

**PRESERVING THE PAST AND PRESENT  
FOR THE FUTURE**



**“The Boys of Spring” –1991**

# REV. ANTHONY J. BLEICHER, S.J.

## FIRST PRESIDENT OF LE MOYNE COLLEGE, 1946-1947

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Le Moyne's history includes some unusual presidents; the pattern started at the very beginning. The College's first president lasted a year and a half.

On Dec. 1, 1945, the Jesuit Provincial, Francis McQuade, S.J. informed Anthony Bleicher, S.J. "You are appointed Superior of all assigned to Le Moyne College. Your residence will be 245 East Onondaga Street." As head of the Jesuit community, Bleicher automatically became President of Le Moyne College. McQuade thanked Bleicher for his twelve years of efficient, behind the scene work as assistant to the Provincial. Although the Provincial did not realize that this background might be not an asset, but a problem, perhaps Bleicher

had an insight into future difficulties. In accepting the post he declared, "My heart is totally and completely in the Le Moyne project" but added "I have enjoyed the 'hidden life.' Now having to be public is a 'sour feature.'"

The new president soon learned that he was not given a sinecure. Loyola Hall on Onondaga St. was "far from inhabitable" because the Jesuit community's meals, living and business areas were each in a different building. Moreover, little had been done to start the college. Bleicher eagerly addressed the problems and opportunities. His presidency was noted for his obtaining the necessary New York State charter of incorporation, purchasing the land where the present college is built, and organizing the first classes of Le Moyne College on James Street. On July 17, 1946 he presided as the bulldozer cleared the first sod on the Heights. Bleicher oversaw draft after draft of the first college buildings. These included the administration and science building as well as a faculty residence that originally would house faculty and students. He was determined that the buildings should not be "five and ten-store cheap," so he requested permission from the Province and Rome to incur a debt of \$600,000 above the money from the diocesan drive. As long as Le Moyne could pay off the debt, Rome's and the Provincial's concern was mainly with bathrooms. Individual ones in the faculty residence were a luxury not to be tolerated. The Province Treasurer, Edward Philips, S.J. asked in alarm whether the large women's toilet and lounge on the 2nd floor meant the college would be co-ed. Bleicher carefully answered that the arrangement was necessary because mothers of the boarders would be visiting.

Le Moyne's birth witnessed the clash of titans as four strong personalities came into conflict. All four were completely dedicated to the best interest of the College, the Jesuits, and the Church but radically differed on how this was to be achieved and "with" or "by" whom. The first confrontation was

between Bleicher and Bouwhuis. In Bleicher's opinion, Andrew "Sam" Bouwhuis, executive director of the new college, lacked tack and common sense. "Sam" had made a fool of himself by claiming that Catholic education was: first, knowledge of Greek; and second, knowledge of Latin; when the new college would be business and philosophy oriented. Bouwhuis also imprudently publicly stated that he didn't expect half of the campaign pledges to be honored. For these gaffes—and general obtuseness—an unhappy Bishop Foery wanted "Sam" out. Bleicher eagerly seconded the bishop's desire, and informed Bouwhuis that he was willing to pay all his expenses for a vacation trip to Florida as a reward for his efforts in the college fund campaign. Bouwhuis, perhaps sensing hostility, gladly returned to Buffalo.

As with Bouwhuis, Bleicher's "fatal" problem was with Bishop Foery. For his part, the college president felt that the Provincial was leaving him out of the loop and dealing directly with the bishop instead. On June 4, 1946, Bleicher wrote a four page, single-space letter to McQuade complaining that he should not have told Foery that the bishop was free to give Bleicher directions. The bishop knew nothing about education. Bleicher's directives should come from his Jesuit superiors. He felt abandoned. As he wrote, "you observed that you were handing me the [most important and] the biggest task the Province has undertaken in the last fifty years." Then the Le Moyné President asked the Provincial to aid him and not make his task impossible.

Bleicher also thought that Robert Grewen, who was known for "king busting," was advising the bishop instead of himself and in a manner contrary to Bleicher's wishes. In fact, Grewen did write a letter to the Provincial on Sept. 23, 1946 stating that relations between Bleicher and the bishop threatened the Society's work. Grewen wrote that Foery was going to tell the conference of his priests that he was fed up with the Jesuits. He hadn't heard from Bleicher for weeks. Foery was infuriated by the delay in the opening of the college. He had worked hard to raise the necessary money and had nothing to show his contributors.

Others reiterated Grewen's worries. The Provincial advised Bleicher to be constant in informing the bishop and "not to sit so close to your desk." His consultants, Jesuit community advisors, reiterated the need for improving public relations with the bishop and local clergy.

One incident in particular did not help. Bleicher had been to a dentist who extracted two teeth in barbaric fashion so that his speech was slurred. Friends advised him to take a glass of wine for his pain. Suddenly Foery appeared unannounced at the Jesuit residence and was scandalized by a Jesuit college president "drunk" in the middle of the day!

On March 22, 1947, Provincial Francis McQuade sent a special delivery-air mail letter to Bleicher informing him that William Schlaerth would take over as rector and president. He told Bleicher to make a public statement that his health required that he step down immediately.... and that he promptly take a long vacation. . Bleicher's many years performing excellently in an office routine were perhaps not a proper preparation for a job demanding exceptional public relations skills. So ended the short history of Le Moyné's first president. ■

# NOW THANK WE ALL—

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Once more we are grateful to those who constantly send items to the Archives. Professor **Nancy Ring**, Academic Dean, and **Jeanne Darby** repeatedly supplied documents. **Diane Litteer**, Institutional Research, delivered five binders concerning Admissions statistics and correspondence. The **President's Office** donated a copy of the college's revised College by-laws and mission statement as well as other documents. **Father Vincent Ryan, S.J.**

**"My heart is moved by all I cannot save:  
So much has been destroyed  
I have to cast my lot with those  
Who, age after age, perversely, with no extraordinary  
Power, reconstitute the world."** —Adrienne Rich

repeatedly dropped off photos, articles and copies of his literary endeavors. **Sr. Joan Kerley** donated many P.I.C. photos. **Barbara Stinson**, Financial Services, presented the Archives with four banker boxes containing the record of the original [1945-1946] College fund drive and other early financial documents. **Adult Education** delivered **Cliff Donn's** material on the Institute of Industrial Relations lecture series. **Patri Welch**, Institutional Advancement, sent over forms, documents, and alumni publications. **Student Development** sent over two banker boxes of **Michael Yost's** material and records of the construction of the Recreation Center. **Cheryl Berardi** supplied print shop material and **Communications** gave the biographies of former college employees and material from the Beirne inauguration. A special donation was made by **Mark Ramsden** of the Audio-Visual Department. In order to open up needed space, he had the archivist appraise boxes of video-tapes and cassettes to determine what was worth saving. Mark also turned over six banker boxes of **Tom Hogan's** notes and collected materials. Another major gift was **Barbara Blaszak's** furnishing the official files of the Academic Senate and its committees, which filled five full banker boxes. The **Parent-Alumni Office** delivered yearbooks, bound volumes and valuable photos and articles from the 1951 graduating class. May others be inspired to do the right thing! ■

# DID YOU KNOW THAT...

## LE MOYNE TRIVIA

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- In the original 1946 college building drive, the Le Moyne president estimated that 70% of contributions came from non-Catholics.
- The greatest day in Le Moyne sports history was Sunday, May 28, 1989. In the NCAA Northeast Regional Tournament play-off on Saturday, May 27th, the Le Moyne baseball team was down 13 to 0 with two outs in the bottom of the fifth inning when the game was suspended on account of rain. The next day, Sunday, the team was so certain of defeat that they checked out of their hotel. They resumed play and at the end of 12 innings the final score was Le Moyne 18-Pennsylvania 16.
- The original plan for Le Moyne included a nine-hole golf course.
- Le Moyne has played Syracuse University four times in basketball. The latest, in 1992, pitted SU's Jim Boeheim against Le Moyne's coach, Scott Hicks. Le Moyne lost 102 to 71. SU's star was Lawrence Moten, a 6'5" sophomore, who later played for the NBA Vancouver Grizzlies. Le Moyne's high scorer was Martin Jason, a 23-year-old freshman center from Stockholm, Sweden. ■

**“Archivists do it in record time!”**

# NOTE THE INTERPLAY

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*For many, an oral history is a walk down memory lane, a gathering of reminiscences about the “good old days.” For the archivist, oral histories are a means of filling in the gaps in the printed documents. They are a way of obtaining the human aspect: personal explanations, clarifications, insights and interpretations of the formal records. As an example, compare Father Ted Clarkson’s oral history account of dormitory life and that of the minutes of the Jesuit Consultors’ [advisors to the rector] meeting in “From the Past” on the next page.*

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**WILLIAM BOSCH:** Oh... the other job that you had, of course, was the dormitories.

**TED CLARKSON:** Oh yeah, I was also the manager of Nelligan Hall, and life in the dormitory in those days was quite different. Of course, we had two Jesuits on each floor, and when you went out at night you had a regular punch clock... And if you were to be away overnight I had to have in my file a letter from your parents saying that you could stay out overnight.

**B:** This was even for the veterans?

**C:** Oh yeah, well, even for the veterans. And I can remember one student who was a very mature guy; he wasn't a veteran, though, and I told him, you know. He said, "I told my folks, and my father he says, Look, don't give me any of that nonsense, you're old enough!" So I called up and this guy lived down in Elmira, I think, or Binghamton, and his father answered the phone, and so I told him, and he gave me a big speech. And I told him that I understood his philosophy, but I had to have this in writing. He would not send it to me. He hung up on me. So then I called during the day and I got his wife. She said, "You infuriated my husband." I said, "Will you send me a letter?" She says, "Sure." So that was it, but there were all sorts of... And at night—at 10 o'clock on each floor, the Jesuit went from room to room seeing that each of the occupants were in their rooms. As for playing the radio or anything, no, that was out after 10 o'clock.

**B:** Hmmm, so it was sacred silence.

**C:** There were some people who had, you know, a record player, and all that... but if they didn't lower it... I used to go in and pull the plug and scratch the record... I was fourteen years upstairs in Nelligan 212, and then I was downstairs for twelve years.

**B:** So Nelligan Hall is really your home. So before this the Jesuits were the ones who did the counseling and the discipline?

**C:** Oh yeah, well of course some of them... now Lou Cox... I would go to Lou and say, "Now, Lou these guys were out last night and there are no tickets from them, and they are on your floor, and get after them." And then of course we got Paul Reed. There's a memorable character because Paul didn't get on with Fr. Grewen. So Paul was a very strict teacher and Grewen took him out of teaching and put him in the dorm, situated him up on the top floor. And of course I knew Paul from Woodstock, and I told Paul, "Now, Paul look: this isn't like that classroom, this is seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day." I said, "Now, I'll never over-rule you, but just you know to be reasonable" Well, of course, after ten o'clock at night you had to get permission from Paul to go to the john. See, and the kids would be coming down to me, And I'd call Paul up and I'd say "Paul, you have to solve this problem, not I." And he'd say, "Well, they go to you or you know who," meaning Grewen. So finally after one term I went to Grewen and I said, "Look," I says, "He's going nuts in this job, and the kids are going nuts," and I says "I'm nearly going nuts." So he took him out.

Le Moyne College

House Consultors' [Advisors] Meeting # 105

Friday May 31, 1957 7:15-8:35 P.M.

Place: Fr. Rector's Room, 953 James St.

Present: Fr. Rector,\* Minister, Curry, Fallon, Fingerhut.

1. Provincial Congregations will be held at Fordham on June 18th.  
Topics for discussion should be submitted in writing by individuals.
2. **Dormitory.** Fr. Rector does not think the situation is too bad. One of main problems is how to prevent a boarder from checking in at night, then leaving again later. Easy to get in and out. Not possible to lock doors, unless there is a watchman at each door to open in case of fire. Fr. Ryan is strict on this, Fr. Clarkson rather easy. It would be fine if we had a younger man, free from teaching, to sleep during the day and stay up at night, and possibly be in charge of coordinating student activities.

**Fr. Curry**—Fr. Reed is strict but fair and regular in his discipline, well liked by boarders.

**Fr. Fingerhut**—Regulations for boarders should be posted in each room; there seems to be question as to what they are. Students going out again after checking in would be expelled. Prefects say that the boarders know the regulations are not enforced, and exceptions made. Dormitory is too noisy, students can't study. Beer is coming in. The head prefect shouldn't make regulations for dormitory and use own arbitrary judgment in enforcing them. Regulations should have own automatic penalty attached to them.

**Fr. Curry**—Last Sunday students in shorts, no shirts, were playing ball and sunning themselves on lawn.

**Fr. Gisel**—Unjust to other students when dorm is noisy and radios blaring, unchecked.

**Fr. Fallon**—Let each prefect go over the present regulations. And in view of past experience, give suggestions for a new list or regulations, which should then be publicized and adhered to. The Fr. Rector should lay down the law to Prefects.

E. A. Gisel, S.J.

\*The Father Rector was also President of the College.



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William J. Bosch, S.J.

Le Moyne College Archives

Archive Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. - noon / 1:30 - 4:30 p.m.

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