

75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY EDITION • 2025 - 2026

# MAVERICK

Celebrating 75  
Years of Brilliance

# Empower the Mavericks of tomorrow.



## Our legacy of excellence starts with you.

Your support helps today's students move forward with confidence, opportunity and purpose as Mercy University builds toward its next 75 years.



Scan the QR code  
with your phone to make  
your gift or visit:  
[mercy.edu/about/support-mercy](https://mercy.edu/about/support-mercy)

**M**  
**MERCY**  
UNIVERSITY



**EDITOR**

Zodet Negrón

**EXECUTIVE CREATIVE DIRECTOR**

Kristen Sangregorio

**ASSOCIATE CREATIVE DIRECTOR**

Megan Daley

**WRITING STAFF**

Sarah Leiber  
Ida Vallo Morris  
Kimberly Steele  
Sarah Urscheler  
Victoria Zunitch

**DESIGN**

Kathryn Berger  
Nancy DeVico  
Amanda Rizzo

**CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS**

Merissa Blitz  
Trina Estavillo  
Kenneth Gabrielsen  
Leslie Kahan  
John Raiola

**MARKETING**

Chris Connelly

**ALUMNI RELATIONS**

Tara Alfano CNR SAS '02, GS '04

**CONTACT US:**

Public Relations  
PR@mercy.edu



# Reflecting on 75 years of Mercy

Seventy-five years is more than a milestone. It is a living story of access, opportunity, and transformation shaped by every student, faculty member, alumnus, and friend who has been part of Mercy University.

Over the past year, we celebrated that story together. Across our campuses, “Mercy Moments: A 75th Anniversary Exhibit” brought our history to life through images, artifacts, and voices from generations of Mavericks. Featured again in this issue, it captures defining moments, including many stories that had never been told before.

Anniversaries invite reflection, but they also call us forward. Throughout this magazine, you will see how Mercy is building for what comes next.

In the School of Education, the Suzanne McGraw Scholars Program marks a transformational step forward, opening new pathways for aspiring educators through the largest philanthropic gift in our history. Across the University, programs continue to evolve with purpose. In the School of Business, students are engaging with emerging technologies while strengthening the critical thinking and communication skills that define strong leaders. In the School of Nursing, immersive clinical simulations using artificial intelligence and virtual reality are preparing students for the realities of patient care.

You will also read about Quest, our reimagined general education curriculum, and the new School of Social and Behavioral Sciences’ Conflict Studies minor, which equips students with practical skills to navigate complexity in any field.

As we look back, we also honor those who have shaped Mercy’s legacy. This issue recognizes Matt Kilcullen, whose distinguished leadership in Athletics has left a lasting impact on our community.

What unites these stories is a shared commitment to progress. Mercy was founded on the belief that higher education should open doors. Today, we are opening them wider and building new ones.

As we look ahead, we do so with clarity and confidence. The next chapter of Mercy’s story will be defined by innovation, inclusion, and an unwavering focus on student success.

Thank you for being part of our first 75 years, and for all we will build together in the years to come.

**Susan L. Parish, PhD, MSW**  
PRESIDENT OF MERCY UNIVERSITY



# In This Issue

## ON CAMPUS

## THE MAVERICK REPORT FEATURE STORIES

### 4

#### Moments That Matter

Mercy students reflect on the memories, milestones and connections that have shaped their journeys and brought the University's 75-year story to life.

### 6

#### A New Way Forward

Mercy's redesigned general education curriculum, Quest, prepares students with the adaptable skills and career readiness needed for a rapidly changing world.

### 10

#### Doing It the Right Way

Ahead of his retirement, Assistant Vice President of Athletics Matt Kilcullen reflects on leadership, mentorship and decades of Maverick pride.



### 12

#### Building the Next Generation of Educators

Through innovative programs and fully funded pathways, Mercy is preparing future educators to lead with purpose and impact.

### 20

#### The Power of Conflict

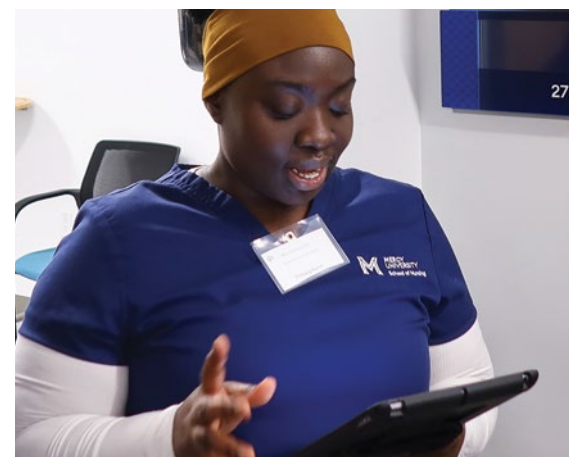
Mercy's new Conflict Studies minor helps students navigate difficult conversations and grow as leaders.



### 16

#### Thinking Under Pressure

Mercy nursing students are gaining hands-on experience with AI and virtual reality simulations designed to strengthen clinical decision-making.





MERCY'S 75TH ANNIVERSARY

23

A Year of Celebration

Take a look back at the moments and memories that defined Mercy's 75th anniversary celebration.

32

Top 10 Facts About Mercy's History

Discover surprising moments and little-known stories from the University's history.

34

A Journey Through 75 Years

Through archival photos, interactive displays and personal stories, a traveling exhibit brought Mercy's history to life across all three campuses.



43

Connected Through Care

A new partnership gives Mercy students hands-on experience supporting individuals living with memory loss and the caregivers beside them.

46

Bright Futures Straight Ahead

Mercy's School of Business is preparing students to work alongside AI while strengthening the analytical and communication skills employers value most.

50

Alumni & Community News

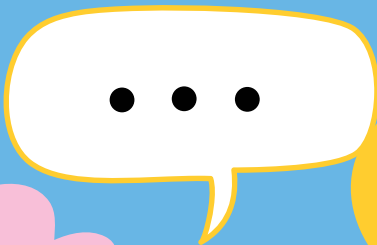




# MOMENTS THAT MATTER



AS MERCY CELEBRATES 75 YEARS, STUDENTS SHARE THE EXPERIENCES, RELATIONSHIPS AND MEMORIES THAT MAKE THEM FEEL PART OF THE UNIVERSITY'S STORY.





**Abb Murez**

**Major: Computer Science**

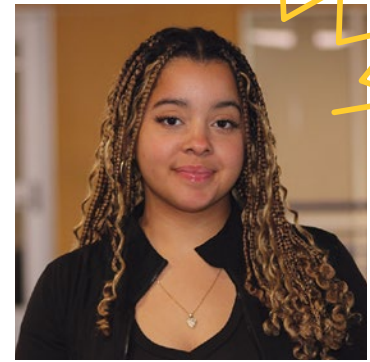
“One thing that makes me feel connected to Mercy’s history is that the campus has gone through so many significant changes ... always seeing how new buildings come up and how things change, and then we get to use these new spaces to create new experiences within the campus!”



**Shy’anne Kush**

**Major: Social Work**

“My aunts graduated from Mercy, then my parents got their master’s here and my mom [works] here. So, I’ve had a close relationship with Mercy most of my life. I’ve seen a lot of Mercy’s history come to life. That’s really special to me because it feels like I grew up here.”



**Sara Otero**

**Major: Behavioral Science Education/  
Early Childhood**

“I feel most connected to history whenever I attend a sports game because you can see the pride and passion for our Mavericks at every game you go to. You just know it’s something that’s been shared from past years.”



**Nyseem Unique Williams**

**Major: Cybersecurity (B.S./M.S.)**

“One moment that made me feel connected to Mercy’s history was joining the Student Government Association. I act as voice for the student community on the Manhattan Campus, and it makes me feel like I’m actively contributing to Mercy’s history.”



**Lenin Rodriguez**

**Major: Business Administration/Finance**

“Last semester, I had the opportunity to speak with the Board of Trustees and President Parish. This experience allowed me to meet and learn from the individuals who continue to carry the university’s mission and legacy forward.”



**Ryanna Lopez**

**Major: Nursing**

“I feel like a moment that ties me to the 75 years would be Mercy going from Mercy College to Mercy University. It makes me feel like I’m seeing my school just expand more and more.”



**Muhammad Ahsan**

**Major: Computer Science**

“Carrying all my belongings across subways, Metro-North, and then up those hills on my first day was tough, but it made me feel like I was truly becoming part of something bigger.”



**Alyssa Richard**

**Major: Behavioral Science &  
Early Childhood Education**

“It’s the people who make Mercy such an unforgettable experience. It’s the people who make Mercy something that will be remembered for the next 75 years!”

**Do you have a story to tell?**

We’d love to hear from you!  
Share your Mercy story  
with [PR@mercy.edu](mailto:PR@mercy.edu).



# A NEW WAY FORWARD

How Mercy's Quest  
is redefining  
general education.

Historically, the general education curriculum – made up of the introductory and foundational courses students take before fully entering their major – has been something that students simply endure. A checklist of courses, a sequence of disconnected topics, a necessary hurdle standing between first-years and the subjects they actually want to study. At least, that's the model at most universities.

At Mercy University, though, faculty and administrators spent the last four years rethinking what general education could look like if it were designed around connection, flexibility and long-term student success from the very start.

"We took it right down to the studs," says Dr. Robert Murray, associate dean for General Education at Mercy University. "It's a holistically new launch. It's not a reform of the old program. It's a brand-new program."

That program, called Quest (an acronym for Question, Understand, Explore, Strengthen, Thrive), replaces a traditional "checklist" model built on distribution requirements with a more flexible path designed to build career readiness, develop durable skills and prepare students to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

"Right now, gen ed is the thing that is in your way," Murray says. "What I hope we discover is that Mercy's gen ed helps you get where you want to go."



**QUEST**  
General Education Program



### From obligation to purpose

For decades, general education has looked something like this: a series of required courses spread across disciplines like humanities, social sciences, math and natural sciences, with little connection to students’ majors and career goals. Students complete the requirements, but may not understand their purpose.

“We originally assessed students and faculty for what they understood about the gen ed curriculum,” says Dr. Dena Whipple, senior vice provost for Academic Affairs. “That became the impetus for how we would redesign it.”

What followed was a multiyear, institution-wide effort that reached nearly every corner of the university. Faculty governance groups, curriculum committees, academic leadership teams and staff across advising, registration and student support all played a role in shaping how the new curriculum would function in practice. Faculty worked together to define learning outcomes, while departments aligned degree pathways around the new structure.

“It really takes the entire institution to move forward on a gen ed curriculum that’s innovative and good for students,” Whipple says. “This is not just one committee leading this.”

### Choice, flexibility and student engagement

A defining feature of the new curriculum is the way students move through it. Instead of a rigid list of required courses, students complete learning outcomes through a wider range of course options tied to their interests and goals.

Students can now take courses that fulfill multiple requirements at once: building skills, exploring interests and even working toward minors.

“Double counting is actually very intentionally part of the design,” says Murray. With thoughtful and efficient course selection, “you can take multiple English courses, for example, and build them toward an English minor very easily now.”

This more customizable approach “allows for building micro-credentials, while staying on track and on time for graduation,” says Whipple. “And it’s also exciting for faculty because they have room to think in a more creative way about the curriculum.”

For faculty like Dr. Elise Arnold-Levene, associate professor of Spanish and program director for Modern Foreign Languages, that flexibility transforms how students engage. “Students may choose to enhance their writing skills through my advanced Spanish Reading and Composition course,” she says. “That course also counts toward the Creative Expression category and can be used toward a minor. The curriculum is both effective and efficient, and it gives students meaningful choices.”

### Building skills across the curriculum

Quest is designed so that students develop and revisit key skills throughout their college experience instead of encountering them once in an isolated course. “If you teach something once, you’re not really teaching it at all,” says Murray.

That’s why writing, collaboration, critical thinking and communication are introduced early and reinforced across multiple classes and disciplines, giving students repeated opportunities to practice and improve.

The curriculum is also structured so that learning outcomes are measurable and consistent across courses. “With clear student learning outcomes attached to each course, we can measure student success in new ways,” Whipple says. “If there are courses where we see students are not finding success, faculty will have the right information to make adjustments and revise as needed.”

“Double counting is actually very intentionally part of the design. You can take multiple English courses, for example, and build them toward an English minor very easily now.”

—  
Dr. Robert Murray,  
associate dean for general education



### Starting strong: The First-Year Seminar

The First-Year Seminar, piloted last semester ahead of the full rollout of Quest, anchors the new curriculum. All incoming students take it in their first term, giving them a shared academic experience and a structured introduction to college.

The seminar introduces students to academic expectations, campus resources and one another. “Building community, collaboration and focused connections starts from the very first class,” Whipple says. “Not when they’re starting their major.”

“It’s very important for university students to get that extended orientation to make them feel a sense of belonging,” says Dr. Tharushi Perera, assistant professor of Chemistry. “One place we start with is how to write an email to your professor. And then we are slowly building everything from there. It’s like a full package.”

Fostering a sense of connection carries particular importance at Mercy, where many students commute and many are also first-generation college students navigating unfamiliar systems and expectations.

“We want them to feel connected to the campus and connected to the university as a whole,” says Dr. Maureen MacLeod, associate dean of Student Success and First Year Experience and associate professor of History. “You need to find your people,” MacLeod says. “You need to know where you belong, not where we say we think you belong.”

Faculty is seeing that transformation firsthand. “Students do not naturally feel connected to other students or to their professors,” says Dr. Jackie Fisher, assistant professor of Psychology. “These are relationships that need to be carefully built. First-Year Seminar gives students those opportunities in a low-stakes environment.”

Through activities as simple as visiting campus offices or collaborating on projects, students begin to see themselves as part of a larger academic community. “You belong here,” Perera tells her students. “And it’s OK to ask for help.”

**“Everything we’re doing is connected – it’s all with a focus on helping students find success, not just while they’re here, but after they graduate.”**

—  
Dr. Dena Whipple,  
senior vice provost for academic affairs

According to Murray, early data suggests that the approach is making a difference. “GPAs are up, and we have the highest retention and perseverance rate in Mercy’s history right now.”

### Long-term impact: Connecting coursework to careers

Quest is designed to connect general education directly to students’ academic paths and professional goals. Career development is integrated into the seminar sequence and reinforced across courses. “There’s a piece in every seminar that specifically relates to careers,” MacLeod says. “We want it to feel relatable.”

Students practice collaboration, develop communication skills and work through applied projects that reflect real-world expectations. “By the time they get to a job interview, they’ll have real experiences to talk about,” Murray says.

“There was a lot of thought and care that went into this,” MacLeod says. “I don’t know many places where this kind of intentionality goes into general education.”

For Whipple, that level of alignment supports a broader goal across the university. “Everything we’re doing is connected,” she says. “It’s all with a focus on helping students find success, not just while they’re here, but after they graduate.”

# DOING IT THE RIGHT WAY



Twelve years shaping Mercy athletics.

After more than four decades in collegiate athletics and 12 years at Mercy, **Matt Kilcullen** is stepping into retirement with a clear perspective on what mattered most. In this conversation, he looks back on the growth of the program, the milestones along the way and the relationships that made the experience so rewarding.

**Q: Congratulations on your retirement! What led you to decide that now was the right time?**

**Kilcullen:** After 12 years here at Mercy, I think we've built the program into something that's prominent in the region. I'm still healthy and active, and I want to be able to enjoy this next chapter while I can.

I've been thinking about retirement for the last year or two. My daughter has her own business, Anact, a sustainable textile company. And after spending 48 years helping student-athletes and other young people, I thought maybe it's time to spend some of that energy helping her run her business.

**Q: Which brings us to your career at Mercy. When you look back at the 12 years you spent here, what stands out the most?**

**Kilcullen:** The interactions and relationships with our student-athletes. Watching them grow as young men and women and become successful in their chosen fields. Of course, seeing them succeed on the playing field is great, but the ability to talk with young people, advise them and support them is really meaningful.

Someone once told me: "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." If there's one thing that defines this department,



it's that we care. Our coaches and staff genuinely care about the student-athletes, and I think that has gone a long way toward our success.

**Q: When you first arrived at Mercy, what was your first impression? How would you compare the program then to what it is today?**

**Kilcullen:** I was a college basketball coach for 31 years, so I understood what it was like to sit in the coach's chair. I had also done about five years of administrative work at two schools combined, so I had experience looking at things from the administrator's perspective.

Our philosophy centered on recruiting. If you recruit high-character individuals along with talented athletes, you give yourself a better chance at long-term success.

We didn't want to sacrifice academics for athletic ability. We wanted good people. The coaches bought into that idea, and I think that's a major reason we reached the level of success we've had regionally and, in some sports, nationally.

**Q: It sounds like strong academic results and character are central to how you've shaped Mercy Athletics. How did you build that culture?**

**Kilcullen:** Again, it comes down to our coaches and student-athletes buying into the priorities of the program. We have study hall rules and clear academic expectations. If student-athletes don't meet their academic responsibilities, they can be held out of games.

Community engagement has also been important. Our teams regularly participate in events like the Holiday Hustle, Ferry Festa, Toys for Tots drives and Thanksgiving food drives. Women's lacrosse, for example, volunteers weekly at Abbott House, and we've also introduced programs like Morgan's Message, which raises awareness around student-athlete mental health.

**Q: Mercy Athletics has seen significant success during your tenure. Are there any moments or seasons that stand out as especially meaningful?**

**Kilcullen:** A few come to mind.

In 2017, we hosted an NCAA quarterfinal in women's soccer. The hill was packed with over 1,000 fans, and the game went to penalty kicks. Our senior goalkeeper hadn't played in several games, but she was sent in for the shootout. She made the final save by tipping the ball with her fingertip, sending us to the Final Four. It was incredible.

In 2019, both our men's and women's lacrosse teams won conference championships on the same day at New York Tech. The women beat LIU Post for the first time, and the men scored the game-winner with 14 seconds left. Seeing both teams celebrating together on the field was so so special.

In 2022, our men's lacrosse team won a double-overtime NCAA semifinal to advance to the national championship game. And this past fall, our volleyball team hosted and won the ECC tournament at home for the first time in program history. These were all huge moments for the program. They stand out for me the most.

**Q: What do you think makes Mercy Athletics distinctive compared to other Division II programs?**

**Kilcullen:** We're a very tight group.

Over time, we've seen teams supporting other teams more and more. Coaches attend each other's games, and student-athletes follow the success of other programs.

For example, when our women's soccer team was traveling for the NCAA

tournament, they watched the volleyball championship game together online and celebrated when the team won. Everybody talks about family, but I think we really do have that kind of support system here.

**Q: When people look back on your time at Mercy years from now, what do you hope sticks with them most?**

**Kilcullen:** That we did things the right way. We accomplished a lot with limited resources. I hope people feel proud of the department and how we've represented the university.

**Q: What excites you about the future of Mercy Athletics?**

**Kilcullen:** There is a more dedicated approach now to supporting athletics with resources. Overall, the future looks bright. We already have three teams in the NCAA tournament this year out of six programs.

Volleyball reached the regional finals. Women's soccer had a young team and made the second round. Women's basketball has a strong returning group. Many teams have talented young players returning, so there is a lot to be optimistic about.

**Q: If you had to describe your time at Mercy in one word, what would it be?**

**Kilcullen:** Rewarding, because of the relationships. To me, life has always been about the relationships. I believe our ability to relate to each other here in the department has been strong. So seeing young people grow and interact with each other has been incredibly rewarding.






to career.

From classroom ...





# Building the Next Generation of Educators

Photos by Kenneth Gabrielsen

Across the country, schools are facing a growing challenge: Fewer people are entering the teaching profession, and even fewer are staying. “We are in the midst of a labor crisis in teacher education,” says Eric Martone, dean of Mercy University’s School of Education. “Fewer students are entering the field, fewer are completing their programs and new teachers are burning out at unprecedented rates. Recruiting and retaining educators is especially challenging.”

At the same time, the path to becoming a teacher has become increasingly difficult. Many aspiring educators must balance coursework with outside jobs, often without access to meaningful, hands-on classroom experience. **That gap between preparation and practice is exactly what Mercy University is working to close.**





MERCY UNIVERSITY  
**SUZANNE McGRAW**  
Scholars Program

“A commitment to quality. A track record in education. A model already in place that could be expanded. The ability to attract committed students, many of whom are first-generation. Mercy checked every box.”

—  
Glenn Goldberg of the  
Suzanne McGraw Foundation



**SEE OUR SUZANNE McGRAW  
SCHOLARS PROGRAM LAUNCH  
EVENT VIDEO AND PHOTO ALBUM**

At Mercy, the focus is not only on educating future teachers, but on building a sustainable pipeline of prepared, supported educators who are ready to serve their communities from day one.

The Suzanne McGraw Scholars Program, launched this year, is a central part of that effort. Funded by a \$9.3 million gift from the Suzanne McGraw Foundation, the largest philanthropic investment in Mercy’s history, the program is designed to remove both financial and experiential barriers to entering the profession.

Each year, 25 students will receive full funding for their tuition and be placed in paid early childhood-level classrooms while completing their degree. By the time they graduate, they will have both a Bachelor of Science in Teaching Students with Disabilities (Pre-K–Grade 12) and real-world experience.

“This extraordinary generosity represents an investment in our mission and a powerful validation of the impactful work being done here at Mercy,” said Provost Dr. Kristin Curry Greenwood.

Scholars also have the opportunity to continue into an accelerated Master of Science in Early Childhood Education at no tuition cost, creating a seamless pathway from undergraduate study through advanced certification.

Importantly, the McGraw Scholars Program is not a stand-alone solution. It builds on a broader ecosystem of teacher preparation at Mercy, including the Empire State Teacher Residency Program, a New York State-funded grant program that allows aspiring teachers to complete classroom residencies in priority districts while earning a stipend and hands-on experience.

“Programs like the Empire State Teacher Residency succeed because they are built collaboratively,” Martone said. “Our role is to help address the structural challenges facing the teaching profession, including teacher shortages, the gap between coursework and classroom realities, and the need to support teachers long term.”

Together, these programs share a common approach: integrating learning with real classroom experience from the start. “One of the longstanding critiques of teacher preparation is that coursework and practice often occur in isolation,” Martone said. “This model addresses that directly.”

President Susan L. Parish emphasized that the impact extends far beyond the University. “Our region desperately needs qualified, passionate and committed childhood educators,” Parish said. “We also know that many talented young people who want to become teachers face real barriers, from financial pressures to limited access to experience. This program removes those barriers.”

Unlike traditional models, McGraw Scholars are embedded in classrooms as paid professionals while earning their degree. After graduation, they continue in their roles for an additional year, providing stability for both the graduates and the schools they serve. In an uncertain job market, that level of built-in opportunity is rare.

Glenn Goldberg of the Suzanne McGraw Foundation said Mercy stood out as the right partner to bring this vision to life. “A commitment to quality. A track record in education. A model already in place that could be expanded. The ability to attract committed students, many of whom are first-generation,” Goldberg said. “Mercy checked every box.”

“Our role is to help address the structural challenges facing the teaching profession, including teacher shortages, the gap between coursework and classroom realities, and the need to support teachers long term.”

—  
Eric Martone, Ph.D.,  
dean of the School of Education

Over the next five years, the program is expected to produce 125 new early childhood-level educators, each entering the workforce with experience, support and a clear path forward. For Mercy, the Suzanne McGraw Scholars Program represents more than a scholarship. It reflects a broader commitment to rethinking how teachers are prepared, supported and retained.

“This program is about more than degrees,” Parish said. “It is about creating opportunity, strengthening communities and preparing the next generation of educators to lead.”

As Mercy celebrates its 75th anniversary, that commitment continues to take shape in new and meaningful ways, ensuring that the future of education is not only imagined, but built.



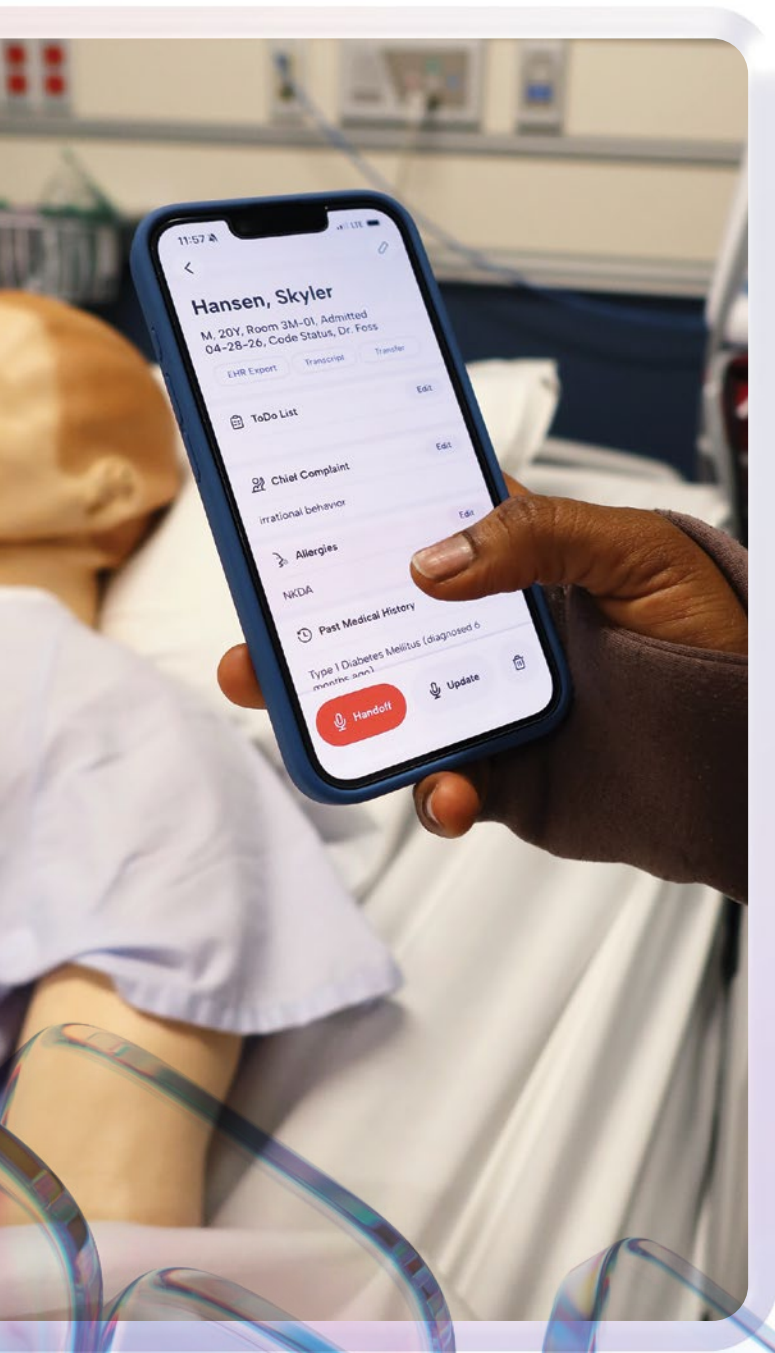
# THINKING UNDER PRESSURE

Mercy's School of Nursing is using artificial intelligence (AI) to sharpen clinical decision-making in the moments that matter most.





On a sunny Tuesday in April, students in Mercy University's School of Nursing participated in a routine clinical simulation designed to prepare them for the fast-moving, often unpredictable reality of patient care. Faculty and staff were on hand, including Marvin Sanon, director of Simulation Operations and Karen Koziol, director of Clinical Simulation, Westchester Campus, School of Nursing. But this time, there was an additional presence in the room – quietly listening in. Kabilah, an AI-powered platform designed to support nursing communication and clinical decision-making, had joined the exercise.



“We use simulation in a lot of different ways. It gives students the chance to practice. It builds confidence for when they step into the real world.”

—  
Karen Koziol, director of Clinical Simulation,  
Westchester Campus, School of Nursing

As healthcare evolves, so does the way future nurses are trained. At Mercy University, tools like Kabilah are helping strengthen clinical decision-making, giving students added support in moments when clear thinking can make all the difference.

Borne out of a desire to reduce errors during hospital shift changes and nursing handoffs, Kabilah was designed specifically for the realities of nursing workflows. In an environment where nurses are working longer hours and managing increasingly complex patient needs, even small gaps in communication can have serious consequences.

“Nurses are working way more hours these days – more shifts and doubles,” said Sanon. “We’re trying, as all hospitals are around the world, to become high-reliability organizations.” In healthcare, high-reliability organizations focus on reducing errors, improving communication and strengthening patient safety.

During the simulation, as one student delivered a patient report and another received it, the platform listened in the background, capturing the exchange in real time. Within moments, it generated a structured report, surfacing key details and prompting deeper analysis during the debrief.

Instead of simply recalling information, students were asked to interpret it – questioning, for example, whether a patient’s low blood pressure was tied to medication or medical history.

“This isn’t about replacing clinical judgment,” Sanon said. “It’s about supporting it – giving students another layer of awareness so they can make better decisions.”

“It takes our reports to the next level,” said Koziol, who brings more than 50 years of experience as a registered nurse. “Seeing the technology change and grow has been an amazing journey.”

A Mercy graduate, Koziol began her career at Nyack Hospital and went on to work in the neonatal ICU at St. Vincent’s Hospital in Manhattan before returning full-time to Mercy in 2010.

When the traditional Nursing program was created in 2015, she served as the inaugural simulation specialist. “In the early days, the simulation team was just me. Now, as the nursing program has grown to include traditional, accelerated and weekend accelerated BSN tracks at Mercy University’s School of Nursing, the simulation team has expanded across two campuses, employs several staff members and is overseen by Marvin Sanon.”

What started as a makeshift lab in Mercy Hall has since grown into a cornerstone of the School of Nursing’s approach to hands-on learning. Today, simulation labs allow students to experience high-stakes clinical scenarios – such as diabetic emergencies, postpartum hemorrhages and asthma attacks – that they may not encounter during traditional clinical rotations.

“We use simulation in a lot of different ways,” Koziol said. “It gives students the chance to practice, to make mistakes and to learn from them – without putting anyone at risk. And it builds confidence for when they step into the real world.”

For Koziol, the difference from her own training is profound. “When I was a nursing student, simulation didn’t exist,” she said. “We had to practice on real patients.” Now, that environment continues to evolve.

As simulation becomes more advanced, faculty are looking beyond what students do in a scenario to better understand how they think and communicate under pressure. That’s where Kabilah is beginning to play a role.

“In one of our scenarios, we had multiple students working together to manage a patient in crisis,” Sanon said. “Kabilah was listening the entire time – capturing everything.”

According to Sanon, the platform also revealed moments that might have been missed in real time. In one case, it identified a prolonged stretch – nearly 90 seconds – where no one was communicating, highlighting how easily critical time can slip by in high-pressure situations.

“It’s really analyzing everything,” Sanon said, giving faculty a much deeper understanding of how students perform under pressure. “We’ve been really impressed with it.”

For Mercy’s faculty, that level of insight is key. The goal is not just to expose students to clinical scenarios, but to reinforce critical thinking in real time.

“It’s easy to read a textbook and think you’ve retained the information,” Sanon said. “It’s different when you’re in the room and everything is happening at once.”

For Koziol, embracing that evolution is essential. “It doesn’t replace nursing – it aids it,” she said. “There is nothing that compares to hands-on clinical experience, but this prepares students for what they’ll encounter. They’re already using this technology in hospitals across New York City, so it gives our students a real advantage.”

That mindset extends beyond AI. Mercy continues to invest in emerging tools, including virtual reality platforms like SimX, which will allow students to participate in immersive clinical simulations across campuses and even remotely – an approach that gained traction across the industry during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Our mission is to be on the forefront of technology,” Sanon said. It’s a mission rooted not just in innovation, but in impact. “Excellence at its best,” he added. “Mercy cares about innovation. Mercy cares about leading the next generation.”



Equipping students  
to navigate complexity  
and lead with purpose.



# The Power of Conflict

Conflict is everywhere. It shows up in workplaces, classrooms, relationships and communities. The difference is not whether it exists, but how we respond to it.

As professional environments grow more complex, the ability to navigate conflict has become essential across industries. From healthcare and education to business and public service, success increasingly depends on communication, emotional intelligence and the ability to work through differences. At Mercy University, a new Conflict Studies minor is designed to meet that moment.





**“People try to avoid conflict, but it is one of the greatest opportunities for growth. When you understand it, you can respond differently. You can lead differently.”**

**Dorothy Balancio, professor,  
School of Social and Behavioral Sciences**

Developed within the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, the interdisciplinary minor brings together decades of coursework focused on conflict resolution, mediation and collaborative problem-solving. Open to students across all majors, it reflects a growing recognition that these skills are not optional. They are foundational to how future professionals will lead, collaborate and make decisions.

“This minor grew out of conversations across the University about what students truly need to succeed,” said Dr. Cynthia Walley, interim dean of the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences. “No matter the field, students are entering environments where they have to navigate complexity, work with different perspectives and communicate effectively. These are skills they will use immediately and throughout their lives.”

The program emphasizes real-world application. Students build highly transferable skills in negotiation, ethical decision-making and emotional intelligence. These skills strengthen leadership, professional judgment and the ability to work across teams. Learning is active and reflective, with opportunities to engage in real-life scenarios, guided discussions and practical exercises that mirror the challenges students will face beyond the classroom.

Its interdisciplinary design makes the minor especially powerful. While it naturally complements fields like criminal justice, psychology and legal studies, it is equally valuable for students in business, health and natural sciences, nursing and the liberal arts.

“Conflict shows up everywhere,” Walley said. “Whether students are working in teams, in clinical settings or in organizations, these skills translate across every environment.”

The minor also builds on a strong foundation already in place at Mercy. More than 700 students have been trained as New York State community mediators, applying these skills in courts, schools, workplaces and communities. This reflects the University’s long-standing commitment to preparing thoughtful, ethical problem-solvers.

For Professor Dorothy Balancio, who has spent more than 25 years teaching Conflict Studies, the work is deeply personal. In 1994, her son Louis, then a Mercy junior, was killed in a case of mistaken identity.

“When I buried Louis, I felt like I had failed him,” she said. “I made a promise that I would spend the rest of my life teaching these skills to other people, particularly college students.”

That promise became a calling and now, a program that will reach students across the University. Balancio’s approach challenges students to look inward as much as outward. Through reflection and discussion, they examine their own experiences and learn how unmet needs, communication breakdowns and assumptions can shape conflict.

“People try to avoid conflict,” she said. “But it is one of the greatest opportunities for growth. When you understand it, you can respond differently. You can lead differently.” That shift from avoidance to understanding is at the heart of the minor.

As Mercy University marks 75 years of expanding access and opportunity, the Conflict Studies minor represents a forward-looking investment in what comes next. Graduates will be prepared not only for the workforce, but to navigate it with clarity, empathy and purpose.

Conflict is inevitable. Knowing what to do with it is what sets Mercy students apart.



A Year of Celebration



# Shining Bright.

SINCE 1950



**Our 75th anniversary was more than a milestone – it was a celebration of the lives we’ve touched, the communities we’ve lifted and the futures we continue to shape.**

**Take a look back at a year that honored Mercy’s rich history.**

Photos by Merissa Blitz,  
Kenneth Gabrielsen and John Raiola

# Founders' Festival

Mercy's annual Founders' Festival took on special meaning in 2025, celebrating 75 years of community and connection.

Students, faculty, staff, families and friends gathered on the Westchester Campus for an evening of food trucks, live music and games, culminating in a spectacular drone show that lit up the September night sky in honor of the milestone.



**SEE OUR FOUNDERS' FESTIVAL VIDEO AND PHOTO ALBUM**



# Maverick Coin Quest

In October 2025, Mercy launched Coin Quest, a first-of-its-kind treasure hunt that brought the Maverick community together in a playful and competitive way. Students, faculty and staff searched for hidden coins, traded with friends and explored all three campuses in pursuit of prizes.

Created for Mercy's 75th anniversary in October 2025, these custom coins became the centerpiece of Coin Quest. Each double-sided design featured the anniversary mark and a letter from "MERCY," with participants collecting combinations for prizes, including a grand package for completing the full set.



**SEE HIGHLIGHTS FROM COIN QUEST ON MERCY'S YOUTUBE PAGE**





# A Year of Celebration

## Warm Wishes for the Next 75 Years

At the 75th Anniversary Exhibit, our community put pen to paper, sharing their hopes for Mercy's bright future.

To stay as a  
institution that furthers  
acceptance and understanding  
for all kinds of people

- John O'Sullivan

IN A WORLD,  
WHERE WE ARE  
CONSTANTLY ON.LINE  
This is where we  
connect with  
purpose, resilience  
preservance. ZAHARA

To help  
people's  
dreams come  
true!  
- MCSE



## World of Healthcare Day

Bringing together professionals and students, World of Healthcare Day was held Oct. 24, 2025, at the Westchester Campus. Hosted by the School of Health and Natural Sciences in partnership with the Westchester County Association (WCA), the event celebrated a shared 75th anniversary milestone while exploring the future of healthcare, career pathways and the evolving needs of the communities Mercy serves.



## Faculty Seminar Day

Faculty Seminar Day highlighted teaching innovation across Mercy, with this past fall's gathering taking place Oct. 15, 2025, at the Westchester Campus. The fully faculty-led program featured reflections on how teaching practices have evolved, especially meaningful during the University's 75th anniversary year.



## Wellness Day

Hosted by the School of Nursing at the Bronx Campus on Nov. 18, 2025, Wellness Day offered moments of rest, renewal and creativity. Community members participated in sessions including reflexology, reiki, therapeutic touch and guided meditation, reflecting Mercy's commitment to care and well-being.



## Honoring History: MERCY EXPLORES THE ITALIAN ROOTS OF VERRAZZANO

In fall 2025, "Honoring History: Mercy Explores the Italian Roots of Verrazzano" brought the Mercy community together at the Westchester Campus to explore the Italian-American roots of Verrazzano Hall. Led by Eric Martone, dean of the School of Education, the program connected campus history to broader themes of identity, immigration and cultural heritage.

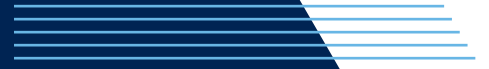


Held on March 12, 2026, hosted by the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, this engaging session featured long-serving Mercy faculty who reflected on decades of teaching, growth and change across the institution.

## Reminiscences: 75 YEARS OF MERCY UNIVERSITY



# A Year of Celebration



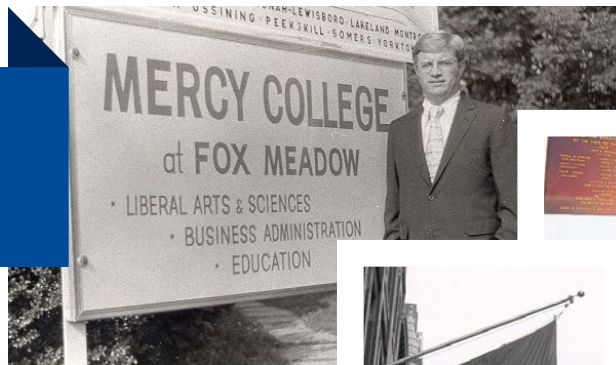
## Hidden Figures of Mercy:

WOMEN LEADERS WHO SHAPED OUR UNIVERSITY'S EARLY YEARS

As part of Women's History Month, the School of Education hosted "Hidden Figures of Mercy: Women Leaders Who Shaped Our University's Early Years" on March 16, 2026. The program highlighted the legacy of the Sisters of Mercy and their lasting impact on the University's foundation.

## Mercy Campuses Through History

A look into Mercy's campuses past and present, "Bringing Education to the People: The Story of Mercy's Campuses and Communities," explored the University's mission to expand educational access through innovation, community engagement and forward-thinking leadership. The event highlighted that Mercy's story is not just one of buildings and expansion, but of purpose and persistence.



## Mercy Moments:

75TH ANNIVERSARY EXHIBIT

An interactive journey through Mercy's 75-year history, the "Mercy Moments" exhibit invited visitors to explore milestones, artifacts and stories from across the University. The exhibit opened Jan. 28, 2026, at the Westchester Campus Library before traveling to the Bronx and Manhattan Campuses.



## Conquer the Trail

Runners gathered at the Westchester Campus on April 18, 2026, for the Conquer the Trail race. The special 7.5K course honored Mercy's 75th anniversary, blending tradition, community and celebration along the scenic trail.



SEE OUR CONQUER THE TRAIL 7.5K VIDEO AND PHOTO ALBUM

## Commemorative Tree Planting



Marking the 75th anniversary, the School of Business planted a commemorative tree at the Westchester Campus in spring 2026. The initiative serves as a living symbol of growth, resilience and Mercy's continued impact.

## Warm Wishes for the Next 75 Years

At the 75th Anniversary Exhibit, our community put pen to paper, sharing their hopes for Mercy's bright future.

To continue to grow + be accessible for all students  
♥

Thank you for empowering students of all ages to accomplish educational and professional dreams. Here's to the next 75 years of uplifting people and turning ambitions into achievements.  
-Donnett Smith

75 plus more years celebrating this accomplished school for adults!  
-Christine '07

75+ more years of PACT!  
♥ Leighann VanDeBogert



# A Year of Celebration

## Warm Wishes for the Next 75 Years

At the 75th Anniversary Exhibit, our community put pen to paper, sharing their hopes for Mercy's bright future.

I wish for Mercy to continue to give students the sense of belonging + home like it has given me over the past 45 years  
Denise Gabrielle Tomlin

A legacy of access, community, humanity, and excellence!

Wishing Mercy continues empowerin' students & building' social mobility!  
#GoMavs



## 2026 Annual Trustees' Scholarship Gala

The 45th Annual Trustees' Scholarship Gala, held April 30, 2026, brought together supporters and honorees to celebrate the transformative power of education while raising critical scholarship funds during Mercy's 75th anniversary year.



SEE OUR GALA VIDEO AND PHOTO ALBUM





## Annual Mavie Awards

Celebrating the achievements of Mercy students, faculty and staff, the Annual Mavie Awards took place May 8, 2026, at the Westchester Campus. In honor of Mercy's 75th anniversary, three special awards were introduced to spotlight those who embody the spirit and excellence of the University community.

## Commencement 2026

Proud graduates crossed the stage May 20 and 21, 2026, at the Westchester County Center, marking a defining milestone in their academic journey and the beginning of their next chapter as Mercy alumni.



# TOP 10 FACTS

## ABOUT MERCY'S HISTORY



Seventy-five years of Mercy University is filled with moments both monumental and unexpected. From bold expansions to everyday traditions, these snapshots capture the people, places and ideas that have shaped Mercy into what it is today.

### 1 Words of Encouragement



Sister Mary Gratia's letter to Mercy's first class in 1961 struck a hopeful tone from the very beginning. Even as construction remained unfinished and challenges emerged, her message was clear: Mercy was built to grow, adapt and move forward. That spirit of optimism has defined the University ever since.



**2** Before becoming the Mavericks, Mercy's athletics teams were known as the Flyers.

### 3

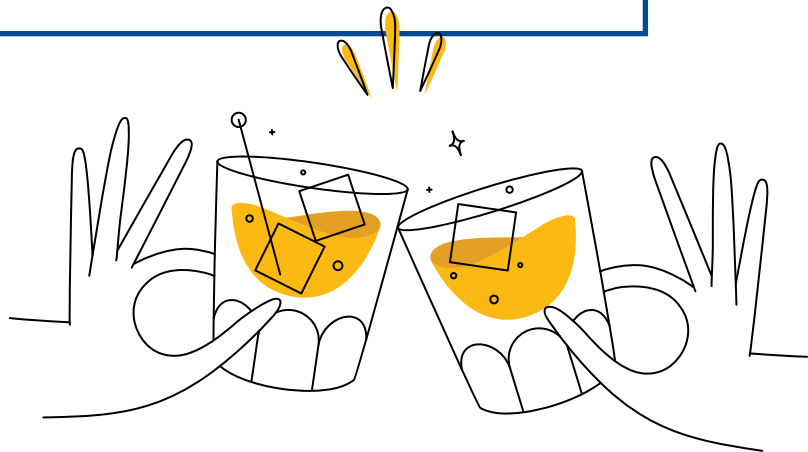


**In 1979, President Gerald Ford recognized Mercy with a \$10,000 Innovation Award, highlighting the University's commitment to forward-thinking education.**



### 4 The Whistle Stop Pub

From the late 1960s through the early 1980s, the Whistle Stop pub was a lively campus hub. Students gathered between classes to connect, celebrate and unwind, making it a memorable part of campus life until changing laws and student needs led to its closing.



# 5

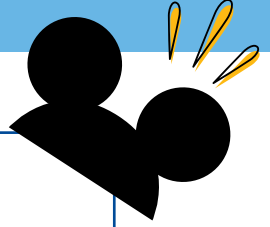
## Mercy's Campus in Miami

In the 1970s, Mercy expanded beyond New York with a campus in Miami. The Center for Bilingual Education primarily served Cuban refugees, offering coursework in Spanish while students learned English. Though the campus later transitioned to local institutions, it remains a powerful example of Mercy's commitment to access and innovation.

# 6

## Notable Honorees

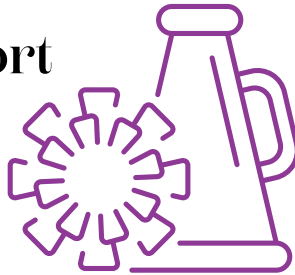
Over the years, Mercy has awarded honorary degrees to an extraordinary group of cultural icons and changemakers, including Roy Disney, Bob Hope, Jerry Lewis, Harry Belafonte, Norman Mailer and Sonia Manzano of "Sesame Street."



# 7

## The Original Sport

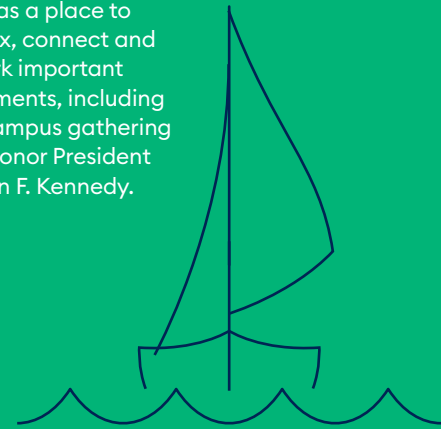
Cheerleading was Mercy's first organized sport. In the early 1960s, students cheered for nearby institutions such as Iona and West Point, helping lay the groundwork for women's athletics at Mercy.



# 8

## Mercy Beach

In the 1960s, students gathered along the Hudson River at what became known as "Mercy Beach." It was a place to relax, connect and mark important moments, including a campus gathering to honor President John F. Kennedy.



# 9

## A Road Through History

A piece of early American history still stands on Mercy's Westchester Campus. Located along the historic Albany Post Road, now part of Route 9, the campus is home to the preserved 26th mile marker. The route, improved under Benjamin Franklin's direction as postmaster general, once connected New York City to Albany and served as a vital communication corridor in Colonial America.



# 10

## Mercy's First Home

In 1892, the Sisters of Mercy moved from New York City to Westchester, acquiring the Kingsland Estate in Tarrytown. Named for Ambrose Kingsland, a former mayor of New York City, the property became a home, an orphanage, a school and ultimately the foundation of what would become Mercy University.



# A Journey Through YEARS

How a signature anniversary exhibit brought Mercy's story to life.

Photos by Kenneth Gabrielsen



The exhibit debuted on Jan. 28, 2026, at the Westchester Campus.

**A**s Mercy University celebrates its 75th anniversary, one signature event has brought its past to life in a powerful and immersive way.

In “Mercy Moments: A 75th Anniversary Exhibit,” visitors moved through towering displays of historic Mercy artifacts, photographs, news headlines and personal stories spanning generations of University history.

Designed as a centerpiece of Mercy’s 75th anniversary celebration, the interactive traveling installation connected past and present through large-scale panels and QR codes that allowed visitors to access digital content directly on their phones, including animated archival images that offered a new way to experience moments from Mercy’s past.

In one scene, a Mercy student and a West Point cadet walked together down an aisle, reimagining a moment from decades ago. Nearby, alumna Louise Squitieri, a member of Mercy’s first graduating class in 1965, smiled in recognition.

“The Sisters of Mercy used to bring different boys’ schools down for dances,” she said. “One year it was the West Point cadets.”

Moments like this defined the exhibit, which debuted in January at the Westchester Campus library before traveling to the Bronx and Manhattan campuses, with opening receptions at each location that brought together students, faculty, staff and alumni.



“Seeing their photos and documents, you realize they [the Sisters] were figuring things out, coming together and doing something great. It made me feel good to know we’re still doing that today.”

Kristen Sangregorio, executive creative director of marketing and communications, Mercy University



Visitors were also invited to contribute their own voices by signing a larger-than-life Mercy yearbook and sharing wishes for the next 75 years.

The exhibit represented months of work led by Kristen Sangregorio, executive creative director of marketing and communications, and her team, who sifted through boxes of archival materials to shape a cohesive narrative.

“When you’re looking back so far in history, the founding Sisters almost have this mythical quality,” Sangregorio said. “But seeing their photos and documents, you realize they were figuring things out, coming together and doing something great. It made me feel good to know we’re still doing that today.”

To extend the experience beyond the exhibit itself, historic photos were also installed in familiar campus locations, including the Rotunda, the Gym and Victory Hall, allowing students to encounter the past in the spaces they move through every day.

Using AI, historical photographs were transformed into video clips, bringing Mercy’s rich history to life. Visitors scanned QR codes with their phones to access the special video footage.

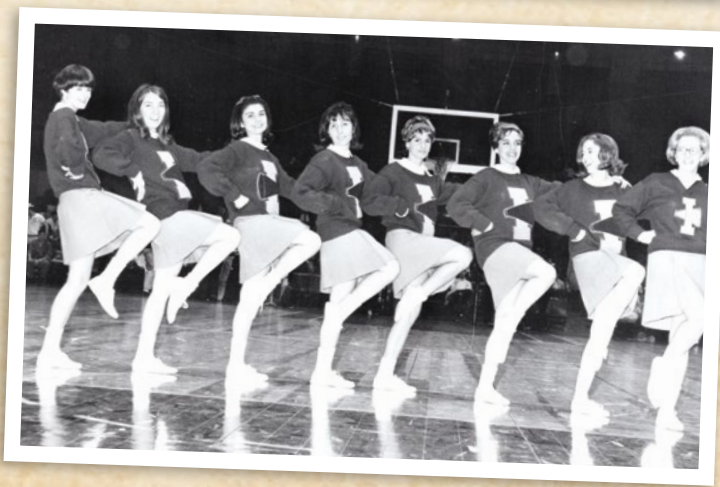
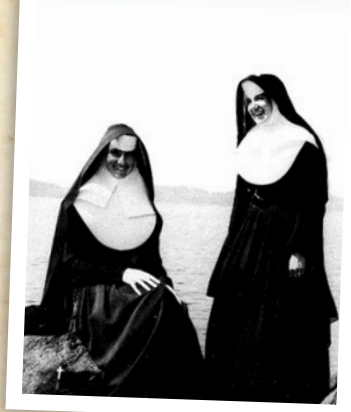


WATCH EXCLUSIVE VIDEO CONTENT FROM THE “MERCY MOMENTS” EXHIBIT



# A Page From Mercy's Past

A closer look at historic photographs  
featured throughout the exhibit.





The Mercy community gathers to celebrate the exhibit opening at the Bronx Campus.

At each campus stop, the response was consistent: a sense of pride, discovery and connection.

Alumni found pieces of their own stories reflected in the timeline. Current students gained a deeper understanding of Mercy's founding mission. Faculty and staff saw their work as part of a larger legacy.

"I'm a little overwhelmed that there is so much that actually was saved from when I came to school here," Squitieri said at the Westchester opening.

She later earned her Ph.D. from Mercy at a time when women were underrepresented in science and academia, a reflection of the access to excellence the Sisters envisioned.

Speaking at the opening, Parish emphasized the exhibit's deeper meaning.

"We're honoring Mercy's history, which is so important," she said. "We're still honoring the vision and priorities of the founding Sisters who created Mercy. We're still living up to their ideals and prioritizing access to excellence for our students."

The exhibit draws on research from Eric Martone, dean of the School of Education, and Professor Michael Perrota, along with contributions from students, faculty, staff and alumni through the 75th Anniversary Research Project.



**“We’re still honoring the vision and priorities of the founding Sisters who created Mercy. We’re still living up to their ideals and prioritizing access to excellence for our students.”**

—  
**Susan L. Parish, Ph.D., M.S.W.,  
president of Mercy University**

Together, these perspectives helped capture not just major milestones, but the everyday moments that define Mercy’s story.

While much has evolved over the past 75 years, including expanded programs, new technologies and a more connected campus experience, Mercy’s core mission has remained constant.

“We are determined to support students, to give them access to excellence and to transform their lives through a college education,” Parish said. “The Sisters’ vision and our vision today have not wavered.”

Walking through the exhibit, that continuity is unmistakable. The buildings, fashion and technology may have changed, but the spirit of the Mercy community remains the same.

That is what “Mercy Moments” ultimately reveals. This is not just a reflection on history. It is a celebration of a mission still in motion and a community continuing to shape what comes next.

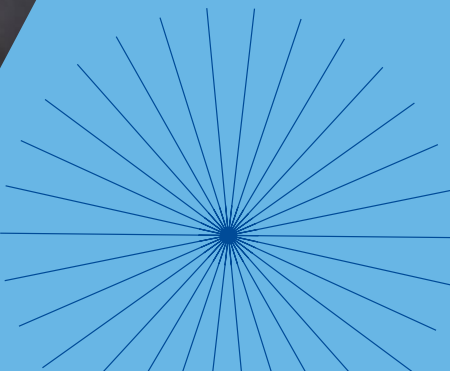
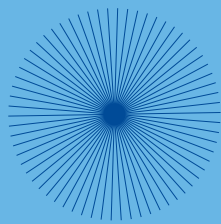


The installation concluded its journey at the Manhattan Campus on March 25, 2026.



MERCY

MERCY





“ Here we will  
begin our own  
building of  
mind and spirit. ”



—  
Sister Mary Gratia, R.S.M.



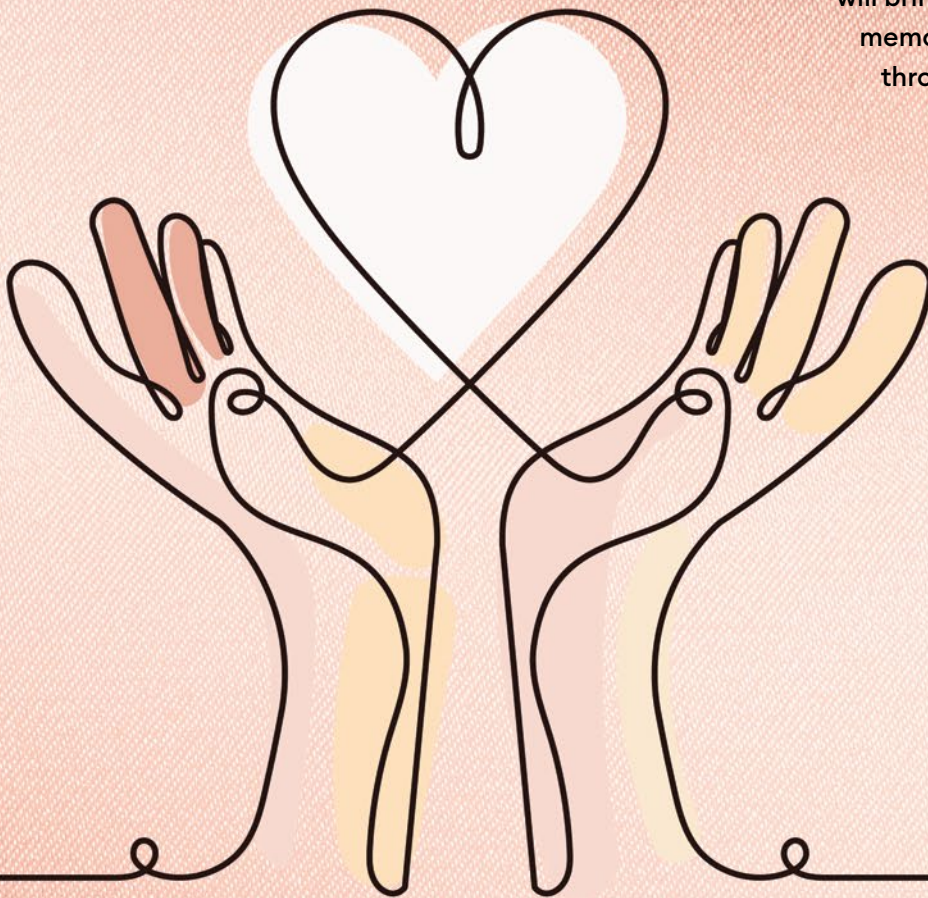


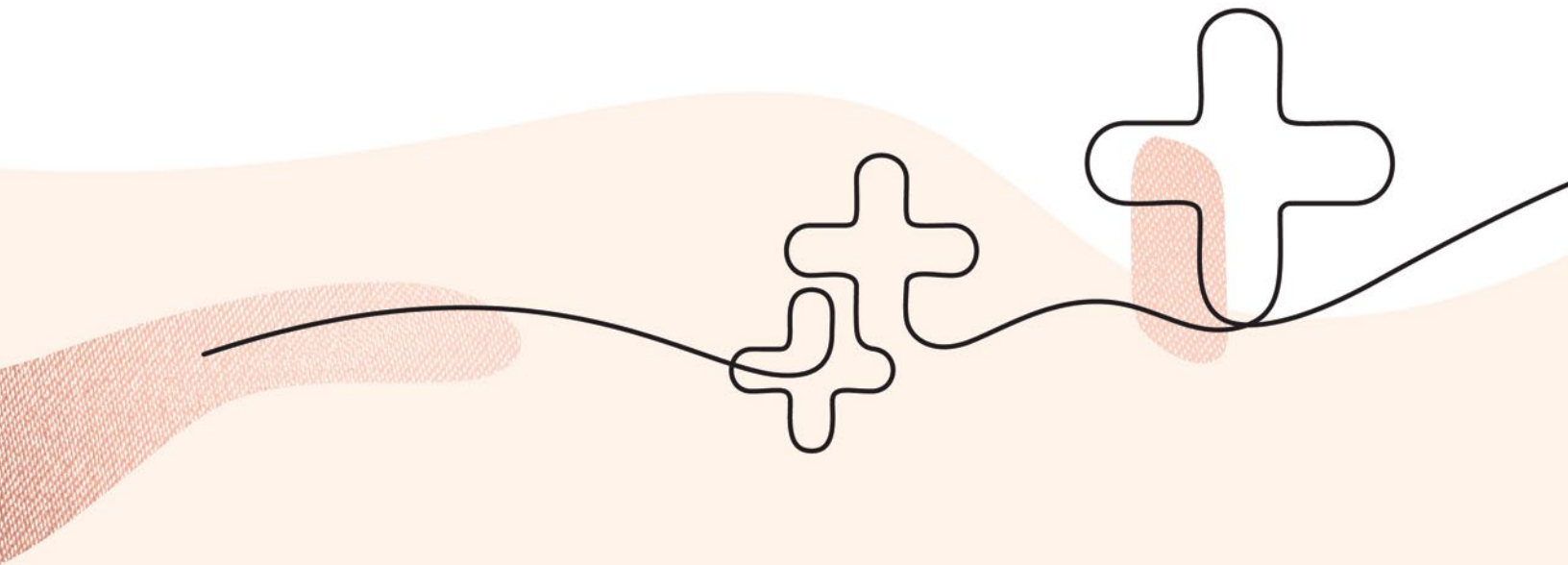
**MERCY UNIVERSITY**  
**SHINING BRIGHT. SINCE 1950.**

# CONNECTED

*Through* CARE

A new interdisciplinary partnership will bring students, individuals living with memory loss and caregivers together through experiential learning and community support.





As New York’s population ages, the need for dementia support and caregiver resources continues to grow. This fall, Mercy University will launch a new respite care partnership designed to meet that need while giving students hands-on experience working alongside older adults and their caregivers.

Developed through a collaboration between Mercy’s School of Health and Natural Sciences and therapeutic horticulture practitioner Fred Ellman, the program is designed to bring students, caregivers and individuals living with memory loss together in a setting focused on connection, engagement and well-being.

For Interim Dean Dr. Nannette Hyland, the initiative reflects both a professional and personal philosophy. “I’m always looking at how we can help our neighboring communities,” Hyland said.

A physical therapist by training who has spent nearly three decades at Mercy, Hyland has long believed that some of the most meaningful learning happens outside the classroom. After learning about Ellman’s work using horticulture, mindfulness and creative engagement to support individuals living with dementia and their caregivers, she immediately saw the opportunity for Mercy students.

“I love to educate outside of the classroom walls in a way that enriches the students and gives back to the community,” Hyland said.

The respite care model will focus on active engagement rather than passive observation. Through plant-based activities, movement, music, mindfulness and social interaction, participants will be encouraged to connect with others and remain mentally and physically engaged. At the same time, caregivers will have an opportunity to rest, recharge and access support.

“The act of doing – that’s where this horticultural practice has come into play,” Hyland said.

What began as a small community-based program quickly revealed broader possibilities. Mercy nursing students first became involved through community health internships, and the response from both students and participants was overwhelmingly positive.

“It was so positive, my goal was to create a bigger partnership,” Hyland said.

Now, Mercy is preparing to formally bring the program to campus, where it will serve as both a community resource and an interdisciplinary educational experience. Initial participation will include students in gerontology, health sciences and nursing, with plans to expand into occupational therapy, physical therapy, exercise science, social work, business and even music programs.

“Our goal is to have as many programs involved as we can,” Hyland said.

The initiative also reflects Mercy’s growing emphasis on interprofessional education – preparing students to work collaboratively across healthcare disciplines while understanding the human side of care.

“I’m a big believer that we are better together,” Hyland said. “A good healthcare team works together as a team, respects each other. How do we work together to make an individual’s life the best it can be? And how do we give back?”

For students, the experience will offer far more than observation hours. By working directly with older adults and caregivers, students will gain exposure to real-world healthcare challenges while developing empathy, communication skills and practical experience.

“There’s research on the impact of intergenerational exposure,” Hyland said. “So it helps the individuals with memory loss. And this is real-life work-based experience that’s offered on campus.”

Hyland believes those interactions can have a lasting impact on students entering healthcare professions.

“We really need to expose our students to individuals who are older,” she said. “They love listening to their stories. They love learning about their lives.”

The program may also create opportunities for future faculty and student research focused on aging, memory care and intergenerational engagement. Mercy faculty members, including Dr. Sarah Hahn, associate dean for the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences and associate professor of behavioral science and sociology, are already exploring ways students can support observational research connected to the initiative.

“There’s so much research potential in this as well,” Hyland said.

Ultimately, Hyland sees the program as a natural extension of Mercy’s long-standing mission of access, service and community engagement.

“The mission of Mercy has always been about access,” she said. “I have always loved this part of the mission, being able to provide access to higher education for students.”

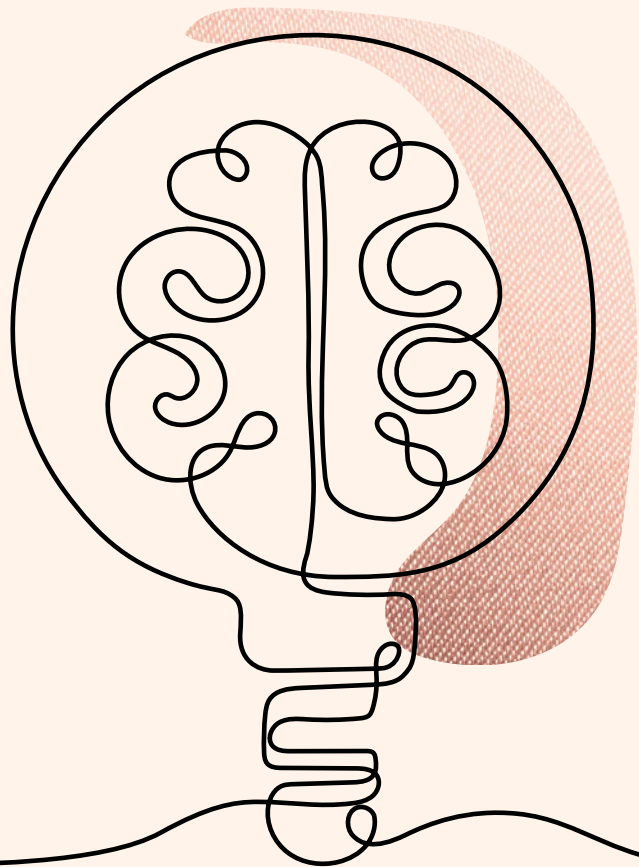
That commitment, she says, is shared across the University community.

“The faculty at Mercy believe in that mission,” Hyland said. “If you are willing to learn and put the time in, this is the place for you.”

As Mercy University celebrates 75 years of expanding opportunity and strengthening communities, the partnership represents another example of how the University continues to evolve, creating innovative ways for students to learn through service while addressing real needs beyond campus. “It brings your education to life,” Hyland said.

**“I love to educate outside of the classroom walls in a way that enriches the students and gives back to the community.”**

—  
**Nannette Hyland,**  
interim dean of the School of  
Health and Natural Sciences



# BRIGHT FUTURES





# STRAIGHT ✦ AHEAD

## Business education reimagined for the AI age.

Every generation faces new technology that changes the way people work. From the invention of the wheel to the rise of computers, innovation has consistently reshaped the workforce while opening new opportunities for those ready to adapt.

Today, artificial intelligence (AI) represents the next major shift, and Mercy University's School of Business is preparing students to meet it head-on.

As Mercy celebrates its 75th anniversary with an eye toward the future, the School of Business is redefining its curriculum to embed AI across programs while strengthening the essential human skills that will remain vital in an increasingly automated world.



Jennifer Fernandes, associate dean  
of the School of Business

“AI is completely revolutionizing the future of business,” said Victor Petenkemani, MBA, dean of the Mercy University School of Business. “Our goal is to ensure that Mercy students graduate ready to work with these tools and understand how to apply them responsibly to solve real business challenges.”

The need for these skills is growing rapidly. Demand for workers in AI-related or AI-assisted jobs is expected to grow much faster than the 4% average for all occupations between 2023 and 2033, according to the U.S. Department of Labor’s Economics Daily. Jobs for personal financial advisers are expected to grow by 17.1% during that period, even as some of their tasks become automated. Employment in AI-based business solutions software development is projected to grow by 17.9%. Meanwhile, the growing complexity of data infrastructure is expected to drive demand for database administrators and architects, with projected growth of 8.2% and 10.8%, respectively.

“We want students to ask important questions ... Can you prove that AI is right or wrong in a particular situation? How do you validate the information it produces?”

**“Our goal is to ensure that Mercy students graduate ready to work with these tools and understand how to apply them responsibly to solve real business challenges.”**



**Victor Petenkemani, MBA,**  
dean of the School of Business

Workers with AI skills are already seeing significant financial benefits. According to a 2025 global AI jobs report from PricewaterhouseCoopers, workers with AI skills are earning a 56% wage premium compared with workers in the same roles without those skills. The report also found that every industry surveyed is increasingly integrating AI into its operations.

At Mercy, these trends are shaping how the School of Business prepares students for their careers. The curriculum is being redesigned to integrate AI skills throughout coursework while strengthening analytical thinking, professional communication and ethical decision-making.

“As AI increases the speed and efficiency of work, students need both stronger analytical skills and stronger human skills,” Petenkemani said. “They need to know how to collaborate, communicate and make ethical decisions in environments where AI plays a major role.”

Jennifer Fernandes, associate dean of the School of Business and assistant professor, is helping to lead a faculty initiative to redesign the curriculum. The goal is to graduate students who are confident users of AI while remaining thoughtful, critical decision-makers.

One key component of this effort is a new cornerstone course, Foundations in AI, which will introduce students to different types of artificial intelligence and explore both the possibilities and the ethical challenges the technology presents.

“We want students to ask important questions,” Fernandes said. “For example, can you prove that AI is right or wrong in a particular situation? How do you validate the information it produces?”

Students may also be asked to consider how they would approach a business challenge without relying on AI tools. “A team working on a project might be asked, ‘Given this situation, how would you solve the problem if AI wasn’t available?’” Fernandes said.

The School of Business is also expanding programs and initiatives that align with evolving workforce needs. Mercy recently received state approval for a Bachelor of Science in Risk Management and Insurance, a program designed to prepare students for careers in a rapidly growing field. Many business programs are also incorporating industry-recognized certifications, allowing students to graduate with credentials that employers value.

Hands-on learning remains central to the School of Business experience. Through projects, partnerships and experiential learning opportunities, students gain practical skills that prepare them to contribute in the workplace from their first day on the job.

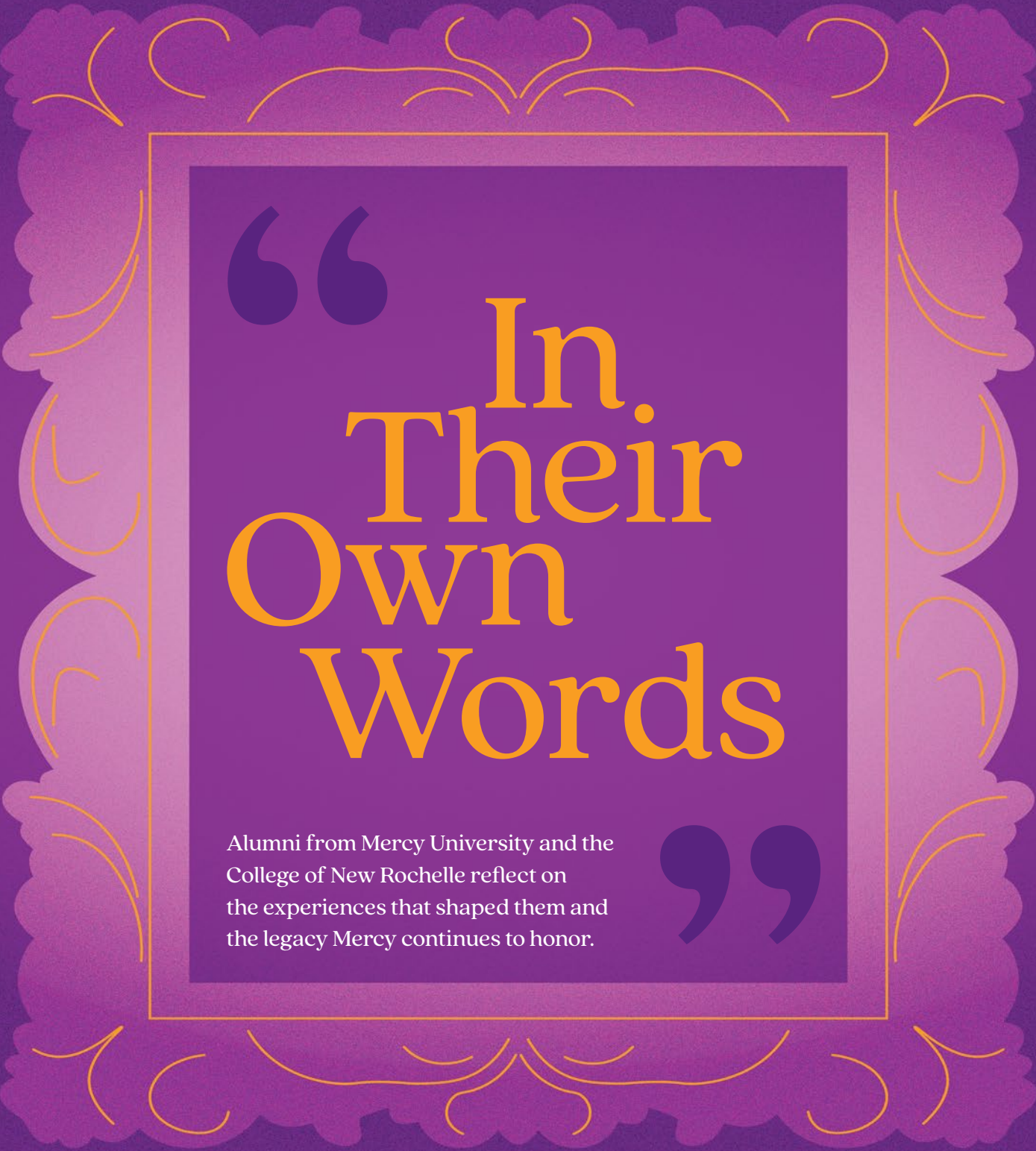
“These changes are about making sure our students are ready not just for today’s workforce, but for the workforce of the future,” Petenkemani said.

Those efforts build on long-standing strengths of Mercy’s School of Business – innovation, strategic partnerships and global engagement – while positioning students to thrive in a world where technology continues to evolve.

“The work we are doing now is really transforming the curriculum,” Petenkemani said.

And in the age of AI, that transformation is designed to give Mercy students an advantage: the ability to combine advanced technology with the human judgment, creativity and leadership that businesses will always need.

Photo by Leslie Kahan



“ In.  
Their  
Own  
Words ”

Alumni from Mercy University and the College of New Rochelle reflect on the experiences that shaped them and the legacy Mercy continues to honor.

We asked Mercy alumni to share their reflections:

**QUESTION 1:** In one or two sentences, what moment best defines your time at Mercy?

**QUESTION 2:** Complete this sentence:

“I am the person/professional I am today because Mercy taught me to ...”



## Carole Kakos '65

**Answer 1:** To define my time at Mercy, it's almost impossible to choose just one moment from those four years. However, I often think back to a senior-year ceremony before graduation when our class passed an ivy chain from classmate to classmate, symbolizing our bond with Mercy and with one another. Sixty years later, many of the women from the Class of '65 are still close friends. The ceremony also marked an important milestone as Mercy became a four-year liberal arts college for laywomen.

**Answer 2:** I became a 31-year inner-city professional educator due to encouragement of professors and the education I received at Mercy. The college arranged for me to student teach in inner city schools, which created a desire in me to always remain working with children who often had little-needed resources within their families and neighborhoods. This allowed me to be creative and become a vital part of their lives. The demands and personal rewards were high.

---

---

## Richard Ceriello '73

**Answer 1:** Walking the long road up from the train station, making the turn onto campus, seeing the cliffs and the river behind it. Like a big estate. Laying eyes on it. I felt I had arrived.

**Answer 2:** Discipline that's guided my path and self-reliance. The kindness and compassion of the teachers as I learned. Self-discipline that has guided me for more than 50 years. I knew I was committed to a cause of social activism and service.



## Helynn B. Boughner '11

**Answer 1:** As a working mother pursuing an advanced degree, Mercy's childcare program was a lifeline. I felt fully supported as I built my future. My academic concentration in special disabilities opened dimensions of empathy I didn't know I had. Mercy prepared me for a profession but, more importantly, Mercy prepared me for life.

**Answer 2:** My entire academic and professional journey has been about transformation and can be summed up in this quote by Maya Angelou: "When you learn, teach. When you get, give." I had the privilege and honor of being taught by some amazing professors during my time at Mercy. Education taught me how to break down complex concepts, meet people where they are and empower them to make confident decisions.

---

---

## Lucinda Cross '14

**Answer 1:** My time at Mercy was defined by transformation. As a single mother impacted by the justice system, I found a community that poured into me through dedicated counselors and resources, such as on-site daycare, that made my success possible. I am the professional I am today because Mercy taught me to persevere, lean into community and never let my circumstances define my future.



We asked CNR alumni to share their reflections:

**QUESTION 1:** What moment at CNR most defined your college experience or shaped your career path?

**QUESTION 2:** What does it mean to you to see Mercy carry forward the CNR alumni community and its legacy?



Pat Lamb Isgro SAS '73

**Answer 1:** I was an English major and took repeated courses with some extraordinary teachers – Drs. Betty Brophy, Katherine Henderson, Jack Denne and Joan Carson among them. They instilled in me a love of language that informed my lengthy career as a business-to-business writer. And if it weren't for Dr. Brophy taking busloads of us into New York to see marvelous classic dramas, my lifelong love of theater would hardly be as rich.

**Answer 2:** The moment I set foot on the Mercy campus for our 50th reunion, I felt welcomed and at home. I am so grateful that we have this “home away from home” where we can celebrate our friendships and memories.

Kathleen Reilly SN '87

**Answer 1:** I was out of college for 10 years before enrolling in the Graduate Program in Nursing at CNR. Not totally convinced that I could be a “graduate student,” a faculty member in the School of Nursing (SON) spent time with me to discuss my concerns, encourage me and give me the confidence to pursue a master's degree in nursing. I graduated with the first class of the Graduate School of Nursing at CNR in 1987, a very proud moment in my life. I could not have done it without the early encouragement of that faculty member. I continued my nursing career in the Emergency Department before becoming an adjunct professor in the SON at CNR and later a full-time assistant professor.

**Answer 2:** CNR was a very special place. There is no question that the legacy of CNR should continue. Many faculty and former students remain in touch and are deeply grateful for the exceptional education we received at CNR. Education, friendship, mentoring, collegiality, professionalism, work ethic and commitment to chosen careers were just a few of the wonderful “gifts” we received from our time at CNR. CNR will always remain in my heart.





## Nakiim Bey SNR '94

**Answer 1:** My time at the Rosa Parks Campus on 125th Street, shaped by the strength and leadership of women, instilled in me a disciplined sense of purpose and a lifelong respect for service-centered leadership. Through my studies in sociology and the mentorship of Principal Sharrie Pratt, the late Ms. Williams in Financial Aid, Judge Rountree, international attorney Roy Smith and Ms. Joyce James of the ELI (Experiential Learning & Identity) program, I came to value how strong institutional relationships cultivate leaders prepared to serve, guide and create lasting impact.

**Answer 2:** It reflects a commitment not only to preserving a legacy of access, dignity and opportunity, but also to stewarding it with vision and responsibility for future generations. Mercy's continued investment in young scholars through academic excellence and community leadership ensures that this legacy remains a living force, shaped by engaged alumni who contribute to its growth, relevance and enduring impact, as reflected in my participation in recent Black History Month programming.



## Debra Hedrick Brown SAS '02

**Answer 1:** Growing up, I was such a quiet child that teachers wrote on my report cards that I would have higher grades if I talked more in class. It's hard to narrow my CNR experience down to a few sentences. I look at my green campus ministry shirt, which still hangs in my closet, and feel grateful for the leadership opportunities I had there. Now, as a mom of two special-needs girls, I know how to handle myself in a way that ensures my voice matters and is heard. I am no longer that quiet, shy girl. I am a strong warrior who has CNR to thank.

**Answer 2:** Seeing Mercy carry forward the CNR legacy means so much to me. It means that a quiet, shy girl may find her voice, and I get to be part of that through my donations and service on the Legacy Council. Mercy alumni share many of the same feelings and experiences we had at CNR. Mercy may not be the castle, but it has become home.

## Liliana Santizo SNR '12, GS '15

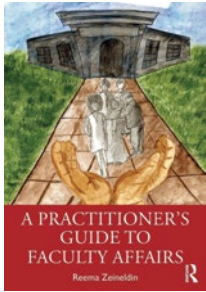
**Answer 1:** One of the things I remember most about CNR was seeing the words "Wisdom for Life" across campus. It was a constant reminder that our education was not just about earning a degree, but about shaping how we would live, serve and grow. As a student balancing work, studies and community responsibilities alongside so many others doing the same, I learned that perseverance and purpose often grow through shared journeys.

**Answer 2:** Seeing Mercy carry forward the CNR legacy gives me hope because it continues the spirit of community, social responsibility and opportunity that defined our experience. When I spoke with first-year seminar students during the fall 2025 semester, many reflected on perseverance, purpose and the importance of supportive environments – values that have always been at the heart of CNR and are clearly still shaping the next generation.



# Mercy University Faculty Publications

JULY 2025–MAY 2026



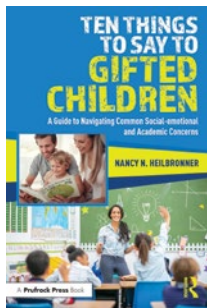
## School of Business

**Maria Cruzet** and Reema Zeineldin (2025) “Budget and Resources for Faculty Affairs.” “A Practitioner’s Guide to Faculty Affairs.” pp. 224–231. Routledge.



## School of Health and Natural Sciences

Farah Kader, **Charis Davidson** and **Marc Campo** (2026) “From National Policy to Local Practice: A County Health Department’s Experience With Race and Ethnicity Data Collection Using Revised Federal Standards.” “Journal of Public Health Management & Practice.” 32(1): pp. 96–102.



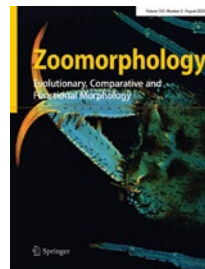
## School of Education

**Nancy Heilbrunner** (2025) “Ten Things to Say to Gifted Children: A Guide to Navigating Common Social-emotional and Academic Concerns.” Routledge.

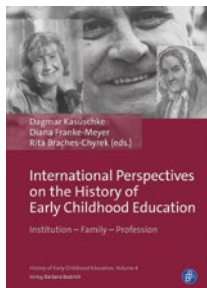


**Ruth Hansen**, Danielle Struble-Fitzsimmons and **Kathy Ryans** (2025) “Physical Therapist Student and Clinical Instructor Perceptions of the Clinical Performance Instrument 3.0 (CPI 3.0): An Exploratory Descriptive Study,” “Journal of Clinical Education in Physical Therapy” p. 7.

**Meghan Marrero**, **Kristen Napolitano** and **Amanda Gunning** (2025) “‘All These Kids Need Is Some Love’: Administrator and Teacher Perspectives on Teacher Persistence in High-Need Schools and Fostering a Culture of Caring.”



**Alexander Root** (2025) “Comparative Anatomical Complexity of 5 Vertebrates and 6 Invertebrates.” “Zoomorphology” Evolutionary, Comparative and Functional Morphology” pp. 144(54).



**Roseanne Vallice Levy** and **Helge Wasmuth** (2025) “Developmentally Appropriate Practice and Its Impact on the Field of Early Childhood Education and Care in the United States.” “International Perspectives on the History of Early Childhood Education: Institution – Family – Profession.” pp. 109–124.



Amiya Waldman-Levi, **Jeanine Stancanelli** and Benay Rubin (2025) “Promoting Aging in Place Through a Wellness Program: Comparing In-Person and Online Delivery.” “Physical & Occupational Therapy in Geriatrics.” pp. 1–17.



## Libraries

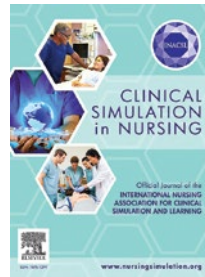
**Haley Collazo** (2025) “Digital Social Reading: Sharing Fiction in the Twenty-First Century.” “Choice.” 62(10): p. 902.

## School of Liberal Arts

**Saul Fisher** and Reema Zeineldin (2025) “Overseeing the Affairs of Part-Time Faculty.” “A Practitioner’s Guide to Faculty Affairs.” pp. 243–249. Routledge.

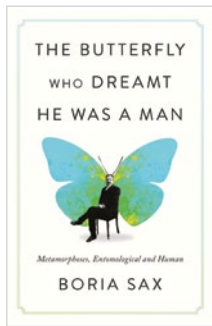


**Alan Hartman** (2025) “The Camino de Santiago as a Contemporary Source of Empowerment in Literature and Experiential Testimony.” “Viagens por Muitas Terras: Uma Abordagem Multidisciplinar ao Turismo e Aos Tempos Livres.” 199–214. CHAM Açores, University of the Azores, Centro de Humanidades.



**School of Nursing**

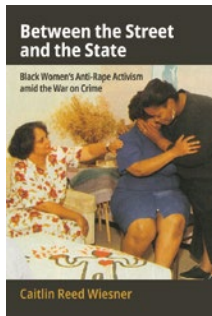
Julie Jacobson Vann, Jamie Conklin and **Adrienne Wald** (2025) “Strategies to Improve Sustainability of Nursing School Simulation Laboratories: A Scoping Review.” “Clinical Simulation in Nursing.” 109: 101853.



**Boria Sax** (2025) “The Butterfly Who Dreamt He Was a Man.” University of Chicago Press.



Sonia Lander, **Regina Cardaci**, Sepideh Mehri and Jessica Deeb (2025) “A Three-Intervention Evidence-Based Bundle to Reduce Chorioamnionitis Among Patients With Prelabor Rupture of Membranes.” “MCN: The American Journal of Maternal/Child Nursing.” 51(1): pp. 13–19.

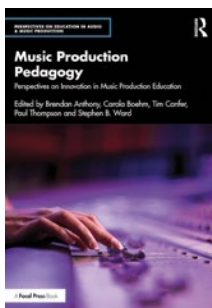


**Caitlin Wiesner** (2025) “Between the Street and the State: Black Women’s Anti-Rape Activism Amid the War on Crime.” University of Pennsylvania Press.

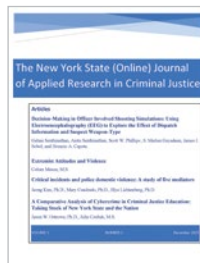


**School of Social and Behavioral Sciences**

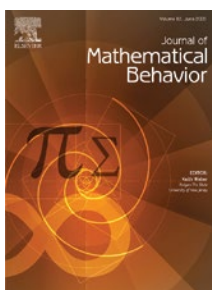
**Jack Simons**, Irena Smetáčková, Yana Kuchirko, Patricio Mujica-Urzúa, **Keith Okrosy**, Christopher Belser and Ondřej Hrabec (2025) “STEM Lives: The Experiences of Sexual and Gender Minority Teachers in the United States.” “Humanities and Social Sciences Communications.” 12(1).



Brendan Anthony, Carola Boehm, Tim Canfer, Paul Thompson and **Stephen B. Ward** (Eds.) (2025) “Music Production Pedagogy: Perspectives on Innovation in Music Production Education.” Focal Press.



**Jeong Kim**, **Mary Cuadrado** and **Illya Lichtenberg** (2025) “Critical Incidents and Police Domestic Violence: A Study of Five Mediators.” “The New York State Journal of Applied Research in Criminal Justice.” 1(2): pp. 52–96.



Rachel Rupnow, **Rosaura Uscanga**, Anna Marie Bergman and Cassandra Mohr (2024) “Snapshots of Sameness: Characterizations of Mathematical Sameness Across Student Groups.” “Journal of Mathematical Behavior” 76: 101193.

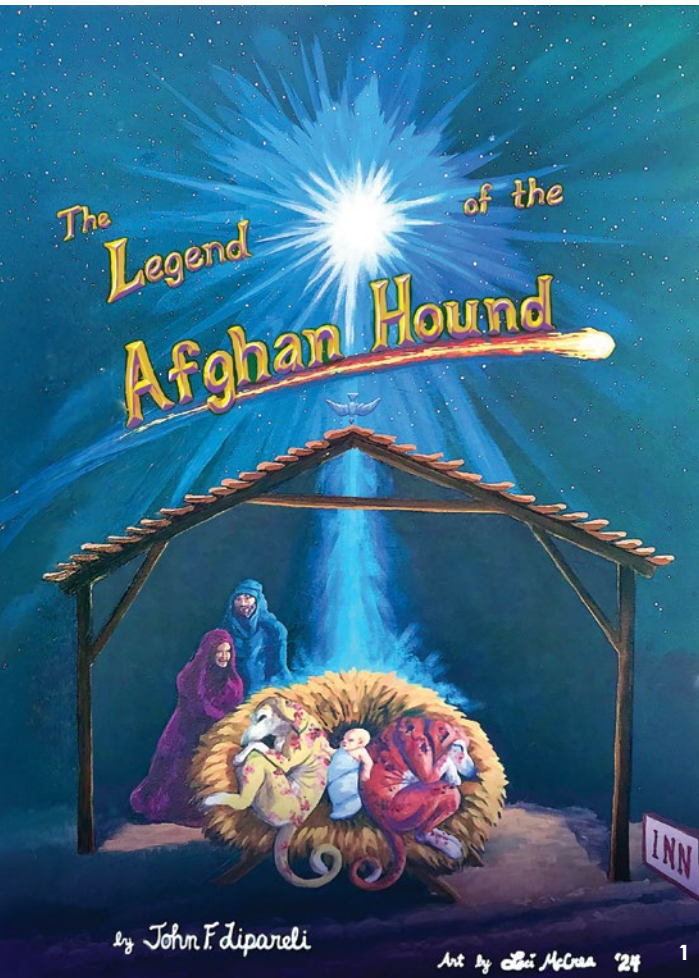


Olga Smoliak, Eleftheria Tseliou, Tom Strong, **Saliha Bava** and Peter Muntigl (Eds.) (2025) “The Routledge International Handbook of Postmodern Therapies.” Routledge.

# Mercy Class Notes

Our Mavericks marking milestones.

AS OF APRIL 2026



## 1970s

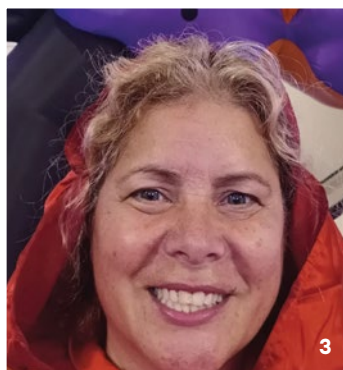
**John F. Lipareli '74** just released his first book, "The Legend of the Afghan Hound," a sweeping saga that begins in ancient Egypt in a time of anxiety and war and ends in Bethlehem with hope and love. Though new to published writing, he is also a songwriter with several copyrighted works. [1]

## 1990s

**Karen McGee '99** having been a successful teacher and union leader for 30 years, became the first female president of the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT). She proudly represented more than 650,000 professionals by working toward legislation to improve teacher evaluation and student learning statewide. And she used her position and voice to raise monies and engage members in causes that directly impact their quality of life and those of their students. She left behind another first for NYSUT, which is the Women's Committee. She established this committee to bring together its members to discuss issues such as financial security, domestic violence, bias in the media toward women and breast cancer advocacy screenings, all while educating and empowering women with the tools necessary to enhance and protect their social, emotional and academic lives. This committee has grown exponentially since her retirement and is a great source of pride for Karen! [2]

## 2000s

**Mary Ann Penzero '03, '09** spent 25 years teaching at Greenburgh Eleven serving The Children's Village. She now teaches Theatre and Music through the Yonkers Parks and Recreation Department. She was awarded a New York State Council on the Arts Support for Artists Grant for fiscal year 2023 to direct an off-off-Broadway play entitled "Twisted." This past fall, she performed as a singer in the choir for Jeanine Tesori's opera "Blue," presented at David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center. Mary Ann holds a master's in Elementary Education from Mercy University (Class of 2003) and a Certificate of Professional Studies in School Building Leadership from Mercy University (Class of 2009). [3]



## 2010s

**Rosemarie Saunders '11** has spent 17 years working in Title I and special education settings, holding roles as a teacher, instructional coach, dean, director of education, professional development provider and learning specialist, with a consistent focus on equity, inclusion and academic excellence. Currently a 5th Grade ICT teacher at Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem, she is also a Ph.D. candidate whose research centers on the narratives of teachers and parents of K-5 students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Her research examines children's developmental readiness to participate in their own IEP meetings, with the goal of amplifying voices that are often unheard in educational decision-making. She believes that honoring these stories can reshape what true inclusion means, moving toward a model where every child not only receives support but also has agency in their own educational journey. [4]

**Angela Cherry '17** has worked as a school counselor in the Bronx with the NYC Department of Education for the last 10 years and also as a psychotherapist at Viva Wellness for the last 4 years. [5]

## 2020s

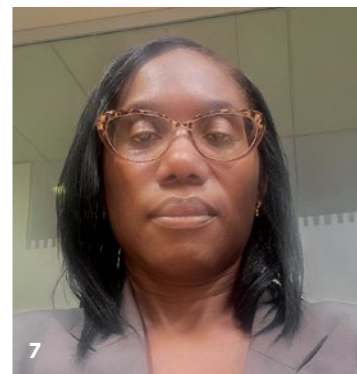
**Keesha Smalls '20** is the unit supervisor in the Birth Registration Unit at Vital Statistics in the NYC Department of Mental Health and Hygiene. She founded Justice Blooms Vegetable Farm and Community Garden and Agape Le Root at Breukelen Houses in Canarsie, Brooklyn. The name "Justice" honors her father, grandfather and daughter, and is a response to food insecurity, injustice and climate change. The project was sparked by the near-tripling of local vegetable prices post-pandemic, the decline of migratory pollinators and birds that historically stopped at Breukelen Houses and the 2024 election. Now celebrating its first anniversary, the garden has distributed peppers, lettuce and tomatoes to residents. Funding and resources have come from Citizens NYC, NYC Climate Exchange, Black Farmers Fund, Councilman Chris Banks, the Green Guerillas, the Mayor's Office of Environmental Remediation, the Lower East Side Ecology Center, Compost Power and the Brotherhood Sister Sol. The garden has successfully attracted bumblebees, butterflies, dragonflies, woodpeckers, warblers, herons and a hummingbird, and resident volunteering is on the rise! [6]

**Shellon (George) Dos Santos '21** just started working as an investigator with the Civilian Unit of the New York City Police Department in April. She's also enrolled in Mercy's Master of Public Health Management Program. [7]

---

**Mercy Class Notes is a way to stay connected.** We would love to share your recent news, life events and accomplishments. Tell us about them, and we will include it in the next issue. Email: [alumni@mercy.edu](mailto:alumni@mercy.edu).

**Please Note:** Our alumni website is undergoing a redesign. During this process, previous links may no longer work. For the most up-to-date information, please visit us at our new URL: [mercy.edu/alumni](https://mercy.edu/alumni).



# CNR Class Notes

Our alumni achievements.

AS OF MARCH 2026



## 1960s

**Anne Tierney Thureson SAS '60** is living happily in Seattle with her husband of 62 years, Glenn. They have three grandsons and four great-grandsons. She volunteers baking healthy bread for her local food bank.

**Janet (Jan) Fappiano Brady SAS '61** and her husband, Bob, will celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary this July, having married five weeks after graduating from CNR. They have four children, 11 grandchildren and are expecting their first great-grandchild this summer. She remains active in volunteer work, including Catholic resident programs, writing for the community newsletter, serving as secretary of the resident associate council and volunteering at a local food bank.

**Joann Fogarty Crinieri SAS '61** lived in West Virginia for more than 45 years before moving to Albany, N.Y. She now lives at Avila Retirement Community with several other CNR graduates who enjoy getting together regularly. Joann is active in the book club, serves as a lector at Mass and takes advantage of the many trips Avila offers.

**Mary Kelly, Esq., SAS '65** was honored by the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York (WBASNY) at their annual convention held on May 29, 2026. She received the organization's highest award, the Joan L. Ellenbogen's Founder's Award.

**Barbara Sisk Troxell SAS '69** and her husband, Jeff, recently sold their home in New Hampshire after 46 years. For the past decade, they have spent their winters in Arizona and have now purchased a summer home in Park City, Utah. They are enjoying being closer to family, as their daughter and her family live nearby in Salt Lake City, and their son and his family are just a few hours away in Glenwood Springs, Colo.

## 1970s

**Adrienne De Francesco Falzon SAS '70** is the author of six published books. Currently, she serves on several boards, both in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif., and Southampton, N.Y. Her granddaughter, Olivia Giaccio, is a two-time Olympian in mogul skiing.

**Margaret (Peggy) O'Neill Midgley SAS '70** retired on Sept. 30, 2025, after five years as a public reference librarian, concluding a 40-year career as the adult services and programming librarian at Penfield Public Library in Rochester, N.Y. In her retirement, she continues to work part time at the library and serves her community by visiting homebound parishioners and leading communion services at assisted living facilities for her local parish.

**Susan Blanchette Oleson SAS '73** published a book titled "Life Stories: The Book of Obituaries."



## 1980s

**Kimberly Farnsworth SAS '83** retired this year, after a career that began in July 1983. She spent those years working with individuals facing physical, mental and emotional challenges, helping them develop greater independence. She and her partner celebrated 19 years together this year, following a commitment ceremony in 2006.

**Dr. Susan Matt, Esq., SN '83** retired after 10 years as assistant dean in the Seattle University School of Nursing to care for her husband before his passing in December 2023. She now lives in Issaquah, Wash., where she serves on local boards, teaches emergency readiness and acts as a court visitor in guardianship cases. [2]

**Katie Gohde Haase SAS '84** wants to let classmates know that every summer for the past 10 years, a dedicated group of CNR's class of 1984 gather at her home in Connecticut for a casual reunion party. Attendees have included Liz Hopkins Horgan, Carolyn Beaulieu Dunn, Betsy Lofink Harrington, Diane Polchlopek Sarna, Fran Bendernagel Caliendo, Michele Cuomo, Eileen Martin Aiello, Maria Prainito Pedersen, Janet Sheridan Horvath, Nancy Walsh McCormack and Sharon Snyder Arnold. [1]

**Debbie Noble-Hughes McNeil SNR '85** recently retired as supervisory program analyst after 42 years with Federal Government Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) Southeast. [3]

**Kathleen Reilly SN '87** transitioned from a full-time adjunct faculty role at Mercy University in September 2025 and now teaches an online nursing course, Intro to Health Policy. She also teaches ESL in person two mornings a week for Neighbors Link in Ossining, N.Y., and leads an online citizenship class for adult learners. Expanding her volunteer work, she recently began helping with the Adaptive Riding Program at Access Equestrian, working with both the horses and student riders. While not fully retired, she enjoys staying active in roles that allow her to teach, volunteer and give back to the community in meaningful ways.



# CNR Class Notes

CONTINUED



## 1990s

**Danny House GS '90** retired from the Yonkers School District after serving in numerous leadership roles, including middle and high school assistant principal and principal and director of the Summer School Program. He also served as vice president of the Yonkers Federation of Administrators and liaison for the New York State Coalition of School Administrators.

**Lauren McGovern SAS '91** lives near Lake Placid, N.Y., and is transitioning from a career in school counseling and teaching to part-time work at a local library. She writes creative nonfiction and personal essays and creates digital artwork. More information about her published work can be found at [laurenmcgovern.online](http://laurenmcgovern.online).

**Rev. Dennis Doris SNR '93** retired in 2023 after 30 years of public service to vulnerable children and families of NYC, working at the Administration of Children's Services.

**Anne Collins Alliegro DNP, SN '97** has worked as a nurse practitioner in Primary Care for Hackensack Meridian Health for the past 15 years and serves as an adjunct nursing professor at the Harold B. & Dorothy A. Snyder School of Nursing. In 2024, she earned her Doctor of Nursing Practice from Quinnipiac University.

**Stacy Scheiterle Patel SN '99** has worked at Westchester Medical Center (WMC) for 26 years. For the last seven years, she's been working on the STAT critical care transport team at WMC. In December 2025, Patel graduated with an MSN from Mount Saint Mary College, Family Nurse Practitioner degree, and as of December she is officially board certified FNP-BC. [4]

**Dr. Vanda Seward SNR '99** recently published her memoir, "That Wasn't Supposed to Be My Story: A Memoir of Resilience and Courage." [5]



### **CNR Class Notes is a way to stay connected.**

We would love to share your recent news, life events and accomplishments. Tell us about them, and we will include them in the next issue. Email: [cnralumni@mercy.edu](mailto:cnralumni@mercy.edu) with your class note.

# 2000s

**Geraldine Ann Wuestman-Clark GS '01** retired from teaching on July 1, 2022, after 35 years of service. On July 1, 2025, she was elected as a South Huntington Union Free School District Board of Education trustee.

**Lisa DeGraffe Williams DNP, SN '02** became a doctoral-prepared nurse practitioner in June 2024. She earned her MSN from Pace University in December 2006 and has worked as a nurse practitioner in vascular surgery at Montefiore Medical Center for nearly 12 years.

**Ashley Napoli GS '09** has transitioned from traditional classroom teaching to coaching women on creating lives they love. Through mentorship, yoga, retreats and Human Design programs, she helps individuals gain clarity, overcome fear and align their lives and work with who they truly are so they can create something meaningful and lasting. [6]

**Oluwakemi Animashaun-Oderinde GS '10**, from Nigeria, is involved in human resource management and development and serves as a counselor, voice-over artist and Children's Bible Club teacher in her community. She is a proud mother of two wonderful, intelligent children.

**Venerada Pagan SNR '10** serves as a program director and social work supervisor, supporting programs that serve older adults and vulnerable populations. She is also completing her Master of Social Work (MSW) at Capella University, a major milestone in her professional journey.

**Diane Sette DNP, SN '14** has had a successful career in primary care, Advanced Nurse Practitioner Education and specialty practice. In 2018 she graduated from MGH Institute of Health Care Professionals with her Doctor of Nursing Practice. She currently lives on Cape Cod and works in a community health center as a primary care provider. She is thankful for the excellent education she received at the College of New Rochelle. [7]

**Dr. Latrice Nicole Jenkins SNR '15** recently earned her Doctorate in Social Work from Simmons University in Boston. Her work focuses on supporting communities and advancing social justice through social work practice and advocacy. In addition to her professional work, she is also the owner of a mobile notary business, We Notarize 4 You, where she provides notary services, including loan signings and wedding officiant services, throughout the New York region.

**Liliana Santizo SNR '12, GS '15** is celebrating another year of building and evolving her work through Florece (florece.life), a space where she explores regenerative leadership, ecosystems and more human-centered approaches to designing work and life. Her work brings together leadership development, organizational strategy and community conversations about what it means to truly flourish.

**Michelle Goyke SAS '16** married Julian Checchi on July 4, 2025, at the Candlewood Inn in Brookfield, Conn. The couple, who met while attending New Rochelle High School, have been together for 15 years. Her maid of honor was her best friend, Katy Fragola (Baudendistel), SAS '16, whom she met while attending the College of New Rochelle (shown on the left of the photo). [8]

**Kevin O. Tracey SNR '19** reflects on his time at the College of New Rochelle as an important chapter that helped shape both his personal growth and professional direction. Today, he works in human services supporting individuals with developmental disabilities, where patience, empathy and advocacy help ensure dignity, respect and meaningful opportunities for those he serves.





# In Memoriam

## Tributes

### Sister Maureen McCarthy, RSM (1936–2026)

Sister Maureen McCarthy, RSM, passed away on Feb. 22, 2026, at age 90, after 73 devoted years to the Sisters of Mercy and a lifelong ministry in teaching, mentoring and accompanying others with wisdom and compassion.

Sister McCarthy began her ministry in elementary education, serving in St. Patrick School, St. Margaret Mary School, St. Francis Xavier School and St. Michael School. She later served at the Child Center in Dobbs Ferry, N.Y., helping children and families with special needs.

For 36 years, Sister McCarthy ministered as a professor in the Education Department at Mercy University. She was central to building and nurturing Mercy's outstanding program in Special Education. Her work was never merely academic; it was rooted in mission. Reflecting during Mercy University's 70th anniversary, she said, "Everything that we did flowed from the College motto, 'Consumed in Service.' Every addition to the program was focused on the betterment of society." Those words capture her spirit. She formed not only teachers but compassionate educators who would recognize the dignity and potential of every child.

### Professor Frederick (Rick) L. Shiels (1949–2026)

Frederick (Rick) L. Shiels, professor emeritus of Political Science and History, passed away earlier this year. Professor Shiels' career of teaching, scholarship and public engagement shaped generations of students over 48 years.

From his arrival at Mercy in 1978, Professor Shiels was an engaged faculty scholar devoted to his students and his studies. He rose to full professor by 1987 and was appointed Professor Emeritus in 2012. He continued to teach part time through the spring of 2026.



His scholarship ranged from Cold War alliances and Pacific Rim politics to collateral damage in the post-9/11 wars, always following the arc of American power around the world. He authored five books and numerous articles, chapters and reviews.

Professor Shiels brought historical depth and contemporary urgency to his diverse fields of specialization – international relations, comparative politics, foreign policy and public administration. He developed signature courses, such as "Nuclear War and Nuclear Politics," "Technology and Change" and "Terrorism," as well as the course "Nonfiction as Great Literature." After completing mediation training, he taught Mediation and Conflict courses for many years and continued to attend trainings, exemplifying principles of dialogue and understanding in conversation and conduct. He was also notable for an early commitment to online and distance education, teaching more than 100 such courses beginning in 1994 and developing Mercy's first American History website.

Beyond the classroom, he served on Mercy's Institutional Review Board, working on union negotiations on behalf of adjunct faculty, and founded the Model United Nations program, which he directed for 25 years.



# In Memoriam

## Alumni & Friends

*In Memoriam List*  
Jan. 1, 2025, through April 10, 2026

### MERCY UNIVERSITY

Dorene Romansoff Cesa '65  
Angela Alvino '67  
Kathryn Melville '67  
Marianne Hollis Holmes '68  
Lucille Coleman Courtney '69  
Mary McLoughlin Krant '69  
Anita Taylor '69  
Cynthia Bowman Pearson '70  
Crucy Trentacoste Riley '70  
Catherine Mahoney Follis '74, CNR GS '82  
Anthony Yannantuono '74  
Rebecca Fierro '75  
Gerald Aponte '78  
Arlene McCann Reden '78  
Donald Mortimer '79  
William Prendergast '79  
Robert White '79  
Marcus Stephens '80

Shirley Canty White '80  
Elizabeth Giampaolo Peyton '82  
Loretta Brown '83  
Charles Chase '84  
Douglas Hearle '84  
Maryanne Brancazio '85  
James Shedlin '85  
Richard Williamson '85  
Elizabeth Hoffman '87  
Delroy Bembridge '88  
Rosemary Heston M.S. '88  
Kathleen Creegan '90  
Kim Laurich '92  
Terry Leeds '92  
Walter Blake '98, M.S. '98  
Sandra Marrero '98  
James Parent M.S. '98  
Cecelia Polite '00  
Christine Walker M.S. '01

Richard Cozza M.B.A. '02  
Henrietta Woodroffe M.S. '02  
Ernie Campbell '04  
Debra Marinucci M.S. '05  
Patsy Quashie M.S. '06  
David Wasserman M.S. '08  
Charlie Thompson '12  
Nydia Zingone '12  
Christopher Sgroi '13  
Gregory Williams M.B.A. '14, H.D. '17, *Past Trustee*  
Sonia Bernard, *Alum*  
Giuseppe Yannuzzi, *Alum*  
Stephen Anbinder, *Past Trustee*  
Monica Getz, *Friend*  
Jamie Harrington, *Friend*  
The Honorable Nita Lowey, *Friend*  
Raymond Manganelli, *Faculty*  
Sr. Elizabeth Pogue, *Faculty Emeriti*  
Frederick Shiels, *Faculty Emeriti*





# In Memoriam

## Alumni & Friends

### COLLEGE OF NEW ROCHELLE

Nancy Duffy Kirkpatrick SAS '43  
 Mary Cushwa Houle SAS '45  
 Marion Reardon O'Brien SAS '45  
 Sr. Joan McCarthy SAS '47  
 Irene Murphy Gilles SAS '48  
 Marie Linehan Chiappetta SAS '49  
 Yvonne Lokensgard Percival SAS '49  
 Joan Cushwa Baer SAS '50  
 Joan Molanphy Bassett SAS '50  
 Helen Weber Buzaid SAS '50  
 Georgia Smith Keefe SAS '50  
 Joan Swallow Regan SAS '50  
 Marianne Palme Rutan SAS '50  
 Marcella Pfeiffer Syracuse SAS '50  
 Louise Ablondi Bonar SAS '51  
 Gloria Angello Gallagher SAS '51  
 Ann Carroll Robertson SAS '51  
 Sally Soultz Brennan SAS '52  
 Mary Ellen Roche Fagan SAS '52  
 Margaret Alberti Lynch SAS '52  
 Dolores Duffy Martin SAS '52  
 Mary Lee Jones Waldron SAS '52  
 Hilda Castellon SAS '52  
 Sr. Teresa Byrne SAS '52  
 Mary Ballengee Collins SAS '53  
 Mary Pat Whalen Devane SAS '53  
 Barbara Neuman Volk SAS '53  
 Terry O'Malley Seidler SAS '54  
 Sr. Carole Marie Keaney SAS '54  
 Janine Vier Grogan SAS '55  
 Florence Saunders Langan SAS '55  
 Anne Rippon Ryan SAS '55  
 Ruth Daley Sharkey SAS '55  
 Margaret Toohy Sweeney SAS '55  
 Marianne Slys Welna SAS '55  
 Dorothy Gannon SAS '55  
 Patricia Murray Blessington SAS '56  
 Marie Vitaliti Grillo SAS '56  
 Catherine Mahony Howett SAS '56  
 Dorothy Elling Meehan-Ripa SAS '56  
 Patricia Devanny Ronan SAS '56  
 Winifred Bernard Russell SAS '56  
 Flavia Kinney Sullivan SAS '56

Faith Rieg Victory SAS '56  
 Mary Louise Foradora Webber SAS '56  
 Elizabeth Robbins Ouchterloney SAS '57  
 Mary Elizabeth Rice SAS '57  
 Margaret Horrigan Connolly SAS '58  
 Betsy Herb Meyer SAS '58  
 Beatrice Fisher Voutsinas SAS '58  
 Janice Lindstrom SAS '58  
 Marianne Trijonis Burke SAS '59  
 Jane Alberghini Morse SAS '60  
 Maura Nestor Bullock SAS '61  
 Jean Gallagher Chen SAS '61  
 Mary Kay Herschede Collins SAS '61  
 Marianne Derwin SAS '61  
 Mary Gallagher Carver SAS '62  
 Bonita King Durell SAS '62  
 Arlene Whited Kalinowski SAS '62  
 Marybeth Markham Sullivan SAS '62  
 Sr. Ann Marie Owen SAS '62  
 Joan Rost Figlozzi SAS '63  
 Noreen Deane Moran SAS '63  
 Marita Rinaldi Bashor SAS '64  
 Susan Lavery Batch-Wolf SAS '64  
 Jeanne Calamari Coburn SAS '64  
 Maureen Kavanagh SAS '64  
 Angela Camporeale Schirizzo SAS '65  
 Patricia Shannon Shannon SAS '65  
 Barbara Kiley SAS '65  
 Sr. Jill Jaeb SAS '66  
 Ellen Perreault Smith SAS '67  
 Michele Mucci-Deming SAS '67  
 Juleen Piderit Flanigan SAS '68  
 Elizabeth Sayre Oldendorp SAS '68  
 Rose Anne Fogarty SAS '68  
 Irene Glasheen Benedetto SAS '69  
 Susan Regan Maloney SAS '69  
 Pauline Boulanger Meyer SAS '69  
 Marie Turley SAS '71  
 Patricia Lamy Donini SAS '74  
 Jean Maine GS '75  
 Theresa Dori Rucker SNR '75, GS '81  
 Elizabeth Reynolds Ruggiero SAS '75  
 Wanda Finley Castner GS '76  
 Eileen Nelson GS '76  
 Margaret Concannon GS '77

Barbara Crowe SNR '77  
 Joanne Fitzpatrick GS '78  
 Corrine Ganues SNR '78  
 Gail Simon GS '78  
 Julianne Isaacson Martensen SNR '79  
 Denise Radigan D'Andrea GS '80  
 Charlene Graves GS '81  
 Cheryl Noonan GS '81  
 Catherine Mahoney Follis '74, CNR GS '82  
 Carol Gonzalez SNR '82  
 Joan Lavelle Doyle GS '83  
 Deborah Kaczmarczyk Cronin SAS '85  
 Wilhelmina Varner SNR '85  
 Camille Hopkins GS '86  
 Edward Paulsen GS '87  
 JoAnn Belgiovene GS '89  
 Col. Charles Lercara SNR '91  
 Kathryn O'Malley GS '91  
 Deserie Jones Harper SNR '92, GS '94  
 Susan Clark Amlicke SN '93  
 Susan Gatson SNR '93  
 Ilene Wolf GS '93  
 Martha Freeman SNR '94  
 Evelyn Watson SNR '95  
 Daniella Viscogliosi SN '96  
 Evet White SN '96  
 Frances Plewak GS '97  
 Judith Ratner GS '99  
 Diana Pace Simulcik GS '99  
 Elizabeth Egan SAS '00  
 Michelle Rouse SNR '02  
 Laurine Davis SNR '05, GS '12  
 Lewis Crawford SNR '06, GS '09  
 Ruth Santiago SAS '06  
 Warren Young GS '06  
 Michael Ambler, *Friend*  
 Joan Boccardi, *Friend*  
 Joseph Chisholm, *Friend*  
 The Honorable Nita Lowey, *Friend*  
 Mary Naughton, *Friend*  
 Gerard Neumann, *Friend*  
 Arlene Reden, *Friend*  
 Dr. Dennis Ryan, *Friend*  
 Geri Shapiro, *Friend*



# Making a Planned Gift to Support Mercy University

There are multiple ways to secure the future of the university and keep higher education accessible to all those who seek it.

Planned gifts or estate gifts will have a profound impact on students and their futures.

**Ready to make a  
lasting impact?  
We're here to help.**

For more information about including Mercy University in your estate plans, contact the Office of Institutional Advancement at [advancement@mercy.edu](mailto:advancement@mercy.edu).

## Answers to Questions About Planned or Legacy Gifts to Mercy University

### WHY ARE LEGACY GIFTS IMPORTANT TO MERCY UNIVERSITY?

A legacy gift is a lasting investment in Mercy University. It is a way to secure the future of the university and keep higher education accessible to all those who seek it.

### WHAT TYPES OF LEGACY GIFTS ARE AVAILABLE?

A bequest or gift in your will or living trust is one of the most meaningful ways to provide for our students' futures. You gift a percentage of your estate or a stated dollar amount to Mercy University.

### WHAT IS THE RONNENBERG LEGACY SOCIETY?

The Ronnenberg Legacy Society, named after founders Mary Ellen and Francis Ronnenberg, recognizes and honors an extraordinary group of alumni and friends who have made a future legacy gift to Mercy University. Members receive a special legacy pin and are honored at select University events.

### WHAT'S THE FINANCIAL BENEFIT OF MAKING A LEGACY GIFT?

A gift to Mercy University in your will or trust allows you to retain your assets during your lifetime. In addition, your family may benefit from estate tax savings.

### ARE THERE OTHER WAYS I CAN INCLUDE MERCY UNIVERSITY IN MY ESTATE PLANS?

Yes. You can name Mercy University as a beneficiary of your retirement plan, individual retirement account (IRA), bank or brokerage account, donor-advised fund (DAF) or life insurance policy. This is an easy way to support our educational mission without changing your will or living trust.

### WHAT INFORMATION WILL I NEED TO SHARE WITH MY ADVISORS TO MAKE A LEGACY GIFT?

You will need to share our legal name, address and tax ID# as follows:

- **LEGAL NAME:** Mercy University
- **ADDRESS:** 555 Broadway, Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522
- **TAX ID#:** 13-1967321

### HOW CAN I CREATE A WILL ONLINE?

Mercy University has partnered with FreeWill, a free online estate planning tool that makes it easy to create your will. **Scan the QR code to get started.**



### CAN I MAKE A GIFT DIRECTLY FROM MY IRA?

Yes. If you're 70½ or older, you can donate funds directly from your IRA. These IRA gifts, also known as Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs), may be excluded from your taxable income, and beginning at age 73, they can qualify towards your required minimum distribution (RMD).

*\*This is not professional tax or legal advice;  
consult a qualified tax advisor or attorney about your specific needs.*

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit #2223  
White Plains, NY



**ANNUAL**  
**Founders'**  
**Festival**

---

Save The Date & Join Us!  
**Saturday, September 19, 2026**  
**1-5 p.m.**

---

Mercy University's Westchester Campus  
555 Broadway | Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522