

Alumna passes on passion, support for teaching career

As an undergraduate at Dominican, Katie Smith '07 was an Honors student, a double major in History and Political Science who once considered pursuing entering law school.

However, by the time she returned to the University to earn her Master's degree in [Humanities](#) and delivered the Graduate Address at [Commencement in 2013](#), Katie had re-committed herself to her passion and the reason she came to Dominican in the first place. She wanted to be a History teacher and faculty supported her goal all the way.

"Those interactions with faculty over and over again and how they were shaping who I was inspired me," says Katie, who now teaches AP History and is chair of the Social Studies Department at Marin Catholic High School. "I wanted to have that same influence with students as a teacher in the classroom."

One of Katie's early influences at Dominican was Christian Dean, a professor of [Political Science](#) and Philosophy and debate team coach in the [School of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences](#). He appointed her as an intern her sophomore year and she to this day remembers the four keywords to his syllabus: Curiosity, skepticism, rigor and humility.

"His class was so thought-provoking and challenging, but I learned so much," Katie says.

After her undergraduate experience at Dominican, Katie earned her teaching credential at St. Mary's College. Albeit, she was drawn back to Dominican upon the advice and help from history professor Sister Patricia Dougherty and Martin Anderson, the Director of Graduate Humanities and now retired.

"I consider myself to be a lifelong learner. I wanted to challenge myself and to continue my education," Katie says. "I also knew that the program would include a lot of the same faculty who inspired me as an undergraduate and I was excited about that."

That excitement culminated with Katie being selected to deliver the Graduate Address on the day she received her Master's degree. Her Commencement speech touched on her three reasons for returning to Dominican: Its community is rich in tradition and academic excellence; faculty who are dedicated to their craft and care about the success of their students; and the uniqueness of the Masters in Humanities program.

"Coming back to Dominican always feels like coming home," she says. "I wanted to talk about how Dominican made me who I am today and influenced what I do and how I look at the world."

March 16, 2016