

THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE SPRING 2023

Volume 51, Issue 2

Alumni in Tech

Graduates Demonstrate the Versatility of Catholic Liberal Education



*Daina Andries ('09),
Jane (Neumayr '98) Nemcova,
and Jonathan Doyle ('96)*



Some much-needed rainstorms brought snow this winter to the mountains surrounding the California campus.

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

Seek First

The Value of Catholic Liberal Education

Looking at the careers that Thomas Aquinas College students pursue after graduation, one would never know that for four years they all study the same classical curriculum. Some go into medicine; others, teaching, law, the priesthood or religious life, architecture, or media. The diversity of fields belies the all-too-common assumption that the only way to succeed in a given subject is to major in it. At TAC, there are no majors — nor are there any professions that are beyond our graduates' reach.

It should come as little surprise, then, that technology is one of the many sectors in which our alumni succeed. And yet, especially among those who are only just learning about the College, this fact is often startling.

How does a school that doesn't even have Wi-Fi in its residence halls, where electronic devices are prohibited in the classrooms, where students read ancient texts and contemplate the works of long-dead masters — how can such a school produce graduates who build lasers, engineer software systems, or launch their own metadata startups?

To answer that question, I encourage you to read our "Alumni in Tech" article on page 11. To the one, these graduates attest that, far from impeding their chosen careers, Thomas Aquinas College has afforded them the intellectual versatility that makes their work possible. Moreover, none of these graduates arrived at TAC looking for a way to break into the technology field. They came seeking a Catholic liberal education.

Students do not choose Thomas Aquinas College to obtain specialized skills. They come to learn about reality itself; about nature and nature's creator; about man and man's relationship to the natural world, to other men, and ultimately to the Triune God. They come to learn by the light of the Catholic faith, which more fully illumines every human endeavor, no matter what the industry or discipline.

In a community that aspires to live out that faith — not only in our chapels, but in our residence halls, in our dining commons, and most especially in our classrooms — these students develop the gift of humble listening. They learn to hear God's call, to discern it, and to follow wherever it leads them, be it a monastery, a courthouse, a classroom, or Silicon Valley.

"Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness," Our Lord tells us, "and all these things shall be yours as well" (Matt. 6:33). The alumni of Thomas Aquinas College thrive in a wide array of fields, bringing the light of Christ with them, not by completing four years of professional training, but by seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness.

Such is the true value of Catholic liberal education. It is an education for a lifetime. ❖



"How does a school that doesn't even have Wi-Fi in its residence halls, where electronic devices are prohibited in the classrooms, where students read ancient texts and contemplate the works of long-dead masters — how can such a school produce graduates who build lasers, engineer software systems, or launch their own metadata startups?"

DEPARTMENTS

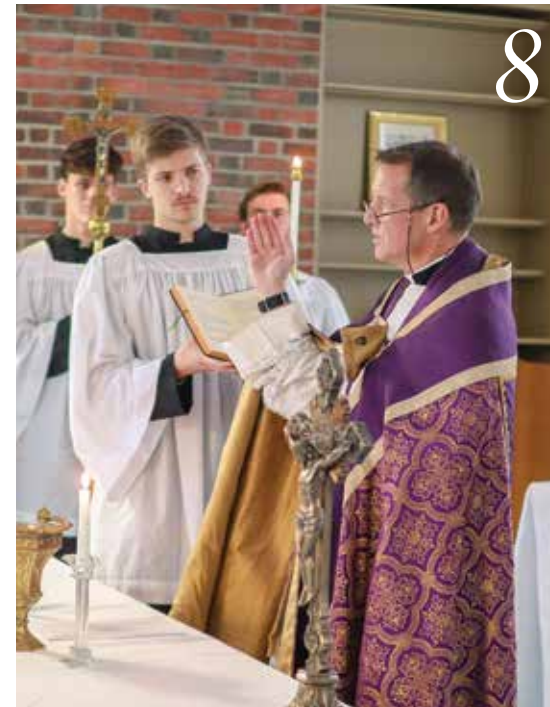
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President
Paul J. O'Reilly, Ph.D.

Vice President for Advancement
James C. Link

Executive Director of College Relations / Editor
Chris Weinkopf

Communications Manager
Benjamin Trull

Student Writers
Peter King (CA'24), Camden Tuffile (NE'24)

Student Photographers
Regina Terreri (CA'23), Samuel Livingston (NE'26)

Correspondence should be addressed to:
Editor, College Newsletter
10,000 Ojai Road, Santa Paula, CA 93060
newsletter@thomasaquinas.edu

Free subscriptions
thomasaquinas.edu/subscribe



One Program Two Coasts

RECENT EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS

Walking for Life on Both Coasts

With the much-celebrated overturn of *Roe v. Wade*, the pro-life movement has shifted to a more regional effort, with activists making the case for human life on a state-by-state basis. And to that end, students on both campuses of Thomas Aquinas College — joined by faculty, alumni, and friends — lent their voices to various local pro-life marches and rallies throughout the country in January.

In California, some 300 students made their annual pilgrimage to San Francisco for the Walk for Life West Coast. Singing hymns, praying, and offering hope to mothers in need and their children, they led several thousand peaceful walkers down the city's streets. For those students who couldn't make the trip to San Francisco, a smaller group made their way to Downtown Los Angeles for



EWTN interviews California students at the Walk for Life West Coast.

One Life LA — the Archdiocese of Los Angeles's annual event to promote the beauty and dignity of all human life.

One week later, a large group of TAC-New England students, faculty members, and their families headed up to Montpelier, Vermont, for the 50th Annual Vermont March for Life. A smaller group of students made its way to nearby Springfield, Massachusetts, for the annual Respect Life Mass and March with Bishop William D. Byrne.

Meanwhile, members of Thomas Aquinas College's Washington, D.C., Board of Regents led a TAC contingent at the March for Life in Washington, D.C. "It's wonderful to see so many young people who care about the sanctity of life," said an observer at one of the myriad events. "I hope you all can inspire more to do the same." ❖



New England students march to the Vermont State House.

Seniors Submit Theses

On the evening of Saturday, March 11, members of the Thomas Aquinas College Class of 2023 submitted the final drafts of their Senior Theses, one of the last steps on their road to graduation. Both in California and New England, seniors celebrated with their classmates and faculty to commemorate completing this rite of passage — in California, students even rang a ceremonial bell for every thesis received!

The Senior Thesis is integral to the College's education. Students must raise a question similar to those considered in the Great Books and offer a defensible answer in light of the College's classical curriculum. Writing, and later defending, this paper synthesizes both the students' analytical acumen and their general grasp of the wider Western intellectual tradition.



"It was a lot of fun to delve into Scripture and use the skills we've learned the last couple of years," said Marius Covington (CA'23), whose thesis reflects on Christ's silence during His passion. "It's also a good lesson in humility, because looking back on it, you realize that you're only scratching the surface."

Fun, humbling — and difficult. It was not without considerable relief that seniors submitted their final drafts. "I'm so glad we're all done!" laughed Maggie Huckins (NE'23) as she handed her paper (about Leo Tolstoy's understanding of love in *War and Peace*) to Dr. Patrick Gardner, assistant dean in New England. "It was definitely a lot of work," concurred John Metilly (NE'23), whose own paper considered how men can have a friendship with God. "But it was great to be able to investigate a subject more deeply — and to do it with friends." ❖

SUMMER CONFERENCES

TAC to Host 2023 Thomistic Summer Conference ...

Encouraged by turnout last July, Thomas Aquinas College, California, will host the second Thomistic Summer Conference from June 15-18, 2023, on the theme, "The Soul in the Philosophy & Theology of St. Thomas."

Although Christian parlance often includes reference to "the soul," St. Thomas's understanding encompasses more than just the *human* soul. It refers, rather, to the vital principle of any living thing whatsoever — thus St. Thomas speaks of vegetative and sensitive, as well as rational, souls. A Thomistic discussion of the soul, therefore, necessarily ventures into regions typically reserved to the "hard sciences," such as biology and psychology, and invites their insight on properly

theological matters.

Revisiting St. Thomas's teaching on the soul provides a chance for sacred and secular science to shed much-needed light on each other. Conference-goers will address such questions as: What are we to make of the concept of the soul in an age of neuroscience? Can we know that the human soul is immortal? And perhaps most intriguing of all: In what way is the soul an image of the Trinity?

Featured speakers will include Dr. Steven Jensen of the University of St.



Thomas in Houston, Dr. Marie George of St. John's University in New York, and Thomas Aquinas College's own Dr. Michael Augros and Dr. John Goyette, tutors on the New England and California campuses, respectively.

Registration is open until May 15 at thomasaquinas.edu/tsc. ❖

... and Co-Sponsor Conference on Catholic Education and Culture

From June 21-24, leading Catholic educators will converge on Pasadena, California, for the first Adeodatus Conference on Catholic Education and Culture, organized by Dr. Alex Lessard and his wife, Angela (Grimm '85), and co-sponsored by Thomas Aquinas College. "The vision that Angela and I have for this conference — and the two that will follow in 2024 and 2025 — is that it will broaden the conversation about the renewal of Catholic education beyond the circle of those already convinced of its importance," says Dr. Lessard.

Given the propensity of TAC alumni to devote themselves to education, it is no surprise that more than a quarter of the conference speakers are graduates. Their number includes scholarly authors Dr. Michael Waldstein ('77), who translated St. John Paul II's *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, and Dr. Arthur Hippler ('89), author of *Citizens of the Heavenly City*:

A Catechism of Catholic Social Teaching. There are also several, such as Dr. Josef Froula ('92), Rev. Sebastian Walshe ('94), and Pater Edmund Waldstein, O. Cist. ('06), who teach in colleges and seminaries. Speaking from a vast trove of experience in elementary, high school, and college education, meanwhile, is Dr. Andrew Seeley ('87), a veteran tutor at Thomas Aquinas College California, who co-founded the Institute for Catholic Liberal Education and is the executive director of the Arts of Liberty Project.

Alongside numerous College alumni, other speakers include theologian Rev. Robert Spitzer, S.J.; celebrated poet and critic Dr. James Matthew Wilson; Chesterton Academies founder Dale Ahlquist; and many more.

"We hold the ambitious hope that the Adeodatus Conferences will echo the educational efforts of the U.S. Bishops'



Adeodatus logo, designed by Michaela Lessard ('23)

Baltimore Plenary Conferences, which were so successful in transforming Catholic education in the 19th and 20th centuries," says Dr. Lessard. "It's appropriate, in the long wake of Vatican II, that laity are taking the lead in the renewal of what the bishops began then."

Echoes from the clergy affirm the Lessards' high hopes. "Our world is in urgent need of the transformative light of the truth, which illuminates the mind and satisfies the heart," says Pater Edmund. "We therefore need a renewal of Catholic education, from its deepest sources, so that that light can pierce the shadows that encompass us and reach the hearts and minds of our young people. As its name implies, Adeodatus is a godsend for such renewal."

For more information, please see adeodatus.com. ❖

A Blessing for St. Joseph Hall

When students at Thomas Aquinas College, New England, returned after Christmas break, they received the happy news that their campus had gained a new residential hall. On January 14, they celebrated that acquisition when Head Chaplain Rev. Greg Markey blessed the building in joyful preparation for its future use.

“We thank God for the generous benefactors who stepped forward, allowing us to purchase this building, which will facilitate the continued growth of our New England campus,” said President Paul J. O’Reilly. “We now seek God’s blessing for the years ahead, that all who live and work here will use this gift to do His will.”

Formerly known as Hibbard Hall, the three-story, 20,000-square-foot building architecturally complements its nearest neighbor, Wilson Hall, on the western end of the Northfield, Massachusetts, campus. Originally built in 1962 for what was then the Northfield School for Girls, the building includes five suites, a commercial



Dr. O’Reilly welcomed guests to the blessing ceremony by discussing the providential nature of the building’s acquisition. “We had two anonymous donors who really contributed to the process,” he said. “They only had one request: that the building be dedicated to St. Joseph, which, of course, we were glad to do.”

Next Fr. Markey led a procession of students, faculty and their families, and friends of the College through the building’s halls, sprinkling each room with holy water. The processors followed behind, singing celebratory hymns such as “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” and “Immaculate Mary.” After the final blessing, all congregated in St. Joseph Hall’s dining area for fellowship and refreshments.

“We are grateful to our friends and neighbors at The Moody Center for their willingness to part with this property, as well as for the benefactors who made this purchase possible,” said Dr. O’Reilly. “TAC-New England continues to flourish and expand, and for that we thank God. St. Joseph, pray for us!” ❖

“We thank God for the generous benefactors who stepped forward, allowing us to purchase this building, which will facilitate the continued growth of our New England campus.”

kitchen and dining hall, common recreation rooms, a finished basement, and a 700-square-foot stone patio. It can accommodate 76 students. After serving these last few years as a function hall for The D.L. Moody Center, it will become a residential hall once more after the College makes some minor renovations.

Alumni Smash Records at 2023 Day of Giving

“When we made plans for this year’s Alumni Day of Giving, we briefly considered setting a goal of \$200,000,” says Dr. Paul J. O’Reilly (’84), Thomas Aquinas College’s first alumnus president. “But we quickly discarded that idea, thinking it too ambitious.”

It turns out that sum was not ambitious enough.

Over the course of March 7, the Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas, TAC alumni gave \$253,571 — far exceeding all expectations and smashing the previous record. “Last year’s Alumni Day of Giving set a record at a little over \$190,000, and that included a \$75,000 matching gift from College Governor Martha Reichert and her husband, Tim, who are parents of alumni, but not actually alumni themselves,” explains Dr. O’Reilly. “This year, we decided to run the whole day with nothing but alumni gifts, which we thought would present a challenge given that the College is still so young. But our alumni did not disappoint!”

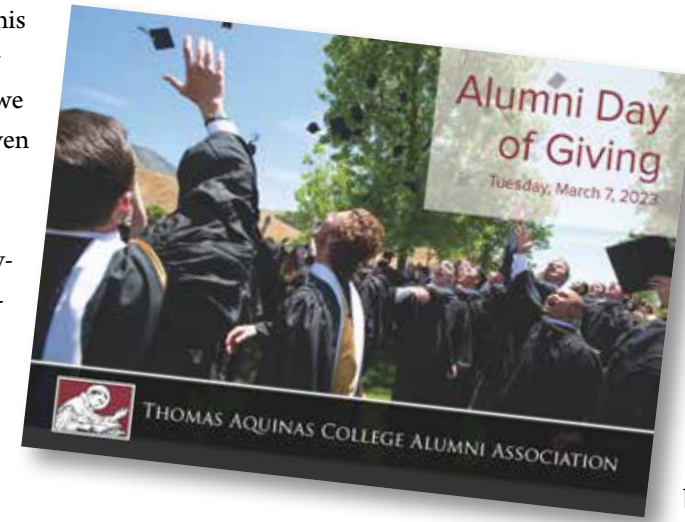
To get the 2023 Alumni Day of Giving off to a quick start, College Governor Angela (Andersen ’87) Connelly and her husband, Jack, promised to match the first \$75,000 in gifts from fellow alumni, who easily reached that goal by 10:45 a.m.

Next up, Antonia and Nick Cammarota (’84), Nicole (Cronin) and Ray Tittmann (both ’94), Megan (Moore ’04) and Kurt Van Sciver (’02), Sarah (Goldberg) and Max Summe (both ’07), and Nona (Haggard ’00) and Matthew Kelsey (’95) teamed up to make a \$15,000 matching gift. Within three hours, alumni fulfilled that challenge, as well, leading to the day’s final matching gift — \$10,000

from an anonymous alumni couple. In less than three hours, alumni had met that challenge, too.

But the deluge of generosity did not stop, with gifts continuing to pour in throughout the night and even the next day. In all, alumni made 784 gifts, up 38.8 percent from last year, and representing a

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32.4 percent increase in total value. Leading the way was the Class of 2014, which achieved the day’s highest giving rate for the second year in a row. Meanwhile, several alumni influencers enthusiastically rallied fellow TACers to the cause, most notably Paul Grimes (’15), who inspired 50 gifts.

“We who have been blessed to attend Thomas Aquinas College have been given a gift beyond measure,” says Dr. O’Reilly. “That gift was made possible by our founders’ sacrifices, and now it is our challenge, as alumni, to make that gift available for generations to come. On the sixth Alumni Day of Giving — and the first to rely 100 percent on alumni gifts — TAC alumni more than rose to this challenge.” ❖

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL Lecture and Concert Series Highlights from the Last Semester*

Endowed by Barbara and Paul Henkels

NEW ENGLAND

January Lecture
Dr. Tony Andres
Tutor, Thomas Aquinas College, California
“The Role of Dialectic in Liberal Education”

All-College Seminar
First nine chapters, Book One
Summa Contra Gentiles by St. Thomas Aquinas

President’s Day Lecture
Pater Edmund Waldstein, O. Cist. (’06)
Member of the Institute of Moral Theology Hochschule Heiligenkreuz
“The Primacy of the Common Good”

St. Thomas Day Lecture
Rev. Michael Sherwin, O.P.
Professor of Fundamental Moral Theology Institute of Spirituality at the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas
“Thomas Aquinas, Spiritual Master and Saint for Our Times”



March Lecture
Dr. Daniel Toma
Professor, Minnesota State University, Mankato
“The Fruit Fly and Aristotle: What Genes Can and Cannot Do”

Spring Concert
The Thomas Aquinas College Choir
The Magic Flute, by W. A. Mozart

CALIFORNIA

St. Thomas Day Lecture
Rev. Stephen Brock
Professor, University of Chicago and Pontificia Università della Santa Croce
“Free Choice: What It Is Not, and What It Is”

February Lecture
Dr. John Goyette
Dean, Thomas Aquinas College, California
“In the Beginning was the Word’: The Mystery of the Trinity in the Prologue to the Gospel of John”



President’s Day Lecture
Dr. Wilfred McClay
Victor Davis Hanson Chair in Classical History and Western Civilization, Hillsdale College
“Tocqueville’s Moment ... and Ours”

All-College Seminar
First nine chapters, Book One
Summa Contra Gentiles by St. Thomas Aquinas

March Lecture
Dr. Brian Kelly
Tutor, Thomas Aquinas College, California
“The Woman Caught in Adultery, John 7:53–8:11”



Spring Concert
The Thomas Aquinas College Choir
H.M.S. Pinafore by Gilbert & Sullivan

*Text and/or audio from select lectures is available at thomasquinas.edu

Alumni, Students Turn Out for First-Ever “TAC Career Day”

To help students prepare for life after graduation, on February 4, Thomas Aquinas College’s Career Center and Alumni Association jointly hosted the first-ever TAC Career Day on the California campus. The event featured visitors from across the professional spectrum — including multiple alumni — for a daylong discussion of the many ways in which the College’s students can put their liberal education to use in the business world.

Presenters came from a wide array of backgrounds: Tom Lawlor ('13) is a senior product manager at Amazon in Nashville, Tennessee, while Anthony Grumbine ('00) is an award-winning architect and principal at the Santa Barbara offices of Harrison Design. Dr. Alex Lessard and his wife, Angela (Grimm '85), have led pioneering efforts to renew Catholic education. Raymond Tittmann ('94) is a California attorney at his own Los Angeles-based firm, Tittmann-Weix. Shane O'Reilly ('95) worked for a decade at Anthem before undertaking an entrepreneurial career in winemaking.

Delivering the keynote address in St. Cecilia Hall’s Fritz B. Burns Auditorium was Tim Cosgrove ('95), the executive director of food services on the College’s New England campus and the onetime head manager of food service for the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Mr. Cosgrove recounted his meteoric rise through the ranks of Wolfgang Puck Catering, a path that led him from the kitchens of the El Rey Theatre to dazzling Los Angeles icons such as the Wil-



tern, the Palladium, and the Conga Room — where he managed a \$12 million budget.

After Mr. Cosgrove’s address, students dispersed to meet with representatives from numerous visiting employers, including Amazon, Tittman-Weix, Catholic Charities, Elevance Health, Geolinks, Adeodatus, the Alvarez Firm, InvestorTools, VSO, Oxbow Pool and Landscape, Tractor Beverage Company, and the United States Marine Corps. Students spoke with representatives, submitted résumés, and interviewed for future positions.

“It was great to see how many students turned out for our first Career Day, as well as the enthusiasm they brought,” says College and Career Advisor Daniel Selmeczy ('08). “There was great energy all around, and I think students and alumni alike are excited to build on this inaugural event for many years to come.” ❖

Goodbye, Fr. Gurtler

In March, Thomas Aquinas College, New England, said farewell to a new but dear friend, Rev. Gary M. Gurtler, S.J., who spent the last six months on sabbatical on the Northfield, Massachusetts, campus, offering Masses and aiding students in their spiritual and intellectual lives.

A 30-year member of the philosophy faculty at Boston College, Fr. Gurtler sat on the doctoral dissertation panels of two TAC-New England tutors, Dr. Steven Cain and Dr. John McCarthy. It was Dr. McCarthy who recommended that he spend his sabbatical year at the College, a suggestion that Fr. Gurtler is glad to have heeded.

“It’s been ideal,” Fr. Gurtler says. “TAC isn’t too far away from Boston, but it’s far enough that I get a change of environment, a



change of scenery. I think it’s very impressive that the students read the original Great Books here — and the method seems to be very effective, since the students are all very intelligent and well-spoken.”

At the campus’s annual St. Patrick’s Day party, Dr. Cain presented Fr. Gurtler with three parting gifts: a TAC hoodie, wine made by an alumnus, and St. Thomas Aquinas’s *Exposition on the Divine Names*, recently translated by tutor Dr. Michael Augros. “This is the most scholarly sabbatical I have ever had,” Fr. Gurtler warmly responded. “You have all been quite helpful for me, and I hope I’ve been helpful to all of you.”

After leaving TAC, Fr. Gurtler will spend the final three months of his sabbatical in Spain before returning to Boston College. ❖

New Books

Recently Published Works from Faculty Authors



Dr. Richard Ferrier

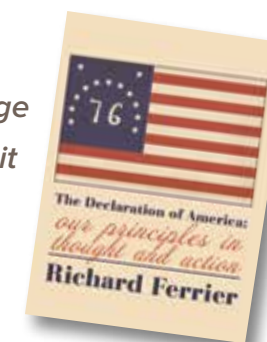
“Come back to the truths that are in the Declaration of Independence,” Abraham Lincoln passionately implored the citizens of Illinois in 1858. More than 160 years later, Dr. Richard D. Ferrier, a tutor on the California campus, echoes Lincoln’s plea. In his new book, *The Declaration of America*, Dr. Ferrier makes the case for how and why Americans must shape their civic sentiments according to the country’s founding document.

“It’s an attempt at patriotic persuasion and self-knowledge for the American citizen, and it ends with a question: Are we worthy of the Declaration in our times?” says Dr. Ferrier. “In that way it’s like a sermon.” Like any great preacher, Dr. Ferrier has two audiences in mind. “I want to preach to the choir and convert the heathen,” he laughs.

First are those who are sympathetic to Dr. Ferrier’s admiration for the American republic, but who lack the knowledge and expertise to defend its credibility. “The Republican party published the Lincoln-Douglas debates in 1859 because they wanted people to get Lincoln’s arguments about how the nation should stand with respect to slavery,” he explains. “I would like to be a minor-league Lincoln to my fellow citizens of today.”

At the same time, however, he hopes the book will fall into less sympathetic hands. “A coalition of people holds hostile views of America’s founding,” he says. “They underestimate the religious dimension and attention to the common good in the American tradition. They could benefit from the things I bring up in the book.”

“It’s an attempt at patriotic persuasion and self-knowledge for the American citizen, and it ends with a question: Are we worthy of the Declaration in our times?”



The book is “a work of public rhetoric,” concludes Dr. Ferrier, appealing both to the head and to the heart. “A clear head with a dead heart is a dead body, but all heart with no head is blind — you want both,” he says. “That is what I want to do for the American republic: I want to clear people’s heads and warm people’s hearts.” ❖



Dr. Brett Smith

What does an obscure, medieval polymath have to say to the modern world about the soul? As it happens, quite a bit. In his new book *‘Aspectus and Affectus’ in the Thought of Robert Grosseteste*, Dr. Brett Smith, a tutor on the New England campus, expounds the rich anthropology of this undeservedly neglected figure.

While a graduate student at The Catholic University of America, Dr. Smith encountered the works of Robert Grosseteste, whose sheer breadth of learning gave him pause. “He wrote about nearly every current topic of his day: scientific works, philosophical commentaries, theology, and vernacular literature,” Dr. Smith observes. “If I studied Grosseteste, I would always have something interesting to learn.”

“He wrote about nearly every current topic of his day: scientific works, philosophical commentaries, theology, and vernacular literature.”

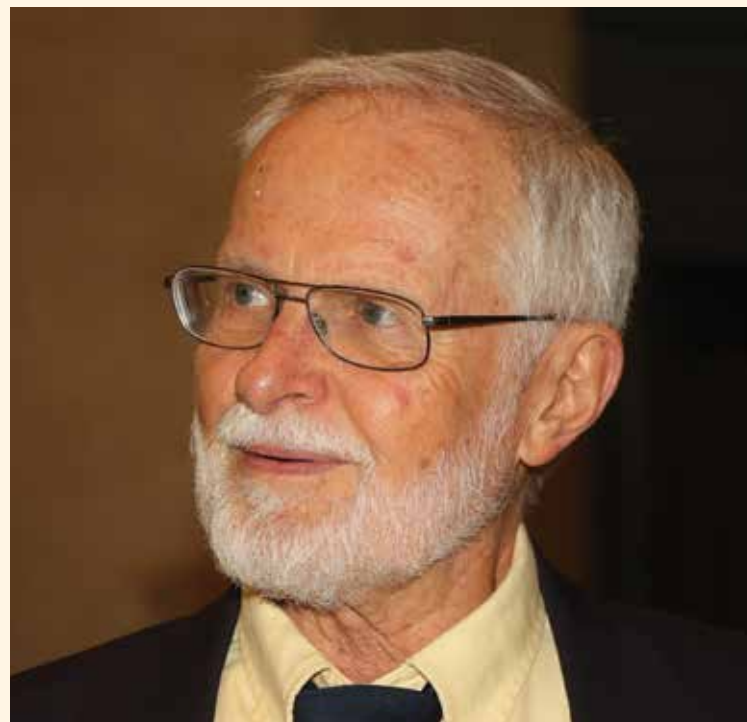


Among the lessons he learned was a bit of wordplay about the soul. “Grosseteste often used this phrase, ‘*aspectus* and *affectus*’ to talk about the cognitive and appetitive powers of the soul,” explains Dr. Smith. *Aspectus* is a Latin word meaning “vision,” heavy with the connotations of *intellectual* vision, while *affectus* means “passion.” Grosseteste’s use of this rhyme thus captures the soul’s twofold abilities to know (*aspectus*) and to love (*affectus*). “Previous scholars observed that this wordplay was probably an original contribution, but nobody could quite verify that claim. When I found out about that, it was obvious that someone needed to write a book about it.”

At just over 400 pages, however, the book provides far more than the genealogy of a curious phrase. “Tracing the wordplay throughout Grosseteste’s thought demands an overview of many different topics in his theology and philosophy,” says Dr. Smith. “The net effect is that this book updates the study of Grosseteste’s thought in multiple areas,” for the first time in 20 years.

“Anyone interested in writing about him,” Dr. Smith notes, “will find much of the most up-to-date information in my book.” ❖

Dr. David Stuhr Scholar & Scout Leader



*“I managed to run into the back of a truck.
And so we had to hang around
for a whole week while the Chevy place
in town fixed our van.”*

— and his 35th backpacking trip to the Philmont Scout Ranch — would bring him on his unexpected sojourn to a young college that lacked the legacy of the schools where he had once worked, yet still measured up more than favorably. “It’s wonderful to have a school that maintains a rigorous approach to classical liberal education,” he says. “Maybe you would be surprised to hear an engineer and a business faculty member saying that, but when I was dean of the undergraduate business school, I spent much time trying to get kids to transfer into the liberal arts and get a broad education rather than a specialty.”

In addition to joining the President’s Council, Dr. Stuhr has become more deeply involved in the life of the College. Last year he attended a Fall Seminar Weekend on the New England campus, where guests took part in discussions of the Great Books modeled after the College’s classes. “I had a fantastic time,” he says. “The whole thing was just terrific. President O’Reilly was our tutor, which was great. He didn’t say much, of course,” he adds, “because tutors try not to dominate the conversation.” When the New England campus hosted its first Commencement last spring, Dr. Stuhr was there, cheering on the new graduates.

He also looks to take another group of Scouts to the College’s California campus this summer. “I’m in the early stages of planning the trip,” he says. “I find any excuse I can to go out there!” ♦

New friends typically learn about Thomas Aquinas College from alumni, from other friends, or perhaps from an advertisement, but Dr. David Stuhr’s introduction to the life of the College was unlike any other: He spent a week stranded on the California campus with a vanload of Boy Scouts.

During the summer of 2021, Scout Leader Stuhr, a few other leaders, and some 15 boys were paying a visit to Southern California — on their way back to New Jersey after a backpacking trek in New Mexico’s Sangre de Cristo mountains — when they encountered some difficulties. “I managed to run into the back of a truck,” he laughs. “And so we had to hang around for a whole week while the Chevy place in town fixed our van.” His old friend Jim Link, TAC’s vice president for advancement, offered them a place to stay in the College’s residence halls.

“My experience was mind-boggling,” he says of his time on campus. “The College is completely unique in its whole atmosphere.”

As a result of this providential visit, Dr. Stuhr and his assistant scoutmaster, Hal Hayward, decided to join the ranks of the Thomas Aquinas College President’s Council. “I thought, ‘This is a place where I am going to give as much as I can,’” he recalls. As a member of the Council, Dr. Stuhr joins those whose yearly gifts of \$1,000 or more make possible the College’s robust program of financial aid. After seeing the campus and meeting students, he decided such a sacrifice was worth it — because, as he enthusiastically explains, Thomas Aquinas College offers “a real education.”

Dr. Stuhr is well equipped to make such judgments. After earning a B.S. in engineering from Yale University in 1960, he worked as a research assistant at the Federal Reserve Bank from 1968–1969 before finishing a Ph.D. in finance and economics at New York University in 1973. He taught at both Columbia and Rutgers before taking a position at Fordham University in 1977, where he taught for 34 years and served as associate vice president for academic affairs.

Amidst his many professional accomplishments, Dr. Stuhr made time for leadership in the Boy Scouts of America, starting in the early 1970s, when a friend asked him to volunteer. “I said, ‘Yeah, yeah, as soon as I finish my dissertation,’” he laughs. But when he completed his doctorate in 1973, that friend held him to his promise. “He was going on a cross-country trip to the National Jamboree in Idaho and needed another driver,” recalls Dr. Stuhr. “I ended up doing it and had a great time!”

Nearly four decades later, Dr. Stuhr’s service to the Scouts

Alumni in Tech

Graduates Demonstrate the Versatility of Catholic Liberal Education

When I graduated from high school, I wanted to go into a STEM field,” recalls Dr. Jonathan Doyle (’96). “I wasn’t interested in Thomas Aquinas College, but my parents talked me into visiting — and I came away thinking, ‘I want this!’”

Fortunately for Dr. Doyle, choosing to pursue a Catholic liberal education did not mean sacrificing his dream of rising to the heights of science and technology. After graduating from the College, he went on to earn a doctorate in engineering physics, then to hold senior positions at Intel and Meta, “working on self-driving cars, lasers, quantum mechanics, photonics, and integrated optics.”

Dr. Doyle is no outlier. Numerous TAC alumni have gone on to flourish in diverse technical fields, including programming, data analytics, digital animation, and cybersecurity. Their success is living proof of an observation which Michael Ortner, founder of the technology firm Captterra, once made while visiting students on the College’s California campus. “The beautiful thing about the liberal arts is they feed into a couple of huge skills that are greatly needed,” he said, “particularly in the tech world.”

The connection is, admittedly, not obvious. After a half century of diluting their liberal arts programs beyond recognition, many conventional universities have recently begun scrapping them altogether. The most-cited explanation for this demise is lack of interest: With soaring tuition rates and dwindling job prospects, college students increasingly believe that their education must be tied to a specific vocational skill set — and that the modern economy has little use for ethicists, philosophers, and theologians.

Yet the alumni of Thomas Aquinas College, who spend four years immersed in nothing but the great works of Western civilization, have succeeded in the full range of professional endeavors, technology chief among them. How can this be?

Poised to Persevere — or Pivot

Not long after graduating from the College in 1994, Josh Hidley applied for a job in computer programming, despite having no prior experience. “I thought that when I *didn’t* get the job, I could at least ask the company, ‘What would I need to do to get a job *like* it?’” he says. “But it was the ‘90s tech boom, when they were looking for anybody that could do anything.”

To his surprise, Mr. Hidley got the job — and soon realized that, thanks to his quick thinking and broad background, he *could* do just about anything. That unlikely first step opened the door to a long and productive career in programming, which Mr. Hidley continues to ply as a senior software engineer at CJ Affiliates in Santa Barbara.

For many alumni, one of the most notable fruits of the College’s liberal education is breadth of mind. Contemplating, for instance, systematic theology alongside Newtonian physics and the plays of William Shakespeare engenders a habit of thinking across many disciplines. This habit is universally helpful, whether for pursuing a life-long career goal or making a mid-career pivot.

Graduating 15 years after Mr. Hidley, Daina Andries (’09) earned a master’s in

French literature, imagining a future academic career. “Technology was the furthest thing from what I thought I would get paid to do,” she laughs. Eventually, however, she reconsidered.

“In pursuing that degree, I discovered that I didn’t love teaching as much as I thought I would,” she admits. “So, I decided to get a second master’s in information science at the University of Michigan, which was a highly interdisciplinary school.” That decision soon led her to become first a data analyst and then an entrepreneur. She is the co-founder of Epidaurus Health, a data-analytics company serving the healthcare sector, where her interdisciplinary background continues to prove indispensable.

Breadth of mind makes graduates adaptive to changing circum-



*Daina Andries (’09), co-founder of Epidaurus Health
Jane (Neumayr ’98) Nemcova, chief operating officer of Veuu Incorporated
Jonathan Doyle (’96), senior network engineer at Meta*

stances, which is an asset for those who walk an unexpected path. Nathan Haggard ('99) worked at Showtime in New York City soon after graduating from the College, then spent some time running his own entertainment business before he joined Apple in 2006, selling computers to Hollywood studios. Before retiring earlier this year at the age of 45, he shifted through many areas of technology from video-editing software, to IT servers, to mobile devices, to team management.

"Eventually I led the Mac Solutions Architect Team working with Fortune 1000 companies to support thousands of Mac devices," Mr. Haggard says. He credits the College for helping him successfully navigate these sometimes-dramatic transitions. "Seeing reality as it is, and not as we want it to be, is difficult for everyone, but at TAC we got a lot of practice," he says. "Engaging in classroom discussions with the greatest ideas in history across a broad range of disciplines made it feel natural to navigate the ever-changing world of technology."

Much like Mr. Haggard at Apple, Alexander Mason ('19) has repeatedly adapted to the fluid industry of Internet data centers. "On a screen, the Internet is virtual, but it has a massive physical footprint," he says. As a technician for CoreSite, which owns and operates datacenters across the U.S., Mr. Mason deals directly with that footprint, handling temperature control for these considerably heat-dense facilities and manually connecting disparate physical data sources with fiber-optics.

In his line of work, success depends not only on mastering several existing areas of competence but in integrating new areas at breakneck speed. His liberal education, Mr. Mason finds, offers him an advantage. "TAC gave me the ability to learn something that I have never encountered before, much faster than anyone else," he says. "When

you walk into class as a student, your primary objective is not to say something intelligent about the readings, but just to understand what the heck is going on! Four years of that makes for some great development once you get into an industry."

Educating Man as Man

Interdisciplinary thinking and mental flexibility render graduates highly employable, but that is not the purpose of Catholic liberal education. Indeed, in Thomas Aquinas College's seminal document, *A Proposal for the Fulfillment of Catholic Liberal Education*, the school's founders explicitly lamented that the American academy "has substituted vocational education for what was once an education for man simply as man." In establishing the College, they were resisting

the reduction of study to job training, hoping to restore the spirit of pursuing truth for its own sake. Breathing that spirit for four years shapes students profoundly, setting them apart from their technically trained peers in intangible ways.

Studying philosophy proved a boon for Jane (Neumayr '98) Nemcova, chief operating officer of Veuu Incorporated, who for six years served as the managing director of Artificial Intelligence at Lionbridge Technologies, working in the intersection of AI and linguistics to pioneer automated translation. Colleagues and clients alike observed the residual influence of her philosophical background, and they did not hesitate to acknowledge it. "They would say, 'It's really the most interesting thing about you, that you studied Descartes, Aristotle, and Kant.'"

As an adjunct professor of AI for graduate students in language at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies in Monterey, California, Mrs. Nemcova now convinces budding linguists that they, like her, have much to offer a bewilderingly technical field. "I spent time building a curriculum from scratch to help the students better understand AI and its impacts on the job market for them," she says. "Like students in the humanities and liberal arts, they feel

vulnerable in the present market. I wanted to give them a framework and a leg up, as they are actually high-potential contributors in the AI world."

The fruits of a liberal education are, of course, more than philosophical. The whole person is leavened through the earnest pursuit of truth — as even outsiders to the College have recognized. Nathan Dunlap ('12), animation director at Respawn Entertainment (a studio of industry giant Electronic Arts), considered studying anima-

tion in college, but a professional animation director cautioned him against that path. "He said, 'You don't want to be *just* an animator,'" Mr. Dunlap recalls.

On the far side of his time at the College and well into his career, Mr. Dunlap concurs with that advice. "If your life experience is too narrow, you won't have the breadth or the depth to do something new. It would be like writing a book about a subject that you have only read about, but never experienced for yourself."

The College's aim of educating man as man tends to leave alumni with a permanent attitude of wonder at the world, allowing many to look with speculative eyes even at the intricacies of their highly technical fields. Mr. Dunlap, for instance, remains fascinated by the College's unique approach to mathematics, which touches on the

technical side of his work in animation. "I was 'good at math' in high school because I could memorize things," he says. "But I'm much better now, because TAC focused on seeing *why* this or that formula came to be. I may not use that knowledge on a daily basis, but knowing it makes it easier to deal with esoteric ideas. I can easily do the research and understand that they come from something knowable."

Dr. Doyle — the senior network engineer at Meta whose testimony begins this article — worked for years as an optical physicist, pioneering lasers and other technologies for Intel. But despite contributing to engineering marvels, he remains far more impressed by the marvel of light itself. "Studying Maxwell, Hertz, Huygens, and Einstein alongside Aristotle awakened a lifelong desire to delve deeply into the nature of light, which still seems to me to lie at the root of all our understanding of natural science." This desire to make sense of the world is what drove him to Silicon Valley, and it sustains him in his work even now.

Kenneth May ('03), chief executive officer of Swift Chip, Inc., has lectured Fortune 500 companies and the United States military about cybersecurity and confronting hackers, but his fascination with the subject is inseparable from his background in classical philosophy. He brought those interests together in his 2020 book *The Art of Hacking: Ancient Wisdom for Cybersecurity Defense*. Consulting the ancients on this very modern problem, however, has raised numerous new and complex questions about both cybersecurity and philosophy. "It's almost a shame I wasn't about 10 years older when I attended the College," he says. "I feel like I'd be able to appreciate it more."

Shining a Light

The aim of Catholic liberal education, however, is ultimately to cultivate a love not merely for theoretical truth, but for the Truth Himself, Jesus Christ. If graduates leave with interdisciplinary competence and speculative zeal but do not glow with the love of God, they are "a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal" (1 Cor. 13:1). There are few places in greater need of an encounter with the love of God than the tech industry of the 21st century.

"Obviously Silicon Valley isn't a terribly Catholic place," says Mrs. Nemcova. "But, in another sense, it is. The people may not all be Catholic, but they are truth-seekers who are intellectually open to debate. If I bring a TAC mindset to discussion, many people who might be hostile on an individual level notice and think about what I say." This openness to truth prepares the mind and heart for the Gospel; as Our Lord said to the thoughtful scribe, "You are not far from the kingdom of God" (Mark 12:34). Without Mrs. Nemcova's presence, open minds in the tech industry might never get any closer.

Dr. Doyle has likewise observed the tech world's passion for truth. "It's inspiring that as you get toward the higher reaches of the industry, upholding a high ethical standard is unquestionably considered a good thing," he says. "That's something we as Catholics hold at our core. Our worldview fits nicely with the core of Silicon Valley's, even though outwardly and externally it can seem to be at odds in some respects."



"I was 'good at math' in high school because I could memorize things. But I'm much better now, because TAC focused on seeing why this or that formula came to be."

— Nathan Dunlap ('12)

For those who are concerned that developing technologies will only accelerate the post-Christian tendencies of contemporary culture, the witness of the College's alumni should come as a reassurance. At every level of the industry, there are men and women striving to remain faithful to the adventure of living the Gospel, even in the midst of their adventures in innovation. Mrs. Nemcova, Dr. Doyle, Mr. Dunlap, Mr. Haggard, Mr. Hidley, and Mr. May are all parents of many children; Dr. Doyle, Mr. Haggard, and Mr. Hidley have already sent daughters and sons to join the College's next generation of students. They are active in their parishes and communities in many forms both large and small, from helping with scouting groups to, in Mr. Hidley's case, "running one of the least essential but most appreciated parish ministries: doughnuts after Mass!"

Responsible Stewardship

In *A Proposal for the Fulfillment of Catholic Liberal Education*, the founders of Thomas Aquinas College observed that the rapid pace of technological advancements in the 1960s was not a historical accident. "Correlated with man's hope in technology is his despair in knowing the truth about reality," they wrote. But technology itself is not guilty by association with such skeptical despair. If the College's mission is to counter modern trends by restoring confidence in the rationality of faith and the competence of reason, a sign of its success is not hostility to technological advances, but a purified attitude toward them.

Above all, the tech world needs a sense of responsible stewardship for the common good and the light of faith — both of which TAC alumni are uniquely poised to deliver. "There are very intelligent people in Silicon Valley who are capable of doing good things and who do good things," says Mrs. Nemcova. "They are intellectual leaders who understand the world around them in a deep way."

The pursuit of such understanding is crucial for integrating the moral and spiritual dimensions of emerging technologies. As Captterra founder Michael Ortner told TAC students during a career talk a few years ago, "Understanding the nature of humanity is only going to help you in building products that better serve man."

Steeped in the sincere pursuit of truth, in imitation of the greatest minds in history and armed with breadth of mind and dialectical acumen, Thomas Aquinas College's alumni in the tech industry are essential partners in shaping tomorrow's world — and preparing it to reflect the light of Christ. ❖

Striving to Live Well

By JohnPaul Beckman ('23)

Port O'Connor, Texas



Ladies and gentlemen of the Board, thank you for giving me some of your time and letting me speak to you today. I am thrilled you are here, and I want to welcome you to the place I have been privileged to call my home these past four years, a privilege for which I could never be thankful enough.

Growing up in a family that prized classical education, Thomas Aquinas College was always on my radar. My older siblings came here, and I knew I wanted to attend even before I went on the High School Summer Program — and even more so after. I didn't know what I wanted specifically, just that something about TAC resonated in my soul. I was drawn to it, and I spent most of my senior year of high school dreaming about what my time here would be like.

One of my biggest takeaways from TAC is that true education is at the service of the good life. This sentiment is more adequately expressed in a saying of the College that is repeated every year at Commencement: namely, that the College does not give us wisdom, but rather, “the beginnings of wisdom.” I heard this when I was in high school, at my brother's TAC graduation, but then I only had a vague understanding of what it meant. However, the longer I have been here, the more I think I understand the saying. The way I understand it now is that the whole of the student's experience at TAC is ordered toward building a foundation for the good life, a virtuous life.

“The community treats the pursuit of wisdom with such reverence — it is infectious, and it makes me want to know more and never stop pursuing wisdom.”

Everyone wants to live well, but not many are willing to do what it takes to achieve a good life, and that was the state I was in before TAC. Over these last four years, I have found that there's an intangible push in this community toward bettering oneself. A communal desire arises that wants everyone to have the best spiritual life, the best intellectual life, and the best social life. My experience has been that it is very hard to find the right balance among these parts of life, but the College has given me the knowledge, discipline, and experience to form the foundations necessary to seek the good life.

I remember Freshman Year, struggling to find enough time to master my Euclid propositions because I always wanted to do every activity, sometimes at the expense of my studying time. But then I would experience a countervailing desire: to participate well in class and not mess up when called to demonstrate the props before my section! This tension soon helped me learn to balance how I spend my time. Already, I can see the effects of living a more balanced life — most notably when I'm at work, or when I go home for breaks — and I can order my days much better than I ever could in high school.

To finish, I would like to share some of my favorite, everyday experiences here, even if only to scratch the surface of the impact they have had on me:

First is the way Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel is at the heart of the academic quadrangle, always reminding me of the importance of prayer, no matter what else is going on, with Our Lady always watching over everything.

Second is the way that the community treats the pursuit of wisdom with such reverence. It is infectious, and it makes me want to know more and never stop pursuing wisdom.

Third is the delight in learning that we can discover truth in every class — by now a familiar but always exhilarating feeling — and the immediate humbling that follows upon realizing, also in every class, that there is so much more we do not know.

And fourth and finally is the way that this community begets some of the strongest friendships I have ever experienced: friendships forged in striving to live well, a task that would be nigh impossible without true friends.

All of these experiences are among the many ways that TAC has helped me build a foundation for the good life, which I will carry with me wherever I go, beginning with law or business school, which I plan to attend in the fall. These are the great gifts I have received here, the ability to order the different, important aspects of my life, and the discipline to pursue virtue.

TAC prepares us to live well, by loving God and seeking truth with true friends. ❖

Answering the Right Questions

By Clare Mangin ('23)

Dubois, Indiana



I had no idea that Thomas Aquinas College even existed two months before arriving as a freshman in August of 2019. I come from a seemingly insignificant farm town in Southwestern Indiana, with a population of 525. The things that matter most in my town are basketball, the harvest, and family, and it is there that I spent the first 18 years of my life.

I excelled in public high school, taking AP classes and playing three sports. I earned an academic scholarship to the University of Southern Indiana, where I would major in biology and chemistry, hoping to become a medical professional someday. My scholarship, I thought, was my way out of the small farm town — a ticket to bigger and better things. I left home, and I thrived, becoming one of the six students in my 2,000-member class to receive the Outstanding Sophomore Award.

“My worldview has completely shifted. A knowledge and love of God and man now acts as the lens with which I see the world.”

Nonetheless, something in my soul was telling me that this was not what I was to be doing. From the sixth grade on, the public school system had been asking me questions such as: “What do you want to do with your life?,” “How will you make a living?,” and “What is your career path?” Rarely was I called on to reflect upon questions such as, “Who are you, really?,” “What's your role in the human estate?,” and “What does it take to live the good life?” I realized that if I stayed on my current path, I would answer only the former of these questions and not the latter.

So, in my efforts to answer these questions, I embarked on a four-week summer class in Germany, culminating in a week in Rome. On the trip, I had the pleasure of meeting two TAC alumni, and the words “Thomas Aquinas College” first crossed my ears.

I was immediately intrigued. I spent almost every night of the trip just scrolling through the website, the curriculum, and everything this place had to offer, and I dreamt about attending one day. Yet I thought I couldn't sacrifice my scholarship and my laid-out path to become a medical professional. I grappled with the question of whether to go to TAC and cultivate my person for the sake of truth. I decided it couldn't hurt to apply.

I was accepted on August 9, and my financial aid application was approved on August 10. The Holy Spirit then prompted me to accept the generous offer the school had extended to me. I had three days to purchase a plane ticket, alert my parents of my change in direction, and pack my one suitcase to accompany me on my new adventure.

My first time on the California campus was Wednesday of Freshman Orientation. Almost immediately it became clear to me that I had made the right decision. I fell in love with the school from my first view of the Chapel, and my love has grown deeply over my four years here.

Students at Thomas Aquinas College are faced with the deepest questions about themselves, their creator, and the rest of creation. In Sophomore Year alone we evaluate the entire universe in St. Augustine's *City of God* and also the universe atomically in the Natural Science tutorial. And in all of this study, we are constantly faced with the questions: “Who am I in relation to all of this? Where do I fit?” The College has cultivated my sense of wonder, and I pray that this wonder will remain with me throughout my life, occupying a permanent place in my household.

All in all, even if TAC had nothing to offer other than my many thought-provoking conversations with friends, I would count it as the most worthwhile pursuit of my life. I have come to know where I stand, not only in the human estate, but also in the universe as a whole.

I will be getting married in June at the simple church I grew up in in Indiana and returning to my roots, all for the greater glory of God. Now the place I was eager to leave has become the home to which I long to return. My worldview has completely shifted. A knowledge and love of God and man now acts as the lens with which I see the world.

As I reflect upon my unique and providential path to this college, I am filled with thanksgiving to God, and also to you all, who by supporting the College, have made my time here the most worthwhile formation of my life. ❖

Faith in Action

News from TAC's Alumni Blog

Putting People Back Together: Dr. Thomas Duffy ('08)



“Getting people back on their feet has been an interest of mine since grade school,” says Dr. Thomas Duffy ('08). “Whenever there was a field trip in the woods, my mom always sent me with an anti-itching nettle spray and some band-aids. They were for me, but I ended up using them on friends. It was fun to say, ‘I can put you back together!’”

Some three decades later, Dr. Duffy continues to put people “back together,” albeit in a more particular way and with a different set of tools — as a dentist and the owner of Peninsula Family Dentistry in Gig Harbor, Washington.

When he was growing up some 50 miles northeast in Redmond, Dr. Duffy pursued a diverse set of hobbies that all involved precision and attention to detail, such as computer programming, playing the piano, and photography. Combined with his delight in caring for people, medicine always seemed like a plausible career choice. Yet rather than pursuing a pre-med major at a conventional school, he preferred to seek an undergraduate education that would give him a solid foundation steeped in his Catholic faith.

“My dad was keeping an eye on Catholic higher education and didn't have much love for any of the established Catholic

“Learning how to listen and take what people say, grow it, develop it, and present it back in a tactful way has been very important.”

institutions as they matured,” he recalls. So, father and son visited Thomas Aquinas College to see if it was any better — and “it was such a world apart!” says Dr. Duffy. “It was beautiful, the people were friendly, and the class discussions had an air of tranquility and rigor at the same time.”

During his years as a student on the California campus, Dr. Duffy kept an open mind about God's plans for his future. Then, while visiting his orthodontist one Christmas break, inspiration

struck. “My orthodontist asked me, ‘What are you planning to do when you finish school?’ I told him, ‘Maybe cardiology or surgery.’ Then he asked, ‘Have you looked at dentistry?’”

Intrigued by the suggestion, Dr. Duffy did his research and liked what he found. “Many people go into dentistry thinking it's just easy medical school, but once they get there, they realize that the manual work really requires some artistic vision to produce the sculptures that you need to be a successful dentist,” he explains.

Dr. Duffy graduated from the University of Washington School of Dentistry in 2014 and soon after joined a group of dentists in Shelton, Washington. Within his ever-developing field, he found himself calling on his analytical training from the College, particularly the habit of having constant recourse to first principles. “For instance, finding success in complex denture rehab depends entirely on the skills you developed setting traditional dentures. The principles remain the same.”



In the last three years, Dr. Duffy ventured beyond the security of an established practice to found his own business, a rare move for dentists these days. “We have grown to full-time at a bustling pace, with lots of new patients coming in,” he says. “I could see the hand of Providence guiding it.”

Contributing to that success were the communication skills refined by the Discussion Method at Thomas Aquinas College. “Learning how to listen and take what people say, grow it, develop it, and present it back in a tactful way has been very important,” he says, especially for developing strong relationships with his patients. In the midst of his professional success, Dr. Duffy credits the College with nourishing the spiritual life that guides him as a husband, a father of five, and a doctor.

“Recognizing our utter dependence on God's grace had its foundations at TAC,” he reflects. “I have been depending on it so much the last few years.” By God's grace, he still puts people back together. ❖

Back to Capitol Hill: Alumnus Attorney James Layne ('08)



As investigative counsel for the United States Senate Budget Committee, “making sure that the hard-earned money people entrust to the government is used as it's supposed to be,” James Layne ('08) is a truth-seeker. “Truth matters when you're pursuing philosophy,” he says, “but also in more practical arts such as politics.”

While in law school in 2012, he undertook a coveted summer clerkship for the late Sen. Tom Coburn of Oklahoma, giving him a taste for the rewards of government service. Thus, when the opportunity arose to return to the Senate in 2018, he did not hesitate to take it. He staffed for Arizona Sen. Jeff Flake, who sat on the Senate Judiciary Committee and was the leading Republican on the Subcommittee on Privacy, Technology, and the Law.

When Sen. Flake's term concluded in 2019, Mr. Layne continued in government service, clerking for Judge Chad Readler of the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. He then

Mikaela (Heal '21) Raum: Sharing Faith through Needlework



It is possible that Mikaela (Heal '21) Raum has the distinction of being the youngest TAC alumna to run a thriving business. “Tangle and Poke is a Catholic embroidery and home-making small business that I have owned now for four years,” she says. “It drew its name from the constantly tangled thread and poked fingers that make up the skill, and I have been astounded by what it's become!”

The enterprise began by way of an encounter with beauty at Thomas Aquinas College, experienced on the 2015 High School Summer Program. “The campus alone made me want to be worthy of living there,” she recalls. “That's really the special thing about beauty: It pierces you in a way that you probably cannot understand, and then lingers and refuses to be dismissed.”

Mrs. Raum found her way back to the California campus as

worked briefly in the private sector before returning to Capitol Hill in January.

His new role as investigative counsel is one of oversight. “Every federal agency has a budget from the money appropriated by Congress, which has a duty and a responsibility to

“Every federal agency has a budget from the money appropriated by Congress, which has a duty and a responsibility to look into how that money is being spent.”

look into how that money is being spent,” he explains. “My role is to make sure that there's no fraud, no major conflicts of interest or self-dealing. Oversight can include investigations of anyone from the President of the United States on down in the executive branch, or even about issues that arise in the federal judiciary.”

Capitol Hill, he says, could use more TAC graduates: “I would encourage any student at TAC to think about entering government service. We need people in the government who are committed to following the path to truth, wherever that path leads you.” ❖

“For the first time in my life, I was utterly pierced by the profound and yet somehow intangible power of beauty. The campus alone made me want to be worthy of living there.”

a freshman in the fall of 2017. “After an intense year of reading and studying Euclid, I really just wanted to spend time creating something with my hands,” she laughs. “I taught myself how to embroider after watching a handful of YouTube videos, and I spent those two months practicing this new hobby.” When friends began asking to purchase her handiwork, she decided to launch a business.

Since then, “It's expanded into hand-embroidered religious décor, journals, bags, and comprehensive embroidery,” she says. “I've fallen in love with the unique way in which embroidery can capture light, texture, precision, and motion. I also love how very therapeutic it is, perfectly lending itself to prayer and contemplation.” ❖

A Vocations Visit from Pater Edmund Waldstein, O. Cist. ('06)

While on the New England campus to offer the President's Day lecture, a prominent alumnus priest and scholar visited the men of St. Augustine Hall to recount how he discovered his Cistercian vocation — offering some practical discernment advice along the way.

While growing up in Austria, Pater Edmund Waldstein, O.Cist. ('06), befriended the monks of Stift Heiligenkreuz, a Cistercian abbey on the outskirts of Vienna, where the Divine Office has been prayed continually for almost 900 years. Later, as a student at Thomas Aquinas College, he found his heart increasingly drawn back to the ancient abbey on the other side of the world — but when he sought permission to join after his sophomore year, the abbot urged him to finish his degree first.

Pater Edmund is glad he heeded the abbot's advice. "TAC helped me to see what's most important in life, that the goal of life is the contemplation of God," he says. Better prepared for a contemplative vocation, he became a postulant three months after graduation, professed his final vows in 2009, and was ordained to the priesthood in 2011, earning his doctorate in theology from the University of Vienna soon thereafter.

"Our monastery has 21 parishes that it takes care of," he says. "I was a parish priest for three years, and while there were many things I enjoyed, I was very happy to go back to the monastery, back to a much more contemplative life." ❖



Architect Erik Bootsma ('01) Wins Urban Guild Award

Alumnus architect Erik Bootsma ('01) has received a 2022 Design Exploration Award from the Urban Guild — a group of professional architects animated by a love for the time-tested principles of design — for his work on St. Aubin Village in Detroit, Michigan.



The project, according to Mr. Bootsma, aims "to build a physical home for the parishioners of the St. Joseph Shrine, a parish managed by the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest." Many parishioners drive upward of an hour to attend Mass at the Shrine, which not only imposes a practical burden but also leaves parishioners with little continuity between their daily and sacramental lives.

Mr. Bootsma hopes St. Aubin Village will one day help to remedy the situation. "A mix of uses and incomes are planned so that a true Catholic community can be formed in the neighborhood of the church," he says. The church stands at the heart of the design, flanking the village green alongside the community market and extensive, inexpensive housing where families and friendships can flourish.

The goal, Mr. Bootsma told the Urban Guild, is nothing less than "transforming the existing commuter community of worshippers into a community every day of the week, not just on Sundays." ❖



Alumnae Collaborate as Reporter and Subject for TV Documentary

Mary Rose (Bacani '03) Valenti and Veronica Ferri ('06) were friends during their overlapping year at Thomas Aquinas College, but in the years since they have bonded over another common love: Madonna House in Combermere, Ontario, an apostolate dedicated to living the Gospel without compromise. Now, in a recent documentary, the two friends invite many more to share this life they love.

Madonna House is an intentional community founded in 1947 by Catherine Doherty, a Russian immigrant to Canada and a convert to the Catholic faith. Under the patronage of Mary, Our Lady of Combermere, Madonna House's full-time members are, says Miss Ferri, "lay men, lay women, and priests who take promises of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and share a common life" in imitation of Catherine Doherty's example.



"The 'rustic' living allowed us to strip ourselves of all that was unnecessary and carve out a space to find God in the simple duties and joys of the present moment."
— Mary Rose (Bacani '03) Valenti

After graduating from the College in 2003, Mrs. Valenti worked as producer and reporter for Salt + Light Media, where she met her future husband. Though she stepped back from Salt + Light in 2011 to care for her children, she still periodically lends her shoulder to the organization's proverbial plow.

It was during her early years at Salt + Light that Mrs. Valenti first encountered Madonna House, when a colleague suggested that she produce a brief documentary about the apostolate. "I was not drawn to Madonna House then, because I thought the members had too rustic and 'poor' a lifestyle," she admits. But in 2018, that rustic lifestyle began to acquire a new savor.

"I came across Cana Colony, a weeklong summer family retreat camp run by Madonna House," she observes, and the Valentis were grateful for the change of pace. "The 'rustic' living allowed us to strip ourselves of all that was unnecessary and carve out a space to find God in the simple duties and joys of the present moment," she says.

Mrs. Valenti was overjoyed when, last year, Salt + Light proposed developing a documentary to commemorate Madonna House's 75th anniversary. It was an opportunity to return to a

cherished spiritual oasis as well as to visit an old TAC friend: Miss Ferri, with whom Mrs. Valenti reconnected on her 2018 retreat, and who had found her own way into the arms of Our Lady of Combermere.

"Ever since my First Communion, I have had a knowledge that the Lord wanted me for Himself," she says. Firm in this knowledge through her time at the College, Miss Ferri began discerning religious life after graduation. "I began a three-year pilgrimage to discover my vocation," she recalls, yet even though she encountered many beautiful communities, none seemed quite like journey's end.

After her long and seemingly fruitless search, Miss Ferri thought that Madonna House would make a good place to discern where her circuitous pilgrimage was leading. "I decided to come for one month," she recalls. What followed was quite a surprise. "I found what I was looking for all along," she says. "This simple Nazareth life has profoundly shaped my whole being and given me the space to contemplate the truth from the heart of the Gospel."

Miss Ferri has since become a full-time member of the community, living Gospel simplicity in the company of friends. "We begin our day in common prayer with *Lauds*, and then work throughout the day in our assigned jobs in the farm, laundry, kitchen, sugarbush, woodpile, publications, handicrafts, etc.," she says. "One of our main services is hospitality, receiving guests from all over the world who live our life with us."

When shooting the documentary last November, Mrs. Valenti's interview agenda included a long sit-down with Miss Ferri. The resulting documentary, available through Salt + Light



"This simple Nazareth life has profoundly shaped my whole being and given me the space to contemplate the truth from the heart of the Gospel."
— Veronica Ferri ('06)

Media's website, is a testament to the spiritual vision of Catherine Doherty as embodied in Madonna House — as well as to the dynamic versatility of the education the College provides. While one alumna sits behind the camera running the production, another sits in front of it, detailing how she brought a mind and heart formed at the College to a life lived entirely for Christ. ❖

The Founding, Expansion, and Preservation of a Catholic College

Reflections from Members of the TAC Board of Governors

When members of the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors met on the California campus in February, New England Senior Tutor Dr. Glen Coughlin ('81) hosted a panel discussion to help his fellow governors "get a little deeper understanding of the mission of the College." To that end, Dr. Coughlin invited four Board members who played key roles in the College's history to share their experiences and insights. The following are excerpts from their comments.



Why Found a College?

by Peter L. DeLuca

Co-founder, third president

Thomas Aquinas College was founded during a tumultuous time in higher education. You had campus unrest tied to Vietnam War protests, the "Free Speech Movement" at Berkeley, and a great many developments of that sort. That turmoil exposed and accelerated the domination of the American universities by skeptical philosophy and Marxist ideology, which are related.

The concern that we, the founders of the College, had at the time was that Catholic colleges were following suit. They were abandoning the tradition of Catholic liberal education. They were abandoning it suddenly, and in droves, because they felt that they had to imitate the secular universities.

Although matters came to a head in the 1960s, these developments flow from a long history. Most Americans are surprised to find out that colleges did not have an elective class system until the middle 1800s. Until then, the Ivy League colleges all had a program very similar to what we do here, and it included the basic disciplines, mostly done from original texts, often in Greek and Latin.

Colleges brought in the elective system, however, because their presidents embraced the tenets of modern skeptical philosophy; they bought into the notion that you can't know anything. That led to the view that students ought to study whatever they want, as nothing is particularly better than anything else, since none of it is really founded on truth — indeed, there is no truth. So, the elective system itself is a product of the triumph of skeptical philosophy in the modern university. People are always surprised when they find out that we don't have majors at Thomas Aquinas College, but that's why.

"In a way, the College was kind of a demonstration project as it was originally conceived."

Concomitantly, that was when Catholic colleges were diminishing their Catholicity. In 1967 the presidents of most American Catholic colleges met for a retreat in Land O'Lakes, Wisconsin, where they came up with what's known as the Land O'Lakes Statement, which amounted to a declaration of independence from the Church. Essentially, they were ashamed of their commitment to Catholic doctrine, so they abandoned it, wanting to be like secular universities.

These are the trends that motivated the founding of the College. We couldn't do anything about the whole enterprise of Catholic higher education, but we thought we could create a



single instance of where the very best kind of Catholic liberal education takes place, so people could see that it was a superior form of education. So, the College was kind of a demonstration project as it was originally conceived.

As we tried to get the program started, we soon concluded that we couldn't do it within an existing institution. That was what led us to the idea of founding a new college. At some point, someone said to our founding president, Ron McArthur, "Why don't you start your own college?" And he said, "But you can't start a college!"

Of course, he was right! We couldn't start a college, only Divine Providence could supply the kind of capital that that required.

Impressions of an Early Student

by Andrew Zepeda ('79)

Founder of the Los Angeles-based law firm of Lurie, Zepeda, Schmalz, Hogan & Martin

When I was 18 years old and first came to Thomas Aquinas College in the fall of 1975, two things immediately began to impress themselves on me: One, the College's education is about truth and gaining access to the truth — and ultimately gaining some wisdom. Second was the commitment to seeing that faith was respected with reason, with theology being the queen of the sciences.

So let me back up. How do you implement that? How do you make that happen, to go from truth and the access to the truth?

Well, one of the ways was the study of logic, one of the liberal arts. How do you come to know something, or know it is necessarily so, as opposed to holding it merely as a matter of opinion? To really analyze that and work through Aristotle's logic was wonderful, but we also got to put it into practice, day by day, in a couple of other classes. In Freshman Mathematics, we studied Euclid, the great Greek geometer who assembled all the mathematical understanding of that time, working from fundamental premises to build — slowly, logically, and beautifully — to conclusions that are beyond your imagination.

For example, Euclid does what is a very primitive calculus proof that the volume of a cylinder is three times that of the volume of the cone on the same base. That is not something you can imagine. You cannot even really wrap your head around it. But he proves it; it cannot be otherwise. That is, in fact, the case, and learning to hold



things like that in your mind is a beautiful thing.

Then we move on to theology and philosophy. We wrestled with the Scriptures for the whole Freshman Year. Scripture is difficult. We got to some understanding of it, and got a little better feel for it, and we came to realize that this is a lifetime process. But in Sophomore Year we got to read the Fathers of the Church, such as St. John Damascene, St. Athanasius, and St. Augustine. It was an eye-opener, I think, for all of us, that here were men of the highest intellect committing themselves to studying the Faith, expressing themselves more eloquently than anyone can today. It was more than just an intellectual experience. It was very moving and caused us to really think through our lives as Christians.

The whole experience was like that. We got introduced to St. Thomas in the Junior and Senior Years, into some of the highest and deepest thinking about the principles of our faith. We were surprised at the community that developed, how intensely unified it was, and how committed we were to showing each other charity and respect. It was an experience that would be hard to find anywhere else. The real capper for me, though, was being exposed to the Church's liturgical tradition, to Gregorian chant and the beautiful treasures of our liturgy. It was an introduction to beauty and to heaven.

Staying on Mission

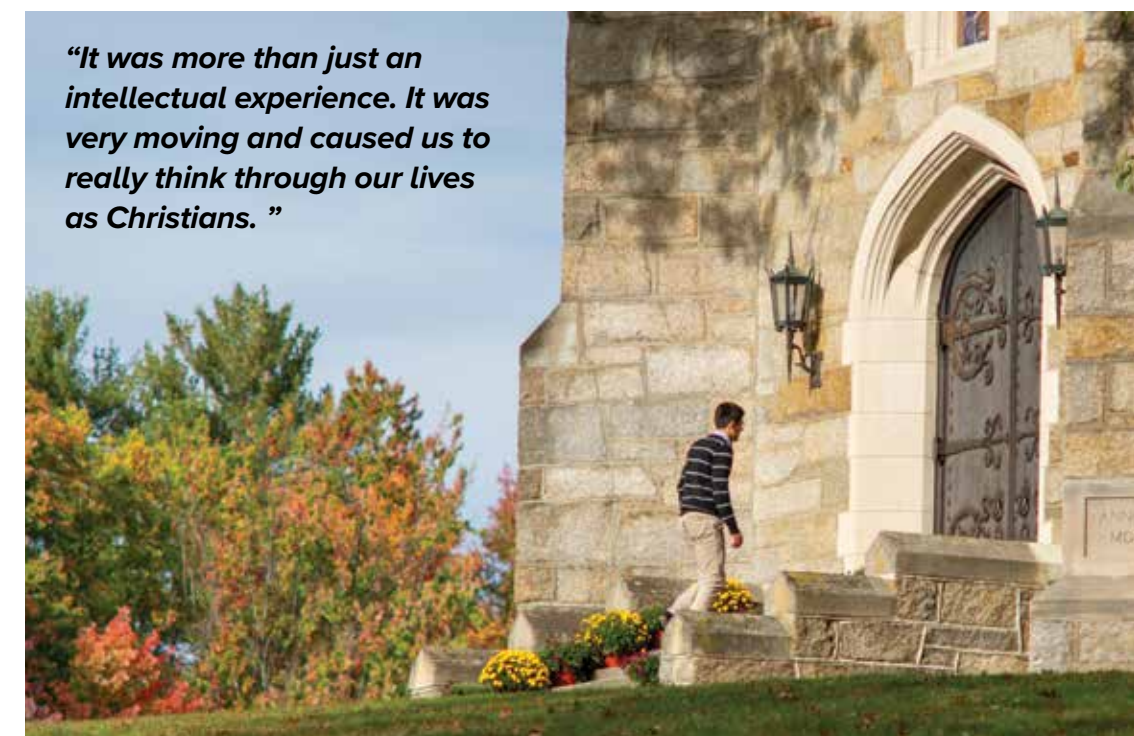
by Dr. Brian Kelly ('88)

Senior tutor, former dean of the California campus

I arrived as a student in 1983, when the College was only 12 years old, and it was in a somewhat tenuous state. We slept and attended classes in temporary buildings constructed by attaching trailers side by side. There were occasional rumors of lawsuits and money crises, and the College had little in



"It was more than just an intellectual experience. It was very moving and caused us to really think through our lives as Christians."



the way of national or international recognition. From my perspective as a student, though, the institution felt permanent and steady.

Thinking about my student experience, I guess it was because the College had such a clear sense of self-identity and unity. The tutors knew what they were trying to achieve in us, and they brought a positive and confident spirit to the daily tasks that made our formation in perennial wisdom possible. We saw this in their delight in teaching and learning. We heard it in the frequent talks from the president, Ron McArthur. Since that time, I have to say, I still get the sense of institutional permanence and steadiness.

Through the years, I have become more firmly convinced that the clarity with which we grasp and articulate our mission lies at the heart of our perseverance. Human endeavors are difficult to maintain. It's very easy to drift little by little, and the founders cared very deeply about staying on mission. You cannot stay true to a real goal if you slip into complacency. How is it that this tiny endeavor has lasted this long with little or no mission drift?

“It’s very easy to drift little by little, and the founders cared very deeply about staying on mission. You cannot stay true to a real goal if you slip into complacency.”

There are many moments where we could have easily drifted, in big ways and in small ways, and there were many factors that contributed to staying the course. I will focus my remarks on one key factor that, in my opinion, has been crucial — the drafting of the College’s founding and governing document.

They say that “well-begun is half-done,” and the founders decided, right from the start, that in order to provide a solid foundation for their bold new effort, they would have to be very clear about the big picture. The wise man builds his house on rock and not sand. They carefully and deliberately articulated their vision in *A Proposal for the Fulfillment of Catholic Liberal Education*, commonly called the Blue Book (thomasaquinas.edu/bluebook). This “book” is very small in stature but great in effect.

Where would we be without a clear statement of where we stand? How would we have stayed on course through the internal and external storm winds that have frequently blown? How would we have resisted pressures to shift emphasis, or to “be more open,” or to line up with the latest priorities of this or that accrediting agency? It’s a little like asking where America would be without the Declaration or the Constitution. Think about how much worse our country’s situation would be today if we weren’t able to appeal to our nation’s founding documents.

It has helped us to be transparent about who we are and what we are trying to accomplish. Transparency is best. Strength comes with clarity. May God bless the founders and all who have helped Thomas Aquinas College thrive.

Founding a Second Campus

by Dr. Thomas Kaiser (’75)
Senior tutor, first dean of the
New England campus



Our primary goal in founding the New England campus was to make this education available to more students. At the time, we were at the point when we had students who were eligible and qualified to be in this program, but we didn’t have room for them. So, when the opportunity presented itself to start another campus on the other side of the country, we decided to go for it. I think it has been a very successful project.

Founding that new campus was in a way much easier than the initial founding of the College. For one reason, our program had been worked on and fine-tuned for almost 50 years, so we knew exactly what they would be doing, as far as teaching is concerned. When the College was first founded in 1971, there was kind of an outline of what the program would be, but the details were being worked out from year to year as the first class was working its way through the program. In New England, the program was already set.

The other advantage was having faculty members who had already been teaching in this program. In that first year, there were seven tutors, and we had a total of 78 years teaching experience in the program. So that’s a tremendous benefit, to be able to start with people who already know the program from the inside and just hit the ground running.

We were also blessed with the commitment of the students who decided to help found that new program. They had a pioneer spirit; they wanted to come help set the tone in terms of the customs and their devotion to the program. It went so well the first year that we were wondering if we had left any great students in California! It really got us off to a good start.

Finally, we had the opportunity to form a wonderfully tight-knit community. Given the nature of the campus, with plenty of houses and apartments, we have the faculty living right on campus with the students. This arrangement worked especially well during Covid because we could consider the whole community an extended household, so we were able to avoid the Covid lockdowns.

One measure of the success of the new campus is the fact that, in the first few years, our attrition rate was very low. Given the small size and the closeness of the community, students didn’t fall through the cracks. We were able to help people who really needed the help. Things have gone well. Another sign of success is the fact that we are attracting new students and faculty. As dean I would get inquiries from prospective tutors about once a week. People are fed up with what is going on at other institutions and are eager to come teach at a place like Thomas Aquinas College. Thirdly, we are attracting new benefactors because of the founding of that new campus.

These are all measures of success of what we have done, and they bode well for our future on both coasts. ❖



High School Great Books Program AT THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE

New England: July 9–22

California: July 16–29

Ask the big questions and explore the answers, forging new friendships to last a lifetime



THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE

thomasaquinas.edu/summerprogram



Irene Grimm

1929 – 2022

A little less than two months after celebrating her 93rd birthday, Irene Grimm — the beloved mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother of 86 Thomas Aquinas College students and alumni — passed away peacefully on December, 22, 2022, at her home in Pasadena, California.

Irene Pilon was born, alongside her twin brother, William, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. When she was six, her family relocated to the Los Angeles area, where she would remain for the rest of her life.

The young Irene met the dashing William Grimm of North Hollywood at a 1944 beach party in Santa Monica thrown by a mutual friend named Myrtle. As son Ernie ('94) later wrote in a 2005 retrospective, Bill was “stunned by Myrtle’s pretty young friend from Inglewood.” Both reported falling in love that day. Three years later, on July 4, 1947, they were married.

Over the ensuing years, the couple raised



no fewer than 17 children, to whom they modeled Christian parenthood. Ernie recalls that he “never heard Mom complain about her annual pregnancy or the crowded living conditions. I believe she never felt she had anything to complain about. She had a hus-

band who provided for and loved her, and she had her faith, and she had her mind.”

Ernie marvels that his mother kept a household of 17 children not only with apparent ease, but with undeniable grace. “Most mornings, she would come into the room I shared with three brothers before 8:00 and sing ‘Good Morning to You.’ ... I remember watching Mom cook up pancakes 20 at a time on two big griddles. She could broil three London broils; bake two dozen potatoes; steam a pound of green beans; prepare a green salad with sliced tomatoes, radish, and green onions; and have it all finished cooking and set on the table at the same time. ... She pushed through six loads of laundry per day while cleaning a 6,500-square-foot house.” But he adds that “through it all, she maintained complete self-possession, as well as cheerfulness and prayerfulness.”

Mrs. Grimm’s uncanny devotion as a wife and mother was born above all from her abiding Catholic faith. Raised in that faith, she and Mr. Grimm were determined to raise devoted Catholics of their own — which they knew would require quality Catholic schooling. Given the bleak prospects for serious Catholic higher education at the time, when Thomas Aquinas College was founded in 1971 — less than 100 miles away from their family home in Pasadena — Mr. and Mrs. Grimm regarded it as a palpable act of Providence.

The Grimms became some of the first parents to entrust the College with their children, with daughter Paula (Kaiser '75) and son Stephen ('75) in the first class, followed by 12 more over the years. In addition to those 14 alumni among her children, Mrs. Grimm eventually became the grandmother of 58 alumni and 10 current students, and the great-grandmother of 4 current students.



She had a heart, however, for even more than her own children. For decades, she and Mr. Grimm opened their home to their children’s many, many friends — and even transformed it into a magical wedding venue when some of those friends became spouses. Her generosity, warmth, and wisdom are legendary within the broader TAC community that she helped bring into existence.

“It’s hard to imagine what Thomas Aquinas College would be without Irene and Bill Grimm — or, for that matter, what the Grimm family would look like today without the College, so inextricably have the two been connected these last 50 years.”

“It’s hard to imagine what Thomas Aquinas College would be without Irene and Bill Grimm — or, for that matter, what the Grimm family would look like today without the College, so inextricably have the two been connected these last 50 years,” says President Paul J. O’Reilly ('84). “We thank God for Irene’s life, for the beautiful family she mothered, and for the enduring mark she has left on this community. Please join us in praying for the repose of her soul, as well as for the consolation of all the Grimms.” ❖

The TAC Legacy of Irene and Bill Grimm

Parents of:

- Paula (Kaiser '75), Stephen ('75), Danny ('76), Marya (Krestyn '76), Jess ('77), Patti (Kaiser '79), Anita (Zepeda '79), Michele (Loughman '81), Angela (Lessard '85), Serena (Mohun '87), Margaret (Blackwell, parent and donor), James ('89), Ernie ('94), Leon ('95), and Peter ('96) Grimm

Grandparents of:

- Tommy ('00), Theresa (Faulk '00), Sarah ('02), Maria (Kuebler '03), Nicholas ('06), David ('09), Charlie ('10), Annie (Kuebler '11), Damian ('12), Rebecca (White '15), and Joanna ('15) Kaiser
- Elizabeth (Forrester '98) Grimm
- Wendy-Irene (Zepeda '99), Bill ('02), Thérèse (Obagi '04), Daniel ('06),

- Rosie ('10), Augusta (Thompson '12), and Jack ('15) Grimm
- George ('03), Anna ('04), Maria (Foster '09), Francesca (Huntley '13), and Elizabeth (Coffey '17) Krestyn
- Genevieve ('05), Michael ('06), Paula ('08), Matthew ('10), and Adrienne (LaFave '14) Grimm
- William ('03) and John ('07) Kaiser
- Lucy (Chirdon '03), Joe ('04), Henry ('06), Edmund ('08), Stephen ('09), Ramona (Cross '11), Martin ('13), Leon ('14), Elena (Schmitt '18), Sylvia (Sanchez '20), Renata (DeBates '21) and Luke ('25) Zepeda
- Thomas Loughman ('18)
- Mariclare (Forsyth '14), Madeleine ('16), Serena (Plaisted '18), Michaela ('23), Paul ('24), and

- Sasha ('26) Lessard
- Robert ('09), Margaret ('10), Catherine ('13), George ('14), Hugh ('19), Edward ('20), and Fiona ('23) Mohun
- Seamus ('15) and Declan Blackwell ('25)
- Jane (Donnelly '13), Arthur ('16), and Marisa ('25) Grimm
- David Grimm ('26)
- Marya Grimm ('26)
- Kayla (Murphy '20), Brigit ('21), Ernie ('24), James ('25) Grimm

Great-grandparents of:

- Georgiana ('24), and Alexander ('25) Forrester
- Peter Kuebler ('26)
- Rose Grimm ('26)



Prepare for Your Future — and Support TAC — with a Charitable Gift Annuity!

If you have been considering a Charitable Gift Annuity, now is the time to act. New federal legislation allows those 70+ years old to use \$50,000 from their IRA for that purpose — with no taxes on the distribution and payouts at their highest rate in more than a decade.

Please call Paul Blewett, director of gift planning, for more information about this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

805-421-5924 | pblewett@thomasaquinas.edu



The St. Thérèse of Lisieux Legacy Society

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. John Benedict Doyle, Jr.
May 5, 2022
Benefactor

Anna-May Regan
June 7, 2022
Benefactor

Tom Gorman
November 22, 2022
Benefactor

Malinda McCafferty
December 2, 2022
Mother of Sadie ('15)

Patricia and Eugene West
December 4, 2022
March 26, 2023
Grandparents of Daniel ('13), Gabriel ('14), and Samuel Bagdazian ('20)

Rev. Mr. Robert Ellis
December 12, 2022
Father of Tom ('98) and Mother Madeleine Marie of St. Joseph (Mary Kay '99); grandfather of Andrew ('22)

The Hon. Frank Shakespeare
December 14, 2022
Commencement Speaker, 1988

Nancy Brown
December 21, 2022
Mother of Tutor Steve Cain; grandmother of Margaret Mary (Richard '13), Sophia (Ford '16), Thomas ('18), and Peter ('23)

George Esseff, Sr.
December 23, 2022
President's Council member

Kay McKenna Paietta
December 28, 2022
Mother of late Tutor Michael ('83)

Linda Lenzen
January 2, 2023
Mother of Paul Lenzen ('86) and Agatha (Poteat '90)



Ronda Deibele
January 5, 2023
Mother of Aaron ('19)

Richard Pfundstein
January 6, 2023
Father of Greg ('05)

His Eminence George Cardinal Pell
January 10, 2023
Commencement Speaker, 2008

George Neumayr
January 19, 2023
Son of TAC Founder John; brother of Mary ('86), Jane (Nemcova '98), and Anne (Braden '05)

Christine Adaline Gauchier
January 23, 2023
Sister of Denise ('00)

William Jess Grimm ('77)
February 2, 2023
Father of Genevieve ('05), Mike ('06), Matthew ('10), and Adrienne (LaFave '14)

Barbara Martin
February 5, 2023
President's Council member

Robert Wood
February 10, 2023
Father of Greg, counselor on the California campus; grandfather of Deirdre (Becher '09), Elizabeth (Dequine '11), Br. Sean Paul, C.F.R. ('13), and Patrick ('14)

Mary Margaret Dillon
February 20, 2023
Mother of Jim ('18) and Faustina ('19)

Joyce Skinner
February 15, 2023
Legacy Society member

William Michael Short
February 23, 2023
Father of Cathy (McCarthy '77), Rev. Peter ('78), William ('80), Michael ('87), Margaret (Schmitt '90), Mary (Grimm '94), and Nancy (Grimm '97). Grandfather of Brigid (Strader '04), Therese (Monnereau '05), Erin (Feeney '07), John ('11), Aileen (Steigerwald '14), and Liam McCarthy ('18); Thomas ('06), William ('09), Mary Rose ('11), Sr. Gianna, SOLT (Joan '15), Mark ('18), Catherine ('19), Margaret ('22), and Greg Short ('25); Madeline (Grimm '15), Benedict ('17), Emma (Emrich '20) Schmitt; and David ('26) and Marya Grimm ('26)

Stephanie Sandoval
March 9, 2023
Former receptionist on the California campus


Donna Florence Conn
March 16, 2023
Wife of late TAC Governor Walter

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.*

UPCOMING EVENTS

 **2nd Annual Commencement**..... May 13

 **49th Annual Commencement**..... May 20

 **Thomistic Summer Conference**..... June 15-18
"The Soul in the Philosophy and Theology of St. Thomas"
thomasaquinas.edu/tsc

 **West Coast Alumni Dinner & Reunions** June 24

 **Summer Great Books Program for High School Students** July 9-22

 **Summer Great Books Program for High School Students** July 16-29

 **Convocation**..... August 19

 **Convocation**..... August 21

More events: thomasaquinas.edu/events

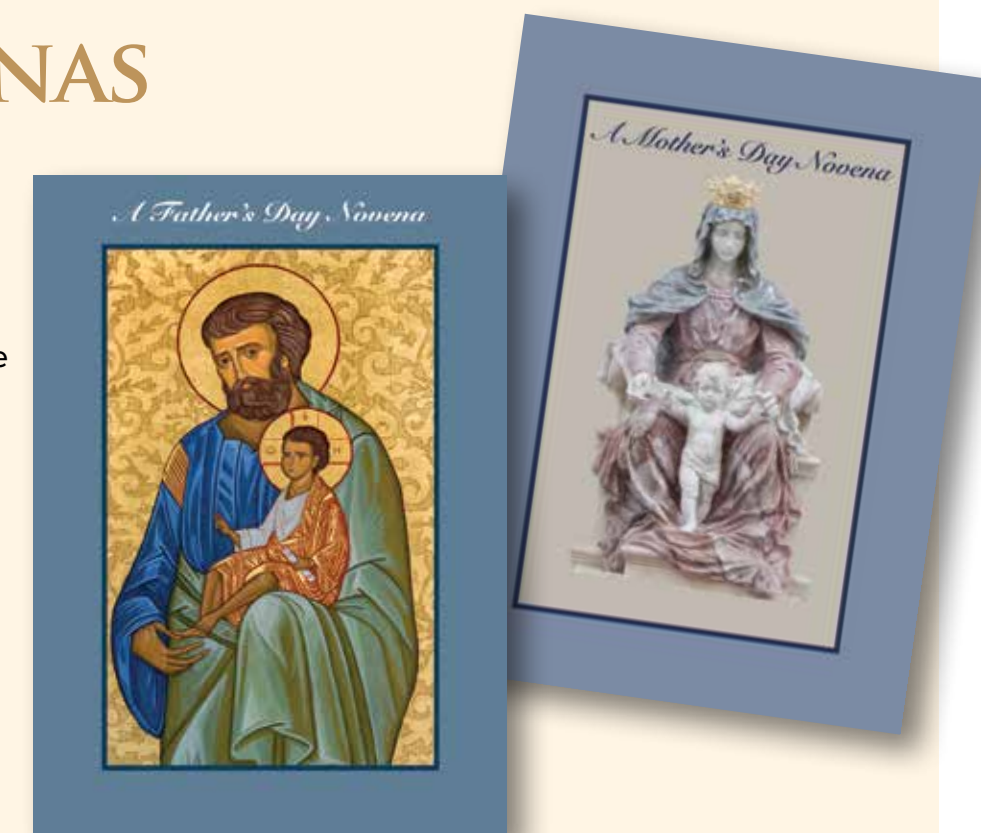
Campus Mass schedules: thomasaquinas.edu/masstimes

THIS SPRING
Honor Thy Father & Mother
WITH NOVENAS OF MASSES

Beginning on Mother's Day (May 14) and Father's Day (June 18), the chaplains of Thomas Aquinas College will offer novenas of Masses for mothers and fathers, respectively. Each parent included in the novenas will receive a beautiful, personalized card from the College.

Cost: \$5 per card for shipping and handling. Mother's Day names must be received by May 12; Father's Day by June 16.

thomasaquinas.edu/novenas



STUDENT LIFE



1. Students mingle at February's Cecilian Corner, a "black-tie speed-dating" event. **2.** Seniors take a break from Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* for a Russian tea party. **3.** Current and prospective students enjoy the Ventura Beach ... **4.** ... and tour the campus at the March Open House. **5.** Chaplain Rev. Jorge Lopez and fellow Argentina fans celebrate his native country's victory in the World Cup. **6.** Students show off their TAC class t-shirts. **7.** Friends gather at a party following this spring's All-College Seminar, at which they discussed the first nine chapters of St. Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Contra Gentiles*.



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1. Campus musicians share their talents at the midterm Open-Mic Night. **2.** The faithful receive ashes at an Ash Wednesday Mass in Our Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel. **3.** Gould Commons hosts a party in appreciation of student kitchen workers. **4.** Students make gingerbread houses at the campus Christmas party. **5.** The College hosts a fiesta-themed dance at February's Open House. **6.** Students, joined by faculty children, cheer on their team at the annual St. Thomas Day game of Trivial & Quadrivial Pursuits. **7.** Art lovers enjoy a day trip to New York City's Met Cloisters museum over Presidents' Day Weekend.



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