

# MARIAN UNIVERSITY

Indianapolis®

MAGAZINE | SPRING/SUMMER 2021

*Living:*  
**DIGNITY  
OF THE  
INDIVIDUAL**





# MARIAN IS MAKING **BIG** MOVES!

## THE EXCHANGE

EXPERIENCE THAT MATTERS

Marian University named a **2020-21 College of Distinction for Career Development** for its career services center, The Exchange.

# #3

**Most Innovative Midwest Regional Universities** by U.S. News & World Report

# #5

**Best Value** category by U.S. News & World Report

# A

**Fred S. Klipsch Educators College** earned an **A** for its elementary teacher preparation program from the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ).



Class of 2021 is home to **three Orr Fellows** and **one Fulbright Scholar**.

# top 5

Byrum School of Business named **Top 5 Best Catholic Undergraduate Business School** by *Poets&Quants*

**MARIAN UNIVERSITY**  
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**E. S. Witchger School of Engineering**

*Indiana Business Journal* reported that **Marian University received the largest charitable gift of any Indiana non-profit organization** to start the E. S. Witchger School of Engineering (see page 12).

➔ *The groundbreaking ceremony for the E. S. Witchger School of Engineering was held on Friday, June 4, 2021.*



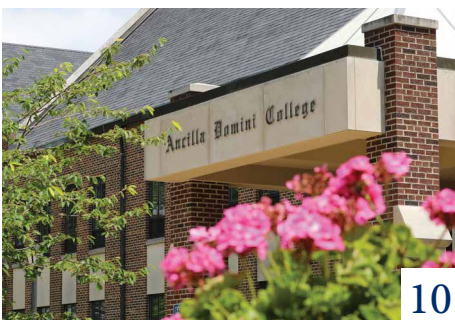
### **Caito-Wagner Hall is nearly done!**

This 57,000-square-foot facility will house 210 students in 112 rooms this fall. It will include a bell tower dedicated to the Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg, Indiana—Marian's founders and sponsors—that will be the highest point of elevation on campus.

**Left:** A few Marian students got a peek inside St. Joseph Chapel during a tour of Caito-Wagner Hall.



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## PUBLICATION INFORMATION

### **President**

Daniel J. Elsener

### **Executive Director of Marketing Communications**

Maggie Kucik

### **Editor**

Robin Evans, director of creative services for marketing communications

### **Associate Editors**

Julia Kelb '16, manager of communications  
Wendy Faust, executive director of development  
Jackie Kretz, manager of advancement communications  
Christina O'Connell, writer/editor  
Carolyn Swartz '18, assistant director of annual giving and alumni engagement

### **Printing**

Fineline Printing Group

### **Contributing Writers**

Sonya Chevigny  
Robin Evans  
Elizabeth Griffith  
Calvin Hopple  
Julia Kelb '16

Jackie Kretz  
Christina O'Connell  
Toni Polizzi  
Carolyn Swartz '18



### **On the Cover:**

#### **Oluwabanwo Adeniyi '21**

- Nursing Major
- President of the Student Nurses' Association
- Freshman Class President

Read her story on page 6.

### **Design**

Kim McBurnett, Blue Olive Design

### **Contributing Photographers**

Ancilla College of Marian University  
Julia Kelb '16  
Marian University Sports Information  
Tenth Street Photography  
Katie Wise

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Opinions expressed in the *Marian University Magazine* do not necessarily reflect the views of Marian University or the Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg, Indiana.

### **How to Reach Us:**

Phone: 317.955.6570  
Email: revans@marian.edu  
Mail: Marian University  
3200 Cold Spring Road  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46222

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as of December 21, 2020



## Dear Marian University Community,

As a great Catholic university grounded in the Franciscan tradition, one of our key values is to give reverence to the **dignity of every person**. Undoubtedly, you have seen this value highlighted throughout our campus—not only in the artwork on the wall outside the Dining Commons and in our informational materials for new community members and visitors, but in the ways we treat, greet, and serve one another and relate to our larger neighborhood, city, country, and beyond. The past year has illuminated the many ways Marian University lives up to our mission and values, and it has provided many opportunities for the Marian University community to do even more to advance **human dignity** and flourishing through innovative and creative endeavors.

Over the past year, our students and alumni have made a direct impact in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. On pages 4-9 and 18-19, members of the Marian community share how they have courageously advanced the **dignity of patients and healthcare workers** in the medical school, helped our student-athletes to safely exercise their gifts and talents, and more.

Recognizing and affirming each person's unique calling and talent is one key way we honor the **dignity of the individual**. In recent months, Marian University has announced two bold and exciting new endeavors that will allow us to do just that for more emerging learners and leaders in more places. Pages 10-11 detail how Ancilla College of Marian University will bring a high-quality Marian education to students on the Ancilla campus—one that is tailored to meet the

specific needs of that community. Information on the E. S. Witchger School of Engineering, which will bring transformational leaders in the vital field of engineering to teach, conduct research, and learn as members of the Marian community, can be found in the story about the school on pages 12-13 and in the Forging Leaders Initiative update on pages 14-15. The STEM fields have much to offer our quest to advance human flourishing, and the E. S. Witchger School of Engineering will play a leading role in that effort.

We also honor the **dignity of the individual** by celebrating the gift of diversity present among us. The Marian University community has long included students from diverse social, cultural, and economic backgrounds, thanks in large part to the historical commitment of the Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg, Indiana and programs like the 21st Century Scholars Program. On pages 16-17, you can get to know the new director of the 21st Century Scholars Program, DeLeon Ayeni. We also celebrate the many women who have helped make Marian the great university it is today through the Women of Marian Society, which is now paving the way for future generations of Marian women to become transformational leaders through the Women of Marian Scholarship fund. You can read about them on pages 20-21.

Finally, the effort to advance the **dignity of every person** is a lifelong pursuit and worthy of the support and engagement of the Marian University community beyond graduation. On pages 22-23, we explain how the new alumni portal will allow you to make connections, advance Marian University values and learning, and maintain relationships with your fellow Marian University alumni and alumni parents in the digital age.

As we wrap up the 2020-21 academic year, let us all commit to rediscovering how we belong to one another by celebrating the **dignity, talents, and uniqueness of each individual** in the Marian community and beyond. The community we have forged in this way enriches all of us and makes us a stronger and more dynamic Marian University for service to the world!

Go, Knights!

Daniel J. Elsener  
President

# Social media is your window into campus.

As we continue to add new campuses and program site locations, follow us on social media to stay informed.



BY SONYA CHEVIGNY  
Social Media Manager  
Office of Marketing and Communications

## INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

UNDERGRADUATE

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### Byrum School of Business

[f](#) /byrumbusiness  
[@](#)byrumbusiness

### Fred S. Klipsch Educators College

[f](#) /KlipschCollege  
[@](#)klipschcollege  
[@](#)klipschcollege

### Leighton School of Nursing

[@](#)mu\_leighton\_nursing

### Marian University Accelerated Nursing Programs

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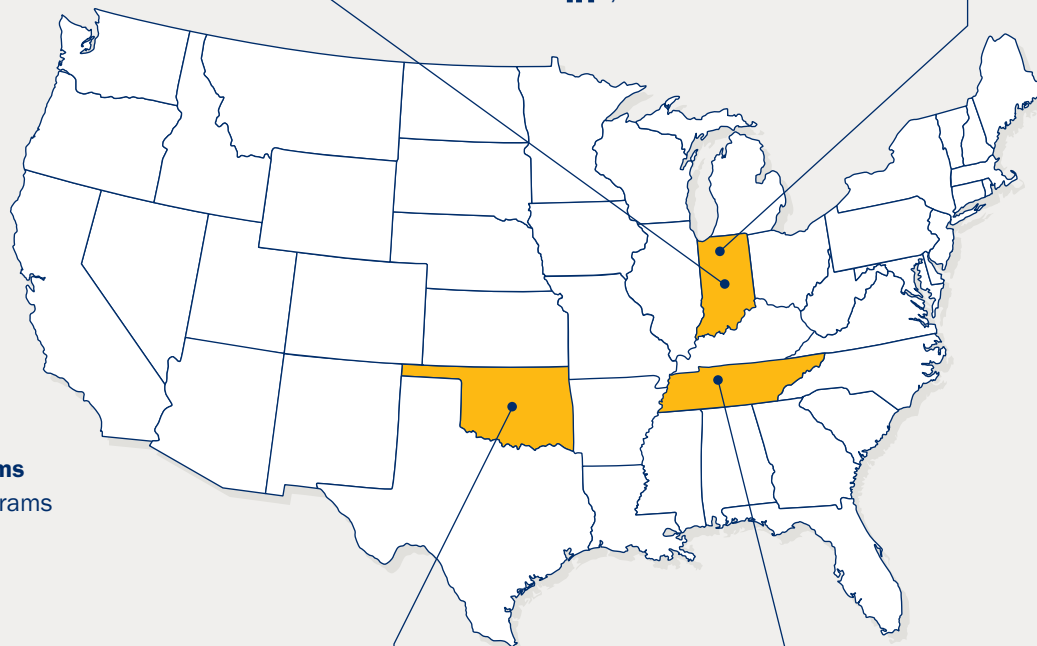
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## PLYMOUTH, INDIANA

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### Marian University Accelerated Nursing Programs

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In case you need them or haven't visited, here are the main Marian University social media pages:

[f](#) /marianuniversity   [@](#)marianuniversity   [@](#)marianuniv

# KNIGHTCARE: RESPONDING TO THE PANDEMIC

BY JULIA KELB '16  
*Manager of Communications  
Office of Marketing and Communications*

From a professor called to serve an active-duty military tour to support COVID-19 relief, to the Student Nurses' Association helping campus thrive, to a nursing alumna on the frontlines—the Marian University community persevered while facing the challenges and adversities the COVID-19 pandemic presented our world. Here are just a few of their stories.



## ACTIVE DUTY

### Professor Serves Tour for COVID-19 Relief While Teaching Business Courses

“Our enemy wasn’t a particular entity. It was a disease that we were fighting against.”

In early Spring 2020, Commander Eric Chitwood was mobilized by the United States Navy to support COVID-19 relief efforts. Over the next several months, Chitwood served an active-duty tour.

He also taught business courses to students in Marian’s Adult Programs (MAP).

“I wanted my quality of teaching to be the same. It was difficult because of the fact that my students were under a lot of stress, and they were struggling. They were trying to study while a lot of them had kids missing school or had to do their jobs. It added extra work, but it was worth it,” Chitwood said.

While he taught his courses online, Chitwood was stationed at Scott Air Force Base in St. Claire County, Illinois, as part of the United States Transportation Command, a branch of the military that manages transportation requirements for the Department of Defense.

“Because of COVID, we wanted to create a sterilized bubble. I was responsible for COVID protocols in my particular directorate,” Chitwood said. “That helped us maintain the operational readiness of the command because we couldn’t afford to have situation where we were all out because of COVID. We would not be operationally ready. Our mission would be compromised, and we couldn’t allow that to happen.”

Chitwood was essential to the development of mobility solutions, like the movement of personal protective equipment to healthcare workers on the frontlines. He also played a significant role in the Global Repatriation Operation, safely returning 3,854 American citizens to the United States who were stranded overseas due to unexpected airport and border closures.

Though part of a long line of military service workers, Chitwood originally had no plans to join himself. He went to college and immediately began his career in business and finance. Then 9/11 happened.



“Once that happened, I had a change of heart. I felt a call and sense of duty. I decided to go ahead and see how I could best serve my country,” Chitwood said.

Chitwood joined the United States Navy Reserve, and in 2005, while drilling at the Heslar Naval Amory (now Riverside High School) on 30th Street, Chitwood learned about Marian University right down the road. Then, in 2006, Chitwood inquired about teaching business courses.

“Before I even started my first course, I was deployed. I asked, ‘Would you mind still letting me teach when I come back?’” Chitwood said. “I deployed in 2006, and in the summer of 2007, I started teaching, and I’ve been teaching ever since.”

Chitwood related his latest tour during the COVID-19 pandemic to building a plane while it’s flying.

“It was tough because everything we were doing was more vague. Because there was no prior precedence of how to fight it, we were establishing procedures and protocols at the same time that we were trying to comply with them,” Chitwood said.

For his outstanding leadership, Chitwood was awarded the Joint Service Achievement Medal by the secretary of defense.

**“I appreciate Marian University’s commitment to their students, faculty, and those that serve. I really couldn’t do it without Marian’s support. They have my back, and that means a lot as I accomplish missions on both fronts,” Chitwood said.**



## ON CAMPUS

### Nursing and Medical Students Volunteer to Keep Campus Safe

“Hi, it’s Bami Adeniyi, president of the Student Nurses’ Association and from the Class of 2021. I’m here to talk to you today about personal protective equipment on campus,” Adeniyi said in a video addressing the Marian University community.

From sharing their expertise to educate the community to volunteering for the COVID-19 vaccination clinic on campus, Marian University students in the Leighton School of Nursing and College of Osteopathic Medicine were quick to take initiative to keep staff, faculty, and students healthy as the world responded to COVID-19.

The now nursing graduate, Oluwabanwo (Bami) Adeniyi, was one of the first to step forward.

Adeniyi was president of the Student Nurses’ Association (SNA), a pre-professional organization that allows pre-nursing and nursing students to build a support system both academically and socially for greater success as a nursing student.

“We work with the tutoring center and career services to provide advice on how to tackle classes and how to study. We also bring in nurses from all across the country to talk about their specialties,” Adeniyi said.

After the Spring 2020 semester quickly shifted online and the university worked to reopen safely the next fall, Adeniyi and members of SNA wanted to be part of educating campus on safety best practices during the pandemic.

“That’s our duty as nurses, to educate the population on health and wellness,” Adeniyi said.

SNA partnered with the university on videos as part of KnightCare, one of the initiatives the university put in place to communicate key COVID-19 information. Videos ranged from how to properly wear personal protective equipment, to how to safely gather in the Dining Commons, to a Q&A answering questions students submitted on Instagram.

“If you feel anxious, worried, or stressed, know that you are definitely not alone. It’s okay to take a step back and take care of yourself,” Adeniyi said in another video focused on taking care of mental health during the pandemic. The video also pointed to on-campus resources, like Counseling and Consultation Services.

A crucial aspect of the videos Adeniyi and SNA wanted to emphasize was that they were students talking to students.

**“I definitely think having a student tell information is different than an administrator. Student voices were being included and heard,” Adeniyi said.**



SNA partnered with the university for the entire 2020-21 academic year and were critical to keeping campus well-informed.

“Being a nursing major, it didn’t scare me from being a nurse, but it reminded me things like this happen,” Adeniyi said.

After vaccines became available in the United States, Marian University hosted its very own vaccine clinic on campus—and nursing and medical students worked together to lead the charge.

From April 26-30, which also was World Immunization Week, students, faculty, and staff were able to get their first or second dose of the Pfizer vaccine right in the Arena/Convocation Center. A second clinic followed from May 17-21, opening up even more opportunities for the Marian community to get vaccinated.





“This was experiential learning at its best. Our students were able to work as a part of an interprofessional team to deliver preventative healthcare to their peers. We are so proud of the impact the students had on keeping our community safe,” Amanda Wright, DO, dean of MU-COM, said.

The COVID-19 pandemic challenged the world to adapt for the safety of friends, family, and the greater community, and Marian University students were there to offer support during these challenging circumstances without hesitation.

“You’re an essential worker as a nurse. You’re going to have to respond to any type of emergency there is,” Adeniyi said. “I knew that as a nurse, working online wasn’t going to be an option. I would be working alongside everything.”



**Above and right:** Marian University students in the Leighton School of Nursing and the College of Osteopathic Medicine worked alongside one another for two COVID-19 vaccination clinics held in the Arena and Convocation Center on campus, administering Pfizer vaccines to fellow students, faculty, and staff. These students were able to gain clinical experience while giving back to the community.





## IN THE ICU

### Alumna Works in ICU as COVID-19 Cases Grow

In early February 2020, Ivana Guillen Howenstine '14 accepted her next contract as a travel nurse in San Francisco. By the end of the month, the first COVID-19 death was announced in the United States.

"I remember just wanting to hide from it. No one knew what to expect," Howenstine said.

Howenstine's position would place her in the intensive care unit (ICU) at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center, and with COVID-19 cases surging, she was uncertain if a new role in a new city was the right decision.

"I saw that there were nurses and physicians coming out of retirement wanting to help, and it really motivated me to work alongside them," Howenstine said. "After talking to other travel nurses and the healthcare community, I got the courage to follow through and live my calling to help others."

Howenstine drove across the country, listening to the latest news of nurses in New York using trash bags to protect themselves, unable secure masks and proper personal protective equipment (PPE).

"Before leaving, my parents prayed with me. My dad, who works in construction, had seven N-95s. He gave me five of them, told me to take care, and that I didn't have to do it. I was scared," Howenstine said.

The ICU Howenstine was assigned had quickly turned into a unit solely treating COVID-19 patients. Labor and delivery and nursing rooms turned into more beds for the unit.

"We were supporting their blood pressure, their oxygen, their kidneys, everything was failing," Howenstine said. "A lot of these patients were intubated with a breathing tube in their throat and facing down on the bed to help with their breathing. They were completely sedated and paralyzed, so they couldn't move."

Taking care of patients was physically and intellectually demanding, but emotionally as well. Howenstine recalled having to use her own phone so patients' families could say goodbye, unable to enter the hospital because of COVID-19 guidelines.

**"We had to put them on the phone for closure, not so much for the patient even at that time, but for their loved ones who felt like they couldn't do anything. That was really tough to watch," Howenstine said.**

Howenstine was also dealing with concerns of bringing the virus home after helping contagious patients in the ICU.

"My husband travels with me, but we have one car, and we had to establish a whole other routine. He would pick me up, and I would sit in the back and change out of scrubs. In our house, we had something called a COVID corner that he wouldn't touch," Howenstine said. "Risking getting him sick added to the anxiety of making sure I was protecting myself adequately."



The Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center was hit with the largest number of COVID-19 cases in the area, and Howenstine found it especially hard to see the impact of the virus on communities of color.

“It was hard seeing Latinos in San Francisco and how badly they were affected, but also seeing them struggle with communication. A lot of them were Spanish speaking only, their families were so confused and not knowing the culture,” Howenstine said. “These were also working people, people that didn’t have the option to work virtually.”

As months passed, Howenstine and her colleagues were able to better predict what a COVID-19 patient’s journey was going to look like.

**“We started to learn what the disease looked like. We knew what kind of supportive therapy we were going to have to give. We knew what the ventilator settings were going to look like,” Howenstine said.**



While Howenstine’s husband was able to move with her to San Francisco, she was unable to see any family until 2021, when the availability of the COVID-19 vaccine alleviated some of the health and safety concerns of spreading the virus.

Howenstine completed her contract in San Francisco in September 2020, and she currently resides in Honolulu, Hawaii, serving in another ICU.

“It has been the hardest part of nursing I’ve ever done,” Howenstine said.



Due to the current unprecedented situation in our world, there is an increase in students with financial need. If you feel inspired by these stories of the Marian University community caring for the dignity of each individual during the COVID-19 pandemic, consider a gift to the Helping Hands Fund by visiting [marian.edu/give](https://marian.edu/give).

# ANCILLA COLLEGE of MARIAN UNIVERSITY®



## A Proud History and Bright Future at Ancilla College of Marian University

BY CALVIN HOPPLE

*Marketing Coordinator for Ancilla College of Marian University*

**T**he congregation of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ (PHJC) established Ancilla Domini College in 1924. It began in the beautiful woods of Northern Indiana on the shores of Lake Gilbraith located two miles south of Donaldson, Indiana. The college was named “Ancilla Domini,” which means “Handmaid of the Lord” in Latin.

In 1918, the Poor Handmaids purchased 65 acres of land, which was previously a resort with a 42-room hotel. In 1919, the Sisters began the construction of the new Motherhouse, and on August 30, 1922, the Sisters moved from Fort Wayne into the unfurnished building. One wing of this building would become the home of Ancilla Domini High School and Ancilla Domini College, a preparatory school for women entering the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ religious congregation.

From 1925 to 1937, the Poor Handmaid Sisters offered college courses for their young Sisters preparing for nursing, teaching, and social work as an extension of DePaul University in Chicago. After changes in regulations by the North Central Association on May 7, 1937, Ancilla Domini College received recognition as a two-year teacher-training college from the Indiana Department of Public Instruction Teacher Licensing Board. The junior college began operating independently from the convent in 1937.

With the need for more space and a desire to achieve regional accreditation, on November 15, 1965, construction began on a new addition connected with the west end of the Motherhouse. The first lay students were admitted in 1966, with male students enrolled in 1967. The college achieved North Central Association full accreditation in 1973. Sister Joel Lampen, PHJC served as the first president of Ancilla College from 1965-85.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, enrollment continued to grow to a peak of 709 students in 1995. Ancilla answered the need for higher education in the area by offering evening classes and unique programs to encourage

1868

Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ Sisters travel from Dernbach, Germany to the United States.

1919-1922

Motherhouse built in Donaldson, Indiana.

1937

Ancilla College officially receives recognition as a teacher-training college.

1966

Ancilla Domini College opens enrollment to first lay students. Male students begin in 1967.



non-traditional and “early bird” students to take classes. Students typically came from a 35-mile radius and Ancilla was considered a commuter school in the area. A long-term goal was to provide housing on campus to expand the reach of Ancilla. In 2015, the first residence hall opened to house 98 students, followed by a dining hall and second residence hall in 2016. Students have come to Ancilla from more than 15 countries, across the United States and throughout Indiana.

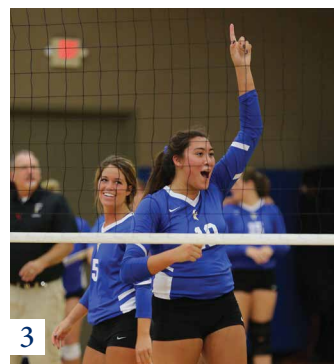
Athletics have been part of the campus for many years, first as intramural sports, then in 1997, Ancilla joined the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) and shortly after, the Michigan Community College Athletic Association (MCCAA). Men’s and women’s teams compete in basketball, soccer, volleyball, wrestling, baseball, softball, golf, and bowling. Although one of the smallest schools in the country, athletic teams have represented Ancilla in the national tournament for basketball and men’s soccer, and brought home a National Championship in Women’s Bowling in 2018.

Leading into today, 2020 saw the announcement and formal agreement between Ancilla College and Marian University. The two institutions will collaborate to expand higher education in Northern Indiana and provide opportunities and resources to students, faculty, and the region through this partnership.

“ This strategic approach includes a long-range goal: to secure more opportunities for Ancilla alumni, current students, and those in our local surrounding counties who seek further education in the region,” Ancilla College President Michele Dvorak, PHJC, Ed.D.



said. “Education rooted in values will be a beacon of light and hope for the future. We believe Marian University commits to not only the mission, but also to fulfilling the mutual goal of advanced academic opportunities.”



Our future for 2021 and onward is blazing bright with opportunity to see Ancilla thrive in collaboration with Marian University. Under the cooperative leadership of chancellor Joseph Heidt, our shared mission of student empowerment, academic excellence, and illuminating faith will continue to serve our community.

“I am excited for the opportunity to work with the Marian University and Ancilla College leadership teams, Boards of Directors and Visitors, the Franciscans and the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ, and the talented staff and faculty of both colleges,” Heidt said. “I will take great care to respect and honor each school’s traditions and successes as the schools join in fulfilling their shared mission and vision of preparing transformative leaders for service to the world, through excellent teaching and learning, that empowers students to achieve collegiate goals, successful careers, and values-centered lives.”



- 1: Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ Motherhouse main entrance.
- 2: The Hardesty Residence Hall built in 2015.
- 3: Ancilla Chargers volleyball game.
- 4: Breakout class study session.



1995

The first conference associated athletics team starts.

2015

First residence hall opens.

2020

Ancilla College and Marian University announce formal agreement of mission collaboration.

For more information about Ancilla College of Marian University, visit [marian.edu/ancilla](http://marian.edu/ancilla).

# MARIAN UNIVERSITY ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF THE E. S. WITCHGER SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

BY ROBIN EVANS  
Director of Creative Services  
Office of Marketing and Communications



**\$26.3 million has been raised in startup donations to build a new facility and hire a new dean.**

**M**arian University will soon launch the E. S. Witchger School of Engineering, offering undergraduate degrees in various engineering disciplines.

“The Marian University community sees the creation of an innovative engineering school as essential to our unflagging commitment to building a great Catholic university in this great American city, important to the future of Indianapolis, and critical to the dedication we have to our students’ best interests,” Marian University President Daniel J. Elsener said. “Marian’s vision is to graduate transformative leaders for service to the world who emphasize trustworthiness, a healthy approach to life, inquisitiveness, and the skills needed to lead in the 21st Century. The E. S. Witchger School of Engineering will contribute mightily to this vision.”

Marian University will continue to recruit students into the dual-degree program with Purdue University for Fall 2021. The inaugural class for the E. S. Witchger School of Engineering will enter Marian in Fall 2022. Marian University will seek approval from the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), which can be obtained after the program produces its first graduating class.

“There is a need for more engineering leaders who possess strong liberal art competencies,” Elsener said. “To meet the changing needs of the economy, leaders in the engineering field must understand the technical side of the practice and be able to communicate, problem solve, and collaborate. A top priority is to attract a diverse student population of talented people who are interested in a well-rounded educational experience. Our Indianapolis location provides students with exceptional opportunities to participate in internships and experiential learning while receiving high-quality instruction.”

Pending approval from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), the engineering degree offerings will concentrate in:



BIOMEDICAL



COMPUTER



CHEMICAL



MECHANICAL



CIVIL

The current Marian student population is 63 percent women and 30 percent of the total population is comprised of students from underrepresented backgrounds. The main priority is to offer competitive scholarships to attract the diverse population needed for future engineers and graduate these students into high-need positions. Marian has experienced a 40 percent growth over the past four years in STEM programs—biology, chemistry, mathematics, computer science, exercise and sports science—while doubling the growth in our dual-degree engineering program with Purdue University.



“With the great work we are doing at our new Walker Center for Applied Ethics and growing interest in STEM programs, we are well-positioned at this time to expand our degree offerings,” Elsener said. “In the Witchger family, we found the ideal partners with the work ethic, dedication to excellence, and commitment to innovation that we teach our students. The Witchger family’s commitment to responsible stewardship and generous sharing of resources makes it a distinct honor and blessing to name the Marian University Engineering School in honor of Eugene S. Witchger.”

### Honoring Eugene S. Witchger

The Witchger family owns and operates Indianapolis-based Marian, Inc., a global provider of custom, die-cut, flexible component parts for the medical, electronics, and automotive industries. Founded in 1954, Marian Inc. has 10 locations throughout North America, Asia, and Europe.



“The Witchger family is extremely honored to partner with Marian University for several reasons,” said William Witchger, president of Marian Inc. “First, our family and company know the value and importance of highly educated engineers, not only for Marian Inc., but for the city of Indianapolis, State of Indiana, and the Midwest region. Secondly, we know Marian University has a deep tradition of producing graduates who have a faith-based education grounded in a liberal

arts setting. Couple this with a first-class engineering experience, and we are confident Marian engineering graduates will be exceptional leaders in the engineering industry. Thirdly, we have the utmost respect for President Elsener and the entire leadership team, including the Board of Trustees. Lastly, we are honored to memorialize our dad and grandfather, Eugene S. Witchger, in this manner. Having his name associated with Marian’s engineering school will be a tremendous way to ensure his legacy lives on forever. The Witchger family is thankful for this opportunity and we look forward to building one of the premiere engineering schools in the Midwest.”

The fundraising goal for creating this innovative engineering school is \$65 million, of which just over \$26.3 million has been committed to date through the support of seven donors. Priorities during the start-up include facilities and equipment, endowed scholarships, endowed faculty positions, and other key needs such as curriculum design, and student recruitment.



### Meet Our Founding Dean

Binh Q. Tran, Ph.D., has been named founding dean of the E. S. Witchger School of Engineering, following an extensive national search. Dr. Tran is nationally recognized for his research and academic areas of focus in telehealth/telemedicine, health information technologies, biomedical instrumentation, and imaging and cardio-pulmonary biomechanics, in addition to serving on the editorial board of several engineering journals.

Dr. Tran has served in numerous academic appointments at The Catholic University of America School of Engineering in Washington, D. C. since 1999, most recently as associate professor in the Department of Biomedical Engineering. He has also served the university as assistant professor, chairman, assistant dean, associate director, and vice provost for strategic initiatives. In addition, he has held engineering positions at Puritan-Bennett, now owned by Medtronic, and has served in the United States Navy Reserve.

“I am thrilled to join Marian University as the founding dean of the E. S. Witchger School of Engineering. Marian has a long history of developing skilled and ethical leaders. The new engineering school will offer high-caliber engineering educational programs to students in Indiana, the region, and attract national and international students. I am thankful for this opportunity to lead the new engineering school and am extremely excited to get started,” Dr. Tran said.

**GROUNDBREAKING FOR THE NEW E. S. WITCHGER SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING WAS HELD ON JUNE 4, 2021.**



Students interested in enrolling in the E. S. Witchger School of Engineering at Marian University may apply at [marian.edu/witchger](http://marian.edu/witchger).



Faculty interested in being a part of this dynamic venture may visit [marian.edu/witchger](http://marian.edu/witchger).

# FORGING LEADERS PROGRESS: THE WINNING FORMULA

OPPORTUNITIES + INDIVIDUAL PASSIONS = CONNECTION → PARTICIPATION → INVESTMENT → **BIG IMPACT**

While the world focused on maintaining proper social distance in 2020, Marian University—with the help of its friends—**actually went the distance**, surpassing its fundraising goal a year early. Former Marian University Board of Trustees Chair Mike Becher, and his wife Bea, are not surprised at all by Marian’s success, and to them, the formula is obvious. Here, he shares his perspective on Marian’s fundraising strategy:

While the success of Marian University programs and graduates is evident on many levels—increased program offerings, enrollment growth, national recognition of program quality and innovation, number of Orr Fellows and Fulbright Scholars, athletic championships, and alumni affinity—one secret to its fundraising success has been the number of new friends who see, embrace, and invest in Marian’s mission and bold moves.



Like Bea and me, many find the mission of Marian to be a compelling one, especially when shared by President Daniel J. Elsener with such passion and energy. The Marian community and the Board of Trustees enthusiastically carry that energy forward by continuing to share that message with friends and colleagues.

Whether it is an invitation to lunch at Allison Mansion or to one of Marian’s signature events, like the annual gala, it is with pride that we introduce others to Marian, and these occasions end up having significant impact. We have become so effective at understanding and connecting our friends to their individual passions, and it seems there is something that virtually anyone can connect to at Marian that touches their desire to reach out and help.

There are so many opportunities for immediate and long-term impact, from a place for reflection in the newly renovated St. Francis Colonnade or assisting those in unexpected need through the Helping Hands Fund or supporting our Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg, Indiana to supporting one of Marian’s many exciting programs, such as the Marian University College of Osteopathic Medicine or Leighton School of Nursing, the Fred S. Klipsch Educators College, Byrum School of Business, Saint Joseph’s College of Marian University, or helping to jumpstart new programs, such as Ancilla College of Marian University or the E. S. Witchger School of Engineering.

**Our ability to match opportunities with passions leads to new connections which result in greater participation, investment, and, ultimately, big impact for all involved.** In fact, some of those initial invitations were to individuals who now serve as current members of Marian’s Board of Trustees, like Ed Bonach, retired chief executive officer of CNO Financial Group; Robyn Werner, partner at EY; and Anne Frye, vice president, general counsel, secretary, and compliance officer at Vertellus.

You don’t have to be a graduate of Marian to be drawn in by its energy—an energy that doesn’t stop just because a goal has been met. As we prepare for the exciting new ventures before us with an updated goal, we look forward to all the new friends we’ll make along our path toward raising \$307 million by 2025!

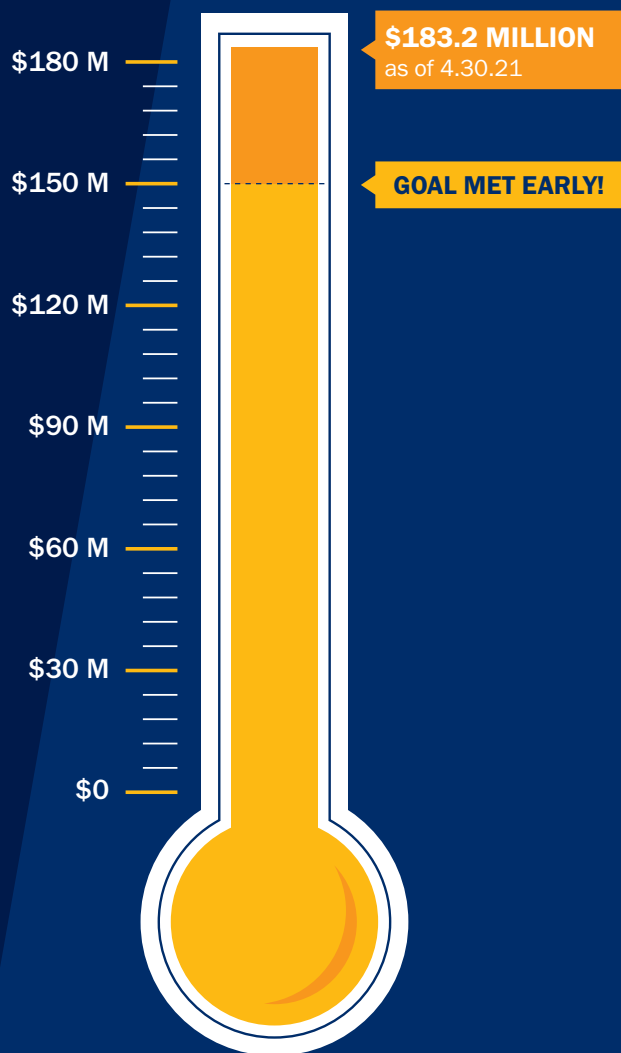
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Becher".

**Mike Becher**  
Former chair of the Marian University Board of Trustees





MARIAN UNIVERSITY  
**FORGING LEADERS**  
*the legacy we're made for*



**2021 Goal \$150 Million**



Thanks to generous support from our donors,  
 we met our 2021 goal of \$150 million early.



**OUR NEXT GOAL IS  
 \$307 MILLION BY 2025.**

**FORGING LEADERS INITIATIVES**

**Mission and Identity**

- St. Francis Colonnade
- Sisters' Legacy Fund
- Scholarships for San Damiano/Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary Latino

**Academic Quality**

- Byrum School of Business
- College of Arts and Sciences
- E. S. Witchger School of Engineering
- Fred S. Klipsch Educators College
- Leighton School of Nursing
- Marian University College of Osteopathic Medicine

**Enrollment**

- 21st Century Scholars
- Ancilla College of Marian University
- Caito-Wagner Hall
- Center for Personalized Learning
- Helping Hands Fund
- Pipeline
- Saint Joseph's College of Marian University

**Leadership**

- Student Success in Life, Learning, and Leadership
- Walker Center for Applied Ethics

**Resources**

- Marian Fund

Learn more at [marian.edu/forgingleaders](http://marian.edu/forgingleaders).



Want to help students be prepared to become leaders for service to the world? Give now at [marian.edu/give](http://marian.edu/give).



# Meet the Director of Marian University's 21st Century Scholars Program

BY CHRISTINA O'CONNELL  
 Writer/Editor  
 Office of Marketing and Communications

In November 2020, DeLeon Ayeni joined Marian University as the new director of the 21st Century Scholars program. In her role as director, Ayeni facilitates all aspects of Marian University's 21st Century Scholars program, including recruiting events for high school scholars, orientation programs, coordinating academic and leadership development programs, as well as one-on-one meetings with scholars to develop strategies for success.



DELEON AYENI

After receiving her graduate degree in student affairs in higher education from Western Kentucky University in 2016, Ayeni started at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) as the coordinator of college transition and leadership development in the Diversity Enrichment and Achievement program. Her work in providing a safe haven and being a resource to the needs of a diverse group of students was what led her to Marian University.

"I was interested in coming to Marian University, because I saw that is what the 21st Century Scholars program

does for our students; making sure our office is personal and a place that is a home away from home for students," Ayeni said. "I love our scholar lounge, where our students have resources from school supplies to snacks throughout the day, to hang out or to do their homework, a place where they can see other scholars, and where they can see the faces that email them every day. They have a close-knit support system of familiar faces and people they develop a relationship with during their time as undergraduates."

Being on a smaller campus, Ayeni believes there is a greater opportunity to form a closer bond with students and learn more about who they are individually.

“ I love that Marian is a smaller institution because it is much easier to develop relationships with the students and find out who they are, where they come from, what their goals and aspirations are, no matter if they're from the smallest cities up north or whether they're from Indianapolis.”

The Office of 21st Century Scholars is dedicated to enhancing the educational experience of scholars. Driven by excellence and quality, they help students develop and engage in activities and programs that are designed to help them reach their highest potential. Students can participate in a number of campus programs and activities that supports them in having a successful student experience such as social events, mentoring programs, and academic support programs.

"A lot of times students can do amazing academically, but they can fall off and lose motivation or inspiration to do what they need to do because they don't feel welcome on campus, or they don't have a place where they feel like they belong or may not have friends or a community," Ayeni said. "We try our best to either be that community for our students or make sure that they know about all the opportunities on campus and that they find the right thing for them to get connected to."

To help 21st Century Scholars afford their college experience, Marian University provides 25 full (includes tuition and fees) scholarships to new scholars each year.

When families were affected by the economic hit during the COVID-19 pandemic in April last year, Marian awarded 50 full-tuition scholarships to high school seniors in the 21st Century Scholars program who enrolled as freshmen in the 2020-21 academic year.

"My first goal or what I'm excited about is to be a part of the recovery after COVID-19, and I look forward to bringing some hope through some unique and creative programming. Our office is known for engagement and community. We're always together either on or off campus doing something somewhere together having fun, learning about something together and continuously growing that community with one another."



# 56.6%

FROM UNDERREPRESENTED POPULATIONS

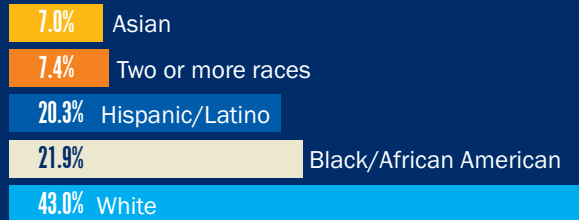
# 37.9%

FIRST GENERATION

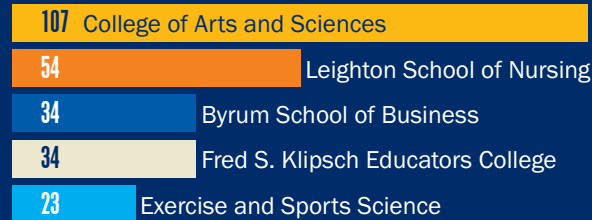
# \$4.3 million

AWARDED TO 21ST CENTURY SCHOLARS THIS YEAR

### ▶ RACE



### ▶ SCHOOLS (based on Fall 2020 data)



### ▶ TOP FIVE MAJORS



“With being a 21st Century Scholar mentor, I have grown to be more loving, compassionate, and willing to work with a team to do greater things. I learned to be a strong leader, an active listener, and overall more understanding that not everyone has the same background and we all have a different story to tell.”

#### HANNAH SNYDER '23

- Double Major in Social Work and Sociology with a minor in Psychology
- Hometown: Fort Wayne, Indiana

“The 21st Century Scholars is the kind of community every first-year student would benefit from. Because of the 21st Century community, I am still here at Marian and without them there is no way I could have succeeded these past 2.5 years. Also, through this program I have met some individuals who will be lifelong friends and for that I am forever grateful for 21st Century Scholars.”

#### JOMAR SEALS '22

- Double Major in Secondary Education and History
- Hometown: Indianapolis, Indiana

“I truly enjoy being a 21st Century Scholar because it was the first place on campus that I felt at home. I have always attended public schools in the past and had no idea what to expect from a private university. At first, I was scared and overwhelmed that going to college would be too much. However, when I met the people in the Office of 21st Century Scholars, I felt good. The area provided has shown me that there is a community of scholars on campus that will always have my back.”

#### MEGAN S. GARCIA '23

- Double Major in Secondary Education and Spanish
- Hometown: Indianapolis, Indiana

Whether it's taking a break from class, needing to stock up on school supplies, or finish homework, students are always welcome to the scholars lounge where staff are always available to listen and help in any way they can.

“We're going to make sure throughout our semester there's going to be a number of things each individual enjoys and connects to,” said Ayeni. “We make sure we talk to our students and get to know them. Where are they from? What are their interests? What are their future aspirations? We want to make sure that each student feels seen. We have an open-door policy where students can come in whenever they want to, and we make sure there's comfortable seating here.”

We welcome you into the office and there's a place for you. In every way, we try to be intentional about being available and open so we can build a personal relationship and get to know each student so we are able to exemplify the dignity of the individual. You can't carry that out when you don't know the individual.”



For more information on the 21st Century Scholars program, visit [marian.edu/21stcenturyscholars](http://marian.edu/21stcenturyscholars).



# PLAYING THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

BY TONI POLIZZI  
Athletics Marketing Manager  
Office of Marketing and Communications

**COMING OFF OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL FALL SEASON IN MARIAN UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS HISTORY**, the 2019-20 winter and spring seasons were full of promise and deservedly high expectations. Knights wrestling just finished a successful postseason at the NAIA National Tournament, and indoor track and field claimed its first-ever female individual national champion in Erin Oleksak, who took first in the indoor pentathlon. Men's and women's basketball were each poised to make runs in the NAIA tournament. Then, on March 13, the world came to a halt.

Dominoes in the sports world fell rapidly, resulting in the cancellation of the remainder of the winter season, and Spring 2020 season. COVID-19 hit close to home in the Marian community. Coaches, student-athletes, staff, and families experienced COVID-19 illness and death firsthand. Conversations shifted from athletic and academic performance to making responsible decisions with safety as the primary goal. Director of Athletics Steve Downing didn't hesitate to make that known. "We made the message loud and clear; we are taking COVID-19 and the implications of this pandemic very seriously. We're not messing around when it comes to people's health. We tried to set the tone here that health and safety supersedes everything this year."

In athletics, teams that can adapt are best equipped to win. Never has that skill been more important.

“ Our coaches bought in completely, even when we had to err on the side of caution or when we were faced with uncertainty. We've had to shut teams down and interrupt practices and routines. Those decisions are not easy to make. Practice is obviously crucial to performance. But our teams and coaches understood the bigger picture, and that was to stay as healthy as possible and reduce transmission throughout our community.”

-Steve Downing



The Knights were aided by guidance and support from Dr. Chase Keirn, John Locke, Deb Lawrence, and Ruth Rodgers. "They have been phenomenal and instrumental in education and awareness during this time. We trust the information we get from them and our local health officials, and we've been able to act accordingly."



Teams quickly adapted to a new way of life, training, and competition in the COVID-19 era. The 2019 NAIA Volleyball national champions wasted no time in setting their protocol. “Our team basically lives in their masks,” says head volleyball coach Ashlee Pritchard. “This includes in the locker room, weight room, and on the court. We also began the season with a clear screen draped over the net to act as an extra barrier between hitters and blockers. Before every practice, we make sure that our team has zero symptoms and completes the appropriate health assessment. We knew that if we wanted to have a season, we needed to do the right things on and off the court to make that happen.”

With unpredictability as the underlying daily theme, teams became adept at making the most of any situation.

**Game canceled on the way to the venue?** Marian women’s soccer made a detour for an impromptu kickball game at a minor league ballpark.

**Football season moved to the spring?** The Knights were given opportunities to practice in a world-class facility at the nearby Colts Complex when winter weather dictated.

**National championship location moved, due to the pandemic?** That led to an unforgettable bonding experience for members of the men’s and women’s track teams.

The weight of carrying on through a pandemic is undeniable, yet has encouraged student-athletes to pay more attention to their mental health. “When the stress is higher, the responsibility is higher,” says Allie Storke, head lacrosse coach. “These can be overwhelming circumstances, and in this time especially, everyone needs someone to help them. Our team has demonstrated that they are willing to slow down and check in on one another.”

“ There’s a heightened sense of communal responsibility; what we do on the field and off has direct and significant consequences on who we come in contact with.”

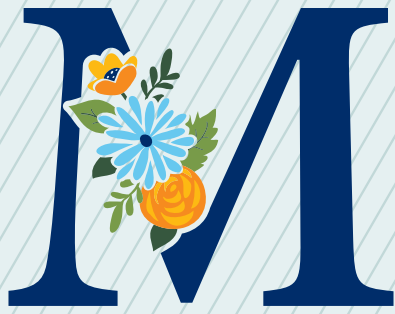
-Allie Storke



With the championship season and the 2021-22 school year on the horizon, the message remains the same: health and safety is top priority. Downing said, “I’ve been pleased with how well we’ve done. The important thing is to get through healthy. At this point, what’s most important for me is for our student-athletes to get vaccinated. They have an opportunity to do so at Marian, and that is going to be key for us to return to full strength. That is our biggest focus right now.”



➔ For more information on Marian University athletics, visit [muknights.com](http://muknights.com).



# WOMEN of MARIAN

## STRONG, CONNECTED, INVALUABLE

BY JACKIE KRETZ  
Manager of Advancement Communications  
Office of Institutional Advancement



LEFT TO RIGHT:

### **Denise Brennan Feser '77**

Chair, Marian University Board of Trustees  
Retired Senior Vice President of USA Funds  
Former Marian Admission Counselor and Alumni Director

### **Patti Curran**

Longtime friend and donor of Marian University  
Champion of the St. Francis Colonnade Restoration  
and *The Saint John's Bible*

### **Beth Elsener**

First Lady of Marian University  
Marian Alumni Parent/Grandparent/Mother-in-law of  
seven children, one grandchild, one son-in-law, and  
three daughters-in-law

### **Michelle Study-Campbell '97**

Executive Director of Youth Programs of Kiwanis International  
Marian University 2019 Alumni Engagement Task Force Member  
Past President of the Junior League of Indianapolis

You've heard the stories about Marian University's foundresses—their courage to venture, their determination and stamina, their Franciscan values, and—most of all—their mission to serve. It's no wonder, then, that today's women of Marian take the responsibility to carry forward the legacy of the Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg, Indiana *very seriously*.

Here, the four core founders of the Women of Marian Society share their thoughts about the inaugural year of this new fundraising society—one that is about so much more than just fundraising.



### *Why do you support the Women of Marian?*

**Feser:** I'm very proud to be a woman of Marian and feel a responsibility to live up to all the hopes and expectations of the Sisters of St. Francis. In 1937, relocating to Indianapolis was a groundbreaking move, but it was equally groundbreaking for those first 24 female students to say "yes" to an education beyond high school in those times.

**Study-Campbell:** I attended Oldenburg Academy when it was still a boarding school, so I especially appreciate the faith and courage of the Sisters to start these schools by and for women.

**Curran:** It's really special that we have provided such a quality education with a focus on values and service to so many young women. To this day, Marian instills that this education is not just for us, but to help others—to get out into the community and make it a better place wherever you are. Now we continue to reach people who might not otherwise have the opportunity.

### *How did the Women of Marian Society get started?*

**Study-Campbell:** Patti and I met through the Junior League of Indianapolis and realized our Marian connection. I had been doing research on women's giving circles, so we started talking about Marian's rich history of women leadership and all the strong women alumni and the Sisters. It just made sense.

**Feser:** To me, the women of Marian form a sorority—that special gathering of women who are committed to service, giving back, and who want to come together to make a difference through philanthropy.







### How do you see women as fundraisers?

**Curran:** Going back a few decades, there may not have been a lot of women in a position to write checks, but they certainly influenced spending decisions at home. The women have always been involved with their communities and informed about its needs. Now, women are catching up with income and professional positions.

**Feser:** It's important to engage women in philanthropy. Statistically, women outlive men and we'll start seeing the transfer of wealth in this country.

**Study-Campbell:** The women of Generation Z, in particular, are more focused on service and philanthropy. What we're doing is very timely.

### Besides the funding of scholarships for future Marian women, what might the Women of Marian Society provide?

**Feser:** We have a great opportunity to be a shining example of inclusion and diversity as we welcome all women in this society who want to focus on helping the underrepresented and underserved. This is not new. The Sisters started as teachers in the first black schools in Indianapolis, worked on Native American lands in Montana, and went to Papua New Guinea. They have always reached out to everyone in society.

**Elsener:** This society will bring women together to uplift and support women, and that's beautiful. The most recent Women of Marian luncheon was just wonderful. When Denise spoke about the journey of Marian's women, the room was filled with joy.

### As a founding member, what are you most excited about?

**Study-Campbell:** Within a very short amount of time, this went from a grain of an idea to having raised enough funds to endow a scholarship and to begin the process of selecting the first applicant—all during a global pandemic.

**Feser:** Our success is consistent with Marian's experience in fundraising. We are a microcosm of people who are very committed with purpose and passion, who are always ready to say 'yes, it is possible to do this'. In addition to scholarships, I would love to add a signature service project each year.

**Elsener:** I would like to see this grow. I'd like to see us fill our arena with women!

**Left:** In 2019, Women of Marian luncheon attendance was record-breaking and included several alumnae from 1975. Pat Baumer Watko (far left) and Kathy Harbor (far right) co-chaired and emceed the event, which featured a presentation on the women of Marian, then and now, by Denise Brennan Feser '77, the first-ever lay female chair of the Marian University Board of Trustees.

**Above:** 2019 Women of Marian luncheon in Alumni Hall.

## WOMEN OF MARIAN SOCIETY FOUNDING MEMBERS

Giving circles with the Women of Marian Society honor the pioneers of Marian's past. We are pleased to recognize the charter members of the Women of Marian Society. (All who joined in our inaugural year of 2020-21 prior to June 30, 2021, will be considered charter members.)

### CLARE CIRCLE

\$1,000 or more annually

Bea Becher  
Annette Brinker  
Marilyn Strasburger Brouillette '57  
Stephanie Brouwer  
Tina Luzer Burks '90  
Karen McNulty Candlish '12  
Phyllis Cardis  
Marsha Casey  
Patti Paquin Cavanaugh '76  
Elizabeth Coit  
Patti Curran  
Yvonne Stanifer Daniel '85  
Kay Urbancic DeHart '68  
Brenda Fancher Dorsey  
Beth Elsener  
Wendy Faust  
Denise Brennan Feser '77  
Laura Tebbe Finke '04  
Anne Frye  
Dorothy Gomez  
Mary Ann Grogan  
Kathy Harbor '75  
Karen McGinnis Hardin  
Helene Herber Henn '53  
Bernie Hopp  
Karen Hudson  
Kristie Johnson  
Amy Koch  
Rebecca Kubacki  
Deborah Lawrence  
Colleen Lawson  
Linda Matthews  
Colleen Murphy '80  
Pat O'Drobinak  
Dean Haklin Padgett '75  
Holly Hammond Pels '09  
Janeann Pitz  
Jennifer Plumlee  
Marianne Price  
Ruth Rodgers  
Rachel Shockley  
Mary Ehringer Sifferlen '61  
Maribeth Smith

Jennifer Snyder  
Michelle Study-Campbell '97  
Elizabeth Wathen '80  
Patricia Baumer Watko '75  
Carole Kunkel Watt '65  
Mary Leahy Welch '68  
Amanda Wright  
Mary McNulty Young '47

### DILLHOFF CIRCLE

\$500-\$999 ANNUALLY

Allison Badgero  
Shirley Martin Daley '61  
Carol Wethington Divine '73  
Sharon Sweeney Lenius '62  
Michelle Werner Meer '81  
Janelle Koening Mueller '06  
Mary Colleen O'Connor '10  
Paula Fey O'Connor '77  
Theresa Phillis  
Michele Macielak Steele '91  
Laura Jo Biltz Tebbe '71  
LaTonya Turner  
Julie Mathias Van Liew '87  
Jennifer Haire Waning '94  
Robyn Werner

### HACKELMEIER CIRCLE

\$250-\$499 ANNUALLY

Judith Weingartner Haynes '71  
Jackie Kretz  
Ginny Mosele O'Brien '67  
Jessica Miller Plew '06  
Maribeth Taylor Ransel '65  
Alice Shelton  
Cathy Watt Siler '86  
Carolyn Swartz '18  
Kayla Karch Wilder '14

Membership as of 2.01.21



Find more information about membership and the Women of Marian Luncheon on July 17, 2021, at [marian.edu/womenofmarian](http://marian.edu/womenofmarian).

# INTRODUCING:

MARIAN UNIVERSITY  
Indianapolis

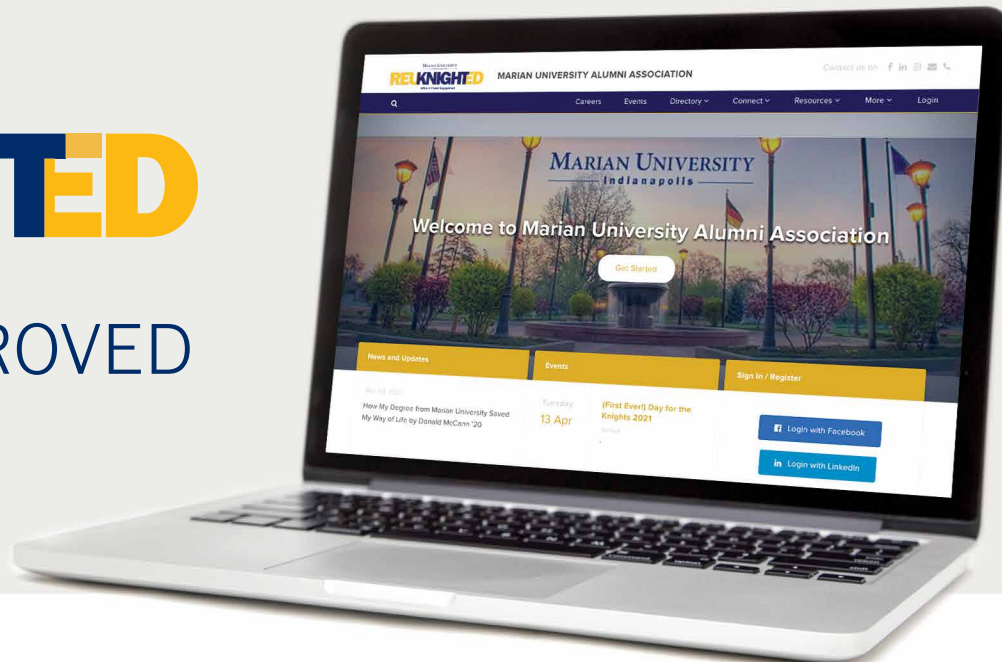
# REUKNIGHTED

Office of Alumni Engagement

## THE NEW AND IMPROVED ALUMNI WEBSITE

BY CAROLYN SWARTZ '18

Assistant Director of Annual Giving and Alumni Engagement  
Office of Institutional Advancement



The Marian University Alumni Association is happy to share that our alumni now have a way to more easily connect with each other! The Marian University Alumni Association is so excited to launch our new and improved website, ReuKNIGHTed at [alumni.marian.edu](http://alumni.marian.edu). This platform keeps everything you need to know in one place for easy access and interaction. Here you'll be able to find former classmates, teammates, roommates, any mates. One of our biggest goals with ReuKNIGHTed is to create opportunities for meaningful connections between alumni. This kind of interaction can have a tremendous positive impact on your lives and careers. **Yes, this service is free to use.**

### What can I do with the new Marian alumni platform, you ask?

By signing up at [alumni.marian.edu](http://alumni.marian.edu) and joining our growing online community, you can...

- Connect and network with over 18,000 Marian alumni and explore what your peers are up to, and where they are.
- Learn about events and important news from the community and the Marian University Alumni Association.
- Read up on the cool things your classmates are doing and share your own news.
- Update contact information, request a transcript, refer a Knight, or contact us.
- Become a mentor for a current student or volunteer on an alumni board.
- Reconnect with your old friends, and share what's new in your lives through community pages and discussion boards.
- See where former classmates are located across the United States and even the world.
- And so much more!



Check out the new ReuKNIGHTed  
at [alumni.marian.edu](http://alumni.marian.edu).

You decide which benefits will best serve your purpose. ReuKNIGHTed is an exclusive private community with access restricted to only our alumni, staff, and faculty (including emeriti). The platform provides a safe, secure way to support one another for career connections and interact with fellow alumni. The data is secure and no third party can access it.

Whether you graduated a year ago, or decades ago, it is important to us that Marian alumni continue to benefit from the positive impact of connecting with each other. Be sure to share the words with friends and former professors. The more people who sign up, the more people you get to connect with. **See you at [alumni.marian.edu](http://alumni.marian.edu)!**

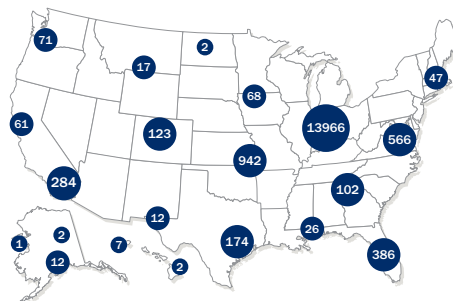


### Introducing Jen Haire Waning '94

Meet the new senior director of alumni engagement, Jen Haire Waning '94. Jen previously served as a regional admissions counselor for Marian University, based in southwest Ohio.

Jen is a graduate of Marian University with a degree in sociology. She met her husband, Greg Waning '94, while a student. Her parents, David '71 and Anne Haire, both attended Marian, as did her sister, Jordan Haire '09. David serves on the Board of Trustees. Jen's twin daughters, Abby '24 and Gretchen '24, just wrapped up their freshman year here.

Feel free to introduce yourself to Jen at the next event you attend or reach out to her and say hello at [alumni@marian.edu](mailto:alumni@marian.edu).





I know I'm not alone when I say that 2020 was simply the longest year yet. Despite the challenges from last year, Marian University continued to flourish through the incredible alumni, community, student body, and faculty/staff. We are excited to see what 2021 continues to hold for Marian University and our alumni. Throughout this magazine, you will get a glimpse into the great work that Marian University is doing daily to improve the lives of our community.

Year after year, Marian University continues to impress me with its reach to be the best in class and exceed expectations. Let's look at some major accomplishments at a glance:

- The Byrum School of Business was named one of the Top 5 Catholic Undergraduate Business Schools in the nation.
- Construction began on the Caito-Wagner residence hall, to open Fall 2021.
- Launched the E. S. Witchger School of Engineering, to open in Fall 2022.
- Announced the collaboration with Ancilla College.
- Continued the growth of Saint Joseph's College of Marian University.
- The Forging Leaders campaign exceeded its \$150 million goal a year early.

And that's just to name a few! But, we wouldn't have the drive or success that we do without YOU, alumni. You are a valuable part of the Knights community and we don't take that for granted. In fact, you are so special to us that throughout 2020 we have strived to learn how to better connect with you. This past summer, we launched an online platform exclusively for our alumni called ReuKNIGHTed—an all-in-one platform where alumni can find resources, social opportunities, network, and more.

I've enjoyed spending time exploring the capabilities of the website, like the section for news and updates specific to alumni and using the directory map to find my former soccer teammates. I hope you take a moment to sign up and join me on this platform at [alumni.marian.edu](http://alumni.marian.edu). The more alumni signed up, the more opportunities to connect with each and every one of you. Check out more details in our feature on the platform on the opposite page.

There are many other ways these days to connect to Marian University near and far, too. Staying connected during these trying times is very important to us. With that being said, **I want to take a moment to chat with you now about what you can do to stay engaged with Marian University as an alum, this year and any year:**

- **Pray for Your Alma Mater** – Our students, faculty/staff, alumni, Board of Trustees, and donors need constant support and guidance, now more than ever. Spend time in prayer over the Marian University community, its leaders, and fellow alumni.
- **Attend (Online) Events** – There are number of online events available to alumni: social, spiritual, professional, sporting, and just for entertainment. Keep an eye on your monthly email from us, the Marian University Alumni Association's (MUAAs) social media pages, ReuKNIGHTed, and [events.marian.edu](http://events.marian.edu) to learn more.

- **Volunteer** – There is always a place for you on campus to support current students and campus initiatives. This year, we launched a letter writing initiative to connect alumni with prospective students. So far, we have sent out over 1,000 notes to accepted students sharing the good word of Marian University. We also are always looking to grow our MUAA and Graduates of the Last Decade (GOLD) committee boards. Visit [alumni.marian.edu/page/volunteer](http://alumni.marian.edu/page/volunteer) today.
- **Stay Connected** – Update your information and share your good news with us. Do it when you move, land a new gig, receive an award, get married, welcome a baby, etc. We love to hear the great things you're doing as well as show you off in our next magazine.
- **Be Social** – The alumni association has our own Facebook and Instagram. Be sure to tag us and add #ForeverAKnight. Follow for events, throwbacks, giveaways, and more. You can also connect on the ReuKNIGHTed platform with former classmates, teammates, any kind of mate.
- **Lend a Helping Hand When You Can** – Every gift to Marian University makes a difference, whether it's \$5 or a check with a bunch of zeroes. The scholarship support you received as a student came from alumni and supporters, like you. Consider lending a helping hand to current students by visiting [marian.edu/give](http://marian.edu/give).
- **Promote Marian University** – Wear your Marian gear proudly. If you know of interested high school students, refer them to Marian using the ReuKNIGHTed submission form. Put a Marian University license plate on your car to drive with pride.

This spring, Marian University graduated another incredible class of future doctors, business men and women, educators, and transformational leaders to join our alumni community. These alumni will look to you to understand how to engage as alumni. The time to stand together and get involved is now, alumni!

We are thrilled to see what new accomplishments and even challenges that 2021 will bring. I know that with a community like this one, there isn't anything we can't not only overcome, but make the best of. Sending warm wishes from my home to yours and wishing you and your family safety.

Go, Knights!

*Holly Pels*

Holly Hammond Pels '09  
Marian University Alumni  
Association President



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**DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE  
WHO WOULD BE A GREAT  
FIT AT MARIAN?**

Refer students to learn more about the  
excellent education they can receive at  
Marian University.

Interested students can learn more  
at [marian.edu/visit](http://marian.edu/visit).

**WE WANT YOU!**

**MARIAN UNIVERSITY**  
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*more people like*



Did you get an exciting new job or promotion? Make a career change? Want to show the newest member of your family to the Marian University community? Did your wedding party or reception include Marian University alumni? If so, let us know by emailing [alumni@marian.edu](mailto:alumni@marian.edu). It could be included in the next issue of the *Marian University Magazine*.

**1960**

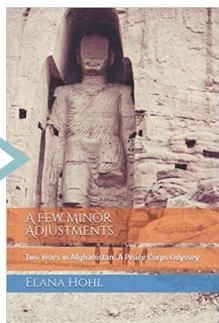
**James Summers** wrote song lyrics to a song called "A Cry from the Womb" that is available on YouTube.

**1962**

**Sharon Sweeney Lenius** was the 2020 recipient of the John Cotton Dana Award from the Special Libraries Association (SLAA).

**1971**

**Elana Hohl** has a new book available on Amazon called *A Few Minor Adjustments: Two Years in Afghanistan*.



**1973**

**Mark Burke** retired from Burke Insurance in 2021.

**Lawrence Merkel** was elected to be a Batesville Community School Board member.

**1984**

**Mary Clouse** created a painting that was displayed at the 2020 Hoosier Women Artists opening reception at the Indiana Statehouse and now hangs in the office of Indiana Treasurer, Kelly Mitchell.



**1990**

**Stacey Nicholas** is a chief development officer for Douglass Community Services, a social service company.

**1995**

**Brian Sweany** interviewed Dolly Parton for an audio book of her life story called *Dolly Parton, Songteller: My Life in Lyrics*.

**1998**

**Scott Young** was elected for a four-year term as the alumni trustee on the Marian University Board of Trustees.

**2000**

**Angela Hatem** wrote an article for the *National Geographic* website called "Talking to kids about natural disasters."



**2004**

**Nicole Martinez-LeGrand** was featured by the Indiana Historical Society talking about her work on the history of Latino Hoosiers for the Indiana History Center.

**Tim Hesler** is teaching students around the world from his Fusion 54 headquarters in Crawfordsville, Indiana, providing assistance to students of all backgrounds through his solo teaching efforts.

**2006**

**Ryan Stone** was promoted to chief medical officer at Schneck Medical Center.

**2009**

**Victoria Hathaway** was featured in an article by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry. She currently serves as the ministry consultant for Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Gary.

**2010**

**Marissa Freson Sauer** and husband, Jake, welcomed son, Eli, in December 2020. Marissa is Director of Children's Service at Crossroad Child and Family Services, a residential treatment center in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

**Jessica Davis** led the effort to make all venue operations of all practices and games during the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Championship carbon neutral.

**2011**

**Reid** and **Jessy White McDowell** welcomed son, Reid Adrian, in February 2021.

**2012**

**Tom** and **Allison Boike Sublett** welcomed daughter Magnolia Marie in November 2020.

**2013**

**Hillary Carpenter** married Brett Cheaney on October 24.

**Michael Kubancsek** married Aub Schrader in October 2020.

**Cindy Farren** released an article about supporting teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic.



**2014**

**Maxx** and **Lauren Paras Hagan** welcomed Lily Marie to their family in November 2020. Grandparents **Mark '84** and **Lola Amberger '85 Paras** are thrilled.

**Kimberly Newcombe** and husband Troy welcomed a baby boy, Kenneth, in December 2020.

**2015**

**Jessica Skrobul** married Tyler Paul in October 2020.

**Coryn Rivera** was selected for the road race roster on the USA Olympic Cycling team.

**Becca Twining** married Sam Gawaluck in December 2020.

**2016**

**Taylor Helvie** married Joseph Huntington on July 18, 2020. Taylor is a CPA and an auditor for Lemler Group, LLC.

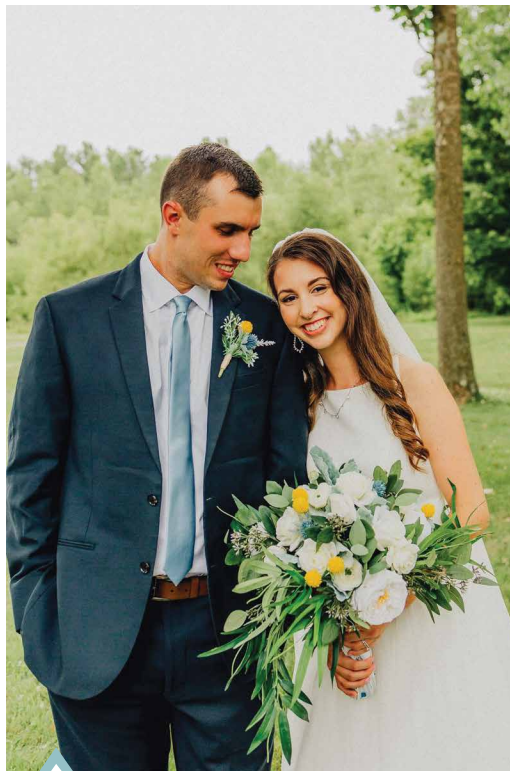
**Joe Landeros** is account executive at Fierce Management Group.

**Christopher Owens** received an esteemed postdoctoral fellowship at the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine Institute of Sexual and Gender Minority Health and Well-Being in Chicago, Illinois.

**Courtney Weiss** and her husband welcomed son Dominic Joseph in December 2020.

**2017**

**Daniel Albert** married **Ellie Lough '18** in September of 2020.



**Gabrielle Fales** married **Zack St. Pierre** in June 2020.

**Jaimee McQueen** and partner, Jacob, welcomed their daughter, Magnolia Mae, on October 18, 2020.

**Amelia Siler** married Wade Brown in August of 2020.

**Kameron Utter** was interviewed by a company called The Catalyst Effect and featured in their blog, "The Catalytic Corner."

**2018**

**Josie Brown** married Josh Foster in October 2020.

**Drake Fleck** and his wife, Jessica, welcomed a daughter to their family in October 2020.

**Ellie Lough** married **Daniel Albert '17** in October 2020.

**Stephanie Purdy** married Rick Tryon in October 2020.

**Sarah Wieser** married Jared Wolfe in May of 2021. Sarah is now a cardiac research nurse at Northwestern University in Chicago.

**2019**

**Cody Bauer** received his Master's in Health Care Management from Indiana University. Cody is a health care analytics consultant for Xtend Health Care.

**Jeremy Lee** and his partner, Areli, welcomed daughter Sophia in November 2020.

**Paula Angarita Rivera** works on a breathalyzer test to identify COVID-19. She was accepted to a Ph.D program.

Have news you want to share?  
Send it to [alumni@marian.edu](mailto:alumni@marian.edu).





2020

Margaret McCarthy Fleetwood '43 – April 24  
 Maryfrances Wendling Jennings '47 – March 9  
 Patricia Duffin Townsend '48 – March 15  
 Mary Rhodes Heimann '48 – October 12  
 Theresa McConahay Meyer '48 – February 13  
 Barbara Grant Mattingly '49 – March 12  
 Catherine Hurrle '49 – February 11  
 Marie Martino '53 – June 9  
 Patricia Doerger '55 – May 29  
 Margene Schuck Goffinet '58 – February 27  
 Anne Munshower Delaney '58 – June 23  
 Daniel McCarthy '58 – August 18  
 Paul Henn '58 – March 24  
 Marie Chall Melton '58 – September 12  
 Patricia Mertz Wilhelm '59 – May 24  
 Judith O'Connor Fenoglio '59 – December 23  
 Anna Diver '59 – April 18  
 Francis Kennedy '60 – February 4  
 William Brady '60 – June 13

Mary Deal Wicker '60 – February 8  
 Sr. Norma Rocklage, OSF, Ph.D. '60 – June 22  
 Julie McGrath '61 – March 4  
 Carol Johnson Jarboe '62 – April 5  
 Dina Bernardon Graffitti '62 – July 18  
 Salvatore Comado '62 – May 27  
 Carolyn Koch Williams '64 – September 23  
 James Fierek '65 – June 6  
 Michael Leonard '65 – May 22  
 Mary Beth McAuliff '65 – June 11  
 Cory Synhorst SerVaas '65 – March 7  
 James Nalley '66 – November 28  
 Mary Hoffmann Fitzgerald '66 – December 8  
 Thomas Deal '67 – September 18  
 Judy DeKemper Feigert '68 – June 6  
 John Chlopecki '68 – September 13  
 David Sohacki '68 – August 10  
 Joseph Miller '69 – March 3  
 Robert Hericks '69 – August 11  
 John Yohler '69 – July 16  
 Patricia Walsh '73 – August 1

Kathleen Doyle '76 – September 16  
 Terrance Byrnes '77 – May 27  
 Mark Daniel '80 – September 29  
 Barbara McDaniel '87 – December 23  
 Lynda Thackrey Lingg '88 – December 8  
 Kelley Griffith '88 – August 4  
 Deborah Fielder-Griffin '90 – September 24  
 Lynda Barton Kirch '92 – February 16  
 Debra Dukehart '97 – December 2  
 Gail Arney Eisenhut '99 – December 19  
 Shanie Smith '04 – April 4  
 Terri Parson Hendrickson '07 – February 8

2021

Robert Kistner '61 – January 2  
 Joyce Leugers Collier '71 – May 7  
 R. Vonderheide '76 – January 14  
 James Gardner '06 – January 19

HERITAGE OF ST. FRANCIS SOCIETY



# You have one life...

**MAKE IT COUNT!** You plan your work week. You plan vacations. You may plan meals. And, of course, you plan for retirement. But, if you believe in a better and stronger tomorrow for the people and causes you care most about, you should probably have a plan for that as well.

If you find yourself wondering about what your legacy will be, then let us help you understand some of your options. Whatever your age or income, there are planned giving options you can consider today that can absolutely have a powerful impact on tomorrow.

It's easier than you think. Contact John Finke, vice president for institutional advancement, at [jfinke@marian.edu](mailto:jfinke@marian.edu) for more information on how to join the ranks of other Heritage of St. Francis Society members who have made the Marian University mission a part of their legacy.

“A planned gift is just an extension of the giving we've done through the years. It is one last time to share what we have and to show our appreciation. It doesn't have to be a large gift to help others have a better life.”



**Dan and Nancy Morales '76 Krodel**



# SAVE THE DATE



**SEPTEMBER 24-25**

Family Weekend



**OCTOBER 22-23**

Homecoming  
With 50th reunion  
celebrations for the  
Classes of 1970 and 1971



For more information on these and other events, visit [events.marian.edu](https://events.marian.edu).



**OCTOBER 29**

JW Marriott Indianapolis  
Reception 6 p.m.  
Program and Dinner 7 p.m.



*honoring*



**Fritz French**  
John A. Purdie Innovator  
and Mentor of the  
Year Award



**Vicki Yamasaki**  
Franciscan  
Values Award



**Ken Tyrrell '73**  
Dillon Family  
Distinguished  
Alumni Award

Purchase tickets and sponsorships today at [marian.edu/gala](https://marian.edu/gala).



# MU-COM Student Survives COVID-19 TWICE and Still Graduates with Her Class

BY ELIZABETH GRIFFITH  
 Manager of Enrollment Marketing  
 Office of Marketing and Communications

In May, Ramya Yeleti (26) graduated from the Marian University College of Osteopathic Medicine (MU-COM) with her doctorate in osteopathic medicine and is completing her residency in family medicine in Geisinger, Pennsylvania. Such accomplishments are all the more remarkable when achieved in the face of a once-in-a-hundred-years pandemic. Yet, last summer, it was a real possibility that Yeleti would not live to see graduation. She is a two-time COVID-19 survivor.

Yeleti is rarely comfortable as the center of attention, so last fall, when news outlets like *Today*, *People*, and *The Indianapolis Star* began calling, wanting to share her illness and recovery story nationally, she dug deep and opened up. After all, she was a medical student, and scientifically speaking, appreciated the heightened interest in her unusual case. Mostly, though, she shared her story because she remembered all too well just how alone she felt in her darkest moments. She did not want others as sick as she had been to feel so alone.

The rarity of surviving multiple COVID-19 infections is not what brought Yeleti her newfound notoriety. No, her celebrity was due to the life-threatening symptoms and complications she suffered during round two—when she would end up in the intensive care unit, unconscious, requiring open-heart surgery within a week of falling ill.

In July 2020, her symptoms presented with fever and vomiting, which she assumed was the flu since she had tested positive for COVID-19 antibodies after experiencing mild symptoms in April.

Symptoms progressed to include chest pains within a few days, and she landed in the hospital, where she officially tested positive again. This time, the virus targeted her heart, causing severe inflammation. Tests revealed it was only working at 10 percent capacity. Yeleti lost consciousness and was out for six days—two of which were spent on cardio life support. Doctors added her to the heart transplant list should her heart function not respond to treatment. Thankfully, it did; however, celebrations would have to wait. After taking her off life support, they discovered valvular damage. She would need open-heart surgery.

Today, Yeleti radiates positivity, peace, and confidence. If not for the visible scar on her chest, you would never know she had lived through such a harrowing ordeal. She beat the odds and would make a full recovery, never needing a transplant.

Three months later, she happily found herself back in rotations, eager to catch up with classmates. Although the MU-COM administration offered to let her take the year to recover, she insisted on graduating with her peers.

Reflecting back on it, Yeleti is still embarrassed at all the attention. She says she didn't do anything deserving of all the interviews and feature stories, that she was unconscious. She attributes her miraculous recovery to luck and her access to resources.

Now, each time Yeleti walks into a patient room, she does so without fear. Yes, she dons her personal protective equipment, but she has the added confidence of knowing that she has already faced down COVID-19 and beat it. Twice. She was able to walk away from open-heart surgery, where it took doctors an hour to coax her heart to restart. She narrowly escaped being placed back on life support, a step from which few survive.



Today, she focuses wholly on her favorite part of practicing medicine—direct patient care. Building relationships with patients and helping them through hardship is why she wanted to become a doctor in the first place, why she chose MU-COM, and to go into family medicine.

The world may think surviving COVID-19 twice is her story, but her story is yet to be written. And when it is, it will be for what she's able to accomplish on her own merits and actions.

March 19, 2021, Match Day celebrations saw the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine Class of 2021 achieve 97 percent placement into physician year one of their residencies, well above the national average. The Marian University College of Osteopathic Medicine is proud that 54 percent of the graduating class will be working in primary care specialties, while 65 percent will train in one of five states—Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, and Kentucky, aligning with the university's commitment of placing physicians in Indiana and neighboring states.



For more information on attending MU-COM for medical school, visit [marian.edu/medicalschool](https://marian.edu/medicalschool).



## MEET THE NEW KNIGHTRO

**Knightro!** His armor is shining, his sword is sharpened, and he's refreshed and ready to welcome alumni, students, faculty, staff, families, and friends to campus. Catch Knightro cheering on the Knights, dancing around campus, and posing for a few selfies.

**Height:** 7'10" (on horseback)

**Weight:** 250 lbs. (with armor)

**Shoe Size:** 27.5

### SOME OF KNIGHTRO'S FAVORITES

**Food:** Shepherd's pie

**Beverage:** Anything out of a goblet

**TV Show:** Saturday Knight Live

**Hobbies:** Jousting, tailgating, epic quests

**Song:** The Marian University Fight Song

**Band:** The Marching Knights

**Movie:** A Knight's Tale

**Worst Knightmare:** Leaving home  
without a sword and shield!

