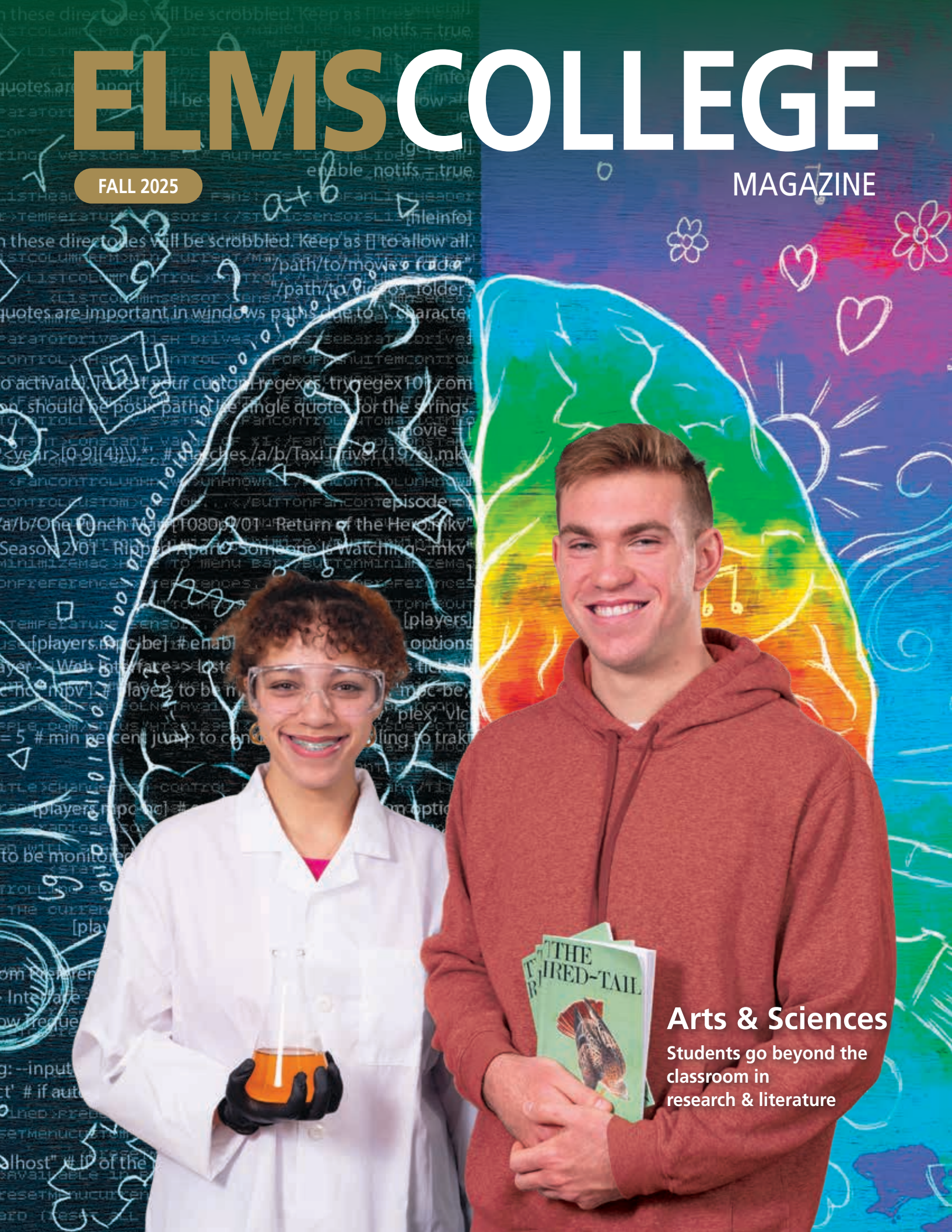
ELMS COLLEGE

MAGAZINE

FALL 2025



Arts & Sciences

Students go beyond the classroom in research & literature



"Do not be afraid of being witnesses to the dignity of every human being."
— St. John Paul II

"Being with God, the dear neighbor, and all of creation is one movement."
— Fr. Jean-Pierre Medaille, SJ Maxim 59

Dear Friends,

The month of October was filled with "mission moments" at Elms College. On Wednesday, October 15, it was standing room only in St. Joseph Chapel on the third floor of Berchmans Hall for the Founders' Day Mass, followed by lunch in the Mary Dooley College Center's Dining Hall with scores of Sisters of St. Joseph. On Friday, October 17, led by Sr. Betsy Sullivan, seven Sisters of St. Joseph kicked off the College's meeting of the Board of Trustees with a reflection on how they dedicated themselves to the SSJ mission through the years, despite changing times. Their inspiring testimony left few dry eyes in the room. And on Sunday, October 19, the Elms community joined with all friends of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the Greater Springfield area for the worldwide celebration of the 375th Anniversary of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Three hundred seventy-five years of serving the dear neighbor without distinction and with unmatched resilience! It is therefore very fitting, as we celebrate this incredible milestone in the history of the Sisters of St. Joseph, that we picked resilience as the theme for the stories in this issue — of students and alumni who, when confronted with personal difficulties, hardship, or loss, have worked actively to overcome them.

In **Finding Her Voice**, alumna Mary Lou Smith '65 is profiled for her work over the past 20 years as an advocate for survivors of domestic violence. At an age when many retire, Mary Lou drew on her own troubled marriage as inspiration for a second career helping others escape similarly difficult relationships.

Recent graduate Katie Cosmo, in **Heart, Mind & Diamond**, shares her story of balancing life as a top nursing student while recovering from two significant softball injuries and coping with the loss of her mother and two grandparents. Her grit and determination led to her nomination for one of the top national collegiate awards for female student-athletes.

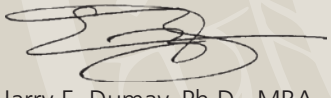
Senior English and Education major Adam Sarlan, in **Nature as a Muse**, describes turning to nature for comfort following the death of his father. The hours he spent watching birds inspired a collection of poems, compiled in his published book *The Red-Tail*. He hopes that his poetry—and the lessons that he learned from nature—will bring comfort to others experiencing loss and heartache.

Conducting research requires patience, discipline, and yes, resilience. **Science in the Summertime** introduces three biotechnology and biology students who chose to spend their summer break in the basement laboratories of the Lyons Center for Natural and Health Sciences, conducting research as part of their degree program.

The history of resilience of the Sisters of St. Joseph, well chronicled in books such as *Joyous Service* and *Uncommon Trust in God*, has a distinctive feature: its selflessness and orientation to service to all people. When we see that the stories of resil ience of Elms College alumni are also directed to service, we find affirmation in the mission of the College. We find motivation to continue to tell current students that an Elms education is intended to equip them to help themselves, but also to be responsive to the needs of their neighbors and their communities. We find corroboration in our statement that the world needs more Elms College graduates.

In this season of gratitude, I want to thank you for all that you do in helping us to carry that legacy forward.

I wish you all a happy and blessed Christmas and a wonderful holiday season.



Harry E. Dumay, Ph.D., MBA
President

TABLE OF

CONTENTS

ELMS COLLEGE MAGAZINE

Carol Lucardi
Marketing Director

Patrick Johnson
Multimedia Writer

Katelyn Connors
Communications & Public Relations Manager

Kyla Miller
Graphic Designer

Katherine Cardinale, Cardinale Design
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Elms College
291 Springfield Street • Chicopee, MA 01013

We are a Catholic liberal arts college founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield, Massachusetts.

The editors invite you to send comments, questions and suggestions to the Elms College Office of Alumni Engagement at **Alumni@elms.edu**



A Cooper's Hawk scouts out the Elms College campus from a perch on one of the gargoyles at the top of the Berchmans Hall tower last June.

FEATURES


2

Science in the summertime

While many classmates spent the summer break relaxing under the summer sun, a group of Elms students passed the time in the basement labs of the Lyons Center for Natural and Health Science, performing research on bacteria cultures.


6

Finding Her Voice

For 40 years, Mary Lou Smith '65 kept a secret from the world about her troubled and often abusive marriage. The 85-year-old Maine woman has spent the last 20 years working as a tireless advocate for survivors of domestic violence with the Portland-based Finding Our Voices.


10

A Universal Language

Elms education professor Dr. Yeukai Chiroodza-Imeh is conducting research with the Springfield Public Schools to see if the use of art in English Language Learning classes makes it easier for non-native speakers to gain fluency with English.


12

Grace, Grit, and Perseverance

In her time at the Elms, Katie Cosmos '25 earned some of the highest accolades as a student-athlete. Her collegiate career concluded with a nomination for the NCAA's highest honor for female student-athletes overcoming adversity.


20

A Literary Pursuit, One Stitch at a Time

Alumnae Library staffer Debby Gomes, a life-long crocheter, used Elms College's literary history as inspiration for her latest handcrafted project. Her work won the Blue Ribbon at the Big E.

Science in the Summertime: Elms science students



Aisha Rasheed, seeking her master's degree in biotechnology, conducts research in the Lyons Center lab.



Bianca Kerr, '27, in the lab.

It's the middle of summer, and while many college students are off somewhere enjoying the break from school, Bianca Kerr and Natalie Truong are where they want to be – in the laboratory of the Lyons Center for Natural Health & Sciences looking at bacteria cultures.

"I am enjoying myself right here!" says Bianca, a 3rd-year biotechnology major.

Bianca and Natalie, a 3rd-year chemistry major, are each researching Hsp90 bacteria, a cellular protein found in mammals. They create mutant copies of Hsp90, introduce them into yeast, and then subject the yeast samples to stress in the form of heat or bombard them with high doses of salt or sugar. The point is to look for any type of reaction.

In other words, says Bianca, "Does the yeast thrive or die off?"

Natalie, on the other side of the counter in the lab, offers her view.

"It's primarily about the mutations. I like to think of it as the beginning of a little bit of evolution," she said.

"We're kind of mutating substances under pressure to see where it will go and how it affects organisms in the long term."

In the same lab, Aisha Rasheed, pursuing her master's degree in biotechnology, is involved in her long-term research on whether levels of the tau protein in urine in infants can serve as an early indicator of autism.

"It's something still in progress," she said. "It's a long process. I've been working on this for a year, and I'm still getting results."

The work Bianca, Natalie, and Aisha are doing is an example of the type of independent research undergraduate and graduate students conduct as part of their degree programs.

Elms College's nearly 100-year tradition of academic excellence continues to flourish across all disciplines, including STEM. Students in biology, chemistry, biotechnology, and biomedical science participate in robust research and laboratory experiences that rival those at much larger institutions.

"Whether you're interested in biology, chemistry, or even biotechnology, you will have first-hand experience doing first-class research at Elms College with individual professors," said Dr. Pamela Cote-Hammarlof, Assistant Professor of Biochemistry.

Elms College students with degrees in science go on to what Cote-Hammarlof called "diverse outcomes."

Some go straight into jobs in the pharmaceutical or biotech industry, some go on to graduate school to further their education in their specialty, and some will parlay their science degree into medical school.

"We have 100% of our students placed in either graduate programs, medical programs, or working in industry," Cote-Hammarlof said.

The advantage to Elms College over a larger school is that the faculty work closely with their students, she said. They develop strong, mentoring relationships that last a lifetime, she said. "We are here for our students and we care about our students."

On that point, Bianca, Natalie and Aisha spoke of developing close relationships with their professors and doubting it would be the same at another school.

"When you're a STEM student, the biggest thing you want is networking. Your network literally sends you everywhere else in the world, whether it is working in labs, working with others, and getting experience," Natalie said. "Elms College gives you that experience. It gives you that network right away."

She spoke of how she already has more research and lab experience than any of her friends who are chemistry majors at other colleges.

Natalie said that while weighing different colleges as a high school senior, what moved the scale in Elms College's favor was biology professor Dr. Nina Theis, co-chair of the Department of Natural Science, Biology and Techology, personally reaching out to her.

Theis let Natalie know that she qualified for a 4-year STEM scholarship worth $10,000 per year.

spend the break doing hands-on research in Lyons Center lab



Natalie Truong, '27 preparing for her experiment in the lab.



Natalie Truong and Bianca Kerr talk with their advisor, Dr. Pamela Cote-Hammarlof, Ph.D, an assistant professor of biochemistry at Elms.

Bianca said she was doing hands-on research in the lab in her freshman year, and she doubts that it would happen anywhere else. "If I had gone to another school, I wouldn't have gotten the same amount of research experience, I wouldn't have gotten the same amount of support from professors who know my name and know my interests."

Her professors let her know of affiliations Elms College has with graduate schools offering science and medical degrees. And that is why Bianca, though still a junior, is pre-admitted to the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine and has plans to become a doctor.

"I would have no idea about the pre-acceptance program if I went to a different college," she said.

Without Elms, she said, "I'd be a different student entirely."

In September, the UNCF, the nation's largest private provider of scholarships to students from underrepresented groups, announced that Bianca had been selected to receive a scholarship worth up to $15,000 from the Slater-Millner Scholars Program. The merit-based scholarship is awarded annually to students interested in pursuing careers in medicine. In addition to financial assistance, the scholarship also includes mentorship and advising services through the UNCF's Ascension Medical Educators - Aspiring Physicians Program.

Aisha came to Elms College as an undergraduate student after briefly attending another college. Completing her bachelor's degree in biotechnology, she decided to stay to earn her master's degree. The paradox of choosing larger colleges, she said, is that even though there are more people around, there's also a greater potential for loneliness.

The Elms, she said, "is so wonderful. It is not like you are by yourself in the laboratory; you're with your friends, and your professor is there whenever you need them. It's just not you alone."

Her graduate program has the flexibility to juggle work, classes, and lab time. That sometimes means working well into the night after most people have already gone to bed. It does not, however, mean being alone.

"If I have a question, I will text my professor on a Saturday or Sunday at 1 a.m., and by 4 a.m. I will have an answer," Aisha said. "I have never heard 'why are you texting me? Don't text me at this hour!' They are open to questions at any time, any day."

Natalie and Bianca are working away with their Hsp90 samples on this day in the lab. They use pipettes to transfer liquid samples into small, sealable containers, which are then put into a heater to raise their temperature. Once the desired temperature is reached, they shuttle the samples across the hall, where they can be examined under an ultraviolet light in a darkened room.

With the samples glowing a bright shade of purplish blue, a glowing Bianca remembers to take out her cell phone for a photo.

Back in high school, she said, she could see herself going to college to study English or history. Then she took a high school biology course, and the first time they examined a bacterial sample under a blue light, she was hooked.

"It was so cool to see the bacteria glowing in the dark," she said. "I started to develop an interest in science or medicine, and it kind of blossomed. And that's what I'm doing for my bachelor's degree."

Natalie tells a different origin story. She said she wanted to do something science-based as far back as she can remember, maybe zoology or marine biology.

"I've always been a science kid."

She traces her interest in a career as a chemical engineer back to an AP chemistry class in high school. There was one assignment in particular where students were divided into teams, given a list of chemicals, and instructed to use the ingredients from the list to devise a simple, practical, and portable hand warmer.

Natalie's team won.

"And that kind of sparked my life," she said.

Nature as Muse

Elms College senior turns loss into poetry with debut book, "The Red-Tail"

Adam Sarlan grew up learning to be attuned to the natural world. His family always encouraged him to be outside, observing nature. His parents even arranged family outings each Sunday to wilderness preserves and state parks.

When his father and uncle each died a little over a year ago, Adam, a senior majoring in English and Education, looked to nature to help process his sense of loss and unending grief.

"It was a tough time," he said.

He said that by processing his grief through his three interests of nature, poetry and creative writing, he was able to feel joy again. His healing process involved spending hours in the wild watching birds in their natural habitats and then coming home to write poetry about what he saw and learned.

The collection of poems is published in his first book of poetry, titled "The Red-Tail," published recently by Bottlecap Press of Los Angeles.

"I would like to think of this book as kind of a road map on how to live a simple and glorious life," Adam said.

Although it originated in a dark place, Adam said, the work ultimately became "a pathway for how to begin life again after grief."

The poems are published as a chapbook, a term for a pamphlet-sized publication that is smaller and less expensive than a conventionally sized book. The work includes 20 poems over just 30 pages.

Copies are available online through the Bottlecap Press site, *http://bottlecap.press*, or at local bookstores Amherst Books in Amherst, Broadside Books in Northampton or Book Moon in Easthampton.

The chapbook may be small, but the ideas on grief and recovery expressed through his poetry are quite large.

Seventeen of the poems are inspired by birds, such as robins, great blue herons, Northern cardinals, cormorants, and geese, to name a few. He describes coming alive each morning with the joyful trilling of cardinals, bluejays and cowbirds around the feeder, seeing swans glide across still ponds like perfectly white angels, and learning about patience from a great blue heron standing in tall reeds as still as a statue while it looked for lunch.

From the birds, he learned to see them living each moment with a quiet grace and resolve, always moving forward, and not getting bogged down by any painful past.

"What really reflected and encapsulated my whole view about nature is finding the good in the simple moments, finding good in your life," he said.

The collection of poems came about as his way of offering a hand up to others feeling knocked down by life. "It is me saying you're not alone out there. You can learn how to live with yourself and live a new life by learning from nature."

Through his poetry, Adam imagines conversations with the birds, where they impart their wisdom and varying lessons for survival. One thing the birds do not do is offer much sympathy or any feathery shoulders to cry on. For example, in "The Poet Cries at Sunset," Adam describes sitting by the water and being told by a rather saucy herring gull that he needs to get over himself.

In another poem, "The Geese (for Mary Oliver)," Adam talks of sharing his misery for more than an hour with a flock of geese by a pond. When he finally asks them for their secret to carrying on, they reply that there is no secret; one simply learns to live, work, and persevere through all the "muck of life."

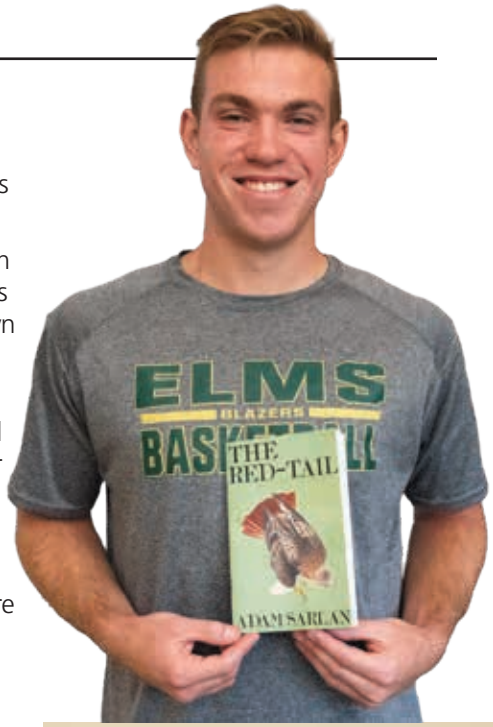
As its title suggests, it was inspired by the famed Mary Oliver poem "Wild Geese," which also explores feelings of loss, despair, and forgiveness as the natural world continues to turn.

He credits the members of the Elms English Department faculty with supporting him through the project and inspiring his love of poetry and creative writing.

"Before I came to Elms, I didn't write. I didn't know how to express myself," he said. "My professors really allowed me to find myself. They encouraged me to get out there, and to write and to see something in myself. I am absolutely thankful for them helping me get out of my shell."

After Elms, he plans to go to graduate school and would like to teach creative writing at the high school level, feeling that schools focus too much on expository or essay writing.

To listen to Adam read from his book The Red-Tail*, scan this QR Code with your smartphone.*



The Geese
(for Mary Oliver)

By Adam Sarlan

"The World offers itself
to your imagination,

calls to you like
the wild geese"

Mary Oliver said to me
one morning while I sat

on the shore; that night
As I walked through

the Provincelands
I saw the geese

lying along the path,
(for how long they were

there I do not know)
And when I looked into their

glossy, pine colored pupils
I knew that they knew

and for the next hour
I told them of my misery;

when I finished, I asked:
Oh what, what do I do

with myself?
Nothing. You must learn

to live with yourself and create
amidst the weeds

and the muck of life.
That is what it means

to swim in our pond,
They said to me.

President's Evening of Appreciation Gives Special Recognition to Past Director of The Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation

John H. Davis celebrated for being an 'inspiring supporter of Elms College'

Elms College in October celebrated the support of its many benefactors and donors at President Harry E. Dumay's Evening of Appreciation on Oct. 4 in the Mary Dooley College Center.

The evening gave special recognition to John H. Davis, director emeritus of The Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation of Springfield.

The foundation, under John Davis's leadership, has been a significant supporter of Elms College programs over the past several years, fostering the formation and launch of both the Center for Equity in Urban Education (CEUE) and the Western Massachusetts Literacy Collaborative (WMLC).

Most recently, The Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation contributed a $250,000 grant in 2025 toward the literacy collaborative, which trains college students to work as literacy interventionists in Springfield area schools during the summer.

Dumay cited John Davis as a thoughtful and innovative philanthropist who is uncompromising in his belief in the power of education to uplift the lives of all children. His early support for Elms College programs allowed them to successfully launch, thrive and continue to bear results.

"John has been an inspiring supporter of Elms College over the years," Dr. Dumay said.

The President's Evening of Appreciation is held annually as a way for the College to extend gratitude to major donors.

Dumay, in his remarks, noted that the name of the evening is somewhat of a misnomer because neither his nor the College's appreciation can be confined to one evening of the year. "We here at the College appreciate you continually – nonstop – all day, every day, all year long."

Kate Kane, chair of the Board of Trustees, expressed her gratitude on behalf of the Elms College faculty, staff, students and alumni, and said the unwavering support toward the college from donors allows Elms College to remain a vital, accessible, and excellent institution as envisioned by the Sisters of St. Joseph while also being able to adapt to the demands of modern education.

"Through the leadership of Dr. Dumay and his cabinet, Elms College is poised to enter its second hundred years with the same resolve, boldness, determination, and strength as shown throughout our first hundred years," she said.



President Harry Dumay welcomes John Davis to the podium.



A large gathering of supporters attended the annual event in the Dooley Center.



John H. Davis receives a hug from his daughter, Laural Ferretti, director of The Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation, at the President's Evening of Appreciation.



Finding Her Voice

Lilly and Mary Lou Smith pose with a domestic violence awareness poster that features each of them. Lilly heard Mary Lou speak of her experiences as a survivor of domestic violence and sought help from her own troubled relationship a few days later. *(photo by Patrisha McLean)*

Mary Lou Smith '62 turned her private pain into a public mission.

For much of the last two decades, Mary Lou Smith '62 has taken her family's biggest secret and her own source of shame and shared it openly with the world, hoping others might benefit from her story.

"It's the passion and the purpose of my life," she said.

For the 85-year-old Smith, that purpose is raising awareness of domestic violence, a constant thread woven through her 43-year marriage. Enduring decades of emotional, psychological, and physical abuse at the hands of her husband, Smith decided at age 65 to get out. All the suffering she endured over her marriage, she bore alone. None of her friends, relatives, or coworkers knew what was happening behind closed doors.

It was in August 2005 that Smith decided it was time to leave her marriage and her home in Maine for good. She remembers looking in the rearview mirror as the garage door closed and hearing a voice in her head say, "This is your chance. Leave and never come back."

She never did.

"Even though I was scared, I was lonely, I was depressed, and I was crying, I said, 'I'm getting out of here.'"

Helping others

Smith began rebuilding her life and processing her trauma through counseling and support groups. Over time, she decided that she wanted to help others who were also suffering in silence.

She has spent much of the last 20 years speaking at conferences, community workshops, and panel discussions throughout Maine.

She became an active volunteer with Finding Our Voices, a Maine nonprofit focused on helping victims of domestic abuse. Her face, name, and story can be found on the organization's webpage, handouts, and promotional materials, and even on larger-than-life posters displayed in downtown South Portland.

She has told her story in newspaper and television interviews, on podcasts, and in 2014, she teamed with Maine filmmaker Jen Widor Smith, no relation, to make a 15-minute video documentary called "Leaving Charlie."

Last year, Mainebiz, a Portland-based business journal, selected Smith as the first-ever recipient of its Volunteer of the Year award.

All of this is quite a turn, she said.

"It's amazing. I was a shy little thing. Even at Elms, I was never outspoken," she said in a recent interview. "But I think a fire ignited in me when I left my marriage…It is a gift. I really feel this. I truly believe I have the spirit in me, and it stands with me, guides me, and protects me."

Behind closed doors, constant fear

Smith met her husband while she was a student at Elms. Six years her senior and working as a public school administrator, he quickly charmed her, and they married soon after her graduation. But the fairy tale courtship had no happy ending. Problems began gradually soon after that and only worsened.

The Smiths appeared to be the perfect family. But behind closed doors, she and her children were constantly on edge. The slightest action, word, or gesture could trigger an intense reaction from her husband.

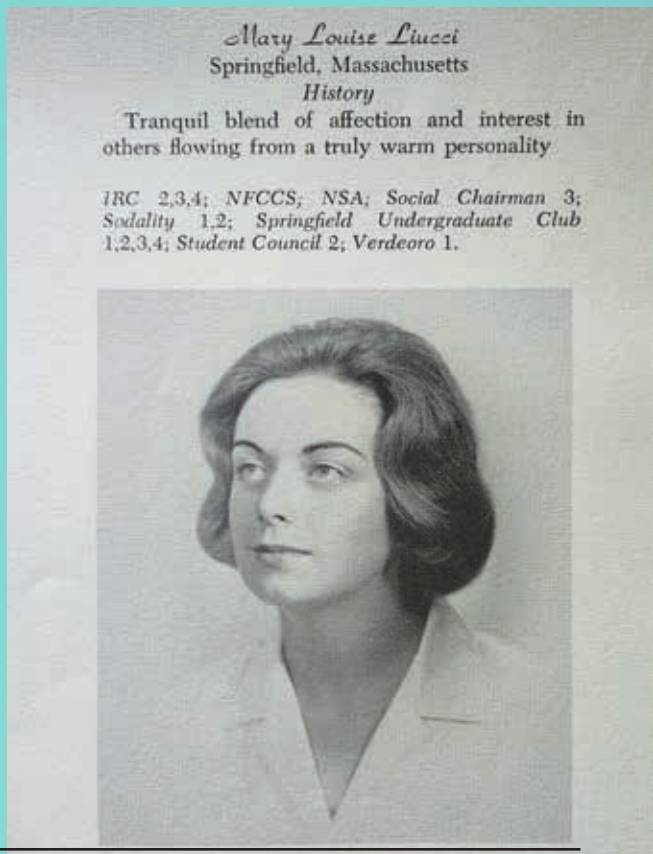
Smith said that for years she believed it was all somehow her fault. Later, through counseling, she learned that this is a form of survivor's guilt that is common in spousal abuse.

"I've worked with a lot of women who are survivors, and they always think it's their fault," she said.

Mary Lou and Patrisha McLean pose for a selfie. McLean is the founder and CEO of Finding Our Voices, the Maine anti-domestic violence organization where Mary Lou volunteers.



A photo of Mary Lou Smith, then known by her maiden name, from the 1962 Elms College yearbook. She would get married shortly after graduation.



Mary Louise Liucci
Springfield, Massachusetts
History
Tranquil blend of affection and interest in others flowing from a truly warm personality

IRC 2,3,4; NFCCS; NSA; Social Chairman 3; Sodality 1,2; Springfield Undergraduate Club 1,2,3,4; Student Council 2; Verdeoro 1.



Mary Lou Smith '65, third from left, takes part in a Bar Harbor, Maine, rally against domestic violence.



Mary Lou Smith '62 poses on the beach near her home in Maine.
(photo by Patrisha McLean)

Changing lives, one story at a time

It was her desire to help herself that led her to want to help others. She sought out different groups focused on combating domestic violence, like Finding Our Voices, and began sharing her story. At first, she was hesitant to give her full name or to allow her photo to be used, but in time came to see that her story was much more powerful if the audience could truly connect with the storyteller.

If publicly telling her story could inspire one person to seek help, then it would be worth it, she said.

"There is something inside of me, a spirit inside of me that will hopefully help them."

And there have been instances where she has heard from people who credit her with giving them courage they needed to help themselves. After one speaking appearance in Falmouth a few years ago, one woman sought her out afterward. The woman told her that 18 months prior, she had heard Smith speak, and her story gave the woman the resolve she needed to leave her abusive husband. "That just filled my heart," she said.

And then there was another appearance in a South Portland panel discussion. Smith came away dissatisfied, feeling she hadn't effectively gotten her points across. At least one person in the crowd did not feel the same way.

"I thought it was a disaster," she said. "But it brought us Lilly."

Lilly was a 21-year-old college student. After hearing Smith, she reached out to Finding Our Voices for help in ending an abusive relationship that began while she was in high school. In time, Lilly would join Smith as a volunteer with Finding Our Voices, and her story and photo would appear alongside Smith's in the organization's materials.

"Here are the two of us, she's 21 and I'm 85," Smith said.

They are separated by generations but bound together as survivors, she said.

Ending the cycle

When Smith speaks of generations, she thinks of how the trauma of violence carries from one family through the next. Great hope is that the cycle of violence will finally end with her granddaughters. When they were old enough, she sat down with them to watch her "Leaving Charlie" documentary. Her granddaughters were so touched by it that they sent copies to all their friends and urged them to watch it.

Smith said that younger generations have a far greater knowledge of domestic violence than she did when she was young. Of her own grandchildren, she said she is most proud of the growth they've made and what they have become aware of.

To see "Leaving Charlie," the documentary on Mary Lou Smith, scan this QR code with your phone.

Reunion Weekend 2025

Fun, Friendship & Festivities Mark Annual Bash

Amid fun, friendship, and festivities, more than 140 alumni returned to campus June 6-8 for the annual Reunion Weekend, sponsored by the Office of Institutional Advancement. Attendees represented classes from as far back as 1955 and as recent at 2015.

The event celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Class of 1975, and several from that class were welcomed as newest members of the Golden Blazers society, reserved for those graduating at least 5 decades ago. Each was presented with a green-and-gold scarf during a St. Joseph Chapel ceremony.

There was also a Friday night Connecticut River cruise, dinner at The Boathouse at Brunelle's Marina in South Hadley, a Saturday luncheon, and an afternoon of activities and games, followed by a Blazer Bash party with a DJ and dancing.

Elms President Dr. Harry E. Dumay presented the Sr. Margaret James McGrath Distinguished Alumni Award to Jeffrey Trant '06.

Trant, who earned his bachelor's degree in Social Work, has had a long career in private practice as a licensed social worker, working primarily with abused children and others suffering emotional trauma and mental health challenges.

He led the Diocese of Springfield's Diocesan Office of Safe Environment and Victim Assistance and in 2017 was named to the Massachusetts Board of Registration for Social Workers.

He is currently a full-time faculty member at Anna Maria College.

Trant said Elms College has "always had a special place" in his heart.

He and his wife, Rachel, met as undergraduates. They were married in the campus chapel, and their daughter, Emily, was also baptized there.

The values instilled in him at Elms made all of his professional accomplishments possible. "Those values gave me the courage, clarity, and strength I needed to meet the moment with both professionalism and compassion," he said.



Blazers dance the night away at the 2025 reunion



Members of the Class of '1975 pose with a plaque commemorating the names of departed



Alumnae from as far back as 1955 and as recent as 2015 were welcomed home for the annual summer reunion.



Jeffrey Trant '06, selected for the Sr. Margaret James McGrath Distinguished Alumni Award, receives his commemorative plaque from Elms President Dr. Harry E. Dumay.



The newest Golden Blazers pose with their commemorative scarves during a ceremony in Berchmans Hall.



Attendees at the 2025 reunion listen to speakers in the Dooley Campus Center.

Elms Research Explores the Use of Art to Aid English Language Acquisition

Can drawing pictures help with language acquisition? Research by an Elms faculty is looking to answer that question.

A project overseen by Dr. Yeukai Chiroodza-Imeh of the Division of Education explores whether non-native English speakers at the grade school level can increase proficiency with English more easily through the use of art projects in the classroom.

As part of a project last Spring and into this fall, students led by Dr. Imeh have been working with English Language Learning (ELL) classrooms within the Springfield and Holyoke public schools. They both observe and assist the classroom teachers in the use of arts projects, such as drawing and painting pictures, to help students with English language acquisition.



Elms students Makayla Alvarado and Ryann Anderson look over artwork of students in an English Language Learners (ELL) class at Springfield Central High School. Alvarado and Anderson are assisting in a research project exploring the effectiveness of using art to help with language acquisition.



Dr. Yeukai Chiroodza-Imeh of the Division of Education checks in on some students at Springfield Central High School. Dr. Chiroodza-Imeh is researching whether the use of art in class helps non-English speakers acquire English proficiency.

The project goals are two-fold, Dr. Imeh said. One is to see if art can help students successfully bridge gaps between their native language and English. Drawing a picture of a field, a tree, or a river may allow the student to connect the word in their native language for the objects in the picture with the English translation.

The other goal is to see if art in the classroom has a calming and restorative quality for students who often feel the stress that comes from the perception of being strangers in a strange land.

Dr. Chiroodza-Imeh said it is too soon to answer either definitively, but the preliminary results indicate that the answer to each is yes.

Previous studies have shown that ELL students in public school experience a great deal of stress. Much of this comes from the inability to express themselves in a primarily English setting, and continually seeing their native culture, language, and traditions minimized. The end result can be feelings of isolation, marginalization, and anxiety. This disconnect can leave students unable to fully express themselves or feel that they are not a part of their school environment.

"The rationale behind it is that there's a lot of stress that comes along with students who are learning English as another language," Dr. Chiroodza-Imeh said.

Engaging in art, or any creative expression, has, in general, a calming effect on any audience, she said. But for ELL students in particular, easing stress levels is important because for them and their families, the national political climate has made this a stressful time.

"That is partly why I did this. If you talk to the teachers, overall, English learners don't feel welcome at all," she said.

"What's happening politically is impacting students in K-12 classrooms. I've heard from teachers in Springfield, Holyoke, and Chicopee who say there is so much anxiety, especially for students who come from other cultures because they are not sure if their parents are going to be deported," Dr. Chiroodza-Imeh said.

"They're young kids, and they bring these anxieties into the classroom because of what is happening out there," she said.

"When you look at the research that's been done in the past, they say that self-care practices incorporated into schools will actually help students, especially English learners, feel more comfortable, and that has a positive impact on education," she said.

Schools should allow students to engage in art and other practices that foster positive self-esteem, she said.

An earlier study with students at schools in Manchester, New Hampshire, indicated the use of art can help with language acquisition.

She said it is too soon to reach conclusions on this study specifically.

But, she added, teachers generally in recent years have been encouraged to use visual representations to help students with literacy. That is a common practice in the classroom and has been proven beneficial, she said.

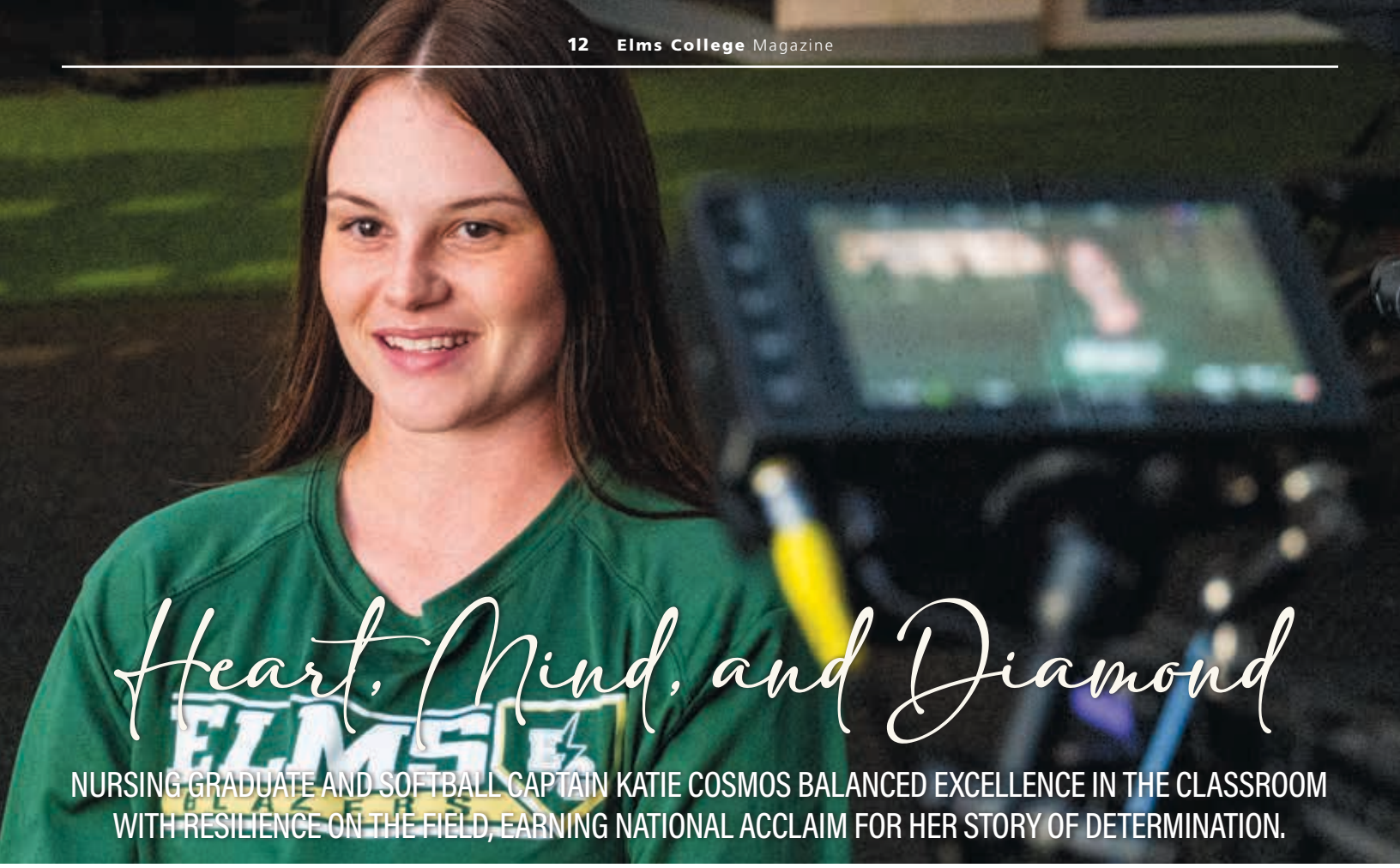
"So now we have that, using it specifically for students who are not proficient with English can be something even more beneficial."

A $3,000 grant from the Keating-Snyder Experiential Learning Fund supplied funding for the two Elms students who served as assistants in the classroom.

The grant did not cover any art supplies, but Dr. Imeh found a workaround to that by reaching out to several artists she knows to see if they had any to donate, and Imo Nse Imeh (INI) Studios in the Community was able to help. Dr. Tyra Good with the Center for Urban Equity in Education also came through with some support for supplies.

As part of the project, they had ELL students draw pictures describing their immigrant journey to the United States. The students were asked to draw about where they and their family were from and what life was like there, and about the transition to life in the United States.

The drawings are intended to be compiled in a book that celebrates the students' cultural identity while sharing the richness of their stories of their journeys to the United States and their work to learn English.



Heart, Mind, and Diamond

NURSING GRADUATE AND SOFTBALL CAPTAIN KATIE COSMOS BALANCED EXCELLENCE IN THE CLASSROOM WITH RESILIENCE ON THE FIELD, EARNING NATIONAL ACCLAIM FOR HER STORY OF DETERMINATION.

When Katie Cosmos graduated with her nursing degree in May, she had already earned some of the highest accolades available as both a standout in the classroom and on the softball diamond.

There was one more accolade waiting - and it was a big one.

In May, she was named one of three finalists for the 2025 Honda Inspiration Award, one of the NCAA's major awards for all of women's collegiate athletics. As a finalist, she was featured in national news media, and the CBS Sports Network profiled her story and broadcast it nationally.

"It was beyond crazy when I found out I had been chosen as one of three nominees for this award," she said. "I never expected that anyone would find my story so compelling."

Academically, Katie finished with a 3.98 GPA on a 4.0 scale, narrowly missing being named valedictorian. She achieved the Dean's List every semester at Elms College, received the Monsignor Fagan Award for Nursing as a freshman, and, as a senior, the Nursing Achievement Award, given annually to the highest-ranked student.

As a softball player, she was named to the Great Northeast Athletic Conference All-Conference First Team and All-Academic Team. She was a two-time National Fastpitch Coaches Association All-American Scholar-Athlete. For her senior year, an abbreviated season in which she successfully returned following a serious knee injury, Katie was awarded the Cheryl R. Condon Leadership Award.

The Honda Inspiration Award each year recognizes the student-athlete who has overcome adversity to prosper in her college athletic career. The award is open to some 230,000 female athletes across all three divisions. Thirty-seven women were nominated, and from that pool, Katie emerged as one of three finalists.

The others were Sidney Barbier of the University of Denver ski team and Marlee Morgan of the University of Virginia track and field team. Barbier was recognized for competing in her sport since high school despite persistent abdominal pain that was later determined to be Nutcracker Syndrome, a rare condition affecting the renal vein. Morgan was nominated for returning to the track team after overcoming a gunshot injury in a 2022 campus shooting.

In Katie's case, she was recognized for successfully returning to the softball diamond after experiencing physical and emotional obstacles.

In her collegiate career, she suffered setbacks from two knee injuries, each requiring surgery and months of rehabilitation. The first was in her freshman year when she tore her right ACL. In the final game of her junior year, she suffered the same injury to her left knee. While Katie rehabbed from the second surgery, her mother suffered a stroke, which led to early-onset dementia and required constant care. Juggling school and her health, Katie helped her family care for her mother. Her mother passed away in the fall of 2024 at the age of 57. She also lost two grandparents during the same period.

Through it all, Katie displayed determination and a never-say-quit attitude and was able to return for the final 12 games of her senior season. In those games, she hit .361 with 12 hits and 9 runs batted in. In recognition of her inspiration and leadership, her teammates chose her as team captain.



Katie Cosmos is interviewed in the Maguire Center weight room by a crew from CBS Sports.



Katie Cosmos poses on Cheryl Condon Field with her 2025 Elms College Leadership Award

Softball Coach Bre Marcyoniak, who nominated Katie for the Honda Inspiration Award, called her "the epitome of resilience and inspiration."

Coach Marcyoniak said that the entire time Katie was hurt and recovering from injury, Katie was continually encouraging and inspiring others on the team. "Although Katie is very humble and private with her personal matters, those close to her were aware of the personal and emotional challenges she was facing outside of her physical ones," she said.

Katie said it was not disappointing that in the end she was not chosen for the award. Just being nominated was an honor, she said, especially when considering the stories of Barbier and Morgan.

As part of the nomination for the award, each of the finalists was interviewed by the CBS Sports Network for extended segments that were broadcast nationally and online in June. Katie's profile, a 7-minute feature titled "Katie Cosmos: Beyond the Basepaths," is available on YouTube.

Katie said afterward that the interview was the most unnerving part of the entire experience.

Just days after her graduation in May, Katie returned to campus for a day-long interview with a television crew. The weight room in the Maguire Center was closed off, and the camera crew set up multiple cameras, lights and a boom mic. She recalls the day of the interview as being a little weird.

"I was still in shock that CBS Sports was coming to do a piece about my life and athletic journey," she said.

Even though she was supplied with the questions in advance and knew what she planned to say, and the production crew did their best to make her feel at ease, she describes the entire experience as nerve-wracking.

On the day it was aired over the CBS Sports Network, Cosmos gathered with her family to see it.

"I wanted to see it with them because they were the ones who were by my side through it all, and also faced the struggles with me," she said. "It was extremely emotional, and we all cried through the entire thing."

Once it aired, she began hearing from many friends and family members who had also seen it and felt moved by it.

"I think it told my story perfectly and touched all the right emotions."

Now working as an operating room nurse at the Connecticut Children's Medical Center in Hartford, Katie looks back at her time at Elms College with both fondness and gratitude. Specifically, she is grateful for all her teammates and friends, her coaches and professors who helped and supported her. "Thank you, Coach Bre, for always believing in me and pushing me to be better," she said. "Thank you to all my professors, clinical instructors, and mentors for preparing me for the nursing world."

She said she chose to come to Elms College after a chance meeting with former coach Cheryl Condon at a high school tournament. She had never heard of the school before but researched the nursing program and came away impressed. "I heard such great things about the nursing program and was sold once I toured the campus," she said.

"Reflecting back on my four years, I wouldn't change a single thing. Elms College holds such a special place in my heart now," she said.

It brought me a great education and career, countless opportunities, and lifelong friends," she said.

To watch "Katie Cosmos: Beyond the Basepaths," scan this QR Code with your smartphone.

Elms Celebrates Blessing of Athletes, Dedicates New Scoreboard



The Elms community celebrated its annual Blessing of the Athletes and the dedication of a new scoreboard in a dual ceremony at the start of the semester in September.

For years, Elms College has traditionally begun each fall semester with its Blessing of the Athletes ceremony. All student-athletes from the many Elms College teams assemble for a brief prayer and service to bless them with good health and to be free from injury in their upcoming seasons.

This year's ceremony included unveiling the new scoreboard at Leary Field, which was made possible with a donation from Westfield Bank.



The ceremony was attended by President Harry E. Dumay, Fr. Mark Stelzer, and Vice President for Student Affairs Dr. Andrew Coston, Vice President for Institutional Advancement Bernadette Nowakowski, and Director of Campus Ministry Eileen Kirk.

Also present were Westfield Bank President James Hagan and wife, Kristin Ferriter Hagan, a 1996 Elms College graduate and a member of the College's Board of Trustees. The Hagans are longtime supporters of Elms College and have contributed to many College projects and programs.

Dr. Dumay thanked the Hagans for being generous and loyal friends to Elms College, saying, "We are eternally thankful for that support and friendship."

He also said Elms College values its student-athletes not just in recognition of their athletic gifts and accomplishments, but because they are a unique and valuable part of the campus mosaic. "We believe in each of you and wish you nothing but success – not just in your sport or even in the classroom, but throughout your life," he said.



President Dumay and James Hagan and Kristin Ferriter Hagan pose in front of the new scoreboard.



Each team member was handed a medallion from Campus Ministry Director Eileen Kirk and Athletic Director Rob Southall.

Elms College Honors Scholars produce video history of Sisters of St. Joseph



Team SSJ: Jadyn Christie with team members, from left, Joelle King, Kay Inacio, Pheona Mburu, Stephanie Mildner and Mary Turco.

Note: As part of Dr. Laura McNeil's Honors Scholars program, the team of Jadyn Christie, Pheona Mburu, Stephanie Mildner, Mary Turco, Joelle King, and Kay Inacio was assigned to produce a video documentary on the history of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

By Jadyn Christie

Before the team and I embarked on the journey to learn about the Sisters of St. Joseph, we knew very little about them. Of course, we had heard of their stories and learned of the charism. But we didn't know much about the whats and whys of the Sisters of St. Joseph, or even who they were as individuals. Through this project, our research and from meeting with some of the Sisters, we would come to learn a great deal.

Pheona Mburu and I had previously had the opportunity to meet with some of the Sisters during our involvement with Campus Ministry's First Year Encounter program. She and I maintained a relationship with one of the Sisters after our time with FYE ended. We each felt drawn to their stories and how they were determined to help those less fortunate or speak up for those not given a voice.

As part of our Honors Rhetoric class, our professors, Dr. Laura McNeil and Dr. Michael McGravey, proposed a team-based video project and sought different topics to work on. Many ideas for topics were pitched, ranging from "a day in the life of Dr. Dumay" to "the history of Elms College Athletics." It was narrowed down to the best eight ideas, and members of the class were each asked to choose which topic most appealed to them.

I was drawn to the history of the Sisters of St. Joseph, so I put my name in for that one. When I found out I was going to

be on Team Sisters of St. Joseph, or Team SSJ as we called ourselves, I was thrilled because I had become very fascinated with their history and many of their stories. Also, it meant the opportunity to work alongside Stephanie Mildner, Mary Turco, Pheona Mburu, Joelle King, and Kay Inacio. Most of us had never worked together before. I was confident that we could accomplish anything, as we are all very determined.

> ***Our overall goal for this project was to highlight the Sisters, how they "exemplified the power of quiet, persistent service, and never-ending love," and how their charism lives on.***

From the start, we knew that we wanted to tell the entire story of the Sisters of St Joseph, yet we were aware that it was going to be difficult to accomplish. We had to create a 20-minute video for the assignment, and we wanted to tell the entire history of the Sisters of St. Joseph because that history is what makes them who they are. Right from the beginning, one of the first questions was, considering the SSJ were formed 375 years ago, would we be able to tell their whole story in 20 minutes? As a team, we all understood the challenges and persevered. We organized the team with each member assigned different leadership roles and we all stepped into those roles with great passion.

We began our research by exploring books and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield's website. We also had meetings with Sr. Carol A. Allan, and through her, connected with other SSJ sisters. We also had the opportunity to have lunch with them during the Feast of St. Joseph.

Joelle dedicated several hours of class time and personal time researching the Sisters in Alumnae Library Archives.

From that research, I wrote the script that Mary, our narrator, would read.

Kay used the script to create a storyboard, coordinating the script with the different visual images, "A-roll" footage of interviews, and "B-roll" footage of historical footage and photographs, that could be used to illustrate our story. Once she identified what footage was needed for the project, the rest of us ran around trying to find it. We connected with different organizations founded by the Sisters, scoured archives, and searched the internet and online platforms. We even went around taking pictures of statues, landmarks, and historical photographs. Dr. McNeil and Dr. McGravey provided us with interview footage recorded previously with different Sisters over the years. This was very helpful as it sped up our production process, as we didn't have to conduct new interviews and could start editing them right away.

Although we all assisted in sorting through these interviews, Stephanie took on the role of editor of the A-roll footage and of deciding which content was best to utilize for our project. This was a great assistance, and we all definitely felt it toward the end of the production process when it came time to edit the narration, A-roll, and B-roll together.

Pheona, our production editor, spent countless hours in the computer lab editing the final product. The rest of Team SSJ stayed on call. If Pheona felt she needed more B-roll to tie things together, it was up to us to go find it and help lighten her load as much as we could.

We are all pleased with the final product and grateful for the opportunity to have worked with such amazing people throughout this process.

Our overall goal for this project was to highlight the Sisters, how they "exemplified the power of quiet, persistent service, and never-ending love," and how their charism lives on. But most importantly, we also had a goal of reminding the community that even in the face of adversity, we should follow the example of the Sisters of St. Joseph and continue to push forward and stand for what we believe in.

To see Team SSJ's video, "Threads of Compassion: The Sisters' Journey" on YouTube, scan this code with your phone:



A sneak peek at the Team SSJ's video. To watch the full video, scan the QR code above.

Business and Education Hailed as Partnership for the 'Common Good' at Annual Leadership Breakfast

Over 190 guests, including many Western Massachusetts leaders in business, healthcare, media, higher education, and municipal and state governance, turned out on June 11 for the 8th annual Executive Leadership Breakfast in the Dooley College Center.

The breakfast, hosted for the last 8 years by Elms College, featured a keynote address from Charles L. D'Amour, executive chairman of Big Y Supermarkets. Big Y President and CEO Michael P. D'Amour introduced Charles D'Amour.

President Harry E. Dumay recognized the service to Elms College by Paul Stelzer, the longtime Board of Trustees member and chairman for the past four years, who completed his term on the board June 30.

Dumay also spoke of the importance of partnerships between higher education, business, and government to serve the common good.

It is, he said, "a partnership for an educated citizenry ready to play its part in our democracy, a partnership that believes in fundamental human goodness and the promise of a better path for all of us if we pursue it together. We thank you for continuing to be one of our partners in that pursuit."

Charles D'Amour recounted the history of Big Y, from a single storefront in Chicopee to one of the region's largest family-owned businesses operating 94 separate locations in Massachusetts and Connecticut and employing several thousand people.

He said one of the most important lessons learned in the company's 90 years is connecting with our communities, supporting local farms and suppliers, providing jobs and career paths, and looking for philanthropic opportunities with local organizations.

"It's embedded in the notion that we have a responsibility to support and nurture the communities we serve," he said. "We're proud to be able to continue that legacy and be guided by those principles today."





Elms College President Dr. Harry E. Dumay addresses the gathering at the 8th annual Executive Leadership Breakfast.



Elms College President Dr. Harry E. Dumay poses for a photo with Big Y Supermarkets Chairman Charles L. D'Amour (left) and Big Y CEO and President Michael P. D'Amour during the annual Executive Leadership Breakfast in June. Charles D'Amour was the keynote speaker for the breakfast.



Elms College Board of Trustees Chair Paul Stelzer is celebrated at the breakfast for his years of service and leadership on the eve of completing his term.

The breakfast was possible only through the generosity of several sponsors. They included:

Platinum Sponsors: Westfield Bank and Baystate Health/ Health New England.

Silver Sponsors: Big Y Supermarkets, Collins Electric, St. Germain Investment Management, and MassMutual.

Bronze Sponsors: Holyoke Medical Center, Checkwriters, Bulkley Richardson, Mercy Medical Center / Trinity Health.

Benefactors: Keiter Corporation and Eastern States Exposition.

And Patrons: T.J. Conway, Antonacci Family Foundation, EDC of Western MA., Egan Flanagan and Cohen, Whittlesey, Freedom Credit Union, M.J. Moran, Cooley Dickinson Hospital, and Hinckley Allen.



Members of the Western Mass. Literacy Collaborative and the Summer 2025 Learn & Earn Literacy Corps

WMLC Receives $440K in Funding from The Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation, State Grant

The Western Massachusetts Literacy Collaborative (WMLC), an Elms College-led program involving student instructors from area colleges tutoring elementary and secondary school students, received two significant grants this year totaling $440,000 that will allow the collaborative to continue improving literacy rates in Springfield-area schools.

The collaborative was selected to receive $250,000 from The Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation in May and another $190,000 in a grant from the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. "The WMLC is grateful for all the support we have received. It has enabled us to create quality mentored work experiences for new and aspiring teachers," said Director Laura Porter, who is also an instructor with the Elms College Division of Education.

The collaborative, which just completed its third summer, was formed to address the issue of declining literacy rates, particularly in urban schools. Through its Summer Learn & Earn Literacy Corps, college students who are studying to become teachers receive specialized training in culturally responsive teaching and evidence-based literacy practices. They are then deployed to work over summer school as Literacy Intervention Teachers (LITs), tutoring elementary and secondary school children.

The collaborative works with Springfield and East Longmeadow public schools, the Springfield Empowerment Zone Partnership, and with early education sites Educare Springfield and Square One. "The generous support from The Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation grant enabled the WMLC to continue the work of the Summer Learn & Earn Literacy Corps," Porter said.

"Quality mentored work experiences for prospective teachers occurred at summer elementary and middle school sites with the Springfield Public Schools and Springfield Empowerment Zone Partnerships. The LITs received mentoring with focused feedback and support from literacy coaches at the summer school sites," she said.

Last summer, the program attracted 34 undergraduate and graduate students to serve as LITs. They worked with nearly 200 elementary and secondary school students.

Porter said that she took delight in stopping at each school and seeing the real impact of the LITs interacting with students.

"At every summer site, it was wonderful to observe the relationships formed between the LITs and the summer school students."

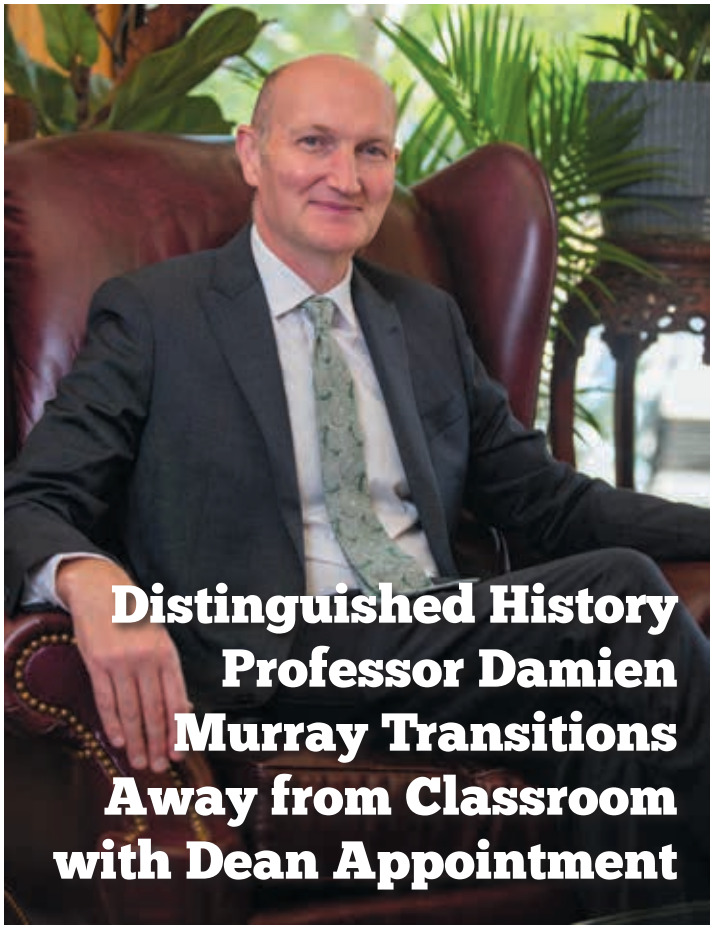
Funding from The Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation supported some key components of the Summer 2025 Learn & Earn Literacy Corps. These included funding of the director's position to oversee and coordinate activities of the WMLC, professional development training, and hiring an evaluation specialist to assess student progress after working with LITs.

The state grant will support similar activities through next summer.

Porter said the evaluation specialist is important for measuring the effectiveness of literacy interventions under Summer Earn & Learn. For the first two years, the effectiveness of the program was largely anecdotal. LITs observed improvement among their students, but there was no way to measure it.

With the evaluation specialist in place this past summer, all students were given an assessment at the beginning and end of summer school. The data so far suggests students made substantial growth in their reading fluency by as many as an additional eight words per minute, Porter said.

"This points to the effectiveness of the Summer Learn & Earn Literacy Corps in supporting new teachers and providing strong literacy outcomes for elementary and middle school youth in our region," she said.



Distinguished History Professor Damien Murray Transitions Away from Classroom with Dean Appointment

In his 20 years at Elms College, Damien Murray has witnessed numerous changes. Now, the longtime professor of Irish and American history has become one of those changes.

After two decades in the classroom, Murray has stepped into a new role as Dean of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Professional Programs. He had served as interim dean for the past year following the promotion of Dr. Joyce Hampton to Vice President for Academic Affairs. After a national search, Murray was appointed to the permanent post in June.

Originally, he considered retaining a least a limited faculty role, but his time as an interim showed him that balancing administrative and teaching responsibilities was unsustainable.

"I tried. I did it over the last year, and it was tough. I was basically working seven days a week," he said. "I love teaching, but I decided this year I wouldn't teach—and we'll see how it goes."

He hopes to stay connected with students through independent studies or internships, but for now, he's giving up the classroom.

During his faculty career, Murray earned 10 National Endowment for the Humanities awards, three college Faculty Development Awards, and an Elms College Distinguished Service Award. He has presented at numerous conferences and published many articles and two books, most recently Irish Nationalists in Boston: Catholicism and Conflict, 1900–1928 (Catholic University of America Press, 2018).

Murray said part of his interest in the dean's role is the opportunity for growth.

"This opportunity opened up and I said, 'Yeah, I need to stretch myself again. It's time for a career change—to try a new path and see if I'm up for it.'"

He also views it as a way to give back to the institution that has shaped so much of his career.

"This is going to sound selfish, but you want to leave a mark," he said. "You're always thinking, 'When I retire, what did I achieve?'"

Murray has been at the Elms since 2005, but his ties to the college go back further. He is married to history professor Laura McNeil, and together they built the college's modern history program. McNeil was hired in 2002 while Murray was completing his doctorate at Boston College. After earning his Ph.D. in 2005, Murray received offers to teach at different schools, but Elms College, he said, "just seemed like a nicer fit."

A native of Dublin, Ireland, Murray's academic interests include immigration, Irish-American culture, and U.S. history in the Progressive Era. He was drawn to Elms' Catholic identity and its historic ties to the region's Irish community.

"This clearly fit with who I was," he said. "It instantly felt like home."

He and McNeil also appreciated the freedom to shape the history program as they envisioned it.

"We were allowed to do the things we found interesting—the things you can be passionate about," he said.

Murray has long valued the College's close-knit community.

"I just love that there were never any superstars here. People realize we're all going to pull together and work as a team."

He views his new job as an extension of that teamwork. Much of a dean's work, he said, involves collaborating with others to turn ideas into reality. "The best thing Joyce said to me when I started was, 'You're part of a team.' When she said that, I felt like the pressure wasn't all on me."

That collaborative approach has already yielded results. Among them is a new graduate program in partnership with the Center for Equity in Urban Education and the Springfield Empowerment Zone Partnership, which enables teachers to earn a master's degree in two years. Another is the creation of a dual-enrollment initiative allowing high school students to take speech-language pathology courses on campus for college credit.

Murray said these programs reflect the College's ongoing evolution from a traditional institution to one that offers online and hybrid courses.

When I first came here, everything was in the classroom, a semester was 15 weeks long, and the College essentially shut down in the summer," he said. "Now, we have become a year-round institution."

Still, he added, the college's heart remains the same.

"The mission of the College is being refined, but the essence of who we are is still there," he said. "The legacy of the Sisters of St. Joseph and the idea that we're here to give educational opportunities to all people, especially those who might not have had them otherwise, that has stayed the same."

A Literary Pursuit, One stitch at a Time

Debbie Gomes's afghan celebrating Elms authors wins Big E blue ribbon

Debbie Gomes is an avid reader, a lifelong crocheter, and a long-time staffer at Alumnae Library. Combine all three and toss into the mix her sometimes chilly office and you have the inspiration for her latest project.

Gomes, associate director and the head of library technology, tapped into her personal and professional interests to craft a homemade afghan with a literary bent; each of its panels pays tribute to Elms faculty, staff, and alumni who have published books.

The finished product, a 4 ½-foot by 4 ½-foot afghan throw, was entered into the knitting competition at this year's Big E fair. Gomes was notified in September that she won the blue ribbon for the best entry in the competition.

The afghan is made in the style of a book blanket, which is gaining in popularity in knitting, quilting, and crocheting circles. This is especially true among those, like Gomes, who enjoy crocheting as much as they enjoy reading. A book blanket is a way of chronicling the different books read over a period of time.

"If you're a reader and crocheter, you would combine the two to make something … to show what your journey was for reading."



Gomes said she already made a book blanket at home based on her personal reading list. With this project intended for her work office, she decided to create it as a tribute to published works with an Elms connection.

"I decided to base it on the books that faculty and staff, and some alumni, have published," she said. "And I just pulled them all together, and each square is based on the book cover for each."

She compiled a list of 24 recent book titles authored by either Elms faculty, staff, or alumni. Titles range from Katherine Anderson's mystery novel, "Murder at the Alma Mater," to Fr. Mark Stelzer's "An Uncommon Love: The Life, Legacy and Lessons of Sisters Mary and Eleanor Dooley."

Twenty-four titles left her one square short. She decided the 25th square should be in the Elms College colors and simply say "Elms Books." The 25 squares are held together with a border of Elms College's signature green and gold.

"It took almost two months," she said. "You do a square at a time and then stitch them together."

The designs on each square are elaborate, unique, and eye-catching, composed of various splashes of colored yarn. But the creation takes on a new depth when you compare each square with the book cover that inspired it.

"For the majority of the covers, I tried to do it where I had the least amount of color in the middle and the largest amount of color on the outside (of the square)," she said.

For example, the square representing Dr. Damien Murray's book "Irish Nationalists in Boston: Catholicism and Conflict, 1900-1928" features large amounts of green, white, and orange, representing the colors of the Irish flag in the book cover photo. However, there is also a patch of reddish-brown that matches the color of the brick building facade in the background of the photo.

Another example is the cover of Sr. Jane Morrissey's memoir "Finding Jane in a Box." The book cover shows a cardboard box in a white background, surrounded by a blue and a gray border. Gomes's tribute has a tan square in the center, and it expands outward to reveal squares of white, blue, and gray.

Gomes said her afghan project has taken on a life of its own, especially after she published an accompanying pamphlet detailing the afghan and showing photos of each of the squares along with the books they represent. Not every author has checked in, but those who have seen it seemed impressed, she said.

"They loved it so far. Everybody is thrilled with it," she said. "I actually have had people come into my office just to take a look at it."

Mark Fulco named Trustees vice chair; William Wyman named to board



Mark Fulco



William Wyman

Mark Fulco, a long time member of the Board of Trustees, has been named vice chair, and William Wyman '96 was named to the board by virtue of his being elected president of the Elms College Alumni Association Board.

Fulco fills a vacancy created in July with the elevation of Kate Kane to chair, following longtime chair Paul Stelzer's completion of his term. Fulco previously served as chair of the Trustees' Institutional Advancement Committee.

Fulco has been on the board since 2018. He brings to the position of vice chair a distinguished career in executive leadership and experience demonstrating his strategic vision and operational expertise, both of which are critical in his new board position.

He serves as vice president for Healthcare and National Healthcare Solutions Team Leader for Suffolk Construction, and previously was President of Mercy Medical Center, Vice President at the Trinity Health Systems, and Chief Transformation Officer for Mercy Medical Center.

Wyman was appointed to the Board of Trustees on July 1. As president of the Alumni Association, he has consistently championed the Elms College community. He was appointed vice president of the Alumni Association in 2003.

He earned his bachelor's degree in paralegal studies and would go on to earn his Master of Military Art and Science (MMAS) from the U.S. Army's School of Advanced Studies. He earned a Master in Arts for Global Governance and Human Security from the John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies at the University of Massachusetts-Boston. Wyman is currently an assistant professor at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas and an adjunct faculty with Norwich University's Strategic Studies and Defense Analysis program.

An experienced leader, planner, and educator, Wyman has great plans for building an inclusive, national Alumni Association. As a new member of the Board of Trustees, he brings the value perspective of an alumnus, and his training and experience provide a distinct viewpoint on leadership and global affairs.

NEWS & NOTES



Madison Quinn '23 waves to people lining the streets in downtown Pittsfield for the annual July 4 parade. The parade committee selected her to be the 2025 parade grand marshal. (Stephanie Zollshan/The Berkshire Eagle)

Madison Quinn '23 leads Pittsfield's July 4 parade

Madison, a Pittsfield native and youngest-ever grand marshal, was chosen unanimously by the parade committee, which felt she best represented the parade theme, "Young at Heart." Madison, who graduated from Elms College with a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing, is employed as a nurse at Baystate Medical Center.

She was selected to represent the parade because of her work as founder and executive director of Strong Little Souls, a nonprofit organization she founded at age 13 to support children with cancer and their families.

Madison said she was honored and flattered to be selected to lead the parade and hear the cheers of family, friends, and neighbors. "It was a great opportunity for so many local residents to learn about Strong Little Souls and the work we do right here to help families affected by pediatric cancer," she said.

Dr. Jason Burke Murphy presents at international conference in Germany



Associate professor of Philosophy Jason Burke Murphy spoke this summer at an international conference in Germany hosted by the University of Duisburg-Essen. The conference, held June 30 - July 1, was titled "What's the Problem with Property and Democracy.

Dr. Murphy's presentation was titled "Communication Capabilities and the Capacity to Begin: Basic Income as a New Kind of Property."

Dr. Murphy is a fellow at the Center for Global Cooperation Research.

He joined the Elms College Philosophy Department in 2010, having taught previously at Saint Louis University, Saint Louis Community College, Webster University and Goeth University in Frankfurt, Germany.

Blazers in Blue Sox



The Blazer Blue Sox are, from left to right, Andrew Ciaglo, Brycen Diaz, A.J. Cook, Colby Alexander, Alex Baeta, and Ryan Ziegler.

Five members of the Elms College baseball team spent last summer as members of the Valley Blue Sox of the National Collegiate Baseball League. The Blue Sox are based in Holyoke, and play their home games at McKenzie Stadium, the same field used by the Blazers baseball team.

Making the Blue Sox roster were pitchers Brycen Diaz, Colby Alexander, and Ryan Ziegler, catcher Alex Baeta, and infielder Andrew Ciaglo. For Ciaglo, joining the Blue Sox was one of those moments were life had come full circle. His father used to own the team when it was known as the Holyoke Blue Sox, and he spent summers as a bat boy.

Rounding out the squad last summer was graduate student A.J. Cook who served on the Blue Sox coaching staff.



Photo courtesy Business West.

School of Nursing professor Andrea Bertheaud named 'Healthcare Hero'

Andrea Bertheaud, assistant clinical professor in the Elms College School of Nursing, has been named a recipient of the 2025 Healthcare Heroes award by Business West. She and seven other recipients were honored in

October with a dinner at the Log Cabin in Holyoke. Business West created the annual award in 2017 to celebrate leaders, innovators, and inspirational figures within the Greater Springfield healthcare sector.

Andrea was recognized for her distinguished career as a critical care and psychiatric nurse, as well as for her work over the past decade in teaching new generations of nurses at Elms College.

A profile of her in Business West describes how she stresses to her students the importance of understanding the technical aspects of nursing and medicine, as well as the importance of approaching patients with empathy and humanity. "I want them to realize that could be me. I'm one car accident away from having a traumatic brain injury. Then my whole world would change, and this is how I would act."

Julie Beck, dean of the School of Nursing, lauded Andrea as "the face of Elms College nursing to many community members."

To read more of the Business West profile on Andrea Bertheaud, go to https://businesswest.com/blog/andrea-bertheaud/

MBA instructor Julie Quink named to Forbes's list for 'Best in State' CPAs



Julie M. Quink, an adjunct faculty member for the Elms College MBA program, was recently named by Forbes as one of the best certified public accountants in the state of Massachusetts.

The ranking is part of its inaugural Best-in-State ranking for CPAs nationwide. The listing names roughly 1,000 CPAs nationwide, but only 18 are based in Massachusetts. Quink, a managing principal at Burkhart Pizzanelli, P.C., is one of the few named from Western Massachusetts.

She has 35 years of experience in public accounting, as well as experience with private corporate accounting.

Quink graduated from Elms College in 1991 with a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting. For the last several years, she has taught a class on business law and ethics for accountants.

Dr. Elizabeth Hukowicz celebrated for 'success over 60'



Dr. Elizabeth "Betty" Hukowicz, dean of the School of Continuing Education and the Center for Student Success, was recently celebrated as a recipient of the 2025 Age of Excellence Awards: Celebrating Success Over 60.

The award from Glenmeadow Inc., a provider of senior retirement lifestyle options, celebrates those over age 60 who continue to make profound impacts in their communities. Recipients are chosen for exemplifying vitality, purpose, and leadership in what is called the "third age" of life.

Nine people in all were named as 2025 recipients of the award.

Dean Hukowicz was cited for her work with the Elms College administration, as a member of the Division of Education faculty, and as founder of Meghan's Light, an organization established in memory of her daughter that is dedicated to supporting the search for a cure for cystic fibrosis.

Board of Trustees member Richard K. Sullivan Jr. was also cited with an honorable mention at the Sept. 3 ceremony in recognition of his 11 years as president and CEO of the Western Massachusetts Economic Development Council.

Elms enters 'shared student' agreement with HCC, STCC



Presidents George Timmons of HCC, Harry E. Dumay of Elms and John B. Cook of STCC ratify a shared agreement during an Oct. 8 ceremony.

Elms College President Harry E. Dumay entered into an agreement with the presidents of Springfield Technical Community College and Holyoke Community College in October, which will allow students from those two schools to reside in Elms' residence halls.

Dr. Dumay, HCC President George Timmons, and STCC President John B. Cook ratified the agreement in a signing ceremony in the Berchmans Rotunda on Oct. 8.

While Elms College has existing articulation agreements with the two community colleges, this is the first time the Elms has opened its residence halls to students from another college. The agreement benefits HCC and STCC students with housing needs, while creating another pathway for students from those two colleges to consider attending Elms College to complete their baccalaureate degree.

"Elms College, for nearly 100 years, has prided itself on promoting educational opportunities to those who would otherwise not have access, and being a collaborative partner with our neighboring colleges. This agreement accomplishes these goals and expands our strong partnerships with HCC and STCC," Dr. Dumay said.



2024-2025 Annual Report

Those of us who come to the Elms College campus each day—whether for classes or for work—can sometimes forget just how beautiful this place truly is. The architecture, the landscaping, the thoughtful layout of the grounds—all reflect the care, history, and purpose that flow from our Catholic mission. When we pass by these familiar sights day after day, it's easy to take them for granted. But every so often, it's worth pausing to see the campus with fresh eyes, as a visitor might, to be reminded of the wonderful uniqueness of this community.

At the heart of this beautiful place is our shared mission: to prepare students to be ethical leaders and agents of positive change in the world. This annual report tells that story—of our financial strength, our continued progress, and the work still ahead. It also celebrates the generosity of our many friends, supporters, and benefactors. Each name listed represents someone who believes in Elms College and has faith in our mission. It is this support that allows us to continue this important work and to move confidently into the future.

We are Elms College.

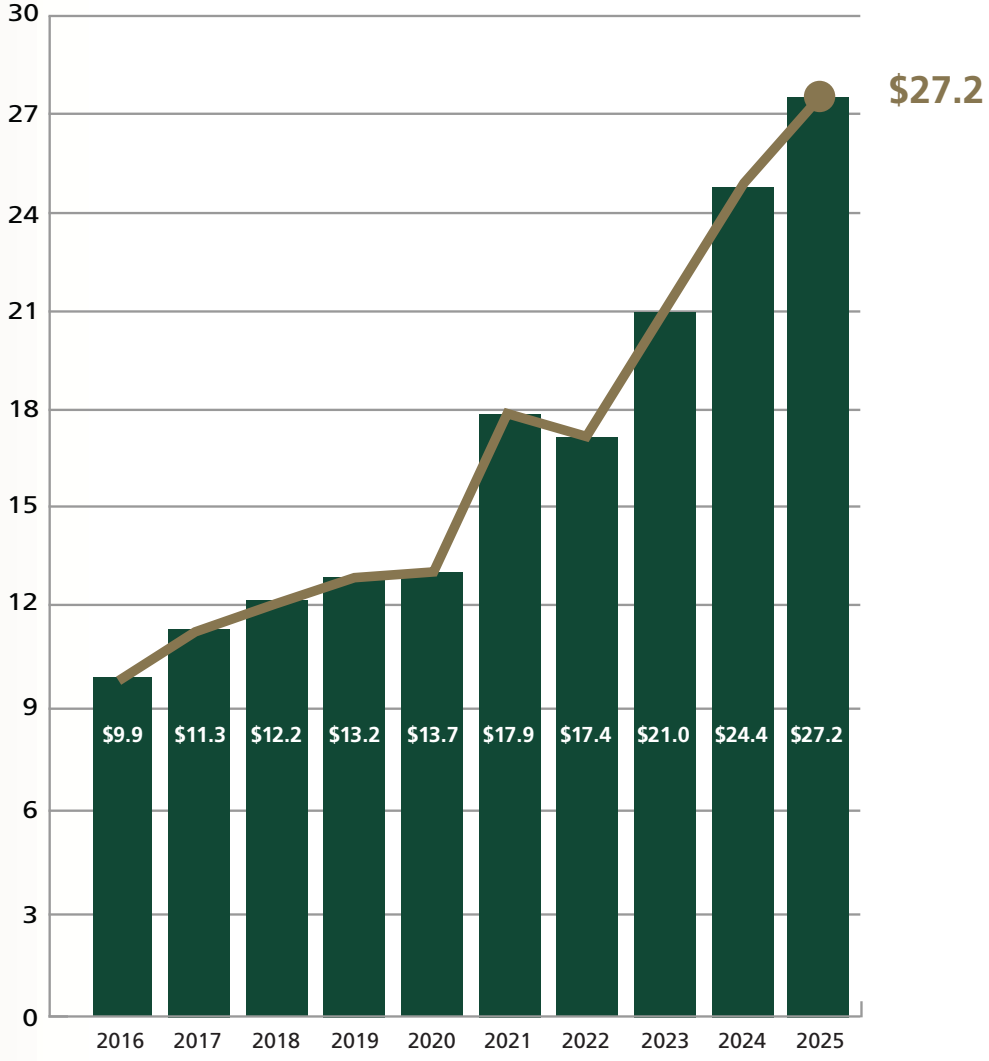
Harry E. Dumay, Ph.D., MBA



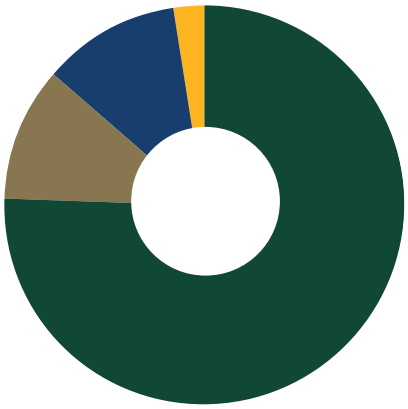
FY25 Balance Sheet *(As of June 30)*

(in thousands)	2025	2024
Assets		
Cash & Short-Term Investments	9,251	11,992
Account & Pledge Receivable, net	3,748	4,986
Long-Term Investments	27,242	25,044
Property, Plant & Equipment	36,233	35,613
Other Assets	5,406	5,312
Total Assets	**81,880**	**82,947**
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses	2,167	2,491
Deferred Revenue	2,510	1,550
Long-Term Debt	13,747	14,056
Other Liabilities	611	420
Total Liabilities	**19,035**	**18,517**
Net Assets	**62,845**	**64,430**
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	**81,880**	**82,947**

Endowment *(in millions)*

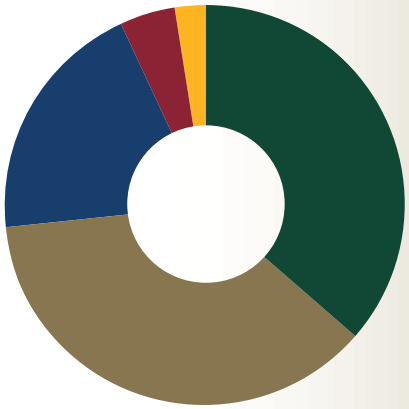


2024-2025 Income



- Tuition and Fees / $22,397,122
- Gifts & Grants / $3,180,339
- Investment Return / $3,350,907
- Other Income / $665,794

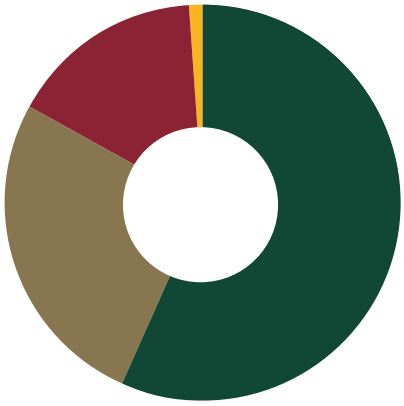
2024-2025 Expenses



- Student Instruction / $11,356,966
- Management and General / $11,556,963
- Student Services / $6,100,903
- Auxiliary Services / $1,445,635
- Fundraising Expense / $718,241

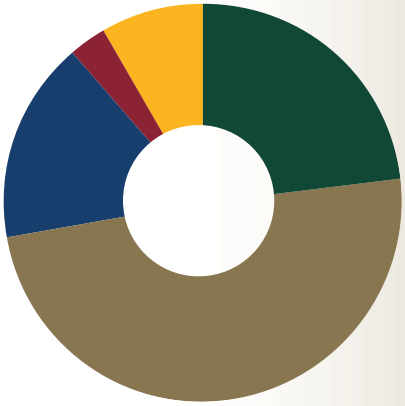
Overall Gifts and Commitments

2024-2025 Giving by Type



- Restricted Giving / $1,992,310
- Endowment / $923,896
- Unrestricted Giving / $552,246
- Gifts in Kind / $32,000

2024-2025 Giving by Constituency



- Alumna/us / $811,873
- Foundation / $1,723,839
- Individual/Friend / $568,432
- Religious Organization / $107,947
- Corporation / $288,360

GIVING SOCIETIES

Elms College is grateful for the support and commitment from its diverse constituents. The following listing recognizes total giving of those who have contributed during the fiscal year July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. These gifts include general support as well as support to the Alumnae Library, endowment, financial aid, capital improvements, the chapel, and faculty, academic, athletic and cultural development.

Giving Societies

President's Circle
(All annual benefactors of $1,000+)

$ 50,000 +	Sister Rose William Society
$ 25,000 +	Sister Helen Joseph Society
$ 10,000 +	Bishop Beavan Society
$ 5,000 +	Bishop O'Leary Society
$ 2,500 +	Mother John Berchmans Society
$ 1,000 +	Sister Mary Dooley Society

Sister Rose William Society

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Bolduc Schuster Family Foundation
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Michael Vivaldi
Eileen and Raymond Walczak
Susan C. Wells
Whittlesey
Lisa Wondolowski
Mildred Zweir and Dr. Richmond M. Rosen, M.D.

† Deceased

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Alumni participation is important to continue to offer quality education and experiences to students who become the next generation of alumni. We are grateful for your support of your alma mater..

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Virginia Jette McDeed
Elizabeth Shaw McGrory †
Violette Cartier Sweeney

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Susan Gelinas Agnew
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Vivien Najimy Delgado
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Joan St. Clair Hayes
Dorothy Didonna Hickey
Barbara Landers Hood
Christine M. Lynch Keaney
Jane Regan Levesque
Mary Ann Cleary Lucia
Theresa Kolano Maloney
Joan Hansen Meehan
Nancy Mirto
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Sr. Eleanor Spring, SSJ
Regina A. Stachowicz Sullivan
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Elizabeth Aldrich Bell
Anne E. Swift Benedetti
Jane Duffy Beswick
Barbara J. Daury Betinis
Kathleen Marby Burton
Lucille Krock Cercone
Leticia Dibiase Clark
Camilla M. Conti Crick
Anne R. Conlee Cronin
Joann Kelly Cronnell
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Ann E. Garvey Schettino
Aniela Marcinczyk St. Peter
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Ann Marie Caron Walden
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AJ Cook
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Michael Klein
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Hudson LaFlamme
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Aixa Lopez Reyes
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Orlando Pagan
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Jacklin Cronin
Zachary Delaney
Jahmai Dixon
Pajorn Drysdale
Elizabeth Franzoni
Ty Gladu
Aiden Goffe
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Haily Lamka
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Chase Prestia
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Every year, generous individuals or groups of individuals turn the dream of a college education into a reality for many Elms College students. We are grateful for the generosity of the following:

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Some of our most meaningful gifts are made in honor or memory of beloved friends, colleagues, and family members. We are honored to accept these special gifts. Many such gifts are designated for annual scholarships or endowed scholarships, awards, and library memorials. This list reflects newly established annual and endowed scholarships or endowment funds, and gifts to existing funds in 2024-2025.

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Many Elms benefactors choose to make gifts throughout the year in memory of beloved family members and friends, or to honor meaningful people or events in their lives. We appreciate the thoughtfulness of those benefactors for choosing to recognize these relatives, friends, and events while supporting the mission of Elms College.

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Many corporations, foundations, and other organizations contributed to the college in 2024-2025. The college is deeply grateful for their confidence in our institution as well as for their financial assistance.

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The following benefactors, now deceased, included Elms College in their estate plans. Funds from their estates were received during the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Our appreciation and prayers were sent to their families and friends.

$376,544.42

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Mary Lou Burke '57 †
Rita Kellett Prevoznik '51 †
Kathleen M. Riordan '67, Ed.D †

† Deceased

DIOCESAN COLLECTION

College of Our Lady of the Elms is most grateful to Bishop William D. Byrne and the clergy, religious, and parishioners of the Diocese of Springfield for their financial support. The college expresses its gratitude for their substantial gift, obtained through the annual collection, with proceeds supporting the college.

$28,473.38

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The Living Legacy Society was established in 1994 to recognize alumni and friends of College of Our Lady of the Elms who have included the college in their will or have established charitable gift annuities or trusts, or have named Elms College as a beneficiary of an insurance policy or IRA.

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Joan A. Brunelle Montana '62
Sr. Jane Morrissey, SSJ '62
Susan E. Breault Napolitano '77
and Robert Napolitano
Carla Oleska, Ph.D.
Elaine Y. Paquet Olive '74
Mary Denisevich Pacione '63
Patricia Philbin '71
Catherine G. Plopper '95
Rita Kellett Prevoznik '51 †
Maureen T. Bryson Rawding '54
Kathleen M. Riordan, Ed.D. '67 †*
Margaret Bouyea Robillard '52 †
Marilyn E. Rondeau, Ed.D. '69
Jacquelyn M. Rosa '69
Joan M. Ryan '69
Janet M. Settembro '75
Michele I. Taylor Shepard '70
Marilyn T. Deignan Shepardson '58
Rev. Mark S. Stelzer, S.Th.D.
Joan M. Talbot '62
Margaret E. Toomey '60
Eleanor M. Tremblay '69
James E. Tremble
Dr. Kathleen L. Vosburgh '66
Carol A. Casullo Waddington '70
Ellen R. Warriner
Dr. Edward J. Welch, Jr., DDS
Amy J. Wilson '75

** Charter Member*
† Deceased

WAYS OF GIVING

An Elms College education is a stepping stone for many graduates to lead lives full of meaningful work, success, and service to others. It is an investment that yields tremendous personal dividends.

Gifts of all sizes allow us to provide the financial assistance that many of our students need to reach their academic goals, to develop innovative academic programs, to respond to the demands of today's world, and to acquire and improve our human resources, facilities, and equipment.

Many of our students have access to the Elms only because of benefactors like you who support what we do and how we do it. Your gift really does make a difference here.

- **Gifts of Cash**
- **Gifts of Securities**
- **Matching Gifts**
- **Gifts through Retirement Plan**
- **Gifts of Personal Property**
- **Gifts of Real Estate**

If you would like more information about making a planned gift or legacy gift, contact Bernadette Nowakowski '89, '08, Vice President of Institutional Advancement, at 413-265-2214 or nowakowskib@elms.edu.

This report has been prepared by the Office of Institutional Advancement and the Office of Institutional Marketing. The list of benefactors reflects gifts to the college during the fiscal year 2024-2025. Donations made since July 1, 2025 will appear in the next annual report. We have taken great care to ensure that complete and accurate listings appear. Should you find an error or omission, please bring it to the attention of the Office of Institutional Advancement at 413-265-2403. Please note that an individual's name may appear on several lists, and also that some benefactors have requested that their gifts be anonymous.

IN MEMORIAM

Alumni
Jean Miner Cook ’50
Elizabeth (Bettianne) Shaw McGrory ’50
Ruth Healy Buckley ’51
Ruth Nolan Dunn ’52
Jean Baillargeon Egan ’52
Therese Quinlan Nesbit ’52
Virginia Bajorin White ’52
Nancy O'Connor Murphy ’54
Sr. Vivian Pyne, SSJ ’56
Ann Meloche Loftus ’57
Eleanor Vose Diethelm ’58
Mary Derengowski-Stein ’59
Mary Lynch Flaherty ’60
Mary Ellen Fitts Johnson ’60
Mary Hayes Morrissey ’60
Marilyn Phelan Fini ’61
Mary Wynn Harney ’61
Jean Tully Kaeli ’64
Ruth Kosiorek ’64
Viola Martinez-Cordova ’65
Pamela Braman ’66
Kathleen Donovan ’66
Thomas Kennedy ’66
Maryann Francese Gannon ’67
Ellen Lahert Coopee ’68
Linda Stadnicki Siedel ’68
Mary Anne Connery-Simmons ’70
Mary Thompson Sacenti ’70
Sr. Gloria Corriveau ’72
Marianne Fratamico ’75
Rosalie Cira Parylak ’75
Carol Kokoszka Whitman ’76
JoAnn Hastings ’76
Ann Claffie Mottley ’78
Zenaida Gomez Acevedo ’80
Michele Plourde Barker ’81
Christine Cebula ’87
Patricia Houlihan Tabb ’87
Rosemary Ryan Kratovil ’89
The Honorable Eileen Maher ’89
Sr. Roberta Carter, CSSF ’90
Stacey Purcell ’90
Johanna Dube ’94
Jill Smith Dangleis ’99
Elaine Parenzo Lees ’04
Deborah Ruel ’07

Husband of
Lorita Calderella Decorie ’57
Mary Ellen Spencer Keating ’58
Jane E. Campbell-Harrigan ’61
Martha O'Brien Dewey ’78
Regina Donovan McGovern ’81
Loralee Perkins Nelson ’89
Brenda Dupras Bianco ’95

Father of
Patricia Bombardier ’67 (Former Staff)
Madeleine Taylor ’11
Jeanne Tippett (Staff)

Mother of
Katherine Clark LaCarrubba ’78
Celeste Trifero ’78
Janemarie Clark Fitzgibbon ’85
Lynn Daigle Korza ’88 (Staff)
Kelly Lowe O'Sullivan ’91
Heather Lowe ’94
Cynthia Lyons (Former Chair of the Board)
Christine Schrauf (Faculty)

Son of
Jean Paulhus ’68 (two sons)
Joli Crespino Basch ’07
Michael (Former Trustee) and Joan Sobon

Brother of
Mark Fulco (Trustee)

Sister of
Sr. Constance Quinlan, SSJ ’58
Carolyn O'Connor Connelly ’60
Maureen Cotter ’05 (Former Faculty)

Aunt of
Mary Keator, Ph.D. ’91
Mary Elizabeth Pniak-Costello ’76

Grandfather of
Caitlynn Tippett ’25

Grandmother of
Nicole Fregeau ’18 (Former Staff)
J A Marshall (Staff)

Grandparents of
Ashley Tucker Vanasse ’11

Sister-in-law of
Sheila Nesbit Keator ’59

Friend of the College
Helen Blake
Lawrence Bossidy
Sr. Theresa Croteau, SSJ
Ann Burke Lowe
Marian Pniak
Robert Zygarowski

This list includes updates reported by family members, newspapers, and other sources from March 28, 2025 through October 12, 2025.

375 YEARS SISTERS OF SAINT JOSEPH
1650 • LE PUY-EN-VELAY

"The greatest gift we give is the gift of ourselves."

—Sr. Elizabeth "Betsy" Sullivan, president of Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield

SSJ celebrates 375 years of uniting neighbors, serving God

Each year on Oct. 15, Elms College celebrates Founders Day in tribute to the Sisters of St. Joseph. This year's observance carried added meaning as it coincided with the 375th anniversary of the founding of the religious order in Le Puy, France.

"We enter this anniversary year knowing that 375 years is certainly a milestone and an event to be celebrated," said Sr. Elizabeth "Betsy" Sullivan, president of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield. "Anniversaries allow us to strengthen established friendships, create new relationships, and connect with others—and, as always, to hope for the future."

The Sisters of St. Joseph were founded in 1650 when six young women in Le Puy formed a religious community dedicated to serving the poor and the sick. They taught women the trade of lace making, offering them a means of livelihood, and over time, the order and its influence grew. The Sisters survived the French Revolution and, in the 1830s, expanded to America, with six sisters traveling to St. Louis, Missouri. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield were established in 1883 when several sisters came from New York to help start a parish school in Chicopee. In 1928, they went on to found Elms College.

As in previous years, Elms marked Founders Day by welcoming members of the Springfield congregation to campus. A special Mass, led by campus chaplain Fr. Mark Stelzer, was held in St. Joseph's Chapel in Berchmans Hall, followed by lunch in the Dooley Campus Center.

The Oct. 15 celebration began a busy weekend for the Sisters. Two days later, several members spoke to the Elms College Board of Trustees about the order's mission, history, and future. The weekend concluded with a Mass at Sacred Heart Church in Springfield, celebrated by Bishop William Byrne and attended by several hundred people.

In his homily, Bishop Byrne reflected on the Sisters' enduring impact on Western Massachusetts since their arrival in 1883.

Once numbering more than 1,000 members, the Sisters of St. Joseph educated generations of children, cared for the sick, supported the poor, and ministered to inmates in local jails. They served as teachers, social workers, and healthcare professionals—helping to shape schools, hospitals, and communities across the region.

Beginning in the 1960s, as fewer young people entered religious life, their numbers declined. Today, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield number about 120, with most being 75 years or older. Though many are retired from full-time work, they continue to volunteer and serve in the community where needed.

During her presentation to the Elms Board, Sr. Betsy reflected that the SSJ's enduring mission – uniting neighbor with neighbor and neighbor with God, without distinction, so that all may be one – will continue far into the future as long as people see the value in serving God by helping others.



Rev. Mark Stelzer celebrates a Founders' Day Mass in St. Joseph's Chapel for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield.



Sr. Elizabeth "Betsy" Sullivan and other Sisters pose with President Dumay, Fr. Mark Stelzer, and Elms staff and students by the 375th anniversary banner inside the Dooley Campus Center.

"The greatest gift we give is the gift of ourselves," she said. "The strength of our mission is experienced when it is seen or felt by others. It is only in living the mission that the mission is experienced. The Sisters of St. Joseph are not the sole carriers of it — our mission comes alive whenever people open themselves to others, walk in solidarity, and assist those in need."

To see video of the Sisters of St. Joseph presentation to the Elms Board of Trustees, scan this code with your phone.

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