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Death Notice No. 16 (To all Unit Administrations):



The Province of the United States of America recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **HAROLD LOOTENS**, of the Residence Community, San Antonio, Texas, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on May 24, 2014 in San Antonio, Texas, USA, at the age of 90 with 66 years of religious profession.

Bro. Harold passed up a promising career as a musician to join the Society of Mary, a decision he never regretted. He spent his working career as a high school teacher and counselor, serving mostly in St. Louis, Missouri.

Harold John Lootens was born on November 18, 1923, in Taos, Missouri. He was one of three boys and four girls in the family of Peter and Clara (Schlueter) Lootens. He attended grade school and high school at St. Francis Xavier in his hometown.

Bro. Harold was drafted into the United States Army in 1943. He later wrote that at the time he was “too cool” to continue the observance of his Catholic upbringing. That changed during the Battle of the Bulge in the winter of 1944, when he pledged to say the rosary daily for 30 days if “someone up there” would get him through combat alive.

Following the war, Bro. Harold was stationed in Vienna, Austria. His skill as a pianist gained him acceptance into the prestigious Vienna Conservatory of Music. During this time, he met Fr. Stanley Kusman, SM, an army chaplain, who told Harold the story of his religious community, the “Monks of Mary,” as he called it. Fr. Stanley’s witness, and the calling Bro. Harold felt, made him decide to abandon his musical training and return to the United States to become a Marianist.

He entered the novitiate at Galesville, Wisconsin, in August of 1946 and professed his first vows there a year later. He earned a bachelor’s degree in education from the University of Dayton in 1950, and embarked on his teaching career. He spent his first two years at Central Catholic High School in San Antonio, Texas, and professed his perpetual vows at the end of this time – on July 15, 1952, in Galesville.

For the following four decades, Bro. Harold devoted himself primarily to teaching in his home state of Missouri, first at Chaminade College Preparatory (1952 to 1967) and St. John Vianney High School (1968 to 1994). He returned to Galesville twice, for one year each time – first for a second novitiate in 1959, and again in 1967 to teach music to the novices. He also continued his own education, earning master’s degrees in theology from Marquette University in 1966, and in counseling from Saint Louis University in 1976. Over the years, he taught religion, English, Latin and social studies, and was a guidance counselor.

Yet Bro. Harold did not leave his music behind. “Bro. Harold was always willing to play the organ or piano when we had Mass or any kind of celebration,” said Bro. Norbert Karpfinger, then the

director of the community at Vianney. “Not only was he willing to do this, he liked doing it. He was always a gentleman,” Bro. Norb said.

In addition to playing for school functions, Bro. Harold regularly accepted paying engagements that fit in his schedule.

In the mid-1970s, Mark Bubash was a Vianney student and guitarist who often accompanied Bro. Harold. “Bro. Harry liked my playing, and he would take me along to play on his gigs – for wedding receptions and society events. I got to play at some really nice venues because of Bro. Harry.” Mark was also a talented athlete, eventually going to college on a football scholarship. “I learned from Bro. Harry that it’s OK to play music and have other interests, such as sports.” Today, Mark is a professional jazz guitarist. “I owe much of my success to Bro. Harry,” he said. “I still think about him a lot.”

Over the years, the musician Bro. Harold developed a reputation in the St. Louis area, moderating chorales and glee clubs, staging musicals and recitals, and performing regularly for a variety of functions. He recorded a number of albums, with proceeds going to Marianist work in developing regions.

In 1994, as he struggled with health issues, Bro. Harold moved to San Antonio, living first at the Casa Maria Community, then at the Marianist Residence. He enjoyed playing the grand piano in the University Center at St. Mary’s University, saying it had become “my own Vienna Conservatory.”

“He was great man, an outstanding Marianist, one of the most talented and truly American musicians I have ever known,” said Fr. Ted Ley of Bro. Harold. “Eighty-eight keys were not expansive enough to contain this man’s heart, faith, religious life or ultimate call.”

Bro. Harold’s practice of saying a daily rosary – which he began as a frightened young soldier in World War II – continued until his death.

May he rest in peace.