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### Transfer Student Finds Her Place, Thrives At UST

Steffani Rush doesn't sleep much. She can't with a schedule as tightly packed as hers. Rush understands the value of hard work and utilizing the gifts that God has given her.

But the senior education major from Baytown took a detour before finding the fulfilling – and hectic – life awaiting her at the University of St. Thomas. She first attended the University of Houston.

"I went to the University of Houston my first year and I just really knew in my heart that it was not the place God wanted me to be," said Rush. "I felt God calling me here [UST] but at UH I just didn't have it together. I had to go to Lee College to get my GPA in line with what St. Thomas required."

Answering that call, Rush transferred into the university and immediately jumped into campus life. She joined the Catholic Daughters, a Catholic women's group, became active with Celts for Life, and became a Presidential Ambassador at the recommendation of her admissions counselor, representing the university at college fairs near her hometown.

And last year, she was selected as UST's Mardi Gras Queen for exemplifying the school's commitment to educating leaders of faith and character.

Rush's experience is not



unique. More than 40 percent of UST undergraduates transferred here from another school so the University is keenly aware of the needs and challenges confronting transfer students.

"I wanted a college that was going to foster my faith and challenge me academically," Rush said. "I felt UST married those two together for me perfectly. I could develop to be the best young woman I know God wants me to be."

Rush will graduate with certification to teach early childhood through grade six. Following the Catholic tradition of teaching, Rush understands that her faith plays an important role in the path that she has chosen, feeling that as

a teacher she is called not only called to educate her students but also be a model of Christ for them.

Rush is also a youth minister at her home parish of St. John the Evangelist.

"At UH I was in a political science class and as I was sitting there I felt God saying in my heart 'you need to be with the youth,'" said Rush. "I sent a text to the youth minister and said 'you have to get me involved.' It went from just volunteering to actually getting a job there."

Rush says that it is through prayer and the support of her family and friends as well as the support of the faculty on campus that she is able to accomplish all that she has

# **Homecoming Marks Major Milestone**

The University of St. Thomas' 2012
Homecoming will commemorate a
central part of the University's history by
marking the 100th anniversary of the
Link-Lee Mansion.

And along with the history will be lots of food, fun, and games as UST alumni, students and friends celebrate Celtic Warrior Weekend, Feb. 17-18. This year's Homecoming will pay special tribute to the reunion classes of 1952, 1962, 1987 and 2002.

### Friday, Feb. 17

6 p.m. – Mass at Chapel of St. Basil 7-9 p.m. – Dean's Reception at Link-Lee Mansion.

### Saturday, Feb. 18

1-3 p.m. – Family-friendly tailgate and entertainment

2 p.m. - Alumni vs. Student Soccer Game on Hackett Field

3 p.m. – Lady Celts Basketball Team vs. Wiley College at Jerabeck

5 p.m. - Celts Basketball Team vs. Wiley College at Jerabeck

7-9 p.m. - After party at Jackson's Watering Hole

For more information visit www.stthom.edu/homecoming.



# Mardi Gras King & Queen

John Ruff, a senior political science major, and Rosemary Tran, a senior biology major, are the 2012 Mardi Gras King and Queen. Chosen for their exemplary records of academics, leadership and service, Ruff and Tran will be honored at UST's 62nd annual Mardi Gras Gala on **Feb. 21**.

# **Director of Nursing Program Tschirch Named School of Nursing Dean**

**D**r. Poldi Tschirch, RN, BC, director of Nursing Program Development at the University of St. Thomas, was named dean of the School of Nursing on Jan. 26. The University hired Tschirch in 2009 to develop the Nursing Program curriculum in anticipation of reopening the School of Nursing, which closed in 1986. After 25 years, the nursing program has been reinstated and received accreditation from the Texas Board of Nursing and the Southern Association of Colleges.

Tschirch's appointment as dean and holder of the Peavy Endowed Chair is a milestone for nursing education at UST, said Dr. Dominic Aquila, vice president for Academic Affairs.

"She has supplied unrivaled leadership, intelligence and creativity at every stage in restarting UST's Nursing Program," he said.

The chair's namesake, Carol Peavy, is a retired nurse and a St. Thomas Nursing School faculty member from 1980 to 1982. The Peavys' \$2.5 million donation supports the restoration of a UST nursing curriculum designed to educate students with both an academic and spiritual foundation.

The School of Nursing has accepted 34 students for studies in the nursing major, leading to a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree.

"I hope it becomes one of the premier nursing programs in the country – one that will graduate nurses who build on the historic tradition of caring in the Catholic Church and are prepared to shape the future of nursing," Tschirch said.

# UST Names Winners of Annual Essay Contest | Lecture Explores St.

Students, parents and teachers from Catholic schools in the Galveston-Houston Archdiocese gathered for the eighth annual University of St. Thomas /Archdiocesan Essay Contest Awards
Ceremony on Friday, Feb. 3 at the Co. Cathodral of the Secret



Ceremony on Friday, Feb. 3 at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred the first place essay at her grade level.

Heart. More than 500 people from 47 schools attended the events, which included a prayer service led by the Most. Rev. Daniel Cardinal DiNardo and a reception at the Cathedral Centre.

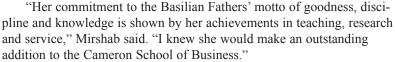
Students from third through 12th grades wrote essays on topics such as their relationship with God, the greatest lesson they ever learned, people who exemplify 'Faith in Practice,' Christ's call to serve others, and the student's experience of faith, academics and service.

The University received 4,705 essays, which were read and ranked by 22 UST faculty and staff members, who chose 656 finalists. UST awarded \$1,000 scholarships to first-place high school winners if they attend the University. The essays from first-place winners in every grade level were enlarged as posters and put on display at the reception. The Essay Contest was sponsored by the UST Catholic Outreach Office and coincided with the nationwide observance of Catholic Schools Week.

# **UST Business School Striving For Diversity**

When Cathy Hardnett joined the University of St. Thomas' business faculty she achieved an institutional milestone as the first African-American full-time faculty member at UST's Cameron School of Business.

Dr. Bahman Mirshab, dean of the business school, first met Hardnett at the 2010 annual American Accounting Association meeting. He said he was immediately impressed and sought to recruit her to UST.



Minority faculty play a key role in attracting more minority business students, Mirshab said, and since Houston is one of the world's most diverse cities it is essential that graduates are prepared to thrive in a diverse workforce

UST's commitment to faith was one of the factors that attracted her to the University, Hardnett said, and since arriving last year has been impressed by the school's close-knit, collegial environment.

# Lecture Explores St. Edith Stein's Philosophy

The intellectual legacy of the philosopher and Holocaust martyr St. Edith Stein will be the focus of a Feb. 28 lecture at the



University of St. Thomas.

The 4th Annual Zambosco-Thomas Lecture will feature Dr. Angela Ales Bello, an Italian philosopher and a leading authority on Stein.

The story of Stein – a German Jew and philosopher whose search for the truth led her to Christianity, a Carmelite monastery and eventually death at the Auschwitz concentration camp – is known throughout the world. She was canonized in 1998 by Pope John Paul II. Stein left behind a serious body of work as she sought to bridge the Catholic philosophy of St. Thomas Aguinas with modern philosophical thought. Bello will address this contribution to philosophy in her lecture.

The lecture is free and open to the public and will be in the Ahern Room of UST's Crooker Center, 3909 Graustark and begins at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday **Feb. 28**. For more information, contact Kathleen Haney at haneyk@stthom.edu.

### **University Singers Concert**

The Music Department is sponsoring a University Singers concert on Monday, Feb. 20. The Singers, under the direction of Dr. Brady Knapp, will begin the performance at 7:30 p.m. in the Chapel of St. Basil. Their repertoire will include music by Heinrich Biber, Michael Haydn, Georg Friederich Telemann and others.



### Fine Arts & Drama Presents "Almost, Maine"

The Fine Arts & Drama Department will present the play "Almost, Maine" starting on Thursday, Feb. 23. The play starts at 8 p.m. in Jones Theatre. It will also run Feb. 24, 25 and March 1-3. Admission is \$5 for UST students, \$10 for faculty, staff and seniors and \$15 for the general public.



### **UST Hosts River Oaks Orchestra**

UST will host a performance of the River Oaks Orchestra String Quartet on Thursday, Feb. 23. It is the second in a three concert series sponsored by the University and the professional chamber orchestra. It will start at 7 p.m. in Cullen Hall. Admission is \$20 or \$10 for students. For more information call 713-665-2700.



### Panel Discusses Religion In Czech Republic

The struggles and resurgence of religious faith in the Czech Republic since the fall of communism will be the topic of a University of St. Thomas conference on Feb. 29. The event is free and open to the public and will be on Wed. Feb. 29 in the Ahern Room of the Crooker Center at 7 p.m.



#### Lecture Explores Gregorian Chant

The University of St. Thomas will host an address on Feb. 15 discussing the beauty and meaning of Gregorian Chant and its continuing role in the liturgy of the Catholic Church. The talk is free and open to the public and will start at 7 p.m. on Wednesday in the Scanlan Room of the Jerabeck Center. For more information





# President's Day of Service

The UST community will answer Dr. Robert Ivany's call to roll up its sleeves and help others for the eighth annual President's Day of Service on Saturday, Feb. 25.

Started with Ivany's inauguration as UST's president in 2004, the Day of Service has quickly become a popular UST tradition. Students, alumni, faculty and staff will work side-by-side on a wide range of service projects. The day starts with breakfast with Dr. Ivany at 8 a.m. in the Crooker Center and projects begin at 9 a.m.

## Pornography: Naked and Unashamed?

With global revenues in excess of \$100 billion, pornography is big business. Its consumption crosses every demographic barrier: rich and poor, young and old, religious and secular, male and female. Many consider it a harmless diversion. Others aren't so sure.



To understand its impact, come to the first of seven sessions presented by The Bottom of the Cup at 12:15 p.m. on **February 14** in Jones Hall. Listen to one of the porn industry's top producers, hear the stories of a major porn star, meet a couple who traveled down pornography's addictive path and watch 3D brain modeling of a brain processing pornography. Bring phones, tablets and laptops to participate in real time surveys and feedback during the event. Free Chick-Fil-A will be provided for the first 250 students.

For more information, visit www.facebook.com/thebottomofthecup.

Star View is published by the Office of Marketing Communications as a means of informing the UST community about University and campus news.

Call 713-525-3116 with questions and/or comments.