

Sacred Heart University

From the Selected Works of Gary L. Rose

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Longtime Professor Shares Stories of His Time at Sacred Heart



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Alumnus Matt Reale, right, welcomes Professor Gary Rose to the stage.

Longtime Sacred Heart University [Professor Gary Rose](#) shared stories about his life and dedicated tenure at a recent event in his honor.

The event, sponsored by the [College of Arts & Sciences](#) and [Office for Alumni Engagement](#), allowed faculty, staff and alumni to learn a bit more about Rose, who has taught at SHU for more than 35 years. Guests gathered at the Frank and Marisa Martire Business & Communications Center for a light-hearted conversation between Rose and one of his former students, Matthew C. Reale '86. Afterward, University officials announced the Professor Gary Rose Family Scholarship to honor Rose and his dedication to SHU. Guests were also able to get a signed copy of Rose's newest book, *HAYWIRE: A Chronology of the 2016 Presidential Contest*.

Clarifying that the occasion did not mean Rose is retiring, Reale said, "This is a fantastic event to honor Dr. Rose."

Reale asked Rose, who is also chair of the politics and global studies program, various questions about his education, career and family.

Raised in Cheshire, Rose attended public school and started his college education at the University of New Haven with the intention of becoming a police officer. "I started to take political science courses and it started to move my interests," Rose said.

This wasn't Rose's first taste of politics. He was influenced by his mother, who was a district coordinator for the Democratic Party, and he attended his first presidential rally with her when he was in fourth grade.

They traveled to the New Haven Green to hear John F. Kennedy speak; Rose said he still has the sign he built and nailed to an oak tree in his front yard in support of Kennedy.

While Rose enjoyed college and his courses, he did not know what path to take. "At this point, I wasn't sure where I was headed in life. I withdrew from school and joined the Army in 1972," he said.

Rose was stationed in Germany for 18 months. When he returned home, he worked in construction before heading back to school to finish his degree. He knew he wanted to be a college professor, so he went to Kansas State University for his master's degree and then on to Miami University of Ohio for his doctorate. Rose went on to teach in Missouri, and then he heard about a job opening at SHU.

Retired Professor John Kikoski hired Rose in 1982, allowing the political science department to grow to two people. "I'm the man who brought Gary Rose here," Kikoski said at the event. "He is totally ethical. What you see is what you get."

Rose said he didn't know much about Sacred Heart at the time, but he was intrigued by what Kikoski told him and showed him at the job interview. With the desire to move back to Connecticut with his wife, Rose saw the job as a good fit and opportunity.

As time went on, Rose took on a number of activities to raise the University's profile. He started and advised SHU's first debate team, bringing it to the same level as Princeton, Yale and Harvard teams. Reale, one of the first five team members, recalled taking long weekend trips with his teammates and Rose to many elite schools to debate. The team's membership grew, and it went on to defeat some of those Ivy League schools.

Rose also started taking students to presidential inaugurations in Washington, D.C. His first one was Ronald Reagan's inauguration in 1985.

The first class Rose taught was comprised of nine students in a classroom in Curtis Hall. He said he enjoyed teaching the commuter students from blue-collar families. "The reason why I enjoyed being here—I saw myself when I was that age. There were a lot of first-generation college kids. That was me...I would really see myself in them. They were hungry...trying to climb the ladder."

As the decades went on, Rose saw SHU's evolution. He witnessed the school change from primarily commuter to residential. He saw the University expand with new facilities and programs, and the student population increase.

Rose said he has been lucky to work with some amazing people since 1982, like Kikoski, former SHU President Tom Melady and countless students who have had an impression on him. He continues to enjoy his time at SHU, he said, and he looks forward to the future.