

## **Brother John Edward Fick, S.M.**

Eulogy – Father Tom Schroer

The more I prepare these eulogies – and I've had a lot of practice recently – the more I realize what a rich and interesting life, what a dedicated and courageous life these men have lived. They have built on and developed an amazing tradition from which the entire Marianist Family has benefited. On the one hand the lives are somewhat ordinary, but on the other hand they are truly extraordinary.

We can be very proud of these men, and John Edward Fick is no exception.

Born October 9, 1916, in Baltimore, he was the son of the late John and Elizabeth Fick. He was also preceded in death by his brothers, Joseph A. and John Ralph Fick, as well as his sisters, Dorothy Ann Knauss and Mary Jeanette Keister. He is survived by his brothers, Francis, Robert and Charles, who live in Baltimore and in Florida.

Ed left Baltimore in 1931 at the age of 15 during the Great Depression for the Postulate at Beacon, N.Y. In 1935, at the age of 19, he entered the novitiate at St. Ann's on this property and professed first vows August 15, 1936, and perpetual vows on August 25, 1940, here at Mount St. John.

Brother Ed began his career as an elementary teacher at Most Holy Trinity and St. John's Home, both in Brooklyn, N.Y., from 1937 until 1945.

And if you're doing the math here, you will realize he began teaching at Most Holy Trinity with only one year of college education.

Perhaps it helped that he taught 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders at Most Holy Trinity, but at St. John's Home he had 8<sup>th</sup> graders, which must have been quite a challenge.

On the occasion of his 70th Jubilee, he said one of the highlights as a Marianist were his years at St. John's where he and other Marianists were responsible – 24 hours a day -- for the well-being of several hundred boys.

After returning after World War II in 1945 for one more year at UD to complete his bachelor's degree, he was off to St. Louis College in Honolulu – first as a teacher and then as the principal of the elementary division of the school.

And then off to St. Anthony's in Wailuku, Maui, Hawaii.

In 1949-1950, the Province of the Pacific was formed. Brother Ed decided to return to the Cincinnati Province, a decision which I know he had some second thoughts about.

He went to Chaminade High School from 1950 to 1956 and was instrumental in the construction of the building at the corner of Washington Street and Ludlow, containing the gym, cafeteria, auditorium, lockers and classrooms.

It was another highlight for Bro Ed and appropriately enough, since it has benefited thousands of Eagles for more than 50 years in so many ways – it has been the heart and soul of that high school. He was also assistant athletic director and taught English.

In 1956 he went to St. Joseph High School in Cleveland, where he taught math and was also the athletic director. He then taught at St. James High School in Chester, Penn., before going to Puerto Rico where he was business manager at both Colegio San Jose in Rio Piedras and Colegio Ponceno in Ponce until 1968.

Another highlight for Bro. Ed was spending 10 summers in the mountains of Puerto Rico building the chapel, which is still in use there.

He then went to Baltimore, where he was the principal of John Bosco School for Special Education until 1970 before going to St. Elizabeth School for Special Education.

He received his master's degree in special education from Loyola College in Baltimore in 1973. He was also a supervisor for the Baltimore Association for Retarded Citizens for several years before beginning service as a volunteer for 17 years in hospital ministry at St. Agnes Hospital in Baltimore.

Illness brought him to Dayton, Ohio, first to the Marianist Community at St. Leonard's and most recently at the Mercy Siena retirement community.

There are two instances that stand out for me in my relationship with Bro. Ed the past two years. The first one captures the suffering he endured. It was no secret that Ed was a very sensitive individual who could also be very contrary.

Once, I remember speaking with him when he was in such a state and he said, "Gee! I wish I weren't like this!!! I don't know why I'm like this!!!"

Obviously, there was suffering in those moments. I think we can all identify with such moments . . . struggling with ourselves, our limitations.

Another situation happened on Good Friday of last year and captured something of his contrariness, but also his creativity, humor and faith.

The nurses were having some difficulty with Bro. Ed. It was lunch time and they couldn't get him out of the hallway to go and eat either in the dining room or in his room.

Being perhaps a little naïve, they thought I might be able to help out – surely he will listen to his director.

So, I went to him and spoke with him. Basically, I said, "Ed, you have an option. You can go back to your room or you can go to the dining room. Ed, where do you want to go?"

He looked up at me and said, "Heaven."

We thank the staff at Mercy Siena for their excellent care....

We thank Judy Moehl and Kim Evans, for their care for Ed.....

We thank the Marianist Community at Mercy Siena, including Bro. Joe Mariscalco and Bro. Don Neff – who help us out frequently.

We thank Fr. Jerry Chinchar who serves as the master of ceremonies for these funerals, and John Edelman and the choir for the beautiful and prayerful music at these funerals.

We thank Fr. Chris Conlon also and finally Bro. Mike O'Grady for so graciously giving up his St. Patrick's Day and joining us from St. Louis to represent our fellow Brothers throughout the Province of the United States.