

# **‘Father Mac’ taught history, served as athletic chaplain at Loyola University Maryland**

Jesuit Father Francis G. McManamin, who taught history at Loyola University Maryland but was more visible serving as a chaplain to the Greyhounds’ athletic teams, died Feb. 24 at Manresa Hall Jesuit Community in Merion Station, Pa. The priest, known as “Father Mac” to many, was 93.

Father McManamin served what was then known as Loyola College as a professor of history and department chair from 1963 to 1970. After stints teaching at Sophia University in Tokyo, Wheeling (W.Va.) Jesuit University and St. Joseph’s University in Philadelphia, he returned to Evergreen in 1981.

Father McManamin traveled with Loyola’s athletic teams, celebrating Mass, leading pre-game prayers, helping student-athletes with their studies and counseling them, as well as their coaches and administrators.

“Father Mac had a quiet presence,” said Bill Heiser, president of Cristo Rey Jesuit High School in Baltimore, who played soccer for the Greyhounds in the early 1990s. “When you arrived in August for the preseason, before other students and professors were on campus, he was there, along with your coach, to greet you.

“You take a bus to Niagara (N.Y.) or Fairfield (Conn.), and he’s there with you. He’s there celebrating Mass on the morning of an afternoon game, and there on the sideline when you’re subbed out and get a drink. At first, I thought he only did that for men’s soccer. My first spring, I realized he did that for other teams, too.”

“He was already an institution at Loyola when I got there,” said Joe Boylan, who was Loyola’s athletic director from 1991 to 2010. “He touched people in a lot of different ways. In traveling with our teams, he felt he could add something to our young people’s lives. He left a heck of a legacy, in terms of his presence alone.”

Boylan described Father McManamin as having a particularly close relationship with

Bill Sento, the men's soccer coach who put the Greyhounds on the Division I map, and the late Diane Geppi Aikens, who turned the school into a women's lacrosse power.

Proud of his roots in Shamokin, Pa., Father McManamin was quick to remind fans that Patty Stoffey, who set state scoring records while playing basketball in the early 1990s for the Greyhounds, was from nearby Pottsville.

Father McManamin's counsel went beyond the spiritual, as his fellow Jesuits included Father James Donahue, who coached the Loyola women's basketball team, 1975-1976 and 1981-84.

"Father Mac was more than a priest," said Mark Amatucci, a guidance counselor at Calvert Hall College High School in Towson who coached the Greyhound men's basketball team, 1982-89. "If I had issues, personal or with my team, I never hesitated to talk about them with him. Besides that, he knew what he was talking about on the basketball side, and was always honest in his assessments."

Dave Gerrity, who played men's soccer for the Greyhounds in the mid-1980s, coached women's soccer from 1992-97 and now serves as associate director of athletics at the university, said that "Father Mac always had your back."

"One year (1994) at Fairfield, our goalkeeper, Mary Clark, got kicked in the head, dropped the ball and they scored," Gerrity said. "I lost my mind and was ripping the officials. One of our parents told Father Mac to get me away from the ref. He sat me down, and proceeded himself to lambaste the official.

"He was the first to pat you on the back for a job well done, and the first to give you heck for not being at your best."

Father McManamin's colleagues in academia included Carol "Sue" Abromaitis, a professor in the English department.

"Father Mac was a great teacher, someone very much involved in the students' lives," she said. "He was a great historian, he loved his field and he liked teaching. He was always so ready to do good things."

A graduate of St. Edward's High in Shamokin, Pa., Father McManamin attended Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg. He earned a master's degree in American History from American University, and a Ph.D. in American and Church History from The Catholic University of America, both in Washington, D.C.

He was ordained a priest in June 1961. His service to the Jesuits included serving in the Curia in Rome, 1975-77. In 2008, he became a pastoral minister at St. Alphonsus Rodriguez Parish in Woodstock. In 2011, he moved to the Colombiere Jesuit Community in Baltimore, and in 2013 moved to Manresa Hall.

A funeral Mass will be offered there Feb. 28, at 11 a.m. Plans for a memorial Mass at Loyola's Alumni Memorial Chapel are being finalized.

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