

BRO. JOHN TOTTEN

80 years of profession

I was born on Oct. 21, 1913, at Ft. Monroe, Va., into the family of James Totten and Julie Willoughby Walke. I also had a brother, James. Mom and Dad were faith-filled people who nourished my faith from the beginning. They were the start of my journey.

Due to my father's military career, I went to a number of different schools and different areas. I was often impressed by some of the exceptional teachers I had and learned to value education and learning. I first met the Marianists in my first year at St. Mary's University. I went one year to St. Mary's and became convinced that it was to the Society that I was called. I was deeply impressed by the family spirit of the Brothers there.

I went to the Maryhurst novitiate in the fall of 1932 and professed first vows on January 22, 1934. I then went back to St. Mary's and earned a BA in mathematics. It made me proud that my recruiter, Bro. Raymond Schnepf, said I was the best math student he ever had. My education continued with a BA in library science from our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio and a MA in Philosophy from Catholic University in Washington, DC.

I taught in a number of our elementary and high schools and also started some libraries in the schools. I taught math, science, geography, history, religion and English. I began a life time association with the Marianist Family through my works with sodalities. I also continued to deepen my appreciation of the genius of Fr. Chaminade and the significance of the Marianist charism. This became and continues to be a source of my constant study.

In 1957, I began my 37 years of teaching philosophy at St. Mary's University. In addition to my teaching, I continued my study of the Marianist Charism as well as some concrete work with Marianist lay groups.

As I reflect on my 80 years of Marianist life, I am reminded of a statement I made in my application for first vows. "I long to consecrate myself to Mary by the vow of religion, for I believe this is the supreme expression of filial piety and the best thing that I can do, and that it is surpassed only by that final perseverance in the state of a child of Mary which embraces every moment and act of life." I hope I have lived up to my dreams.