



## Brother Gary E. Morris, SM

### *Celebrating 60 years of Profession*

Leo Tolstoy: “The business of a Christian is everywhere and always one: to increase one’s fire and let it give light to everyone.”

When I wrote a reflection on my Marianist life for my Golden Jubilee 10 years ago, I mentioned that many of my friends thought that the chance of my perseverance as a brother was a “long shot” at best. Well, 10 years later, that “long shot” has gotten better than ever. And my aim, despite my failing eyesight, has gotten keener. My target is perseverance because I was called to be a brother in the best way I know how. My religious superiors and fellow brothers have allowed me—but not always and sometimes reluctantly—to follow my choices to use my talents in the best way with the gifts that God gave to me.

I was born and raised in San Francisco, CA, where I attended St. Agnes Elementary School and Archbishop Riordan High School, graduating in 1964. I professed my First Vows on August 15, 1965, in Santa Cruz, CA, and went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts in English from University of Dayton in 1969. I served the next six years at St. Louis School in Honolulu, HI, as a teacher, speech moderator, and drama director before earning a Master of Arts in Theater/Drama from San Francisco State University in 1977.

I returned to my alma mater, Archbishop Riordan High School, as a teacher and drama director (1977-1995) while concurrently serving as vocation director of the Pacific Province (1985-1990). I was a member of the Pacific Province Provincial Administration, serving as assistant provincial and assistant for education (1995-2002) before returning to teaching in the roles of associate professor of performing arts and theater director at Chaminade University of Honolulu (2003-2020).

Since my retirement in 2020, I have been in residence in the Marianist Hall and Kalaepohaku Community in Honolulu, where I serve both the religious and larger public community through music, theater directing, acting, and board leadership, including my current service as president of the Hawaii chapter of the National Society of Arts and Letters.

Through my gifts as a brother, teacher, mentor, drama director, actor, advisor, and friend, I have joyously used my intelligence, humor, friendliness, and willingness to be creative, dramatic, often outrageous, sometimes mischievous, but, hopefully, always an inspiration to both the young and the old alike. I’ve always invited others to join in the celebration of this thing called life—and to appreciate our religious life of prayer, fraternity, meaningful mission, and the love, laughter, and gratitude for just being alive in a world that needs and loves us.

Since I have been associated with teaching and performing arts for almost all of my years as a brother, I have embraced the diversity and creative possibilities that I believe our Founder envisioned for the ministry of education. Mary proclaimed it at Cana, and I have happily chosen to “do whatever He tells

you” by developing and enriching my life as a Marianist Brother through the creative arts and the gifts and graces that have blessed my 60 years in the Society of Mary. Thank you to those wonderful brothers in my life who encouraged me and came along with me on a journey filled with hope, surprises, and absolutely amazing stories. I look forward to what lies ahead. As Tolstoy said so clearly in the above quote, I still want to increase my fire and let it give light to everyone.