Where did you grow up? Why aren’t you there now?
I grew up in Battle Creek, MI. When my then-boyfriend was ready for residency, we agreed that he’d try to match in a city I’d be willing to move to so we could be in the same place. That wound up being Boston. Now married, we always assumed we’d go home, but it’s been 24 years and we are still in our beloved Boston.

What path brought you to BC?
I was a commencement speaker for the School of Social Work and that caused a huge protest among the students. I was running Catholic Charities at the time and they were concerned that the School was inviting a speaker who represented an anti-LGBTQ institution. I worked with the students and faculty in a number of open meetings, conversations, etc., and to my great delight, received a standing ovation from the students at commencement. That solidified a close relationship with the school, so when a practice faculty position in social innovation opened and the dean approached me about it, I was really excited about the possibility.

What are you most passionate about professionally?
I know it sounds a little wonky, but I really, really love helping people understand complex problems so they can figure out how to solve them toward love and the common good.

Where can we find you when you’re not working? What’s your favorite way to spend a weekend or Sunday afternoon?
The gym. Also, snuggling with my dogs while playing games with my husband and children.
Any volunteer activities you’re crazy about?
I serve on a whole bunch of boards and advisory committees, and do pro bono mentoring for a number of nonprofit leaders. I love so many great Boston organizations that I can support that way - everything from WBUR, to InnerCity Weightlifting, to UTEC.

Who is your hero? Why?
Mother Teresa. Nerves of steel, tenderest heart, singular focus, and yet she struggled with self-doubt and her faith through it all, which also made her incredibly human. My mom. Raised 8 kids, shaped us all profoundly. Taught me a fundamental, deep commitment to service to others as the organizing framework of life.

Who is your mentor? How did you connect with them?
How did you connect with them? Fr. Bryan Hehir. When I came to Boston, I was a little lost. A mentor back home told me I needed a spiritual director. When I said I didn’t know what that was, he said, “Find the priest at church that gives the best homilies and tell him. He’ll know what it is and he’ll be a good spiritual director for you.” So I did. It wasn’t until a year later that I found out Fr. Hehir was a world famous public intellectual, scholar, and MacArthur Fellow. To me, he was the priest who gave the best homilies...

What’s the most unusual place you’ve visited?
Harare, Zimbabwe

What would be impossible for you to give up?
My family.

What’s one thing you want to accomplish before you die?
I confess, I’d really love to publish a nonfiction bestseller.

TIZIANA DEARING