

MARQUETTE
UNIVERSITY
A PRESIDENT'S
JOURNEY
ROBERT A. WILD, S.J.



“At Marquette, we are as we are. We lose our soul if we are not that.”

—Robert A. Wild, S.J.
President

HE'S A WARM MAN,
AND KIND. A COMMITTED JESUIT.
A DISTINGUISHED BIBLICAL SCHOLAR.
NO PUSHOVER, HE ADMITS THAT GIVEN
SUFFICIENT PROVOCATION, HE'S IRISH ENOUGH
TO WANT TO GO HEAD-TO-HEAD. WITHOUT HESITATION,
HE SAYS, "I LOVE MARQUETTE."

CERTAINLY, ROBERT A. WILD, S.J., KNOWS MARQUETTE better than most. In his time at the university he has been a teacher, a chaplain, a Trustee, a boisterous fan, and, for the past seven and a half years, its president. The scope of his intellect amazes: this scholar of Paul's teachings completed his doctoral thesis on the cult of Isis.

His original call to duty at Marquette came in 1975 as a professor, fresh from his doctoral studies at Harvard. Now, almost 30 years later, Father Wild shares stories from his life's journey and speaks candidly about world issues, Jesuit tradition, and the values of a Marquette education.

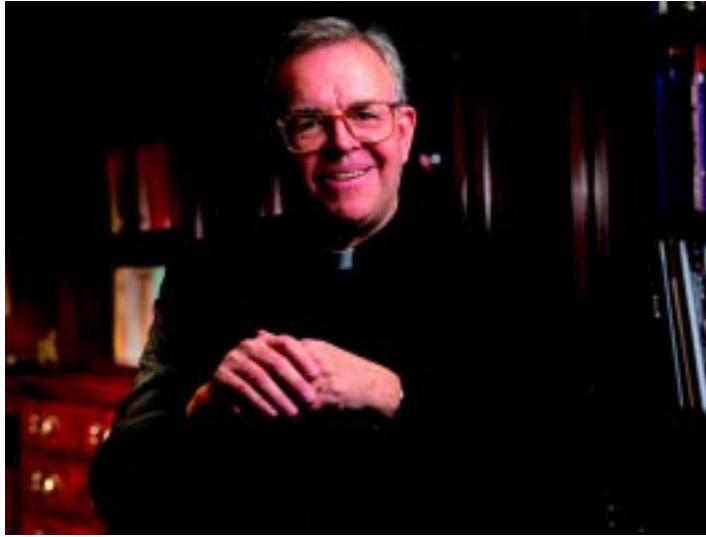
AT HARVARD MY STUDIES COVERED EVERYTHING that religiously moved and breathed in the Mediterranean basin, from the time of Alexander the Great to about 300 A.D. It was fascinating. So, finishing up there, I was looking to join an exemplary program. From the beginning at Marquette, I could see that I was going to work with professionals who were engaged in their discipline, who would challenge me as a young scholar, and who would push me to write and to publish. I was offered employment by several Jesuit places, but after visiting I said to myself, Marquette is the one.

Later, the Jesuits in Chicago asked me to be the religious superior of the young Jesuits studying at Loyola and the director of their program. So I left Marquette at that point, even though I was very happy with my whole experience here.

When I became provincial superior in the Chicago region, I traveled a good deal, getting to know our men in places as varied as Tanzania and Peru. Those were six marvelous years. During that time, I remember my assistant saying to me, “You’re going to be president of a major Jesuit university one day,” and I replied, “You just don’t know how wrong you are. That is not going to happen. I can tell you that as a fact.” So much for my prophetic talents.

During the early 1990s, I served as president of Weston, our Jesuit theology school in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and in 1995 Father DiUlio decided to step down as president here. I got a call from Board Chair Ed Brennan, who was CEO at Sears and one of our alumni, and he said, “We need to talk.” Talk we did, and as we did so Ed convinced me that I could indeed do this job, and I became excited by the prospect. What attracted me to Marquette was that I knew the institution, the Board members, and many of the faculty. I had a feel for the culture, and I genuinely loved this university.

*“When we convey the full force of an education
based in academic excellence, faith and justice,
you can see how it helps students make more sense of their lives
and gives them greater direction.”*



On the day I was elected president, we were down at what is now the U.S. Bank building in Milwaukee for the Board meeting. The Board kicked me out of the room, took a vote, called me back in and said, “You’re it.”



I JOINED THE JESUITS AT AGE 17, and I have joked that entering the Jesuits in 1957 at that young age was close to *ignorantia simplex* — as they would say in Latin — total, utter, complete innocence and ignorance about life. How much do you know when you’re 17, especially back then? On the other hand, sometimes I think I was genetically programmed to become a Jesuit because I had a Jesuit uncle and also a cousin. I went to a Jesuit high school, St. Ignatius High School in Chicago, and I felt the Jesuits there were terrific guys doing wonderful work. There was an excitement about being a part of that — a pull.

About halfway through the long course of Jesuit studies, I was assigned to teach at St. Xavier High School in Cincinnati. That’s normal in Jesuit training; superiors want to know if the young Jesuit can succeed in and be happy doing full-time apostolic work. We weren’t asked in those years, “Which school would you like to go to?” We were just told, because we were supposed to be ready to go anywhere in the world to serve the Lord.

I was at Xavier for three wonderful years, teaching Latin and Greek, and in my first year there we were state runner-up in the basketball tournament, losing by just one point. That was when my passion for basketball started. I was never that athletic personally. Coaches would spot me in my freshman year in high school when I was tall and skinny, and they’d say, “Maybe.” Then they’d see me in action and say, “Maybe not!” But at Xavier I realized the emotional power of competitive sports.



*“...other schools find it difficult or impossible
to deal with religious faith, and even perhaps ethical values,
we find it easy to address such
realities in forthright fashion.”*



In fact, I knew I was hooked when, back in Jesuit studies once again, I found myself on Friday nights straining to pick up a Cincinnati radio station so I could learn the high school scores.



JESUITS ARE URBAN FOLKS. We live in, work in, and do our training in the big cities. If you go to Rome and you look for the places where the earliest Jesuits worked, you find them right in the heart of the city. But from the very beginning we also did a lot of missionary work in places like Latin America, India and the Far East.

You might ask, why work in India and establish schools where almost every student is Hindu or Muslim and will almost certainly stay Hindu or Muslim? It has to do with trying to make people's lives better. God cares about our life in this world, and not simply about life in the next. Like all Catholics, we Jesuits believe this world is a fundamentally good place, and if we can teach the right values, then people can become real forces for good within their societies. Does God love Hindus, Muslims and others outside the Christian faith? Yes. The answer, of course, is yes.

We Jesuits did not start out in 1540 running schools, but we were from the very beginning founded "to help souls" or, in more contemporary terms, "to help people" in the various aspects most central to their lives. However, it didn't take us long to conclude that a powerful vehicle for doing that was the work of education and the advancement of human knowledge. People are often surprised to learn that the best science in the world of the 17th century was being done in Jesuit schools. That is why you have a whole raft of features on the moon named after Jesuits, because Jesuits were the folks discovering them back at that time. If God

created our world “and saw that it was good,” why, we Jesuits say, should we be threatened by new ideas and new discoveries?

AMONG ALL THE CHOICES, Jesuit schools such as Marquette are indeed different places. While, for example, other schools find it difficult or impossible to deal with religious faith, and even perhaps with ethical values, we find it easy to address such realities in forthright fashion.

At Marquette, we are free to create an environment in which people can shape and form their lives. We hope, obviously, that those students who are Catholic, but also the 30 percent who aren't, will deepen their faith commitment, and we work to help it happen. We can't control that, though. These are young adults — adults in the making. They need to be able to spread their wings, to explore, and to question. What we provide is an atmosphere and a whole array of supports where people can pursue their questions, including their faith questions, and not be laughed at.

Religion is a big part of human experience and of all that's going on in our world today, and we feel students need to know something about it. So, we're not going to excuse anyone from a course in theology just because he or she says, “I'm not sure I believe.” At Marquette, we are as we are. We lose our soul if we are not that.



PEOPLE EDUCATED AT MARQUETTE are going to be well trained. They gain here the knowledge and the skills to contribute at a high degree of professionalism — whether in business, teaching, engineering, dentistry, communications or any other area. They will want to engage. And they will most likely bring a faith dimension and strong moral principles to their work. For them, it won't just be about adding titles or getting more

*“We can be a generous people,
a people that really seeks, with others, to build
a peaceful and equitable world order.”*



in a paycheck. They will approach their work and their whole life situation from the point of view of service to others. They will have an awareness of the poor and the marginalized in our world, because these are God's people, too, and a very special part of God's people. I am not saying that you can't find this in graduates from other institutions, but I can tell you that the alumni and alumnae from a Jesuit school like Marquette do have something special about them.

When we convey the full force of an education based in academic excellence, faith and justice, you can see how it helps students make more sense of their lives and gives them greater direction. Sure, they'll sometimes stumble and bumble around in adulthood, because we all do, but catch up with a Marquette alum and you'll find someone who's got real power.

Our alums, of course, want us to do well in academics. They want us to do well in basketball, in other sports, in everything. They want a school they can be proud of — that performs well, whatever its pursuits. But they also want a school that, regardless of how the campus changes over time, will enshrine those core values that helped them to form their lives. And they want those same values to provide purpose, meaning, direction and hope in the lives of current and future students. I take that mandate very seriously indeed.

And that's our challenge for the future, isn't it? We have to work in season and out to continue to build our academic quality by supporting our faculty in their work and strengthening further our research, our teaching, the whole array of academic resources. But we also — and our alums confirm this again and again — have to continue to be serious about our Catholic and Jesuit identity. We can't just be saying nice things; we need to deliver on what we promise.



*“Our alumni want a school they can be proud of—
that performs well, whatever its pursuits.”*





WHEN I BECAME PRESIDENT IN 1996, we had not been in a fundraising campaign since 1990. Once we began to build enrollment and institute stronger financial accountability, we could start to talk about the support we needed. The Board was very, very helpful. When a number of people came forward with major new gifts, the campaign we are now in began to snowball.

The building of the Raynor Library, which came to fruition during the current campaign, is a great success story at Marquette. Though we started talking about our library needs in the early 1990s, over time, thanks to our Board of Trustees especially, we drastically revised our thinking about how we'd approach the project. They would ask: "Do we need to build another building? A big expensive building to hold all our books? Isn't the real need of the library more on the electronic research side? Isn't that the future direction of research and study?" And now to see those Raynor Library doors open after more than a decade of careful planning — that's extraordinary.

We had a lead donor kick off the library project with a remarkable gift of \$10 million to honor all that Father John Raynor had done for the university over 25 years as president. That was a great moment. And now I think about all the people who have helped bring the Raynor Library together — those who gave the money and those who did the planning, along with the splendid work of the library staff and the students in those years who pitched in with a sense of their needs, even though they weren't personally going to benefit from it. When you go into the building, you just say, "Wow!"



In this campaign, having met many of our goals for several key facilities, we still have important funds to raise, and I will put those needs before people unabashedly. We have no less ambition for excellence and achievement than our competitors, yet we operate with almost one-fifth the endowment resources of Boston College and one-tenth that of Notre Dame. So I am out to change those ratios and to charge forward on our priorities. Imagine Marquette five times more able to help financially needy students or assist young faculty who so very much want to initiate their first research project. I am also asking people wherever I go, to boost the support they give our day-to-day operations through the Marquette Fund. Making that annual commitment is the easiest and most consistent way to say that education the way we shape and deliver it here at Marquette really matters.



ONE OF THE GREAT DISTINCTIONS that marks this country of ours is a culture of philanthropy. It goes far back in our history, because those who settled this land had to dip into their own pockets to build churches and schools. But the fact is that no one has to give anything. A gift is a gift. And I remember being told this by Ed Brennan, who said, “Be grateful for every gift you get, even when people disappoint your expectations. Never communicate that you are disappointed, because they don’t have to give you anything.”

I find our alums really do want to participate in encouraging the work of a faculty member or helping a young person have the opportunity they enjoyed. They feel a great gratitude for what they experienced here and for what Marquette has meant in their lives. That more than anything else has served as a powerful impulse for our graduates to give and to try to stretch in their generosity.





Marquette both needs and deserves the gifts that people make to us. We manage our affairs well, and we are forthright about who we are and what we stand for. People want to give to an enterprise that is going places, and we are. Marquette is serious about igniting the curious mind, turning out purposeful graduates, accomplishing superb research, and demonstrating that we are worthy of trust, commitment, and, yes, investment.



THE YOUNG PEOPLE THAT WE'RE EDUCATING will find this a world of wonders and marvels, filled with human accomplishments. But there are tremendous numbers of people who spend all their energy just wondering if they can survive to the next day. We can't ignore those people. We must create a world situation where there's a more equitable sharing of goods among the haves and the have-nots.

As a nation we need to learn better how to live in this complex world and to be a true leader. We can be, and I think truly want to be, a generous people, a people that really seeks, with others, to build a peaceful and equitable world order. The Jesuit tradition offers many lessons for how best to proceed, and thus our work at Marquette has never been more important for our nation and for our world. 🙏

*“At Marquette, we are free to create an environment
in which people can shape and form their lives.*

*These are young adults — adults in the making.
They need to be able to spread their wings,
to explore, and to question.”*



FACTS TO KNOW ABOUT MARQUETTE

- ✿ Founded in 1881, Marquette is recognized among the nation's leading universities. Last year, more students applied to Marquette than in any previous year.
- ✿ A Catholic, Jesuit university with an emphasis on scholarship, faith, leadership and activism, Marquette attracts students from all states and more than 80 countries. Students annually join faculty and alumni to perform more than 100,000 hours or more of community service.
- ✿ Marquette has a renowned faculty; 52 members have claimed 69 Fulbright Awards for scholarly research. English professor and writer C.J. Hribal was one of only 184 artists, scholars and scientists to win a 2003 Guggenheim Fellowship. Faculty work with students in a 1:15 ratio. Only 10 percent of Marquette's classes have 50 or more students.
- ✿ Marquette educates 7,600 undergraduates and 11,000 total students, including the dental, graduate and law schools. More than 90 percent of freshmen received some form of financial assistance. Offering undergraduate degrees in more than 60 majors, Marquette also grants graduate degrees in 35 master's and 18 doctoral programs, along with professional degrees in law and dentistry, and offers degree-completion programs for working adults.
- ✿ The university is located on approximately 80 acres in the city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Facilities include a new library, dental school and major new athletic complex honoring legendary Marquette coach Al McGuire. The Haggerty Museum of Art, an award-winning building, features more than 8,000 works from Old Masters to contemporary art.
- ✿ The Marquette University Les Aspin Center for Government is a highly regarded internship program with a permanent home on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. The center annually offers more than 80 governmental internships and provides democracy training for political leaders from six African countries.
- ✿ Marquette's athletics teams proudly compete in NCAA Division I. The Golden Eagles reached the Final Four in men's basketball in 2003.
- ✿ In the 2004 survey of colleges and universities, *U.S. News and World Report* ranks Marquette among the top 100 national, doctoral-granting universities in the country. Other notable rankings are held by the Law School, the Dispute Resolution Program, the College of Nursing, the Nursing-Midwifery Program, the College of Business Administration's Kohler Center for Entrepreneurship, the Part-time MBA Program, Physical Therapy, the Physician Assistant Studies Program and the School of Education.
- ✿ To respond to new initiatives in faculty support, financial aid and key renewal projects on campus, Marquette is engaged in an ambitious \$250 million campaign, *Magis: The Campaign for Marquette*, which is being led by John Stollenwerk, Sp '62, Grad '66, and a member of the university's Board of Trustees.



IF YOU WOULD LIKE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION or can help Marquette reach its priorities for increased annual support, endowment growth, and facilities renewal, please contact:

Julie Tolan
Vice President for University Advancement
Marquette University
1212 Building
P.O. Box 1881
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201-1881
800-428-7940
www.marquette.edu/magis

“MARQUETTE IS SERIOUS
ABOUT IGNITING THE CURIOUS MIND,
TURNING OUT PURPOSEFUL GRADUATES,
ACCOMPLISHING SUPERB RESEARCH, AND
DEMONSTRATING THAT WE ARE WORTHY OF TRUST,
COMMITMENT, AND, YES, INVESTMENT.”



MARQUETTE
UNIVERSITY

Be The Difference.