

CONTACT

SPRING 2016 VOL. 16 N. 2

NEWSLETTER FOR ALUMNI & FRIENDS OF ST. THOMAS UNIVERSITY

Digging Deep at the Dominick Miniaci Beach Volleyball Courts



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a Campus p. 8*

*Vatican Official Talks
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



It has been a busy spring at St. Thomas University, as we continue to implement our Blueprint for Leadership Plan, the plan to cement STU's position as the best Catholic university in the southeast. This visionary and transformative plan touches every area of the university, from our schools and college, to our library and athletics. As you will read in this edition of CONTACT, we are already seeing the impact of the investments.

Our new Goldbloom Endowed Distinguished Chair in Cybersecurity Management has been hired – an expert in this emerging area of study. New lights will be shining down on our soccer teams – scholar athletes that perform as exceptionally in the classroom as on the field. Students returned from study abroad experiences in India – experiences that allow our students to attend world-renowned programs, excel in competitions, immerse themselves in a second language, or observe how businesses evolve in challenging environments. Soon, we will break ground on a state-of-the-art facility

designed to enhance the learning experience for our business students. All of this is possible because of the generosity of so many alumni, friends and family.

But a university is an ever changing place. As we prepare to celebrate a new class of graduates in May, we are already planning for our fall class, and for new programs and projects to enhance the academic experience and help us produce the next generation of "Leaders for Life."

We thank you for joining us on this journey that promises to be more exciting each season.

Rev. Msgr. Franklyn M. Casale
President

ST. THOMAS WELCOMES NEW TRUSTEES



STU welcomes Michael Fay, Lourdes Rivas and Maureen Shea to its Board of Trustees. These recognized community leaders' unique talents and skills will benefit STU students, our community and the university mission. Fay is a principal and managing director at Avison Young. He holds a bachelor's degree from LaGrange College. Rivas is the CEO of Simply Healthcare, and holds a bachelor's degree from Florida International University. Shea is the CEO and co-founder of Right Management. She holds a bachelor's degree from Kean University.

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BEACH VOLLEYBALL ARRIVES AT STU

Volleyballs were flying under the clear blue skies at STU after a special dedication and blessing by President Monsignor Franklyn Casale officially opening the new Dominick Miniaci Beach Volleyball Courts to players and students on Feb. 18.

The courts, located just to the west of the softball stadium, feature three regulation-size beach volleyball courts that will serve as the home for this new sport at STU. One of the courts was made possible thanks to a donation by the family of third-year volleyball player Dana Nowaczyk. The Gerritts family, whose company Gerritts Construction was responsible for the construction of the entire facility, also donated a court.

STU's new women's beach volleyball team will play in two tournaments this season and plan a full schedule for the spring of 2017.

#1 LAW SCHOOL IN THE NATION FOR HISPANICS, TOP-RANKED FOR MINORITIES



STU Law has long been nationally-recognized for its students' quality of life and the diversity among its student body. Now, the law school has been ranked the number one law school in the United States for Hispanics by Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education Magazine. The ranking is based on enrollment and completion surveys submitted to the National Center for Education Statistics in Washington D.C., an arm of the U.S. Department of Education.

And for the 11th consecutive year, STU Law is once again ranked by Princeton Review in the top ten for the nation's best environments for minority students. STU Law was the only Florida law school to be ranked in this category in Princeton Review's annual guide to law schools, "The Best 173 Law Schools: 2016 Edition." STU Law was also ranked in another top 10 ranking: "Most Diverse Faculty."



AROUND CAMPUS

STU'S GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK OFFERS INSPIRATION. IDEAS



STU celebrated a picture perfect 2015 Fall Commencement with more than 250 graduates and their friends and family.

HONORING 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF NOSTRA AETATE, CATHOLIC-JEWISH DIALOGUE

Various religious groups came together at STU to mark the 50th anniversary of Nostra Aetate, the landmark document that transformed Jewish-Catholic relations. The event, which took place in November, celebrated 50 years of groundbreaking progress with discussion, prayer and a special musical performance.

The commemoration – a joint effort by STU, the American Jewish Committee and the Archdiocese of Miami in collaboration with the Miami Coalition of Christians and Jews, the Rabbinical Association of Greater Miami, and the Jewish Community Relations Council – heard from Archbishop Bernardito Auza, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations; and Rabbi Noam E. Marans, the AJC's director of interreligious and intergroup relations.

Addressing the audience, Rabbi Marans said, "Nostra Aetate is the greatest interreligious transformation in history; and St. Thomas University is a living, breathing Nostra Aetate."

Nostra Aetate, which is Latin for "in our time," was issued in October 1965 by Pope John Paul VI to try and build better relationships and understanding with other religious groups.

For the seventh year, STU joined the international community in hosting Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW). Events, speakers and activities inspired and engaged students and the community on the entrepreneurial spirit.

GEW kicked off with keynote speaker **Manny Medina**, CEO of Medina Capital Partners and founder of eMerge Americas and Terremark, addressing the opportunities and threats of the data revolution. Afterward, **Fabrizio Alcobe-Fierro**, senior vice president of Univision Networks; **Jeanette Blanch**, senior vice president, real estate department at Continental National Bank; and **Sam Zietz '97**, CEO of TouchSuite, spoke about their professional journeys and their ever-changing industries.

Other GEW speakers participated in events such as the Business Leaders Roundtable, Young Entrepreneurs Panel, Immigrant Entrepreneurs Panel, and Women in Entrepreneurship Panel. Speakers included: **Aston Lue**, co-founder of Ocho Rios International Foods; **Amir Hagoo**, trial attorney and counselor-at-law at Law Office of Amir Hagoo, P.A.; **Alvaro De la Cruz**, founder, Fox Webpages LLC; **Anastasiya Voronina**, CEO, Private Investment Firm; **Patricia Delinois**, CEO of Premier Elite Realty; **Rachel Sapoznik**, CEO of Sapoznik Insurance and Associates, Inc.; **Maria Hernandez**, senior vice president of strategic development at Modernizing Medicine; **Kim Stone**, executive vice president of the Miami HEAT and general manager of American Airlines Arena; and **Maria Arazoza**, senior vice president of Merrill Lynch. In addition, an STU Student Shark Tank competition was held where students pitched their ideas for a chance to win cash prizes, one-on-one mentoring and coaching.

Events like GEW at STU strengthen the entrepreneurial and innovative culture of our students and local community by exposing them to new business trends, and successful, local entrepreneurs.



STU AND LYNN UNIVERSITY LAUNCH ACCELERATED LAW DEGREE PROGRAM

STU School of Law and Lynn University have signed a new articulation agreement that allows qualified students to earn their law degree in six years – as compared to seven years if completed in the traditional way. Students will complete three undergraduate years at Lynn University before matriculating into St. Thomas Law for a three-year juris doctor program.

The accelerated law degree will result in significant savings for students who are faced with ever-increasing education costs.

The '72 Dolphins were inducted into the Bobcat Hall of Fame at the Annual Stone Crab Dinner on Nov.8.



VATICAN OFFICIAL SPEAKS AT STU'S FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Business leaders, innovators, leading experts, and academics gathered at STU during its first International Conference on Climate, Nature and Society, which took place in February. The two-day conference, spearheaded by STU's Institute for Bioethics, tackled the science and social impact of global climate change with talks from leading experts in the field, and featured a prominent Vatican official.

Pope Francis's right-hand man on climate change, and President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Cardinal Peter Turkson, spoke about our social responsibility to mobilize and curb climate change. Cardinal Turkson, who helped draft the eco-encyclical "Laudato Si': On Care For Our Common Home," also participated in panel discussions and Q&A sessions throughout the two days.

Father Alfred Cioffi, the Florida Blue endowed chair in bioethics and director of STU's Institute for Bioethics, said, the conference educated, but more importantly, unleashed ideas to curb global climate change.

Other speakers at the conference, supported through the Amaturio Lecture Series, included: Dr. Richard Muller, Dr. John Van Leer, Dr. Chris Langdon, Dr. Claudio Cioffi-Revilla, and Greg Hamra.

Photo Credit: Tom Tracy



Msgr. Franklyn Casale and Cardinal Peter Turkson holding a copy of *Laudato Si'*.



Cardinal Peter Turkson during a special mass at STU.

SCHOLARS DISCUSS THE MUSLIM EXPERIENCE IN AMERICA

On Feb. 25, STU hosted a panel discussion titled "Two Faiths One God: The Muslim Experience in America," which informed, educated and enlightened attendees about the central beliefs of the faith, and the common roots it shares with other faiths. The panel discussion featured Father James L. Heft, President of the Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles; and, via video conferencing, Dr. Amir Hussain, who is both a professor of theological studies at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, and a Muslim whose specialty is the study of Islam. The event was hosted by STU's Institute for Ecumenical and Interreligious Studies at the School of Theology and Ministry, and the Winifred and Joseph Amaturio Lecture Series.



The Sardiñas Art Gallery at STU hosted the "7 Plus One Art Project" this past fall. The new exhibit "Interplay" features the work of Pedro Hernandez, and will be display March 31 through June 30, 2016.

ALUMNI AND TRUSTEES HOST PREVIEW EVENTS

Preview events are a first glance at what attending STU is all about. At the event, high school students meet current faculty, staff, students, trustees and alumni, learn about our academic programs and financial assistance, and get the answers to university questions. Three preview events have been hosted in the past six months - in the home of STU alumni and trustee Jorge Rico '86, and his wife Isabel '91; in the home of STU Trustee Constance Fernandez; and at the Lauderdale Yacht Club hosted by Trustee Wini Amaturio and her husband Joe. Attendees include admitted and prospective students and their parents. Several more Preview Events are planned throughout the coming months. To find out more about our Preview Events, including how to invite students to attend, please email Carmen Brown at cbrown@stu.edu.

AROUND CAMPUS

STU RECEIVES \$500,000 TO ENCOURAGE THEOLOGY EXPLORATION



STU received a grant of \$557,588 to establish STU IMPACT: Empowering Young Disciples. It is part of Lilly Endowment Inc.'s High School Youth Theology Institutes initiative, which seeks to encourage young people to explore theological traditions, ask questions about the moral dimensions of contemporary issues and examine how their faith calls them to lives of service.

During the eight-day summer program, 100 high school students will live on campus, learn from renowned scholars, and participate in local and regional civic engagement activities. For more information about the program, visit www.stu.edu/theology/Community/STU-IMPACT.

STU TACKLES FINANCIAL CRIMES, OFFERS UNIQUE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

With the rising demand of ethics and compliance education in the United States, STU has launched a professional certificate program in ethics and compliance, making it the second academic institution in the country to offer this unique certification. In addition, STU launched the Money Laundering & Financial Crimes Institute, a one-of-a-kind program offering an internationally recognized certification in anti-money laundering, countering the financing of terrorism and the prevention of financial crimes. For more information, visit www.stu.edu/Business.

INAUGURAL FRESHMEN CONVOCATION



This past fall, STU hosted its Inaugural Freshman Convocation, welcoming 200 incoming freshmen to campus. The event featured the Most Reverend Thomas G. Wenski, Archbishop of Miami, as the keynote speaker. Archbishop Wenski shared his thoughts on the Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato Si" with the new students, as well as visiting students from local Catholic high schools. The theme of the Archbishop's presentation was particularly timely since it was a reflection on the Pope's new encyclical.

A REFLECTION ON OUR LADY OF CHARITY



Toward the end of January, experts gathered at STU to talk about the history and popular devotion of Cuba's patron saint, Our Lady of Charity (La Virgen de la Caridad). During the "La Virgen de la Caridad: Historia y Devoción Popular" panel discussion, speakers presented the history of the beloved Cuban Marian image from its origins in the 17th century to its significant role in Cuban culture and Catholic religion within the island and abroad to the present.

Speakers included: Emilio Cueto, Cuban attorney, author, actor, and avid collector of Cuban memorabilia; Olga Portuondo Zúñiga, Cuban Historian; and Father Jorge Catasús, Cuban musician and composer.

This event is part of "Latino Americans: 500 Years of History" project, a national initiative sponsored by National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Library Association, with support from the Amaturio Lecture Series.

DID YOU KNOW?



NEW PROFESSOR PLANS TO MAKE STU A CYBERSECURITY HUB

Dr. Gurvirender Tejay, a leading cybersecurity expert, has joined STU as the first Gary Goldbloom Endowed Distinguished Chair in cybersecurity management. Tejay, who heads STU's Institute for Cyber Security Studies, is spearheading the university's new and innovative program designed to address one of the most challenging issues for businesses today, and he is also positioning the university as the South Florida hub for cybersecurity.

PROF. ARNOLD ELECTED TO PACT BOARD

Dr. Darrell Arnold, professor of philosophy at Biscayne College, has been chosen as the first-ever university administrator to serve on the Executive Board of South Florida's largest faith-based community organizing coalition, PACT (People Acting for Community Together), an interfaith coalition of diverse congregations working for social and economic justice in Miami-Dade County.

LAW PROFESSOR KEITH RIZZARDI

traveled to Beijing this summer at the invitation of the China University of Political Science and Law (CUPL), to teach in a variety of disciplines, including environmental law, criminal procedure, legal ethics, lawyering skills, global governance, and human rights, as a part of the CUPL Summer School Program.

LAW PROFESSOR LENORA LEDWON'S

article titled "Green Visual Rhetoric: The Human/Nonhuman Connection in Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind," was recently published in the Journal of Animal & Environmental Law. Her article, "Understanding Visual Metaphors: What Graphic Novels Can Teach Lawyers about Visual Storytelling," was recently listed on SSRN's Top 10 download list for Law & Literature eJournal.

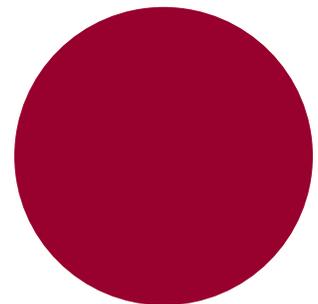
LAW PROFESSOR PATRICIA MOORE'S

article, "The Anti-Plaintiff Pending Amendments to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and the Pro-Defendant Composition of the Federal Rulemaking Committees," was highlighted on JOTWELL journal, an online journal run by law professors who review and highlight relevant scholarship.

THREE RETIRING PROFESSORS: 78 YEARS OF INSPIRATION

Three highly respected STU professors have announced they will retire at the conclusion of this academic year. The university community will miss **Dr. Barbara Buzzi, Dr. Joe Holland, and Dr. Paul Maxwell** whose combined careers represent more than 75 years of teaching excellence and countless student lives touched.

FACULTY NEWS



IN MEMORIAM: DR. EDMUNDO HART

In early February, our Bobcat family lost Dr. Edmundo Hart. The beloved mathematics professor graced our campus with his knowledge and caring nature for 33 years. A farewell mass was held Feb. 13 for Dr. Hart, which was attended by family, friends, alumni, students, faculty and staff.

STU NEW HIRES

STU welcomed **Dr. Richard Bair** as our new director of online instructional design, and **Susan Donoff** as director of institutional research and effectiveness. Also joining the STU team is **Dr. Robert Epling**, associate professor at the Gus Machado School of Business, as our newest faculty hire.

BLUEPRINT FOR LEADERSHIP



STU UNVEILS RENDERINGS OF NEW GUS MACHADO SCHOOL OF BUSINESS COMPLEX

STU's Gus Machado School of Business is one step closer to the fruition of its new home with the unveiling of architectural renderings showcasing the newest addition to the 144-acre campus. The first renderings, designed by Bermello, Ajamil and Partners, were revealed during a private reception at the home of STU Trustee and alumnus, Jorge Rico, '86.

In attendance for the unveiling were community leaders, board members, alumni, and well-known South Florida philanthropist and STU supporter Gus Machado and his wife Lilliam. Last year, Machado provided the naming gift for the School of Business.

The 21st-century complex features multi-purpose spaces that combine robust technology with functionalities that will help students learn real-life business practices, and will be equipped with interactive smart classrooms, audience response technology, networking and audio/visual capabilities, as well as a trading room, a global conference auditorium, the student business incubator, and a communications and media lab. An administration building for the Business School, and a building that will house an expanded Center for Career Development, Alumni Relations and a Business Commons, will round out the "campus-within-a-campus" design.

To view the complete renderings, visit: www.stu.edu/GMSOB-Renderings.

LEAVING A LEGACY: THE COL. JACQUELIN KELLY FIELD

"THIS GENEROUS DONATION...GIVES US THE OPPORTUNITY TO HONOR AN AMAZING FEMALE, A CHAMPION OF CHARACTER."

Before Col. Jacquelin Kelly passed away from cancer in 2014, she bequeathed a generous gift to STU's Athletic Program. Jacquelin, a lifelong athlete and coach, held a strong belief that women should participate in competitive sports and pursue higher education, and in recognition of her gift, the university will be dedicating "The Col. Jacquelin Kelly Field" at the St. Thomas Softball Complex.

In 1960 she joined the army and was stationed in the Middle East and the Far East working in military intelligence. Jacquelin, who received her bachelors from St. Elizabeth College, served in the army for 21 years, 12 of them at the Pentagon, where she was the highest ranking woman at that time, having achieved the rank of colonel.

In the mid-1980s, Jacquelin moved to South Florida where she continued her education by pursuing a master's in sports administration at STU and graduated in 1987 at the age of 56 - in total she earned four master's degrees, including one in Chinese.

"This generous donation to our athletics department not only allows us to upgrade our facilities, but also gives us the opportunity to honor an amazing female, a champion of character," said Laura Courtley-Todd, STU director of athletics. "Jacquelin was a phenomenal role model, and will remain so through the naming of the softball complex."

WHY WE GIVE

"... I wanted to let you know that I think about you all very often as I walk into the classroom or send off another chapter to my publisher. Thank You."

The note that accompanied the donation was addressed to Professors Jim Conley, Richard Raleigh, and Philip Reckford – three well-known and much-loved professors at St. Thomas University. Before he became an associate professor of business law and Chair of the Department of Business and Economics at Elizabethtown College, authored over two dozen articles on business law and tax related topics, wrote seven books, and worked as a corporate lawyer in a large Philadelphia-based law firm, Sean Melvin was sitting in one of Professor Raleigh's classes. Sean, originally from the Philadelphia area, graduated in 1987 from St. Thomas University with a B.A. in English. His collegiate experience included the requisite classwork on Keats and Byron, along with a study abroad in Spain, and nights at the Rat. But the English Department, and these professors in particular, made a lasting impression. "The faculty in that department is a talented and devoted group of teacher-scholars, and so are plenty of others that I stay in touch with," said Melvin. "Every time I visit they are all so magnanimous and I always get a kick out of watching them helping freshmen register and get oriented, just as they did for me more than 30 years ago."

Melvin joins the many alumni that are offering their time, talent and treasure to support St. Thomas University and honor their alma mater. Our alumni are hosting internships at their businesses, helping as mentors to young students, and serving as guest lecturers in Distinguished Lecture Series. They are also supporting scholarships, travel abroad experiences, and facility enhancements. Each is giving as they can, when they can, in recognition of the incredible experience and education they received at STU.

"There is no doubt that my life's journey to becoming a college professor and author, like many alums, was heavily influenced by faculty mentors," added Melvin. "But what is unusual is how they have continued to serve as my mentors more than three decades later. I owe them much more than I can afford to give."

"THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT MY LIFE'S JOURNEY...WAS HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY STU FACULTY MENTORS."



Stu, STU mascot; President Msgr. Franklyn Casale; Antonio Barreto, Miami FC CEO; and Alessandro Nesta, Miami FC head coach

PROFESSIONAL SPORTS BACK ON CAMPUS

STU and Miami FC, South Florida's new NASL team, have teamed up to bring the excitement of professional soccer to our campus. STU is the official training grounds of Miami FC, providing Miami's only professional soccer club with its practice and training facilities. As part of the partnership, the soccer club donated a state-of-the-art lighting system valued at \$415,000 for the university's soccer fields and is providing valuable internship opportunities with the club.

"We are very excited to be the new training home of Miami FC, and we're excited to see what the future holds," said STU President Msgr. Casale. "This partnership is a great win for our soccer community, sports enthusiasts, and St. Thomas University."

STU RANKS TOP 20 FOR GIVE MIAMI DAY DONATIONS

While we experience generosity all year round, on Give Miami Day, Nov. 19, donations poured in for STU once again. At the end of this one-day, intense fundraising campaign, we received \$58,627 in donations! The generous gifts will help our students achieve greatness by allowing them the opportunity to take part in hands-on internships, unique research, student competitions and athletics. The unique 24-hour online Give Miami event helps build a greater Miami by allowing supporters to make charitable gifts to local nonprofits – like STU! Thank you for your support!

**EVERY GIFT COUNTS!
PLEASE CONSIDER MAKING
A DONATION AT:**

WWW.STU.EDU/ONLINEGIVING

POINTS OF PRIDE

■ UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT NAMED CHAIR OF ACCU BOARD

President Monsignor Franklyn M. Casale was elected chair of the board of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU), a Washington-D.C.-based association of more than 230 member institutions. As chair, Casale will work with President and CEO Michael Galligan-Stierle, to help guide the work of this national association to serve its member institutions and respond to emerging member needs.

■ FLORIDA CAMPUS COMPACT RECOGNIZES STU FOR GLOBAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In recognition of STU's commitment to community engagement and public service, the university's Center of Community Engagement, part of our Biscayne College, has received Florida Campus Compact's Global Impact Award for its STU/Port-de-Paix, Haiti, Global Solidarity Partnership (STU GSP). Each year the award recognizes one outstanding campus-community partnership that produces measurable global improvement while enhancing higher education. The recognition came on the heels of being selected, for the fourth consecutive year, as a national leader in civic learning and democratic engagement.

■ STU RANKED BEST UNIVERSITY IN TWO NICHE.COM RANKINGS

STU was ranked #38 Best Catholic College out of 100 in Niche.com's "2016 Best Catholic Colleges" ranking, the highest ranked in the Southeast. This ranking is based on key statistics and student reviews. The top ranked Catholic colleges are leading academic institutions that offer students an education and college experience rooted in Catholic traditions and faith.

In the "2016 Best Colleges in Florida" ranking, STU ranked #10 out of 31 schools! The 2016 Best Colleges ranking calculates statistics and student reviews into one overall college ranking. The top ranked colleges are elite academic institutions that provide a good value, attract a diverse student body, and offer an exceptional college experience.

■ STU RANKED TOP 50 MOST AFFORDABLE SMALL CATHOLIC COLLEGES 2015

St. Thomas University was identified as one of the most affordable small Catholic colleges in a ranking by CollegeValuesOnline.com. STU was ranked number 49, with comparison criteria that included maximum enrollment numbers, Roman Catholic religious affiliation and average net price.

■ SUN CONFERENCE ACCOLADES WOMEN'S BASKETBALL:

STU Head Women's Basketball Coach Albrey Grimsley was named Sun Conference Coach of the Year after leading the Bobcats to a regular season co-championship with a 13-3 conference record. Senior guard Jamesha Willis was named Sun Conference Defensive Player of the Year, while guard Samara Auguste was honored as Freshman of the Year and forward Supavadee Kunchuan won Newcomer of the Year.

■ MEN'S BASKETBALL:

STU center Raheem Bowman was named Sun Conference Freshman of the Year. Junior guard Michael Walker was named First-Team All-Sun Conference and to the conference's All-Defensive Team.

■ BASEBALL RANKED #1 IN NATION BY PERFECT GAME

Coming off last year's runner up finish in the NAIA World Series, the STU baseball team was ranked number one in the nation in the 2016 Perfect Game NAIA Preseason Top 25. The Bobcats, which finished last season with a 48-18 overall record and the best finish in school history, are seeking to capture the first national championship in any sport this year. They entered the season ranked number two in the NAIA Coaches Poll.

■ STU STUDENT LANDS NASA INTERNSHIP

St. Thomas University senior Javier Rojas, 21, was recently selected to be a part of National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) summer internship program, the Centennial Challenges Program in Huntsville, Alabama.

During the highly-competitive, paid internship, which begins June 6 and ends in August, Javier will research new technology developments in solving complex problems associated with spaceflight and living on another planet!

ANTIGUOS ALUMNOS

When Augustinian Father Lorenzo Spirelli arrived in hot and humid Havana in 1944, his dream of founding a Catholic university was considered by some, far-fetched. There were no private universities in Cuba at the time, but parents and students wanted an alternative to the publicly-run universities frequently shut down during political turmoil. The concept of a Catholic university appealed to many who personally financed what became the Universidad de Santo Tomas de Villanueva.

It took years before the Cuban government recognized the university's status, but during that time Santo Tomas graduated top engineers, architects, educators, businessmen, economists and lawyers, among others - many of whom fled the island as the school was taken over by the Castro government. Much like the story of many who were exiled during that period, after being forced to leave Cuba in 1961, the Augustinian administrators and faculty landed in Miami and made a new home: Biscayne College. By 1984 the college became a university again, and it was renamed St. Thomas University in honor of its rich history and Augustinian tradition.

It has been 70 years since the founding of Santo Tomas in 1946. Like many of our graduates from our campus in Miami Gardens, those Santo Tomas graduates became successful in the US, South America, Europe and elsewhere, and today form our "Antiguos Alumnos" alumni association. Later this year, the university will mark this important anniversary with a series of events to recognize the contributions of our early graduates. For information on upcoming events, please email alumni@stu.edu.



Late 1950: Universidad de Santo Tomas de Villanueva



Statue of Santo Tomas de Villanueva in Havana, Cuba.



Universidad de Santo Tomas de Villanueva



CUBA PAPAL PILGRIMAGE INCLUDES VISIT TO STU'S FIRST HOME

Among the group of pilgrims from the Archdiocese of Miami who travelled to Havana to welcome Pope Francis to the island were STU's President Monsignor Franklyn Casale, Provost Dr. Irma Becerra, and Vice President for Advancement, Hilda Fernandez. A highlight of the trip was the ability for Msgr. Casale to share the altar with Pope Francis and other priests from South Florida for a mass witnessed by thousands of faithful. It was an emotional experience, in particular for the Cuban-Americans in the group, which included alumni from la Universidad Catolica Santo Tomas de Villanueva – our University's first campus in Havana. Msgr. Casale, Provost Becerra and VP Fernandez's itinerary included a visit to the original St. Thomas campus. They had an opportunity to enter the University's chapel, which has been returned to the Catholic Church. Abandoned for many years, the chapel is in disrepair, and the statue of St. Thomas in front of the chapel has been vandalized. While the Archdiocese of Havana is working to renovate the chapel, plans are underway in Miami to help with the restoration of the statue. A generous donation from a Villanueva alumnus will also provide for a replica of the original St. Thomas statue to be erected in front of the Chapel of Saint Anthony in our Miami campus. The statue dedication will be among several events planned to mark the 70th Anniversary of the university's founding in Havana, including events for our alumni from the Santo Tomas campus.



The dilapidated chapel at the original site of STU in Havana. Photo Credit: Tom Tracy



From left to right: Alum from la Universidad Catolica Santo Tomas de Villanueva; Vice President for Advancement Hilda Fernandez; STU President Monsignor Franklyn Casale; and Provost Dr. Irma Becerra. Photo Credit: Tom Tracy.

ALUMNI NEWS

HOMECOMING & ALUMNI REUNION



Homecoming & Alumni Reunion Tailgate



STU Talks: St. Thomas Over the Years, with Professor Richard Raleigh

Throughout campus, alumni, faculty, staff and students celebrated their Bobcat Pride during Homecoming & Alumni Reunion, which took place Feb. 4 - 6. The events kicked off on Thursday with “STU Talks: St. Thomas Over the Years,” where Professor Richard Raleigh shared his anecdotes and historical accounts since he started at STU in the fall of 1966. Following the talk, alumni mingled and reconnected with old friends and classmates at the **President’s Reception**. On Friday, alumni and students gathered for the **Homecoming & Alumni Reunion Tailgate** before the Bobcat baseball team won doubleheader games against Lindsey Wilson College (KY). It was an “event-full” Saturday including **campus tours**, a walking tour that explored our evolving campus and future plans; “**Frankly Speaking**,” where Msgr. Franklyn Casale shared campus news; **Homecoming & Alumni Reunion Mass**, where our STU family gathered at the Chapel of Saint Anthony for a special mass; and lastly, the festivities concluded with “**Back at the Rat**” where alumni took a walk down memory lane with fellow Bobcats. It was a homecoming to remember! Please visit:

www.facebook.com/STUAlumniAssociation to view all event photos.



Back at the Rat



President’s Reception



DINING WITH 12 BOBCATS

Alumnus Jose Keichi Fuentes shared insights and advice about life after college with current STU students during the “Dining with 12 Bobcats” event, which took place in January at the offices of Becker & Poliakoff. Events like this, which happen throughout the year, help bring the growing STU community together, and offer current students the opportunity to develop relationships with alumni in various professional fields. To host a Dining for 12 Bobcats, please contact alumni@stu.edu.



ALUMNI REUNITE IN WASHINGTON, D.C.



On Friday, Jan. 29, President Msgr. Casale, Law School Dean Al Garcia, Law School’s Alumni Relations Director Peter Kelly and STU Alumni Director, Lorena Hidalgo met with alumni in the Washington, D.C. area at the Exchange Club to reconnect, network, and share all of the great things that are taking place on campus. Thank you to everyone who participated and helped make this event a success! We hope that you enjoyed rekindling old friendships and making new ones. To learn more about the National Capital Region (NCR) Chapter, please contact Lorena Hidalgo, at 305-628-6601 or lhidalgo@stu.edu.

CLASS NOTES

1980



Bob Storin, B.A. Sports Administration, joined the Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association (WANADA) as director of marketing, events and sponsorships.

1990

Laura Sanchez Ramirez, B.A. Communication Arts, currently resides in New York City and has initiated the application process to pursue a doctorate's degree at the Teachers College in Columbia University.

1992



Miguel Barreto Jr., M.B.A. Business Administration, is a member insurance benefits supervisor at Air Line Pilots Association International.

1993



Barbara Ferrer, Esq., B.A. Human Services, is a shareholder in Gray Robinson's Miami office and a member of the firm's Real Estate Practice Group. Barbara was named in the "2016 Best Lawyers in America" list in the real estate law practice area.

Nicholas W. Romanello, J.D. Law, general counsel and chief legal officer for the Health Care District of Palm Beach County, Fla., was appointed in July 2015 as the Health Care District's interim chief executive officer.

1994

Julie Harris Nelson, J.D. Law, a senior associate at Roig Lawyers in Miami, has been appointed as "Liaison" to the State Board of Directors of the Florida Association for Women Lawyers (FAWL).

1995



Brian Hill, Esq., J.D. Law, retired from the U.S. Coast Guard as a commander O5 in late 2011. Currently, Brian is responsible for all ports in Texas and Oklahoma with the U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD), and is based in Houston, Texas.

1998

Patricia Smith, M.S. Management, retired as a detective sergeant from Broward County Sheriff's Office in 1998. Patricia is currently the compliance officer and lead nurse practitioner for Urgent Care Travel clinics nationwide.

1999



Maylynn Vargas-Menoud, B.A. Human Resources, is the practice development and marketing director at Roig Lawyers. Maylynn was appointed as one of the 2015-2016 Regional Deputy Presidents to the Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA) Region VIII in October 2015.

2000

Jenelle La Chuisa, J.D. Law, recently opened her own practice in Miami, La Chuisa Law, located at 1001 Brickell Bay Drive. Her specialties include arbitration, business law, start-up services, commercial litigation, and appeals.

2001



Alexander Puga, B.A. Criminal Justice '97, M.S. Mental Health Counseling '01, "retired" in February after 16 years of serving as the voice of the Bobcats for men's and women's basketball. Alex is extremely proud of a Bobcat alum and looks forward to supporting the university's Athletics Department for many years to come.

2002



Raul M. Freyre, B.A. Organizational Leadership, has been named small business sales executive in Florida at BankUnited. Most recently, he was the small business banking manager in South Florida for Bank of America.

Lani Menendez Lima Cespedes, B.A. Criminal Justice '97, J.D. Law '02, joined Roig Lawyers as an associate and will concentrate her practice on personal injury protection/non-fault litigation.

Aileen Nuñez, B.A. Psychology '95, M.S. Marriage and Family Therapy '02, became the founder and CEO of Famwell Healing Center. For the past 13 years she has managed the organization and worked as a licensed family therapist. Aileen is also a certified mediator.



Dr. George L. Salis, CBE, LL.M. International Taxation, recently earned his Certified Business Economist designation (CBE) and consequently awarded by National Association for Business Economics (NABE) at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. He is a member of the inaugural class of the CBE designation, where only 75 candidates received the designation nationwide.

2003

Michele A. Vargas, J.D. Law, an associate in the Coral Gables office of Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP, has been appointed as one of the 2015-2016 Regional Deputy Presidents to the Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA) Region VIII.

2005

Dr. Marie Pierre-Okerson, M.S. Special Education, earned a doctor of philosophy in education with specialization in leadership in educational administration degree.



Dr. Raimundo Socorro, B.A. Organizational Leadership '02, M.S. Management '05, retired from the Miami-Dade Police Department and was given the opportunity to lead the School of Justice at Miami Dade College.

2007

Dr. Sara Saborido, B.A. Liberal Studies '05, M.B.A. International Business '07, founder of a non-profit organization The Saborido Foundation, Inc. dedicated to helping the less fortunate. All donations benefit The Missionaries of Charity of Mother Teresa in Miami and Haiti, as well as an orphanage in India.

2008

Kansas R. Gooden, J.D. Law, was named partner at Boyd & Jenerette, PA, in Jacksonville, Fla. Focusing primarily on civil appeals, insurance coverage and bad faith/extra-contractual liability litigation. Kansas also recently earned her board certification in appellate practice.



Dane M. Garland, J.D. Law, was recently made partner at Swindle Law Group, P.C., a criminal defense firm in Carrollton, Ga. Garland lives in Atlanta with his wife and two children.

2009



Andrew M. Gordon, J.D. Law, an attorney at Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP in Fort Lauderdale, has been appointed to the Fort Lauderdale Board of Adjustment by Mayor Jack Seiler for a three-year term. Andrew was also recently appointed as an Advisory Board Member of Riverwalk Fort Lauderdale.

Ricky K. Patel, J.D. Law, was appointed in January 2016 to the Miami Children's Health Foundation's Board of Directors. He is a founder and senior partner of Farrell & Patel Attorneys at Law in Miami, and a member of the Board of Advisors at St. Thomas University School of Law.

2010

Andres J. Correa, J.D. Law, was sworn in as the 2015-2016 President of the Coral Gables Bar Association. Correa, a founding partner of Jaramillo, Correa & Martinez, is a trial attorney who focuses on first party property damage claims against insurance companies, personal injury, premises liability and wrongful death claims and motor vehicle accidents.

Armando G. Hernandez, J.D. Law, an associate at Rumberger, Kirk & Caldwell in Miami, was selected in November 2015 by the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation as one of its "40 Under 40 Outstanding Lawyers" of South Florida.



Wenisha Jones, M.B.A. Business Administration, is an accountant in financial management with the U.S. Coast Guard in Washington, D.C. She is a member of the National Association of Black Accountants (NABA) and National Black MBA Association (NBMBA).

Jonathan McConnell, J.D. Law, was named to the 2015 Rising Stars list by Super Lawyers for the state of Kansas. Jonathan was also named a "Top 40 Under 40 Attorney" by the National Trial Lawyers and was honored in 2015 as a "Paul Harris Fellow" by the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International.



Tanika Nunez-Navarro, J.D. Law, partner at Haddad & Navarro, one of the nation's premier criminal defense law firms, was named one of Florida's "Top 40 under 40 Trial Lawyers" by the National Trial Lawyers Association.

2011

Patricia Hernandez, J.D. Law, managing partner at Rotella & Hernandez, LLC in Miami, has been appointed for a one-year term as co-chair of the Asylum Committee for the American Immigration Lawyers Association's South Florida Chapter.

2012

Valeria Frias, B.A. Communication Arts, is currently a supervisor and operations officer with Lufthansa Airlines and is based in Charlotte, N.C.

Margaret Gray, M.A. Pastoral Ministry, is currently working in mission services for the Mercy Health Systems Springfield Communities as the Interpreter Coordinator for nine hospitals and 150+ clinics.

2013



Samantha Morris, M.S. Marriage and Family Therapy, is a psychotherapist and licensed marriage and family therapist in Florida, and is currently pursuing a doctorate of behavioral health from Arizona State University. Samantha is the clinical director at Family Psych Central.

2014



Vanessa Gonzalez, M.S. Mental Health Counseling, co-founded an intensive outpatient substance abuse and mental health counseling treatment center, Espiga Health, with her husband. As a mental health counselor, Vanessa provides outpatient services to adults and adolescents coping with substance abuse and mental health issues.

2015



Marc-Jean Pierre, B.A. Organizational Leadership, is currently focusing on a socio-economic project partnering with business entrepreneurs for direct investment and venture to help strengthen the Haitian community.

“LEADERS FOR LIFE”

MIAMI-DADE’S TOP COP IS A BOBCAT



Juan J. Perez '03, B.A. Organizational Leadership, was appointed Director of the Miami-Dade Police Department in February 2016, the largest police department in Florida, and 15th largest in the country. He has dedicated more than 25 years to the law enforcement profession, joining MDPD in 1990 and has been promoted through all civil service ranks.

LEADERS IN THE CLASSROOM



Precious Symonette '13, M.A. Educational Leadership, was named Miami-Dade County’s 2017 Francisco R. Walker Teacher of the Year. She is a creative writing teacher at Miami Norland Senior High where she helps students find their own voice through spoken work and writing.

“STU gave me the opportunity to finish the college degree I started before becoming a police officer. I worked long hours as a sergeant while at STU, and it all paid off in the end. ‘Behind every challenge lies great opportunity.’”

- Juan J. Perez '03

SHARE YOUR NEWS!

Have you been promoted? Earned an advanced degree? Been honored for professional or personal achievements? Added to the family? We want to be in the know! Visit us at www.stu.edu/alumni/classnotes, email alumni@stu.edu, or call us at 305-628-6601 to share your news!



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