

Ethics and Public Responsibility

# *Up Close*

2024-2025 Annual Report



**SMU**

Cary M. Maguire Center for  
Ethics & Public Responsibility





# 2024-2025 Annual Report

**CARY M. MAGUIRE CENTER FOR  
ETHICS AND PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY**



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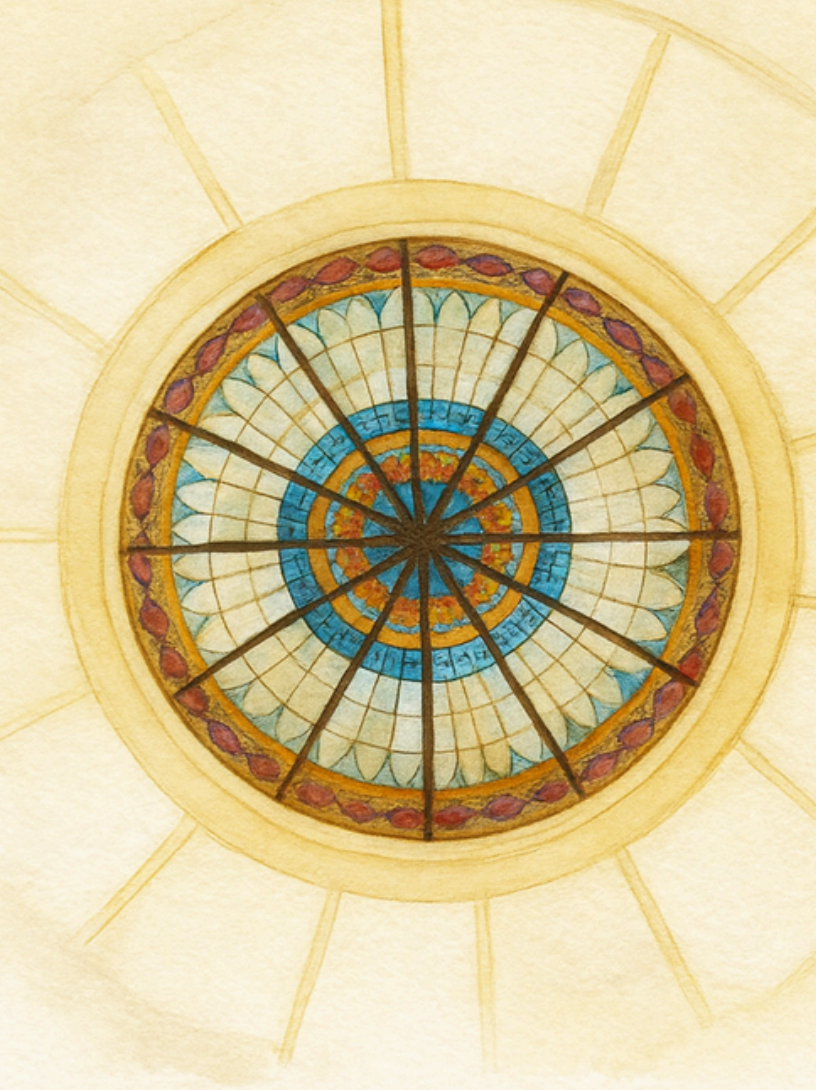
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# *Letter from the Director*



Look closely and you'll notice the Maguire Center's impact among the students, faculty, and community members connected to our work who embody ethics and public responsibility each day. It emerges in the ways they build understanding and turn values into action. These glimpses reveal how ethics is lived, not just taught.

This year, the Center created opportunities to engage directly with pressing ethical questions and to reflect on the responsibilities that come with them. Programs ranged from voter education initiatives and civil discourse conversations to lectures addressing urgent issues such as climate change, health, and trust in the media. Our Public Service Fellows applied their skills in communities worldwide, the Ethics Essay Prize elevated stories of how values are formed, and faculty collaborations deepened civic and ethical inquiry in the classroom.

Through these efforts, the common good is recognized not as an abstract idea, but as a lived responsibility. Ethics comes into view through dialogue, study, and service, shifting and growing as each generation takes up the work of shaping a thoughtful and just society.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to creating spaces where difficult questions can be approached with honesty and respect. The challenges of our time such as political division, environmental change, and rapid technological disruption require more than expertise. They call for courage, humility, and a willingness to take responsibility for one another. Our role is to prepare students and equip our community with the habits of mind and heart that make constructive engagement possible, even when answers are complex.

At its heart, our mission is simple: to foster the exploration and understanding of ethical questions in ways that strengthen both individuals and communities. That mission is woven throughout this report, in the ideas examined, the initiatives undertaken, and the recognition given to those who lead with responsibility. I invite you to read these stories as evidence that the work of ethics and public responsibility belongs not only to the Center, but to all of us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rita Kirk". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning.

***Rita Kirk, Ph.D.***

**William F. May Endowed Director**

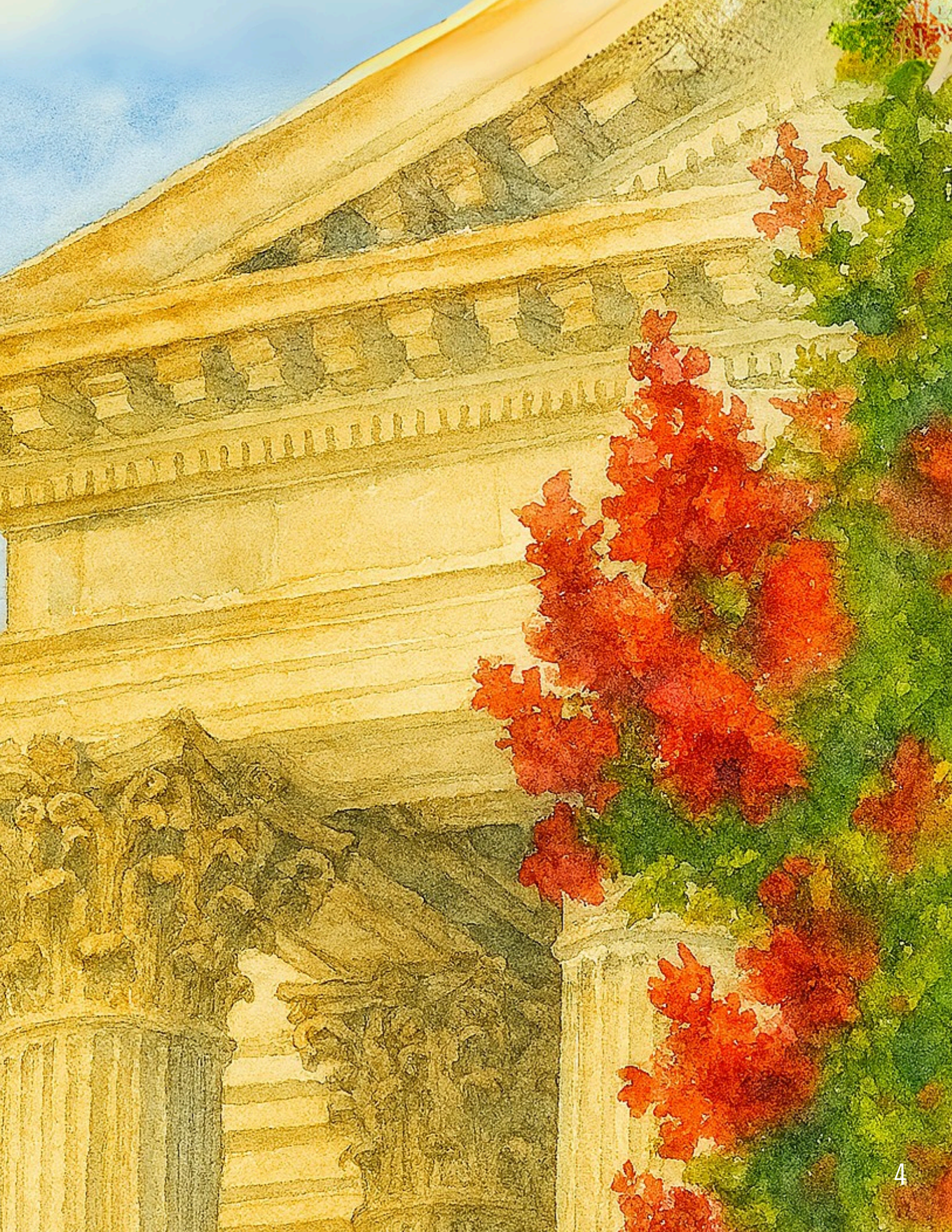




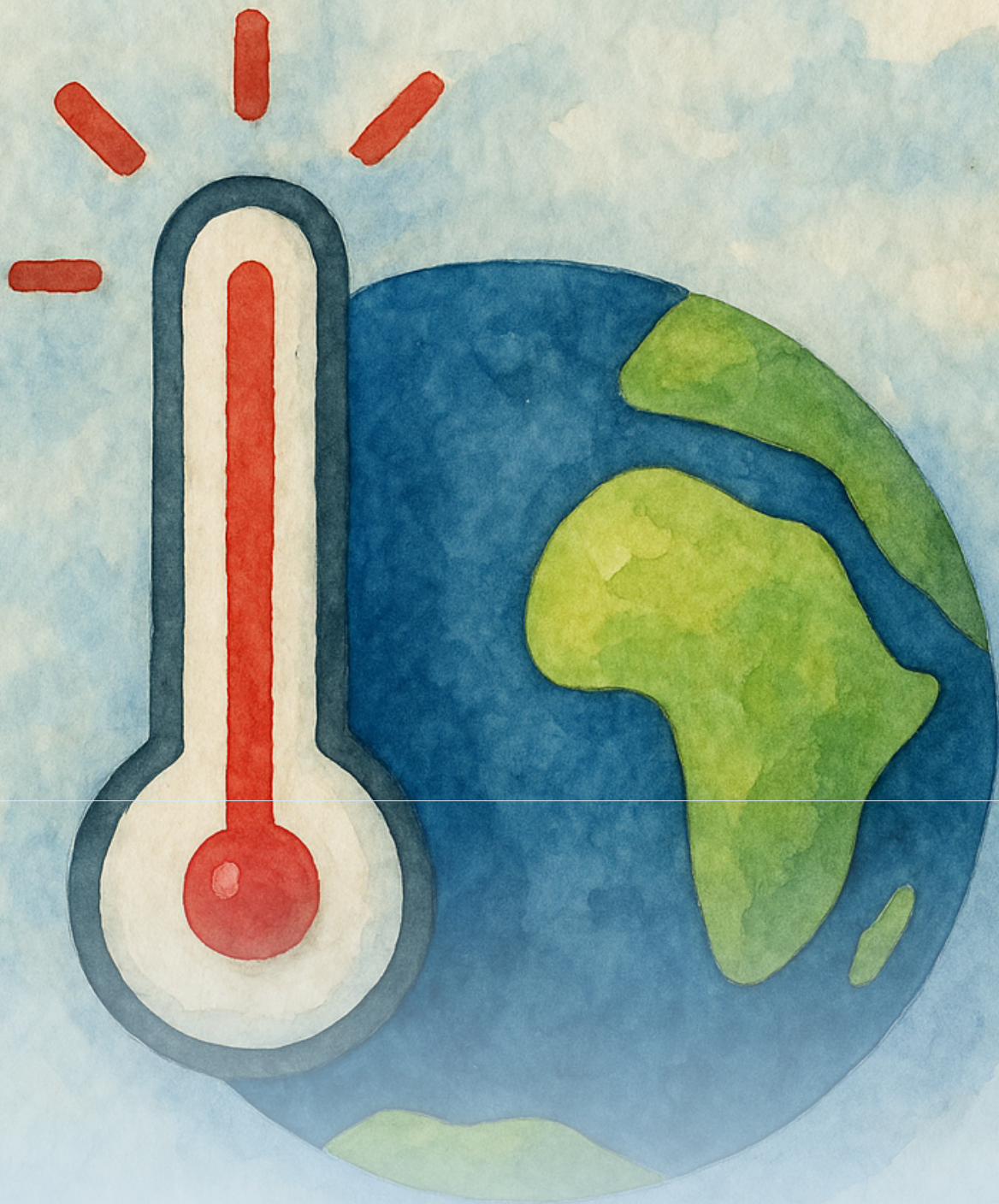
# *Ethics in Action*

This year, the Center brought ethical questions into focus through programming that connected ideas to action in classrooms, on campus, and across the community. From lectures on climate change and public trust to hands-on voter education efforts, each initiative invited participants to confront real-world issues through the dual lens of ethics and public responsibility. We built on the strength of longstanding Center programs while also responding in new ways to the concerns of the moment, fostering conversations shaped by both tradition and timeliness.









# CLIMATE, CONSEQUENCE, AND THE COST OF INACTION

The Maguire Center for Ethics & Public Responsibility hosted Dr. Klaus Desmet, who delivered the 2024 Maguire Public Scholar Lecture, “The Cost of Climate Change: Ethical and Economic Perspectives.” In his talk, Dr. Desmet reframed climate change as both an economic challenge and a moral one, underscoring how its burdens fall unevenly across nations, communities, and generations. His lecture demonstrated how scholarship can inform public debate while also pressing us to act with greater ethical responsibility.



This recognition is made possible through the careful nominations and deliberations of our faculty selection committee, whose commitment ensures that the Public Scholar Lectureship elevates voices shaping ethical conversations across campus and beyond. Cary M. Maguire University Professor of Ethics Dr. D. Stephen Long, who served on the 2025 selection committee, reflected on the importance of the lectureship:

**Serving on the selection committee for the 2025 Maguire Public Scholar Lectureship offered a meaningful opportunity to elevate the intellectually rigorous, ethically engaged, and publicly relevant scholarship that our university champions. This annual lectureship honors faculty whose research provokes ethical questions and demands public discourse, pushing important ideas beyond the walls of the academy and into broader conversations that shape our shared world. The committee provides an opportunity for SMU faculty to interact with the interesting work their colleagues are accomplishing and then honoring one of their own.**

**This year's selection, Dr. Desmet, made possible a challenge to our community to consider climate change as a matter of inequality as the effects of climate change are unevenly distributed across nations, communities, and generations.**

**Being part of this process reminded me how essential it is for universities to create space for scholarship that challenges us ethically, intellectually, and publicly. The Maguire Public Scholar Lectureship continues to be one of those spaces. It affirms that the role of the scholar is not only to generate knowledge, but to help communities grapple with the moral dimensions of the world they inhabit. Dr. Desmet's lecture did exactly that, and I'm grateful to have played a part in bringing that conversation to our campus.**







# *Beyond the Third Rail:*

## **A Model for Civil Discourse**

By Michelle Tes, Maguire Center Student Staffer

As a college student, politics never intrigued me because of how divisive it can be. I was often told to avoid discussing politics because it's a conversation where people tend to get aggressive and even vulgar. But I always wondered, why? Why can't we have civil, respectful conversations about politics, a subject based largely on opinions, without immediately becoming defensive? Growing up in a polarized political climate made me hesitant to engage in these discussions and even discouraged me from voting, as I feared contributing to the division. However, my perspective shifted after spending time in a room full of individuals who demonstrated a deep respect for one another, despite their differing viewpoints.

The "Beyond the Third Rail" event, hosted by SMU's Center for Presidential History and the Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility, reshaped my perspective on politics and how we approach conversations on this topic. The event followed a lecture by two national policy experts: University of Texas professor Dr. Peniel Joseph, speaking from a Democratic viewpoint, and Heritage Foundation visiting fellow Stephen Moore, speaking from a Republican one. The two debated the domestic policy directions of the upcoming election. Watching advocates from both parties express their opinions without any vulgarity or aggression was eye-opening. Their respectful discourse set an example for everyone in the room, showing that even in disagreement, mutual respect is possible.

After the lecture, students participated in a facilitated dialogue led by Dr. Jill DeTemple, an experienced facilitator and faculty member at SMU. We were divided into small groups and guided through a structured conversation that encouraged reflection, curiosity, and connection. We started by setting communication agreements such as "avoid interrupting," "don't try to persuade," and "share airtime." These ground rules helped make the space feel safer and the conversations to come more intentional.



One of the most impactful moments was when Dr. DeTemple asked each of us to share a story about a time a law, rule, or policy affected us or our families. As each person spoke, it became clear that everyone regardless of background or political leaning carries personal experiences that shape the way they view the world. This reminded me that behind every opinion is a story worth hearing. The structure of the conversation required us to hold our thoughts and simply listen, which made the room feel more respectful and connected.

This exercise reinforced the idea that the “think before you speak” principle applies in all types of conversations, not just political ones. Once we took time to sit with our thoughts and fully process them, the discussions flowed much more smoothly. We were able to articulate our ideas more clearly while maintaining mutual respect.

As we went around the circle and were prompted to dive deeper into the original question, it was fascinating to witness the thought processes of my group members, even when I didn't fully agree with them. Seeing civil conversations unfold between individuals who think and act differently from myself was eye-opening. It further motivated me to set that example in future conversations.

Politics is often met with hesitation, viewed as a breeding ground for conflict or hostility, but it doesn't have to be that way. Change begins when we recognize one another as human, each of us shaped by unique experiences, beliefs, and emotions. Disagreements are inevitable, yet they don't require us to abandon civility. At the heart of any meaningful dialogue should be mutual respect, a principle that's especially vital when navigating political conversations.

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***“Dialogue invites students to hear what is true for others, even as they explore what is true for themselves. These are vital experiences that build the habits of civic engagement on the foundation of core values and virtuous character.”***

**-DR. JILL DETEMPLE**

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## ABOUT DR. JILL DETEMPLE

Dr. Jill DeTemple is the Chair of Religious Studies, Professor of Religious Studies, and, by courtesy, Professor of Anthropology at Southern Methodist University. Dr. DeTemple is also an Associate at Essential Partners, a non-profit organization helping people build relationships across differences.

Her research focuses on religiously sponsored development in Latin America and on the uses of dialogue for teaching in higher education. She is currently co-authoring a book, *The Dialogic Classroom in Higher Education: Listening for Engagement and Deep Learning* that introduces Reflective Structured Dialogue and attendant approaches to dialogic classrooms in postsecondary contexts.





# BUILDING CONFIDENCE AT THE BALLOT BOX

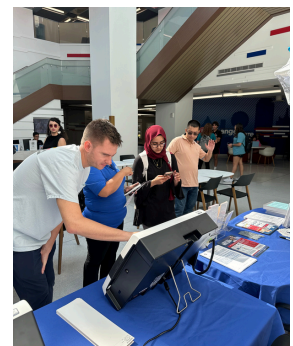
By Rylee Bailey, Maguire Center Coordinator

During a high-profile election season, the Maguire Center set out to help SMU students feel informed and empowered as participants in the democratic process. Many students face barriers long before they cast a ballot, from complicated registration rules to unclear deadlines. Together with our campus and community partners, we worked to make that system clearer and more accessible.

Throughout the fall, our team provided practical, nonpartisan support to students at every stage of the voting process. We helped them register to vote, explained deadlines, walked through ballot logistics, and even brought in voting machines so students could learn by doing. We also partnered with SMU's Multicultural Greek Council to host voter registration events that reached new corners of campus and encouraged broader student engagement.

Our collaboration with Dallas County Elections added another layer of impact. Certified deputy voter registrars joined us on campus to help students register in real time and answer technical questions about voter ID laws, district boundaries, and absentee voting. SMU's Hughes-Trigg Student Center even served as an official polling location on Election Day, giving students the chance to vote right where they live and learn.

What struck me most throughout this effort was the number of students who didn't just stop by to fill out a form but stayed to ask questions, double-check details, or talk through concerns. These were thoughtful conversations driven by a genuine desire to understand the democratic process and participate with confidence. When students are given the knowledge and tools to engage fully, that experience stays with them. It becomes part of how they see their role not just as voters, but as members of a broader civic community.







# A NEW BLUEPRINT FOR *Civic Engagement*

By Jenna Young, Campus Votes Project Democracy Fellow

As a rising senior at SMU, pursuing a double major in Political Science and Psychology with minors in Law and Legal Reasoning and History, I first became interested in voter engagement through my experience running in student government elections. That interest led to my involvement as a Campus Democracy Fellow for Campus Vote Project, a nonpartisan initiative that works to expand student access to and education about the ballot.

When I initially got involved, it was because I had more questions than answers. Over time, I've learned that what we often label as voter apathy is actually a mask for discouragement. In my opinion, many students care deeply about the polarizing and prevalent issues in our society, but don't always see how voting leads to tangible change. There's no one right way to address this. The challenge is showing up and meeting people where they are.

In my experience, students aren't apathetic. They're overwhelmed, discouraged, or unsure how to navigate the system. Some believe their voice doesn't matter. Others may think the system is too broken or that the issues they care about won't be addressed by their single vote. But I've also seen what happens when students feel empowered and informed.

For me, this work isn't just about elections, but rather about building lifelong habits of leadership and ethical responsibility. Voter engagement is a gateway to deeper civic involvement and I believe my generation has both the passion and the power to redefine what civic engagement looks like—grounded in integrity, driven by community, and focused on long-term change.

Looking ahead, I hope civic engagement for my generation becomes less reactive and more intentional. Long-term change isn't always easy to measure, but it's necessary. I hope to attend law school and become a judge one day, and this work is a foundational part of that path.







# TRUST IN MEDIA

A Conversation About Transparency and Accountability at *The Dallas Morning News*

By Dr. Rita Kirk, Maguire Center Director

Today's students won't just inherit our media systems, they'll shape them. That was the starting point for our conversation this fall with leaders from *The Dallas Morning News*. In a room filled with future journalists and communications professionals, we created space for students to speak directly with industry leaders currently navigating the realities of newsroom pressures, disinformation, and public skepticism in real time.

I've spent much of my career studying how institutions earn and lose trust. But the most powerful part of this event wasn't what our speakers brought to the stage. It was how students showed up. Their questions about the ethical use of AI-generated content, the impact of financial pressures on coverage, and the public's growing sense of disconnection from traditional news outlets reflected a clear understanding of what's at stake for the journalism industry.



Stephen Buckley, public editor at *The Dallas Morning News* and a professor at Duke University, offered a thoughtful look at what it means to balance speed with accuracy, and editorial independence with public accountability. He challenged students to think about objectivity not as a claim to neutrality, but as an intentional process rooted in evidence, transparency, and self-awareness.

Grant Moise, the *News*'s CEO and publisher, was equally candid. He spoke about the paper's efforts to reestablish trust through clearer communication and institutional humility, including initiatives like "Inside the Newsroom," a public-facing newsletter that breaks down how editorial decisions are made and why certain stories are prioritized. His message was simple but powerful: trust must be earned and re-earned through consistent, ethical action.

For our students, this wasn't just a critique of the media, it was a look ahead. They weren't there to admire the problem. They were there to ask, "how can we do better?" That's exactly the kind of conversation we strive to foster at the Maguire Center.

Ethics in action means giving students the tools to confront real-world issues with clarity, compassion, and a sense of responsibility. It means connecting

what we teach in classrooms to the values that shape institutions and preparing students to play an active role in that process.

These conversations don't provide easy answers. But they remind us that trust, like ethics, is built in the day-to-day decisions we make and in the courage to keep asking hard questions. For our students, that courage begins with the willingness to engage deeply, think critically, and take seriously their own role in shaping public discourse.

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*"It's not enough to  
report the news.  
We have to explain  
why it matters and  
how we got there."*

**-GRANT MOISE**

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## From the Public Editor



As public editor, Stephen Buckley holds *The Dallas Morning News* accountable to its readers.

Scan to explore his columns on transparency, editorial choices, and how trust in journalism is earned.



# *Rethinking Health, Respectability, and Neurodiversity:*

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## **Reflections on Dr. Kukla's Visit to SMU**

By Dr. Alida Liberman, Associate Professor of Philosophy



On March 6, 2025, Dr. Quill Kukla presented the Maguire Ethics Lecture at SMU on the topic of “Healthism, Neurodiversity, and Respectability Politics.” Dr. Kukla is Professor of Philosophy and Disability Studies at Georgetown University and a fellow at the SOCRATES Institute at Leibniz Universität Hannover. I was thrilled when they accepted our invitation to give the lecture, as I’ve been a fan of their work for a long time, and regularly teach their articles in my bioethics and feminist philosophy classes.

Kukla’s philosophy is both wide-ranging and interdisciplinary while remaining deep and nuanced; their many papers and books have shaped debates and reframed conversations in fields including ethics (especially bioethics and sexual ethics), feminist philosophy, philosophy of science, philosophy of language, aesthetics, social epistemology, and urban theory/philosophy of place. The topic of the lecture is at the intersection of many of these important concerns.

Dr. Kukla offered a compelling, engaging lecture for an important, illuminating, and provocative thesis. “Healthism” is a pervasive, but typically ignored,

ideology presuming that individuals are responsible for maximizing our own health, and that society ought to incentivize healthy living (through enforcement, surveillance, or encouragement).

Kukla highlights how neurodiversity, focusing on ADHD and autism, is typically framed as a health problem: that is, a diagnosable condition to be treated via traditional medical interventions. In a healthist context, neurodivergent people are strongly pressured to become “healthy” through behavioral therapy, medications, and other means. But, Kukla argues, neurodivergence is not in fact “unhealthy” in the typical sense, and our standards for health for neurodivergent people are much less about what enables them to flourish and much more about avoiding making neurotypical people uncomfortable, or violating neurotypical social norms or expectations. They present compelling evidence that traditional interventions for autism, for example, do not make the lives of autistic people better or easier; instead, they train autistic people to “mask” in ways that make the lives of those around them easier and that support neurotypical productivity culture. “Health” for neurodivergent people becomes a form of respectability politics, and this, Kukla argues, should be rejected.



SMU strives to be a welcoming place for all. To accomplish this, we need to rethink the ways in which our standard practices may be (perhaps unintentionally) alienating, excluding, or harming the neurodiverse. How do presumptions about respectability show up in our classrooms or committee meetings? How can our course policies or departmental procedures be revised to avoid these damaging presumptions? Dr. Kukla's lecture helped me think more carefully and critically about whether our approaches to teaching are entrenching unhelpful respectability politics under the guise of health or well-being, and how to better avoid doing this going forward.

The lecture was also extremely valuable as a way of centering neurodiverse voices, and helping neurodiverse students and faculty better understand themselves. It sparked further engagement across campus, including a reflective interview and blog post by the Office of Student Academic Engagement & Success, in which Disability Accommodations &

Success Strategies (DASS) Graduate Assistant Max Ashby explored the lecture's personal and institutional relevance through a conversation with Dr. Kukla.

A couple of days after the lecture, I called a neurodiverse friend and told her about some of the main ideas in it; she told me that it not only resonated with her experiences, but helped her appreciate how some of her own struggles as a student were the result not of anything lacking in her, but of (unnecessary) external pressures to conform to mainstream ideas about what "hard work" should look like.

Universities rightly investigate how race, gender, sexuality, class, and other aspects of our identity shape our experiences. However, disability and neurodivergence are often ignored in these conversations, which makes devoting a public scholar lecture to these topics especially important. At its best, philosophy helps us to better understand the world and our place in it and inspires us to try to make our collective lives better. Dr. Kukla's lecture was philosophy at its best.

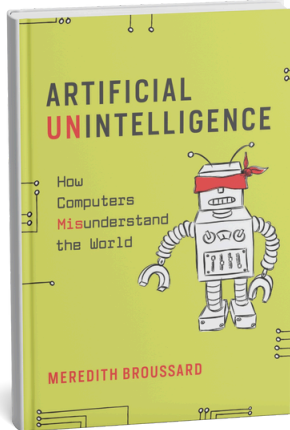




## Small Moments

# *Big Conversations*

Reflection often begins in everyday moments; a question during a workshop, a story shared in conversation, a pause that invites deeper thought. This year, the Center partnered with campus groups and student leaders to create opportunities for students to consider the values shaping their choices and their roles in their communities. Together, we made space for conversations that encouraged students to think more deeply about how they live, lead, and engage with the world around them.



### ***SMU Common Curriculum Reading Program***

The SMU Common Curriculum Reading Program invited students to engage in thoughtful conversations about the ethical implications of technology through *Artificial Unintelligence* by Meredith Broussard, a book recommendation from the Maguire Ethics Center. Open to undergraduates seeking to fulfill their Civics & Individual Ethics requirement, the program included eight student-led discussion sessions centered on the real-world limitations of AI and its social consequences. Ethics Center staff participated in the program's kickoff event, helping students connect the text to broader questions of equity, public responsibility, and ethical decision-making in everyday life.

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### ***Supporting First-Year Student Leaders***

The Ethics Center collaborated with the Crain Emerging Leaders Program to lead a session on the principle that leadership is inherently ethical, one of the seven frames of leadership in SMU's Leadership Framework. Designed for first-year students exploring their leadership potential, the session invited participants to consider how integrity, accountability, and self-awareness guide decision-making. Through conversation and reflection, students connected ethical reasoning to the everyday choices that shape their roles as campus leaders.

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### ***2024 Rosine Smith Sammons Lecture in Media Ethics***

The Maguire Ethics Center was proud to support the 2024 Rosine Smith Sammons Lecture in Media Ethics, which welcomed acclaimed journalist Chuck Todd to campus for a timely conversation on election coverage and the evolving media landscape. In alignment with our commitment to ethical inquiry and civic engagement, we were glad to help elevate this important dialogue on trust, truth, and the responsibilities of the press in a democratic society.





## Empowering Informed Voters

In the weeks leading up to the 2024 presidential election, the Maguire Ethics Center worked to keep SMU students informed by distributing voter resource cards across campus. Offices, departments, and faculty received these compact and easy-to-distribute cards to help students stay aware of important deadlines in the voting process. Each card served as a quick reference point for critical information, like registration deadlines, early voting periods, and when ballots needed to be mailed or cast. By providing clear, accessible reminders in high-traffic areas, we aimed to remove barriers to civic participation and ensure students had the tools to confidently take part in the democratic process.



## A Call to Compassion

In October, the Maguire Ethics Center partnered with the Office of the Chaplain and Religious Life to help organize and support a campus-wide Peace Vigil, an interfaith gathering centered on reflection, compassion, and a shared call to be agents of peace in a world marked by conflict. Through this partnership, we reaffirmed our belief that ethical leadership begins with empathy, and that spaces for collective reflection are essential for building a more just and compassionate campus culture.

## Strengthening Civic Muscles

In collaboration with the Office of Student-Athlete Success, the Maguire Ethics Center helped register dozens of SMU student-athletes to vote ahead of the 2024 election. We provided in-person support and clear, accessible information to make the registration process straightforward for students balancing demanding academic and athletic schedules. This partnership reinforced the idea that civic participation is part of being an engaged campus leader, on and off the field.



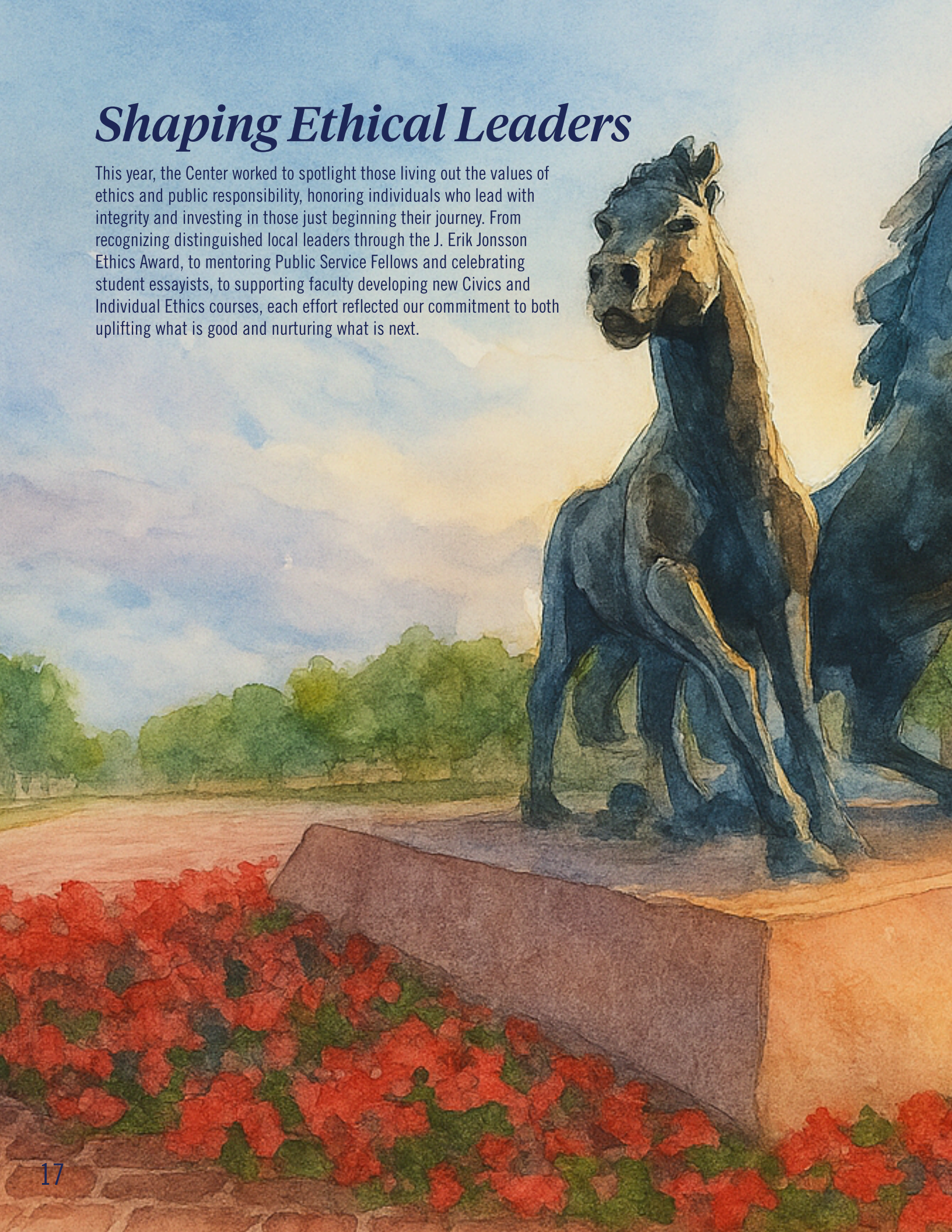
## Framing the Future

To kick off the academic year with energy and intention, the Maguire Ethics Center hosted a first day of school photo station that invited students to reflect on their future while capturing a fun memory. Participants posed with personalized chalkboards sharing their goals, aspirations, and the kind of leaders they hope to become. Beyond a simple photo op, the activity encouraged students to start the year grounded in purpose, thinking not just about what classes they're taking, but who they're becoming.



# *Shaping Ethical Leaders*

This year, the Center worked to spotlight those living out the values of ethics and public responsibility, honoring individuals who lead with integrity and investing in those just beginning their journey. From recognizing distinguished local leaders through the J. Erik Jonsson Ethics Award, to mentoring Public Service Fellows and celebrating student essayists, to supporting faculty developing new Civics and Individual Ethics courses, each effort reflected our commitment to both uplifting what is good and nurturing what is next.









2024-2025

# *Public Service Fellows*



**SARA BETH BECKER**

*Graduate – Medical Anthropology; South Texas Equality Project*

Sara Beth leveraged her ethnographic research, interview techniques, and community engagement skills to support the South Texas Equality Project's collaboration with the Rio Grande Valley's queer community. This initiative documented the resilience and development of LGBTQ+ networks amidst challenging political environments. Through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and analysis of formal and informal support systems, Sara Beth contributed to a comprehensive understanding of local queer experiences. Additionally, she explored the significance of Pride celebrations within these communities, laying the groundwork for future research on transgender

communities and DIY transitioning. In conjunction with her research, Sara Beth interned with the South Texas Equality Project, offering organizational support and event planning expertise. This collaboration advanced both academic inquiry and practical advocacy efforts for LGBTQ+ rights in the region.



**SIMON GONZALES**

*Graduate – Anthropology; San Antonio Recovery Center*

Simon led a multi-sited project aimed at addressing the gap in anthropological literature surrounding substance misuse and mental health within Chicano, Tejano, Mexican American, and Latino families in Texas. Through applied anthropology methods, including dialogues with healthcare counselors, observational studies, and active engagement at addiction clinics in San Antonio and Dallas, Simon explored the cultural nuances of mental health communication and wellness journeys within multicultural families facing substance misuse challenges. He used his research to inform future grant proposals, develop culturally sensitive mental health interventions, and initiate a dialogue mapping

the healthcare infrastructure and public opinions in major Texas cities, fostering more inclusive and responsive healthcare services statewide.





## JT MARTIN

### *Graduate – Moral Theology; Good Fruit Faith*

JT applied his data analysis skills, qualitative research coding, and literature review to support Good Fruit Faith, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting evidence-based teaching on marriage and sex among evangelical Christians. The project identified research opportunities by applying collected data to gaps in current research on religion, sexuality, and the physiological influences of theological beliefs. By analyzing survey data, interview transcripts, and relevant literature, JT proposed new scholarly papers that addressed gaps in understanding within the evangelical discourse on sex and sexuality. As part of the initiative, he developed five paper proposals, complete with abstracts, contributing to Good

Fruit Faith's mission of educating professionals and the evangelical community on sexual health and ethics.



## GENEVIEVE SOUCEK

### *Graduate – Anthropology; Clean Coast Outer Hebrides*

Genevieve Soucek used her expertise in linguistic and environmental conservation to support a project on the Isle of Lewis in Scotland. This initiative, in collaboration with Clean Coast Outer Hebrides and various heritage organizations, explored the interplay between linguistic and environmental conservation and its impact on physical and mental well-being, identities, and a sense of belonging. The project actively engaged in local environmental efforts, such as beach cleans and school presentations, while also preserving Scottish Gaelic heritage. Genevieve immersed herself in community activities, including cultural events like the Hebridean Celtic Festival, gaining insights into how language and identity intersect with environmental stewardship.

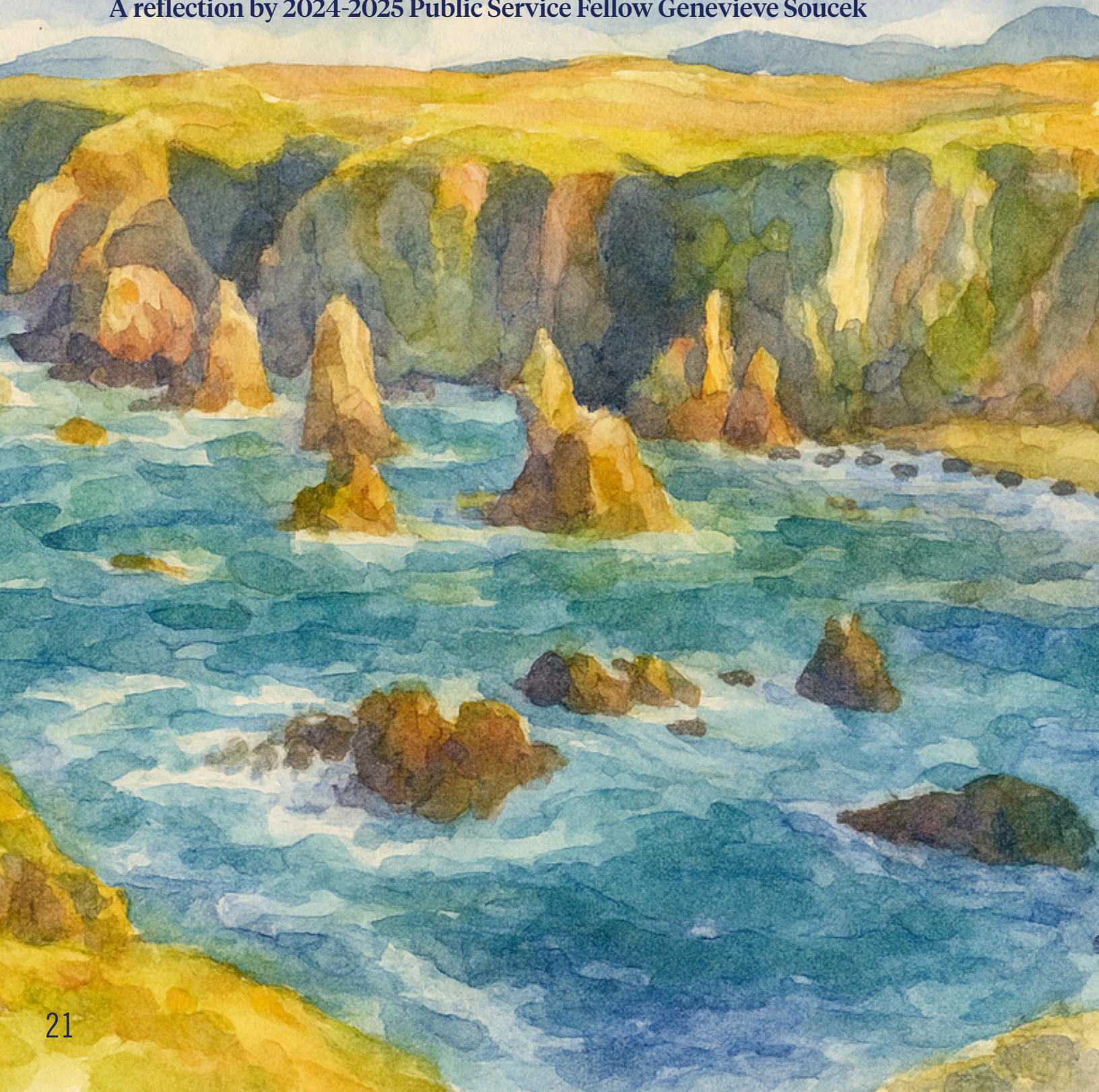
*"During my time as a Public Service Fellow, I learned that service isn't always about having the perfect plan. It's about showing up, listening, and being willing to help however you can. My experience made me more confident in how I can make a difference."*

**—SARA BETH BECKER**



# FIELD NOTES ON **CONSERVATION AND COMMUNITY**

A reflection by 2024-2025 Public Service Fellow Genevieve Soucek







This summer, I was able to spend eight weeks in Scotland, engaging in preliminary fieldwork for my dissertation and working with a few different non-profits on the Isle of Lewis. The main organization that I was able to volunteer with was Clean Coast Outer Hebrides (CCOH), an organization that organizes beach cleans and community awareness about the dangers of marine litter and plastics on both marine and terrestrial environments.

Through my fellowship experience, I was able to help with all of CCOH's events this summer, mainly by showing up, helping with set up, and learning about the process of beach cleans. After I had participated in a couple of beach cleans, I was able to provide advice and information to volunteers on other beach cleans, which is helpful to have a few experienced volunteers when covering larger beach areas.

I also engaged with people to help create a sense of community at CCOH's beach cleans, whether the participants were locals or tourists. A key goal of the beach cleans is to bring community members together to learn about the environment and how to help address pressing concerns of litter and plastic waste in the environment, as well as to learn about other environmental changes in the region, such as coastal erosion. As a part of my fellowship, the CCOH director really wanted me to learn as much as I could about the history of the region, so I visited as many historical societies and community centers as I could. At my last event, the director was impressed that I was able to attend all of the events and learn so much on my own by navigating the island.

I also learned more about linguistic preservation and revitalization, which allowed me to see how these initiatives were also a form of conservation. To do this, I spent a lot of time at An Taigh Ceilidh, a Gaelic community center and language café. I would spend time talking to other regulars and customers about their perspectives on how the use of Gaelic has changed over time, as well as just general conversation about the island.

Through this fellowship, I was able to ask many people about their perspectives on this project and thus was able to learn more about different concerns for the future held by people with different backgrounds. This allowed me to make progress on my dissertation research by interviewing people who are invested in the linguistic revitalization of Gaelic and/or environmental conservation, as well as some native Scottish Gaelic speakers, to understand contemporary views on conservation and linguistic preservation. Older interviewees who were locals were also able to share their experiences and observations about change on the island regarding the physical environment, wildlife, and Scottish Gaelic language.

Overall, though I learned more about discourses on environmental conservation than linguistic preservation, I was still able to see how general conservation approaches between the two are connected through a concern for well-being and for preserving life. For environmental conservation, the focus is to protect marine and terrestrial life by working to maintain landscapes and reducing macro- and micro-plastics. For linguistic conservation, organizations focus on maintaining Gaelic fluency in the 60,000 current speakers, and by working to encourage more Scots to learn the language. For example, unless parents opt out, children on the island are enrolled in Gaelic medium education, where they learn completely in Gaelic. However, given that there are fewer opportunities to maintain Gaelic fluency after graduating secondary school at 17 or 18, many Gaelic speakers are unable to practice or learn Gaelic in everyday life. Thus, linguistic conservation on the Isle of Lewis is concerned with bringing the language back to life in communities, where the language has historical and social significance. This main connection of environmental and linguistic conservation is leading me to maybe focus on the concept of life and preserving/conserving various forms of life and the environments and surroundings that support it.



VALUE WOMEN LOVE  
EXPERIENCE STUDENT WORLD  
WORK COMMUNITY  
SUPPORT CONVERSATION

## *Reading Between the Lines: What 22 Essays Reveal About SMU's Ethical Culture*

By Rylee Bailey, Maguire Center Coordinator

Each year, the Ethics Essay Prize invites SMU students to reflect on how their values have developed during their time on campus. This year's prompt asked: Which community has made the most profound mark on your values? The answers offered a glimpse into how students are thinking about ethics not as an abstract concept, but as something shaped by real experiences and relationships.

As the program coordinator, I read all 22 essays submitted. Students described spaces where they were learning what it means to live according to their values. The stories were personal and varied, but many pointed to moments where students were challenged to think differently, care more deeply, or take responsibility in new ways.

The word community appeared more than any other, but what students meant by it wasn't always the same.

Some described long-standing groups they had grown with over time. Others shared how a single conversation or unexpected moment left a lasting impression and shifted their perspective. In both cases, what stood out was how seriously students took the question of how to act with integrity, especially when it wasn't easy or straightforward.

The essays affirmed something we see across the Center's work: ethical leadership takes shape through connection and reflection.

Students weren't writing from a place of certainty. They were working through what they believe and why. In doing so, they gave us a candid view into the process of becoming someone others can trust to lead. Through small decisions and steady involvement, students are forming the habits and perspectives that will guide them well beyond their time at SMU.



# *Ethics Essay Prize Winners*

## **2024-2025 UNDERGRADUATE WINNERS**

**First Prize: A Seat at the Table: How First-Gen Students Thrive When Institutions Make Room**

Written by Cedar Roach, a Corporate Communications & Public Affairs and Public Policy student

**Second Place: The Tapestry of a Mustang: Threads of Growth, Challenge, and Integrity**

Written by Dani Lopez-Balderas, a Chemistry and French student

**Third Place: On It**

Written by Emerson Mason, a Corporate Communications & Public Affairs student

**Honorable Mention: When Community Looks Like One Person**

Written by Natie Mekonnen, a Corporate Communications & Public Affairs and Public Relations & Strategic Communications student

**Honorable Mention: Growing Through What You Go Through**

Written by Angel Mugambi, a Psychology student

## **2024-2025 GRADUATE WINNERS**

**First Prize: The Participatory Power of Giving: An Immigrant Student's Path to Community and Change**

Written by Maria Guadalupe Casteneda, a Doctor of Liberal Studies student

**Second Place: Burnout Doesn't Wear Lipstick: A Manifesto on Rest, Power, and the Future of Women in Business**

Written by Gloria Samuels, a Master of Business Administration student

**Third Place: The Power of Difficult Dialogue**

Written by Kaylie Kenebrew, a Juris Doctor candidate



**SCAN TO READ THE WINNING 2024-2025  
ETHICS ESSAY PRIZE SUBMISSIONS.**





## 2025 CONFERENCE OF THE PROFESSIONS

# *Artificial Intelligence in the Professions:*

### Examining Its Influence and Our Ethical Responsibilities



For nearly 40 years, the Conference of the Professions has brought together leaders in law, medicine, and ministry to reflect on the ethical foundations of their work. Hosted by the Maguire Ethics Center in collaboration with Dallas County Medical Society, the Dallas Bar Association, Dedman School of Law, Perkins School of Theology, Faith Commons, and the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, the conference has become a space where practitioners at every stage of their careers can step back from their day-to-day responsibilities and think more deeply about what it means to lead with integrity.



This year's theme, *Artificial Intelligence in the Professions: Examining Its Influence and Our Ethical Responsibilities*, invited participants to grapple with how emerging technologies are changing professional judgment, client care, and even workplace culture. In law, attendees discussed how AI tools could impact sentencing decisions and legal research. Medical professionals examined the ethics of using AI in diagnostics and patient communication, especially when algorithms are trusted more than physicians. Faith leaders reflected on how technology is affecting pastoral care and the human connection that lies at the heart of their work.



Breakout sessions created space for deeper conversation and cross-professional insight. Participants shared how they were navigating real decisions in their organizations—when to rely on AI tools, how to maintain transparency with clients or patients, and how to train the next generation without losing sight of the human element. These smaller sessions also highlighted generational differences in how leaders approach new technology, creating an opportunity for mutual learning rather than division.




The conference continues to serve as a touchpoint for professionals who want to lead with clarity in uncertain times. Whether they've been practicing for three years or thirty, attendees return to their work with new insights, a broader perspective, and a strengthened sense of responsibility.



# FACULTY SHAPING CIVICS AND INDIVIDUAL ETHICS

By Dustin Grabsh, Assistant Provost for Undergraduate Education & Academic Success and Molly Ellis, Associate Director of Learning Analytics & Student Success



When faculty come together around a shared purpose, the impact reaches far beyond the classroom. That's what we saw this year as SMU expanded its Civic and Individual Ethics offerings, not just by adding new courses, but by investing in the faculty who make those courses meaningful. This partnership with the Maguire Ethics Center allowed us to support faculty in designing courses that challenge students to reflect on their values in ways that are timely and deeply relevant to their professional and civic lives.

The Maguire Ethics Center provided meaningful support to faculty as they developed new courses in Civic and Individual Ethics. From the earliest planning conversations, faculty were supported with resources and guidance designed to meet the practical realities of course development while also creating space for meaningful dialogue.

The magic of this partnership came to life in the developmental sessions. Led by senior faculty and university leadership, these sessions fostered a collaborative environment where instructors could deepen their understanding of the proficiency and consider how best to translate it into their teaching. What made this effort so powerful was the level of enthusiasm faculty brought to the process. They embraced the opportunity not as a task to complete, but as a chance to design courses that reflect their expertise and invite students into meaningful ethical reflection.

With these new courses now approved, we're excited to see them offered in upcoming semesters. They will serve students across the university, from general education to major-specific capstones, and continue to evolve alongside the faculty who teach them.





# *A Legacy of Values*

**Honoring Cynt Marshall with the 2025  
J. Erik Jonsson Ethics Award**



*"The greater the difficulty, the more glory in surmounting it. Skillful pilots gain their reputation from storms and tempests."*

— EPICTETUS

Some leaders are defined by the titles they hold. Others are defined by the storms they endure. Cynthia "Cynt" Marshall belongs to the latter. Her career is a story of rising through difficulty while guided by principles that remain steady when the ground shifts. On April 14, the Maguire Ethics Center presented her with the 2025 J. Erik Jonsson Ethics Award at SMU's Armstrong Fieldhouse, honoring not only what she has accomplished but the way she has met challenge with resilience.

The luncheon drew people from across Dallas who have seen Marshall's influence in settings as varied as boardrooms to sports arenas. They came to celebrate a leader who steps forward in uncertain moments, willing to make the hard calls and stand in the uncomfortable spaces where change begins. From executives to community advocates, the audience represented the broad reach of Marshall's impact and the shared respect she has earned.

When she addressed the audience, Marshall spoke with the authority of experience. She reflected on times when she could have stepped back, yet chose to engage more deeply. She described the responsibility that comes with being "chosen" not as a privilege to display, but as an obligation to act even when it draws criticism or tests patience. Her words carried the kind of weight that only comes from someone who has weathered adversity and come out stronger, choosing conviction over convenience.





In one of the afternoon's most memorable moments, she held up a small, weathered box labeled Ethics in Action. It has traveled with her for decades, filled with scenario cards from an early leadership program. For Marshall, it is a tangible reminder that values are proven in the hardest circumstances, not in times of ease. The simple prop became a powerful symbol of her message: that true leadership requires grounding in principles that can withstand pressure.

Her career offers many examples of that conviction. She has led during moments when organizational cultures needed repair and when trust was fragile. She has stepped into roles where the challenges were public and the outcomes uncertain, and in each case, she emerged having strengthened the people and institutions she served. Whether addressing systemic change, steering through controversy, or fostering environments where integrity could take root, Marshall has consistently chosen the harder but more ethical path.

That pattern of leadership is what the Maguire Ethics Center recognized in presenting the J. Erik Jonsson Ethics Award. It is leadership that does not retreat when the spotlight burns brightest or the criticism grows loudest. It is the kind of leadership that stands tall in the wind and holds steady when others might step away. Marshall's example is proof that ethics is not an abstract ideal but a lived practice, embodied through action and resilience.

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*"All of us are  
chosen to stand  
up for someone  
else. We are  
beyond the days  
of minding our  
own business."*

**-CYNT MARSHALL**

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# 2025 J. Erik Jonsson Ethics Award *Host Committee*

## HOST COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS

Elizabeth Carlock Phillips  
Hilda Galvan  
Ashlee Kleinert  
Bobby Lyle  
Tracey Nash-Huntley  
Dale Petroskey

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Ralph W. Babb, Jr.  
Jan Hart Black  
Michael M. Boone  
Linda Pitts Custard  
Christopher J. Durovich  
Ruben E. Esquivel  
Terry J. Flowers  
Margo E. Goodwin  
Nancy Strauss Halbreich  
Douglas D. Hawthorne  
Blainey Maguire Hess  
Walter J. Humann  
Jack Lowe, Jr.  
Grant S. Moise  
Erle Nye  
Ken Smith  
Ronald G. Steinhart  
Annette K. Vaughn  
Kern Wildenthal





# FACULTY, STUDENTS, & COMMUNITY

# THINKING BIG & DOING GOOD



## DR. JILL DETEMPLE FEATURED IN *TIME* MAGAZINE

Faculty Advisory Committee member Dr. Jill DeTemple contributed to national discourse on civil dialogue during a pivotal election season. Her article in *TIME* Magazine, “What to Say to Family When You Disagree About Voting”, offered practical advice for navigating political conversations with empathy and integrity, values that echo the Maguire Center’s mission. Her work exemplifies how SMU faculty are helping shape a more ethical and reflective public culture, both on campus and beyond.



## RUTHIE'S CAFE OPENS IN SOUTH DALLAS

Ethics Center Advisory Board member Ashlee Kleinert '88 opened the doors to Ruthie's Café this year, expanding the reach of Ruthie's Fueled by Good. The new café brings her vision of second-chance employment to a permanent space, offering meals with a mission in the heart of south Dallas.



## DR. BONNIE WHEELER RECEIVES 2025 LITERATI AWARD

Ethics Center Faculty Advisory Committee member Dr. Bonnie Wheeler was awarded the 2025 Literati Award by the Friends of SMU Libraries for her lasting impact on scholarship and literary culture. A leading voice in medieval studies and feminist scholarship, her work has shaped the field through decades of teaching, publishing, and advocacy.





## PHILLIPS DRIVES PASSAGE OF TREY'S LAW

Ethics Center Advisory Board member Elizabeth Carlock Phillips '09 played a pivotal role in advancing Trey's Law, landmark legislation that prohibits the use of non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) in civil settlements involving child sexual abuse. Named for her late brother, Trey Carlock, the law ensures survivors can speak openly about their experiences and hold institutions accountable. Thanks to her advocacy, Texas became one of the first states to pass such legislation, joining Missouri and Tennessee in prioritizing public safety over silence.



## SMU STUDENTS LAUNCH NONPARTISAN NEWS APP

SMU students Josh A., Julián Cabrera, Justus Woods, and Abbie Ellermeier are taking on misinformation with TIMIO, a nonpartisan news platform that removes algorithms and highlights multiple perspectives. Designed to foster critical thinking and reduce polarization, TIMIO uses AI to flag logical fallacies and help users engage more thoughtfully with the news. By putting truth and transparency first, these students are helping shape a more informed digital future.



## HUNTLEYS SUPPORT SMU STUDENTS WITH \$1M GIFT

SMU Trustee David S. Huntley '80 and Ethics Center Advisory Board member Tracey Nash-Huntley made a \$1 million gift to expand scholarships and mentorship for SMU students. Their support strengthened the Connect Mentorship Program, funded scholarships in Dedman College, and contributed to the Dedman Law Centennial Scholarship Challenge, opening doors for students from historically marginalized backgrounds to succeed and lead.



## ST. PHILIPS CELEBRATES 25 YEARS OF DESTINY AWARDS

Ethics Center Advisory Board member Dr. Terry Flowers marked a major milestone this year with the 25th annual Destiny Awards Luncheon, benefitting St. Philip's School and Community Center. As Headmaster and Executive Director, Dr. Flowers has made the Destiny Awards a signature event celebrating excellence in education, leadership, and service. The luncheon reflects his decades-long commitment to building stronger, more equitable communities in Dallas and beyond.



# 2024-2025 BY THE NUMBERS



800

Hours of Community  
Service Performed by  
Public Service Fellows

53

Civics and Individual  
Ethics Undergraduate  
Courses Taught  
Across Campus

93

Organizational Partnerships  
Formed with Nonprofits, Civic  
Groups, and University Partners

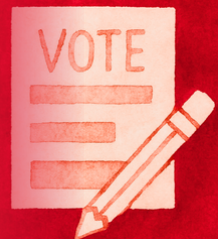


23

Events Sponsored  
by the Ethics Center

160

Students  
Registered to Vote  
Through Campus  
Outreach





# 8,000

Voter Information Cards  
with Election Dates,  
Deadlines, and Resource  
Links Distributed to  
Students, Faculty, Staff, and  
Community Members



# \$2 Million

Endowment Established for the  
Associate Director Position



# 15

Guest Speakers  
Brought to Campus  
for Public Programs

# 192

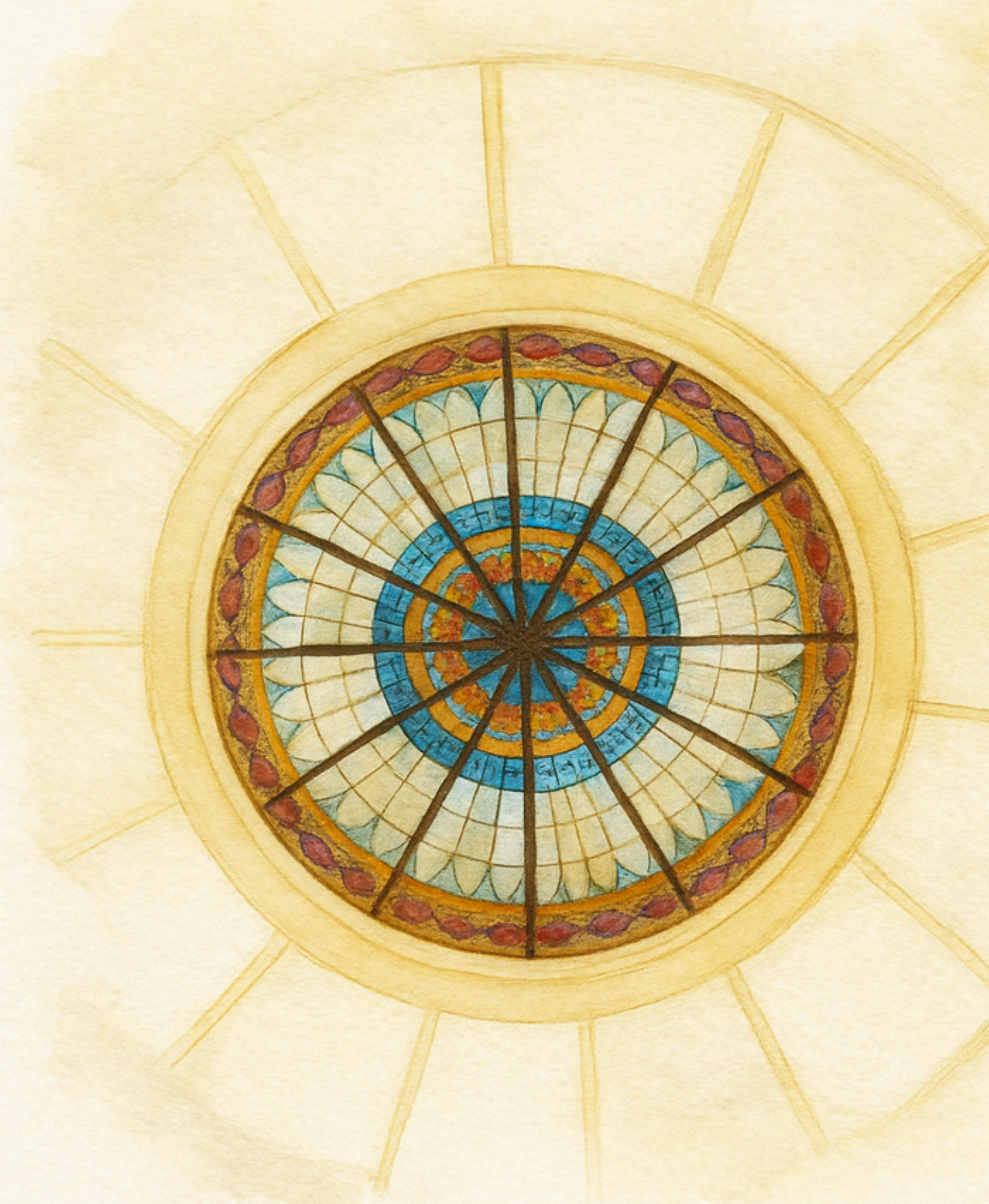
J. Erik Jonsson Ethics  
Award Luncheon  
Attendees

# 22

Student Essays  
Submitted for the Annual  
Ethics Essay Prize  
Competition











## ***Building an Ethical Future***

The Center's future-facing work reflects a renewed commitment to ethical leadership and community collaboration. Faculty-led projects, new grant-supported initiatives, and strategic partnerships are helping shape the cultural and institutional foundation for the decade ahead. As we prepare to launch our 2025–2029 strategic plan and celebrate our 30th anniversary, these efforts underscore our long-term vision and values.



# *Building Character at SMU with Support from the Educating Character Initiative*



By Matt Nadler, Maguire Center Associate Director

When I joined the Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility, I was particularly drawn to one of the guiding questions that shapes our work: what are new and meaningful ways to embed ethics and public responsibility into the SMU campus culture? In my role, I'm energized by the chance to explore that question alongside students, faculty, and staff who care deeply about the kind of community we're building at SMU.

That exploration led us to the Educating Character Initiative at Wake Forest University. Their Capacity-Building Grant supports colleges and universities in developing institution-specific approaches to character education, efforts that reflect each campus's culture, values, and aspirations.

As we considered how SMU might engage with this national effort, we recognized that any proposal would need to reflect our identity. Our planning process began by grounding the proposal in the voices of our community. We sought out insight from colleagues across campus. We took time to understand how character is already being cultivated, whether in courses, student leadership programs, or the countless informal moments that shape a student's experience. These conversations didn't just shape our thinking; they allowed us to build a proposal grounded in real challenges and focused on tangible improvements.

Conversations became an opportunity when SMU was selected as one of 42 institutions nationwide to

receive an ECI Capacity-Building Grant. With support from this \$40,400 award, we are embarking on a year-long initiative, *From Nodes to Networks: Defining, Unifying, and Promoting Character Education at SMU*. I'm grateful for the funding that allows us to put our plan into action.

Over the next year, we will establish a task force that will dig deep. We'll explore SMU's history, examine current programs and practices, and host campus-wide conversations to achieve our goal of a unified understanding and language regarding character education. We'll also develop a "Culture of Character" campus map to better understand where character development is already happening and how we might strengthen those connections.

We're working toward a common framework that links our daily decisions to the values we aspire to uphold. It's a way to surface the connections already present in our work and give them language. Through that shared understanding, we hope to help students grow not only as scholars or professionals, but as people with purpose.

The Wake Forest Educating Character Initiative grant is not just an endorsement of our proposal. It's a signal that SMU is ready to take bold, intentional steps to center character in the student experience. I'm proud to be part of this journey and even more excited for the year ahead, where conversations will turn into campus-wide action.





## ABOUT THE EDUCATING CHARACTER INITIATIVE

The Educating Character Initiative aims to equip a wide range of public and private institutions of higher education—including, but not limited to, major research universities, liberal arts colleges, community colleges, military academies, minority-serving institutions, religiously affiliated colleges, and single-gender colleges—with the resources, funding, and support needed to integrate character education into their distinctive institutional contexts, curricula, and cultures. The broader aspiration is to foster a robust network that recognizes the value of educating character within higher education.

## ADVANCING ETHICS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE CURRICULUM

### New Grant Supports Development of Two Core Curriculum Courses

By Dustin Grabsch, Assistant Provost for Undergraduate Education & Academic Success

One of the ongoing challenges we face in general education is not just ensuring students meet graduation requirements, but making sure the opportunities to do so are meaningful, accessible, and reflective of the world we're preparing them to enter.

That's why this partnership with the Maguire Ethics Center has been so valuable. Our two offices came together around a shared need: expanding the number of courses that fulfill the Civic and Individual Ethics (CIE) proficiency. When the opportunity to apply for a Civic Pluralism in the Core Curriculum Grant through Interfaith America arose, it provided us with the momentum to act.

With the support of that grant, we launched the development of Societies, Communities, & People and The Ethics of Service. These aren't just check-the-box classes; they invite students to examine the complexities of civic life from multiple angles. Students are asked to consider how their values take

shape, how their actions affect others, and how they might engage with communities in ways that are thoughtful, responsive, and responsible. The goal isn't simply to fulfill a requirement—it's to cultivate habits of ethical reflection that students can carry into whatever path they pursue.

What began in spring 2025 as a focused effort to expand CIE offerings is quickly becoming a catalyst for broader curricular transformation. When the new courses debut in spring 2026, they'll do more than meet a requirement, they'll invite students to wrestle with real ethical dilemmas and civic responsibilities in ways that feel relevant and personal. This progress is possible because of partners like the Maguire Ethics Center, whose collaboration ensures these courses are built with care, clarity, and purpose, proof that when shared values align with timely support, meaningful change follows.





# *Endowment Milestone Marks a New Moment for Ethics at SMU*

By Rita Kirk, Maguire Center Director

Fundraising is what allows the Maguire Ethics Center not just to operate, but to grow. It expands our capacity to meet emerging needs and pursue work that might otherwise go unsupported. That's why I'm honored to share that we've reached a major milestone: the endowment supporting the associate director position has now surpassed \$2 million.

What does that mean? In practical terms, it means that both the director and associate director positions at the Center are now fully endowed. For the first time in our history, we can say with confidence that the leadership of the Center is financially secure, independent of annual fundraising or operational reallocation. But this isn't just about sustainability; it's about possibility.

By fully endowing our leadership roles, we free up precious operating dollars. Dollars that can now be used to seed innovative faculty collaborations, support student-led public service projects, and expand the kind of programming that invites our campus and city into critical conversations about ethical responsibility. In short, we can dream a little bigger and act a little bolder.

This achievement was not inevitable. It came one gift at a time, from donors who saw themselves in our mission.

To each donor who helped us reach this point, thank you. Your generosity is not just an investment in the Center. It is a vote of confidence in the kind of university we aspire to be. And it is a legacy that will continue to grow every time a student stops to ask not just "Can I do this?" but "Should I?"

We're energized by what this milestone makes possible and excited to pursue the next chapter of our work. With new momentum, we can begin to endow programs that matter deeply to our mission and respond more boldly to the ethical opportunities emerging across campus and beyond.







# *Charting the Road Ahead:*

## **Reflections on the Maguire Center's 2025-2029 Strategic Plan**

By Dr. Rita Kirk, Ethics Center Director

At its best, a strategic plan is not a static document. It's a compass. It keeps us oriented when the terrain shifts and helps us move with intention, even when the path forward is uncertain. That's the spirit with which the Cary M. Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility approached the development of its new strategic plan. I'm proud to share that this milestone has now been achieved.

As the Center prepares to celebrate its 30th anniversary, this was the right time to step back and take stock. Strategic planning requires significant attention and sustained effort, and those can be difficult to carve out amid the rhythm of daily work. But the questions at the heart of this process couldn't wait. What do students, faculty, staff, and the community need from a Center dedicated to ethics and public responsibility? What are we uniquely positioned to offer? With strong leadership in place and momentum from recent initiatives, the timing clicked. We had both the capacity to reflect and the drive to imagine what comes next.

From the beginning, this process was anchored in aspiration. We allowed ourselves to think boldly about what could set the Center apart and strengthen its reputation on a national scale. The process invited bold ideas and honest reflection, grounded in the values that have shaped the Center since its

founding. Just as no journey is made alone, this strategic plan is the product of deep collaboration.

The Maguire Ethics Center Advisory Board played a key role, providing feedback at crucial junctions, refining our direction, and ensuring the final plan remained both practical and ambitious. Thank you to all who contributed to this plan, especially Board Chair Dr. Bobby Lyle, who guided us through the strategic planning process.

This plan does exactly what we set out to do. After years of listening and dreaming, the plan is now in place. This is a moment worth celebrating. What we've created is not just a document, but an intentional vision for the future. It clarifies our direction and reinforces the purpose behind the work. Having this plan in hand means we can act with intention. It gives shape to our goals and energy to our next chapter.

The future of the Center is open, but it is not uncertain. As we put this plan into action, I'm encouraged by the clarity it brings and the momentum it creates. This plan gives us a way to move forward with purpose. I look forward to walking alongside our team, our Board, and the broader SMU community as we bring this vision to life. Together, we will ensure that SMU remains a place where ethics are not just studied, but lived.





# 30 YEARS OF IMPACT

## CELEBRATING THREE DECADES OF ETHICS IN ACTION AT SMU

By Dr. Rita Kirk, Maguire Center Director

As the Cary M. Maguire Center for Ethics & Public Responsibility enters its 30th year, we find ourselves standing at a meaningful point of reflection. Anniversaries have a way of inviting perspective not only about where we've been, but about where we're going and who we hope to become in the years ahead.

Since our founding in 1995, the Ethics Center has served as a space for honest dialogue, moral reflection, and public responsibility, but it has never been content to stay still. The work of ethics is not about preserving tradition for tradition's sake. It's about constantly engaging with the questions and complexities of the world we live in. This anniversary moment calls us to ask how we can remain relevant, responsive, and deeply rooted in our mission, even as the world around us continues to change.

The coming year offers a chance to celebrate the impact of those who built this Center and carried it forward, but even more, it challenges us to prepare the next generation of students, faculty, and community leaders to carry it further. The task before us is not to look back with nostalgia, but to look forward with resolve.

As we plan for a year of commemorations, collaborations, and conversations, we do so with a renewed sense of purpose. Our work will continue to evolve, just as it has over the past three decades, but our foundation remains the same. We believe that ethics belongs at the heart of higher education and that public responsibility is not a slogan, but a standard we are called to live by.

It's an honor to steward the Center at this moment in its history, and I look forward to the year ahead not just as a celebration, but as an opportunity to recommit ourselves to the values that have always defined this work.





# Ethics Center Advisory Board

The Ethics Center Advisory Board members serve three-year terms and meet twice each academic year.



Ralph W. Babb, Jr.  
*Comerica Incorporated and Comerica Bank, ret.*



Nancy Strauss Halbreich  
*Dallas Philanthropist and Civic Leader*



Ronald G. Steinhart  
*Dallas Civic Leader*



Jan Hart Black  
*Dallas Civic Leader and Former Dallas City Manager*



Douglas D. Hawthorne  
*Texas Health Resources, ret.*



Omar Suleiman  
*Yaqeen Institute*



Michael M. Boone  
*Haynes and Boone, L.L.P.*



Blainey Maguire Hess  
*Maguire Oil Company*



Annette Vaughn  
*Dallas Philanthropist and Civic Leader*



Talmage Boston  
*Shackelford, Bowen, McKinley & Norton*



Walter J. Humann  
*WJH Corp. and Hunt Oil, ret.*



Kern Wildenthal  
*Children's Medical Center Foundation*



Randy A. Bowman  
*AT LAST!, Inc.*



Ashlee Hunt Kleinert  
*The Good Foundation*



R. Gerald Turner  
*SMU President*



Richie L. Butler  
*St. Luke "Community" United Methodist Church*



Jack Lowe  
*TD Industries, ret.*



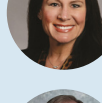
Elizabeth Lobo  
*SMU Provost  
and Vice President for Academic Affairs*



Linda Pitts Custard  
*Custard/Pitts Land and Cattle Company*



Bobby B. Lyle  
*Lycor Holdings Incorporated, **Chair***



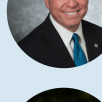
Brad Cheves  
*SMU Vice President for Development  
and External Affairs*



Christopher Durovich  
*Children's Health Services of Texas*



Grant S. Moise  
*The Dallas Morning News*



Rita Kirk  
*William F. May Endowed Director  
of the SMU Maguire Ethics Center*



Ruben E. Esquivel  
*UT Southwestern Medical Center*



Tracey M. Nash-Huntley  
*Philanthropist and Civic Leader*



D. Stephen Long  
*Cary M. Maguire University Professor of Ethics  
Perkins School of Theology*



Terry J. Flowers  
*St. Philip's School and Community Center*



Erle Nye  
*TXU Corp., Emeritus*



Elizabeth Carlock Phillips  
*The Phillips Foundation*



Hilda C. Galvan  
*Jones Day*



Ken Smith  
*Revitalize South Dallas Coalition*



Margo E. Goodwin  
*Mayor of the City of Highland Park*

## Ex Officio



# Faculty Advisory Committee

The Faculty Advisory Committee consists of selected senior faculty members from SMU and the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas.



**Gary Brubaker**  
*Director*  
*SMU Guildhall*



**D. Stephen Long**  
*Cary M. Maguire University Professor of Ethics*  
*Perkins School of Theology*



**Jill DeTemple**  
*Religious Studies, Chair*  
*Dedman College*



**Pamela Metzger**  
*Deason Institute for Criminal Justice Reform*  
*Dedman School of Law*



**Dallas Gingles**  
*Director of the D. Min. Program*  
*Assistant Dean of Hybrid Education*  
*Perkins School of Theology*



**Rebekah Miles**  
*Ethics*  
*Perkins School of Theology*



**Fred Grinell**  
*Cell Biology*  
*UT Southwestern*



**Helen Reynolds**  
*Economics*  
*Dedman College*



**Kenneth M. Hamilton**  
*History*  
*Dedman College*



**Luke Robinson**  
*Philosophy*  
*Dedman College*



**Alice Kendrick**  
*Advertising*  
*Meadows School of the Arts*



**John Z. Sadler**  
*Director of Ethics in Science and Medicine*  
*UT Southwestern Medical Center*



**Maribeth Kuenzi**  
*Director, The Niemi Center*  
*Cox School of Business*



**Aurelie Thiele**  
*EMIS*  
*Lyle School of Engineering*



**Carrie La Ferle**  
*Advertising*  
*Meadows School of the Arts*



**Theodore Walker**  
*Ethics*  
*Perkins School of Theology*



**Alida Liberman**  
*Philosophy*  
*Dedman College*



**Bonnie Wheeler**  
*English*  
*Dedman College*

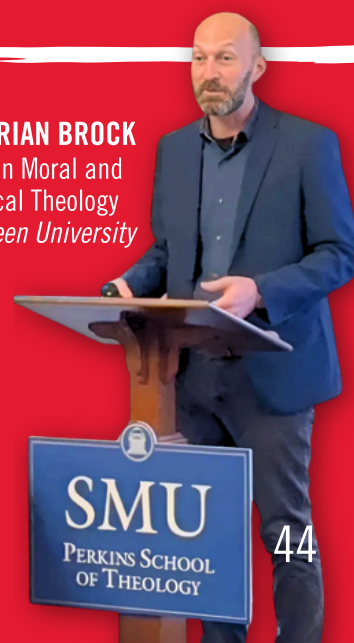
## INSIDE THE 2025 SCOTT-HAWKINS LECTURE

Thanks to Dr. Dallas Gingles' leadership, the 2025 Scott-Hawkins Lecture brought Dr. Brian Brock to SMU for a thoughtful conversation on how AI is shaping political and economic systems in subtle but significant ways.

Hosted with the Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute, the lecture invited students, faculty, and community members to consider how technology is influencing daily life and decision-making.

Brock encouraged a deeper understanding of the values built into AI systems. Gingles' vision helped spark a meaningful exchange at the intersection of ethics, technology, and public responsibility.

**DR. BRIAN BROCK**  
Chair in Moral and  
Practical Theology  
*Aberdeen University*





# *Ethics Center Faculty and Staff*



## ***Dr. Rita Kirk***

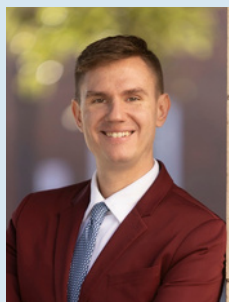
### **William F. May Endowed Director**

Dr. Rita Kirk serves as the William F. May Endowed Director of the Maguire Center for Ethics & Public Responsibility, where she leads the institution's mission to advance ethical leadership and public accountability. Under her directorship, Kirk has strategically expanded the Center's reputation and influence through innovative programming and strategic partnerships that address contemporary ethical challenges.

As the Center's endowed director, Kirk has forged significant institutional collaborations, including her recent tenure as a Visiting Fellow at Harvard University's Safra Ethics Center. This fellowship strengthened inter-institutional ties while advancing her groundbreaking research on declining institutional trust—work that empowers individuals and organizations to navigate complex ethical landscapes in today's polarized political environment.

Kirk's leadership at the Center extends to interdisciplinary initiatives that bridge academic research with real-world application. She co-led an interdisciplinary research colloquium this last year on Healthcare and Human Flourishing alongside Drs. Dallas Gingles and Robin Lovin, convening ethicists from hospitals and medical services firms with SMU researchers to address critical challenges facing healthcare providers. These roundtables exemplify the Center's commitment to connecting academic ethics with practical professional concerns.

Beyond her directorial responsibilities, Kirk is a professor in the Division of Corporate Communication and Public Affairs and maintains an active consulting practice, advising national and international corporations on public policy matters and serving as a sought-after speaker on ethics and communication strategy. She brings a unique blend of academic rigor and practical expertise to her role, informed by her educational background that includes a Ph.D. in Communications from the University of Missouri, a master's degree in communications from the University of Arkansas, and a bachelor's degree in Communication/Political Science, also from the University of Arkansas.



## ***Matt Nadler***

### **Associate Director**

Matt Nadler serves as the Associate Director for the Ethics Center working with students, faculty, staff, and the greater DFW community to encourage Ethics education and research. Prior to starting in the Ethics Center, Matt worked for the division of Student Affairs at SMU in the Hegi Family Career Development Center and Residence Life and Student Housing. During that time Matt received the Courageous Change Leader award for his work and embodiment of the division.

Matt received a B.A. in Political Science and a minor in Philosophy from Niagara University, followed by a master's degree in Higher Education Administration from The Pennsylvania State University. Recently, Matt has conducted research and published journal articles examining college students' sense of belonging and the impact of the co-curricular experience on employability.





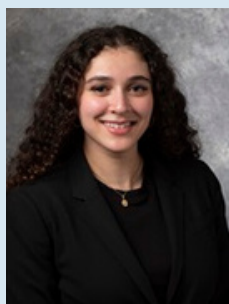
## ***Rylee Bailey***

### **Coordinator**

Rylee Bailey is the program coordinator of the Maguire Center. Rylee co-manages daily operations of the Center including the Maguire Public Service Fellowship program and student staffers. Additionally, she co-manages the Center's annual fundraising and academic events and prepares correspondence and reports, including the Center's annual report along with the creation of internal and external marketing and design.

At the 33rd Annual Association for Practical and Professional Ethics International Conference, Rylee presented her first academic paper on behalf of the Maguire Ethics Center titled, "Mandating Ethics and Values in Legislative Oversight of Natural Resources." Rylee graduated from SMU in 2022 with a bachelor's in Corporate Communications and Public Affairs. As an undergraduate, Rylee was recognized by the National Ethics Project for her contributions to the Center's blog. She was also named SMU's 2022 Outstanding CCPA Student in Political Communication.

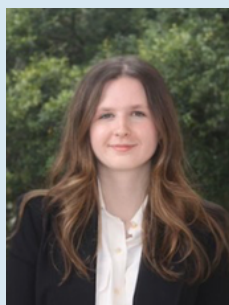
# ***Student Staffers***



## ***Sarah Chellali***

### **Sophomore; Biology, Psychology, & Neuroscience**

Sarah Chellali is a Hilltop Scholar at SMU pursuing studies in biology, psychology, and neuroscience on the pre-health track. She serves on the Pre-Health Readiness and Enrichment Program's Advisory Board and mentors fellow students through the Hilltop Scholars Program. Sarah volunteers with various organizations, and she conducts research in SMU's Embodied Learning Lab, where she explores topics related to neuroscience and embodied cognition.



## ***Rose Powell***

### **Sophomore; Marketing & Public Policy**

Rose Powell is a second-year SMU student double majoring in Marketing and Public Policy. A University Honors student, she is also a University Scholar and Richter Fellow. At the Maguire Ethics Center, she supports outreach and communications, and she volunteers with Engage Dallas and Hilltop Scholars on community projects. Rose also promotes university athletics through SMU's Club Sports Marketing and Media team.



## ***Michelle Tes***

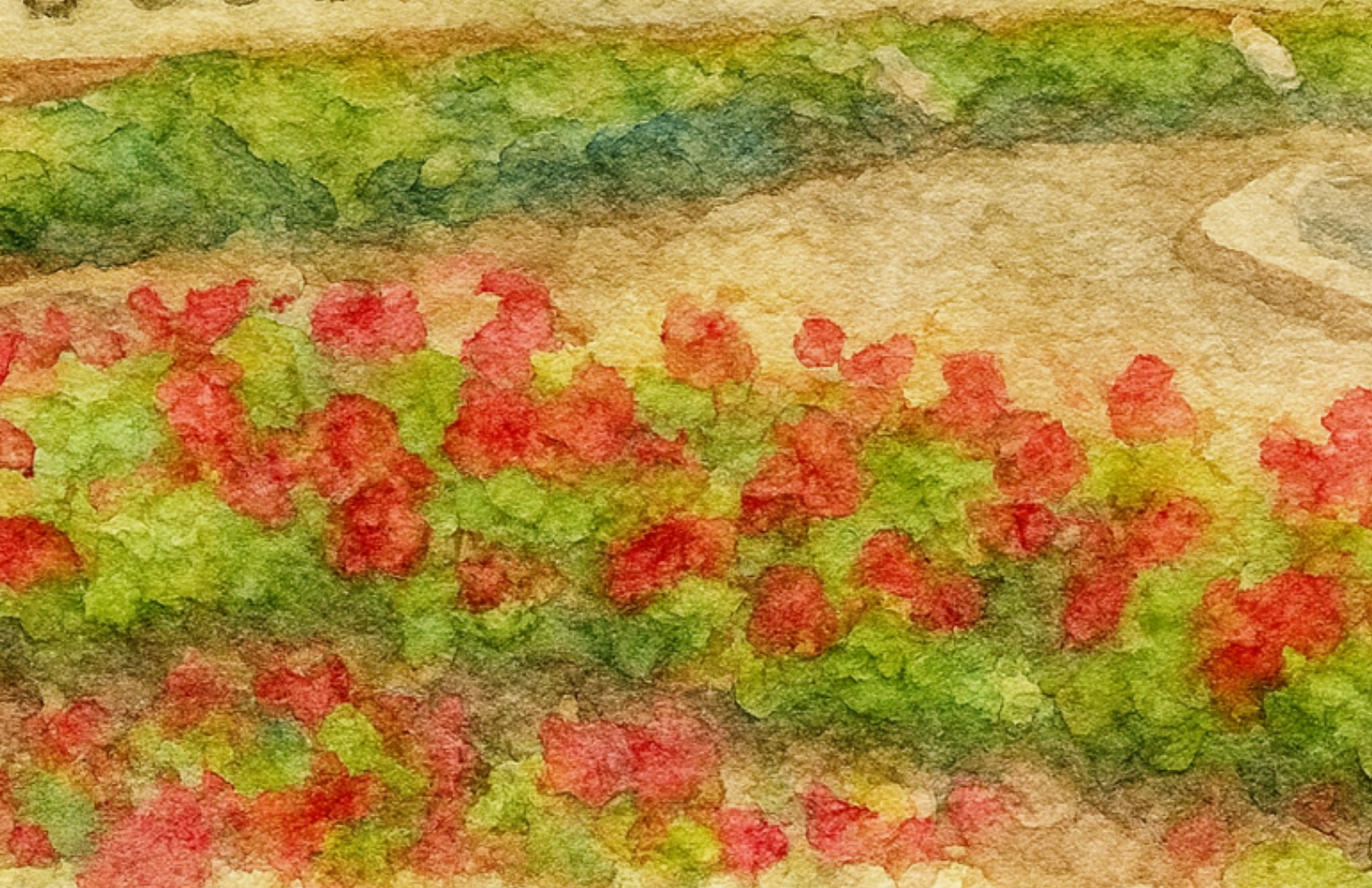
### **Junior; Economics & Data Science**

Michelle Tes is a junior at SMU majoring in Economics and Data Science with a minor in Business. She serves as Vice President of Programming for Program Council, leading large-scale campus events, and is a Peer Wellbeing Educator with the Office of Wellbeing Education. Passionate about leadership and student engagement, she focuses on creating inclusive and impactful programs across campus.





SOUTHERN METHOD





A watercolor illustration serves as the background. On the left, a large tree with green and blue foliage stands on a brownish ground. In the bottom left corner, there are clusters of red and pink flowers. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

# *SMU Code of Ethics*

Southern Methodist University creates and shares knowledge and prepares citizens for a global society. The University is entrusted with the freedom and opportunity to fulfill these purposes by a public that values our creativity and needs our leadership. Our vision of the future draws on the legacy of those whose learning, faith, and moral commitments shaped the institution we now share. Whatever our individual roles at SMU, we owe it to the public, to our common heritage, and to one another to uphold certain basic values. These include:

**Pursuit of truth.** We seek knowledge and understanding through open, energetic inquiry and creative freedom. We support one another with hard questions and sincere encouragement. Because we seek truth, we encourage free expression of ideas, accept challenges to our assumptions, and treat those whom we question as colleagues sharing a common purpose.

**Integrity in work.** In teaching and learning, research, administration, and all aspects of university life, we strive for the highest standards of excellence. We represent what we have done honestly, and we acknowledge the ideas, effort, and resources that others have contributed to our achievements.

**Respect for persons.** We honor the dedication of faculty, staff, and students to their work at SMU. We evaluate them and their work fairly. We seek diversity, which enhances our search for truth and enriches our experiences in learning, work, and life together. We extend hospitality to visitors, guests, and participants in programs at SMU. We maintain confidentiality and respect the privacy of others. We do not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, or intimidation, and we reject behavior that is degrading to ourselves or those around us.

**Responsible use of resources.** We direct funds and services to their intended purposes. We do not make personal use of University assets, nor do we permit misappropriation of those assets to go unchallenged. We use resources efficiently, conserving financial assets, physical resources, and the built and natural environment for future generations.

**Accountability.** We take personal responsibility for respecting these values. We keep accurate and complete reports of the work we have done and the funds we have handled. We disclose potential conflicts of interest and reject inappropriate influences on our choices. We endeavor to make decisions that meet public and professional standards of honesty, competence, and fairness.





## **SMU** Cary M. Maguire Center for Ethics & Public Responsibility

The Cary M. Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility is a trusted resource for the exploration and understanding of contemporary ethical questions through education, scholarship, research, and recognition that fulfills our public responsibility to build a society that upholds integrity, critical thinking, and social responsibility as essential values to the well-being of humankind.