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HOLY CROSS IN SAN ANTONIO 1957-1986

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Notre Dame, Indiana

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In the early 1950's, the Archdiocese of San Antonio conducted a fund raising campaign. One of the purposes of this drive was to raise money to construct four Catholic High Schools for boys. One was to be located on the North side of San Antonio. A second was to be located on the South side. A third on the East Side and a fourth school was to be located on the West side of San Antonio. At the completion of the drive there was enough money to build only two high schools. One site was selected on South Zarzamora St., and a second was selected on N. San Felipe St. From that time, the school to be built on N. San Felipe St. was referred to as Westside Catholic High School.

In the 1950's, Catholic Schools were staffed almost exclusively by Sisters, Brothers or Priests. It was decided that the West Side of San Antonio needed a good Catholic trade school. The Archdiocese of San Antonio began negotiations with the Salesian Brothers to attract them to San Antonio to conduct this Catholic trade school. This trade school was scheduled to open in 1957. However, approximately one year before Westside Catholic High School was scheduled to open, the Salesian Brothers informed the

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Archdiocese of San Antonio that they would not be able to accept the operation of the Westside Trade School. In looking for another organization of Brothers to conduct this high school, the Archdiocese of San Antonio contacted the Brothers of Holy Cross. Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, Provincial of the U.S. Province of Brothers informed the Archdiocese of San Antonio that the Brothers of Holy Cross did not conduct trade schools but only college preparatory schools. However, Brother Ephrem thought that this would be a good mission school. After some discussion and modifications the Brothers of Holy Cross accepted the operation of Westside High School and the name was changed to Holy Cross High School. On September 3, 1957, LaSalle High School, conducted by the Brothers of Christian Schools, and Holy Cross High School, conducted by the Brothers of Holy Cross began operations. On opening day at Holy Cross there were 84 freshmen and three Brothers, Harold Young, Stephen Titzer and Leo Hogan. All Students brought lunch from home and tuition was \$7.50 per month. The Campus was quite different. At that time there was the Brothers' residence, the main school building and the cafeteria. There was no grass in the quadrangle, no gym, no science building, no track, no baseball



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field. The school was surrounded by vacant property with a few grazing horses. In fact, one day during class, one of the horses poked it's head through one of the open windows of a classroom. The sunflowers behind the cafeteria were so tall that you could not see General McMullen Drive. Along San Felipe St., in front of the school, there were no sidewalks and the street was just a mud trail. There were no bridges over the drainage creeks on N. San Felipe St., and when it rained, some students braved the waist-high water to get to school. There was no public transportation. On more than one occasion the school station wagon was stalled by a water covered "chug hole" in the San Felipe mud trail and needed to be pulled out. The second year, 1958, saw another class of freshmen accepted and the faculty increased to five Brothers, adding Michael Ardoin and Stanley Culotta and a part-time coach. Things began to happen! The windows in one of the classroom were painted and it became the athletic change room. Showers were installed in the restroom of the classroom building. The boiler room also served as the training room. The entrance to the parking lot from San Felipe St. was the 75-yard track and the parking lot behind the Brothers' residence was the outdoor basketball court. Even one home

basketball game was played there. No, admission was not charged. No, crowd control was not a problem.

Most of the Physical Ed classes were spent pulling weeds, planting grass, and picking rocks. Gradually, the weeds behind the cafeteria were cleared. After more than 1000 loads of topsoil, many Phy Ed classes, and the school work days, the football field was completed.

Because the contractor went bankrupt, the Science building was under construction for more than one year and eventually completed in January of 1961. On June 4, 1961, forty of the 84 who started as freshmen in 1957 were among the 44 who received diplomas in the first graduating class of Holy Cross High School.

With perseverance by three families (Noll, Gray, and Chapa) working every Saturday for two and one-half years, 1963 saw the completion of the cinder track. This was just in time for Brother Harold Young to complete his six-year term as principal and superior. He was succeeded by Bro. Stanley Culotta.

After seven years of operations, the gym was completed for the start of the school year, 1964. A raffle raised \$8,800 to purchase bleachers for the gym

and they were installed by several of the Alumni. Shortly after, the students, parents and Booster Club began clearing the area for the baseball field. Enrollment began to climb. The 1967 school year also saw the inauguration of the Junior Air Force ROTC program. In athletics, Holy Cross was already outclassing most other schools in track and field, and this year won its first of 3 consecutive Texas Catholic Interscholastic League District Football and track Championships. Greater than 80% of Holy Cross graduates were enrolling in college. As they say, Holy Cross was on a roll! So it was planned on March 10, 1968, to celebrate the completion of ten short but most successful years. Dignitaries, community and church officials were being notified. Brothers William Dooling and Robert McCarthy joined forces to make the Tenth Anniversary Celebration a local extravaganza. Suddenly, on February 13, 1968, Archbishop Robert E. Lucey through the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, James C. Brunner, informed La Salle High School and Holy Cross High School that financial support would be withdrawn, and that in less than six months, June 30, 1968, Holy Cross High

School would be closed. Secondly, the Archdiocese informed the Brothers of Holy Cross that they would move to La Salle High School to jointly staff La Salle High School, since a high school on the West Side of San Antonio could not survive. Reflecting the thoughts and attitudes of the Brothers stationed at Holy Cross High School, Brother John Baptist informed the Superintendent of Catholic Schools that the Brothers of Holy Cross would be at Holy Cross High School or they would not be in San Antonio. Outraged students, faculty, parents and alumni rallied to support Holy Cross and avert the possibility of closing. Fund raising activities were organized overnight. Donations were solicited in all amounts. Having made the decision to commit ourselves to an education presence in San Antonio, the question was no longer "if" but "how." There appeared to be three equally important areas to address: (1) financial stability; (2) faculty stability and (3) improvements in the educational program. The fact that "money makes the world go 'round" has continually been a hinderance of some proportion to the accomplishment of the latter two goals but as we will see, not a defeat of them.

First, a look at the efforts to stabilize the finances. To say that our fund-raising efforts have been many and diverse is an understatement. The decision was made in 1968 to explore every conceivable avenue available to raise the necessary monies to keep the school afloat. One such avenue has been our most publicized and successful, the utilization of show business personalities. Even this approach was, and sometimes still is, fraught with difficulty. Early on it was decided that anyone who was anyone in show business who came to San Antonio would be contacted about possible help for the school. There are stories of the Brothers tracking Desi Arnaz to half the bars in town, and having finally caught up with him (by this time he was in the inebriate Twilight Zone in his hotel room in a towel), got him to agree to do something. What usually follows in these situations is the proverbial show biz "see me tomorrow and we'll talk." The Brothers did try to see him the next day only to be "shuffled off to Buffalo" by his manager. Quite a common occurrence in this business! Disappointed but not defeated, the Brothers continued their pursuit. One such pursuit involved James Brown. Mr. Brown had a manager who should have played defense in the National Football League. The Brothers had Brothers Robert McCarthy and

William Dooling, who should have coached the offense of the opposition, and did! This chase led to Mr. Brown's private plane being prevented from takeoff in San Antonio by a phone call from Brother Robert to the hangar from which it had taxied. Brother Robert undoubtedly remembers the half-truth used to delay the flight but the end result was the suggestion that they call him in Cincinnati, the next day. Robert did, to their chagrin! We were finally and emphatically turned down.

There were shows with Cheech and Chong (long before their recent success in the film industry) and at which the Vice-Squad threatened to close the curtain if they told "one more dirty joke;" René and René (during the brief show business minute when they were "hot") and others, none of which were particularly financially spectacular. Obviously we were due to strike it big and we did so with Vikki Carr. Ms. Carr was performing at HemisFair in 1968 and Brothers Robert McCarthy and William Dooling decided to see if she would help. She and her manager-husband agreed to come out to the school the next day and, having done that, agreed that something would be done. Her first show was in 1969. It raised approximately \$25,000 and caused her to commit herself to "annual concerts" for the school. Well, they were not

to be annual nor could they have been. However, since that first concert she has performed in San Antonio for Holy Cross, and no one else, seven more times, (in 1970, '71, '74, '76, '77, '79 and '81) raised and caused to be raised approximately \$500,000. In addition, she has brought with her the like of Trini Lopez (who refused to get out of his hotel shower because there was no bathmat on the floor), Danny Thomas (who insisted on riding on the police motorcycle instead of in the limousine), Ronnie Schell, Hank Garcia, Fred Travalina (who passed himself off as an Englishman to all the girls in the hotel lobby) and Tom Driesen. Also, Vikki's husband, Dann Moss, arranged for Roger Miller to do a semi-benefit for the school in 1974. It was this concert that illustrated, in color, the dangers of show business. The show lost \$3,478.92 for Holy Cross Productions and gained Mr. Miller (currently seen in McDonald's commercials) a grand total of \$635.99. Mr. Miller made the remark that he had seen more people at a car wreck! Had this concert been 10 years later, the result no doubt would have been different. The guest star at this show was Larry Gatlin. In addition to all the concerts, other show business enterprises have included the presentation of a movie, PRIMIVERA IN CUERNAVACA, which was

generally considered to be "dirty" by those of the clerical estate who were in attendance; the world premiere of the movie VIVA MAX, which was filmed in San Antonio and in which Brothers William Dooling and Robert McCarthy had a small appearance; a record store which was stocked through the generosity of Vikki Carr's recording company, Liberty Records, and a dubious donation of two truck loads of records from Capitol Records in Los Angeles; all of which were monoral, and this at the advent of stereo. And then there were the boxing matches with Jose Pimentel.

The 1979 Vikki Carr Show was taped for television with a budget of \$20,000 and it generated an Iris Award as the second best locally produced entertainment special in the U.S. in 1979, along with \$70 in donations.

In 1970 the school sponsored an Air Show, the success of which was moderated by the fact that some of the promised aircraft did not make the show, and some of the people working the gate felt they were in greater financial need than the school.

The Alumni Association continues to explore the possibilities of show business with "Concerts in the Park", a comedy concert in 1986, wrestling matches, and a 10K run with a guest appearance by Olympic Miler, Jim Ryun.

In addition to entertainment, we have tried our hand at selling soap, candy and, as Brother Rene Lenhard would say, "almost everything except prostitution and drugs."

Marie Lukacs, the school business manager, has developed and copyrighted a type of festival money called "Check-a-Dollars" which eliminates to a large extent the possibility of losing money to festival workers. We periodically get orders for these from around the country. She has also developed an educational sweepstakes program which the school uses to provide the necessary cash flow during the year.

Brother Gonzaga Day has done more than his share of helping over the years along with other members of the Midwest Province, by periodically bringing his truck full of rummage, etc., down to San Antonio for his Gran Barata.

One of the most unique efforts was the Operation Identification project.

This consisted in going to houses which had been foreclosed on by the Federal Government and engraving identification numbers on a variety of things in the house including cabinets, sliding glass doors, all other doors, water heaters, heating units, and sinks and toilets. The purpose of this was to prevent contractors who were hired to refurbish these houses

from stealing from themselves and using the stolen property to fix their next project. In order to do this, we had to take our gasoline generator and 200 feet of extension cords in the back of the 1960 Chevrolet "Tank" and travel to these deserted houses after regular school hours. The program went fine until we actually caught a contractor using materials from one house to fix another house and then, true to form, we lost the contract because the Government declined to prosecute. Perhaps the most important step in trying to stabilize the financial situation at Holy Cross was in 1974 when the Endowment Fund was established by Ms. Vikki Carr. Her concerts, the Archdiocese of San Antonio, and among others, the Anheuser-Busch Corporation have enlarged this fund to its current size. In 1980, Bro. William Nick resigned as principal and was succeeded in that job by Bro. William Dooling. He remained as Principal until 1983. 1982 saw Holy Cross High School celebrate its 25th Anniversary, and the addition of a part-time development director to coordinate fund raising and alumni activities.

Stabilization of the faculty has been an ongoing process at Holy Cross.

When Brother Stanley resigned as principal in 1972, Brother William Nick made this one of his top priorities. Currently, the average turnover in the faculty is less than 20% per year and one of the lowest percentages of any private school in the city. This is due to the hiring of competent staff and the continued efforts to increase the pay scales to make them more competitive with the public schools. In 1986, the faculty was composed of 5 Brothers of Holy Cross, 6 Sisters from various communities, 2 priests, and 15 lay people, 5 of which are graduates of Holy Cross High School or spouses thereof.

Improving the educational program has been a priority over the past 29 years which has often been overshadowed, and sometimes hindered, by the financial problems previously addressed. However, the progress has been constant and largely successful. We have witnessed the addition of the computer program in 1979 which is the largest of any private school in the city and one of the best equipped of any school in the city.

We were the first private school in the city of San Antonio to bring our curriculum in line with the new state laws in 1983. This entailed among other things completely rescheduling the school at mid-year. Some of the more significant results of these improvements have been the receipt, in June, 1985, of the Excellence in Private Education Award for the 1983-84 school year. This award was presented to Fr. James Hoelscher who had become the Principal in 1983, in Washington, D.C., by Secretary of Education T. H. Bell. The School is now accredited by the Southern Association effective in the school year 1986-87, thanks largely to efforts by Fr. Hoelscher and Bro. William May.

In addition to the developments at the school, there have been other additions to the Holy Cross presence in San Antonio. Most notably these include Brothers working in three parishes in the Archdiocese, Brothers involved in pastoral ministry in local hospitals, the establishment of a house of formation, CASA SANTA CRUZ, and the locating of part of the formation program of the Southern Province of Holy Cross Priests at Holy Cross High School, under the direction of Fr. Len Collins, CSC.

By 1967, Holy Cross High School already established itself as one of San Antonio's outstanding secondary schools. Enrollment was at a maximum, greater than 80% of the graduates were enrolling in college, athletic teams were winning repeated championships. However, it was not sufficient to feel that the top had been reached. What more could be done? This was a challenge that was welcomed and accepted. Several Alumni (Louis Rodriguez, Antonio P. Garza, Larry Noll, Paul Falbo), some of the students (Rich Noll, Roger Leverette), some of the faculty (John Lanzzone, Bro. William Dooling) and the Principal (Bro. Stanley Culotta) conferred and set out to answer the challenge: What more could be done? Monopolizing on Holy Cross' prestige and the position of leadership, these people began studying the neighborhood surrounding Holy Cross High School. What are the needs and what should be done to satisfy them? After reviewing, studying and analyzing the available socio-economic data, the concept of a total Community service center was developed. The categories or target areas were Education, Recreation, Health, Employment, Cultural, Public Assistance and welfare. Efforts to obtain funding for such an undertaking were fruitless. We were swamped with best wishes but bone dry on financial support. From

1969 until 1981, there was no visible evidence of Holy Cross Center. With a \$50,000 grant from the Myra Pryor Trust, and \$15,000 from the South-West Province Social Justice Fund, and many dedicated hours donated by the loyal Holy Cross High School Alumni who had been working since 1967, Holy Cross Family Medical Center opened on September 1, 1981. The Family Physician was Brother Stanley Culotta, and the nurse was Bro. James Martin. One year later, 1982, a second Family Physician (Dr. James Legler) joined the staff. Quickly added was a Social Worker (Mary Louise De Leon) and Clinical Psychologist (Bro. Barry Cabell). Holy Cross Center in San Antonio in just four years was bursting through its facilities and becoming known in San Antonio, just like its facility of origin, Holy Cross High School. In 1985, the Sisters of the Holy Cross and the Holy Cross Health System were investigating the possibility of purchasing St. Benedict' Nursing Home in San Antonio. This news was relayed to Holy Cross Center personnel by Sr. Joanne Upjohn. There was excitement and enthusiasm that the Sisters of the Holy Cross could be coming to San Antonio. A nursing home was very important in the future plans of Holy Cross Center. Several weeks later it was learned that St. Benedicts was being sold to a for-profit corporation

and there was disappointment. This disappointment was expressed to Sr.

Upjohn in a letter from Bro. Stanley Culotta. She in turn forwarded the letter to the Holy Cross Health System headquarters in South Bend. Dialogue with Holy Cross Health System revealed that both Holy Cross Health System and Holy Cross Center in San Antonio, had very similar goals, interests and philosophies. On October 15, 1985, Holy Cross Center and Holy Cross Health System formally signed an agreement of collaboration in San Antonio. On the following day, October 16th, 1985, a press conference was held in the gymnasium of Holy Cross High School to announce the agreement.

On March 16, 1986, groundbreaking for Holy Cross Center's Family Health Pavilion was held. Completion of the Family Health Pavilion is scheduled for September 1, 1986. This facility will accommodate four family physicians, a clinical psychologist, a social worker, medical laboratory, x-ray, and a pharmacy.

Subsequent development during the next three years will include a day care center for senior citizens and for children; a nursing home; a multi-purpose center; and senior citizens housing. Beyond the apostolate and quality of the services offered, Holy Cross Center now brings another

branch of the Holy Cross Family, that is, the Sisters of the Holy Cross to San Antonio.

Let's take a trip back into history and re-read Fr. Moreau's comments.

"Woe then, and anathema to the priest, Brother , or Sister who by word or action would attempt to separate establishments which God has willed to unite under the same general authority. Here we have a striking representation of the hierarchy of the heavenly spirits, wherein all the different choirs of angels are arranged in three orders, mutually subordinated one to another. Our association is also a visible imitation of the Holy Family, wherein Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, notwithstanding their difference in dignity, were one at heart by their unity of thought and uniformity of conduct. A fearful judgment is in store for whoever would thus paralyze the prosperous development of these three works for they have been founded on such close mutual relationships as to constitute but one work by their common interests and unity of ideal.

"If an exhortation can make any impression upon you, if the love I bear you can touch your hearts, if there is among us any union of mind, if you have for me any sentiments of affection, if you share in my sufferings,

then make my joy perfect by having, all of you, the same sentiments and the same charity. Be all but one heart and one soul, doing nothing out of a spirit of contention or vainglory, but in sincere humility, always putting others before yourselves and forgetting your own interests, to busy yourselves only with those of others."

We have to say, ---Somebody up there likes Holy Cross!