



THE PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL



THE FORDHAM UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL

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.

Since the President's Council was established in 2004, 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 young alumni grows each year.

The President's Council has nearly 100 members, drawn from across the professional world, contributing their time and expertise for the benefit of future Fordham generations.

Tania Tetlow, president of Fordham, invites each member of the President's Council to engage in the University's life and mission in 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 latest admitted class, 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

Serve as guest speakers in classes, student club events, and on panels in their areas of expertise

Lend the volunteer leadership and support necessary to ensure the annual outstanding success of the Fordham Founder's Dinner and Scholarship Fund

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





**Catherine
Blaney-Petralia**
FCLC '86, PAR, Chair

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

When I enrolled at Fordham College at Lincoln Center in the '80s, I found a strong sense of community and support. A Jackson Heights, Queens, native, I wouldn't have been able to attend Fordham if it weren't for the scholarship the University awarded me. That support, both moral and financial, is a big driver behind my ongoing philanthropy. In fact, giving back isn't just something that's personally important to me or that I do for my alma mater; I've dedicated my career to it.

After Fordham, I went on to earn a law degree from St. John's University. Now, as the development lead for Bloomberg Philanthropies, I'm responsible for finding sponsors and funding for a variety of projects, from the 9/11 Memorial & Museum and the Perelman Performing Arts Center to Everytown for Gun Safety. Projects are sustainable the more people you have involved, so I try to get people involved in causes that really affect us all—from climate change to feeling secure in your homes.

Today, as chair of Fordham's President's Council, I work with the University and other alumni to help make sure students get the financial and moral support I did. I serve as a mentor and help students attain internships at Bloomberg Philanthropies and elsewhere. I still reside in Manhattan with my husband, Michael; our two children, Hope and Nicholas, both of whom are getting a Jesuit education; and our golden doodle, Piper. I'm so excited to continue working to advance Fordham's mission for the entire community.

Catherine Blaney-Petralia

**“Never stop learning,
never stop exploring,
never feel like you are
in one area and you're
sort of pigeonholed.
Fordham didn't do
that, right? Fordham
is the place where you
can specialize, but
you don't have to
compartmentalize.”**



John McGinley
FCRH '94, Vice Chair

MAGIS

Macto

v: to magnify, glorify, honor

Before he knew anything about Fordham, John McGinley felt its influence through his grandmother, who earned a master's degree in social work from the University in 1946.

"She stopped me as I walked through the kitchen one day and said, 'I don't know where you're looking at schools, but you should look at Fordham,'" he said. Once he saw Keating Hall and experienced "a place with great history and interest," he decided to enroll.

Today, McGinley is the chief operating officer for global real estate at JPMorganChase. He credits Fordham with helping him fall in love with New York City and launch his career. With Heather, his wife, a fellow Ram, he's working to make that experience possible for new generations of students. They set up two scholarships: one that benefits students enrolled in the Graduate School of Social Service, and another, the McGinley Family Scholarship, that's earmarked for a first-generation student.

"As we were going through the financial aid process and college applications in general, I thought to myself: I can't imagine what it's like if your mom or dad doesn't speak English, or you've never done it before, or they don't even think you should be going to college," he said. "There's a million reasons that somebody who's in their first turn as a college attendee may just need a little bit of a leg up."

McGinley considers their generosity "just a drop in the bucket," though: "It's nothing compared to what Fordham has given us."

"The idea of 'people for others' was something that really resonated with me. I think some of it was by osmosis: I didn't know that I was embodying Jesuit principles until I was kind of through it. And then I realized, 'Oh, yeah, this is who I am.'"





**Ann
Williams-Isom**

FCLC '86

MAGIS

Adjugo

v: to join, connect

Anne Williams-Isom's life reflects the story and values of Fordham. A daughter of immigrants from Trinidad and Tobago, she first learned about the struggles of vulnerable children and families and the importance of social justice while growing up in Queens, where she attended Catholic schools. Her post-Fordham career has led her to key roles in both nonprofit and executive leadership.

Most recently, as the deputy mayor for health and human services, she oversaw the city's health and social services agencies, addressing the needs of seniors, children, victims of domestic and gender-based violence, and people struggling with hunger and homelessness.

Prior to her city government role, Williams-Isom was the CEO of the Harlem Children's Zone, a nonprofit anti-poverty organization. As a President's Council member, she has helped mentor students from underrepresented backgrounds. The spiritual strength Fordham helped her develop is evident in stirring remarks she has delivered at University events, including a recent Graduate School of Social Service diploma ceremony and Fordham Women's Summit.

In striving to advance the University or other causes, "be joyful warriors," she said at the summit. "That joy is a vital ingredient. It is the spark that can light the way for you and for others around you."

"As far as I'm concerned, philanthropy is a part of having a full life. All of us need to walk in our purpose and to connect to that light that is inside of us."



Jason Caldwell
GABELLI '10, '17, GSAS '11

MAGIS

Genero

v: to beget, engender, produce, create

Growing up in Baltimore, Jason Caldwell had what he calls the stereotypical “African American in an inner city” experience: single-parent home, food stamps, drug dealers as the most successful people around—until his athletic prowess earned him a football scholarship and a chance at a different life. Today, he’s a three-time Fordham graduate and executive director at J.P. Morgan Private Bank.

“I stand on the shoulders of hundreds of people who saw something in me and who gave me an opportunity to be successful,” he said. “It was up to me to continue to push forward, but there were hundreds of people who actually pried the door open or at least gave me a glimpse of what success looked like.”

Caldwell’s philanthropic motivation is simple: He feels indebted to Fordham for the blessings and opportunities it’s bestowed upon him. He met his wife, Katheryn Pereyra-Caldwell, FCRH '08, on campus, and the alumni network has played a major role in helping him advance professionally. He generously supports Fordham Athletics and the Fordham Founder’s Undergraduate Scholarship Fund. And by serving on the President’s Council, he believes he’s in the best position to help pry open doors for Fordham students from backgrounds similar to his own, students who just need a chance to thrive.

“It’s okay to fall short or to start over. I didn’t feel that way early on, but I wish I would’ve taken more risks—when it came to my career, when it came to traveling. It’s okay to fail. It’s not about how many times you get knocked down; what’s more important is how many times you get back up.”





**Margaret (Peggy)
Smyth**

FCRH '85

MAGIS

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."

Now a senior advisor and chair of global infrastructure at CenTrio Energy at QIC, she met her husband, Bernard Smyth, FCRH '85, when she was studying economics at Fordham College at Rose Hill on a presidential scholarship. Joseph A. O'Hare, S.J., who served as the 32nd president 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 become 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."



Cindy Vojtech
GABELLI '00

MAGIS

Suscipio

v: to raise up, maintain, support

A Southern California native, Cindy Vojtech came to Fordham for the Catholic education and proximity to Wall Street. She was active in Campus Ministry, competed on the varsity volleyball and crew teams, and interned at Lehman Brothers.

She went on to earn a doctorate in economics and is currently a principal economist for the Federal Reserve Board in Washington, D.C.

Fordham was a critical waypoint on her journey. As a student, she was challenged “not just academically but athletically and spiritually, too,” said Vojtech, who graduated as valedictorian.

Her Fordham experiences have informed the ways in which she gives back as a President's Council member. As an undergraduate, she was the first recipient of a scholarship created by Joan and John E. Toffolon Jr., GABELLI '73, '77, for talented female students at the Gabelli School of Business. In addition to mentoring students and cheering on the volleyball team when they are in D.C., Vojtech has given in support of scholarships, as well as the volleyball and crew programs.

She developed a friendship with the Toffolons, whose generosity helped inspire her to join the council, and she strives to help students benefit from the kinds of experiences that shaped her at Fordham. “All these experiences,” she said, “develop a person who is prepared to face any kind of challenge.”

“At Fordham, I found mentors in my coaches, professors, and teammates. Their support prepared me to thrive and grow in a team-based work environment.”



