



The Marianists

BRO. GARY MORRIS

50 years of profession

When I was a kid, not yet 18 years old, entering the novitiate in Santa Cruz, California, I was unaware of what it meant to be a brother in the Society of Mary. However, I knew there were a number of wonderful members of that Society who taught, mentored and nurtured me through Riordan High School in San Francisco – men who, through their examples and their literal invitations, wanted me to join them in their mission. I was thrilled with the invitations and headed off for what began as a most fortuitous adventure. I was going to be a brother. Many of my friends could not believe my choice: “YOU are going to be a BROTHER! Oh, boy...that’s a long shot,” some of them would say.

“Yeah,” I tell those with whom I am still in contact, “So far it’s a 50-year shot...and counting!”

My novitiate formation year was tough, but my formative years of study at the Scholasticate in Dayton, Ohio, were enriching. I grew in knowledge about the wonderful heritage of the Society of Mary, and the presence of so many brothers, sisters and lay Marianists from different areas of the country and the world widened my understanding of the global Marianist mission. Upon graduation from the University of Dayton, I was sent to Honolulu to teach at Saint Louis School. Hawai’i was another wonderful cultural experience for me. I quickly became enculturated with the island beauty, the people, customs, music and cuisine. I built friendships with families and former students that I still cherish today.

I reluctantly left Honolulu after six years to pursue graduate studies in San Francisco. After completing my graduate degree, I began an 18-year ministry as teacher and drama director at my San Francisco alma mater, Riordan High School. Those years were major highlights of my journey as an educator and theater director, with more than 40 creative, wonderful plays and musicals produced in a partnership with Marianist Bro. James Roberts, a close friend and one of the most talented and creative theater designers with whom I have had the privilege to work.

During these years in San Francisco, I had the creative challenges of working with civic groups as writer and director of the 1976 major pageant commemorating the bicentennial of founding of the city of San Francisco, as well as formulating and working on the team that founded the LIFE (Living in Faith Experiences) retreat program for the schools of the Marianist Province of the Pacific. These leadership experiences helped prepare me when I was appointed as the assistant provincial and director of education for the Pacific Province in 1995.

I am grateful to be back in Hawai'i with ministry at Chaminade University of Honolulu since 2003. My journey hasn't always been a smooth one, but it always has been satisfying and enriching. I am grateful for the fraternal support of my religious superiors and the many brothers with whom I have lived and worked. All in all, this has been an amazing, wonderful "long shot."