



**Society of Mary - Compañía de María - Société de Marie**  
*Via Latina 22, 00179 Roma*



**July 1, 2020**

### **Biography of Death Notice No. 15**

The Province of the United States recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **Charles Hugh CHARLSON**, of the Marianist Residence Community of San Antonio, Texas, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on June 25, 2020, in San Antonio, Texas, at the age of 86 with 67 years of religious profession.

Brother Hugh was a teacher who served cheerfully at many high schools across the former St. Louis Province. He will be remembered for his sly humor and his sincere, uncomplicated dedication to his roles as teacher and brother.

Charles Hugh Charlson, known as Hugh, was born on September 19, 1933, in Hannibal, Missouri. He was one of three sons and a daughter in the family of Benjamin and Loretta (Mudd) Charlson. Young Hugh attended elementary and high school at his parish school, Holy Rosary, in Monroe City, Missouri. Personal contact with Marianist Brother John Kessler during Hugh's senior year in high school gave form and direction to his thoughts of religious life.

Along with 49 other young men, Hugh entered the Marynook Novitiate at Galesville,

Wisconsin, shortly before his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. He professed first vows there a year later, on August 15, 1952. He earned a bachelor's degree in history at St. Mary's University in San Antonio in 1955 and began teaching that autumn at St. Joseph School in Victoria, Texas.

For the next several years, Brother Hugh moved frequently, serving wherever he was needed across the bustling St. Louis Province. He taught at Chaminade College Preparatory in St. Louis, Missouri (1956-1959); St. Michael Central High School in Chicago, Illinois (1959-1961); and Don Bosco High School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (1961-1964). He professed perpetual vows on July 13, 1957, at Marynook.

In the autumn of 1964, Brother Hugh began ministry at St. Mary's High School in St. Louis, Missouri. He remained there for ten years, teaching and serving as assistant principal. During these years, he also earned a master's degree in history at Saint Louis University (1966).

Following his decade at St. Mary's High School, Brother Hugh taught at Central Catholic High in San Antonio (1974-1975); Daniel J. Gross High in Omaha, Nebraska (1975-1976); St. Anthony School in Wailuku, Maui, Hawaii (1976-1980); and again at Chaminade College Prep (1980-1982). In the autumn of 1982, he returned to Texas and to Central Catholic, where he taught for the next eight years.

Although Brother Hugh's degrees were in history, he generally taught math. In addition, over the course of his long career, he moderated sodalities and student councils, and coached hundreds of boys in basketball, baseball, golf and football. During some summers, he ministered at Texas Catholic Boys Camp (TECABOCA) in Mountain Home, joining his fellow Marianists as they wrangled their young charges in traditional camp activities like swimming, horseback riding and archery.

"I came to understand that the heart of Hugh's ministry was to bring a sense of joy, humor and laughter, accompanied by a beaming smile," said Father Richard Villa, who lived in community with Brother Hugh. He said Brother Hugh was "able to lift up the spirit of each person he encountered."

Now with 35 years of teaching experience, Brother Hugh continued a full schedule at Nolan Catholic High School in Fort Worth, Texas. He remained at Nolan for a decade,

from 1990 until 2000. He then taught for three years at Chaminade-Madonna College Preparatory in Hollywood, Florida. During these years, he stepped back from full-time ministry while continuing to teach and tutor part-time.

In 2003, Brother Hugh returned to the community at Nolan Catholic. He coached golf, helped out at the school and delivered Marianist hospitality unofficially but instinctively. Paul Combest, who worked at Nolan at the time, said Brother Hugh would regularly bring figs from the brothers' tree to share with faculty and staff along with his general good cheer. "Brother Hugh would walk the halls of Nolan Catholic in the late afternoons. He would pop into any open classroom or office and sit and talk to the staff or faculty member, always sharing a laugh or a funny story," said Paul.

During these years in the Nolan community, Brother Hugh also volunteered at the nearby St. Rita's parish school and often attended Mass with the youngsters. "Hugh would go there every morning and greet the kids as they entered school," said Brother Al Kuntemeier, who lived with Brother Hugh. "He was like a proud grandpa, saying hello to them, cheering them on. He just loved these kids, and the kids loved him," said Brother Al.

When the Marianists withdrew from Nolan Catholic in 2014, Brother Hugh, now 80, moved to the Marianist Residence, where he continued his devotion to community and prayer.

In the paperwork from Brother Hugh's early days at the novitiate, he was described as "steady, cheerful, respectful and methodical." These were characteristics he carried with him throughout his 67 years as a Marianist.

"Hugh was such a happy brother," said Brother Al. "He was a good monk."

May he rest in peace.