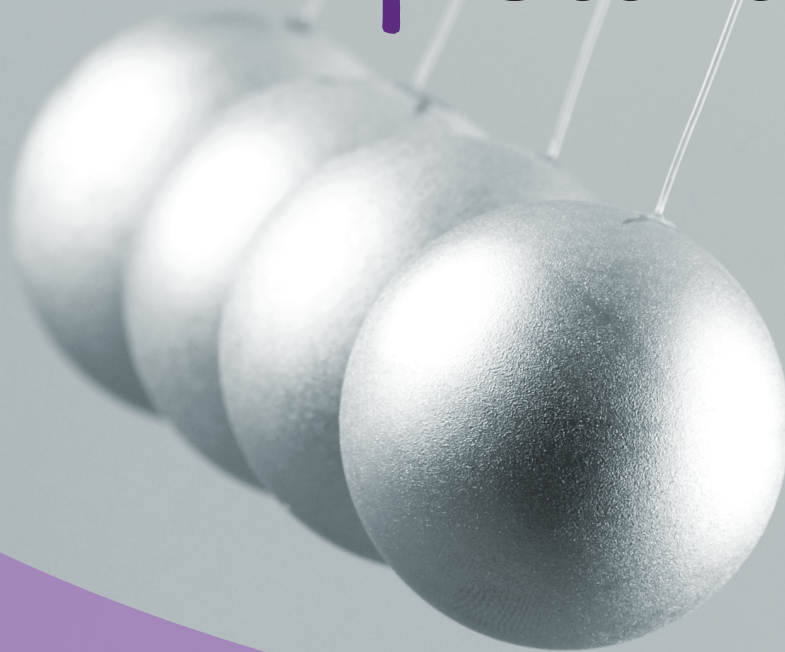


today



FALL 2021

impact
starts here



ROBERT MADU

House of *Prayer* | House of *Presence* | House for *People*

The Impact of Saying Yes to God



Robert Madu was a 17-year-old junior in high school when God put a call on his life to preach the gospel. Standing on the SAGU campus, he was halfway through a Fine Arts short sermon when God so clearly spoke, "This is what I've called you to do for the rest of your life." Since that monumental moment during a simple short sermon, Robert has crisscrossed the globe sharing the hope of Jesus. For 20 years, he has had the privilege of preaching for camps, conferences, and churches worldwide. With a fresh vision and a passion for the local church, the Madu family's most recent step of faith was to plant a brand new church in Dallas, TX. The impact this orator and pastor has had on the Kingdom of God is astounding, but it all started with an impact that was made upon him as a college student.

In 2002, Robert began his freshman year at SAGU. Confident in his calling, he was eager to gain all that he could from the Bible college experience. "I had so many landmark moments at Southwestern," Madu said. "One morning in chapel the Holy Spirit spoke to me," he went on to explain. "He told me I was missing something." With divine discernment, the light came on for Robert. "It was like I finally realized that education was more than just the credit hours I was paying for. Everything was a class!" Robert recalled. From then on, he took notes in every chapel.

"My professors were a great gift to me," Robert said. "I will never forget the time Jeff Magruder gave me a C on a message in Biblical Preaching. Full of pride and baffled, I wondered how I could have gotten a grade like that! He cared enough to pull me aside and say, 'You had good thoughts, but they weren't what the text was saying. You have a gift that can fill arenas, but with a great gift comes a greater mandate of responsibility.'" This was foundational advice for Robert.

Now, years later, Robert Madu is still building upon the faith and disciplines that were embedded in him during his time at SAGU. His advice for future generations of students is to show up, lean in, and never miss a moment to learn. "Fall in love with following Jesus, not your dreams," he said.

"Give up the idol of your own plans and what you think your life is supposed to look like. God will unfold it piece by piece as you chase after Him."



Recently, Robert had to take his own advice when God called him out of itinerant ministry and into pastoring. “I had no intention of ever church planting,” he explained. However, things began to shift in his heart. What started as a monthly social gathering in 2019 quickly evolved.

Then, when the world turned upside down during the pandemic, Robert felt he could not stop. He continued to reach the community that had been forming through online messages he would record in his living room. “God birthed our church out of that moment, I’m thankful for it,” said Robert.

Monthly services turned into weekly services, and by Easter of 2021, Social Dallas officially launched as a church. Though he didn’t see it coming, Robert is thankful for the journey of church planting.

“God has stripped every piece of me that would lean on my own ingenuity or my own gift. I don’t feel like I’m qualified, but I’m going to rely on Him.”

One week this fall, Social Dallas’ usual meeting location was unavailable, so they scoured the city and found Strauss Square, an outdoor performance theater in downtown Dallas. What seemed like a twist in the road turned out to be a divine detour. 1,600 people showed up and 38 gave their lives to Jesus that morning! “God will

use anything to make sure we’re dependent on Him,” Robert said. “For years we’ve been saying that the Church is more than a building. God just put that to the test!”

Even as a mobile church, Social Dallas consistently sees between 1,300 and 1,500 people show up every single Sunday. God is doing amazing work, and yet, the best is still to come! What started for Robert Madu at SAGU continues on through his ministry today! The impact upon one student has led to an impact upon thousands. ■



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POSITIVE IMP[ACT]

transforming lives of orphans and
victims of human trafficking

In the Spring of 2011, high school senior, **Morgann Delaney**, had two post-graduate choices. “Do I move to Sydney, Australia to be with my parents, or do I begin my college career in the States?” Her parents had chosen to be supportive of both options, so the decision was entirely Morgann’s. What a weighty choice—one that would not only impact her life but many others for years to come!

After being given the opportunity to attend SAGU Campus Days, the decision about her future became much easier to make. As soon as she arrived on the campus, she knew it was home. While others her age were soaking in the fun activities and food trucks that Campus Days offers, Morgann found herself attending a prayer meeting where the ministry calling upon her life was confirmed through prophecy. “I can experience the Lord in a place like this,” she recalls thinking.

Though it was the spiritual environment that initially attracted Morgann to SAGU, she remains grateful for the practical education she received and the work ethic instilled in her throughout the course of her undergraduate and graduate studies. “I am applying what I learned in those classes daily,” she says. “My professors mentored me. It wasn’t just a job for them.”

Morgann recalls a powerful chapel during her time at SAGU where she committed to herself and the Lord,

“I want to be someone who stands for the things that matter. I want to be someone who pursues the Lord with everything that I have. I want to use my gifts and education to bring forth justice.”



To this day, she is living out that commitment as she serves orphans and survivors of human trafficking.

After receiving her Bachelor’s Degree in Marketing in 2015 and her Master of Divinity in 2018, Delaney followed her heart for human rights and justice into the non-profit world. She began working for **Nou Fam**, a Haitian orphanage that rescues children from trafficking and cares for them through a foster care model. The organization focuses on education, job creation, and family preservation. With her marketing expertise, Morgann helps Nou Fam with (1) donor acquisition and relations and (2) telling their story as an organization.

In 2020, Morgann also began working for an anti-trafficking organization called **Treasured Vessels Foundation**. They loved her work so much as a volunteer and then a part-time employee, that they convinced her to come on full-time with a personally tailored job description. “I knew that the Lord had opened up that door for me,” she says.

“Having a deep-rooted biblical foundation has been key because, at the end of the day, I can always go back to the Word. I can walk into our safe house and declare the atmosphere as a place of peace and restoration. Every single survivor that has come into our program has said, ‘There’s something so different. What is that?’ It’s been so great to be able to walk through hard times with these women and to disciple them as well. It’s honestly been one of the greatest honors of my life to serve these women.”

An impact isn’t easily measured, but it is readily felt through stories.

The impact Morgann is having on the lives of women and children began many years ago. It began in marketing classes and in the Jeter Prayer room at SAGU, and it continues now at her job and around the world. “I am so thankful to SAGU for equipping me with the tools and resources to be able to do what I’m called to do.” ■

To learn more about Nou Fam and Treasured Vessels Foundation, visit noufam.org and treasuredvesselsfoundation.org.

FROM THE **COURT** TO THE **CLASSROOM**

Could one simple stomach bug impact the course of someone's life? For **James Southerland**, the answer is a resounding 'yes'! It was the night before an important college basketball tryout when it hit him. "I was sicker than a dog," James relays. "The night before a pivotal day in my basketball career, you don't want to be ill," he adds. The tryout did not go very well, leading James in a new direction.

Failures are painful in the moment, but God can redeem our disappointments by redirecting our paths for the better.

For James, it was this divine detour that led him to check out SAGU, a place that would impact his life and the lives of the students he would come to lead in his career.

While touring the SAGU campus for the first time, James serendipitously ran into the assistant basketball coach. On the spot, he was given the opportunity to try out. James recalls, "I didn't have any basketball shoes. I didn't have any shorts. I didn't have anything with me." The coach gave him clothes, he tried out, he made the team, and the rest is history. When asked, "What brought you here to SAGU?"

James answered, "When I walked into the gym, it felt like I was supposed to be here. It just felt right."

James spent the next three years playing basketball and earning his Bachelor's Degree in Sport Management. He learned a great deal from his professors, from sport-specific content to general business ethics. He developed relationships with these mentors that would last for years to come.

In addition to the mentors he gained at SAGU, James also met his wife and many life-long friends during his college years. "What started for me at SAGU? Relationships. You don't think about going to university to invest time and money to get relationships, but really, that's what I got from SAGU." said James.

"At SAGU, I learned how to apply sports as a ministry tool," said James. Right before he graduated,

James attended a Mission Ten trip where they used the sport of basketball to open up conversations with students at schools and camps. For him, sports management has equaled sports ministry. It's always been an avenue to reach people. Throughout his career, he has continued this mindset and asks the question, "How can we use this to reach people?"

James went on to coach, teach, and direct at both high school and collegiate levels before returning to SAGU. He joined the team as the Assistant Men's Basketball Coach and the Business Sport Management Program Coordinator. Now, he is teaching his students the principles he learned at SAGU.

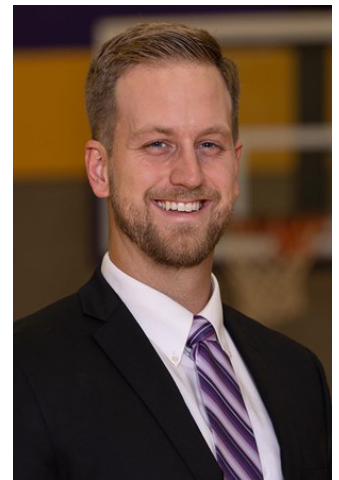
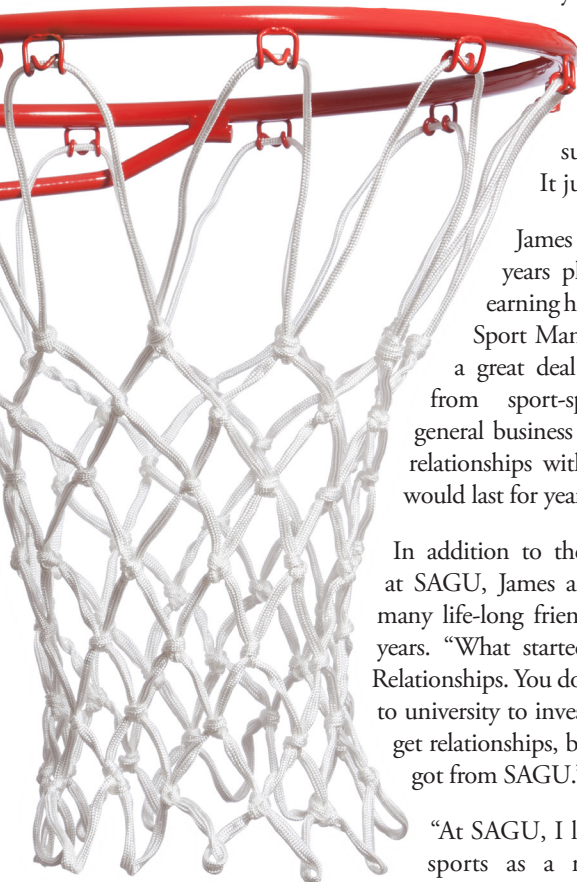
The impact has come full circle.

"What I try to tell my students is, 'grasp the values you learn here. When you go on to work in another place they're going to see high character, high values, high morals, and work ethic. Discipline and values started for me here and are what have helped me in the workforce now.'"

James' journey at SAGU started on the basketball court. From that first spontaneous tryout, he knew he was exactly where God wanted him to be. Later, on that same court, he saw his wife for the first time while watching a volleyball game. He spent many practices on that court being shaped by coaches who were influential in his life. He even proposed to his wife on that court after an athletic banquet.

Now, he's back on that same court coaching. In his words,

"It's amazing how something as simple as the court impacted me so much. Now I get to be part of someone else's journey on that court, impacting students." ■

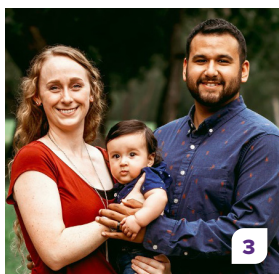




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All notes are published online at sagu.edu/alumninotes. Your submission may be featured in the printed March issue of SAGU Today.



CELEBRATIONS

1 **Rebeka (Dollar) Sanchez (2010-2014)** met her husband, Ramsey Sanchez of five years, while at SAGU. She is a Highschool ELAR teacher, Physical Education Coach, and Assistant Volleyball Coach. Rebeka hopes to become the Head Volleyball Coach at her high school.

2 **Tricia Ikard (1981-1984)** retired in December 2017 after over 33 years in corporate financial management. Now, she serves as a Maypearl Independent School District board trustee, member of the Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas and Southwestern Women's Auxiliary of SAGU. She is actively involved in special education activities, as her son is intellectually disabled.

3 **Samuel Flores (2018)** has served full-time as Campus Pastor for Parkway Church in Port Lavaca, TX. His wife **Melissa** graduated from SAGU with a degree in Elementary Education in **2014** starting her 7th year teaching 4th grade this year. Samuel and Melissa celebrated the birth of their first child, Micah in 2020.

4 **Beverly Mosley (1980-1984)** joined Wycliffe Bible Translators in 1990 and in 1993 moved to Papua New Guinea to begin her career as a Bible translator. Beverly loves being a Bible translator combining her love of language and Scripture.

Since February of 2011, she also served as treasurer and one of the General Presbyters for the Native American Fellowship of the Assemblies of God.

John Hall (1958-1962)

John Mark Hall ("Big John Hall"), of Colleyville, TX passed away on September 29, 2020. "Big John" was known around the world as a premier Gospel singer since the late '50s with his great bass singing for the Inspirationals, the Stamps Quartet, and the Blackwood Brothers. Big John began a solo career and recorded many great records, featured on the Gaither Homecoming videos, and was a member of the Gospel Music Hall of Fame. He was also inducted into the General Council of the Assemblies of God Hall of Honor.

Aileen I. (Robinson) Bullock (1950-1954)

Aileen Bullock (who was originally from Canada) joined the heavenly host of angels on February 6, 2021. She was married for 66 years to Lyndal M. Bullock (1952-1956) who she met at SAGU. They had one child, Brekke Khyleen, who preceded her mother in death. Aileen taught in elementary schools for many years in Kansas. She earned a second bachelor's degree from the University of Central Oklahoma and a master's degree from UNT. Aileen's vivacious smile and enthusiasm for life were an inspiration to all who knew her and that will be immensely missed.

Viola Kay Grissom Holder (1967-1969, 1992-1994)

Viola Kay Grissom Holder passed away on April 23, 2021, in Lynchburg Virginia, with her family at her side. Viola was raised on a farm in Illinois, where she and her sisters achieved recording success as a singing trio. She served as a civil service secretary for the army and then as a secretary and teacher for two decades at Cobb Christian School. Viola was an avid genealogical researcher and published multiple articles in numerous genealogical societies. Viola entered a second career as an Academic Recorder, an Archivist, and a University Historian at SAGU. Here she co-authored a biography with historian Bob Burke. Viola published five books on SAGU history. ■

IN MEMORIAM

Rev. Vernice Sampson (1977-1979)

Vernice (Cheri) Sampson walked through the eastern gate on January 20, 2020, to hear well done good and faithful servant. Cheri made history when she became the first female Native American presbyter to serve in the Assemblies of God. Cheri, an enrolled member of the Akimel O'odham tribe, was elected by the Phoenix Metro Indian Section of the Arizona District Council. She was the pastor of Salt River Indian Assembly of God in Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community near Scottsdale, AZ.

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chapel highlights

- 1 **Donna Barrett, General Secretary, Assemblies of God**, used the unfaithful example of King Saul to encourage students to live a faithful life.
- 2 Alumnus, **Robert Madu, Social Dallas, Dallas, TX**, spoke to students about the cost of going off, the consequences of anger that result in missed opportunities.
- 3 Alumnus, **Jim Franklin, Cornerstone Church, Fresno, CA**, challenged students to be the ones to pick up the mantle and do more for the Kingdom.
- 4 Alumnus, **Jason Exley, Life Church, Midlothian, TX**, encouraged students that shame and guilt are not a guest staying in their house but an enemy they need to slay.
- 5 Alumna, **Meredith Bagby, Missionary to South Africa**, shared her experience as a missionary planting a church and the Urban Tribe initiative. ■

From Rick Bowles, Vice President of Advancement



A few months ago, one of our University personnel revealed two words the Holy Spirit had shared concerning SAGU. Those words were: **“Financial Revival.”** Since then, we have been humbled to witness the ways God has begun to fulfill that promise.

An alumnus recently committed their multi-million dollar estate to SAGU with \$1 million set to be given by the end of 2021. Recently, we learned another person wants to match that \$1 million dollar gift. These donations, along with additional funds yet to be raised, are the beginning foundation to build a **new College of Business and Education facility** when all the funds become available! We have raised (commitments and cash) \$1 million dollars for Phase One of a **new turf football, soccer, and track venue** to be built behind the Sheaffer Activities Center. One donor has made it known they want to contribute and help raise additional funds for Phase Two, which will feature a **stadium for our football team** to be able to play their games here on campus.

I believe this is just the beginning of a financial revival that will encourage the faith of our students, staff, alumni, and donors to believe in God for what seems impossible; and that it will impact many in our community and even the world. Will you stand with us in prayer, asking God for a wave of revival – both spiritual and financial – to continue, and grow even stronger for His glory? Likewise, we pray God will bless you in the same way!

Finally, we are pleased to welcome **Girien Salazar as our new Director of Development**. Girien received his undergraduate and master’s degrees at SAGU. He is married to Esmeralda (Emy) and they have a seven-month-old daughter, Salomé. As former Executive Director of the NHCLC and the Faith and Education Coalition, Girien will be an asset to the Advancement office and SAGU, and we are thrilled to have him on our team! ■



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HOMECOMING 2021



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WELCOME HOME



"Homecoming 2021 we had a record number in attendance at our Michael W. Smith concert to kick off the weekend. Many of the alumni in attendance expressed the excitement and joy of being back at SAGU after a tough year in 2020.

We hope to keep building on the momentum from this year's event to make next year even better. This Homecoming was especially unique because we had the opportunity to commemorate numerous alumni and introduce some new events and reunions!" ■

James Carnell, Sr. Director of Alumni

1 Dr. Tyrone Block gave a speech as he received the 2021 Distinguished Faculty Award. He has been with the university for nearly 20 years.

2 Grace Hector received the Outstanding Young Alumnus Vocational Ministry Award for her work with The Block Church in Philadelphia, PA.

3 Michael W. Smith kicked off the weekend in concert. It was a powerful night of worship.

4 Alumna Dorothy Trogg showing her Homecoming keepsake with a smile.

5 The P.C. Nelson Distinguished Alumnus Award was presented to **Terry and Irma Phipps**. This is the most prestigious honor that

the university can bestow. Candidates must exemplify outstanding character and excellence through service in every aspect of their lives.

6 The Young Alumni Marketplace Ministry Award went to **Malorie Cellestino** for her award-winning work in digital media.

7 9 Students & alumni enjoyed the Homecoming Football Game and Tailgate Party at Lumpkins Stadium.

8 XErnie Meritt received the Distinguished Alumnus Service Award thanks to his over 35 years of service to his community.

Mark your calendars for next year's Homecoming experience!