THE PRESIDENT’S COUNCIL

MAGIS
Making *Magis* a Living Ideal

The Latin word *magis*, meaning “more, to a greater extent,” is one of the core principles of a Jesuit education. But it is much more than an abstract concept. It is a lifelong call to strive for excellence, to make the most of our God-given talents and use them to serve others.

The spirit of *magis* animates the Fordham University President’s Council, a group of successful professionals and philanthropists who are committed to mentoring Fordham’s future leaders, funding key initiatives, and raising the University’s profile.

Joseph M. McShane, S.J., president of Fordham University, established the President’s Council in 2004. Since then, more and more accomplished alumni, parents, and friends have been sharing their time, creativity, and financial resources with Fordham, and the council’s impact on the lives of students and alumni grows each year.
I am honored to lead the President’s Council and very grateful for the work of those who served before me. The bar has been set very high.

Father McShane has created a dynamic era for Fordham with his vision and his tireless efforts to elevate the University to ever-higher levels. He and I agree that our collective reach should exceed our grasp, to borrow from the poet Robert Browning.

With this as a guiding principle, and with a committed group of alumni and faculty by his side, Father McShane has accomplished a great deal. But there is, always, more to be done. I am proud to be a part of that.

I was born and bred in the Bronx, or bread and buttered, as they say in Ireland. Like many of my fellow President’s Council members, I owe much to the generations of my family who paved the way for me in this great city. My great-grandfather came to New York from County Kerry and started his company in the Bronx in 1891. I worked part time in the family real estate business while earning my Fordham degree—a degree that helped me grow that business and advance my own career.

My father—who seldom offered advice—once told me, “You never know your luck.” Today’s Fordham graduates will face a different job landscape than I did, one that will close and open many doors to them before they’re 30. But, as my father explained, these doors open and close for a reason, revealing unexpected opportunities at every turn. Through the President’s Council’s networking, mentoring, and executive-in-residence programs, we can help open doors for Fordham scholars, and give them a competitive edge that will help them seize the opportunities they find.

I look forward to collaborating with my talented fellow council members—both in the boardroom and at Fordham events—to generate ideas that will open new doors for our students and for this great University. Together, we will continue to extend our reach.

James J. Houlihan, GSB ’74
Managing Partner, Houlihan-Parnes Realtors, LLC
For generations, Ed O’Brien and his family have trusted in the power of a Fordham education. His father and grandfather are Fordham graduates, and O’Brien is a trustee emeritus at his high school alma mater, Fordham Prep.

An investment management professional who has spent 33 years on Wall Street, O’Brien believes in the positive impact of mentorship. As a member of the President’s Council, he’s brought several Fordham students to his offices to show them around and offer his career advice. “I got help from people 30 years ago,” he said, “and I think it’s very important. Fordham’s done a great job of putting people together.”

O’Brien has made it possible for new generations of scholars to attend Fordham by establishing the Edward I. O’Brien Jr. Endowed Scholarship Fund, which benefits outstanding students pursuing American Catholic studies. “As a Catholic, you take pride in Fordham,” he said. “I think it’s a great school, and I think the leadership is tremendous.”

“Forham works hard to help students take advantage of the University’s location in the financial capital of the world.”
Your education is something you can take with you. Everywhere.

When Colleen M. Jones was pursuing her M.B.A. at Fordham while working full time, she wasn’t able to take advantage of the University’s networking, mentoring, and job placement programs.

Now senior vice president at Klingenstein Fields & Co., LLC, Jones is enjoying the opportunity to mentor students at the Graduate School of Business Administration and Fordham’s Higher Education Opportunity Program, which supports students whose academic performance and income would otherwise make college just beyond reach. She recently worked one-on-one with an undergraduate accounting major and two graduate students, helping them develop time-management skills and prepare for job interviews.

“One of the Jesuit principles is to give back,” she said, “and that is part of my genuine philosophy in life.”

Adjungo

v: to join, connect

Colleen M. Jones, GBA ’88

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For John C. McGinley, executive director/head of retail asset management for JPMorgan Chase, part of the work of the President’s Council is “creating and maintaining a buzz about the quality of a Fordham education in the professional community.” But he also works to build a sense of pride among current students, helping them see themselves as part of a larger network.

“The goal is to develop future alumni—get them to think about and appreciate the lifelong value of holding a Fordham diploma.”

McGinley frequently visits campus, mentoring students and serving as a guest panelist at events. Continuing to nurture that Fordham connection for graduates, he co-hosts the annual Fordham alumni reception at JPMorgan Chase.
Incito

v: to excite, spur, inspire, increase

Peggy Smyth’s motivation for serving on the President’s Council is simple: “Everything good I have in my life,” she said, “I owe to Fordham.”

The vice president of finance at Con Edison met her husband, Bernard G. (Berney) Smyth, FCRH ’85, when she was studying economics at Fordham College at Rose Hill on a presidential scholarship. Joseph A. O’Hare, S.J., now president emeritus of Fordham, baptized the couple’s two sons at the University Church. And Smyth is still best friends with her Fordham roommate.

Smyth achieved remarkable success in the business world at an early age; in 2002, Crain’s New York Business named her to its “40 Under 40” list. She went on to be a global business executive in some of the world’s biggest companies, including technology and energy firms.

After receiving a Fordham education, learning the “tech side” of her business was a challenge for which Smyth was prepared. “At Fordham you learn how to learn,” she said. “The world is constantly changing, so you always need to be studying to stay up-to-date. And Fordham teaches you that. That’s why I am a really big advocate of a liberal arts education.”

“Most Fordham students are pretty hungry to succeed, and that’s what I like to see. Attitude is everything.”
Coming from a small all-girls Catholic high school, Roberta Siciliano knew she wanted a broader university experience without losing that “sense of community and sense of family.”

“For me, Fordham was the right blend. It was large enough to have everything you wanted but still have the personal touch.”

While the future actuary was drawn to Fordham’s math and science curriculum, she appreciated the “ethical grounding” she found in her philosophy and theology courses. “It forces you to think about the larger issues beyond your field.”

Throughout her career, she has stayed grounded and held tight to what is most important to her. “I deliberately chose to keep my family time special, and those I love close.” So close, that in 2002, she started her own consulting firm with her husband and stepdaughter.

As a member of the President’s Council, Garland enjoys mentoring Fordham students and young alumni, encouraging them to maintain a healthy work-life balance as they pursue their career goals. “Your worth is not determined by how many hours you work, but by your contributions to yourself, your family, your employer, your clients, and society as a whole.”

“Fordham is a nurturing environment, but also a challenging one. I never had a class where the teacher didn’t know my name.”
Joseph M. McShane, S.J., president of Fordham University, invites the members of the President’s Council to engage in the life and mission of the University in a variety of distinct and meaningful ways. Specifically, President’s Council members:

- provide philanthropic support to the University at the highest levels, sharing both the inspiration and leadership necessary to help Fordham realize its greatest dreams, as an institution dedicated to wisdom and learning in the service of others;

- reach out to and engage the University’s top undergraduate applicants, sharing with them the Fordham story and its lifelong impact;

- mentor current students and young alumni, promoting their academic success and career development;

- leverage corporate relationships to create enhanced opportunities for students and alumni;

- participate in the Executive-in-Residence program, guest-teaching classes and leading seminars in their area of expertise;

- lend the volunteer leadership and support necessary to ensure the annual outstanding success of the Fordham Founder’s Award Dinner.

For more information about the President’s Council, please visit www.fordham.edu/prescouncil.