

CANOPY

A PUBLICATION OF THE AQUINAS COLLEGE OFFICE OF ADVANCEMENT



CONGRATULATIONS
CLASS OF 2022

WELCOME PRESIDENT
ALICIA CORDOBA, D.M.A.

5 QUESTIONS WITH ALUMNUS
JIM VELDHEER '83



CANOPY

SUMMER 2022

Canopy is a publication of the Aquinas College Office of Advancement. Whether you are near or far from Aquinas College today, we want to share some of the great things happening in our Saints community under the enduring canopy of our beautiful campus.

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AQUINAS COLLEGE

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Aquinas College is an equal opportunity employer and an inclusive educational community rooted in the Catholic Dominican tradition. Aquinas College provides a liberal arts education with a global perspective, emphasizes career preparation focused on leadership and service to others, and fosters a commitment to lifelong learning dedicated to the pursuit of truth and the common good. Aquinas College values:
Faith, Learning, Service, and Community.

From Our Vice President for Advancement

Dear Alumni and Friends,

The feelings of hope, joy and anticipation are almost palpable at Aquinas College these days. We are excited to meet the Class of 2026 and have students 'back home' on campus in August. After so many unknowns and losses in recent years, there is a lightness in the air here, and I hope you are feeling some relief in your part of the world too.

Most notably, we are thrilled to welcome Dr. Alicia Córdoba as the ninth President of Aquinas College. President Córdoba brings an energized and joyful spirit to her role, and she is hard at work. In the months ahead, President Córdoba will be attending events and traveling to connect with as many of our alumni and friends as possible. She will be sharing the many wonderful things underway at Aquinas and is eager to listen and learn from our community of Saints. Please be on the lookout for upcoming events, and let us know if you might be interested in hosting a gathering in your area.

We will officially celebrate President Córdoba's inauguration the afternoon of Friday, October 7, the Feast Day of Our Lady of the Rosary, a special connection for Dr. Córdoba. We hope you are able to join us in person or virtually for this very special occasion.

As we close one fiscal year and begin a new one, I want to thank you for your incredible generosity that continues to benefit our dynamic and deserving students this academic year. On page 8, we are featuring several of this year's graduates. They are inspiring and wonderful examples of what it means to be an Aquinas College Saint. You are part of their story and we are so grateful.

Thank you for believing in Aquinas College and her Saints.

Sincerely,



Gina Covert, CAP®
VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADVANCEMENT

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

CONTEMPORARY WRITERS SERIES, SEASON 26: NATIVE VOICES IN LITERATURE

All events 6 - 7 p.m. • Kretschmer Recital Hall • Art & Music Center

Thursday, November 10

Angeline Boulley, author of New York Times bestselling novel *Firekeeper's Daughter*

Thursday, February 9

Dr. Anton Treuer, language revitalization activist and author of *Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians but Were Afraid to Ask*

Thursday, April 13

CMarie Fuhrman, eco-poet, editor of *Native Voices: Indigenous American Poetry, Craft and Conversations* and author of *Camped Beneath the Dam: Poems*



HOMECOMING AT AQUINAS COLLEGE: SEPTEMBER 15 - 18

Thursday, September 15

Welcome Home Reception & Awards Celebration
6 - 8 p.m.
Sturuss Sports & Fitness Center

Honoring the following Saints:
Jeanette Pierce '04
Outstanding Alumni Award

Sr. Mary Ann Barrett, O.P. '66
Distinguished Service Award

Lisa Peterson '13
Young Alumni Award

Dave Steffee '79
Hall of Fame Inductee

Sr. Ann Mason, O.P. '60
Hall of Fame Inductee

Friday, September 16

Alumni Golf Outing at The Golf Club at Thornapple Pointe at 9 a.m.

Coach Terry Bocian Athletic Hall of Fame at 6 p.m.
Sturuss Sports & Fitness Center
Honoring the following inductees:

- Mike Dean**
- Jackie (Braspenninx) Ehnis, '07**
- Aaron Hendrick, '16**
- Natalie Kent, '07**
- Amy Panse, '01**
- Jeo Pantoja, '11**
- Nikki Tuttle, '97**
- 1980 men's soccer team**

Saturday, September 17

25th Class Reunion
10:30 a.m. - Noon
Donnelly Center

Multicultural Alumni Social
10:30 a.m. - Noon
Cook Carriage House

Leadership Club Reception
11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Holmdene Garden

Arts at AQ
Alumni Art Show
AQtainment! Student & Faculty Talent Revue
Noon - 4 p.m.
Art and Music Center

Main Stage Tent & Future Saints Zone
Noon - 7 p.m.
Holmdene Lawn

Soccer Games
Noon and 3 p.m.
Athletic Field

50th Class Reunion
hosted by the Class of '72
6 - 9 p.m.
Cook Carriage House

Sunday, September 18

Golden Saints
Mass at 10:30 a.m.
Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Chapel
Brunch at 11:30 a.m.
Cook Carriage House



3Things to Know

President Alicia Córdoba

**The path that led me here**

After receiving a doctor of musical arts from The Juilliard School, I had the opportunity to teach a class at Benedictine University outside of Chicago. I found something there that fed my soul. That class led me to spend the next 20 years in Catholic higher education, first at Benedictine and then at St. Mary's University in San Antonio where most recently I served as associate vice president and Beirne director of the Center for Catholic Studies. I believe that each step along my path has prepared and led me to this role at Aquinas College. I am genuinely humbled and honored to have been selected by the trustees as the ninth president of this wonderful institution.

Amazing things are underway for Aquinas students

We stand on the shoulders of those who came before us. I am deeply grateful for the work of my predecessors, including Dr. Stephen Germic, who graciously served as interim president of Aquinas College. While in this role, Dr. Germic has simultaneously worked with our outstanding faculty to redefine a truly distinctive educational experience for our students. This includes the development of a block schedule which is being offered now to a limited cohort of students entering Aquinas in fall 2023. Aquinas will be the first in Michigan and one of only a handful in the country to offer this innovative model of academic delivery!

I cannot wait to work alongside you

The AQ 2030 Strategic Plan sets the vision and the roadmap for Aquinas to be regarded among the premier Catholic colleges in the midwest. I believe we are well on our way toward this vision. Ushering in a new era of excellence, prosperity and student success will require all of us lifting together, but it can be done. In the coming months, I look forward to meeting with you, learning from you and working alongside you for Aquinas College and her Saints.

CONGRADULATIONS!

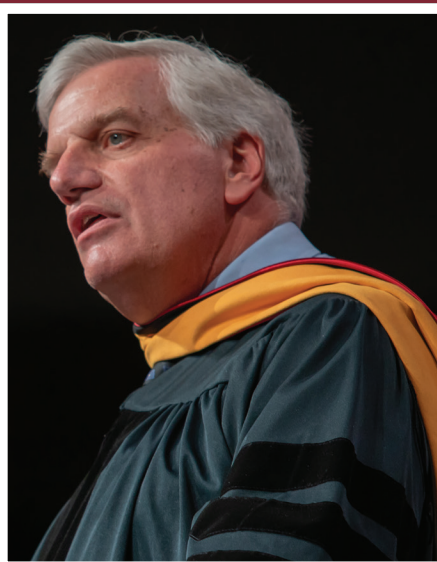
Aquinas College celebrated graduates along with their loved ones at Baccalaureate Mass followed by commencement on Saturday, May 7. Members of the Class of 2022 were called across the stage to receive their degrees and were welcomed as the newest members of the Aquinas alumni family.

Mark Meijer '81, president of Life EMS Ambulance, delivered the commencement address. Honorary doctorate degrees

were bestowed upon Mark Meijer, Lt General John Nowak '63 and Carolyn Sturrus. Deborah Steketee was designated Faculty Emeriti. Macayla Jones received the Monsignor Arthur Bukowksi Award for Outstanding Graduate.

A new award named in honor of the late Debra Ann Bailey was presented to Marcie Hillary '97 and Bob Woodhouse '77, M.M. '92 for their service as exemplary stewards of the college.



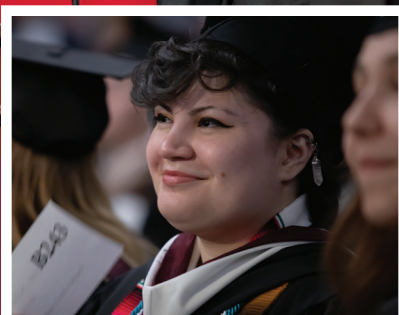


To close out commencement, Provost, Dean of Faculty and Interim President Stephen Germic offered an inspiring Charge Off to graduates. He concluded with:

Scan here to watch Dr. Germic's full Charge Off:



“To pursue an education is most fundamentally an act of hope. And hope is about the future. We are now witness to the possibilities that attend hope, and you are hope’s stewards: our new greatest generation. Now go with all our gratitude and blessings. And with godspeed.”



SENIOR *SALUTES*

MEET MEMBERS OF OUR CLASS OF 2022

In the weeks leading up to commencement, we celebrated several of our graduates on social media and on our website. These students were nominated to be featured by faculty and staff because of their efforts in the classroom, on campus and in the community. We asked each of them a handful of questions. Here's a snippet of their responses in their own words. Scan the QR code to read all of our 2022 Senior Salutes.



**MACAYLA
JONES**

Hometown: Holt, MI

High School: Holt High School

Areas of Study: Business and Communication with a Spanish minor

AQ: *What brought you to Aquinas College?*

Macayla: I chose Aquinas College because I loved that Aquinas was a small, liberal arts school where I would be able to create close relationships with my peers and faculty on campus. I knew that whatever school I attended I didn't want to only be a number, and I wanted to know I could come to my professors with questions or for help in my classes. I automatically felt that sense of comfort when I stepped onto campus. I also loved how Aquinas was only a 10-minute drive to downtown GR, which was completely new to me coming from the Lansing area. I was excited to explore the city and see new things while making amazing memories.

Hometown: Seagrave, Ontario, Canada

High School: Monsignor Paul Dwyer Catholic High School

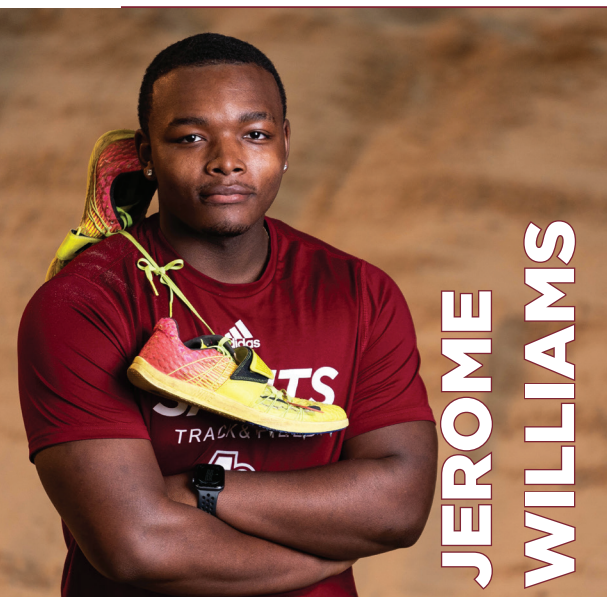
Areas of Study: Mathematics, Chemistry and French with a Physics minor

AQ: *Why is it great to be a Saint?*

Morgan: Accepting the mantle of being an AQ Saint means acknowledging a heritage of excellence. To claim that you are an AQ Saint means you accept the challenge that is extended to each of us. We strive for greatness in each endeavor, we study rigorously, we practice relentlessly, and we compete with a purpose. It is great to be an AQ Saint because when you live by these expectations, your life is enriched with challenges and opportunities you never would have thought possible.



**MORGAN
NISSEN**



**JEROME
WILLIAMS**

Hometown: East Saint Louis, Illinois
High School: Belleville East High School
Areas of Study: Business Administration and Communications

AQ: *How has your experience at Aquinas shaped you?*

Jerome: I've learned via school that hard effort, decisiveness, and tenacity may lead to chances I never thought existed. As an Aquinas College student, my education has taught me to search deep inside myself and push through mental barriers. Furthermore, education has influenced me to push myself in all I do.

Hometown: Venetia, Pennsylvania
High School: Oak Crest Academy
Areas of Study: Business Administration and Sports Management with a Marketing minor

AQ: *Why is it great to be a Saint?*

Maeve: Being an AQ Saint is one of the best things that has ever happened to me. As a Saint, you find your people, are taught in an encouraging and enlightening manner, and simply create relationships that will last a lifetime. These past three years at Aquinas were some of the most influential, and I am thankful for each memory, lesson, and experience. Being an AQ Saint is great because it helps you transform into the amazing person you are meant to become.



**MAEVE
SENTNER**

Hometown: Lake Leelanau, Michigan
High School: St. Mary Lake Leelanau High School
Areas of Study: Music Performance with an emphasis in Voice

AQ: *What is your favorite memory from your time at Aquinas?*

Lexi: The Our Lady of Seat of Wisdom Chapel has hosted some of my favorite memories at Aquinas. Not only is the chapel so beautiful, with its large windows and resounding acoustics, but it was a place of sanctuary for me... literally. Many late, stressed-out nights I'd seek solitude in its dimly lit room; to sing hymns if no one was around or just to sit and think. It was also the place where I first talked to my soon-to-be husband, which is one of my favorite memories, period.



**ALEXANDREA
(LEXI) SCHAUB**

1886 Legacy Society

Featuring Margaret Idema



Margaret enjoys adventure, traveling, sports, music and just being out in nature. She is an active philanthropist, generously sharing her time, talent and financial resources to support the three causes she holds most dear: the environment, performing arts and women's issues.



Margaret Idema's mother,
Jane Hibbard Idema

While many supporters of Aquinas are connected to the College through direct relationships as alumni, that is not the case for Margaret Idema.

Margaret grew up in East Grand Rapids. She graduated from the University of Michigan and became a special education teacher. As a young woman, she traveled around the world (much of it solo) for eleven months before returning to West Michigan. She then went on to secure a position in Human Resources at Steelcase.

Margaret's late mother was Jane Hibbard Idema, the trailblazing feminist for whom the Women's Studies Center at Aquinas is named. In the early years of Jane's work at the college, and under President Norbert Hruby, Jane led Aquinas' innovative Encore Program, which was developed for women who were returning to school. The program offered flexible and unusual class hours to meet the needs of women who had either never begun college or left their degrees incomplete as they raised families in

the 1950s and 1960s. Later, in the mid-1980s, Jane was part of a small group of women who established the College's Women's Studies Center.

To honor her lifelong dedication to improving the lives of women, in 2000, with the support of a gift from Mary Caroline "Twink" Frey and James E. McKay, the Women's Studies Center was named in Jane's honor.

"She was a kind and humble woman. A Vassar graduate, she finished her schooling and immediately joined the Red Cross. She followed the battles across Europe during WWII serving troops along the way. She had five children and then returned to the University of Michigan to earn her master's

degree. She was very adamant about women getting ahead, and was especially an advocate for pay equality. She was such an inspiration. It means a great deal to me to carry on the things that meant a lot to her."

In addition to supporting the Jane Hibbard Idema Women's Studies Center, Margaret makes regular contributions to a scholarship fund established in her mother's name at Aquinas. Earlier this year, she created a Named Annual Scholarship Fund at the College. "Aquinas College is a real gem in Grand Rapids with its beautiful campus, its unique and progressive degree offerings, and its ability to graduate students that go on to full lives and successful careers." Margaret said.

When it came time to plan for the future, Margaret sat down with her estate planning attorney, Laretta Murphy, to devise a plan for where she would want her assets to be eventually distributed beyond her family. "Aquinas College is one of a number of future distributions from my estate and it is because of the connection to my mom. Currently, my gift is set up as an unrestricted gift to the College which may use it for the area of greatest need"

"It is important to me to continue my involvement at Aquinas," Margaret said. "I feel like this connection allows me to walk a bit in mom's shoes and carry her legacy forward."

"I FEEL LIKE THIS CONNECTION ALLOWS ME TO WALK A BIT IN MOM'S SHOES AND CARRY HER LEGACY FORWARD."

JOIN THE 1886 LEGACY SOCIETY

The 1886 Legacy Society recognizes those who include Aquinas College in their estate plans. Members receive updates from leadership, recognition in our publications and invitations to special Aquinas College events.

If you would like Aquinas College to be part of your family's legacy, let's connect! To learn more, contact Mary Slafkosky, senior philanthropy officer at (616) 632-2453 or mvs002@aquinas.edu.

Fore AQ!



This year's Peter M. Wege Pro-Am Golf Tournament, presented by the Jandernoa Foundation and the Aquinas College Board of Trustees, took place on May 16 at Thousand Oaks Golf Club. The event hit a new record for dollars raised, all to benefit the Peter M. Wege Annual Scholarship Fund for students at Aquinas.

Teammates Greg Alksnis, Bob Sakocious, Chuck Rapolevich and Max Rouse earned top honors for the day with a score of 57. Second place went to Doug Meijer, Steve Workman, Jim Wisinski and Steve Loftis. And in third place were teammates Dan Vaughan, Danny Vaughan, Kerry Buettner and Mark Lundvick.

Special thanks to Judge Sara Smolenski, who served as auctioneer. Special recognition also goes to Eric Olson who had landed the day's only hole-in-one.

This event would not be possible without the support of our planning committee and generous sponsors. Thank you for making this year's Wege Pro-Am a success!





THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS FOR MAKING THIS SPECTACULAR EVENT POSSIBLE:

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WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU NEXT YEAR!



Jim and Mary Veldheer attended Aquinas College and graduated in 1983. Jim joined Merrill Lynch Wealth Management in 1990 and concentrates on consulting to pensions, foundations, endowments, and high net-worth families on their investment portfolios.

Giving Back to AQ

5 Questions with Jim Veldheer CIMA, CRPC '83

In each issue of Canopy, we feature an alumnus or alumna who has given back to Aquinas College with financial support. Jim '83 and Mary McCarthy '83 Veldheer are members of the Holmdene and Leadership Clubs in recognition of their generous support of Aquinas College. Jim and Mary established the Jim '83 and Mary McCarthy '83 Veldheer Scholarship, which is awarded to a Men's Basketball Student-Athlete. They have actively supported academic and athletic programs at Aquinas College.

1. What brought you to Aquinas College? How did you choose to attend AQ?

Coach Terry Bocian '70 is the reason I chose Aquinas College. My brother and I attended the first-ever Aquinas Basketball Camp in 1975. The camp was my first experience with the dorms, cafeteria and campus. Coach Bocian became my basketball coach at AQ and helped shape my life by instilling the leadership and motivational skills that I utilized in my career as a teacher and coach.

2. In what ways did your education at Aquinas prepare you for your current role?

Dr. Jim Garafolo was another key faculty member. His guidance and leadership in the Education Department gave me the lifelong teaching skills needed as both a teacher at Catholic Central High School and as an Investment Advisor at Merrill Lynch. Along with my Statistics Professor, Gary Robertson, and my Sociology Professor, Sr. Nancy (Joannes) Flumerfelt, O.P., who espoused Dominican ethics, I became a rounded student and citizen.

3. What do you think is the most unique/special/significant aspect of Aquinas College?

The Aquinas College Alumni Network. Upon graduation, I was hired by Aquinas graduate Ray McCahill '74 as a teacher and coach at Catholic Central. I married my college sweetheart and fellow graduate Mary Anne McCarthy '83 (37 years strong), and I watched my daughter, Meghan, compete as a Saint on the volleyball team.

4. Do you have a favorite Aquinas memory to share?

I enjoyed competing both as a member of the Varsity Basketball team and playing with the Professors on their intramural basketball team. It's been years since I graduated from Aquinas, but I will never stop appreciating my positive experiences while being a student-athlete.

5. As an alumnus, why is giving back to the College with your time, talent and treasure important to you?

I hope that our contributions allow current students the same great experiences and lifelong skills that I learned at Aquinas. I believe that I have been successful in life because of God blessing me with the following skills: the ability to educate, motivate, teach and coach. Thank you, Lord, and thank you Aquinas College!

LET'S CONNECT

If you are an alum who wants to explore ways to get more involved, we'd like to hear from you! Drop us a line today at alumni@aquinas.edu.



AQUINAS COLLEGE

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