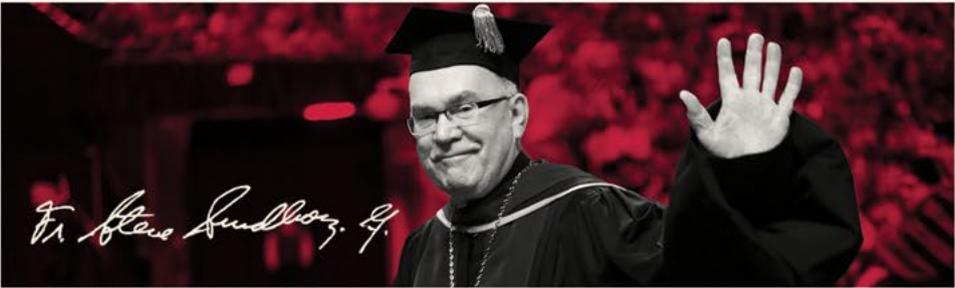


# SEATTLE UNIVERSITY

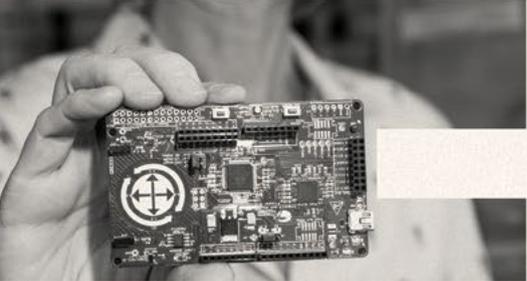
MAGAZINE



# 2 4 YEARS



# GUIDED BY MISSION



EMPOWERING LEADERS FOR A  
JUST AND HUMANE WORLD



A young woman with long braids, wearing a light blue denim jacket, teal pants, and white sneakers, sits on a large rock. She is holding a notebook and a pen, looking thoughtfully to the right. Next to her is a teal backpack. To her right is a large, modern fountain with water cascading over a curved, dark metal structure. In the background, a church tower with a cross on top is visible, surrounded by tall evergreen trees and some bare deciduous trees. The scene is set outdoors on a bright day.

## BETTER DAYS AHEAD

Samantha (Sam) Cremer, '21, enjoys the beauty and serenity of campus and the Centennial Fountain on a recent spring day.

**EDITOR**

Tina Potterf

**LEAD DESIGNER**

Marissa Leitch

**SENIOR WRITER**

Allison Nitch

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**

Jerry Cobb, S.J., Dean Forbes

**DESIGN TEAM**

Terry Lundmark, '82, Anne Reinisch

**UNIVERSITY PHOTOGRAPHER**

Yosef Chaim Kalinko

**DIRECTOR / STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT**

Kristen Kirst

**VICE PRESIDENT / UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS**

Scott McClellan

**PRESIDENT / SEATTLE UNIVERSITY**

Stephen Sundborg, S.J.

Seattle University Magazine (ISSN: 1550-1523) is published in fall, winter and spring by Marketing Communications, Seattle University, 901 12th Avenue, PO Box 222000, Seattle, WA 98122-1090. Periodical postage paid at Seattle, Wash. Distributed without charge to alumni and friends of Seattle University. USPS 487-780. Comments and questions about Seattle University Magazine may be addressed to the editor at 206-296-6111; the address below; fax: 206-296-6137; or e-mail: tinap@seattleu.edu. Postmaster: Send address changes to Seattle University Magazine, Marketing Communications, Seattle University, 901 12th Avenue, PO Box 222000, Seattle, WA 98122-1090. Check out the magazine online at [www.seattleu.edu/newsroom/](http://www.seattleu.edu/newsroom/).

Seattle University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, political ideology or status as a Vietnam-era or special disabled veteran in the administration of any of its education policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletics, and other school-administered policies and programs, or in its employment-related policies and practices. All university policies, practices and procedures are administered in a manner consistent with Seattle University's Catholic and Jesuit identity and character. Inquiries relating to these policies may be referred to the University's Assistant Vice President for Institutional Equity, Andrea Herrera Katahira at 206-220-8515, [katahira@seattleu.edu](mailto:katahira@seattleu.edu).



**ON THE COVER:** As Father Steve is set to leave the university in June to start his next chapter, we reflect on the defining moments of Seattle University's 21st president.

Photo by Yosef Chaim Kalinko

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

02 DID YOU KNOW

04 ON CAMPUS

# 12

**A PRESIDENT DEFINED AND GUIDED BY MISSION**

20 ATHLETICS

# 22

**ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: A COMPASSIONATE HAND**

26 THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE UNCOMMON GOOD

# 28

**IN MEMORIAM: REMEMBERING #22, SEATTLE U AND NBA GREAT ELGIN BAYLOR**

34 LAST WORD



# DID YOU KNOW

## WELCOME NEW COLLEGE OF EDUCATION DEAN

Following an extensive national search, Cynthia B. Dillard, PhD, has been appointed Dean of Seattle University's College of Education. Dr. Dillard currently serves as the Mary Frances Early Professor in Teacher Education at the University of Georgia.



"I am thrilled to be selected as the next Dean of the College of Education at Seattle University. It will be my privilege to work in community with the exceptional students, staff and faculty at SU," says Dillard. "Guided by the strong Jesuit commitments of social justice and service that are foundational to this university, I look forward to working diligently to address our most pressing challenges in education—in Seattle, across the nation and the world."

Dillard's scholarship has included research on intersections of race, culture, gender and spirituality, particularly in the context of teaching and education. She has authored or edited four books, with the most current, *The spirit of our work: Black women teachers (re)member*, to be published by Beacon Press later this year. In addition, Dillard has written a multitude of articles, book chapters and other scholarly pieces, while frequently presenting as a keynote speaker or panelist at national conferences. She has received more than a dozen awards and recognitions, including the 2019 Taylor & Francis Award for Lifetime Achievement from the American Educational Studies Association (AESA).

Dillard brings to Seattle U and the College of Education a wealth of experience as a proven leader. She has served in several key academic posts in higher education including, among others, as Chair of the Department of Educational Theory and Practice at the University of Georgia and Associate Dean for Equity and Diversity at The Ohio State University.

Dillard's current responsibilities require she remain in her role with the University of Georgia through January 2022. She will officially begin her new role as Dean on Feb. 1, 2022.

"I am delighted that Dr. Cynthia Dillard will be our next Dean of the College of Education. An internationally renowned educator and scholar with a proven track record of leadership, she is highly qualified to serve in this position," says Provost Shane P. Martin. "Her charismatic and engaging style will propel our education program to new heights and strengthen our relationships with our partners."

SEATTLE U TOP 3% IN U.S. FOR DIVERSITY.

—College Factual



## GRANT SUPPORT FOR FOSTERING SCHOLARS AND CENTER FOR RELIGIOUS WISDOM

Michael Reid Trice, PhD, director of the Center for Religious Wisdom & World Affairs and Colleen Montoya Barbano, director of the Fostering Scholars Program, were recently awarded grants from the Alfred & Tillie Shemanski Testamentary Trust, whose philanthropic mission focuses on supporting interfaith tolerance and understanding and promoting quality educational, human services and health care programming for economically challenged individuals.

These recent awards continue the Shemanski Trust's generous and longstanding support of initiatives and student scholarships at Seattle University, including 15 years dedicated to interreligious engagement.



## INNOVATION AWARD FOR VI HILBERT HALL

Seattle U's newest residence hall, Vi Hilbert Hall, was awarded the "Best Public-Private Partnership Development" honor at the *Student Housing Business* magazine's 10th Annual Innovator Awards. Vi Hilbert Hall was developed by Capstone in collaboration with Seattle University in a public-private partnership.

The project was selected among 120 student housing developments submitted for a total of 22 award categories.

## WITH PRO PARTNERS, ALBERS LAUNCHES NEW SPORT & ENTERTAINMENT MBA

### Diversity, equity and inclusion form core philosophy of new program

Albers School of Business and Economics has launched a new program—the [MBA in Sport and Entertainment Management \(MBA SEM\)](#)—with its first classes beginning in late June.

The commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is one of the hallmarks of the MBA SEM, making it the first program of its kind to build on DEI as a core philosophy. It is an offering

consistent with Albers' 70+ year legacy of championing business as an agent of positive social change.

Partners in this new MBA include all of Seattle's professional sports teams: the Mariners, Seahawks, Storm, Sounders and new NHL team the Seattle Kraken.

"The sports industry has a renewed call to action as it endeavors to increase diversity at all levels and in all segments," says Albers Dean Joseph Phillips. "Our program will make an important contribution to those efforts."

The new MBA is a reimagining of the business school's Master's in Sport Business Leadership program founded in 2006.

"In addition to boosting students' employability with an MBA, we will equip them with the leadership skills and business acumen sought after by employers, while preparing them for key roles within the sports industry," says Program Director Maylon Hanold.

Learn more at [seattleu.edu/business/mba-sport-entertainment/](https://seattleu.edu/business/mba-sport-entertainment/).





## CURATING THE INTERSECTION OF ART AND SCIENCE

The Jim and Janet Sinegal Center for Science and Innovation will feature works by renowned local and national artists

By Allison Nitch

A fusion of art and science is underway at Seattle University. The curation of artwork exploring the interconnectedness of visual arts, life sciences, digital technology, engineering and math will imbue a sense of excitement for scientific learning and discovery for all who enter the newest and largest building on campus.

An interdisciplinary committee is curating a cutting-edge collection of contemporary art for the Jim and Janet Sinegal Center for Science and Innovation, which will officially open for students next fall.

The 13-member committee includes Seattle U faculty knowledgeable in fine arts, art history and science—all working in consultation with external collectors, artists and thought leaders.

Josef Venker, S.J., MFA, fine arts assistant professor and curator of the university's permanent art collection, leads the project and serves as the committee chair. Jim Hembree, senior director of development for University Initiatives, guides the committee's work with external donors and collectors.

Over the years, Seattle U has “developed experience and a track record of having an excellent public art collection,” says Hembree, who has been involved with building the campus art collection since the mid-90s.

With 27 years at the university, Father Venker has strong ties with the local art scene. “Actively building relationships with the art community [and commercial galleries] is so important,” notes Fr. Venker. “There’s a real benefit ... and a perspective these organizations and dealers bring. I may know an artist for a few years, but they know them for 15 or 20 years. They understand the context within the larger Seattle experience.”

The committee expects 40-60 new artworks and art from the university's permanent collection, which will be installed in the Sinegal Center and the refurbished Bannan and Engineering Buildings.

A total of 49 art walls in the center have been identified for two-dimensional works. Additionally, three multi-story interior spaces and an outdoor plaza provide venues for sculpture and site-specific installations. Among the acquisitions confirmed to date are works by Barry Johnson, Alfredo Arreguín, Mary Ann Peters, Dennis Evans, Rachel Yo, Michael Schultheis and Intima Rosa Machita.

Through engagement with alumni, trustees, art collectors and patrons, Hembree and Fr. Venker cultivate relationships that will allow the end-users of the Sinegal Center to have a sense of ownership of the art that ultimately will adorn the various labs and classroom spaces.



One of the paintings that will adorn the walls of the Sinegal Center is “Dance of the Muses” (2018; 48” x 72”/oil on canvas) by local artist Alfredo Arreguín. Courtesy of the Linda Hodges Gallery.

Themes factoring into this collection have been “composed very intentionally,” such as sustainability, cosmologies and technology, faith and science, diversity and racial equity, says Fr. Venker.

Featuring BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) artists ranks high among the committee's goals, which align with “narrative through art and symbols”—one of the main priorities featured in the university's diversity and inclusion LIFT SU initiative.

This includes commissioning portraiture of BIPOC individuals who have contributed to science, math and engineering so students “see themselves imaged in the art collection” ... and see BIPOC community members that “have been part of these disciplines,” says Fr. Venker.

Additionally, a proposal has been submitted to feature a mural within the Billodue Makerspace that is collectively produced by BIPOC students from campus clubs and organizations. “Part of

our growth in terms of racial justice and equity is to tell the story [visually],” says Hembree.

The committee is halfway through its art acquisitions as of January 2021, while fundraising for the collection continues.

“It’s a terrific and exciting opportunity to expand the collection dramatically, both in terms of the wall space and exploring the interface between the visual arts and the sciences in a way that hasn’t been possible in any of the other collections,” says Fr. Venker.

To learn more about ways to support the Sinegal Center art collection, contact Jim Hembree at [jimh@seattleu.edu](mailto:jimh@seattleu.edu) or call the Office of Annual Giving at (206) 296-6301.

# AMAZON TO ENDOW COMPUTER SCIENCE CHAIR AT SEATTLE UNIVERSITY

By Dean Forbes



*New Amazon Endowed Chair in Computer Science promotes science education and diversity in the field*

Amazon will endow a chair position in Seattle University's Computer Science department, the latest in a series of investments by the company reflecting its support for the science and tech industries.

Amazon's gift will support efforts to recruit and retain well-prepared computer science students—with a focus on underrepresented minorities—and to connect all students with industry perspectives. And it will elevate the department's ability to graduate computer scientists and software engineers.

"The Amazon gift to Seattle University will allow us to enhance this first-rate program by recruiting the best faculty and educating students as leaders in service to the industries of our region," says President Stephen Sundborg, S.J. "We are most grateful for this timely gift from Amazon that builds on their earlier gift supporting the construction of the Jim and Janet Sinegal Center for Science and Innovation."

When completed this summer, the Sinegal Center for Science and Innovation will serve as the gateway to the Seattle University campus. In new, state-of-the-art facilities, an increasing number of STEM students will benefit from opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration with their peers, professors and industry and community partners.

In May 2019, Amazon made a \$3 million gift to the [Sinegal Center](#)—a major component of Seattle University's comprehensive campaign—opening in the fall. This is in addition to Amazon's \$50 million investment in U.S. computer science education through Amazon Future Engineer, the company's comprehensive childhood-to-career program, which currently benefits more than 550,000 K-12 students from underserved communities across 5,000 schools and hundreds of college students.

"Seattle University has been a leader in bringing more diverse talent into computer science—women comprise 44 percent of students in the College of Science and Engineering and half of the college's leadership team—and at Amazon, we want to support this critical work," says Drew Herdener, vice president of Worldwide Communications at Amazon. "We created the Amazon Endowed Chair in Computer

Science to enable Seattle University to keep recruiting and educating the next generation of computer science and engineering talent, especially among underrepresented minorities. We're excited to be part of the university's ongoing growth in the CS field—in research, in education and in building the future pipeline of great computer scientists."

The investment from Amazon will secure a top-tier candidate to lead the department, according to Mike Quinn, PhD, dean of the College of Science and Engineering.

"The Amazon Endowed Chair in Computer Science will continue to build the visibility and prestige of the Computer Science department nationally and internationally as it continues its rapid growth in size and quality," says Quinn. "It will appeal to exceptional candidates who are drawn to Seattle U's values around seeking diverse perspectives and focusing on whole-person learning and curiosity."

Computer science will also play a key role in the growth in new data science offerings, Quinn says, and will support more students from other majors who want to minor in computer science.

### Computer Science Boost

Computer science is the university's fastest growing program within the College of Science and Engineering. The completion of the Sinegal Center will accommodate increased enrollment in computer science programs, to more than 600 undergraduate and graduate students by 2025. Overall, enrollment in the College of Science and Engineering has increased by 60 percent in the past decade, while the number of students studying computer science has quintupled.

### Amazon Computer Science Project Center

Undergraduate computer science majors spend their senior year working on team projects assigned by industry partners. In the new Amazon Computer Science Project Center in the Sinegal Center, student teams will work on their capstone projects, developing technical expertise and polishing the skills employers like Amazon are looking for. Amazon is one of many industry partners providing projects for students.

Learn more about the [Sinegal Center for Science and Innovation](#) at [www.seattleu.edu/science-innovation/](http://www.seattleu.edu/science-innovation/).

## A SHOT IN THE ARM AGAINST COVID-19

Seattle U & Swedish partner on vaccine clinic

By Dean Forbes



Earlier this year, much of the first floor of Campion Hall was transformed into one of the region's first sizable vaccination sites.

The Swedish Community COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic at Seattle University was a unique collaboration between the two longtime partners in health care education.

The clinic, which opened in January and administered its final shots in late February, was operated and managed by Swedish, with Seattle University hosting the facility and parking. Both organizations promoted the clinic and supported recruitment of non-medical volunteers who helped staff it.

**"Two organizations that are cherished for their mission to serve came together to do good. And that feels great."**

—Kristen Swanson, RN, PhD, FAAN, Dean

The two institutions worked quickly to bring the clinic to fruition—only two weeks from decision to implementation.

"I received an email from Dean (Kristen) Swanson asking about doing this. Within minutes we said, 'Yes, make it happen.' Two very professional teams from Swedish and Seattle U got together, looked at facilities and thought through all of the challenges we would have to put together a clinic. They made it happen and then stood it up," says President Stephen Sundborg, S.J. "We were delighted as a university to host this clinic with Swedish. It's an amazing thing how we were able to put this together."

President Sundborg notes that the College of Nursing, under

the leadership of Dean Kristen Swanson, RN, PhD, FAAN, was instrumental in bringing the collaboration forward. Academically, it allowed nursing faculty and student nurses to administer vaccinations.

"This was a dream come true. Two organizations that are cherished for their mission to serve came together to do good. And that feels great," Swanson says. "This was a joyful clinic. This was our chance to see to it that the vaccine gets into the arms of our community members."

President Sundborg, Swanson and Swedish CEO Guy Hudson, MD, MBA, FAAP, noted that the decades-long relationship between the university and Swedish made the clinic a natural partnership.

"This endeavor was in perfect alignment with our mutual commitments to assure equity in access to quality health care and education for members of our community," says Swanson. "The College of Nursing is particularly proud that Renee Rassilyer-Bomers, ARNP, DNP, a key leader in launching this project, earned her baccalaureate, master's and doctoral degrees in nursing from Seattle U in 2003 and 2016. She models the leadership one might expect of a graduate of our Health Systems Leader Doctor of Nursing Practice program."

Hundreds of volunteers signed up to assist at the clinic, which in its first week vaccinated nearly 5,000 people.

"This clinic helped us reach our goal to vaccinate thousands of people who aren't affiliated with a large health system," Hudson says. "We're grateful to our partners at Seattle University."

## MAPPING A CHANGING HIGHER ED LANDSCAPE

By Tina Potterf

Over the past 24 years working at Seattle University, Melore Nielsen has seen all dimensions of the college admissions process, from recruitment to acceptance to ultimately, enrollment. But this past year was unlike any other, with the pandemic upending the tried-and-true methods of the college admissions world, requiring flexibility, adaptation and modification of best practices.

“Although the economic impacts of COVID-19, declining student demographics and an uncertain national climate will undoubtedly challenge higher education, I firmly believe our Jesuit education was made for this moment,” says Nielsen.

As the new Vice President for Enrollment Management, Nielsen’s focus is on a comprehensive enrollment plan that aligns with and supports the university’s Strategic Directions. To this end, Nielsen and Provost Shane P. Martin are co-chairs of a recently formed University Enrollment Committee (UEC) that is comprised of key leaders from across campus. The UEC is tasked with setting enrollment priorities, including around undergraduate and graduate projections.

“Having more campus leaders engaged in the enrollment conversation is a critical step forward and I believe will benefit both our short-term and long-term planning,” she says. “I am also energized by a renewed commitment to our diversity recruitment and retention efforts in coordination with the new *LIFT SU*: Inclusive Excellence Action Plan for Equity and Antiracism. The announcement of our partnership with Rainier Scholars is just one

example of opportunities that exist in attracting BIPOC students and building affinity sooner with families and students as they begin thinking about their college options and search process.”

In 2025 a “demographic cliff” is expected to occur when there is a sharp decline in the number of graduating high school students, says Nielsen. “This makes identifying new markets with growth potential crucial and also the need to further invest in the top of the admissions funnel now.”

This year, COVID-19 and the resulting shift to mostly remote learning presented a host of challenges impacting enrollment numbers overall with students and families concerned about the cost amid other financial impacts and hardships and the move away from in-person classes. International students had “their own unique set of challenges,” says Nielsen, with many not able to attend Seattle U due to visa issues and other travel restrictions.

“Among the recruitment issues we faced was our inability to offer in-person yield events and campus visits for students, which can be of vital importance for students making such a significant decision,” she says. “It was also tricky trying to relay fast-moving policy changes and accommodations and the uncertainty around how long quarantine restrictions would remain in place.”

With the marked departure from the norm when it comes to attracting, admitting and retaining students, Nielsen credits the collaborative nature of departments and programs that stepped up and developed creative strategies to support undergraduate

“... What we have experienced this past year will have forever changed higher ed and how we serve and reach students.”

—Melore Nielsen, VP, Enrollment Management

and graduate students and their families. This involved more than 70 virtual events for admitted students, academic and student life Zoom sessions, virtual financial aid workshops and one-on-one meetings between students and admission and financial aid counselors. And it continues this summer with an entirely virtual orientation.

While the plan is a return to in-person instruction and on-campus activities this fall, elements that proved successful during the pandemic will likely continue.

“... What we have experienced this past year will have forever changed higher ed and how we serve and reach students. My assumption is that our virtual offerings will be additive and create an additional channel for how students can engage with us and receive information,” says Nielsen. “We see that we can reach a broader audience by offering virtual information sessions on different topics so they will continue in the future. I suspect we

will keep at least one virtual admitted student open house for both undergraduate and graduate students as it allows us to expand our geographic reach.”

For prospective students considering Seattle U, Nielsen says there are several factors that set the university apart and help guide the work of the enrollment team in its recruitment efforts.

“Undoubtedly, for undergraduate students it’s the combination of a rigorous educational experience, centered on Ignatian pedagogy, located in one of America’s most exciting urban environments,” she explains. “Graduate students have also noted that they feel a special attraction to our mission. It is frequently our single-most distinguishing feature and it holds up across our wide range of degree programs. It is also affirming to have alumni consistently speak of their educational experience as ‘transformative.’”

Photo by Yosef Chaim Kalinko



Seattle University graduate computer science student Fang (Jenny) Yuan, '21, and faculty advisor Michael Koenig have built an app that can test blood samples for jaundice on your smartphone.

## LIFE-SAVING APP

Faculty, students and recent alumni collaborate with start-up to support solutions for early detection and treatment of severe infant jaundice

By Allison Nitch

Throughout the world, including the United States, many newborns develop jaundice, which if left untreated can result in severe neurological damage known as kernicterus. According to Bilimetrix-USA, 50 percent of newborns experience a yellowing of the skin due to a build-up of the chemical bilirubin in their blood during the first week of life.

Unfortunately, families in developing countries face barriers to timely and affordable treatment. A major challenge is the inability of clinics to measure plasma bilirubin levels needed to assess risk for kernicterus and the need for treatment.

Dr. Richard Wennberg, neonatal medicine specialist and founder of Bilimetrix-USA, developed the BiliPic, a low-cost system to measure bilirubin in plasma using a tiny drop of blood applied to a cell/plasma separator attached to a test strip. When he needed a smartphone app to analyze the intensity of yellow color on the test strip, he turned to Seattle University's Project Center.

In partnership with the Stop Kernicterus in Northern Nigeria consortium, Dr. Wennberg's and Seattle U's teams collaboration helped establish a service known as **SKi** (Stop Kernicterus International).

Seattle U's initial venture with Dr. Wennberg, which began in 2017, involved building a prototype to capture readings and calculate results as a senior capstone project. Since then, volunteer students in the Computer Science program have contributed to completing the mobile application, building web services for content management, reporting, security and data hierarchy.

Students built the mobile application for Android smartphones to measure plasma bilirubin, "and a companion cloud service that allows the sharing of information for researchers around the world," notes Michael Koenig, a lecturer in computer science, project developer and faculty advisor.

Here's how it works: App users take a photo of a test strip against a standard reference card with their phone. The app transmits results to a secure cloud platform where it's accessed by referral hospitals and for population research.

Since the project is deployed live to researchers in Africa, Seattle U's teams "also learn about DevOps, keeping live systems running with security and performance, along with how to ensure quality through test automation and good quality assurance processes," says Koenig.

Fang (Jenny) Yuan, '21 MSMC, first began working on the SKi website in a software engineering class. In 2019, she volunteered to work on the app. By October 2020, Yuan officially received patent pending for her contributions. The patent application was generously supported by a Seattle U alum.

"I believed in this project and the impact it would make. Professor Koenig has supported this project since day one," says Yuan. "He is the driving force ... and is always willing to answer questions and teach students. Also, we would not have this patent if not for Seattle U's support."

Approximately 20 computer science students have contributed to the project to date, along with Albers students helping with nonprofit case studies and graphic design students from the College of Arts and Sciences creating logos, UX designs and assets for the Bilimetrix-USA/SKi website.

With the project concluding next year, Dr. Wennberg says, "... Seattle U has made a major contribution to a holistic system that provides hope for eliminating kernicterus in any country that adopts it. I hope students and faculty were as inspired contributing to a solution of a major health problem as I was inspired working with so many very talented students from many disciplines."

Photo by Yosef Chaim Kalinko

# A PRESIDENT DEFINED AND GUIDED BY MISSION

## ◆ Father Steve

STEPS OUT OF THE ROLE OF SEATTLE  
U'S PRESIDENT AND INTO A NEW PHASE  
OF HIS LIFE THIS JUNE

By Allison Nitch and Tina Potterf

“ If Father William Sullivan laid the foundation for the modern Seattle University, **Father Steve built the skyscraper.** ”

These words, expressed by alum DJ Weidner, '07, president of the Alumni Board of Governors, reflect the innovative, legacy-defining impact of Seattle University's 21st President—Stephen Sundborg, S.J., known affectionately as “Father Steve.”

Seattle U's longest-serving president is a builder, a friend to all, a guiding light, steadying force and deft leader. Many of the university's most pivotal moments—from the return to Division I and the building of great new facilities that have literally reshaped the physical makeup of campus to the creation of mission-driven programs benefitting students such as Fostering Scholars, service-learning

initiatives within a Jesuit and Catholic framework and the elevation of Seattle U's reputation as a top institution of higher education—have occurred under the direction and advocacy of President Sundborg.

In June, nearly 24 years since he first took the position, Father Sundborg will step into a new phase of life as he leaves the post at this Jesuit Catholic university that he helped transform from a one-time “hidden gem” into a nationally known university recognized for its academic excellence, top faculty-scholars, commitment to social justice and care for the whole person. He leaves with the university on strong footing, all

the more remarkable considering the unprecedented challenges presented by a once-in-a-century pandemic.

Fr. Sundborg departs having been the state's longest-serving college president, handing over the reins to President-Elect Eduardo Peñalver. “Seattle U under Father Steve's leadership has become more established, respected and uniquely positioned to address both local and structural injustice,” says Weidner, who is not only a graduate of Seattle U but also a past employee and current mentor and volunteer, interacting with the president in different capacities.



While Fr. Sundborg let on informally about his plans to “graduate” with the Class of 2021 when he welcomed the freshmen class in fall 2017, it was made official last spring with the launch of the search for his successor and confirmed earlier in the fall with the selection of the new president.

Recently, Fr. Sundborg—who was inaugurated as president on September 26, 1997—shared his reflections on his presidency while giving a nod to the future:

“People ask me frequently what I am most proud of from these past 24 years. What stands out for me is above all the development of and consistent commitment to our mission. That mission calls us to be Jesuit and Catholic, supports our challenging and relevant academic programs, expresses our personal care of each student and explains why we are so involved with the local community in hundreds of ways. It is the reason we have received such wonderful scholarship programs as the Sullivan, Costco, Naef, Fostering, Bannan and Alfie Scholars and is the rationale for our wide-ranging degrees all in service of ‘empowering leaders for a just and humane world.’ So, when asked what I am most proud of, I say ‘It’s the mission!’”

His imprint across the university is indelible and inspiring, notes alum Lindsay Leeder, ’02, ’07, a Sullivan Scholar who started at Seattle U the same year as Fr. Sundborg.

“Father Steve harnessed the energy of his community to build a center of learning and education that moves beyond the walls of a classroom,” Leeder says. “I truly believe that his vision of SU was to create a launching pad for individuals to authentically lead and serve in the world, to create a safe space for personal disruption so that we, as students, could break through our own barriers to



try to walk in the world as passionate and curious change agents. From the physical landscape to the creative curriculum to the incredible thinkers and servants that guide the community, Fr. Steve has played a significant role in shaping all of it.”

Here’s a look at some of the key programs, campus improvement projects and initiatives that have defined Fr. Sundborg’s presidency:



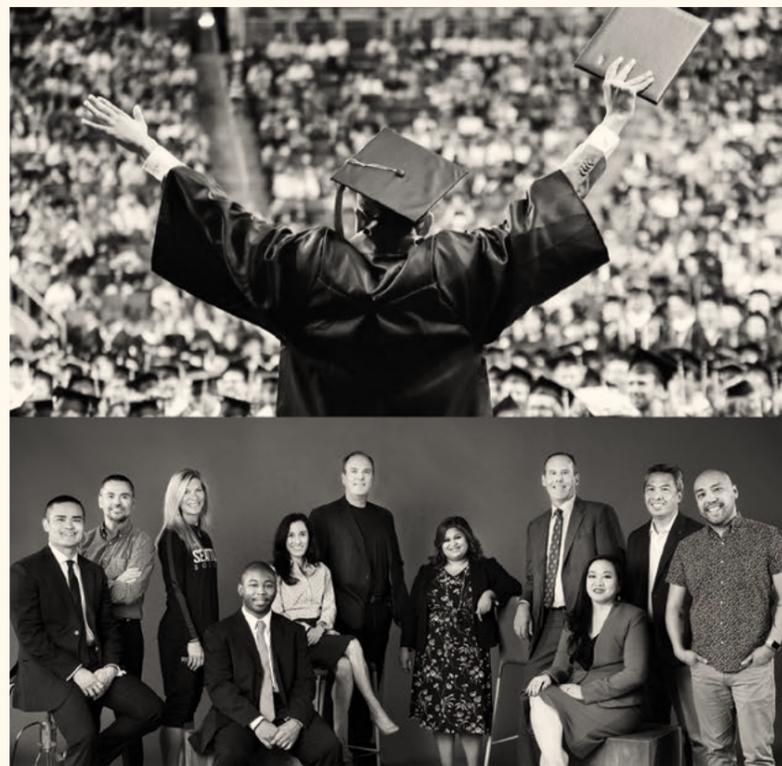
### A PURPOSEFUL MISSION

In 2003, President Sundborg authored Seattle University’s Mission Statement, committing the university “to educating the whole person, to professional formation and to empowering leaders for a just and humane world.”

The mission puts students at the center of all we do and all we are as a university. During his nearly 24 years as president, Fr. Sundborg has developed strategic opportunities for the Seattle University community to carry out that mission, championing endeavors such as the Costco Scholarship Fund for underrepresented students; the Seattle University Youth Initiative to strengthen the education and support systems for local youth and community-engaged learning for Seattle U students; and Mission Day.

The mission not only infuses every part of the student experience but also carries forth in the tireless work of faculty and staff and in the relationship-building championed by the president.

“I worked with Fr. Steve for a number of years while serving on the Board of Regents. When he returned from his visit with Pope Francis, I noticed a change in him, a peacefulness and sense of



community partners and embraced an educational mission that forms tomorrow’s leaders.

Nicole Piasecki, chair of the Board of Trustees, has said of Fr. Sundborg’s leadership that, “Seattle University has grown and flourished, consistently rising in national and regional rankings.” Seattle U consistently ranks among the top universities and colleges in the nation from *U.S. News & World Report* to *WSJ/Times Higher Education* and *Princeton Review*.

In January 2020, Fr. Sundborg shepherded the launch of the [Strategic Directions](#) to guide Seattle University’s most important work over the next five years to further its mission and advance a long-term vision for the university.

“Being a Catholic university is something many of us are so proud of and Father Steve built on our image and strengthened it by his strong Catholic leadership, at times taking stands that may have been unpopular, but he did so because they were the right decisions, so his strength of character solidified our reputation as a great Catholic university,” says Zavaglia.

Another important initiative that coalesced during Fr. Sundborg’s presidency is the creation of the Staff Council. Erin Beary Anderson, associate director of Campus Ministry, says the president worked closely with her and others in getting the council off the ground. “Fr. Steve was so incredibly supportive of the work we were doing because he cares for staff and truly understands the positive impact staff have on the student experience,” she says. “Our partnership with Fr. Steve through the difficulties of 2020 made a tangible difference in the lives of Seattle University staff and I will always be grateful for that.”

purpose that served to inspire me in ways he never had before,” says Joe Zavaglia, ’71. “His engagement and respect for the Regents was always admirable, but from that moment on he was on another level. He helped us build a level of community and engagement with the Regents that set the standard for how it should be done. He emanated a spiritual presence and love for the work he was doing that so inspired all of us, he made us feel we were truly part of his inner circle of respected advisors. ... He made us feel like we made a difference and were a critical part of the community.”

### A FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE

Under President Sundborg’s leadership, enrollment has grown by nearly 80 percent, as the university has strengthened its academic programs, more deeply engaged with civic and

### CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SEATTLE UNIVERSITY YOUTH INITIATIVE

The Center for Community Engagement (CCE) serves as the main entry point for students, faculty and staff who want to engage in the local community through service learning, mentorship and outreach. It also acts as the focal point for community-based organizations and government institutions seeking university support to address unmet community needs. Its signature focus is the Seattle University Youth Initiative (SUYI), which unites the campus and the surrounding neighborhood to enhance Seattle U students’ learning and improve the academic achievement of 1,000+ youth from low-income backgrounds in Seattle Public Schools.

“It was Father Steve who led the effort to create the Center for Community Engagement in 2004,” says Executive Director Kent Koth. “And he led the effort to launch the Youth Initiative in 2011. Bold initiatives require bold leadership. Father Steve has led the way.”

Koth continues, “He leads with conviction and also deep humility. I think this arises from his Jesuit Catholic spirituality. I’ve appreciated how he will offer a vision, often through a metaphor or poetry, and then empower those around him, myself included, to take action.”

Adds Carol Ann (Conroy) Barnickol, ’64, “Father Steve’s initiation and support of the Center for Community Engagement and the Youth Initiative have distinguished Seattle University while clearly benefitting both the students and the surrounding community.”

### FAMILY HOMELESSNESS PROJECT

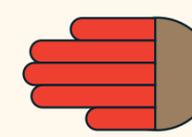
The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has provided funding to The Project on Family Homelessness at Seattle University since late 2009 to support strategic communications around the need to help families experiencing housing instability.

The project used journalism, art and storytelling to help engage the community to make family homelessness rare, brief and one time only in Washington state. Concluding in late 2020, it was the longest continuous homelessness advocacy project at Seattle University. It was of great significance to the president.

“Under Father Steve’s leadership, Seattle University became the first university in the country to host a homeless encampment. ... His clear and insistent message to house the homeless will be greatly missed in our community,” says Kollin Min, Housing & Homelessness senior program officer for the Gates Foundation. “When I look back on all the years that we’ve collaborated, I’ll always remember the many occasions on which Fr. Steve stood up and with his calm, but forceful, presence made the moral case for taking care of our neighbors as we would our own families.”

### FOSTERING SCHOLARS

The Fostering Scholars program was established in 2006 to make higher education possible for current and former foster youth. The program is designed to identify students whose achievements and goals mirror the university’s mission and to



allow these students to fully focus on their goals by providing financial, academic and personal support toward the completion of an undergraduate degree.

Since day one, “Father Steve’s open heart and servant leadership were instrumental in the creation of the Fostering Scholars Program,” says Director Colleen Montoya Barbano.

“Without him, the program would not exist, nor would we have graduated almost 60 former foster youth from Seattle University in the past 15 years. These exceptional young alumni are now leaders in their own rights—in health care, law, business and education. Fr. Steve’s legacy is alive in their successes.”



**GLOBAL AWARENESS**

Global engagement is a gateway to the wide world of international study programs and resources at Seattle University.

Our alumni are truly global, coming from 93 countries. Of the nearly 7,200 students on campus, 36 percent are from culturally diverse groups and 700 are international students. With distinguished faculty from around the world, students can explore 130 fields of study.

Experiential learning is an invaluable way to connect classroom concepts to service experiences both in the community and throughout the world. It’s also part of educating students to be global citizens, one of Seattle University’s defining characteristics. In the latest Strategic Directions, global engagement is among the top priorities: “Deeply connected to our region, creating partnerships that provide our students unparalleled professional learning experiences locally and globally.”

**GREAT FACILITIES**

Over the term of his presidency, Fr. Sundborg has been at the forefront of many of the physical changes—by way of new facilities and services—that have transformed the Seattle U campus.

“How do we measure his impact over the past 24 years? Let’s look at what is visually obvious, the physical plant itself—our facilities,” says Zavaglia. “Just look where we are now vs. 24 years ago. It was Fr. Steve who had the vision to build out Seattle U into what it is today.”

The campus has blossomed with the construction of, among other facilities, a Student Center, the School of Law, residential housing, the Lee Center for the Arts, a reimagined and renovated Lemieux Library and McGoldrick Learning Commons and a modern fitness center. A new state-of-the-art hub for STEM education—the Jim and Janet Sinegal Center for Science and Innovation—will open in the fall.

Also of importance: Many of these buildings are designed to LEED Gold standards, reflective of the president’s and the university’s commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship.

With all of these buildings and new spaces, Fr. Steve has played an outsized role in helping make them possible.

“Father Steve is a phenomenal fundraiser and I cannot think of another university president who has been as successful over such a long and vital career,” says Michael Podlin, vice president of University Advancement. “He leaves a legacy with the Jim and Janet Sinegal Center for Science and Innovation, the Lemieux Library and Learning Commons and countless endowed funds in support of students and faculty.”

**RETURN TO DIVISION I**

Led by the president, and unanimously approved by the Board of Trustees, Seattle University began its return to NCAA Division I membership in 2007. The university entered the then five-year reclassification process in 2008.

“I was honored to serve on the committee to evaluate the return to Division I athletics,” recalls Zavaglia. “Father Steve is the person we thank for making this courageous decision and his passion for athletics reignited a flame and longtime passion for many alums that was so needed.”

The university completed the process in 2012 by earning active Division I membership and joining the Western Athletic Conference (WAC) as a full member.

“Competing in Division I, it’s about striving for the highest level. I think what our student athletes gain from their experience is being fully committed and all in,” says Director of Athletics Shaney Fink. “With a vision to achieve all around excellence, enhancing Seattle U’s national reputation, engaging alumni and the community and creating a vibrant student experience, Father Steve championed Seattle University’s return to NCAA Division I.”

**STRATEGIC FOCUS**

President Sundborg has also been a leader in driving the future of the university through key strategic initiatives that will guide the university for years to come.

In 2020 the university presented, *Strategic Directions for Seattle University 2020-2025: A Jesuit University of Distinction for a Time of Change*.

As noted by Fr. Steve, “The Strategic Directions do show us what kind of university we aim to become, what we intend our Jesuit education and formation of students to be, how we will relate to and be enriched by our wider community, how our collegiality as educators will enable this future and what choices we need to make—especially in academic and financial repositioning.”

**LEGISLATIVE PRESENCE**

As president, Fr. Sundborg was a consistent presence in the government and external affairs efforts of the university. When his schedule would allow, he helped represent the university at community-building events and galas for local charities and other nonprofits. And he never missed an opportunity to engage with elected or public officials. He



worked diligently to always understand complicated issues of public policy or who represented the university in congress or the legislature. Many people of his stature may not routinely—if at all—engage in the kind of grassroots lobbying that goes on behind the scenes. Not Fr. Steve, who has a way of putting anyone he met with at ease while sending an unmistakable message: “I represent Seattle University and this is how you can help our students and institution.”

As Fr. Sundborg readies his next move, he reflects on the deep connections and rich memories he will carry forth from his presidency.

**“My heart is full of gratitude for all of you who believe in Seattle University and who have supported and accompanied me during these years. I have never felt alone in leading Seattle University because I have known that**

**I have been accompanied and supported by people like you: faculty, staff, friends, alumni, donors, parents of students, members of our boards. I experience more and more that what is important is not the list of the accomplishments but rather the network of people and the relationships with them.”**

HOW IT BEGAN

Stephen Sundborg, S.J., was ordained a priest in Seattle in 1974 and completed his doctoral studies in spirituality at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome in 1982. He taught theology at Seattle University from 1982 to 1990 and served as provincial of the Northwest Jesuits from 1990 to 1996. A year later he was inaugurated as Seattle U's 21st president.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

In addition to his responsibilities as president, Fr. Sundborg serves on the boards of Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia, the Independent Colleges of Washington, the Seattle Nativity School and the Fulcrum Foundation and is a former trustee of Lakeside School, the University of San Francisco and United Way of King County.

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

President Sundborg has received prestigious honors and accolades throughout his presidency. Here's a sampling:

- The Christus Magister Medal from the University of Portland
- The Martin Luther King "Vision from the Mountaintop" Award
- The Seattle-King County First Citizen Award
- The Council for Advancement and Support of Education Leadership (CASE) Award
- The Campus Compact Engaged Presidential Leadership Award

“One of the things that stands out most about Fr. Steve was his ability to remember people and names. It was not uncommon when I was an undergrad to bump into Fr. Steve walking on the Upper Mall on the way to Arrupe House and have him call out a big ‘hello’ to me before I saw him. It struck me, even then, how unique it was that a university president knew who I was, what I was studying and what I was involved with around campus. That’s really special and **helped build the close-knit community around campus.**”

—DJ Weidner, '07

“FATHER STEVE HAS AN UNUSUAL ABILITY TO GRACEFULLY BALANCE SERIOUSNESS WITH LEVITY. I’VE GREATLY APPRECIATED THIS QUALITY IN FR. STEVE. IT HAS INFORMED MY OWN LEADERSHIP AND WAY OF BEING.”

—Kent Koth, director, Center for Community Engagement

“I have always admired Fr. Steve for his servant leadership, his integrity and his inclusive spirit and **desire to do the right thing.**”

—Anita Crawford-Willis, '82, '86 JD  
Seattle Municipal Court Judge & Chair of Board of Regents

“His warm demeanor so inspired thousands of students and alumni, he was an approachable president, a caring person, someone who truly reflected the clerical collar he wears. We all need spiritual guidance in our lives and Fr. Steve was not only a great university president—he was also a trusted spiritual advisor for many of us.”

—Joe Zavaglia, '71

“FR. STEVE REMAINS TO ME AN EXTRAORDINARY EXAMPLE OF A SERVANT LEADER. HE IS ONE WHO GENUINELY LIVES OUT OF HIS MISSION TO SERVE OTHERS AND DOES SO WITH **honesty and humility.**”

—Lindsay Leeder, '02, '07

Illustration by Marissa Leitch

# SPORTS STAR OF THE YEAR

Women's basketball player recognized for superior skills and perseverance

You might call women's basketball standout player McKenzie Williams, '21, a star on and off the court. And the Seattle Sports Commission and fans alike would agree as she was selected as the 2021 Seattle Sports Commission's Female Sports Star of the Year.

"I'm so excited to receive this award," says Williams. "There's so much talent in Seattle that often gets underrecognized and I'm thankful for the Seattle Sports Commission for giving athletes this stage to highlight their skills. I want to thank my coaches and teammates for always having my back throughout my career. I want to thank my family, especially my mom, for supporting me and keeping me going. Thank you to my athletic trainers, Eric Raustein and Tiffany Mallick, and my strength and condition coach Jen Petersen for helping with my rehab process and allowing me to get back on the court. Thank you to the other finalists for being so talented and inspiring and thanks to the fans who voted..."

The native of Auburn, Wash., has been Seattle U's top performer this season, ranking second in the Western Athletic Conference in scoring at 16.2 points per game. On Dec. 21, Williams set a Division I program record with 36 points at Idaho.

Williams beat out four other finalists in the fan-voting contest, as Alysha Clark (Seattle Storm), Morganne Flores (Washington softball), Charlissee Leger-Walker (Washington State basketball) and Jenn Wirth (Gonzaga basketball) were in the running.



"Kenzi has been challenged throughout her young life and has shown great perseverance to overcome and succeed," says SU Coach Suzy Barcomb. "This is a testament to her fighting spirit and belief in herself."

Williams joins a prestigious group in Seattle U athletics history to receive a Sports Star of the Year Award, joining Johnny O'Brien (1952), Pat Lesser Harbottle (1955), Elgin Baylor (1958), Jim Whittaker (1963), Tom Gorman (1972), Bill Fenton (1973) and Stephanie Verdoia (2014).

Williams, a redshirt junior, has worked to recover from two torn ACLs in her collegiate career. She has played in 77 career games and has two years of eligibility remaining.

Seattle U student Matthew Esselstrom also took home an honor at the awards show as the recipient of the Wayne Gittinger Inspirational Youth Award.

Graphic courtesy of Seattle Sports Commission



## Athletics Unveils New App

Fans of Redhawks sports teams can now stay connected even when on the go. Recently the Athletics department unveiled GoSeattleU, its official mobile app.

Powered by SIDEARM Sports, the app features real-time news alerts, schedules, exclusive multimedia content, gameday details and more. Even more, it's

free and compatible with both Apple and Android devices.

Through the app, Redhawk fans get a personalized mobile experience with breaking news and score notifications for the teams they follow, along with the ability to purchase official Seattle U merchandise and tickets. The user-friendly app will also offer links to video and audio streams of live games.

"We are excited to add the GoSeattleU mobile app to our

digital presence," says Director of Athletics [Shaney Fink](#). "The app allows us to reach the Seattle U community in new and engaging ways and provides additional avenues to connect partners with the Redhawk fan base. As mobile is increasingly how people access online content, this is an important component to enhancing and expanding the Seattle U brand."

To download the app to your smartphone or tablet, visit the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#) and search for "Seattle U Athletics."

## WAC FAVORITES



## Women's Soccer

For the seventh time in eight seasons, Seattle University women's soccer has been voted to win the Western Athletic Conference (WAC), according to the Preseason Coaches' Poll.

Michele Adam, '23, has been picked Preseason Defensive Player of the Year, while Adam and Leahi Manthei, '21, were voted Preseason All-WAC.

Seattle U earned five first-place votes and 46 points in the voting.

As a freshman, Adam started 17 games at center, earning 2019 WAC All-Freshman honors. The native of Morgan Hill, Calif., was vital to the Redhawks' back line, helping Seattle U allow just nine goals in eight WAC contests.

Manthei was a 2019 All-WAC Second Team choice after putting up a career-high eight goals. She scored five times in eight WAC matches and then recorded the tying goal in the final five minutes of regulation in the 2019 WAC Tournament Championship. Manthei, of Gig Harbor, Wash., has 20 career goals in her three seasons as a Redhawk.

## Men's Soccer

That same poll picked Seattle U men's soccer to win the WAC this season.

Additionally, Alex Acton-Petronotis, '21, was chosen Preseason Defensive Player of the Year and Noe Meza, '21, Preseason Offensive Player of the Year. Acton-Petronotis, Meza, Akili Kasim, '22, and James Morris, '23, have earned Preseason All-WAC honors.

The Redhawks, WAC preseason favorites in five of the last seven seasons, claimed nine of 10 possible first-place votes and 98 points. Seattle U entered the regular season with the longest active unbeaten streak in the nation (16 games).

## Softball

Seattle University softball also made the favorites list. Players Madison Cathcart, '21, and Ally Choate, '21, were picked Preseason All-WAC. The Redhawks were voted favorites to win the WAC for the second consecutive year. The team earned four first-place votes and 32 points.

The Redhawks remain defending WAC regular-season and tournament champions from the 2019 season. They return every starter from the 2020 squad.

Learn more about these teams and players at [GoSeattleU.com](http://GoSeattleU.com).



# A Compassionate Hand

Photo by Yosef Chaim Kalinko



## Alumna combines faith with healing as a chaplain for first responders

By Allison Nitch

In the wake of a critical incident, a chaplain, staff psychologist or clergy member typically arrives to provide mental and emotional support to first responders. But this is often not the case for those who work in remote areas.

A new nonprofit by a Seattle University alumna and former public safety officer aims to fill an important need, providing support to wilderness first responders while accessing the psychological, spiritual and emotional resources needed to survive and thrive within the demands of an often high-stress profession.

Being among the few wilderness chaplains in the Pacific Northwest, Katjarina (Katja) Hurt, '13 MAPS, knows firsthand how frequent exposure to trauma can take a toll on the emotional and mental well-being of first responders.

A human resource consultant at the Washington State [Department of Corrections](#), Hurt is also founder and executive director of [Wilderness Chaplains](#). The organization was inspired by her personal experience with tragedy.

In 2018, she received devastating news that changed everything. Her friend Stephen Kornbluth fell while descending Dewey Peak in Mt. Rainier National Park and did not survive his injuries.

Local mountaineer authorities were contacted, albeit unfamiliar with critical incident stress or how to immediately support the two survivors. The authorities eventually decided to call Hurt, a rare resource for wilderness crisis response.

"They didn't know it was my best friend who had died. I collapsed on the floor sobbing," Hurt recalls. "... I knew I had to go into chaplain mode. God help me, I wished there was someone else who knew what needed to be done, but I didn't know where to find another one of me."

### ANSWERING HER CALL

Hailing from Vashon Island with an innate love of the outdoors, the former ski patrol volunteer traces her life's mission back to years earlier and a particular experience she had while working as a public safety officer at Seattle University.

During a night shift in 2009, chatter over the police scanner caught her ear. It quickly escalated to screaming and an urgent distress call describing the shooting death of Seattle Police Officer Timothy Brenton.

"You could tell this burly cop was crying on the radio," recalls Hurt, a graduate student at the time. "I thought, 'Who goes out there and takes care of the cops? Who is there with the family of this guy who has just been killed ... making sure they are okay?'"

She was struck with a realization. Rather than locating perpetrators, "I want to go out and hug all of these officers because they sound so devastated. That's when I learned what chaplains were and found my calling."

### COURAGEOUS SHIFTS

Hurt discovered Catholicism as an undergraduate student at Gonzaga University and continued her religious journey at Seattle U.

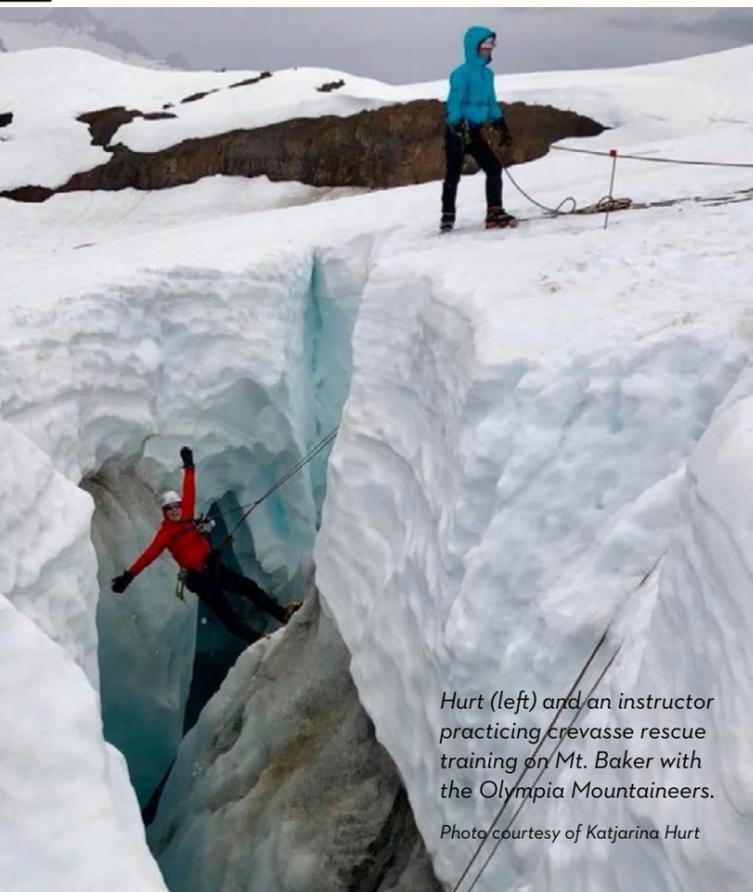
While her faith sustains her, she explains that a chaplain is a listener, rather than a preacher, and is meant to serve everyone. They "represent what is in the best interest of the other person's heart, mind, body and soul."

Hurt attributes her personal growth to her experience in Seattle U's Pastoral Studies Program, which instilled in her confidence and courage.

"For the first time in my life I had the courage to say, 'Actually, I don't agree with what you're saying' or 'I have a different perspective.' ... Leadership was a huge thing I never would have sought out for myself."

Following graduation, Hurt earned a chaplaincy certificate and began her career in various positions within the Department of Corrections (DOC) in Missouri and later, Washington state.

In 2015, recurring exposure to traumatic and dangerous situations caught up with her. Upon noticing Hurt's drastic change in demeanor, a supervisor suggested she apply for a curriculum designer position within the agency's training and development unit. It led to a big career shift as she flourished in training and coaching instructors and took part in conferences and events as a guest trainer and speaker.



Hurt (left) and an instructor practicing crevasse rescue training on Mt. Baker with the Olympia Mountaineers.

Photo courtesy of Katjarina Hurt

Although COVID-19 halted in-person training opportunities, the organization is offering virtual programming, expanding its network of interested chaplains through word of mouth in the field and delivering emergency guidance sessions by phone and Zoom.

When responding in-person, Hurt and her team exceed all health and safety concerns by doubling up on PPE and bringing folding chairs to hold socially distant consults.

In a time when consoling gestures like laying your hand on someone or giving them a hug is now considered high-risk behavior, such support only occurs on a case-by-case basis.

“Part of ministry is presence. For chaplains and clergy, the notion of being the servant for God is so engrained,” says Hurt. “We sometimes forget ... we can give that gift to others.”

In turn, Hurt discovered a unique way to offer solace to individuals experiencing trauma: onsite coaching. While she can’t provide consoling touch during the pandemic, she can gently instruct a victim’s family or friend circle to do so effectively.

#### TAKING CARE

Hurt says once someone enters the responder world, which along with wilderness rescue teams includes emergency medical technicians (EMTs), paramedics, firefighters and police, and sees how much help is truly needed, it’s difficult to turn away. At the same time, post-traumatic stress and the risk of burnout is especially high.

According to the *Journal of Emergency Medical Services*, the people who work in these professions experience depression and suicide rates higher than those of the general public.

Hurt advises first responders seeking help to start with confidential methods, like peer support or seeking out a psychologist. If they’re uncomfortable with those options, she recommends the state’s [Employee Assistance Program](#) or a first responder crisis line.

Hurt returned to DOC due to her belief in its mission of improving public safety. “As a chaplain and through the nonprofit, I am exposed to many of different agencies and best practices, which help me bring new ideas and approaches to my work” with the state, she says.

“Having faith sustains me ... There are plenty of days where I come back from something horrific or I lost my friend or have seen other people lose theirs. Naturally, you question why this happened.”

She tends to her own well-being through outdoor activities like skiing, kayaking and exploratory hikes with her dogs and establishes days where she turns her phone off while a colleague covers for her.



[wildernesschaplains.org](http://wildernesschaplains.org)

#### GRIEVING A BELOVED FRIEND

After her friend’s accident, Hurt distanced herself from corrections work and began part-time employment as a behavioral health technician at [Ashley House](#) and [ACES](#), organizations providing compassionate care for young adults, children and those with special health care needs. Helping her young clients allowed Hurt to feel other things besides grief.

“I was pretty numb from the loss of Stephen. ... It was good for me to be in a position to experience strong emotions unrelated to his death.”

Hurt’s unique skillset began to get attention within the search and rescue community. Calls from all over the area rolled in—each requesting training and information about where to find chaplains specializing in wilderness incidents. From there, the inspiration to create Wilderness Chaplains emerged.

Through the guidance and support of Angels for Angels—a Seattle nonprofit that offers fiscal sponsorship to social entrepreneurs—Wilderness Chaplains launched.

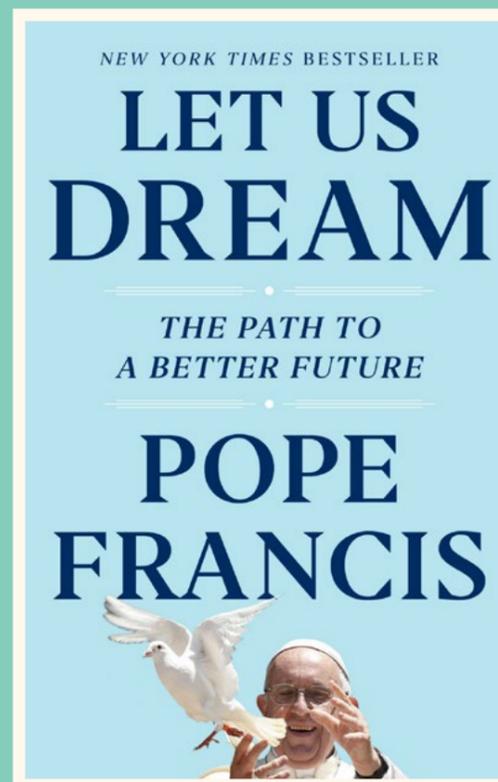
#### STAYING PRESENT

Wilderness Chaplains operates using a three-prong approach to crisis intervention: trainings (post-pandemic), presentations and support consultations.

## Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future by Pope Francis (with Austen Ivereigh)

(Simon & Schuster: 2020)

Reviewed by Jerry Cobb, S.J.



At 150 pages, the new book by Pope Francis, *Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future*, is brief and breathtaking. Pope Francis sees our present crises as God’s invitation to change. He writes, “The basic rule of a crisis is that you don’t come out of it the same.” Although we understandably long for pre-COVID normality, Francis believes “normal times” too often foster spiritual superficiality.

This book is the opposite of superficial. In this Genesis-like moment Francis urges his readers, “Be the creators of your future.” He also names a new category of martyr for the Church—the health care workers and family members who died as a consequence of caring for COVID-19 patients.

While the effects of the pandemic are painfully obvious, Francis asks, “How will we deal with the hidden pandemics of this world, the pandemics of hunger and violence and climate change?” He believes the stage is set for us to dream a new dream and “to commit to act in our daily lives on what we have dreamed.”

The book is divided into three parts. In the first, “A Time to See,” Francis asks readers to “Imagine what happens when the virus hits a refugee camp.” He identifies three obstacles to seeing what is before us—narcissism, discouragement and pessimism, which produce what he calls an “existential myopia.” He also shares three of his own personal “COVID moments,” times of serious illness, self-doubt and struggle.

In part two, “A Time to Choose,” the Pope discusses “signs of the times” such as the neglect of the elderly and the heartfelt desire of many women to exercise leadership in the Church.

Following “A Time to Choose” is the third and final “A Time to Act,” in which Francis declares the poor must have “a place at the table,” not just crumbs from the table. He explores complex issues such as capital punishment, abortion and the plight of migrants, rejecting the paradigm of “survival of the fittest.”

In an epilogue, Francis warns against longing for a pre-pandemic status quo and quotes a poem by actor and playwright Alexis Valdés that Francis received during his own time of lockdown. The poem ends with the plea, “When the storm passes / I ask you Lord, in shame / that you return us better, / as you once dreamed us.”

British journalist Austen Ivereigh provided editorial assistance on *Let Us Dream*, adding to the lively and clear prose. For fans of audiobooks, this version features narration by Arthur Morey, one of the most gifted audiobook actors working today. Francis’ ideas expressed in Morey’s serene voice will stimulate your mind and move your heart.

*Jerry Cobb, S.J., is Assistant to the President and Associate Professor in the English Department.*

#### GREAT READS

Have a new book? Send information for review consideration to [tinap@seattleu.edu](mailto:tinap@seattleu.edu).

## Fearlessly Building a Better Future for All

Together, we're envisioning progress where others do not. In a community with more than 22,500 donors, we have not only met, but exceeded Seattle University's most ambitious fundraising goal.

Thanks to you, we are amplifying the good we're already doing and expanding into areas where we will have the broadest and most enduring impact. We celebrate the uncommon good across our campus. This includes providing equity for all and access to education for each and every academically successful student, a unique combination of the humanities and sciences that educate the whole person and lead to improving the human condition and an enduring Jesuit mission that's as future-focused as it is foundational.

Uncommon good begins here. You are essential to the next chapter in our journey as we continue empowering champions for a just, inclusive and sustainable world.

Read stories of your impact at [seattleu.edu/uncommongood](http://seattleu.edu/uncommongood).

**104.8%**  
OF FUNDRAISING GOAL

### CAMPAIGN PROGRESS REPORT

**\$288,199,321**

(raised as of April 6, 2021)

**\$108,609,435**

MISSION & PROGRAMS

**\$79,564,308**

SCHOLARSHIPS

**\$100,025,577**

SINEGAL CENTER FOR SCIENCE & INNOVATION

**95,517**

Gifts to the campaign

**24,419**

Total campaign donors

**15,249**

New donors since the start of the campaign

There's still time to get involved as The Campaign for the Uncommon Good runs through June 30, 2021.

[SEATTLEU.EDU/UNCOMMONGOOD](http://seattleu.edu/uncommongood)

### HONORING & EXTENDING FATHER STEVE'S IMPACT

During Stephen Sundborg S.J.'s 24-year tenure as president, his vision and deep commitment to developing and advancing Seattle University's mission has physically and foundationally transformed our campus and the surrounding community. To honor President Sundborg's legacy, Seattle U has three opportunities to expand upon his impact:

#### The Stephen V. Sundborg Center for Community Engagement Endowment

This fund will provide operational support for Seattle University-led community engagement activities and programs and further efforts to transform the university and its communities through deepening student learning, creating a culture of service and promoting a just and humane world.

#### The Sundborg Fund for Community Business Impact

This fund will grow and amplify the community work that Father Sundborg passionately championed as president. Gifts will support the Albers School of Business and Economics' efforts to build capacity for entrepreneurial leadership in students and local microenterprises.

#### The Stephen V. Sundborg Endowment for Jesuit Teaching and Ministry

This endowment will further Seattle University's Jesuit tradition of excellence in education, teaching and service in perpetuity, assuring our ability to recruit, welcome and employ Jesuits on campus.

To learn more and to make a gift to one of these funds honoring Stephen Sundborg, S.J., visit [seattleu.edu/giving/honoring-father-steve](http://seattleu.edu/giving/honoring-father-steve).

OUR MOMENT FOR  
MISSION  
THE PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE

“With Our Moment for Mission, I'm challenging 10,000 alumni to engage with Seattle University. Connect, volunteer or give to the campaign. Make this your moment for mission.”

—PRESIDENT STEPHEN SUNDBORG, S.J.



CONNECT  
Keisha Jackson, '14

“I stay connected to Seattle U via the SDA program and participating in the Albers MBA mentoring program because the more we lift one another the more inclusive our community becomes.”

Connect with fellow alumni and students, share your experiences and ask for advice with Redhawk Landing. Participate with discussion questions and join groups that are relevant to you. Redhawk Landing is your place to support our students as they explore career opportunities while building community and connections.

[redhawklanding.seattleu.edu](http://redhawklanding.seattleu.edu)

## Together, We're Leading the Charge for Positive, Lasting Change

As The Campaign for the Uncommon Good comes to a close, Our Moment for Mission The President's Challenge is creating a new era of alumni involvement that is just beginning.

Every time you connect, volunteer or make a gift, you ensure that current and future Redhawks have the same transformational education and experiences that you did. As an alum, your involvement inspires current students to begin building a better future for all.

Our Moment for Mission has just one month left. Take action to inspire tomorrow's leaders. Your moment is now.

Find more ways to get involved at [seattleu.edu/alumni/presidentschallenge](http://seattleu.edu/alumni/presidentschallenge).



VOLUNTEER  
Aileen Aquino, '14

“If it weren't for the mentorship I received, I would have had to find resources and network by myself. They helped me to navigate challenges and expand my network and I want to do the same for current students. By being a mentor for the Communication and Media Alumni Mentorship Program, I can support students to navigate the communications field, while staying connected to Seattle U.”

Be part of bringing in the next class of Redhawks! Volunteer for the Alumni Admissions Interview Program. Share your Seattle U experiences with prospective students in your region and provide input to the Admissions team.

[admissions.seattleu.edu/register/alumnientry](http://admissions.seattleu.edu/register/alumnientry)



GIVE  
Jiwan Hayre, '91, '95

“I am fortunate to have served Seattle U through advisory boards, mentoring and corporate project sponsorship. These opportunities helped me appreciate how critical alumni involvement is to Jesuit education. Our family made a commitment to the Jim and Janet Sinegal Center for Science and Innovation to ensure Seattle U remains a regional leader in STEM programs.”

The Sinegal Center will be the new heart of Seattle U—housing labs, computer science and the Center for Community Engagement. But we need your help to fill it. You can make a difference with a gift to the CSI Equipment Fund today.

[connect.seattleu.edu/giving/csi](http://connect.seattleu.edu/giving/csi)

# Remembering Seattle U Legend **Elgin Baylor**

BAYLOR LED MEN'S BASKETBALL TO HISTORIC NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP GAME & WAS A CIVIL RIGHTS TRAILBLAZER

NCAA FINAL FOUR MVP

1958



BAYLOR'S NUMBER, RETIRED BOTH BY SEATTLE U AND THE LA LAKERS

11X

NBA ALL-STAR



GREATEST ALL-TIME NBA PLAYERS

1959

TOP 50

GREATEST ALL-TIME NBA PLAYERS

2X

NCAA ALL-AMERICAN



The man who literally redefined the small forward during his college and professional career, Elgin Baylor had an indelible impact on the game of basketball, as player, coach and general manager—from Seattle University to the LA Lakers, the New Orleans Jazz to the Los Angeles Clippers. And around these halls, he's the stuff of Seattle U legend and lore as a pivotal member of that unforgettable 1958 men's basketball team that played in the NCAA national championship game. His grit and courage on the court was matched off the court in his work around civil rights and issues of equality, as Baylor was also one of the first high-profile Black athletes to join the civil rights movement. Elgin Baylor died on March 22, 2021. He was 86.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the Baylor family at this time," says Director of Athletics Shaney Fink. "One of the greatest basketball players of all time, Elgin led Seattle U to its first ever NCAA Championship game in 1958. Throughout and beyond his illustrious career ... Elgin kept close ties to the city of Seattle and his alma mater, Seattle U. Elgin possessed an exceptional personality and warmth and an admirable generosity. We will be forever grateful for the impact he has had on Seattle U Athletics and our student athletes."

Born September 14, 1934 in Washington, D.C., Baylor played one collegiate season at the College of Idaho before transferring to Seattle U to compete both in the 1956-57 and 1957-58 seasons. He led the 1958 Seattle U men's basketball team to the NCAA title game, earning MVP honors even though Kentucky won the championship game.

Baylor averaged 31.2 points and 19.8 rebounds over his two seasons at Seattle U. On Jan. 30, 1958, he scored 60 points against Portland—one of 11 school records he still holds.

That same year, Baylor was drafted by the Minneapolis Lakers and moved with the franchise to Los Angeles, playing until 1972. An NBA All-Star for multiple years, he was named Rookie of the Year in 1959. He teamed with Jerry West to create the Laker legacy of success and in commemoration of the NBA's 50th season, Baylor was named one of the 50 greatest players of all time.

Baylor is in both the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame and the Seattle University Athletic Hall of Fame. His #22 jersey has been retired by Seattle U and the Lakers. For 22 years he was general manager of the Los Angeles Clippers.

In 2009, Seattle U named its basketball court at KeyArena the "Elgin Baylor Court." The university has also hosted an annual Elgin Baylor Classic, often welcoming back Elgin and Elaine Baylor as part of the annual celebration.

At the Athletics Department Red Tie Celebration in 2014, Baylor was one of the year's honorees. Former Seattle U Athletics Director Bill Hogan called Baylor "one of the most remarkable game changers in the history of any sport."

"His courage and toughness knew no bounds. His basketball prowess and humility not only transformed the game but challenged deeply rooted cultural norms," Hogan said. "His legacy in the sport of basketball resides with the greatest of all time, with the likes of Chamberlain, Russell, Jordan and James."

In 2015, Baylor received the Seattle Sports Commission Royal Brougham Legends Award. In 2018, he became the 10th person to be awarded a STAPLES Center sculpture, joining Magic Johnson, Jerry West, Chick Hearn, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Shaquille O'Neal, Wayne Gretzky, Luc Robitaille, Bob Miller and Oscar De La Hoya.

Baylor inspired many of the basketball greats that followed him at Seattle U and in the NBA including alum Eddie Miles, '63.

"When I graduated high school, I had a lot of scholarship offers, but I couldn't think of going anywhere but Seattle U because that's where Elgin went," says Miles.

Read more about Elgin Baylor's life and legacy at [The Newsroom: www.seattleu.edu/newsroom/](http://TheNewsroom:www.seattleu.edu/newsroom/).

**Seattle University remembers those in our alumni family and university community we've lost.**

**1951**

Dr. George J. Hiester, M.D. (May 17, 2020)  
 Jeanne Marie Lee (January 17, 2021)  
 Ruth E. Shipp-Dart (October 10, 2020)

**1953**

Patricia T. Isaksen (December 22, 2020)  
 Patricia A. Schanzenbach (December 29, 2020)  
 Robert J. Yunker (December 25, 2020)

**1956**

William DeForeest (January 25, 2021)  
 Joseph Roni (December 16, 2020)

**1957**

Walter J. Janicki (January 2021)

**1958**

Roy Mathiesen (January 21, 2021)

**1960**

Edward M. Foley (January 9, 2021)

**1961**

Glenn B. Lee (November 21, 2020)  
 Joseph O. McGowan, S.J. (December 23, 2020)  
 Robert (Bob) A. Ponto (May 12, 2020)

**1962**

John G. Michaelson (November 2, 2020)  
 Frances Sheryl Williams (Ver Steeg) (November 20, 2020)

**1963**

Patricia Sanders (November 4, 2020)

**1964**

John N. Berlin (November 22, 2020)  
 John M. Foy (October 31, 2020)  
 Joseph D. Robinson (March 19, 2021)

**1966**

JoAnne Cripe (December 31, 2020)

**1967**

Linda M. Bluhm, '68 (November 24, 2020)  
 Thomas Goff Sr. (April 10, 2020)

Katy Heily Jusenius (February 1, 2021)

**1968**

Paul M. Bader (January 3, 2021)  
 Robert "Bob" Klee (September 26, 2020)  
 David P. Maddock (January 11, 2021)  
 Clayton Pitre (January 1, 2021)

**1969**

Michael J. Carney (December 7, 2020)

**1970**

Lawrence L. Boldrin (December 18, 2020)  
 Michael J. McGuigan (November 12, 2020)

**1974**

Marie V. Strohm (November 5, 2020)

**1977**

Gregory L. Bertram (November 13, 2020)

**1978**

Kenneth A. Bartlett (November 19, 2020)

**1982**

Michael M. Hobson (December 6, 2020)

**1986**

Steven R. Fantello (October 23, 2020)

**1989**

Helen Urbani (January 16, 2021)

**1991**

David E. Dudek (October 9, 2020)

**1996**

Stacie Lee Hanson (August 6, 2020)  
 Gilbert P. Mabrey (October 27, 2020)

**1998**

Michael R. Peterson (December 2020)

**2004**

Stryder J. Wegener (December 1, 2020)

**2008**

Lilyan S. Snow (November 29, 2020)

**2013**

Hannah Steinweg McDonald (December 31, 2020)

**2016**

Darlene F. Peters (December 17, 2020)

**Our Thoughts are With You**

Seattle University honors the memory of those in our community who we've lost.

Send notice of a loved one's passing, including an online or newspaper obituary if available, to [tinap@seattleu.edu](mailto:tinap@seattleu.edu).

**REMEMBERING JOSEPH MCGOWAN, S.J., '61**

Joseph McGowan, S.J., longtime minister and leader at Seattle University, died on Dec. 23, 2020, at the Sacred Heart Jesuit Center in Los Gatos, Calif.

Father McGowan, who was a Jesuit for 59 years, served at Seattle U from 1974 to 1999 as director of Campus Ministry, director of the Office of Minority Affairs (now the Office of Multicultural Affairs), Residential Life minister and campus minister for peace and justice. He inaugurated the Archbishop Hunthausen Resource Center and launched the Archbishop Hunthausen Award.

Born in Houston, on September 9, 1940, and a graduate of Seattle Prep and a 1961 graduate of Seattle U, Fr. McGowan was a leader in the African American community in the Seattle-Tacoma area. After 25 years at Seattle U, he taught at O'Dea High School, served at St. Joseph's Parish on Capitol Hill and for many years was a chaplain at St. Joseph Medical Center in Tacoma. His ministry work in Tacoma also included retreats, writing an online blog for the *Tacoma News Tribune* and assisting at Bellarmine Preparatory School.

In a letter to the campus community in remembrance of Fr. McGowan, President Stephen Sundborg, S.J., wrote, "Fr. McGowan was an affirming presence on campus to students and colleagues, empowering them and giving special encouragement to persons of color and to women. His ministry touched the lives of many and made a lifelong difference for alumni."

Seattle U hosted a virtual memorial service and reception for Fr. McGowan's on Jan. 21. At the service Father Sundborg said, "We have heard the gospel according to Joseph McGowan and what a gift it is for living . . ."

Writing in *The South Sound Emerald*, Glenn Nelson called Fr. McGowan a "beloved mentor who spoke out against systemic racism." He wrote that Fr. McGowan "seethed inside with a maelstrom of outrage over racial inequality."

Michael Hale of St. Leo's Parish in Tacoma recalled Fr. McGowan's ministry at retreats: "At youth retreats he was always dancing as he came down the aisle of the church, moving to the music. It was always a great joy to see him. He gave great, inspirational homilies that were relatable to the kids."

—Jerry Cobb, S.J.

**Here are some memories of Fr. McGowan shared by the greater community:**

*"Joseph McGowan, S.J., was a gentle giant as a teacher, leader, campus minister, pastor and advocate for racial/social justice. Ordained in the shadow of Vatican II, he envisioned an inclusive Church as the People of God. Joseph empowered women into full ministry as leaders, preachers, liturgical celebrants and educators. He taught me how to graciously push the boundaries and envision what can be. I am deeply grateful for his love, confidence and leadership."*

—Erin Swezey, senior instructor/College of Education & former director of Campus Ministry

*"As our Search crew chaplain he understood the importance of each student's faith journey and modeled God's grace to help them discover it. His indomitable faith, combined with a passion for social justice, laid the groundwork for us to thrive and spread the word of God through our Jesuit-centered ministry. His leadership made Search one of the bedrock experiences of my time at Seattle U. Heaven has gained an amazing man."*

—Bryan Brunette, '86, Search Committee Chair

Gifts in memory of Fr. McGowan may be made at [connect.seattleu.edu/giving/mcgowan](http://connect.seattleu.edu/giving/mcgowan).

Share a memory in this book of remembrances at [kudoboard.com/boards/oTE9oTtG](http://kudoboard.com/boards/oTE9oTtG).

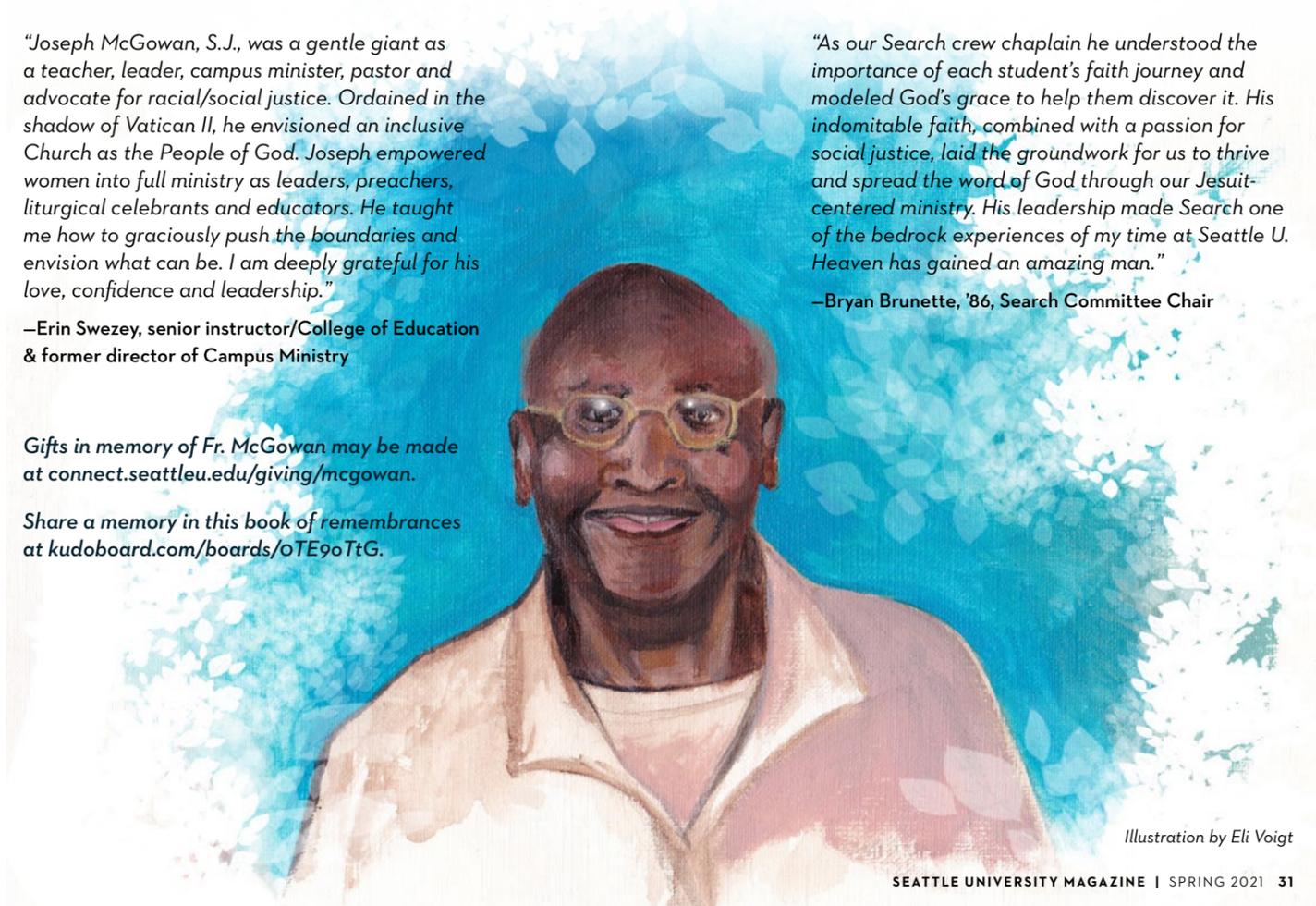


Illustration by Eli Voigt



Clayton Pitre, '68



Jeanne Marie Lee, '51

## REMEMBERING CLAYTON PITRE, '68

Clayton Pitre, '68, a Congressional Gold Medal recipient, trailblazing Montford Point Marine and longtime community activist with deep connections to Seattle's Central District and Seattle University, died on January 1, 2021. In 2015, he received the university's Community Service Award, a reflection of his tireless work within the city and with civic causes, including serving as former chief housing developer with the Central Area Motivation Program (CAMP) and as a staff member of Veterans Affairs. In 2012, he was among 400 Marines awarded the Gold Medal for their service with the first African American Marine troop in World War II.

Originally from Louisiana, Pitre made his way to Seattle, where he learned about a program for veterans who had not earned a high school diploma—he would ultimately complete that program—and later, while married with three children and working as a postal clerk, attended Seattle U, earning a degree with support from the G.I. Bill. He had a long and distinguished career as a realtor and in housing development.

For nearly two decades Pitre organized and chaired the African American Dollars for Scholars program, which raised funds to support low-income students and their higher education aspirations. Additionally, he coordinated efforts to fund and build three low-income housing projects and was an active member of St. Mary's Catholic Church for 52 years. He was also a longtime member of the Knights of Columbus and Knights of Peter Claver, the African American arm of the organization.

With St. Mary's, Pitre served three terms as president of the parish board. But it was the creation of a child care center at the church of which he was most proud. The day care made it possible for young mothers to complete their education.

In paying tribute to Pitre when he was honored with the Community Service Award from the Seattle University Alumni Association, then-Seattle U faculty member Susan Clifford Jamroski said, "He has mentored hundreds of people as a true servant does. Clayton rarely looks back. He is always future forward—the next person who needs help, the next opportunity, the next friend. As a Catholic born in the south and of very humble origins and now in his ninth decade, he continues to press full steam ahead."

## REMEMBERING JEANNE MARIE LEE, '51

Jeanne Marie Lee, '51, beloved mother of six, nana of 15 and great nana of 12, died on January 16, 2021.

Lee was born to Irene and George McAteer in 1930 and raised on Capitol Hill with her brother Jim, attending Holy Names Academy. She went on to Seattle University, where she sang opera, graduated summa cum laude and met the love of her life, Rhoady Lee, Jr., '50. They married while she was still at Seattle U and settled in Bellevue soon thereafter to raise their large, close-knit family. She had five children in six years and was lovingly committed to them. So much so that six years later she welcomed son Michael.

While she grew up a city girl Lee embraced adventurous activities as an adult, from tennis to horseback riding, fly-fishing to boating. She and Rhoady surrounded themselves with good friends that enjoyed these same activities, usually traveling in large and boisterous groups to each locale, with many of the kids in tow.

They were avid skiers and built a large cabin in Alpentel with their dear friends, the Dempseys. They taught their

children from a young age to love the mountains and every weekend would cram the family station wagon full of kids, pets and supplies for the adventures ahead.

Jeanne Marie and Rhoady also frequently vacationed at the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel in Hawaii, where they bought a lot in 1982 and built a family home designed by their son, Rhoady III. It served as a retreat to escape the Seattle winter.

Love of family and of God were Lee's guiding principles throughout her life. Along with her husband she attended mass at Sacred Heart Church in Bellevue. She was a voracious reader and her intellectual mind and curious spirit fostered a deep appreciation for education. Lee was also active on the boards of Holy Names Academy and the *National Catholic Reporter*. She and Rhoady received the Elizabeth Ann Seton Award from the National Catholic Education Association, as well as the St. Ignatius Medal and honorary doctorates from Seattle U, for their lifelong support of Catholic education. Lee was also an enthusiastic supporter of the arts and regularly attended the Seattle Opera, the Seattle Symphony and events at the Seattle Art Museum, and served on the Seattle Youth Symphony board. Seattle University's Lee Center for the Arts is named in honor of Jeanne Marie and Rhoady Lee.

Photos by Yosef Chaim Kalinko

# e n g i n e e r i n g

Mechanical engineering alum finds a better solution to help close the health equity gap

By Allison Nitch



# s o l u t i o n s

A broad range of experiences working with [SpaceX](#), [Spacelabs Healthcare](#) and [Kestra Medical Technologies](#) have fueled Elias Baker, '16, with a passion for startups and the biomedical industry.

He now serves as Chief Operating Officer for [Nanodropper](#), an FDA-listed adaptor for eyedrop bottles that makes drops smaller, helping to reduce the waste and cost of eyedrop treatments, according to the company. The idea was sparked in part in 2017, when he and his team read an NPR article titled, "[Drug Companies Make Eyedrops Too Big, And You Pay for the Waste.](#)"

After learning that patients were running out of medication because of the waste generated by oversized drops, Baker and his co-founders decided to develop a solution to empower patients to take control of their eye health by eliminating this financial barrier to care.

"Hearing stories and feedback of our product and how it has positively impacted our customers inspires me to keep pushing forward and deliver the best product for them," says the Minnesota-based entrepreneur. Along with his Nanodropper co-founders, Baker was named to this year's *Forbes* "30 Under 30" [list](#).

Born in China and raised in Northern California, Baker's family instilled in him a love of science and engineering. He grew up observing and learning how to fix and care for everything from home repairs to cars to fruit trees.

He was drawn to Seattle University's Mechanical Engineering undergraduate program due to its smaller class sizes and skilled faculty who encourage strong leadership in their students. "I was able to ask a lot of questions that informed my development after I graduated and began my career."

Baker was also impressed with the Project Center, which pairs student teams with industry professionals to collaborate on solving a real-world problem. These challenging ventures "allowed us to use the knowledge we learned at Seattle U to work on a real project" and contribute to the success of partnering companies. The center also "presented a great opportunity to network" with the project sponsors, says Baker.

After graduating, Baker started his first company, Tape-it-Easy, alongside future Nanodropper Chief Executive Officer Allisa Song. Together, they participated in various business competitions, "which helped us learn a lot about starting a company and making a product that people want and need," says Baker, who adds that his role "was to design a device that would install drip tape irrigation auto/semi-automatically to decrease the amount of time and labor involved with installing drip irrigation manually."

For the future entrepreneur, Baker advises, "...If you're looking to start your own company, make sure you have a strong set of core values and stick with them. Find a diverse team and filter any advice you might receive."

Outside of work, Baker is a known go-kart-racing fanatic, snowboarder, gamer, computer builder, hiker and aspiring pilot. A new hobby he recently added to this list is restoring a 1968 Mercury Cougar passed down to him from his father. "I took apart the whole car to a bare body shell and it's currently getting prepped for paint." After that, he plans to upgrade the car's engine, suspension, brakes, electronics and transmission.

When it comes to offering insights for prospective mechanical engineer students, Baker shares what helped him through times of struggle as a student: remaining "persistent and asking questions ... during class or one-on-one with the professor on topics I wasn't sure of." He also recommends studying with a group as much as possible to share ideas and work through problems together. "I think even doing this virtually will help."



Elias Baker, along with company co-founders Mackenzie Andrews, Jennifer Steger, PhD, and Allisa Song

# SEATTLEU

SEATTLE UNIVERSITY  
9012th Avenue  
PO Box 222000  
Seattle, WA 98122-1090

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR THE

# ALUMNI INTERVIEW PROGRAM

Prospective students frequently ask to speak with alumni to learn more about the SU experience firsthand. Would you be willing to share your insight? Please join us by signing up now!



INTERESTED ALUMNI CAN SIGN UP AT [ADMISSIONS.SEATTLEU.EDU/REGISTER/ALUMNIENTRY.](https://admissions.seattleu.edu/register/alumnientry)

