

SPRING 2026

SLU'S NEW PRESIDENT  
**Dr. Edward Feser**

# UNIVERSITAS

THE ALUMNI MAGAZINE OF SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

8

**Higher Ed**

A conversation with SLU's new president, Dr. Edward Feser  
— *by* Laura Geiser

16

**Moving Forward Together**

SLU's inaugural events gathered the community and looked to the future.  
— *by* Joe Barker

2

ON CAMPUS

- Men's soccer A-10 champs
- Midyear commencement
- Shaughnessy House
- Clay Institute
- Fundraising numbers
- Teacher education initiative

30

CLASS NOTES

- 33 **How I Got Here:**  
Beth (Hittler) O'Leary (DCHS'01)  
— *by* Amy Garland
- 35 **Alumni Spotlight:**  
Amy Hopfinger (A&S'03)  
— *by* Anne Marie Apollo-Noel

20

**A World of Hope**

The inaugural address of Dr. Edward Feser

24

**After the Storm**

After the May 2025 tornado, SLU worked to support the St. Louis community.  
— *by* Amy Garland

36

IN MEMORIAM

41

THE LAST LOOK

The Saint Louis University campus was lit in blue for Christmas on the Quad on Dec. 6. The annual event welcomes alumni, students, faculty and staff to campus for a variety of holiday activities, including the lighting of SLU's Christmas tree near Pius XII Memorial Library.

PHOTO BY SARAH CONROY

# UNIVERSITAS

VOLUME 52, ISSUE 1

EDITOR

Laura Geiser  
(A&S '90, Grad '92)

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Amy Garland (A&S '97)

ART DIRECTOR

Matt Krob

ON CAMPUS NEWS  
STORIES

University Public Relations  
Billiken Media Relations

ON THE COVER

SLU President

Dr. Edward Feser

Photo by Sarah Conroy

*Universitas* is published by  
Saint Louis University.

Opinions expressed in  
*Universitas* are those of the  
individual authors and not  
necessarily those of the  
University administration.

Letters to the editor must  
be signed, and letters not  
intended for publication  
should indicate that fact.

The editor reserves the  
right to edit all items.

Address:

*Universitas*  
DuBourg Hall 39  
1 N. Grand Blvd.  
St. Louis, MO 63103

Email address:

universitas@slu.edu

Website: [slu.edu/universitas](http://slu.edu/universitas)

*Universitas* is printed by

Progress Printing Plus

Worldwide circulation:

103,000

©2026, Saint Louis University

All rights reserved.

Reproduction in whole

or in part without

permission is prohibited.

## Message from the Chair of the Board of Trustees

**D**uring the inauguration of Saint Louis University's 34th president in November, I had the distinct honor of formally granting the authority to lead the institution to Dr. Edward Feser.

The "investiture" moment was more than a year in the making, and I was privileged to be part of the entire process.

In early 2024, I joined fellow trustees as well as representatives from the Society of Jesus and SLU's faculty, staff and students on the presidential search committee.

We wanted a bold, strategic, mission-driven leader — someone with the vision and skill to build on the institution's history, accomplishments and strengths, and lead Saint Louis University to greater stature and impact.

That is exactly what we have in Dr. Feser.

Throughout his career, he has put into action his steadfast belief in the power of education to transform lives and contribute to flourishing communities.

If you review his résumé, you see that Dr. Feser comes to us uniquely positioned to take the University to the next level. As a product of both Catholic and Jesuit education, he personally values our shared mission. As a scholar of city and regional planning, he recognizes the importance of institutional partnership and community focus. And as a faculty member and administrator, he understands the challenges and opportunities facing higher education today.



FILE PHOTO

If you were fortunate enough to hear his inaugural address, you will know that Dr. Feser prioritizes student success above all else. He is deeply committed to providing an environment in which all students can thrive: Where teaching and cutting-edge research integrate, where technology helps connect people and solve the most pressing challenges we face, and where success on campus results in the success of the whole community. (If you didn't get to hear his inaugural address, you can read it on page 20.)

In short, Dr. Feser is the perfect choice to lead this mission-focused, student-centered, research-driven University.

This issue of *Universitas* offers several opportunities for you to get to know Dr. Feser, including coverage of his inauguration and an exclusive Q&A in which he reflects on his first months here as well as the future of higher education and SLU's place in it.

I thank you for all the ways you contribute to Saint Louis University.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eric S. Engler".

Eric S. Engler

Chair

Board of Trustees



### Men's Soccer Wins A-10, Reaches NCAA College Cup Semifinals

In November, the Billiken men's soccer team captured the Atlantic 10 Conference Men's Soccer Championship over Dayton at Hermann Stadium on SLU's campus. It was the fifth A-10 Championship title for SLU and the first since 2023.

The win secured the Billikens the A-10's automatic bid to the NCAA Division I Men's Soccer Championship. The team defeated Kentucky 2-1 in double overtime in the first round. In the second round, they topped Indiana 1-0, SLU's first win against the Hoosiers in six NCAA Tournament games. Then the Billikens prevailed over Bryant in a penalty-kick shootout following a 2-2 draw in a third-round matchup. A 3-2 victory over Akron in the quarterfinals led the Billikens to their

17th Men's College Cup appearance and the first since 1997, when Billiken head coach Kevin Kalish was a junior defender on the team.

SLU's run in the NCAA Championship ended Dec. 12 with a 2-1 loss against NC State in a semifinal matchup.

It was the Billikens' 52nd appearance in the NCAA Men's Soccer Championship, an NCAA record. It was also the team's fourth bid in the last five years.

The Billikens concluded their season with a 13-3-8 overall record.



Quinten Blair (with ball) celebrating with teammates after scoring the game-winning goal in the 78th minute against Akron in the NCAA quarterfinals.

PHOTO BY  
AUSTYN McFADDEN

## BY THE NUMBERS: Fundraising

BETWEEN JULY 1, 2024, AND JUNE 30, 2025

**4th-largest**  
fundraising year in  
SLU history

**\$84.6 million**  
in gifts and pledges

**\$36.5+ million**  
from bequests or  
bequest intentions

**14,960+**  
gifts to 779 funds

**2,320+**  
donors in SLU's leadership  
giving societies

**6,756**  
donors who gave in two or  
more consecutive years

**726**  
first-time donors

**Nearly  
\$600,000**  
from parents of  
current Billikens

## MAJOR GIFTS BENEFIT STUDENTS

**\$4.6 Million to Science and Engineering, SLU-Madrid:** After a lifetime supporting Saint Louis University, Dr. Frank Magiera (PC '62) made a final gift in the form of a bequest totaling more than \$4.6 million. The largest portion was dedicated to scholarships, initiatives and facilities at the School of Science and Engineering, including collaboration space for students from all majors to work together on industry-related projects.

An independent financial services professional, Magiera was also a professor of finance and an author. He established additional gift funds at SLU over the years, including assisting students during the COVID-19 pandemic and providing scholarships at SLU-Madrid. On his most recent visit to SLU's St. Louis campus in 2024, Magiera received the Alumni Merit Award. He died Sept. 14, 2024.

### Scholarship for Business School Undergrads:

David Jacquin (CSB '84), founder of the independent investment bank North Point Mergers and Acquisitions, and his wife, Heidi, pledged \$5 million to establish the Stephen W. Vasquez Accounting or Finance Scholarship for undergraduates at the Richard A. Chaifetz School of Business.

Jacquin named the scholarship for Vasquez, a former SLU business school dean and chair of the Department of Accounting, who influenced his father, David M. Jacquin Sr. (CSB '61). After Jacquin Jr. practiced law in New York and London and led mergers and acquisitions divisions for several companies, he founded North Point Mergers and Acquisitions in 2004. Representing industry leaders in more than \$100 billion of transaction value, the company counts Starbucks and Jimmy John's among its clients.

## SLU Partners with OSU, Purdue on Geospatial Research Center

**S**aint Louis University, along with The Ohio State University and Purdue University, will establish a new, innovative industry-university cooperative research center. A \$2.25 million grant from the National Science Foundation will fund the launch of CAGE, the Center for Accurate Georeferencing of the Environment. SLU will receive \$500,000 to support its campus operations.

The teams at each university will collaborate to solve concrete problems, with each team approaching the project from its own area of expertise. The SLU team will focus on core geospatial sciences and artificial intelligence with applications in GPS alternatives, precision agriculture and geospatial data analytics driven by industry partners.

The member-based center will work with over a dozen industry partners and government agencies that contribute membership funds to the research and development efforts at the center. Those companies and agencies will come together to form a board, bring their research and development challenges to the center, and fund submitted research proposals from three universities as solutions to their needs.

## On campus



Clara L. Reyes at midyear commencement

**December Grads Celebrated:** At midyear commencement on Dec. 13, more than 600 Saint Louis University students walked across the stage at Chaifetz Arena and left as graduates.

Dr. Edward Feser, who was participating in his first commencement ceremony as SLU’s president, said he hoped the new Billiken alumni would be “ethical and inspiring doers” who help navigate the challenges facing the world today.

“In any community where good things happen, there is a group of people who are committed to working together, thinking creatively, weathering the setbacks and persisting until they achieve their goals,” Feser said. “In other words: The people in this world who make good things happen are an awful lot like all of you.”

He reminded them that even though they are leaving SLU, they continue to be part of the University’s fabric. “You are a Billiken, forever,” he said. “You are part of a proud history, whose legacy will be a better future.”



Walter at SLU’s 2025 midyear commencement

### Public Health Prof Honored with Ring Award

**M**arcea Walter, an assistant professor and director of the Master of Health Administration Program in the College for Public Health and Social Justice, won the 2025 Nancy McNeir Ring Award for Excellence in Teaching.

She was recognized during the 2025 midyear commencement ceremony at Chaifetz Arena in December, during which she gave the commencement address.

Walter joined the SLU community in 2018. In addition to teaching, she helps students secure competitive internships, administrative fellowships and leadership roles across major health systems nationwide.

The Nancy McNeir Ring Award, named for the University’s first dean of women, was established in 1966 by SLU’s chapter of Alpha Sigma Nu, the national Jesuit honor society.

SARAH CONROY



Mercier

Koenig

## NEW TRUSTEES JOIN SLU BOARD

In May 2025, two new members were elected to Saint Louis University’s board of trustees: Ron Mercier, S.J., a former SLU faculty member who served as provincial of the Central and Southern Province of the Society of Jesus from 2014 to 2020, and Joe Koenig (CSB ’87), president of World Wide Technology.



SARAH CONROY

## SLU Commits up to \$1.4 Million for Teacher Education

In October, Saint Louis University's School of Education launched the StayTeachLead Scholarship Program, an initiative designed to strengthen the local teacher pipeline through partnerships with St. Louis area schools.

Through the program, local schools will partner with SLU to nominate promising students to receive half-tuition scholarships worth more than \$28,000 per year. Students who receive this scholarship will spend their fourth year student-teaching in a local school.

Each StayTeachLead partner school or district will nominate two students who aspire to become educators and study at SLU's School of Education. School districts, including traditional public schools, charter public schools and private schools, are invited to join the School of Education StayTeachLead partnership.

## SLU's Mission Priority Examen Affirmed by Jesuit Leadership

In July, Saint Louis University received a positive affirmation of its recent Mission Priority Examen (MPE) process from Arturo Sosa, S.J., superior general of the Society of Jesus, and Thomas P. Greene, S.J., provincial superior of the Jesuits' Central and Southern Province. The MPE is meant to affirm the Jesuit, Catholic mission of Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States and Belize.

SLU's recent MPE — the University's second — began in December 2023. A steering committee invited the campus community to reflect upon areas of strength in embodying SLU's Jesuit, Catholic identity and to discern opportunities to deepen the mission. More than 600 people participated, representing more than 45 campus units. The University undertakes the MPE process every seven years.

## RECORD NUMBER OF BILLIKENS LAND ON A-10 HONOR ROLL

The Atlantic 10 Conference announced in June that 298 Saint Louis University student-athletes earned inclusion on the 2024-25 A-10 Commissioner's Honor Roll — a school record. Billiken student-athletes achieved a cumulative GPA of 3.50 during the 2024-25 academic year. To be listed on the honor roll, a student-athlete in an Atlantic 10-sponsored sport must have at least a 3.0 grade point average for the entire academic year.

## SLU PITCHER SIGNS WITH HOUSTON ASTROS

Saint Louis University pitcher Charlie Weber signed a free-agent deal with the Houston Astros last summer. Weber led the 2025 Billikens with a 2.89 ERA and a 4-1 record, recording four saves. He pitched 56 innings, struck out 58 batters and held opponents to a .239 batting average.

In Atlantic 10 Conference play, Weber posted a 3.08 ERA, which ranked fifth in the league. He allowed just 13 earned runs in conference games, tied for second fewest with his brother, Jack Weber (CSB '24, Grad CSB '25).



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: O'Leary talks to a reporter on his way into the premiere; the red-carpet entrance to Powell Hall; Feser (right) talks to the film's director, Sean McNamara; the Billiken stands out among the celebrity arrivals.

**SLU at *Soul on Fire*:** The Billiken and SLU President Dr. Edward Feser walked the red carpet at the premiere of *Soul on Fire*, held near campus at Powell Hall on Oct. 2. The movie depicts the life story of SLU alumnus John O'Leary (CSB '99), and many scenes were filmed on SLU's campus in fall 2023. The film is now streaming on Netflix. — Photos by Sarah Conroy

## On campus

Justin Vilbig, a SLU geospatial data scientist, flies a drone on campus.



SARAH CONROY

### SLU's Remote Sensing Lab Joins Climate TRACE Global Coalition

**S**aint Louis University's Remote Sensing Lab is now a coalition member of Climate TRACE, a global nonprofit focused on tracking greenhouse gas emissions and building the world's most comprehensive emissions inventory to provide accurate, transparent data.

The Remote Sensing Lab, run by Dr. Vasit Sagan, professor of geospatial science, uses machine learning and AI-driven analysis of multi-scale remote sensing data to tackle challenges in food and water security, environmental change and socio-ecological resilience.

The lab received a \$409,649 grant for the first year to become the sector lead for Climate TRACE's pastures and support the coalition with mapping cattle operations globally. SLU's team will be responsible for enhancing global mapping of pasture areas that support cattle, along with detecting large-scale feedlot operations in South Asia, Latin America and Africa.

Climate TRACE members include Duke University and Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, among others.

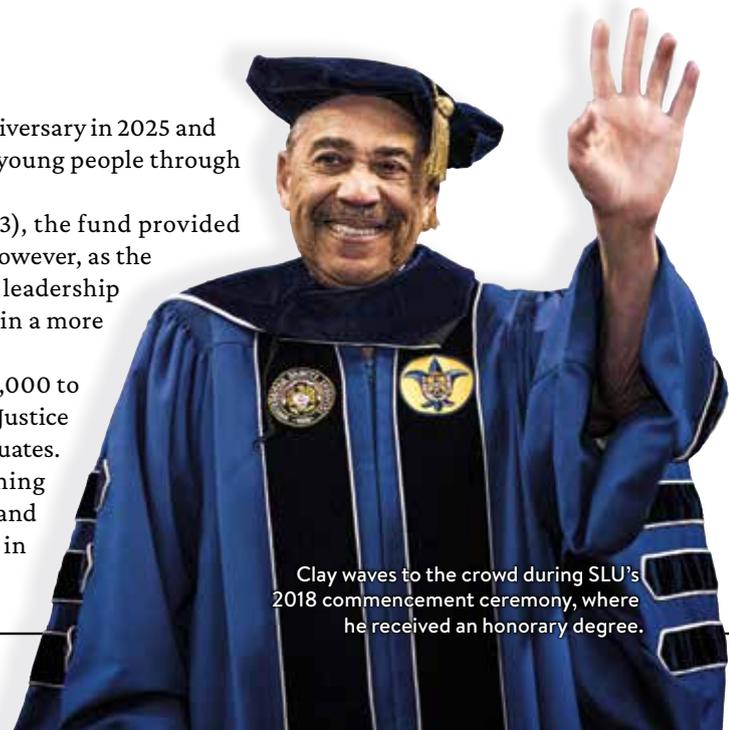
### SLU Launches William L. Clay Sr. Institute of Civic Engagement and Economic Justice

**T**he William L. Clay Scholarship and Research Fund celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2025 and started a new chapter in its longstanding commitment to empowering young people through education.

Founded by the late former U.S. Congressman William L. Clay (A&S '53), the fund provided financial support to students from Missouri's First Congressional District. However, as the landscape of education evolves and financial challenges persist, the fund's leadership saw an opportunity in its anniversary year to ensure its mission continues in a more sustainable way.

The fund has transitioned from providing scholarships to investing \$400,000 to establish the William L. Clay Sr. Institute of Civic Engagement and Economic Justice at Saint Louis University, where Clay was one of the first African American graduates.

The Clay Institute will provide immersive learning experiences and training that address the social and economic challenges facing the St. Louis region and the nation. Programming will be available to all students with an interest in civic engagement and democratic participation.



Clay waves to the crowd during SLU's 2018 commencement ceremony, where he received an honorary degree.

STEVEN DOLAN



SARAH CONROY

Shaughnessy House in 2024

## SLU PRESIDENT COMES HOME TO SHAUGHNESSY HOUSE

On Thanksgiving Day 2003, Joe (IT '57) and Rosemary (A&S '57) Shaughnessy moved into a new home in the DeBaliviere Place neighborhood, just a few miles from Saint Louis University's campus. It was a haven for their family, and in time, two of their children settled in the houses on either side of them.

Years later, anticipating their next move, the Shaughnessys started discussing the possibility of transferring ownership of their house to the University. Joe Shaughnessy thought the location and floor plan would make it an ideal residence for SLU's president, while also being used to host gatherings for trustees and other stakeholders.

In 2020 the couple completed documentation to transfer the house upon their passing. Soon after, Rosemary's health began to decline, and the Shaughnessys moved to a senior living facility. In 2022, they formally donated their home to the University. Rosemary died two years later.

When Dr. Edward Feser relocated to St. Louis last summer to become SLU's 34th president, he and his wife, Kathy Feser, moved into the Shaughnessy House.

Joe Shaughnessy said he is "delighted" his former home has become the SLU president's residence.

"I am thrilled Ed and Kathy are living in the house and hosting alumni events," he said. "Ed will be a wonderful president for Saint Louis University."

The University recognizes donors with lifetime contributions of \$100,000 or more with membership in the DuBourg Society, named after SLU's founder, Bishop Louis William DuBourg. Shaughnessy received the DuBourg Society Platinum Crown, which honors total lifetime giving of more than \$5 million.

## Students, Alum Receive National Honors

Student **Russell Hooker Jr.** was named a 2025-26 Campus Compact Newman Civic Fellow, which is a year-long program that recognizes and supports students who have demonstrated an investment in finding solutions for some of society's toughest challenges. Hooker is majoring in psychology with minors in African American studies and theater. He has served as a SLU 101 orientation leader and volunteered with Campus Kitchen. He also received the Better Brothers Los Angeles Scholarship and is developing a mentorship program with Better Brothers LA.

Political science major **Faith Townsell** received a 2025-27 Voyager Scholarship, which was created by former President Barack Obama, former First Lady Michelle Obama and Brian Chesky, co-founder and CEO of Airbnb. The scholarship supports students who have a passion for helping others, experience serving their communities, and can demonstrate an expansive view of what's possible through public service. Townsell has worked in public service, including with the Chicago mayor's office.

Alum **Anuj Gandhi** (A&S '24) received a Fulbright-Nehru Student Research Award to conduct independent research in Mumbai to "investigate how globalization-based acculturation influences Indian young adults' attitudes toward mental health and treatment options." The Fulbright Program is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government. Gandhi was one of six Fulbright semifinalists from SLU announced early in 2025.

# Highline

**Dr. Edward Feser is no stranger to forging paths, both literal and figurative. From his teenage summer job on a trail crew in Yosemite National Park to his leadership of Saint Louis University, Feser’s journey has been one of discovery and discernment.**

Feser grew up in national parks in Montana, Washington and California as the son of a National Park Service ranger. His family sometimes got its groceries via snowmobile. And for a time, he attended a two-room school in Mineral, California, near Lassen Volcanic National Park.

After high school, he got a feel for urban life when he enrolled at the University of San Francisco, a Jesuit institution, where he found a passion for cities. He also got an introduction to Jesuit higher education, which stuck with him.

Years later, after spending decades as a faculty member and administrator at large public universities in the United States and United Kingdom, he found himself intrigued by the opportunity to become SLU’s 34th president. Feser, who was then the provost and executive vice president of Oregon State University, was drawn to SLU because it seemed like a good fit for his skills, interests and expertise — not to mention his connection to the core values of the Catholic, Jesuit education that inspired him all those years ago.

As he explored the job, he wondered: “Does it feel like the right moment where I could be helpful to the kind of institution I care about? Do they believe I could be helpful? Do those things come together at the same time?”

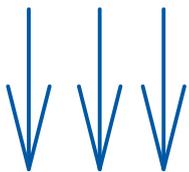
It turns out that the answers were yes.

Here, he discusses why he said yes to SLU and shares his thoughts on SLU’s remarkable accomplishments and hope-filled future.



Saint Louis University's  
34<sup>th</sup> president  
Dr. Edward Feser shares  
his thoughts on how  
to bring SLU to even  
greater heights.

— by Laura Geiser



### [What attracted you to Saint Louis University?](#)

SLU's focus on holistic student success and well-being, breadth of disciplines, strong liberal arts and humanities, Jesuit mission, excellent research trajectory, larger size among Jesuit schools, and location in a redeveloping, post-industrial city like St. Louis were all characteristics that aligned with my interests.

It's unusual to move from a big public land-grant university to a mid-sized, private Jesuit school. But there are many similarities between an urban Jesuit university and a land-grant institution in their values and philosophical approach. Land-grant universities, and this is certainly true at OSU, are sincerely committed to their communities and states, and to advancing the public good. In many ways, that mirrors the Jesuit approach to higher education.

### [What were your first impressions of SLU?](#)

I'd been exploring a variety of opportunities, and what was impressive about the trustees I spoke with and the members of the search committee was how they projected a truly positive, yet honest, impression of the institution. They voiced optimism and enthusiasm for what had been accomplished and what was possible in the future yet acknowledged frankly that there are real challenges to address. I sensed a combination of firmly held values, mission understanding and commitment, authenticity and candor. Those things matter to me as a leader.

### [What has inspired you about SLU since arriving?](#)

I gain much satisfaction and joy in coming to work every day to support an institution that is seeking truth in this highly complex and divisive world. We model what the pursuit of truth looks like on our campuses and in our community for our students who will go out and change this world. That's why I'm also bullish about higher education and its role during this period when our politics are so polarized. We are an important part of the solution.

There are so many people across SLU who care deeply about Saint Louis University and its success. We're fully capable of moving forward despite external pressures and challenges. We're in a strong position, and we're successful. We're doing good things for our students and our city. We can build on our deep commitment to excellence, clear values and integrity.

### [How did your work as provost and executive vice president at Oregon State prepare you for this job?](#)

I was lucky at OSU. The role I held was expansive — a combination of chief academic and chief operating officer — and probably made more by our high level of presidential turnover while I was there; I worked for four presidents in eight years. I was forced to learn a lot about nearly every aspect of university operations.

I was also fortunate to work closely with the OSU Foundation, the development arm of the university, where I learned much about fundraising and alumni relations. And I spent considerable time working on enterprise-level issues related to athletics, more than most university provosts typically do. All that was very good training for a presidency.

### [Maybe you knew you were preparing yourself for this kind of role.](#)

I took a long time to decide I wanted to be a president. It was truly a discernment in the Jesuit tradition, and my wife Kathy and I thought carefully about it together, both because she knows me better than anyone, and it is a significant commitment for her as well. The provost position was a natural for me because I'm strongly academic in orientation. As president, you can sometimes be distant from faculty and student concerns and issues, and I wasn't sure I wanted that. I considered SLU partly because it would allow me to be closer to the intellectual enterprise because the scale isn't quite so large as places I'd been. I realized I want to be in a smaller place — smaller but not too small — where both scholarship and teaching are robust, and I wouldn't lose all touch with students and faculty.

### [What themes or priorities have emerged for you in these first few months as SLU's president?](#)

We must be student-centered, students-first in everything we do. The most important question we can ask is: Are our students well-positioned for success? We do care about our students at SLU, but we can ask that question more often, and we can be more systematic in evaluating how we're doing on that front.

In making student success our principal focus, we must be careful not to be confused by our new Research 1 status. People are naturally enthusiastic about the R1 designation. So am I. However, our core strength remains the delivery of high-quality learning experiences delivered with excellent faculty and selected, distinctive research programs. We need to remember this.

In the area of research and creative work, we have to make choices if we're going to be successful, especially in the world we're in right now, given shifts in the federal government's approach to research funding.

Organizationally, we need to work hard to be more flexible, efficient, agile and cost-effective. Costs in universities are simply rising too fast, and it will be difficult for any institution to keep up; fundamental change is needed to bend the cost curve. SLU has done amazing things over the last decades to conserve resources, and we're going to build on those achievements. But we're going to have to do it in ways that higher education hasn't traditionally done.





Feser greets students during the international student welcome party in August.

### **What's the best part of being SLU's president?**

Representing and championing the work. We do great things here. The most enjoyable aspect of this role is serving as the University's loudest advocate. Engaging with students, faculty and alumni is always deeply rewarding and fun.

### **What about the most challenging part of being president?**

Maintaining morale at this moment in our sector. It's a challenging time, and it's easy to get into a spiral where you only see retrenchment ahead, given a budget under strain, competition for enrollment, challenging demographic trends, and a federal government that appears to be rejecting the long-held compact between the government and universities.

But higher education institutions have been dealing with challenges since their very inception, and they have succeeded because they've adjusted and changed. So, while we do face some obstacles, I'm optimistic. I am convinced we'll be successful here at SLU if we have sufficient creativity and courage.

## THE FESER FILE

A QUICK GLIMPSE INTO WHAT MAKES DR. EDWARD FESER TICK

### **If you weren't a university president, what would you be?**

A scuba instructor

### **Who were your role models?**

My sister, Vicki, is one of the most significant influences on me, as are all my siblings. I've also worked with some outstanding university presidents and chancellors. I've been fortunate to have so many good mentors, personally and professionally.

### **If you could have dinner with one historical figure, who would it be?**

Abraham Lincoln

### **Any hobbies besides the outdoors?**

I'm lousy at cultivating hobbies in the conventional sense, though my wife Kathy and I do enjoy ballroom dancing.

### **What's the most adventurous thing you've ever done?**

As a study abroad student in Vienna in 1988, I traveled extensively in East Central Europe at the very end of the Cold War. I visited Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, among other countries. Most of my study abroad friends spent their available travel time in the more hospitable and comfortable western Europe. As a student of politics at the University of San Francisco, I wanted to experience what life in the Soviet bloc felt like.

As you might gather, I've had more than a few experiences outdoors, but some were more stupid than adventurous. When I was 14, I was airlifted by helicopter from a tiny spit of land in the middle of a raging river during a record rainstorm. I thought it might be a good idea to paddle across said river. It was not. I'm lucky to be here.

### **What is your least favorite task?**

Booking flights

### **How do you relax?**

Reading, hiking and time with family

### **Early riser or night owl?**

I'm usually up by 5 a.m.

### **Do you favor routine or spontaneity?**

Both. I like routine, but I also enjoy dropping everything and doing something different when an opportunity arises. Variety is a source of peace.

### **Biggest guilty pleasure?**

Movies I've seen before. I find it more relaxing to watch old movies I know than new ones I don't, but I feel guilty about that for some reason.

### **Favorite undergraduate college class?**

At USF, I took a class on 20th century European history from a masterful professor who was a truly articulate, spellbinding lecturer. Listening to him was edge-of-your-seat exciting. His final exam called on us to "summarize European history from the turn of the century to the end of World War II." Fifty minutes, a pen and a blue book. I wrote my answer in a fever and handed it in without re-reading it. When he returned my exam, on it was written an A+ and glowing comments about its eloquence. Reading it later, I couldn't believe I managed a coherent, cohesive answer in so short a period, much less an eloquent one, and it was truly because of my teacher's instruction and example. I still have that blue book, and I remember that teacher with gratitude.

### **Pet peeve?**

Pessimism

### **Favorite TV shows?**

*The Wire*, *Fauda* and *The X Files*

### **Favorite movie?**

Too many to choose, but *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* is a masterpiece.

### **Is there a sports team that you follow?**

Roll Bills!

### **First concert?**

The Tubes ... yes, I'm old ...

### **Favorite vacation spot?**

Outside and very remote

### **Favorite food?**

Much too hard to answer!



Kathy Feser with students

## MEET FIRST LADY KATHY FESER

When Dr. Edward Feser decided to accept the presidency of Saint Louis University, it was a mutual decision, made in collaboration with his wife of 35 years, Kathy Feser.

After all, it meant a new role for Kathy, too.

Before she became SLU's first lady, Kathy Feser had many careers, including civil engineer, stay-at-home mom, elementary school teacher and most recently, school district sustainability coordinator in Corvallis, Oregon.

Born in Buffalo, New York, and raised in Atlanta, Kathy attended Rice University. During her college study-abroad experience in Vienna, she met Ed on a spring break trip to Poland.

After college, she found civil engineering work in water resources and air quality and worked for an EPA contractor. Then she was a full-time mom for 10 years.

"As our kids got older, it was time to think about what's next," she said. "Ed was at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, so I decided to go back to school for a master's and teaching certificate in elementary education. I started teaching fourth and fifth grades and then worked my way into a hands-on science position, teaching lab-based science to every grade. That took me back to my civil engineering and math and science roots."

When she and Ed moved to Oregon in 2017, she took a position running special projects for the local school district, eventually becoming the sustainability coordinator.

And though she's only been in St. Louis since June, she has planted trees in Forest Park, helped clean the Meramec River with Operation Clean Stream, and spent a couple of days volunteering with the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis.

She and Ed also have received numerous invitations to take in St. Louis landmarks. "People have been so generous and welcoming," she said. In just a few months, they've been to Cardinal baseball and City SC soccer games. They've seen shows at the Muny, Shakespeare in the Park and Jazz St. Louis, and took in the Garden Glow at the Missouri Botanical Garden. They've also enjoyed tours of the Missouri History Museum, Pulitzer Arts Foundation and Saint Louis University Museum of Art, among others.

Kathy is thankful for all the invitations to get to know the region. "We try not to say no," she said, "because every event gives you another opportunity to get to know people and offers a little glimpse into the city."

St. Louis is a big departure from Oregon. "Corvallis is a sweet college town embedded in the Willamette Valley, an hour from the beach and an hour-and-a-half from the mountains," she said. "It's beautiful, but it's very small, and cultural and other activities are limited. We're really enjoying the diversity of people, neighborhoods, restaurants and arts in St. Louis."

She recalled an event that dramatized the differences: "I was doing the free yoga at the Saint Louis Art Museum in September, and before I went, I thought it might just be a few women like me. But there were 60 people, and the group was diverse in age, race and gender. It was wonderful. And that said to me, that's what St. Louis is giving to us."

## How would you describe your leadership philosophy?

Team-based — assemble talented people, coalesce them as a team, and challenge that team to deal with issues in the moment while simultaneously, constantly and relentlessly improving the organization. Continuous improvement conversations need to happen generatively and naturally through the day-to-day work of the leadership team, not in response to the crisis du jour or because the president or board of trustees demands it.

Once you get that kind of team-based leadership going, it acts like a flywheel, and the institution moves forward in positive ways. People begin to enjoy the process of problem-solving, the results and the camaraderie.

As a leader, I also try to be as direct and clear as possible in my communications, respectfully, of course. I don't see a point in being cagey. The goal is to be clear. Ever since serving as a department head, I've believed that everybody needs to understand the situation we're in, the reason we're there and then, at their level, the ways they can help. When we hold back information, we shouldn't be surprised there's confusion or that people don't know how to be helpful in addressing a challenge.

Feser is missioned as SLU's 34th president during the Mass of the Holy Spirit at St. Francis Xavier College Church in August.



For sound shared governance reasons, faculty have the principal responsibility for shaping the curriculum. They're the experts in their disciplines. But if they don't shape it in a way that helps address the fiscal challenges we face so that we remain financially viable as an organization and affordable for students, we're lost. Our employees — especially faculty members — need to be given the information they need to understand the financial hydraulics of the institution, and then they need to take the time to truly understand that information. There used to be a time when administrators would seek to protect faculty from having to worry about those kinds of details or imagine leading would be easier with less transparency. However, that leaves faculty without the knowledge of why acting sooner rather than later is essential to the university's success.

**You are SLU's second lay president after nearly two centuries of Jesuit leadership. How do you emphasize SLU's Catholic, Jesuit nature?**

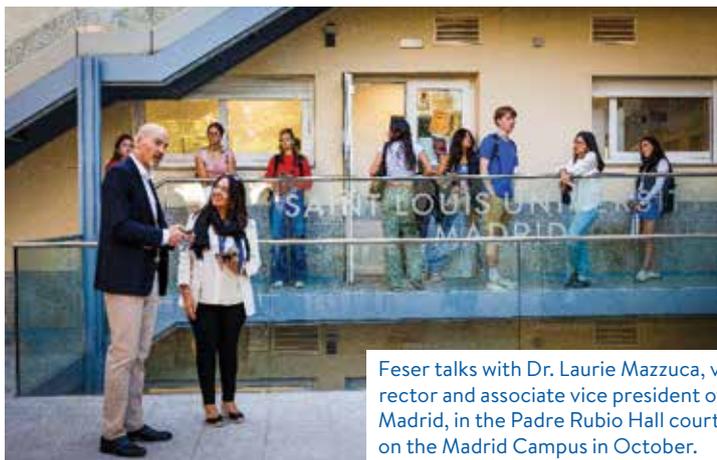
Our Catholic, Jesuit mission offers a direct and intentional consideration of reason, faith and the intersection of the two. Regardless of a student's faith background or level of experience with a religious tradition, Jesuit universities offer a combination of values, perspective and understanding that helps one examine what it means to live a life of purpose and in community with others. At SLU, we spend a lot of time on the "what" and "how" of individual disciplines and fields, but we also create myriad curricular, extracurricular and co-curricular opportunities for students to explore questions of "why" in a serious way. That is increasingly appealing to students today. Moreover, our Jesuit focus on prioritizing the needs and concerns of the disadvantaged — as well as acting as men and women with and for others — offers

students a strong values-based foundation for whatever career path they choose.

There is also a very pragmatic argument for the holistic education we offer at SLU. Billions of people worldwide are people of faith. Their worldviews, grounded in their religious traditions and understandings, influence how they live their lives personally and professionally, the choices they make, their actions in the public square and so on. Regardless of one's own religious beliefs, it's wise to understand how faith shapes others' views and actions.



SARAH CONROY



Feser talks with Dr. Laurie Mazzuca, vice rector and associate vice president of SLU-Madrid, in the Padre Rubio Hall courtyard on the Madrid Campus in October.

ANGEL GARCIA LOPEZ

**Could you discuss the role of athletics in today's higher education landscape, particularly at SLU?**

Athletics are an extraordinarily powerful portal into the University. They help people connect with the institution, and they create a sense of community, pride, enthusiasm and momentum. Successful teams build national visibility. I've witnessed this in tangible ways at schools with tremendous reputations in sports — UNC Chapel Hill, Illinois and Oregon State.

We have terrific assets at SLU. We're this region's sole NCAA Division 1 program, and when we're successful, we draw national attention to SLU and our city.

Our student-athletes are also outstanding role models. They are models of focus and discipline. Otherwise, they couldn't manage the level of work they must put in to be successful or navigate the public pressure they're under. I'm so impressed with the quality of our Billiken athletes as men and women and the care our coaches put into developing them holistically.

**You visited SLU-Madrid in October, and you have also taught and conducted research abroad. Why are SLU-Madrid and international study opportunities key to the SLU student experience?**

We live in a highly globally connected world, economically, technologically, environmentally and socially. Our longstanding presence in Europe — in Madrid — creates opportunities for students from all disciplines to gain an understanding of those connections and to build intercultural competence. SLU-Madrid is a wonderful part of the SLU portfolio in that sense.

We're also part of an international Jesuit network. We do apostolic work around the world via a variety of partnerships. These create additional unique opportunities to educate our students and prepare them for a life of service and leadership.

SLU-Madrid is deeply impressive, from its facilities to its location to the faculty, leadership team, staff and students. Its position in one of Europe's great cities complements our presence in St. Louis. Going forward, it will give us an opportunity to emphasize our intellectual contributions to understanding the future of cities in general, a particular interest of mine and one in which SLU has a rich history.

**Higher education is undergoing a period of profound change. Where do you see the greatest opportunities for you to lead, adapt and innovate?**

It is essential in this time when prospective students are questioning the return on investment in higher education that universities maintain a deep commitment to providing excellent education, the highest quality student extracurricular and co-curricular experience, effective advising and mentoring, and career placement upon graduation. At SLU, we're fortunate that we can pair our traditionally strong undergraduate experience and liberal arts foundation with career-oriented, professionally focused degrees. As we develop our own version of an R1 (research-intensive) mission, we should do so in tight integration with our educational mission, something the largest R1 institutions struggle to do well.

There is much creative work happening nationally to adjust to different student learning needs, including different kinds of credentials and flexible modalities. We're doing some of that, but it's nibbling at the edges compared to many of our competitors. I'm not arguing we need to shift dramatically to online education or the delivery of alternative credentials, but there is more we can do to serve a greater diversity of learners, including transfer students and returning students (those with some college and no degree). That will help us meet our access mission while helping us succeed when the traditional college-going population is shrinking.



At Billiken Night at the Ballpark in August at Busch Stadium, Feser (center) with (from left) softball coach Christy Connoyer, athletics director Chris May, basketball player Kalu Anya, softball player Abby Mallo, men's basketball coach Josh Schertz and the Billiken

**What has impressed you and your wife, Kathy, about St. Louis?**

So many things. Forest Park, the unique neighborhoods, the welcoming people, the great diversity of the population. St. Louis offers a great quality of life with an unusually rich mix of culture, music and sports, and it's affordable. Less well known but also impres-

sive is the growing innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem. St. Louis has the potential to attract young people seeking a high quality, affordable quality of life, if we continue our redevelopment momentum and do a better job of getting the word out.

**You have two adult children. Can you tell us a little about them?**

Kathy and I could not be prouder of them. Our son, Jack, is a computer scientist working in artificial intelligence, including applications to issues in urban development and management. I wish I could say that's because his dad's field is city planning, but it's really because of the big data involved. He lives in Brooklyn, works in Manhattan, and loves the outdoors, cooking and photography.

Our daughter, Mary, is a recent graduate of the Master of Public Health program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which was coming full circle because she was born at UNC's hospital when I was a member of the faculty there. And now we share the same *alma mater* for graduate school. She's now in Raleigh working on hurricane relief efforts in western North Carolina. She also loves the outdoors and is terrific at arts and crafts. Both my children are more well-rounded than I am!

**As a scholar of city and regional economic growth and development, what are your thoughts on St. Louis?**

Many American cities are at a crossroads, with pandemic-driven changes in where and how people work and with so much population concentration on the coasts. In my experience, struggling cities that experience a renaissance have done so by marshalling every available resource by collaborating and coordinating across jurisdictions and sectors. Thoughtful and bold leadership is key. We have many good leaders in place right now and in every conversation I've been in so far, the spirit is willing. I'm hopeful we can find ways to address longstanding issues like our jurisdictional fragmentation as well as conflicts between urban and rural interests broadly in Missouri, which will help unlock St. Louis as Missouri's biggest growth engine. Saint Louis University is ready to do all it can to be part of the solution, recognizing that strong partnerships and economic mobility for all are keys to success.

**What do you see as the University's role in that work or in the St. Louis region in general?**

As one of the area's biggest and most stable employers, we need to continue to be an economic engine for St. Louis. We must continue our efforts to support the development of Midtown and to collaborate with others in the area to continue to build assets in the neighborhoods around us. In the next phase of campus development, we will think strategically about our edges, the spaces where the SLU campus intersects with surrounding neighborhoods. There are some creative things we can do to create an exciting campus-city sense of place that benefits us — given students' interests in a rich urban quality of life — and neighboring businesses and organizations.

I think we can be a bigger thought leader and convener for issues that face the city, a place where people come for conversation, to tap expertise and to exchange ideas. Ultimately, I'd like SLU to be a champion of this city and this region in a way that is inclusive and bridges differences across the political divide. I do know that's easier said than done.

# Strategic Plan Gets Underway

Days before his inauguration in November, Saint Louis University President Dr. Edward Feser announced the development of the University's next strategic plan, "Future in Focus."

"We will work to understand the challenges and opportunities we face and identify and prioritize actions that will advance SLU's mission over the next four years, to 2030," he said in a message to the SLU community.

Feser charged a strategic planning steering committee to assess the internal and external terrain, solicit the insights of the University community and key stakeholders, and propose a focused set of strategies that will have the greatest positive impact on SLU's mission and will distinguish the University in a competitive and complex landscape.

The launch and implementation of the strategic plan are scheduled to begin in summer 2026. The plan will be continuously assessed and updated over its four-year span.



The Fesers skiing in Forest Park in January

SUBMITTED BY THE FESERS

## I know you enjoy the outdoors. How has that shaped you?

In a big way. I feel like I grew up outside, and it's where I feel the most at peace. Kathy and I both have a deep love of the outdoors, in any landscape and any season. I've been truly lucky to have had lots of experiences outdoors in different and spectacular parts of the world.

## So, St. Louis is an urban area. Why choose an institution in a big city?

It was deliberate. When we moved to Oregon from Illinois in 2017, it was a homecoming for me, since I grew up in the Pacific Northwest. I thought I'd never leave again. I can recall distinctly an overwhelming sense of joy and peace, shortly after returning, on a walk in the high mountains of the Cascades range, in a location just a couple hours' drive from our home.

And yet, my interest in urban development had not waned, and Kathy and I enjoy the diversity of people and culture in cities. I wanted to continue a leadership path in higher education, precisely because we're in a time that is so fraught with challenges. There is much to be done to ensure universities remain strong in the United States and continue to be engines for economic mobility and groundbreaking research. I'm truly humbled and grateful to have the opportunity to lead here at SLU and to contribute what I can to supporting the success of St. Louis.

Kathy and I will get outside from time to time. Missouri is a beautiful state, and we look forward to exploring it. The Midwest has its own version of natural beauty, and we haven't abandoned the West. This past January, for example, we managed to find a few days to spend in Yellowstone National Park cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. And we were delighted to put on skis and venture into Forest Park this winter!

The Feser family: (from left) Jack, Kathy, Ed and Mary

## How will you measure success this first year?

By solidifying a team-based approach to leadership at SLU, getting a strategic plan mostly — if not fully — completed, and getting to know our trustees, many of our alums, and our faculty, staff and students.

## And in five years?

That SLU has a very strong directional strategy and that we've made tangible progress on that strategy. That our enrollment is robust, our student experience is second to none, our faculty are thriving as teachers and scholars, and we are viewed as a collaborative, creative partner with our neighbors and in St. Louis broadly. That there is a very strong sense of belonging on this campus for students from every background.

## How can alumni assist you in moving SLU forward?

Please engage. Come back and visit campus. Consider making a gift. Talk about SLU. Cheer our Billiken student-athletes. Make a visit to SLU-Madrid. Be part of the momentum we want to build. Alumni are such a critical force multiplier for what we want to do. When you build excitement and enthusiasm among your alumni, it supercharges the work of the students and the faculty, who know there's a group of champions out there behind them. ☒

COLLEEN SMYTH





Feser holds the  
University mace.

# Moving Forward Together

— by Joe Barker  
photos by Sarah Conroy

The inauguration of Saint Louis University's 34th president brought together the whole community in celebration of Dr. Edward J. Feser and the University's bright future.

Feser, a Jesuit-educated leader in higher education, assumed the presidency on July 1, 2025. The official inauguration ceremony took place Nov. 5 at Chaifetz Arena.

Themed "Igniting Hope, Growing in Community," the event celebrated the light of hope accompanying this historic moment and the new possibilities the SLU community can cultivate together in service to the greater good.

Here are some memorable moments from Feser's inauguration.



✦ The celebration included (above) delegates representing more than 35 colleges and universities; greetings from faculty, staff, students and members of the St. Louis community, such as (center) Dr. H. Eric Clark (Grad Ed '99, '14), president, Loyola Academy of St. Louis; and (below) students who attended the ceremony.



↑ "In just a few months, the Archdiocese of St. Louis will celebrate their bicentennial. Saint Louis University has been a partner every moment of those 200 years, and Dr. Feser, under your leadership we look forward to continued partnership and growing for centuries to come."

— Father Carl Scheble, vicar general of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, who offered a greeting of hope and community during the ceremony



✦ In his inaugural address, Feser said that there are challenges ahead for higher education but noted that SLU has a history of navigating difficult circumstances — and that the University’s enduring strength lies in its willingness to grow with humility and courage. He said the most important part of SLU’s mission is to prepare students for the future. (An abridged version of his address starts on page 20.)



↑  
 “He understands that higher education must go beyond instruction and instead be paired with inspiration — inspiration to think boldly, to serve generously and to lead faithfully. Under Dr. Feser’s leadership, I am confident this University will continue to be a light for the city and for our entire state.”

— Missouri Governor Mike Kehoe spoke and shared his excitement about the start of Feser’s tenure.



✦ The day before the inauguration, the SLU community gathered in St. Francis Xavier College Church for a Mass of Hope and Community. Here, Feser is congratulated by his brother, Chuck, during the homily.

↑ “I am deeply inspired by SLU’s commitment to forming people for others, guided by Jesuit values, with purpose, leadership and a vocation for service. I am truly excited about SLU’s future. I’m ignited by its power to transform lives and build a more just world.”

— Victoria Villarreal (A&S ’86, Grad CSB ’88), vice rector and chief financial officer, SLU-Madrid, who represented the SLU staff in a greeting during the ceremony



\* Following the ceremony, the University hosted an open luncheon in the Wool Ballroom of Busch Student Center. Here, Feser poses for a selfie with students (from left) Ayden Wells, Laney Price and Rebekah Durgin.

“These twin ideals of compassion and knowledge propel us forward to a more equitable and loving future. President Feser is prepared to lead us there with his own Jesuit education and his stellar record of academic accomplishment.”

||||

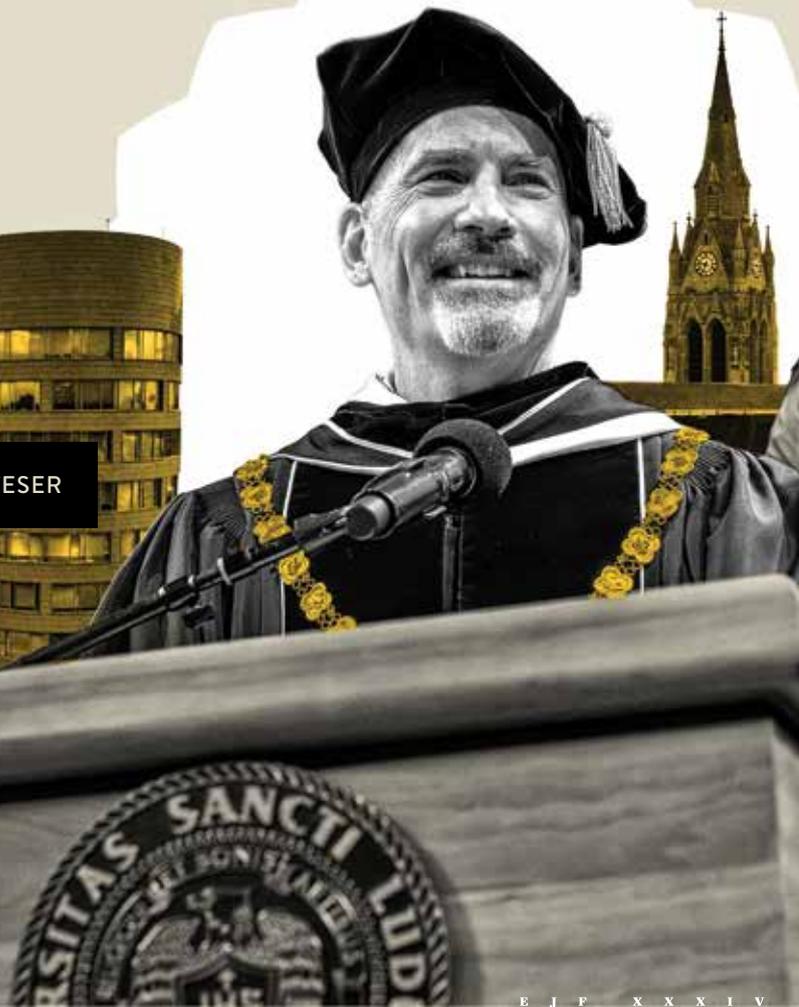
— Dr. Holden Thorp, a SLU trustee, editor-in-chief of the *Science* family of journals and a professor at George Washington University, gave the keynote address. He is a former colleague of Feser’s at the University of North Carolina.



\* During the ceremony, Feser received the official symbols of the University: the chain of office from Marian “Bo” Mehan (VSN ’74, Law ’82) (second from right), vice chair of the board of trustees, and the University mace from President Emeritus Dr. Fred P. Pestello (left). Eric Engler (right), chairman of the board, formally installed Feser as president. ☒

# A WORLD OF HOPE

THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF DR. EDWARD FESER



During his inauguration on Nov. 5, Saint Louis University President Dr. Edward Feser shared his vision for SLU's future.

What follows is his inaugural address, abridged for space.



Good morning, and *buenas tardes*, colleagues in Madrid!

Before I begin, I am so delighted that [SLU students] Nathan Sewell and Richa Kulkari are today's emcees, and that the Pep Band and Drumline, Bare Naked Statues, student speakers and leaders, students from across campus, and our Billiken student-athletes are participating.

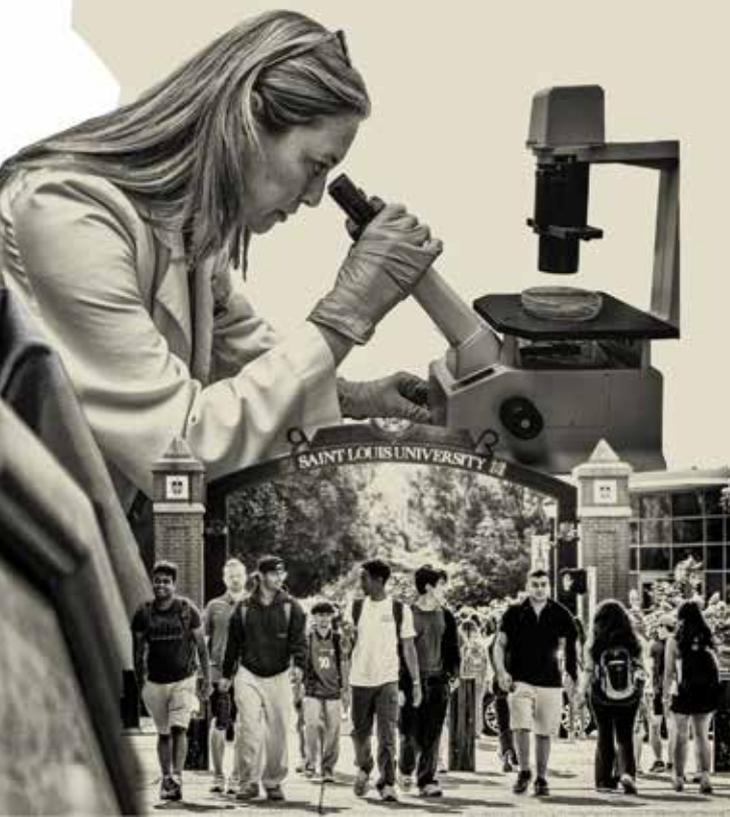
As we begin this next chapter, our top priority must always be the whole education and success of every student.

Sincere care for our students — demonstrating through our daily work that every person is a divine gift, created in the image and likeness of God — is the heart of Saint Louis University, and it's the firmest possible foundation for our future as a leading research university.

By lending their time and talent, the students participating today have made this their inauguration, too, choosing not to be passive recipients in what comes next, but to walk with me and all of us as we build on SLU's distinguished history. If you ever wonder if the future is bright — for our University, city, state, nation or world — I invite you to spend an hour with SLU students.

I'm sincerely grateful to the students joining us today.





Today is the Feast of all the Saints and Blessed of the Society of Jesus, which is auspicious for a Jesuit university that has accumulated 207 years of rich history.

On this feast day, we honor God's work in those who exemplified the charisma that animates Saint Louis University's mission to pursue truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity. Steadfast adherence to that charisma has yielded a modern university of great reach and impact.

With the leadership of many, not least President Emeritus Lawrence Biondi, S.J., we enjoy beautiful campuses in St. Louis and Madrid.

We're now teaching over 13,000 students in well over 200 academic programs. The expertise of our 2,500 faculty spans an unusual breadth of scholarly and professional disciplines for our size, including the arts, humanities, sciences, engineering, social sciences, law, business, education and social work. Through our academic-clinical partnership with SSM Health, anchored by SSM-Saint Louis University Hospital and Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital, our faculty provide best-practice care; train the next generation of physicians, nurses and other health professionals; and conduct leading-edge research in medicine and health sciences.

Our Madrid campus is thriving as a platform for study, research and service in one of Europe's spectacular cities, providing an international complement to our work in St. Louis and opening the door to study abroad for students at SLU and from universities around the world. SLU's international footprint expanded substantially in recent years, positioning us well to thrive in an increasingly globalized world.

Under President Emeritus Fred Pestello's leadership, SLU's research excellence accelerated dramatically, resulting in our achievement this year of a longstanding goal: designation as an R1 university. Multiple programs in arts and sciences, law, business, medicine and other fields are highly ranked. Our students routinely answer the call to be men and women for and with others, completing 1.6 million hours of service each year. We are blessed to be home to a robust Jesuit community and one of only two First Studies programs for Jesuit formation in the country.

I could say much more. We are justly proud of what Saint Louis University has become.

And, like any human institution, what we've become has been shaped by both the achievements and the sins of our past.

The same Society of Jesus that calls on men to abandon their worldly possessions and see God in everyone participated in the grave sin of slavery. The 12 Jesuits who journeyed here to establish the Missouri mission brought with them six enslaved people of African descent. The involuntary work of the enslaved — their cruel treatment — benefited Saint Louis University.

This is our legacy. A noble mission on the one hand, and actions that were in shocking conflict with that mission on the other.

We're resolved to take steps toward repairing the harm that slavery and its legacy have caused. This is not only just, but consistent with a way of proceeding that is both fundamental to our Jesuit values and instructive in an America in which skepticism of core institutions is rising steeply.

In examining our conscience as an institution, and inviting conversion toward truth, justice and reconciliation, we name and repair what is harmful, we strengthen what is good, and we choose a better path.

This is a story repeated throughout our history.

When in 1944 Claude Heithaus, S.J., delivered a sermon denouncing segregation and calling on SLU to admit Black students, he was reprimanded by University leadership. Yet SLU would become the first university in a formerly slaveholding state to establish a policy of integration. And just 12 years later, President Paul Reinert, S.J., would withdraw the University from a national tournament when Cal Burnett, a Black student on SLU's basketball team, was barred by Louisiana from competing in that state. Other Catholic universities would follow SLU's lead.

In another example, SLU's history of developing the land on and around our campus is complex. Part of our University sits on the once-thriving African American neighborhood of Mill Creek Valley, which was demolished during urban renewal in the 1950s. We recognize we benefited from this, and we also know that this history should not be repeated. In our recent Midtown work, we are striving to foster genuine partnership with neighbors like the Gate District. We're committed to strengthening those ties.

My point is that standing here, on the Feast of all the Saints and Blessed, and the cusp of the next chapter in the University's history, we inherit the whole story: sinners, grave mistakes and failures, but also saints, courageous corrective action and triumphs.

Our belief in progress — grounded in humility but bolstered by courage and optimism — is essential.

We are a university which strives to own its mistakes, to right its wrongs, to bridge divided people, to close the gap between falsehoods and truth, to pursue rigor and excellence in all things, and to do right and to do good for our students, our city and our country.

This belief in our capacity for redemption, excellence and justice, coupled with our hope for the future, is critically important at this juncture in our nation's history and given the challenges and opportunities facing universities like ours.

In higher education today, we are rightly focused on enrollment cliffs, changing learner preferences, escalating costs, lapses in scientific integrity, an upended college sports model, and rising public doubt about whether universities are truly forums for the open and free exchange of ideas. We're also engaged in a national conversation about the merits and appropriate structure of the historic partnership between the federal government and research universities.

But I'd like to address something even more fundamental before I conclude with thoughts about the road ahead.

This is a time of extraordinary political, technological and social change.

Our nation's politics are deeply polarized, and our predominant modes of communication — most prominently social media — work directly against reasoned discourse pursued with the intellectual humility and compassion that are needed to engage complex issues. To paraphrase Jesuit John Courtney Murray, S.J., the civic consensus by which we acquire our identity and sense of purpose as a nation has badly eroded.<sup>1</sup>

And it is eroding even as a uniquely powerful technology — artificial intelligence — is transforming nearly everything we do at an astonishing pace. AI is placing enormous pressure on our civic and corporate institutions to shape and adopt a response that preserves human control, dignified work and a robust democratic polity.

I believe young people today face greater political and economic complexity and moral peril in navigating this technology-enriched, AI-infused world than prior generations.

At the same time, they inherit a world of enormous possibility and opportunity. We remain a powerful and prosperous nation, founded on universal principles and values that do not always yield perfect outcomes, but create the basis for action that can rectify wrongs, correct injustice and produce demonstrable progress. Technologies under development — if wisely deployed — hold the promise of supercharging the discovery of solutions that would address serious challenges in human health, the environment, food security, energy and many other domains.

From one perspective, we face a world of peril. From another perspective:  
**We see a world of hope.**

How do we prepare our graduates for this world? What do we teach and study as we do so? What is Saint Louis University's unique contribution?

As we proceed in our work to answer these questions together, I ask us to keep three broad considerations firmly in mind.

**First, who are our graduates?**

Our graduates are our greatest contribution. Who do we wish them to be? What will set them apart? What will ensure their success in their careers and their lives?

"Who is a SLU graduate?" is the single most important question we can ask, and our answer must be both distinctive and authentic.

Let's ensure that SLU graduates are well-trained in their discipline, technically skilled and career-ready, and that they are AI-savvy, whatever their field. But let's also ensure they're truly able to wrestle with life's big questions — how best to live and what to care about.

Let's ensure SLU is not just a place for the transmission of knowledge but is rather "a forum for the exploration of life's mystery and meaning,"<sup>2</sup> via serious engagement with great literary works, philosophy, history, religion, art and faith; and that we're helping every student build skill in leadership and entrepreneurship grounded in that unique exploration, exploration that we, as a Jesuit university, can provide.





Padre Arrupe Hall at SLU-Madrid



The Billiken at the Gateway Arch

We must deliver on this mission for every student, and we must be better prepared to welcome students from all walks of life: transfer students, returning adult learners, part-time students, students with families and students seeking non-traditional credentials. We must deliver on this mission as attention spans are challenged by the consumption of digital media and as students are drawn to practical and professional fields. These challenges make our imperative all the more important.

We must maximize opportunities for students to integrate practical experience in their studies, as “experience is our ultimate human advantage”<sup>3</sup> and provides an essential basis for judgment. Concurrently, we should reinvent the ways we educate our students for careers and vocations, where they will contribute to the creation of humane and hope-filled institutions and communities. We can begin by deepening our partnerships with organizations and employers in St. Louis who care about the future of this University and this city as much as we do.

A SLU graduate should be ready to act, to exercise civic and social leadership, to use technology wisely, to learn from diverse viewpoints, and to build enterprises and communities, always with an ethic of service to others and the common good.

### Second, what should we study and teach?

We need to become our own unique kind of research university. Indeed, I believe we can lead others in defining what cutting-edge research grounded in Jesuit principles and values looks like as we embark on our new era as an R1 institution, provided we integrate our teaching and research missions; focus on building depth in fields where the University can be most distinctive; and prioritize interdisciplinarity.

These are keys to delivering the kind of rich education I just described and harnessing strength in the humanities and social sciences alongside the sciences, engineering, medicine and health sciences.

### Third, how should we deliver our mission?

Like so many other industries, higher education is being reshaped in profound ways. Advances in computational power and machine learning are making it possible to tap vast stores of data in highly creative ways. An acceleration of innovation in our sector has the potential to expand access and increase student success. By taking advantage of these developments, we can reduce costs and put higher education in reach of the very students that we — as a Jesuit, Catholic university — seek to serve.

#### The lesson?

The same technological and organizational revolution that we must prepare our students to understand and shape is changing the nature of work in universities like ours. We need to practice what we preach and harness these innovations and technologies creatively and wisely in how we do our work.

Let me conclude by returning to where I started: our students. Our students come to us focused ever more intently on preparing themselves for career and work. Yet they also come to us — whatever their faith background or no faith at all — yearning for morality, meaning and significance.

Both things are very good news.

We are graced with the opportunity — if we build our own beautiful combination of teaching, research and service distinctively and with fidelity to our Jesuit mission — to graduate ethical and inspiring doers. Those SLU doers, drawing guidance from 500 years of the saints and blessed we honor today, will help our city, state and nation navigate wisely through a world both fraught with peril and rich with opportunity.

If we succeed, the future will be bright for SLU because we will have made it so.

Thank you for your trust in me.

Thank you for your commitment to this place we share and its future.

May God bless you, and may God bless Saint Louis University. ☕

#### Footnotes

1. Walter J. Burghardt, S.J., “Preface” to *We Hold These Truths: Catholic Reflections on the American Proposition* by John Courtney Murray, S.J., (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005).
2. Larry Kronman, *Education’s End: Why Our Colleges and Universities Have Given Up on the Meaning of Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 8.
3. Joseph Aoun, quoted in John Werner, “Joseph Aoun’s Thoughts on Higher Education in America Today,” *Forbes*, Oct. 22, 2025.

*This text reflects the speech as prepared, which may vary slightly from the version delivered.*

IN THE WAKE OF  
A DEADLY  
TORNADO, SAINT LOUIS  
UNIVERSITY  
FOUND MYRIAD  
WAYS TO SHOW  
SUPPORT  
AND SOLIDARITY  
WITH THE  
ST. LOUIS COMMUNITY.

- BY AMY GARLAND

**F**riday, May 16, 2025, started like many mid-May days at Saint Louis University. As the whirlwind end of the semester was winding down, celebrations were ramping up. Campus bristled with excitement as graduates and guests arrived for Friday's six precommencement ceremonies, and the whole SLU community looked forward to Saturday's main commencement.

Friday seemed a great day to celebrate, dawning warm and full of sunshine. But as the day went on, the atmosphere transformed. Then the warnings started.

Around 2:30 p.m., Debbie Pike (Grad CSB '92) stepped to the podium onstage at Chaifetz Arena to present the graduates from the Richard A. Chaifetz School of Business. Minutes later, emergency signals sounded on phones throughout the arena, interrupting the litany of names.

Pike, associate dean for undergraduate education at the business school and an associate accounting professor, held her composure. She had spoken several times that morning with SLU's Events Services team and Department of Public Safety.

"I want you all to know that this is the safest place. We are not near any glass. We are down low in the ground," she said calmly, as the crowd started applauding. "I won't dare the weather to disrupt our ceremony, but we're going to just keep on going."

The ceremony proceeded undisrupted, but outside, severe thunderstorms beat the St. Louis area.

Around 2:40 p.m., a tornado touched down in Clayton, seven miles from the University. The storm quickly moved northeast for 23 miles through north St. Louis City before crossing the Mississippi River and lifting in Illinois.

The nearly-mile-wide tornado ravaged the ground for almost half an hour, the wind whipping up to 152 mph.

In the wake of the storm, five people were dead and 38 more injured. More than 5,000 buildings had been badly damaged or destroyed, with total damages estimated at over \$1.6 billion to St. Louis.\*

While Pike kept the precommencement on track, she ignored texts from her husband, who was working from home in the Central West End, less than two miles from SLU. The tornado blew the roof off their historic condo building and knocked out more than 40 windows in the complex.

The next day, Saint Louis University hailed its newest graduates at commencement and turned to the city it calls home in support and solidarity.

University leaders set the tone in a message to the SLU community: "In moments like these, our mission calls us not only to prayer but also to action grounded in the Ignatian ideal of *cura personalis* — care for the whole person. Thank you for all you are already doing to lift up those around you, and we stand ready to walk with you in the days ahead."

*\*Information from the National Weather Service St. Louis*



After



# the Storm

AN AERIAL VIEW OF A NORTH ST. LOUIS CITY NEIGHBORHOOD AFTER THE MAY 16 TORNADO / PHOTO BY JUSTIN BARR



SARAH CONROY

# Alumni Take Action After the Disaster

## PICKING UP THE PIECES

The relief effort in St. Louis started as triage: clearing huge, fallen trees that made streets impassable, securing tarps where roofs had been blown off, feeding residents who could no longer cook or even sit in their homes. The devastation was vast, especially in north St. Louis City, where buildings had been torn wall from wall, reduced to rubble.

To encourage volunteering, the University gave employees each one full day to spend on relief efforts, without loss of pay or the need to use vacation. Individuals and groups representing various colleges and schools, offices and athletic teams answered the call.

“Saint Louis University stepped up to the plate when the horrific and devastating tornado took place in our city,” SLU Trustee Michael McMillan (A&S ’97) said.

McMillan is president and chief executive officer of the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis. He and his organization worked closely with the University to harness the capacity of the SLU community.

According to McMillan, SLU provided “hundreds of hours of volunteerism from students, faculty and staff, members of the board of trustees, and even the first lady of the University herself.”

In addition to serving in person, the SLU community was encouraged to donate supplies. The on-campus Tornado Relief Donation Drive technically took place over four days in early June, but McMillan said it continued much longer.

“After the drive, there were people still bringing things and running smaller efforts as well. As a result, tens of thousands of dollars of food, clothing, cleaning supplies and PPE materials were gathered around campus and shipped to the Urban League to be distributed to victims of the tornado,” he said.

McMillan, who has spent his whole career in service to the St. Louis community, said, “If everyone lived out the Jesuit mission, then this type of work would be a no-brainer for everyone all the time.”

## TAKING ACTION / In the Streets

**Birch Fabregas** (A&S ’25) was on campus packing up her Marchetti East apartment when the tornado hit. After the “all clear” message, she didn’t hesitate to go headlong into the wreckage.

“That’s the kind of person I was raised to be: If you see someone raising a hand for help, you take that hand,” she said.

For Fabregas, that meant skipping her commencement the next day so she could move out of her apartment and start volunteering as soon as possible.

First, she emailed **Kyle Foerst**, adjunct faculty in the College for Public Health and Social Justice, who had taught her emergency management course at SLU.

“He gave me a list of what to wear — work boots, gloves, mask, sun protection — and told me not to self-deploy but to get involved in a directed way,” Fabregas said.

She found her way to The People’s Reponse, a relief hub led by Action St. Louis and ForTheCultureSTL. For the next three weeks, she dedicated all of her time to the recovery effort: surveying residents, climbing trees to cut down dead limbs and translating for Spanish speakers in need.

She quickly became a team leader, directing dozens of volunteers. And she relied on her SLU network to recruit more help.

Fabregas and her twin sister **Greer** (A&S ’25) posted on social media to rally friends and sent a Google form to former professors to share with their students. They organized carpools from campus to service sites. Fabregas was impressed with how many SLU students served, especially international students.

The work “was heartwarming but also heart-wrenching,” she said. “The most important part was that I was never alone. It was collective action in the face of adversity.”

After the May 16 tornado, some SLU alumni across the area served in the short term, while others made an extended commitment, with the intention of lasting investment in the community. Here are just a few of their stories.

▼ **TAKING ACTION / One Block at a Time**

On the day of the tornado, attorney **Mark Timmerman** (Law '17) was running errands, getting ready for a party the next day. At Timmerman's house, handyman **Calvin Motley** was painting a nursery. Neither one could have known how the storm would bring them together.

When Timmerman checked in with Motley on May 17, the day after the tornado, he learned that Motley's house, in the Penrose neighborhood, had lost half of its roof. He had already mostly repaired it and was preparing to help others on his block.

Soon thereafter, the two men hatched a plan for STL Rebuild.

Timmerman told Motley, "You're a master craftsman. You're already repairing the neighbor's homes. What if you were somehow paid to continue to do this every day?"

He helped Motley launch a GoFundMe and promoted it on social media. He called on connections in public service and media he had made through the Ferguson Commission, where he clerked during law school.

The initial goal of \$5,200 quickly became \$10,000 and then \$50,000.

"The idea is to tackle Calvin's block and the immediate area, so that the repair work is manageable and the block can become a model for other places — anywhere disaster strikes or a neglected area that needs to rebuild themselves," Timmerman said. "It's making a difference in a different way than we anticipated."

STL Rebuild clearly has made a difference in Timmerman's life; his long-term goal is to redevelop a corner building in Penrose and move his law firm there.

"This is a calling," he said. "It's one of the things that brings me the most joy and purpose that I've ever felt in my life."



SARAH CONROY

**HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

**V**olunteers with SLU's Mobile Health Clinic certainly embodied the Jesuit mission as they served in the tornado-ravaged Fountain Park neighborhood a couple of weeks after the storm.

Faculty, staff, residents and students from the School of Medicine, Doisy College of Health Sciences and the College for Public Health and Social Justice went door to door, checking on community members.

Did they have power and internet service? Access to their medications? Had they eaten?

After connecting with residents, volunteers regrouped at the mobile clinic to check blood pressures, hand out sunscreen and write prescriptions. Some people just needed a place to rest.

"We heard their stories about how they survived the tornado and how many of them are pitching in to help each other out," said Dr. Angela Cecil, an associate professor of occupational science and occupational therapy. "They also expressed gratitude for the help they've been receiving from mobile clinics like SLU's and other outreach efforts."

SLU started the mobile clinic in May 2022 after receiving federal funds to serve St. Louisans who lack nearby health care facilities, transportation to clinics or the technology for telehealth.

Reflecting on the recovery effort, Cecil said, "I was impressed by the resilience and strength of each resident whom we encountered, despite challenges that are now compounded by the loss and uncertainty of life and recovery after the tornado.

"It was both humbling and an honor to volunteer," she said. "I hope the goodwill of the community continues until this neighborhood and others recover."



SARAH CONROY

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** (From left) Fabregas, her sister Greer and a fellow relief worker help clear fallen trees on May 22, 2025.

**ABOVE:** The Mobile Health Clinic offers care to tornado victims in the Fountain Park neighborhood in June 2025.

**LEFT:** Tornado victims receive support at the Disaster Assistance Center in Chaifetz Arena on June 17, 2025.

## TAKING ACTION / Local Weatherman

**Matt Beitscher** (Grad A&S '20) wasn't in St. Louis when the May 16 tornado hit, but as a meteorologist at the National Weather Service St. Louis (NWS STL), his work was integral in the aftermath.

"The core responsibility of the NWS STL is to produce an hourly, seven-day forecast for the 46 counties we serve," Beitscher said. "We start with a model, and then we use our expertise and knowledge of the local patterns."

Local, historical knowledge can provide crucial information that a weather app might not.

"On the weather apps on the day of the tornado, people were seeing a 10% chance of rain. That was it. No mention of severe weather," Beitscher said. The National Weather Service offers more nuanced and helpful information, "because of meteorologists in the area. Our office was talking about the threat of severe weather five days in advance. The day of the event, we were concerned with very large hail and strong tornadoes."

Local meteorologists then go into the field as soon as possible to survey damage and, eventually, arrive at a strength rating for the tornado. The preliminary results for the May 16 event came out a couple days later: EF-3, a category with wind speeds from 136 to 165 mph.

EF stands for "Enhanced Fujita," a scale for rating tornadoes that was formulated after decades of studies by meteorologist Dr. Ted Fujita. Beitscher said the scale balances "two components, empirically derived: the damage indicator (what was hit?) and the degree of damage (how bad it was hit?), plus mitigating factors."

For example, surveyors look for uprooted trees but also consider how large they are and how healthy the root ball looks. All of that specific information gets factored into calculating the EF number.

"There's an intricacy to the work," Beitscher said.

Also, a humanity.

"We're there to console people and to listen," he said. "We always consider the intersection of weather and society. Everything we do is muted by the societal impact."

## PRAYERS AND FELLOWSHIP

The same week the mobile clinic ministered to Fountain Park residents, the University opened its doors to faith communities that had been devastated by the tornado.

On June 5, St. Francis Xavier College Church hosted an interfaith service of prayer, community and hope in solidarity with congregations whose worship sites had been affected by the storm.

Tim McMahon, S.J. (A&S '80), canonical pastor of the College Church and a SLU trustee, welcomed the participants, who included not just tornado victims but also College Church parishioners and friends. Pastors from three local congregations preached and offered their reflections. Afterward, everyone gathered for fellowship at a reception.

Nicci Roach, special assistant to SLU's president, helped plan the event in coordination with the College Church and SLU's Division of Mission and Identity.

"The room was so filled with heart," she said.

## ASSISTANCE ON CAMPUS

Across campus, Chaifetz Arena became a Disaster Assistance Center (DAC).

Opened June 9 through a partnership led by the City of St. Louis with the Missouri State Emergency Management Agency, the DAC brought together more than 30 government agencies, nonprofits and faith-based groups to provide coordinated support.

In the weeks that followed, people from hundreds of households visited the DAC for help navigating the recovery process. Survivors were able to access a range of services, including financial assistance, legal and insurance guidance, housing resources, health care and emotional support.

SLU provided both the venue and logistical backing for the multi-week effort. University leaders described the initiative as a natural extension of SLU's mission.

Although the campus had been spared, dozens of members of the SLU community felt the impact of the tornado in a tangible way. The University encouraged affected faculty and staff to reach out to SLU's Division of Human Resources (HR) for direct support, while students could contact the Office of the Dean of Students.

According to Tom Vonderheid, senior director of human resource operations, 26 employees contacted HR in the days that followed the tornado and received time off, financial assistance, help with temporary housing and more. HR referred some people to Helping Our Own, a program funded by SLU employees to help each other during financial crises, as well as the University's Employee Assistance Program, which offers free, confidential counseling.

Donney Moroney, assistant vice president and dean of students, said that the Student Emergency Relief Fund provided a total of \$31,600 to 25 students to assist with temporary accommodations, relocation fees, food and other essentials.



SARAH CONROY

FROM LEFT: Dr. Angela Cecil, associate professor, occupational science and occupational therapy; Jiaxi Lu, medical student; and Elizabeth Bacar, clinical research coordinator for the School of Medicine, canvass in the Fountain Park neighborhood.

## COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY

Summer wore on, and the University settled into another academic year, but the region still reeled from the effects of the tornado. A disaster of that magnitude simply could not be overcome in short order — full recovery will entail long-term commitment.

Rochelle D. Smith, SLU’s vice president and chief belonging officer, addressed this with the SLU community.

“Though efforts began in earnest immediately after the tornado, it is crucial we remain steadfast in our support of our neighbors and neighborhoods most impacted in the journey ahead to recovery,” Smith said. “As we continue to accompany one another through the aftermath of the storm, let us remain grounded in our mission and shared commitment to be men and women for and with others.” ☒

## TAKING ACTION / Advocates for Residents

When **Kimberly Turner** (Law ’14), an attorney and realtor, volunteered for tornado relief, she quickly realized that her professional expertise could be an asset.

“People were being told that their home was condemned, that if it has a red sticker, they no longer own it. To sign a quitclaim deed to give over rights to your home because it’s not worth anything anymore. It was heavy on my heart,” Turner said. “I felt that God was saying, ‘You can give out essential items. But what can you do as an attorney and a realtor?’”

What she did was help found The Coalition, which comprises attorneys, law students, realtors and insurance claim experts, as well as organizations including SLU law school’s Black Law Student Association (BLSA).

The Coalition protects and supports homeowners and tenants in St. Louis City whose homes were damaged or destroyed by the May 16 tornado. Volunteers help safeguard property rights, maximize insurance claim outcomes and ensure that people are not exploited or displaced, so the community can rebuild.

Days after the storm, the group created a “Know Your Rights” flyer, which they distributed through community hubs and shelters and by canvassing. They also established a weekly insurance claim hub to provide on-site legal and claims assistance and partnered with FEMA to help the community complete applications.

**LaShonda Lambert-Howze** (Law ’08), a senior counsel for Schnucks Markets Inc., got involved right away. Her house was damaged by the tornado, and she was already serving as an expert for her neighbors.

“I had a lot of people knocking. So, I just started walking around to my neighbors, asking if they understood what this process would look like, what resources they would need,” she said.

“It was like a second storm, because not only had they lost their homes, resources and paperwork — but they’re dealing with insurance companies, attempting to get contractors to get bids, not able to obtain resources from FEMA,” Lambert-Howze said.

The Coalition started distributing essentials through community partnerships.

**Robert Beckles**, who is pursuing a dual degree in law and social work at SLU, was involved with The Coalition through BLSA when he connected the group with Feeding Families, a program at SLU’s Doerr Center for Social Justice in the School of Social Work. Feeding Families delivers nutritious food to families facing severe food insecurity in St. Louis City and County and was funded at the time by the University’s 1818 Community Engagement Grant Program. The partnership with The Coalition led to more than 350 meals for residents over the summer.

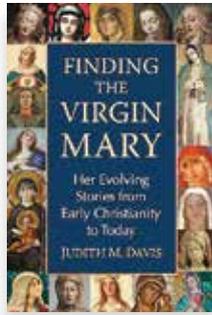
The Coalition is committed to continuing for the duration.

“As long as we’re needed, we will be available to the community,” Lambert-Howze said.

## Class notes

1958

**DR. JUDITH (FELKER) DAVIS** (A&S) has been teaching and writing about the Virgin Mary for more than 25 years, most recently in a book, *Finding the Virgin Mary: Her Evolving Stories from Early Christianity to Today*.



Davis is a professor emerita of French and humanities at Goshen College in Indiana.

1965

**DR. TIM BERRA** (A&S) wrote *The Peopling of Polynesia: From Taiwan to Easter Island*. He is an academy professor emeritus in the Department of Evolution, Ecology and Organismal Biology at The Ohio State University at Mansfield.

1969

**BOB BARTON** (A&S) joined the litigation department of Miller Nash LLP. He is based in the Portland, Oregon, office.

**WILLIAM CONLEY** (PC) is chief executive officer and chairman of the board for Sky-Trax Inc., an engineering technology provider that serves a range of safety, process optimization and productivity needs.

1970

**KEVIN F. O'MALLEY** (A&S '70, LAW '73), United States ambassador to Ireland from 2014 to 2017, received an honorary doctorate in law from University College Dublin in September in recognition of his career as a diplomat, lawyer and advocate for transatlantic partnership.

1971

**DR. ROBERT W. TAYLOR** (GRAD ED), professor of earth and environmental studies at Montclair State University in New Jersey, published the book *Critical Thinking in Sustainability: Conflicting Perspectives*.

1972

**JOSEPH MICHAEL TEETS** (PC) received both the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award and the Charles Taylor Master Mechanic Award in August 2025. The awards are given by the Federal Aviation Administration to those with 50 years or more of practicing and promoting safe aircraft operations and maintenance. Teets lives in Florida.

1973

**ERIC BRAM** (A&S '73, GRAD ED '81) is the owner and a patent attorney at Bram Patent Services in Huntsville, Alabama.

**JAMES M. GALLEN** (CSB '73, LAW '76) is a member of Evans and Dixon in its St. Louis office and serves as president of the College of Workers' Compensation Lawyers.

**JAMES HACKETT** (A&S '73, LAW '78) was appointed to the Fifth District Appellate Court, which hears cases from across 48 counties in the southern part of Illinois.

1975

**JOHN F. SHEKLETON** (A&S) wrote *Bellosio: An Age of Miracles*, which was named a "distinguished favorite" in the epic fantasy category for the 2025 NYC Big Book Award. Shekleton, a writer and former member of the Jesuits, lives in Minneapolis.

1976

**LAWRENCE ALTMAN** (LAW) received the 2025 W. Oliver Rasch Award for his article in the *Journal of the Missouri Bar*, "U.S. Supreme Court's June 2023 ruling concludes Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 is constitutional."

1978

**DR. GEORGE LINSENMEYER** (MED) is a clinical cardiologist for Marshall Health Network in Huntington, West Virginia. He recently published two children's books, *Sherri the Shrimp Saves the Day* and *Magnolia and the Gang Save the Day*.

1980

**THERESAMARIE MANTESE** (LAW), **GERARD V. MANTESE** (LAW '82) and their co-counsel achieved a landmark class action settlement that requires the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to improve mental health care for 90,000 children.

**DR. MARC D. SMITH** (GRAD), a retired Episcopal priest, published *Vestry Reflections: Cultivating Spiritual Growth in Church Leaders* in November.

STAY CONNECTED  
TO SLU

No matter where life takes you,  
you're always a Billiken.

Make sure your contact information is up to date, and we'll keep in touch with invitations to upcoming events, networking opportunities, news from your college or school, and more.



## KEY

Following each alumni name in *Universitas* is an abbreviation of the college or school from which that alum graduated. Here's a key to the abbreviations.

**A&S** / COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

**CSB** / RICHARD A. CHAIFETZ SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

*Includes alumni who graduated under the school's previous names, the John Cook School of Business, the School of Commerce and Finance, and the School of Business and Administration*

**DCHS** / DOISY COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

*Includes alumni who graduated from the School of Allied Health Professions*

**DENT** / SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY

**ED** / SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

**GRAD**  
*Used in front of other abbreviations to indicate a graduate degree*

**IT** / INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

**LAW** / SCHOOL OF LAW

**MED** / SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

**P&L** / COLLEGE OF PHILOSOPHY AND LETTERS

**PC** / PARKS COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING, AVIATION AND TECHNOLOGY

**PH** / COLLEGE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

**PS** / SCHOOL FOR PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

**S&E** / SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

**SW** / SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

*Includes alumni who graduated under the school's previous name, the School of Social Service*

**VSN** / TRUDY BUSCH VALENTINE SCHOOL OF NURSING

*Includes alumni who graduated from the School of Nursing*

## 1981

**RICHARD P. DORSEY III** (CSB '81, GRAD '84, LAW '84) received the Good Scout Award from the Greater St. Louis Area Council. Scouting USA recognized his 56 years in scouting as well as his service on the boards of numerous community organizations throughout the St. Louis area.

## 1986

**DR. LINDA (BRANDEBERRY) WOOLF** (GRAD ED '86, '88), a professor at Webster University, was elected president of the American Psychological Association.

## 1987

**STEPHEN J. MURPHY III** (LAW) became chief judge for the Eastern District of Michigan. He joined the district's bench in 2008 after being nominated by former President George W. Bush.

## 1990

**DR. EDWARD LOTT** (CSB) earned a doctorate in management in April 2025. He is a professor of management at Maryville University.

## 1991

**ELLEN W. DUNNE** (LAW) was appointed as circuit judge in Missouri's 21st Judicial Circuit. She lives in St. Louis.

## 1992

**PHILIP LONGMEYER** (A&S) is a partner at Dinsmore in Louisville, Kentucky. In January 2025, he helped secure an acquittal in a federal murder trial, an outcome achieved in less than 1% of such cases.

## 1993

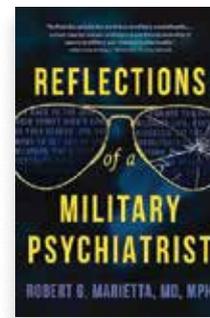
**BRYAN SKELTON** (LAW) joined a group of attorneys in early 2025 to form Skelton Moore Powell Lindsey and Pour, a civil litigation defense law firm headquartered in St. Louis.

## 1994

**JEFFERY MCPHERSON** (LAW) was appointed as circuit judge in Missouri's 21st Judicial Circuit.

## 1995

**MARLOWE VALDEABELLA** (CSB) and **MALENA (HOEGER) VALDEABELLA** (SW '01, GRAD SW '03) have acquired the HOTWORX 24-Hour Infrared Fitness Studio adjacent to SLU's campus. They opened their first studio in 2023 near Malena's hometown in Dubuque, Iowa.



## 1996

**DR. ROBERT MARIETTA** (A&S '96, MED '00), a psychiatrist serving with Veterans Affairs, wrote a book called *Reflections of a Military Psychiatrist*.

## 1997

**MICHAEL P. MCMILLAN** (A&S), president and CEO of the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, received the John W. Mack Medal of Honor, the National Urban League's highest distinction for leadership and service, in July 2025. The recognition honors McMillan's commitment to civil rights, community empowerment and transformational leadership across the region and the nation.

**SHARON (GUNDERSON) RYBACK** (GRAD VSN) started the Museum of Costume Jewelry in Asheville, North Carolina. Ryback left psychiatric nursing after 40 years, including teaching at Goldfarb School of Nursing and Galen College of Nursing.

## 1998

**DR. PATRICIA ZAHN** (A&S) was inducted as a member of the Academy of Community Engagement Scholarship in July 2025.

## Class notes

2000

**CASEY CIRA** (A&S '00, LAW '04) is a partner at Simmons Hanly Conroy. Based in the firm's Alton, Illinois, office, she focuses her practice on helping victims of mesothelioma and other asbestos-related diseases.

**DR. JULIE (AKER) KACZMARK** (MED) is a diagnostic radiologist with Inland Imaging in Spokane, Washington. She was inducted as a fellow of the American College of Radiology in May 2025.

**DR. DREW KRAMER** (A&S) is an associate professor in the Department of Integrative Biology at the University of South Florida, where he studies quantitative ecology.

**JO ANNA (KING) POLLOCK** (LAW), partner at the Simmons Hanly Conroy law firm, played a leading role in the founding and national expansion of education nonprofit Lindenwood Education System (LES). Pollock vice-chairs the boards of trustees for LES and Lindenwood University.

**MATTHEW RADEFELD** (LAW), an attorney with decades of experience in criminal defense, launched Radefeld Law Group in March 2025. A former corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps and captain in the U.S. Army's Judge Advocate General's Corps, Radefeld had been a prosecutor in military courts.

2004

**DR. JEFF DEGRAFFENREID** (GRAD) completed the Executive Leaders Program at the Center for Defense and Homeland Security at the Naval Postgraduate School. He is the fire chief and director of emergency management for the City of Olathe, Kansas.

**TODD SIVIA** (LAW) opened a new location of his firm, Sivia Law, along with Heartland Title and Escrow, in Centralia, Illinois. It is Sivia Law's seventh location. The office is anchored by **BRANDON NIEPOETTER** (LAW '19), a member of the firm since 2022.

**ERIKKA WILLIAMS** (GRAD) has worked in commercial insurance for the past 10 years.



### TUNE IN TO 1818: A SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY ALUMNI PODCAST

Some stories from Saint Louis University's past have become legend and lore, but much of the University's most intriguing history is unknown — until now.

Tune in to *1818: A Saint Louis University Alumni Podcast*, where more than 200 years of SLU history come to life, hosted by Executive Development Director Meg (Burnes) Connolly (A&S '90, Grad '92) and Assistant Vice President of Alumni and Donor Engagement Tony Minor (A&S '03).

This season, they're diving deep — from the real story behind the infamous exorcism that inspired a Hollywood film ... to the early days of Billiken Athletics ... to the untold ways SLU has shaped the St. Louis community and how SLU's iconic Billiken mascot got its start.

Whether you're a proud alum, current Billiken or just love a good story — this podcast is for you. Scan the QR code to learn more.



2005

**MICHAEL J. DEEM** (GRAD A&S) was ordained as a deacon in the Diocese of Pittsburgh in October 2024. He serves the people of St. Aidan Parish in Wexford, Pennsylvania. Deem is an associate professor in the School of Public Health and the Center for Bioethics and Health Law at the University of Pittsburgh. He and his wife, Katerina, live outside Pittsburgh with their five children.

**MELISSA CROWE SCHOPFER** (LAW), a partner at Simmons Hanly Conroy, won the 2025 Women of Plaintiffs Asbestos Litigation Seminar (PALS) Award. Schopfer has worked on more than 500 cases and helped to recover over \$100 million in settlements and verdicts on behalf of people who have been impacted by mesothelioma and other asbestos-related diseases.

2006

**UNTRESS "TREZ" QUINN** (LAW), a partner at Armstrong Teasdale, is president of the Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis. Prior to becoming an attorney, Quinn was a registered nurse for more than 10 years and a member of the U.S. Air Force Reserves for 13 years, where he achieved the rank of first lieutenant.

2008

**ANNIE (HENDRICKSON) HOFFMAN** (LAW) is a circuit judge in South Dakota's Second Circuit.

**DR. JASON BURKE MURPHY** (GRAD A&S) presented "What's the Problem with Property in Democracy?" at an international conference organized by the Institut für Philosophie and the Centre for Global Cooperation Research held at the University of Duisburg-Essen in Germany in June 2025.

2009

**MICHAEL KIBBE** (LAW) is a shareholder at Littler, the largest employment and labor law practice representing management. In February 2025, he was appointed to co-lead Littler's veterans initiative affinity group. He lives in Irvine, California.

## HOW I GOT HERE



O'Leary (FAR RIGHT) with her siblings (FROM LEFT) Chrissy, Joe and Tim

**1979** O'Leary is born in St. Louis, the oldest of four siblings. Her mom is a nurse and her dad, a letter carrier. The family settles in Webster Groves, Missouri, where O'Leary will later raise her own family.

**1997** She graduates from Cor Jesu Academy and heads to Saint Louis University to study occupational therapy.

*"I chose SLU because they had a great OT program, and it was direct entry for freshmen. I worked hard in high school and wanted to know in advance that I didn't have to be concerned about getting into a program after college courses had begun."*

**1998** She meets John O'Leary on the dance floor at a fraternity party. He wants to date, but she declines: "John, you're like a brother to me." After years of friendship, she realizes her feelings have changed and asks him out.

**2001** She graduates magna cum laude from SLU.

*"My first job after college was working PRN (on an as-needed basis) at SLU Hospital. I worked there as a rehab aide in college, so it was an easy transition into working as an OT. At the same time, I was also working hourly for the Special School District as an OT. The following year, that became my first full-time job."*



**2003** Beth marries John on Nov. 22. Twenty years from now, she'll lend her wedding dress to actor Masey McLain, who will portray her on the big screen.

Beth and John at their wedding reception



At her SLU commencement with her parents, Mary and Joe Hittler



### Beth O'Leary

BETH (HITTLER) O'LEARY (DCHS '01), AN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST, MOTHER AND WIFE OF MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER JOHN O'LEARY (CSB '99), WATCHED HER LIFE BECOME A MAJOR MOTION PICTURE.

— by Amy Garland



**2014** Beth becomes an adjunct instructor of occupational therapy at SLU.

**2016** John writes *On Fire: The 7 Choices to Ignite a Radically Inspired Life*, based on his work as an inspirational speaker who survived a near-fatal fire as a child.

*"John's book was wonderful and a culmination of years of writing and speaking. He had worked so hard at building his career as a motivational speaker while I was working a bit but mostly raising our four children as he traveled nationally and internationally. They were 4, 6, 8 and 10 when On Fire was released. It became a national bestseller."*



The O'Leary children in 2016 with John's book, *On Fire* (FROM LEFT) Patrick, Grace, Henry and Jack

**2018** John is approached about making a movie based on *On Fire*.

*"The entire movie process took eight years from beginning to end."*

**2023** Beth visits the set of *Soul on Fire*, part of which is filmed on SLU's campus. She serves behind the scenes as an expert to help the actors depict OT exercises properly — and even appears onscreen as an OT professor and an audience member during the graduation scene.

*"So many miracles took place for everything to happen: John's survival as a 9-year-old child from a fire; securing a screenwriter and director; raising funds; passing a law to get the movie made in St. Louis; attracting amazing Hollywood actors. The final miracle was when Sony purchased the film and made it a theatrical release worldwide."*

**2025** Beth attends the world premiere of *Soul on Fire* at Powell Hall in St. Louis. She goes to screenings for her SLU friends and for the Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy.

*"Seeing the movie, so many emotions went through my head. It's hard to separate real life from a story on the screen. So much of the movie was true to the story in many ways, but I had to learn to laugh at the parts that weren't completely factual."*





SAVE THE DATE

# Homecoming and Family Weekend

September 25-27, 2026

Scan the QR code to learn more.



**MEGAN WILLIAMS** (LAW) is a partner at Simmons Hanly Conroy. She manages the probate division, supporting asbestos and mass tort cases. She is based in the Alton, Illinois, office.

**CENGIZ YAR** (CSB), a documentary photographer and editor based in El Paso, Texas, is a visuals editor at ProPublica. His first monograph, *The Alabaster Grave*, contains photos taken between 2015 and 2023 and explores the destruction in the Iraqi city of Mosul, in the context of its history and unique, now largely ruined, architecture.

## 2011

**MAGGIE HINES** (A&S) is the deputy general counsel of Ducks Unlimited Inc. She focuses on corporate and environmental law and works at the headquarters in Memphis, Tennessee.

## 2012

**BRYAN SCHREMPF** (LAW) is a principal at Danna McKittrick, P.C. He joined the firm in 2023.

**KATHERINE THOMPSON** (LAW) was named one of the “2025 40 Under 40” by the *Springfield Business Journal*. Thompson has represented regional public service providers for more than a decade, now as legal and regulatory counsel for City Utilities of Springfield, Missouri.

## 2014

**JACQUELINE DUVALL** (LAW) is “of counsel” in Ogletree Deakins’ Kansas City office.

## FIVE REASONS TO ATTEND A SLU ALUMNI EVENT IN 2026

**LYNN RYAN** (A&S) joined Fox Rothschild in New York as an associate in the corporate department. She guides clients through mergers and acquisitions and the diligence process.

## 2016

**DR. AMY ESTLUND** (GRAD PH), an associate professor and program coordinator of public health at Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Missouri, is serving as a Fulbright U.S. Scholar at the University of Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## 2017

**TORREY PETERSON** (LAW) is a partner at Shook, Hardy and Bacon. She defends clients in product liability actions, focusing on pharmaceutical drug and surgical device litigations. She lives in Kansas City, Missouri.

## 2025

**STEPHEN CHAPMAN** (LAW) was a member of the 2025 fall associates class at Shook, Hardy and Bacon. Chapman was part of the complex litigation practice group.

**NOAH MARLAR** (LAW) joined the business litigation practice group as a 2025 fall associate at Shook, Hardy and Bacon.

You found a home at Saint Louis University. This year, take advantage of that community, no matter where life has taken you. SLU alumni events, hosted year-round worldwide, offer:

- 1 The ability to build your **professional and personal network** through happy hours, lectures and continuing education.
- 2 A chance to **catch up with friends** — and make new ones — through gatherings at sporting events, art venues and other hot spots.
- 3 Access to **exclusive experiences** and updates about SLU, including special appearances by leadership and VIPs.
- 4 **Opportunities to celebrate**, from milestone events and alumni awards to expressions of SLU’s shared mission and identity.
- 5 An avenue to **show your pride in SLU**. Every gathering is the perfect occasion to wear your SLU-blue best!

SEE WHAT’S COMING UP IN YOUR AREA AT

↓  
[SLU.EDU/ALUMNI/EVENTS](https://slu.edu/alumni/events)



## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT *Amy Hopfinger*

Her next move changed the trajectory of her career. **Dan Flynn** (CSB '78), former CEO of the U.S. Soccer Federation, helped her secure an entry-level position with the organization. She expected to be there a year but stayed nearly two decades, most recently as vice president of events and special advisor to the United States, Mexico and Canada's winning campaign for the FIFA World Cup 2026. She was also a founding architect and lead for the federation's SheBelieves movement, one of American sports' premier platforms to inspire and empower girls and young women.

Growing up around sports, she learned about being part of a team, Hopfinger said. Watching her father also taught her the value of hard work and about being a good boss and person. She also learned life lessons at Saint Louis University.

"SLU helped lay the groundwork for my future," she said. She was pushed to challenge herself and step outside her comfort zone, making lifelong friends and mentors along the way.

"SLU did a great job of helping me discover what was best for me as a person, not just a student," she said. "My time at SLU also taught me a lot about community and the importance of being part of and surrounded by a great team. I would not be where I am today without so many amazing people that I have had the fortune to work for and with."

The ability to challenge herself and push limits has quietly defined her career, she said.

Hired in 2022 as the first U.S.-based employee for the FIFA World Cup 2026, she now oversees hundreds of employees as they prepare for what is projected to be the largest sporting event in history. With over 6 million fans filling stadiums across 16 host cities — and 6 billion more engaging with the tournament across the globe — all eyes will be on the FIFA World Cup from June 11 to July 19, 2026.

Hopfinger's advice for SLU students and fellow alumni is to put themselves out there and be open to what comes next. The reward? Being surrounded by excellence.

"Seeing firsthand teams train and play at the highest level ... how can you not want to be the best if you are surrounded by the best?" she said. "Thankfully, I've gotten to do that all my life."

— by Anne Marie Apollo-Noel

**A**my Hopfinger (A&S '03) has been behind some of the world's biggest and most successful global events, a leader for women in sports and part of the groundbreaking growth of soccer in the United States. As the FIFA World Cup 2026's chief business and strategy officer, she is charged with planning and overseeing the FIFA World Cup this summer.

She said her success was possible only because she was willing to put herself out there and ask for help along the way. "Things don't just happen for you," she said. "You have to go out and get them."

At 18, Hopfinger thought she was going to be a physical therapist, a path inspired by her father, Billiken Hall-of-Famer **Bill Hopfinger** (DCHS '78), who often brought her to campus when she was young as he worked with Saint Louis University athletes as SLU's head athletic trainer. Ultimately, though, she graduated from SLU with a degree in psychology.

# In memoriam

This list of deceased alumni was compiled by SLU's Office of Research and Development Services. If you have a question or would like more information about an "In Memoriam" listing, please send an email message to [devupdates@slu.edu](mailto:devupdates@slu.edu).

## ALUMNI

### 1940 - 49

George Millner (PC '42)

Joseph Dunn (CSB '43)

**Dr. Mary (Nawrocki)**

**McGinnis (A&S '45, MED '52)** died Sept. 13, 2025, at age 101. She made history as the first woman to graduate from SLU's School of Medicine. Known professionally as Dr. Nawrocki, she spent 27 years of her career in rehabilitative medicine at the Harmorville Rehabilitation Center in Pennsylvania.

Kay (Kircher) Best (A&S '46)

Katherine Heffernan,  
B.V.M. (A&S '46)

George McCalpin Jr. (A&S '47)

Francis Meier (MED '47)

Doris (Doyen) Faught (CSB '48)

Margaret (Dempsey)  
Fayen (SW '48)

Nicholas Swatek (CSB '48)

A. Daniel Buechler (CSB '49)

Anna Cunningham (SW '49)

Edward Knop (CSB '49)

### 1950

**Anita Lyons Bond (A&S)**, a civil rights advocate and academic, died Aug. 15, 2025, at age 95. Bond was the first Black undergraduate to graduate from SLU with honors. A delegate to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, she became president of the St. Louis Board of Education in 1974 and helped write the plan to desegregate St. Louis Public Schools. In 2015, she received an honorary degree from SLU.

Charles Kohler (CSB)

Robert Kriegshauser (CSB)

Florence (Kirkpatrick)  
Murphy (VSN)

Mary (Mullins)  
Prendergast (DCHS)

Marilyn (Reppell)  
Stolwyk (A&S)

Raymond VanderVliet (PC)

### 1951

Ramon Garrett (PC)

Loyal Harant (DENT)

Donald Maley (CSB)

Mary (Flinn) Rathman (VSN)

**James Swetnam, S.J. (A&S '51, GRAD A&S '52, '60)** died April 27, 2025. He was 97 years old and a Jesuit for 79 years. Over five decades at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, Swetnam held almost every academic and community position. At age 82, he moved to Jesuit Hall in St. Louis, where he taught and authored two websites about scripture.

George Wandell (PC)

### 1952

Alan Clarke (PC)

**Dr. Charles Dahm Jr. (A&S '52, MED '56, GRAD A&S '10)**, a former professor at SLU School of Medicine, died Aug. 15, 2025. He was 94. In 1967, Dahm joined the School of Medicine faculty in obstetrics and gynecology, where he taught for 37 years.

A specialist in high-risk pregnancies involving diabetic mothers, he also practiced for more than four decades.

Russell Kinney Jr. (A&S)

Gregory Nooney Jr. (CSB)

Emil Poertner (LAW)

### 1953

John Antrim (PC)

**Rep. William Clay Sr. (A&S)**, one of SLU's first African American graduates and Missouri's first Black congressman, died July 16, 2025, at age 94. With a 32-year congressional tenure, Clay sponsored more than 100 bills that became law, focusing on civil rights, labor and education. He received an honorary degree from SLU in 2018 and the University's Pioneer Award in 2023. In 2025, SLU established the William L. Clay Sr. Institute of Civic Engagement and Economic Justice. (See page 6.)

Virginia (Brungard)  
Fitzgerald (DCHS)

Elizabeth (Haupt)  
Hessburg (A&S)

Robert Onder (CSB)

James Poon (MED)

Trudy (Erlacher) Ritter (VSN)

**Dr. William Sly (A&S '53, MED '57)**, a professor emeritus, died May 31, 2025, at age 92. In 1984, he became the Alice A. Doisy Professor and Chairman of the Edward A. Doisy Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, which he led for 26 years. In 2007, he became the inaugural holder of the James B. and Joan C. Peter Endowed Chair in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. He retired in 2014. He researched the disease that now bears his name, Sly syndrome. In 2021, SLU established the William S. Sly Centennial Chair.

George Velz (PC)

### 1954

Bruce Becker (A&S)

Gloria (Hollis) Broun (VSN)

Agnes Cunningham,  
S.S.C.M. (A&S)

Harold Mabrey (A&S)

Teresa McKenna-Erken (VSN)

Hugh Mestres (MED)

Jacqueline (Pfeffer) Miller (A&S)

Anthony Palazzolo (A&S)

Marian Sotel (A&S)

Thomas Sweeney (MED)

Gloria (Palmer) Vincent (CSB)

### 1955

Joan (Bodner) Adams (DCHS)

Joseph Box (DENT)

Michael Conway (PC)

Edmond Fitzgerald Jr. (MED)

Miles Hellman (DENT)

H. Bernice (Boucher)  
Hopp (DCHS)

Sheila (Prendergast)  
Luetkehans (SW)

Walter Sin Lung (DENT)

Loretta (Keeley) Roberts (ED)

Donald Schaefer (CSB)

Harry Sunder (CSB)

AnnaMae Tolomeo (VSN)

### 1956

Catherine Brenneman (DCHS)

Vincent DeBlaze (CSB)

Joseph DeCiechi (CSB)

Peter Duhamel (MED)

Robert Flick (IT)  
 Ernest Genco (DENT)  
 Marcia Klawon, O.S.F. (DCHS)  
 James Merk (MED)  
 F. Douglas O’Leary (LAW)  
 Charles Peterson (MED)  
 Diana (Norsigian)  
 Petrosian (A&S)  
 Charles Stickford (A&S)  
 Sarina (Giallombardo)  
 Tillis (VSN)  
 Samuel Trotz (A&S)  
 Stuart Yaffe (MED)

1957

John Bouhasin (MED)  
 Arthur Burke Jr. (A&S)  
 Donald Cento Sr. (A&S)  
 George Dempsey Jr. (CSB)

Joseph Lipic Sr. (CSB), a leader in the promotional products industry, died May 23, 2025. He was 89 years old. Lipic owned and led Alexander Manufacturing Co. for nearly 60 years. His generosity to SLU was recognized through the naming of the Joseph G. Lipic Clock Tower Plaza.

Louise (Hines) McAllister (A&S)  
 Lucian Prohaska (PC)  
 Maynard Roush (PC)  
 Robert Worman (A&S)

1958

Harold Beasley (CSB)  
 Marie Boehmer, A.S.C. (A&S)  
 Billye Brown (VSN)  
 Jane (Watson)  
 Cunningham (A&S)  
 Mary Charity (Schmuck)  
 Dalton, C.S.J. (ED)  
 John Donnelly, S.J. (A&S)  
 James Empereur, S.J. (A&S)

Kenneth Gressler (PC)  
 Charles Hall Jr. (CSB)  
 Paul Hein Jr. (MED)  
 John Hunthausen, S.J. (CSB)  
 Edward Kramer (A&S)  
 Eugene Murphy (A&S)  
 Robert Owens (CSB)  
 Ronald Schoeck (MED)  
 Bernadette (Kelly) Tapella (A&S)  
 Curtis Van Del, S.J. (A&S)  
 Edward Wintergalen (IT)

1959

Richard Bazzetta (DENT)  
 Rafael Correa-Coronas (MED)  
 Mary Ann (Connor)  
 Freeman (A&S)  
 Robert Friedewald (CSB)

Gus Kamenko (CSB)  
 Gale Kristof (IT)  
 Robert Logomasini (DENT)  
 Arthur Lyons Jr. (A&S)  
 Francis McCafferty (MED)  
 Daniel McEneaney (PC)  
 Roy Nomura (MED)  
 Vernon Norell (PC)

William O’Brien (A&S)  
 Eugene Rossel (IT)  
 Joseph Walchshauser (A&S)  
 Betty Welland (VSN)

1960

Kenneth Clements (PC)  
 Rosemary (Hines) Dorsey (A&S)  
 Richard Eichhorn (A&S)  
 William Gerut, S.J. (A&S)  
 Joseph Gross (PC)  
 Joseph Hakala (DENT)

Dr. James Hitchcock (A&S), professor emeritus of history, died July 14, 2025. He was 87. Hitchcock began teaching at SLU in 1966 and remained until he retired in 2013. He was a noted historian of the Catholic Church and a prolific author with a dozen books, including *The Supreme Court and Religion in American Life*.

Mary Maher (ED)  
 Marcia Pratte (VSN)  
 S.R. Reddy (GRAD)  
 Joseph Sabella (IT)  
 Caroline Stoll (VSN)  
 William Stude Jr. (A&S)  
 Aloysius Ward (A&S)  
 Melvin Willenborg (DENT)  
 Robert Zamboni (PC)

1961

Thomas Baker Jr. (CSB)  
 Veronica (Meyer) Buben (VSN)  
 Jerome Carter Sr. (CSB)  
 Richard Counts (A&S)  
 Thomas Hyland (SW)  
 Donald Jerome (MED)  
 Patricia (Mooney) Levins (A&S)  
 Mary Morkovsky, C.D.P. (A&S)  
 Sheila (Thompson)  
 Nicholson (VSN)

Joseph Reinkemeyer (MED)  
 Robert Ryan (PC)  
 Thomas Schloemer, S.J. (A&S)

1962

Helen Brinkman, F.S.E. (ED)  
 Robert Clark (CSB)  
 Judith (Market) Cosgrove (A&S)  
 Jacqueline (Inglis) D’Cruz (VSN)  
 Susanne (Jarvis) Gerber (VSN)  
 James Gloeckner (CSB)

Dorothy Johnston (ED)  
 James Kappel (A&S)  
 Donald Labrot (PC)  
 Stephen Plaisted (PC)  
 Marvin Plamann (ED)  
 Donald Schappe (A&S)  
 Herman Marie Siebenmorgen,  
 S.S.N.D. (ED)  
 Carl Simpson (PC)  
 Darlene (Sobberi) Smith (VSN)  
 Michael Suchenski (MED)  
 Bernard Swaykus (MED)  
 Albert Thelen, S.J. (A&S)  
 Dennis Ulsomer (CSB)  
 Donald Vetrone (CSB)

1963

Francis Bottini (CSB)  
 Kenneth Cavanaugh (MED)  
 Rosemary Connelly, R.S.M. (ED)  
 John Everett Jr. (PC)  
 Ruth (Dyan) Gensman (SW)  
 Joan Glaser, O.P. (PH)  
 Richard Hoffman Jr. (A&S)  
 Anthony Marie Kasper,  
 S.S.N.D. (ED)  
 Gary O’Grady (CSB)  
 Edward Oswald (IT)  
 Steve Panus (PC)  
 Thomas Schuman (A&S)  
 Les Stege Jr. (CSB)  
 Dennis Wysocki (PC)

1964

Winifred Adelsberger,  
 C.S.J. (ED)  
 Kathleen (Brady) Andria (ED)  
 Dr. John Cross (GRAD), professor emeritus of psychology, died Oct. 27, 2025. He was 93. In 1966, he joined the SLU faculty. After a brief stint away, he returned

to SLU in 1973 as an associate professor of psychology and as assistant academic vice president. Cross also served as a coordinator of undergraduate psychology programs. He was a strong advocate of peace studies. He retired in 2004.

Mary Cunningham, S.L. (ED)

Thomas Depke (IT)

Robert Diekmann (A&S)

Nancy (Coates) McKinney (A&S)

Ann (McWilliams) Skoglund (A&S)

Richard Wagner (SW)

Claude Wiegand (SW)

1965

Charles Abele (LAW)

John Ahlquist (A&S)

Gerald Campbell (A&S)

Earl Davis (LAW)

Mike Graham (PC)

William Gross (A&S)

Carl Hendrickson (LAW)

James Howard (CSB)

Patricia (Frichtl) Kaus (VSN)

James Keene, S.J. (A&S)

Carol (Drevs) Kovac (A&S)

James Mauck (SW)

Ellen (Noel) Mellick (VSN)

Carolyn (James) Mooney (A&S)

Joseph Thaman III (A&S)

Lawrence Vastola (LAW)

Leo Webb (LAW)

1966

Ida Berresheim, C.S.J. (ED)

Donald Burrus (ED)

Judith Carron, R.S.M. (VSN)

Richard Davis (MED)

Edward Goering (SW)

Lars Hagen (ED)

James Hesse (LAW)

Rita Killian, R.S.M. (ED)

Michael Lynch (MED)

Katherine (Bugan) Mitros (DCHS)

Patricia (Phelan) Moore (A&S)

David Olenik (MED)

Edward Pepper (MED)

Stanley Schlarman (ED)

Catherine (Wilson) Simmons (A&S)

Richard Sonnemaker (PC)

John Stefanic (IT)

Leianna (Rasche) Young (A&S)

Robert Zink (A&S)

1967

Thomas Blevins (A&S)

Thomas Doll (A&S)

Peter Esselburne (PC)

Robert Firle (CSB)

James Gomric (LAW)

Manuel Gutierrez (CSB)

Christine Jobson (A&S)

Donald Johnson (PC)

William McClure (IT)

Gerald Niewoehner (A&S)

Richard Ripper (IT)

Vincent Scuzzo (MED)

Marie Seymour, R.S.M. (A&S)

Roger Spriggel (PC)

David Tiedeman (IT)

1968

Thomas Barnhart Jr. (A&S)

Richard Berger (A&S)

R. Bridges (MED)

J. Kevin Colligan (A&S)

Bernard Dawdy (PC)

Lovenia DeConge Watson (A&S)

Robert Dighton (IT)

Betty Lee (Morrison) Dodson (A&S)

Thomas Donahoe Jr. (A&S)

Clare Fitzgerald (A&S)

Thomas Fitzgibbons (LAW)

Alexander Lambros Jr. (PC)

Mary Lebeau CPPS (A&S)

Kenneth Leonard (CSB)

Bernard Mack Jr. (CSB)

Timothy McCarthy Jr. (SW)

Francis Neuner (DENT)

J. Dennis O'Leary (LAW)

Wilson Overall (CSB)

Frances (Palanti) Papa (VSN)

Kenneth Peirce Jr. (LAW)

Nicholas Rashford, S.J. (A&S)

Pamela (D'Angelo) Shephard (A&S)

Donald Smith (PC)

**John "Jack" Warner, S.J. (A&S)**, died Oct. 4, 2025. He was 80 years old and a Jesuit for 63 years. Warner is remembered for his ministry in El Progreso, Yoro, Honduras, where he established Teatro La Fragua ("Theater of the Forge"), a theater company, in 1979. The theater became a beacon of cultural resistance and social evangelization, and he led it until 2021.

William Wefel (LAW)

1969

John Garesche (A&S)

Joseph Georgevitch (CSB)

George Hambrook (MED)

Theresa (Healy) Jensen (A&S)

Urban Knoll (A&S)

Frank Lipson (DENT)

Joel Marie MacKay, S.S.N.D. (ED)

Donald Mantel (PC)

Donald Matthys, S.J. (A&S)

Thomas Murphy Jr. (CSB)

Regina Murphy, S.C. (ED)

John Ryan (CSB)

Justina Schaefer, A.S.C. (A&S)

James Schapp (SW)

James Thomas (A&S)

Alphonso Trotman (DENT)

John Tumbarello (LAW)

1970

**James Baker, S.J. (GRAD ED)** died June 25, 2025. He was 87 years old and a Jesuit for 68 years. Baker spent two decades in leadership at Jesuit secondary schools. In 1991, he became a campus minister and taught ethics at SLU's Parks College. He later became a campus minister at SLU's School of Medicine. In 2014, he moved to pastoral ministry at Jesuit Hall and then St. Ignatius Hall.

Genarose Buechler, A.S.C. (A&S)

Joseph Cocozzella (MED)

Robert Cralle (MED)

Charles Cumbow (PC)

Roberta (Dentinger) Curtin (VSN)

Walter Davis (DENT)

Charles Evans (CSB)

Merle Fischlowitz (ED)

Bonnie (Randolph) Gibson (SW)

Elizabeth Gremillion (ED)

Alexander Herzen (MED)

John Husted (A&S)

Stephen Kinney (A&S)

Carol (Licavoli) Kohnen (A&S)

Robert Landry (LAW)

Patrick McGraw (A&S)

Robert Tovey (SW)

M. Wasilweski, C.S.F. (SW)

David Wiesner (CSB)  
 Jerome Wilett (A&S)  
 Edward Wygonik (A&S)  
1971  
 Dale Berkbigler (A&S)  
 Adelaide Cline (DCHS)  
 M. (Bauman) Crowe (A&S)  
 Penny (Hoffman)  
 Engelsman (ED)  
 Donald Funderburk (IT)  
 Norman Jorgensen (DENT)  
 Michael Kotson (SW)  
 Peter Legere (A&S)  
 Joseph McCarthy (A&S)  
 Robert McKendry Jr. (CSB)  
 Vicky (Govero) Puronen (A&S)  
 Suzanne (Ryan) Roth (DCHS)  
 Patricia (Farih) Schoenung (PH)  
 George Smith (LAW)  
 Atiq Syed (IT)  
1972  
 Michael Bridges (ED)  
 Patricia (Williamson)  
 Caldwell (CSB)  
 Carol Callahan, R.S.M. (SW)  
 Dennis Coleman (A&S)  
 Robert Dolan Jr. (A&S)  
 Dorothy (Gassner) Finch (A&S)  
 Patrick Hitpas (LAW)  
 Patricia Lybarger (VSN)  
 Helena Monahan (A&S)  
 Larry Myers (A&S)  
1973  
 Gloria Abbington  
 Rosenbloom (ED)  
 Russell Bull (A&S)  
 Michael Dahl (PC)  
 Joseph Funfar (A&S)

Francine (Cassata) Glass (DCHS)  
 John Smolen (PH)  
 Ted Thompson (MED)  
1974  
 Mary Beard (CSB)  
 Richard Bohling Jr. (CSB)  
 Walter Brueggemann (ED)  
 Stephen Daniel (A&S)  
 Jerome Feist (SW)  
 James Knapp, S.J. (A&S)  
 David Kraeger (ED)  
 Peter Masucci Jr. (MED)  
 Ann Mertens (DCHS)  
 Charles Miceli (MED)  
 Michael Runde (A&S)  
 Peter Salm (LAW)  
 Kenneth Schirmang (CSB)  
 Dave Witt (CSB)  
 Albert Zimmerman (ED)  
1975  
 Philip Barling (A&S)  
 Patricia Connolly, D.C. (ED)  
 Patrick Devereux (CSB)  
 James Gerdes (ED)  
 Robert Gustafson (CSB)  
 Thomas Huddleston (ED)  
 Elizabeth Ortner-Chopin (LAW)  
 James Prier (PC)  
 Michael Pyzdrowski (PC)  
 Charles Ryder (PC)  
 Peter Seger (PC)  
 Gerald Wickenhauser,  
 M.M. (ED)  
1976  
 Edwin Aumiller (A&S)  
 M. Crowder, O.S.F. (VSN)  
 Patrick Frawley (LAW)

Larry Hall (ED)  
 Robert Salmo (CSB)  
 Alfred Shaplin (MED)  
 JoAnn (Vecchiarelli)  
 Smith (A&S)  
 Charles Stewart (SW)  
 Carol Teague (A&S)  
 William Woeger (ED)  
1977  
 Lawrence Brase Jr. (PC)  
 Stephen De Lurgio Sr. (CSB)  
 Robert Handkins (A&S)  
 Phyllis Headley (MED)  
 Velma Lambert (LAW)  
 Joseph Mangina (ED)  
 Robert Murphy (A&S)  
 Ruth Onken (VSN)  
1978  
 Helen (Hamm) Gamble (PC)  
 William Hanks (LAW)  
 Dennis Holway (CSB)  
 Stewart Johnson (CSB)  
 Leah Kabakeris (A&S)  
 William Molz (PS)  
 Thomas Paino (A&S)  
 Ronald Paul (ED)  
 Sandra Weinkein, D.C. (VSN)  
1979  
 Lilian Castellani-  
 Fernandez (A&S)  
 Jad Gennaoui (MED)  
 Jack Itzkowitz (LAW)  
 Juanita McCarthy (CSB)  
1980  
 James Dixon (LAW)  
 John Lochner III (MED)  
 Joyce (Farmer) McKinney (VSN)

Thomas O'Brien (A&S)  
 David Renaud (CSB)  
1981  
 Philip Becker (PC)  
 Frances (McDermott)  
 Craft (VSN)  
 Thomas Darrah (ED)  
 John Dwyer Jr. (LAW)  
 Maryallen (Collins) Estes (SW)  
 Betty Farris (A&S)  
 Stanley Griffis (CSB)  
 Virginia Ptak, F.M.M. (VSN)  
 Stephen Sprint (PH)  
1982  
 William Gilbert II (MED)  
 David Hanson (PC)  
 Ashley How (PC)  
 Katherine (Roesel) Mandel (SW)  
 Michael Mueller (PC)  
 Robert Salamone (A&S)  
 John Springborn (LAW)  
1983  
 Sandra (Wrigley)  
 Borgschulte (CSB)  
 Ellen Galanis (VSN)  
 Gedas Grinis (MED)  
 Timothy Hogan (A&S '83, LAW '85)  
 Stuart Keck (PS)  
 Jeffrey Langfels (PC)  
 Marycathryn Sheboy (VSN)  
1984  
 Steven Milligan (MED)  
 T. Vollmar (MED)  
1985  
 Michael Barbone (LAW)  
 Doris (Moore) MacDaniel (ED)  
 Gilbert Wagner (PC)

IN MEMORIAM

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>1986</u></p> <p>Mary (Kessler) McCarthy (sw) Susan (Stowers) Noakes (vsN) Eric Ostermeier (PC) Wilmot Scott (PC) Susan (Carmichael) Thomson (CSB)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>1987</u></p> <p>Katherine (Hunter) Powell (sw)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>1988</u></p> <p>Susanne Chenot (GRAD) Richard Oris (CSB) Paul Van Horn (ED)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>1989</u></p> <p>Donna Barry (A&amp;S) Jeffrey Wilkins (sw)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>1990 - 99</u></p> <p>Joseph Moynihan (A&amp;S '90) Judith (Dahlheimer) Roderick (ED '90) David Bramman (CSB '91) Richard Conant (LAW '92) Michael DiPlacido (CSB '92) Patrick Honig (CSB '93) Tina (Mertens) Casey (CSB '95) Jason Moore (PC '95) Rosemary Buyno (CSB '96) Mary Ann Degonia (A&amp;S '96)</p>	<p>Brian Corson (CSB '97) Diane Gray (LAW '97) Evelyne Lo (vsN '97) Anthony Hausladen (CSB '98) William Kellermann (ED '98) Daniele (Starr) Pasatieri (vsN '99) Adrienne Powell (sw '99)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>2000 - 09</u></p> <p>Patricia Roman (CSB '03) Michelle Hafner (CSB '04) Nicholas Pistor (A&amp;S '04) Alice Roach (ED '04) Sean Hayes (PC '05) Edward Parker (CSB '06)</p>	<p>Mark Brentz (CSB '07) Sarah Keller (DCHS '07) William Morrison (ED '07) Melissa Marquis (PH '09)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>2010 - 24</u></p> <p>Gloria Skelton (PS '10) Reinald Kozikowski (A&amp;S '12) Aleksandr Lanis (MED '12) Jamila Yezza (A&amp;S '12) Andrew Martin (A&amp;S '15) Brian Wiese (PC '17) John Davis (ED '18) Owen Seal (DCHS '24)</p>
--	--	---	--

FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATORS

**Dr. Bruce Bacon**, professor emeritus of internal medicine, died July 6, 2025, at age 75. An internationally recognized clinician and researcher, Bacon came to SLU in 1990. In 1994, he helped launch the Saint Louis University Liver Center, which gained attention for its work with hepatitis C patients, including singer Naomi Judd, who credited Bacon with curing her. He retired from SLU in 2020.

**Dr. Robert Bolla**, former chair of the biology department, died July 27, 2025, at age 81. Bolla's research centered around parasitic roundworms. He started at SLU in 1989 as a professor and chair of biology. He left the University in 2001.

**Matthew Braun**, professor and director of SLU's Vincent C. Immel Law Library, died May 28, 2025, at age 48. Braun joined the School of Law in 2023. Before that, he served at several law libraries, including the Law Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

**Barth Breneman**, former assistant director of facilities management, died Sept. 19, 2025. He was 66. Breneman dedicated nearly 35 years of his career to Saint Louis University.

**Dr. Helen De Cruz**, the Danforth Chair in the Humanities, died June 20, 2025, at age 46. De Cruz joined the University in 2019 as a professor of philosophy with a secondary appointment in theological studies. She also was editor-in-chief of *Res Philosophica*, the international journal of philosophy. She was in the first cohort of SLU Research Institute Fellows in 2022.

**Dr. Patrick "PJ" Gannon**, former professor of psychiatry, died Aug. 26, 2025. He was 94 years old. Gannon immigrated to the United States from Ireland in 1967 to become a psychiatrist at the Missouri State Hospital, where he later became superintendent. He joined SLU's faculty in 1976 and stayed until 2001.

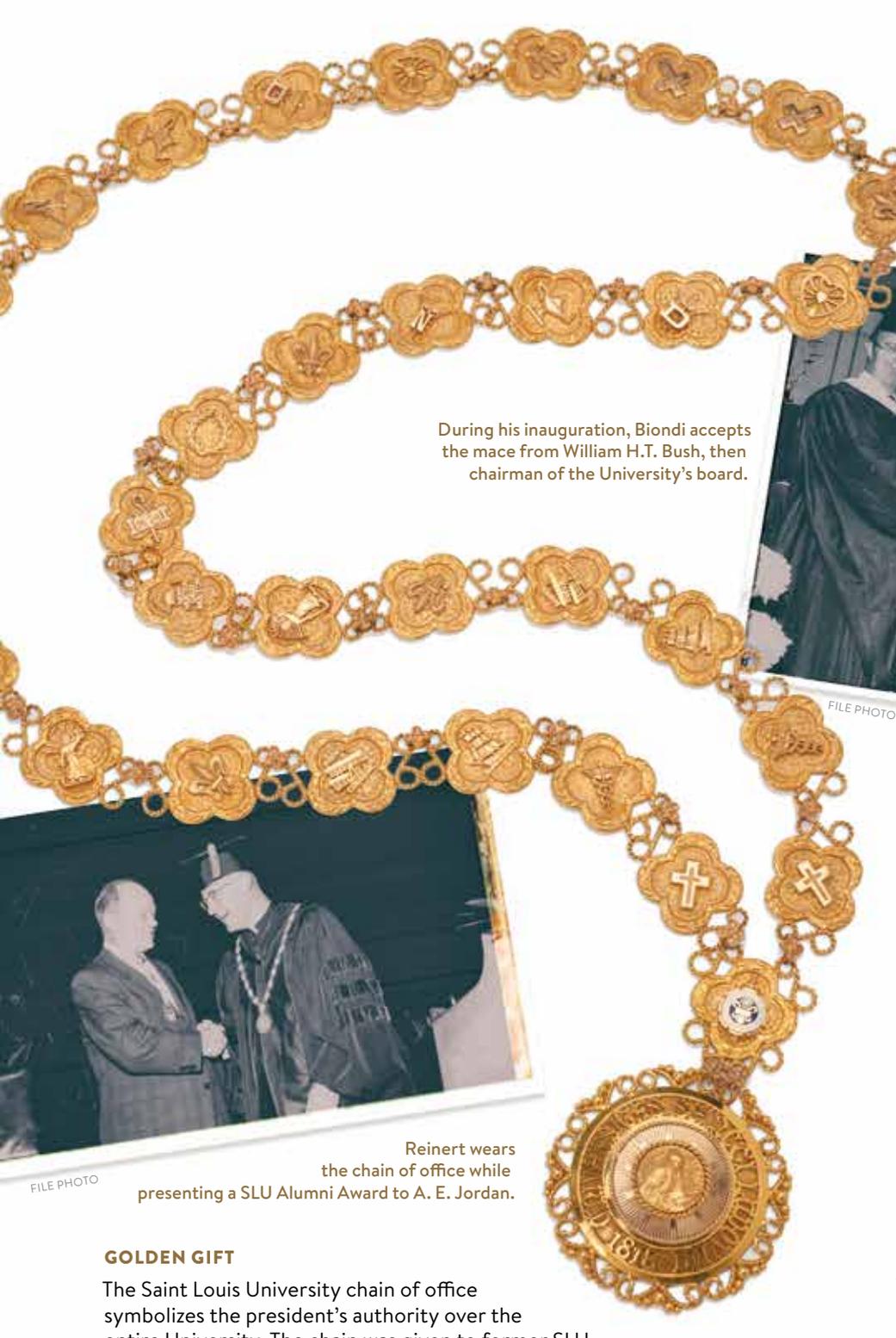
**Dr. James "Jim" Hebda**, professor of mathematics and statistics, died Jan. 18, 2026, at age 73. Hebda joined the University in 1981 as an assistant professor. His scholarly expertise was in differential geometry and Riemannian geometry. From 2011-17, he served as chair of the Department of Mathematics. He stayed on the faculty for nearly 45 years, beginning a phased retirement in 2023.

**Dr. James Korn**, emeritus professor of psychology, died July 17, 2025. He was 87. Korn came to SLU in 1974 to lead the psychology department. In 1997, he helped establish the Paul C. Reinert, S.J., Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning. He retired in 2006, the year the center created the James H. Korn Award and the University established the James H. Korn Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Award.

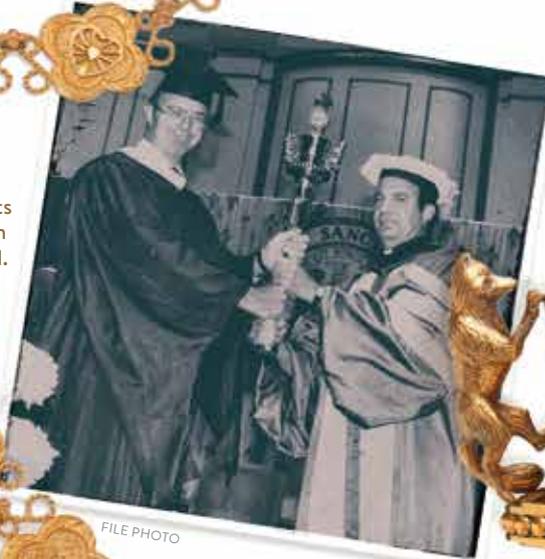
**Dr. Kathryn Mitchell Pierce**, associate professor of educational studies, died Dec. 10, 2025, at age 70. Pierce came to Saint Louis University in 2015 as a literacy specialist in the undergraduate education program. She eventually taught and mentored across all levels and was integral to the redesign of the School of Education's undergraduate curriculum. Her research interests included children's literature and classroom discourse.

**Dr. Leo "Charlie" Senay Jr.**, a former professor of physiology at SLU for 37 years, died Aug. 5, 2025, at age 98. Senay pioneered an interdisciplinary research approach and advanced understanding of human thermoregulation, fluid balance and physiological responses to environmental stressors.

## The last look



During his inauguration, Biondi accepts the mace from William H.T. Bush, then chairman of the University's board.



FILE PHOTO



FILE PHOTO

Reinert wears the chain of office while presenting a SLU Alumni Award to A. E. Jordan.

### GOLDEN GIFT

The Saint Louis University chain of office symbolizes the president's authority over the entire University. The chain was given to former SLU President Paul C. Reinert, S.J., by the president's council, a forerunner to the board of trustees, at a Founders' Day celebration in 1957.

### STRONG LINKS

The chain includes more than 30 medallions and a larger pendant, which features a likeness of St. Ignatius Loyola as well as the words *Universitas Sancti Ludovici* ("Saint Louis University" in Latin) and the University's founding year, 1818. Some of the medallions feature symbols representing the SLU schools and colleges established before 1957.

### EXECUTIVE STAFF

Commissioned in 1987, the mace was given first to President Emeritus Lawrence Biondi, S.J., at his inauguration. Since then, the piece has been part of all formal academic occasions at SLU. It represents the Catholic, Jesuit and urban influences of the University.

### EXCEPTIONAL SCEPTER

Handcrafted in bronze by a St. Louis artisan, the mace is 30 inches long and weighs 11 pounds. On top is a cross supported by the SLU seal. Beneath are two wolves at a cauldron, a symbol from the coat of arms of the House of Loyola, from which descended St. Ignatius, founder of the Jesuits. The crown of the mace rests on three fleurs-de-lis taken from the royal standard of King St. Louis IX of France, namesake of both the University and the City of St. Louis. The names of every SLU president are inscribed on the handle.

### MEDIEVAL ORIGIN

The mace as a symbol traces back to medieval times, when churchmen would carry clublike staffs into battle because the use of swords was forbidden under biblical injunction.





**SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY**

1 N. GRAND BLVD.  
ST. LOUIS, MO 63103

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
ST. LOUIS, MO  
PERMIT NO. 134



# SLU GIVING DAY 2026

**EVERY MINUTE COUNTS  
EVERY GIFT MATTERS**

**Save the Date: April 9, 2026**

## **Saint Louis University's 24-hour giving initiative is coming soon!**

**Rally with Billikens worldwide and show the power of collective philanthropy.**

- Help unlock matching and challenge gifts.
- Designate a contribution to one area or split it between multiple projects.
- Become a Giving Day Advocate to champion your favorite SLU cause.



**Early giving starts March 26.**

Visit [slu.edu/give/ways-to-give/giving-day.php](http://slu.edu/give/ways-to-give/giving-day.php) or scan the QR code to learn more.