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**Death Notice No. 1 (To all Unit Administrations):**



The Province of the United States of America, recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **DONALD WINFREE**, of the Mercy Siena Woods Marianist Community, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on January 25, 2012 in Dayton, Ohio, USA, at the age of 68 with 49 years of religious profession.

Despite being confined to a wheelchair for the latter part of his life, Bro. Don greeted the world with humor and optimism. He loved to learn and used the tools available to him to keep in touch and express his love for others.

Don was born to Howard and Margaret (Flanagan) Winfree in Chester, Pennsylvania, on Christmas Eve of 1943. He had one brother, Thomas; his father was the police chief in Chester.

After attending grade school at St. Michael's Parish School in Chester, Don attended St. James High School, where he met the Marianists. Don entered the postulate in Beacon, New York, on Sept. 4, 1958. Less than three years later, he entered the novitiate in Marcy, New York, and professed first vows on Feb. 11, 1962.

Bro. Don earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Dayton in 1965 and began a long career as a Marianist educator. Between 1965 and 1975, Bro. Don served at Cardinal Gibbons High School in Baltimore, Maryland, with the exception of a two-year period when he was the assistant director at a retreat house in Baltimore. Bro. Don earned a master's degree in religious education from Loyola University in Chicago in 1974.

Bro. Don and Bro. Frank O'Donnell became close while serving in Baltimore. Bro. Frank said Bro. Don was beloved by his students, and they asked about him many years after leaving the classroom.

Bro. Frank said he will miss Bro. Don's sense of humor. "He loved to dress up for Halloween, so one year he told the class his sister would be visiting on Halloween," Bro. Frank recalled. "Bro. Don dressed up as a nun, with a full habit."

Fr. George Cerniglia lived in a small community with Bro. Don when they served at Cardinal Gibbons. “He simply loved people and having a good time,” Fr. George said. “His laugh was infectious.”

From 1975 until 1981, Bro. Don served as principal at Chaminade High School (now Chaminade-Madonna College Preparatory) in Hollywood, Florida. While on sabbatical in Berkeley, California, in 1982, Bro. Don was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. He was devastated, but he did not lose his sense of humor or his love of learning. He said the best piece of advice he received was from his doctor, who told him the key to living with MS is adaptability. Bro. Don accepted there was no cure for the disease, and knew it was up to him to live a fulfilling life.

“Even after he was diagnosed with MS, I never heard him complain,” Bro. Frank said. “He was just a positive person.”

Fr. George recalls Bro. Don’s natural leadership skills and believes he would have eventually served on the Provincial Council had his health been better.

Bro. Don returned to Chaminade-Madonna in 1982, where he served in various roles until 1994, when MS forced him to enter St. Leonard’s Health Center in Dayton, Ohio. Though Bro. Don spent the remainder of his life at St. Leonard’s and Mercy Siena, he led a productive and prayerful life.

In 1997, Bro. Don said he was at peace. “Thanks to the support of friends, family, fellow Marianists and the God with Whom I had been quite angry, I’m more at peace playing the hand I have been dealt,” he said. “While playing that hand, I pray daily I will not ‘hold or bid’ too low.”

Bro. Don was part of the personal computer boom of the 1990s and loved his Apple Macintosh. He taught himself to use it and created the “Bordeaux Chronicle,” an email newsletter for the Marianist Family.

“People enjoyed the Bordeaux Chronicle so much and it was a wonderful way for Bro. Don to be of service to the Province,” Fr. George said. Bro. Don said the Internet allowed him to explore the world and keep in touch with his brothers and friends.

May he rest in peace.