

THE WORD

Winter 2026

NEW MAPS OF HOPE

Announcing CHARISM,
an innovative alliance
of Catholic universities



THE TRADITION GLOWS ON

UIW'S 39TH ANNUAL
Light the Way
UNIVERSITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD
Holiday Festival

On Saturday, Nov. 22, the University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) hosted its 39th annual Light the Way Holiday Festival, presented by H-E-B, and sponsored by KSAT 12, Spectrum Reach and Perry Homes. The event welcomed thousands of guests to the Broadway campus for a day filled with festive fun as UIW ushered in the Christmas season.

Follow QR code
to see more about
Light The Way. ▶



THE
WORD

Winter 2026

A publication of the Office of
Communications & Brand Marketing

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THE INCARNATE WORD**
SAN ANTONIO



UIWtv Students in Action

Did you know?

UIWtv is a multiple Lone Star EMMY® Student Production Award recipient. The award-winning student-run station is dedicated to providing the University of the Incarnate Word community with quality programming that informs and entertains, while promoting the core values and Mission of the University.

Follow this QR code for more information.



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Do you know someone interested in attending UIW? For more information on what UIW has to offer or to schedule a campus visit, go to uiw.edu/admissions



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FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Alumni and Friends,

I come to you in every edition of the Word Magazine through my opening letter of welcome, but I rarely greet you from the cover! In what I humbly consider a “collector’s issue cover” (if only to my family), I am joined by my dear colleagues Dr. Glenna G. Temple, president of Dominican University, Dr. Susan R. Burns, president of the University of Mount Saint Vincent, and Dr. Gilberto J. Marxuach Torrós, president of Universidad del Sagrado Corazón. In the photo, we have just come from the Joeris Ballroom on the UIW Broadway campus, the site of our shared announcement of CHARISM, an unprecedented alliance of four Catholic universities working together to provide new and exciting opportunities for students and faculty through intentional collaboration.

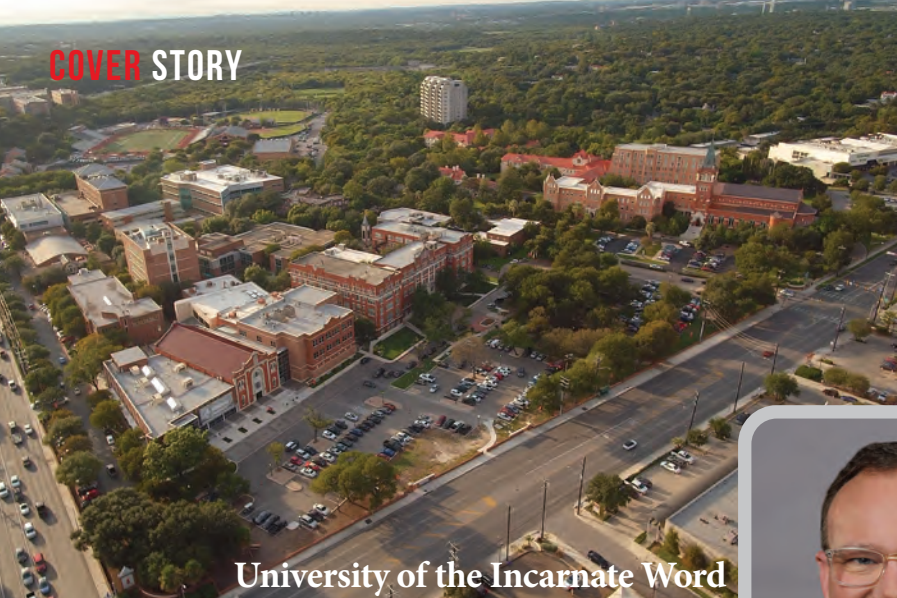
There is so much positive potential in the CHARISM initiative, but one of the aspects of this alliance that I am particularly inspired by is its serendipitous alignment with Pope Leo XIV’s first apostolic letter on Catholic education (p. 4). Our Holy Father calls Catholic institutions to form educational constellations in which each institution is a star that shines brightly on its own but that together with other aligned stars is even more luminous.

As a light in Catholic education, our UIW community is incredibly radiant. That is thanks to the works, contributions and spirit of every member. Throughout this edition, we celebrate many who share their sparks with others. Alumni Asia Ciaravino and Miguel Ochoa delight and inspire as leaders of the San Pedro Playhouse (p. 8). Stephanie and Dr. Christopher Alvarado have hearts for our Mission and for the “Pharmily” at the Feik School of Pharmacy. Together they have established scholarships that will make more possible for the next generation of pharmacists (p. 14). In addition, we share the wins and life milestones of our dear alumni.

This new year has so much in store for our university and everyone who makes up our brilliant community. I wish you a happy and successful 2026.

Praised be the Incarnate Word!

Thomas M. Evans, PhD
President



University of the Incarnate Word

Thomas M. Evans, PhD
President



NEW MAPS of HOPE

Announcing CHARISM,
an innovative alliance of
Catholic universities

By Eva Fernández, PhD, Erlinda López-Rodríguez, DrPH
and Marissa Rodriguez

Gilberto J. Marxuach Torrós, JD
President

Universidad del Sagrado Corazón



A Challenging Course Makes Way for Strategic Navigation Rooted in Mission and Service

Unsteady enrollments, escalating costs and public concern about the value of college degrees are just a few of the challenges facing higher education. Mission-minded colleges and universities are compelled to consider how to respond to our calling in new and innovative ways: How can we help more students complete degrees, preparing them to enter empowering careers that lift their lives, their families and their communities?

An impactful strategy for navigating these challenges is to set up collaborations like CHARISM, collaborations that leverage the distinctiveness and academic strengths

In a time of profound change for higher education, the University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) is leading a transformational movement that reimagines how to educate and inspire students. The **Catholic Higher Education Alliance of Rising Institutions in Service and Mission — CHARISM** — brings together four mission-aligned institutions: UIW, Dominican University, Universidad del Sagrado Corazón and University of Mount Saint Vincent. By connecting across languages, cultures and geographies, we jointly aspire to expand opportunities for students, amplify Catholic identity and model collaboration.



of our member institutions, particularly our compatible missions and shared focus on service grounded in Catholic Social Teaching. Our joint work will allow us to deliver innovative, affordable and mission-aligned education for students, as well as afford us opportunities for cost savings and new revenue generation. CHARISM builds on UIW's already significant geographic footprint, which includes campuses in the United States, Mexico and France, by adding three significant urban centers in the continental United States and Puerto Rico: Dominican in Chicago, Mount Saint Vincent in New York City and Sagrado in San Juan.

Among our member institutions the parallels are many. All were founded by women religious, are Hispanic-Serving Institutions and are located in major urban centers. Add to this a shared commitment to service learning, to promoting social justice and to providing a holistic student-centered and community-engaged education.

In his recent Apostolic Letter, his Holiness Pope Leo XIV writes that "Catholic education can be a beacon: not a nostalgic refuge, but a laboratory of discernment, pedagogical innovation and prophetic witness. Drawing new maps of hope: this is the urgency of the mandate."

In that spirit, CHARISM charts new courses for academic exploration, discovery and growth.



University of Mount Saint Vincent

Susan R. Burns, PhD
President



CHARISM universities are collaborating to create new academic and co-curricular experiences. Students will benefit from cross-registered courses, joint academic programs and opportunities to study abroad or study away.

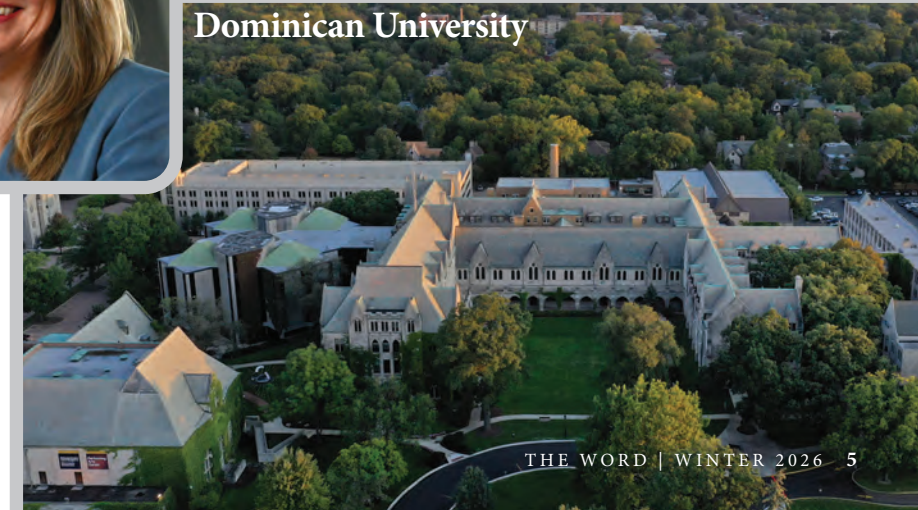
The programs and experiences will be offered in both English and Spanish, online or in person. CHARISM collaborations will stimulate academic innovation, expand access and affordability and foster faculty collaboration, within and between disciplines. Shared services and resources, joint programming and professional development opportunities will benefit faculty, staff and students.

"I like to think that we will serve as a model for greater collaboration," shared UIW President Thomas M. Evans, PhD. "While each of our institutions has numerous distinct opportunities for our students in working together, we're finding dynamic intersections where our academic work can meet ... I'm truly proud to embark on this new journey with my colleagues here today, with all those whose efforts helped bring this new alliance to life, and the many more whom it will serve."

continued on next page

Glena G. Temple, PhD
President

Dominican University





Paving Paths for the Future

All four CHARISM founding members have strengths in preparing students for healthcare careers, which are in high demand throughout the nation but especially in our regions. Collaborative work underway focuses on creating targeted pathways and high-impact experiences:

- A redesigned didactic course in Nursing will feature a two-week bilingual immersion in Puerto Rico, Guatemala or

the U.S.-Mexico border, blending clinical formation with mission-driven services.

- Undergraduates preparing for Physician Assistant graduate programs will access specialized online content, readiness coaching and a summer immersion at Dominican or Mount Saint Vincent.
- UIW's Occupational Therapy program is exploring setting up a satellite location at Dominican. The program would feature an innovative model pairing bilingual curriculum alignment with faith-informed clinical experiences.



The collaborations made possible through this new alliance extend far beyond the health professions. Currently, CHARISM leaders, including presidents, provosts, academic leaders and faculty, are exploring additional connections among Business disciplines. There is also ongoing work to develop a collective

online footprint, which will feature courses and programs in English and in Spanish. Behind the scenes, Registrars are building the infrastructure needed to make collaboration seamless.

Wayfinding Together

Our students undergo journeys of discovery across the many parts that make up the dynamic UIW system and throughout our partner institutions. As we look to the future, CHARISM will help us continue to venture ahead, paving new paths of opportunity and formation for students to traverse, knowing that every step will lead them closer to becoming the people that God has called them to be.

Launching CHARISM

On Monday, Dec. 8, UIW welcomed presidents and dignitaries from the alliance universities to the Broadway campus. UIW President Thomas M. Evans, PhD was joined by Dominican University President Glenna G. Temple, PhD, President of the University of Mount Saint Vincent Susan R. Burns, PhD and President of Universidad del Sagrado Corazón Gilberto J. Marxuach Torrós, JD, to sign the CHARISM charter.

“
While each of our institutions has numerous distinct opportunities for our students in working together, we're finding dynamic intersections where our academic work can meet.
”

During the event UIW Provost Eva Fernández, PhD shared, “His Holiness, Pope Leo XIV, has described Catholic universities as ‘choreographers of knowledge,’ calling on us to become pathways of the mind and towards God. That is such a beautiful calling, so today, we take a key step in choreographing knowledge as we launch this innovative alliance that will ignite such new pathways.”

Vice President of Mission and Ministry Sr. Walter Maher, CCVI continued that sentiment, “Unity is our most prophetic strength, as we come together as one, seeking to find the right path forward to become an educational constellation that cultivates the development of the whole person. I ask that together we call the Spirit of God to come upon us as we move forward in unity, with trust and firmly rooted in a shared vision.”

Evans along with the other presidents explained how CHARISM came into fruition. What began as an idea sparked at higher education leadership conferences led to collaborative conversations amongst leadership. The result of these catalyst interactions

was CHARISM. Each president expressed their hopes and gratitude for this agreement as they proudly prepared to officially sign the charter.

Members of the Incarnate Word community in San Antonio were joined via live stream by Cardinals from UIW Campus Bajío and Centro Universitario Incarnate Word, as well as by partner institution communities in Chicago, New York City, San Juan and more. No matter where attendees were located in the world, all were unified in a sense of hope, ambition and innovation as they stepped collectively into this new chapter.

Also in attendance was Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller of the Archdiocese of San Antonio, who offered a closing blessing.

“Bless this constellation of institutions committed to forming hearts, shaping minds and serving your people with faith, creativity and compassion,” he said.



Full Circle Moments

By Krystal
Cantu-Cuate



Life has a beautiful way of placing you exactly where you need to be—each experience quietly preparing you for the next step. Though life is rarely predictable, the moments you live through were made for you, whether you felt ready for them or not. Through all the twists and turns, your full-circle moment will always find its way to you.

Asia Ciaravino, BA '98 and Miguel Ochoa, BA '09, MA '12 could never have imagined that their journeys would lead them to 800 West Ashby Place. Yet, the San Pedro Playhouse has become a full-circle moment for them both—one that feels destined, meaningful and deeply personal.

From an early age, Ciaravino was captivated by the theater. At just five, she rallied neighborhood kids to perform basement shows for their parents. Creating stories and watching them come to life kept her on her toes. As she grew, her dream of becoming a professional actress sparked a journey across San Antonio in search of the right university. UTW quickly rose to the top when she saw the genuine care in its programs. Supportive faculty and small class sizes made her decision easy. She had found her home.

Ochoa's childhood dreams were far from singular. He imagined life as a Catholic priest, a professional musician or even a linguist. Though a career path was uncertain, Ochoa was determined to achieve something meaningful for himself. As the time to choose



a university approached, Ochoa knew exactly where he was headed. Seeing his best friend thrive in UIW's music program left an impression on him, the one-on-one support, vibrant culture and small classes were exactly what he wanted for himself.

While the pair did not attend UIW together, they have shared similar experiences rooted in their appreciation of the founding Sisters and their mission. Both Ciaravino and Ochoa fondly remembered moments with the Sisters filled with laughter, support and encouragement. While interactions with the Sisters are individual to every student, all students share some special memory that shaped who they became and how they support others moving forward.

In 1998, Ciaravino graduated from UIW with a BA in Theater and a wealth of experiences. Though her time at UIW had ended, the lessons she learned stayed with her. People often hear the phrase, 'You can do anything you set your mind to,' but few truly understand it until they live it. For Ciaravino, that realization came while juggling a full class schedule and working both onstage and backstage. Her hard work and dedication to theater and academics molded her into the driven professional she is today.

In 2009, Ochoa graduated with a BA in Music and later earned his MA in Teaching in 2012. It was during his time at UIW that Ochoa was able to secure a position

as a music teacher, an opportunity he remains deeply grateful for today. Ochoa's time at UIW allowed him to feel secure in himself as a leader, mentor and teacher. In this role, Ochoa drew on techniques from his time with the UIW Cardinal Chorale, the University's primary vocal ensemble. The techniques and exercises that Ochoa once knew as a student were now tools that he could pass down to his own students, blending comfort with nostalgia.

oldest municipally constructed theater in the country, and the only one in San Antonio designed as a functioning theater.

Today, Ciaravino serves as President and CEO of the San Pedro Playhouse, while Ochoa leads as Director of Development. Together, their history, experiences and knowledge of the arts bring fresh perspectives and a renewed outlook for the

future of the Playhouse. Although their paths never crossed during their time at UIW, each was exactly where they needed to be at the right moment.

Today, the passion that radiates from both Ciaravino and Ochoa is rooted in positivity and community. Together, their incredible work has ensured that the San Pedro Playhouse continues to fulfill its original mission—to serve the community by providing a safe, welcoming space where everyone can freely express themselves through the arts.

This season marks a milestone as Ciaravino and Ochoa celebrate bringing *Disney's Frozen* to life at the San Pedro Playhouse. Join them for future productions and step inside to discover a world where creativity and authenticity take center stage.



For years, Ciaravino and Ochoa admired each other's talent from a distance. Then came the moment, Ciaravino learned Ochoa was searching for his next project, and together they embarked on a new venture: the San Pedro Playhouse.

Built in 1929 during the Little Theatre Movement, the San Pedro Playhouse is the

Upcoming Shows

Follow QR CODE for more information about the San Pedro Playhouse.



DREAMGIRLS

February 6 – March 8

TWELFTH NIGHT

March 24 – March 29

STEEL MAGNOLIAS

May 7 – June 7

EVITA

June 26 – July 26

THE SEAGULL

August 6 – August 30



The University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) is proud to announce that it has, once again, been ranked the No. 1 university in the nation by Military Times in its 2025 “Best for Vets: Colleges” list. This marks the third consecutive year that UIW has received the No. 1 ranking from the national publication.

“We are honored to be recognized, once again, as the country’s leading university for members of our military, veterans and military families. That is thanks to many efforts put forth by our UIW community, especially our broad, collective effort to build an environment where they are well

supported and can thrive,” said Thomas M. Evans, PhD, UIW president. “While this honor is significant and humbling, the real proof of our commitment to serving military-affiliated students lies in their engagement, formation and success during their UIW journeys and beyond.”

UIW is proud to say that nearly one in five of the Fall 2025 undergraduate and graduate students here are military-affiliated. Many of them take advantage of the services provided by the UIW Military and Veterans Center, a one-stop place for military-affiliated students that offers services and resources to our veteran community. The Center also helps to coordinate yearly

events across campus including Veterans Day services, military commissioning ceremonies, the military appreciation game and more.

“This recognition is far more than an award; it’s a reflection of our deep and unwavering commitment to supporting service members, veterans and military families as they pursue their educational goals,” said Tila Jernigan, senior director of UIW Military and Veterans Affairs. “At UIW, we believe that those who have served our nation deserve every opportunity to thrive in their academic and professional journeys. That belief drives the work we do each day.”



2025

PUTTING THE "HOME" IN

Home-coming

By Clarissa Gauna, MS '23

The basic idea behind "homecoming" is that you return to a place that had significant meaning to you at one point in your life. However, at the University of the Incarnate Word (UIW), it is more than just a place. It is the people: professors, other students and staff, that made an impact on you while completing your studies. It is the atmosphere, a place where tradition and legacy are present in all that you do. It is because of the Mission, which started with the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word all that time ago, that we are even able to celebrate this week together. Homecoming at UIW is not about coming back to a place; it is about coming home.

This year the Homecoming theme was "There's No Place Like Home(coming)", an idea that stemmed from the fact that there is nowhere quite like UIW. UIW is where many of our journeys began – where we discovered our passions, built lifelong friendships and found mentors who inspired us, key factors that have helped pave the way for us today and shaped who we are in the world.

Alumni and friends of the University from near and far joined in the festivities during Homecoming Week. Here's a glimpse of what unfolded right here at home.

TRUNK-OR-TREAT

Often, Homecoming falls near the end of October, and we celebrate that by hosting our own Halloween event called Trunk-or-Treat. This event is open to alumni, friends of the University and their families who want to enjoy the spooky season. Hosted in part by student organizations and departments on campus, each group decorated a trunk and gave away candy and other goodies to all who dare to come near. From frightening and eerie costumes to beloved movie characters, there was something for everyone to enjoy while trunk-or-treating.



PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS



A tradition introduced just three years ago, the President's Address offers UIW President Thomas M. Evans, PhD, a meaningful opportunity to connect personally with the community while sharing updates on the University's progress and the collective impact being made together. This year, we were able to hear from not only Evans, but also a few members of our community who truly helped tell the story of the University. The address included an incredibly bright student, an alumna and former student-athlete who is now a professor at the University, a beloved faculty member, and a parent. Each offered a unique perspective of what it is like to be a part of UIW and how it has continued to guide them in their lives.

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ALUMNI EMPLOYEE LUNCH

There are many aspects worth mentioning when talking about what makes this University special, however, one that is not highlighted enough is the fact that after graduation, our alumni often decide that their experience here was so meaningful that they want to stay at the University and give back. Our alumni work at UIW as professors, administrators, staffers, mentors and so much more, and we offer this event to recognize the many ways they impact our community. Reminiscing on

mutual experiences and sharing the new and exciting endeavors each of us is experiencing in our jobs, the Alumni Employee Lunch brings together both recent graduates and distinguished alumni during Homecoming.

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TASTE OF THE PEARL

A crowd favorite, Taste of The Pearl gives the UIW community the chance to explore a handful of critically acclaimed, not to mention delicious, restaurants The Pearl has to offer. As a group, alumni and friends of the University bar hopped from one restaurant to another, trying a selection of different foods and drinks from each location. This was a wonderful opportunity to connect with new and old friends as we took in the beauty of The Pearl.

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LIVING THE LEGACY: UIW'S STORY THROUGH THE EYES OF THE SISTERS

This is a new event in our Homecoming lineup that dives into the history and Mission of our University. Led by Sr. Mary Henry,

CCVI, and fellow Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, we took a tour of the CCVI Heritage Center located at the Chapel of the Incarnate Word. The personal reflections and shared memories from the Sisters brought to life the founding moments, Mission and spirit that continue to shape our University today.

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HALL OF FAME

The UIW Athletics department is home to countless talented student-athletes who excel in the classroom, in the community and in competition. These are characteristics that have defined UIW student-athletes for years, and they are recognized during the UIW Athletics Hall of Fame. This year marks the Hall of Fame's 20th anniversary – two decades of celebrating individuals who paved the way for current student-athletes and the department as a whole. Hosted by the UIW Letterwinners Association, UIW Athletics inducted five new members into the 2025 Hall of Fame class, as well as one Honor Team and an Order of Merit.

For more information, please follow this QR code.





SERVICE OPPORTUNITY

One of the most significant lessons learned while attending UIW is the importance of service. During Homecoming, we gave back to our community, and in doing so, we remembered the mission of the Sisters who came to aid the sick and the poor. In partnership with the UIW Ettling Center for Civic Leadership and Sustainability, students and alumni came together to volunteer for four organizations, consisting of both on-campus organizations and off-campus nonprofits. Together, our efforts included everything from creating care packages for foster children to caring for rescue animals to designing an encouragement wall for students in local schools.



BREAKFAST TACO 5K

What better way to start Homecoming Weekend than with a 5K! Beginning at Du-buis Lawn, alumni, students and friends of the University gathered to run a 5K around campus, taking them all across the Nest, including through the trails beside the softball

and baseball fields, up the hill near Joeris Residence Hall and then back through Gayle and Tom Benson Stadium, eventually finishing at the Clock Tower. Every participant earned an exclusive Breakfast Taco 5K medal and, of course, a breakfast taco to refuel after their run.

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REDZONE TAILGATE AND UIW FOOTBALL VS. LAMAR UNIVERSITY

No UIW Homecoming is complete without some football! Before the game officially kicked off, our UIW community got the party started by attending the RedZone Tailgate. The tailgate offered great food, cold drinks and a special performance from UIW alumna Patsy Torres, BA '03, MEd '05, PhD '11, and her lively band. RedZone Tailgates are always fun for all, including activities for our tiny Cardinals, such as a bouncy house and a soft play area. When it was finally time for the game to begin, we had a special group of ladies join the players on the field. This group was part of this year's 50th reunion class, the class of 1975, and they had the honor of performing the coin toss before the game. The Cardinals played an epic game, winning 24-17 against Lamar University.

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HOMEcoming MASS

As we concluded Homecoming Week, we gathered together in faith – remembering

the legacy of those who came before us and reaffirming our shared Mission of service, compassion and community, at the Homecoming Mass. During this time, we honored the 50th reunion class, who donned in their graduation gowns and 50th reunion stoles, as they celebrated their reunion with their classmates and families. As the mass drew to a close, we as a community made our way to the congregations cemetery in song, to lay flowers for the Sisters who have passed and made a significant impact on our University and our students.

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50th REUNION BRUNCH

In the final event of Homecoming, we proudly celebrated the Class of 1975's 50th reunion and honored their legacy within the Incarnate Word community. This special gathering is part of our annual tradition recognizing Golden Spire Society members – alumni who have celebrated their 50th reunion and continue to be cherished pillars of the Incarnate Word family. Each member of the class of 1975 was inducted into the Golden Spire Society and given a medal that represents their time and commitment to the University since graduating. This is a cherished event that brings alumni of all generations together and reminds us that our University is truly a place to call home.

As we wrap up this Homecoming recap, we invite all alumni to reminisce on their time at the University and cherish the years spent making lifelong friendships with classmates, learning valuable life lessons from professors and being a part of the Mission that makes UIW one of a kind. There is no place like Home(coming).



Furthering the Story and Legacy of UIW

Christopher Alvarado, PharmD '10 and Stephanie Alvarado, BA '16

By Devin Castillo

In 1869, three courageous young women, Sisters Madeleine Chollet, Pierre Cinquin and Agnes Buisson, traveled from France to San Antonio, Texas at the request of Bishop Claude M. Dubuis to administer aid for the victims of a cholera epidemic. Led by their steadfast faith, determination and compassion, these three Sisters formed the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word (CCVI) and established San Antonio's first hospital, the Santa Rosa Infirmery. This significant achievement was later followed by other programs for those in need, including the opening of orphanages, additional hospitals and a school, first elementary and then, as the children grew, later a college that would evolve into our beloved University of the Incarnate Word (UIW).

Without the collective efforts of multiple

individuals, UIW wouldn't have been nurtured into the proud institution it is today. The University continues to be supported by its community members, allowing it to further expand its reach both nationally and globally. Two incredible individuals that support UIW are Christopher "Chris" Alvarado, PharmD '10 and Stephanie Alvarado, BA '16.

Chris and Stephanie first met in high school on a blind date. Since marrying in 1992, the Alvarados have had 33 years of marriage and have led remarkable lives that have fulfilled their individual passions and shared values.

From a young age, Chris had his sights set on becoming a pharmacist. Although his father was keen on the idea of him playing sports, seeing the passion Chris had for pharmacy, he was just



“

The University has afforded me the opportunity to doing what I do today, and I enjoy doing what I do. What UIW gave me, I want to give back.

”



as supportive of his son's pursuit of a career in healthcare. Chris attended Heath Careers High School and was able to gain hands-on experience while working as a pharmacy technician during his junior year. As a member of the inaugural Heath Careers graduating class, he was then ready for the next crucial steps, college followed by pharmacy school. Chris caught word of UIW's plans to officially open its Feik School of Pharmacy (FSOP) in 2004 and knew that was where he wanted to go.

"I remember coming to the school for a tour and getting all the information about the school," recalled Chris. "I was in the first graduating class at Health Careers, and I thought I want to be part of this first class at Feik (School of Pharmacy) too."

After fulfilling the class credit requirements and an interview with FSOP's Founding Dean Dr. Arcelia Johnson-Fannin, Chris was admitted into FSOP, eager and determined to officially become a pharmacist.

In 2010, Chris proudly crossed the graduation stage with his Doctor of Pharmacy degree, joining the Feik School of Pharmacy's inaugural graduating class. His academic excellence and leadership were recognized with the Dean's Pinnacle Award for Excellence in Pharmacy Studies and Leadership. From there, his ambitions have never subsided in his over 30 years as a pharmacy professional.

Chris presently serves as Staff Pharmacist for H-E-B where he is able to serve his patients every day, a gift and privilege he feels that has been given to him by God. Even after all this time, Chris is extremely

passionate about serving his community and hopes to nurture that same passion in the next generations of pharmacists.

"I am a strong believer in God and Jesus Christ," shared Chris. "God is who got me through pharmacy school. There were some rough patches that He got me through and put the right people in front of me to see that I finished. I feel strongly that God puts people in others' way for the better good. I know he puts me in others' lives to mentor and help them get through the tough times as well (school issues, family, job, etc.)."

Stephanie also has experience in the pharmacy industry, having previously served as a pharmacy technician supervisor at CVS/Caremark for 25 years. However, after being exposed to the Human Resources department of the company, she discovered that her passions were elsewhere. She soon enrolled in classes through UIW's School of Professional Studies (SPS) to pursue a bachelor's degree in Human Resources (HR). Although returning to school in her 40's was an intimidating decision, Stephanie knew she was more than capable of earning her degree. She felt that the SPS online curriculum offered her flexibility to balance multiple parts of her professional and personal life.

"While I was in school, I was working full time and was enrolled in an Emerging Leaders for Human Resources program at work," noted Stephanie. "So, they (her roles) were all coming together. I was studying HR, working at it and was doing it at work as well."

Stephanie was able to both apply her previous experiences during her program as well as gain new knowledge that expanded

her capabilities and confidence within her new field. Although there were challenges during her journey, the reward of earning her degree in 2016 was a surreal and immeasurable experience for her. Soon after, Stephanie officially began her career in HR. Today she serves as a Compensation Analyst at Whataburger.

UIW has been a proud part of the Alvarado family's stories, helping them achieve their respective goals and aspirations. Just as, the Alvarados have remained an integral part of the University's story for more than 20 years in a multitude of roles, helping to further advance the University and honor its Mission.

At his alma mater, Chris has served in positions including president of the UIW FSOP Alumni Association, president of the UIW Alumni Association, UIW Board of Trustee member, chair of the Institutional Advancement Committee, FSOP preceptor, member of the UIW Athletics Tartan Society and more. In 2017, Chris received the Alumni of Distinction Award for Professional Achievement. He also remains involved in a number of state and national organizations including serving as a Board of Director member for the Texas Pharmacy Association, Board of Director member for the West Texas Pharmacy Association, Southwest Regional director for the National Hispanic Pharmacist Association and Board of Director member of the Bexar County Pharmacy Association. Stephanie is also a member of UIW's Tartan Society and is present at numerous University events in support of

institutional initiatives.

Recognizing the countless opportunities and blessings UIW has given them, Stephanie and Chris knew that they wanted to pay that same generosity forward to future generations of graduates striving to make their own dreams a reality.

In 2021, the Alvarados launched their first endowed scholarship, the Chris and Stephanie Alvarado Pharmacy Scholarship for \$25,000. They noted that the scholarship was developed with advocacy at its core, and they hoped their scholarship would invite students to get involved not only in the classroom, but with local organizations and community members. By engaging in their broader world, students would be able to recognize needs and hear the perspectives of others, encouraging them to consider how to be better servant leaders.

This endowed scholarship at FSOP is the first of its kind, supporting aspiring pharmacy professionals. Chris smiled as he recalled their scholarship, expressing how proud he is that he and Stephanie were able to give others the opportunity to pursue his same cherished profession.

"I like giving back to students," shared Chris. "My mission is to give back to students and to try to do so as much as possible."

"I enjoy giving back to UIW because



of what it's given to me," noted Stephanie. "The University has afforded me the opportunity to do what I do today, and I enjoy doing what I do. What UIW gave me, I want to give back."

The Alvarados' mission still persists, as they've just committed a generous \$1.15 million gift that will support first generation students, Mission and Ministry at FSOP, Military and Veterans services and more.

Both the Blas L. Alvarado Military and Veterans Center Endowment and Paul R. Howerton Sr. Military and Veterans Center

Endowment are named after Chris and Stephanie's fathers, who served in the military and were proud veterans.

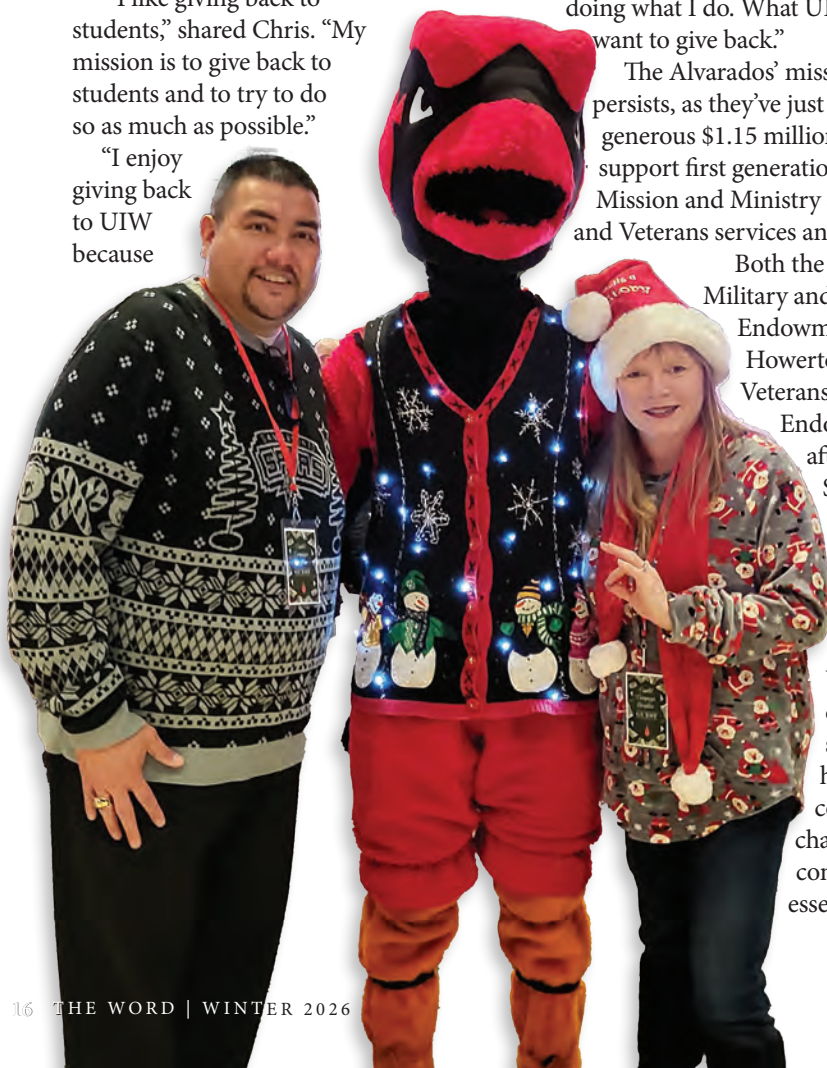
These endowments will support UIW's military-connected students and help them navigate college life, address challenges and connect them with essential resources

both on and off campus. The Alvarados will also continue to contribute funds to the Alvarado First Generation Student Endowed Scholarship, recognizing the need for scholarship support for first generation students.

Additionally, over the next three years, the Alvarados will give \$150,000 to address several immediate priorities to meet current institutional needs. Their gift will aid in enhancing the video board and sound system at the Gayle and Tom Benson Stadium, creating the Mission and Ministry Endowed Fund at FSOP, launching the new Alvarado Endowed Business Studies Scholarship in support of Business students studying at SPS and adding to the Chris and Stephanie Alvarado Pharmacy Scholarship.

Chris and Stephanie's stories are ones that reflect what it means to be servant leaders. In addition to having the courage to lead their own authentic lives, the Alvarados are also dedicated to uplifting others.

It is through their steadfast faith, innovation and generosity that UIW's ongoing legacy continues to be enriched, affording it the opportunity to further serve its community and beyond.



MEET YOUR CHAPTER PRESIDENTS

DALLAS



**Aaron Norton,
BBA, MSA '15**

Since graduating in 2015, Aaron Norton has worked in international tax and is currently an international tax consultant in BDO's Global Value Chain group. In this role, he helps multinational enterprises streamline their corporate structures and implement cross-border tax strategies that support their global operations.

While on the UIW swim team from 2010 to 2014, Norton was part of the squad that finished 3rd at Nationals in 2013. He still enjoys the pool and stays active by swimming. Outside of work, he serves as president of the Dallas Alumni Chapter and prioritizes time with family and close friends. Whenever possible, he loves to travel, immersing himself in new places and different cultures.

That same discipline and sense of balance he developed as a collegiate athlete continues to serve him well in his professional life.



HOUSTON



**Cody Graham,
BBA '21**

Cody Graham was a member of the Men's Basketball Team, the accounting society and graduated with a BBA in Accounting in 2021.

Following graduation, Graham worked at Ernst & Young in the firm's Technology Risk Consulting practice, primarily covering insurance clients. This piqued an interest in combining finance with client interaction which led Cody to move to JPMorgan where he supported the firm's Technology, Media and Telecoms investment banking team focused on clients with +\$1b revenue.

Currently, Graham works at Scotiabank's Houston office, where he aids in the buildout and development of the Mortgage Capital Markets platform.

In his free time, Graham recently became the assistant boys' basketball coach at his high school alma mater, St. Pius X in Houston. He also enjoys spending time with family and friends, working out, outdoor sports such as tennis and golf and the theater.





UIW Announces Naming Gift for Signature Spaces in Founders Hall

The University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) begins 2026 with tremendous momentum and exciting milestones ahead. Among the most anticipated is the Fall 2026 opening of Founders Hall, the University’s newest and most significant renovation project to date. In just a few months, this historic building will come alive as a vibrant gathering place for Cardinals, faculty and staff, purposefully designed to foster engagement, collaboration and innovation.

UIW is proud to announce a major leadership gift from Jane Cheever Powell that will support two cornerstone spaces within Founders Hall. Her generosity establishes the Col. Cheever Events Center and the Cheever Family Auditorium, honoring the legacy of Col. Charles E. Cheever, Sr. and the Cheever family, whose influence has helped shape San Antonio for generations.

Col. Cheever, Sr., founder of Broadway Bank and former president of USAA, played a pivotal role in the original development of the building, which once served as USAA headquarters. He was present at the 1954 groundbreaking and instrumental in its early vision. Today, select design elements from the 1960s remain thoughtfully integrated into the Col. Cheever Events Center, connecting the building’s past to its future as Founders Hall.

Located at the heart of the first floor, the Col. Cheever Events Center will host distinguished speakers, encourage meaningful dialogue and serve as a central hub for campus engagement. Nearby, the Cheever Family Auditorium will provide an inspiring venue for learning, collaboration and community-building.

CLASS NOTES

Celebrate UIW success stories. Keep up with your class, and be part of *The Word* online! Send your achievements to alumni@uiwtx.edu.

Photos submitted for Class Notes may be included on online alumni platforms.



1976

Denise DeJarnette Stout, BA '76

Celebrated her 50th wedding anniversary on November 15, 2025. Stout's wedding was held in Our Lady's Chapel inside the Administration Building. The happy couple are blessed with two children and their spouses as well as five grandchildren.

1970s



Terri Antonucci Harrold, BA '75

Retired after 28 years in education, 20 of which were served as an administrator and elementary principal. Prior to her retirement, Harrold worked with an educational non-profit training teachers, pre-service teachers, administrators and superintendents.

Harrold is now busy volunteering with St. Pius X Catholic Church and St. Vincent de Paul, while writing two books.

1980s

Anthony Joseph Pena, BBA '87

Retired after 32 years in the Air Force Reserve, 433d Airlift Wing, Colonel, USAFR, Medical Service Corps.

1990s



Nancy G. West, MA '94

Published her ninth novel, "Risky Pursuit", in April, 2025, which was recognized as the #1 Best Young Adult (YA) Book in the category Books That

Anyone Would Read, #1 YA Summer Thrillers and #1 Best YA Original Story.

Perfect for fans of psychological suspense and coming-of-age mysteries, "Risky Pursuit" explores the power of forgiveness, the weight of family secrets and one teen's courageous efforts to save everything he holds dear.

2010s



**Modesta
Garcia-
Atwater,
DNP '13**

Joined UT Health and will serve patients and families at the MAYS Cancer Center and

the new adjacent Multispecialty and Research Hospital. Inspired by her mother Natalie's brave journey with Stage IV Lymphoma during her last semester at UIW, Garcia-Atwater changed clinical concentration and focused her efforts to fill gaps in care and expand palliative access. She became certified in Hospice and Palliative Care in 2020 and remains dedicated to this specialty in her mother's honor.

Sharon Downey, MHA '15

Obtained a Doctor of Strategic Leadership with a Healthcare Concentration from Regent University in July 2019. Downey got a position as an adjunct instructor, Doctoral Research chair at Liberty University in 2020. She also wrote "A Leadership Strategy: Been There and Done That!", which provides insight into sequential building blocks for effective leadership in organizations.

2020s

**Drake Denning, BBA '24 and
Carolina Geyer Denning, BS '24**

Married on October 4, 2025, at the Nativity of The Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church in Flagstaff, AZ. Carolina is currently completing her master's program at UIW, and Drake just graduated from the San Antonio Police Academy in November 2025.



ETERNAL REST GRANT UNTO THEM, OH LORD.



IN MEMORIAM

**Sr. Helena Monahan, CCVI,
BA '68, PhD, JD**

Sr. Helena Monahan, CCVI, was a member of the founding congregation, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, and played many roles at the University over a long and distinguished tenure marked by her deep kindness, dedication to the institution and its students and determination to serve both wholeheartedly. Please pray for the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, Sr. Helena Monahan's family and everyone in the wider Incarnate Word family who are affected by this profound loss.

Deborah E. Bussineau-King,
Former Employee

Kymberly J. Fox, MA '00

Arcelia M. Johnson-Fannin, PharmD,
FSOP Founding Dean, Faculty Emeriti

Maria D. S. Kypuros-Ortiz, BS '58

Maria A. Maldonado, BS '58

Elizabeth J. McKinney, BA '47

Maria N. Olivarez, BS '55

Josephine G. Perales, BS '60

Jacob R. Rodriguez, BSN '24

Frank P. Vavala, Jr.,
Former Employee

MAY PERPETUAL LIGHT SHINE UPON THEM. MAY THEIR SOULS AND THE SOULS OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED, THROUGH THE MERCY OF GOD, REST IN PEACE. AMEN.



UNIVERSITY COLLECTIVE

NEWS, ACCOMPLISHMENTS
AND ACCOLADES FROM OUR
ILLUSTRIOUS FACULTY AND STAFF



Melissa Walker, DO

Assistant Professor, School of Osteopathic Medicine

Received recognition from her alma mater, Grambling State University. Walker was recognized as a 2025 honoree for the Distinguished 10 Award, which was created to honor graduates each calendar year who have demonstrated excellence in their respective industry and community. Walker was recognized for her many contributions in the field of Healthcare, including medical clinics she has led in Botswana, being an ambassador for the American Stroke Association's Power to End Stroke campaign and her advocacy for caregivers through the symposium she started called "Heal the Healer."



Sr. Marth Ann Kirk, CCVI

Faculty Emeriti

Received the "Best and Brightest" award from the San Antonio chapter of the University Roundtable, an organization founded to "explore creative, challenging and controversial issues." The award was presented on Dec 10, 2025.

Sr. Martha Ann shared that the award carries special meaning because of its connection to Dr. Amy Freeman Lee. "When I was notified about the award, I was told that Dr. Amy Freeman Lee was a founder of the University Roundtable of San Antonio. I was delighted and touched because she had inspired me as an Incarnate Word College student when she often spoke on campus," she recalled. "She had a profound reverence for life, joyful creativity, compassion, enthusiasm and generosity."

As this year's honoree, Sr. Martha Ann addressed attendees on the themes of compassion, service and peacebuilding, highlighting UIW projects that embody these values. She also shared about organizations she actively supports, including Charter for Compassion and CompassionateUSA.



Stephanie Schmiedecke Barbieri, OD
Dean, Rosenberg School of Optometry

Appointed Dean of the Rosenberg School of Optometry (RSO), effective November 1, 2025. Schmiedecke Barbieri earned her Doctor of Optometry degree and completed a residency in Low Vision Rehabilitation at the University of Houston College of Optometry. She brings more than 23 years of clinical and leadership experience, including ten years with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, where she served as a national point of contact for low vision services. She has developed award-winning interprofessional clinical programs at the VA, the University of Florida Health Shands Hospital, and here at RSO.

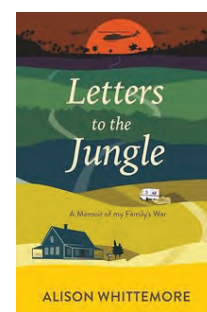
At RSO, Schmiedecke Barbieri was appointed as Interim Dean in February 2025 and has served as professor and chief of the Low Vision Rehabilitation and Genetic Service and as director of Residency and Fellowship Programs, leading efforts that doubled the number of ACOE-accredited residency programs. Board Certified by the American Board in Medical Optometry, she is a diplomate of the American Academy of Optometry's Low Vision Section, fellow of the National Academies of Practice, and international speaker and author. She was also the 2024 recipient of the Sister St. Pierre Cinquin Award for Faith.

Schmiedecke Barbieri shared, "It is a profound honor to be selected to serve as dean for RSO, uniting our shared vision for innovation and excellence with the enduring legacy of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word. A special thank you to the WittKieffer search firm, Search Committee, Provost's Office, and our amazing faculty, staff, students and alumni for entrusting me with this role."



Alison Whittemore, PhD
*Faculty Emeriti, College of Mathematics,
 Science and Engineering*

Published a memoir titled, "Letters to the Jungle: A Memoir of my Family's War." While clearing out her mother's home, Whittemore found a huge trove of letters from the '60s, the year her dad spent in Vietnam - weekly letters to the jungle from her grandma, mom, two sisters and her, and a handful of letters from her dad back to the family. After almost a year of transcribing and an additional two years of writing, she completed this historic memoir available on Amazon.



Jeannette Wong-Powell, OD, FAAO, Dipl. AAO
*Clinical Associate Professor,
 Rosenberg School of Optometry*

Designated an American Academy of Optometry Diplomate in Comprehensive Eye Care. This prestigious designation (Dipl AAO) is a testament to her exceptional commitment, expertise and leadership in the field. Achieving Diplomate status requires hundreds of hours of rigorous preparation and evaluation, and it represents one of the highest levels of recognition by peers in optometric practice and research.

Wong-Powell shared, "Achieving diplomate status is deeply significant to me. It reflects a commitment to honor the sacrifices made and to uphold the excellence expected by those who support me."

UIW INDUCTS ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME



Class of 2025

The University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) Athletics program has a proud legacy built by countless visionaries who believed in its power to transform lives. Today, UIW Athletics shines as the only Catholic NCAA Division I program in the Southland Conference, supporting 14 sports and 23 men's and women's teams. As the program continues to soar, UIW honors the individuals who helped shape this success through its prestigious Hall of Fame ceremony.

Since its inception in 2005, the UIW Athletics Hall of Fame has celebrated extraordinary athletic achievements and contributions to the University's intercollegiate sports. This year marks a milestone, the Hall of Fame's 20th

anniversary; two decades of honoring those who have defined the Cardinal spirit.

Hosted by the UIW Letterwinners Association, a proud community of alumni who earned their varsity letters at UIW, the 2025 induction ceremony paid tribute to a remarkable class of athletes, coaches and supporters whose impact continues to elevate UIW Athletics. University President Dr. Thomas M. Evans reflected on the program's journey,

"Tonight, we celebrate not only our honorees and Cardinal pride but also the growth of a program that began as a small independent effort, advanced through NAIA and Division II, and ultimately became the dynamic Division I Southland Conference program we know today.

Many of those who helped make that possible are here with us."

Nearly 300 guests, including family, friends and members of the Incarnate Word community, gathered to honor this year's inductees.

Honoring Leaders and Legends

Among the honorees was **Mark Papich**, former Volleyball coach and Athletics Director, recognized for his transformative leadership. With 124 coaching wins and a tenure as Athletics Director from 2001–2015, Papich oversaw tremendous growth, adding six sports and guiding UIW's transition from Division II to Division I.

"It's humbling," Papich shared. "We started with a small staff of maybe seven



HONOR TEAM
2009-10 MEN'S SWIMMING & DIVING



ORDER OF MERIT
TRACY AVERY, BA '96, MBA '12



**ALLISON BRITT
BRISEÑO, BS '09**
SOFTBALL, 2005-2008



MARK PAPICH
VOLLEYBALL COACH/
ATHLETICS DIRECTOR,
1995-2015



**SHELLY SNOOK
TOMPKINS,**
BBA '98, MED '01
VOLLEYBALL,
1995-1997



KENNETH WATSON
MEN'S BASKETBALL,
1991-1994



SHAYN WEIDNER,
BS '10, MSAS '14
CROSS COUNTRY/
TRACK & FIELD,
2007-2010

people. Without their dedication, none of this would have been possible.”

The **2009-10 Men's Swimming and Diving team** also earned a place in history. In just their third season, the Cardinals captured the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference Championship and finished second at the NCAA Division II National Championships, the best finish in school history. Their coach, Phillip Davis, was honored for his leadership, which earned him the NCAA Division II National Coach of the Year.

Team member **Teofilo Reyes, Jr.** reflected, “It’s special to be recognized nearly 20 years later. This brings back memories of practices, meets and everything we went through. It’s amazing to see that experience still valued today.”

Celebrating dedication beyond the field, also honored was **Tracy Avery**, a two-time UIW alumna and passionate advocate for Cardinal Athletics. Avery played a pivotal role in developing the UIW Athletics Cardinal Clubs and served as President of the UIW Alumni Association. Her unwavering commitment earned her the Order of Merit, an award presented to individuals who make significant contributions to UIW Athletics.

“Watching the program evolve has been incredible,” Avery said. “It’s not about one moment—it’s about the entire journey.”

A Legacy of Leadership

The evening concluded with a special announcement: the creation of the Stephen J. Heying Leadership & Service Endowed

Scholarship, honoring the former UIW baseball coach who mentored countless student-athletes. Funded by former players, colleagues and friends, the scholarship will support students who demonstrate academic excellence and financial need.

UIW Athletics Director Richard Duran summed up the night, “It was a privilege to honor the incredible achievements and lasting impact of our alumni, coaches and supporters. Congratulations to the Class of 2025!”

For more information, please follow QR code.



CALENDAR



ALUMNI EVENTS

16TH ANNUAL ALUMNI EASTER EGG HUNT

Saturday, March 28

UIW Broadway Campus

Bring the little Cardinals in your life back to the Nest for our annual alumni Easter Egg Hunt!

SPRING RING CEREMONY PRESENTED BY HERFF JONES

Monday, May 4

Chapel of the Incarnate Word and reception at SEC Mezzanine

Join us for the UIW Ring Ceremony presented by Herff Jones as we commemorate academic achievements and present graduating students with their class ring! Registration Required.

ARTS, MUSIC & THEATER PERFORMANCES

UIW THEATER PRESENTS “MARY’S WEDDING”

Friday, Feb. 20 - Saturday, Feb. 28
The Cheever Black Box Theater

UIW THEATER PRESENTS “TROIJAN WOMEN / HECUBA”

Saturday, April 18 - Saturday, April 25
UIW Broadway Campus - Coates Theater

SPECIAL EVENTS

SWING-IN DINNER & GOLF TOURNAMENT

- AUCTION PARTY
Thursday, May 14
McCombs Center Rosenberg Sky Room
- GOLF TOURNAMENT
Friday, May 15
Hyatt Regency Hill Country Golf Club

GRADUATION

Saturday, May 9

Celebrate the Spring 2026 Graduates at Freeman Coliseum.

SPECIAL SERVICES

CARDINALS COUPLES MASS Sunday, Feb. 15

Our Lady’s Chapel

If you met your soulmate at UIW and want to celebrate Valentine's Day in a special way, join us for the annual Cardinals Couple Mass!

BACCALAUREATE MASS

Friday, May 8

Celebration of Mass for the Spring 2026 Graduates.

Follow these QR codes
to Calendars:



UIW Athletics
Tickets



UIW Mission
and Ministry



Alumni Events



UIW Box Office



Moral Leadership Symposium

By Stephanie L. Grey, BA '00

The University of the Incarnate Word Mission and Ministry, in collaboration with the Offices of the US Army Chief of Chaplains, will host the second annual Moral Leadership Symposium 2026: Leading with Courage. From April 13 - 17, the symposium will inspire and motivate community leaders, non-profit professionals, business managers, medical professionals, educators, students and military personnel through discussions on ethical leadership and community collaboration.

As leaders, it is essential to understand how moral leadership applies across various contexts, including academic settings, military operations and community engagement. The symposium will equip participants with an understanding of how moral leadership applies in different situations by presenting examples and exploring moral and ethical dilemmas and decision-making at all levels of leadership. The Moral Leadership Symposium 2026 aims to equip participants with the knowledge

and skills necessary to address challenging situations with integrity and courage.

Featuring keynote speaker, Chaplain Colonel Primitivo Davis, US Army. Distinguished guests and speakers UIW President Thomas M. Evans, PhD, Chaplain Major General William Green, Jr., US Army Chief of Chaplains and Major General Anthony McQueen, Commanding General US Army Medical Center of Excellence. Including presenters from Baylor University Bioethics, Army Medical Command, Navy Medical Command, Air Force Chaplain Corps and the University of the Incarnate Word.

"Moral Leadership is an essential component of our mission as chaplains and leaders within the Army. It embodies the principle that guides our decision-making and interactions, rooted deeply in the Army's core values. As leaders, we are called to lead by example, demonstrating integrity, respect and selfless service in all that we do."

"I trust that this symposium will serve

as a valuable opportunity for collaboration, encouraging critical thinking and spiritual reflection. As we engage in meaningful discussions and share our experiences, let us inspire one another to embody the values we hold dear and to equip ourselves to be effective leaders in our communities," stated Chaplain Green.

Join the conversation and attend the second annual Moral Leadership Symposium 2026: Leading with Courage. For more information, don't hesitate to get in touch with Stephanie Gray, UIW Mission and Ministry, and UIW alumna, at weisslop@uiwtx.edu or 210-829-3980.

To attend the Moral Leadership Symposium, follow this QR code.





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UNIVERSITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD®

SWING IN

AUCTION PARTY AND GOLF TOURNAMENT

AUCTION
MAY 14, 2026

GOLF
MAY 15, 2026

The Swing-In Auction Party and Golf Tournament is the University of the Incarnate Word's annual scholarship fundraiser.

MAY 14 | AUCTION PARTY

Join us in the McCombs Center Rosenberg Sky Room for live music, delicious food, an open bar and the opportunity to bid on amazing silent and live auction packages!

MAY 15 | GOLF

Meet us at the Hyatt Hill Country Golf Course for an 8 a.m. tee time. Breakfast and lunch are included. Expect exciting contest holes, a UIW Swing-In shirt and a hat!



**Scan the QR code to
register for the 49th
annual UIW Swing-In
Scholarship Fundraiser**

University of the Incarnate Word
Office of Alumni Relations
4301 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas 78209
(210) 829-6014 | alumni@uiwtx.edu

The University of the Incarnate Word provides reasonable accommodation with adequate notice. To request disability accommodation for this event, please visit www.uiw.edu/ada