

# Absence of Bob Flynn lingers longer than Ravens' loss to Colts

The last time I saw Bob Flynn was in the summer of 2006, during Baltimore Ravens' training camp at McDaniel College. Flynn was the men's basketball coach there, literally had the keys to the gym, but he was like any other fan, excited to see professional athletes honing their craft.

Jan. 13 marks the fifth anniversary of the Ravens' last home playoff game at M&T Bank Stadium, a 15-6 loss to the Indianapolis Colts and Peyton Manning. The sidebar I wrote off the game was quickly forgotten, as it was not the most important story I prepared that day.

That Saturday in 2007 was sour from the moment word came of the passing of Flynn. He had died the night before, of a massive heart attack, at age 49. Before he was the face of McDaniel basketball, Flynn was a fixture in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, coaching at Mount St. Mary's and then Cardinal Gibbons, his prep alma mater.

Flynn bled the red of Gibbons, where he was a benchwarmer for Ray Mullis before he went to the Mount. He was a longtime assistant to Jim Phelan at the Mount, and that is a parlor game in itself, debating who was the bigger character of the two.

The first time I set foot in St. Mark Church in Catonsville was for Flynn's funeral. I'm not sure what left more of an impression, the legion of former players who packed the church, or the homily from Father Chris Whatley.

When the archdiocese closed Gibbons two years ago, Bob's legacy became a rallying point for that community. Gibbons had named its basketball floor for its former coach and athletic director. His twin sons, Mike and Ryan, were basketball players there. They moved on to Archbishop Spalding, where Mike is a regular for the basketball team.

Flynn did not take himself seriously, and had a golden touch with the common man. The morning after Flynn died, Phelan told me, "Bob went out of his way to be nice to

the fringe people, from the manager to the custodial help.”

Not a bad way to be remembered.