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For Immediate Release

OLLU marks one-year anniversary of fire with 'Building Dreams' event *Increased enrollment and a spike in donations follow four-alarm blaze*

SAN ANTONIO (May 6, 2009) – Today, Our Lady of the Lake University (OLLU) and the Sisters of the Congregation of Divine Providence commemorated the one-year anniversary of the May 6, 2008, fire and honored first responders during the “Building Dreams” special event. The fire that tore through OLLU’s historic Main Building last May brought out the best in the campus community and its many supporters.

Since the fire, enrollment has risen one percent in the fall and three percent in the spring marking the first increase since 2002. Forty eight hours after the blaze ignited, the Office of Admissions received an unexpected surge in student applications: 54. Two weeks after the fire, 138 applications arrived. “We were stunned,” said OLLU Vice President for Enrollment Management Mike Acosta.

During the commemoration event, San Antonio Mayor Phil Hardberger spoke about planned improvements to 24th Street adjacent to OLLU. The mayor’s wife, OLLU alumna Linda Hardberger also spoke, along with other city and business leaders. In addition, Texas Secretary of State, the Honorable Hope Andrade, gave a proclamation to the first responders that was signed by Governor Rick Perry. Secretary Andrade is a former student of the Lake.

OLLU President Tessa Martinez Pollack reported a 24-percent increase in donors from the previous year – and an 84-percent increase in donations. The university is debt-free. Two of the city’s largest corporate citizens – Valero and AT&T – were recognized for investing \$1 million into OLLU’s future. Last year, the Valero Energy Foundation – the charitable arm of Valero Energy Corporation – announced that its gift will go toward the rebuilding fund. The AT&T Foundation – the philanthropic arm of AT&T – announced today a grant that will support the university’s higher education initiatives.

The more than 100 fire fighters and police officers were honored for their heroic efforts last year. Representing them at the event were S.A. Fire Chief Charles Hood and S.A. Police Chief Bill McManus. Also recognized were City Councilwomen Lourdes Galvan and OLLU students, including Student Government Association President Carlos Gonzalez. Providing the invocation was Sister Diane Heinrich, CDP.

To cap off the evening, plans were unveiled for the rebuilding of Main by Kell Muñoz Architects and Bartlett Cocke General Contractors. They reported how they are preserving Main’s historic significance while creating a contemporary learning environment.

OLLU