

Shield Day Ceremony Honors Incoming Freshmen Class

The motto is "Embrace Illumination."

Freshman Alex Herrera accepted the Class of 2017 shield from Stern and Alex Lopez-Ramirez, Dominican senior class representative at the event, hosted by Associated Students of Dominican University (ASDU). Dominican alumnae Winnie Coleman '57 and Amiya Hodge-Powell '12 were guest speakers.

[Shield Day](#) is a beloved tradition at Dominican. Classes in the 1920s began designing shields in honor of and with elements from the original Dominican Shield to celebrate our Dominican heritage.

Each fall Dominican seniors welcome the Freshmen Class with the gift of an illustrated shield that reflects an inspirational motto. By custom, the motto helps guide the freshmen throughout their years at Dominican and throughout life.

Originally the shields were created in stained glass renditions until 1961 when the University began to have them carved into wood. All of Dominican's shields, dating back to the early 1920s, are on display on campus in Meadowlands Hall, Guzman Lecture Hall and the Shield Room in Caleruega Dining Hall.

Each year a senior is selected to design the shield for the Freshmen Class. With help from their classmates they incorporate elements from the shield they received when they entered Dominican. Stern, a transfer from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, was chosen to design this year's shield following a recommendation from Lynn Sondag, head of [Dominican's Department of Art, Art History and Design](#).

"It's just such a great tradition at Dominican," Stern says. "I really like the idea of having a school with such a long history of traditions. It's so exciting knowing that they are going to have this shield on campus somewhere forever."

Working with Lauren Castro, Director of [Student Activities and Leadership](#), and Lopez-Ramirez, a biological sciences and pre-med major who is ASDU's Senior Class Representative and chair of the senior committee, Stern drew inspiration for her drawing from the rose featured in the Class of 2014 shield. Her work is influenced by tattoo art.

"Shield Day is an important first step in Freshman's life at Dominican," Lopez-Ramirez says. "It is a gift they receive from the seniors that makes them feel at home. A gift they can treasure and help guide them through their Dominican experience."

The Shield Day ceremony featured shield bearers Jessica Lou Dabandan, Lucy Camarena, Brittany Mitzner and Alex Herrera. ASDU President Brianna Fennell provided a description of the Class of 2017 shield, Patricia Canuto led the singing of "Alma Mater" and "The Dominican Spirit Song" and Elizabeth Anne Bertolino, Alexander Clauss, Yoshie Fugimoto Kateada, Liza Kroeschell and Ivy Patterson performed the Shield Day Dance on stage.

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