

the quintessential man

remembered

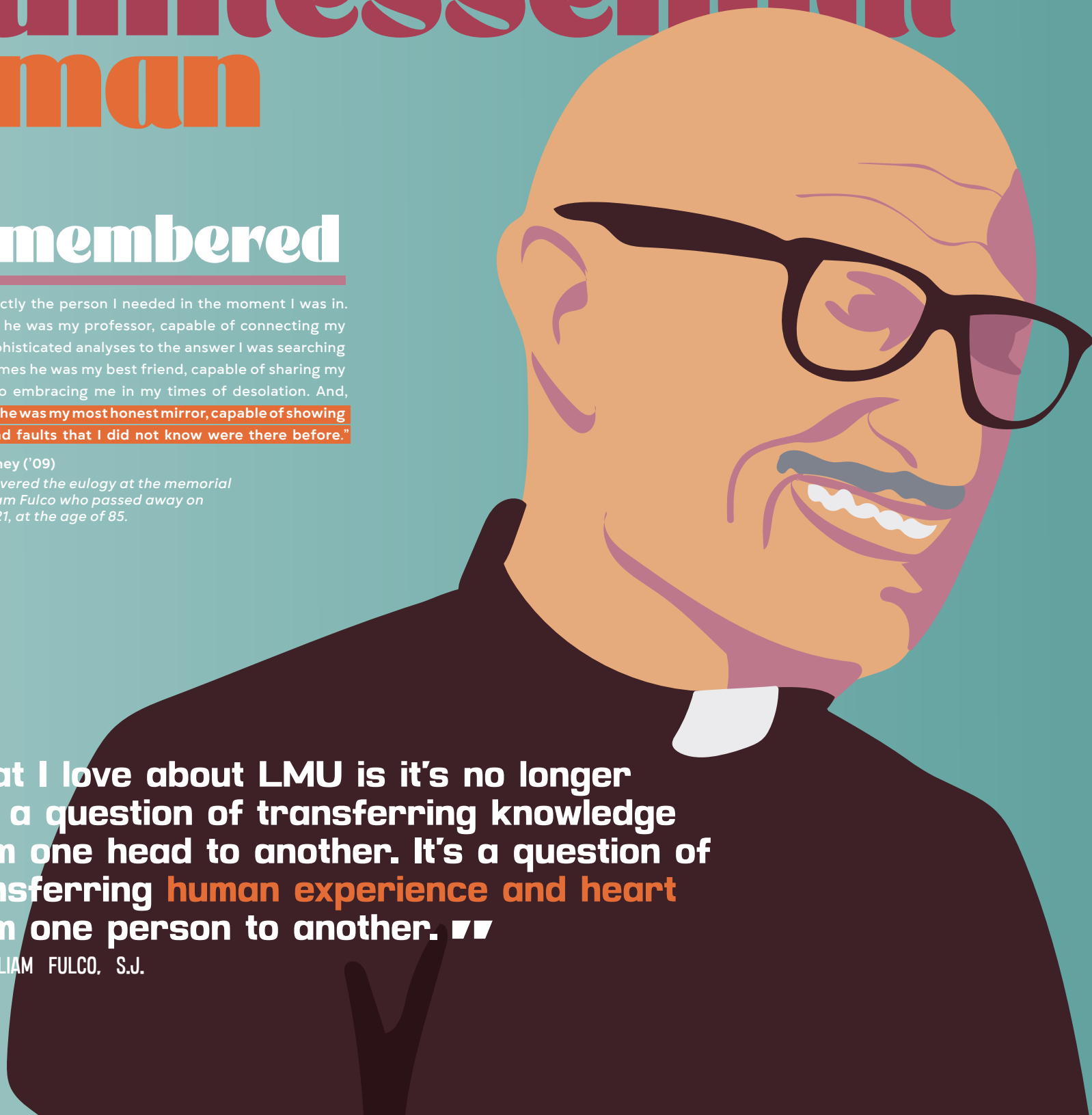
"He was exactly the person I needed in the moment I was in. Sometimes he was my professor, capable of connecting my most unsophisticated analyses to the answer I was searching for. Sometimes he was my best friend, capable of sharing my joy and also embracing me in my times of desolation. And, sometimes he was my most honest mirror, capable of showing me gifts and faults that I did not know were there before."

—Sean Tierney ('09)

Tierney delivered the eulogy at the memorial for Fr. William Fulco who passed away on Nov. 24, 2021, at the age of 85.

▲▲ What I love about LMU is it's no longer just a question of transferring knowledge from one head to another. It's a question of transferring **human experience and heart** from one person to another. ▼▼

FR. WILLIAM FULCO, S.J.



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academics



As an educator, Fr. Fulco said his philosophy was to teach “person-to-person, heart-to-heart.” With that approach came a bevy of accomplishments and accolades as an academic. He ran the archaeology program at LMU, founding the Bellarmine College of Liberals Arts’ archaeology center on campus. He received a Ph.D. from Yale University, and a litany of honors (including the BCLA Daum Professorship in 2013) throughout his career at LMU. In addition to his academic work on campus, he also worked on several books and translated dialogue for “The Passion of the Christ.”



brotherhood

In 2002, Fr. Fulco became the faculty advisor for LMU’s chapter of the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity. As a “Renaissance Brother” – a title conferred to non-undergraduate members – he appreciated seeing members grow so close in friendship. “I find these guys to be an extraordinary group of men,” he said in a 2012 interview. When Fulco battled cancer in 2013, the men of Sig Ep kept him company in the hospital, with three even getting his signature tattooed on them as a reminder of him. In return, he got their initials tattooed on himself, as a daily reminder of those students.



bunnies



At some point (that even he could not remember when interviewed), Fr. Fulco began to amass a large collection of bunnies in his office. He considered the animal his “totem,” and it became one of his signatures on the LMU campus. “Bunnies look very gentle,” he said in a 2012 interview. “But for anyone who has raised a rabbit ... they know that bunnies kick and bite.” When he was hospitalized for cancer, among other things, he received a great deal of bunny gifts from loved ones.



sobriety

Though he drank socially before 1968, Fr. Fulco started what he called his “drinking career” that year, after a period of personal and professional disillusionment. He felt stuck and resorted to drinking, as he put it, “to change my reality.” His fellow Jesuits held an intervention for him in 1985, and he learned to view sobriety and AA as a solution to replace the “solution” that alcohol offered. Fr. Fulco lived a sober life for decades after that, including throughout his time at LMU, and spoke openly and honestly about his journey.