



LEADERSHIP SOCIETY APRIL UPDATE

You are receiving this letter because you are a member of Saint Mary's Leadership Society, a family of givers who generously contribute \$1,000 or more annually to the university.

Greetings!

Seventeen years ago, I came to Saint Mary's University of Minnesota to be a professor in the Educational Leadership doctoral program. It is fair to say my path to that professor role — and then on to my current role as dean of the School of Education here — was far from traditional.

My “real world” training included being a truck driver, bartender, caterer, private club manager, and a stint in the restaurant business. My nontraditional pathway taught me a lot over the years, about education and about life. All those roles have included “survivor stories,” along with a lot of strategic thinking. I learned ways to get things done without adding vast resources.

Originally from Chicago, I obtained my BFA from Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. I traveled to New York City to work in theater and some of the other jobs listed above. Upon returning to the Midwest, I earned a master's degree in counseling. I began helping workers through employee assistance programs, first with trade unions and then United Healthcare. I earned my Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota in adult education, and with that degree, I started teaching at Saint Mary's.

I was on the faculty at Saint Mary's for eight years, a program director for nine years, and about a year ago I became dean of the School of Education. In my nearly 20 years at Saint Mary's, my own leadership has been deeply formed by the Lasallian tradition.

Our School of Education is firmly rooted in the wisdom of Saint John Baptist de La Salle and the tradition of the Christian Brothers. We began our school meetings with Lasallian reflection, and all of us who teach accompany our students as they move through the struggles and challenges of their education. My longevity at Saint Mary's is a direct product of the way our learning community works. As the Brothers say: “Together and by association.” That is very real to me.

To form more teachers in the Lasallian tradition, I work with our faculty on new initiatives to expand our reach. We are finding that most schools where we send our student teachers have not yet made up for the staffing losses that occurred because of COVID-19. In facing that challenge, we at Saint Mary's are in the business of celebrating and developing the best teachers possible!

Dr. Bruce Locklear D'00, a graduate of our doctoral program and former principal of Edina High School, returned to Saint Mary's this year to lead our Strategic Partnership. We surveyed 32 school districts and identified their need for paraprofessionals to be educated for teacher's licensure. Working with school districts, we are partnering on bachelor's completion programs to prepare future educators.

Last fall, a second annual cohort began in our graduate certificate program in Catholic School Leadership. Supported through contributions from the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation and the Winona-Rochester Diocese, the certificate was developed to build the capacity, form the spirit, and retain the best of Catholic school teachers.

One of the Schulze Scholars recently reflected: “This program has shown me my calling. I will complete the Master’s in Education to further my knowledge for my classroom. After this program, I plan to go back for principalship to obtain a Master’s in Administration and fulfill my dream of becoming a principal.”

Meanwhile, our partnership in the American Creative Academy (ACA) with the nation of Kuwait continues to grow. Teachers in Kuwait are earning a Master’s of Arts in Education from Saint Mary’s, and 15 students from Kuwait have applied to take online classes to earn an Executive Doctorate in Education Leadership from Saint Mary’s.

No doubt, our students are inspiring. As Saint John Baptist de La Salle wrote, “Young people need good teachers, like visible angels.” When you support Saint Mary’s, you are, indeed, a visible angel. Thank you for being part of this ministry!

Live Jesus in our Hearts, Forever!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack McClure". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Jack McClure, Ph.D.

Dean of the School of Education

P.S. Please keep our graduating students and their families in your prayers. Undergraduate commencement on the Winona Campus is Saturday, May 4, 2024. You can watch a virtual livestream at smumn.edu/winonacommencement2024.