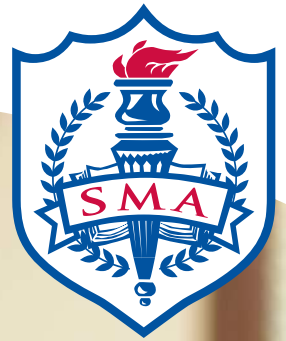
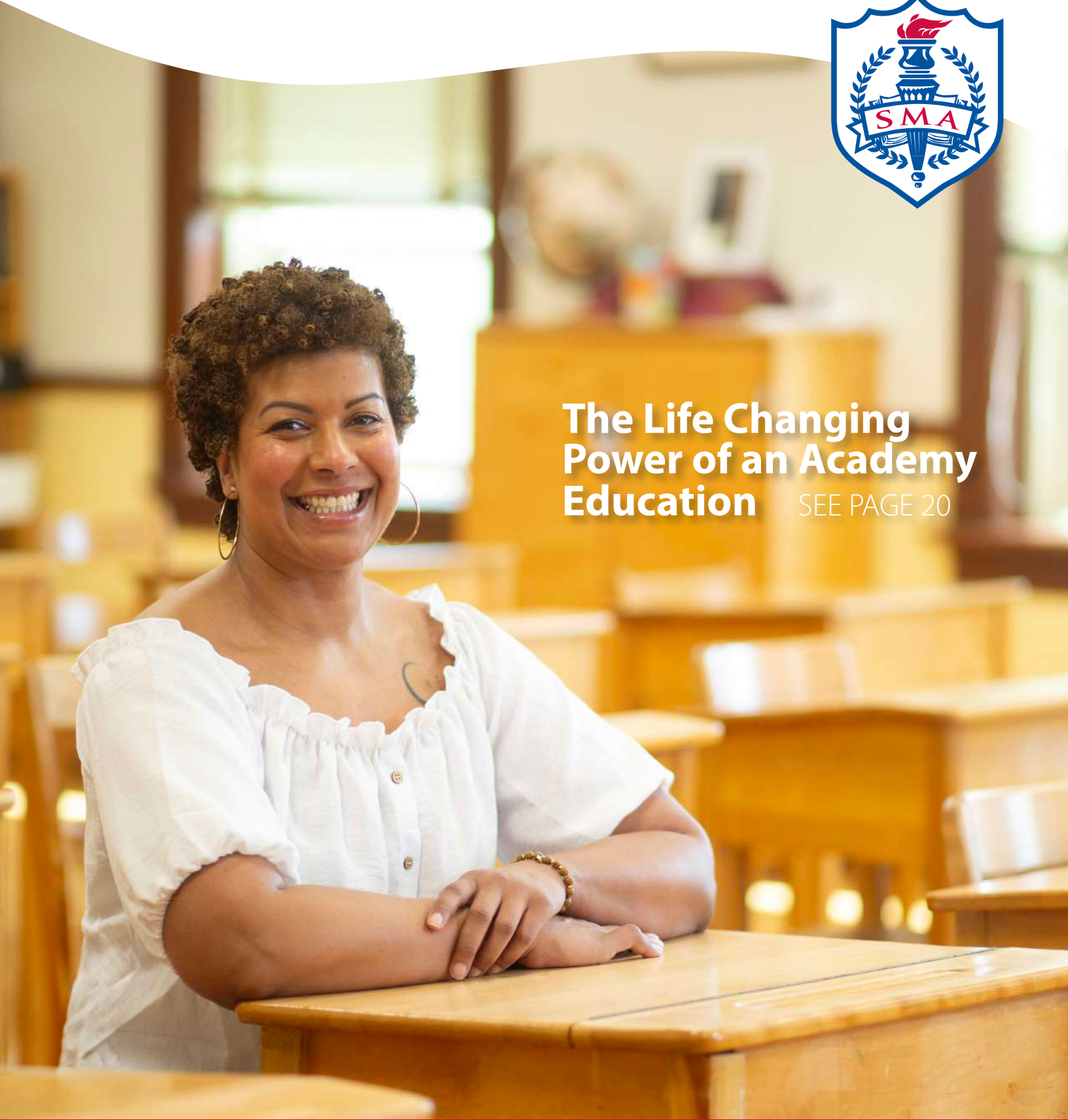


TORCH LIGHT

ST. MARY'S ACADEMY
YEAR IN REVIEW
FALL 2026



**The Life Changing
Power of an Academy
Education** SEE PAGE 20



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Sr. Lorraine St-Hilaire, SNJM
Sr. Susan Wikeem, '63, SNJM

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Michelle Klus
PRESIDENT | ST. MARY'S ACADEMY

At St. Mary's Academy, we are called to learn, grow, lead and bring light to the world around us. Throughout the 2025-2026 school year, our theme, "How Do I Cast Fire?", invited students to reflect on how their learning, gifts and actions could bring God's love into the world through kindness, dedication and courage. As you will read in this issue of the Torch Light, our students as well as our broader community brought that call to life.

Students explored faith through liturgy, prayer and service; challenged themselves through academics, debate and the arts; strengthened resilience and teamwork through athletics; and looked ahead with confidence through career and mentorship opportunities. In each of these experiences, they were encouraged to ask questions, discover their voices, and grow into young women of faith and purpose.

None of this happens without the dedication of our exceptional faculty and staff. Every day, they model care, nurture curiosity, uphold high expectations, and help students recognize the gifts within themselves. Their work reaches far beyond the classroom and reflects the educational mission so powerfully affirmed this year when our Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJM) received the Justice James Higgins Award (story on page 8). This national recognition honours the Sisters' many contributions to Catholic education. It also reminds us that we are blessed to walk the path they created and carry forward their legacy of learning, faith and service, always mindful of the dignity of each person.

This legacy is strengthened each day through the generosity and commitment of our broader community. Our Parents' Guild gives so generously of their time and talents, organizing events and initiatives that build community, support school life, and raise funds for projects that enrich the student experience, including the Outdoor Learning Circle that opened last fall. Our alumnae, families, donors, and friends also play a vital role in creating opportunities for students, both now and for generations to come, through volunteer service, mentorship, philanthropic support, participation in our IGNITE Gala, and countless acts of encouragement. I am sincerely grateful to all who share their time, expertise, and resources in support of the Academy. This includes the members of our School Board and Foundation Board, whose leadership, governance, and stewardship help ensure a strong and vibrant future for St. Mary's Academy.

This year also marked the development of a new Strategic Plan, which will be released by the end of 2026. Grounded in our SNJM roots and mission to nurture young women in spirit, mind, and body, the plan will guide our priorities in the years ahead and help ensure that St. Mary's continues to provide an education that is academically empowering, deeply rooted in faith, and responsive to the needs of students.

To the Class of 2026, congratulations. As our newest alumnae, you carry with you the knowledge, confidence, compassion, and sense of purpose nurtured at the Academy. We look forward to seeing the many ways you will continue to serve, lead, and cast fire in the world.

As we begin a new school year, we are pleased to welcome Mrs. Jeannine Pistawka (Barnabé '88) as Principal and are grateful for the leadership, faith, and the deep connection to St. Mary's she brings to the role. We also embrace our 2026-2027 theme, "Who Am I?" Guided by Ephesians 2:10, which reminds us that each of us is God's work of art. Throughout the school year, our students are invited to deepen their understanding of who they are, whose they are, and how they are called to use their gifts. As valued members of our community, you, too, are invited to contemplate what it means to be God's work of art.

Thank you for your continued support of St. Mary's Academy. As you Hold High the Torch, you help carry our mission forward and bring light to our community and the world.

With gratitude and every blessing,
Michelle Klus
President

AROUND THE ACADEMY

ROOTED IN FAITH

At St. Mary's Academy, we are rooted in our Catholic faith, recognizing that a strong spiritual foundation guides us to live with kindness, grace, curiosity, and resilience, while inspiring us to grow, serve others, and make a meaningful impact in the world.

Each school year we embrace a guiding theme, rooted in faith and expressed as a question. The theme for 2025-2026 was "How Do I Cast Fire?", accompanied by the Gospel verse, "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God?" (Micah 6:8). This verse served to answer the theme and lead students to discover how they can set the world ablaze with God's love.

This year, we placed special emphasis on what it means to kindle the fire of God's love. Across school-wide liturgies, Religion classes, activities, service, and community life, students explored how words and actions can spark change, inspire hope, and kindle faith in others.



WELCOME OUR NEW PRINCIPAL

In August 2026, St. Mary's Academy welcomed Mrs. Jeannine Pistawka (Barnabé '88) as Principal.

Mrs. Pistawka is a proud SMA alumna and former member of our faculty, having faithfully served students from 1998 to 2014 as an English teacher, including 12 years as Department Head. Her deep history with SMA, along with her extensive experience in education, makes her exceptionally well suited for this important leadership role.

She brings more than a decade of distinguished leadership as Principal of St. Ignatius School and holds a Master of Education in Educational Administration. Mrs. Pistawka is actively involved in Catholic education, she has served in a variety of leadership capacities within Manitoba Catholic Schools, including contributions to the Group Services Board. She has also contributed to committees with the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, Manitoba Education, and the Manitoba Federation of Independent Schools.

At the heart of Mrs. Pistawka's leadership is a student-centred philosophy and a commitment to honouring the dignity of each learner, ensuring students are known, supported, and challenged to grow in meaningful and holistic ways. Her guidance is grounded in faith, collaboration, and purpose, and her longstanding involvement in faith communities continues to inspire her commitment to service.

We warmly welcome Mrs. Pistawka back to the SMA community.

"Returning to St. Mary's Academy is deeply meaningful and fills me with gratitude. This community formed me as a student and shaped me as an educator. I am honoured to serve a mission I hold close to my heart, and I look forward to working together to support the young women we are called to educate and inspire." – Mrs. Pistawka

FAITH, CULTURE, AND ARTS TRIP TO EUROPE

During Spring Break, 48 students in Grades 10-12, accompanied by six faculty members, travelled through Europe. With a focus in Theatre, Religion, Art, and French cuisine, students engaged in cultural experiences across London, Paris, Brussels, and Amsterdam. Highlights included visits to iconic landmarks and museums such as the Arc de Triomphe, Eiffel Tower, Grand Place, the National Gallery, and the Louvre. The group took part in a range of impactful experiences, from attending Palm Sunday Mass at Notre Dame Cathedral and walking through the Anne Frank House, to visiting Buckingham Palace and watching *Wicked* on Broadway. Students also participated in hands-on experiences such as macaron and chocolate-making classes. The jam-packed journey was filled with adventure and invited students to deepen their understanding of history, culture, and faith.



GIFT BAGS FROM THE HEART

In December, our Mission Club and SMA students organized Gift Bags from the Heart, a cherished 17-year tradition. Each homeroom was assigned a category – girl, boy, woman, man, or “most needed” – and collected items to assemble gift bags for those in need. On December 21, SMA volunteers delivered the gift bags to the Immaculate Conception Drop-In Centre, sharing Christmas joy with over 450 community members.



WOMEN IN STEM

On April 17, 35 Grade 10 students gathered in the Durocher Library for an engaging Women in STEM panel. Students heard from a diverse group of speakers, including civil engineer and SMA alumna, Laura Robson '01, alongside a biology instructor, senior mathematics instructor, laboratory manager, and several master's students. Panelists shared insights into their career paths and current work, and students learned about the many possibilities within STEM and how science can be used across various professions. The session sparked particular interest in engineering, with several students connecting with Robson during the small round question and answer period.



MARIAN CUP DEBATE TOURNAMENT

On April 21, SMA proudly hosted the annual Marian Cup debate tournament, welcoming nine schools and more than 20 teams, including six from SMA. The competition featured three rounds of impromptu debate, challenging students to engage with topics related to education and world affairs in Canada. Well done to all students who participated and a special congratulations to students Miabella P '27, Delphina N '27, Anastasia W '27, and Umber K '27, whose strong performances placed them among the tournament's top five teams.

AROUND THE ACADEMY

HUMAN RIGHTS TEAM DINNER

On April 29, SMA's Human Rights Team reintroduced its annual dinner with a focus on genocides, immigration, and refugee experiences from female perspectives. Speakers included Jamileh Naso, President of the Canadian Yazidi Association, Delphina N '27, SMA Student and Member of the Human Rights Executive Team, and Sumayo, a neighbour from Holy Names House of Peace. Each offered meaningful information that deepened the SMA community's understanding of global human rights.



SPRING CONCERT

On June 1, Alumnae Hall was filled with beautiful and uplifting melodies at the Spring Concert, Made in God's Image. Performances by the Con Spiritu Choir, SMA Glee Club Singers, SMA & SPSHS Polyphonic Motet Group, and the Grade 7 & 8 Choir Class were complimented by the premiere of the SMA Sacred Dance Team. Special thanks to guest artists Fr. Geoffrey Angeles, Fr. Marc-André Veselovsky, Keith Macpherson, and Alyssa Romaniuk. Thank you to all who contributed in support of Rossbrook House.



ATHLETICS BANQUET



On May 13, more than 100 students, coaches, and staff gathered for the SMA Athletics Banquet, an inspiring event hosted by the Athletics Council. Student-athletes and coaches across all sports were recognized through a variety of awards, including Most Valuable Player, Sportsmanship, Resiliency, and more. The evening also featured a keynote address from alumna and two-time Olympian, Janine Stephens (Hanson '01), who spoke of the importance of a positive attitude, thoughtful communication, and a commitment to the "one percent" each day. The banquet served as a meaningful celebration of teamwork, commitment, and Flames school spirit.



TEAM ACHIEVEMENTS

High School Flag Football | Divisional Championship in the Football Manitoba High School Girls Flag Football League

Grade 8 Girls Cross Country | West Winnipeg Athletic Conference Champions

Varsity Cross Country | West Winnipeg Athletic Conference Champions, Manitoba High Schools Athletic Association Provincial Champions

High School Water Polo | Provincial Champions

Varsity Track & Field | Manitoba High Schools Athletic Association Provincial Champions





CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2026

Our seniors embraced this year's school theme, *How Do I Cast Fire?*, reflecting throughout their final year on the words of the prophet Micah: "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God?" -Micah 6:8

The Class of 2026 celebrated the culmination of their Academy journey through cherished traditions, including the Grade 12 Retreat, Graduation Mass and Brunch, Convocation, and Dinner & Dance. Graduates also celebrated friendships, growth and the beginning of an exciting new chapter.

Graduation Mass brought graduates and their families together to praise God and celebrate this important milestone. Father Geoffrey Angeles invited students to reflect on all they have learned during their time at the Academy, to look ahead with hope, and to let love be their anchor as they cast fire in the world. Following Mass, guests gathered for brunch at the Viscount Gort Hotel, where Miss Congeniality was awarded to Miss Ibereayo (Michelle) Ajayi '26, as chosen by her peers, and all graduates were inducted into the SMA Alumnae Association.

At Convocation, Miss Mila Saltel '26 delivered the Salutatory Address, having been selected by her classmates, Miss Kennedy Chambers '26 gave the Valedictorian speech, an honour awarded by a panel of judges. The Address to Graduates was presented by alumna Ms. Sarrah Menge (Brown '95).

Mila welcomed guests and expressed heartfelt gratitude to families, friends, teachers and mentors for their unwavering love, guidance, and support.

Kennedy encouraged her classmates to reflect on how they will Cast Fire – to consider how they will ignite change through their actions and use their unique gifts to make a positive impact in the world. Looking back on the years at St. Mary's, she celebrated the friendships, learning, faith, and growth that shaped the Class of 2026, reminding graduates, "St. Mary's has given us more than an education. It has taught us adaptability, resilience, and the power our voice holds. It has shown us that we are capable of more than we have imagined, and we have a responsibility to use this voice for good."



Mila Saltel '26



Kennedy Chambers '26



Sarrah Menge (Brown '95)



Ibereayo (Michelle) Ajayi '26



St. Mary's Academy congratulates the Class of 2026! May you Hold High the Torch, cast fire wherever your journey leads, and know that our prayers are with you.

SISTERS OF THE HOLY NAMES OF JESUS AND MARY



SNJM with Justice James Higgins Award. Left to right: Sr. Yolande Marion, Sr. Josephine Chudzik '59, Sr. Cathy Laviolette, Sr. Lesley Sacouman '63, Sr. Susan Wikeem '63, Sr. Laura Gosselin, Sr. Edith Grenier, Sr. Lorraine St-Hilaire, Sr. Pauline Saurette, Sr. Marylyn Gibney

MANITOBA SNJM HONoured WITH NATIONAL AWARD

For more than 150 years, the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJM) have played a defining role in shaping and nurturing Catholic education in Manitoba. On June 6, 2026, their impact was recognized nationally when the Manitoba SNJM received the Justice James Higgins Award, the highest honour presented by the Canadian Catholic School Trustees' Association (CCSTA).

The story of the Sisters began in Quebec in 1843 when Blessed Marie-Rose Durocher, born Eulalie Durocher, founded the SNJM. She dreamed of "a community of teaching religious established in every parish, where young people, rich or poor, would receive a good religious education." Her vision was rooted in a profound belief in the transformative power of education that is grounded in faith. She believed true learning happens in an environment where one's potential is seen and nurtured. She saw the Arts as important in education and encouraged learning through self-expression. She knew that an entire society could be transformed when the minds and hearts of young women are nurtured. Blessed Marie-Rose frequently repeated the words of Jesus, "I have come to cast fire upon the earth." And cast fire she did.

Her vision travelled west in 1874 when four young Sisters arrived in the new province of Manitoba to serve Catholic families in the Red River settlement. Their first ministry began at St. Mary's Academy and, over the decades that followed, expanded to schools and communities throughout Winnipeg and beyond. The Sisters were educators and administrators at 22 private, parochial, and public schools over the course of their

Citing the writings of theologian Thomas Groome, Sister Susan stated, "To be an educator is a sacred privilege and awesome responsibility. You mold the very being of people, both who they become and how they live in the world. You walk on holy ground – peoples' lives."

history in Manitoba, while also playing an important role in the development of French-language education in the province. They persevered through periods of significant challenge, including the loss of public funding for Catholic schools, to ensure that Catholic education not only survived but flourished. Their influence reached generations of students and families and helped build the educational landscape of Manitoba.

Accepting the award on behalf of the Manitoba congregation, Sister Susan Wikeem '63, noted that the hallmarks of a Holy Names education remain as relevant today as they were in 1843. She gratefully acknowledged the many Sisters who came before, stating those receiving the award "stand on the shoulders of all those who came before us."

Sister Susan also used the occasion to recognize the educators, administrators, and leaders who continue the work today. Citing the writings of theologian Thomas Groome, she stated, "To be an educator is a sacred privilege and awesome responsibility. You mold the very being of people, both who they become and how they live in the world. You walk on holy ground – peoples' lives."

For all who have had the privilege of walking in the path the Sisters blazed, this recognition is especially poignant. It honours a legacy of learning, faith, leadership, courage, and service that has shaped countless lives. As beneficiaries of that legacy, our SMA community remains inspired by their example and committed to Holding High the Torch for those who follow.



Blessed Marie-Rose Durocher



SNJM on front steps of St. Mary's Academy in 1915

FROM THE ARCHIVES



Andrew Morrison, SMA Archivist



Sister Mary Gorman '49, SNJM

ARCHIVES AND HERITAGE COLLECTION

From the earliest days of St. Mary's Academy, the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJM) understood the importance of preserving the school's history. Student records, photographs, memorabilia, and artifacts were carefully kept, not simply as documents, but as the living memory of the young women whose lives helped shape the Academy.

For 25 years, Sister Mary Gorman '49, SNJM, faithfully tended this vast Archives and Heritage Collection. As Archivist from 1995 to 2020, she organized and preserved records that connect generations of students, alumnae, SNJM, families and staff to their shared history.

Today, that stewardship continues under Archivist, Andrew Morrison, who brings a wealth of experience to the role, including a Master of Information Studies from the University of Toronto. When he first stepped into the archives in 2025, he was struck by the breadth of the collection.

"The archival records capture the lives of students unfolding in extraordinary detail – from classes taken and clubs joined, to financial records, multigenerational family histories, and even postcards to the Sisters from girls travelling abroad. The artifacts, from familiar pieces like the antique furniture on the second floor's 'cozy corner' to the lesser-known treasures, have all been well cared for and carefully preserved." – Andrew Morrison, SMA Archivist

Early in his tenure, Andrew discovered a scrapbook created by a boarder in the early 1920s. The young girl filled the pages with photographs and her own handwritten reflections on life as a boarder, from the books she loved to the everyday moments of being a student, offering a rare glimpse into her life at the Academy a century ago.

The Archives and Heritage Collection keep the legacy of St. Mary's Academy alive, ensuring that the stories of the past continue to connect generations and inspire those who walk the halls today. With countless personal histories still to be uncovered and shared, the Archives remain a living, evolving collection – one whose future is as rich with possibility as its past. Significant work now and in the future ensures these stories and artifacts remain accessible for generations to come.

PRESERVING THE STORY OF SMA

At St. Mary's Academy, history is preserved in two powerful ways: through the records that document daily life, and the objects that carry its meaning forward.

ARCHIVES OUR RECORDED HISTORY

100 metres of textual records
(nearly the length of a football field)

17,124 photographs documenting
generations of students

169 audiovisual recordings from VHS
tapes to digital media

1,084 architectural records, maps,
and posters



HERITAGE COLLECTION OUR PHYSICAL LEGACY

500 pieces of furniture used
throughout the school's history

125 religious objects, paintings,
and sculptures

80 pins, ribbons, and medals
marking achievement and
tradition



GET INVOLVED

Curious to learn more about a loved one's story?

We would be honoured to explore SMA's storied past, together.

Interested in becoming part of a group of volunteers helping preserve SMA's history for future generations?

We would love to welcome you.

Please contact our Archivist at: archives@smamb.ca

ALUMNAE ATHLETICS



ALUMNAE VS. STUDENTS GAMES

Alumnae from across the years returned to SMA, facing off against current student-athletes in basketball, soccer, and volleyball. This pilot program celebrated camaraderie, SMA spirit, and friendly competition. The field and courts were filled with the energy of women who, though they had never played together, shared the same foundation. Retired coaches returned to the benches, leading teams with enduring passion, while the stands were filled with cheering families and friends. Together, the community reunited in a heartening celebration of SMA's enduring legacy.

"It was so incredibly fun, and honestly, such a treat to connect with so many like-minded, 'like-energized' women across so many years. SMA is a really special place, and I'm so grateful to have been able to be a part of tonight."

-ANNA DREWNIAK '99

BACK ON CENTRE COURT

BY AMY HOUSTON '03

Last night, I found myself standing at centre court at my Alma Mater, waiting for the jump ball. I was excited to be back, but also nervous. It had been two decades. Would it still be there? And then the ball went up. Within seconds – it all came flooding back. The footwork. The timing. The spacing. The instinct to move, pass, box out. All those hours in the gym. All the reps. All the drills. Still there.

What made the night even more meaningful was who I got to share the court with – players I once looked up to, and a coach I had always hoped to be coached by but never had the chance. It felt like a full circle moment. One of those rare experiences where past and present meet in the most meaningful way. But what stood out the most wasn't just the nostalgia. It was the chemistry. A bench of players who had never actually played together – and yet, we moved like we had. Why? Because we were shaped the same way. Through discipline. Through repetition. Through the fundamentals.

At the end of the game, a parent said something that stayed with me: Grit. And the more I've sat with it, the more I realize – it wasn't just grit in that moment. It was practiced grit. The kind you build over time. The practice of not giving up. The practice of being relentless. The practice of finishing. The practice of going for it – even when you don't know the outcome. The practice of trusting your team. The practice of executing under pressure. The practice of believing you have what it takes. That's what showed up on that court. Not speed. Not flash. But wisdom. Instinct. And years of practiced resilience.

Last night was a testament to something bigger than a game. It was legacy. A group of athletes and their coach, who even decades later, didn't stop – not until the final buzzer. And it reminded me of something I see so clearly in life and in my work today: What you practice is what you become. The habits you repeat today are shaping the version of you you'll rely on tomorrow.

I left that game with so much gratitude – for the coaches, the mentors, the parents in the stands, and the younger version of me who showed up, over and over again, to put in the work. Because those lessons didn't stay in the past. They're still showing up for me now. Just in a different way. And if I'm honest... the athlete in me is very much alive.

The magic is still there.



CELEBRATIONS

DECEMBER CELEBRATION | DECEMBER 7, 2025

Our SMA community joyfully gathered on the first Sunday of Advent to celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Guests were nourished by a touching liturgy, presided by Father Gerry Ward, who shared a message of hope, peace, joy, and love. Holy Names Chapel was filled with sacred music from students in the school's Con Spiritu Choir, quiet reflection, and warm greetings from alumnae, students, and staff. Following the service, alumnae and friends enjoyed time to connect and reflect over tea and refreshments. A sincere thank you to everyone who joined us for this cherished tradition, and special thanks to those who generously donated to Rossbrook House in support of their winter clothing drive. Rossbrook House is a neighbourhood drop-in centre founded by the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary and a group of young people in 1976.



Left to right: Cheryl Prokopanko '72, Father Gerry Ward, Francheska V '29, Myla D '31



Left to right: Cheryl Gilleshammer, Pat Gilleshammer, Justita Suarez, Malou Epres, Edna Vilanueva, Rachel Suarez-Banmann, Rebecca Skinner



Left to right: Sergio Almeida, Trevor Yakel, Gabriela Tylman, Sandra Martin (Alwis '97), Joanne Steeves (Weight '90)



DRINKS UNDER THE DOME | DECEMBER 19, 2025

After a snowstorm forced a rescheduling, the Class of 2025 trudged through snow back to SMA – and back to one another – for the time-honoured tradition of Drinks Under the Dome. Warmth quickly replaced the cold as our newest alumnae received their yearbooks, flipping through pages filled with memories and laughter, and were reminded of the shared community woven between them. Guests reconnected with teachers, shared stories of life beyond SMA, and visited the dome, a cherished rite of passage. The evening marked not an ending, but a beginning, as their connection to SMA and one another continues to blossom.



Left to right: Brisa Van Norman '25, Brooke Toporoski '25, Dawon Yoon '25



Left to right: Kasia Rakowski '25, Sydney MacKinnon '25



Left to right: Sabrina Batla '25, Wynne Hu '25, Janna Cuevas '25

HOMECOMING

HOMECOMING | SEPTEMBER 20 AND 21, 2025

We were delighted to welcome alumnae, students, families, staff, and friends – past and present – back to St. Mary's for Homecoming 2025, a special reunion that brings together generations and celebrates the enduring bonds that unite SMA graduates.

The weekend began with a wine and cheese reception on Saturday honouring alumnae from the **Classes of 2015, 2005, 2000, 1995, 1990, 1985, 1975, and all alumnae from the Class of 1965 and earlier.** The halls were once again filled with familiar laughter as old friends slipped

effortlessly back into a place that still feels like home, pausing at graduation photos in search of one another. On Sunday, the community gathered for Mass, presided over by Father Colin Peterson, followed by touring and tea. Alumnae lingered into the afternoon, walking the halls, reconnecting with familiar faces, and reflecting on the moments and years that continue to shape them. Homecoming is a joyful reminder that while much changes, the spirit of SMA and the connections made here, remain.

View more photos at smaphotos.ca/homecoming2025



Class of 1965 and earlier



Class of 1975



Class of 1985



Class of 1990



Class of 1995



Class of 2000



Class of 2005



Class of 2015: Kelsey Copeland '15, Jillian Stefanson '15, Chelsea Jones (Colburn '15)



Left to right: Lucy Beckta (Stepien '65), Regina Porth (Cottingham '65), Father Collin Peterson, Jocelyn Preston (Martens '65), Janice Wautier (Dziedzic '72)



Left to right: Magdalena Berger (Drewniak '00), Niki Little '00, Lindsay McLeod '00



Left to right: Marisol Molina-Smith '85, Glenda Rudnicki-Enns '85, Lynn Nykoluk '85, Diana Riedle (Reichardt '85), Marge Logan (Anderson '85), Lucy Shrimpton (Farnsworth '85)



Left to right: Nola Buhr '75, Colleen Ridley (Donnelly '75), Beverly Horbay '75, Gisèle Molgat '75, Teresa Petriw (Prokopanko '75), Joan Degraives '75, Jennifer Copeland (Whytehead '75), Margaret Coyle '75, Catherine Cronin-Licharson '75



In a spontaneous moment during the Sunday tea – one that perfectly captured the spirit of homecoming – the Class of 1965 rose from their table and sang the SMA School Song. With arms wrapped around each other's shoulders and voices ringing with pride, their love for their Alma Mater, the community, and one another was palpable, even decades later. The moment brought smiles to the faces of all, and cheers and applause followed the song's end. It was a moment that celebrated tradition, connection, and enduring sisterhood.

A MILESTONE MOMENT

"Then on St. Mary's

Pride of the prairies

Adventure bravely on your way

We'll love thee ever and stand together

On guard for S.M.A."

-SMA School Song

BEYOND THE PROGRAM

Outside the formal events, groups of alumnae took the initiative to extend the celebration and organized their own gatherings. The Class of 1965 hosted a reception in the library with dainties and refreshments, while the Class of 1995 came together for a high-energy spin class at The Vault, led by Sarrah Menge (Brown '95).



Class of 1995



Left to right: Stephanie Poon '05, Kaela Acheson '05

CAREER AND MENTORSHIP

ST. MARY'S ACADEMY'S CAREER AND MENTORSHIP PROGRAM BRIDGES ASPIRATION AND EXPERIENCE

Through a range of events and initiatives, students are supported as they explore career paths and plan for life beyond graduation. The Program brings together alumnae and members of the SMA community - leaders in their fields - who generously share their time, insight, and experience. Together, they inspire the next generation to pursue their passions and build meaningful futures.



ASK AN ALUM | GRADES 11 AND 12 | NOVEMBER 27, 2025

Ask an Alum offers real talk from recent grads.

Current students heard firsthand from alumnae who've recently made the leap from high school to post-secondary. Through panel discussions and small group meetings, their stories, insights, and lived experiences offered a meaningful glimpse into life beyond SMA and valuable insights into everything from academic choices to managing newfound independence. From candid conversations to thoughtful Q&As, our students felt encouraged and were reminded that they are not alone as they take their next steps. The result was a sense of connection, reassurance, and inspiration that stayed with students long after the conversation ended.

THANK YOU TO OUR ALUMNAE FOR VOLUNTEERING



Jenna Cross '17



Meredith Cumming '18



Sophia Partyka '18



Anna Bird '19



Bethany Kolisniak '19



Joanna Joe '20



Linnea Kosokowsky '20



Kaylin Lazaro '20



Hillary Nguyen '20



Ainslee Tolentino '20



Katelyn Mestito-Dao '21



Annika Zirino '21



Fatima Faiz '22



Gregoria Ginakes '22



Kennedy Green '23



Sophia Krak '23

CAREER SPEAKERS

Career Speakers offer insight, inspiration, and real-world perspective.

Alumnae from a wide range of industries shared their professional journeys with current students – what drew them to their careers, the successes they’ve celebrated, the challenges they’ve overcome, and the lessons they’ve learned along the way. These candid conversations gave students the opportunity to ask questions, gain practical advice directly from women in the industry, and sparked ideas for the future.



Left to right: Dr. Anna Drewniak '99 and Caroline Sicat '94

GRADE 9 CAREER SPEAKERS | OCTOBER 16, 2025

Dr. Anna Drewniak '99, Allergist/Immunologist, and **Caroline Sicat '94**, Aircraft Maintenance Engineer, shared their distinct professional journeys and thoughtful insights at the first of two career speaker events this year. From the challenges faced on the path to becoming a licensed physician to exploring various professional routes before entering the field of aerospace engineering, both speakers offered compelling reflections on the perseverance required to succeed, alongside candid real-world perspectives. Their stories encouraged students to consider new possibilities and pursue their interests with confidence.



Left to right: Lauren Hayhurst '07 and Ellen Enns '10

GRADE 10 CAREER SPEAKERS | MARCH 6, 2026

Lauren Hayhurst '07, Fish Research Biologist at the International Institute for Sustainable Development Experimental Lakes Area, and **Ellen Enns '10**, Registered Professional Planner with the Canadian Institute of Planners, shared valuable insights into their respective educational journeys and careers at the second event. From long-term, non-lethal fish monitoring projects in lakes studied for climate change to the intricacies of land-use planning and subdivision files, they offered informative and engaging perspectives. Their stories provided encouragement and inspiration for our students as they begin to imagine their own future pathways.

“What do you find fascinating? What work would continuously pique your curiosity? I believe those are essential questions to ask yourself when trying to find a fulfilling career.”

Ellen Enns '10

CAREER AND MENTORSHIP EVENTS FOR THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR

GRADE 9 CAREER SPEAKERS | OCTOBER 15, 2026

ASK AN ALUM | NOVEMBER 26, 2026

GRADE 10 CAREER SPEAKERS | MARCH 5, 2027

GRADE 10 MOCK INTERVIEWS | APRIL 21, 2027

GRADES 11 AND 12 PANEL INTERVIEWS | APRIL 22, 2027

To express your interest in volunteering with the Career and Mentorship program, please contact the SMA Alumnae Office: alumnae@smamb.ca or 204-560-6924.

CAREER AND MENTORSHIP

PANEL INTERVIEWS | GRADES 11 AND 12 | APRIL 23, 2026

Panel Interviews help students build confidence and career readiness.

Designed to strengthen communication and presentation skills, students introduced themselves and their work to a group of panelists. They received feedback, practical advice, and encouragement in a supportive environment that allowed them to practice professionalism and connect with mentors who have walked a similar path.



Left to right: Celyne T '26, Johanna W '27, Sarah M '27



Kate D '26,

"Panel interviews are a truly valuable resource that I strongly encourage students to partake in. I received lots of encouragement and feedback after my presentation that I will carry with me moving forward. It was an extremely rewarding experience."



Mila S '26

"Deciding your future is complicated and multi-layered - to get insight from people who can help you through that process is just another opportunity to be successful. This school gave me so much, it's nice coming back to make a small contribution."



Dr. Angie Mathieson '84



Left to right: Dr. Devi Atukorallaya, Julia Wilkins '97, Rekha Malaviya '83, Dr. Angie Mathieson '84, Suzan Goritz Tetrault (Goritz '99), Dayna Queau-Guzzi '06, Jennifer Busch (Kennedy '90), Gabriella Wilson, Brian Steeves (SPHS '88)

MOCK JOB INTERVIEWS | GRADE 10 | MAY 28, 2026

Mock Job Interviews help students land their first job.

Grade 10 students had the opportunity to participate in 15-minute mock job interviews with alumnae and friends of the Academy working in retail, hospitality, and restaurant and hotel management. With resume prep and real-time feedback, this initiative helped students gain confidence, sharpen their interview skills, and connect with mentors who provided practical advice and encouragement.



Left to right: Adriane McElrea, Bruce Garvey, Casey Nolin, Ray Louie, Joanne Dela Merced, Kate Hodgert-Fennell '99



THANK YOU
TO OUR ALUMNAE AND
FRIEND VOLUNTEERS

Rekha Malaviya '83
Dr. Angie Mathieson '84
Jennifer Busch (Kennedy '90)
Julia Wilkins '97
Suzan Goritz Tetrault (Goritz '99)

Dayna Queau-Guzzi '06
Sergio Almeida
Dr. Devi Atukorallaya
Joanne Dela Merced
Bruce Garvey

Ray Louie
Suzie Martin
Casey Nolin
Brian Steeves (SPHS '88)
Gabriella Wilson



1963 Correction: In the 2025 Torch Light Grapevine, the award attributed to **Sister Lesley Sacouman**, SNJM, was incorrect. We regret the error. In May 2025, she received a Doctor of Laws, honoris causa, from the University of Manitoba. The honour recognized her lifetime leadership and devotion

to the dignity of all, and her embodiment of the university's values of justice, equality, compassion, and hope.



1976 **Kimberly Prost** has built a distinguished international career in law and has served as a judge of the International Criminal Court (ICC) since 2018. Previously, she served as Chef de Cabinet for the President of the ICC and was appointed the first Ombudsperson to the United

Nations Security Council Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee. In recent months, her work has drawn international media attention, reflecting the global significance of her contributions to international justice.



1980 The Honourable **Mary Kate Harvie (MacDonald)** received the Manitoba Bar Association Distinguished Service Award (2025) for her dedication to the legal profession and broader community. Notably, she has contributed over two decades to the FASD Justice Program,

advancing justice-informed approaches for individuals affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.



1987 **Genevieve Michael** has accepted a new position as Manager of Access and Privacy at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) following a 26-year career with the Manitoba Department of Justice, where she was most notably the architect of Canada's first justice-based

youth self-harm policy. She now leads the stewardship of residential school records and serves as a global consultant, co-developing trauma-informed and culturally responsive policies across international jurisdictions.

1992 **Ginette Lavack** was elected Member of Parliament for St. Boniface – St. Vital in April 2025 and was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services in June 2025. She has built her career in cultural advocacy, regional development, and community-led governance.



1992 **Dr. Leisha Strachan** was nominated for the 2025 Research and Innovation Award from the SWIS Africa Awards in recognition of her leadership in sport psychology research. Her work has focused on positive youth development, coaching behaviours, and anti-racism in sport, helping to foster more inclusive

environments for young athletes. She is currently a Professor and Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies at the University of Manitoba. In addition, she has coached baton twirling for more than 30 years and directs the ANANSI School for the Performing Arts.



1997 **Corrine Kulyk**, a dedicated family lawyer, was recognized with an award honouring a Manitoba Bar Association member whose collegial spirit, support for lawyer wellness, and positive contributions have elevated the legal profession in our province.



1998 **Giselle Martel (Governor)** is the Vice President, Finance and Administration at RRC Polytech and a key leader behind the institution's achievement of a Gold STARS sustainability rating. She emphasized that the recognition reflects a collective, campus-wide commitment to sustainability, from reducing

water and energy use to advancing clean energy research and partnerships.



1999 Michelle O'Brien (Czarnecki) is a Kinesiologist, CSEP Personal Trainer, Nutrition Coach, and the owner of O'Brien Fitness, an international coaching company recognized for its innovative Total Body Approach to health and wellness. Her expertise has been featured in major fitness

publications and on CTV's Morning Show Live, where she appears as a health and fitness contributor. In 2026, Michelle was named one of Canada's Top Trainers by IMPACT Magazine.



2004 Dr. Oluwatomilayo (Tito) Daodu has been named one of Canada's Most Powerful Women of 2025: Top 100 by Women's Executive Network. A pediatric surgeon at the Alberta Children's Hospital, Dr. Daodu also serves as Assistant Dean of Research and Scholarship in the Precision

Equity and Social Justice Office at the Cumming School of Medicine. She is nationally recognized for her leadership in advancing equitable surgical care and fostering inclusive, justice-centred approaches to research and medical education.



2004 Dr. Nichelle Desilets was elected President of Doctors Manitoba for the 2025–2026 term, representing physicians across the province in advancing patient care and supporting the profession. A graduate of the University of Calgary's Faculty of Medicine and University of Saskatchewan's Department of

Family Medicine, she completed much of her training in rural and northern communities. Dr. Desilets practices in Neepawa as a full-scope rural family physician.

2011 Samantha Semchyshyn and her husband were delighted with the arrival of their son, Owen Robert Foster, born on February 24, 2026.



2012 Bénédicte LeMaître joyfully married her husband, Stéphan Kosowski on July 25, 2025. While on their honeymoon, the couple attended Pope Leo XIV's general

audience in St. Peter's Square, where they were seated in the 'newlywed' section. At the conclusion of the July 2025 address, the Pope offered a special blessing to the newlyweds and invited them forward for a personal blessing, an unforgettable honour. Bénédicte earned a Master of Arts in Religious Studies and is part of SMA's Mission and Charism team, nurturing faith, community, and music ministry.



2012 Nicole McGlenen and Andrew Koch were happy to welcome their son, Liam, to their family on November 28, 2025. Nicole has taught at SMA since 2019 and coaches the high school hockey team. While on maternity leave, she continued to attend each game to support the team.



2012 Alicia Ogoms was inducted into the Manitoba Volleyball Hall of Fame on June 7, 2026. She was a key member of the Canada Women's National Volleyball Team, competing in the 2023 Olympic Qualification tournament and the 2024 Volleyball Nations League. Her

international career involved playing in several tournaments including the 2022 World Championship, 2021 Nations League, 2020 NORCECA Women's Tokyo Qualification Tournament, and the 2019 Women's Challenge Cup. In 2025, she was diagnosed with breast cancer. During this time, she married her partner, Samantha Loren. She has since completed treatment and is now looking ahead to her return to the court.



2013 Annie Chipman Stockl serves as Vice President of Marketing for the Winnipeg Jets and True North Sports + Entertainment. During the 2024–25 NHL season, her Jets content team was named Social Media Team of the Year at the NHL's annual business meeting. A strong advocate for

women in sport, she helped create the Manitoba Moose Celebrating Women in Sport Job Shadow Program and the Winnipeg Jets Celebrating Women in Sport Scholarship, supporting young women pursuing post-secondary education who have made an impact in their communities. She also co-authored the proposal that brought the PWWHL's first game to Winnipeg during the 2026 Takeover Tour. She serves on the NHL and NHLPA Women's Hockey Advancement Committees.



2014 Jodi Kristjanson is an actor, director, and multidisciplinary artist who has worked across Canada in theatre and film in both English and French. She trained at Drama Studio London and the Village

Conservatory for Music Theatre, and holds a Bachelor of Philosophy from Collège Universitaire Dominicain/Carleton University. She is a co-founder of Genesis School of Dance, an accessible Christian dance studio in Winnipeg, where she serves as Director of the Musical Theatre program.



2020 Katie Welham, an alumna of the University of Winnipeg Honours Acting Program, has emerged as a rising artist in Winnipeg's theatre community. She has performed in the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre's *The Last Wife* and in productions at the Winnipeg Fringe Festival,

including *Women*, *A Taste of Blood in the Mouth*, which received the Harry S. Rintoul Award for Best New Manitoba Play, and *CLIQYOU*. Katie is currently participating in the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre's National Mentorship Program.



2015 Sydney Maurice, SMA teacher, continues to make a meaningful impact behind the bench as a coach with the SMA Flames in the Manitoba Women's High School Hockey League. She is part of an all-female alumnae coaching team alongside SMA teacher, **Nicole McGlenen '12** and assistant coaches **Katie McGlenen '16**, **Clare Hibbert '19**, and **Isabel Ostermann '25**, united in developing young athletes and fostering a positive team culture. This past winter, Sydney's father, NHL coach Paul Maurice, proudly took in a game and cheered for our Flames.

2016 Larissa Potenza-Mohr and Brendan were overjoyed with the arrival of their son, Lorenzo, born on February 12, 2026.



2016 Emma Welham made her professional directing debut with *Macbeth* for Shakespeare in the Ruins in 2025. She is currently a student in the Directing Program at the National Theatre School of Canada and holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) from the University of Winnipeg. Emma

has worked in many theatres locally and across the country as both a performer and director.



2024 Meghan Lagadi was awarded the Faculty of Science Undergraduate Student Research Award (NSERC URSA) and will be assisting Dr. Dilantha Fernando's Plant Pathology lab in the Department of Plant Science at the University of Manitoba. Their project is investigating the interactions of

two canola pathogens and their interactions with Resistance (R) genes and Susceptible genes (S). Research entails studying how the blackleg pathogen (the most known pathogen of canola) and the new pathogen in canola (*Verticillium longisporum*) interact with each other. In the summer of 2026, she conducted lab research identifying key genes through PCR and qPCR, and through greenhouse interactions trials.



2025 Regina Suliman has committed to the Acadia Axewomen rugby program for the 2026–27 season. Playing the position of prop and No. 8, Suliman captained the SMA Flames during the 2024–25 season and was a standout performer across Manitoba high school, club, and provincial

rugby. She will begin her studies at Acadia University in fall 2026, pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Psychology while continuing her rugby career at the U SPORTS level.

GRAPEVINE STORIES | Submit your story for the 2027 Torch Light Grapevine to alumnae@smamb.ca. Deadline to submit is **April 15, 2027**.



*"I wouldn't be where I am now
if it wasn't for the bursary.
Coming to SMA truly set the
wheels in motion for me to
have a life that I am proud of."*

The Life Changing Power of an Academy Education

In the final weeks of Grade 12, when the class schedule began to loosen, the girls gathered on the front lawn and talked about how they would always be friends. This was before social media, before keeping in touch was effortless. So, they made lists: where each girl was going to university, phone numbers, and promises to stay in touch. It felt important, even then, as they knew what they had found in each other during those years was rare.

These are my people, Sarrah Menge (Brown '95) remembers thinking. This is my community. Whatever came next, they would carry that sense of belonging with them, bound not just by the Class of 1995 but by a community that had wrapped them tightly during their formative years.

For Sarrah, those moments that would become core memories had not always been guaranteed. She grew up in Manitoba Housing as the eldest of four children, raised by a single parent. She had big dreams as a kid – of becoming a veterinarian or a doctor, and of wearing the same tartan kilt she had seen her mother wear in photos. In a home where the priority was making sure everyone was fed and clothed, there was little room for extras, and those dreams didn't come with the resources to make them real.

By junior high, Sarrah felt herself slipping. Her drive to succeed in school was at odds with the crowd she found herself part of, and she began to quiet that part of herself to fit in. Tired of shrinking who she was, she knew she desperately needed a change. It was her grandmother who first planted the seed of St. Mary's Academy. From the outside, it appeared to be something more – an opportunity to step into the student, and the person, Sarrah had always known she could be.

With the support of a bursary, SMA moved from something imagined to something within reach.

Though she knew the school was where she wanted to be, Sarrah found her first day intimidating. She entered in Grade 10, a year that didn't typically welcome many new students, without any friends. She was convinced her background would set her apart.

What she experienced instead was something she hadn't expected.

She was met with warmth, encouragement, and an insistence that she belonged. A classmate from her neighbourhood was assigned as her buddy by Sister Marylyn – someone who, more than thirty years later, is still her best friend. By the end of her first week, the fear had waned.

SMA quickly became more than a school to Sarrah. It became a second home and a place where she felt truly valued. The strong sense of community, grounded in the Catholic teachings of caring for one another, resonated deeply and continues to shape her today.

She gravitated towards sports, becoming part of the Academy's first rugby team in 1993. What began as practices on the school's front lawn grew into something lasting, with Sarrah continuing to play competitively until she was forty years old. She represented the province on Team Manitoba and went on to coach.

The same sense of possibility extended into the classroom. In an environment where every girl was encouraged to contribute, Sarrah found herself stepping forward in ways she hadn't before – raising her hand in class, joining clubs, and discovering that it was cool to care. She took courses that challenged her to think critically and speak with confidence, and she began to understand that she could shape her own future.

"Attending SMA changed the trajectory of my life," she says. "It gave me the confidence to dream bigger and want more for myself. Going to an all-girls school gave me the perspective that we are not in competition with each other. We all belong and have something to contribute."

That faith in herself and other women has carried forward.

Sarrah became the first woman in her family to graduate from university, earning a degree in Finance and Accounting from the Asper School of Business and a diploma in Occupational Health and Safety. Today, she leads a department as Director of Workplace Health and Safety, builds community through teaching spin classes, and keeps the stable, supportive life she has created for her children at the heart of everything she does. The friendships she formed here remain central to her life, unconditional bonds that have carried her and her friends through life's highs and lows.

Years after graduating, Sarrah still shows up for SMA. She can be found in the audience at school musicals, cheering from the sidelines at sporting events, and returning for Homecoming. Seeing her own name on the wall among generations of women who have walked those halls fills her with a deep sense of joy and pride – made possible only by the generosity of others.

"I wouldn't be where I am now if it wasn't for the bursary. Coming to SMA truly set the wheels in motion for me to have a life that I am proud of."

Sarrah's story is one of many.

Today, one in six students at SMA relies on financial assistance, with \$427,700 in tuition support provided to families in the 2025-2026 school year alone. Designed to bridge financial gaps, the bursary program carries forward the vision and legacy of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary: that a faith-filled education rooted in excellence, compassion, and community should be accessible to all girls, regardless of financial circumstance. Many of the bursary funds are endowed, meaning each gift is invested to provide lasting impact – year after year, generation after generation.

For Sarrah, it was more than financial support. It was a turning point, an impact that is still felt thirty years later.

In January 2026, she returned to share her story at SMA's IGNITE Gala in support of the Bursary Program, standing before a room of supporters whose generosity makes those opportunities possible for young girls today. In reflecting on her own journey, she offered a powerful reminder: behind every bursary is not just a student, but the spark of a bright future, that can unfold in ways once only imagined.

CALL FOR BURSARY STORIES

We know that behind every bursary is a powerful story of the life-changing impact of a St. Mary's Academy education. Stories have the power to inspire generosity and show what's possible when we invest in young women. If you're willing to share, we would be honoured to hear from you. Your voice can help others understand the lasting impact of this support.

For more information, please contact the SMA Advancement Office: advancement@smamb.ca or 204-560-6924.



ANNUAL GIVING REPORT

Thank You

This past year, your generosity once again affirmed what makes St. Mary's Academy so special: a shared commitment to ensuring every student has the opportunity to learn, grow, and lead. Together, we reached a remarkable milestone, raising \$705,560 in donations across all funds, reflecting the extraordinary contribution of our giving community.

Philanthropy plays a vital role in our school. Tuition alone does not cover the full cost of an SMA education, and your support helps bridge the gap. Because of you, students are growing in confidence and finding their voices in the classroom, on stage, in athletics, and in service to others and the Church.

A single spark can set the world aglow. Your generosity is that spark, shaping the leaders our world needs.



Kate Hodgert-Fennell '99
DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT
AND DEVELOPMENT
204-478-6031
KHODGERT-FENNELL@SMAMB.CA

THE POWER OF MATCHING GIFTS

Thanks to the leadership of **Tina and Mike Jones** and their extraordinary \$100,000 matching gift, the SMA community came together to generate a total of \$491,946 in bursary support for students this year. These contributions extend far beyond financial assistance, creating access, opportunity, and a lasting sense of belonging for students whose SMA experience is made possible through bursary support.

NEW NAMED BURSARY FUNDS

Saratha Joseph Bursary Fund

The Saratha Joseph Bursary Fund was created in November 2025 to honour the legacy of former SMA faculty member Saratha Joseph. Established by Devika, Sareli, and Ameen DeRaj/ASDEL, the Fund reflects a deeply personal tribute and is open to additional contributions from those who wish to support this lasting legacy.

Sister Marylyn Gibney Bursary Fund

Established in September 2025 for Sister Marylyn Gibney's 80th birthday, the Sister Marylyn Gibney Bursary Fund was initiated by Andrea Cibinel (Fricke '76) and supported by alumnae and former faculty and staff members. Rooted in gratitude, it invites gifts from all who wish to recognize Sr. Marylyn's lasting impact.

BECAUSE OF YOU ...



86 students experienced the life-changing gift of a St. Mary's Academy education, gaining academic opportunity, belonging, and possibility through bursary support.



Alumnae Hall was transformed with new, state-of-the-art theatre lighting, bringing liturgies, performances, and community gatherings to life with renewed beauty and impact.



Grade 8 students participated in specialized "March Gladness" programming designed to strengthen relationships and support mental health and well-being.



Select faculty and staff travelled across North America for Catholic faith development, strengthening teaching practice and mission-driven formation.

IGNITE

A Gala Fundraising Dinner
in Support of St. Mary's Academy



THANK YOU

A signature moment in a year marked by extraordinary generosity, the 2026 IGNITE Gala brought our community together in an unforgettable way. Thank you to everyone who helped make the event such a resounding success, including our sponsors, donors, guests, students, and volunteers whose generosity and dedication brought the evening to life. Together, IGNITE raised a remarkable total of \$325,184 in support of bursaries and school programs.

As President Michelle Klus reflected in her remarks:

IGNITE is more than an event. It is a testament to hope. It is a declaration of possibility. It is a spark that reminds us what can happen when a young woman is formed in an environment that nurtures her intellect, strengthens her character, and anchors her in faith.

At St. Mary's Academy, we witness every day the profound transformation that occurs when students are given not only an education, but a mission. They learn that their gifts are meant to be shared. That their voices matter. That leadership is not about standing above others but standing for others. Here, young women discover that their lives are part of something larger—something deeply rooted in faith, compassion, and service.

We are deeply grateful to all who contributed to IGNITE and helped advance access to a St. Mary's Academy education for students today and into the future.



SPECIAL THANKS

We are deeply grateful to all of our IGNITE sponsors and partners, without whom this evening would not have been possible (complete list on the next page).

Special thanks to emcee Ibukunoluwa Okunnu '20 and speaker Sarrah Menge (Brown '95) for lending their voices to the evening's programs.

GALA PLANNING COMMITTEE:

Niclas Bembenek
Madison Barron (Harding '09)
Michael Boucher
Kelly Boulay
Jennifer Busch (Kennedy '90)
Catherine Cronin-Licharson '75
Laura Davey '05

Sylvia Falconer (Bator '01)
Hildegart Gonzalez Magana
Gillian Hauser
Bailey Harris '98
Alexandra Malkiewicz '14
Adriane McElrea
Jennifer Moncrieff (Kavanagh '84)

Lianne Pereux '98
Susan Erjavec Parker '92
Carolyn Ritchie '01
Michelle Saltel (Moore '95)
Janine Stephens (Hanson '01)
Connie Yunyk (Scerbo '77)

View more photos at smamb.ca/events/ignitegala

View the "Help Her Light Shine" video that premiered at the Gala at smamb.ca/support-us/ways-to-give

DONOR RECOGNITION

Because of you, the young women of St. Mary's Academy are discovering their potential and preparing to make a difference in the world. Thank you for your generosity and for the lasting impact you have on our students and community.

MOTHER MARIE-ROSE CIRCLE | \$25,000+

Tina and Michael Jones
Estate of Elisabeth Kavanagh
Bob and Marnie Puchniak

FOUNDERS CIRCLE | \$10,000 – \$24,999

The DeRaj Family / ASD Enterprise Limited
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Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary
Barry and Lynda Twerdun, and
Melanie Potter (Twerdun '00)

HOLY NAMES CIRCLE | \$5,000 – \$9,999

Andrea (Leslie '97) and Sergio Almeida
The Rob and Sandi Coghlan Family
Tyler Gompf and Rebecca Mollard
Estate of Michael Koryluk
Ruth and Brian Hastings
Shaun and Gillian Hauser
Colleen Kovacs '76
Amanda Lang '88
Douglas and Debra Robinson
Family Foundation
Natalie Van Rosmalen '04
Christine (MacInnes '87) and Paul Soubry
The Jim & Janice Tennant Foundation
Delaney Vun '03

PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE | \$2,000 – \$4,999

The Bahl Family
Cynthia Balaberda '77
Anthony Balthazaar
Tania Balthazaar
Ken and Diane Cranston
Joyce Dalmy '75
Jaime (Prystenski '07) and Emeric Duha
Carol Fletcher '79
Jim and Elizabeth Gaynor
Hilde Gonzalez and Kelly Sitarz
The Hanson Family
Gregg and Mary Hanson
Kevin and Deneen Klippenstein
Peter and Carla Kobar
Lis (Vis '84) and Quentin MacCharles
Peter and Sherry MacDonald
Romulo Magsino and Michelle
Halipchuk-Magsino
Angela Mathieson '84 in honour of
Beverly Mathieson
Tokumbo and Olayemi Okunnu
Rosemary Podwin (Vis '80)
Ross Ransby
Michelle (Moore '95) and Eric Saltel
Michelle and Richard Soenen
Daniel and Sylvia Susanto
Roger Vincent and Michelle Hogue
Jim Vis and Meghan O'Laughlin
George and Michelle Vis
Rita Vis Dube '83

TARTAN CIRCLE | \$1,000 – \$1,999

Lisa Anttila '95 and Andrew Holtmann
Tyrone Balthazaar
The Billinkoff Family
Malcolm and Jennifer Bird
Mike and Karen Boucher
Kelly Boulay and Scott Stewart
Lynda (Oland '69) and Barry Brown,
and Alyson Brown '98

Linda Cameron '76
The Chicoine Family
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The Choiselat Amato Family
Ms. Michelle Chrisp and
Dr. Eddsel Martinez
Andrea Cibinel (Fricke '76)
Karen Colfer and Dean Barth
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Richelle (St. Croix '03) and Nate Friesen
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Barbara Godfrey '70
Ted and Jackie Greenhalgh
Susan and Vincent Hendricks
Kate Hodgert-Fennell '99
David and Lesia Johns
Diane Johnson '97
Robin Johnson
Chelsea Jones (Colburn '15)
Jennifer and Jill Jones
Julia Jones Fast '13
Saratha and Elian Joseph
Michelle Klus
Corrine Kulyk '97
Margaret Lachance and Tracy Houston
(Lachance '92)
Lindy Ledowski '94
Alan and Barbara MacInnes
Virginia Mak '77
Felix and Lileena Mendis
Roshini Mendis
Missionary Oblate Sisters of St. Boniface
Dr. Marc Mollot and Dr. Shelley Mollot
Jennifer Moncrieff (Kavanagh '84)
Kerri (McIvor '94) and Stephen Moore
Kellie O'Rourke '76
Dr. Renee Phipps-Owusu '01 and
Dr. Nana Owusu
Lisa and Robert Plohman
The Poirier-Gillies Family Foundation
Qualico
Laura Quinton '15 and Adam Lowry
Ainsley Rice and Ty Wirvin
Harindra Sebastian
Mary-Coleen Shanahan '72
Celia Sherbo '03
Michelle and Richard St. Croix
Janine (Hanson '01) and Matt Stephens
Summit Growth Consulting Ltd
Lynne Sweeney and Aaron Anderson
Tri-Star Technical Ltd.
Dr. Erin Weldon '91
David Whetter
Ute Wieden-Kothe and
Hans-Joachim Wieden
Mary-Alex (Puchniak '03) and
Lance Willer
Sheila Williams (Keegan '57)
9 Anonymous

FRIENDS | \$1 – \$999

Mokhes Abdelsayed and Marim Samy

Adeniran Adeniyi
Sina Aiello and Russell Psooy
Fadekemi Akinpelu
Mary Akins-Peters
Anthony Alagacone
Sharon and Paul Alcantara
Malsha Annakkage
Sharmini Arjoon
Cyril and Gizelle Armas
Marla (Smendziuk '90) and
Terrance Armstrong
Orlando Athayde
Junyi Au Liu
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Heartfelt appreciation is extended to our faculty and staff, whose dedication, talent, and commitment bring SMA's mission of faith-based education to life each day.

YEARS OF SERVICE RECOGNITION

30 Years:

Chris O'Donoghue, Science, Digital Media, Coding



RETIREMENTS

At the end of the 2025-2026 school year, SMA's Principal, **Mrs. Carol-Ann Swayzie (van Es '80)**, retired after 17 years of dedicated service. She devoted 42 years to education, leaving an indelible mark on Winnipeg's educational landscape. From her early teaching roles at Sargent Park, École River Heights School, Grant Park High School, and Tec-Voc to her leadership as Vice Principal and Principal at SMA, Mrs. Swayzie led with integrity and compassion, embodying a life rooted in faith and service to her students and community. Since joining the Academy in 2009, she was a remarkable leader and mentor. Her passion for education and unwavering dedication profoundly shaped our community and enriched the lives of countless students and families. SMA extends heartfelt thanks to Mrs. Swayzie and we pray that her next chapter is filled with peace and many joyful adventures.

IN MEMORIAM

With sorrow, St. Mary's Academy acknowledges the passing of alumnae and former faculty and staff. Please remember them and their families in your prayers.

Sister Rose Marie Knight '47

Helen Deegan (Vukets '48)

Margaret Meagher (Skelly '48)

Valerie Stark (Swiderski '48)

Sheila Horan (Coughlin '49)

Elizabeth Veert (Dowbenko '49)

Clare Hoeschen (McMaster '51)

Cecille Dreger (Lannoo '52)

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Bridget Brown (Lavelle '87)

Joanne Cochrane '89

Mirna Dominguez Majano '93

Eugenia Ramirez '01

Katelyn Byers '17

Marion Hlady (Former Staff 1975-1977)

Saratha Joseph (Former Staff 1989-2008)



Sr. Louise Van Belleghem, SNJM

Margaret Reichardt

(Former Staff 1999-2009)

Sister Louise Van Belleghem, SNJM

(Sr. Paul Roger) (Former Staff 1956-1957
& 1965-1966)

Please send 'In Memoriam' notices to
alumnae@smamb.ca



Saratha Joseph

COMING EVENTS

HOMECOMING: COMMEMORATIVE YEARS RECEPTION SEPTEMBER 19, 2026

Celebrating the Classes of 2016, 2006, 2001, 1996, 1986, 1976, 1971, and all alumnae from the Class of 1966 and earlier.

HOMECOMING: MASS, TEA, AND TOURING SEPTEMBER 20, 2026

CAREER AND MENTORSHIP: CAREER SPEAKERS, GRADE 9 OCTOBER 15, 2026

INTERNATIONAL DAY OCTOBER 25, 2026

CAREER AND MENTORSHIP: ASK AN ALUM, GRADES 11 AND 12 NOVEMBER 26, 2026

DISNEY'S *THE LITTLE MERMAID* DECEMBER 3 – 5, 2026

DECEMBER CELEBRATION & TEA DECEMBER 6, 2026

DRINKS UNDER THE DOME: CELEBRATING THE CLASS OF 2026 DECEMBER 17, 2026

OPEN HOUSE JANUARY 12, 2027

PARENTS' GUILD 50/50 RAFFLE OPENS, DRAW HELD FEBRUARY 19, 2027 FEBRUARY 1, 2027

ALUMNAE VS. STUDENTS ATHLETICS SERIES SPRING 2027

CAREER AND MENTORSHIP: CAREER SPEAKERS, GRADE 10 MARCH 5, 2027

CAREER AND MENTORSHIP: MOCK JOB INTERVIEWS, GRADE 10 APRIL 21, 2027

CAREER AND MENTORSHIP: PANEL INTERVIEWS, GRADES 11 & 12 APRIL 22, 2027

MARIAN AWARDS BRUNCH MAY 8, 2027

SPRING CONCERT MAY 2027

For more information about events, please visit
smamb.ca/alumnae/eventlist

We acknowledge that St. Mary's Academy is situated on the original lands of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Red River Métis. We respect the Treaties that were made on these territories, we acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, and we dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

St. Mary's Academy, 550 Wellington Crescent, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3M 0C1 | 204-477-0244 | www.smamb.ca

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Disney THE LITTLE MERMAID

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LYRICS BY
HOWARD ASHMAN & GLENN SLATER

BOOK BY
DOUG WRIGHT

Based on the Hans Christian Andersen story and the Disney film produced by Howard Ashman
& John Musker and written & directed by John Musker and Ron Clements
Originally Produced by Disney Theatrical Productions

DEC. 3 - 5, 2026

Thursday & Friday at 7:00 p.m., Saturday at 2:00 p.m.

Tickets on sale November 2026



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