

St. Mary's Academy
Alumnae and Friends Newsletter

The Echo

Summer 2014



Gold Ties of the Class of 2014 at the 125th Commencement



From the Principal

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

I have always known that I wanted to do something meaningful, something special and impactful. My faith helped me to see at a very young age that my life, just as every life, serves a purpose, something greater than what I could fathom alone. For a very long time, I believed that it was a combination of my education and my loving husband that saved me from life's circumstances. Not until a few years ago did the light bulb go off in my head and I realized that it wasn't my education, it was God's plan.



Six months ago, as a part of God's plan, I was blessed and brought here as principal. Having come to know St. Mary's Academy in such a spiritual and intimate way these months, I now would like St. Mary's to come to know me closer, to know who I am.



As a young adult, I knew I wanted to do good for the world and in the world, so naturally I decided to pursue a Bachelors degree in Psychology to go out and change the world. Oh how naïve and starry eyed I was! To make a long story short and by the glory of God, I didn't end up being a child psychologist as planned but instead became a teacher. I was fortunate to spend eleven of my seventeen wonderful years in education, thus far, as a super-blessed teacher from elementary to high school and even adult education—from private, to public to charter. Being a teacher, being in education is where I began to realize my mission, my role in life, my purpose—God's plan.

I continued to teach while simultaneously pursuing my teaching credential, my Masters in Education and my Administrative credential. Now, my life's journey has led me to pursue a PhD in Education with an emphasis in Urban Education at Claremont Graduate University. I pursue my education while being an advocate for each and every one of my students and their families as well as of students and families in my parish and in my community. I continue my mission of service and hold a seat on the Advisory Commission of Special Education for the state of California. I am blessed to be able to express my love for teaching by volunteering at my parish in the catechism program for our youth. Through my education, through my faith, and through God's plan, my hope is to be a model of "all of which women are capable" for the young women at St. Mary's Academy.

As you can witness, St. Mary's Academy is more than a school for our students, more than a place where a strong emphasis on academic and college readiness occur, more than a place of blossoming career path programs, more than a place where students are accepted into prestigious programs and universities such as the UCLA and UC Berkeley. SMA is a place where our students are provided with the immeasurable opportunities and gifts only a Catholic education provides. Our students both give and receive the gifts of living, loving, learning and serving—the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.

From my most grateful heart, I want to thank all of you—alumnae, friends, my husband and beautiful children, the Board of Directors, faculty and staff for your support, generosity, prayer and love in helping our students come to know their mission, their role in life, their purpose—God's plan.

With much love and gratitude,
Nancy H. Portillo
Principal

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On the cover:

Graduates of the Gold Tie Class of 2014 processed to the Senior Lawn on the newly installed Senior Walkway at this year's commencement ceremonies. The Senior Walkway is a gift from the Blue Tie Class of 1964 in honor of the golden anniversary of their graduation. St. Mary's Academy thanks the Blue Ties of 1964 for their generosity in making this meaningful and lasting contribution to the school.



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.
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Nancy Portillo
Pash Salehi
Paula Simoncini '63
Janice Wiles Spaeth '64
Manuel Villarreal
Catherine Walton '74
Sonjia White-Edmond
Sister Mary Williams, CSJ

SMA Belles Are Women of Distinction

Red Tie Selected As 2014 California State Youth Ambassador



Red Tie **Ankofa Billips '15** was selected to be a 2014 California State Youth Ambassador by the Young Center for Academic & Cultural Enrichment. Youth Ambassadors are selected based on their demonstrated leadership abilities, academic achievement, character, and letters of recommendations from teachers, counselors, and program staff.



Ankofa (pictured above, seated at the bottom right end) and the other Ambassadors will represent their communities as youth education liaisons to local and state government agencies. They will participate in a variety of activities and media events throughout the school year to promote literacy and higher education opportunities for all California youth. In the Spring 2014, the group traveled to Sacramento, California, to meet with state lawmakers and school officials at the Department of Education to discuss and propose solutions to the critical shortage of counselors in California public schools. ■

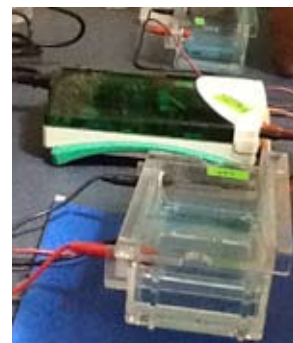


AMGEN Partnership for STEM Education

Pharmaceutical company AMGEN has selected St. Mary's Academy to participate in their program to increase STEM education. SMA is one of only a few high schools in the Los Angeles metropolitan area that has this partnership with this biotech giant. For three weeks in May, Dr. Jeffery Morse from AMGEN came to SMA to teach students emerging scientific techniques, such as gel electrophoresis, culturing of bacteria, and the transfer of DNA segments (plasmid) into *E. coli* bacteria. SMA students also

extracted their own DNA and put them into bottle kits, which were funded by an anonymous SMA donor. AMGEN provided all of the very expensive machines required for these lessons.

These hands-on experiments introduced SMA students to the biological sciences in an invaluable way. AMGEN will also provide further classes for teachers as a part of their partnership. ■



Gold Ties Awarded College Scholarships

The Kamimoto-Minami Family Scholarship of \$2,500 for college expenses was awarded this year to Gold Tie **Jessel Cruz '14**. This annual scholarship is granted by Blue Tie **June Kamimoto Minami '60** to a graduating senior who has excelled academically and has demonstrated a desire to help others in the health, legal, arts, business, science, or teaching professions. The award was presented by Manny Villarreal, Director of Development (pictured right), on May 21 at Academic Achievement Awards Night. Jessel will be attending UC Berkeley in the fall and plans to major in Biochemistry.



Gold Ties **Imani Warren '14**, **Deja Edmond '14**, and **Sidni Watson '14** (pictured left) also received scholarships for college from the Inglewood Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated. Imani will be attending UC Riverside in the fall and majoring in Biochemistry. Deja will be attending Xavier University in Cincinnati and majoring in Athletic Training. Sidni will be attending Xavier University of Louisiana and majoring in Biology/Pre-Med. All three were students in the Health Careers Program at SMA. ■

Operation Progress Update

Operation Progress (OP) was founded by a group of Southeast Division LAPD Police Officers who fight gang crime in South Los Angeles. The officers of OP identify students in at-risk neighborhoods to help them through leadership training, mentoring, and financial assistance for education. St. Mary's Academy is the anchor school for the female students of the OP program.

Natalie Llamas '17 joins three other current Green Ties as the newest OP Scholar at SMA. Graduating Gold Ties **Aquiel Godeau '14**, **Lizeth Sanchez '14**, and **Roselyn Tovar '14** were also accepted as rising college freshmen into the South Central Scholars program, another partner of Operation Progress. South Central Scholars (SCS) assists hundreds of motivated and gifted students with academic and scholarship assistance to apply to, afford, and succeed in a rigorous college environment. Since 2001, SCS has supported 900 college scholars with a near 99% graduation rate. ■





The Gold Tie Class of 2014 graduated on Saturday, June 14 in the presence of family and friends, faculty and staff, Board members and alumnae. Nine Gold Ties graduated *summa cum laude* (“with highest honors”) with a cumulative GPA over 8 semesters higher than a 4.0, ten *magna cum laude* (“with great honors”) with a cumulative GPA over 8 semesters between 3.6 and 3.99, and five *cum laude* (“with honors”) with a cumulative GPA over 8 semesters between 3.3 and 3.59. Congratulations to our newest alumnae and best wishes for their continued success! ■



Photos Counterclockwise:

(Top Left) Christina Hale ‘14 walks under the arches in the processional.

(Middle Left) Sister Kathleen Mary McCarthy, CSJ gives the final blessing.

(Bottom) Graduates stand for prayer and the final blessing.

(Middle Right) Salutatorian Neyat Tefery ‘14 delivers her address.

(Top Right) Valedictorian Jessel Cruz ‘14 takes a “selfie” at the conclusion of her speech before returning to her seat.

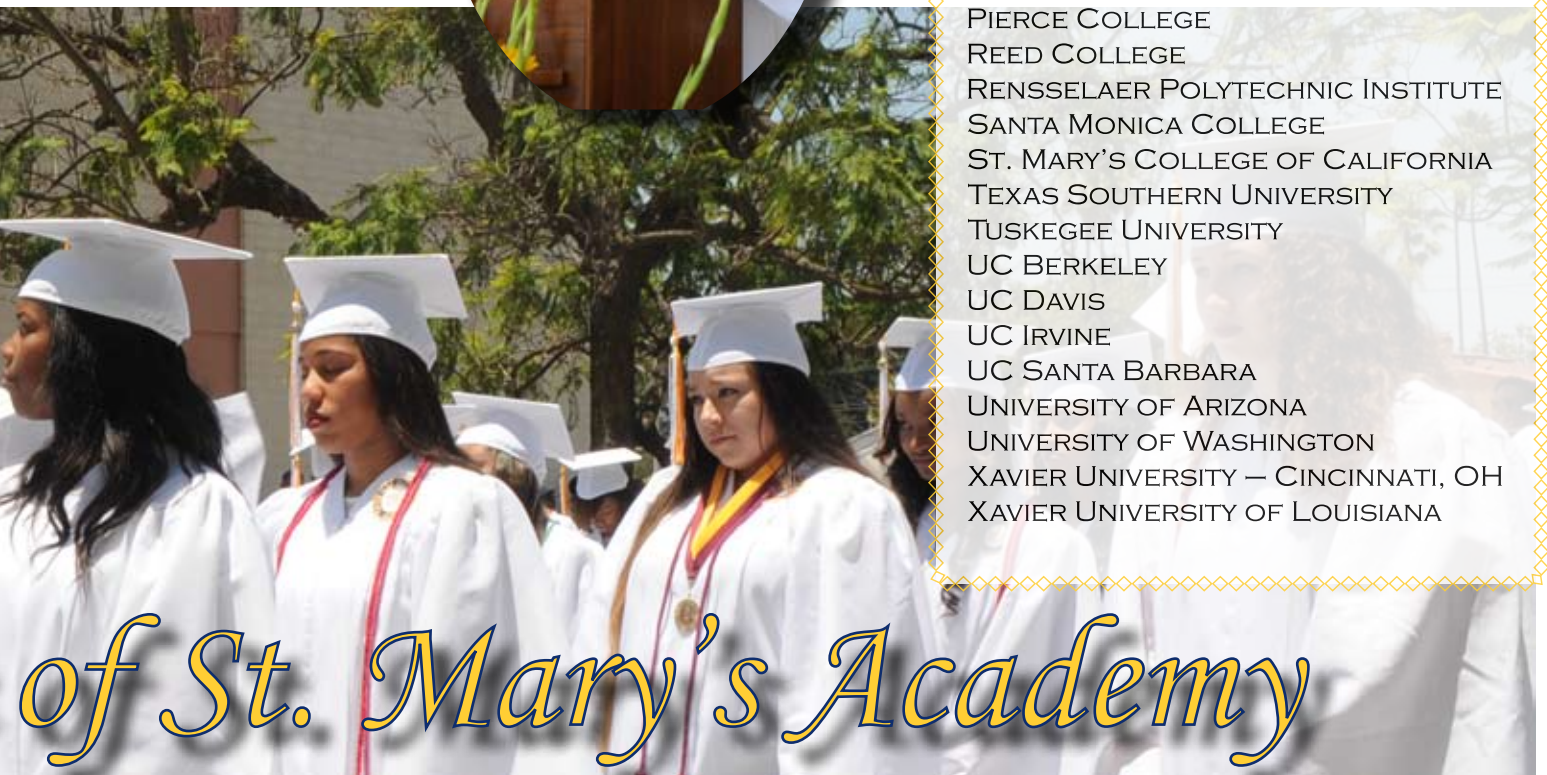
(Top Center) The keynote address was given by Dr. Ann McElaney-Johnson, the president of Mount St. Mary’s College.



The 125th Commencement

ONCE AGAIN, SMA CAN BOAST THAT 100% OF THE GRADUATING CLASS WAS ACCEPTED TO COLLEGE. GOLD TIES OF THE CLASS OF 2014 HAVE CHOSEN TO MATRICULATE TO THE FOLLOWING COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES:

ALABAMA STATE UNIVERSITY
AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE
AZUSA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY
CONCORDIA COLLEGE
CSU BAKERSFIELD
CSU DOMINGUEZ HILLS
CSU EAST BAY
CSU LOS ANGELES
CSU MONTEREY BAY
CSU NORTHRIDGE
CSU POLYTECHNIC POMONA
CSU SACRAMENTO
CSU SAN FRANCISCO
DREXEL UNIVERSITY
EL CAMINO COLLEGE
FASHION INSTITUTE OF DESIGN &
MERCHANDISING
GETTYSBURG COLLEGE
GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY
LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY
MARIST COLLEGE, POUGHKEEPSIE, NY
MARYMOUNT CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY
MOUNT ST. MARY'S COLLEGE
NORTH CAROLINA A&T UNIVERSITY
PIERCE COLLEGE
REED COLLEGE
RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE
SANTA MONICA COLLEGE
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF CALIFORNIA
TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY
TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY
UC BERKELEY
UC DAVIS
UC IRVINE
UC SANTA BARBARA
UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
XAVIER UNIVERSITY — CINCINNATI, OH
XAVIER UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA



of St. Mary's Academy

From the Alumnae Association

Dear Alumnae of St. Mary's Academy,

As we continue to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the founding of St. Mary's Academy we find that we have much to be thankful for. The graduating Gold Ties of 2014 proved to embody all that SMA stands for and hopes to achieve in its graduates: young women who will continue to reach their highest academic, spiritual, and personal growth; in other words Women of Distinction. On Saturday, June 14, St. Mary's graduation was witnessed by 44 alumnae from the Golden Graduates of 1964. In addition, we were privileged to have in attendance members of the Class of 1954 as well as other alumnae. We were all excited to hear that once again there was 100% college acceptance for the graduating class of 2014.



So far this year, the Alumnae Association hosted a number of special events that brought together alumnae, parents, and students. On February 23, St. Mary's celebrated a 125th Anniversary Tea, a wonderfully reminiscent tradition that was reestablished last year (see photos above). Many alumnae returned to campus for Career Day in March to share their experiences and professional insight with current students. On May 3, Derby Day was held at a new venue, Santa Anita Park. Attendees were treated to watching California Chrome win the Kentucky Derby and a fun day was had by all.



Gold Ties of the Class of 1974 at Derby Day: (back row) Cathy Walton, Sally Boyle, Patty McCormick, Teri Toth, Celia Domingue, Diane Marshall; (second row) DeeDee Thomas, Carrie Gonzales, Sheree Brown, Arlene Acevedo, Yvette and Yvonne LaFontaine; (front row) Luz Cajao, Kim Pavegeau, Jan Williams.

If you love to read and want a chance to see firsthand the excellence of St. Mary's, we have just the event for you. The Alumnae Association has teamed up with St. Mary's in a program called One School-One Book. All students as well as 50 alumnae volunteers will be reading the same book, *I Am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai. Please see the invitation at right for details.

We are planning other events this year such as a Day of Spiritual Renewal in December with Sr. Kathleen Mary, a gifted retreat facilitator. Details of all our events will be posted on the SMA website (www.smabelles.org) under the Alumnae button.

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet said the establishment of St. Mary's Academy was important 125 years ago; please join the Alumnae Association in affirming that St. Mary's Academy is indeed important with your support today.

Wishing you and your family many blessings,

Madelyn Murray '67 and Paula Simoncini '63
Co-Presidents



(Left) Alumnae Association Co-President Madelyn Murray '67 presents the history of the Tea tradition at the 125th Anniversary Tea Party.



(Right) Alumnae Association Co-President Paula Simoncini '63, Development Director Manny Villarreal, Teresa Welsh '73, and Susan Ferruccio '73 install much-needed new furniture on campus. The Green Tie Class of 1973 donated funds for this furniture after their 40th class reunion held at SMA.

You are invited to join

SMA ALUMNAE –“BELLES & BOOKS”

Join with SMA students, the SMA English department, and fellow Alumnae in an exciting inaugural summer reading project: **Belles & Books**.

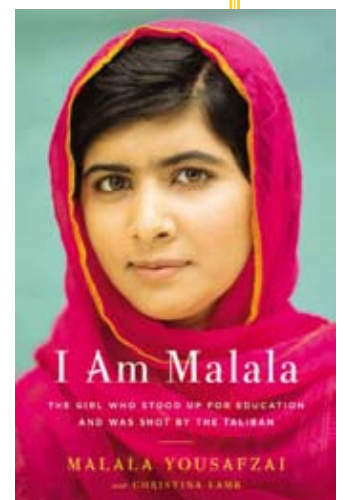
What's required?

During the summer, SMA Alumnae will read the same book as the students and come back to the school for a classroom discussion, on either **Thursday, September 4** or **Friday, September 5, 2014**.

We need 2-3 alumnae per class to share their insight in a teacher-led discussion of the selected common book, with either freshman, sophomores, juniors, or seniors. Sign up for (1) class. (9-12 classes total.)

The book the school has chosen is:

“I Am Malala - The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban” by Malala Yousafzai



To join Belles & Books and become a volunteer reader/mentor with the students, please contact: Madelyn Murray at madmom717@att.net or Paula Simoncini at simoncinibp@verizon.net or Toni Parham at tparham@smabelles.org.



Celebrating Golden Grads



St. Mary's Academy hosted alumnae at the Golden Grads Lunch Reception following the commencement ceremonies on June 14. The library on campus was transformed into a beautiful dining space for the event. Forty-four Blue Ties of 1964 and six Gold Ties of 1954 were in attendance. The guests were treated to a delicious lunch, a personal address by the current principal, Nancy Portillo, and a delightful tour of campus by the Development Director, Manny Villarreal. ■



(Top)
Golden Grads of the Class of 1964
dedicate the Senior Walkway,
which they donated, to SMA.

(Bottom Left)
Gold Ties of the Class of 1954



Reunion Notices

The Blue Tie Class of 1984

We wish to extend an Invitation to our fellow classmates. A Blue Tie Affair will be held on August 2, 2014 at 6:00 pm at The Westin LAX Hotel.

Please visit our website at: www.smablue84.weebly.com, or email at smablue84@gmail.com.

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. Everything is still in the planning stages and we'd love to hear from you.

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 1985

Our 30th Reunion will take place on August 14, 15, 16, 2015. We are looking forward to hosting a Friday Night Mixer, a Saturday Morning Family Day, a Saturday Night Belle Dinner and a Sunday Morning Prayer Service and Tour at SMA.

Reunion Contact: Donyale Hall, donyale.hall@lacity.org.

For further information about Alumnae Association events and ways to participate, please 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. Or contact the SMA Alumnae Coordinator, Toni Parham, at tparham@smabelles.org or (310) 674-8470 ext. 214. Also, check out the Alumnae tab of the SMA website at www.smabelles.org.

The Ties That Bind



Family and friends of Gold Tie **Mary Ann (Gallagher) Arrowsmith '58** request your prayers for Mary Ann and her health.

Congratulations to Red Tie **Gianna Woodruff '11** for being named the 2014 Women's Track Athlete of the Year at the University of Washington!



Gold Tie **Autumn Cohen '10** returned to SMA to address the graduating Gold Ties of 2014 at the Tie Returning Ceremony on May 29.



Congratulations to Green Tie **Sydney Johnson '13** for being named Scholar-Athlete of the Year at Cal State East Bay for Women's Track & Field 2013-2014!

Gold Tie **Jade Romain '10** founded Khondanani Projects, an organization dedicated to bringing educational resources to community schools. After three months of working with children at Blessed Vale Community School in Chibolya, one of the poorest compounds in Zambia, Jade was inspired to create Khondanani Projects in partnership with Children's International. Jade recently graduated Magna Cum Laude from Xavier University of Louisiana with a Bachelor of Science degree in Speech Pathology. This fall, she begins working toward a Master of Science degree at Columbia University in New York.



Do you have a green thumb?

Since 2006, Alumnae and Friends of St. Mary's Academy have supported the Run for Roses, a plan to beautify the campus with rose gardens. Many rose bushes have been planted, but we are in need of caretakers for these lovely flowers. Please contact Manny Villarreal at (310) 674-8470 ext. 209 or mwillarreal@smabelles.org if you are interested in volunteering your gardening talents.



A Recent Alumna Looks Back..

Freshman Green Tie Receiving Ceremony, Sophomore Retreat, Junior Ring Ceremony, and finally, senior year 2013 and graduation... it all happened so fast. Reflecting on my teachers, tutors, friends, and extracurricular coaches that made my four years at St. Mary's Academy so fulfilling, I feel blessed to have received a well-rounded educational experience.

My heart warms with the thought of my educational sponsors such as the Sisters of Carondelet, as well as the many alumnae who have and continue to invest their money into my education. After graduating from St. Mary's Academy in June of 2013, I was quickly thrown into the real world with responsibilities to fulfill. Furthering my education was essentially the next step of my life. At a young age my parents and strong adult figures embedded in my head that education is the key that will unlock any door leading to success. Knowing that higher education will advance me through life is one of my motivations for making college my next step after high school.

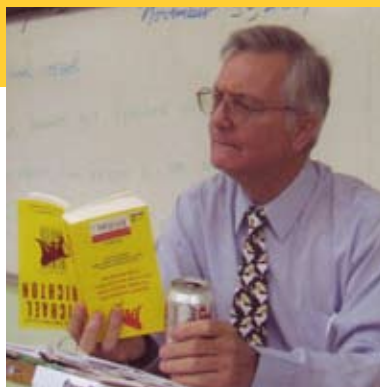
After graduating SMA, I enrolled into Santa Monica College the following summer to help assist in acclimating to a collegiate environment with new teachers, peers, and increased independence. I chose to attend a junior college instead of going directly to a four-year university due to the significantly reduced financial obligation and smoother transition it would offer. Not only do I have the luxury of living within walking distance from school, I am able to clearly plan out the next four years and enjoy the more focused attention in the classroom that larger four-year universities do not always offer. Shortly after getting settled into school, I was hired and working my first part time job at a local movie theater and continuing to pursue my passion for photography on the side.

While balancing school and work, my parents reminded me of the need to "pay it forward" through alumnae donations that would benefit a current SMA Belle's tuition. Throughout my four years at SMA, both of my parents severely struggled to maintain employment and simultaneously pay tuition at SMA while the recession was hitting them at full force. Nevertheless, God made a way for me to carry out his will of receiving my education at St. Mary's and blessed me with a generous amount of financial aid from various donors throughout all four years. Receiving consistent aid not only allowed me to continue my education at St. Mary's, but it also enabled me to be enriched in the Catholic, all-girls experience that was being offered. When I was a high school student, the age-old question of "when will I actually apply what is learned in the classroom?" often floated through my thoughts. I am excited to say that I have applied almost everything I learned in the classroom at SMA and was able to skip over two English classes in college thanks to the mentally stimulating curriculum taught at SMA.

As I reminisce about my high school education and apply the knowledge I gained, I am so proud to say that I am a St. Mary's Academy alumna, and I strive to give back when I can. Admiring the young women that the academy shapes and cultivates, I am so encouraged to continue to give back through alumnae donations because I remember being in their shoes, and having my education being supported by an alumna and other donors who simply had faith in my academic future. As I progress into my sophomore year of college I thank God for the strong foundation St. Mary's provided me that is helping me to succeed.

Selena Charles '13





Happy Retirement: Roger Knight

Roger Knight, beloved English teacher, retired this year after 29 years of dedicated service at St. Mary's Academy. Known for his extensive tie collection, he will always be tied to SMA in the memories of countless alumnae and staff. We wish you well in your retirement, Mr. Knight! ■



Rest In Peace: Mary Frances Morgan

November 27, 1920-May 25, 2014

Mary Frances Morgan, mother of **Judy Morgan O'Mahoney '62** and **Kathryn Morgan Itzel '66**, passed away on the evening of Sunday, May 25, 2014 in Newport Beach, California. Mrs. Morgan truly modeled the spirit and tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet to serve the "dear neighbor." She was active at Daniel Freeman Hospital as president of the women's club and coordinated the prayer line for many years at Our Lady Queen of Angels parish, where she was a prominent member.

Mary Frances married Robert Emmett Morgan in 1942, and they spent sixty-three happily married years together until he passed in May 2005, followed by their beloved daughter, Judy Morgan O'Mahoney '62, who passed in July 2005 of breast cancer.

Mrs. Morgan initiated the Judy Morgan O'Mahoney Emergency Fund at St. Mary's Academy in 2010. The JMO Fund provides critical assistance to SMA students who need essentials such as

breakfast and lunch, shoes, glasses, bus fare, and other basic items without which they cannot succeed in school. This is an endowment fund with the principal remaining in perpetuity in memory of Judy. Other donations are added to the investment, and interest from the fund and smaller donations are used for students' emergency needs. Too many of our students come from struggling families and difficult personal backgrounds. We are so grateful to Mrs. Morgan and our other JMO Fund supporters who enable us to give our students what they need to learn and grow. She will be missed, but her legacy will continue to serve our students.

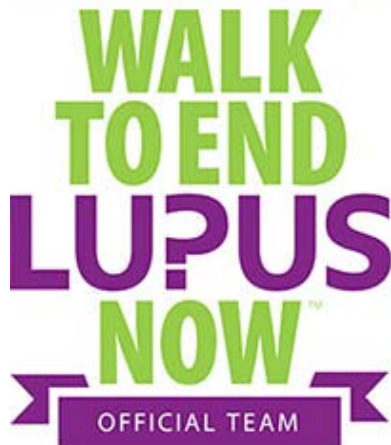
The JMO Fund continues to be overseen by **Kathy Itzel '66** and **Kathy Kirk '65**. Donations can be made in memory of Mary Frances and Judy at www.smabelles.org or by mail to The JMO Fund at St. Mary's Academy, 701 Grace Avenue, Inglewood, CA 90301. ■

Farewells

The Gold Tie Class of 1974 will remember classmate **Debbie Williams Peters '74**, whose passing was announced in the Winter 2014 Echo, at this year's *Walk To End Lupus*. Debbie passed away on March 27, 2013 and is survived by her husband, Glenn Peters.

TEAM PRECIOUS DEBBIE IN MEMORY OF DEBBIE WILLIAMS PETERS - GOLD TIE '74

LUPUS FOUNDATION OF AMERICA



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2014
Exposition Park

Los Angeles, CA

7:30 AM Registration Opens

8:30 AM Opening Remarks

9:00 AM Walk Begins

Register and join the PreciousDebbie team at
<http://lupus.donorpages.com/LAWalk/>
PreciousDebbie

Rest In Peace

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

*Frances Ann Maniscalchi
Bacchi '45*

Karen Neeland Brown '58

Susan L. Ferruccio '73

Alba Erbe Lamadrid '61

*Mary Theresa Donohoe
Lyons '48*

*Shirley Connolly McKenney
'44*

*Mary Frances Morgan
(mother of Judy Morgan
O'Mahoney '62 and Kathryn
Morgan Itzel '66)*

*Patricia Marie Wagner
Nevins '50*

Lyndall Faustina Ruiz '61

Ana Herrera Sobrado '61

*Charlene Louise Tucker
Sydow '57*

Joanne Needels Taylor '45

Stephanie Wright '78

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 Winter 2015 Echo should be made by November 15, 2014.

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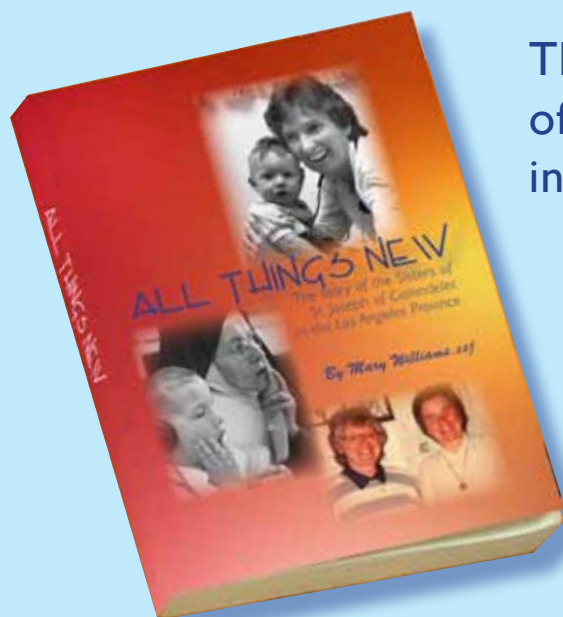
Echo

Summer 2014

St. Mary's alumnae may be interested in a new book just published about the Sisters of St. Joseph in the West. *All Things New* tells the fascinating story of the sisters from their arrival by covered wagon in Tucson in 1870, through expansion in the desert, the move to California with the founding of St. Mary's Academy, and all the way to 2014. The author is Sister Mary Williams, longtime Mount faculty member, who lived at St. Mary's and served on the board of directors. To order, please contact Sister Irma Amelia Tye, CSJ at (310) 889-2138.

Announcing-

The first full-length history
of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet
in the Los Angeles Province



ALL THINGS NEW
By Mary Williams, CSJ

\$20 each (tax included) plus \$4.00 s/h first book
2.00 s/h second book

Orders of 50 or more... \$15 each (tax included) plus s/h
Place orders by phone 310.889.2138