



LEADERSHIP SOCIETY SEPTEMBER UPDATE

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

Greetings!

The beginning of a new academic year is a time to honor new commitments to Saint Mary's University of Minnesota. We celebrate our new students in Winona, the largest class of first-year students in years, who are eager to learn and serve. We also welcome new students in Minneapolis, Rochester, and online whose choice to enroll at Saint Mary's represents an investment in their future. We embrace our returning students and the faculty and staff who are dedicated to their success. As your president, I recognize that the educational journey of our students is the result of your commitment, your prayers, your inspiring stories of success, and your financial support for Saint Mary's.

I am grateful to all students who choose Saint Mary's for their education. Our incoming undergraduate class of more than 300 first-year students is a demonstration that students and families support our mission and prioritize Lasallian Catholic education. It is also a clear indication that what we needed to do last year in realigning our portfolio of offerings was the right decision. While Saint Mary's graduate programs have steady enrollment numbers after years of decline during the pandemic, there remains essential work to be done to grow enrollment across the university. But make no mistake, our admissions team is providing results. Next month's leadership society letter will feature more detailed admission information from Dr. Michael McMahon, vice president for enrollment management.

Progress in enrollment is built on the foundation of historic benefactor support. Your charitable support last year was record breaking. Saint Mary's received \$47 million in cash, gifts-in-kind, pledges, and estate gifts — more than double the most generous previous years (\$19 million in 2014 and \$18 million in 2018). Philanthropic gifts are an affirmation of the direction Saint Mary's has set; with Christ as our model, the impact of such an approach on our students is palpable, especially with this incoming class. They are preparing to contribute to the common good when they enter into their communities and workforce with the valuable blend of character education, real-world preparation, hands-on learning, and ethical leadership skills.

There are numerous examples of the impact of benefactor generosity to Saint Mary's. Among the many philanthropic souls is Betty Kabara, a friend of Saint Mary's and a former trustee and CEO of Med-Chem Labs. Betty made a commitment from her estate for \$4 million to the Kabara Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies, founded by her and her husband, the late Dr. Jon Kabara B'48, in 2006. Jon was an entrepreneur who started Med-Chem Labs and was known worldwide for his breakthrough medical research. Betty remembers that "one of the first things my husband wanted me to see before we got married was the Saint Mary's campus. He shared that it was one of the best times of his life." Through the financial support of Jon and Betty, young people learn to create, run, and thrive at their own businesses.

Betty's gift counts toward our \$100 million challenge, set earlier this year by an anonymous benefactor. The benefactor and his family made a \$25 million commitment to inspire others to step forward to support the university and to position it for a strong and successful future. I am humbled and inspired by the generosity of benefactors who continue to give to Saint Mary's to help us meet this challenge.

Marc Weisenburger B'75 and Bob Cerone B'75 are former teammates and longtime donors to Cardinal baseball. They are helping us get closer to meeting our \$100 million challenge goal by giving one of their biggest gifts to Cardinal Athletics. They came together to give \$800,000 to replace both the baseball and softball infields with artificial turf. This is in addition to the continuation of a vital program that equips baseball players with needed equipment. Mark shared that they were motivated by "the immediate benefit of improving the surface playing conditions, while considering the overwhelming desire to protect Saint Mary's legendary coach Max Molock's legacy." Baseball coach Nick Winecke and fastpitch softball coach John Tschida spoke to the need for these turfed fields by explaining games are often postponed due to poor weather and playfield conditions. Mark and Bob both hope that their gifts inspire other alumni to help Saint Mary's stay competitive.

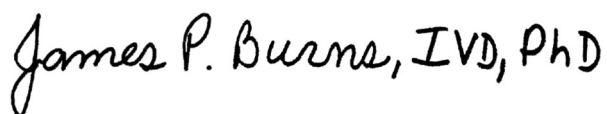
Arts opportunities on the Winona Campus received renewed investment this fall. Saint Mary's hired Lynette Johnson, senior director of arts and event services, to build an arts co-curricular model. Saint Mary's is on-boarding a director of music programming (Dr. Michael Bagby) who will lead band, choir, and liturgical choir, while also continuing to support Phi Mu Alpha music fraternity. In theater, there will be two productions this year — and a drama club will support future student productions. We will also bring in community and professional productions to campus and work with outside troupes. Within the visual arts area, the Lillian Davis Hogan Art Gallery has a full schedule for the year. Arts continue to play a vital role in a student's time at Saint Mary's and in our community in general. I invite you to come to experience arts on campus and join this commitment to help them flourish.

In June, I greeted over 200 alumni who came back to campus for reunion weekend. For some, this was their first visit in decades. Their excitement for Saint Mary's was contagious. Also in June, the Winona Campus hosted nearly 220 priests for the biennial Presbyteral Assembly of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. It was a time for fraternity, prayer, and learning. They enjoyed the hospitality of Saint Mary's, and as they returned to their parishes, they have become some of our most inspiring ambassadors by encouraging parishioners to go to Saint Mary's.

Everyone who makes a commitment to Saint Mary's helps us serve our students. Your support helps us "awaken, nurture, and empower learners to ethical lives of service and leadership." Your commitments serve our mission and are an expression of your faith in action, your faith in us, and your desire to help us to create a Christ-centered university.

May you be rewarded and blessed abundantly for all the good you do and the persons you are!

Live Jesus in our hearts, Forever!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James P. Burns, IVD, PhD". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

The Very Rev. James P. Burns, IVD, Ph.D.
President, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota

PS: Please mark your calendars for Thursday, October 12, and join us for our annual "Celebrating a Tradition of Philanthropy" benefactor Mass and Dinner in Winona. I hope to greet you there!