

GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY
THE MERCY UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

GCU MAGAZINE

VOLUME 23 FALL 2025



POWERING THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION:

Georgian Court's
New Ed.D. Program

GCU MAGAZINE

VOLUME 23 FALL 2025

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Georgian Court University Magazine is published by the Office of Institutional Advancement and our partners at Princeton Strategic Communications (PSC). Phone: 732-987-2232 • E-mail: advancement@georgian.edu

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends,

This fall marks an exciting new chapter for Georgian Court University as we continue to build on our mission of preparing leaders who serve with compassion, courage, and vision.

One of our proudest milestones is the launch of the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Educational Leadership, GCU's second doctoral program and a bold step forward in expanding access to advanced education (p. 24). The Ed.D. reflects our deep commitment to academic excellence, innovation, and the Mercy tradition that guides all we do.

That same mission is reflected across our campus and in the lives of our students. Through our Some College, No Degree initiative, we are helping students return to complete their education, offering the resources and encouragement they need to finish what they started (p. 32). Their determination reminds us that higher education should always remain within reach for those ready to pursue their dreams.

We also celebrated the first full academic year of the Sister Maria Cordis Richey Center for the Humanities and Creative Arts (p. 6). Named for an alumna, former president, and poet, the Richey Center has quickly become a vibrant space where creativity and critical thinking flourish, enriching both campus and community life.

Our students continue to find innovative ways to learn, connect, and compete. Esports has emerged as a dynamic part of campus culture, with a new gaming lounge, intercollegiate competition, and an academic minor (p. 22). And in April, our AI-powered chatbot, Roary, began supporting students by checking in, answering questions, and helping them navigate university resources (p. 12).

Our faculty remain at the heart of this progress. Their teaching, research, and mentorship shape the GCU experience and inspire excellence in every discipline. Dr. Vincent Chen, associate professor of exercise science, exemplifies this commitment through his blend of scholarship, innovation, and personal care in preparing future health leaders (p. 8).

The past year also brought opportunities for cultural exchange and global discovery, including study abroad experiences in Puerto Rico, Iceland, and Chile, and a Japanese tea ceremony that brought international traditions to our campus (p. 16). These experiences encourage our students to explore the world with empathy and curiosity.

As Georgian Court continues to grow, we remain grounded in gratitude for the leadership and dedication that brought us here. We extend our appreciation to Dr. Joseph R. Marbach, who retired earlier this year after a decade of dedicated service as president. His stewardship helped guide the university through change and positioned it for the future (p. 28).

Looking ahead, I am truly inspired by how Georgian Court continues to evolve while remaining true to its Mercy core values. We celebrate new academic frontiers, empower students to achieve their goals, and strengthen the bonds that make our community so special. With faith in our mission and confidence in our shared purpose, we step forward—stronger, more connected, and ever guided by Mercy.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eugene J. Cornaccia". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Eugene J. Cornaccia, Ph.D.
Interim President

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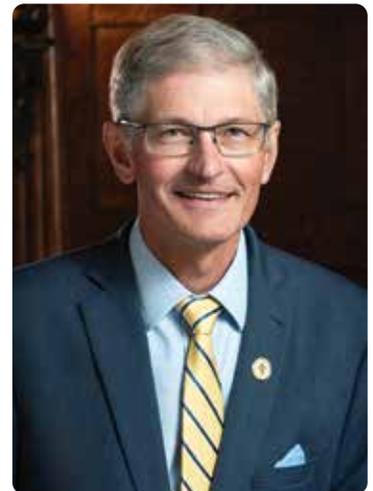
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SISTER MARIA CORDIS RICHEY CENTER CELEBRATES ITS FIRST ACADEMIC YEAR

Since its opening in the Fall 2024 semester, the Sister Maria Cordis Richey Center for the Humanities and Creative Arts has quickly become a vibrant hub for the humanities at Georgian Court. The Richey Center was named to honor the legacy of Sister Maria Cordis Richey, RSM, Ph.D., '50, an alumna, beloved former GCU president, prolific poet, and professor of english.

The Center elevates the presence of the humanities and creative arts across the university, inspiring campus and community members to explore and showcase them. For undergraduates, it provides resources to conduct research, develop creative projects, and engage in experiential learning, while for faculty, it coordinates teaching and research initiatives to foster interdisciplinary collaboration. Beyond campus, the Richey Center engages community audiences with programming highlighting the relevance of the humanities and creative arts in the 21st century.

The Richey Center's strength lies in its multidisciplinary approach, which produces a deeper understanding of people, cultures, beliefs, and experiences from multiple perspectives. "It's all about creating connections and showing relevance. The humanities bring people together and create a human bond; it's called the humanities for a reason," said Dr. Paul Cappucci, Director of the Richey Center and Chair of the Department of English and Interdisciplinary Studies.



Since its opening, the Richey Center has achieved several milestones. A "virtual" Richey Center on Blackboard was created to connect faculty, staff, and students with humanities events and topics. The site also includes a dedicated humanities career resources section for students. Poetry Nooks across campus offer a quiet space for reflection, comfortable seating, and free books on a variety of topics—not just poetry—including selections from Sister Maria's own collection. A compilation of past and current campus performances, lectures, and events is also available on a dedicated Richey Center YouTube playlist hosted by the Sister Mary Joseph Cunningham Library.

During the fall 2024 and spring 2025 semesters, the Richey Center hosted or co-sponsored 31 events, many of which were interdepartmental collaborations involving

faculty from multiple disciplines. These events drew over 380 attendees across campus, providing opportunities to connect and experience the humanities and creative arts together. “The attendance is a testament to how people are willing to show up for the humanities,” said Christine Stevenson, MLS, Assistant Director of the Richey Center and Outreach and User Engagement Librarian.



These events offered something for everyone—from tributes that brought the past to the present, such as *A Tribute to Jessica Dragonette*, *A Johnny Cash Tribute: “The Man in Black,”* and the *Gilded Age Experience*, to opportunities to explore the art of poetry in *A Dose of Poetry: Visiting Poet Alicia Cook*, and to programs connecting the humanities with nursing, integrative health, and English through the *Medical Humanities Forum*.



The Richey Center celebrates the humanities and creative arts in Sister Maria’s honor with each event. “Cordis in Latin means of the heart, and her legacy is that heart, that love,” stated Dr. Cappucci. “We are committed to this center and believe in what we are trying to do, to not only honor Sister Maria’s legacy, but

to build on that great GCU humanities legacy and show the value of what the humanities can bring to everyone,” he added.



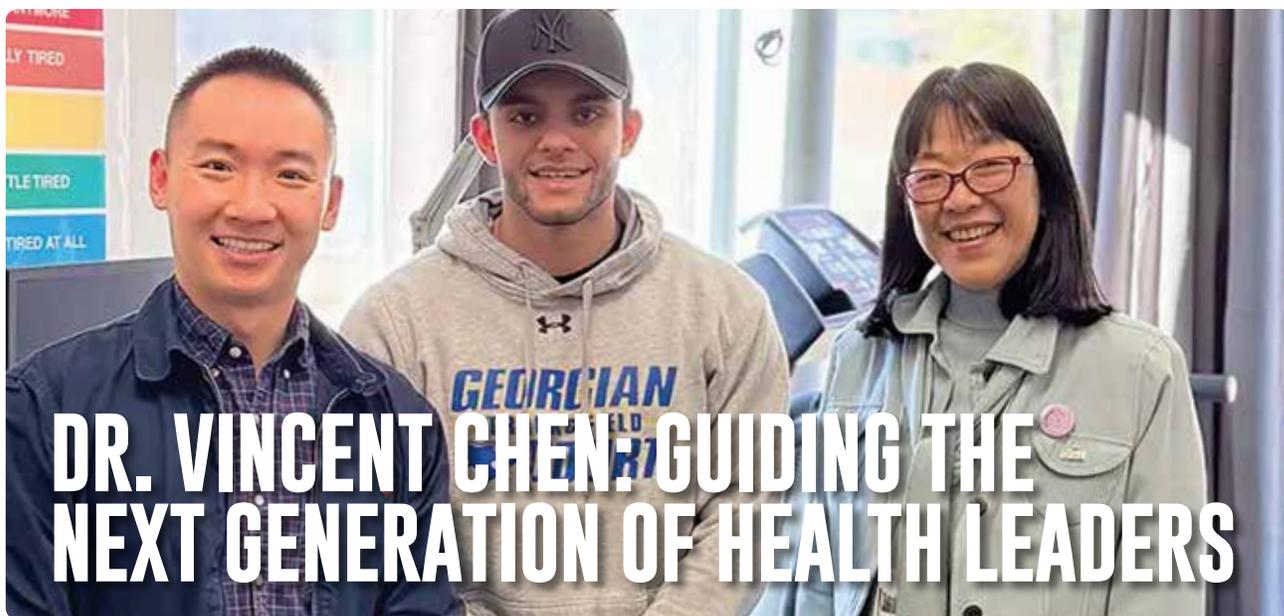
Sister Maria, who retired in 2011 and is still quoting Shakespeare from memory at 96 years old, demonstrates a tremendous love of language, literature, and poetry. She has left a lasting mark on future generations and maintains deep connections with students, colleagues, and the Georgian Court campus community.

“What I love most about Sister Maria Cordis is her ability to bring the energy of joy to everything, and there’s a calmness that comes with that type of person,” expressed Christine, who was one of her students. “I just want to carry on that legacy of spreading joy and perspective, more than anything.”

“We need to rejoice in accomplishment, because without it, we might not have the strength for our wings to soar to the stars,” Sister Maria once said. “We need to remember how much we can do, how much we have done...but we also need to remember that there is so much yet to do, so much yet undone. We need to aspire as well as bless our past accomplishments. The world needs both our accomplishments and our aspirations. We need both wings.”

This quote epitomizes the Richey Center, which has accomplished much in its first year yet continues to spread its wings, aspiring to reach even greater heights in the future.

The Richey Center has received generous support from the Georgian Court community and beyond, including its Advisory Council members, event attendees, and especially its donors. As the Center is fully funded by donations, community member support is essential to bringing more programs to life. To contribute, please visit link.georgian.edu/richeycenter. 🐾



DR. VINCENT CHEN: GUIDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF HEALTH LEADERS

As an associate professor of exercise science at Georgian Court, Dr. Vincent Chen brings a blend of research expertise and student-centered teaching. Born in Taiwan, he came to the United States in 2007 to pursue a degree in health and kinesiology, a field that interests him both academically and practically.

“Whatever you do in the future, even if it’s not directly related to exercise science, the knowledge can improve your health and help the people you care about,” he said. “That’s what makes it so valuable.”



After earning his Ph.D. from Texas A&M University, Dr. Chen joined Georgian Court in 2017. Today, he teaches courses from Exercise Physiology to Sports Nutrition, mentors students on research and internships, and serves as director of the university’s Honors Program.

A Commitment to Teaching and Mentorship

Dr. Chen didn’t always plan on becoming a professor. But even in elementary school, he found joy in helping others

understand and improve themselves. That early passion for mentorship stayed with him and became central to his teaching philosophy.

“When I was teaching 250 students in a big auditorium, I didn’t know any of their names,” he said. “At GCU, I build relationships with every student. They deserve that.”

His belief in student-centered teaching led him to choose Georgian Court over larger institutions. “I asked myself: Do I want to work at a big school where people barely know each other, or do I want to build something meaningful with my students and colleagues?” he said. “The answer was clear.”

Research That Makes an Impact

Dr. Chen’s research focuses on real-world applications that improve health, performance, and quality of life. He includes students through every step of the process, including study designs, data collection, presentation, and publication.

“I don’t just assign research—I do it with them,” he said. “When students feel ownership over a project, they take pride in the process. That’s where real growth happens.”

He has mentored students on various projects, including those supported by NASA's NJ Space Grant Consortium. These competitive, student-led opportunities allow participants to gain valuable research experience while building their résumés. Dr. Chen guides them in structuring and executing projects that are both rigorous and achievable.

Earlier in his career, he co-authored a widely cited study that helped debunk the myth that eggs raise cholesterol levels. "At the time, it was still common to hear people say 'Don't eat too many eggs,'" he said. "But our findings showed that for healthy individuals, dietary cholesterol from eggs wasn't the risk people thought it was. That study helped move the conversation forward."

More recently, Dr. Chen and his students explored the physiological benefits of *Kanpu Masatsu*, a traditional Japanese self-massage technique using a dry towel. Using wearable sleep trackers, they found the practice may improve sleep quality—a simple and affordable wellness approach. Other projects have examined blood flow restriction training and even the physical and emotional responses of athletes during esports competition.

Across all projects, Dr. Chen ensures students ask questions, present at conferences, and see how research can directly improve lives.

Building Pathways for the Future

Dr. Chen's impact goes beyond the classroom and lab. He also prepares students for life after graduation by helping them turn academic experiences into professional opportunities.

As the coordinator of exercise science internships, he connects students with placements tailored to their goals. Whether they aspire to become physical therapists, occupational therapists, conditioning coaches, or personal trainers, students are encouraged to explore the field they're passionate about. He often draws on his

growing network of professionals, including Georgian Court alumni he once taught, to make these matches.

"When my former students become PTs or OTs and come back to mentor current students, that's the full circle moment," he said. "I want them to graduate with a degree, connections, and confidence."

"Seeing my students succeed, and eventually relying on my students in the future. That's the best scenario for me."

Dr. Chen also builds pathways for students beyond the university campus. Through the NJSTEP program, he teaches college-level courses in New Jersey correctional facilities, giving incarcerated individuals a second chance to pursue education.

"When I was a student in Texas, I studied on a scholarship funded by taxpayers," he said. "So now, I want to give back. Teaching in the NJSTEP program lets me do that."

More Than a Professor

Dr. Chen is a professor, research mentor, and internship advisor, but above all, he sees himself as a guide and supporter in his students' journeys.

"I always tell my students, 'Your success is my success,'" he said. "If they become outstanding physical therapists, healthcare providers, or just healthier, happier people, I've done my job."

Many of his students stay in touch well beyond graduation, supporting one another's careers, organizing reunions, and reaching out with updates and gratitude. That lasting bond is one of the most fulfilling parts of his role.

Ultimately, his greatest goal is simple: "Seeing my students succeed, and eventually relying on my students in the future. That's the best scenario for me," he said.

As for his future? Dr. Chen jokes that he's aiming for the Nobel Peace Prize for teaching or, at the very least, free healthcare from his former students. 🐾

CUNNINGHAM FAMILY CONTINUES LEGACY OF GIVING WITH BOOK DONATION

The Cunningham family gathered once again on campus for their annual family picnic, a cherished tradition that celebrates their long-standing connection to Georgian Court University. This year, their visit included a special gift: a donation of a richly detailed family history book to the Sister Mary Joseph Cunningham Library, presented by family member Jeffrey Sandy. The book documents the history and stories of the Cunningham family and their extended relatives, many of whom share deep roots in the Irish community of Glentogher, County Donegal.

The volume was created as a labor of love and preservation by editor Teish Doherty, who wanted to honor her father's legacy by recording the rich heritage of Glentogher descendants. Featuring over forty essays and historical photo-



graphs, the book explores family ties and cultural history, including a dedicated chapter on Sister Mary Joseph—known affectionately as “Aunt Maisie” to the family—and her lasting impact on Georgian Court. This donation enriches the library’s collection and serves as a unique cultural document for many alumni connected to the Irish diaspora.

Beyond the gift itself, the family’s commitment extends further: proceeds from the book’s unexpected success have been donated to several nonprofit organizations in Carnonagh, Ireland. The Cunningham family’s ongoing support continues to strengthen Georgian Court’s community spirit and preserve its rich history for future generations. 🐾

A MURAL WITH A MISSION

Georgian Court’s newest mural, located just outside the campus bookstore, brings color to the wall and cleaner air to the community.

Created as part of the *UniDos: Chile Exchange Program & Climate Education Initiative*, this eco-conscious mural incorporates Photio, an innovative paint additive developed in Chile. When activated by sunlight, Photio mimics photosynthesis, purifying the air by absorbing pollutants and CO₂, equivalent to the work of 50 trees.

Designed by Georgian Court alumna and artist Emily Donovan '15, the mural reflects global and local environmental challenges, from beach cleanups and wildfires to overdevelopment and deforestation. “Some of the paints are made from natural materials, like dirt, berries, and clay, so it’s completely eco-friendly,” she noted.



Led by Laura Dunn, Director of Global Education Programs, this is the university’s third mural project using Photio, following previous installations in Quintero, Chile, and at Clifton Avenue Elementary School in Lakewood. Each mural serves as a symbol of action and hope, reminding us that even small steps can make a big impact. 🐾

SUPPORTING TOMORROW'S TEACHERS

The Early Educator Award, funded by the Lambda Chapter of the New Jersey State Organization of Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, provides financial assistance to rising teachers to help cover expenses associated with earning a New Jersey state-approved teaching certificate. 🐾



From left: Lauran Schwerthoffer '24, EEA Recipient; Marilyn E. Gonyo, Ed.D., Trustee; and Deborah Snyder, Assistant Dean for Accreditation & Licensure.



From left: Marilyn E. Gonyo, Ed.D., Trustee; Kendall Holman '25, EEA Recipient; and Amuhelang Magaya, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Education.

THE INGRID RIVERA-ZUNIGA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The Ingrid Rivera-Zuniga Memorial Scholarship honors the life, spirit, and aspirations of Ingrid Sabrina Rivera-Zuniga, a Criminal Justice major and student-athlete at Georgian Court University who dreamed of becoming a detective. Known for her courage, determination, and dedication to justice, Ingrid left a lasting impression on everyone she met.

This scholarship supports female students pursuing careers in law enforcement who embody the same strength, passion, and commitment that Ingrid brought to everything she did. By empowering the next generation of women in law enforcement, the scholarship ensures that Ingrid's legacy continues to inspire and make an impact.



You can help carry out Ingrid's dream by supporting this scholarship. Every gift, no matter the size, makes a difference. 🐾



Scan the QR code or visit alumni.georgian.edu/the-ingrid-rivera-zuniga-memorial-scholarship to give today.

HAVE A QUESTION OR CONCERN? CHAT WITH ROARY!

Navigating college life can be exciting, challenging, and everything in between. Georgian Court has made the journey easier by supporting students academically, emotionally, and even digitally.

In April 2025, the university launched Roary, an AI chatbot developed in partnership with *EdSights*, a platform that promotes student success and improves retention through conversational text messaging. Roary checks in with students to understand their challenges and connect them with campus resources. If a student faces academic difficulties, financial stress, mental health concerns, or feelings of disconnection from campus life, Roary guides them.

Students who feel overwhelmed may hesitate to reach out to staff, but they're often more comfortable texting an AI chatbot. Roary bridges this gap by initiating conversations and checking in with students every 7-10 days, with questions timed to key points in the semester. "It has a year-long schedule of messaging outreach," explained Sharmay Wood, Associate Provost and Dean of Students. Leading into midterms, for example, it might ask students how they are feeling or whether they have registered for classes. At the start of the semester, it may check if they are financially ready to return.

Roary also sends light-hearted prompts to foster connection and engagement. "One of the questions was, 'What's your favorite movie?'" Dean Wood said. "We used student responses to help plan welcome week, including things like movies and candy for events."

The conversation goes both ways. Students can ask: "Where's a good place to study? What events are happening this week? I'm feeling anxious. Who should I talk to?" Roary responds with helpful suggestions and direct links to services, and flags certain responses for staff follow-up when extra help is needed.

Designed for a Digital Generation

Today's students live by their phones, and research backs it up. Studies show that young adults send and receive dozens of texts each day and often prefer texting over email or phone calls. "Students don't always know what they need until they need it," explained Dean Wood. "Roary gives them access to support right when it matters, in a format they are already using."

With more than 300 frequently asked questions programmed, students can ask Roary anything, including dining hall hours and information on tutoring support. In one case, a student shared that they had a recent medical concern. Roary caught the message, and the Georgian Court team quickly intervened to coordinate accommodations and help the student return home for treatment. "It allowed us to respond in a timely manner," Dean Wood said.

Another student was struggling financially due to car repairs. Roary prompted a conversation about emergency needs, which led the student to apply to Georgian Court's angel fund, a one-time grant for unexpected expenses. "They didn't even know that fund existed," Dean Wood explained. "But Roary helped connect them to it, which made a difference in getting to class."





A Better Experience, One Chat at a Time

Roary gathers feedback through the Student Voice Score, asking students once a semester to rate the university and share the reason behind their rating. The AI then summarizes the responses and suggests action steps the university can take to improve the student experience. “It’s not just checking boxes; it helps us understand how students are feeling and how we can do better to meet their needs,” explained Dean Wood.

Student engagement with Roary has been high since its launch. “At last count, 93% of undergraduates had opted in,” Dean Wood said. “That’s a high indicator that students see the value in this kind of communication.”

Another AI Tool Arriving

Beginning in Fall 2025, the university will introduce a second AI-powered tool to support student success: CircleIn, an interactive platform designed to help students study.

Unlike traditional AI, which only provides answers, CircleIn walks students through how to solve problems step-by-step. “If a student asks, ‘What’s two

plus two?’ it won’t just say four,” explained Dean Wood. “It will say, ‘Let’s walk through how to solve that.’ Then it will ask students how they arrived at their answer. It builds critical thinking skills, not quick solutions.”

CircleIn is especially valuable to commuters who may find it difficult to schedule in-person tutors. “We were struggling to find enough tutors for some core classes,” said Dean Wood. “This helps fill that gap, while still maintaining the quality of the learning process.”

Looking Ahead

As Georgian Court continues to explore ways to integrate technology into the student experience, the focus remains on making sure students are supported, informed, and empowered to succeed.

“My goal is always to support every student the best I can,” Dean Wood said. “Roary helps us do just that by reaching students faster, connecting them to resources, and making sure they never feel they have to figure things out alone.”

Want to Talk to Roary?

Undergraduate students are automatically enrolled each semester if their phone number is on file. If you didn’t receive a message and want to opt in, text: **+1 (855) 612-8710. 🐾**



MEET DR. EUGENE CORNACCHIA!

Georgian Court's new interim president stepped into the role in Spring 2025. Get to know him through this snapshot of fun facts, favorites, and first impressions:



Early Life & Personal Background

He was born in Bronxville and raised in Eastchester, New York.

He's visited ten countries, including Italy, Spain, Germany, Switzerland.

His father was politically conservative, while his brother was an anti-war protester and activist.



He and his wife, AnnMarie, a retired Spanish and ESL teacher, have two daughters and three grandchildren.

Education & Career

He holds a bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D. in political science, all from Fordham University.

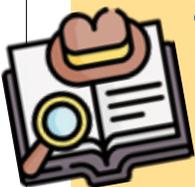
His dissertation focused on how different racial and ethnic groups participate in politics and elections in New York City.



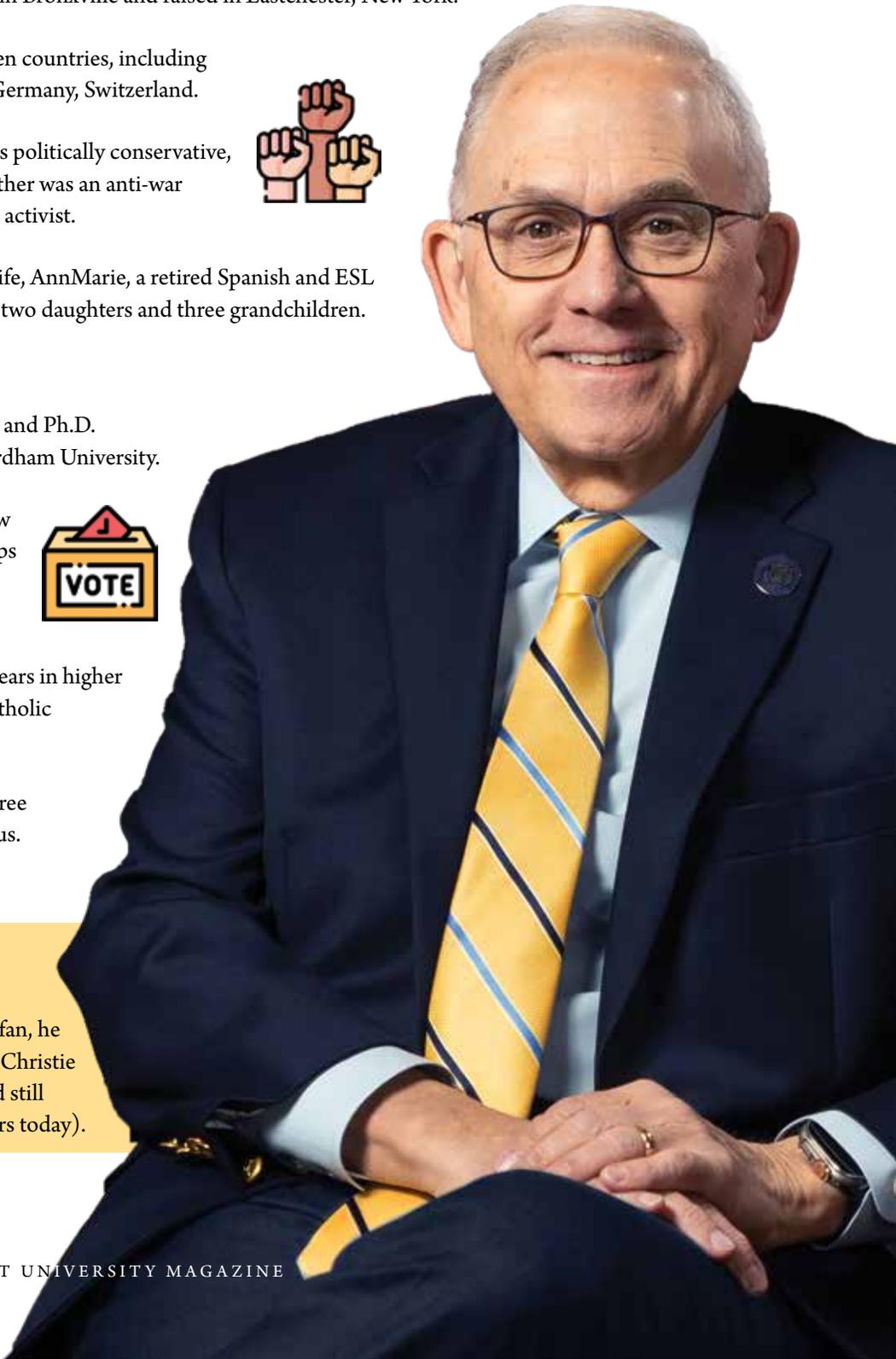
He's spent over 43 years in higher education, all at Catholic institutions.

He is a Third Degree Knight of Columbus.

Interests & Fun Facts



A lifelong mystery fan, he read every Agatha Christie book as a kid (and still enjoys spy thrillers today).



JAPANESE CULTURAL EXCHANGE & TRADITIONAL TEA CEREMONY



Over a century ago, a traditional Japanese tea house on display during the 1910 Japan-British Exhibition in London was purchased as a gift for Edith Gould for her extensive gardens. The tea house found its new home on a Lakewood estate, now known as Georgian Court University.

Last December, the history and culture of the tea house came full circle when a contingent of 25 students and their Grand Tea Master, who leads the Hayami-ryū Japanese Tea Practitioners, visited the university campus.

The Japanese delegation, ranging in age from 9 to 75, participated in a series of special cultural exchange events with members of the campus community, including Japanese Matcha tea tastings, a seminar on tea culture and the history of the tea house, and a special ceremony and Shinto blessing for the tea house. 🐾





STUDY ABROAD: PUERTO RICO & ICELAND

EXPANDING HORIZONS AND BROADENING STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

A global education can be an unforgettable experience that broadens students' minds and perspectives. Georgian Court students can make their dream study abroad experience a reality through service trips, semester-long opportunities, and even virtual experiences.

This year, two particularly popular programs took students to Puerto Rico for the *Community Service Learning & Cultural Exchange* and Iceland for the *Land of Fire and Ice: Icelandic Health, Wellness and Recreation* program.



"This trip gave me a chance to truly connect with Puerto Rican culture in a way reading never could. Seeing how they live their lives first-hand helped me understand the struggles communities face, and how they come together to make a difference in their community," explained Mirella Bueno Garista, who is pursuing a bache-

lor's degree in Nursing. "Gentrification is a global issue, and Puerto Rico's murals and public art beautifully reflect their voice and resilience."



"We worked with Proyecto Enlace, where we cleaned and prepared a home for a future family. We also cleared trash from an abandoned property that was being transformed into a community hostel. It was amazing to see the tangible impact we were making," said Sabrina Halk, a recent Georgian Court graduate with a BFA in Graphic Design and Multimedia, who is now pursuing her Master of Science in Integrated Marketing and Communication. "University students from Puerto Rico joined us, along with TRIO participants, which made the experience even more meaningful. We had the chance to connect, work, and learn from each other."



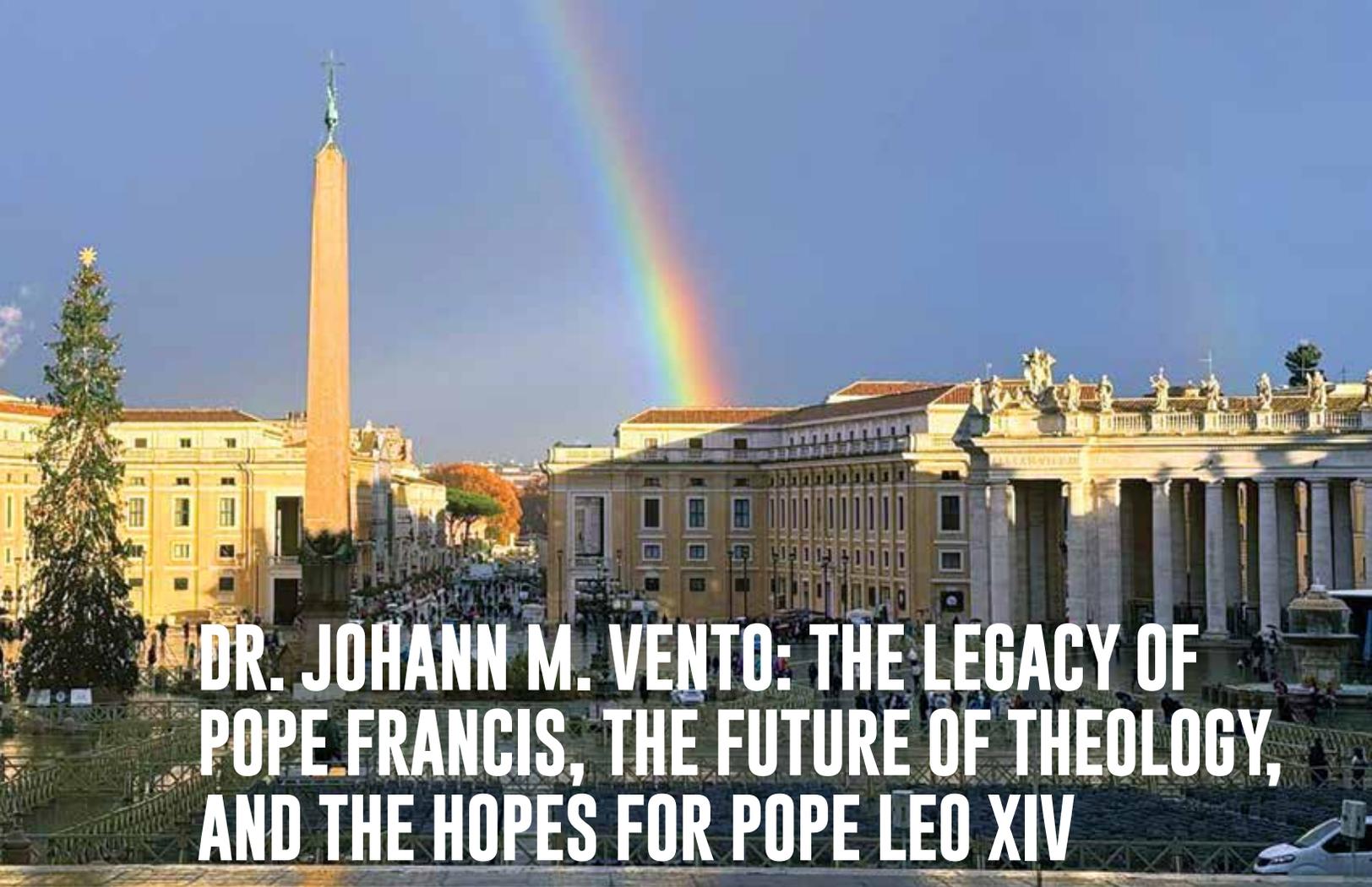
“I remember comparing the Gullfoss waterfall to the people standing beside it in the distance. The clear rainbow that cast across it led me speechless,” explained Brittany Webster, an M.A. in Applied Behavior Analysis candidate who earned a B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies in 2022. “My eyes filled up with tears as my body tried to process the surreal scenery I was facing. I couldn’t say much then, but I can’t wait to tell everyone about that moment.”

“This trip pulled me out of my comfort zone, opened my eyes to how similar and different we all are, and opened my eyes to the desire to start seeing the world more. I learned so much about Puerto Rico, including its culture, people, and resilience,” reflected Nancy Velez, who is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in Medical Imaging Sciences. “Despite daily challenges, the community finds joy in small moments and uses art, music, and activism to share their story beyond the scenic views.”



“The Iceland trip immediately caught my attention and piqued my interest,” said Darren Burlison, an Education and Exercise Science major who hopes to become a Physical Education teacher. “The focus was on leisure and understanding why Iceland is ranked as the third happiest nation in the world. I was drawn to learning about their lifestyle and visiting Iceland’s beautiful natural landscape.”

“The leaders were welcoming, approachable, and always willing to help. They were learning alongside us, which made the whole experience feel more connected,” said Burlison. “They worked with us every step of the way, and made everything seamless.” 🐾



DR. JOHANN M. VENTO: THE LEGACY OF POPE FRANCIS, THE FUTURE OF THEOLOGY, AND THE HOPES FOR POPE LEO XIV

Pope Francis made a lasting mark on our world, people's lives, and the Catholic Church. Before his passing, Dr. Johann M. Vento, Professor of Religious Studies and Theology, had the special privilege of hearing the Holy Father speak and meeting him face-to-face when serving as the President of the College Theology Society. Now, as Past President, she reflects on her experience and Pope Francis' life and legacy.

In December 2024, Dr. Vento participated in two groundbreaking international theological gatherings: the General Assembly of the International Network of Catholic Societies of Theology (INSeCT) in Rome and the historic International Congress on the Future of Theology at the Vatican.

The INSeCT General Assembly brought together presidents and representatives from theological societies across Europe, Asia, North America, South America, and Africa. Over the past three years, the assembly has focused on the theme of Decolonizing Theology, giving participants an



opportunity to share their work and perspectives. "It broadened my understanding of the various ways that Catholic theologians serve the church and the academy around the world," said Dr. Vento.

The International Congress, hosted by the Vatican Dicastery for Culture and Education, gathered 450 theologians from around the world for a first-of-its-kind discussion on the evolving role of theology in society, the Church, and the world. "This conference encouraged the Vatican itself



and the Pontifical Theological Faculties in Rome to be in dialogue with the way theology is practiced in other contexts,” she stated. “It was truly inspiring to be part of this global conversation on the future of theology, and I hope it will be an ongoing conversation.”

The conference started with an address by Pope Francis, who emphasized the need to make theology more accessible to all and the inclusion of women’s voices in theology. He encouraged them to listen to and be with people on the margins, engage with diverse perspectives, and expand their work beyond academic circles to reach broader audiences.

Dr. Vento’s favorite quote from Pope Francis exemplifies this teaching. It reads: “Certain realities in life can only be seen through eyes cleansed by tears.” She explained that the quote reminds us to truly encounter those who are suffering and to allow their suffering to touch us and become our own.

Dr. Vento is grateful to have met Pope Francis, an experience she’ll never forget. Along with each attendee, she had the extraordinary honor of shaking his hand after his speech. “The opportunity to engage with theologians from all over the world, and to meet Pope Francis himself, was an experience I’ll always treasure,” she expressed. “I’m grateful I had this opportunity to meet him in this context.”

She has always been inspired by Pope Francis—seeing him as a loving pastoral leader, gifted teacher of the faith, and an icon of God’s love and mercy. “I admired his witness to tenderness, compassion, and mercy,” she said. While she was helping to develop Georgian Court’s Mercy Spirituality Certificate Program, Pope Francis declared an Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy from December 2015 to November 2016. At this time, the theme of mercy was central to his preaching and visions for the Church,

which encouraged Dr. Vento and her team to develop and promote GCU’s new program in Mercy Spirituality.

Dr. Vento described how we can keep Pope Francis’ legacy alive, reflecting on his teachings on caring for God’s creation and our mutual love and care for each other, especially the most vulnerable, including the poor, homeless, migrants, and marginalized.

“We should meditate on God’s inexhaustible love for us and all creation,” she said. “We can then allow that to form in us ever greater love and compassion that shows itself in how we interact with each other, especially with the most vulnerable and with our vulnerable and threatened ‘common home,’ our world—all of creation.”



To deepen this understanding, she encourages everyone to read his major encyclicals, *Fratelli Tutti* and *Laudato Si*, which she will continue to reference and teach in her theology classes during her 25th anniversary of teaching at Georgian Court during the 2025-2026 school year and beyond. Now, with Pope Leo XIV, she awaits his major encyclicals and teachings and hopes he will continue Pope Francis’ emphasis on synodality, pastoral issues, and the marginalized.

Pope Leo chose his name in honor of Pope Leo XIII, who inaugurated the tradition of modern Catholic social teaching in his 1891 encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, about workers’ rights during the Industrial Revolution. Considering this choice, Dr. Vento believes our new Holy Father will concentrate on the issues of justice and human rights, and first address the challenges facing workers amid the new revolution in our world, the rise of artificial intelligence. “I’m encouraged by his choice of the name Leo, and I’m looking forward to his teaching,” she concluded. 🐾



From left (standing): Sister Dorothy Lazarick, Sister Barbara Williams, Dr. Joan Mast, Sister Mary Catherine Mindling; (seated) Sister Maria Cordis Richey, Sister Cecilia Fox.

BUILDING A JUST FUTURE THROUGH EDUCATION

DR. JOAN MAST '82, SUPERINTENDENT, SCOTCH PLAINS-FANWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT

When Dr. Joan Mast '82 arrived at Georgian Court College at the age of 16, her mother anticipated that the small, all-women's college would be a nurturing environment where her daughter would achieve her potential. For Mast, the experience was nothing short of transformative.

She noted that the Sisters' daily presence on campus highlighted and reinforced the university's Mercy mission in a way that was deeply felt. "I was happy that the Sisters were such a presence when I was there," she recalled. "Certainly the lay instructors were equally competent and impactful, but the witness of the Sisters made the Mercy values really stand out."

At the time, Georgian Court was still an all-female campus. "A few men matriculated, but they couldn't live on campus. It was not the norm," Mast explained. "The fact that it was all-female had its benefits: you were more focused on your academics, and it really helped empower women leaders." While she appreciates the way that

environment benefited her, she added, "I was pleased to see GCU decide to go co-ed. You can still support women significantly in education while opening the doors for more students to gain access to a Mercy education."

Inspired by Educators

A mathematics major, Mast pointed to the strong influence of her high school teachers and guidance counselor. "Those roles in public schools are so significant in making a difference in the lives of individual students," she said. "I'm eternally grateful for those who guided me."

At Georgian Court, she found comparable support. Sister Stephanie Sloan, RSM, then chair of the Mathematics Department, championed her all the while mindful that Mast had accelerated through high school in only three years and had gaps to fill. "I was taking calculus and pre-calculus simultaneously," Mast laughed. "But my professors and fellow students were always willing to help, and I learned great pedagogy in the process."

Sister Stephanie's encouragement continued even after graduation. "She urged me to pursue graduate work at Columbia, which eventually led me to my doctorate in education," Mast said. "Her belief in me was significant."

A Career in the Classroom and Beyond

After graduating from Georgian Court, Mast began teaching mathematics at Mount Saint Mary Academy, a Mercy school in Watchung. From there, she moved into public education, where she taught math for 15 years in districts including Rumson-Fair Haven and Mount Olive. Leadership opportunities soon followed: mathematics supervisor at Millburn, then back to Mount Olive as Math/Science Supervisor.

The events of 9/11 reshaped her priorities, leading her to seek work closer to home. In 2001, she joined the Scotch Plains-Fanwood School District as math supervisor and steadily advanced to Assistant Superintendent and ultimately Superintendent, the role she holds today.

Her career has come full circle. Scotch Plains-Fanwood lies at the foot of the Watchung Mountains, near Mount Saint Mary. Mast still visits the Georgian Court sisters there, sometimes accompanied by Spiffy, the district's beloved therapy dog, an initiative she introduced.

Mercy Values in Action

Through every stage of her career, Mast has carried Georgian Court's Mercy core values with her. "In the work I do with the district, 'all' means ALL," she emphasized. "Every staff member, every student, every family matters. We want to give students windows into the world where they'll bring all they are learning to shape their future, but also

mirrors that help them take advantage of their education to understand themselves and their current experiences."

Faith, justice, integrity, compassion, and courage remain her compass. As superintendent, Mast finds the most significant privilege she has is "being able to collaborate with the community to make a difference in the lives of our children. Education is the baseline for building the future and hopefully a just world for everyone."

A Network for Life

Looking back, Mast credits not only her professors but also her peers. "Forming relationships matters," she said. "I'm still close with members of the Class of 1982. It's a timeless network."

That network has even influenced her career. When she was hired at Rumson-Fair Haven, she learned that a Georgian Court alumna, Jean Harbach, sat on the board and supported her candidacy. "Her love of GCU had an influence on me getting hired," Mast reflected.

Giving Back to Today's Students

As Mast looks to the future, she remains eager to help others. "Any student or alum who has a question about education, or what it's like to be a superintendent, I'd be happy to respond," she said. She encourages them to reach out directly at jvmast@gmail.com.

For Mast, the lesson is simple: whether in the classroom or the superintendent's office, the guiding question remains the same: Is this good for our students? It's a question rooted in her Georgian Court experience, one that continues to shape her leadership today. 🐾





LEVELING UP: ESPORTS IS ON THE RISE AT GEORGIAN COURT

A new kind of student athlete is emerging at Georgian Court University. This one may not wear cleats or carry a ball, but they train with just as much strategy, precision, and teamwork. With the launch of its new Gaming Lounge, official club, CACC Division II intercollegiate matches, and academic minor, esports is now part of the fabric of student life at Georgian Court.



What's Esports, Anyway?

Short for electronic sports, esports refers to organized, competitive video gaming. It's a fast-growing global industry where players compete in games like Rocket League, League of Legends, Super Smash Bros., and Overwatch 2, often as teams. The competitions are as intense and disciplined as any physical sport, requiring critical thinking, communication, and lightning-fast reflexes.

In May 2025, the New Jersey School Boards Association officially recognized esports as a legitimate form of interscholastic competition, urging schools to award varsity letters to student gamers, just like they do for athletes in traditional sports. The resolution named Garden State Esports (GSE) as the official governing body for scholastic esports in New Jersey, solidifying a movement that has already captivated more than 12,000 students across 400+ schools in the state.

A Community of Gamers

At Georgian Court, the foundation for this movement began with the formation of the university's Gamers Club in 2023 with a series of game nights held in the Sister Mary Joseph Cunningham Library. Since then, students from all backgrounds have gathered for game nights that range from casual to competitive: Dungeons & Dragons campaigns, Super Smash Bros. tournaments, Valentine's Day events, and more. By the end of the Spring 2023 semester, the Gamers Club quickly became the largest club on campus with over 60 members.

“Gaming is such a powerful way to build community,” said Jeffrey C. Donnelly, M.L.S., M.A., Director of Library Services and GCU Esports Advisor. “Whether someone is into casual gaming or high-stakes competitive matches, we’ve created a space where everyone can feel like they belong.”

This sense of belonging now has a physical home on campus. Opened at the start of the Fall 2024 semester, the new Esports Lounge in the lower level of the SMJC Library is a gamer’s dream. The space features ten high-performance MSI gaming PCs with low-latency monitors, mechanical keyboards, high-DPI mice, and Mavix M5 ergonomic gaming chairs, perfect for 5v5 matchups and hours-long play sessions. A 75-inch 4K HDR TV with virtual surround sound and a Nintendo Switch docking station adds to the console experience. A selection of popular games and peripherals is also available for checkout at the library circulation desk.

“The Esports Lounge is a symbol of how much we value this part of student culture,” Donnelly added. “We’ve seen students light up when they walk in. It’s where friendships are made, skills are sharpened, and memories are created.”

From Game Room to Tournament Arena

GCU’s commitment to esports took another leap in Fall 2024, when the university fielded its first-ever collegiate esports team. The Lions took on Brookdale Community College and Monmouth University in Georgian Court’s debut match, kicking off its journey in the Garden State Esports collegiate circuit.

“We’re forming connections between high school and college, while showing students what’s possible when they bring their passion to the next level,” said Kenneth M. Karamichael, Ed.M., NCVE, Associate Vice President for Professional Studies and Business Development.

That vision came to life when Georgian Court hosted the Garden State Esports Fall Championships in the Casino in Fall 2024, the largest scholastic esports event in U.S. history. More than 2,000 students, parents, and educators from across New Jersey packed the campus for competitions in Rocket League, League of Legends, and Super Smash Bros. In March 2025, the momentum continued as Georgian Court hosted the GSE Winter Championships, another 1,500+ esports enthusiasts for tournaments in Street Fighter 6 and Overwatch 2.

“These events bring together so many facets of education: STEM, communication, leadership, and digital literacy,” Karamichael said. “They also give students an outlet to shine in ways they might not have elsewhere.”

Academic Pathways for a Growing Industry

To support students who want to turn their passion into a profession, Georgian Court now offers a minor in esports. The program provides a multidisciplinary introduction to the world of competitive gaming through courses in sport management, media, marketing, and technology. Students can also explore electives in programming, cybersecurity, and event production, preparing them for careers in esports operations, content creation, and digital marketing.

“As esports continues to grow globally, so does the demand for people who understand both the game and the industry behind it,” Karamichael noted. “This program equips students to become leaders in a \$1.4 billion global industry.”

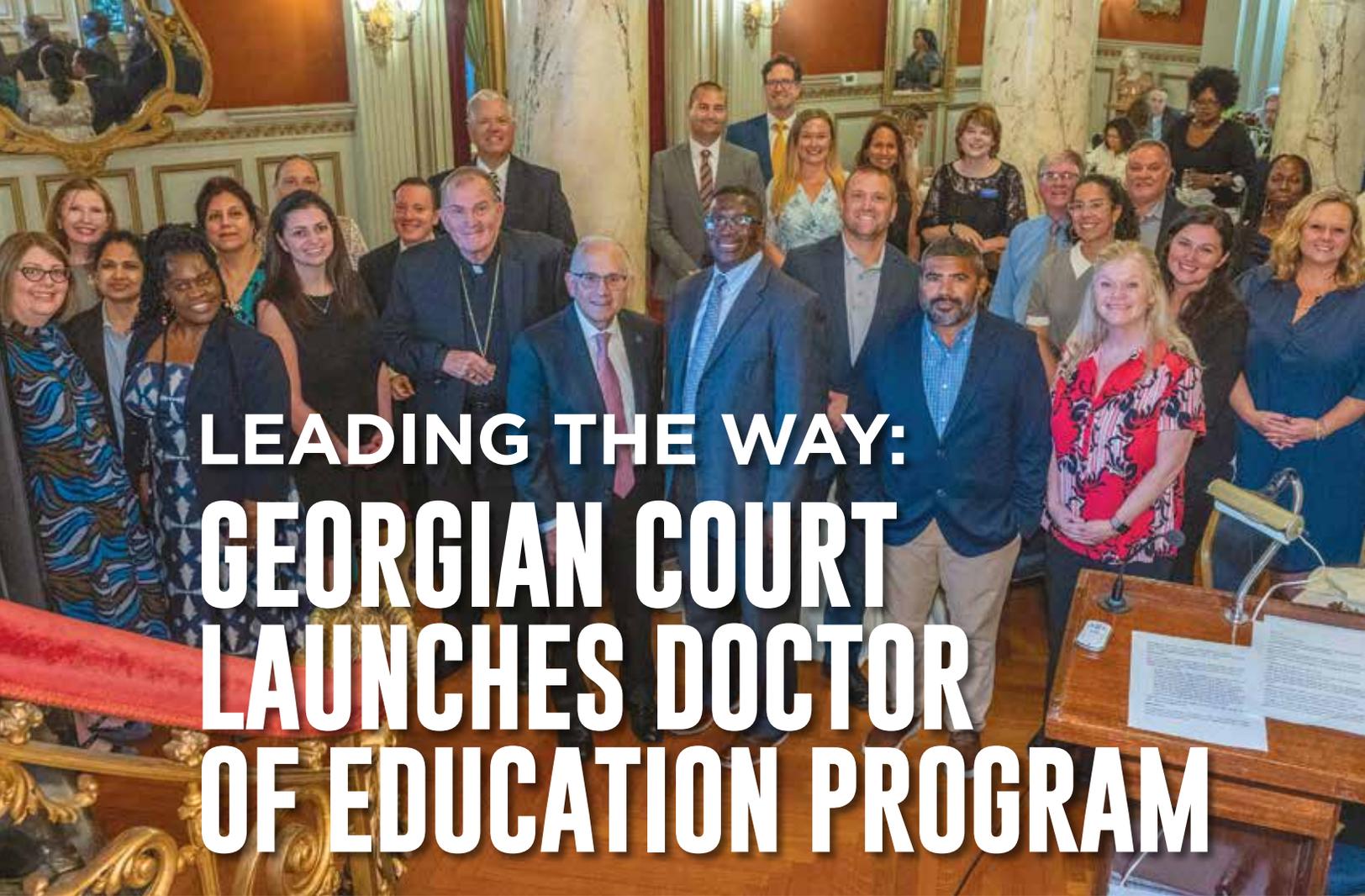
What’s Next?

With a brand-new lounge, a growing club, a refined academic offering, and a strong partnership with Garden State Esports, Georgian Court is positioning esports as a vibrant and lasting part of campus life.

“There’s real excitement on campus,” Donnelly said. “Beyond the gaming itself, it’s about learning and building something fulfilling together.”

As Georgian Court continues to expand possibilities for students of all interests, esports stands as one more way the university is helping Lions level up in-game and in life. 🐾





LEADING THE WAY: GEORGIAN COURT LAUNCHES DOCTOR OF EDUCATION PROGRAM

Georgian Court marked a historic milestone in Fall 2025 with the launch of its second doctoral program: the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Educational Leadership. The program, which was formally approved by the State of New Jersey’s Office of the Secretary of Higher Education earlier this year, is designed to prepare leaders across PreK–12 education, higher education administration, and education policy.

The Ed.D. reflects Georgian Court’s ongoing commitment to academic excellence, innovation in graduate education, and the university’s mission of preparing leaders who serve with compassion and vision in the Mercy tradition.

From Approval to Launch

On January 15, 2025, Georgian Court announced that the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership had received state approval. At the time, the program was described as an important step forward in preparing future school principals, superintendents, deans, provosts, and policy advocates.



By the time the program officially launched in September, that vision had become reality. The university welcomed its inaugural cohort of 14 students at a kickoff celebration on September 19, 2025, joined by leaders, partners, faculty, and members of the Georgian Court community.

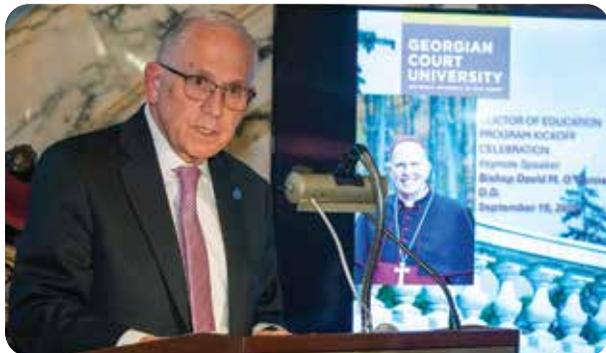
“This program has been long-awaited,” said Amuhelang (Amu) Magaya, Ph.D., Associate Professor in the School of Arts, Sciences, and Education, and the program’s

director. “Our celebration is that we have come this far, and this is where we are. I want us to celebrate that we worked so hard. It took everybody.”

A Distinctive Model

The Ed.D. is a 54-credit, cohort-based program that allows students to earn their doctorate in as little as three years, including the dissertation phase. Unlike many other programs in New Jersey, where students typically begin their dissertation work after three years and may take five to ten years to complete the degree, Georgian Court’s program integrates dissertation work from the very first semester.

“That early start, along with the program structure, means that most students are projected to finish in three to four years,” noted Interim President Eugene J. Cornacchia, Ph.D. “This ambitious yet achievable timeline reflects our commitment to their success.”



Other hallmarks of the program include:

- **Experienced faculty:** Faculty bring both scholarly expertise and real-world leadership experience, supporting students as mentors and guides.
- As Dr. Magaya explained, “This nontraditional dissertation approach is student-centered and focuses on helping the students throughout their dissertation writing. With rigorous coursework and a unique international experience, students will expand their intellectual capacity and be able to value diverse perspectives and backgrounds.”
- ## Rooted in Mercy Values
- True to Georgian Court’s identity as a Catholic Mercy institution, the Ed.D. program weaves the university’s Mercy core values throughout the curriculum. For the first cohort, those values serve as both a compass and a foundation for their academic and professional journeys.
- “This Ed.D. program is built around the student,” Dr. Cornacchia emphasized. “It is designed with full-time professionals, educators, and administrators in mind, all of whom are balancing demanding schedules but want to grow as leaders without putting their careers on hold.”
- ## Student Perspectives
- Members of the inaugural cohort embody the program’s goals and mission, bringing diverse backgrounds and aspirations that reflect the breadth of educational leadership:
- **Kimberly Gleinig**, Vice Principal of Donovan Catholic High School and a two-time GCU alumna, hopes to enhance Catholic education nationally. “I want to use my experience to enhance the education of Catholic students to be 21st-century learners, and to contribute to the research available to aspiring Catholic educators and leaders,” she said.
 - **Richard Van Pelt**, a Volunteer Catechist at the Church of Visitation in Brick and Georgian Court alum, views the program as deeply personal. “How much the program is guided, it’s very personal, and it starts from day one. The program and Georgian Court as a whole are very communal.” He hopes to advance in ministry and disability theology.

- **Michael Hajisafari**, Assistant Principal at Lavallette Elementary School, seeks to fulfill his lifelong ambition of teaching graduate students and modeling leadership. “My mom has always said, ‘Your education, nobody could take that away from you, so keep pushing forward.’ And I think getting your doctorate is the highest level of that accomplishment.”
- **Susan Coll-Guedes**, Clinical Specialist of Art and Art Education at The College of New Jersey, intends to use the program to influence Medicaid policy, disability services, and inclusive education. “The Mercy core values, particularly the commitment to social justice, deeply resonate with me,” she noted.
- **Alice Velez**, ‘84, ‘93, Educational Consultant, Co-Founder of Velez Educational Services, and current member of Georgian Court’s Board of Trustees, sees her role as one of service to the cohort and profession. “I want to understand their goals and their obstacles and support them in any way that I can, and to pay forward the support that I received over my career.”
- **Oscar Orellana**, Athletic Director and Guidance Counselor at Ocean Academy Charter School, described his opportunity as a blessing. “Many talk about hope, and what our job is as leaders. I really think that, for me, is the number one priority. To just bring hope to students as my mentors brought hope to me.”

- **Erin Gomez**, Assistant Superintendent of Schools in the Middlesex Borough School District, looks forward to becoming a superintendent and adjunct professor. “Our responsibility as this first cohort is not only to pave the way for our future success, but for the future success of the many cohorts to come,” she said.

These students reflect the program’s emphasis on leadership, service, and transformation—both for themselves and for the communities they will serve.

A Historic Moment for GCU

The Ed.D. in Educational Leadership joins Georgian Court’s existing doctoral offering, further solidifying the university’s role as a leader in advanced professional education in New Jersey. For GCU, the launch is an investment in shaping the next generation of educational leaders who will carry forward the Mercy tradition of service, justice, and compassion.

As Dr. Magaya summarized, “This program equips leaders to create inclusive and effective educational environments to address current challenges. Students will be challenged to reflect and apply theory to practice, and they will leave prepared to make a profound impact.” 🐾



FROM THE COURTIER TO TODAY: A 1954 GRADUATE LOOKS BACK

When we invited alumni to share their favorite memories and photos, Eddie Laubach answered on behalf of someone very special: his 92-year-old grandmother, Lorraine Oklamcak Laubach, '54. A lifelong New Jerseyan now living in Parlin, Lorraine is still, as Eddie puts it, "sharp as a tack."

A proud member of the Class of 1954, Lorraine was active in the Michaelangelist Club and attended senior tea at the mansion, back when each graduate had two full pages in *The Courtier* yearbook. With help from her grandson, she's opened a window into Georgian Court's past, offering a delightful look at life on campus more than 70 years ago. 🐾

The Courtier, 1954
A glimpse into the yearbook from Lorraine's graduating year.

Inside Cover
The beautifully designed inside cover of the 1954 yearbook.

A Two-Page Tribute
At the time, each graduate was featured on two full pages, a hallmark of Georgian Court's all-women's era.

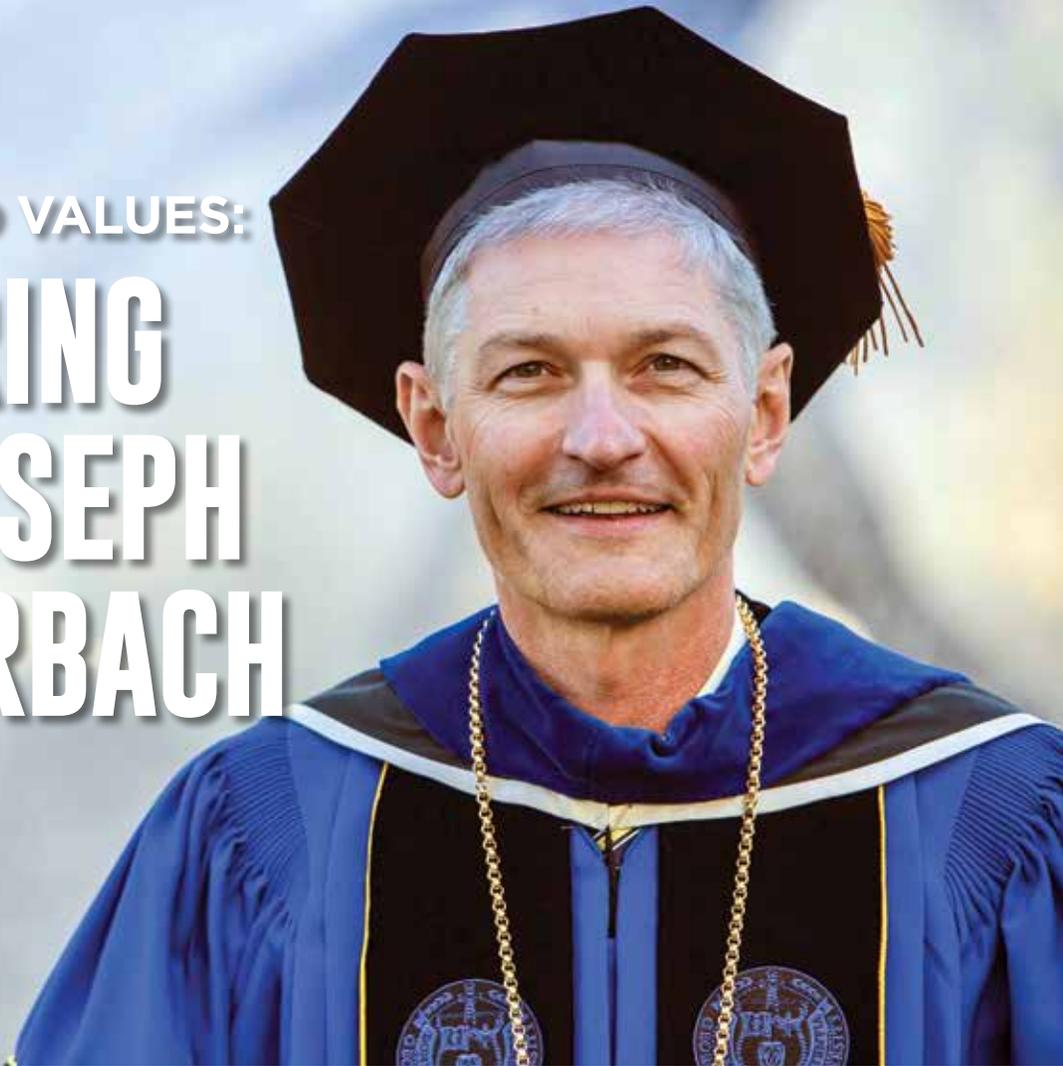
Senior Tea at the Mansion
A cherished tradition: seniors gathering at the mansion for tea.

Still Radiant at 92
Lorraine, age 92, at dinner in Old Bridge, NJ, with her son, Eddie.



VISION AND VALUES:

HONORING DR. JOSEPH R. MARBACH



When Dr. Marbach announced last fall that he would retire in 2025, it marked the end of an era for Georgian Court University. Over the course of a decade, he became a steward of the university’s mission, an advocate for access and equality, and a bridge between its Mercy roots and an evolving future.

Dr. Marbach made history in 2015 as Georgian Court’s first lay and first male president. His appointment reflected a broader shift happening across Catholic higher education, but it was also deeply personal. “There’s a learning curve when you come to a private institution, there’s a learning curve when you come to a Catholic institution, and even more of a learning curve when you come to a Mercy Catholic institution,” he said. That learning curve, he added, shaped his presidency and fueled his passion for putting students first.

From his first days on campus, Dr. Marbach worked to elevate the university through strategic planning, mission-centered leadership, and innovation across academics, wellness, and sustainability. Under his leadership,

Georgian Court launched nine new undergraduate programs, introduced its first-ever doctoral degree, and created three new master's programs. He also prioritized community partnerships, deepened transfer pathways with local institutions, and led the launch of the Center for Professional Studies.



Navigating New Traditions

When he became president of Georgian Court on July 1, 2015, Dr. Marbach stepped into a role steeped in history and deeply rooted in Mercy tradition. His appointment came at a pivotal moment for Catholic higher education as more institutions turned to lay leaders amid shifting demographics and vocations.

Dr. Marbach brought with him a deep appreciation for the values that shaped Georgian Court. Though new to the Mercy tradition, he was not new to Catholic education; he had previously served as provost and academic vice president at La Salle University, a Christian Brothers institution in Philadelphia. "While I didn't come from a Mercy education, I understood and respected those values, which closely aligned with my own background. I made sure to communicate that, and people got it," he said.

Still, the transition was significant. "There was definitely a sense of missing the Sisters, especially Sister Rosemary," he recalled, referring to his predecessor, who had led Georgian Court for 14 years. One of her final and most difficult decisions was to relocate many of the Sisters who lived on campus, recognizing that the university could no longer meet their evolving needs. "Many moved to Mount St. Mary in Watchung, where the facilities were better suited to their care, while others found appropriate housing in the community."

Dr. Marbach sensed a quiet but palpable shift. "There was a sense that something meaningful was missing," he explained. From the outset, he worked to earn the community's trust, showing that the Mercy core values would remain central to the university's identity. His inauguration in October 2015 signaled a deep respect for Georgian Court's 107-year legacy and a bold step forward.

Leading Through Crisis: The COVID-19 Pandemic

In March 2020, Dr. Marbach found himself leading the university during one of the most disruptive global crises in modern history. He recalls the early days of COVID-19 clearly:

"We first discussed COVID-19 at a President's Leadership Council meeting, and not much was known about it at the time. Dr. Louise Wootton, who was the faculty chair at the time, and has since passed away, was a leading voice in talking about how serious this virus was going to be. Based on her understanding of the science and her contacts, she made it clear this wasn't just another flu."



Within days, Georgian Court faced its first COVID-19 scare—a close contact of a community member tested positive. From that point forward, rapid action became essential. The university shifted to remote learning within a week, using spring break as a springboard for transition. Faculty quickly adapted, creating chat groups to share on-line teaching strategies and moving from Microsoft Teams to Zoom for a more intuitive student experience.

"Everyone was scrambling to figure out how to stay connected with students," Marbach said. "And I give our faculty a lot of credit. Our student satisfaction didn't drop off. In fact, I think it may have even increased a little."

The nursing program continued in person with stringent safety protocols, while Aramark helped deliver meals to students in quarantine. Georgian Court never had a single case of COVID transmission in the classroom—a testament to the community’s vigilance and care.

“It really pulled the community together. People discovered skills they didn’t know they had.”

Georgian Court moved swiftly to online learning and later became the first university in Ocean and Monmouth Counties to require COVID-19 vaccination for residential students. A public vaccination clinic was also established on campus.

Work-Life Balance as a Strategic Decision

One of the most forward-looking decisions of Dr. Marbach’s presidency was launching a four-day compressed workweek for staff, making Georgian Court the first higher education institution in New Jersey to offer this model year-round.

“In discussions with leadership from HR, we talked about: How can we attract and retain talented people?” Marbach recalled. “If we couldn’t pay them more, we could at least offer an opportunity for a better work-life balance. One resource that many of our employees value more than money is time. So we capitalized on that.”

The initiative reflected the university’s core values and served as a strategic response to evolving workforce needs. It began as a COVID-era adaptation but became a permanent fixture, offering about 220 full- and part-time staff members the option to work compressed schedules while maintaining full-time hours.

At the time of the announcement, Dr. Marbach highlighted how the program aligned with Georgian Court’s commitment to care for its people: “Our core values are about taking care of the individual, and for years we’ve encouraged and successfully accommodated flexible hours. It’s a system that works for us and our employees.”

By pioneering this approach, Georgian Court positioned itself as a leader in workplace innovation, demonstrating how values-driven leadership can be both pragmatic and compassionate.

A Landmark Land Deal

During his presidency, the difficult though strategic choice to sell 36 acres of underutilized land to Beth Medrash Govoha, a neighboring Orthodox Yeshiva also located in Lakewood, took place. “The Orthodox are good neighbors,” he said, referencing his strong personal relationship with the leadership at BMG. “There was mutual respect on both sides, and it was from there that we were able to work out a deal that benefited both universities.”

The 2022 announcement was the result of two years of thoughtful discussion between the two institutions. It marked a step forward in strengthening a long-standing partnership between two distinct faith-based institutions, each committed to education and community growth.



The Heart of Georgian Court

For Dr. Marbach, what truly defines the university isn’t just its programs or campus—it’s the community. “Georgian Court is home to so many wonderful people who really care about this place,” he reflected. “And they come here to make an impact on the students we serve.”

That impact runs deep because most students come from the surrounding counties, often reflecting the same communities where employees live. “Our faculty and staff often see themselves or their neighbors in the eyes of those students. I think that deepens the commitment. It’s why people want to work here.”

His pride extends to the students themselves, many of whom overcome significant obstacles. “Nearly 40% are first-generation college students, and about the same percentage come from modest socioeconomic backgrounds. They work incredibly hard to get that degree and build a life.”

The students' presence reflects Georgian Court's mission: "We attract students who want to stay in their community, live and grow here, and give back. Our values also attract those who have personally benefited from services like counseling, nursing, or social work—or who were inspired by a great high school teacher. That personal connection shapes their career goals."

A Lasting Impression

When asked who stands out in his memory, Dr. Marbach didn't hesitate. "The students in our Transition and Career Studies (TCS) program. TCS gave such an opportunity to students who wouldn't have had it otherwise," he said. "They were just so friendly, and so open, and they had no filters. They'd come right up and say, 'Hey, Mr. President, how are you?' Sitting with them in the dining hall was so gratifying."



He credits Dr. Sue Field for bringing the program to Georgian Court and working with colleagues at TCNJ to make it a reality. "The TCS students brought a different perspective to campus. And I know our students embraced these peers...people who might have been a little different, who had learning disabilities, or were on the spectrum, or however they were defined. It was just so reflective of what Georgian Court is as a place."

That spirit of inclusion is rooted in Georgian Court's mission. "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are components of our Mercy core values," Dr. Marbach said. "You have to stand up for those values. If you really want to be a Mercy institution, or a Catholic institution, those are universal values, and they can't be legislated out."



Looking Ahead

Throughout his presidency, Dr. Marbach never lost sight of the importance of expanding access and opportunity for Georgian Court students. He launched the GCU Promise, which expanded financial aid for first-year and transfer students. In 2024, amid the nationwide federal student aid delays, he led the university's effort to be the first in the state to extend its deposit deadline. He also implemented progressive workforce policies, including a tobacco-free campus.

Now retired and living in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, with his wife, he joked that they're "almost operating a bed-and-breakfast on the weekends." He also maintained his academic roots, co-authoring and presenting a paper on metropolitan governance in Mexico City this fall. 🐾

To honor his commitment to accessibility and student success, the university has established the *President Joseph R. Marbach, Ph.D. Endowed Scholarship*. The fund will support students in financial need and ensure that Dr. Marbach's legacy continues to transform lives for years to come. To make a gift to the *President Joseph R. Marbach, Ph.D. Endowed Scholarship*, please visit georgian.edu/give or contact advancement@georgian.edu.



HELPING STUDENTS FINISH WHAT THEY STARTED

THE ‘SOME COLLEGE, NO DEGREE’ INITIATIVE

At Georgian Court University, finishing what you started is always possible, and never too late. Understanding that the path to earning a degree is not always straightforward, the university’s Some College, No Degree (SCND) initiative assists students who have previously paused their education to re-enter college with confidence and support.

Removing Barriers To Education

In the program’s first year, Georgian Court focused on outreach to former students who left the university without completing their degrees. By contacting and offering balance forgiveness awards to these students, the university provided them with a second chance.

Many returning students received “Pathway to Graduation Awards”—flexible stipends that could be used for everyday needs such as housing, groceries, or child care. “Many scholarships go toward tuition, but that doesn’t help if you can’t afford groceries or get to class,” explained Dr. Jennifer Edmonds, Dean of the School of Business

& Digital Media and executive lead for the university’s SCND initiative. “Giving students control over how they used their support made all the difference.”

In its second year, the program expanded to include adults who had stopped out of any college, not just Georgian Court. As a result, new students enrolled who had never previously attended the university but met the eligibility criteria. “This was exciting,” shared Dr. Edmonds. “We met students who had started college elsewhere, taken time off, and were now ready to finish here.”

Dr. Edmonds invited these new students into her office to give them a warm welcome, along with gift bags and stipends. “It was so great putting a name to a face, getting to know them, and letting them know I’m in their corner,” she said. These conversations revealed why some students pause their education: financial strain, grief, family obligations, or simply needing time. “It wasn’t that they failed. Life happened, and we wanted to let them know they could come back.”

In addition to providing stipends, Georgian Court implemented an academic forgiveness policy. If a student's record included low grades due to personal struggles, the policy offered a clean slate and an opportunity to succeed.

The university also strengthened credit for prior learning, enabling students to build portfolios from professional experience. "If you've spent ten years working in a bank or managing teams, you've gained real-world skills that should count toward a degree," Dr. Edmonds explained. Georgian Court has prioritized flexibility for working adults and parents, with the option to take online courses as well.

Welcoming Students Back: Pathway Scholars Kayla Argue, Jamie Sánchez, and Jane Palandro

Returning to college can be overwhelming. To build confidence and a sense of belonging, Georgian Court created opportunities for connection. Returning students received invitations to on-campus career and networking events. And at commencement, they received custom stoles celebrating their achievement. "What meant most to me was that they wore them. It showed that they were just as proud of themselves as we were of them," said Dr. Edmonds.



Kayla Argue, who earned her Bachelor's degree in Psychology in May 2025, found her way back to Georgian Court with purpose and perseverance. After starting her degree a decade earlier, Kayla returned to finish what she started, this time balancing her studies with a career and family.

"While finishing my degree, which I started in 2015, my college experience wasn't exactly traditional. Coming back to GCU and only taking online courses made it harder for me to be involved in campus life," Kayla explained. "However, through discussion posts, I was able to share my experience as a 28-year-old student balancing a career and a family. There is no right order when it comes to life, as long as you keep going."

She credits both the program and her professors with helping her find her voice. "Thank you, Professor Mossbacher, for bringing to light what I am meant to do, because I had no idea how much advocacy meant to me! Pathway to Success allowed me to complete something I never thought was attainable."



Another pathway scholar, **Jamie Sánchez**, a 2025 graduate with a degree in Spanish, is taking her career far beyond the classroom. As a member of the Spanish Honors Society and a proud graduate, Jamie plans to bring her education to Mexico City, where she hopes to begin a new chapter, personally and professionally.

"My plans are to take this Spanish degree to Mexico City, where I'll live, start a new life, and launch a new career. I plan to put this Spanish degree to good use! Being a Pathway Scholar means so much to me because it was another step in helping me achieve my goal, and I am forever grateful," explained Jamie.



Jane Palandro, a 2025 graduate with a degree in religious studies, returned to college to follow her lifelong calling to deepen her faith and serve others. After earning an associate degree in business and working for over 20 years in the insurance industry, Jane was inspired by her parish community to pursue a theology degree.

"I could work full-time and go to school remotely," she said. "Theology is a lot of reading and writing...time was the big challenge. My professors worked with me and were very understanding."

"If you're looking to expand your mind, have a nice, diverse worldview, and many perspectives, [Georgian Court is] a good school. It's rigorous, so they're making sure you're getting a good education," she added. "I'm very grateful and blessed for my education. I will always remember this time fondly."

The Path Forward

Although the original grant is coming to a close, Georgian Court is committed to supporting returning students. Conversations are underway to carry forward the program's ability to reduce barriers and expand access to education.

"Everyone's journey is different. Not everyone starts college at 18 and finishes in four years. So I think we just need to normalize that everybody's path isn't a straight line."

And for students wondering if they can return? The advice is simple: "Just make the call. You never know what's possible until you do." 🐾

MERCY IN ACTION: OAK STREET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Reading a book, participating in a color run, or talking about sports and college may not seem to have much in common, but they are integral to the *Mercy in Action* initiative to connect and give back to the local community.

The longtime partnership between Georgian Court University and the Oak Street Elementary School in Lakewood, NJ, grew even stronger when GCU students participated in a series of fun and educational events for 3rd through 5th graders.

Campus Minister Amy Cerreta spearheaded the *Mercy in Action* initiative, run by the Office of Mission and Ministry in collaboration with Georgian Court Athletics and several GEN 100-400 classes as part of the community service component.

Ceretta worked closely with Oak Street leaders to create programs that would be impactful and rewarding for everyone involved. “Georgian Court students serve as role models to the younger students while they learn skills they can use in their careers and in life through service,” described Ceretta. “This initiative has also allowed students at both schools to experience and see *Mercy in Action* and the importance of caring for your neighbor, community, and world.”

“Sometimes our students feel discouraged, that their life is always going to be a certain way, and they may not realize there are other opportunities out there,” explained Jennifer Patella, Assistant Principal of Oak Street School. “Seeing real college students who are either in an education program or sports program really boosts their confidence and gets them to think that they can do that someday.”

Georgian Court students volunteered for Oak Street’s Read Across America celebration. Some were guest readers in the classroom, while others recorded themselves reading a book to share with a class and connected virtually for a Q&A session as part of the Book Buddy program. Students also collected and donated 100 books to the school.

Mary Gresco, a senior majoring in psychology, participated in the Book Buddy program as part of *GEN 400: Visioning a Future*. “Prior to recording our videos, we Zoomed with the class. We introduced ourselves, said our majors, and told a fun fact about ourselves. Then, the Oak Street School students introduced themselves and asked us questions regarding college life, or they reacted to our fun facts. The children were laughing so hard and smiling because they were just so happy to have special guest appearances and be able to interact with us.”



Gabrielle Battle, a senior majoring in business administration and a member of the Women’s lacrosse team, participated in Read Across America, the color run, a lacrosse workshop, and a student-athlete panel. “What I enjoyed the most about these events was interacting with the kids. Teaching them and talking about the lacrosse game was also fun. I realized many students have limited access to sports or programs. This changed my perspective entirely, as I always assumed that all schools had sports.”

“Having the GCU students come in and talk to them about the different sports, like lacrosse and basketball, and just show them even the basics of how to play the sport was an amazing opportunity for our students,” noted Patella.



The color run involved the entire school—nearly 600 Oak Street students—who walked or ran through an outdoor course while being doused with colored powder. More than 35 Georgian Court student volunteers, including student-athletes from Women’s Lacrosse, Men’s Basketball, Acrobatics, and Track and Field, helped with the event. Georgian Court mascot *Roary* and Oak Street mascot *Woody the Piner* were also on hand to cheer everyone on.

“The students and I laughed and tried to dodge as much color as we could! At the end of the race, the students asked me to sign their shirts and to continue running by playing tag,” described Gresco, who relayed that this was much more than just a color run for these children. “It was a day where students got to go outside, have fun, and laugh because we, GCU students, were able to make it happen.” She added, “The biggest takeaway from working with Oak Street was realizing how such small things can change a person’s day.”



According to Samantha Hosford, Head Women’s Lacrosse Coach, the student-athletes who volunteered for the programs at Oak Street have grown from the experience. “Connecting with the community youth has given them a sense of belonging and has shown them that giving back to our local community is always important.”

Battle said, “You start to understand how lucky you are, and it makes you want to give more back to the community and the younger generation. They look up to us so much more than we think they do. Seeing us enjoy going to school and playing sports, they will want to do the same.”

Patella emphasized that this was the goal: “The GCU students did an excellent job communicating and answering questions, and they got them excited about reading and college. It really makes them more enthusiastic about their future and what is possible, having these real-life examples in front of them.” She added, “We are so grateful for this partnership; it has been a wonderful experience.”



Plans are in the works to expand the *Mercy in Action* initiative and the partnership with Oak Street School and potentially other schools in the district.

“We are called to put Mercy into Action and to care for one another. We can only do that if we break down walls and have opportunities to collaborate and learn from one another,” said Ceretta. “Partnering with Oak Street School and expanding service opportunities for our students in the Gen 100-400 curriculum and across campus allows all students involved to learn and grow in Mercy.” 🐾



CELEBRATING THE 2025 GEORGIAN COURT JUBILARIANS: SISTER MARIA CORDIS RICHEY AND SISTER MARY ELLEN FUHRMAN

Each year, the Sisters of Mercy celebrate Jubilarians, those marking milestone anniversaries in their religious lives. Georgian Court University proudly honors members of our own community who have dedicated their lives in service to the mission of Mercy.

This year, we celebrate two distinguished women whose contributions to Georgian Court have left a lasting legacy:

Sister Maria Cordis Richey, RSM, Ph.D., '50: 75 Years

A beloved educator and leader, Sister Maria Cordis began her journey with the Sisters of Mercy in 1950, shortly after earning her associate's degree from Georgian Court College. Assigned to Georgian Court in 1957, she spent more than five decades teaching and mentoring students in the Department of English, 33 of those years as department chair.

From 1974 to 1980, she served as president of Georgian Court College, guiding the university through a pivotal time in its history. Even after stepping down as president, she remained a steady, inspiring presence in the classroom until her retirement in 2011. Five years later, Georgian Court recognized her extraordinary service with an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters.

Sister Mary Ellen Fuhrman, RSM: 60 Years

A current member of Georgian Court's Board of Trustees, Sister Mary Ellen Fuhrman has long exemplified Mercy leadership. This is her second tenure as a trustee, having previously served from 2002 to 2005. During her time as Special Assistant to the President for Mission Integration and Strategic Planning, she played a central role in advancing Georgian Court's Catholic identity and co-chaired the university's successful re-accreditation with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Her decades of leadership and mission-driven guidance continue to shape the GCU community today.



GEORGIAN COURT SISTERS CELEBRATE JUBILEE MILESTONES

These Jubilarians embody the Mercy core values that continue to guide Georgian Court’s mission: respect, integrity, justice, compassion, and service.

The Sisters of Mercy Jubilee is a cherished tradition across the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. It honors the commitment of women religious who live out the Gospel of Jesus through education, advocacy, service, and spiritual ministry. In 1908, the Sisters founded Mount Saint Mary College, which became Georgian Court College in 1924.

[Here is the full list of 2025 Jubilarians across the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas:](#)

80 Years

Sister Arlene Bennett
 Sister Maureen Dees
 Sister Mary Fidelis McDonough
 Sister Mary Helena Naviaux
 Sister Janet Rock
 Sister Helen Marie Scannell
 Sister Rose Schum
 Sister Mary Sears
 Sister Karen Yarkosky

75 Years

Sister Phyllis Bernardo
 Sister Francis Marie Blas
 Sister Mary Rene Bourques
 Sister Marie Yolanda Burns
 Sister Mary Louise Burt
 Sister Mary Juliane Carey
 Sister Mary Catherine Daly
 Sister Nena Marie DeMatteo
 Sister Patricia Durbin
 Sister Gertrude Erb
 Sister Mary Fasulo
 Sister Kathleen Dillon Geaney

Sister Mary Lois Harten
 Sister Elaine Heffernan
 Sister Cleopha Ruth Heinrich
 Sister Jean Holehouse
 Sister Ruth Hurtubise
 Sister Mary Gertrude Keefe
 Sister Kathleen Kelly
 Sister Olivia Kidney
 Sister Edith Langiotti
 Sister Marie Celestine Lynch
 Sister Joyce Mahany
 Sister Marie Genevieve Mannix
 Sister Mary Vivian McElhinny

Sister Teresa Ann McGreevy
Sister Margaret McHugh
Sister Mary Louis Oslick
Sister Mary Jonella Rhoda
Sister Maria Cordis Richey
Sister Paulina Simms
Sister Elizabeth Slattery
Sister Jeanne Snyder
Sister Suzanne Toolan
Sister Marianna Walsh
Sister Joan Marie Warnement
Sister Mary Grace Wee Tom
Sister Maria Goretti Weldon
Sister Mary Robert Williams
Sister Maria Goretti Zamberlan

70 Years

Sister Shirley Agnew
Sister Marie Noel Bannon
Sister Mary Elisa Bauman
Sister Betty Jean Bischel
Sister Denise Bourgeois
Sister Margaret Brennan
Sister Mary Naomi Buniff
Sister Mary Cecilia Camacho
Sister Elizabeth "Betty" Campbell
Sister Margaret Marie Carey
Sister Mary Barbara Ann Centner
Sister Joan Chachula
Sister Ann Crouse
Sister Mary Brigid Danaher
Sister Patricia A. Davis
Sister Alice Delaney
Sister Judith Dolloff
Sister Margaret Mary Donnelly
Sister Leonita Duhoski
Sister Mary Alice Feenane
Sister Cora Finnane
Sister Mary Yvonne Gellise
Sister Mary Terena Gentili
Sister Marilyn Graf
Sister Barbara Guarino
Sister Karina Haywood
Sister Justina Heneghan
Sister Patricia Mary Hesperlein
Sister Carmen Hrametz
Sister Dorothy Jancola

Sister Margie Keane
Sister Charleen Koenig
Sister Monica Kostielney
Sister Marie Clare Kubiak
Sister Patricia Ann Lang
Sister Marjorie Mancini
Sister Patricia McCann
Sister Mary Frances McMahan
Sister Jane Meuse
Sister Grace Miller
Sister Madonna Moran
Sister Margaret (Peg) Murphy
Sister Mary St. Michael Myles
Sister Eileen Mary O'Connor
Sister Mary O'Neill
Sister Mary George O'Toole
Sister Diane Pederzani
Sister Mary Lalemant Pelikan
Sister Mary Brigid Perez
Sister Marianne Postiglione
Sister Jean Pyper
Sister Nancy Quinlan
Sister Jeanita Richter
Sister Rose Marie Rocha
Sister Karen Ross
Sister Mary Michon Rozmajzl
Sister Ellen Marie Ryan
Sister Mary Carmela Sandusky
Sister Loretta Saudarg
Sister Mary Sharon Schmitz
Sister Amelia Seidl
Sister Mary Lou Seitz
Sister Mary Susan Severin
Sister Marjorie Smith
Sister Catherine Snyder
Sister Dolores Ann Stein
Sister Mary Catharine Sullivan
Sister Mary Imelda Sullivan
Sister Mary Eleanor Thornton
Sister Mary Stephen Torres
Sister Rachel Torrez
Sister Arlene Vannie
Sister Regina Williams
Sister Barbara Joan Wintish
Sister Mary Clare Yates
Sister JoCeal Young

60 Years

Sister Margaret Mary Andrews
Sister Dolores Arruda
Sister Mary Jo Baldus
Sister Joanne Mary Boellner
Sister Mary Clare Bollow
Sister Mary Ellen Brennan
Sister Mary Ellen Brody
Sister Mary Agnes Brueggen
Sister Richard Mary Burke
Sister Ann Byrnes
Sister Maria Elena Cervantes
Sister Mary Juliana Clancy
Sister Donna Marie Coward
Sister Anita Marie DeSalvo
Sister Maureen Christi Donahue
Sister Eileen Dooling
Sister Carole Doring
Sister Janice Edwards
Sister Theresa Falco
Sister Miriam Claire Ford
Sister Mary Ellen Fuhrman
Sister Mary Galeone
Sister Suzanne Gallagher
Sister Katherine Marie Glosenger
Sister Mary Gormley
Sister Ida Gregoire
Sister Patricia Griffith
Sister Veronica Gross
Sister Eugenie Guterch
Sister Michael Mary Gutowski
Sister Dale Jarvis
Sister Anna Mae Keeley
Sister Moira Kenny
Sister Maria Klosowski
Sister Veronica Kovach
Sister Carol Ann LeTourneau
Sister Mary Ann Mazza
Sister Mary Jo McGinley
Sister Catherine McGroarty
Sister Mary Ellen McKenna
Sister Lee Ann McNally
Sister Marilyn Ann Metz
Sister Pamela Michaels
Sister Jacqueline Moreau
Sister Ellen Murray

Sister Suzanne Marie Neisser
Sister Diana Newton
Sister Elaine Lopez Pacheco
Sister Mamerta Pagente
Sister Marie Parker
Sister Eileen Pazmino
Sister Mary Krista Ramirez
Sister Patricia Randall
Sister Cecile Sakaley
Sister Helen Santillan
Sister Mary Antonette Schmidt
Sister Patricia Ann Smith
Sister Maurita Soukup

Sister Suzanne Thompson
Sister Eileen Trainor
Sister Mary Suzanne Stalm
Sister Sheila Stevenson
Sister Margaret Verstege
Sister Margaret Mary Wharton
Sister Judith Wuerl

50 Years

Sister Anne Curtis
Sister Nancy Houlihan
Sister Kathleen Mary Kelly
Sister Nancy Kelly

Sister Dorothy Lettiere
Sister Catherine Maguire
Sister Marguerite Pessagno
Sister Imelda Sherrett
Sister Kathleen Sonnie
Sister Jane Winterson

25 Years

Sister Jean Dy Delgado
Sister Breige Lavery
Sister Derby Mercado
Sister Catherine L. Solan
Sister Elaine Stahl



CLASS NOTES



1960s

Sister Barbara A. Williams, RSM, '63, officially retired in June 2025 after an extraordinary 65 years of ministry at Georgian Court. Over the decades, she served in numerous roles, including Registrar, Head Librarian, Academic

Dean, President, and Librarian/Archivist. Georgian Court honored her with an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters in 2017, named her President Emerita in 2000, and Librarian/Archivist Emerita in 2025.



Thirteen members of the **Class of 1968** gathered for their annual brunch at the Grenville Hotel, continuing a beloved tradition. The group reunited following a weekend visit to campus, where they shared memories and meaningful conversation. “We always seem to pick up where we left off,” said Marjorie Hale '68. “No one’s changed in 56 years!”



2000s

Jill Falletta, '05, was named the 2024–2025 Ocean County Teacher of the Year. A first-grade teacher at Beach Haven School, Jill has taught in Ocean County for over 16 years and is known for creating hands-on learning experiences and strong community connections.

Laura Carolfi, '09, wrote the lyrics and melody for a newly released children’s song, *The Hungry Little Gopher*, performed by Jared Bashant and the Garden Gang. The song is available on major streaming platforms, with a music video featuring American Sign Language (ASL) on Laura’s YouTube channel.



2010s

Kirsten DeLuca, '13, '17, recently published her debut contemporary LGBTQ+ romance novel, *The Hummingbird Lullaby*, under the pen name Kirsten Miles. The book was released on August 1, 2024, and is available through Amazon and Barnes & Noble.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

WEDDINGS



Megan Reinhold Hills, '21,
and Mark Hills —
September 14, 2024

Jessica Sipili, '19, and Jimmy Sanford, '20
— August 15, 2024

Jessica and Jimmy were married on Georgian Court's campus, exactly nine years after they first met on August 15, 2015, during their freshman year. Jimmy played for the men's soccer team and Jessica for the women's volleyball team, and both were joined at their wedding by former GCU coaches.



Do you have good news to share? Send your updates to alumni@georgian.edu for possible inclusion in upcoming magazines.

IN MEMORIAM

Doris Musa '50
 Margaret Cleary '51
 Irene Dominik Storkan '52
 Eileen Leyshon Warman '52, sister of Margaret Leyshon Cole '56
 Josephine Wong Yao '54
 Meriann Gruerio Destribats '56
 Kathleen Lee Choy '57
 Marcella Wall Pearman '57
 Joan Wright Ruppert '57
 Catherine Kelaher O'Brien '59
 Joy Eayre Brower '63
 Alice Corinne d'Hedouville '63
 Janet Haney Hand '64
 Ellen King Kravitz, Ph.D., '64
 Ann O'Connor Kelly '65
 Barbara Eschelbach Reutter '66
 Gloriana Gleason Rodriguez '66
 Mary Ann Peters, RSM, '67
 Sharon Popinko Rogora '67
 Ann Gill DiCerbo '68
 Patricia Dubatowka McMillan '68, sister of Deborah Dubatowka Anilonis '71
 Virginia Barrett Agans '69, cousin of Anne Yeomans Petty '56, Patricia Hamilton Flood '50, and Frances Kling Spann '62
 Ellen Murray Burstein '69
 Mary Anne Clancy '69
 Marie Fedkenheuer Paulina '69
 Lee Ann Sahrner '72
 Michele Tryon Cimiluca '73, mother of Lora Cimiluca Messa '09
 Kathy Furka Nuttycombe '74
 Joyce Bannister '77
 Lettie Brower-Napolitano, Psy.D., MFT, LP, '78, '01
 Mary Ann Burns Bowers '79, '83, aunt of Florence Polhemus Flitz '08
 Bianca Camilleri, FMIHM, '79
 Carla Crohn Friedman '79, '92
 Jody Sporn '79
 Grace Williamson Haviland '80
 Gregory Greer '82
 Dorothy Irre '82
 Brenda Bivins Gainey '83
 Carol Kershaw '83, wife of Raymond Kershaw '97
 Katherine Mayer '84
 Diana Partusch '85
 Susan Willmott, Esq., '87
 Elizabeth Masella Grabowski '88
 Carole Gill Adamo '91
 Doreen Siegmann Coticelli '91
 Sally Ash Griffin '91
 Sean McGrath '91, brother of Patricia McGrath O'Brien '95
 Matilda Sirianni Penta '91
 Karen Newman Nobel '94
 Miss Maria Pellicone '95
 Diane Liddawi Koehler '96
 Carol Theall Covert '97
 Susan Hunter-Mazzella, Ed.D., '97
 Laura Scott Kasnowski '97
 Linda Shufelt Ansbach '98, wife of John Ansbach '98
 Barbara Thrash Bates '01
 Carmen Bojorge '04
 John Regg '04
 Veronica Chirico Viviani '09
 Michael Hughes '20
 Porscha A. Glisson '21
 Ingrid Rivera Zuniga '25

Sister Mary C. Bilderback, RSM
 Kate Castell, former faculty of education
 Sister Mary Francesca Holly, RSM, '69, '00
 Joseph E. Potaski, Ed.D., former associate professor of education, father of Karen Potaski '93, '00
 Sister Mary C. Sullivan, RSM, '55
 Elaine Thompson, Ph.D., former professor of psychology
 Eric Wurmser, M.D., husband of Dr. Theresa Wurmser, dean of the Hackensack Meridian Health School of Nursing at GCU

We offer our condolences for any losses experienced in the lives of our GCU community. This list represents all passings shared with the Georgian Court Office of Alumni Relations between July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. To honor the memory of a loved one, donations can be made to Georgian Court University at alumni.georgian.edu.



Elaine Thompson, faculty member from 1990 to 2015



Ingrid Rivera-Zuniga, Criminal Justice major and Chi Alpha Epsilon Honor Society member, Class of 2025

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On Thursday, May 15th, we celebrated our 114th Annual Commencement, marking the graduation of 465 members of the Class of 2025! Even the clouds and light rain couldn't stop the smiles and pride of graduates and their loved ones on this special day. Scan the QR code to view or download photos from throughout the day or watch videos of the ceremonies.



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More details to follow this summer!





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