. "I was mostly just grateful that NBC was giving me any money so I could buy groceries and pay rent."

In January of 2021, the network green-lit the show for a 10-episode first season, based on six scripts that had been written by then. "I got a call from my manager saying that they were not only picking me up, but it was filming in Australia, and that I would be moving in two months to Australia for six months to film it. Again, a very surreal moment."

In some ways, her *La Brea* character's story arc paralleled that of St. Clair and the rest of the cast. "The whole premise of the show is that a group of people have to bond together to survive extraordinary circumstances. Isn't that really what we all have been doing?" She's come to feel that her fellow actors have become family.

"There I was, with a group of strangers. I didn't have any support system there outside of them. In many ways, they're the people that I'm closest to now."

What's next? Well, a second season of *La Brea* was green-lit in mid-November, which is exciting. Of perhaps equal importance is the news that St. Clair adopted a kitten named Carmen, news that she's so delighted to talk about that she whips out her phone to share a photo.

"She's so cute! And she plays fetch. You'd think a cat that would do that would be boisterous, but she's very well-behaved."

St. Clair, who's been doing quite a bit of press since the show began airing, smiles her million-dollar smile. "I'm very glad we're talking about Carmen right now. This is great for me." 🐾

mer 2021. As part of her first Earth Expeditions course, she traveled to Belize and studied coral reefs, manatees, howler monkeys, jaguars and other wildlife while learning the methods communities are using to sustain them.

[2019]

JESSICA DEMIRDJIAN (MS), '21 (MS) has continued to work full time at the County of San Diego while finishing two master's degrees in Accountancy and Taxation at USD. "In January 2020, I started my own business, Lotus Accounting and Tax Services, providing reasonably priced services for San Diego residents and business owners."

TAYYIBA KHAN (LLM) reports she has been working with immigration consultancy firm since February 2020. "It's a wonderful experience."

LT. CMDR. BRENDA MORGAN (MSN) recently started a job in Naples, Italy.

SUSIE TAYLOR (BBA), '21 (MA) is working for Pacific Sotheby's International Realty. She says, "My partner and I recently put our Carmel Valley listing into escrow after it was featured in *The New York Times*." She followed up with the following note: "In light of Homecoming and the season of giving, I am committing to donate to USD for the remainder of the 2021 Fall semester. I was lucky enough to complete both my undergraduate and graduate degrees at the University of San Diego after being recruited from Australia to compete for the women's rowing team. I had the best experience as a Torero student athlete and couldn't be more grateful for the opportunities that USD has provided for me."

JOSHUA WILSON (BA) reports welcoming his first child on June 14, 2021, "a healthy baby boy named Jack."

2020s

[2020]

DHALIA BALMIR (MA) writes, "I am a solo entrepreneur and my business focuses on racial equity consulting and coaching and grant management for nonprofits." She

plans to start working toward a PhD at USD in Fall 2021, in the education for social justice program.

TATIANA BARBONE (BS) began working as a software engineer at Dell Technologies in August 2021.

NICOLE SABATINO (BA) has been working for a nonprofit, the Disabled American Veterans. She says, "I would love to connect with my fellow alumni and veterans."

In Memoriam

AVI BERGMAN '89 (MBA) passed away on June 18, 2021.

THOMAS I. GREEN '83 (JD), a father, grandfather, great-grandfather and Army veteran, with careers in international law and business, passed away peacefully in the company of his family.

ROBERT INFANTINO, professor emeritus of education, has passed away. He was a lifelong educator, faithful husband and loving father who was dedicated to serving his community. He joined USD's growing School of Education in 1976 as director of teacher education, and over the next 31 years, mentored thousands of future educators, administrators, and professors. He was a scholar of secondary teacher education, character education and ethics in the teaching profession. He served many leadership roles in local, state and national professional organizations. As an author and creative writer, Bob especially enjoyed teaching writing as a process. He was a committed Catholic who was active in the Cursillo movement, Ignatian Volunteer Corps, and the Interfaith Shelter Network. He directed and accompanied the St. Catherine Labouré music group for more than 40 years. He is survived by Ginger, his wife of 59 years, and by six children, 11 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

CHARLES L THOMECZEK '58 (BBA) passed away on March 5, 2021.

Send Class Notes

Submit class notes via email to classnotes@sandiego.edu.



[rest in peace]

IN MEMORY OF A GENIUS

Former top administrator and trustee passes away

John “Jack” Boyce ’85 (JD) served as the University of San Diego’s Vice President for Financial Affairs — overseeing the physical plant, human resources, the bookstore, the mail center, accounting, administrative data processing and public safety — from 1975 to 1992. Following his retirement, Jack then served on USD’s Board of Trustees from 1995 to 2006.

He passed away peacefully on May 28, 2021, at his home in

Carlsbad at the age of 94.

Born in Philadelphia, Jack’s youth was spent in Bayside, New York. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and subsequently attended Manhattan College, earning an electrical engineering degree. He began his career as a project manager for Hazeltine Corp., in New York, and Kearfott System/Singer General Precision, in New Jersey, before moving his family to Solana Beach in 1968.

Along with two partners, Jack developed the Lomas Santa Fe community in Solana Beach. He founded the Rancho Santa Fe Thrift Association and was a pioneer in developing cable television when he started North County Cable. He had just sold the cable company when he was approached by USD President Author E. Hughes in 1975.

Hughes needed someone with construction experience and financial knowledge. Jack had both.

Jack was credited with financing the design and construction of the Hahn University Center, Olin Hall, Manchester Executive Conference Center, the original Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science building, Copley Library, Loma Hall, the Mission Crossroads Housing Complex, the Alcalá Vista Housing Complex and the soccer field.


He also made possible countless improvements, including masterminding USD’s employee’s benefits program; establishing the Staff Employees Association; creating the campus tram system and purchasing trams; upgrading the campus computer system; automating Copley Library, the Legal Research Center and the media center; expanding the print shop, bookstore and mail center; building a cogeneration plant, which saved the university thousands of dollars each year in utility costs; and buying a bus for the baseball team, to name just a few.

Jack and his wife of 71 years, Marguerite, endowed four four-year undergraduate scholarships and contributed to the Choral Scholars program. In 1989, he received USD’s Administrator of the Year award.

At the end of his 17-year tenure as USD’s vice president for financial affairs, Provost Sister Sally Furay called Jack a genius, saying that although she and then-President Author E. Hughes received much of the credit for the physical beauty, financial stability and growth of the campus it was only made possible because of Jack.

Jack’s wife, his seven children, their spouses, his grandchildren and great-grandchildren were his greatest loves.

He is survived by his wife, Marguerite; sister, Mary Boyce, a member of the Maryknoll Sisters; his seven children; eight grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren. 🌻



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February. 4–May 13
Storywork: The Prints
of Marie Watt

sandiego.edu/galleries



February 18-20
Grandparents' Weekend
and Parent Summit

sandiego.edu/parents



April 1-30
Research Month

sandiego.edu/research-week



Friday, May 13
Engineering and Comput-
ing Showcase

[sandiego.edu/eng_
showcase22](http://sandiego.edu/eng_showcase22)



May 21, 22, 28
Law/Graduate
Commencement

[sandiego.edu/
commencement](http://sandiego.edu/commencement)



May 29
Undergraduate
Commencement

[sandiego.edu/
commencement](http://sandiego.edu/commencement)



Saturday, July 9
USD Wine Classic

sandiego.edu/wineclassic



Coming Soon!
There are many Torero
alumni events happening
around the globe.

alumni.sandiego.edu