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March 10, 1955

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Very sincerely

*Brother Elmo I.*

Brother Elmo I.  
President

## Four Brothers

THE PRESIDENTS WHO HELD ST. EDWARD'S  
TOGETHER WITH GRIT AND PERSEVERANCE

## A PRAYER FOR THE HILLTOP

O God of Hope,  
Two hundred years ago,  
in the midst of social upheaval and uncertain times,  
when the needs of your children were so great,  
you inspired Fr. Jacques Dujarié to bring together  
a group of Brothers committed to education and doing good.  
In just fifty years, these Brothers of Holy Cross  
came to Texas with this same mission,  
eventually settling on the Hilltop.  
They were men with hope to bring.

O God of Mercy, with sadness and fear,  
we have entered another time of upheaval and uncertainty  
as we face this global pandemic.

We, your children, turn to you in our need,  
asking you to renew in us that same hope  
that you gave to our Holy Cross founders.

Give hope to our students, who are adjusting  
to remote learning and distance from their friends.

Give hope to our alumni,  
especially those who work in healthcare, scientific research,  
and production of the technology we need to combat this disease.

Give hope to all who work on the hilltop,  
especially those who are providing essential services.

Give hope to our Board of Trustees and administration,  
making important decisions for the future of our university.

Give hope to our wider Holy Cross community,  
whose members are ministering in various parts of the world  
under the stress of this pandemic.

Most of all, give hope to all in our St. Edward's community,  
that we will continue this important mission of education and good works.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

FATHER PETER WALSH, CSC  
Director of Campus Ministry

# W

hile there is  
no way yet  
to determine

the full impact of COVID-19 on the St. Edward's community, it has already disrupted life on the hilltop significantly — sowing uncertainty in students' lives through unexpected housing and food expenses, restricting travel and potentially stranding them away from home, limiting their income from hourly jobs, and creating other unprecedented challenges.

Yet our campus remains a beacon of hope for the future. It's home for our students. It's where we "prepare the world for better times than ours." It's where we nurture future health-care workers, civil servants, policymakers and scientific innovators. It's where we prevent the next pandemic.

The immediacy of this crisis is glaring. But I'm touched that our alumni and friends are still asking how they can help.

The Hilltoppers Overcoming Obstacles Fund (HOOF) provides Hilltoppers with emergency funding and resources for their academic success, personal safety and peace of mind. HOOF is entirely supported by donors who give what they can afford, and gifts of any size are deeply

**The immediacy of this crisis is glaring. But I'm touched that our alumni and friends are still asking how they can help.**

meaningful to students during this vulnerable time and beyond. To date, more than 180 students have demonstrated need for HOOF resources — and we expect that need to grow in the coming weeks.

If you are in a position to support students in need, I hope that you will join me in donating to HOOF today. Every gift, no matter the size, makes an incredible impact.

The St. Edward's family has always united in the face of great challenges; the enduring hope and faithfulness rooted in our Holy Cross mission keeps us strong. Now is no exception. I have hope and faith that our community will arise from this uncertainty more resilient than ever.



JOE DEMEIROUS  
Vice President for  
University Advancement



Support students in need  
[stedwards.edu/giving](https://stedwards.edu/giving)



PHOTOGRAPH BY INTI ST. CLAIR

# the hilltop

BEST & BRIGHTEST

## How to Go Outside Your Comfort Zone

This Forbes Under 30 Scholar has used her time at St. Edward's to expand her horizons.

BY LISA THIEGS



**Kimberly Foo '21** grew up playing soccer.

Her competitive club schedule kept her from playing on her middle school's soccer team, but she thought her soccer skills might be an asset to the football team. At tryouts, she launched the ball through the uprights just after the regular kicker missed his field goal attempt. The coach put her on the A team as the first female kicker for her middle school. Taking a risk was a new experience for the eighth grader. In the years since, stepping out of her comfort zone has taken her places she never would have imagined.

Foo, a first-generation American (her mother is Mexican and her father is Malaysian), traveled to Washington, D.C., her freshman year with the League of United Latin American Citizens to lobby for DACA, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals immigration policy. "I have a few friends and family members who are under DACA," she says. "They are limited in certain ways that I'm not, and I want to advocate for them."

While still a freshman, Foo started a student organization called Minority American. She created inspirational T-shirts and recruited fellow freshmen to a photo shoot at the Texas Capitol to model the organization's clothes. "It was just beautiful because it was a very diverse group of people," Foo says. "I really wanted to create a space for people to be open about how they're feeling and how they're a minority." The organization donated the money raised from T-shirt sales to RAICES, a nonprofit that provides legal support to immigrants and refugees.

Foo, a self-described introvert, has stepped out of her comfort zone in other ways. She joined Phi Alpha Delta, the pre-law fraternity on campus. She says she was intimidated as she stepped onto the fraternity's mock trial team but gained confidence from competing in both Dallas and Washington, D.C.

Last year, at the persuasion of a friend, Foo applied to become a Forbes Under 30 Scholar — and won. As a scholar, she was invited to attend the Forbes Under 30 Summit, held in Detroit, for free. She convened with a diverse group of college students for four days of building connections and learning how to be leaders in business, along with hearing speakers discuss topics such as philanthropy, entrepreneurship and technology. She returned to campus with an expanded network that she hopes to tap for a summer internship opportunity.

The Business Administration major and Political Science minor spent her sophomore year interning at the State Capitol. As an intern for Rep. César Blanco, she worked on HB391, which requires teachers to print homework and reading materials for families who don't have access to technology at home. The bill was signed into law in June 2019. Over the summer, Foo met Rep. Julie Johnson while working for a strategy group in Dallas. Johnson picked up on Foo's work ethic and attention to detail at a fundraiser and requested Foo join her team.

Foo's dedication is evident in everything she does, including her role as a resident assistant at Dujarié Hall. "My rule as an RA is to be there and make a positive impact on their lives. It's really important to me to help others," says Foo.

While Foo spends much of her time advocating for and focusing on the people around her, she also recognizes that she couldn't have succeeded without others supporting her. "My parents never told me I couldn't do it," Foo says. "They always pushed me to see what I was going to do next, and I really appreciated that." And that support continued on campus. "People at St. Edward's want to see you grow and flourish and be the best *you* possible. Taking on leadership roles has given me the confidence to be where I am today. I'm definitely an introvert, but growing and learning as much as possible is something that's very important to me."

## 3

### Forbes Under 30 Scholars

Three students from St. Edward's received the Forbes Under 30 designation in 2019. In addition to Foo, Antoine Chamoun-Farah '20, a Mathematics major and student in the dual-degree Engineering program with Washington University in St. Louis, and Michael Villarreal '22, a Business Administration major, received the honor.

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#### On the Cover

Between 1946 and 1984, four Holy Cross Brothers served St. Edward's University as president. Edmund Hunt, Elmo Bransby, Raymond Fleck and Stephen Walsh led the university through the middle decades of the last century — and set it on the path to become the university that it is today.

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▼  
All Social Work students, like Meagan Biscamp '19, pictured here, complete an intensive 430-hour internship. "With students, we see an increasing sense of professionalism, confidence and empowerment in relying on the skills they have developed," says Assistant Professor of Social Work Laurie Cook Heffron. "We also hear feedback from field instructors about how well our students adapt to the field internship."

AUSTIN CONNECTION

## Where Data, Passion and Policy Collide

Meagan Biscamp first encountered the vast social services system when helping a friend. As a Social Work major, she harnessed her power to enact change.

BY LISA THIEGS

HOMELESS, ADDICTED and reeling from an HIV diagnosis, Meagan Biscamp's friend was in crisis. Family and friends stepped in to help. "It took four people making lots of phone calls, standing in lines and waiting for appointments to get him the treatment he needed," Biscamp says. "The entire time I was wondering what people do who don't have that support."

That was when Biscamp saw the power of social work. She was drawn to the macro side of the profession, which focuses on policy work and enacting institutional change. Biscamp, who returned to St. Edward's at the age of 35 and graduated in December 2019, completed an intensive internship at the Austin Sobering Center, a safe place for intoxicated Austinites to sober up that's more recovery oriented than jail. "It felt like the help I had given my friend had come full circle because this was a place where people who don't

have support could get connected to resources," she says.

Biscamp started her internship by talking with individuals who were sobering up and assessing the resources they needed. She looked at the bigger picture, too, by sitting in on strategic planning meetings to learn more about how the new organization would operate in the months ahead.

Biscamp's internship coincided with the 2019 Texas legislative session, and in her Macro Systems class, she wrote a policy brief about a bill that would directly impact the Sobering Center. Biscamp went to the Capitol to testify before the Senate Committee on Criminal Justice and was elated when the related bill passed into law. It added language to the state law to codify the practice of officers releasing individuals suspected of public intoxication to facilities such as the Sobering Center.

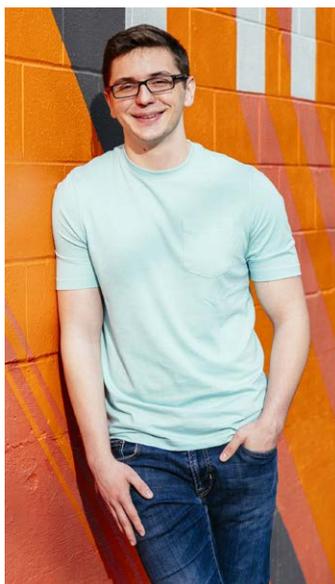
In addition, Biscamp's field supervisor, **Doug Smith '94**, a board member for the Sobering Center, helped her develop a study in which she examined 114 arrest affidavits for publicly intoxicated people not brought to the Sobering Center or not admitted. "She is producing a report on what we can do to better train staff in de-escalation so law enforcement would have greater confidence in bringing a belligerent individual to the center," Smith says. "She is also looking to increase use of the Sobering Center by identifying cases where it was unclear as to why police took someone to jail [instead of the center]."

Biscamp's friend was able to get the help he needed at a treatment center in Austin and has since moved out of state to live with family members. Watching his recovery and working at the Sobering Center have prepared Biscamp to take the next steps in her chosen career.

# Photography, Algorithms and Screenwriting

3 students share how their St. Edward's experience has helped them connect their interests, passions and future careers.

BY ROBYN ROSS  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY INTI ST. CLAIR



▲ **Josh Leikam '20,**  
**Computer Science**

“In the sciences, it’s easy to develop a theoretical, detached outlook. But behind every technical solution is a human problem or need. What St. Edward’s has taught me is that even if you’re not a humanities major, you still need to consider the human aspect of your work. Instead of just learning an algorithm, you need to think about how that algorithm might have ripple effects in people’s lives. St. Edward’s does more than acknowledge issues like the social impact of technology — it helps you think deeply about them.”



▲ **Alex Castillon '20,**  
**Writing and Rhetoric**

“My professional goal is to be a screenwriter, and during college I’ve made several short films. Through Campus Ministry, I’ve participated in Service Break Experiences in Park City, Utah; Bangalore, India; and an Apache reservation in New Mexico. Each trip focused on education and working with

children in underprivileged communities that a lot of people don’t even know exist. One of the best discoveries I’ve made is that I can incorporate what I’ve learned on my Service Break Experiences into my writing. ... That’s played a large part in finding my own voice as a writer.”

**“I can give visibility to people who are not typically represented in entertainment media.”**

ALEX CASTILLON '20

◀ **Aariah Alba '22,**  
**Photography and Media Arts**

“The courses in my Religious Studies minor have taught me how to ask questions about my own Christian faith as well as other people’s faiths. That was helpful in my Documentary Photography class last spring, when each student chose a specific aspect of Austin life to photograph. I documented faith

communities in some of Austin’s non-Christian religions: Buddhism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. I went to places of worship, all over Austin — mostly taking the bus because I don’t have a car. Every single community welcomed me in a way that made me feel like an invited member of their family.

My project, ‘How Austin Worships,’ was included in our class’s exhibition at the Austin History Center, *Discovering Place*. I hope the people who saw my photographs learned about religions they might not have interacted with before and felt the same human connection to these communities that I did.”

MY HILLTOP

# The Daily Grind

Vivian Phillips tackles a full week with support from friends and really good coffee.

BY ROBYN ROSS

WHEN THE PHONE rings at the nonprofit law firm the Equal Justice Center (EJC), **Vivian Phillips '21** answers, ready to help. As an intern, Phillips is the first point of contact for callers seeking to renew their Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, work permits. She conducts a brief interview in the caller's preferred language — English or Spanish — to gather the information EJC needs and schedules the appointment.

A Global Studies and Spanish double major, Phillips started paying closer attention to politics and government after the 2016 primary, during her junior year in high school. At St. Edward's, classes about dictatorships, democracies and human rights in Latin America helped her understand how events in the region prompted waves of immigration to the United States and how the U.S. government has sometimes reacted by limiting who can settle in the country.

"That's where my interest in law began," Phillips explains. "I wanted to make sure people were not targeted or discriminated against."

The people Phillips helps with their DACA renewals are just a few years older than she is. Many were particularly anxious in November as the Supreme Court heard a challenge to the DACA program, a case it will decide this summer. "You could

definitely feel the pressure in the office," she says.

Phillips also works on campus in the dean's office for the School of Natural Sciences, where she answers phones, delivers the mail and helps schedule events. She also has honed her marketing skills, designing flyers for events like Donuts with the Dean, and she helps maintain the school's Instagram account.

Outside of class, Phillips is the fundraising coordinator for the pre-law organization Phi Alpha Delta and a member of It's On Us, a student-led group that focuses on sexual assault prevention. In her free time, she explores Austin's coffee shops — especially ones with eye-catching décor. "I'll text friends and say, 'OK, we have to get work done, but we might as well go somewhere cute,'" she says. Her new favorite spot is Plaza Colombian, which checks all the boxes: good coffee, good food (smoothies and *arepas*) and thoughtful design.

Phillips often finishes her day hanging out with friends in her on-campus apartment. When classes are over, she'll do homework and then text **Gianni Zorrilla '20** and **Sierra Rozen '20**. They'll watch something light — Netflix or reality shows like *Top Model* — to relax. After thinking about so many weighty issues, she says, "I think it's important to wind down every once in a while."



In her on-campus job as an office assistant, Phillips distributes the mail for faculty and staff in the School of Natural Sciences.



Phillips checks in with Paola Hernandez, her supervisor at the Equal Justice Center, about tasks they need to complete after a citizenship clinic.



Phillips takes a study break with her friend and fellow Global Studies major **Hildana Adhanom '21**, who hails from Ethiopia.



Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Ori, an emotional support animal for one of Phillips' colleagues, provides Phillips and other students a welcome break.



In addition to running errands for the School of Natural Sciences, Phillips designs flyers for events and helps with the school's social media.



Before watching a documentary during an It's On Us meeting, students organize buttons and laptop stickers with the organization's logo.



For the last Phi Alpha Delta meeting of the semester, the group decorated Christmas ornaments to counterbalance the stress of finals.



Plaza Colombian, a new coffee shop on South Congress Avenue near campus, is Phillips' and Adhanom's go-to spot for caffeine, food and productivity.



After a long day of classes, Phillips winds down by watching movies or reality TV with her friends **Sierra Rozen '20** (left) and **Gianni Zorrilla '20** (right).

THINKING BIG

## MODEL THINKERS

Scientists recently discovered that the enzyme acireductone dioxygenase (ARD) is associated with stomach cancer, brain tumors and, in patients with Down Syndrome, congenital heart defects. To understand how the enzyme is related to disease, researchers need to figure out exactly how it works.

BY ROBYN ROSS

The work builds on that of St. Edward's alumni who synthesized the first structural model of the enzyme.

Biochemistry major Glenn Blade '21 has conducted tests to validate whether the model behaves in ways similar to the enzyme.

Associate Professor of Chemistry Santiago Toledo and the students in his lab are building molecular models of the part of the ARD enzyme where chemical transformations occur.

With a model, researchers can make small structural tweaks and then test how those changes affect the function of the enzyme.

"At St. Edward's we're making real, meaningful contributions to research. It's not just an exercise, where students do a project to practice their research skills – we actually are adding our little piece to the scientific puzzle," says Toledo.



# Around Campus

3 new online programs help students take on their world.



## DIGITAL MARKETING AND ANALYTICS

**Degree: Master of Science**  
**Program Length: 16 months**

Professors immersed in the field of digital marketing combine their professional expertise with knowledge of technology and analytics to prepare students for the constantly changing world of marketing.



## LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION

**Degree: Doctorate of Education**  
**Program Length: 39 months**

Universities need qualified leaders, and this doctorate helps working administrators improve their ability to solve big challenges facing higher education.



## GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE

**Degree: Master of Arts**  
**Program Length: 16 months**

Achieving sustainable development will take a new generation of leaders, and this new master's degree – launching this fall – will prepare graduates to be forces of positive change in global sustainability.

Rafael Flores '21 (not pictured) is working on a collaborative project with Professor of Chemistry Eamonn Healy's lab that studies the relationship between another enzyme called superoxide dismutase and ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease.

Emily El-Shaer '22 and Georgia Barone '22 are working on second-generation models of the enzyme, building on previous work to create a model that is structurally and functionally accurate.

The first ARD enzyme discovered in plants and bacteria is associated with nickel, but in humans the enzyme may be associating with cobalt and manganese. Chemistry major Rose Smiley '20 is synthesizing molecules using those two metals to explore the role of human-relevant metals.





TAKE ON YOUR WORLD

## PLACES MATTER

### Students in Rhetoric of Public Memory analyze monuments, memorials and myths about the past.

BY ROBYN ROSS

IN RECENT YEARS, cities in the United States — particularly in the South — have grappled with the future of their Confederate monuments. Should the statues be left as they are? Removed from public spaces and installed in museums? Contextualized with markers that explain when and why the monuments were erected? Paired with new monuments, like memorials to leaders of the civil rights movement, that would serve as a counterpoint?

The students in the course Rhetoric of Public Memory, taught last fall by **Stephen A. King**, professor and chair of Communication, spent a class debating those four questions, but there was no clear consensus on what should be done with the Confederate monuments. The exercise was part of their semester-long exploration of public memory: an emerging field that studies how groups of people form their understanding of the past, and how those ideas influence their beliefs about the present and future.

“Public memory is connected to issues that are contested,” King says. “Memory objects” — like the monuments — “are often surrounded by controversy and criticism because different people come to them with very different understandings of the past and its relationship to the present.”

The students investigated public memory

in relation to gender, identity, slavery, genocide, terrorism and social justice, and they studied artifacts including museums, monuments, documentary films, speeches and architecture. They explored the tension between “official culture,” such as that produced by governmental bodies, tourism boards or curators, and “vernacular culture,” which is associated with ordinary people. And they learned to ask critical questions: In sites of public memory, which historical figures are remembered and commemorated, and which are forgotten?

The students explored campus to take inventory of memory artifacts at St. Edward’s: Sorin Oak, the Father Foik plaque near the library, the red doors of Main Building. Each student wrote a rhetorical analysis of one of the objects.

Communication major **Taylor Garcia ’20** chose the Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto. She described it as a symbol that asserts the university’s Catholic identity, in contrast to other physical reminders that St. Edward’s welcomes a religiously diverse student population — like the banner that hung near the chapel doors last year offering support to “our Muslim neighbors.” Garcia also noted a tension between official and vernacular culture at the site: When students visit the grotto, they often leave vernacular mementos like flowers and notes. But these are periodically removed by groundskeepers who clean the area — an action that, while practical, erases the students’ material contribution to public memory at the grotto.

Garcia said that in addition to helping her reflect on campus symbols, the class has encouraged her to be more conscious in her consumption of media and visits to memorials. “It’s helped me think more critically about my own role in creating public memory,” she says.

For King, that’s the aim of the class. “My goal is that the students will, as a result of the course, see the world in a very different way,” he says. “If they go to a museum, they’ll be able to critically analyze what’s going on there: What history is on offer? Who’s doing the offering? How am I being asked to remember? I tell my students, Public Memory is not just a course. It envelops all of us.”

A large, ancient tree with a thick, gnarled trunk and a wide, spreading canopy of green leaves dominates the center of the image. A dirt path leads from the foreground towards the base of the tree. The scene is set in a park-like area with other trees and a fence in the background. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day, with some lens flare visible on the right side.

**In sites of public memory,  
which historical figures  
are remembered and  
commemorated, and  
which are forgotten?**





# break out

The university's partnership with Breakthrough Central Texas helps inspire students to become the first in their families to graduate from college.

**BY STACIA M. MILLER MLA '05**  
**PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHELSEA PURGAHN**



**“Needing help and not knowing where or how to get it is a very lonely place to be.”**

**GLEND A BALLARD,  
DEAN OF THE SCHOOL  
OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
AND EDUCATION**

**A** **DRIANA REYNOSO '22** stomped her boots on the slick green grass to warm her toes as the wind whipped her hair across her frozen nose. She shoved her numb fingers deeper into the pockets of her khaki coat and took a moment to capture the view in her mind's eye. Swaths of sugar beets and just-harvested Riesling vines fluttered in the vicious wind. Fir and beech trees climbed the Vosges mountainsides, their crowns concealed by swirls of fog. Raindrops as big as pebbles pooled on rusty barbed wire and ran down the eaves of the austere crematorium. October had come to the Alsatian countryside — and to Natzweiler-Struthof, France's only World War II concentration camp.

As she stood, Reynoso thought of the brilliant reds, blues, golds and purples of the intricate stained-glass windows that she and her classmates who were studying at Université Catholique de l'Ouest, a St. Edward's partner university in Angers, had just seen at the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Strasbourg. Light from a hundred flickering candles cast shadows across the smooth pews. The air was filled with a reverent stillness.

Here was humanity at its best and its worst, she realized, just 30 miles apart.

And all of it was a world away from the Austin neighborhood where Reynoso grew up. A native Californian, she had moved to Texas in kindergarten, eventually attending Manor Middle School and Manor High School, both federally designated as Title I schools with high percentages of students living below the poverty line. College wasn't in the cards for Reynoso and most of her peers — in fact, only 6 percent of middle schoolers in low-income Central Texas households similar to Reynoso's go on to earn a bachelor's degree.

Reynoso is working hard to beat those odds. She enrolled at St. Edward's after visiting campus with a high school classmate and an advisor from Breakthrough Central Texas, which provides resources and support to help low-income students become first-generation college graduates.

In middle and high school, students who join Breakthrough receive academic support after school and through weekend and summer programs, including preparation for standardized tests and help applying for college. They work one on one with an advi-

sor, who serves as an advocate and mentor, and they participate in internships and projects organized by Breakthrough to build their leadership skills. When Breakthrough students enroll in college, they meet regularly with a college completion counselor who helps them navigate challenges like applying for financial aid, managing their time and talking with professors.

Reynoso felt at home on the hilltop as soon as she visited, thanks to the peaceful campus and welcoming faculty and staff. In Fall 2018, she moved into Hunt Hall, joined the Social Justice Living Learning Community and started studying the history of the American school system. And, just as she had in middle and high school, she stayed connected to Breakthrough.

That's in part because School of Human Development and Education Dean **Glenda Ballard** had made it a priority to partner with Breakthrough when she was hired in 2016. Ballard, a descendant of sharecroppers and a sixth-generation Texan, is a first-generation college graduate herself. “There wasn't anything like Breakthrough when I was growing up,” she says. “I was lucky that my group of friends wanted to go to college. We didn't really have any idea how to make it happen, but we were each other's motivation when things got tough.”

Then, after graduating from Texas A&M University-Commerce and earning her teaching certification, Ballard came to rely on her colleagues for professional and moral support as a novice English teacher at Commerce High School in the late 1970s. “Needing help and not knowing where or how to get it is a very lonely place to be, whether you're trying to graduate from high school, get through college, or do your job,” she says. In the field of education, specifically, a lack of resources, training and support has taken a toll, with 50 percent of new teachers leaving the profession within five years, according to the U.S. Department of Education. Partnering with Breakthrough, Ballard knew, “would put even more resources into helping everyone — their students and ours — succeed.”

When Ballard approached Breakthrough Executive Director Michael Griffith, he immediately agreed to collaborate. “We knew a partnership would be successful because our missions are so much alike,” he says. “St. Edward's is thoughtful about the student

services they have in place. The student experience is of utmost importance to them, and their staff and faculty are accessible and approachable.”

The university has welcomed Breakthrough middle schoolers to its hilltop campus on three Saturdays each semester for workshops. As the college students lead Breakthrough’s middle schoolers through a project — anything from designing their own energy bar to showcasing their community through photography — the 6th, 7th and 8th graders practice teamwork, critical thinking, problem solving, public speaking and more. They get the added benefit of visiting a college campus and interacting with college students and professors.

“It’s a chance for us to say, ‘I see you. I know what you’re dealing with. I’ve been right where you are,’” says Reynoso, who led a Saturday group during her second semester at St. Edward’s. “Seeing that my own story meant something to them gave me even more confidence to open up and try to connect with them.”

Many St. Edward’s students also serve as Breakthrough summer fellows, where they teach local middle and high schoolers alongside other college students and Breakthrough alumni. After two weeks of intensive training, the fellows lead six-week sessions at schools in Austin, Manor and Del Valle independent school districts in core subjects like math and language arts, and in electives that help students explore interests such as art or fashion.

“Sometimes you’re standing up there and the kids won’t listen, or someone’s being disruptive, or your lesson is not getting through to them,” says Reynoso, who has been a summer fellow with Breakthrough twice. “You just want to cry, but you know you can’t. You have to figure it out and keep going.”

**Kasie Guzman ’23** knows that frustration well. With one summer session under her belt, the aspiring teacher already has a few classroom-management tricks for keeping the students she is teaching engaged, like quick walks on a nice day, call-and-answer cheers, and icebreaker games of Uno before school. She also looks for creative ways to present lessons, like “trashketball” contests with crumpled-up paper to illustrate fractions and percentages: 4 out of 5 shots made equals 80 percent.



▼  
**Top:** 160 AmeriCorps Teaching Fellows work with Breakthrough each year. The fellows teach small groups of middle-school students in math, social studies, science and English. **Left:** Breakthrough Saturdays expose students to events like the Texas Teen Book Festival. **Right:** A 10th grader in the Breakthrough program hones her communication skills during an interview with a community volunteer. **Bottom:** Advisors provide Breakthrough students support at each of the organization’s middle school sites with after-school hours.

▼  
As a first-generation college student, Adriana Reynoso '22 shares a special connection with the students she mentors as a teaching fellow for Breakthrough Central Texas. She and other fellows lead six-week sessions for middle-school students at schools in Austin, Manor and Del Valle independent school districts.



“I’ll try anything if I think it will motivate my students,” she says. “So many kids who are part of Breakthrough have a lot to worry about at home, and sometimes a teacher or a counselor who always shows up is the only consistency they get. If I’m not energetic, I certainly can’t expect them to be.”

Guzman, a Breakthrough student herself, understands this better than most. She joined the program as a 6th grader at Fulmore Middle School (now Lively Middle School) and has relied on her Breakthrough mentors to help her through her mother’s incarceration and conflicts with her stepfamily,

as well as challenges applying to college and securing financial aid. “If you have people in your life who will find any way to be there for you,” she says, “you never feel alone, especially when you want to give up.”

That care is often what low-income or first-generation students need most, says Griffith, Breakthrough’s executive director. “They need someone who believes in them before *they* believe in them, no matter what barriers they face.”

As Reynoso stands in her classroom this summer — her third as a teaching fellow — she wants to take that same personalized

approach and instill that same sense of confidence in her students. “They’re the future,” she says.

Last fall, as the wind whipped around her and she stood surrounded by the barbed-wire perimeter of Natzweiler-Struthof, she felt the weight of her responsibility as a citizen of the world — as someone who wants to teach citizens of the world. “Suddenly the history that I’d only read and learned about felt very real,” she says. “I realized we all have the chance to choose something different for ourselves and our community.”

# Breakthrough on the Hilltop

8

St. Edward's graduates currently working at Breakthrough

24

Alumni of Breakthrough who are currently attending St. Edward's

16

Alumni of Breakthrough with degrees from St. Edward's since the program began in 2002

	Connection	Currently	In Their Words
 <p><b>Krystal Cantú Cossey '07</b> Bilingual Education major</p>	Summer advisor for Adriana Reynoso '22 (and advisor to Reynoso's 13-year-old brother, a Breakthrough student at Pflugerville Middle School)	Program coordinator for Breakthrough middle schoolers in Manor ISD	"There's never quite enough of anything – hours, resources, funds – to go around. But we keep pushing through because it's not just a job; it's become family."
 <p><b>Skylar Jon Garza '19</b> Political Science major</p>	2019 teaching fellow	Saturday class volunteer and 2020 summer teaching fellow for Austin ISD Breakthrough students	"Every first-generation student has a story, but it can be hard to take the plunge and tell it. Breakthrough is a community that pushes us to find our voices."
 <p><b>Kasie Guzman '23</b> Elementary Education major</p>	Breakthrough student since 6th grade, 2019 teaching fellow and Saturday class volunteer	Working toward her Early Childhood–Grade 6 certification to one day teach first-generation Americans	"If not for Breakthrough, I wouldn't be in college. They only see the best in you, and they never give up, even when you want to give up on yourself."
 <p><b>Norma Reyes Jaimes '22</b> Psychology major</p>	Breakthrough student since 6th grade	Student ambassador for Breakthrough freshmen on the hilltop	"Breakthrough has been my backbone. They've provided support and guidance for me – and my family – every step of the way."
 <p><b>Kaomi Matos '22</b> Social Work major</p>	Breakthrough student since 6th grade	Studying to be a social worker specializing in child trauma	"Breakthrough and St. Edward's are such close partners – they know that everyone coming from different walks of life makes college unique."
 <p><b>Tiara Miller '18</b> Acting major</p>	Breakthrough student since 6th grade	AmeriCorps-funded senior leader at Breakthrough's Manor ISD middle school sites	"Breakthrough meant I had a fighting chance at getting my college degree. Together with St. Edward's University, it gave me the tools to achieve my dreams."
 <p><b>Cristofer Olivares '23</b> International Business major</p>	Breakthrough student since 6th grade	Hopes eventually to manage business affairs at a big tech company	"First-generation college students have to make a lot of hard decisions, like leaving home or having to work part time. But the reward is worth the risk."
 <p><b>Marissa Peña '19</b> English Literature major</p>	Breakthrough student since 6th grade and 2018 teaching fellow	AmeriCorps-funded college completion counselor for Breakthrough student Kasie Guzman '23	"Even small victories are victories. As first-generation college students, we're paving the way for the students who will follow us."
 <p><b>Adriana Reynoso '22</b> Elementary Education major</p>	Teaching fellow since 2018 and Saturday class volunteer	Saturday class volunteer and 2020 summer teaching fellow for Manor ISD Breakthrough students	"When my little brother is frustrated, I tell him how much I wish I'd been part of Breakthrough when I was younger and that all his hard work will be worth it."
 <p><b>Eddy Sanchez '22</b> Psychology major</p>	Breakthrough student since 6th grade	Taking a research methods class to learn more about field research in his major	"Your whole college journey is a story that you are writing, so make sure it's something that you're proud of."
 <p><b>Ricardo Apanco Sarabia '19</b> Business Management major</p>	Breakthrough student since 6th grade	AmeriCorps-funded advisor for Breakthrough high-school students in Manor ISD	"Every student I meet is an individual with different needs – I try to adapt my leadership style to meet those needs."



**Brother Edmund Hunt, CSC**  
*President, 1946–1952*



**Brother Raymond Fleck, CSC**  
*President, 1957–1969*





**Brother Elmo Bransby, CSC**  
*President, 1952–1957*



**Brother Stephen Walsh, CSC, '62**  
*President, 1972–1984*

# Holy Cross Roads

Between 1946 and 1984, a fledgling St. Edward's University faced serious challenges. Against tremendous odds, four humble and faithful Holy Cross Brothers, each called to serve as president, brought the university back from the brink and sustained St. Edward's through financial, organizational and cultural transition.

**BY ROBYN ROSS**  
**PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY ERIN STRANGE**

ON A BLISTERING HOT day in July 1946, **Brothers Edmund Hunt, CSC,** and **Simon Scribner, CSC,** stepped off the train that had carried them from Chicago to St. Louis to Austin. Waves of heat rose from the pavement, and the men's black suits absorbed them all. When they reached the St. Edward's campus, the hilltop felt deserted. Most of the university students had left to join the service during World War II, which had ended a year earlier. Main Building and Holy Cross Hall were overdue for repairs. The grass was hip high — and probably full of rattlesnakes — and cicadas mocked them from the branches of the trees. “Well, here we are,” the duo thought. “What have we gotten ourselves into?”

Hunt and Scribner's arrival in Austin marked the beginning of a new era at St. Edward's. The previous year, the priests and brothers of the Congregation of Holy Cross had voted to split into separate societies. The brothers were given responsibility for St. Edward's University, an institution

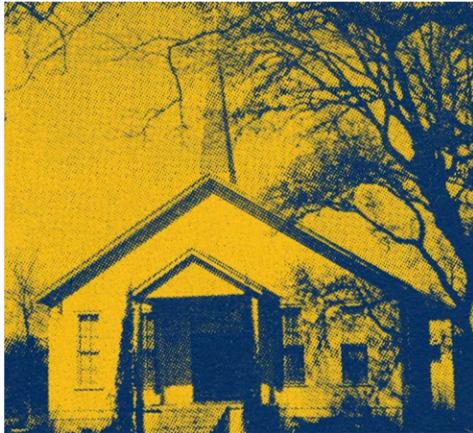
that had barely survived the Depression, only to be drained by the war. The task facing Hunt, the first brother-president of St. Edward's, and Scribner, the vice president, was daunting. But they, along with Holy Cross Brothers who were already working in Austin and the leaders who followed them, would meet the challenge with the clear-eyed pragmatism and humility that are hallmarks of the congregation.

The only four brother-presidents in St. Edward's history — Edmund Hunt, Elmo Bransby, Raymond Fleck and Stephen Walsh — led the university through a 38-year period when it sometimes appeared that St. Edward's would not survive. These decades were filled with challenges for colleges, especially Catholic ones, across the country, as both higher education and the church underwent dramatic changes. The brother-presidents marshaled their limited resources and made strategic, if difficult, decisions to help St. Edward's weather the transitions and enter the 20th century with

## AN ENDURING LEGACY



The construction of the gymnasium (now UFCU Alumni Gym) in 1950 relied on donated materials and free labor.



Prior to becoming the chapel in 1949, the building was a theater, a machine shop and a rifle range.



Brother Edmund Hunt, CSC, oversaw the construction of the gymnasium. He built the original bleachers himself and later refinished the floor.

The Holy Cross Brothers are everywhere on campus. Building names and symbols on the hilltop honor the people and places of the congregation. The Brothers of Holy Cross Garden, dedicated in March, serves as a reminder of the impact of the brothers in the lives of students of all ages at the university.

Illustrations: Erin Reas



**HOLY CROSS HALL**  
Named after the Congregation



**HUNT HALL**  
Named after Edmund Hunt, the first brother-president of St. Edward's



**JACQUES DUJARIÉ HALL**  
Named after Father Jacques Dujarié, who founded the Brothers of St. Joseph in 1820



**BASIL MOREAU HALL**  
Named after Father Basil Moreau, who established the Congregation of Holy Cross

a foundation of excellence. While they quietly worked to transform a university, they lived the mission of the Brothers of St. Joseph, the religious community founded by Father Jacques Dujarié that would become the Congregation of Holy Cross.

"These are the guys who made St. Edward's," says **Brother Richard Daly, CSC, '61**, who knew all four of the brother-presidents. "They created something out of nothing in the beginning."

### ARRIVAL

In the hot summer of 1946, Hunt and Scribner started preparing the empty campus for the influx of student-veterans they knew would soon arrive, supported by the GI Bill. The university had no money for facilities, so Hunt borrowed enough to purchase war-surplus buildings from Camp Swift, an Army training camp near Bastrop, and have them shipped at night, in pieces, to campus. Old barracks, which Scribner described as being "held together with tacks and chewing gum," served as student residences, classrooms and the original St. Joseph Hall. The brothers converted the rifle range that, before the war, had been a theater — and before that, a machine shop — into Our Lady of Victory Chapel. Hunt built the pews himself.

As students arrived and the campus returned to life, Hunt and Scribner reorganized the academic curriculum and created a night-school program to accommodate students from Bergstrom and Gary Air Force Bases. Hunt, 36, had earned his doctorate at the University of Chicago and had taught classical languages and history at the University of Notre Dame before being dispatched to Texas. At St. Edward's, he taught courses in languages, history and art history and led "Great Books" discussions with Scribner, all while serving as president.

A handsome man who somehow always had a tan, Hunt was known among students — behind his back — as "the Greek god." He often wore a cape. Yet he also enjoyed manual labor. Colleagues reported that he would finish teaching a class and immediately set to laying linoleum, pouring concrete sidewalks, repairing a roof or painting walls.

"Edmund Hunt cannot be underestimated in terms of getting St. Ed's off the ground following World War II," says Daly, who has researched the brother-presidents and who took history courses from Hunt in the 1950s. "He made do with nothing."

Hunt, though, wasn't satisfied with nothing. By 1949, he was writing letters to prominent Texas philanthropists — Amon Carter, Herman Brown, Jesse Jones — asking for their support. St. Edward's was then at capacity with 300 students and could accept no more until it built another college dormitory. The school had no endowment and practically no money for scholarships. It owed money for the barracks buildings. And it really needed a gymnasium. Could they help?

Hunt pulled together enough money, donated

1820

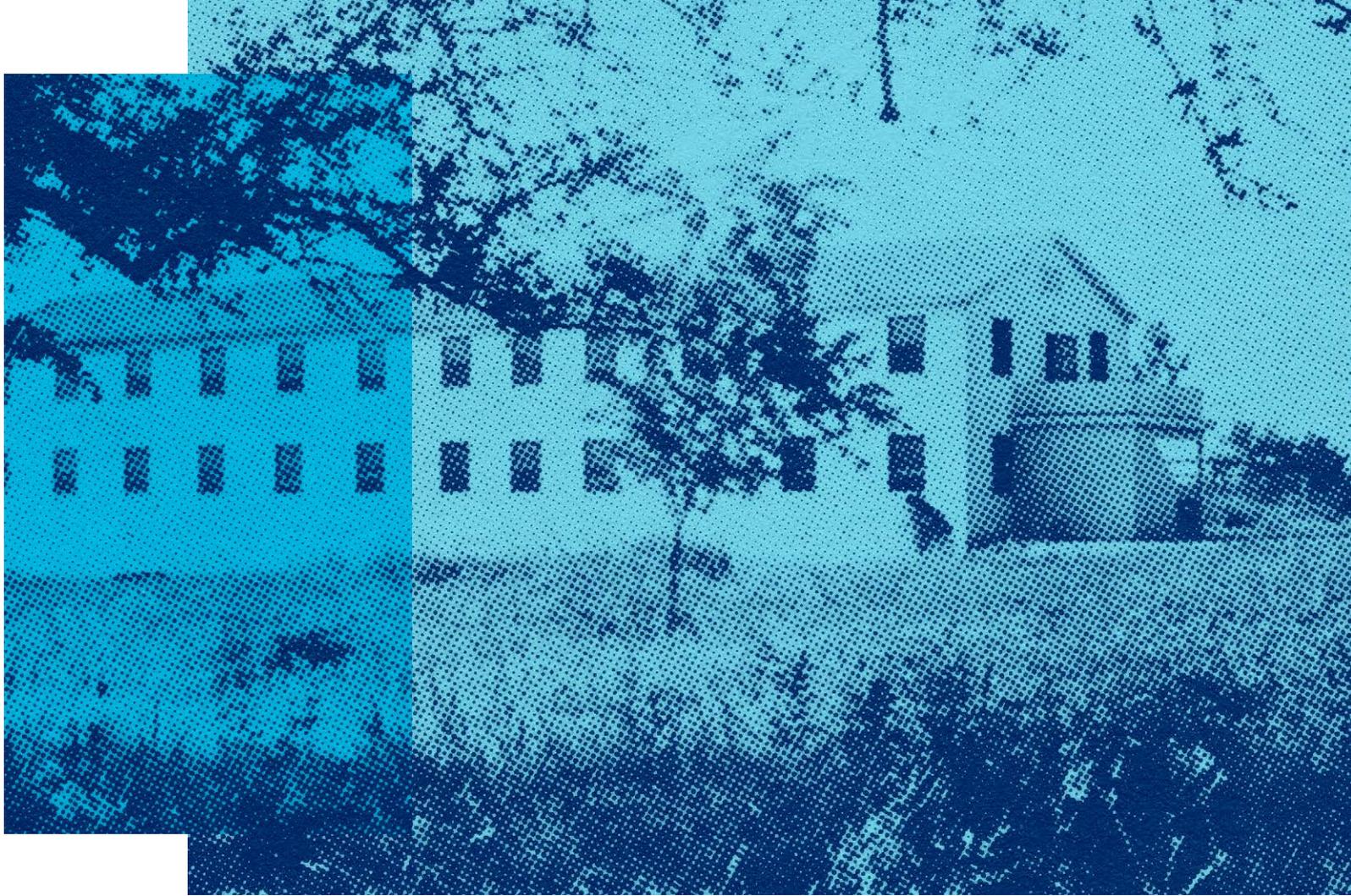
Father Jacques Dujarié starts the Brothers of St. Joseph in France

1837

The Congregation of Holy Cross forms when the Brothers of St. Joseph merge with the Auxiliary Priests

1872

Mary Doyle bequeaths a 400-acre farm to the Catholic Church in Austin for an educational institution



The original André Hall, pictured here in 1950, was a reassembled barracks building from Camp Swift, an Army training camp near Bastrop. André Hall was initially located by the gymnasium, then moved near the current St. André Apartments, where it became the south wing of Vincent Hall. During a move, the old barracks got stuck and Vincent Hall sat in the middle of center field of the baseball diamond. Any ball that hit the building was an automatic double.

materials and free labor to build a gymnasium, today's UFCU Alumni Gym, in 1950. (Hunt constructed the original bleachers himself.) A decade later, after his term as president had ended and he'd spent time in Europe and back at Notre Dame, he returned to St. Edward's to lead the Division of Humanities. He dedicated his summers to refinishing the gym floor in the airless, stifling building, pressing a brother or a student like Daly into service alongside him.

Hunt exemplified what Associate Director of Transfer Student Services **Michael Kinsey '85** calls the "unstated charisms" of Holy Cross. "The well-known characteristics of Holy Cross are in the St. Edward's mission statement: the courage to take risks, an international perspective, meeting students where they are," Kinsey says. "But there are other less public characteristics, things like, 'If there's something that needs to be done, you just do it.' So, if you're the president of the university and the floor needs to be tiled, you just get down there with the grout and you tile it. You don't say, 'That's not my job.' You work hard, and you do whatever needs to be done and whatever the situation calls for."

In those days, the Congregation's rules limited the term of a St. Edward's University president to six years. So in the summer of 1952, Hunt passed the torch to **Brother Elmo Bransby, CSC**, an educational psychologist who had joined the St. Edward's faculty two years earlier and directed the scholasticate, the student broth-

ers' residence. Bransby tackled a problem that had come into focus during Hunt's tenure: The university was not regionally accredited, a deficiency that was costing it grants as well as students. Bransby applied for accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the same body that accredits St. Edward's today. *You'll need a library, a science building and a real dormitory*, the association responded. So Bransby oversaw the construction of the first library, which opened in 1954, and commissioned a master plan for the western portion of campus.

The terrible Texas drought of the 1950s had ended the university's farming operation on part of the original Doyle farm, and during Bransby's tenure the university sold land to make way for Interstate 35, Woodward Street and Ben White Boulevard. The proceeds helped pay for new buildings: student residence André Hall, and a science building designed with help from **Brother Romard Barthel, CSC**, in physics (who also directed the choir) and then **Brother Raymond Fleck, CSC**, a young chemistry professor. In 1957, when Bransby was assigned to the Eastern Vice Province, Fleck was named the next president of St. Edward's.

#### EXPANSION AND UPHEAVAL

Fleck built on the foundation Bransby had laid: He completed the accreditation process and built the facilities in Bransby's master

1878

The first students attend St. Edward's Academy, which Father Edward Sorin established on Doyle's land

1925

St. Edward's receives its state charter as a university

1945

The Congregation of Holy Cross establishes separate provinces for its priests and brothers

1946

The Brothers of Holy Cross assume responsibility for St. Edward's

1946

Brother Edmund Hunt, CSC, becomes the first brother-president

1950

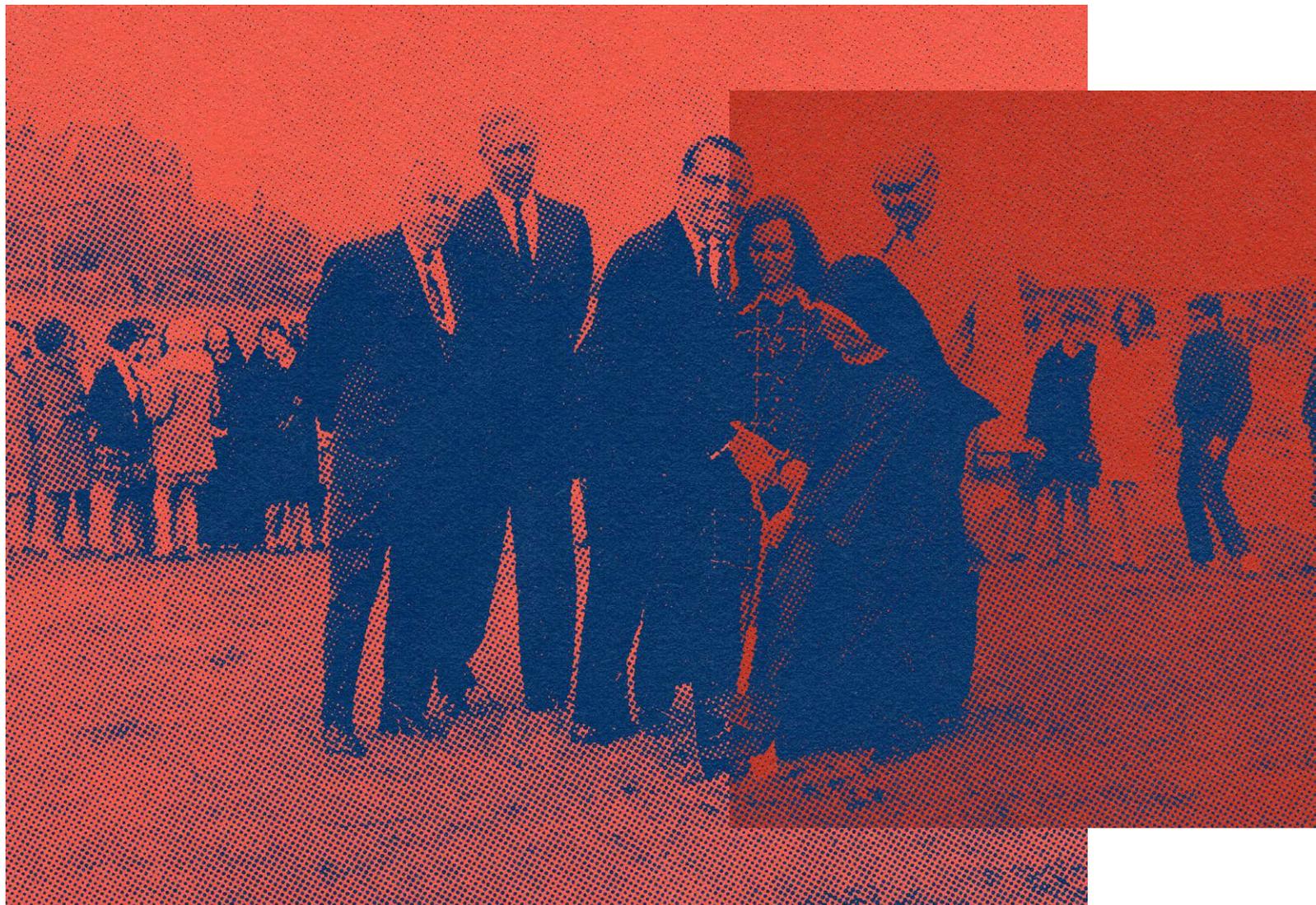
The gym, a project of particular interest to Hunt, is built

1952

Brother Elmo Bransby, CSC, becomes president

1954

The university's first library opens



Raymond Fleck, who became president of the university in 1957, invited the sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary from Michigan to initiate Maryhill College for Women on the university campus. The sisters' arrival provided a way for Fleck to launch a coordinate women's college and nudge the university toward coeducation.

plan, a task that required still more fundraising. He also led the university as the country began to experience a series of dramatic changes in higher education, social norms and the Catholic church, all of which would influence the future of St. Edward's.

"I don't say this as a put-down, but Edmund [Hunt] and Elmo [Bransby] kind of ran the place by the seat of their pants," says Fleck, 93, who today lives in Southern California. He remembers the university treasurer's surprise when he asked for a copy of the budget early in his presidency; evidently no one had been very interested in it before. Fleck and his team put together a 20-page document that spelled out how the university was organized and how it should operate.

In the late 1950s, when Fleck began his presidency, the brothers taught multiple classes and lived in the student residences as hall directors. They traveled across the country to recruit students, and

some coached sports or managed the physical plant. "Everybody had two jobs," Daly says. "Some people had three. These guys in the '50s, '60s and '70s — they did it all. They had to."

But Fleck could see that this system of staffing the university was not adequate for the long term. The brothers had academic expertise and were willing to work hard, but very few had training in college administration. In the late 1950s, higher education was professionalizing other areas of administration besides the historic role of academic affairs. St. Edward's, Fleck realized, would need directors of student affairs, public relations, fundraising and finances.

His first step: Connect with Austin. "When I became president in 1957, St. Edward's was a mystery to the average Austinite," Fleck wrote in an unpublished memoir. "Was St. Edward's a high school or a college? Or was it, perhaps, a seminary?"

1957

Raymond Fleck (a Holy Cross Brother at the time) becomes the third brother-president

Fleck, with help from an alumnus, developed the university's first advertising campaign that reintroduced St. Edward's to the community. He served as a founding member, then president, of the South Austin Rotary Club, where he met prominent local businessmen with expertise the university needed. Several of Fleck's colleagues from the business community joined alumni representatives on the university's lay advisory board, an idea Bransby had implemented near the end of his presidency.

Fleck oversaw the completion of André Hall, the science building, Doyle Hall, the dining hall (today's Fine Arts Center), St. Joseph Hall and Premont Hall. But he knew it would be impossible to borrow money for all this construction. Instead, he hired the university's first development director and began paying personal visits to prospective donors himself. He met with members of the Moody family in Galveston, who contributed first to their namesake academic building and, later, after Fleck spent a morning sipping lemonade on the porch with Mary Moody Northen, to the theater. He drove to South Texas to call on the East family, who contributed a significant gift to build the residence hall that bears the family name.

Fleck realized that the university's future required answers to three major questions: Would the high school continue on campus? Would the university offer any graduate programs? And would St. Edward's admit women? All three decisions would have significant implications for the physical space. He asked the South-West Province provincial, **Brother John Baptist Titzer, CSC**, who provided answers: The high school would eventually leave the campus (it closed in 1967). The question of graduate programs could be answered later. And "the university" — which Fleck interpreted as himself — could decide about women students.

Fleck had watched Bransby float the idea of going coed and be met with immediate backlash. "I wasn't going to walk the plank the way Elmo had," he recalls, with a laugh. Instead, he suggested the university launch a coordinate women's college on campus, an arrangement that existed at other colleges across the country. He figured that if the university could get an order of sisters to establish a women's college that would operate parallel to the existing men's institution, he could offer a compromise to suit both supporters and opponents of coeducation.

In 1966, members of the Immaculate Heart of Mary sisters arrived, at Fleck's invitation, from Michigan to initiate Maryhill College for Women. Men continued their studies under the banner of Holy Cross College of St. Edward's University. Soon, the impracticality of running two schools with duplicate staff on the same campus became clear. In 1969, Maryhill was dissolved and incorporated into a single coed St. Edward's University of about 900 students. Fleck says he considers the admission of women one of his biggest accomplish-

1960

The university's first development director, T.A. Paulissen, is hired

## AN ENDURING LEGACY



**LE MANS HALL**  
Named after the French city where Father Basil Moreau established the Congregation of Holy Cross



**FLECK HALL**  
Named after Raymond Fleck, a former Holy Cross Brother and the third brother-president of St. Edward's



**BROTHER STEPHEN WALSH, CSC, '62 CAMPUS MINISTRY BUILDING**  
Named after Walsh, the fourth and last brother-president of St. Edward's



**SORIN HALL AND SORIN OAK**  
Named after Father Edward Sorin, who established St. Edward's Academy in 1873



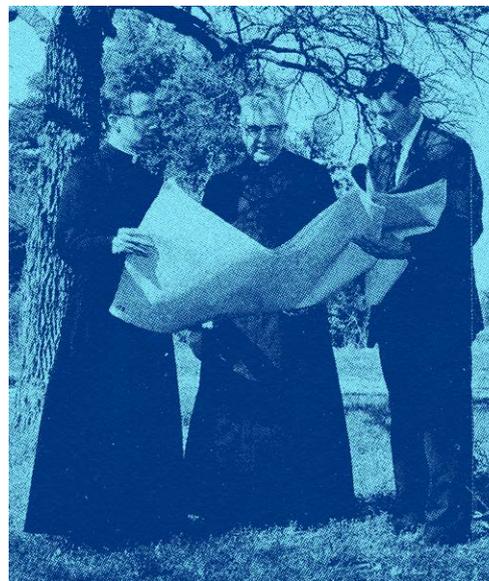
**ST. ANDRÉ APARTMENTS**  
Named after St. André Bessette, the first saint of the Congregation of Holy Cross

1966

Maryhill College for Women opens as a separate, "coordinate" institution on the St. Edward's campus

1967

St. Edward's High School closes



Fleck (left) and his fellow Holy Cross Brothers led the university through a period that saw significant changes, including a building boom, accreditation and professionalization.

ments as president. "It was a pretty painful process for the university, but it has worked out just fine."

### A DIFFICULT TRANSITION

A spirit of creativity and experimentation — and sometimes rebellion — permeated the country in the 1960s. Meanwhile, the Second Vatican Council of 1962–1965 dramatically reshaped Catholic life, including offering laypeople more significant roles in the church. Yet increased opportunities for the laity coincided with a drop in vocations; by 1970, the number of priests, brothers and sisters had begun to decrease.

For years, Catholic colleges had been able to lean on the labor of their religious, who worked without receiving salaries, to run the institutions. But as vocations declined, they could no longer rely on what Daly calls "a living endowment of inexpensive labor" to balance the budget.

Until the late 1960s, the lay advisory board had offered input, but all decisions about university governance were made by an all-Holy Cross board of trustees. As Fleck prepared to step down as president in 1969 and return to chemistry research (he would also leave the brothers, get married and have a family), he drafted a plan for the brothers to turn the operation and legal responsibility for the university over to a new governing board of trustees comprising members of the lay advisory board along with four brothers. Similar transitions were happening at Catholic colleges across the country.

Daly served on that first governing board and remembers that task as a challenging one. "None of us knew anything about being a trustee," he recalls.



An early version of the university seal includes the anchor, which is taken from the seal of the Congregation of Holy Cross.

“We needed some time to adjust to the reality of higher education.”

The president who succeeded Fleck was Edgar Roy, Jr., a layman with higher education experience, who began at St. Edward’s in the fall of 1969.

But Roy, while a kind person, was not the fundraiser that Fleck had been — and by those days, fundraising had become essential for university presidents. In the late 1960s the university had expanded enrollment and academic programs, but the lack of significant grants or private gifts during Roy’s tenure contributed to a large operating deficit. In January 1972, Roy resigned.

**Dick Kinsey**, who joined St. Edward’s in 1969 as Roy’s assistant and worked for the three following presidents, says the legal process of transferring the university to its new board took more than a year. The transition, which triggered people’s emotions about the larger changes in the church and culture, dominated Roy’s tenure as president.

“At this point in history, when all those Catholic institutions took the step toward the first lay president, that guy or gal generally failed,” Kinsey says. “[The brothers] were used to making university decisions sitting at the breakfast table. These people lived together and worked together and prayed together. Moving to a new operational model didn’t happen easily or well in some cases.”

### BACK FROM THE BRINK

The man chosen to right the ship was **Brother Stephen Walsh, CSC, ’62**, then the dean of Education. With his imposing stature and booming voice, Walsh could intimidate. “He wouldn’t tolerate much baloney,” Kinsey remembers. But he had a good sense of humor and the respect of the faculty.

“He had a clear picture of what an academic institution like St. Edward’s — a Catholic institution — ought

## AN ENDURING LEGACY



**BROTHER VINCENT PIEAU RESIDENCE**  
(Next to campus)  
Named after the brother whom Sorin called the cofounder of Holy Cross in America



**FATHER PAUL FOIK, CSC, PLAQUE**  
Honors an early librarian of St. Edward’s who was also a prominent Texas historian



**BROTHER EMMETT STROHMEYER TENNIS COURTS**  
Honors a Holy Cross Brother who coached the tennis team to 25 consecutive conference championships



**LUCIAN-HAMILTON BASEBALL FIELD**  
Honors, in part, longtime athletic director Brother Lucian Bliersch, CSC



**BROTHERS OF HOLY CROSS GARDEN**  
Commemorates the impact the Brothers of Holy Cross had on the lives of students at the university

to look like,” Kinsey says. “And he worked toward that, while at the same time appreciating the value of a quirky faculty and the need for there to be room for idiosyncrasies.”

The board appointed Walsh interim president in January 1972 and installed him as permanent president 11 months later. His initial task was to rescue the university from the brink of financial crisis. Walsh worked with Daly, his development director, to reestablish connections with prospective donors in the Austin business community.

But he still had to make cuts to balance the budget. The university was operating with a deficit that was approaching \$700,000 by Walsh’s stint as interim president. In summer 1974, the Walsh-appointed Presidential Taskforce worked eight hours a day for seven weeks to revise the curriculum and recommend cuts to help the university live within its means. The group included **Brother John Perron, CSC**, who had started teaching English at St. Edward’s in 1970 and went on to direct the Freshman Studies and Writing programs.

“Those were desperate times,” says Perron, who now lives in the Brother Vincent Pieau Residence, the retirement facility next to campus. “The taskforce had to cut majors. It had to cut courses. It had to cut faculty in order to keep us afloat. There were some painful transitions.” But these efforts eliminated the deficit by the 1974–1975 school year.

Walsh understood that the university might be able to stabilize its enrollment — and enact its social justice mission — by serving students who fell outside the “traditional” college-going population. In 1972, he and Kinsey secured the first College Assistance Migrant Program grant, launching a program that endures to this day. In 1974, he initiated New College to serve adults who wanted to pursue a degree during evenings and weekends.

Walsh had a broader vision for the future of St. Edward’s that acknowledged significant changes like coeducation, the shift to lay leadership and the increasing diversity of the student body, says **Brother John Paige, CSC**, who served as dean of Education in the early 2000s.

“He wasn’t afraid to embrace those things,” Paige says. “Walsh was knowledgeable about them because he was an academic and an educator. He was able to move the university in a direction to turn over leadership to well-qualified lay folk who shared the same mission as Holy Cross and who brought skills and great diversity. So instead of a small mom-and-pop school on the hill, St. Edward’s University has progressed far beyond that in recent years.”

Walsh stepped down in May 1984 and took a sabbatical before working with Holy Cross high schools in Southern California and New Orleans. He returned to St. Edward’s in 2005 and served until his death in 2011 as the first executive director of the Holy Cross Institute. The brainchild of current St. Edward’s

1969

Women are admitted to St. Edward’s for the first time and Maryhill College dissolves

1969

Edgar Roy, Jr., the university’s first lay president, is hired



Brother Stephen Walsh, CSC, '62 (center) assumed the helm at St. Edward's in 1972 and brought a broad vision for the university's future. Here, Walsh visits in front of Main Building with two students for an article that appeared in the Texas Star in 1973.

University President **George E. Martin**, the institute is designed to enhance Holy Cross education and equip laypeople to carry on the mission and charisms of the Holy Cross Congregation.

Today, the number of Catholic brothers in the United States is one-third what it was in 1970. The days of brother-presidents at St. Edward's are long over. But the university has been forever shaped by the work of the four brother-presidents — Edmund Hunt, Elmo Bransby, Raymond Fleck and Stephen Walsh — who led it through the middle decades of the last century.

In 1949, Edmund Hunt wrote a fundraising letter to the Kenedy family — well-to-do ranchers in South Texas — laying bare his ambitions alongside the university's struggles. "I hope eventually to make St. Edward's the best Catholic college in the south, even

though by my accomplishments so far, the hope seems dubious," he wrote. "... We have about 300 college students because that is all the housing we have. ... By my check of the records, no person has ever given St. Edward's more than \$1,000 at any time. ..."

If Hunt were alive to see St. Edward's today, it's likely he would barely recognize it. Seven decades after he penned his request, enrollment has increased more than tenfold, the endowment surpasses \$110 million, and St. Edward's has been recognized as one of the nation's best colleges — Catholic or otherwise. That success is the legacy of Hunt and the Holy Cross Brothers, who helped St. Edward's flourish against overwhelming odds. It's a legacy that's carried forward in every student, professor or staff member, every proud alumnus, and all the lives that they touch.

1972

Brother Stephen Walsh, CSC, '62 is appointed president

1984

Walsh, the last brother-president of St. Edward's, steps down

2005

Walsh returns to St. Edward's to begin the Holy Cross Institute

2020

The Holy Cross Brothers celebrate their 200th anniversary



## LEARNING TO BE

# WELL

How do students develop the habits that lead to lifelong wellbeing? Start early and practice often, say professors who research in this area.

**BY ERIN PETERSON**  
**ILLUSTRATIONS BY**  
**NATHALIE LEES**

WHEN STUDENTS ARRIVE at St. Edward's, they know they'll build the skills they need for a career. What they might not realize is that they'll be developing, in tandem, the habits that will foster success on campus and beyond.

The need is stark. According to data from the American College Health Association, nearly nine out of ten college students say they have felt "overwhelmed" in the past 12 months; more than one in four say it has negatively affected

their academic performance. Two-thirds of students report feeling "very lonely."

At St. Edward's, faculty and staff know that they're supporting the whole student. It's why they create courses that are designed to connect students to their community — both on the hilltop and in Austin. It's why they're teaching students to use technology thoughtfully. And it's why they're connecting students to the help they need, exactly when they need it.

This holistic approach is

about more than simply "being healthy," says Senior Director of Recreation and Wellness **Andy Lemons**. It's about giving students the tools to live big lives without compromise. "We want students to be able to take care of themselves so that they can take on their world," he says.

In the pages that follow, we ask six professors to share some of their expertise and research on wellbeing, as well as a few of the practical tips that they encourage their students to implement.

# 1



## MAKE THE MOST OF TECHNOLOGY BY USING IT WITH INTENTION.

In 2014, a study from Princeton and UCLA indicated note-takers using pen and paper retained more information than their counterparts who used computers. It made waves not just in the academic world but in the rest of it, too. Splashy headlines insisted that tech really was ruining us, making us dumber even as it promised to make us ever smarter.

The only problem? It's turned out that subsequent research hasn't validated those findings. Projects by Associate Professor of Psychology **Michael Disch**, for example, suggest that we don't remember information any better when we write it by hand than when we type with a computer.

(In certain memory tasks, in fact, people who took no notes at all did better than their note-taking peers.)

But don't toss your keyboard or your notebook just yet. Disch says that the big difference between those who remember information and those who forget it has more to do with mindset than note-taking. "What really matters is that people pay attention and think deeply about the material, rather than letting it go in one ear and out the fingers," he says. "If you're just transcribing or mindlessly writing down words, that's not going to be useful, regardless of what you're doing."

In other words, while you should absolutely take notes at your next important class or meeting, the most important thing to have ready is your brain, prepared to be fully engaged.

# 2



## Explore emotions beyond those of traditional gender norms.

The messages to boys start early: *Man up. Don't show emotions.* By the time they hit adolescence, many have internalized ideas of toxic masculinity at the expense of embracing empathy and compassion.

To avoid or misunderstand these emotions is harmful for boys *and* girls — and, later, men and women, says Associate Professor of Social Work **Adam McCormick**. By looking beyond traditional gender norms, boys can learn to express their emotions in healthy ways, says McCormick, and ultimately reduce gender violence and the power differential between genders. "The rate of suicide for 17-year-old boys is seven times what it is for girls," McCormick says. "But we have trouble talking about masculinity and mental health in boys."

We can't change society's gender expectations overnight. Still, finding ways for boys to share emotions and transforming ideas around masculinity can interrupt the damaging messages boys receive.

3

## CONNECT YOUR MOST IMPORTANT POLITICAL VALUES WITH REAL ACTION.

As a political theorist, Assistant Professor of Political Science **David Thomason** spends much of his time in the classroom talking about aspirational values like freedom of speech, fairness and equality. But he says students often don't internalize those ideas fully until they do nuts-and-bolts projects outside the classroom.

In recent years, for example, his students have worked on projects to add traffic lights and speed zones to busy areas around high schools. They've advocated for legislation at the State Capitol, working to build coalitions,

attract media attention and meet with government officials.

Thomason says the lessons they draw from their experiences are powerful. "They see all of the places where the system can be influenced and how they can influence the system," Thomason says.

These activities lead them to realize that their voices matter and that they can use them. "When you see [something in a textbook], you think, 'How can I ever have an impact on public decisions?'" Thomason says. "But I want students to say, 'I can actually do something about this.'"



# 4

## TEST A SUSTAINABLE PRACTICE IN YOUR OWN LIFE.

Professor of Environmental Science and Policy **Peter Beck** can tell you all the statistics in the world about the benefits of sustainable practices. He can tell you that in Costa Rica, the country's national sustainability policies have been linked to high scores on quality of life, health and education. He can tell you that cities designed for walking and biking tend to have healthier, less-stressed residents. He can tell you about the growing body of research that shows children who spend significant time in nature see benefits in not just their physical health, but their mental health as well.

But he says the facts aren't nearly as powerful as lived experience. That's why he has his students experiment with implementing sustainable lifestyle changes, such as "avoiding driving by yourself by taking the city buses, avoiding highly processed food or meat, and minimizing your electricity and water use," he says.

Beck says students frequently discover that reducing resource use can unexpectedly improve their quality of life. His students have told him they've learned that shorter showers give them more time in the morning, that skipping a Netflix show allows them to meet up with a friend for a walk, and that avoiding processed foods leads them to feel more energetic.

And that's part of the point. "Sustainability isn't just about the environment," he says. "It provides social, health and economic benefits."





5

## You Are Not Alone

Associate Professor of Psychology **Tomas Yufik** studies and supports veterans who have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and he says one of the most challenging parts of the treatment process is reducing the stigma around getting help. To address this, psychologists spend much of their time normalizing: helping people understand that what they're experiencing is common.

These same ideas are valuable in his work with students. "They may be living with some experience that they never want to talk about," he says. "But there is a whole world of people who have experienced something similar and who are committed to helping them."

## FIND THE ADULTS WHO "GET" YOU.

Assistant Professor of Counseling **Kerrie Taylor** knows that teens often don't get much respect. Adults roll their eyes at the very real emotions that they experience after difficult break-ups, social snubs or just the high-stakes stresses of everyday life.

But adolescents who find adults who both champion their successes and can empathize with the challenges that they face can see huge boosts in their wellbeing. It's part of the reason there's an entire team of counselors at St. Edward's who stand at the

ready when students need them.

Counselors aren't necessarily fixing teens' problems, says Taylor. But they're attentive adults who get to know these students and meet them where they are. "Just being able to validate [students'] feelings and experiences, instead of trying to brush over them or pretend like their feelings don't exist," can make a difference, she says.

She and counselors at St. Edward's stay in touch with the emotions and life experiences of young adults so they can offer support that

has an impact. "You have to have an emotional vocabulary to do that. [You need to be able to sit] across from another person and say, 'I know this really sucks right now. This really hurts. This is very sad for you,'" Taylor says.

Students who have adults in their lives who understand them and value them are able to internalize the idea that they are important. Even more than that, teens gain self-awareness and the language to describe emotions in ways that can make them empathetic to others.



## Why It's Time to LiveWellSEU

At St. Edward's, wellbeing is more than a buzzword. A new LiveWellSEU initiative brings together a range of programs, departments and offices on campus to support students' wellbeing in a holistic way.

While development of the initiative is ongoing, Senior Director of Recreation and Wellness **Andy Lemons** says the overarching idea, along with some of the improvements that have already been implemented, will have a big impact on students. Here's how:

### The transition from high school to college will get easier.

Most students love their college experience, but not always right from the start. "Students experience feelings of loneliness, a lack of connectivity and stress from expectations of high achievement," says Lemons. St. Edward's has committed to providing more robust programming, from

counseling services to student financial services, that will help students manage stress and find the support they need, exactly when they need it.

### Students will be in environments that make healthy decisions easier.

The Recreation and Athletic Center expansion, for example, includes tech-free

lounges and spaces for students to take naps between classes to help them recharge if they need it.

### Trained peers will give advice students actually want to take.

A new program called Peer Wellness Champions will train students to act as "guides" to help others make good decisions about health and

wellness or connect with specific campus services.

### Students will learn the tools to succeed at St. Edward's and in the world beyond.

"We're always asking: What are the challenges that our students face?" says Lemons. "We want to help them manage their own wellness and provide services where needed."

# red doors



## TOP OF THE GAME

### Level Up

Sheri Graner Ray changes the world one pixel at a time, and she keeps aiming higher.

BY LISA THIEGS

Sheri Graner Ray '97 grew up in the Rio Grande Valley town of McAllen, where there were no game stores or comic book shops and only a couple of small computer stores. As a child, she played imagination and role-playing games with friends. In the early 1980s, she led a group in Austin that regularly played Dungeons and Dragons (D&D).

And that's when she fell into the computer gaming industry. A newer member of her D&D group noticed that Ray was exceptional at writing rule sets and game scenarios and suggested she would be a great fit at the company where he worked. She applied and, within a month, was hired as a game designer for Origin Systems.

"After the first three or four months, I thought, 'This isn't going to last. They're not going to keep paying me to do this,'" Ray says.

But 30 years later, after having worked for some of the biggest gaming companies in the industry, she's still going strong. "It's been a pretty fun ride, and it just keeps going."

As a designer, she decides how the fictional world within the game works. She builds the rule sets and designs the story, characters and plot line. "I'm somewhere between a choreographer, a script writer and a director," she says.

Ray earned her English and Creative Writing degree from St. Edward's during her time at Origin Systems. She has gone on to create training games for the U.S. Department of Defense that increased participants' skill retention by 22% over traditional training methods. She has designed the software experience behind a couple of rides for major theme parks. She has contributed

## HIGH SCORES

**1** Worked for leading video game companies like Origin Systems, Sony Online Entertainment, HeR Interactive and Schell Games. She's now a senior game designer for Maxis, a division of Electronic Arts, which produces the *Sims* games.

**2** Won the prestigious International Game Developers Association Community Contribution Award in 2005.

**3** Founded Women in Games International, a professional trade organization that helps give women a voice in the industry.

**4** Named one of the 100 most influential women in the video game industry in 2004 by *The Hollywood Reporter*.

to a multitude of games for computers, multiplayer gaming systems and mobile devices. Some of the most recognizable titles include *Ultima* (one of the games that established the computer role-playing game genre), *Star Wars Galaxies* (the first massively multiplayer *Star Wars* online role-playing game) and *Nancy Drew* (one of the early games targeted to girls).

Ray has seen many changes over the years — including the role of women in gaming. Back when she started out, the prevailing mentality in the gaming industry was that women didn't play games. Today, women represent a significant share of the market. "I want to give women a space at the table," she says. "When there are just a few women at a company, their voices get trivialized. When we join together, now we've got some weight to our voice."

# AGAINST THE GRAIN

Veronica Garza MBA '08 gave up her beloved tortillas after a diagnosis. Then she had an epiphany that led to the creation of one of the fastest-growing national food brands.

BY ROBYN ROSS

Growing up in a Mexican American family in Laredo, Veronica Garza MBA '08 ate tortillas every day — sometimes at every meal. The warm scent of the freshly cooked tortillas greeted her each time she walked into her grandmother's house.

But after being diagnosed with multiple auto-immune conditions, she stopped eating grain to see if a different diet would reduce her symp-

toms. That shift, coupled with other lifestyle changes, helped. But not being able to eat tortillas felt like turning her back on her heritage. Her parents and four siblings gave up grain in solidarity. "We weren't able to partake in a part of our culture that we really loved," Garza says.

She started experimenting in the kitchen, developing an almond-flour tortilla that had a soft, buttery flavor. Her taste-testers

— first Garza's immediate family, then members of her CrossFit gym — approved. But when her grandmother tried the tortillas and proclaimed them better than her own, Garza knew she had a winning recipe.

In 2014, with her mother and brother Miguel, Garza launched Siete Foods, named for the seven members of Garza's nuclear family, all of whom quickly joined the business. The

Austin-based company now has more than 60 employees and, in 2019, received a \$90 million investment from Stripes, a growth equity firm. In addition to tortillas made from almond, cassava, coconut, chickpea and cashew flowers, Siete makes grain-free chips and dairy-free queso, all products Garza says are designed to allow people with dietary restrictions to eat foods they've been missing.

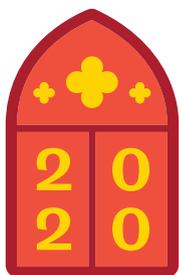
Garza says customers often tell her Siete's products have changed their lives. "This might be the first time in 10 or 15 years that they're able to eat a tortilla or a chip," she says. "That feedback is one reason we keep innovating and doing what we're doing. With these foods, my family started to feel more connected to each other and to our culture, and I wanted more people to have access to that."



## 3 LESSONS FROM MY MBA

- 1** To start a business, you don't have to be good at everything yourself. Once you figure out your strengths, find others who have complementary ones.
- 2** Whenever you're generating ideas, focus on the problem you're trying to solve. Siete developed out of me trying to solve a problem for myself, then realizing there were others who would benefit, too.
- 3** Teamwork makes projects more enjoyable. At Siete, we say, *Juntos es mejor*, which means "Together is better."

# Hilltopper Connection



**At Homecoming & Family Weekend 2020, we celebrated the outstanding achievements of seven alumni and one Hilltopper Athletics coach.**

300

DONUTS SERVED

Tailgating on Saturday is Homecoming and Family Weekend's most popular event, featuring great food, a DJ, a caricaturist, local beer, train rides for little Toppers, our live goat mascot and more.

46

GOLDEN GUARD INDUCTEES

We celebrated 46 alumni who graduated 50 years ago, including the first women to graduate from St. Edward's.



This year's alumni award honorees include (from left) Kevin Koch '80, MBA '84; Sonia Hurtado '04; and Brother Larry Atkinson, CSC, '70. To the right of President George E. Martin, Ph.D., are the five Athletics Hall of Fame inductees: Nichole Stroup '00 (women's basketball), Robin (Becker) Keller '08 (softball), Kelsey (Yeatts) Baird '09 (women's soccer), Mike Smith (soccer coach), and Matthew Hatcher '10 (men's golf).

**Read more about our awardees at [stedwards.edu/homecoming](https://stedwards.edu/homecoming).**

## ALUMNI EVENTS

### VIRTUAL EVENTS

**➔** You can count on the Hilltopper family – anytime. Now, stay connected with unique opportunities like these. Visit [stedwards.edu/alumni](https://stedwards.edu/alumni) for more.



**COOKING CLASS**  
Join us in the kitchen for a virtual cooking experience.



**HOOF DONOR RECEPTION**  
Learn about the impact you're making and meet fellow donors.



**PAINT WITH US**  
Stretch your creativity along with your fellow alumni.

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## 5 WAYS TO UPLIFT EACH OTHER

Our Holy Cross mission strengthens our community – even during deeply challenging times – as it reminds us to approach each other with hope, encouragement and supportive concern. Discover ways to uplift and inspire yourself and your entire Hilltopper community throughout this global pandemic.

### Enrich Your Mind and Spirit

Join the Alumni Association for a virtual petting zoo, cooking class, blessings from the director of Campus Ministry, and other one-of-a-kind content sourced from our community.

### Give a Laptop

Sixty students need laptops to pursue their academic goals online. A charitable gift of \$500 puts the computer in their hands for the remainder of remote instruction.

### Provide Immediate Relief

Students impacted by COVID-19 continue to request emergency support. Your gift to the Hilltoppers Overcoming Obstacles Fund (HOOF) helps with unexpected travel, housing needs or other necessities.

### Get to Know a Student

The Hilltopper Pen Pal program connects you with a current student. Deepen the spirit of community in your own life and theirs while you interact through email, letters or phone calls.

### LEARN MORE



Visit [stedwards.edu/alumni](https://stedwards.edu/alumni) for links to these opportunities.

### Connect with Classmates

Virtual reunions and Netflix watch parties are coming soon! Discover new ways to share time with cherished friends (and start new relationships) while you stay safe at home.

# moments

## OF RELAXATION

“I practice wellness by doing a combination of hobbies that make me happy, while sticking to my work and school schedule. Rugby has always played into my wellness because it’s an escape — no matter how stressful my week has been, I can run hard for an hour straight on the field. I’m able to get all that emotion out. I always feel so relaxed and relieved when I walk away from the pitch.”

◀ **James Russo '20**  
Criminal Justice major



## OF WHOLENESS

“Wellness is more than just the physical aspect. When you think of the spiritual aspect, the Recreation and Athletics Center has a tech-free room, which plays soft music and allows for meditation. There are also e-sports, which I’m really into, too. There’s just so many aspects of wellness you can pull into your life that build you up as a person.”



◀ **Tristin Castillo '20**  
Criminal Justice major



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**ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED**

## **Homecoming!**

For three days in February, more than 2,000 alumni, students and parents – and one floral-adorned goat – gathered on the hilltop to celebrate the spirit of St. Edward's.

