

## NEWS RELEASE

May 4, 2009

Contact: John Shultz (913) 758-6165  
E-mail: [shultz35@stmary.edu](mailto:shultz35@stmary.edu)



### University of Saint Mary Honors Students and Faculty at Spring Convocation/Hooding Ceremony

(Leavenworth, Kan.)—In the build-up to May 9's commencement ceremony, the University of Saint Mary paid tribute to the undergraduate class of 2009 with a hooding ritual at USM's Spring Convocation and Honors Ceremony on Tuesday, April 28, in Annunciation Chapel.

The University of Saint Mary is one of the few remaining universities to perform the time-honored and stately hooding ceremony for its undergraduates, noted Dr. Bryan Le Beau, USM's academic vice president. The hoods are worn over the graduation robes and denote a student's specific academic discipline.

Besides hooding, the convocation ceremony provides the university a chance to bestow a bevy of awards on both its most promising students and most esteemed faculty including USM's highest teaching honor and top award for student leadership and service.

Mathematics major Carolyn Elvers, of Elkhorn, Neb., won the top student service honor—the Mother Mary Ancilla Award. Elvers spent many of her breaks traveling to Denver, Kentucky, and New Orleans to work with the poor. She volunteered with Big Brothers Big Sisters and participated in the Student Government Association and Mission Council on campus.

"Carolyn is an intellectual with a heart for service and is truly a credit to Saint Mary," Dr. Le Beau said. "Throughout her four years here, she has shown her dedication to service again and again."

The Ancilla Award carries with it an additional honor: Elvers will deliver the invocation prayer that opens the commencement ceremony on Saturday, May 9.

Associate Professor Susan Nelson, director of the university's art program, won the Sullivan Award for Teaching Excellence. The award plus \$1,000 are presented to a full-time faculty member who has made a distinct difference in the teaching climate at USM. The Sullivan Award was created in 1990 and named for the late Sister Mary Louis Sullivan, former academic dean. The winner is nominated by students, faculty, and staff. Nelson earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in fine arts from the University of Kansas.

"The quality and variety of student art shows has improved greatly under her leadership," said Dr. Le Beau. "Her students produce excellent work."

Other USM awards presented at Spring Convocation included:

- **Students Appreciating Students Award:** Matt Reitemeier
- **"E" Award** (*given to USM sophomores intending to major in English*): Michelle Lighton and Kyle Petesch

- **The Chase Student Award in Biology:** Geoff Peterson
- **Outstanding Business Student Award:** Alyse Lindsay
- **All-University Honors** (*requires a 3.70 cumulative grade point average, participation in honors work within the major and in Honors Seminar, and recommendation of the Honors Council for All-University Honors*):
  - Christina Grande, Departmental Honors in Theology, All-University Honors
  - Geoff Peterson, Departmental Honors in Biology and Theology, All-University Honors

*The University of Saint Mary is a Catholic co-educational applied liberal arts university founded and sponsored by the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. The University of Saint Mary is located at 4100 South 4th Street, Leavenworth, Kan., with additional locations in Overland Park, Shawnee, and Kansas City, Kan. Visit [www.stmary.edu](http://www.stmary.edu) on the web for more information.*

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