



Emmett McMenamy's Professional Portfolio

DRAKE UNIVERSITY | PUBLIC RELATIONS AND
MULTIMEDIA JOURNALISM MAJORS

I deeply desire to serve Christ and His Church by working as the Digital Evangelization Specialist for the Diocese of Des Moines. I am a trained multimedia storyteller, with a passion for writing as the foundation for all my work. I'm proficient in journalistic writing, social media management, content creation, and launching print initiatives.

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Work Samples

#1: Writing →

Fried fish, fast service

As Easter approaches and the Lent season begins, parishes open their church cafeterias or school gyms for an annual tradition: the fish fry.

St. John and Paul in Altoona has hosted a traditional fish fry for more than 20 years, but about a decade ago, the parish set itself apart by adding a drive-thru in the parking lot. What began as a makeshift system with volunteer carhops evolved into two dedicated trailers and a well-oiled machine rivaling any fast-food restaurant. Now, with the dine-in and drive-thru options, this fish fry is bustling every Friday night during Lent.

The drive-thru dream originated from a member of the Altoona Knights of Columbus, the Catholic organization that runs the event. Steve Vonnahme, one of the organizers, said the team didn't know if it could support a drive-thru but tried it anyway. "We just took a shot," he said.

He said the initial setup definitely could've been more efficient. Volunteers would slip in and out the back door to take and deliver orders, inevitably interrupting the flow of indoor orders. The process worked well enough until the pandemic hit, and demand for drive-thru orders skyrocketed.

A solution rolled up in two custom trailers, one for frying fish and one for boxing meals. As soon as the fish turns golden brown, volunteers put it in a pan and carry it to the other trailer, where it's boxed up with green beans and macaroni and cheese (Vonnahme's favorite). The new system requires more help, but the Knights find plenty of volunteers to lend a hand.

While the efficient trailer-to-car service has become popular, indoor dining is still booming. Parish member Maxine McEnany said the chef has perfected the fish recipe, which draws folks from as far as Cedar Rapids to the feast.

"The Knights are so proud of what they do," she said. "Seeing that crowded place, they are just busting at the seams."

More of my writing samples can be found at
<https://emmettmcmenamy.com/my-published-work/>

We're all lonely. We miss each other. Let's go to church.

Note: This article was written for my journalism capstone, which is a secular, Gen Z audience.

The red brick church called Holy Cross sits on a low hill surrounded by prairie grass in Maxwell, Iowa. Few sounds can be heard here, save for the sporadic chorus from gray herons and pheasants, and, every Sunday, car tires churning over gravel and old friends chatting as they make their way up the front ramp.

For more than a century, a loving community has gathered inside this rural church. It's Roman Catholic by affiliation, but its spirit belongs to its neighbors. Come as you are to Holy Cross.

Come on In

Gen Z is hesitant about social interactions; as a result, we report lower levels of happiness than older adults, according to a Stanford report. We underestimate the friendliness of others and often shy away from one another. But rural churches like Holy Cross, with pews emptying like their rural surroundings, want to welcome us in. They need us just as much as we might need them.

Here, you will be quickly known. The congregation of Holy Cross remembers your name. It's a small gesture, but it makes a newcomer feel... at home.

Casey Meeker began attending Holy Cross with his spouse, Shelby, when they moved to the area a few years ago. They knew about the little church that stood alone amid grassland and decided to visit because they preferred the 8 a.m. Mass — a valiant move for a Sunday morning.

"They were very welcoming right away," Casey says. "Everyone would say 'hi' after church, and we got to know them."

By their third Mass, the priest at Holy Cross was greeting them both by name and blessing their son Jax as they stood at the altar for communion.

"We completely bought into what they built and what they wanted for this church, because it so aligns with who we are," Shelby Meeker says.

In a world of passwords and keycards, this jewel box of a church insists on a tradition of open access for all who may need it — community members new and old. In fact, if you want to join, you get a key of your own.

Read of the article rest [here](#).

Emilie Meyer races towards her final collegiate finish line (National Award Winner)

Emilie Meyer glided past the charred remains of Jethro’s on Forest Avenue. Her feet chopped the concrete sidewalk at a controlled runner’s rhythm. Her 5-foot 9-inch frame gives her a longer stride than most competitors. I tried my best to keep up.

“Seven miles is a light run,” Meyer said. “And I feel pretty good today.”

She asked if I wanted to run 10 miles; I tapped out at about four. We ran a loop around campus and chatted the entire time. I would ask a question as succinctly as possible, gasping for air whenever I could. She would respond with a minute-long answer, just enough time for me to catch my breath. About a mile in, I couldn’t hear her over my own heavy breathing.

This shouldn’t surprise anybody. I’m just an average runner who tried to keep pace with Meyer, who’s been running her whole life. And she’s pretty good at it.

How good? This winter, as a senior track and field athlete at Drake, Meyer broke the school’s women’s indoor mile record with a time of 4:42.83, over three seconds faster than the previous record. At a different meet this winter, she broke the school’s women’s indoor 800-meter race record, one she actually set last year. And in her first race of the 2025 outdoor season this spring, she broke the women’s 1500-meter race record.

“It feels good to know that I left my mark on Drake and helped improve the program the best I could,” Meyer said. “I was joking with my coaches: I just don’t want you guys to forget me, so you have to look at my name.”

Meyer was born to run. In kindergarten, she lapped her classmates while running the school mile. As a result, Meyer’s gym teacher asked her to compete in a regional track meet a few years later. She competed as a third grader and finished in second place — bested only by an eighth grader — and her parents took notice.

“God had given her a gift of running, and she could use it as she chose,” her mom, Judy Meyer, said.

Meyer hasn’t stopped using her gift. She competed throughout high school and decided to run collegiately because four years wasn’t enough. This decision came after a period early in high school when she was fainting in the middle of runs. Her mom suggested she stop running; Meyer knew that wasn’t an option. She couldn’t stand just watching from the sidelines.

That was when I was like: ‘I’m not ever doing this again,’” Meyer said. “It was so hard for me to just watch and not compete.”

For Meyer, it’s not only about running; it’s also about competing. When she hits the track, she intends to

achieve her goals. This winter, those goals were to break the school mile record and reach the podium for the 800-meter race. She accomplished both. To continue reaching new goals, Meyer trains six days a week: one day for speed training, three days for weight training and two days for long runs. And she never skips a workout.

Her teammate and college roommate of three years, Meghan Coulter, sometimes tries to get her to break her routine. It never works.

“There’ve been days and weekends where I’ve begged her to skip a run so we could go do something and she refuses,” Coulter said. “That girl is so dedicated to the sport...so to see it really paying off her senior year has been super special.”

As Coulter alluded, Meyer wasn’t always breaking school records. She was always fast — in high school, she placed fourth at the state competition twice, and, early on in college, she notched multiple top-three finishes in meets — but this year she’s hit another level of success.

How did she unlock this extra level?

Training her body has helped, but so has training her mind. Her parents said one of Meyer’s greatest challenges has been building confidence. Specifically, she’ll go into races with the demeanor that she doesn’t belong when she’s actually one of the fastest runners.

This year, that demeanor has changed. At a race in Fayetteville, Arkansas, before Meyer broke Drake’s mile record, a coach said she was getting too overwhelmed before races. Her coach offered a solution: let God take over.

Meyer grew up Catholic and prays with her parents before every race, but this year, the phrase “let go and let God” has become her mantra. Now, before a race, Meyer consistently reminds herself to trust in her God-given abilities and the hard work she’s already put in.

So far, it’s working out. But the book isn’t quite closed on her college running career. She has an outdoor season to wrap up, and one goal remains the same: to improve each week.

From my observations, Meyer is doing just that. She even believes she can improve her record mile time. While we ran by Old Main along University Avenue, Meyer joked that after hitting the 4:42.83 mile time, she was disappointed because a sub-4:40 finish was in reach. Even after breaking school records, Meyer doesn’t feel she’s reached a limit on how fast she can run. The question is: Who can keep up?

Work Samples

#2: Social Media Content Creation



@dubulldogcatholic



Three pinned posts. Created using Canva and Adobe Illustrator.

@dubulldogcatholic



“House Blessing Crawl” Video.

Engagement:

- 6.5K views
- 463 likes
- 65 shares

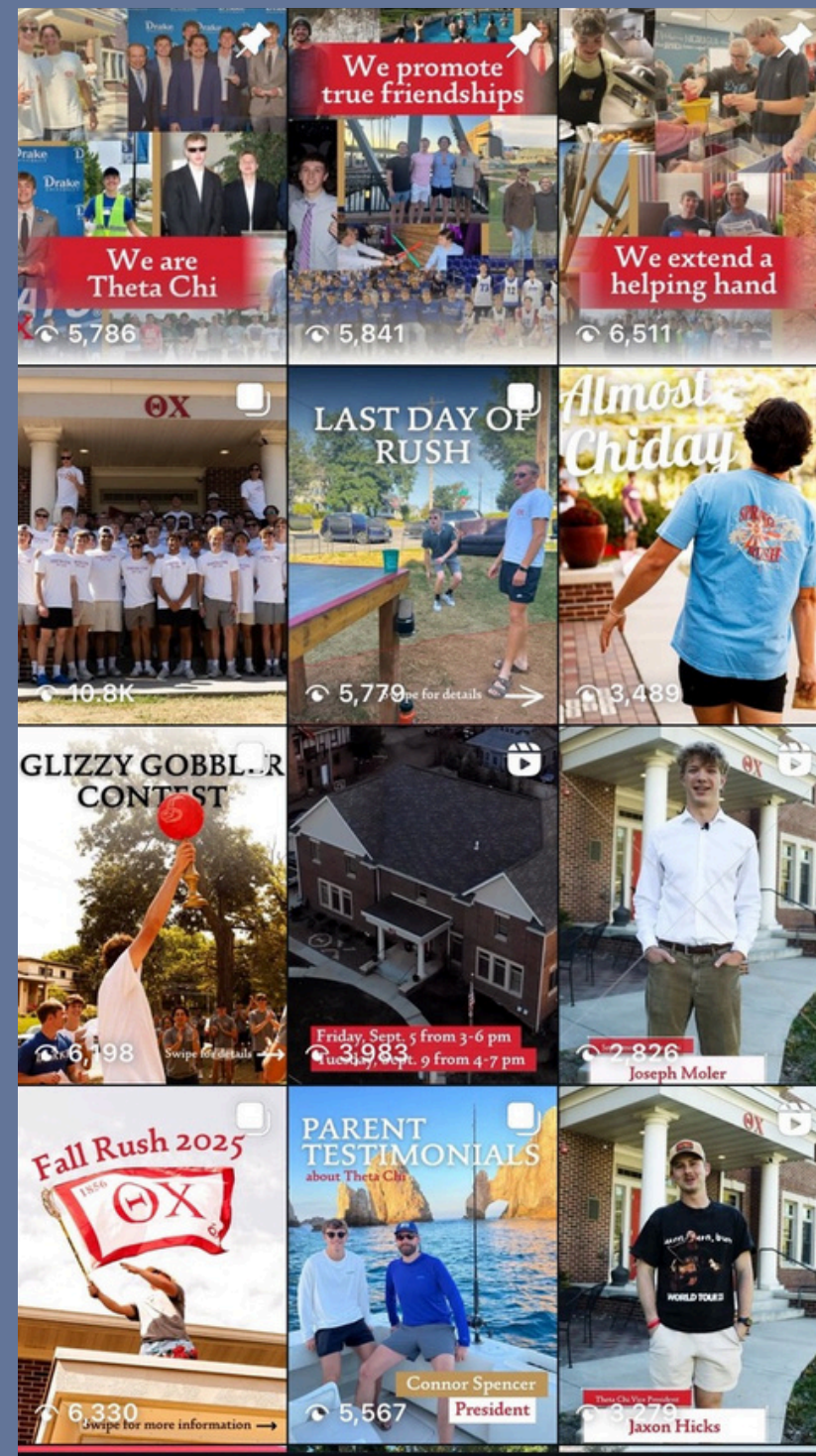
Edited in Adobe Premiere Pro.

@drakethetachi fall 2025 social media campaign.

I succesfully solo-launched a social media outreach campaign for my fraternity's fall recruitment. Here were the results:

- 18 posts in one month.
- 128,000 total impressions on an account with 1,200 followers.
- 156% increase in engagement from 2024 to 2025.
- 200% increase in new members.

← This is a photo of the Instagram feed during that August.



@drakethetachi grahpics



Fall Rush Schedule:

Pizza and House Tours
Friday Sept. 5 from 3-6 pm
Tuesday Sept. 9 from 4-7 pm



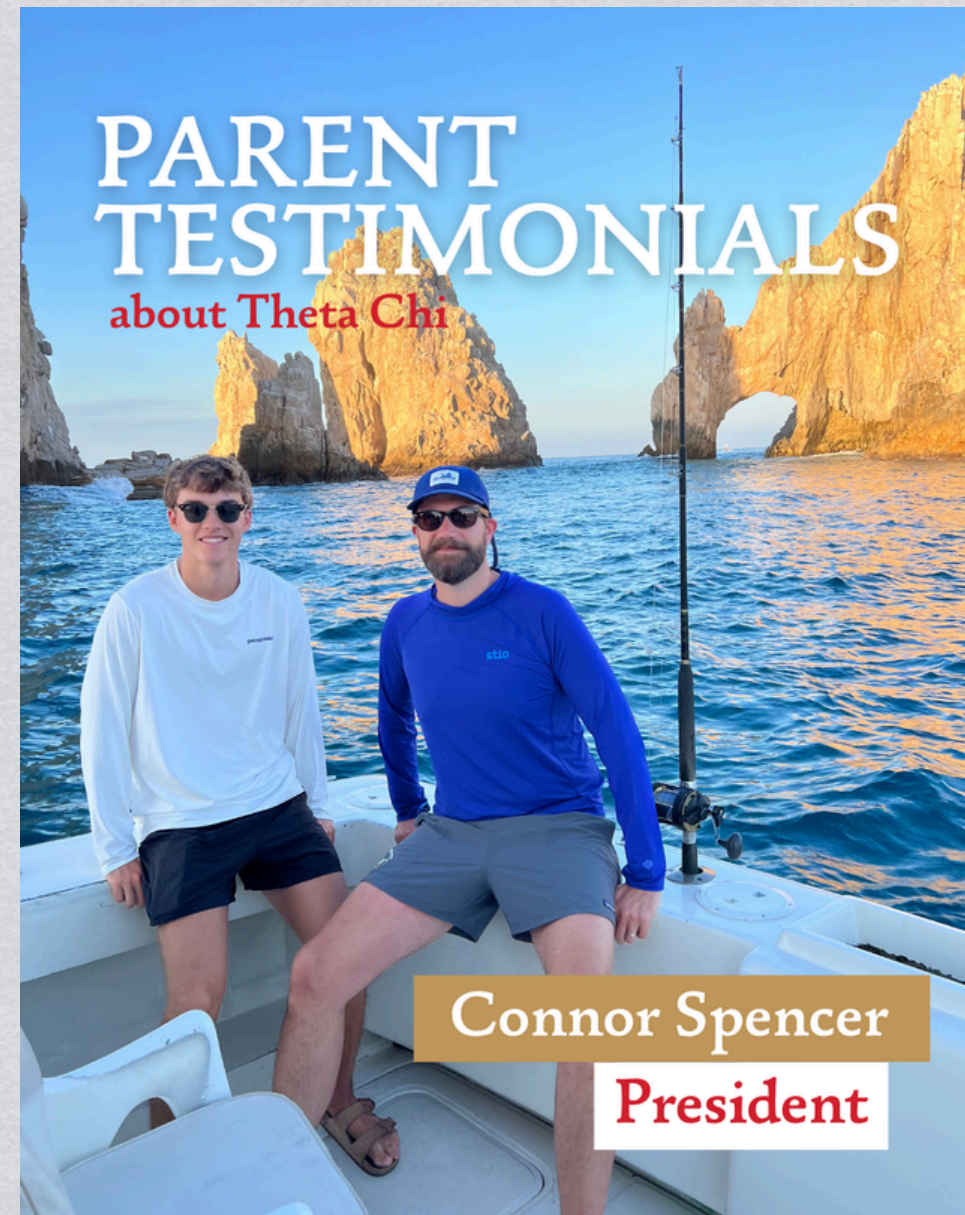
Glizzy Gobbler Contest +
Games
Wednesday, Sept. 10 from 4-7 pm

NFL Pregame Party & Jethro's
Thursday, Sept. 11 from 4-7 p.m.



Grill Out and Games
Friday, Sept. 12 from 1-4 p.m.

Bid Day
Saturday, Sept. 13 from 12-2 p.m.

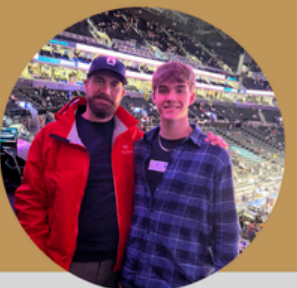


Connor Spencer
President

We couldn't be happier about our son's decision to join Theta Chi! It has been wonderful to see him grow in such a supporting group of young men committed to excellence: **academically, philanthropically, and socially.**

We find the house to be a safe and **welcoming environment**, and feel very comfortable with him living there. ”

— Jaime, Connor's Dad



@drakethetachi



Theta Chi Testimonial Video.

Engagement:

- 4.5K views
- 122 likes

Edited in Adobe Premiere Pro.

@aarp iowa



“Social Security’s 90th Anniversary” Video.

I completed this project as a Communications and Outreach intern with AARP Iowa.

*Edited in Adobe Premiere Pro.
Created motion graphics in Adobe After Effects.*

Work Samples

#3: Print Initiatives 

St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Student Center Biannual Newsletter

I launched this new communications initiative for St. Catherine's alongside Megan Schultz, the campus minister. Megan and I collaborated on ideas for the newsletter, and I executed its creation. I took photos, enhanced photography in Adobe Photoshop, created the layout in Canva, and wrote most of the copy. See the full newsletter on my [website](#).



Cover page



Pg. 5



Pg. 10
Feature article



Pg. 11

AARP Iowa Community Challenge Grant Booklet

I created this 32-page booklet to highlight the AARP Challenge Grant initiative. I designed it from scratch in Canva, and AARP Iowa is delivering it to state legislators to raise awareness about its Challenge Grants. You can download the full PDF [online](#).



Cover page



Pg. 5



Pg. 6

Pg. 13

Thank you!

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