



**Society of Mary - Compañía de María - Soci t  de Marie**  
*Via Latina 22, 00179 Roma*



**April 10, 2019**

### **Biography of Death Notice # 13**

The Province of the United States of America recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **Richard MARTENS**, of the Marianist Residence of San Antonio, TX, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on March 24, 2019 in San Antonio, TX, USA, at the age of 87 with 69 years of religious profession.

Bro. Richard was a teacher, a liturgist, a musician, an organist, and chorus director. He dedicated his love of music to singing the praises of God and Mary to generations through his musical ministries in schools, parishes, chorus groups, bands, military bases and communities.

Richard Dale Martens was born on June 20, 1931, in St. Louis, Missouri. He was one of five children in the family of Charles and Helen (nee Donovan) Martens. He had three brothers and one sister. He attended St. John the Baptist school from kindergarten until the tenth grade. He was first introduced to the Marianists through his cousin, James Donovan, who was a Marianist postulant.

He entered postulate at Maryhurst in St. Louis, on August 10, 1947. In August 1948, after completing his high school education, he went to novitiate at Marynook in Galesville, Wisconsin. He professed first vows on August 15, 1949. His scholastic studies were at Maryhurst in St. Louis, Mount Saint John in Dayton, Ohio, and St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas. He graduated from St. Mary's University with a degree in history in 1952. He professed perpetual vows on July 19, 1953.

His first assignment brought him back to St. Louis where he taught at St. Mary's High School (1952-1957). There, he developed a reputation of strict discipline as a teacher of religion, English and history. He also coached football as well as soccer and served as the moderator of the glee club. In 1957, he was assigned to Don Bosco High School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he continued to teach religion, English and history. He also moderated the glee club and served as assistant athletics director and assistant football coach.

Bro. Jim Burkholder writes, "One of Bro. Richard's strengths was in his ability to get people to sing and sing well, even if they thought they didn't have much musical talent. He was able to get amazing performances out of ordinary students. His leadership and assistance with liturgical music in the community, in school liturgies, at Camp Tecaboca and in parishes was most welcomed. He was a strict disciplinarian who left no doubt who was in charge, which helped him keep his pupils on task."

In 1961, he began what would be his longest teaching assignment at Central Catholic High School in San Antonio, Texas. During this time, Bro. Richard earned his master's degree in theology and a bachelor's degree in music from St. Mary's University. He continued teaching religion and served as assistant principal but his main interest was music. He pursued his passion for music directing the school band and glee club. He also formed three special choral groups: Octet, Octet Pius and His Brother's Children. His Brother's Children made six concert tours in Europe.

Bro. Ed Loch, remembers, "Bro. Richard is probably best known for his association with music. His chorus group, His Brother's Children, would sing to the tourists along the River Walk in San Antonio. At the request of the US State Department, he took the group to Eastern Europe as part of the plan to bring peace and understanding to that part of the world. He made a great contribution to the community by preparing a worship aid for every Sunday with different songs. He shared his music by accompanying the celebration of Mass at retirement homes for the army and the air force."

Paul Combest, Director of Operations at Central Catholic High School, writes, "I always marveled at the many ways Bro. Richard used his talents to serve others. He shared his music with generations of students. He was always quick with a smile, a laugh or even a humorous comment. I was glad he was here when I returned to Central Catholic in 2015. Even in retirement, he was always looking for some way to help or serve. I think he has found it now—interceding for us all."

After dedicating more than 20 years to Central Catholic, Bro. Richard served at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Helotes, Texas (1985-1987). From 1987-1991, he resided at the Marianist Formation Community in San Antonio. His music ministry included the weekend liturgies at Lackland Air Force Base and playing organ at the Air Force Village retirement community and the Army Residence Community.

In 1991, he served as the director of the Camden Avenue Community until it merged with

the Central Catholic Community in 1994. He was, once again, assigned to Central Catholic Community. From 1994-2018, he continued his work with the Air Force Village and the Army Residence Community while teaching music at four Catholic grammar schools: Westside Catholic School, St. Mary Magdalen, St. Mary's on the River Walk and Holy Rosary. He played the organ for Masses at various local parishes. During summers, he served in liturgy and music at Camp Tecaboca. He also served on the Marianist Apostolic Project Sharing (MAPS) committee (1993-1997), the Vocation Advisory Board (1997-1999) and was president of the local unit of the National Catholic Music Educators Association in San Antonio. In 2018, Bro. Richard retired to the Marianist Residence of San Antonio.

Fr. James. Mueller writes, "When teaching religion classes, Bro. Richard was known to say 'It's not that your body has a soul. It's your soul which has a body. Remember that your soul is more important than your body.'"

We thank God for his life, for his tremendous love for Mary and for bringing joy to generations of Catholics through his music as he joins Mary and the choirs of angels in heaven to sing eternal praises to God.