

University of San Diego

**Digital USD**

---

USD Magazine

USD News

---

Summer 2022

## USD Magazine Summer 2022

University of San Diego

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital.sandiego.edu/usdmagazine>

---

UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

# USD MAG

*Summer 2022*

## NEW ADVENTURES AWAIT

*Born storyteller Jessica Beck is eager to start her next chapter. Whether she's aboard an oyster fisherman's boat or interviewing survivors of the 1942 Luftwaffe bombings of Exeter, storytelling is her passion.*

# DEAR TOREROS



BARBARA FERGUSON

alumni the other day, and this group included a former Alumni Association president and former alumni director. We were talking about lots of events, including reunions (class of '87, are you ready for your 35th?), as well as discussing who comes back to campus for Homecoming events. I compared it to a Jimmy Buffett concert, in that if you go to an event such as Homecoming, you are certainly counting on having a blast, just like those Parrotheads always do. While I can't guarantee we will turn the campus into Margaritaville this October, I can promise that everyone who comes back will have a good time!

The other thing we talked about was the importance of the lifelong connections alumni form with each other and with the university. From those first, sometimes awkward meetings as students, to being in each other's weddings — and sometimes marrying each other — we are there for one another to share both good times and bad. We love hearing about alumni meeting up with one another, and we'll continue to provide opportunities for Toreros to gather and celebrate each other.

I can't wait to connect with you again, whether we are on Zoom and you are pointing out that I'm still on mute, or we are meeting at one of our many events on campus or around the world.

Enjoy the magazine, and remember, it's a great day to be a Torero!

*Charles Bass, MPA*

*Senior Director of Alumni Relations*

Welcome to the summer edition of the *USD Magazine*, one of the tools we use to keep our USD community connected.

For many months now, we have looked for innovative ways to bring the USD family together. Faculty, staff and students have logged countless hours Zooming together for coursework, study sessions and group meetings. Alumni have tuned in from down the street, across the country and around the world to participate in virtual events of all kinds.

One of the blessings of this pivot to virtual events has been the opportunity to engage with alumni and friends who otherwise would not have been able

to participate due to time or geographic constraints. These spiritual, social, educational and professional activities all have one common connection point — the University of San Diego.

As much as we have benefitted from these virtual opportunities, we still relish the ability to gather with one another. Our team in Alumni Relations, our campus colleagues and our alumni and parent volunteers are excited to host meetings and events in person once again. We are especially grateful when we can bring alumni, families and friends back to beautiful Alcalá Park.

Along those lines, our summer plans include a return to campus for the USD Wine

Classic, San Diego's premier wine tasting event. This will be our 14th year to host what will undoubtedly be a fun and festive affair, and it's for a good cause: All net proceeds benefit USD student scholarships. Over the years, we have raised more than \$800,000 to help current and future Toreros.

Homecoming and Family Week is another cherished campus tradition that brings the community together. Between celebrating our new alums from the Class of 2022 and buying new Torero Blue outfits, our team will be working to make this year's week of activities better than ever!

I was visiting with several



# We take crypto!



In this digital age, the university now accepts cryptocurrency – Bitcoin, Ethereum, Tether, Zcash and more! But truly, we take cards, cash and checks, too. All gifts – of any type and amount – benefit USD students.



## Make your gift today

[sandiego.edu/crypto](https://sandiego.edu/crypto) | [sandiego.edu/giving](https://sandiego.edu/giving)

## 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](mailto:petermarlow@sandiego.edu)

**[editor/senior director]**

Julene Snyder

[julene@sandiego.edu](mailto:julene@sandiego.edu)

**[senior creative director]**

Barbara Ferguson

[barbaraf@sandiego.edu](mailto:barbaraf@sandiego.edu)

**[editorial advisory board]**

Sandra Ciallella '87 (JD)

Lynn Hjar 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)

**[USD Magazine]**

USD Magazine is published three times a year by the University of San Diego for its alumni, parents and friends. U.S. postage paid at San Diego, CA 92110. USD phone number: (619) 260-4600.

**[class notes]**

Class Notes may be edited for length and clarity. Photos must be high resolution, so adjust camera settings accordingly. Engagements, pregnancies, personal email addresses and telephone numbers cannot be published.

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.

Email Class Notes to [classnotes@sandiego.edu](mailto:classnotes@sandiego.edu) or mail them to the address below.

**[mailing address]**

USD Magazine

Publications

University of San Diego

5998 Alcalá Park

San Diego, CA 92110

**[website]**

[www.sandiego.edu/usdmag](http://www.sandiego.edu/usdmag)

**[be blue go green]**

USD Magazine is printed with vegetable-based inks on paper certified in accordance with FSC® standards, which support environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests.

[0522/Digital/PUBS-22-3388]

# CONTENTS





## USD MAGAZINE

## FEATURES

## PERSPECTIVE IS EVERYTHING

12

Matia Robotics CEO Chris Tinhansky '85 (MBA) is excited about the firm's product, the Tek RMD, a robotic mobility device that makes the world a more welcoming place to the differently abled. Tinhansky knew from the time he was in high school that he wanted to go into biomedical engineering, a path he's found greatly fulfilling.

## NEW ADVENTURES AWAIT

14

Jessica Beck '03 (BA) was one of the first USD students to graduate as a theatre major. Much of her subsequent career has been spent in London as a teacher and director, but most recently, she worked at the BBC as an award-winning producer before embarking on her next chapter with *The Guardian*. "Theatre and radio have so much in common," she says. "In many ways, being a producer is very much like the director role in theatre."

## SHINING THE LIGHT

16

The Rev. Dr. Christopher Carter — an assistant professor of Theology and Religious Studies at USD, as well as a member of the clergy at Westwood United Methodist Church in Los Angeles — says his faith has shaped his environmental worldview. Throughout his journey, his connection to the natural world and food has been deep-rooted. His new book, *The Spirit of Soul Food: Race, Faith and Food Justice*, delves deep into the idea of reclaiming the Black soul through what and how folks eat.

## TORERO NEWS

## From One Bro to Another

4

When Joe Gonzales '19 (MSN) needed her, Amanda Cuellar '11 (MSN), '19 (MSN) didn't hesitate. Why? She knows exactly what friends are for.

## Students First

5

Employees at the University of San Diego have always put students first, but it's never as apparent than during the annual Employee Giving Campaign.

## A Quality Education

6

This spring, the university was granted a 10-year reaffirmation of accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Senior College and University Commission this spring.

8

## Important Work

The inaugural Diversity and Inclusion Impact Awards honored outstanding faculty members and staff for their work with helping communities of color as well as those who are underserved and marginalized.

## TORERO ATHLETICS

## Head Basketball Coach Named

10

New USD men's basketball head coach Steve Lavin is the Toreros' 14th head coach and seventh since USD moved to the NCAA Division I ranks.

## CLASS NOTES

## Keeping a Clear Head

22

Karolina Rzadkowska '16 (MBA) decided to flip societal norms on their heads and explore an alcohol-free approach to her own socializing, and recommends the switch to others.

## The World is Her Oyster

26

The childhood dream of Grace Cawley '19 (BA) to become a marine biologist has come true. She was recently awarded the 2022 Cushing Prize from the Journal of Plankton Research for the best article written by an early career stage scientist.

## ON THE COVER

Photo of journalist and storyteller Jessica Beck '03 (BA) by Negine Jasmine.

WEBSITE: [sandiego.edu/usdmag](http://sandiego.edu/usdmag)

FACEBOOK: [facebook.com/usandiego](https://facebook.com/usandiego)

TWITTER: [@uofsandiego](https://twitter.com/uofsandiego)

INSTAGRAM: [@uofsandiego](https://www.instagram.com/uofsandiego)

E-MAIL: [classnotes@sandiego.edu](mailto:classnotes@sandiego.edu)  
[publications@sandiego.edu](mailto:publications@sandiego.edu)

U.S. MAIL: *USD Magazine*  
 University of San Diego  
 5998 Alcala Park  
 San Diego, CA 92110-2492

# TORERO NEWS



ENRIQUE ALVARADO

[compadres]

## FROM ONE BRO TO ANOTHER

**Friendship grows deeper after lifesaving gift**

by *Julene Snyder*

**I**t's easy to sense when people have been friends for a long time. For one thing, there's an easy banter that only comes from decades of closeness. "Bro! We were just talking about that time when you and your daughter brought me lunch when I was

at work at the hospital," Joe Gonzales '19 (MSN) exclaims. "She was only three then, and now she's all grown up in college."

"I know, bro! It's crazy!," responds Amanda Cuellar '11 (MSN), '19 (MSN) with infectious delight.

When asked to talk about their

20-year-plus friendship, the two interrupt each other. "He'd go with me and my kids when we did back-to-school shopping," offers Cuellar. "He talks to my dad more often than I do!"

"Bro, you're not lying," Gonzales says.

Seeing their easy affection, it's not surprising — but still impressive — that when her friend needed one of her body's organs, Cuellar was on it. That's what you do when your bro needs you.

As far as he could tell, in mid-2020 Gonzales was in perfect health. Still, his job as a nurse practitioner required an annual wellness check. He noticed something off with his kidney function on his lab work, but assumed it was just a fluke.

It wasn't. A biopsy revealed he had focal segmental glomerulosclerosis (FSGS), a rare disease

that can lead to kidney disease or failure. “I was a fairly new nurse practitioner,” he recalls. “I had just started this career when the pandemic started, and this was scary.”

His medical team tried high doses of steroids as well as other treatments, but none had positive results. Before long, it was clear his health was suffering. When his kidney function had dropped to 15%, he became eligible to be placed on a transplant list.

That’s when his doctor told him it was time to reach out to family and friends to see if any of them would be willing to see if they were a match. “To be honest, I sat on that. I didn’t reach out to my family or tell my friends or tell my family. I prayed and prayed. At the next visit, he asked me if I’d reached out, and I had to admit that I hadn’t.” That’s when the surgeon told him that there was a 10 year wait for a cadaver kidney unless a person is critically ill.

So, Gonzales texted five family members with the news and got on the phone with Cuellar. “I know he’s kind of private,” she recalls. “But I told him, ‘Bro, you’re a superstar. People are going to want to help you.’” When she hung up, she immediately got on the kidney donor website, filled out a lengthy questionnaire, and started to process to see if she might be a match.

After submitting vials of blood and other fluids and having to address a few health issues of her own — including a directive to drop some weight and make sure her blood sugar wasn’t elevated — in January of 2022, the word came that she was a match.

“I honestly feel that this was in the cards for us,” says Cuellar. “I was never, ever nervous, just excited. And my kids and my parents were fine with it. It was just meant to be.”

By the time the surgery took place in March 2022, they were both eager to get to the other

side. “Those two months prior to the transplant were when I felt the worst,” says Gonzales. “My eyes were super swollen, I was very pale and nauseated, I had no appetite. But worst of all was the fatigue. In this career we’re in, we can’t be fatigued. We’re seeing up to 20 to 25 patients a day. Their lives are in our hands.”

The morning after the transplant, the pair had breakfast together in Gonzales’ hospital room. “They put us two rooms apart, because they wanted us to have to walk,” says Cuellar.

Joe’s improvement was practically immediate. “I literally felt like a whole new person the very next day,” he says. “And now, each day that I wake up, I feel even better. I feel like my old self, which is hard to believe, because it wasn’t that long ago when I felt so miserable.”

The two met when they were both working at Pioneer Memorial Hospital in Brawley, California, and immediately hit it off. In fact, he attended her graduation from USD in 2011; after one look at the campus, he told her he was going to walk across that stage one day himself.

Today, the pair are both working on earning their Doctor of Nursing Practice degrees from USD and expect to graduate in May of 2023. “We always said we were going to get our doctorate together,” Cuellar says. “And we are.”

“What Amanda did was very selfless,” Gonzales says. “As for me, I just want to get the word out that people need to get checked by their primary doctors at least once a year, just to make sure everything’s OK.”

“Especially in the Hispanic and Latino community, people don’t go to the doctor unless something’s wrong. By then, it can be too late. Even if you’re afraid, you need to get checked out, because early detection is key.”

[givers]

# STUDENTS FIRST

## Employee generosity is in full bloom

by Krystn Shrieve

Employees at the University of San Diego have always put students first, but it’s never as apparent than during the annual Employee Giving Campaign, when they contribute to student scholarships, academic programs, athletic teams and other initiatives that are important to the student experience.

The university first launched what’s known as the Students First! campaign in 2015. That year, nearly 42% of employees raised more than \$385,000. This year’s campaign reached 60% participation and has raised more than \$750,000 to date.

Cornelio Gonzalez is one of two lead groundskeepers whose team of eight oversees the west end of campus. The team charged with the eastern end of campus is led by Juan Minjares.

“This time of year, when the weather is warm and all the flowers are in bloom the campus looks wonderful,” says Gonzalez, who particularly loves to see the rose bushes around campus come back to life after their pruning at the first of the year. “Our goal is to make sure that everything is perfect for all the

graduation ceremonies.”

Gonzalez has been helping to rally the troops since the beginning as captain of the team that includes groundskeepers and members of the transportation unit; it was among the first teams to achieve 100%.

“The Grounds Maintenance team has led the way across campus with 100% participation every year and Facilities Management overall is consistently more than 90% participation,” says Philip Garland, USD’s associate vice president for advancement and campaign operations.

Gonzalez says his task is easy because his team is generous and everyone understands the importance of giving what they can to support students.

“The first year, I talked one-on-one with each person, and each understood the need and the importance of helping students, especially those who might not have the ability to pay for school,” Gonzalez says. “All the people on this team have good hearts and they care about the students. Now, when they see me coming with the donor envelopes, they’re ready.”







[progression]

# A QUALITY EDUCATION

## 10-year accreditation reaffirms USD's value

by Allyson Meyer

Approximately every decade, the University of San Diego undergoes an accreditation process — an evaluation of operations, academics and institutional procedures. In March 2022, the university was granted a 10-year reaffirmation of accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC).

A requirement for universities receiving federal funding,

accreditation is a peer-review process that enables “students, families, the government and the public to know that an institution provides a quality education.”

“It’s a process to ensure we are meeting our mission in many different ways,” says Elizabeth Giddens, director of Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Initiatives (IESI) and the WSCUC accreditation liaison officer. “Accreditation provides an accountability

framework for institutions to demonstrate educational quality and continuously improve. It is critical to our operations as a university, how we service students, their learning, and their successes at USD and beyond.”

First accredited by WSCUC in 1956, reaccreditation occurs roughly every six to 10 years, with the entire process taking a few years to accomplish. Multiple cross-campus collaborations (with entities such as the University Assessment

Committee, WSCUC Steering Committee and Strategic Planning Steering Committee), twice monthly meetings with an Executive Team, detailed evidence gathering, an institutional report, and a three-day site visit with 100+ university stakeholders culminated in the announcement in March that USD is reaffirmed in its accreditation for another 10 years, the maximum reaffirmation available to institutions.

“In addition to this 10-year reaffirmation, due to a long pattern of USD having quality outcomes, the campus qualified for the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation (TPR) process,” explains Giddens. “The TPR process is a shortened accreditation process for institutions

with an already healthy fiscal condition, strong student achievement indicators and sustained quality performance. The TPR review theme was organized around USD's progress and achievement toward the goals of our strategic plan, *Envisioning 2024*. The success of that plan played a key role in the outcome of the reaffirmation of accreditation review."

An opportunity to reflect on what USD offers, Giddens sees accreditation as a chance to re-evaluate as well as reaffirm the quality of education being offered on campus.

"This gives you an opportunity to step back and ask, 'Are we being the best that we can be?' Without accreditation, continuous improvement would stagnate," she says. "The process requires a lot of engaged faculty, staff and the student voice. Universities are complex organizations, and it requires us all to come together and reflect and make improvements."

With the reaffirmation of accreditation complete, the university is looking ahead to the next 10 years. The work to implement WSCUC recommendations includes advancing the Renaissance Plan for deferred maintenance, developing a new strategic plan (post-*Envisioning 2024*) aligned with the university's budget, continuing timely academic program review, creating a strategic plan for distance education, continuing to measure USD's campus climate to advance diversity, equity and inclusion across campus, and increasing diversity among USD faculty members.

For Giddens, accreditation provides an opportunity for the university to continue to set the standard as an engaged, contemporary Catholic university of higher education. 🌐

[community]

# CELEBRATING A MILESTONE

## Latino Alumni Network makes great strides

by Krystn Shrieve

As a student, Kevin Pelaez '14 (BA) was involved in MEChA, which stands for Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán, an organization that promotes higher education, community engagement, political participation, culture and history.

He says that being a part of MEChA was a way for students to celebrate their food, heritage and shared experiences. They also shared feelings that they didn't always feel included in the campus student experience. Most of the club's events were held on Monday, a day he made sure to keep clear on his calendar.

"MEChA provided us a space that felt like an extension of home," Pelaez says. "We had fiesta nights, salsa nights, we'd hire a DJ who would play Spanish-language music. We honored our culture, and we served the community as well. My first year, we went into communities like City Heights and registered people to vote."

When Pelaez graduated with a degree in mathematics he was one of a handful of students who participated in USD's Latino/a commencement ceremony, a more intimate gathering of students and their families.

It was an incredibly special moment for his family.

"It was held in Spanish so my parents could understand. There was a mariachi band, we celebrated with Mexican food and my family had the chance to meet my friends," Pelaez says. "It was an event that celebrated the whole family and was as much about them as it was about me."

The Latino/a graduation ceremony is run by students and is supported by the administration and by the Alumni Association. Each year, the first-years, sophomores and juniors put the event on for the seniors.

When he graduated, Pelaez helped to found the Latino Alumni Network, which in many ways felt like an extension of the MEChA club he enjoyed so much. The main goals of the group were to endow a scholarship for Latino/a students, provide networking opportunities for students and to engage alumni.

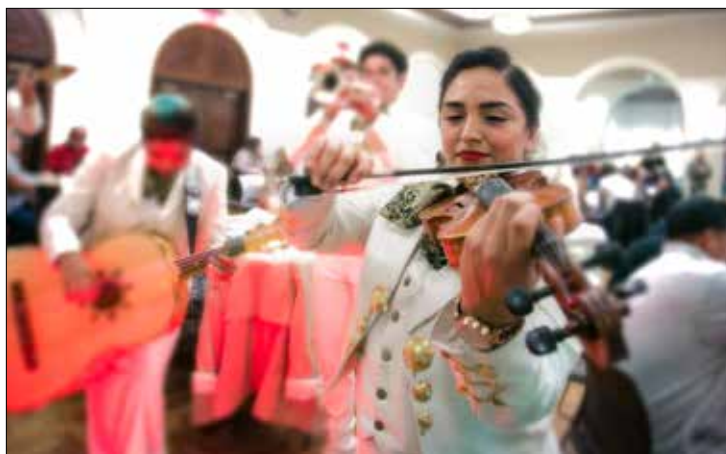
The group has held painting and mezcal-tasting events. "People enjoyed them and net proceeds would go toward our scholarship endowment," Pelaez says. "I'm proud every time I meet a first-time attendee at one of our events or a first-time donor who's supporting the cause."

Kara Marsh Proffitt '04 (BA), USD's director of alumni operations and engagement, says the work done by alumni affinity groups has a ripple effect that

makes a difference for students and for alumni. "At USD, we're a family that goes back for nearly 75 years," she says. "Our hope is that alumni reach back to help and support the students who came after them. When those students graduate, hopefully they'll do the same for the next generation."

The Latino Alumni Network just celebrated its fifth anniversary. This year, Pelaez is serving as president and is extremely proud of all that the alumni in the group have accomplished since its inception. Last year, during USD's day of giving, Torero Tuesday, the group raised enough money to fully endow its scholarship.

"We focused on a whole day of giving and held mini challenges," Pelaez says. "Everyone was so generous and, as a result, the Latino Alumni Network, along with several other alumni networks — including the Black Alumni Network and the PRIDE Alumni Network — all reached their goals. We couldn't be more thrilled." 🌐







BARBARA FERGUSON

[recognition]

# IMPORTANT WORK

## Diversity and Inclusion Impact Awards

by Lisette Martinez

**O**n a rainy day in late February 2022, the Inaugural Diversity and Inclusion Impact Award ceremony kicked off in a room of people filled with hope, gratitude and an eye on the horizon.

The event was hosted by USD's Center for Inclusion and Diversity. The award was created to recognize outstanding faculty members and staff from the School of Leadership and Education Sciences (SOLES); the Shi-

ley-Marcos School of Engineering (SMSE) and the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) for their work with helping communities of color, as well as those who are underserved and marginalized.

Surrounded by family and colleagues, the six recipients — Reyes Quezada, '83 (MEd), EdD, and Sarina Molina, '10 (EdD) from SOLES; Odesma Dalrymple, PhD, and Rhonda Harley, MS from SMSE, along with Jesse Mills, '04 (MA) '08 (PhD) and

Pauline Berryman Powell, MA, from CAS — were presented with their awards from President James T. Harris III, Provost Gail Baker and Vice Provost Regina Dixon-Reeves.

Harley, the interim senior director of career development at SMSE, expressed gratitude for feeling seen and heard for her work supporting and mentoring students in the STEM disciplines. "This work is ingrained in me. This is passion for me,"

she said. "I'm grateful for this, since it's rare to have staff acknowledged, I just want to name that. To know that I get to — in partnership with faculty — be acknowledged for this work is really powerful for me."

The award was created in 2021 to honor and recognize the experiences of Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) on campus. Whether through their research, their work with students or through their community partnerships, the award recipients have made it their mission to level the playing field in higher education. Aside from the recognition, a certificate and a plaque, the awardees also received a stipend of \$1,000.

While they differ in their areas

*From left to right: Pauline Berryman Powell, President James T. Harris, Sarina Molina '10 (EdD), Rhonda Harley, Vice President and Provost Gail F. Baker, Reyes Quezada '83 (MEd), Odesma Dalrymple and Jesse Mills '04 (MA).*

of study and work, the awardees were united by their passion for making positive changes at USD, recognizing the accomplishments made thus far and outlining the work that lies ahead.

Ethnic Studies Professor Jesse Mills reflected on his early days at the university: "My colleagues hired me as a young hopeful person with a lot of ideas in 2006, and I was honored to get the job, which was about building ethnic studies as a field. My mentors have taught me how to be a better teacher and to ask, 'Can we, as a community of educators, get on the same page? Can we hold each other, lovingly and caringly, to as high and loving a standard as we can?' It's been an honor to give my time and energy unselfishly, which is what has been modeled for me from the folks that I run with here."

Molina also sees collaboration as key. "This work is never done in isolation. I wish to extend my deepest gratitude to all those who have worked tirelessly to think deeply and to think hard about what diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice look like in action," she said. "I'd also like to thank my wise father, who always said, 'Put your head down and do good work.' Likewise, my spiritual teacher always taught me the importance of selfless service, that true service is done in silence."

Quezada, a professor and chair of the Department of Learning and Teaching for SOLES, noted that this work is ongoing. "For me, the support of diversity, equity and inclusion is not a one-semester or one-year accomplish-

ment event, but a lifetime dedication to *la causa*, the cause, in many fronts: in my profession, in my community and in my daily actions," he said.

"My colleagues really brought me in and helped me fulfill this mission to make engineering's identity more inclusive and socially connected," said Dalrymple. She was effusive in noting the welcoming nature of her colleagues, particularly when she brought her infant daughter to work.

"The fact that I was able to bring my daughter here — literally, from when she was born — into the classroom is amazing. I never felt weird or strange for doing that; colleagues just welcomed her and embraced that notion that we don't have to be separate from our lives and our families," she said. "These things can be integrated, which is a big part of this concept of inclusion. We can come as who we are, and we can bring all the things that make us unique, all the experiences that have shaped us. All those things are accepted and honored and celebrated at USD."

Berryman Powell's closing remarks noted that the work of diversity, equity and inclusion require us all to do our part.

"What's amazing about my job is that I can affect change right away. I'm able to have an impact," she said. "The late U.S. Congressman John Lewis had a phrase about doing something for the greater good: 'Good trouble.' I try to stay in good trouble by mixing it up and asking the questions: 'Why are we doing it like that? Because we've always done it like that? Maybe there's another way to resolve this issue.' I'm going to keep asking those questions. There's a word in Swahili that I learned years ago: It's called *harambe*, which means, 'Let's get together and push.'" 🗣️

## [AROUND THE PARK]

### USD Graduate Rankings Jump

The 2023 *U.S. News & World Report* graduate school rankings saw USD significantly improve its position in the "best law school" category (#64 from #86) and the "best business school" category (#85 from #92) this March. The law/full-time program jumped by 22 points, ranking the program ninth in California. The full-time MBA at the Knauss School of Business earned the #1 spot for MBA programs in San Diego.



### State Legislation to Protect Children

A first-in-the-nation state legislation will work to discourage, through financial accountability, social media companies from manipulating their inventions to be addictive and harmful to kids. USD's Children's Advocacy Institute and Common Sense Media are co-sponsors of the bill, which makes platforms liable for penalties and damages when social media addiction harms children.



### Black Engineers Chapter Shines Brightly

USD's chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) sent 28 students, the largest cohort yet, to the 48th annual NSBE Convention in Anaheim, California, this spring. Twenty USD students interviewed with companies at the convention, resulting in 12 receiving either internship or full-time employment offers from companies such as Boeing, Honeywell, UPS, and Lockheed Martin.



### Tiny Toreros Podcast Wins Accolades

Discover Pods named USD's *Tiny Toreros Story Time* as one of the best podcasts for kids and pre-teens this spring. The series mixes stories read in Spanish and English and was praised as "an excellent choice for quiet moments or nap times." The short episodes were praised as a "great podcast for guardians who want their toddlers to experience and learn about different cultures, practices and people." This spring marks the podcast's second birthday; it launched in March 2020.





# TORERO ATHLETICS



ELENA GOMEZ

[*inspirational*]

## HEAD BASKETBALL COACH NAMED

**Steve Lavin will be 14th to serve in the role**

by USD Athletics

**S**teve Lavin — a proven winner who guided UCLA and St. John's to eight NCAA Tournament appearances in 11 years — has been hired as USD's head men's basketball coach, Associate Vice President and Executive Director of Athletics Bill McGillis

announced in April 2022.

A staple in college basketball for more than three decades, Lavin becomes the Toreros' 14th head coach and the seventh since USD moved to the NCAA Division I ranks in 1979-80.

"I'm thrilled to welcome Coach Lavin and can't wait for this ex-

citing new era of Torero basketball to begin," McGillis said. "His demonstrated record of success, positive inspirational leadership and deep West Coast roots provide a foundation to catapult our program to new heights."

In 11 full seasons as a head coach, Lavin accumulated a

record of 226-133 with 10 post-season appearances. He led his programs to eight NCAA Tournaments, including five Sweet 16 appearances and an Elite Eight.

"I'm honored to have this opportunity of leading USD's men's basketball program," Lavin said. "Throughout my discussions with President Harris and Bill McGillis, I gained a greater respect for their vision of USD Athletics. My background living on the West Coast, the rich history of WCC basketball, and the

strong academic reputation of USD has made this an ideal fit from the beginning. I look forward to building relationships with the entire Toreros family as our program aspires towards excellence on and off the court.”

While at UCLA, Lavin compiled a 10-1 record in the first two rounds of the NCAA Tournament. He holds the all-time record for most wins in the NCAA second round without a loss (5-0). Lavin was named Pac-10 Coach of the Year following the 2000-01 season after leading the Bruins to a 23-9 record and a Sweet 16. The following season, UCLA achieved its highest national ranking of Lavin’s tenure at No. 3. During Lavin’s time as head coach, he was one of only two coaches in the country to go to five Sweet 16s in six seasons.

During his time at St. John’s, Lavin registered a record of 81-53, making two NCAA appearances and two NIT appearances. In his first season with the Red Storm, he led the program to 21 wins and its first NCAA Tournament bid in eight years.

The San Francisco native has mentored 17 NBA players during his career, including Baron Davis, Jerome Moiso, Earl Watson, Matt Barnes, Jason Kopono, Jelani McCoy, Dan Gadzuric, Maurice Harkless and JaKarr Sampson.

Lavin’s coaching career began in 1988 when he was hired as an assistant by Purdue. After three years, he joined the UCLA staff where he served as an assistant coach for five seasons, including the 1995 national championship team that finished with a 32-1 record. In 1996, he was promoted to head coach.

Most recently, Lavin served as a national college basketball broadcaster for Fox Sports and CBS Sports. He previously worked with ESPN, ABC, and the Pac-12 Network. 🌐



COURTESY OF USD ATHLETICS

## GETTING TO KNOW ... BART THOMPSON

**CREDENTIALS:** Prior to taking the reins as head coach of men’s rowing in 2021, Thompson spent four years as head coach at Adrian College, where he built the crew program from scratch and led the Bulldogs to a Mid-Atlantic Rowing Conference championship. An Ann-Arbor, Michigan native, he co-founded and served as assistant coach at the University of Missouri’s Kansas City Rowing Club and also co-founded and served as head coach for the men’s and women’s juniors’ program at the Kansas City Boat Club. He was a two-sport athlete (lacrosse and rowing) at Stanford University.

**BUILDING CULTURE:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the team’s four seniors are the only players that experienced a full year of collegiate rowing prior to this season. In his introductory meeting, Thompson addressed each class individually and acknowledged the unique hardships they’ve experienced. “I told them, ‘It’s important that I honor you guys and everything you have had to sacrifice and go through.’” **OLD SCHOOL/NEW SCHOOL:** Thompson believes there’s a fine line between cultivating personal relationships and holding his players accountable. Coming from a “no-nonsense” family, Thompson knows being tough but fair is essential to growing the young men on his team. “I tell them, ‘I can’t prepare the world for you, I can only prepare you for the world.’” **TAKING A MOMENT:** At each practice, Thompson stops his team for what he calls a “mindful minute.” Gliding in boats on Mission Bay, the team silently observes the beauty around them. “We take in the sunrise and the view of The Immaculata piercing the horizon,” Bart says. “It’s a tremendously beautiful sport. It’s poetry and power in motion.” — *Matthew Piechalak*



A man and a woman are standing in a large, brightly lit indoor arena, likely a convention hall. The man, wearing a blue t-shirt with a mountain logo and the text "PATAGONIA BUILT TO ENDURE", is standing on a robotic mobility device. The woman, wearing a dark t-shirt and leggings, is leaning against the device. The device is a three-wheeled, motorized platform with a control panel and a large battery pack. The background shows other people and exhibits, suggesting a trade show or expo setting.

BY JULENE SNYDER

# I M P R E S S I V E

photo by Keith Fearnow

**Craig, who attended a recent Abilities Expo in Los Angeles, is beaming after taking a spin in the Tek RMD, a robotic mobility device that lets him move freely while standing.**

# PERSPECTIVE IS EVERYTHING

**Robotic mobility device changes the way people with walking disabilities move in the world**

**F**orget flying cars, personal jetpacks and billionaire rocket junkets. If you want to see the future, look no further than the Tek RMD, a robotic mobility device.

At the Los Angeles Abilities Expo in March 2022, a man named Andre waited in a line of others in wheelchairs for his chance for a demo. He followed a few simple instructions and was quickly lifted into a fully standing position and navigated about the convention hall with a joystick. When asked, “Fun, right?” he responded with genuine emotion.

“This makes my mind see clearer. I’ve only been in a wheelchair for five years; it’s still kind of new. This is a comfort feeling. Things look different from up here. It’s a different perspective. Perspective is everything.”

Chris Tihansky ’95 is the CEO of Matia Robotics, which manufactures and distributes the Tek RMD. He says that standing has many proven health benefits for those who use a wheelchair, such as improved circulation, alleviation of pressure to certain areas of the body and can have profound psychological impacts on patients like Andre.

“The device is sized for the individual patient,” he says. “This product is well-designed and well-engineered.”

He’s got the background to back up that assertion. He knew from the time he was in high school that he wanted to go into biomedical engineering. When it came time for college, most universities did not offer biomedical engineering as a major, so Tihansky earned a degree in mechanical engineering from Lehigh University and went on to receive his master’s in biomedical engineering from Drexel University. He decided to pursue an MBA at USD a few years later, which rounded out his skillset and made him perfectly suited for his current role.

“I really liked the idea of trying to find engineering solutions for clinical issues,” he explains. “I’m most comfortable in the business role working with engineers and physicians and the financial and legal aspects of business. My career took a lot of twists and turns over the course of time, but this is where I have the most enjoyment.”

Founded in 2012 in Istanbul, Matia Robotics received FDA clearance for the Tek RMD in 2016, established a U.S. facility and had its full commercial launch in 2018. In 2020, the second FDA clearance was granted, and in 2022, the company launched a second-generation iteration of the system. Now with distribution partners in 10 countries it’s poised to continue to grow and make a real difference.

Witness a video by user and disability advocate Karen Roy (@Life-PossibleKarenRoy) on Instagram, in which her poodle barks excitedly as she uses the hydraulic lift of the Tek RMD to rise from a seated position to standing, with the caption, “It’s easier than you think!” An impressed viewer commented, “One day I would like to own one. Standing is not a luxury, it’s a necessity.”

Given that there are as many as 3.3 million people in the U.S. who are

wheelchair bound, it’s not surprising that people are enthusiastic about ways to make the world more welcoming to the differently abled. That said, the Tek RMD is not for everyone. It’s ideal for paraplegics or those with compromised walking and standing ability; however, good upper limb and hand function is necessary.

“There are a lot of clinical benefits to standing,” explains Tihansky. “And the psychological impact of being able to go from a seated to a standing position and meet your world eye-to-eye with others and be able to be part of the conversation is a really important aspect of our technology,” he says.

In action, the device is impressive. A remote control summons it and the user can get on board from either a wheelchair or a sitting position on a chair or a bed. Boarding is done from the back, avoiding awkward or dangerous transfers. The person then stands up on their own by pulling the handlebars, a gesture described by Matia Robotics for their second-generation model, which has an electric lift, as “just the right amount of help from the product.”

The person can then freely move around their environment while standing — with their hands free — allowing them a significant amount of freedom to perform daily tasks such as cooking, cleaning and conversing with others at eye-level. It even allows users to lower themselves to a convenient height to reach things on low shelves and then easily return to a standing position.

“Our device has a very narrow footprint,” Tihansky notes. “This allows you to navigate space indoors in your kitchen, your bathroom, your living room, easily.”

Not surprisingly, the Tek RMD is not inexpensive, with a base model running about \$20,000. “The cost is not insignificant, but our device is less than half of what a fully standup powered wheelchair would cost,” he explains.

Bill Winchester — a firefighter who had a biking accident and is the first American to test out the device — is an enthusiastic proponent.

“It really gives you a boost of confidence to be at somebody else’s level again,” he says, in a video featuring him zipping around outside using the company’s new outdoor kit. “I have plenty of motion on here; this is actually fun. This would be a great way to coach the boys, to get back on the field where you can teach your kids something.”

Tihansky finds great satisfaction in the path his career has taken. When asked what advice he’d give to others, he’s quick to answer.

“Your career doesn’t always go in a straight trajectory. Sometimes it zigs and zags, but — as long as you’re always learning and always being challenged — that’s an important thing to remember as you’re navigating your path in the world.” 🌱



matiarobotics.com





BY ALLYSON MEYER

C U R I O S I T Y

photo by Negine Jasmine

**Jessica Beck '03 (BA) in  
Los Angeles with her Gracie  
Award from the Alliance for  
Women in Media for produc-  
ing "Snapshots from Black  
America" for BBC Radio 4.**

# NEW ADVENTURES AWAIT

Born storyteller Jessica Beck is eager to start her next chapter

Storytelling is a privilege, which is something that Jessica Beck '03 (BA) doesn't take lightly. "When you're working in news, you're asking people to, at times, share their worst day," she says. "There's a generosity in their stories."

Whether she's aboard an oyster fisherman's rowboat to discuss Brexit or interviewing survivors of the 1942 Luftwaffe bombings of Exeter in the United Kingdom, storytelling is her passion. But if you'd told Beck 18 years ago that she'd become an award-winning radio producer, she wouldn't have believed it.

From her days in Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, Beck yearned to journey west for college.

"I wanted to go to California," she admits. "I wanted to get as far away as I could on the continental United States to just try something different."

Intrigued by the University of San Diego's theatre program, Beck connected with former Assistant Professor of Theatre Arts Marilyn Bennett and Corey Johnston, MFA, an adjunct assistant professor and the faculty costume supervisor in the College of Arts and Sciences.

"Marilyn was so inspiring and inviting. When I had my interview, she was talking to me. She really saw me," recalls Beck. "I had done costume design work in high school, and she looked at my designs and rushed me over to the costume shop to meet with Corey. He looked at my designs and I just felt like these were people I wanted to learn from."

Because the theatre program had no major track at first, Beck planned to study business.

"I started as a business major because my parents had hoped I would study business. I did take lots of classes, but I ended up taking more and more theatre classes because that's where my passion was."

By the time Beck graduated, the theatre program had an established major and she was one of a few students in its first graduating class.

She spent the summer after graduation assisting at The Old Globe Theatre in Balboa Park, but planned a return trip to London, having first experienced the city while studying abroad.

"I remember speaking to this woman who worked in The Old Globe box office, and she asked what I was up to next. I said, 'I'm going to London for a year, but I'll be back.' The woman laughed and said, 'You won't be back.'"

Eighteen years later, Beck admits the woman was right.

"I accidentally started my life as a theatre maker in London. I created shows and took them to the Edinburgh Festival, and then I wanted to stay," she says. That took the form of a PhD

program, with Beck earning her doctorate in 2011 from the University of Exeter.

She never imagined she'd end up in journalism, but after the 2016 U.S. presidential election and the Brexit referendum, she found herself attending protests and interviewing participants.

Those experiences lit a spark in her. When the BBC had an open call for applicants for its Production Trainee Scheme, Beck thought it was worth a shot.

"I applied for it thinking, 'It's 11 months, so if I don't like it, I can go back to doing some part-time teaching and directing,'" she recalls with a rueful laugh. "I had no idea it was a very competitive scheme. There were more than 6,000 applicants and they chose 10 people."

Since then, Beck has produced BBC flagship programs and more recently served as the NPR's London producer for correspondent Frank Langfitt. In the fall, Beck received a Gracie Award for best producer for her work on "Snapshots from Black America" for *World at One*, a three-part series that gave BBC listeners a historical context around race in the U.S. For Beck, receiving the award from the Alliance for Women in Media Foundation was a surreal experience.

"With a lot of these awards, you put yourself forward because you're supposed to, but you don't think anything's going to come of it," she says.

As she prepares for a career move to *The Guardian*, Beck looks back fondly on her path to this point.

"I remember being at USD, dreaming big about my future and thinking about working with actors like Michael Caine. Never in my wildest dreams did I think that would happen through radio," she says, referring to having recently worked with the Academy Award winning actor on the podcast *Heist with Michael Caine*.

"Theatre and radio have so much in common," she says. "It requires using all the same skills. You engage the imagination, you have to rely on sound, you want to take your listeners somewhere. I found myself using the same skills, writing scripts, booking talent, finding contributors. In many ways, being a producer is very much like the director role in theatre."

When asked what she'd tell her younger self, Beck stresses that everything happens for a reason.

"I worried a lot," she admits. "Looking back, every deviation fits. A lot of great things happened when I didn't get what I wanted. You have to trust life and be open to new adventures. And if you're in a very privileged place, use that privilege to give voice to the voiceless." 🎧



A black and white portrait of Rev. Dr. Christopher Carter, a Black man with long dreadlocks and a beard, smiling. He is wearing a light-colored dress shirt and a dark plaid tie. The background is a solid dark gray.

BY JULENE SNYDER

S I N C E R I T Y

photo by Justin Hackworth

USD Professor of Theology  
and Religious Studies the  
Rev. Dr. Christopher Carter  
says his faith has shaped his  
environmental worldview.

# SHINING THE LIGHT

Theology professor advocates reclaiming the Black soul with respect to food

Those who routinely traverse the I-5 between Los Angeles and San Francisco are all-too-familiar with the dreary homogeneity of the route. But for the Rev. Dr. Christopher Carter — an assistant professor of Theology and Religious Studies at USD, as well as a member of the clergy at Westwood United Methodist Church in Los Angeles — the first time he made the drive was quite an eye-opener.

“I’d never been on I-5,” he says. “And driving that path was the first time I’d seen real industrial agriculture.” He shakes his head, remembering. “The smells and the poverty, well, I got shook. It reminded me of when we’d have family reunions in Brookhaven, Mississippi. That’s when my grandfather would tell these stories about working on farms and working on plantations picking cotton. He would talk about how hard that labor was.”

Seeing the farmworkers scattered under the hot sun in the fields alongside the freeway brought all those conversations flooding back.

“I thought, ‘How is this still happening?’” Carter is crystal clear about the debt owed to his maternal grandfather, Grandpa Robert, who pulled the family out of generational poverty.

“That’s where I got the idea to focus my dissertation on food justice and the intersection of racial justice. It was about giving a voice to marginalized farmworkers and how the environmental consequences of how we grow food impacts all of us — but particularly how it impacts poor people and people of color.”

As a boy, Carter lived in Battle Creek, Michigan, then a small town (pop: 30,000). Every summer, the kids in the family would travel to an even tinier town, Three Rivers, Michigan (pop: 3,000), to visit his maternal grandparents.

“I always loved it because they lived in a house that had a huge backyard,” he recalls. “They had a garden that was really more like a homestead — a huge, huge garden where they grew all kinds of stuff — next to an elementary school that we could go play at and a large field that we could play in. There, we were in touch with nature in a way that we weren’t when I was at home with my parents during the school year.”

Carter has warm memories of those halcyon days.

“Grandpa Robert would talk about how we’re supposed to care for the land and be stewards over the land, so that we could grow our own food,” he recalls. “A Southern Baptist who’s very theologically conservative, he really believes in ecological stewardship, that the Earth is a gift from God that we’re supposed to care for. He impressed that upon us in a very powerful way.”

That impression has had a profound impact on Carter’s work. His doctoral dissertation, “Eating Oppression: Food, Faith and

Liberation” was the foundation for his new book, *The Spirit of Soul Food: Race, Faith and Food Justice* (University of Illinois Press). In it, he offers a compelling case for the need for Black people, in particular, to practice three eating practices: soulful eating/black veganism, seeking justice for food workers and making a practice of caring for the Earth.

---

“I didn’t grow up wanting to be vegan or vegetarian. It was seeing this for myself and realizing I didn’t want to be complicit in suffering. I can’t be complicit in the way in which the system oppresses people, oppresses animals, oppresses nature. Since I have the ability to opt out – not everybody does – I should do it. And I should work toward not only reforming the system but creating opportunities for other people to be able to opt out.”

---

“Christianity, food justice and food sovereignty are intertwined in my family history,” he says in the book’s introduction. “As far as I can remember, I believed there was a moral obligation to provide access to food for all people.”

For Carter, that duty is deeply rooted in those childhood summers in Three Rivers. “That stayed with me throughout my life. I’ve always had appreciation for nature, in a way that wasn’t typically common among my peers, especially the Black folks who grew up in urban spaces,” he says.

“Grandpa Robert interspersed these stories when I was growing up — and definitely as I’ve gotten older — about his experiences in the South growing up in the era of Jim Crow. The discrimination he experienced from the people he worked with, from the people he worked for, and the ways in which, economically, he was



subjected to exploitation because of Jim Crow. Ultimately, that's why he ended up leaving Mississippi; he and my grandmother moved to Michigan in search of economic opportunities."

The year was 1962, and the civil rights movement was heating up across the nation. "He was very concerned for his own safety and well-being. This was right before things started getting really ratcheted up with Martin Luther King, Jr., and there was a lot more racial terror happening. So, they moved to Michigan, and like many people in Michigan, he worked in a factory for his daytime job. And in the afternoons and evenings, he was out in the garden."

In fact, up until just a few years ago, that was still the family patriarch's routine, until he started slowing down as an octogenarian. While Grandpa Robert's wife, Grandma Yvonne, is no longer with us, Carter wants his late grandmother to get credit where it's due.

---

**"Grandpa Robert would talk about how we're supposed to care for the land and be stewards over the land, so that we could grow our own food. A Southern Baptist who's very theologically conservative, he really believes in ecological stewardship, that the Earth is a gift from God that we're supposed to care for. He impressed that upon us in a very powerful way."**

---

"She had a profound intimacy with God. From her, I learned what it is to really love the church, and what it means to practice Christianity and embody that. She taught me the importance of cultivating a spirituality that wasn't just a kind of performance. It was really about who you were becoming. For her, it was about reading scripture, reading the Bible, and engaging in practices to become more like Jesus.

"Both of them really modeled this for me. I would come back home after my visit every summer, and after each time, I felt like I was changing."

**W**hile Carter was the first in his family to attend college, it took some time for him to see that path for himself. Right out of high school, he took a job at a grocery store. It wasn't until he was 23 years old — at the urging of his wife, Gabrielle, who said he was too smart not to pursue higher education — that he enrolled at Michigan's Cornerstone University, graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration.

"It was the best decision I ever made — to wait to go to college," he says. "I was a more mature student as an undergrad, and in that

space, it allowed me to see myself as smart and take myself out of the environment of where I'd grown up and be in a totally different space, where people didn't know who I was. I was able to engage with the course materials in ways that I just didn't try to in high school. I realized that I had a lot to say, and that I had a lot to contribute. That's when I began to accept a call to ministry."

Carter laughs, then continues. "I had felt the call for many years, but it was not something I was really looking forward to doing, because I had seen so many clergy in my life have bad marriages and all kinds of stuff that didn't seem like the kind of life I wanted, which was a really stable family life. But in the end, it was something that I couldn't not do. It was so steeped in me — that call to serve through the church — so that's what I did."

After graduation, he applied and was accepted to the seminary, subsequently earning a Master of Divinity as well as a Master of Religion degree, going on to earn a doctorate in Religion Ethics and Society, all from the Claremont School of Theology.

"It was in seminary that I began to connect the strands between my faith and how it shaped my environmental worldview," he explains. "In Michigan, I took nature for granted. It's so green there, and I lived in a place where there were lots of green spaces. If I wanted to go camping, if I wanted to go hiking, it was easy."

Not so much in Los Angeles County. "I began to experience environmental suffering and environmental degradation," Carter says. "I began to think theologically about this issue, which wasn't my intention. I didn't think I'd do anything with food, anything with animals."

Through his journey, Carter's connection to the natural world and food has been deep-rooted. He notes in the introduction to *The Spirit of Soul Food* that he came to decide how he should eat "based upon my own particular kind of moral identity and formation. I was curious as I began to learn more about environmental injustice and the relationship that had to racial injustice ... I saw these connecting in ways which weren't initially evident to me."

And the exploitation of people working in the fields continues to this day. "I've gone to those places, and I've seen what it looks like. That stuff is hidden, and it's hidden for a reason. The goal is for us not to see it," Carter says. "Then we don't think about how we get our food. I want to bring light to that. I feel like if people know about it, I can make a persuasive argument for them to opt out and move into alternative ways of thinking about how we eat."

**O**ne of the central practices that Carter explores in his book is that of black veganism, which he describes as "the ideal form of soulful eating and the way Black people can decolonize our diets and delink from coloniality." He says the concept is an "ideal way for Black people to eat in a way that prioritizes justice for and solidarity with Black and other dispossessed communities," particularly when seen through the lens of the desire not to be complicit in cruelty.

"My wife is a veterinarian, and one of her former teachers works with cows in Tulare County, which is the mega-dairy capital," he explains. "So, I have a lot of inside knowledge of how these mega-dairies work — not just the treatment of the animals,



## Peach Crisp

### Ingredients

#### Peach Filling

2 pounds frozen peaches,  
partially thawed  
2 tablespoons cornstarch  
1/2 cup agave nectar  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

#### Crumb Topping

1/2 cup oatmeal  
1/2 cup unbleached all-purpose flour  
1 cup brown sugar  
3 tablespoons cinnamon  
1/2 cup sliced almonds  
12 tablespoons vegan butter,  
diced small freeze for 15 minutes

### Directions

Preheat the oven to 375°F. In a large mixing bowl, sprinkle the peaches with the cornstarch and toss lightly until they are well coated. Pour the peaches into a large sauté pan, cover, and cook on medium heat. Add the agave nectar and vanilla and stir until the liquid is simmering and thick. Remove the peaches from the heat and set aside. Place all the ingredients for the topping into a 1-gallon plastic sealable bag. Break up the butter with your fingers, then smash and shake the bag until the mixture is crumbly. Place the peaches, including the liquid, in a lightly greased 9-by-9-inch baking dish. Evenly cover the peaches with the crumb topping. You should have some topping left over; freeze it for future use. Bake the peach crisp for about 40 minutes, or until the peaches are bubbling and topping is firm and brown.







Isaiah helps out in the kitchen, where his dad, USD Assistant Professor of Theology and Religious Studies Christopher Carter, does much of the family cooking.

but the treatment of the people — and it's all just immoral. 'Evil' is the word I use. We shouldn't treat anything like this."

Carter sees his choices and advocacy regarding food as grounded in morality and ethics.

"I didn't grow up wanting to be vegan or vegetarian. It was seeing this for myself and realizing I didn't want to be complicit in suffering. I can't be complicit in the way in which the system oppresses people, oppresses animals, oppresses nature. Since I have the ability to opt out — not everybody does — I should do it. And I should work toward not only reforming the system but creating opportunities for other people to be able to opt out."

---

**"It was in seminary that I began to connect the strands between my faith and how it shaped my environmental worldview. In Michigan, I took nature for granted. It's so green there, and I lived in a place where there were lots of green spaces. If I wanted to go camping, if I wanted to go hiking, it was easy. In Los Angeles, I began to experience environmental suffering and environmental degradation. I began to think theologically about this issue."**

---

In many ways, his life's work as a scholar, social ethicist and practical theologian has roots in the Mississippi summers of his childhood.

"When the conversation turned to comparing the various foods against one another, it tended to flow from recipes and ingredients to stories about how these recipes were passed down from our elders," Carter says in his book's introduction.

"Eventually, someone would talk about how these foods helped our ancestors during their enslavement and Jim and Jane Crow. These foods contained painful, powerful and empowering memories of Black suffering and self-determination. The family elders would explain that we eat chitlins because we were given the scraps of domestic animals and we needed a way to find a way to make all the parts palatable."

He notes that Black people were "forced to make the best out of the worst, and this improvisation ability is how we survived," and says that he's proud to "have come from people whose culinary habits reflect our ability to 'make a way out of no way.'"

It all comes back to morality, in Carter's view. "Race and food justice is intimately connected. It's a theological problem, with food as an entry point. Everyone eats. We all have a stake in this."

**W**hen it comes to potential solutions, Carter sees churches serving as food hubs as one viable option for making change.

"In Michigan, my church has enough land to have a farm and to practice food justice as a form of ministry. If we can address the structural barriers and empower farmers, we can create local food economies," he says. "From a theological perspective, this is the way we practice being the body of Christ, by ingesting something that reminds us of our connection with God."

Carter says that suburban or rural churches with land should think about how they might use it to grow food to feed their communities. "How might churches partner with local farmers to host markets where people in the community can buy direct from the farmer to get the freshest food at a lower cost?"

On a personal level, he's been contributing his cooking to members of the churches he's been affiliated with for quite some time. "When I was the senior pastor at First United Methodist Church of Compton from 2010 to 2012, I'd regularly bring a vegan dish to share," he recalls. "I'd cook traditional soul food dishes like mustard greens, red beans and rice and a peach crisp. The most requested item was always the citrus raisin collard greens, which was the first vegan item I ever cooked for them, so I think it held a special place in their hearts. It's really good."

Not that the folks didn't take some convincing at first. "People were initially hesitant to eat the greens, because they're used to eating them with some type of pork, but when they finally ate them, they loved them," Carter says. "At first, they were eating them because I was the pastor and they wanted to be nice, so the fact that they enjoyed them took them by surprise."

He saw this as a pivotal moment because commenting on the vegan collard greens gave them permission to talk about why they ate what they ate without feeling guilt. "I wasn't shaming them, and I could share details about my diet and explain the religious significance of my veganism."

In his household, Carter's proud that he's the primary person at the stove. "So many of us have negative feelings around cooking," he notes, pointing out that gender stereotyping and the idea of cooking as a chore is pervasive in our society. But he says, "If you can read, you can cook, as long as you're patient with yourself."

And on a personal level? "I've gotten to be a pretty good cook," he says, beaming. When asked what challenges he faces regarding cooking for, and with, his 3-year-old son, Isaiah, the answer is quick: "I tend to pray a lot."

But on the more serious side, Carter says it's important to encourage kids to eat a variety of things, so they develop a well-rounded food identity. "Isaiah loves to eat all kinds of foods, and it makes dining out or cooking at home much easier. Don't get me wrong, he has his favorites, but I try to only cook them once or twice a week."

Speaking of which, what's on the menu for tonight's dinner for himself, wife Gabrielle and Isaiah?

"Faro grain rice with vegan mozzarella, roasted zucchini, tomatoes tossed in olive oil and balsamic, topped with toasted almonds."

In a word? Yum. 🌱



# CLASS NOTES



KILEY SHAI PHOTOGRAPHY

[moderation]

## KEEPING A CLEAR HEAD

Alumna celebrates benefits of going alcohol-free

by Kelsey Grey

Alcohol has long been a lubricant in bringing people together to socialize, but an increasing number of people are seeing the benefits of abstaining

from hitting the bottle.

Karolina Rzakowolska '16 (MBA) began exploring an alcohol-free lifestyle in 2018. She was tired of the social pressure to drink at social occasions

and every weekend. She hated the repercussions that came along with drinking: poor sleep, mood shifts and a decline in her overall physical well-being.

"There was a part of me that

wanted to challenge this norm," says Rzakowolska. "Most of the time, when women get a break from alcohol, it's because they're pregnant. It's ridiculous to me that being alcohol-free isn't an acceptable choice in our society for casual drinkers, even though it's one of the healthiest things a person can do. People are still really judged for choosing not to drink."

She decided to flip the societal norm on its head and explore an alcohol-free approach to her own

socializing by participating in her first-ever “dry January,” a movement that began in 2012 as an initiative by Alcohol Change UK to “ditch the hangover, reduce the waistline and save some serious money.”

“I fell in love with that break,” she says. “I had more energy, my self-love was growing and I began discovering new hobbies.” From that point on, everything began to change. Her alcohol-free life inspired her to start a company and write a book that would help other sober-curious people take charge of their lives.

Rzadkowska started her entrepreneurial journey with The Brink Small Business Development Center at USD. In 2017, she contributed to the successful launch of the center as a strategic initiatives manager, after earning her MBA from the Knauss School of Business. When she saw how The Brink could help entrepreneurs grow their businesses, she decided to become a client herself and was paired with a marketing mentor who helped her to grow a clientele base.

Once she had an audience, Rzadkowska saw the need to write a guide to help people on their alcohol-free journeys. She’d always been interested in writing a book but had been paralyzed by not knowing where to begin.

“I used to write all the time when I was younger,” she says. “By the time I went to college and started drinking, I stopped writing. I remember having these New Year’s resolutions: ‘Every week you’re going to write for 30 minutes.’ I would do it the first week and then stop. But when I went alcohol-free in 2018 and all of a sudden, all of those limiting stories were like, ‘Well, why couldn’t you write a book?’”

Rzadkowska began with baby steps, writing 15 minutes each day. She then took a book

proposal course and used The Brink’s accountability group to make sure she was taking daily actions to achieve her goal of becoming a published author.

Now, she’s a certified alcohol-free life coach and author of *Euphoric: Ditch Alcohol and Gain a Happier, More Confident You* (HarperCollins 2022), an eight-week guidebook for casual drinkers looking to transform their relationships with alcohol and tap into their self-growth as they learn about the benefits of going alcohol-free.

While eight weeks without alcohol may sound intimidating to some, Rzadkowska says not everyone’s journey to an alcohol-free life will be the same.

“At first, you may just want to learn more about it by reading a book or listening to a podcast, and ask yourself questions like, ‘When did this become an ingrained part of my life and why?’ Then you try it out yourself by taking a break and learning first-hand about all the benefits.” While some may worry that going alcohol-free will isolate them from social activities, Rzadkowska points out that the non-alcoholic beverage industry is steadily growing, which points to the larger trend of more people eschewing liquor. Plus, there’s a burgeoning array of alcohol-free events and bars that cater to those who’d prefer to skip imbibing.

Non-alcoholic beverage sales increased 33% to \$331 million between November 2020 and November 2021 in the U.S., according to data from Nielsen. Rzadkowska says that number is forecasted to reach the billions in the coming years. She hopes to see this trend continue with more people exploring their options when it comes to drinking. “Even if I help just one person discover their potential, that’s my deeper why for doing this.” 🍷

## 1960s

[1961]

**MARY DUGAN (BA)** writes, “I’ve recently retired from my part-time job writing grant proposals for a small dance company; before that, I wrote for immigrants’ rights and at one time, for reproductive rights. I’m an active Unitarian and just went on a march for climate justice in downtown Manhattan. I’ve lived with my boyfriend, Robert Mentken, for 14 years; he’s an inventor, semi-retired and age 87. We’ve slowed down. Because of COVID, we haven’t gone to any shows yet, but hope to do that soon. Here, we don’t have a car and enjoy the subways and buses! My three kids and two grandkids have done well: Anna is a surgeon at Brown and Ben works for Google in Silicon Valley. My daughter has an eight-horse trailer transporting horses lovingly all around the Western states, especially California. One son is a scientist/professor on sabbatical, enjoying his Tesla, and one son teaches fourth grade in the LA schools. I am blessed and got a good foundation in liberal arts at USD.”

[1962] 🎓

**PEGGY THOMPSON (BA)** has retired from her position as wedding coordinator at St. Joseph, Husband of Mary Church. “I’m still active in the ministry with the new coordinator, and still very involved in our parish activities and organizations,” she says.

[1963]

**ELOISA THOMPSON (BA)** reports that she is living in Baja with her husband, “walking the beach (almost) daily.” She has three grandchildren and one more on the way.

## 1970s

[1971]

**VINCE AMMIRATO (JD)** says that after 42 years of practice, “I will be retiring and will be of counsel for my son, Vincent S. Ammirato at Ammirato Legal in Costa Mesa. I feel that after more than 140 jury trials, it is time to pass the baton to the younger generation. Life with the law has been a most interesting and learning experience, and I will always thank USD for allowing me to be a part of its School of Law.”

[1972] 🎓

**ALICE GONZALEZ (BACC)** writes, “I’ve lived in beautiful San Diego all my life. I retired from being a Catholic school teacher. I’m enjoying rediscovering San Diego, traveling and volunteering in my community!”

[1976]

**DAVID MOUSSETTE (BA)** writes, “Still living in Williamsburg, Virginia, near my grandsons, who are now 10 and 12 years old. I’m involved with the York County Historical Committee in the local area, which also contains Yorktown and Jamestown. Staying healthy and close to home due to pandemic.”

[1979]

**JAMES PAULSON (BBA)** retired from the Gaming Control Board in October 2011.

## 1980s

[1981]

**SUZANNE HAGAN (BA), ‘94 (MED)** writes that she taught a public speaking course at USD in the fall of 2021. She previously taught a public relations and social media pop-up course.

[1983]

**GERALYN SULLIVAN (BA)** was named to the 2022 list of top women wealth advisors by *Forbes* in February.

[1985] 🎓

**LAURA REYES (BA), ‘88 (MED)** was honored as one of five teachers of the year by the County of San Diego in the fall of 2021. She writes that as a girl she started kindergarten without knowing English. “If I could do it, with limited access, then I wanted to encourage others and inspire others to overcome obstacles that come their way. I connect with emerging bilingual students.” She teaches at Central Elementary School in the Escondido Union School District.

[1986]

**JANINE MASON (BA), ‘11 (MA)** writes that she “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. Learn more at [np-boardexchange.org](http://np-boardexchange.org).

## 1990s

[1993]

**LISA GREER (BA), '00 (MBA)** writes, "Happy New Year Toreros! The Greer family is thankful to be healthy, well and living in Carmel Valley/North San Diego. Our four kids — 19-year-old Robbie, who attends Cal Poly SLO; 17-year-old Megan, who is a high school senior; 13-year-old Mandy, who is in the eighth grade and 7-year-old Josh, who is in the second grade — are all well too. Let's connect on LinkedIn. Go Toreros!"

[1994]

**VALERIE ATTISHA (BA)** provided the following update: After a successful two-decade career as a fundraising professional and nonprofit executive, Valerie joined PNC Bank in June 2021 as its first vice president of client and community relations in San Diego County. In her role, Valerie oversees the bank's business, charitable and civic relationships as well as its philanthropic giving and sponsorship opportunities. Additionally, she directs the bank's marketing, branding and communications efforts as well as its community engagement strategies. "I feel immensely grateful to have landed my dream job at my dream company," she says.

[1997] 🎓

**JENNIFER BOWHEY (BA)** recently won the Pinnacle Achievement Award. Her franchise location, Light-house Family Services, Inc., is ranked 33rd out of more than 560 Visiting Angels locations in the world. Her company also ranked in the top 15% of home care companies nationwide via Home Care Pulse surveys. She also has a product launch in the works. Jennifer bought an extra company car and is in the process of remodeling a guest home near the office so she can set up internships in the Chesapeake Bay region in the summer of 2022 and beyond.

**TREVOR HOUSER (BA)** has published his debut novel, *Pacific*, the story of what a desperate father is willing to do to save his son's life.

He is an advertising copywriter living with his family in Seattle. He's published stories in dozens of literary journals including *Story Quarterly*, *Zyzzyva* and *The Dr. TJ Eckleburg Review*, among others. Three of his stories were nominated for the Pushcart Prize.

[1998]

**JOSH BECKETT (BA)** and Gibsey (Pence) Beckett '99 (BA) recently launched an online winery brand. Thibido Winery is based in Paso Robles, California, and is a side project while they manage the Beckett family company, Peachy Canyon Winery. "We're looking forward to coming back to USD and pouring wines for both wineries at the USD Wine Classic in July!" they say. The couple has two daughters in high school and reside in Morro Bay, California.

**DON MARTIN (JD, LL.M.)** joined Snell & Wilmer as a real estate partner in the firm's Las Vegas office.

[1999]

**JORDAN HOPCHIK (MSN)** writes, "I completed my DNP in 2014."

## 2000s

[2000]

**MANDI URBAN-LESTER (JD), '03 (MED)** reports that after being nominated by her students, she 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 for the state of Illinois. Mandi — an adjunct faculty member and specialist writing tutor at CLC since 2005 — teaches a specialized section of Critical Thinking focused on U.S. Supreme Court cases.

[2003]

**ELISABETH BIEBL (BA)** writes, "After a long hiatus from California, I am back in the Bay Area with my husband and two kids (4.5 and 2.5). We are missing the mountains of Colorado, but enjoying being closer to loved ones."

[2004]

**MARIA GAUGHAN (BA), '09 (MA)** reports that she transitioned

into a career in real estate after working at USD in ministry and in the nonprofit sector. She is proud to work for The Seaman Team Keller Williams Realty in San Diego and to continue to serve and accompany fellow Toreros with their home buying/selling experience. She lives in San Diego with her husband and their three boys.

[2007] 🎓

**KATHERINE CHIRIBOGA (BA)** writes, "My husband is USD alum-adjacent, as his brother and I are both Toreros and he was commissioned out of the San Diego NROTC consortium. After 14 years of active-duty service, we are settling in the Washington, D.C., area living on the Virginia side. Having received various scholarships for both undergraduate and graduate school, I am really enjoying my job as the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society's education program manager and as a Sunday librarian with the historic Alexandria Library."

**BRITTANY HALL (BBA)** is a real estate agent with Benchmark Realty in Nashville, Tennessee. She enjoys helping people call middle Tennessee home and has worked with several USD alumni who have relocated to the area. She adds, "I specialize in working with investors who are eager to take part in this rapidly growing city!" On Oct. 15, 2021, she reports that she married Derek Graff in a beautiful outdoor ceremony in rural Nashville. The couple resides in downtown Nashville.

[2008]

**REBECCA FRAZEE (EdD)** writes, "In addition to teaching at San Diego State University in the Learning Design and Technology graduate program, in the summer of 2021, I was thrilled to serve my community as sort of an 'edtech first responder' by providing professional development and support to more than 1,000 faculty members as they transitioned to online teaching. I also serve as the associate director of the Flexible Learning Environments Exchange initiative (FLEXspace.org), an award-winning global open education resource of learning space examples and resources, with an international community of more than 5,000 members from 67 countries. Recently, we have begun gathering examples and evidence-based guidance for the design of more inclusive physical learn-

ing environments. In response to the pandemic, FLEXspace has been able to provide valuable resources and guidance to the higher education and K12 community as they struggle to reimagine and reconfigure physical learning spaces to consider social distancing needs. Through the FLEXspace open educational collaborative, I have had the opportunity to work closely with higher education leaders from the California State University Chancellor's Office, California Community College Chancellor's Office, the University of California Office of the Provost, the State University of New York Office of the Provost, Pennsylvania State University, EDUCAUSE and the International Society for Technology in Education, among others."

**SYDNEY HARTLEY (BBA)** writes that she and her husband, Robert, recently welcomed their baby girl. "Our hearts have never been so full!"

## 2010s

[2011]

**JOHNNY CUSHING (BA)** is a 2011/F-35 contract instructor pilot at Miramar with Lockheed Martin.

**KEVIN O'MALLEY (BA)** writes, "My wife and I were married on July 31, 2021, after having to postpone the event in 2020 due to COVID."

[2012] 🎓

**RYAN GOBLE (BA)** reports that he and his wife have relocated. "We live back home now in Arizona and I work at our home church, Scottsdale Bible Church."

**NICOLE SCHMIDT (BA)** writes, "I graduated with my master's in leadership development from Chapman University in August 2021 and moved to Denver at the end of October!"

[2013]

**A.J. AGRAWAL (BBA)** recently sold his company, Verma Farms — an ultra-high-end health-conscious CBD brand — to FE International Inc.

**SCOTT MARCUS (BBA)** says that he is "looking forward to retiring after 23 years of uniformed service to our great nation! I hope I can find a good job that will allow me to stay in San Diego!"

[2014]

**RAQUEL MEADE (BA)** says, "After many years of undergraduate and graduate training, I am now working as a licensed clinical pediatric psychologist in New York City. I started as a psychology major at USD, which opened the doors for great training opportunities (USD peer counseling program) and internships and allowed me to earn a spot at a doctoral program!"

**KYLE MILLER (BBA)** writes, "I was named one of *Fast Company's* Most Creative in Business in 2021." This is the 12th annual list that the company has put out to celebrate the "most creative people in business," honoring an influential and diverse group of leaders from a vast range of global industries including tech, science, design, entertainment, health care, media, government, nonprofit, sports and food. He is head of the Z Team at Tinder, which is described as "a cross functional group that combines deep product expertise with a propensity to take big swings in order to create the next generation of dating products for Gen Z."

**MICHELLE PEÑA (JD)** is the new attorney member-at-large in the Appellate section of the San Diego County Bar for 2022.

[2016]

**BRENT ALLMAN (BA)** published a paper in the journal *Viruses* as one of his dissertation chapters. Find it online at <https://doi.org/10.3390/v13071216>.

**JUAN CHARRABE (BA)** is a yoga teacher working toward a degree in psychology.

**LAUREN FREIDENBERG (JD)** provided this report: "I recently relocated from Los Angeles (previous employer: McMurray Henriks, LLP) to Seattle (new employer: MacDonald, Hoague, and Bayless). I am entering my sixth year of the practice of law, all of which has been dedicated to civil rights litigation (police misconduct). I am grateful to USD's School of Law and to Professor Roy L. Brooks for my civil rights education and employment opportunities."

**JACK A. GARRETT (MBA)** writes, "I'm so appreciative of all my time at the USD School of Business master's program and Nonprofit institute. I'm

# HOMEcoming & FAMILY WEEK

OCTOBER 11-16, 2022

Join alumni, students, family and friends for a week of celebrating Torero pride, gathering with old and new friends, and reconnecting with the USD community. Learn more at [sandiego.edu/hfw22](https://sandiego.edu/hfw22).

TORERO TUESDAY



DAY OF GIVING



TORERO TUESDAY • STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY • LEGACY PINNING CEREMONY  
FABULOUS TORERO CASINO NIGHT • BIG BLUE BASH STUDENT CONCERT  
TORERO TAILGATE AND FOOTBALL GAME • ALUMNI AND FAMILY MASS





[a q u a t i c]

# THE WORLD IS HER OYSTER

**Environmental and ocean sciences is the wave of Grace Cawley's future**

by Kelsey Grey

**A**s kids, most of us had a particular dream job we imagined for our grown-up selves. Grace Cawley '19 (BA) wanted to be a marine biologist. "Whales were something that interested me," she jests. "But do kids understand what it means to be a marine biologist?"

Years later, she's actualized that dream and is studying and working as a PhD biological oceanographer at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla.

It's a title, she says, that she feels she is slowly earning.

Cawley grew up in Salem, Massachusetts, or as she is typically reminded, the place where the witch trials were held. Her dad was a big advocate of exploring the outdoors, something the family frequently did together.

During the summers, Cawley and her family would go to Cape Cod. There, she and the other children would play in the tide pools, creating minnow houses

and looking for life under rocks.

Still, when it came time to apply to colleges, she wasn't thinking about things aquatic. She tossed around ideas for majors such as educational psychology and pre-med. She originally applied only to East Coast schools. It wasn't until a high school friend visited the University of San Diego that she added it to her list.

"My brother is two years older than me and went to the University of Miami," recalls Cawley.

"He was always outside and always at the beach. I remember thinking, 'That must be so freeing.'" When her parents pressed her for a decision, she answered, "USD," even though she hadn't even visited campus.

It was an impulsive decision, but one that she says paid off.

As a first year, Cawley still believed she would declare as pre-med and thought she'd select a chemistry class for her Living Learning Communities require-

ment. Instead, she ended up in Introduction to Earth Systems, taught by Associate Professor of Environmental and Ocean Sciences Beth O'Shea, PhD.

The class became a defining moment for Cawley.

She quickly dropped the idea of pre-med and began to pour her heart and soul into environmental and ocean sciences. O'Shea also became her advisor.

By her sophomore year, Cawley was approached by Associate Professor of Environmental and Ocean Sciences Jennifer Prairie, PhD, to work on a research project, a rare opportunity for a sophomore.

"She talked about how she studied marine snow and there was this new project focusing on how zooplankton interacts with it," says Cawley.

To make the deal even more appealing, during her senior year, Prairie pitched the idea that Cawley become one of the very first students to participate in the department's combined degree program. By the end of her studies, she would earn both a BA and an MS, all while expanding on her research project.

Cawley agreed and began to research the effect of phytoplankton properties on the ingestion of marine snow by *Calanus pacificus*.

Let's break that down.

The ocean is a balanced ecosystem. Live phytoplankton live in the topmost 200 meters of the ocean or the surface ocean. These microorganisms are similar to plants on Earth, in that they contain chlorophyll and require sunlight to live and grow. They also pull carbon from the atmosphere above.

Phytoplankton have a sticky outer coating. When they collide, they form clumps called marine snow, due to the fact that they actually look like snow falling in the ocean. Because the phytoplankton weigh each other down in these clumps, they leave the

surface ocean and go into the deep ocean, taking the carbon with it.

Originally, biological oceanographers thought the snow particles would just sink, ending the cycle of the marine carbon pump, where carbon is drawn out of the atmosphere and down to the ocean floor.

But Cawley noticed phytoplankton, even as a snow particle, still served as food for zooplankton. The zooplankton would eat it, then excrete it. This added a "wrinkle to the question of the role of marine snow in the oceanic carbon pump."

Cawley, along with co-authors Moira Décima, Andrea Mast and Jennifer Prairie, published their findings in the *Journal of Plankton Research* in Fall 2021.

In January, Cawley was awarded the 2022 Cushing Prize from the journal for the best article written by an early career stage scientist.

She attributes her success thus far to the women who've uplifted her.

"I was blessed to find Jennifer and Beth — two women in a field I wanted to be in — and learn from their journeys. I didn't always have a 4.0, but I found my place in research and did it well enough that people gave me chances."

She'll continue working on ocean research for her PhD for the next several years. After that, the world is her oyster. Looking back, Cawley finds it hard to believe that she ever considered the idea of any other major.

"I was looking for a challenge, and research is a challenge I can do on my own terms. I really enjoy that."

She has advice for young women doubting if research is the path for them. "Hold your space. We lose ourselves to imposter syndrome. Fail and make mistakes, but don't let them define you. Grow from them." 🌊

currently consulting for nonprofit institutional clients' capital improvements in the greater Philadelphia area with Aegis Property Group."

**MORGAN HANSEN (BA)** passed both the California and Nevada bar exams and is practicing as an attorney in Santa Rosa, California.

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

**JULIANA MASCARI (BA), '19 (JD)** reports that she married Austin Jacobs '17 (BBA) in Founders Chapel on Oct. 16, 2021.

**NATHAN OLIVER (BBA)** transitioned from the DTLA Wells Fargo commercial banking office to the San Diego Banner Bank commercial banking group.

**HAYLEY PARK (BA)** earned her Master's in Music Therapy from Arizona State University in 2019. She currently works at the VA providing music therapy to veterans in the rehab, dementia and hospice units. She reports that she married her husband, Chris, in 2018 and they just became first-time homeowners.

**DARCI ROBERTS (BA)** reports that she married Ricardo Dixon '14 (BA) on Oct. 23, 2021, at the Old Post Office in Saint Louis, Missouri. A reception at Hotel Saint Louis followed the ceremony. She earned her bachelor's degree in communications studies at USD and her master's degree in media and strategic communication at George Washington University. Ricardo earned his bachelor's degree at USD in political science and his law degree at Indiana University's Maurer School of Law. Darcy is a digital director at Faith in Action, a national nonprofit organization, and Ricardo is an assistant United States attorney. The couple met more than seven years ago at USD and currently reside in Saint Louis, Missouri.

**ARMAN SIDDIQUI (BA)** recently received an F31 graduate fellowship from the NIH to fund research aimed at developing a novel drug target to treat the three neglected tropical diseases caused by trypanosome infections. Read more at

<https://reporter.nih.gov/project-details/10234600>.

**KEITH VAN WAGNER (JD)** was promoted to program coordinator for the County of San Diego Independent Redistricting Commission.

**[2017] 🎓**  
**DEVON PARIKH (BBA)** provided this update: "Bid get the frisbee dolla dolla bill y'all."

**KIKO SALAZAR (BA)** writes, "At the age of 25, I was promoted to chief operating officer of Doctor Multimedia, the highest-rated medical marketing company in the world. In June of 2020, my rapid progress in the world of business led myself to be featured on the cover of *San Diego Woman Magazine*, an invitation-only publication. I created a website, [www.kiko.org](http://www.kiko.org), where visitors may find my latest endeavors in the worlds of business and digital marketing, the dates of my upcoming seminars and more."

**SHANNA VAN WAGNER (JD)** was promoted to senior associate for Lynberg & Watkins.

**[2018]**  
**INDIRA GALVEZ (BA)** writes that she is the press secretary for Ally Dalsimer, "a progressive Democrat who is running for Congress in VA-11."

**[2019]**  
**ERIC GERSBACHER (MA)** says, "Lately I've been chilling hard. I am hoping to gain some data analytics skills, and am considering a boot camp. I was offered a job in disaster relief assistance to begin next year."

**NOEL MEZA (JD)** writes, "My son, Noel, Jr., just turned 2! He was born three weeks before I took the California Bar Exam, which I passed on the first try!"

**2020s**

**[2020]**  
**RAMON LEYVA (BS/BA), (MA)** accepted a software engineer offer from Microsoft at the end of July 2021.

**WILLIAM SWEATT (BBA)** writes, "I graduated in the Corona Class of 2020 so had to get a little





**MIKE HARROD, DVM '78 (BA)** writes, “I was one of three USD graduates accepted to the veterinary program at UC Davis in 1983. Veterinary practice was a challenging and rewarding profession. Those who have read or seen *All Creatures Great and Small* have caught a glimpse of veterinary life, but something was left out: fleas! In my first years of practice in San Diego, I spent an incalculable amount of time talking about and treating fleas. At that time, there were no treatments or preventatives that were both safe and effective. Most of my patients were itchy and my clients were mad. So, I used my liberal arts education to expand my horizons and wrote a children’s book about fleas. It didn’t help my clients or patients, but it relieved my stress. I published *Farrah Farhopper the Faraway Flea* on Feb. 17, 2022, which was Amazon’s No. 1 New Release in Children’s Bug & Spider Books. It was published five years after I retired because life, raising a family, fighting fleas and helping pets and pet parents took priority.”

creative. I bought a couple of buckets, a vacuum, some spray bottles and started knocking on doors. Now we are San Diego Select Detailing, and have been running independently for 15 months, most recently ranking in San Diego’s top-10 detailing businesses. Things worked out how they were supposed to!”

#### [ 2021 ]

**DAVID FIELDS (BBA)** writes, “I graduated in May and got a job as a logistics specialist at Pilot Flying J in Knoxville, Tennessee.”

**MARVIN HEINZE (MSEL)** was recently honored by the San Diego-Imperial Council of the Boy Scouts of America as a 2021 National Eagle Scout Association Outstanding Eagle Scout. Currently a City Councilmember in Coronado, Heinze was recognized as a notable Eagle Scout who, through service to his country and community, has inspired others. A career Navy Special Operations Officer who led Explosive Ordnance Disposal forces, a senior government official in port and harbor security and a dedicated community volunteer, Marvin consistently lives the Scout Oath.

**MARJON SAULON (MA)** recently accepted an appointment to serve as Northern California regional coordinator for the Office of California Gov. Newsom. He began the job on Feb. 7, 2022. He writes, “I’m excited to connect the priorities of Californians to the governor.”

## In Memoriam

**JENNIFER “JENNY” DOYLE BATISH ‘03 (BA)** passed away on Nov. 8th, 2021, at the age of 40 after a long and courageous battle with breast cancer. She grew up in a Navy family and lived in numerous locations before settling in Washington state. She graduated from Archbishop Murphy High School in Everett, Washington, in 1999 and received a Navy Reserve Officer Training Corps scholarship to the University of San Diego. After succeeding in making many lifelong friendships, she graduated from USD in 2003 with a degree in biology and was commissioned as an Ensign in the United States Navy.

Following her active-duty Naval Service, she worked in support of

the Navy with the SAIC Corporation before joining the Federal Bureau of Investigation in 2009. She completed training at the FBI Academy with Class 09-04. Jenny served on multiple squads as an FBI Special Agent in Philadelphia and Sacramento until her illness forced her to medically retire in 2021. She was extremely proud of the important work she did with the FBI and enjoyed the friendship and camaraderie she developed with fellow agents and teammates.

Jenny is survived by her husband, Ramon Batish, and her almost 5-year-old son, Christopher. They were the love of her life along with her entire family. She is also survived by her mother and father, Christie and Dennis Doyle, and by two older brothers: Pat and his wife, Ann, and their two children, Patrick and Louisa; Tim and his wife, Nicole, and their daughter, Alexandra.

**JAMES FREED ‘56 (BA)** passed away on Dec. 21, 2021. He was the first graduate of the College for Men. As such, Freed holds a special place in the history of the university.

James transferred to USD from St. Columban’s Seminary in Milton, Massachusetts, coming to campus as a senior in 1954. At that time, there were about 40 undergraduate men enrolled at USD, along with another 60 in the School of Law. “We were the stepchildren,” he recalled in a 2006 story in *USD Magazine*. “We went to class across Linda Vista Road, where the University of San Diego High School used to be.”

After earning his undergraduate degree in philosophy, Freed was drafted and did his military service in Germany before returning to San Diego, where he’d lived since 1941. “I worked at Teledyne Ryan for 36 years,” he said. “Back then, the aerospace industry was San Diego’s bread and butter.”

He looked back on his place in USD’s history with a hint of solemnity: “The men’s college blossomed and grew from humble beginnings to the great university we became. Bishop Buddy was a visionary.”

## Send Class Notes

Submit class notes via email to [classnotes@sandiego.edu](mailto:classnotes@sandiego.edu).



# Wine Classic

UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

PRESENTED BY SETH O'BYRNE

Saturday, July 9 • 3-6 p.m.

The University of San Diego Alumni Association hosts the 14th annual Wine Classic outdoors at USD! Join wine aficionados to enjoy tastes from more than 20 wineries, gourmet food, auctions and live entertainment! This exceptional wine-tasting event is San Diego's "can't miss" event of the summer! Net proceeds support student scholarships. Tickets are available beginning on May 2. More details at [usdwineclassic.com](http://usdwineclassic.com).

## PRESENTING SPONSOR

O'BYRNE TEAM | COMPASS

SETH O'BYRNE DRE 01463479

## RESERVE SPONSORS



ALEX BEATON  
REAL ESTATE

## VINTAGE SPONSORS



MARCO '84 AND KIMBERLY '87 ALESSIO  
JOHN '80 AND HELEN '81 (KASPERICK) FINNERAN



Buchalter



Sponsorships are available today! Contact Derek Legg, Director of Corporate and Community Partnerships, at [dlegg@sandiego.edu](mailto:dlegg@sandiego.edu).





OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY PUBLICATIONS  
5998 ALCALÁ PARK  
SAN DIEGO, CA 92110-2492

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
SAN DIEGO, CA  
PERMIT NO. 365

[SAVE THE DATE]



CHECK EACH WEBSITE FOR THE LATEST EVENT INFORMATION



June - August  
Summer Send-Offs

[sandiego.edu/parents](https://sandiego.edu/parents)



July 9  
USD Wine Classic

[usdwineclassic.com](https://usdwineclassic.com)



August 27-28  
OLÉ! Weekend and Parent  
Orientation

[sandiego.edu/orientation](https://sandiego.edu/orientation)



August 28  
Mass of Welcome

[sandiego.edu/ministry](https://sandiego.edu/ministry)



September 3  
Football Home Opener  
USD vs. La Verne

[USDToreros.com](https://USDToreros.com)



September 8  
Mass of the Holy Spirit

[sandiego.edu/ministry](https://sandiego.edu/ministry)



October 11-16  
Homecoming and Family Week

[sandiego.edu/hfw22](https://sandiego.edu/hfw22)



Coming Soon!  
Enjoy a variety of Torero alumni  
events

[alumni.sandiego.edu](https://alumni.sandiego.edu)