

**“And then there’s  
this remarkable  
truth: I’m one  
generation out of  
poverty because  
of my BA from  
Dominican.”**

**Dr. Gina Fromer**

**Advancing a Love Agenda:  
President Pitchford in  
Conversation with  
Dr. Gina Fromer '04**

*page 7*



*1917 Dominican College Yearbook Basketball Team, Dominican University of California Archives*

### In This Issue

- 1** Letter from the President
- 2** News
- 7** Advancing a Love Agenda:  
President Pitchford in Conversation  
with Dr. Gina Fromer '04
- 9** Alumni News
- 17** Gloria Steinem's 1995 Visit  
A Moment That Mattered
- 18** Mother Louis O'Donnell  
Trailblazer of Education
- 19** Class Notes
- 23** In Sympathy



### The Torch

The Torch is a publication presenting the news, people and progress of Dominican University of California. The symbol of the flaming torch, representing truth, is rooted in the history of St. Dominic. The University's motto is "Truth is a flaming torch." The torch is carried by one of the "hounds of the Lord," or, in Latin, "Domini canes."

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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear friends,

May I tell you a story? (Don't panic, it ends—rather, it continues—well.)

The story begins with ten pioneering women: one Belgian-French nun, joined in phases by two American Dominican Sisters (from Ohio), one Mexican woman, and six Californios (Californians descended from Spanish settlers). Their leader, Mother (then Sister) Mary of the Cross Goemaere, had crossed oceans, the Isthmus of Panama, and unforgiving terrain to accompany Bishop Joseph Alemany from Europe to his new post in Monterey. It was 1850, and the region was bustling with fortune seekers. In our own City by the Bay, discoveries of gold up and down the Northern California coast fueled a population boom. San Francisco's residents multiplied twenty-five times over in just two years.

Mother Mary founded the Dominican Sisters, Congregation of the Most Holy Name. The Congregation converted a house into a convent and school. The school relocated from Monterey to Benicia (where the Sisters taught the children of gold miners) and then, in 1889, to San Rafael. Articles of incorporation

were filed with the State a year later. A junior college and then a four-year college blossomed on this bright patch of land, gazing at Mt. Tamalpais and over the ridge from San Pablo Strait, occupying the unceded ancestral land of the Coast Miwok people.

Wars. Movements. Crises. Breakthroughs. Decades rolled into a century. Dominican and its students devoted themselves to study, community, service, and reflection through waves of change in our region and our nation. Like any resilient organism, our beloved institution evolved.

More than a hundred years later, still steadfastly committed to its founding values, Dominican's and the Bay Area's stories continue to intertwine. A bastion of knowledge and discovery. A trusted partner to local nonprofits, school systems, and small businesses. An educator of thousands of our region's healthcare professionals, teachers, public servants, and entrepreneurs. A social mobility engine powering better futures for learners of all backgrounds and identities. Dominican means many things to the Bay Area.

In this issue of *The Torch*, we're telling Dominican's story in the context of a shared history with this land, our county, and our state. **If this tale resonates with you, please know: more than ever before, Dominican needs your support to weather the wave of change that's shaking higher education today. Invest with me in another century of doing good, here, like no one but Dominican can.**

My warm best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicola". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Nicola Pitchford, President 🔥





# How Presidential Rhetoric Shapes the National Agenda

## Professor Alison Howard's Research Offers Insight Into the State of the Union



Each year, the president's State of the Union Address provides a unique window into an administration's priorities, tone, and strategies. For Dominican University of California political scientist Alison Howard, the annual speech is more than just a moment of national theater—it is a key tool for analyzing how presidents attempt to lead.

Howard, whose research focuses on presidential rhetoric, has spent more than a decade studying these addresses alongside her colleague Donna Hoffman, the Chuck and Barbara Grassley Professor of Political Science at the University of Northern Iowa. Together, they have explored how presidents use this constitutionally mandated address to shape policy discussions and influence both Congress and the American public.

In their co-authored book, *Addressing the State of the Union: The Evolution and Impact of the President's Big Speech*, Howard and Hoffman examine how modern presidents use their speeches to command attention, target specific audiences, and propose legislation. "The goal of the speech is to set the agenda, be persuasive, and have congressional influence," Howard explains. "Presidents don't govern alone—as our system is one of shared powers—and the State of the Union is a key opportunity to remind the country of what they're trying to accomplish and why."

Presidents frequently use the platform to claim credit for executive actions and past accomplishments while presenting their legislative agenda for the year ahead. "President Trump has spent the first few weeks of his presidency issuing an extraordinary number of executive orders that he will likely claim credit for in his speech," Howard noted ahead of Trump's first address to Congress in 2017. The same was true of Trump's 2025 Joint Address to Congress.

But beyond its ceremonial role, the address also functions as a tool for political accountability. Howard and Hoffman's research tracks every legislative request made in State of the Union addresses since 1965—analyzing whether those requests were fully enacted, partially enacted, or not enacted at all.

Howard and Hoffman's research includes a breakdown of how successful recent presidents have been in translating their State of the Union proposals into policy:

### ■ PRESIDENT BIDEN ■ PRESIDENT TRUMP

**2024** 37 requests



**2023** 47 requests



**2022** 33 requests



**2021** 43 requests



**2020** 12 requests



**2019** 20 requests



**2018** 24 requests



**2017** 23 requests



Howard and Hoffman also highlight that modern presidents tend to include an increasing number of direct legislative requests in their addresses, with a median of 33.5 per speech since 1965. These requests range widely—from President Obama's 2016 low of five to President Clinton's record-setting 87 in 2000.

In a time when partisan divides are sharp and governing challenges are complex, Howard's work reminds us that presidential speeches are more than symbolic. They offer insight into how presidents seek to lead, the priorities they elevate, and how the nation responds.

"Presidents may not always get what they ask for," Howard says. "But how they ask—and what they choose to prioritize—still matters." 🔥

# Penguins Go 'All In' for Dominican, Raising Nearly \$350,000

**O**n March 25, 2025, a total of 673 donors—including students, alumni, parents, faculty, staff, and friends—came together for Dominican University's annual day of giving, All In for Dominican. Through their collective generosity, the university raised \$349,692, including matching funds.

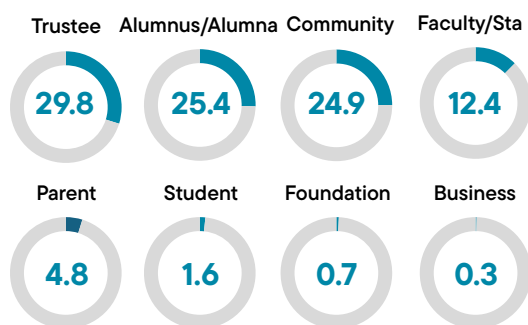
This year's campaign emphasized Dominican's ongoing dedication to student success and accessibility, particularly by funding student scholarships.

Donations will directly support critical resources, alleviate financial burdens, and enable students to thrive despite challenges facing higher education.

Community engagement was significant: Alumni represented 25% of donors, and faculty and staff participation reached 12%. Every contribution underscored Dominican's strong community bonds and shared mission.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WAS SIGNIFICANT

### Donors by Affiliation (percent)



Athletics quadrupled their initial \$5,000 goal raising  
**\$22,245 (444%)**

More than simply a fundraising event, All In for Dominican celebrates the transformative educational experiences that distinguish the university. Whether community members donated, shared messages of encouragement, or helped spread awareness, their efforts reinforced Dominican's legacy of empowering first-generation students, providing support to those with the greatest financial need, and nurturing future leaders.

**Dominican University extends sincere gratitude to all who participated in making this remarkable day a success. 🙌**











*The Lady Penguins defeat Azusa Pacific, advancing to the PacWest championship game for the first time in program history.*

## Dominican Hosted the PacWest Basketball Tournament Women's Team Made Play for Championship

**D**ominican University of California proudly hosted the 2025 Pacific West Conference (PacWest) Basketball Championships from March 6 to 8, welcoming approximately 250 student-athletes, coaches, officials, and staff to the San Rafael campus for three exciting days of NCAA Division II competition.

All games were held in Dominican's Conlan Center, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. Named in honor of Sister Samuel Conlan, Dominican's fifth president, the center hosted its first athletic event in 2000. This year marks the second time Dominican has hosted the PacWest Championships, the first being in 2019—the same year the women's basketball team earned its first-ever NCAA Division II tournament bid.

The 13th annual PacWest Championships featured six women's teams—Azusa Pacific, Biola, Dominican, Fresno Pacific, Point Loma, and Westmont—and eight men's teams—Academy of Art, Biola, Chaminade, Concordia University Irvine, Fresno Pacific, Hawai'i Hilo, Point Loma, and Westmont. The tournament winners received an automatic bid into the NCAA West Region Championships.

### Penguin Women Make History

Dominican's women's basketball team made a historic run to the PacWest Championship finals, reaching the title game for the first time in the program's NCAA Division II era. The Penguins, ranked No. 3 heading into the tournament, were just a few baskets away from winning it all.

The team was also on the brink of securing its second consecutive 20-win season—a milestone never before achieved in the program's DII history. This achievement reflects the growth and competitive excellence of Dominican Athletics.

### Season Highlights and Standout Athletes

Senior guard Alaiyah San Juan led the Penguins, averaging 13.3 points per game. She became the fifth women's basketball player in Dominican history to reach the 1,000-point milestone and currently ranks third all-time in career scoring during the DII era. She also led the team with 69 assists and 58 steals.

Forward Taylor Linzie, a Cal State East Bay transfer, made an immediate impact. She tied a single-game program record with 25 rebounds against Hawai'i Pacific, earned three PacWest Defender of the Week honors, and ranked no. 2 in the conference in rebounding average. Nationally, she finished second with 327 total rebounds for the season.

### Community Celebration

The tournament wasn't just about basketball. The Conlan Center and surrounding campus transformed into a festive hub featuring food trucks, shaved ice, a craft beer garden, daily raffles, and prize drawings. Students, alumni, and local fans created a lively atmosphere that celebrated not only athletic excellence but also Dominican's community spirit.

Congratulations to Dominican women's basketball on an inspiring season and a history-making playoff run. The legacy continues. 🔥





## Archivist Corner: A Dominican University of California Tradition



**D**ominican University of California has always been more than just a place where students earn degrees. As the university archivist, I see daily how political discussions and activism have shaped our institution's history. Dominican has long served as a platform for civic engagement by hosting political events, welcoming thought-provoking speakers, and empowering students to use democratic processes to influence their campus community.

One of the most significant moments in Dominican's political history occurred during the 2010 California gubernatorial election. Did you know that the gubernatorial debate between Jerry Brown (Democrat) and Meg Whitman (Republican) took place in Angelico Hall on October 12, 2010? Moderated by esteemed news anchor Tom Brokaw and televised nationally by NBC, the debate positioned Dominican as a hub for critical discussions on issues affecting California voters. Following the debate, Dominican students participated in the VoteSmart Challenge '10, a cross-campus event that invited them to discuss key policy topics such as education, energy, healthcare, immigration, and water infrastructure.

Beyond high-profile political events, Dominican's Institute of Leadership Studies (ILS) has played a crucial role in fostering civic discourse. In collaboration with local bookstore Book Passage, ILS has hosted an array of speakers, from national figures such as Elizabeth Warren and Van Jones to local changemakers like Felecia Gaston of Marin City. Through initiatives such as One Book One Marin and the Leadership Lecture Series, Dominican continues to facilitate meaningful conversations on political and social issues.

Political engagement at Dominican isn't limited to external events; it has also been demonstrated through student-led advocacy. In 1968, before Dominican transitioned to a coeducational institution, the all-women student body petitioned then-president Sr. Samuel Conlan, O.P., to allow pants as acceptable attire under the school's dress code. The October 1968 edition of *The Carillon* captured the energy of the movement:

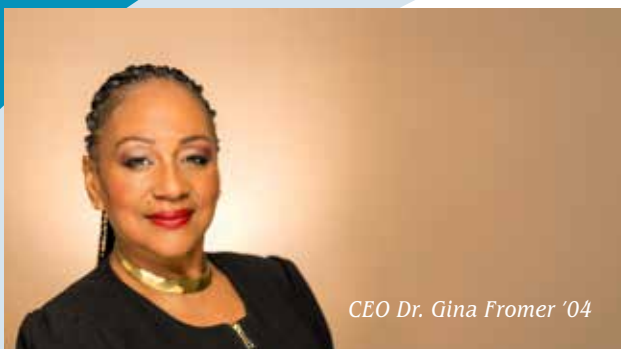
"The tumult over the issue of wearing pants on campus has uncovered one beneficial thing: Dominican students are not as apathetic as they are often accused of being. Whether a student opposes or supports the petition, enthusiasm to this degree is rewarding for all concerned."



Dominican's archives are rich with examples of student activism and political vibrancy. As we continue to navigate evolving local, state, and national challenges, may this legacy of civic engagement remain a defining characteristic of our campus and regional community. 🔥

# Advancing a Love Agenda

## President Pitchford in Conversation with Dr. Gina Fromer '04



CEO Dr. Gina Fromer '04

The intersection of Taylor and Ellis Streets in San Francisco is bustling on a rainy December morning. Activity swirls around the entrance to 330 Ellis, under a row of bright orange awnings that bear the GLIDE logo. Inside, President Pitchford finds the reception area a flurry of joyful business—employees pushing supply carts through the lobby, clients swapping greetings, and phones ringing.

An iconic, nationally recognized center for social justice since 1929, GLIDE's mission to break cycles of poverty and marginalization is thriving. Annually, thousands of clients access transformative no-cost services that advance food and housing security, mental and physical health, employment, and more.

President Pitchford receives a visitor's badge and makes her way to GLIDE's administrative offices on the third floor. She's here to meet with GLIDE president and CEO Dr. Gina Fromer '04, sixth-generation San Franciscan, accomplished nonprofit leader, and—yes—Dominican alumna.

Dr. Gina grew up in Bayview-Hunters Point. She took criminology and psychology classes at San Francisco State after high school, but the demands of a growing family and limited support made completing a college degree impossible. She put her education on hold.

By the late 1980s, Dr. Gina was a single mother to three young children, and she knew she wanted to finish school. With help from Children's Council of San Francisco securing childcare, she went to work at Head Start. After six months as a case manager, she was promoted to oversee citywide parent involvement programming.

In 2000, Dr. Gina married Reed Fromer '91, a celebrated musician, educator, and activist, and together they continued to grow their beautiful family. Having moved to Marin, Dr. Gina promptly completed a BA in psychology through Dominican's Adult Degree Completion program, which positioned her to earn two advanced degrees and excel professionally. Until his passing in 2023, Reed and Dr. Gina enjoyed in common a deep affection for their alma mater.

Today, at GLIDE, Dr. Gina has a "love agenda," and she sits down with President Pitchford to explain.

**PRESIDENT PITCHFORD:** Every Dominican student has a unique story to tell. What's yours? What's been Dominican's role in your life?

**DR. GINA FROMER:** Growing up in poverty, I was determined to earn a college degree and change my family's circumstances. I was a working parent and pregnant with my fourth son when I enrolled in Dominican's Adult Degree Completion program, then known as Pathways.

The campus became a haven for my family. I'd lay a blanket on the lawn and study, my kids playing in the grass. I kept fit through my last pregnancy by working out at Conlan Gym between classes. My late husband was also a Dominican graduate—and that connection was very special to us.

And then there's this remarkable truth: I'm one generation out of poverty because of my BA from Dominican.





**PP:** You went on to earn a master's degree and a PhD in organizational leadership from the University of Arizona Global Campus. You've held leadership positions at Children's Council of San Francisco and San Francisco YMCA. Given all that perspective, and now that you're CEO of GLIDE, what do you consider to be the biggest challenge facing Bay Area communities?

**GF:** Most people would say homelessness. I say we have to go further upstream. We have to stop the bleeding. We have to start with families. Families fall into poverty, and children experience trauma; later, those children may struggle as adults. We need to route families into crisis support programs, provide a safety net, and prevent trauma from happening in the first place. Homelessness is a symptom of unsafe, unhealthy circumstances for families.

There's a false perception that people waiting in food lines are all homeless or unemployed. I received food from GLIDE as a young mother to support my family when I was between jobs. We have lots of families, parents well dressed and paying rent, who bring their kids to dinner at GLIDE because they just can't afford that third meal. That's why we take an integrated approach to addressing the full spectrum of families' needs. That's our love agenda.

**PP:** Food insecurity is a very real issue on college campuses across America, including ours. In fact, Dominican partners with a local food bank to offer weekly free groceries to our students and community. Partnerships like that are the heart of our institution. I imagine they play a key role in GLIDE's work as well.

**GF:** Partnerships are central. GLIDE volunteers hail from a vast web of coalition organizations. The populations we serve are thinking about eating and being housed, they're thinking about sobriety or safety, and only when they find stability are they considering an education. We have to connect the dots for these clients, and we can't do that without our partners. Whatever a client needs, we're providing it directly or through our network.

**PP:** You've been so generous in telling us your story and about GLIDE's work. Will you indulge us with a final anecdote from your Dominican days?

**GF:** Near the end of my first semester at Dominican I delivered my fourth son. Can you believe the following Monday I brought my newborn to the final exam? I aced the test!

In the warren of corridors, offices, inviting community spaces, and a glorious church that comprise GLIDE, Dr. Gina's *love agenda* is tangible—another vivid example of Dominican graduates' impact on the health and vitality of the Bay Area. At home on campus, with Dr. Gina's story top of mind, we too are pressing on—fostering potential, embracing partnerships, dismantling obstacles, and practicing compassion. Improving lives and strengthening our region, one student at a time. 🔥





# JOIN DOMINICAN'S ALUMNI BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Play a pivotal role in shaping the future of our alma mater. Share your voice, expertise, and passion by volunteering to represent our vibrant community.

Connect with fellow alumni, lead initiatives, and be the voice of your generation. Your dedication can make a significant impact, whether near or far.

Step up, stand out, and make a difference. Volunteer today and be a guiding force in propelling Dominican University of California forward. Your alma mater needs YOU!

Email: [alumni@dominican.edu](mailto:alumni@dominican.edu) for more information

“When three alumni approached me to join the alumni board, I felt a strong sense of responsibility. Being on the board has shown me that my time as a DU student and connected alum, along with my ABD membership, have all contributed to my personal growth. Challenging myself to make a difference has made me a better person. My enhanced bond to Dominican has taught me valuable lessons in a life of service to our shared objectives. Serving on the ABD constantly reminds me of the ongoing responsibility and legacy of my journey with DU.”

**Stewart McRae '77**

“Dominican is in my DNA. It has been a special place for my family since its inception, and my experience at Dominican has remained with me and served me throughout my career. Volunteering on the Alumni Board is a way for me to give back and stay deeply connected with this extraordinary place.”

**Jennifer Morrissey '88**

“

“I am serving on the Alumni Board of Directors because my four years at Dominican changed my life. Almost 15 years post-graduation, I've discovered that my skill set extends beyond my initial expectations. With a passion for bettering the world through the performing arts, I've achieved dreams beyond my dance major through entrepreneurship, activism, and teaching. Grateful for the opportunities Dominican provided, I serve on the Alumni Board to ensure that the arts are well represented and that liberal arts institutions like DU thrive for generations to come.”

**Casey Lee Thorne '10**





### A Message from your Alumni Board President

Dear Fellow Alumni,

Hello Penguins! I am thrilled to be writing to you as your new Alumni Board President. It is an honor to step into this role following Brian Moore's incredible leadership over the past three years.

Dominican is at an exciting and pivotal moment in our history. Whenever I am on campus (which is often—attending Board of Trustees meetings, events, and more!), I see a place that is evolving to meet the future while honoring the traditions that make it so special. Students are still celebrating the holidays by lighting the silver spruce tree in front of Angelico, but did you know that tree was planted by the Class of 1922 in honor of their commencement?

There are so many ways for you to stay connected and be part of Dominican's ongoing story. Consider applying to join the Alumni Board, where your voice and ideas can help shape the future. Share your news by submitting a class note—we love hearing about the incredible things you're doing. Nominate a fellow Penguin for an Alumni Award to celebrate their achievements during Alumni Weekend. Or simply come back to campus, take a walk, and relive the memories that started it all.

Your involvement, no matter how big or small, makes a difference. Together, we can ensure that Dominican's legacy remains as vibrant and inspiring as ever.

Thank you for your continued support and for being part of this amazing community. Let's make this year one to remember! 🔥

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sal Chávez'.

Salvador Chávez '16, MSOT '17

President, Alumni Board of Directors

### 2024-2025 Alumni Board of Directors

Sr. Patricia Dougherty O.P. '67

Stewart McRae '77

Kathryn Grako '79

Jennifer Morrissey '88

Lianni Castro-Teets '04

Crystal Nasir '04

Brian Moore '05 (Former President)

Gigi Gillard '06, MBA '07

Felicia Bell '06

Casey Lee Thorne '10

Domingo Ramirez '14

Kim Harris '15, MS '16 (Secretary)

Sal Chávez '16, MSOT '17 (President)



## Dominican Honors Distinguished Alumni, Students, Faculty

This year, alumni from the classes of 1949 through 2025 came together to reconnect and celebrate Dominican milestones during Reunion Weekend.

Reunion began Friday evening with the 50th anniversary reunion Golden Circle Dinner honoring the class of 1975. On Saturday, alumni and their families enjoyed a luncheon and awards ceremony. This was followed by campus tours and a afterparty.

The awards ceremony honored alumni, students, and faculty with the Outstanding Recent Graduate Award; the John F. Kennedy Ph.D. Senior Appreciation Award; the Spirit of the Alumni Award; the Sister M. Patricia Lyons Distinguished Alumni Award; the Sister M. Aquinas Nimitz, O.P. Distinguished Service Award; and the Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award.



**Professor Alison Howard**  
**John F. Kennedy Ph.D. Senior**  
**Appreciation Award**

With her dynamic teaching style and unwavering dedication to student success, Professor Alison Howard has been a cornerstone of Dominican's political science program for more than 20 years. She teaches courses on American government, politics and the media, and campaigns and elections — challenging students to think critically about the democratic process while equipping them with the tools to engage meaningfully in civic life. Known for her use of the Socratic method and personalized mentorship, Alison has inspired countless students to pursue public service, advocacy, and law.

Alison's scholarly work focuses on presidential rhetoric, particularly the State of the Union address and how presidents use it to shape public discourse and push forward their policy agendas. She is the co-author of *Addressing the State of the Union: The*

*Evolution and Impact of the President's Big Speech*, and her research — frequently cited in political science literature — has been featured in *PS: Political Science and Politics*, *Social Science Quarterly*, and more. A recognized expert in her field, Alison is often tapped by national and local media to provide commentary on presidential communication. Howard's research continues to evolve, exploring how modern presidents balance political performance and policy persuasion.



**Samantha Hunt '18**  
**Outstanding Recent Graduate Award**

After graduating cum laude with a B.A. in International Studies and Political Science, Samantha earned her J.D. from Vanderbilt University Law School in 2023. From her early work in the California State Assembly to internships at the ACLU and

Brennan Center for Justice, Samantha has been driven by a deep commitment to public service. Her passion for justice and advocacy was sparked at Dominican, where she credits professors and experiences — like a research fellowship supporting Syrian refugee mothers in Turkey — with shaping her path today.

As an Equal Justice Works Fellow at A Better Balance, Samantha ensures that pregnant and parenting students in New York can learn without facing discrimination. Her two-year fellowship project — sponsored by Merck & Co., Inc., and Covington & Burling LLP — focuses on educating students about their rights and providing direct legal services, including support for accommodations like prenatal leave and access to lactation space.

*Although Samantha couldn't join us for Reunion, she sent her heartfelt gratitude and appreciation.*





**Gina Dudley '25**  
**Spirit of the Alumni Award**

Gina Dudley '25 has left an undeniable mark on Dominican as a standout student-athlete, leader, and community member. A two-time All-PacWest Tennis Third Team honoree for doubles, Gina has consistently brought excellence to the tennis courts — most notably with a 10-5 doubles record in back-to-back seasons while holding down the No. 1 spot. Her efforts also earned her spots on the ITA All-Academic Team and as an Academic All-PacWest recipient. But Gina's impact extends far beyond her athletic achievements.

As president of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Gina champions the needs of her peers. Whether volunteering at campus events, mentoring teammates, or uplifting others with her positivity, Gina is the definition of a servant leader. Her legacy of compassion, resilience, and integrity will continue to inspire for years.



**Dr. LeeAnn Bartolini '79**  
**Sister M. Patricia Lyons Distinguished Alumni Award**

Dr. LeeAnn Bartolini '79 exemplifies the Dominican ideals of study, reflection, community, and service through every facet of her professional and personal life. A dedicated professor of psychology and a champion of women and gender studies, LeeAnn has long been a powerful voice for inclusion and equity at Dominican. Through her leadership on numerous university committees and ability to mentor, support, and uplift those around her, she has made a profound and lasting impact on the Dominican community.

In addition to her forty years of institutional service, Dr. Bartolini's clinical work has helped individuals and couples heal and grow. She has inspired generations of students to think critically and compassionately, challenging them to envision a more inclusive world.



**Virginia "Ginger" Good '55**  
**Sister M. Patricia Lyons Distinguished Alumni Award**

Virginia "Ginger" Good '55 has been a lifelong embodiment of Dominican's values, from her time as student body president to her seven decades of leadership, service, and community building. Ginger has worked tirelessly to keep her classmates connected—organizing reunions, planning gatherings, and ensuring the bonds of friendship remain strong. Her generosity and forward-thinking spirit led her to establish a scholarship fund in honor of her graduating class, which continues to support Dominican students today.

Following graduation, Ginger dedicated herself to education and later ventured into business, all while raising four children and staying deeply engaged in her faith and church community. Her commitment to serving others has continued into her later years,

as she now leads a unique housing initiative for senior women designed to combat isolation and foster deep community.



**Phillip Billeci-Gard '08, MBA '18**  
**Sister M. Aquinas Nimitz, O.P. Distinguished Service Award**

Phillip Billeci-Gard '08, MBA '18 is shaping a new and dynamic role at Dominican that bridges advancement and athletics, centering student experience, philanthropy, and service. A standout student-athlete turned influential coach and now senior associate athletic director for compliance and advancement, Phil brings energy, innovation, and deep institutional pride to everything he does. A true collaborator and connector, Phil has elevated Penguin Athletics through initiatives that blend school spirit with meaningful engagement — from leading student-athlete food drives and service projects to building corporate partnerships in support of Dominican's mission.

Phil's commitment to Dominican extends well beyond the athletics office. As an alumnus, he regularly rallies fellow Penguins to give back, serves as a volunteer at every commencement (except the one he walked in), and brings campus-wide energy to efforts like Day of Giving and PacWest Championship events. Whether mentoring students, creating new traditions like the athletics beer garden, or coaching youth soccer in Marin, Phil is a passionate, purpose-driven leader who continues to inspire excellence through his actions.



**Sabrena McCarley '04, MBA '09**  
**Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award**

Sabrena McCarley '04, MBA '09, is a nationally recognized leader, advocate, and educator in occupational therapy whose career reflects the very best of Dominican's values. Sabrena works at the intersection of policy and practice—leading national advocacy efforts through roles with the FDA's Health Care at Home Initiative Steering Committee, the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), and the National Association of Rehabilitation Providers and Agencies (NARA). She has led over 200 national presentations on health policy and reimbursement, developed grassroots advocacy programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, and created initiatives that empower occupational therapists to shape the future of healthcare. Her work continues to enhance patient care access and professional representation nationwide.

Sabrena remains deeply connected to Dominican, serving for six years on the alumni board and continuing as a regular guest lecturer in the occupational therapy program. Each year, she inspires future practitioners by delivering impactful lectures on advocacy and health policy, bridging academic learning with real-world influence. Her life's work exemplifies the ideals of study, reflection, community, and service: she never stops learning, questions systems to spark progress, uplifts her professional community, and gives back with intention and purpose. 🔥



## Imagine An MFA Student's Story of Beating the Odds

WRITTEN BY  
Max Bidasha  
Graduate Student

**I**magine having everything you ever wanted: A home in picturesque Napa, a lucrative career, attending one of the best schools in the San Francisco Bay Area, a budding relationship with all of the fluttering and clumsy butterflies. Now imagine getting a call that would change your life forever. After a lump in your left hand began to grow, you go to the doctor. Maybe it's just scar tissue from the two previous carpal tunnel surgeries you had. The same doctor who performed your second carpal tunnel surgery walks in, rolls his eyes, and without even looking at your hand barks, "I already told you there is nothing else we can do!" You feel devastated, angry, and like a complete inconvenience for simply existing and needing help. After you show the doctor your hand, his mouth drops to the floor. The doctor says, "Oh, this isn't good." Your heart races. You go into what you think is your third carpal tunnel surgery. The healing process feels the same as before, until you get a call from your hand surgeon. They tell you that at thirty-five, you have an extremely rare form of cancer that only 60 people get in the entire country each year. "You have stage four cancer" resounds and your mind begins to think

the absolute worst-case scenario will happen, and your greatest fears are set when your calloused oncologist says, "There is a 50/50 chance chemo will even work, and if it does work, you'll have a year or two to live." He tells you this without flinching or changing his voice that could have shown some emotion, hope, or humanity. You leave the hospital knowing you have to share the news with friends and family, but you're still trying to wrap your head around everything. You begin to think of all the things you still want to do, but don't know if you'll get to do any of them. You are too shocked to cry. You find yourself comforting others at the idea of your passing. You answer complete strangers' questions like, "When are you going to die?" Your schedule quickly fills up with appointments. You run from doing blood work to CT scans to biopsies and MRIs. You don't just do one MRI, but several, because "your cancer doesn't like to show up unless you have extra contrast." You vomit from the contrast, while the only medical professional to show you any form of human kindness is the technician who grabs a bucket, pats your back, and calls you "Bud" as you projectile vomit into his blue

bucket. You learn that you need an underarm lymph node biopsy. You are held down by four people who could probably win a strong man competition. You feel the needle enter your underarm several times. In fact, you feel everything. After five minutes of terrible pain, your nurse tells you that you are a bleeder. You are informed later that day that you will need a lung biopsy because the cancer has spread to your lungs. You can't think of anything else you'd rather do less, but you go in. You feel the numbing needles that feel like bee stings, but nothing else. You are told that, "while it is rare, the possibility of your lung collapsing is still there, and you'll know it if it does." Your lung collapses two days later. You can't breathe in all the way. The pain is sharp, overwhelming, and excruciating, but still NOTHING like the pain you'll experience during the insertion of the chest tube! You aren't sure if the person putting the chest tube in is a doctor, and you can't help but notice him reading the directions at the foot of your hospital bed. You inquire if he has ever done "this" before. He waves you off and explains that you are getting the new model and they want to make sure they do it right. You can't believe

your ears. He runs his fingers over your rib cage, finds the spot, and tells you to breathe. He puts all of his body weight on you as he pushes the tube through your body. You scream and see black. You tell him you might faint. He replies, "well, you're already on a bed." Your dad calls you pleading for you to move to Sequim, Washington, but you are too independent. Life gives you two whole seconds to breathe and reflect, leaving you looking reality in the face. You know you don't want to die in Sequim, but you know that you want to spend as much time as you have left on this earth with people who love you. You've quit school. Your significant other breaks up with you on Valentine's Day because they aren't strong enough to deal with your situation. You meet your new doctors and nurses. Your mind is put at ease when you learn your family doctor, oncologist, and hand surgeon are all women, and you experience something you never felt from doctors in California: compassion. Your personable, intelligent, and kind oncologist explains that the tumor in your hand is spreading the cancer at a rapid rate, and the best plan of action is to amputate it and then start chemo ASAP. You agree because, for you, there's a lot of living to be done. You thank the stars that you are right-handed. Your surgery is scheduled, and you begin to mentally prepare for parting ways with a body part you never realized you used as much as you did. The surgery date arrives. You are starving because you have to fast from the night before. You get in your car with your family to drive seventy minutes away. You get a call letting you know your surgery needed to be postponed until the next day. You mentally prepare again, and of course, you are hungry! You get a call six times on six different days to reschedule your surgery. You are more than frustrated

and hungry. You know that every second you have your hand is another second the cancer is pumping through your blood and spreading. The day finally arrives. It's early. The nurses are amazing and so is the doctor who rescheduled you six times. They start your IV. You know that when you wake up your body is going to look different. It's going to feel different. What you weren't prepared for is how differently people would treat you. You said goodbye to your hand on December 6, 2018, four days before your 36th birthday. Eight days later, you start the most hardcore chemotherapy on the market. It's neon red and makes you urinate a color you never want to see again. On January 1, 2019 all of your hair falls out. Up to this point, you've been strong. You've been positive, but now, all you can do is cry. Your eyebrows fall out, along with your eyelashes, and leg hair. You have to smirk when you realize your nose and ear hair are the last to go. You realize that your life HAS to be more than just not dying. You call your school. They let you back in. You catch up. You go to school in California once a month and do the rest online. You graduate cum laude and earn the Dean's Outstanding Student Award. You go to see several Broadway shows because it might be your last chance to go. You are inspired and realize that YOU have a story to tell. You write your first play called STAGES about your cancer journey that unites people and shows those without cancer how to respectfully treat those with the disease. You direct, act in, and produce your show. You find your calling. You write another play called Missing Red Girls about the 6,000 missing and murdered Indigenous women in the US and Canada alone with a cast of all Native actors. You get accepted to grad school. Missing Red Girls is chosen out of seventy plays for a community

reading, and then a festival in Virginia. You get straight A's in your first summer in your **MFA in playwriting program at grad school**. You've been seeing a nutritionist, minimizing sugar and carb intake. You drink alkaline water, you do Reiki, you take daily walks, appreciate nature, try cannabis for the first time because your oncologist shares that it is shown to shrink cancer cells. You pray every single day. You visit your grandmother's grave and tell her not to take you quite just yet. You get the results back from your latest CT scan. You and your oncologist can't believe the news, because "the most they could have hoped for was for the cancer to stop growing." They can't see a trace of cancer in your body now! You continue to surround yourself with love, art, nature, music, and theatre. And while NO ONE knows when we are going to die, you know that the Creator has the final say in how long you get to enjoy life...so you enjoy it to your fullest by always having goals and doing your best to see beauty in even the darkest of times. You learn that you don't have to imagine because everything you need to truly live is inside of you. You enjoy every second in your **MFA program at Dominican**, publish your first book of poetry called The Pros and Cons of Dying, and continue with all the goals you ever had and create new ones along the way because you are more than alive.

**YOU ARE LIVING!** 🔥





## A Century of Memories

### Barbara King '46 Reflects on Dominican and Life's Journey

At 100 years old, Barbara King '46 carries a lifetime of memories, many rooted in her formative years at Dominican College during the 1940s. Barbara's story intertwines the resilience of wartime America with the warmth of a close-knit campus community. Speaking from her retirement community—established by the Dominican Sisters in Mountain View—she reflected on her experiences with humor, insight, and gratitude. She was accompanied by her daughter Anne Navach, an alumna from the Class of 1969 who exited before graduation.

Barbara arrived at Dominican College in 1942, following in the footsteps of her sister, Kay. The all-women's college, with its small classes and tight-knit community, provided a supportive environment where students knew one another by name. The campus was a hub of activity and camaraderie, even as the shadow of World War II loomed. Barbara fondly recalled the shared meals in the modest dining hall (located in Fanjeaux at the time), where lifelong friendships were forged over simple, rationed fare.

Wartime rationing shaped many aspects of daily life for Barbara and her peers. "We had the ration book for me—coffee, butter, shoes. We could only have, what, one or two pairs of shoes a year," she shared. "It was tough. It was tough." Despite the challenges, Barbara and her classmates found ways to support one another, embodying the spirit of resourcefulness and determination that defined their generation.

While Barbara attended Dominican, her love story began. Her sister Kay married Barney Bannan, whose cousin, Louis King, served as Barney's best man. Barbara served as maid of honor, and it was love at first sight. "The year after that, we got married," Barbara said with a smile. Their union marked the beginning of a family legacy tied closely to Dominican.

After graduating, Barbara and Louis built a life together in California, raising five children in the span of 12 years. Louis transitioned from military service to a career with the telephone company, while Barbara devoted herself to her family. Over the decades, they lived in places such as Arcadia, San Clemente, and San Carlos, but their connection to Dominican remained strong. Barbara's family ties to the school extended beyond her own experience, with relatives attending and even joining the Dominican order.

Now, as a centenarian, Barbara reflects on the many changes Dominican has undergone since her time there. The expansion of the campus, the transition to Dominican University, and the broader evolution of education are milestones she has witnessed with pride. Yet she believes the essence of Dominican—its commitment to community and excellence—remains timeless.

Barbara's lighthearted nature shines through in moments like when she is told she doesn't look 100 years old. "The other people in my retirement community will say, 'You're 100? She must be telling a lie,'" she said with a playful smile. Her humor, coupled with her deep well of experiences, offers inspiration for anyone lucky enough to hear her story.

Barbara King's story is a testament to the enduring impact of Dominican on its students and the remarkable lives they go on to lead. As she looks forward to celebrating her milestone birthday (with plenty of her all-time favorite coffee crunch cake), her story serves as a bridge between Dominican's past and future, a reminder of the rich history woven into the fabric of the university. 🕯️





## A Moment That Mattered

### Gloria Steinem's 1995 Visit to Dominican

This year, Gloria Steinem celebrated her 90th birthday—a remarkable milestone for the iconic feminist, journalist, and activist. Her unwavering commitment to advancing gender equality and social justice has inspired generations, and her influence continues to resonate today. For Dominican University of California, Steinem's legacy holds a special significance, tied to a pivotal event in 1995 that brought her to campus and challenged the institution's identity and values.

Diane Rawicz '99, then the director of Dominican's conference center, remembers the moment that set it all in motion. It was a routine Friday in February 1995 when she answered a phone call from Planned Parenthood about renting the college's outdoor amphitheater for a summer fundraiser. As Rawicz discussed logistics, the planner asked whether there would be an issue with a Catholic college hosting the event (*Editor's note: Although Dominican became an independent university in the 1970s, its Catholic heritage remains visible through the continued presence of the Dominican Sisters and the enduring influence of its founding values*). Confident in Dominican's commitment to intellectual freedom and community engagement, she assured them there was no issue. Then, the planner casually mentioned the keynote speaker: Gloria Steinem.

Rawicz, an admirer of Steinem's work, was thrilled. Steinem, co-founder of Ms. magazine and a trailblazer for women's rights, represented everything Rawicz admired about feminism and activism. She saw the event as an opportunity for Dominican to gain valuable exposure and demonstrate its role as a forum for meaningful dialogue. With excitement, Rawicz finalized the booking—unaware of the storm it would unleash.

As news of the event spread, the excitement quickly turned into controversy. Dominican, an institution with a strong Catholic heritage and a history of embracing freedom of thought, was at the center of heated debate. The backlash began with angry phone calls to Rawicz's office. Alumni threatened to withdraw donations, local clergy condemned the event from their pulpits, and some parents vowed not to send their children to

Dominican. Some accused the college of abandoning its Catholic identity.

The controversy extended beyond the conference center. Dominican's then-president, Dr. Joseph Fink, fielded hundreds of letters, most of them critical. Articles appeared in national outlets like The New York Times, and the Archbishop of San Francisco publicly demanded the college cancel the event. Trustees debated the college's values, with some resigning in protest. Despite the uproar, Dominican's leadership stood firm, releasing a statement affirming the college's commitment to fostering dialogue and serving as a forum for diverse perspectives.

On June 9, 1995, the day of the event, a sold-out crowd of 950—mostly women—filled the amphitheater. Outside the gates, protesters gathered, praying the rosary and waving graphic posters. Overhead, a plane circled with a banner proclaiming, "Real women don't need feminists." Inside, however, the atmosphere was electric with anticipation and solidarity.

When Gloria Steinem arrived, she introduced Rawicz as the woman who made the event possible. Steinem's warmth and graciousness left a lasting impression. She spoke for nearly an hour, addressing the challenges of societal labels and encouraging the audience to recognize their power to effect change. "Everything we do matters," she said, invoking the metaphor of a butterfly's wings influencing the weather miles away.

For Dominican, the event was transformative. It reaffirmed the institution's commitment to actively exploring ideas and engaging with complex, sometimes controversial, issues. For Rawicz, it was a defining moment that deepened her understanding of Dominican's mission and the importance of standing firm in the face of adversity.

Nearly thirty years later, the lessons from that day remain vital. Gloria Steinem's visit to Dominican was not just an event—it was a moment that challenged, inspired, and ultimately strengthened the college's identity. Today, Steinem's words echo as a timeless call to action: Everything we do matters. 🔥



## Trailblazer of Education

### How Mother Louis O'Donnell Ignited Dominican's Legacy



In the heart of San Rafael, amid the rolling hills and towering oaks, Dominican University of California stands proudly as an institution of education, faith, and progress. It's easy to admire the beauty of our campus—the stately Angelico Hall, the serene courtyards—but behind every landmark is a story, and few figures loom as large in Dominican's history as Mother Louis O'Donnell: Dominican's first president.

Mother Louis was no ordinary leader. She was a determined woman in her habit, navigating the challenges of the early 1900s and unafraid to push boundaries. She saw the potential in Dominican College long before others did, and her bold vision laid the foundation for what the university would become.

When the Dominican Sisters arrived in San Rafael in the late 1800s, they faced an uphill battle. Their first project was a convent—modest compared to the grand buildings we see today—but Mother Louis had a bigger dream from the beginning. The Dominican Sisters were not just here to establish another school but to create an institution of higher learning at a time when college for women was a revolutionary concept. They were trailblazers, and Dominican College was the torch they carried forward.

Mother Louis did not just dream of offering women access to higher education—she built the framework for it. Under her leadership, Dominican College was formally incorporated in 1890, but it would take nearly three decades of patience, persistence, and strategic growth before the college began conferring degrees in 1917. At a time when women were fighting for the right to vote, the Sisters of Dominican were empowering young women to earn a college degree, creating a parallel between the college's growth and the women's rights movement sweeping the nation.

What is even more impressive? Mother Louis and her fellow Sisters did not come to California as experienced college educators. They honed their teaching skills at the primary and secondary levels before expanding into higher education. This humility and a relent-

less drive to provide the best for their students set the Dominican College experience apart from the beginning.

But it wasn't all academics. Mother Louis understood the importance of balance—creating an environment where students could grow intellectually, spiritually, and physically. The Sisters fostered an early athletic program that included horseback riding, archery, and swimming. At a time when societal norms kept most women away from physical activity, Dominican College encouraged its students to embrace both body and mind. The courtyard between the Convent and St. Thomas Hall buzzed with energy as young women took part in activities that allowed them to push beyond the boundaries that had long been imposed on them.

Mother Louis's leadership wasn't limited to classrooms and courtyards, though. Under her watch, Dominican College expanded dramatically. In 1918, the Sisters took out a loan to purchase the grand Meadowlands estate, a sprawling property that became a cornerstone of campus life. Meadowlands was not just another building—it symbolized the college's growth, housing dormitories and even a chemistry lab in a converted carriage house. The Sisters, ever resourceful, hosted garden parties to fund the transformation of the property, bringing the community together to support their ambitious plans.

Over the years, Dominican College continued to grow—structurally, academically, and in reputation. From its partnership with the University of California, Berkeley in 1915, which allowed students to complete their first two years at Dominican before transferring, to becoming the first Catholic college in California to offer Bachelor of Arts degrees to women, Mother Louis's influence was everywhere. Her vision of Dominican as a place where women could thrive, both in mind and spirit, was realized as the college continued expanding its offerings and establishing itself as a women's education leader.

As you stroll through campus today, take a moment to reflect on Mother Louis O'Donnell's legacy. Dominican isn't just a collection of beautiful buildings—it's the embodiment of a dream, built by a group of pioneering women who believed that education could change lives. At the center of that vision was Mother Louis. Her determination and unwavering belief in the power of education laid the foundation for everything we cherish about Dominican today.

So whether you find yourself walking down Acacia, sitting in Angelico Hall, or reading beneath the trees, remember: it all began with a woman who dared to imagine something greater—and whose courage turned that dream into a lasting institution. 🔥

Hayes, M. J. (2000). *A Dominican Torch in the Pioneer West: The Founding of Dominican College and a Century of Growth* (Senior thesis, Dominican University of California). Dominican Scholar. <https://doi.org/10.33015/dominican.edu/2000.HIST.ST.01>.



Class of 1960



Class of 1974



Jon Mark Plater '77



Kristen Ostrem Niemcewicz '89

## 1960s

**On the road again! The Class of 1960** "Talk-a-Lots" reunited for another adventure, this time exploring the hidden charms of San Jose, CA—who knew? **Louise (Pitta) Polsky '60, Patricia (Maxwell) Malmstrom '60, and Anne (Hicks) Kimball '60** represented California, while **Judy (Bridgewater) Hopcroft '60** traveled from New York, **Dee (Arnold) Sullivan '60** from Iowa, and **Phyllis (McMullen) Duris '60** from Oregon. Phyllis' daughter, Jen Norton, served as their itinerary director and chauffeur for the week-long reunion in September. No gathering would be complete without Blum's famous coffee crunch cake, which Louise flew in from Los Angeles. The trip included a special visit to Santa Cruz, a scenic drive up to Half Moon Bay, and a memorable final evening at a beachfront restaurant, where they were treated to a bagpipe concert at sunset—closing with a stirring rendition of *Amazing Grace* as the sun dipped beneath the horizon. As they parted ways, they wished each other well with their signature farewell: "Don't fall, so we can keep planning for next year!" Note submitted by Phyllis Duris '60.

## 1970s

**Class of 1974** reunited at their 50th reunion in November 2024 and had a wonderful time reconnecting. Left to right: **Jane (McCabe) Kolling, Lynn Thurman-Bemis, Ann Marie Taheny Miller**, and **Mary Jane Burke** enjoyed their Golden reunion and celebrated together by traveling to Palm Springs with their partners. It was a memorable gathering for these longtime friends!

**Jon Mark Plater '77** built a 30-year career with the California Department of Corrections, starting as an officer at San Quentin State Prison before serving as a Correctional Counselor on the Central Coast until his retirement in 2003. Passionate about history and the arts, Mark is the Educational Director for the Central Coast Renaissance Faire, where he teaches Tudor history, and has been active in community theater for nearly three decades. He and his wife, Valery, recently celebrated 50 years of marriage and have traveled extensively across Europe, exploring their genealogy.

## 1980s

**Morgan Peterson '85** retired from Palomar College in December 2023 and now holds the title of Emeritus Professor.

**Kristen Ostrem-Niemcewicz '89** celebrates 36 years since earning her BSN from St. Luke's School of Nursing, crediting Dominican for sparking her passion for nurse-led, community-based care. Her career has spanned labor and delivery, an MSN in Nurse-Midwifery, a Post-Master's Family Nurse Practitioner (University of New Mexico '96 & '97), and a DNP in public health (New Mexico State '15). After retiring from the University of New Mexico College of Nursing in 2024, she returned to the Pacific Northwest as Associate Clinical Professor and Associate Dean of Graduate Nursing Programs at Oregon Health & Science University. Her scholarship focuses on healthcare simulation and expanding advanced practice nursing to include ultrasound for clinical decision-making. Kristen lives with her husband, Stefan, and their beloved dogs, cats, chickens, and horses. She is a proud aunt to Elsa (21) and Odin (16) and enjoys snorkeling in warm oceans whenever possible.





Sister Marie Thérèse Carney '89



Lee Ann (Estes) Wise '93



Mark Weston '93



Elizabeth (Williamson) Crook '07

## Sister Marie Thérèse Carney '89

(JoLee Carney, OCD) celebrated her Silver Jubilee of Profession of Vows on May 30, 2024, with her community of Discalced Carmelite Nuns in Sioux City, Iowa. Bishop Walker Nickless celebrated Mass and gave her a special blessing, during which he also blessed a crown of small white roses and baby's breath. Mother Joseph placed the crown on her head, and Sister Marie Thérèse proudly wore it throughout the two days of celebration. Her sisters tolerated her well enough, and the event was filled with joy and smiles.

## 1990s

**Lee Ann (Estes) Wise '93** is Vice President of the MarinHealth Medical Network, a UCSF affiliate, and a seasoned healthcare executive with expertise in both clinical practice and operational management. She previously served as Medical Group Administrator/Chief Administrative Officer at TPMG/Kaiser in one of Northern California's largest service areas and held leadership roles at UCSF. A Marin native, Lee Ann played a pivotal role during the pandemic, collaborating with public health officials to develop testing workflows, workplace safety protocols, therapeutic administration processes, and leading

vaccination efforts that earned national recognition for Marin County. She holds a Master's in Nursing from the University of San Francisco and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Psychology from Dominican, along with certifications in Clinical Nurse Leadership, Nurse Executive Leadership, Perioperative Nursing, Plant-Based Nutrition, and Climate Change in Healthcare. Passionate about prevention and public health, she is dedicated to building a healthier world. Lee Ann is also a proud parent of two Dominican Penguins! Her daughter, **Julia Reinhard '22**, was honored as Outstanding Student at commencement and now works for Marin County District 1 with Supervisor Mary Sackett. Her son, **Andrew Reinhard '25**, is a student-athlete competing in Track and Field.

**Mark Weston '93** has been a Dominican nursing graduate for over 30 years, specializing in Emergency, Disaster, and Investigative Medicine. Recently, he was offered a position to teach graduate nursing students in the Master's in Nursing program at the University of San Francisco. He began his first semester in Fall 2024 with a cohort of 19 students and will continue teaching in the Summer 2025 session.

**Dayna (Querín) Clark '96** was recently promoted to Senior Account Specialist at Hometown Health, a Reno, NV-based health insurance carrier. She has been with the company for 17 years as a key member of the Sales & Retention team. In her new role, she will continue working with broker partners on plan benefit education and eligibility for their Individual and Family products while also taking on leadership of the organization's employee orientation sessions and collaborating on the annual product benefit and rate filing process. She looks forward to learning and growing professionally in 2025.

## 2000s

**Lee Ann Steinmetz '03** is celebrating two joyous milestones! Her son, Alex Steinmetz, married Lauren Wagner on November 22, 2024, and they welcomed their daughter, Lindy Lou Wagner Steinmetz, on January 15, 2025.

**Brian Moore '05** was elected to Vice Chair of the City of Newport Beach Civil Service Board and Secretary of Concordia University Alumni Board of Directors.

**Elizabeth (Williamson) Crook '07** is an Assistant United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio,

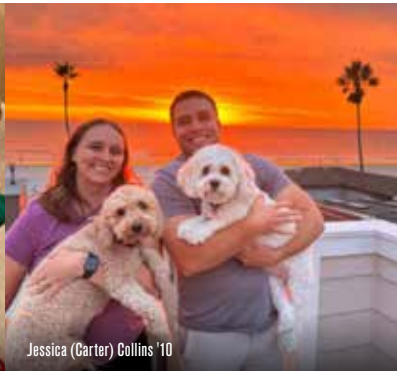




Gigi Gillard '06, MBA '08



Cameron Sawyer '08



Jessica (Carter) Collins '10



Marcia Barahona '10, MBA '15

working in the OCDETF unit. She married in September 2015 and has two children, including Charlie, born on September 4, 2024.

**Gigi Gillard '06, MBA '08**, celebrated her 40th birthday at Disneyland surrounded by fellow Dominican alumni! The celebration brought together **Brian Moore '05, Kara Amestoy '04, Dean Aclan '04** and his wife **Sharon Goya-Aclan, Nicole Gillard '04, Arian Ahmadi '03, Stacey Helguera '02, Shannon Dustin Bondoc '02**, and Tiffany Tygart, showcasing the strong connections formed at Dominican. Note submitted by Nicole Gillard '04.

**Cameron Sawyer '08** and his wife, Gina, welcomed their second daughter, Lily, to the family in October! Big sister Ava is already thriving in her new role. Congratulations to the Sawyer family!

**Jill Zechow, MD, MS '10** (Counseling Psychology) recently published her first book, *The Motherhood Survival Manual: Your Prenatal Guide to Prevent Postpartum Depression & Anxiety*. Written for expectant mothers,

the book outlines evidence-based strategies to reduce the risk of postpartum depression and anxiety. Jill specializes in perinatal mental health and runs a private practice in Santa Rosa, CA.

**Jessica (Carter) Collins '10**, and her husband, Chris, are celebrating 10 years of marriage this July. Jessica is a dedicated Catholic school teacher, while Chris is a civilian for the Department of Defense. They share their home with two beloved "fur babies," Penny and Nickel "Nikki," a Cavachon and a Mini Goldendoodle.

**Marcia Barahona '10, MBA '15**, and Carlos Quinto Delgado celebrated their ecclesiastic wedding on the Dominican University of California campus, bringing full circle a love story decades in the making. The two first met as children in Venezuela, where their families were close friends—Marcia was two, and Carlos was eight. After Marcia moved to the U.S. at age 12, they lost contact, only to reconnect nearly 40 years later, rekindling childhood memories and forming

a friendship that blossomed into love. Following their civil ceremony in Santa Rosa in January 2024, they honored their Christian faith with a bilingual wedding on campus on August 30, 2024. The couple exchanged vows on Meadowlands Lawn, surrounded by loved ones from across the U.S., South America, and Europe. Guests then enjoyed a garden cocktail hour by Guzman Hall's ivy-clad walls before dining and dancing into the night in the Guzman Lecture Hall. Dominican holds a special place in the couple's hearts, especially for Marcia, who remains deeply connected to the University. She serves as a Trustee, Chair of the Advisory Board for the Lepage Center for Global Innovation, Barowsky School of Business Advisory Board member, and ILS Executive Education Program instructor.

**Nunugha "Winnie" Jacobs '11** has recently been promoted to Clinical Research Manager. In this new role, she will oversee clinical trials, lead teams, and ensure compliance with regulatory standards. Winnie is excited for this next chapter in her career and



James Christopher Fish '11



Katelyn (Rardon) Letuchy '14 and Konstantin Letuchy '14



Victoria Grajeda '15, MS '19, and Bryan Grevera '15



Stacy Young '23

remains committed to advancing clinical research. She extends a special thank you to Emory University School of Medicine for the foundation and support that have been instrumental in her professional growth.

A painting by **James Christopher Fish '11**, created during his watercolor class with Professor Lynn Sondag, is to be featured in *Wings of Stars*, a book of poems by local poet Robin Gabbert. The book, set to be published by Blue Light Press in a few months, includes a poem inspired by James' painting, which was previously exhibited.

**Chelsea Christopherson '12** welcomed a beautiful baby girl, Madalyn Louise, on November 13, 2024.

**Katelyn (Rardon) Letuchy '14** and Konstantin Letuchy '14 met at Dominican 15 years ago. They started dating, got married in 2018, and are now the proud parents of two future Penguins!

**Victoria Grajeda '15, MS '19, and Bryan Grevera '15** tied the knot on July 25, 2025, in San Jose, CA. Alumni in attendance included (left to right) **Jordan Ranson '14, Courtney Coan '16, Kimberly Harris '15, Sophia De Quattro '16, Salvador Chavez '16, MSOT '17, Vanessa Alejandra Smith '24, Elizabeth Rice '15, and Ann (Broich) Van Valkenburg '14** (not pictured).

**Allison Kustic '20** graduated from California State University, Sacramento, with a Master's in Public Policy and Administration in December 2024. She continues her work in public policy and recently relocated to Seattle, WA.

**Stacy Young '23** wasted no time after graduating from the School of Liberal Arts and Education with a degree in Sociology and a minor in Philosophy and Religion—she embarked on a journey to Africa, visiting Ghana, Togo, and Benin. A highlight of her travels was exploring the Ganvie floating

village on Lake Nokoué in Benin, an experience that deepened her passion for designing sustainable housing programs for young adults aging out of the foster care system. This fall, Stacy will continue her studies in the University of San Francisco's Urban and Public Affairs graduate program, focusing on housing policy structures. She is also a DEI Consultant advocating for equitable healthcare access and a Gallup-certified Strengths Coach.

**Sachie Ohara '23** joined the Sacramento Kings Dancers for the 2024-2025 season! The Kings Dancers are the official dance team for the Sacramento Kings, performing both on the court and in the community. Known for their dynamic styles and incredible performances, the team brings energy and excitement to the Golden 1 Center.

Want your class note included in the next Torch?  
Visit [dominican.edu/alumni/news-and-notes](https://dominican.edu/alumni/news-and-notes) for the submission form!

## ALUMNI

Cecil Bruener Kantola '43  
 Mary Giraudo Beck '45  
 Brenda Doyle Jeffers '46  
 Alice Karam '46  
 Madeline Cyr Moscatelli '46  
 Evangeline Sprague Pouncey '47  
 Terry Burke Johnston '48  
 June Renton Chambers '49  
 Natalie Stevenson Daneri '49  
 Alice Kerckhoff Fahey '49  
 Catherine McDonald Henseler '49  
 Marilyn Luchetti McCarthy '49  
 Pat Warner Mitchell '49  
 Laverne Schlemmer Barrett '50  
 Catherine Dobbel McLanahan '50  
 Barbara Hohlt Lee '51  
 Beverly Rossi Bacci '52  
 Sr. Joanne Cullimore '52  
 Paula DeCarlo Tuttle '52  
 Claire Diepenbrock '53  
 Sally Ferguson Gram '54  
 Teresa Bannan Nally '54  
 Colleen Sullivan '54  
 Maureen O'Connor Portello '55  
 Catherine Laden Uniack '55  
 Marianna Bloom McEvoy '56  
 Patricia McCready Stopsky '56  
 Patricia Flitner Novak '57  
 Kathleen Magee Schulz '57  
 Clare Hasenpusch Daum '58  
 Barbara Wilson Pedroncelli '58  
 Marguerite Grady Fox '59  
 Donna Wilson Long '59  
 Helen Condon Stichler '59  
 Mary Anne Dolen '60  
 Jacqueline Valado Canepa '61  
 Sally Geary Enos '61  
 Sheila Littleton Elliott '63  
 Joan Garaventa Jaffe '63  
 Joan Barovetto Black '64

Sharelle Mayer '64  
 Mary Harrington Trotter '64  
 Mary Kathleen O'Brien Allison '66  
 Theodora "Teddi" Spargo Morris '67  
 Sharon Ravani '68  
 Margretta Shine Schroth '68  
 Julie Leonardi Isetta '69  
 Susie Crofoot Johnson '69  
 Carolyn Chiesa '70  
 Patricia Colman Lawler '70  
 Beverly Butkevich Barish MS '71  
 Barbara Murphy MA '71  
 Michael Carey MS '77  
 Eric Enderle '79  
 Mary McDevitt MS '87  
 Perriann Wood CRED '89  
 Sarah Cahill '95  
 Peggy Gunter CRED '96  
 Johna Lounibos '97  
 Carolyn Mucelli '97 CRED '98  
 Diane Glas '00  
 Erika Riedel Lippsmeyer '00  
 Theresa Searcy '00  
 Mark Reed '01  
 Rita Dempsey '08  
 Marissa Gailey '10

## FACULTY AND STAFF

Charles Billings  
 Roland Cooper  
 Gay Lynch  
 Mary McDevitt  
 Arthur Scott  
 Sherry Volk

## TRUSTEE

John R. Gaulding

## SYMPATHY TO

Sheila Doyle Kiernan '48 on the passing of her sister, Brenda Doyle Jeffers '46  
 Margaret O'Connor Brennan '50 on the passing of her sister, Maureen O'Connor Portello '55

Barbara Luchetti Bosque '54 on the passing of her sister, Marilyn Luchetti McCarthy '49  
 Irene Tognoli Hannauer '55 on the passing of her husband, Joseph Hannauer  
 Jacklyn Smith Herup '55 on the passing of her husband, William Herup  
 Ann Marie Karam '58 on the passing of her sister, Alice Karam '46  
 Marian Cossa Bowser '61 on the passing of her husband, Carl Bowser  
 Nancy Cirimele Devlin '61 on the passing of her husband, and Ann Devlin Ford '61 on the passing of her brother, Jack Devlin  
 Joyce Leonardi Boccabella '63 on the passing of her sister, and Gregory Isetta '12 on the passing of his mother, Julie Leonardi Isetta '69  
 Gail Downey Carcione '64 on the passing of her husband, and Carolyn Carcione '94 on the passing of her father, Peter Carcione  
 Francine Colli Pogue '65 on the passing of her husband, Edwin Pogue  
 Cleoni Tocalino Gause '67 on the passing of her husband, Jerry Gause  
 Kathy Lyons Tierney '67 on the passing of her husband, Michael Tierney  
 Donna Guerra Howe '68 on the passing of her husband, Bruce Howe  
 Jeanette Gilbeau Corder '71 on the passing of her son, Patrick Corder  
 Sandra Medina-Haberman '76 on the passing of her parents, Ernest and Helen Medina  
 Patty Garbarino '77 and the extended Garbarino family on the passing of her father, Joe Garbarino Jr.  
 Claire Nixon Reed '88 on the passing of her husband, and Molly Reed '11 on the passing of her father, Mark Reed '01  
 Kristen Elliott '89 on the passing of her mother, Sheila Littleton Elliott '63  
 Lindsay Lynch Lytle '94 and John Lynch '98 on the passing of their mother, Gay Lynch  
 Sean Glas '02 on the passing of his mother, Diane Glas '00  
 Leroy Lounibos '06 and the extended Lounibos family on the passing of his wife, Johna Lounibos '97  
 Blake Robins '11 on the passing of her father, David Robins



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