

# Mount Mercy

# TIMES

A student publication

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Veronica Jons/Times

Interim Mount Mercy University President Dr. Tim Laurent is in his element as prefers his exercise ball to a traditional chair.

## New University President Departs Unexpectedly

Provost Named to Lead MMU

By Veronica Jons  
Editor-in-Chief

After 69 days in office at Mount Mercy University, Dr. Bob Beatty resigned as the 10th president for the institution. On Sept. 9, the Board of Trustees held a press conference via Zoom Video Communications to announce the appointed interim president as Tim Laurent, who previously served as the provost.

It is unclear specifically when and why Beatty resigned, as details have yet to be released to the questioning public. He began his presidential duties on July 1 while having to deal with planning for an unparalleled fall semester due to COVID-19, and later a derecho that set Mount Mercy's start-date back because of the devastating damage.

Beatty is a Cedar Rapids native who was looking forward to being back at his hometown, thinking it was his last stop. He was quoted in March of 2020 saying, "I am very optimistic about the future of this institution."

Students warily anticipate what the future of the institution holds after many feel the school keeps taking hit after hit.

However, Board Chair Charlie Rohde stated at the conference call, "Our commitment to you is as strong as ever."

The administration's number one concern and priority is the success of students in order to get them the best education they can.

"I want our students to be the most productive, happy, and contributing people to society," Rohde said.

Tim Laurent, who has since been named as the interim president, says his goals for his year-long term is to look at ways to set up for success after this school year. He also hopes to listen and have good conversations with students, faculty, and staff to make strong connections.

"I have three focus areas we want to focus on, our first priority is care of our community. Our second priority is a successful 2020-2021 academic year with a high-quality experience for all. Our third priority is developing the foundation for a successful 2021-2022 year."

◆ **Board to Set**  
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## Derecho Damages Entire Campus



Jeremiah Fields/contributed (above)  
Annie Barkalow/Times (left)

A large pine tree (above) leans on Warde Hall in the late afternoon, Aug. 10, the day a derecho storm with hurricane force winds damaged all Mount Mercy University buildings. On Sept. 18, workers make repairs to the roof of Warde Hall (left).



## MMU Recovering After Hit by 112 mph Winds

By Courtney Hoffman  
Managing Editor

On Aug. 10, a derecho storm complex traveled its way across Iowa. In Linn County, gusts reached up to 112 mph with the force of a Category 3 hurricane. Initial estimates state that \$4 billion of damage was done in Iowa alone.

Mount Mercy campus was no exception to this with damage done to all MMU buildings and properties, according to Dennis Gehring, director of facilities.

"All Mount Mercy buildings and properties sustained damage in some form or another," he said. "Not one building was unaffected."

Anne Gillespie, vice president for business and finance, recalls it took an hour and a half for her to travel three miles to campus after the storm.

"It was really surreal," she said. "And I think part of it is that you just don't understand the scope of how much damage there is and how far that it went. I was actually off campus when the storm hit and trying to get back to campus was just—it was shocking."

"It was hard to even fathom how a storm could cause that kind of damage,"

she added.

Though many faculty members were working from home, there were several faculty members on campus at the time, including essential workers in facilities, who were working to meet maintenance and dining needs, and some business and accounting workers, according to Gillespie.

Jeremiah Fields, assistant director of residence life, stated that 45 students were living on campus at the time the derecho hit.

"When I came back to campus, I was very grateful that everyone was OK. Many were down in the tunnels, and I think that was a tremendous value of having them," Gillespie said.

"We wanted to make sure that they were OK, and at that point, I don't think we understood that power would be lost for two and a half weeks," she added. "So, it was immediately making sure we had lights, we had food, everyone knew where the students were located, and that staff were OK."

"We were grateful that no one was hurt, yet we are heartbroken that our

**"All Mount Mercy buildings and properties sustained damage in some form or another."**

Dennis Gehring, director of facilities

**"It was really surreal And I think part of it is that you just don't understand the scope of how much damage there is and how far that it went. It was hard to even fathom how a storm could cause that kind of damage."**

Anne Gillespie, vice president for business and finance

**"We were grateful that no one was hurt, yet we are heartbroken that our home on the Hill suffered so much damage."**

Nate Klein, vice president for student success

◆ **University Officials Expect**  
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## Heads up:

### Succulent Craft Night

Join M2AP Board on the Rhode Plaza from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 24 for a chance to plant your

own succulent houseplant.

### Author Showcase

Join local author Patti Seda virtually at noon Oct. 1 to discuss her new book, "Discovering Job Joy: Your Guide to Stretching without Snapping."

### Fall Faculty Series

The Fall Faculty Series kicked off on Sept. 22 with Director of Diversity & International Student Success Keesha Burke-Henderson's "Am I a Woman." Join Allison McNeese, associate professor of history, in Flaherty Community Room or online

at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 7 for her lecture, "The Fight for Women's Suffrage in the Hawkeye State."

### Netflix Trivia Night

Join M2AP Board on Zoom at 7 p.m. on Oct. 5 and put your Netflix knowledge to the test!

### Virtual Career Fair

Coe College, Cornell College and Mount Mercy University are hosting a virtual career fair on Tuesday, Oct. 6 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Handshake. Contact Kalindi Garvin at [kgarvin@mmmercy.edu](mailto:kgarvin@mmmercy.edu) with any questions.

# Welcome, Mustangs, to Our Unique Fall

**O**n behalf of our entire Mount Mercy community, I welcome our students to MMU. To our returning students, I say welcome back home. To our new students, I say welcome to the Hill. Soon it will feel like home.

This year looks and feels a little different. Due to the derecho, many of our trees were destroyed, bringing more sun to campus. You will also notice differences on campus due to COVID-19. Classroom chairs are six feet apart, Owls are near the front of the room, and the professors don't have the freedom to move around the room as they would like.

Students and faculty have face coverings and some students are in the classroom while others are coming in via Zoom. When you go to the cafeteria you will notice that tables are spread out. We also have hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies around campus. All this is to help us mitigate the spread of COVID-19 as much as possible.

During times when things

## Opinion



**Tim Laurent**  
MMU Interim President

are odd and seemingly ever-changing, it's good to reflect on what is certain. Mount Mercy's commitment to students has not and will not change.

Faculty want students to learn and will guide them along their academic journey. Coaches will push their athletes to get better every day. Residence life staff will make the dorms feel like home. Everyone on campus will do their part to help ensure students receive the full Mount Mercy University experience.

Students also have a consistent path to success within our new way of operating. The best way to succeed in college is, and always has been, to get involved. It doesn't specifically matter the activity, just that you are involved with something of interest to you.

Consider peer tutoring, volunteerism, athletics, research, student organizations, intramurals, campus events, student publications, a deep dive into academics and taking on leadership challenges. Simply find your passion in one or more of our activities. And, if we don't have the activity that matches your passion, create it.

I wish you the best as you begin or continue your Mustang journey.

Have a great year! Go Mustangs!

**The best way to succeed in college is, and always has been, to get involved. It doesn't specifically matter the activity, just that you are involved.**

Wikimedia commons, official government photo

**Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the notorious RBG, died Sept. 18.**

## U.S. Mourns Justice RBG, a Small Giant

**By Jada Veasey**  
Opinion Editor

**O**n the evening of Friday, Sept. 18, the world learned that Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg had passed away. Ginsburg was 87, and died of complications related to pancreatic cancer, which she had battled for years before her passing.

Ginsburg was a small woman in the typical sense of the word—she stood at just 5-foot-1—but in the realm of the American judiciary system, she was a giant. President Bill Clinton nominated Ginsburg to the Supreme Court in 1993, and Ginsburg served on the highest court in the land from August of that year all the way up to her death.

She was the second woman to serve on the Supreme Court, and from the years 2006 to 2009, between the retirement of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and the appointment of Justice Sonia Sotomayor, Ginsburg was the Court's sole female justice.

Ginsburg wrote many noteworthy majority Court opinions but was best known for her dissents. As one of the most liberal members of the Court, she often strongly disagreed with her more conservative colleagues.

Before becoming a Supreme



Court Justice, Ginsburg was an influential advocate for women's rights. She was a working wife and mother, and that greatly influenced her legal practice.

She co-founded the Women's Rights Project at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in 1972 and became the general counsel of the project the following year. Ginsburg argued six gender discrimination cases before the Supreme Court and won five of them, an incredibly impressive track record.

President Jimmy Carter nominated Ginsburg to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit in 1980, and she served there until her Supreme Court confirmation in 1993.

Ginsburg will undoubtedly go down in history as one of the most influential Supreme Court Justices in American history. She is already thought to be a pop culture icon, and many people reference the Justice as the "Notorious RBG."

Her legal practice, advocacy, and later judiciary rulings have impacted America significantly, and she will never be forgotten. She will be remembered as a fierce advocate for women, the LGBTQ+ community and for the wellbeing of all Americans.

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# MMU Needs Unity and More Testing to Survive Pandemic

Everyone has experienced some kind of change to their routine due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mount Mercy has already started taking actions and precautions.

Still, most people are eager to return to some kind of fairly normal society. 2020 has shown itself to be a rather memorable year to say the least.

For many college students, going to class and attending both school and outside activities satisfies their social needs. But despite the move back to in-person classes, many students are wondering how pandemic precautions will be implemented and adapted as the year progresses.

Like many other businesses and organizations, in an attempt to stop the spread of COVID-19, Mount Mercy implemented a strict face-covering mandate throughout campus. Will these safety precautions be enough to sustain a safe learning environment this year?

The lack of leadership on a national scale has left people with unanswered questions and uncertainty regarding what news to rely on. During a time when people needed to be uplifted and unified, it almost seems as if American health and political officials have chosen to do the opposite.

The United States is no stranger to dealing with conflict based on the division of people—North versus South, left versus right, and red versus blue are all examples of this. Currently, Americans are struggling to come together in participating in safety guidelines like wearing masks.

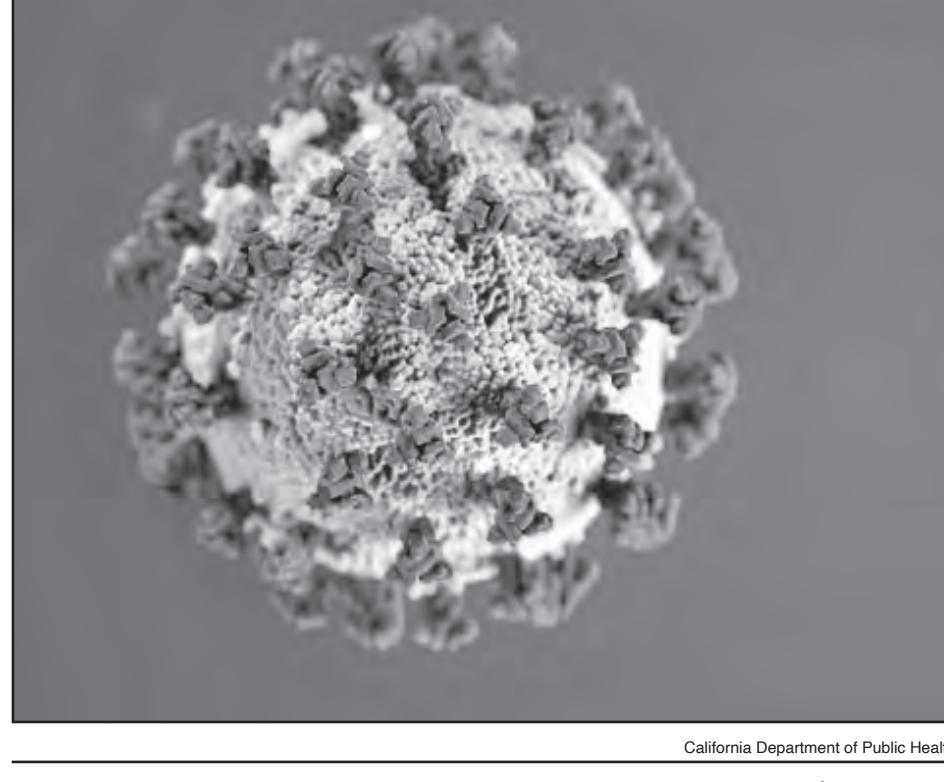
Though it's on a much smaller scale, how will leadership at Mount Mercy keep our community unified?

Mount Mercy has seen two new Presidents within a few months. It would be a difficult task to walk in and take leadership during such uncertain times; nonetheless, someone is needed to step up and welcome the role. It is hard to see how we benefit from this rocky start to the school year.

A leader doesn't have to know all

## Staff Editorial

The opinion of Times editors



California Department of Public Health

the answers. Instead, a respected leader empowers and uplifts the people around them. Humans tend to rally around one another, and if a leader is seen showing genuine care and compassion, others will follow. A big question is, can Mount Mercy and current administration do that? Only time will tell.

MMU has decided to bring forward a COVID-19 dashboard which can be found via the Mount Mercy website. The dashboard offers information and statistics regarding the number of positive COVID-19 cases on Mount Mercy campus, including their close-contact stats and the quarantined number of students.

This can be beneficial to students, faculty, and staff. The COVID-19 response team and the interim President check the national, state, city, local colleges, and Mount Mercy COVID-19 statistics every morning.

Many administrators say they want students to have as normal of a school year as possible. What does that even look like? How are they to decide what normal is for us?

Restrictions and rules are changing daily; there is simply nothing normal about that. This time last year, no one would have predicted they would soon have to wear masks, go to class online or socially distance from friends and family. As humans, we need interaction and human connection in life; how badly is this affecting the students of this institution?

At the moment, students living on campus and attending in-person classes have not been required to perform a COVID-19 test prior to their move-in, though student athletes were. And though athletes may be in closer contact with a larger number of people, any student that does not play a sport can still contract the coronavirus on campus.

There's still room for risk in Mount Mercy's COVID-19 detection plan. It is easy for any student to not report their symptoms in fear that they will have to quarantine, risk falling behind in classes, or just out of fear of being diagnosed.

It is hard to say if requiring all students to take a COVID-19 test would have

been beneficial long-term, but making it optional isn't the best option right now. Student athletes have to take a COVID-19 screening questionnaire before attending practice, the same should be expected of all students who have in-person classes to prevent further spread on campus.

And while the six-foot distances between desks and frequent sanitization are certainly helpful, current practices also have their own drawbacks, including crowding students around the sanitization materials to wipe desks down, entirely undoing the effect of having desks set apart.

In addition to that, allowing water bottles and food in classrooms nullifies the use of masks when students have them pulled down to drink or snack in poorly ventilated classrooms.

As college students, it never occurred to us that we would need bribed to wear a mask and socially distance. Though it comes with good sentiment, the COVID-19 Safety Award does have some patronizing undertones. Do we need to hand out prizes to get our community to follow CDC guidelines?

Mandatory testing is necessary to ensure the safety of everyone on campus. Though MMU has implemented several good safety measures, there needs to be a re-evaluation of campus guidelines.

COVID-19 screening questionnaires should be mandatory, a more effective approach to sanitizing classrooms should be implemented, and bribing students to mask-up on campus shouldn't be necessary.

Campus leadership needs to be transparent, yet students haven't stopped bringing forward questions, complaints and concerns, and there has been little clarity of what is yet to come for the Mount Mercy community.

Figuring this out is not only on the administration, it's on us students as well. We have voices and need to be heard. Let's all be smart, Mustangs, and follow guidelines not for the COVID-19 Safety Award, but for the safety and health of other students, staff and faculty, family and society.

## Try Changing Someone's Day with St. Therese's Little Way

Hello fellow Mustangs! My name is Vanessa Milliman and I am a sophomore elementary education and religious studies double major. I grew up in a small Iowa town and am blessed to have been raised in an amazing Catholic family.

From a young age I was taught to explore and continually go deeper into what I loved. The search for truth has been, and continues to be, at the forefront of my educational and life goals. Sharing what I love comes naturally, so I am very excited to explore and share Faith on the Hill with you this year.

Growing up, I had several people who made a big difference in my life. Their examples impacted the way that I live today. Some of these role models include my parents, close friends and coaches. Each of them had something unique to offer me and they helped me become the person that I am.

Some of my greatest mentors are people who lived over 100 years ago. The Church calls them saints.



Vanessa Milliman  
Columnist

to do to get to Heaven. While they were not perfect—they were still sinners like us—their lives give witness to how God is working in each one of us.

One of my favorite saints is Saint Therese of Lisieux.

St. Therese was born on Jan. 2, 1873 in Lisieux, France. Her mother died when she was only 4 years old and then Therese was raised by her father and older sisters. With her father's permission, she entered a Carmelite convent and became a nun when she was 15.

St. Therese believed that we do not have to do big, daunting tasks to show our love for God and others. She showed her love for God by doing small, everyday things with great love. This is known as her "Little Way." We can find joy by giving our wholehearted commitment to the smallest tasks.

I want to challenge you to spread joy around campus and at home. Use the Little Way to bring a smile to someone's face.

You can simply hold the door for a stranger or say "hi" in the elevator. Pick up the trash that missed the can. Take a few minutes to stop by the chapel for quiet prayer.

You will be surprised by how many people you will have an impact on. You will also be surprised to see how the Little Way can transform your day into one of joy.

## Old School News

### Print is Best for Reliable Information

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed my life in so many ways. It has altered how I socialize, how I shop, and how I eat. And perhaps more importantly, it has changed how I get my news.

Despite being an editor for this lovely print newspaper, I'm a bit ashamed to admit that up until around May, Twitter was my main source of news.

Of course, I don't only mean random tweets from celebrities; I also follow plenty of legitimate news sources. But I'll be the first to admit that along with real news, I read a lot of misinformation online.

As the pandemic surged in the weeks following spring break, I became frustrated with my lack of legitimate knowledge about what was going on in the world. I felt like I was reading contradictions on Twitter all the time

— some sources claimed

masks worked, others

#### Opinion



Jada Veasey  
Opinion Editor

denied it (they definitely work though, please wear yours); some people quoted Trump only for others to state they'd quoted him incorrectly; people were constantly posting about conspiracy theories regarding the origin of the COVID-19 virus. I was sick of it.

In addition to all the unreliable information I saw in tweets, I also ran into a new problem with the legitimate news

accounts I followed—much of their content was blocked

behind pay-walls. Many of the major news organizations I follow

allow users to read a few articles per month

for free, but once you hit their quota, you must pay for access.

So, what did I do? I bit the bullet and paid for access. And boy, am I glad I did.

I am now the proud owner of a digital student

subscription to the New York Times. I chose this particular news source because I've been listening to their podcast "The Daily" for about a year now and I like their coverage.

The student rate for the digital subscription is a very affordable one dollar a week, which they charge to my credit card in monthly chunks.

I have felt much better

about the reliability of the news I read since buying a newspaper subscription. I encourage my fellow college students to do the same.

that you can trust. It is also important to remember that good coverage sometimes costs money, and for myself anyway, the price of good journalism is worth every penny.



#### Editorial Staff

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Joe Sheller  
Faculty Advisor

The Mount Mercy Times is a biweekly student publication serving MMU students, faculty, and staff and those close to the Mount Mercy University community. The Times is published on alternate Thursdays during the school year (each issue has a Thursday date, but the paper is usually distributed Wednesday).

In addition, the Times maintains a student-run website for the dissemination of additional news in various forms, including Times TV video stories.

Membership on the staff of the Times is open to any MMU student, full- or part-time, undergraduate or graduate.

Please attend one of our staff meetings, which are all open to the public, or contact an editor or our advisor for more information. Meetings will be announced in the paper, via social media and with on-campus posters. During the pandemic, meetings may be remote, at the discretion of editors.

Staff Writers are listed by name on the stories they write, photographers are

credited on photos.

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Letters to the editor are encouraged. Letters should be concise, 300 words or less, and preferably emailed. The author's name, phone and address must be included. The name is published with the letter. Longer commentary, in the form of guest columns, is also encouraged. Besides the name, a photograph of the author is published with guest columns.

The Times reserves the right to edit or omit submissions. Letters and other submissions may be sent to the Times via email, campus mail or brought to the Times office in the lower level of the Busse Library.

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Jeremiah Fields (below) and Anne Gillespie (right and below right)/contributed  
Images taken by Mount Mercy University officials show how fallen trees littered the campus on Aug. 10, the day of the derecho storm. Officials stated that even more damage was done than losing the canopy of trees, as every building at MMU received damage. Repairs are expected to take at least a year.



## University Officials Expect Repairs From Storm Will Require A Year to Complete

### ◆ Derecho Damages

continued from page 1

home on the Hill suffered so much damage," said Nate Klein, vice president for student success.

After that came damage assessment, with the majority of the damage being caused to campus roofs in the McAuley dorms and the Penthouse, Betty Cherry Heritage Hall, Warde Hale and the Busse Chapel, the lower campus apartments and Hazel houses, the Grad Center, the roof above admissions and student services, and more, according to Gehring.

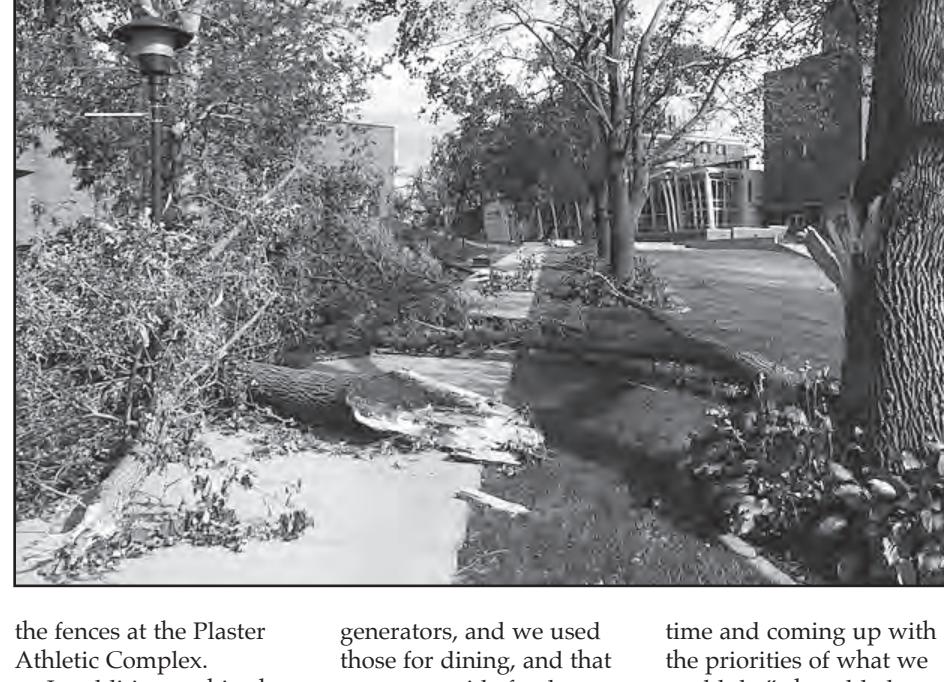
"McAuley and the McAuley Penthouse roofs were total losses with varying amounts of water damage on floors four and five, along with the penthouse itself," Gehring said. McAuley roofing repairs are currently underway, while the roofing in Betty

Cherry Heritage Hall and above admissions and student services have been temporarily repaired while waiting for replacement.

Gillespie shared that several roofs on campus will require specialized roofers to permanently repair. Permanent repairs are also pending for the lower campus apartments and Hazel houses.

"The replacing of these roofs will be determined by the timeframe for acquiring the roofing materials, installation crews, crane services and disposal services to arrive to campus, and the coordination of these components to be on the same schedule," Gehring said.

Gehring also stated that several hundreds of gallons of water had to be removed from McAuley theater, both buildings of the Rinderknecht Athletic Center were damaged, and there was damage to



the fences at the Plaster Athletic Complex.

In addition to this, the resulting nine-day power outage on campus resulted in a massive loss of food before generators could be brought in.

"We had a couple of

generators, and we used those for dining, and that was to provide food storage for the folks that were on site that needed to have dining services," Gillespie said.

"It was overwhelming, so it was just one day at a

time and coming up with the priorities of what we could do," she added.

"With the availability of contractors being a major hurdle, the immediate damage issues are being addressed on an 'ASAP' approach, whereas minor

issues will be at later dates," Gehring said. "Major damage repairs are currently being completed, whereas lesser issues may not be completed until next year."

Gillespie agrees that it will likely take another year to finish repairs, and another after that for "beautification." But beyond that, she is thankful for the MMU community and facilities for working so hard to get campus back up and running in time for the start of the fall semester.

"As we continue to fix things, we find additional things that need to be repaired. Our facilities team have done the lion's share of the work. Really, it was quite amazing how everyone came together," she said.

"I'm honored to be with people who work so hard for our mission and for our community."

## Faith Can Be Solid Even As Campus Deals with Derecho Winds

One short month ago, many of us were unaware of the life changing event that was approaching us from the west and the devastation and damage that would be left in its path. The horizon of the known

### Opinion



Sister Linda Bechen  
VP of Mission & Ministry

green over the familiar paths on campus are gone, splintered, or severely trimmed. The persistent rain of last week has revealed the constancy of leaks and on-going issues which will be with us going forward.

Masks, social distancing, classroom configurations, and ever-present hand sanitizers remind us of COVID-19 guidelines. All on the Hill is different.

As the clean-up process began on campus, I noted that despite the strong winds and the torrential rain, the statues of Catherine McAuley and Frances Warde on this campus, the Sacred Heart and Mary statues at Sacred Heart Life Care Center, and the grotto weathered the storm and remained standing.

These icons of faith spoke clearly and firmly not only of what Mount Mercy University has been built on over the years, but of where our hope and assurance need to rest as we rebuild and go forward. Our foundation has been built on our Catholic



Sister Linda Bechen/contributed

Icons of faith on the MMU campus, such as the statue of Sister Catherine McAuley on the Rohde Family Plaza remind us of enduring faith while the university faces storms like the derecho.

abundantly given to us:

*"Merciful Jesus, you inspired in Catherine McAuley a lively conviction of your enduring love. In times of need, she and her companions faithfully entreated your help, and they were never disappointed. In this same confident spirit, we come to you now."*

*"Because you walked among us, you know our human experience. You have shared our joys and sorrows. You have healed and comforted us, sustained, and renewed us. Be with us now in this time of need. Let us experience your loving presence as you grant us this favor. Bless all within our Mount Mercy Community. Show us your loving kindness."*

*"Encouraged by your care for us, we will, with lively fidelity, devote ourselves to the works of mercy. Through our good works, may your people experience your unceasing care for them. We ask all this through the intercession of Jesus, your son, and Mary, your mother and the mother of Mercy. Amen."*

identity and Mercy legacy, an expression of our faith in God; this will be our constant and our strength in the days ahead.

It was Catherine McAuley's custom to pray two Thirty Days' Prayers in times of need, for benefactors and coworkers and at the establishment of a new foundation. As we continue

to build on our foundation as Mount Mercy University, let us rest in the security and protection of our God who has given all to us and Catherine McAuley to guide us.

I invite each person on campus to pray this adaptation of her prayer until Oct. 10 and to open ourselves to the graces which are

## Board to Set New Search

### ◆ New MMU President

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do during this time, despite the craziness to have that success?"

Dr. Kim Bro, chair and interim dean of the Martin-Herold College of Nursing took part in the search committee last year.

"I would not change anything," she said. "From my point of view, Dr. Beatty's search was conducted and completed thoroughly. Everyone on the search committee had a voice on who was chosen."

To mirror her opinion, Rohde has been involved in four presidential searches during his time at Mount Mercy. He felt this search was the most inclusive they've ever had.

"If we did enough is based on a matter of opinion," said Rohde, "Faculty seemed to think they needed more time."

The board will discuss possibly extending candidate visits and interviews over multiple days per candidate instead of scheduling a single 12-hour day for each person. However, they did highly appreciate students' feedback—the trustees spent countless evenings going over all of it.

Beatty could not be reached for comments.

The Board of Trustees and the presidential board will formulate a plan to start the new search in the next few weeks.

## BLM Movement Strong Seven Years Later

### Video Showing Death of George Floyd Gives New Energy

#### By Jada Veasey

Opinion Editor

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement has existed in America since 2013, which began as a hashtag to protest George Zimmerman's not guilty verdict. Zimmerman shot and murdered unarmed teenager Trayvon Martin in Florida on Feb. 6, 2012. The movement is largely concerned with fighting systemic racism and police brutality.

The BLM movement has remained active since its inception, but this summer, the movement rose to a new level of prominence.

On May 25, 2020, 46-year-old George Floyd was killed during an arrest after an officer kneeled on Floyd's neck for over seven minutes.

The news of Floyd's death spread fast in his hometown of Minneapolis, Minnesota, and the news reached other parts of the country and the world through social media. A bystander captured a video of the incident, which was quickly posted online.

In the video, Floyd was heard repeatedly pleading with the officer, saying, "I can't breathe."

Floyd's death sparked a series of BLM protests. The first ones occurred in Minneapolis, where the incident occurred, but protests soon sprung up all over the country. These protests were not isolated incidents; they happened for many consecutive days and weeks and happened in all fifty states.

In June, the New York Times confirmed that protests related to BLM and Floyd's death had occurred in 2,000 cities across the nation. Americans were, and in some places still are, protesting from sea to shining sea.

Though most of the protests were peaceful, others were not.

Reports of police using tear gas came out of cities like Seattle, Portland, and even nearby Iowa City. In May in Washington D.C., violent protests near the White House led to a heavily armed military police presence in the city. Pictures of citizens clashing with

police officers during protests spread across social media like wildfire.

As citizens march in the streets, some American companies and organizations are showing their support for the BLM movement as well. The NBA unveiled a court with the BLM logo on it. Quaker Oats has committed to retiring their Aunt Jemima brand, which has a deep history rooted in racism. NASCAR banned the Confederate flag from any of their official events. Netflix now has a genre dedicated to emphasizing Black creators and their stories.

These changes have been positively received by many members of the BLM movement, but many activists have pointed out that while these changes are good ones, they are only a small step forward in righting America's racist wrongs.

The primary goal of the Black Lives Matter movement is to stop police-initiated murders of Black people. It has yet to happen.

According to the Washington Post, at least 59 more Black people have been killed by police since Floyd's death in May.

Donovan Grubaugh/Times

The annual Involvement Fair, giving students at Mount Mercy a chance to see the many clubs and organizations available, was held outdoors this year due to COVID-19. Stormy weather the first week of class caused the fair to be rescheduled to Sept. 15, which turned out to be a breezy, sunny day. Art and Design club (right) hosted a table, as did the nursing club, MMUANS (below, right) and other groups.

## Getting Involved

Weather-Delayed Fall Clubs Fair Held Outdoors Due to Pandemic



Donovan Grubaugh/Times

Gaming Club got creative with their table, featuring video game figurines and crafts to show off the possibilities their club can offer. They were granted a gaming room on campus specifically for video gaming and other game related activities.



Donovan Grubaugh/Times

Somos MMU, a club that promotes better understanding of Spanish-speaking countries organized a table for the Involvement Fair. Their biggest events are zumba and Somos dance night.

## Student Athletes Adjusting to COVID-19 Challenges

By Morgan Ingwersen  
Sports Editor

Most colleges and universities have made the decision to push back the fall sports season to the spring, though the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletes (NAIA) has made the decision to continue the season as planned.

Classes resumed in September after a long six-month break from in-person sessions. In addition to classes starting, athletics have also been in full swing, but following new guidelines to ensure the safety of everyone involved.

"The first few practices felt really strange with the six-month gap, because we normally practice throughout the year," said Amir Hadzic, head coach for the men's soccer team. "Not having a camp with kids like we normally do in June, it took me awhile to get back into coaching."

MMU, as well as other schools in the Heart of America Conference, is required to follow specific safety guidelines for the fall season. These include, but are not limited to temperature checks, thorough sanitation, denying spectators at any home events and COVID-19 screening completed by 11 a.m. each day.

At Mount Mercy, masks are required for athletes in the athletic centers, as well as during practices when players are not actively participating. After the use of any athletic equipment, athletes must wipe down everything after a single use just in case another student would like to use it. Spectators are not allowed at any home sporting events, but cross-country meets are allowing volunteers to make the meets run smoother.

When a student athlete tests positive for COVID-19, they will quarantine at a designated hotel paid for by Mount Mercy. Any persons that were in close contact will

quarantine at their living quarters on campus.

"Nate Klein, Tony Begley, and Donna provided meals for me at the hotel," said Mahlon Steepleton senior cross-country athlete. "I spent most of my time doing homework, watched movies, and played video games. I was grateful for a safe place to quarantine."

"Personally, I think having meets and competitions is a great idea because certain measures have been put into place to help students achieve all their goals both academically and athletically, as well as keep them safe," said freshman Lilian Gaulrapp. "Student athletes need that outlet to relieve stress and gain a certain feeling of accomplishment each day."

The NAIA has already made the decision to postpone the cross-country championships to April 2021, for the safety of the host school, Mount Mercy University, as well as other schools in the NAIA.



Matthew Mumm/Times

Due to the pandemic, changes have been made to not only academics but athletic departments as well. One of the bigger changes is that as posted above, there are no spectators allowed at any home competitions until further notice. This is Mount Mercy's decision, not an NAIA restriction. Those who wish to watch home competitions can do so by utilizing Mount Mercy's live stream online.

## Sports In Short

### Women's Volleyball Falls to Grand View

Women's volleyball lost to Grand View University after winning the first set on Tuesday, Sept. 15. Freshman Cassidy Boch and senior Maddie Bell led the team with points. Boche finished the game with 15 kills with two blocks, Bell had 12 kills and six blocks, while senior Kayla Daggett helped with 43 assists and three aces. The team also had 20 digs from senior Gobi Delsing.

### Women's Soccer Loses against Clarke

Clarke University started the game right away by scoring goals before the Mustangs had time to react. While Mount Mercy shot three times, Clarke took 33 shots, with two making it past senior Sarah Johnson on Tuesday, Sept. 15.

### Mustang Men Stomp the Lions

On Tuesday, Sept. 15, Mount Mercy men's soccer team won the game over Clarke University 1-0. Junior Yu Sasaki scored the first and only goal of the night and of the season.

### Mustangs Win at Clarke University

Men's golf team won the championship at Clarke University on Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2020. They finished the tour-

nament with a score of 306, not far behind was Wisconsin Lutheran at 314. Sophomore Colten Mishek won the individual title scoring 73.

### Women's Volleyball Takes the Win

Women's volleyball swept Peru State College Friday, Sept. 18, with a 3-0 set win.

### Men's Soccer Game Postponed

What was supposed to be a men's soccer game against Evangel on Saturday, Sept. 19, turned into a postponed game due to COVID-19 safety concerns.

### Women's Volleyball Postponed

Women's volleyball versus Graceland University on Saturday, Sept. 19, was postponed.

### Women Take Team Title

At the Graceland Invitational, women's golf received another team title with a score of 344. Sophomore Natalea Cook placed in the top five with a score of 83.

### Upcoming Home Games:

#### Saturday, Sept. 26

Women's Golf at 12 p.m. on the Hunter's Ridge Golf Course

Women's Soccer v. Park University at 1 p.m. in the Robert W. Plaster Athletic Complex

Men's Soccer v. Park University at 3:30 p.m. in the Robert W. Plaster Athletic Complex

Women's Volleyball v. Culver-Stockton College at 1 p.m. in Hennessey Rec. Center

#### Tuesday, Sept. 29

Women's Soccer v. William Penn University at 5 p.m. in the Robert W. Plaster Complex

Men's Soccer v. William Penn University at 7:30 p.m. in the Robert W. Plaster Complex



Veronica Jons/Times  
Julia Baker twirls her batons practicing for an upcoming performance in her MMU uniform.

"Something that really challenges me is my lower spine scoliosis," she said.

Despite her condition, she has continued dancing at Mount Mercy on the nationally ranked dance team for three years now. It wasn't always like that though, it started 8 years ago after a boating accident. "No one knew what was wrong with me because I went to doctor after doctor after doctor." Eventually, she gave up and lived with the pain. For her yearly checkup she would go in and listen to what their guesses were for her back problems. Not a single doctor had the same conclusion until two years ago, when they figured it out. "I have lower back scoliosis which led to having an inner muscle problem, as well."

Although she loves dancing and twirling, her condition is a constant battle. During dance season there are a lot of chiropractor visits, weekly physical therapist appointments, and pushing through the pain.

She is currently a nursing major with a junior standing, patiently waiting to graduate in Dec. 2021 to start her career.

"My mom is a nurse, she influenced me to always want to be one too. When I was a kid, she would let me visit all the sick children twice a week. I really bonded with them."

She helps teach twirling at her older sister's studio, Ambition Baton and Dance, while also working in the assisted living department at Oaknoll retirement home.

Despite it all, she finds herself still doing everything she loves from dancing and twirling, to painting and nature walks. "I like to paint often—it's a fun escape for me to do crafts!"

If you find your passion, never let it go.

## Twirler Refuses to Let Scoliosis Get in Her Way

### Nursing Major Performs As She Lives With Pain

By Veronica Jons  
Editor-in-Chief

**S**he is the girl that is known to steal the show of any halftime performance, she wears eye catching clothing and has a bright smile plastered on her face—she is a twirler. But what sets her apart? She is a twirler with lower spine scoliosis.

Julia Baker started her twirling career at the ripe age of

2-years-old. While most toddlers were trying to learn how to play with Play-Doh and color, she was trying to mimic her twirling older sister.

"Me and my sister started doing pageants and we loved watching Iowa's Golden Girl," Baker said. Her sister was so fascinated, she begged her parents to get her into twirling lessons. Eventually, they were able to get into contact with the Golden Girl for private lessons.

Baker started doing pageants at 10-years-old, which is where she really got to show off her skill. She walked a crossed the

pageant stage for the last time when she turned 18.

"I love to twirl; I love to dance. I can't imagine myself doing anything else," Baker said. "Twirling is such a unique sport! I've always liked that aspect of twirling."

Rhythmic twirling, her art of choice, placed her second nationally

in 2017 and ninth on the national level for her age group.

"Rhythmic twirling is the art of twirling mixed with gymnastics and contemporary dance to a song of your choice," Baker explained. However, regular twirling can only be

performed to the song "Stars and Stripes."

2017 proved to be a successful year for Baker; her twirling team ranked 4th nationally after twirling to a social media bullying awareness piece.

"It was a cool performance," she said. "It will always stand out to me! It had a monologue with instruments mixed in and each one of us represented a social media outlet."

But her success doesn't stop there. Her high school dance team placed 14th and 16th nationally at the ESP Center in Florida. After her time as Iowa City West High School's feature twirler, Julia attended Western Illinois University, then later became a Mustang.

### SNAPSHOT

Meet the people on The Hill

Julia Baker

## How COVID-19 Has Changed MMU

By Josh Harmon  
Senior Multimedia Editor

**T**his school year differs from those of the past. With COVID-19 impacting students all over the globe, Mount Mercy University has put restrictions in place to better serve the students, faculty, and staff in Cedar Rapids. It is required at Mount Mercy University to have face coverings at all times on campus. Some campus workers feel it is a necessity to keep campus afloat.

"Wearing a face covering shows your compassion towards others who could be high risk," said Tony Begley, events manager. He gave a large amount of COVID-19 information, proving many faculty and staff were trained for this scenario.

Mount Mercy officials have also asked students, faculty and staff to social distance when on campus. Mount Mercy has created a theme, in heart with the university mascot, in asking members of the Mount Mercy community to stay at least 'one mustang' apart from one another. In correlation with guidelines of the CDC's social distancing standard of six feet, it is also the same average distance it would be if two people stood at the tail and muzzle of a fully grown horse.

Masks and hand san-

tizing stations have been placed at all major entrances to campus, as well as dispersed throughout each campus building.

### "Wearing a face covering shows your compassion towards others who could be high risk."

Tony Begley

Signage has also been placed in all areas throughout campus to remind everyone of the new guidelines.

All multi-purpose rooms on campus, such as Flaherty in Basile Hall, Betty Cherry and the McAuley Theater were transformed into classrooms to spread students out. Classrooms themselves have been set to a limited, socially-distanced capacity.

The rooms are also equipped with new technology to accommodate students performing hybrid learning. Cleaning supplies can be found in each classroom for students to wipe down their learning surface both when entering and leaving.

Dining Services have implemented new measures to ensure the safety of the Mount Mercy community. The cafe dining area has been extended into the University Center, where tables and chairs have been appropriately socially distanced. Cups, plates and utensils are now

disposable. Students will still be able to get drink refills and extra servings of food, but

will be asked to use a new utensil each time.

One of the bigger changes to dining is the added option that students have been given to take their food to-go if they pleased. Instead of being confined to eating in the cafe, students are encouraged to package their desired food and then take it with them to eat in desired places such as student residence halls.

Many changes have already been made at Mount Mercy due to the pandemic, and there's a chance that more changes will have to be made as the academic year progresses.

The administration checks the daily statistics of the United States, Iowa, Cedar Rapids, and Mount Mercy University.

COVID-19 policy updates and additional information can be found at <https://www.mtmerry.edu/campus-life/health-wellness/safe-return/index>.

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**D**ue to the global pandemic, our minds are on COVID-19. So the *Times* asked: How have you been affected by COVID-19 this year?



Winner Williams, sophomore, health care administration major.

"I miss normal learning, like being in class, studying in big groups with my friends, and just having normal fun school activities."



Mallory Hester, junior, education major.

"It was hard for me to adjust to the online learning last year. Another big thing for me is not seeing my grandparents."



Jacqueline Selemani, sophomore, social work major.

"I don't feel motivated this year. I'm not as passionate about my classes as I was last year."



Emma Oliver, junior, elementary education major.

"Getting a job was rough and so is trying to do classes online."



Zahra Abdi, sophomore, nursing major.

"I miss in class learning and getting to hang out with friends."



Jude Zawadi, freshman, biology major.

"Aside from what everyone else is going though, I can't see my family as much because of COVID."

## Friday Conversation Series Begins With Mental Health Topic

**T**he Student Government Association (SGA) welcomes all returning students and freshmen to campus this fall! We are excited to work for the students this coming semester.

So far this year, we have opened freshman president and vice-president applications, as well as five positions in our student senate. These applications have been given an extended deadline of Friday, Sept. 25.

SGA is also working to create conversations with students with the creation of "Leave It on the Floor Fridays." Each

### SGA Column



Emma Lantz

SGA President

Friday, we will discuss a different topic pertaining to students and the lives they live at school and outside. This Friday, Sept. 25, the conversation will be centered around student mental health and suicide prevention.

This will be followed by discussions regarding student debt and managing this expense, Latinx issues, Black Lives Matter, an explanation on how to register to vote and request an absentee ballot, and gender inequalities across the world.

Each of these discussions will occur each Friday from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Zoom. We also welcome students to bring their own topics, as this is an open forum, and we want to hear what you're concerned about.

SGA and marketing also recently came

together to create a multimedia room with necessary equipment for filming, taking photos and other technology needs. This equipment will be held in the library with a check-out policy. This is for the use of students, faculty and staff as our variety of majors and student organizations need updated technology.

With the upcoming semester and COVID-19, we have limited events on campus and guests are not allowed on campus at this time. In addition, the maximum number of participants at any in-person event is 50 and masks are always required, inside or outside.

These restrictions come at a time where keeping students safe is a priority and we hope that you understand and follow the guidelines that we have put in place. If

there are any concerns, you may reach out to us. Please be safe and use your discretion if it is safe for you to attend an event.

Finally, SGA is working on creating a multicultural space on campus and we need opinions on what this should look like. We are working with many registered student organizations to bring our idea to fruition and if you have any ideas, they are welcomed. This is a necessary space to bring to MMU and we hope that it will be utilized.

If there are other projects you would like to start, or any questions that you may have, please reach out to sga@mtmercy.edu.