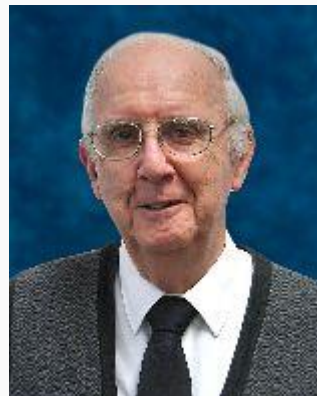




**Society of Mary - Compañía de María - Société de Marie**  
*Via Latina 22, 00179 Roma*



**September 28, 2022.**

### **Biography of Death Notice N. 33**

The Province of the United States recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother **Harry B. CORNELL** of the Marianist Residence Community in San Antonio, Texas, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on September 19, 2022, in San Antonio at the age of 81 with 63 years of religious profession.

Known as the “Voice of the Buttons,” Brother Harry was considered an icon at Central Catholic High School in San Antonio, where he served on staff for more than 60 years – working as a beloved teacher, coach, club moderator and public address announcer at sporting events, graduations and academic ceremonies. For several decades, he also spent his summers serving youths at Camp Tecaboca in the Texas Hill Country, where he worked tirelessly to introduce campers and staff to what he called “the greatest gift one could receive: membership in the loving family of Mary.”

Fr. Oscar Vasquez recalls, “Bro. Harry spent years trekking out to Tecaboca after school to open the camp property for retreat groups and then would come back to drive a bus to a football or basketball game. On Sundays, he would go back out to close the camp. He was generous.”

Harry Bert Cornell III was born on January 23, 1941, in Honolulu, Hawaii. He was the third of three children (two older sisters) in the family of Harry B. and Mary (Helma) Cornell. When Harry was still an infant, the Cornells moved to Oakland, California, where he was baptized at Sacred Heart Church. The family then moved to San Antonio, Texas – the city where Harry attended grade school and would spend most of the rest of his life.

Harry first encountered the Marianists as a student at Central Catholic High School in San Antonio, where he graduated in the class of 1958. Touched by “the harmony of the brothers,” he discerned that he, too, might have a religious vocation.

Harry entered the Society of Mary in August 1958 at the Marynook Novitiate in Galesville, Wisconsin. He professed first vows there a year later and then returned to San Antonio to begin scholastic studies at St. Mary’s University. He would go on to earn both a Bachelor of Arts (1962) and a Master of Science (1964) in mathematics from the university.

In 1961, Brother Harry began teaching at Central Catholic, his alma mater. He taught religion in his early years in the classroom before shifting to mathematics – the subject that would form the centerpiece of his career at the school. Brother Harry would eventually teach every mathematics course in the curriculum, from algebra to advanced placement calculus. When the school’s first computer arrived in the 1980s, Brother Harry set about learning another subject as well – computer science. He’d go on to teach the subject for 30 years and serve for a time as head of both the mathematics and computer science departments. All told, he spent more than 55 years in the classroom and continued to tutor students in mathematics for several more years after retiring from the faculty.

Along with bringing his attentive energy to the classroom at Central Catholic, Brother Harry was involved with coaching (baseball, football, basketball) and moderated other extracurricular activities (photography, debate). In 1968, he

agreed to serve as “interim” announcer for Buttons sporting events – a role in which he would then continue to excel for more than 40 years.

Summer breaks proved to be anything but downtime for Brother Harry during his teaching career. Instead, at the end of each school year, he headed about 85 miles north of San Antonio, to serve on staff at Camp Tecaboca, a Marianist-sponsored camp and retreat center located in the Texas Hill Country. Ultimately, Brother Harry would spend a total of 30 summers at Tecaboca – leading the ministry as camp director for 18 of those years.

Father Ted Ley, who lived in community with Brother Harry during their scholasticate years, says, “It is the end of an era for Central Catholic, because Brother Harry was a significant part of the Marianist life there. He was very generous, even-tempered and an exemplary religious. Everyone loved him.”

Erin McGinnis worked alongside Brother Harry for decades at Tecaboca. She fondly remembers what he always called his greatest accomplishment as a Marianist – bringing together a community of religious and lay people each summer to serve hundreds of children from different parts of the world and become “a forever and love-filled family.” She says Brother Harry “accomplished this, and so much more. He created a forever family of people from Mexico, Japan and the United States, a family of God’s children. He often told us that creating this family was in honor of and love for his Mother Mary and in following God’s desire for him to do so. His spirit will always be vibrantly alive amongst us.”

Brother Jim Burkholder considers himself blessed to have worked with Brother Harry at both Tecaboca and Central Catholic. Among his fond memories, he recalls that Brother Harry “was dedicated to student success and would frequently be found tutoring students outside of class time, even on weekends. Brother Harry also loved cats and frequently fed the local strays. For a while, he had a pet cat in his computer science lab because the feline liked to sleep on top of the warm computer monitors. Quiet and introverted, Brother Harry was a man of prayer and used his talents to be a great mathematics teacher and community member.”

Brother Fred Halwe first met Brother Harry when both were students at Central Catholic. They would enter the novitiate together and complete scholasticate

studies at St. Mary's before both being assigned to teach at Central Catholic. Brother Fred recalls how his classmate stood out from the other brothers. "At the end of a school day, most of us returned to the residence to take a nap," Brother Fred says. "Not Harry. He coached football, baseball and basketball every afternoon; some days, he cooked the brothers' supper. Then it was time for a little TV-watching. Not Harry. For decades he became the 'Voice of the Buttons,' announcing every varsity football, baseball, and basketball game, home and sometimes away. When summer rolled around, the brothers exhaled and looked forward to a few months of leisure time. Not Harry. He headed immediately to Tecaboca, spending 8-10 weeks with 150 campers per session. And oh yes, Harry was also a punster; he could instantly spot the incongruity in something someone said or did and make a wisecrack about it that could make you squirt the soda out of your nose! Long story short, he was irreplaceable. In him, we are celebrating an exemplary Marianist."

Michael Keefe remembers Brother Harry as a dear friend and colleague. "He was the epitome of a Marianist, devoted to the service of others," Michael says. "In his humble, selfless manner, he developed generations of Central Catholic students into responsible men. He was a 'players' coach/teacher, focused on their total development: academically, athletically, and more importantly, personally and morally. He was an old-school gentleman; respectful, wise, understated, and responsible. He always had your back. He leaves a long legacy of all the lives he influenced. He will be long remembered and greatly missed."

May he rest in peace.