



## ALUMNI UPDATE

September 2018

# UNIVERSITY OF SAINT JOSEPH --- CONNECTICUT





Reunion is just around the corner and we continue to receive registrations. Don't miss out on reliving your St. Joe's past, remembering your time on campus, and reuniting with old friends!

Join your friends and enjoy a lecture by professor Dorothy Keller, M'85, C'97, DAA'99, H'17, M.Ed., or listen to current students and alumni speak of their experiences in serving their community. Celebrate as you parade across campus and enjoy lunch in a transformed McGovern Cafe. Make your way to Connections on the Quad where you will learn about current service projects or meet with the dean of your college: Look where your SJC is today. Take a tour of campus and complete your day with a beautiful Mass at The Connor Chapel of Our Lady. Finally, join President Free as she welcomes you to the Presidents Reception in the Crystal Room.

There is something for everyone!

[Register Today](#)



[EVENTS](#)

[ATHLETICS](#)

[USJ APPAREL](#)

[REUNION](#)

We are pleased to announce this year's Distinguished Alumni Award recipients. We will celebrate the four honorees on Friday, Sept. 14 for their professional achievements and service to the community. The 2018 Distinguished Alumni Award Ceremony and Reception will take place on the University's West Hartford Campus in the Bruyette Athenaeum and honor the following:

- [Marie Benoit-Connors '83](#) will receive the Nightingale Health Science Award for her leadership in the field of health science.
- [Paula Ballantyne DeSilva '68, Ph.D.](#), will receive the Sister Mary Rosa McDonough Award for achieving distinction in her professional field and local community.
- [Dayne Laskey, Pharm.D., DABAT](#), will receive the Winifred E. Coleman Service Award for his exemplary service and commitment to the University of Saint Joseph.
- [Sherry Stearley Neuner '73](#) will receive the Sister Fay O'Brien Education Award for promoting the growth of the whole person in an inclusive environment, while encouraging strong ethical values, personal integrity, and a sense of responsibility to the needs of society.

Please call 860.231.5364 or email [Katie DaSilva Burke '15, M'17](#), to register.



## Welcome, Dr. Francis-Connolly!

The University of Saint Joseph is pleased to welcome Elizabeth (Betsy) Francis-Connolly, Ph.D., to USJ as the founding dean of the School of Interdisciplinary Health and Science and professor of Psychology and Nutrition and Public Health.

Dr. Francis-Connolly earned a B.S. in Occupational Therapy from Quinnipiac College (now University), an M.S. in Occupational Therapy from Boston University, and a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Michigan. In addition to her experience as an occupational therapist, she has worked in academia for 30 years. She has held various leadership roles at several institutions, including professor and dean of the Westbrook College of Health Professions at the University of New England. She has published in peer-reviewed journals, authored book chapters, and presented at numerous national and international professional conferences. She has provided

[DAA](#)

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## Trivia Question

This highly anticipated campus structure was completed and dedicated in 1993. Identify the structure by emailing your response to [alumni@usj.edu](mailto:alumni@usj.edu).



extensive service at the departmental, college, and university levels, as well as professional organizations. Her broad administrative and academic experience will be an asset in her role as dean of the newly formed School of Interdisciplinary Health and Science.

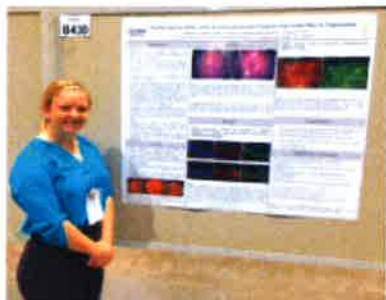
Dr. Francis Connolly joins Raouf N. Boules, Ph.D., dean of the newly formed School of Arts, Sciences, Business, and Education and Joseph R. Ofsu, Ph.D., dean of the School of Pharmacy and Physician Assistant Studies.



Sarah (Sally) Forte '60

Sporting new paint, carpeting, and furniture, Rosary and McAuley Halls re-opened for the 2018 fall semester welcoming both male and female students through their doors.

The winner of the June trivia question was: Sarah (Sally) Forte '60.



### **Sarah Palko '19 Represents USJ at ASBMB Conference**

University of Saint Joseph student Sarah Palko '18, a Biology major with a Chemistry and Mathematics double minor, attended the American Society for

Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB) conference this past spring in San Diego, Calif.

A member of the Mohan Lab in the Neuroscience Department at UConn Health Center in Farmington, Conn., Palko attended the Conference to share the research she has done under the supervision of UConn Professors Royce Mohan, Ph.D., and Paola Bargagna-Mohan, Ph.D. Palko's work focuses on Wet Age-Related Macular Degeneration, which involves the degeneration of the retina, causing vision loss and difficulties reading, driving, and completing everyday tasks.

Attending the conference, presenting, and immersing herself in the latest initiatives from the field's top researchers proved to be a defining moment for Palko.

"The opportunity to attend the ASBMB Conference was one that has changed the way I look at science, research, and education as a whole," she shared. "To experience the true experts in my field presenting their work and doing what they love has inspired me to pursue my dreams to become a research scientist. Presenting my research at such a huge conference allowed me to gain confidence in my work and to believe that my goals to do ground-breaking research are achievable and very real. USJ has given me this opportunity of a lifetime and, for that, I am extremely grateful. My undergraduate institution has inspired my love of research and has helped me further my education by providing me with the chance to attend such an amazing conference."

In between training for her final season as a USJ soccer player and relaxing after a 20-credit spring semester, this summer Sarah participated in the Partnership for Innovation and

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## **Upcoming Events**

### **Distinguished Alumni Awards Ceremony**

**Friday, Sept. 14**

5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

For more information, email [Katie DaSilva Burke '15, M'17](mailto:Katie.DaSilva.Burke@usj.edu), or call 860.231.5364.

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### **Reunion 2018**

**Saturday, Sept. 15**

Education (PIE) Fellowship program at UCONN Health Center where she continues her work on Macular Degeneration. Her hope is to remain at UCONN during her final fall semester at USJ. After her December graduation, Sarah's goal is to stay on as a lab technician at UCONN and ultimately apply for the biomedical sciences Ph.D. program.

To view more student research at USJ, visit the [Center for Student Research and Creative Activity](#).



### **Area Students Collaborate on the Integrated Solutions Laboratory Experience**

Wednesday, Aug. 1, 2018, marked the end of the 10-week Integrated Solutions Laboratory Experience (ISLE) program that brought together students from three institutions in the [Hartford Consortium for Higher Education](#) (HCHE): [Capital Community College \(CCC\)](#), the [University of Hartford \(UHART\)](#), and the University of Saint Joseph (USJ).

The program, funded by the [CTNext Higher Education Initiative](#), [Metro Realty](#), and the [NASA Connecticut Space Grant Consortium](#), offered students an opportunity to strengthen their entrepreneurial skills. Collaborating within their small groups, students designed and developed computer-based, mechanical, or other assistive-technology products to solve challenges faced by individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and other special needs. As their projects progressed, they also conducted testing and developed business and marketing plans for their products.

To build their skills in these areas, students learned in four course modules taught by faculty from the three institutions and guest speakers from relevant industries. Between the modules on Autism Spectrum Disorders/Special Needs Populations, Ideation and Solution Development, App Development, and Business Plan Development, students

For more information, email [Tonja Russo](mailto:tonja.russo@usj.edu) or call 860.231.5447.

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### **Spanish Language Film Festival Series**

**FREE**

**Tuesday, Sept. 18**

**7 p.m.**

Bruyette Athenaeum,  
Hoffman Auditorium

Coco - PG

Includes remarks by Dr.  
Diana Aldrete, Trinity  
College

**Tuesday, Sept. 25**

**7 p.m.**

Bruyette Athenaeum,  
Hoffman Auditorium

*Like Water for  
Chocolate/Como agua para  
chocolate - R*

Includes remarks by Dr.  
Roger Zapata, Montclair  
State University

**Tuesday, Oct. 7**

**7 p.m.**

Bruyette Athenaeum,  
Hoffman Auditorium

*The Book of Life/El libro de  
la vida - PG*

gained the necessary knowledge to see their projects through to completion.

"This project was a collaboration – from the submission of the proposal by faculty and staff at USJ, UHART and CCC, to the development of the course modules by faculty from each institution," said USJ Provost Michelle Kalis, Ph.D. "The most gratifying aspect was to see the students from three different institutions and nine different majors learn together and form cohesive teams."

The program concluded with a statewide workshop on USJ's campus, where each team presented their project and displayed their prototype. Selected teams are continuing on, working with capital funders and project faculty to move forward in development with the goal of bringing their product to the market.



### **Gengras Center School Debuts New Basketball Court**

On Friday, June 15, the University of Saint Joseph's Gengras Center School held a ribbon cutting for its new outdoor basketball court and picnic area. The event debuted the renovations and honored the families who, through generous donations, made these dreams a reality. "The Gengras Center students have extraordinary families. Today, the Gengras Center continues to grow and prosper with strategic additions to our facility that were spearheaded by several families. While we can celebrate the results we've had with thousands of children and their families over the years, we make a special place for each child in our hearts and here on campus," said USJ President Rhona Free, Ph.D., addressing the crowd.

The basketball court, now known as "Kammy's Court," was made possible by Noraleen and Scott LeClaire, whose daughter Kammy is a student at the School. In honor of her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday last year, Kammy's family and friends donated to the Gengras Center and ensured the successful construction of this project.

"I can't begin to put into words the appreciation and respect we have for the Gengras Center teachers, aids, therapists, administrators, and staff," Noraleen remarked. "It is because of them that our daughter Kammy has had such amazing growth and achievement over the last 10 years. Their hard

Includes remarks by Dr. Rachel Payne, University of Saint Joseph.

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### **2018 Munger Lecture: The Crisis of Migration, Sanctuary and Theology**

**Thursday, Sept. 20**

**12:30 - 1:30 p.m.**

Mercy Hall, Crystal Room

Lunch is provided.

Join us as we welcome Waleska Cabrera '07, as she shares her passion for human rights and liberation theology.

This is a free event; however, we ask that you pre-register by emailing [Nancy Billias](mailto:Nancy.Billias@usj.edu), professor of Philosophy, chair, department of Philosophy, Theology, and Religious Studies.

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### **Women's Leadership Center**

**Got Grit?**

**Wednesday, Sept. 26**

**5:30 p.m. Registration**

**6 p.m. Program**

Grit is a special blend of passion and persistence. Learn how grit can make a difference in your life.

work, care, and teaching is what makes us give back to the school. The new basketball court is an expression of our gratitude.”

Now sitting beside the court are new picnic tables – one of which has a plaque in honor of Sean Kedzior, a beloved Gengras Center student who passed away earlier this year. Thanks to donations from Sean’s family and friends, as well as the continued generosity of Gina and John Uricchio, whose daughter Ally attends the School, the new area will offer a beautiful, shady spot for older students to enjoy.

“When we came up with the idea to redo this space, it was from a need to have more outdoor space for our older students,” explained Michelle Lestrud, M.Ed., C.A.G.S., director of the Gengras Center. “We wanted to expand on this side of the building to have more opportunities for recreation, leisure, and fitness. Now, our high school and transition-aged students have a space to use.”

The [Gengras Center School](#) is located on the [USJ Campus](#).

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## Career Development Center News

Looking for a part-time or full-time job?

The [Career Development Center](#) is ready to help with your search by offering an online job-listing service where employers will be looking for you!

[Sign up](#) to create a username and password to be able to:

- search for jobs posted for University of Saint Joseph students and alumni
- create and save your resume and cover letter to send to employers advertising positions through this system
- update and tailor your resume and cover letter for specific employers

Sign up today! [Email](#) the Career Development Center if you need assistance with resume writing and cover letters.

Bruyette Athenaeum,  
Hoffman Auditorium

Event is free but registration is requested.

For more information and to register, visit the [Women's Leadership Website](#).

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### 8th Noche Latina

Friday, Oct. 5

6 p.m. - Reception

7 - 9 p.m. - Performance

Bruyette Athenaeum,  
Hoffman Auditorium

Annual Pan-Latin Musical Celebration. Performance by Mariachi Mexico Antiguo.

Adults - \$10

Children & Students - FREE

### Alumni Networking Opportunity

Tuesday, Oct. 23

5:30 p.m.

University of Saint Joseph,  
School of Pharmacy

229 Trumbull Street,  
Hartford, CT

Email [Katie DaSilva Burke '15, M'17](#) to register or call 860.231.5364.

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## Day of the Dead Altar

Nov. 1-4: Workshops for students and adults.

Nov. 3: Family Day workshops and Art Museum activities.

Art Museum at USJ

A community project led by artist Yolanda Vasquez Petrocelli.

Email [Darcie Shultz](#), Assistant Director of the Arts Center, Bruyette Athenaeum, or call 860.231.5528 for more information.

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## Alumni Volunteer Opportunities

**Saturday, Oct. 13**

Team up with fellow alumni, students, staff, and friends to support the Eversource Hartford Marathon. For the second year, USJ will host a water station along the course of the half marathon. Join us as we cheer on the runners.

**Class Notes Ambassador**



The next edition of outlook is in production. Do you have a career, family, or education update? Please share by Friday, Sept. 14.

To volunteer for these opportunities, email Tonja Russo, or call the office of Alumni Relations, 860.231.5447.

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