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December 16, 2016

Death Notice No. 30 (To all Unit Administrations):



The Province of the United States of America recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **ROBERT WOOD**, of the Marianist Residence, San Antonio, Texas, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on December 6, 2016 in San Antonio, Texas, USA, at the age of 89 with 71 years of religious profession.

Brother Bob had a long and distinguished career. He was a missionary and teacher; he served as Secretary General of the Society of Mary; he was a college professor, author, translator and archivist.

Robert Douglas Wood was born on April 2, 1927, in St. Louis, Missouri. He was one of two children in the family of W. Douglas and Helen Keefe Wood. He attended Catholic elementary schools and went on to Eugene Coyle High School, where he first met the Marianists.

At age 17, he entered the novitiate at Galesville, Wisconsin, and professed first vows there on August 15, 1945. He earned a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Dayton in 1948. He professed perpetual vows on July 17, 1949, in Galesville.

In the earliest years of his ministry, Brother Bob taught at St. Michael Central High School in Chicago, Illinois (1948 – 1949); Provencher Institute in St. Boniface, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada (1949 – 1952); and St. Mary's High School in St. Louis, Missouri (1952 – 1953).

In a 1945 letter to his provincial, Brother Bob wrote, "I have a very great attraction for the mission field, and, should it be God's will for me, I would love to serve Him under Mary's patronage in the mission establishments of the Society."

Apparently, this was God's will for Brother Bob. In 1953, he was sent to Peru, where he taught at Colegio Santa María in Lima and at the Marianist postulate in Chiclayo through 1958. He returned to the United States for a brief time, teaching at Maryhurst novitiate in St. Louis, before heading for Japan in 1959.

From 1959 – 1962, Brother Bob taught at St. Joseph International School in Yokohama. As at his other assignments, Brother Bob likely taught religion and English, and was probably involved in music and drama programs. His file includes photos from a stage production labeled "Chaminade Operetta" in Yokohama. A letter notes that when Brother Bob departed the school, "some 20 students were at the airport to bid him farewell."

Upon returning to the United States, Brother Bob taught for one semester at St. Michael Central before beginning work on advanced degrees. He attended Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., earning a master's degree in Latin American history in 1965. He then spent two years back in Lima, earning a doctorate in history at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru.

For five years beginning in 1967, Brother Bob was a professor at the Catholic University of Santa María in Arequipa, Peru, where he was also the university's dean of humanities, secretary general and director of the glee club. He later wrote of the experience: "The challenges were constant but meeting them was

rewarding. It was also an opportunity to introduce hundreds of young people to the Marianist charism and spirituality.”

In 1972, Brother Bob moved to San Antonio, Texas, where he was a sociology professor at St. Mary’s University for eight years. During this time, he also was named the school’s vice president for student services. He then was sent to Mexico as one of three St. Louis Province “pioneers,” assigned to help re-establish a Marianist presence. He served first at Parroquia Sagrado Corazón in Coatzacoalcos and then at a parish school in Apaseo El Grande.

In 1983 he was called back to Peru, responding to a request to serve as secretary general to Bishop Oscar Julio Alzamora, a Marianist.

Brother Bob had returned to St. Mary’s University as a professor for a brief span (1984 – 1986), before again answering a call to administrative service. He was named Secretary General of the Society of Mary, and was the first American to hold that post. He served in Rome through 1990. In addition to this key ministry, Brother Bob assisted at six General Chapter meetings and translated scores of documents over the course of many years.

Now in his fifth decade of ministry, Brother Bob returned to St. Mary’s University, where he was a professor, archivist and curator of special collections. He remained in the archivist role until 2010, serving a total of 28 years at the university.

“It was St. Mary’s great fortune to have Brother Robert return to San Antonio,” read a St. Mary’s news article from 2010. “He could be counted on to produce the needed photo, the elusive date, the important chronology.” The article refers to him as “the passionate guardian of the university’s history.”

In 2007, to honor the esteemed Marianist, St. Mary’s University created the Robert Wood, SM, Scholarship Fund, which provides tuition assistance to undergraduate students. In 2015, an alumnus of St. Mary’s made a \$1 million pledge to the fund. At the time, the anonymous donor was quoted on St. Mary’s website: “Brother Wood is a wonderful man and the embodiment of Marianist values and education.”

A gifted writer, Brother Bob saw his work published beginning in 1947. He authored 15 books on religion, history and archeology, and had scores of articles published in periodicals. In 1998, he published “The Society of Mary in Mexico,” as part of the Sesquicentennial Series. He also wrote plays and operettas, including one called “The Queen’s Captain,” based on the life of William Joseph Chaminade. When he was age 77, he published the award-winning book, “Life in Laredo,” which documents the first 100 years of the historic Texas town.

Father Ted Ley first met Brother Bob in the early 1960s. “I was impressed with his dynamic personality and enthusiasm about his vocation as a Marianist,” said Father Ted. “Years later, I caught up with this wonderfully mellow older brother whose young vibrancy was still there in a twinkle of the eye and a broad smile.”

In his seven decades of ministry, Brother Bob served in the United States, Canada, Peru, Japan, Mexico and Italy, sharing his intelligence, skill and faith with great generosity. Father David Fleming ministered alongside Brother Bob at several junctures. “Robert Wood was a wonderful, energetic and encyclopedically learned friend. He was sensitive and intense in all aspects of his life – especially the religious ones,” said Father Dave. “I thank the Lord for the gift of knowing him.”

In 2015, Brother Bob wrote a short note to the members of the Provincial Council, thanking them for his 70th jubilee celebration. The note closed this way: “I have had a long, successful and adventurous time in the S.M. I hope God will soon say, ‘enough.’”

May he rest in peace.