

Legacy



St. Mary's Academy
Alumnae and Friends Newsletter

The Echo

Winter 2015

From the Principal

Dearest Alumnae and Friends of St. Mary's Academy,

It is a new year and with each new year comes a moment when one takes time to celebrate and look with enthusiasm into the future and all of its possibilities and the gifts it may hold. But before doing so, one must take time to pause and reflect on where they are now and the special moments that have led them to where they are today. Now, take a moment to reminisce about your roots, your foundation. Go back to your high school days at St. Mary's Academy. Your memories of nostalgia may take you back to a time of giggles in the hallway, to your favorite (or least favorite class), and to the spirit, values, and charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet with which you were gifted. What talents and gifts did the charism of the Sisters help you to discover while at St. Mary's Academy? What talents and gifts were you able to share with the world because of all you learned in the halls of SMA? Discovering your talents and your gifts here at SMA has influenced, shaped, and formed you into the person you once were, are today, and will continue to become as you look with enthusiasm into the future.



Today, in the year 2015, SMA is providing the same nostalgic experiences for young ladies. We are more than a school, more than a loving environment. We are an institution that grows, molds, shapes, and forms young ladies to discover, sharpen, and share their gifts in the spirit of service for others, the dear neighbor. For this, I am proud.

I am confident in all that the future has in store for our beloved St. Mary's Academy. This past year has been a year of true reflection and vibrant growth. Together, we are preparing for our Western Catholic Education Association (WCEA) accreditation visit. In preparation, the school community held multiple meetings in which the voices of parents, board, personnel, students, and alumnae were heard. These meetings provided time for all stakeholders to share their perspectives on the areas of strength and opportunity that exist in our ministry. This reflective process will guide us in continuing to grow, mold, shape, and form young ladies to become all of which they are capable.

May you have many opportunities to share your gifts and love this new year.

In partnership, friendship and gratitude,

Nancy H. Portillo
Principal



The Principal and Board of Directors of St. Mary's Academy hosted the "Celebrating Our Partnership" Appreciation Dinner at the Doheny Mansion of Mount St. Mary's College on October 9, 2014. Pictured left from the Appreciation Dinner event are **Cindy Haxton '65**, SMA Financial Aid Coordinator; Gwen Wood, SMA Parents Association Vice President; **Drew WP '15**, ASB President; Drew Palmer; Sr. Theresa Kvale, member of the CSJ Los Angeles Province Leadership Team; Lisa Sachs, SMA Board member; (standing) **Aysa Collins '16**, Development Ambassador; Nancy Portillo, Principal, and her husband, Victor Portillo.

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On the Cover: Gold Tie Olivia Avila '14 (pictured above at the right end) is one of thirteen members of her family who graduated from St. Mary's Academy. Also pictured above are her aunts: Martha Carranza '78, Silvia Carranza '74, and Frances Carranza '79. Other alumnae from her family include Rochelle Romo '78, Rebecca Romo '75, Elsa Rivas '71, Judith Dominguez '76, Marisa Rivas '95, Soledad Solis '98, Monica Rivas '02, and Laura Rivas '08.

SAVE THE DATES IN 2015

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7 - **ATHLETICS CASINO NIGHT** AT SMA

FRIDAY, APRIL 17-SUNDAY, APRIL 19 - **SPRING PRODUCTION OF "THE WIZARD OF OZ"** AT SMA

SATURDAY, MAY 2 - **DERBY DAY** AT SANTA ANITA PARK

SATURDAY, JUNE 13 - **GRADUATION AND GOLDEN GRADS LUNCHEON** AT SMA

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27 - **TIES THAT BIND & BUILD** (TENTATIVE DATE)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5 - **ALUMNAE RETREAT** AT SMA

The Echo is published twice a year by the Development Office of St. Mary's Academy for alumnae, parents, and friends.

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St. Mary's Academy (Inglewood, CA)

Special thanks to the following for their contributions to this issue:

Armstrong Printing Co.
Olivia Avila
Maria Beltran
Sallie Sanguinet Grippo '54
Linda Ji-Kim
Madelyn Murray '67
Toni Parham '75
Nancy Portillo
Paula Simoncini '63
Jacqueline A. Smith '81
Wenonah Valentine '72
St. Mary's Academy Alumnae

Continue the *Legacy...*

Future Belles at SMA

Submit Admissions Applications
for the 2015-2016 School Year

For more information, contact
Carla Cotton
Director of Admissions
310.674.8470 ext. 204
ccotton@smabelles.org

SMA Belles Are Women of Distinction

Red Ties Recognized for National Merit Scholarship

In October 2014, Red Tie sisters **Alexandrea and Angelica Chima '15** each received *Letters of Commendation* from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation in recognition of their outstanding academic promise. This prestigious honor is granted to only students who score in the top 3% nationally after taking the PSAT/NMSQT as juniors. Alex and Angelica are among the top 50,000 out of 1.5 million entrants who took the test in fall of 2013. Although Commended Students do not continue in the competition for National Merit Scholarships, many become candidates for a wide variety of special scholarships sponsored by corporations, businesses, and universities.



Honorees Alexandrea Chima, Drew WP, and Angelica Chima with Principal Nancy Portillo.

Red Tie **Drew WP '15** has also received recognition for her PSAT score. The National Achievement Scholarship Program has named her an Outstanding Participant among Black American high school students for 2015. Drew is among the top 4,700 of the over 160,000 students who entered the National Achievement Program in fall of 2013. Although Outstanding Participants do not continue in the competition for Achievement Scholarships, their names are referred to about 1,500 four-year colleges and universities for appropriate consideration during the admissions process.

We are extremely proud of all our high-achieving Belles! ■

SMA Ambassadors in the Community

St. Mary's Academy Student Ambassadors served as greeters at the Dia de los Muertos Community Cultural Festival hosted by Inglewood Park on Sunday, October 26, 2014. The Belles welcomed visitors and distributed popcorn treats on behalf of Inglewood Park. As representatives of St. Mary's Academy, Ambassadors engaged with community members as well as prospective Belles. ■



(Left) Event participants Director of Admissions Carla Cotton, Melissa Ramirez '15, Monica Ramirez '16, SMA Board of Directors Chair Daniel Villa, Lizeth Sican '15, Rachel Farkas '16, Bria Archer '16, and Development Coordinator Toni Parham '75.

(Right) Welcoming visitors Rachel Farkas '16 and Bria Archer '16.



iDREAM and Belle Partnerships for Success

SMA prepares young women to impact the world. Each tie color transforms a four-year experience into an alumnae legacy - women of distinction. My name is Wenonah Valentine, Blue Tie '72, founder of iDREAM for Racial Health Equity, leadership coach and community partner with the Health Careers Program. "Imagine! God used me, a 19-year-old mother, and framed a 40-year vocation of influential service leadership. I faced the reality that 'smart girls do get pregnant.' Today, my privileged insight - as a first-generation college graduate, professional, mother and grandmother - informs and guides a leadership, training and advocacy network dedicated to eliminating health disparities and infant mortality."

The iDREAM mission, a project of Community Partners®, is committed to empowering a pipeline of millennial and community health advocate leaders with a deeper understanding of the cultural, societal, environmental and economic issues impacting the health outcomes and resilience for mothers and babies throughout the life course. Visit www.idreamnow.org



USC/iDREAM 2014 Collaboration



iDREAM teamed up with the USC Diversity in Healthcare Leadership Initiative and its 12-year summer enrichment program. "Our partnership with iDREAM has meant that young people from diverse communities get the chance to develop the skills that will help them be successful on college campuses and in careers in the health field. More importantly, they learn how much their voices are needed to transform health to meet the needs of all people." LaVonna Lewis, PhD, MPH, USC Sol Price School of Public Policy. Since 2013, eight SMA students benefited from mentoring and guidance aligned with the knowledge transfer, skill-building and early career exploration to prepare as emerging healthcare champions and decision-makers. Visit www.priceschool.usc.edu/programs/masters/mha/summer-enrichment/

Alumnae collaborations deepen our civic reach and community service. Jacques Vanadore-McNeil, Green Tie '81, President of W.I.T.N.E.S.S. Book Club,

partnered with SMA faculty member and Health Careers Program Director Jeanne Fisher for WBC Mothers' Day Outreach 2014. "I've learned the importance of sisterhood at SMA. Our motto is 'I AM My Sister's Keeper' and I am passionate about giving to the less fortunate. In May 2014, Class of 2015 Red Ties helped us prepare 500 Bags of Love and hand out to women and children on Skid Row. This was a dream come true. Sisters, the Dream is Real!" Visit www.witnessbookclub.com



WBC Mothers' Day Outreach 2014



From the Alumnae Association

Dear Alumnae of St. Mary's Academy,

As your SMA Alumnae co-chairs, we would like to reflect on the highlights of 2014.

We began the year with a dynamic open house event that gave aspiring SMA students a chance to learn what our very special school has to offer. We met with prospective 8th graders from many local schools, as well as their parents and family, and welcomed them to our lovely campus.

In the spring, we welcomed our new principal Mrs. Nancy Portillo in an informal luncheon with our active Alumnae. Nancy explained her vision and goals for the future of SMA, as well as its academic curriculum and her plans for SMA's continued success in transforming the lives of young women.

Also in the spring, our Alumnae participated in a very successful and well attended 125th Anniversary Tea hosted by the SMA Parents' Association.

Several Alumnae returned to SMA for our biennial Career Day, sharing the realities of their various professions with eager and interested students of all grades.

On Derby Day, our Alumnae, donors, and friends celebrated the Running of the Roses by reviving the annual SMA Derby Day fundraiser. While the change of venue from Hollywood Park to Santa Anita Park proved challenging, the event was a success and will be repeated in 2015 at a more suitable location within the Santa Anita Park Clubhouse.

The Golden Grads Blue Tie Class of 1964 generously donated the Senior Lawn Walkway, which provides a proper commencement pathway for graduation processions. In addition, the Golden Grads joined in the 2014 SMA Commencement Ceremony and Alumnae Luncheon Reception along with several Alumnae from the Gold Tie Class of 1954.



Over the summer, 50 Alumnae participated in the inaugural Belles & Books reading club by reading the same book the students read for their "One School, One Book" program. The book, *I Am Malala, the Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by The Taliban*, was an excellent and timely choice. Our Alumnae readers returned to the school for exciting panel discussions with our students over two days [see photos at left].



In the Fall, contributors who gave \$1,000 or more to St. Mary's over the past two years were thanked at the biennial Appreciation Dinner on the historic Doheny Campus of Mount St. Mary's College. Alumnae and foundation contributors, faculty, and staff were treated to an outstanding gourmet dinner and received recognition for their ongoing generosity and support.

We ended the year with a Day of Spiritual Renewal and Reflection on Saturday, December 6, in the SMA chapel. All Alumnae were welcomed in this uplifting mini-retreat which also included a breakfast reception, Mass, and lunch.

We would like to thank you all as we continue in our goal of attaining a vibrant Alumnae Association with an increase in participation. We look forward to our exciting major 2015 Alumnae events, Derby Day, and Ties That Bind and Build.

Wishing you and your families a blessed 2015,

Madelyn Murray '67 and Paula Simoncini '63

Co-Presidents

Reunion Notices

The Blue Tie Class of 1960 55th Reunion: It has been five years since our 50th class reunion and we all had such a great time, we thought we should have another celebration for our 55th. Come and be a part of this fun, casual party on April 18, 2015. Please call Joanie Moser George, 714.524.7129 or Madelyn Wooley McCann, 714.528.0278, for all the exciting details. See you there!

The Green Tie Class of 1965 Our reunion date has been set for Saturday, September 19, 2015. It will be a luncheon held at the Westin South Coast Plaza, 686 Anton Blvd., Costa Mesa, CA 92626. The hotel contact is Martha at 714.662.6637. A block of hotel rooms has been reserved at a cost of \$139/night, and there will be a hospitality room available for all 1965 Green Tie Alums. Best contact person is: Stephanie Allen Callei, her home: 714.377.0088, cell: 714.686.1298. If any of you Green Ties are interested in being on the committee, we would welcome it!

The Red Tie Class of 1975 Calling the Class of 1975! Time to plan that Red Tie Reunion! Yup, it's been 40, count 'em, 40 years, my friends! Drop me a line if you're interested in planning: Lisa Fitch at Olivia8882012@gmail.com

The Green Tie Class of 1985 The Green Tie Class of 1985 will be celebrating its 30th Reunion, August 14 – 16, 2015. There will be a Friday Night Mixer at Tony P's in Marina del Rey, a Saturday Morning tour of the Santa Monica Aquarium, a Saturday Night Belle Dinner at Gladstone's in Long Beach and a Sunday Morning Prayer Service and Tour at SMA. All are welcome to join us. For more info visit www.smabellesreunion.com/sma/green1985/Reunion Contact: Donyale Hall, donyale.hall@lacity.org.

For further information about Alumnae Association events and ways to participate, please contact the SMA Development Coordinator (Alumnae & Special Events), Toni Parham, at tparham@smabelles.org or 310.674.8470 ext. 214. Or contact the co-presidents: Paula Simoncini '63 at simoncinibp@verizon.net or 310.545.3304, and Madelyn Murray '67 at madmom717@att.net or 213.216.6717. Also, check out the Alumnae tab of the SMA website at www.smabelles.org.

The Ties That Bind



Correction: **Susan L. Ferruccio '73** was mistakenly listed in the Rest In Peace section of our previous issue (Summer 2014). It is Susan's mother, Anna Victoria Ferruccio, who has passed away and not Susan herself. We sincerely apologize for this grievous error and regret any misunderstanding it may have caused. Friends of Susan also request your prayers for Susan and her health at this time.



Orange Tie **Jacquelin Hanley Johnson '38** (pictured left) passed away on October 31, 2014. Her family has set up a memorial fund at St. Mary's Academy in her name. In lieu of flowers, please send donations to St. Mary's Academy in honor of Jacquelin Hanley Johnson.

Mike Banta reports the passing of his wife, proud Green Tie **Yvonne Spalding Banta '45**: "I had the privilege to be the husband for 64 years of one of the St. Mary's girls who went all the way from K to 12. From someone who knows, they are the best." An excerpt of her obituary follows: *My dear wife and closest friend, Yvonne, passed to her reward at 6:00 am, Saturday, November 8. She attended St. Mary's Academy Girls School, Los Angeles, and then entered USC, her first coed school. There, the little girl from St. Mary's met her husband, the dashing army pilot, in freshman English. He stole her heart and they graduated in 1949 and married on October 14, 1950. Refusing the luxuries of a second income she devoted her life full time to her family and home. A longtime resident of Rancho Palos Verdes since 1968, she was an avid golfer*



who played every golf course on Maui at least a half dozen times. She is survived by her husband, her children Ted Banta and Michelle Banta MD, her granddaughter, Sara Phillips, her brother John Spalding MD and her sister Mary Lou Spalding Cashin '54 as well as many nieces and nephews.

The Sisters of St Joseph of Carondelet affirmed their newly elected Province Leadership Team on Sunday, August 3, 2014. Three of the team members are graduates of St. Mary's Academy. The members of the team are pictured below (from left to right): Sisters Sandra Williams, **Mary Ann Martin '70**, **Angela Faustina '60**, Theresa Kvale, and **Suzanne Jabro '60**.



Green Tie **Linette Thomas-Batts '81** passed away on October 8, 2014. Her sister, Leslie Thomas Cox, reports to us: *Linette attended St. John Evangelist Elementary School and St. Mary's Academy High School. She married her beloved, best friend Ricky Batts on December 1, 1990. On June 26, 1997, Linette and Ricky welcomed their greatest joy into the world, Brandon Batts. In September 2004, the Batts family moved to Northwest Las Vegas. Linette was raised Catholic, and while staying close to her Catholic roots, she also embraced the Christian faith in many other ways. In 2010, Linette was ordained as a Minister of Christ at Unlimited Life Ministries Church, and was appointed Bishop. Linette and Ricky were known as the "Tagteam Ministers for Christ," and were invited by other Churches to bring the Gospel of Christ. Linette could be heard weekly on a local Christian radio talk show. She had a beautiful voice and was often invited to sing at events, shows, and other Christian radio broadcasts. Even during her illness she delivered*



comfort to others. Linette was an incredibly fun and joyous person. She had a heart of gold, always put others first, and was incredibly generous. She was one of a kind and while we will miss her dearly, we know heaven has a new angel!

Blue Tie **Jamila Strong '96** has self-published a book called *Don't You Know Your Father's Voice?* It is about her journey with God and how He still speaks to His children. The book is available for purchase at Amazon.com. Jamila is working toward her credential and an MS degree in Special Education at National University.

Green Tie **Janet Jennings**

'13 was crowned St. Lucia at Gustavus Adolphus College's 74th annual Festival of St. Lucia. Janet is a Russian major who intends to add a biology major and follow a pre-med track at Gustavus. She is a Collegiate Fellow in Norelius Hall, Treasurer of the Pan-African Student Organization, a Peer Educator in the Diversity Center, manager of the men's tennis team, chair of the Food Committee for the International Cultures Club, an ally member of Queers & Allies, and a member of the Russian Club. Every year five or six sophomore women are chosen to serve on the College's St. Lucia Court based on courageous leadership, strength of character, service to others, and compassion. St. Lucia is chosen through a campus community vote.



Recent Gold Tie graduate **Milan White '14** received a scholarship in recognition of scholastic achievement from the National Congress of Black Women in Washington, DC. Milan is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree at North Carolina A & T University.

Rest In Peace

Let us remember in prayer the following members of the SMA family—alumnae, friends, former faculty and staff:

Mary Ann Gallagher Arrowsmith '58

Sara Pero Bailey '72

Yvonne Spalding Banta '45

Juanita Bartlett '46

Margaret Jane (Peggy) Guthrie Bivens '53

*Maxine U. Davis
(mother of Darleen M. Davis '70 and
Nadine Davis Destouet '71)*

Jane Norton Del Valle '63

Onorinda Larrabee Dickey '49

*William (Bill) J. Donovan
(husband of Elana Haidinger
Donovan '52)*

*Anna Victoria Ferruccio
(mother of Susan L. Ferruccio '73)*

Anne Sharron Forel '75

Linda Ann Maloney Foxen '58

*Joanne Marie Mouren-Laurens
George '48*

Patricia J. Mullen Hansen '46

Jacquelin Hanley Johnson '38

Diane Rudolph Kiesselbach '50

Georgia J. Chocok Lengning '50

Kathryn E. Lenow '53

Margaret Holstine Peebles '65

Holly Franking Slegman '62

Lilyan Leyba Smith '50

Linette Thomas-Batts '81

June Marie Le Sage Whelan '45

Please submit any alumnae updates and notices for publication in the Echo by email to Linda Ji-Kim, Development Assistant, at lji-kim@smabelles.org. While we cannot publish every item submitted, we will make every effort to include what we can. Submissions to the Summer 2015 Echo should be made by May 15, 2015.

Annual Listing of Contributors 2013-2014

The generous giving of our alumnae and friends supports St. Mary's Academy and our students to be all of which they are capable. This listing recognizes those who have made gifts between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014. These are our invaluable partners in mission for whom we are very grateful.

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(\$50,000 and above)

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Eileen F. Laber
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The Los Angeles Challenge Corporation
Thomas and Sharon Sloan Malloy '57
Mara W. Breech Foundation
Lola McAlpin-Grant '59



Norene Murray Zapanta '65, current Chair-Elect of the SMA Board of Directors, gave the keynote address at the "Celebrating Our Partnership" Appreciation Dinner:

One week after my freshman year at St. Mary's, my father died suddenly—I was the oldest of 3 children. My mother made an appointment to meet with Sr. Mary Ann who was the treasurer at St. Mary's. My mother and I were very anxious about that meeting. Sr. Mary Ann turned out to be a delightful person. After that meeting, I was on financial aid, and that certainly began a new and different partnership [for me] with St. Mary's and the CSJ's. The Sisters had now agreed to help me with 1/4 of my tuition for the next three years. That was a generous commitment they made for my future.

After my husband's death in 2002, I realized I needed to make more of a difference somewhere and somehow. I knew I owed so much to SMA and so I reconnected... I was asked to serve as co-president of our Alumnae Organization. After two years as co-president of the SMA Alumnae Association, I made the decision to ask to serve on the SMA Board of Directors. I was pleased to be accepted and have just begun my fourth year on that Board.

Through my service at SMA, I have realized how very important it is to out live your life. Think about that. How do you out live your life? You need to create a legacy and make a difference that will live on well past your life time.

Sr. Kathleen Mary McCarthy CSJ
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 Antoinette (Michele) Dumont '62

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