

NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL

THE TRADITION TAKES HOLD

1949-1958

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In this year of 2005 Notre Dame High School reaches an important milestone in its journey. It celebrates fifty years as a Holy Cross college preparatory school for boys from the Northside of Chicago and the northern suburbs. Those of us who serve here at Notre Dame owe a great debt to those religious and laymen who founded this institution and began the great tradition of 'FAITH, SCHOLARSHIP and SERVICE.' This threefold motto has been imparted to over 10,000 graduates of our school in these past fifty years. If we are to continue in this apostolate it is crucial for us to know our heritage and the men and women who have been so important in shaping it.

This paper will examine the first decade (1949-1958) of Notre Dame High School's beginnings. Its principal and ten of its first sixteen faculty came from another all boys school, Columbia Preparatory School of Portland Oregon. In the first section I will explore THE COLUMBIA PREP CONNECTION. Next we will see how the Province's quest for a large scale high school apostolate leads to A NEW VENTURE IN NILES. Then we will witness Notre Dame's struggle to open its doors in A DELAYED START. I will discuss the physical features of THE SCHOOL BUILDING and THE HOLY CROSS RESIDENCE. I will also share some of the experiences of the "Founding Fathers and Brothers" from the first four years at the High School (1955-1958.) And finally I will briefly discuss the Holy Cross religious and lay faculty who began the Tradition here at Notre Dame in NOTRE DAME'S FIRST FACULTY. Since the School needed four to build to its full capacity, I will be discussing the faculty members of the first four years.

A school's reason for existing is in large measure is the education of its students. This paper does not explore the day to day experiences of those first 1400 plus students. Instead I have focused on their teachers, coaches and administrators. I do have other resources to provide a picture of student life here in those early days of Notre Dame. But I decided to try to pull together the many disparate sources on the Holy Cross religious and their lay colleagues who were the founders of this school. I lived with many of these men here at the High School during my 28 year tenure. Only a handful are alive to join in our Fiftieth Anniversary. It was this sense of urgency that caused me to focus on them in what is the first, but hopefully not the last of reflections on our first fifty years.

I would like to acknowledge the following persons who assisted me in this endeavor. I want to thank the Provincial Archivist Fr. Bill Simmons and Fr. Bob Antonelli who provided me with letters of correspondence, articles from the PROVINCE REVIEW, the history "Bold Beginnings" by Chris Salituro '91 in FOCUS, the Fr. John Corcoran Interview "Reminiscences," conducted by Br. Donald Martin in 1968, and the short history by Fr. Peter Sandanato in 1980 on the School's 25th Anniversary. The assistance which Mr. Joe Villinski gave me in the photo presentation was invaluable. Finally I wish to thank Mr. Phil Donner who helped me in using the word processor for this paper.

THE COLUMBIA PREP CONNECTION

The story of Notre Dame High School does not begin in 1954 with the laying of the cornerstone in Niles Illinois. Instead it begins in 1949 in Portland Oregon with the demise of Columbia Preparatory School. This all boys boarding school was started in 1901 by the Holy Cross Priests and Brothers. A decade later, the Prep School offered college level courses to the older students. In time it developed into Columbia University. It was not until 1922 that a separate college catalogue was published. In that same year Junior College certificates were awarded for the first time.

In 1935, the College became incorporated as the University of Portland. Columbia Prep School acquired its own identity in 1939 when it separated academically from the University. Even after the separation of the Prep School and the University, the enrollment figures included both institutions. The Prep School was considerably larger in size than the University. During the Second World War, the University's enrollment plummeted from 782 in 1940 down to 259 in 1945. In those same years, Columbia Prep had an upsurge in enrollment from 120 up to 280. But returning World War II veterans in the late 1940's would reverse the University's declining enrollment. (Lloyd Teske, "Remembering the Prep," THE BEACON, 1985)

The Prep School had been located on the campus of the University of Portland on the bottom floor of West Hall. But after the Second World War, the University needed the space and the Prep School was moved into two frame buildings on the edge of campus. The lack of space for the Prep's boarding students led Fr. Michael Early (Prep Principal) to seek a new and more spacious campus for the Prep School. Fr. Early was a 1912 graduate of the Prep School, President of the University of Portland between 1936-1940. He served two terms as Principal of Columbia Prep 1947-1949 and 1949-1951. At this time Fr. Theodore Mehling had become President of the University and Superior.

In 1947 a new site for the Prep School was chosen, it was the former Wilcox Estate located on Shattuck Road in Southwest Portland. It had 100 acres, 53 acres were developed and were purchased by Holy Cross for approximately \$150,000. To the original Main House there was a long corridor added with a Library and Offices on one end and a Gym on the other. Eight classrooms (which were Quonset huts) radiated off the long corridor. About 30 boarding students lived in the Main House with Frs. O'Neill and Corcoran. A cottage at the other end of the property housed 8 more priests. The former chauffeur's quarters was transformed into a chapel. The campus also had an outdoor swimming pool and a golf course.

In 1949, Columbia Prep left Waud's Bluff, its home of 48 years, and moved into its new location in Southwest Portland. But financing would doom the new venture in only six years. The University had loaned the Prep School the funds to purchase the Wilcox Estate. Facing its own expansion costs, the University demanded repayment of the loan. The Prep School took out a loan to pay back the University. Archbishop Howard refused to help the Prep School. He was instead supporting Central Catholic High School in downtown Portland. The Prep School was planning an expansion to accommodate 500 boys. The Provincial Fr. Mehling balked at the idea of the Province financing the expansion. The money had to come from the Prep school's donor base in the Portland area and the Pacific Northwest. (John Corcoran, REMINISCENCES, 1968)

In 1954, Fr. Mehling had already accepted Cardinal Stritch's request to build and staff an all boys school in Niles, Illinois, the future Notre Dame High School for Boys. The Cardinal had donated the 32 acre tract of land and a million dollars to build the school. Portland's Archbishop Howard, by contrast, would not permit a drive to raise money for Columbia Prep mounted by the School's parents and alumni. Fr. James D'Autremont, Columbia Prep's last principal (1952-1955) assured parents and students in a letter dated 2/2/55 that Fr. Mehling who had visited with their representatives during the previous 3 weeks, had been impressed by the "enthusiasm and loyalty and generosity and initiative of the parents reflected through (their) representatives.) . . . He promised before he left, to present the parent suggestions to his council on his return to South Bend about February 15."

Impressed or not, Fr., Mehling had decided the Prep School would close after its 1954-1955 school year. Fr. John Corcoran (Assistant Principal for Fr. Early 1947-1951 and Fr. D'Autremont 1952-1955) recalled in a 1968 interview with Br. David Martin "Everything had come from here (Columbia Prep). Then they finally decided to go to the Archbishop and ask him about it. He said there was nothing he could do. So Fr. Mehling told him they would just have to close the place. He said 'Well that's the way it will have to be, I guess.' Probably the only place at that time in the United States that you find them closing a Catholic school, because there's such a demand in most places."

Fr. Mehling certainly had the financial conditions to support a decision to close the 55 year old Holy Cross institution. Yet one is given to wonder, how much his earlier role as the President of the University entered into his decision to close Columbia Prep School. He had insisted on the Prep vacating its home for 48 years on Waud's Bluff and move out to the Wilcox Estate in Southwest Portland. Having authorized the University's \$150,000 loan he surely understood the repayment would tax the new venture to its limits. There is also the contrast of the future school in Illinois with a very generous and eager Cardinal Stritch and the financially strapped school in Portland with its miserly and indifferent Archbishop Howard.

After deciding to close Columbia Prep, Fr. Mehling wrote a letter to Mrs. Regis O'Brien (a Prep parent Club Member) on 6/22/55. "We felt that we could not be sure of getting enough students paying enough tuition to make our operating expenses." He concludes his letter by making this point, "There is absolutely no connection between the closing of Columbia Preparatory School and the opening of a school in Chicago." This statement is contradicted by his assignment of the Prep's Principal (Fr. D'Autremont) and the Faculty of the Prep School (Frs. Corcoran, O'Neil, Tallarida, Wohman and Stroot) to staff Notre Dame High School for Boys.

The connections between Columbia Prep and Notre Dame are certainly most evident in these priests who began a new all boys school in Chicago after closing a 55 year old all boys school in Portland. But they threw themselves into the new venture with energy, enthusiasm and success. In some ways Columbia Prep continues to live on at Notre Dame. As Chris Salituro (NDHS Class of '91) observed, Notre Dame's colors (Green and White) are the same as Columbia Prep's colors. Notre Dame's fight song melody as composed by Fr. George Dum of the Prep School. Fr. George Wiskirchen simply changed the words. (Chris Salituro, "Bold Beginnings," FOCUS 1989-1991)

A NEW VENTURE IN NILES

At the Provincial Chapter of 1949, a decree was approved stating that the Province should look for opportunities in high school work. One rationale for the decree was the "likelihood that the priests' contact with high school boys will bring more vocations to the community." Notre Dame High School was the Indiana Province's response to this Provincial mandate. "The long rumored entrance of the Province into large scale high school work is now officially under way." (PROVINCE REVIEW, September 1954)

Notre Dame High School opened its doors in September of 1955 in Niles Illinois, only 3 months after the closing of Columbia Preparatory School in Portland Oregon. Unlike the Archbishop of Portland, Chicago's Samuel Cardinal Stritch encouraged and supported Holy Cross in founding an all boys high school. He recognized the tremendous growth potential of Chicago's northern suburbs following the Second World War. The school is located in Niles, a suburb bordering Chicago's northside. In 1950, Niles' population was 3,000 people, by 1960 its population had exploded to 30,000.

(Chris Salituro, "Bold Beginnings, FOCUS, 11/15/88)

Provincial Fr. Theodore Mehling stated "This area is in desperate need of a Catholic high school for boys. There is not another within ten miles of the site which has been selected for it. Until more schools can be erected, Notre Dame High School will draw students from the whole Northern part of Chicago and from a number of lake suburbs. To the north there is nothing between our location and the Wisconsin border." Notre Dame would need to accommodate 1500 to 1600 students within 3 to 4 years of its opening. (PROVINCE REVIEW, September 1954)

Fr. John Lane (Business Manager/Director of Studies) reflected on the need for Notre Dame to open in 1955. "There was a desperate need for a boys' high school in the vicinity. On the north side of Chicago, at the beginning of this year (1955) Notre Dame was the only school with any space available." (PROVINCE REVIEW, November 1955)

Enrollment statistics bear out Cardinal Stritch's sense of urgency. He needed Notre Dame to meet the surging population of Catholic boys on Chicago's northside in the mid to late 1950's. Fr. John Lane had opened a storefront office on the northeast corner of the intersection of Dempster and Harlem next to Stan's Snack Shop. It was there that he took applications in 1954 for Notre Dame's first students in the 1955-1956 school year. When Notre Dame began in September of 1955, it had 525 students, 450 of whom were freshmen and 75 who were sophomores. Fr. Lane stressed that future freshmen classes must be capped at 400-425 students. This was based on school's projected total capacity of 1500 to 1600 students.

The faculty to handle this burgeoning student population must likewise grow. The first year there were 18 faculty, 16 priests and 2 laymen. Evidently some province members were questioning, "where will we get the men to staff it?" Fr. Bernard Mullahy (Assistant Provincial) explained that 4 or 5 men would be available each year to increase the faculty when the 1954 and 1955 ordination classes are assigned. (The ordination class of 1954 was 13 and 1955 was 10.) The Novitiate of 1954 had 57 novices and second year theology had 27 men. Fr. Mullahy speculated "there is some possibility that in future years a number of seminarians will give a year or two to teaching before ordination." (PROVINCE REVIEW, September 1954)

A DELAYED START

Notre Dame High School opened its doors a week behind schedule. Classrooms were not prepared to receive students. Paint buckets and step ladders made the hallways into an obstacle course. The one completed classroom could not accommodate the 525 students who arrived on that September 20, 1955. Workers were still laying the gray asphalt tile in the main corridor. This tile was ubiquitous until the corridors were carpeted in the late 1980's. Fr. John Lane (Business Manager/Director of Studies) explained the reason for the delay: a city-wide walkout by the glaziers and roofers in July. Without these workmen, the plumbers, electricians and plasterers could not go on with their work. "For three weeks, we were practically at a standstill, and those three weeks made the difference." (PROVINCE REVIEW, November 1955)

The classrooms were not completed when the students returned a week later, nor for several weeks. Fr. Bill Brinker recalls that the glass window above the lockers in the corridor outside the classroom was not installed for weeks. Fr. Tom Tallarida who taught a History class across the corridor could be heard sometimes over Fr. Bill's Mathematics Lecture. "Even after school started, there were some aspects of the building left unfinished. It was not uncommon for workers to come into a classroom during class to take a measurement, hang drapes, etc." (FOCUS, 11/15/88)

An attractive design aspect of the school today is the two courtyards, known as the Library and Cafeteria courtyards. The Classrooms are arranged around these two large rectangles. The Classroom's oversized window opens onto a landscaped garden. But in the fall of 1955 the view was a bleak treeless expanse. In that first fall only the east and the north corridors had completed classrooms. The site of the present Band Room (for many years the Biology Lab) was an auto and woodworking shop. In his agreement with Holy Cross dated 1/13/54, Cardinal Stritch had insisted on "not only college preparatory curriculum but other (vocational) curricula as well."

In fall 1955, neither the Library nor the Gymnasium were complete. They would open in early 1956. In fact, the Gymnasium was utilized for a May 1, 1956 Mass of Dedication. The floorboards of the Gymnasium were warped because of recent flooding rains. Although the Parking Lot was not paved it must have dried out sufficiently to accommodate the vehicles of the over 1000 people who attended the Mass, toured the facilities, and heard the concert provided by the one year old band of Fr. George Wiskirchen. Cardinal Stritch, after blessing the Chapel and building exterior, gave a brief address on Catholic education at 4:00 P.M. (PROVINCE REVIEW, June 1956)

The Residence was also in a state of confusion. Fr. Bill Brinker recalls, "We were told the Residence would not be ready in time, so we were told to stay home for two more weeks." The Chapel would not be ready until January of 1956. So priests had permission to say mass in private rooms. The large Community Room on the west end of the Ground Floor was pressed into service as a temporary chapel. The actual Chapel was used as a storage room for trunks and boxes, many from Columbia Prep. The recently closed school provided furniture, books, and football uniforms for the fledgling Notre Dame. Fr. Bill says they simply sewed "Notre Dame" over Columbia Prep.

The Holy Cross Community struggled with the chaos even in the most basic aspects of their existence. There were no meals served in the Residence in the first weeks. The gas lines had not been connected. The community had to eat out, often at Stan's Snack Shop. Remember how Fr. John Lane's storefront office had been located next to this popular Niles eatery. When the gas lines were connected the buying of a stove became a top priority for Fr. John Wolvlear Assistant Superior. Fr. John Corcoran who accompanied him on this major purchase had to remind him a stove with only two burners would not be adequate for the 40 religious destined to live and EAT at the Residence.

Also living with the Holy Cross religious working at the High School were members of the Mission Band. They lived at the High School for the year of 1955-1956 until their residence was completed at Notre Dame. Frs. Charles Callahan and Michael Foran were among these Mission Band members. (PROVINCE REVIEW, June 1956.) Later joining the Mission Band were Frs. Jake Smith and Jim Trepanier who taught at Notre Dame. The Mission Band had owned a home in Evanston prior to coming to the High School.

The Residence followed a rigorous schedule of religious exercises as was required in the pre-Vatican II Church. The morning began at 5:00 A.M. with Meditation. There were private masses offered in 12 small chapels in the Crypt or Subchapel. (The altars made of marble were still there in the late 1970's when I came to the High School. We had small group masses in these private chapels until they were removed in the early 1980's.) Soon parishes were requesting supply for daily masses. Having only two cars the priests going out for mass would taxi each other to the various parishes. In time a hot breakfast was served in the House. Then it was off to classes.

The school hours were initially 9:00-3:30 P.M. With the House connected to the school by Breezeway or Chapel there was little time spent commuting. Although a hot lunch was available in the House many religious ate in the Cafeteria. Since many of the men were coaches and club moderators the school day did not end for them at 3:30 P.M. After Vespers, the Community would gather for recreation in the Round Room. Often to ease the tensions of the day, Frs. D'Autremont and VanWolvlear would call for an ad hoc soiree. To signal the religious, Fr. VanWolvlear would broadcast over the intercom, "We will be celebrating Fr. Wohman's birthday in the Round Room in 5 minutes." It seems Fr. Wohman had a birthday every week or so. (Fr. Norb Hess' recollection.)

Supper would follow at 6:00 P.M. There were often school related meetings in the evenings during the week, but the Community still found time for Compline, Devotions, Benediction, Novenas, Chapter of Accusation, and Holy Hours. After a very hectic day, many of the religious would gather to socialize around 10:00 P.M. When television made its appearance at the High School it was often sought out for the news at this time. Radios in private rooms caused much hand wringing and anxiety in religious houses. But at Notre Dame they appeared soon after the school opened. Fr. D'Autremont loved listening to a radio, and permitted the religious to have them in their rooms.

The Guest Suites were put to good use by visiting family members. In the 1950's, travel was not as frequent or as fast as the jet would later be. So families traveling from out of town would come and stay for longer periods of time, especially in the summer. Chicago was a major railroad center, so religious at the High School could usually visit their family out of state with ease. The University owned a large wilderness property in Land O'Lakes Wisconsin donated by Martin Gillen. This became a favorite destination in the summer for fishing, hiking, swimming and community building.

THE SCHOOL BUILDING

On September 1, 1954 Cardinal Samuel Stritch broke ground for the new Notre Dame High School in Niles Illinois. Provincial Fr. Theodore Mehling and his assistant Fr. Bernard Mullahy were present for the ground breaking. The school was to be built on the south side of Dempster Street between Milwaukee and Harlem Avenues. As Dempster Street (Route 14) grew public transportation became available for students. This was an important asset for a school serving the boys of Chicago's northside. Photos of the construction site reveal the rural character of the Niles area in the mid 1950's. Dempster Street was two lanes (today it has six lanes carrying 180,000 vehicles daily.) There was a farmhouse and a barn belonging to Schroeder's Nursery which was on the northside of Dempster opposite the school. These wood frame buildings were used for a fire demonstration by the Niles Fire Department in the early 1960's. Today the land they occupied is zoned commercial with a shopping strip. The land on which the school was constructed was mostly prairie on the north end of the property and low lying marshland on the south end of the property. Over the years this land has been filled in to provide athletic practice fields, a recently lighted Baseball Field and two smaller Baseball diamonds. However the low lying terrain has caused major flooding problems over the years requiring the subterranean gym floor to be replaced three times. The ground floor of the Holy Cross Residence has been flooded at least as many times.

The School building was designed by architects Belli and Belli. It was primarily a sprawling one floor structure with a second floor for administration and an adjoining three floor Residence for the Holy Cross Community on the east end of the school. The School Building contains 30 classrooms. Each classroom has a complete outer wall of glass. "This oversized window will furnish all the natural light needed, as well as Psychological help to those high school boys who develop incipient claustrophobia whenever they are closed into a classroom with a teacher and blackboard." There were 3 laboratories, 3 industrial arts shops, a Library seating 150, a Little Theatre, a Kitchen and Cafeteria able to accommodate 600 students at one time. The Gymnasium-Auditorium will seat 3000 in permanent bleachers for Basketball and approximately 5000 for stage productions or concerts. (PROVINCE REVIEW, September 1954)

Regrettably the Holy Cross Brothers whose principle ministry was secondary education were not consulted about the classroom design. Classrooms lacked any storage space. Over the years the faculty has had to improvise with bookshelves and storage cabinets. Another glaring mistake was the narrow corridors. When there is a change of classes, the congestion in the corridor is made worse by lockers being opened on opposite sides of the corridor. In the days of 1500 students, Fr. Joe O'Neill (Principal following Fr. Jim D'Autremont) dreamed up a "solution." There would be one way traffic in all the corridors. A story is told of Fr. Peter Sandanato having classes in adjoining classrooms, but the plan required him to walk all the way around the building. When he tried to "cheat" and "swim upstream against the current" he was reviled by the students. (This was a favorite story of Frs. John Corcoran and Joe Stroot) Perhaps the worst mistake was cutting corners on the glass used for the classroom's "oversized window." Rather than installing double pane glass, as the architect called for, single pane glass from a closed factory was installed. This resulted in enormous heating problems during the winter.

HOLY CROSS RESIDENCE

The Residence for the Holy Cross Community is connected to the school by the Chapel or a covered Breezeway. During inclement weather, the Chapel is the only viable passageway, because the roof of the Breezeway leaks like a sieve. Instead of overlapping the several sections of roof, there is a gap that allows copious amount of rain, sleet and snow to leak down on those below. Sadly this has sometimes led the solitude of the Chapel area to be disturbed by people wandering through the space oblivious to its sacred character. The Chapel was used by the Holy Cross Community until the last six years for the Divine Office and Community Mass. Now a Guest Suite known as the "Bishop's Suite" has been converted into the Oratory for the Community's daily prayer. The Chapel was too small to accommodate the entire school population, so the Gymnasium-Auditorium was converted into a Chapel for masses and reconciliation services. Given the poor acoustics (the roof is a concave metal structure), it can be difficult to hear the homily. Smaller class masses, or masses for sports teams often use the Chapel.

The Residence had 45 private rooms, a superior's quarters and three guest suites. Each was equipped with a private bathroom and shower – "a luxury" according to Fr. Mullahy. (Fr. Corcoran is the source of this quote.) Closet space in the private room was almost non-existent. "Enough room for your work habit and your Sunday habit."

(Br. Andrew Corsini is the author of this quip.) There is adequate space for a desk, bed, easy chair and bookcases. In the 1990's many single rooms were turned into two room suites. The windows in the Residence, like the school, are single pane glass, so they are very little protection from the blast of winter winds. Some have speculated that the Province was contemplating missions in the polar regions and Notre Dame was the training grounds. (Fr. Corcoran and Br. Andrew made such speculations.)

One of the most appealing features of the Residence was the two floor circular addition to the North Side. On the Ground Floor it has the Community Dining Room and on the First Floor it had the Community Recreation Room, it very quickly became known as the "Round Room." Now it used as a Meeting Room for the School. The Community numbered over 40 in the early 1960's and occupied the entire Residence. Today the Holy Cross Community numbers about 10 and occupies the top or Second Floor. The Ground Floor consists of the Community Kitchen, Dining Room, Laundry, Garage, Guest Suite, two television/recreation rooms and a four car garage. Since the mid 1990's, the School has taken over the First Floor for its Business and Development Offices.

The Residence lacks any central stairwell or elevator. This prevents easy access to the Ground Floor especially for older and handicapped Community members. When asked why residents had stairs on opposite ends of a long residence, Fr. Mullahy is alleged to have said it was to encourage religious to make a visit to the Chapel on their journey. (Frs. Joe Stroot and Norb Hess related this inspiring yet impractical admonition.)

The Ground Floor which is a few feet below street level has suffered at least 3 major floods in my tenure. The Flood of 1988 saw 3 to 4 feet of water in Community Kitchen and Dining Room. Since electrical outlets were put in the floor, we were without power for over a month. Fr. George Kahle (Superior) rigged up power lines from the First Floor. But the clean up, especially in the SubChapel was an epic undertaking.

NOTRE DAME'S FIRST FACULTY

Notre Dame's first faculty consisted of 16 Holy Cross priests and 2 laymen. Fr. Jim D'Autremont was the first Principal and Superior. He was joined by fifteen Holy Cross priests: Frs. Tom Baker, Bill Brinker, George Cockshott, John Corcoran, Allen Cormier, John Lane, Tom Markos, Joe O'Neill, Peter Sandanato, Joe Stroot, Tom Tallarida, John VanWolvlear, George Wiskirchen, Andrew Wohman, and Ronald Zell. Of these 16 men 10 came from Columbia Prep: Frs. Cockshott, Cormier, Corcoran, D'Autremont, O'Neill, Sandanato, Stroot, Tallarida, Wohman and Zell. (COLUMBIAD 1955.)

In their first school year of 1955-1956 at Notre Dame the 16 holy Cross priests served as the new school's administration and faculty: Fr. Jim D'Autremont (Principal/Superior), Fr. John Wolvlear (Assistant Principal/Superior, Religion), Fr. John Lane (Business Manager/Director of Studies), Fr. John Corcoran (Director of Student Affairs, History), Fr. Tom Baker (Spiritual Director, Religion), Fr. Bill Brinker (Athletic Director, Math), Fr. George Cockshott (Mathematics, Sophomore Moderator), Fr. Allen Cormier (Math, French, Bookstore), Fr. Tom Markos (English, Freshman Moderator), Fr. Joe O'Neill (Latin, Assistant Director of Student Affairs), Fr. Peter Sandanato (English, Student Publications Director), Fr. Joe Stroot (History, Assistant Athletic Director), Fr. Tom Tallarida (History), Fr. George Wiskirchen (Religion, Music Director), Fr. Andrew Wohman (Latin, Librarian), and Fr. Ron Zell (English, Bookstore.) Also joining the faculty that first year were Mr. Edward McCoy (Basketball) and Mr. Thomas Powers (Football) both taught Physical Education.) (MARIDON 1955.)

As the second school year of 1956-1957 approached, Notre Dame easily met its incoming freshman enrollment limit of 425. To meet the increased personnel demands the Provincial Administration assigned 7 new Holy Cross religious and 12 new laymen. The Holy Cross religious were Fr. Jim Fahey (Religion, Mathematics, Art Club Moderator), Fr. Bernard Foley (Mathematics, Chemistry), Fr. Bill Neidhart (Religion, General Business, Assistant Spiritual Director), Br. Leo Quirion (Maintenance), Br. Robert Sinnaeve (Bookkeeper), Fr. Jim Trepanier (French, History), Fr. Paul Wendel (Religion, Bookkeeping, Junior Red Cross Moderator), and Br. Ron Whelan (Bookstore) (MARIDON 1957)

Twelve laymen joined the faculty the second year they were Mr. Michael Bartos (Latin, Debate Club), Mr. William Bergin (History), Mr. John Brett (Latin, Biology), Mr. John Brey (Mathematics, Biology), Mr. John Carroll (German, Biology, German Club), Mr. George Herman (English, Debate Club), Mr. George Jacobson (English, Music), Mr. John Lane (History), Mr. John Monahan (English), Mr. Lawrence Nomellini (Spanish, Spanish Club), Mr. Harry Shay (Biology, Baseball Coach), Mr. John Steinmetz (Biology, General Science), and Mr. Charles Updike (History). Coaches Edward McCoy (Basketball) and Thomas Powers (Football) continued into the second year.

The third school year of 1957-1958 saw another 425 freshmen enrolled. There were 13 new Holy Cross religious assigned to Notre Dame: Fr. Jim Blaes (English, Religion, Swimming), Fr. Paul Carrico (English, Religion, Yearbook, Radio Club), Fr. Edward Buenger (Mathematics, Mechanical Drawing, Cross & Anchor Ushers), Fr. Bernie Christel (Social Studies), Fr. Leo Clementich (German, German Club, Social Studies,

Rifle Club, Religious Life Director), Fr. Robert Floyd ((Mathematics, Freshman Moderator, Assistant Athletic Director), Fr. Norbert Hess (Mathematics, Religion, Sophomore Moderator, Art Club). Fr. Robert Nogosek (German, Religion), Fr. Richard Poorman (English, Director of Studies, Pep Club), Fr. John Schueneman (Mathematics, Typing, General Business, Assistant Athletic Director), Fr. Jacob Smith (Religion, Assistant Religious Life Director), Fr. Thomas Waldron (English, Religion, Chorus), and Br. Andrew Corsini Fowler (Cafeteria Manager.) (MARIDON 1958)

Three new laymen joined the 1957-1958 Faculty they were Mr. Jim Androff (Biology, General Science), Mr. John Cole (Physical Education, Football, Track), Mr. Frank Mariani (Woodshop, Mechanical Drawing, Football, Baseball, Assistant Coach), Mr. Griffith MacDonald (Physical Education, General Business, Sophomore Football), Mr. Donald Nie (Latin, Varsity Basketball, Baseball, Assistant Football Coach), and Mr. Joe Yonto (Head of Physical Education, Varsity Football Coach.)

By the School year (1957-1958) Notre Dame High School was closing in on its projected total capacity. However, it was in 1960 that the school hit its peak enrollment of 1572. (FOCUS, 11/15/88) The Faculty of 1957-1958 was nearing the projected 50 which Fr. D'Autremont had thought a school of 1500 to 1600 would warrant. (PROVINCE REVIEW, June 1956.)

When I arrived at Notre Dame High School in 1977 on my first assignment after my ordination, the enrollment was at 1198. There were 28 Holy Cross Religious living in the Residence. Fr. Thomas Markos was Principal, Fr. Peter Sandanato was the Superior. My classes were large, 42 students per class. Over the past 28 years that I have taught at Notre Dame, I witnessed the enrollment drop to near 600 and the Religious Community shrink to 8 men. Since the mid 1990's enrollment has grown to nearly 800 and the Holy Cross Community has rebounded somewhat to 13. I am the only full time Holy Cross religious teaching in the school. Fr. Michael DeLaney is President, Fr. David Scheidler is the Director of Campus Ministry, Frs. Bill Brinker and Jerry Esper are semi-retired still helping in the school with tutoring and substituting, Br. Pat Lynch is House Steward and assists with Liturgies, Retreats, and Tutoring.

One of the great opportunities I have had serving these 28 years at Notre Dame High School is getting to know many of the "Founding Fathers and Brothers." I lived with 6 "Founding Fathers" who made Notre Dame their life's work: (Fr. Bill Brinker 1955-1962, 1968-present), Fr. John J. Corcoran 1955-1971, 1972-1981, 1981-1993), Fr. Norbert Hess (1958-1972, 1974-2000), Fr. Peter Sandanato (1955-1980), Fr. Joe Stroot (1955-1994) and Fr. Andrew Wohman (1955-1986, 1990-1996) , I also had the privilege of living and getting to know Coach Jack Cole who came in 1958 and served at Notre Dame until his death in 1996. From these Founders the Holy Cross Community, the Lay Faculty, the Alumni and our students have received a precious legacy of hard work, dedication, and a powerful faith.