

Rev. Ronald J. Ferguson, SJ, 69, assistant to the president at Loyola University, Jesuit priest, teacher, musician, and computer pioneer died Wednesday, November 27, at Genesys Regional Medical Center in Grand Blanc, MI.

Fr. Ferguson was born in Indianapolis, IN, where he attended parish grade schools and Cathedral High School. In 1951, two months after graduating from Cathedral, he entered the Jesuit novitiate at Milford, OH. During his studies to become a priest, Fr. Ferguson completed his A.B. in Latin in 1956 and then in 1958 earned a Ph.L from West Baden College in West Baden Springs, IN. He earned an MA in mathematics from Boston College in 1964, and completed his S.T.L at Bellarmine School of Theology in Aurora, IL, where he was ordained to the priesthood in 1965.

Fr. Ferguson's principal appointments included teaching math at Loyola Academy in Wilmette, IL, from 1967-1973. In 1968, Loyola Academy's math department obtained its first computer. Fr. Ferguson was quick to see the potential of computers to change the way people worked, lived, and studied, so he enrolled in a computer training course at the Illinois Institute of Technology. As a Jesuit, Fr. Ferguson's knowledge and mastery of computer technology was motivated by his desire to serve others.

In 1979, after serving six years as executive assistant to the Chicago Provincial, Fr. Ferguson was assigned to Xavier University where he became director of academic computing with responsibility for providing computer services to faculty, staff, and students. Fr. Ferguson, who directed a staff of 40, spent nine years at Xavier. In that time he helped modernize and advance the computer infrastructure of the growing university, which was recently ranked third out of 142 Midwest colleges and universities by *U.S. News and World and Report*. "Computers make it possible for people to live on a human level," Fr. Ferguson once said, noting that "computers can make life better for people so they are more able to practice virtue."

In 1989 Fr. Ferguson served for a year as national coordinator of the Jesuit Refugee Service before his appointment as assistant

to the president of Loyola University Chicago where he worked until he took ill last fall. He was also a gifted flautist and was studying the oboe at the time of his death. During his years at Loyola, therefore, he also engaged in a "music ministry" to the elderly in local nursing homes. Fr. John Piderit, SJ, former president of Loyola University, says Fr. Ferguson also went out of his way to care for foreign priests, brothers, and nuns who were studying at Loyola. "He knew them all, made sure they were content and making progress, and enjoyed meeting with them regularly," says Fr. Piderit, who adds that Fr. Ferguson "was a loyal and faithful priest, careful to fulfill all his daily obligations as a Jesuit. He did not cut corners. In fact, he was so diligent, understanding, and faithful that the president and his entire staff thought he would be an excellent candidate to be a bishop."

"Fr. Ron was a kind, thoughtful, gifted minister of the-gospel. In some ways he was like a utility infielder on a ball team: he served in such a-wide variety of ministries over his long and fruitful apostolic career," says Fr. Michael Sparough, SJ, superior of the Jesuit community at Loyola University.

"Fr. Ron Ferguson was an accomplished mathematics teacher whose abilities translated well into computer skills in the technological age. It was perhaps the same set of inner skills that made him a good musician as well," says Fr. Jack O'Callaghan, SJ, rector of Loyola University's Jesuit community. "His music was always performed in a context of faith and caring: it was a symbol and a vehicle of his genuine concern for people who were ailing or lonely or bored. If, as we believe, heaven will be a place where all gifts are carried to their highest level, I'm sure we will one day meet Ron there, playing away on one or other instrument in high praise of the God he served so well on earth."

"Ron was a tremendous asset when he was my executive assistant as Provincial," says Fr. Daniel Flaherty, SJ, former provincial of the Chicago Province. "He actually ran the Province when I was attending our 32nd General Congregation in Rome for five months in 1975-76 and again when I was hospitalized for awhile in late '76. I think the Prov-



Rev. Ronald J. Ferguson, SJ
November 27, 2002
Genesys Regional Medical-Center
Grand Blanc, MI

Celebrating

the eternal Life of . . .

ince liked it better when I was away and they could deal with him. He was understanding, unfailingly helpful and approachable, with a good sense of humor and very efficient. He got things done. He was 'a Jesuit's Jesuit,' if I can put it that way. A deeply spiritual priest whose 'vocation' was to change the world by engaging in it."

Fr. Ferguson is survived by his sister Ms. Carole Y. Finnell of Indianapolis, and his mother, Olive Naomi Harden. ■



Rev. Stanley C. Tillman, SJ
January 9, 2003
Genesys Regional Medical
Center
Grand Blanc, MI

Rev. Stanley C. Tillman, SJ, 88, Jesuit priest, longtime Xavier University philosophy professor and Kentucky parish priest died January 9, 2003, at Genesys Regional Medical Center in Grand Blanc, MI.

Born in Newport, KY, in 1914, Fr. Tillman attended St. Xavier High School and entered the Society of Jesus soon after his graduation in 1932. During his studies to become a priest he completed his AB in Greek, Latin, and English in 1937 at Xavier University and went on to earn his MA in Greek from Loyola University Chicago in 1942. He studied theology and was ordained a priest in 1945 at West Baden College, IN. In 1954 he earned a Ph.D. in philosophy from St. Louis University in St. Louis, MO.

His principal appointments as a Jesuit included teaching in Jesuit high schools and universities, and serving in various parishes in Kentucky. From 1939 to 1942, Fr. Tillman taught at University of Detroit High School and at Loyola Academy in Chicago. In 1947, after his ordination, he was invited to teach philosophy at Mundelein Seminary in Mundelein, IL. In 1953 he came to Xavier University as professor of philosophy, and the following year was appointed chair of the philosophy department, a position he held until he departed Xavier for Loyola University Chicago in 1962. He taught philosophy at Loyola's Chicago campus for two years and then taught for two years at Loyola U's Rome Center. In 1966 Fr. Tillman returned to Xavier University, where he remained a professor of philosophy until 1985.

Fr. Walt Bado, SJ, who served with Fr. Tillman in Xavier's philosophy department, says "Stan was a beloved professor. He was an excellent teacher, a very demanding teacher,

but his students did well and had great respect for him." Fr. Bado adds that one of Fr. Tillman's crowning achievements came outside the classroom, when he arranged a series of retreats to the Holy Land for Jesuit priests and brothers. "He did everything: arranged lodging, flights, and all the other details, and prepared a program based on the Spiritual Exercises." The retreats, which Fr. Tillman ran for more than ten years during Xavier's summer breaks, were a time of profound learning and reflection for all involved, according to Fr. Bado.

"I see a real thread in my memories of him," says Fr. Hank Kenney, SJ, another former colleague from Xavier and a fellow member of the Jesuit Mission in Kentucky. "He was passionate and enthusiastic about every part of his life. He had great passion for what he was teaching. If it was Thomas Aquinas, then nothing bigger or better would be coming down the pike. He had the same passion for the students he taught, and for the parishes he served in his declining years. He loved the work there. He could always see the sunny side of things and the good in people."

Fr. Frank Oppenheim, SJ, professor of philosophy at Xavier today, echoes these sentiments when he says Fr. Tillman was "an excellent teacher. He engaged his students directly and personally. He was a bit of a bulldog, a teacher who challenged students to meet deep questions and think about them. His personality was all over the room. Pedagogy was his gift."

In 1985 Fr. Tillman retired from teaching at Xavier and moved to Murray, KY, where he served as pastor of St. Leo Church and as campus minister at Murray State University, part of an initiative led by then provincial Fr. J. Leo Klein, SJ, to expand beyond the usual ministries in high schools, Jesuit universities, and Jesuit parishes. "Stan was 71 then," Fr. Klein recalls, "the age when a lot of people retire completely. He could've said 'No, I'd rather just retire at Xavier', but instead he packed up to go to Kentucky to start a new Jesuit mission. He was willing to serve in any way he could." In 1992 he went to Barbourville, KY, where he served as administrator of St. Gregory's parish. While there he helped rebuild the church and also its surrounding

buildings, which are once again in use after many years in disrepair. Fr. Tillman flourished in the parish environment and became much loved by the congregations in both churches before retiring to the Colombiere Center in Clarkston, MI, where he resided until he took ill in January. Fr. Tillman celebrated his 70th anniversary as a Jesuit in 2002.

Fr. Tillman is survived by his sister, Ms. Ruthanne Rust, and two nephews. ■

Rev. F. Torrens Hecht, 86, Jesuit priest, long-time Loyola University philosophy professor and missionary to East Africa, died January 6, 2003, at Colombiere Center in Clarkston, MI.

Born in Chicago in 1915, Fr. Hecht attended Loyola Academy and after his graduation in 1933 entered the Jesuit novitiate at Milford, OH. In 1938, as part of his Jesuit training, he completed his AB degree at Loyola University Chicago with a major in English and in 1943 earned an MA in English from St. Louis University. He was ordained a Jesuit priest in 1946 at West Baden College in West Baden Springs, IN. In 1952, he earned a Ph.D. in philosophy from St. Louis University.

After completing his Ph.D. coursework in 1951, Fr. Hecht taught philosophy at John Carroll University in Cleveland, OH, and remained there until 1959, when he came to Loyola University Chicago. He served as professor of philosophy until 1982 and was also chair of the philosophy department from 1960 to 1968. During his tenure at Loyola, Fr. Hecht also served as a visiting professor of philosophy at St. Mary of the Lake Seminary in Mundelein, IL, from 1968-1970 and was rector of the Jesuit Community at Loyola from 1971-1977.

In 1982, after retiring from teaching at Loyola University, Fr. Hecht volunteered to go to the recently reopened St. Paul's Major Seminary in Sudan, East Africa, and taught philosophy there from 1982-1988. In a letter dated Sept. 1, 1983, he commented on his time in Africa in his typically humble and self-deprecating manner: "The churches are full of young men, and the number of seminarians is increasing better than the percentage of monetary inflation. There is need for teachers, and Jesuit volunteers, even old timers." Fr. Hecht's willingness to go to Africa as an "old-timer" at

age 67 demonstrated the spirit of generosity that characterized his entire career as a Jesuit.

Fr. Hecht's younger brother, Robert, remembers that his brother's dedication to the Jesuits began at an early age. "When he was a student at Loyola Academy he worked at the switchboard. He knew then he wanted to become a Jesuit. I remember him telling my mom 'if they don't pick me to be a seminarian, I still want to work there even if I just get to scrub the floors'. He was drawn to the Order. He gave himself completely to the task of living the Jesuit life and he never asked for anything."

Fr. Paul Clifford, SJ, spiritual director at Colombiere Center, says he was impressed with Fr. Hecht's willingness to accept death as it approached. He also remarked that in life Fr. Hecht had been known to all as a deeply kind and generous man. "When he was rector of Loyola University's Jesuit Community there were probably more than a hundred members living there. People would always be asking him questions or approaching him about different matters. And whenever someone said 'can I ask you a question?' or 'can we talk?' he responded, 'sure, sure, how about right now?' He had time for everybody."

Fr. Joe Casey, SJ, superior of the Jesuit community at Colombiere, echoes the same sentiments, pointing out that even after losing both his legs to a circulatory disorder, Fr. Hecht was "always gentle and kind. He never was angry even given his affliction. He was always even tempered and, as a result, loved by many."

Fr. Hecht is survived by two sisters, Ms. Marcita Hecht and Sr. Mary Veronica, PCC, and his brother Robert E. Hecht. ■



*Rev. F. Torrens Hecht, SJ
January 6, 2003
Colombiere Center
Clarkston, MI*

In Remembrance

The Chicago Province gratefully acknowledges the deceased donors listed below who remembered the Jesuits in their estate plans. Many Jesuit ministries and programs have benefited from their extraordinary generosity. Please remember them and their families in your prayers.

Rita Finnegan	Harry M. Tuffy
Agnes C. Finnerty	Mary C. Williams
Gertrude Jurschak	