

NEWS RELEASE

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University of Saint Mary Honors Students, Faculty at 2007 Spring Convocation

3:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 1, 2007

(Leavenworth, Kan.)—With the academic year coming to a close, the University of Saint Mary celebrates its students, especially graduating seniors, during its annual spring convocation ceremony. While student awards will be the focus of the afternoon, USM will pay tribute to one special professor who is retiring following commencement.

Sister Susan Chase, professor of biology, has been an esteemed member of the University of Saint Mary community since the 1960s. A Saint Mary alum from the class of 1964 and a Saint Mary professor for more than 30 years, Chase will retire following commencement. She will be conferred with professor emerita status, a life-long honor, given to distinguished full-time faculty upon retirement.

“Sister Susan Chase has been both a demanding and dedicated professor,” USM Vice President and Academic Dean Dr. Sandra VanHoose said. “She has played an important role over the years in preparing USM pre-med students for acceptance into medical school, evidenced by our 95% acceptance history. It is our privilege to honor her with emerita status at spring convocation.”

For graduates and their families, the highlight of the ceremony is the “Hooding of the Seniors” – a ceremonial ritual where cloth hoods are placed over their graduation robes by the university president to recognize their new academic degrees. Hoods were worn as part of the graduation dress in 12th and 13th century Europe. The hooding ritual is unique to Saint Mary; very few colleges and universities hood undergraduates, and in most cases, hoods are only awarded to Ph.D. graduates.

Two of the university’s most prestigious honors will be awarded during spring convocation, including the Mother Mary Ancilla Award and the Sullivan Award for Teaching Excellence. The Mother Mary Ancilla Award is presented to a graduating senior who demonstrated concern, commitment, and Christian humanitarian service for others during his or her time at Saint Mary. The award is named after Mother Mary Ancilla Spoor, who served as dean of women at Saint Mary from 1931 to 1944 and later as mother general for the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. The Ancilla Award is also awarded the distinction of delivering the invocation prayer that opens commencement, Saturday, May 12.

The Sullivan Award for Teaching Excellence was created in 1990 to recognize teacher achievement at Saint Mary. Named in honor of the late Sister Mary Louis Sullivan, the Sullivan Award recognizes a full-time faculty member who creates a unique distinction in the teaching climate at Saint Mary. The recipient is determined by faculty, staff, and student nominations.

Spring convocation will be held at 3:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 1, 2007 at Annunciation Chapel. The University of Saint Mary is located at 4100 South 4th Street, Leavenworth, Kan. Call (913) 758-6115 to learn more about spring convocation.

The University of Saint Mary is a private, co-educational applied liberal arts university founded by the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. The University of Saint Mary is located at 4100 South 4th Street, Leavenworth, Kan., with additional locations at 11413 Pflumm in Overland Park and inside Providence Medical Center at 8929 Parallel Parkway in Kansas City, Kan.

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