

Thank you, Fr. Rich and Sr. Grace, for gathering us here to celebrate today and for allowing me the opportunity to introduce this year's Santa Maria Justice Award: Dr. Tom Madison.

Dr. Madison is the associate dean of the Greehey School of Business, where he has been a faculty member since 1998. There, he has guided countless students through accounting courses and led his colleagues as the chair of the Accounting Department.

Dr. Madison's commitment to the common good goes far beyond campus. Dr. Madison has served as treasurer of LiftFund, offering his expertise and time to the largest non-profit microlender in the United States, headquartered here in San Antonio.

And, of course, over the past decade and beyond, Dr. Madison's efforts to build a more just and equitable community have found a home each tax season here at the Center for Legal and Social Justice.

Each spring, Dr. Madison leads the University's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program as it trains some two hundred volunteer preparers—mostly students—to assist upwards of 1,000 taxpayers complete their returns, free of charge.

If Dr. Madison's effort was limited to recruiting a team of expert faculty, staff, and practitioners to train volunteers and review returns, that would be enough.

If his commitment to taxpayers was limited to come early and stay late each Saturday until the last family was served, that would be enough.

If his impact was limited to sharing his enthusiasm with nervous student volunteers, that would be enough.

Dr. Madison does all that, and more. Through his hard work, attention to detail, and strategic use of technical tax terms, he has created an engine that generates economic security for our West Side neighborhoods.

Under his leadership, the St. Mary's VITA program has helped return 10 *million* dollars to our neighbors. To put that into an individual perspective:

A typical taxpayer in our 78228 ZIP Code—where over 1 in 4 people live in poverty—may be eligible for \$2,100 in tax credits. In the neighboring 78207 ZIP Code—where over 2 in 5 people live in poverty—a typical taxpayer may be eligible for \$7,500 in tax credits. That's nearly 30% of that neighborhood's median income.

That can, and does, change lives. *That* is Dr. Madison's legacy: a program that harnesses the talent, knowledge, and effort of dedicated individuals not for the wealthiest among us, but rather for those our society too often overlooks.

The program's volunteers are his legacy, too. Through the VITA program, Dr. Madison has molded a generation of St. Mary's graduates who enter their careers with an ethic of service. This ethic informed by their VITA experience. The retiree and the immigrant; the laborer and the person with disabilities; the unemployed man and the single mother: in these classrooms and in these halls, Dr. Madison has fostered a program where all are treated with dignity and respect.

That is the Blessed Mother's legacy, too.

On this Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe—the patron saint of this Center—how fitting it is to honor Dr. Madison, a servant leader who helps make this building a beacon for justice for our San Antonio community. Dr. Madison, please come forward to accept this award.