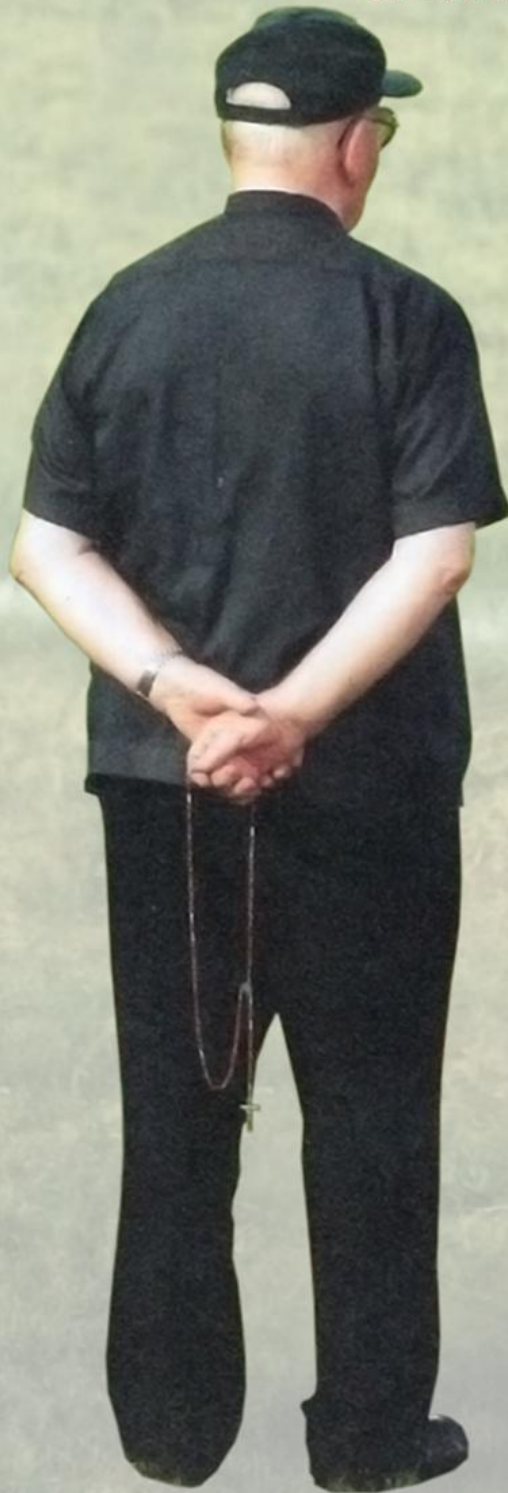


The Leprechaun

A Publication of the Notre Dame Alumni Association
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Keeping the Spirit of the Fightin' Irish Alive Since 2005!

SPECIAL EDITION



A Tribute To
Fr. John Bryson
1923 - 2011

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Saying Good-Bye to Hollywood

Fr. Hollywood. The Rock 'N Roll Priest. The DJ Priest. How many other priests can you think of that have affectionately used nicknames? How many other priests can you think of that are well known outside of the communities in which they are assigned to serve? Fr. Bryson was loved and respected by generations of metro Detroiters. For many, he was a personal mentor. For some, he just provided a wholesome, memorable experience during their adolescent years.

There are a lot of memories I have of Fr. Bryson - all of them good. I got to know and understand him better after graduating from Notre Dame. I remember the way he would light up when someone came to visit. It didn't matter if he had you in class as a student. As long as you were a Notre Dame man he was excited to see you. It also didn't matter how busy he was. If you stopped by ND, he stopped what he was doing long enough to say hi and have a conversation. I remember his infectious laugh and his laid back demeanor. And I don't think I've ever met a more humble man.

I remember the jukebox in the cafeteria. I also remember a lot of people referring to it as Fr. Bryson's juke box. I remember how he'd have it playing before lunch started. He did that to set the mood when the first group of students came in to eat. He knew lunch time was a time to take a break from the rigors of the academic day. He always played the same couple of songs. *Happy Birthday* and *Immigrant Song* by Led Zeppelin are the two that come to mind. I can trace my love of music back to the first time I walked into the ND cafeteria as a scared freshman in 1986. The music helped to put me at ease. I recall a time when I was searching for a song to play and Fr. Bryson walked by, dropped some change into the jukebox and just kept walking without saying a word. Fr. Bryson understood the important roll music played in the lives of teenagers. And that's part of what made him a legend in Detroit. To this day, when I tell someone that I went to Notre Dame, they ask if I knew Fr. Bryson and they proceed to tell stories about his Friday night dances. I am proud to be able to tell people that I knew him.

I can't think of the cafeteria food without thinking of Fr. Bryson. We didn't eat pizza there. We ate *Fr. Bryson's* pizza. We didn't drink slushies. We drank *Fr. Bryson's* slushies. And who can forget the race to eat the half melted ice cream sandwiches before they became *fully* melted ice cream sandwiches? We didn't care they were half melted because they were *Fr. Bryson's* half melted ice cream sandwiches.

Perhaps the most important thing I remember about Fr. Bryson can be summed up in one word - *loyalty*. He was intensely loyal to Notre Dame High School. He was a loyal servant to the entire ND community. When others were leaving the school in the 1990's, he stayed true to the mission he helped to start back in the 1950's. It was *his* community and *his* mission. He was one of the founding fathers. He vowed to remain a loyal servant to the community and mission for as long as his body would allow. He made it to see the 50th anniversary of the old school and then retired to Boston. Soon after his retirement, ND closed. From our correspondences with him over the past several years, we know the closing of ND was difficult for him to take. Like all of us, a part of him was lost in 2005. He expressed his gratitude for all that everyone did to try to save the school. We always sent him a hard copy of each edition of *The Leprechaun* when it was released. He enjoyed hearing from us. He enjoyed hearing from everyone from the ND community. Indeed, Fr. Bryson was loved and respected by generations of metro Detroiters for what he did for them during their adolescent years. But more importantly, *everyone* was loved by Fr. Bryson.

The cover of this special edition of *The Leprechaun* was decided based on another fond memory I have of Fr. Bryson. Fr. Bryson loved going to the football games at ND. But, I rarely saw him sit in the stands. Once the volunteers took over the concession stand, he watched the game from the sidelines with his rosary. He watched over the team, praying. He prayed more that no one would be hurt than he prayed for a victory. Now, he watches over *all* of us. I dedicate this edition of *The Leprechaun* to Fr. John "Hollywood" Bryson. On behalf of the entire Notre Dame community, I say to Fr. Bryson: "*Thanks a million.*"



Jim Mandl - Class of 1990
President, Notre Dame Alumni Association
Friends of Notre Dame, Inc.

The Friends of Notre Dame would like to thank all who made this tribute possible:

Jim Mandl '66, John McCabe '63, Fr. Bryson's family, Fr. John Kiselica, Fr. Gerard Demers, Catharine-Mary (Marist secretary), Chet Szerlag '66, Dick Purtan, The Detroit Free Press, Joe Heilig '89, Deena Shields, Simone Vitale '67, Bel Air Bill and Howling Harry of Jukebox Classics Radio, and to all who emailed, called us, or Facebooked a memory or thought of Fr. Bryson.

We Honor and Remember Rev. John “Hollywood” Bryson

Reverend John W. Bryson was born December 8, 1923, the first child of John W. Bryson and Leola Landry. He is survived by his brother, Paul F. Bryson of Worcester; his five sisters: Mary A. Cashmon of Santa Fe, NM, Irene L. and husband Everett L. Herden of East Haddam, CT, Joan H. Tetrault of Rehoboth Beach, DE, Maureen T. Rawding of Blue Hill, ME, Virginia F. and husband William White of Dennis; and many nieces and nephews with whom he has maintained verbal and written contact. He is also survived by one of his closest cousins, Jack and Jan Landry of Coldwater, MI and their children. He also maintained contact with his many cousins from the Bryson family of Waltham, the Aldrich family of Westborough, and the Landry family of Maine, New York and Michigan. He was predeceased by his brother Edward R. Bryson and recently his sister-in-law Carol A. Bryson of Dennis.

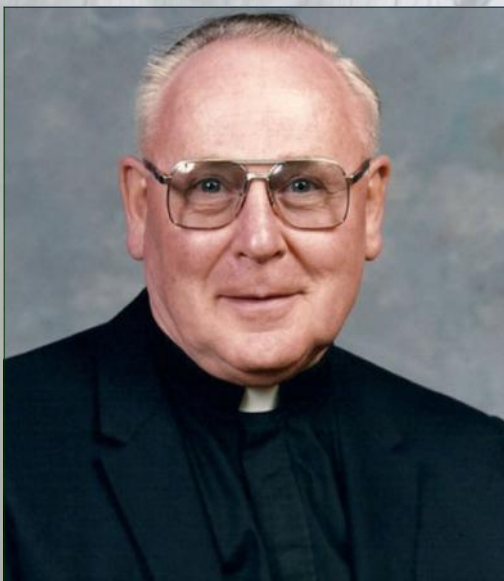
Fr. Bryson's early life was in the Worcester area where he attended both St. Paul's and St. Peter's schools prior to his introduction to his second family, the Marist Fathers and Brothers of the Boston Province. After his education, he professed his final vows and was ordained in Boston July 23, 1953 at Our Lady of Victories Church.

He was sent to Notre Dame High School in Detroit, Harper Woods Michigan. In addition to his assignment of teaching Religion, he became active in school with both the students and families. He initiated many extra curricular activities that brought Notre Dame's name to be recognized in the greater Detroit community.

Fr. John will be sorely missed for his many kindnesses and thoughtfulness.

The Funeral was held at 10:30 a.m on Friday, May 20 at the Chapel in the Marist Center, 518 Pleasant Street (Rt. 30), Framingham, MA 01701. Burial at St. Luke's Cemetery, 26 Hopkinton Road, Westborough MA 01581. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Marist Order, 518 Pleasant Street, Framingham MA 01701. Arrangements are under the care of CALLAHAN & FAY BROTHERS FUNERAL HOME, 61 Myrtle Street, Worcester.

For online condolence book please visit www.callahanfay.com



**Rev. John “Hollywood” Bryson
Born: December 8, 1923
Died: May 17, 2011
Age 87**

**May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind always be at your back,
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
and rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.**

From the Homily at Fr. Bryson's Funeral Mass

Friday, May 20, 2011

My Dear Friends,

I first met John Bryson formally on September 8, 1953 in Framingham, Massachusetts. I later got to know him much better - he was always smiling with a red face. He was always friendly to everyone. He was indeed a friend to all.

John was not a scholar. He was not an Academician. His strength was not primarily from books. He was a powerful and strong man. His strength came from within - from his heart. He had a definite impact on all who met him.

He worked 45 years in Michigan at Cathedral High School and Notre Dame High School in Harper Woods. His personality and enthusiasm affected students, parents, faculty, city fathers, Police and Firemen, the entertainment industry, disc jockeys, the music of Motown. Some of the national entertainers whose careers he personally influenced include Stevie Wonder, The Supremes, Dihann Carroll, Patty Duke, and Ted Nugent.

To ALL he brought himself. He was a man who loved being a priest. He would readily whisper a prayer anywhere, anytime. He would say "Hey Hollywood, God Bless You!!" His papal blessing as he passed by you. The prayers and the blessing came from his soul. He knew how to draw good from people from every walk of life. He showed the genuine love of Christ for all.

John was responsible for much of the early funds that helped pay the bills for the ongoing development of Notre Dame High School - the academics as well as sports programs and facilities!

I remember him as a man the students loved. The staff loved him. Parents loved him. City fathers loved him. Police and Firemen loved him. Disc jockeys loved him. National entertainers loved him. The dances he hosted at Notre Dame brought in 1,400 to 1,500 students! Many future spouses met at his dances. He even performed the weddings for some of these couples.

John Bryson knew who he was and he knew who he was not. Most importantly, he knew that he was a *Marist* and *HE WAS A PRIEST*. He once told me that becoming a Marist priest was his proudest achievement.

John Bryson: He served mankind all around the world. Priest of God, We Salute You! We pray for you!! And we ask that you please pray for us!!

- Fr. Gerard Demers, S.M.

Curriculum Vitae

Rev. John W. Bryson, S.M.

Born December 8, 1923 in Worcester, MA
Son of John and Leola Bryson

Attended St. Peter's Junior High and
High School in Worcester, MA

Marist Novitiate, Staten Island, NY
1945 - 1946

Professed in the Society of Mary on September 8, 1946

Marist College & Seminary, Framingham, MA
1946 - 1953
Bachelor of Arts

Ordained a priest in the Society of Mary on
July 25, 1953

Priestly Assignments From 1953 - Present

Cathedral Central High, Detroit, MI
1954 - 1955 Professor

Notre Dame High School, Harper Woods, MI
1955 - 1958 Professor

Notre Dame High School, Harper Woods, MI
1959 - 1970 Professor

Bishop's Residence, Grand Rapids, MI
1970 - 1976 Bishop Breitenbeck's Secretary

Notre Dame High School, Harper Woods, MI
1976 - 2004 Professor and Staff

Marist House, Framingham, MA
2004 - 2005

Elizabeth Seton Residence
2005-2011

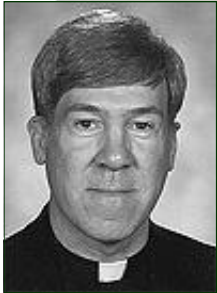
Personal Remembrances

I first met Fr. Bryson back in the fall of 1984, my first semester as a teacher at Notre Dame High School. For the next 16 years, he was my Marist confrere, with whom I prayed, shared meals and community time. I also had the "joy" of assisting at our school dances – not with the likes of Bob Seger or Diana Ross anymore, but with DJs playing top 40 records and complaining afterward that "the priest" paid them (in singles) only \$48.00 of their agreed to \$50.00 fee.

I understand that in his hey-day, there were many young musicians whose way to stardom began in the packed cafeteria, gym and hallways of Notre Dame. Indeed, Fr. Bryson's "sock hops" were so popular, that in the summer months, they were attended twice a week by many, with the Marist seminarians recruited to chaperone. I also learned that Fr. Bryson was flown to New York City, with record executives offering him cash with which to buy and raffle off mini-bikes as door prizes, in return for a gauge as to what songs young people most wanted to hear.

In addition to being the host of the sock hops, with their mandatory shirt and tie dress code and the preliminary praying of a 'Hail Mary', Fr. Bryson is also fondly remembered for his sales pitches during school lunches. Who could forget his legendary, if not mathematically sound, refrain: "Ice cold pop here, 25 cents, two for a quarter." I also seem to recall him pushing ice cream bars (pronounced "bahs" in a Boston accent) and cartons of milk, all coming dangerously close to their "sell before" date. Alas, from way back in the 1980s and '90s, I can still hear the "Happy Birthday" song playing from the old jukebox.

I once had a private conversation with Fr. Bryson, during which he shared with me that he didn't feel so gifted with "book smarts" as much as with a knack for fundraising. He certainly put that talent to work on behalf of Notre Dame. He cared so much for the school and students that he often times would drive to the local pizza shop and Farmer Jack, pay less than cost for trays of pizza and cans of pop, load them in the back of his station wagon and sell them in order to save the school money. He was a good man, a hard worker, hoping to make a difference to the bottom line. I am sure all of Fr. Bryson's hard work and dedication was appreciated when, in 2004, he was able to celebrate and witness the 50th anniversary of Harper Woods Notre Dame.

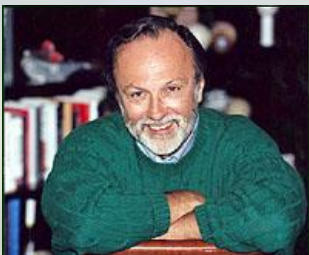
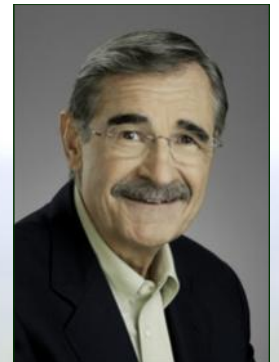


Fr. Bryson was stationed at Notre Dame for practically all of his priestly life – with just one short stint away to act as a bishop's secretary. In fact, those few years gave another "founding Marist Father", Fr. Ouellette, the longevity award for most consecutive years served at the school. Fr. Bryson had a dry sense of humor, a cackle-laugh, a faithful prayer life and a true love for the *Fightin' Irish* of Notre Dame High School. I am proud to say I had the opportunity to serve with him and to get to know him. I was saddened by his leaving and I mourn his loss. His like we may never see again in this life, but I hope I will see him again one day, apron on and countless key-rings jingling, selling "fresh" coffee to the new arrivals at the pearly gates. Rest in peace, Fr. Hollywood, and thanks for the memories!

Respectfully submitted by **Fr. John Kiselica** jkiselica@stmarysprep.com

I only did two dances for Father Bryson. I believe I was paid \$120 for each one... in cash! After the first dance I counted the 120 single dollar bills and guess what? There was only 119 dollars. The next morning during my show on WKNR (Keener 13) I mentioned that somehow Father Bryson had miscounted but, no problem, I was sure he was good for it. I did this for a few mornings having fun with it. A few weeks later the good father called me to emcee another record hop at Notre Dame. He told me that he had heard me mention the missing dollar bill quite a few times and that he would make it up to me at the upcoming dance. Well, I did the dance and Father Bryson paid me and apologized for the previous mistake. I said "No problem" and we had a good laugh about it. When I got home I counted my money and there it was again - 119 dollars. He'd "gotten me again! The truth is that both of us loved the whole thing. I had "material" to talk about on the radio and Father Bryson got a lot of publicity for Notre Dame and the dances!

- **Dick Purtan, Legendary Detroit radio host**



Father Bryson was a devoted priest, scholar and community leader who played an important role in the lives of many of the men of Notre Dame, as he often referred to us. I attended the first dance Fr. Bryson hosted at Notre Dame. His dances were renowned throughout the Detroit area because of the talent he was able to bring in. He had the top of the line in the music business.

- **David Bonior - Class of 1963, Former U.S. Congressman**

I have so many memories of Father Bryson, from buying food from him in the cafe (and the occasional freebie when I was broke) to talking with him about the early days at Notre Dame. But one stands out, perhaps a little unique compared to others' recollections. My father had worked the Wednesday Bingo Nights since my brother, Doug, Class of '67 (deceased) attended ND. Dad, who just turned 87, used to tell me stories about the Rock n' Roll priest. I'm pretty sure my freshman year, 76-77 was the year of Father Bryson's return. When I first saw him, I was surprised to see a solid, thick-shouldered man who looked like he could lift a car, sporting what can only be described as a cherubic face and impish grin. He always had that mischievous little glint in his eye, didn't he? The shuffling little steps and fast cadence in his voice, still holding onto a bit of that East Coast accent, made him even more of a character. Over the years I found him to be one of the most honest, friendliest and *gentle* men I've ever had the honor to know.

Which makes one of my favorite memories of him even more...*favorite*. It was at my first Friday Night Dance. Earlier that day Father had announced who would be performing, and though I can't remember *exactly* which band it was, I'm positive their name was prefaced with his penchant for adding "the" to it. So it may have been, "...*the Holy Smoke, the Toby Redd,*" or "*the Salem Withcraft...*" In any event, that night was awesome. The gym was packed with Regina girls and guys, some from neighboring schools. And father was there, walking around, patrolling and saying hello to the students. The music was loud and it was a new and exciting experience for freshman like myself. After the final number, three of my fellow St. Jude friends and I prepared to walk home when some guys from Austin or De La Salle started getting into it with several ND upperclassmen. It started out as just pushing. Soon the figure of Father Bryson appeared, making his way through the crowd, the whole time politely asking, "Please move, let me get through there, thank you now, clear out boys, thank you so much, that's good..."

Then two of the guys started throwing haymakers and that led to a bit of a brawl. Father made his way to the skirmish, literally pulling guys off each other, flinging them into the air with one handed grabs, so as to get to the two main combatants. Again, the whole time remaining calm, admonishing them with, "OK, now, that's enough roughhousing there, boys...go home now..." The peripheral fighters hit the exits, and as he separated the two main battlers, the non-ND student turned around and took a swing at the good Father, which he adroitly stepped away from. Instincts must have taken over (I heard he boxed as a youth but could never confirm it), because the Rock n' Roll priest *rocked* the guy's world with a weight-shift, one handed slug/forearm shiver to the cheek. Not really delivered with enough force to *wound* the guy but well-placed with enough efficiency that it knocked him backward about ten feet or so. I'll never forget what Father Bryson did at that moment: He put a hand to his mouth, his cheeks growing immediately red and said, "Oh my!"

Can't you just hear him saying that? It was vintage Bryson. He helped the guy up, apologized to him (*Father B* apologized!) and shooed him out the doors. Then for some reason, among that whole crowd of kids who watched in awe, he locked eyes on me. He allowed himself a sheepish grin then shuffled away.

Father Bryson was one of a kind. A man with that rare ability to make you feel like the most important person in the world, simply by greeting you with his patented, "Heyyyyyy Hollywoooooood..." That's what I took away from him. He was about actions more than words. A special person. He was a humble man that could laugh at himself, teaching us not to take everything so seriously. To teenaged guys full of adolescent insecurities, guidance like that was invaluable. He loved the environment of our school and used music to bridge the gap between the administration and student body in a way that was innovative and to my knowledge has never been duplicated by anyone else.

Rock on Father B. You were truly one of a kind.

Joe Borri
Class of 1980



Rest assured somewhere in the Great Beyond, Fr. Bryson is having a "record hop" with lots of young people who enjoy a good time! Fr. B. taught Religion, and he was good. Irish and Bostonian to the core, he had a constant twinkle in his eye, and greatly enjoyed doing what he did. But more importantly, he had a love for young people, which led him to sponsor the Friday night dances, which thousands of "kids" enjoyed so often. He truly got a kick out of so many teens having a good time in a wholesome environment. He was a great host.

I too loved music, and still do. I enjoyed hanging out with friends, and music and dancing were a big part of that. I served as DJ at our home parties, and had a good selection of records. Over the years I came to cherish the Marist Notre Dame experience more and more. Fr. John Bryson was a large part of that experience. I will remember him, and Fr. Leo Galant, very fondly. May the angels welcome him to paradise.

- Fr. Mike Petoski - Class of 1965

Father Bryson was an amazing man who was instrumental in my coming to Notre Dame and then my staying there for my four years. When looking at Notre Dame when I was in 8th grade, I was much more interested in going to Bishop Gallagher as all of my friends were going there. I had occasion to speak to Father Bryson at an open house at Notre Dame and I told him as much. I remember him telling me that Bishop Gallagher was a very good school and I would be happy there. But he said, if you really want a place to excel, nothing beats the brotherhood I would feel at Notre Dame. With that, he gave me a little wink, and was on his way with his little slurpee like drinks on his cart saying two for a quarter, one for twenty-five cents. Well, I decided to listen to him and enrolled at Notre Dame. Midway through my freshman year, I was lost and feeling alone. Sitting at lunch, Father Bryson came over and asked how it was going. I told him that I wasn't sure I had made the right choice. I hadn't made a lot of new friends yet and was feeling more like a fish out of water. He asked if I wanted to work with him at lunch. I did and he became my first real friend at Notre Dame. It didn't take long for the rest to fill in for me and Notre Dame became a home, a family, and the true brotherhood that he spoke of. I will always cherish the memories of my time at Notre Dame. I haven't spoken to Father Bryson in at least ten years but I am sure like most of us, he will live on in our hearts forever. God Bless.



**Jerome Vangheluwe
Class of 1983**

I had Fr. Bryson for homeroom and religion during my freshman year of 1962 - 1963. The first day of school, he called on me in homeroom. I do not recall what the topic of the conversation was, but I do vividly remember the "Hey Hollywood." I thought to myself: "If he can remember on what street I live, why can't he remember my name?" I grew up on Hollywood Street in Roseville. A few days later, I caught on that everyone was "Hollywood" to Fr. Bryson.

In 1986, when our son, Jim, entered Notre Dame as a freshman, I became involved with various fundraising activities for the school, most notably the Sunday and then later Saturday, bingos. Fr. Bryson got to know my wife, Marge, who was a French teacher, and our daughter, Melissa, who attended Regina (1991). Whenever I saw him at a bingo, basketball or football game, etc., he always took the time to ask, by name, how each of the family was faring.

I have kept in touch with him since he moved back East. Every month I mailed a hard copy of the Leprechaun to him. I sent greeting cards, some personal and some from the Notre Dame Alumni Association. At Easter, Christmas, and on his birthday, in December, I sent cards.



Back in 1996, I asked Fr. Bryson to preside over a ceremony to renew my wedding vows. On April 27, 1996, he did just that. He and Fr. Gonzales said a private mass for my entire family at the chapel in the rectory. Some of the photos below are from that day - a day I will never forget.

Fr. Bryson was a teacher and an important mentor to us all while we were students at Notre Dame. But after graduation, he became a friend. I will miss him. Although the school has been closed since 2005 and Fr. Bryson moved back to Boston a few years ago, the event of his passing truly closes a major chapter of the Notre Dame High School history.

**Jim Mandl - Class of 1966
Vice President, Notre Dame Alumni Association
Friends of Notre Dame, Inc.**



Photos from the 25th wedding vow renewal ceremony performed by Fr. Bryson on April 27, 1996 for the Mandls. The ceremony took place in the rectory chapel.

Since I was involved with Notre Dame for so many years, I have a lot of fond memories of Fr. Bryson. As a student, he used to refer to me as his "A student." But did I ever get an A on my report card? No. Every time he would call on me in class, I knew the answer. And I always got A's on my tests and assignments, but I never got an A on my report card. To this day, I can't figure that out. Why would he call me his A student and not give me an A? I don't know, but it really didn't bother me all that much. Another great memory I have is from the 1989 baseball season. Fr. Bryson sent me a really nice card after we won the state championship. He wrote "After all those years of hard work, you finally did it! Congratulations!" That meant as much to me as winning the championship. He was a one of a kind. I'll tell you what: every one of us is a better person for having known him. Fr. Bryson was a true Notre Dame man.



John McCabe
Baseball Assistant Coach
Class of 1963



Jeff Ranieri
Class of 1983

Fr. Bryson was always really nice to my family. I used to work all 3 bingos selling refreshments for him as did 3 of my sisters. I also used to fill candy machines for him after school and work the snack bar during lunch. After bingo nights he used to send all of the leftover pizza, donuts, pop, etc home with me since he knew my mom and dad were struggling making ends meet at the time. He got my sister her first job at Leonard's Syrups and mine at Valente's Formal Wear. He always looked out for others, especially my family. He loaned me the money to buy my class ring and allowed me to pay him back \$10 per week. Years and years after I was gone from ND, I would run in to him now and then and he would still ask how my "Blessed" Mom and Dad were doing. He always said my Mom was a Saint. Now they are meeting each other again in heaven. ☺

Thanks for sharing this. It is sad news, and very much like a family member passing. My memories of Fr. Bryson revolve around the Friday night sock hops he organized in the 1960s. They were truly fun events, and the place to be on the east side of Detroit. The leading DJs of the era such as Joel Sebastian, Lee Alan, and others paid homage. I don't know what inspired Father Bryson to start these social events, but they became bigger than life, and made my high school experience at Notre Dame memorable to this day. It's unfortunate that today's kids don't have similar outlets for socializing. Father Bryson would call the guys "Hollywood," and I sensed he enjoyed his role as the sock hop impresario. Father Bryson will always have a special place in my heart, and I thank him and the other Marists for guiding me through adolescence and instilling the values and ideals I have today. Notre Dame was truly a special place and Father Bryson helped make it so.



Chet Szerlag
Class of 1966



I have nothing but fond memories of Fr. Bryson. He was such a kind and genuine person. All during my senior year he would cut out newspaper clippings from the basketball team. Every day at lunch he would come to my table to give me the clippings and talk sports. Many times he would also bring me one of his world renowned slushies (free of charge) and give me a quarter to put in the jukebox to play my favorite song. Those were truly some of the best days of my life.

Whitney Robinson
Class of 1998

Ed Kisch - Class of 1968

I remember Fr. Bryson as a very patient teacher when trying to teach us about the origins and doctrines of our Christianity freshman year. The class of '68 was an unruly bunch, but in the end, Fr. Bryson reached our hearts. It was the first time I heard Fr. refer to God as "Yahweh." It sounded kind of funny to us! Fr. Bryson's legacy: He will be remembered by all who knew him and knew of him for all of his efforts to provide students with a way to let loose at the famous sock hops. Fr. was quite convincing to some local music talent and D.J.'s during the 60's when the Motown sound was going global. We will miss Fr. Bryson, but always remember him for the ways he found to reach out to us and get our attention. We would be walking down the school corridor and hear "Hey, Hollywood" and everyone would turn around to check who Fr. Bryson would want to speak to. God Bless Fr. Bryson!

Jerry Alderman - Class of 1962

"How did he touch my life, personally?" WOW, where do I begin. Probably one of the most valuable 'lessons' he taught me came as a result of trying to promote the record hops. He wanted his DJ's to be 'high profile', and always arranged for us to be seen with the 'stars'. He was instrumental in getting me with a band (The Thunder Rocks) and we eventually linked up with the Dick Clark Road tours. As a result, I 'hung out' with the likes of Freddy Cannon, Bobby Rydell, Chubby Checker, Ann Margret, Leslie Gore etc. etc. The valuable lesson I learned is that they are just people, as you and I are. They all have their personalities just like us. (Wow...could I tell some stories about personalities!!!!) My daughter was born on St. Patrick's Day 1988 and Fr. Bryson baptized her in the chapel at Notre Dame. Later in life, (May 2007) I was professed as a Third Order Franciscan and Fr. Bryson celebrated mass that day for me. We have been in touch all through the years, and I will miss him dearly. Fr. Bryson was, in his own words to me, a "simple man." Well, you know what... so were St. Francis of Assisi and Fr. Solanus Casey! There is so much more to tell of this wonderful man, and what he did for US - the ND students! There were the 'endless' meetings that usually ended with "Play 3 slow songs for every fast song." The problem was they didn't MAKE 3 slow songs for every fast song. Who could forget Fr. Bryson standing on the stage, looking out at the crowd. If he thought you were dancing too close, he would stare you down and 'jot a note down' on the little pad he always had. Did anyone ever see those notes? Did he really write any? I know of several occasions when Fr. Bryson spent his own personal money to buy records and advertising etc. for the dances. I am sure we will all, forever, remember his famous. "Thanks a Million!" Thank YOU Fr. Bryson... "Thanks a million."

Ken Lenz - Class of 1981

Don't forget the ever so important bottles and cans...cans and bottles... and slushies next to the jukebox.

Tony Block - Class of 1980

He was better to some of us students than we probably deserved at the time. He was a kind, gentle man who was truly devoted to Christ and Mary. During the last 2 years of the school he was supportive of the staff there who were, of course, under great stress. I treasured, and still do, the many "God bless" he would say to me. Godspeed.

Ron Martin - Class of 1993

I can remember helping make shushes at lunch for him. He would always tell me not to put too much cherry juice in no matter how much money I was offered. R.I.P. Old friend, you will never be forgotten.

Leonard Bugajewski - DLS

I graduated from De La Salle in 1960 and was fortunate to have the opportunity to attend the dances that Fr. John hosted every Friday night, except Lent. While observing the strict rules of Catholicism at the time, he still managed to let us teenagers have a great time. I, and my family, have remained friends with him all these years. I will miss his bright smile, gentle laugh and Bostonian accent, which, I am sure he is bringing to Heaven with him. My desire is to meet up with him, again.

Gary Hamel - Class of 1963

Fr Bryson was my religion teacher for at least 2 years. He must have had an influence on me since I attended the Marist College & Seminary after Notre Dame. I remember his smiling face gracing the halls of Notre Dame, as well as the fame of the dances (even though I never attended, due more to my shyness than lack of appeal of his dances). God bless & keep his soul for always!

Steve Sobetski - Class of 1987

I only knew Fr. Bryson from Notre Dame in Harper Woods. Every day selling slushies one for a quarter and two for fifty cents. I have one fond memory of the day I turned sixteen, the same day Bryson turned sixty one. We had a short discussion about the irony and the irony continues because he died at the age of 87 - the same year I graduated.

Tom Sloan - Class of 1972

He will be missed. I thought of him often.

Ron Hier - Class of 1966

I had Fr. Bryson for English one year. I worked at the Chatham Supermarket down the street on Kelly road. On Fridays, I didn't get out of work until 9:00PM or later. I complained to father that I had to pay full admission to the dance when I was only going to be there for a little while. He smiled and said, "let's fix that." He wrote me a permission slip stating that if I showed up so late for the dance, it was because I just got out of work. **"Please allow him in at no charge. Fr Bryson"**. From then on, I was able to just show the note when I came in late to the dances. At a young age, that was a real ego boost, to have a 'get into dance free card.' Thanks father, you will be missed, but not forgotten. BTW: Why did he always mumble in the halls? ☺

Paul Vago - Class of 1966

Anyone who attended his dances in the mid to late 1960s is blessed with great and happy memories. He gave us the opportunity to develop our social skills that we still use today. May God welcome him into heaven with open arms. He helped thousands of us develop in a trouble free environment, which sadly is hard to find today. Rest in peace Fr. Hollywood. You will continue to live on in the stories that we tell about our teen years. Motown Records would have never gotten off the ground without the platform that the dances provided.

Ken Masty - Class of 1980

Some of my fondest memories from Notre Dame are of Fr. Bryson and his music. From him "fussing" over something in the cafeteria, his specials on that "orange stuff" near the end of lunch or him walking around with the pen in his mouth calling everyone "Hollywood" all while Twisted Sister, Led Zeppelin and Alice Cooper played in the background on his juke box, to the Battle of the Bands concerts. Fr. Bryson was outgoing, quite easy to talk to, and more than able to keep us rowdy teens in check during lunch. I will remember him always for his wit and gifted ability to connect to us through music. Hey Hollywood, rest in peace.

John Cusumano - Class of 1997

Fr. Bryson was actually my first boss. As a sophomore I started working for him with the concessions filling the candy and pop machines after school and working the bingos and the sports games on Saturdays and Sundays. He was kind enough to trust me with handling those events even when he wasn't able to be there. Aside from that, there are always the other memories of his rounds at lunch. Slushies sold towards the end of the lunch hour for 25 cents apiece or 2 for a quarter. Subway subs were \$1.75 or 2 for \$3. And of course the empty pop can collection. "Empties, empties, empties." I'll never forget watching him intervene in the occasional fight that would break out. He would grab one kid in each hand and pull them apart. He always seemed to be stronger than you would expect for someone his age. These are the memories that both my brother Russ and I have recalled over the years and I know will continue to reminisce about in the years to come. He will be truly missed.

Joel Jarvis M.D. - Class of 1964

I am responding to Fr. Bryson's death. I have remembered his walking down the halls of Notre Dame along the walls and brushing the walls with his right hand as he walked. He always said that a humble man walked near the wall and not down the center. He was a fine man, priest and teacher and a great positive influence on us boys/men.

Bruce Kopitz - Class of 1968

I attended his sock hops and DJ'd a couple times for him. He taught my freshman religion class. He was one of those people that you always enjoyed seeing and saying hello to. He was always joking, always laughing. He had a simple demeanor which, to me, concealed a complex inner man. I never knew what Fr. Bryson was thinking, but I was pretty sure he was always three steps ahead of me. God bless his soul.

Bill Perish - Class of 1966

Fr. Bryson always seemed to be involved with the student - always putting together popular and positive events. He was God's carnival barker at Notre Dame.

Mike Genette - Class of 1962

I was a disc jockey for the "sock hops" that Fr. Bryson organized starting back in the late 50's. In 1958-1960 I worked the Friday night dances at Notre Dame. We used both the Library and the Cafeteria as dance rooms (there was no gym back then), and we had a live disc jockey in each room. During the summer we did two dances every week, Tuesdays and Fridays as I recall. Fr. Bryson was constantly running in between the two rooms to make sure everything was going OK. For those who did not have the privilege of knowing Fr. Bryson, he never went anywhere slowly. His pace was always frantic, his cassock rustling in the breeze, and his face was usually beet red before long. I particularly recall one night when we had a guest artist. Brenda Lee came and sang live at a Notre Dame dance. Fr. Bryson was so excited (and embarrassed at the same time) meeting Miss Lee. She was only 15 or 16 at the time but had a big hit song called "Sweet Nothings" and we were all excited to be in the limelight with a big star. The dances went on for years but that night was especially memorable. It brought out the best in everyone and Fr. Bryson was in his element as an impresario.

John C. Monigold. - DLS

Thanks for the heads up regarding the passing of Father Bryson. No question about it, he was a legend on the East Side! I can vividly remember him hosting the ND dances, which back in the day were the talk of the town. God bless Father Bryson and the Notre Dame Family.

Gary Socco - Class of 1978

"Hey Hollywood" was his famous moniker. He was not only a great priest and friend, but a saint in the way he was towards others. He touched many lives during his life. What more can you say about anyone you want to be remembered well.

David Cerrini - Class of 1970

He was a great guy, always friendly and smiling at everyone. What a joy to be around. I enjoyed my time at Notre Dame with him as a faculty member, (and the dances were fun for all that attended). An end of an era. He will surely be missed by many.

Mike Bilicki - Class of 1990

I have a favorite Fr. Bryson moment while teaching. Fr. Bryson was still in charge of the bingos. Pizza and food not eaten at the bingo would be sold at lunch to the kids. Fr. had a few young men assisting him in putting the pizza up in the cafe for lunch between classes. One poor young man lost his pizza tray and half the pizza fell on the floor. The young man was picking up the pizza as fast as he could and asked Fr. what he wanted to do with said pizza. Fr. made the sign of the cross over the pizza and told the young man that "we will sell it, of course." I wonder if he charged extra for the blessed pizza? Or did he simply live by the 5 second rule?

Tom Somyak - Class of 1976

This is truly a sad day for the Notre Dame family. The first memory that comes to mind is the obvious one, the legendary sock hops that he was able to stage for our high school. Does anyone have a list of the acts that he arranged to perform there? I would love to see one; it would stagger the mind of people who weren't familiar with his story. But to make that the sole memory would not do justice to the body of Fr. Bryson's life work. He was a treasured asset to his students, the communities in which he served, and I'm sure to the order of the Marists.

Chris Desmet - Class of 1959

The real story... I recall how the record hops really got started. Being a member of Notre Dame squires and the varsity club and Fr. Bryson being the moderator, he asked the varsity club for ways to make money. We suggested a record hop. And the rest is history.

Chris Guzman - Class of 1997

Sad news about a great figure in NDHS history not to be forgotten by any alumni. Slushies \$0.25... two for a quarter. What a great deal! Two songs played by Fr. Bryson EVERYDAY in the cafeteria: Summer Wind (Sinatra) and Happy Birthday. Eventually, lunch would have been strange without those songs. If he called you "Hollywood," you knew you were good.

Vicki Granger - DLS

There were some great DJ's and great times. The concerts must have been after my time. Fr. Bryson was quite the "Energizer Bunny." We had some of the top Detroit area DJ's of the '60's there - Robin Seymour, Dick Purtan, Tom Shannon from CKLW ("The Sun Never Sets on the Shannon Empire"), and I remember some of the early Motown groups there who later hit it big. Was daring in those early 60's days to have those groups there, but he did.

Casey Wakula - Class of 1996

Hey... heaven has Hollywood back. RIP Fr.... you changed the lives of many young men.

Paul Baeckeroot - Class of 1961

My interactions with Fr. Bryson were especially warm and pleasant. He was always ready to listen to what was happening in your life. His contribution to the growth of teens in east metro Detroit area was critical to this passage in their life. His effort to bring value and support to many individuals will always be remembered. Bless his soul and spirit.

Richard Moritz - Class of 1972

Truly a great, kind, and fun man! Our lunch table at Notre Dame High in Harper Woods was close to his office and something was always going on! May God bless him for all the good things he brought to so many of us. We will miss him but he will live on in our memories.

Dave Methric - Class of 1964

What really sticks out in my mind is serving mass for Fr. Bryson at 6:00 AM at Assumption Grotto. We tried to pin-point how long it would take for the service. Fifteen to twenty minutes was the average. It was sometimes hard to keep up with him. He will be missed as will all the teachers, both religious and lay, that were there in the early 60's.

Phil Horlacher - DLS

The Man is a legend!! RIP Fr. Hollywood He reminds me of Brother George Synan from De La Salle! Another great man who passed away and had a huge following and touched many peoples' lives!! Saw Adrenalin at ND when I was a junior at DLS with my buddy Dan Dubay!

Michael Tasti - Class of 1981

I, as a graduate of Notre Dame, remember this man so fondly. He wasn't a teacher, per se, but ran the cafeteria and the Friday night dances we had when I was a student. Ironically, on Bob Seger's homecoming Fr. Bryson passes away. Great man who will be missed by all the extended Notre Dame family. RIP Fr. Bryson.

Tony Kraft - Class of 1987

To this day I can't buy a Charleston Chew because it isn't \$.25. As much as you were sure he didn't know you, he knew every single one of us. He was one who certainly deserved his uniform. There were ones that didn't.

Dennis G. Grenier - Class of 1958

I remember Father Bryson as a great personality and individual that was genuinely interested in the students and the activities surrounding Notre Dame life. This translated into his status, in my mind, as one of the best in the classroom and in campus activities and life!

Ron Meloche - Class of 1960

What I remember most about Fr. Bryson was his quiet humor and his direction of the dances. He always had a kind word and was always eager to listen. I do not think a week in my life has gone by without thinking of him. He was one of the presences in my life at N.D. that was in fact bigger than life. I will miss him as I miss all of the priests, brothers and teachers from N.D. that influenced me throughout my life... at least in the good and sane things I did.

Paul Schulte - Class of 1973

Well I remember Fr Bryson quite a lot from some of my early classes. I'd say my best memory is shared by a number of others - it was Fr Bryson walking up and down the room aisles selling pencils. He had this great sales line (I'm paraphrasing, here) something like: "Pencils for sale, 10 cents each, 2 for a quarter." And we all looked at each other confused like "was it a joke or did he not get the math?" I always figured it was a great sense of humor and irony that he had. Anyhow, sounds like he had a good long life. What more can we hope for!

Bob Olejar - Class of 1987

Oh man, the man lived a good long life. My mom had gone to those dances at ND years ago with Bob Seger. I remember one day when he was teaching me to use the slush machine. I pulled the handle only to have it fall off in my hand as purple slush sprayed everywhere. I've never heard a priest swear so much and yet in such a quiet voice ever. Kevin Howard and I have laughed about that for years.

Ron Francek - Class of 1974

I think I will be echoing the sentiments of many who went through the halls of Notre Dame and remember that smile provided by Father Bryson. For me, I was fortunate enough to "work" for Fr. Bryson on bingo nights which he coordinated for many, many years. Naturally, who can forget all of the dances he orchestrated. Fr. Bryson was a sturdy foundational cornerstone of the Notre Dame family and will be missed and fondly remembered forever.

Michael Nehra - Class of 1966

Father Bryson (AKA) Father Hollywood ran the Notre Dame dances from 1963 until who knows when. His entertainment Included: Bob Seger, The Kingsmen, Stevie Wonder, etc. Always had a smile on his face and loved getting involved with the students. He was also my religion teacher. He will be sorely missed.

Denis Kansier - Class of 1964

It's something like this that really makes you look back at your youth and think hard about those times. Fridays were the high point of the week with the Notre Dame Dances organized by Fr. Bryson. It was a time when you let loose, in a good way, because you knew the consequences, but had a good time and were able to meet new friends and have fun. Fr Bryson will be missed very much.

Lazaros Kikas - Class of 1983

I knew Father Bryson when I was a student at Notre Dame. He was a wonderful human being. Rest in Peace Father Bryson.

Bob Mikonowicz - Class of 1960

He, along with 2 other N.D. priests, did my father's funeral mass out where I live in Union Lake at St. Pat's. Also, in sophomore year he seated by height for his religion class. I was #19 of 37 boys, in other words I was average. When we graduated there were only 2 boys taller than me. I went from average to 6' 4" tall. He was a great person.

Kent McCombs - Class of 1969

Can't say enough tributes to my friend Father Bryson - he allowed our band to play at his record hops several times during the years I attended Notre Dame (1965-1969). He always called me Hollywood - a word he used for me during my school years, suspect he may have called others that as well. But a term of endearment indeed. I will miss him.

Dave Garstecki - Class of 1981

So sorry to hear of Fr. Bryson's passing. My condolences go out to Fr. Bryson's family and the Notre Dame community. I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to pass through the hallways of ND and receive such a top notch education. ND was so special in part because of Fr. Bryson. I remember the milkshakes - 25 cents a piece or two for 50 cents. "What a deal," as Fr. Bryson always said. I think he touched any and all students who attended ND. Fr. Bryson will always remain special in the hearts of all Notre Dame alumni.

Jim Belloli - Class of 1967

Although I didn't have the opportunity to interact with Fr. Bryson on a one-on-one basis, he was one of those teachers and school "personalities" that you just cannot forget and enhanced your high school memories. I had Father Bryson for one class, Religion I think, but I cannot specifically remember because what he provided was more than the knowledge associated with that class - it was how you received the knowledge, what you did with it, and how you grew with it that he influenced. Whether he was teaching you in the classroom or "teaching" you in the lunch room, Fr. Bryson had a positive effect on every single student that passed through the halls of Notre Dame.

Chuck Blomme - Class of 1967

I knew Fr. Bryson prior to attending Notre Dame. I was an altar boy while attending grade school at Assumption Grotto. At that parish, Fr. Bryson, along with Fr. Chase, used to help out saying the early Masses on weekdays and weekends. Fr. Bryson (and Fr. Chase) would always kid around by pushing me to attend Notre Dame when I went to go to high school. He would always say "you gotta go to Notre Dame. It's a good school. You gotta go." Fortunately I did go and when I got there on the first day, Fr. Bryson was my homeroom teacher. He just looked at me and said "I knew you would make it". People used to love seeing Fr. Bryson walking out to say the Mass because you knew you would be out in about 30 minutes. He didn't mess around. For those of us who were fortunate enough to be playing football in the mid-sixties, there was the experience of hearing the near-breakdown halftime speech "If I had a helmet." I think even Bazy was lost for words at that time. That was pretty memorable. I don't think Fr. Bryson was EVER as fired-up as he was that day, in that locker room. As most of us know, Fr. Bryson was a man that didn't forget you. You could run into him at anytime, any place, years later after graduation, and he would know your name. He was a memorable man. God bless you Fr. Bryson.

David Milescki - Class of 1977

Fr. Bryson used to give the football team a prayer and words of encouragement before the games back in "76" and "77." I'm sure anyone who had the pleasure of his prayers will never forget his passion. The prayer would always start out with a blessing over the team and end with a passionate "Now go out there and kick their BUTTS." I will always remember his spirit and energy. I will see him again one day but until then, his passion lives on in me.

Terrell Kromer - Class of 1964

I have only good thoughts about Fr. Bryson. I remember the Friday night dances. I rarely missed them. He was one of the good guys.

C. John Childs - Class of 1987

Fr. Bryson was a great teacher, friend and priest to many who knew him. He affected thousands of students during his time at Notre Dame High School and his star in "Hollywood" will shine for many years. He was also "famous" for getting Bob Seger to play at a Notre Dame dance... what are the odds Seger's 1st concert in Detroit is tonight - the day Fr. Bryson passes? Fooks and I would get back from taking the wrestling team to a meet and return the bus keys to the rectory. They would always have us in for a while and listen to how the team did over a few beers from the kegs they had tapped back there. So, I'm thinking the rosy cheeks were from the communal vino or the kegs of beer they had. LOL.

Victor R. Battani - Class of 1958

I didn't have Fr Bryson as a teacher in the classroom but he still had a significant effect on my life. While I was coaching football at ND from 1963-1968 he would always give an inspiring pep talk to players before and after games telling them to hold their heads high regardless of the outcome. He taught me and others to have a positive attitude. I'm sure we all remember Fr. as a business man running the concessions at the Wednesday Night Bingos and of course the FRIDAY NIGHT DANCES. Many times radio personality Dick Purtan would interview Fr. Bryson and I think nicknamed him Fr. Bebop. He was a priest, a friend, a great teacher and will be dearly missed. Gob Bless Father Bryson.

David Kerwood - Denby 1972

I attended the concerts at Notre Dame and I believe Father Bryson was responsible for them also. What a sad loss. Never met him but enjoyed what he provided for us teenagers at the time.

David Sherrod - Denby 1968

Had many, many great times at those dances.

Rodney Reeves - Class of 1987

One of the good ones.

Paul J. Konal - Class of 1982

Get your slushes here - one for a Quarter... two for fifty cents. The Best!

Jeffrey Safi - Class of 1996

Fr. Bryson was pretty old when I started at ND. I was in one of his last classes when I was a freshman (he was teaching mechanical drawing). I remember him being a very sweet man, very old school, but still a great guy. Who could forget him putting the jukebox on during lunch? He would always put on Strangers in the Night, some AC/DC and Led Zeppelin. After that he would walk around with that cart slinging slushies: "Slushies...1 for twenty-five cents 2 for a quarter." Rest his soul.

Robert Zeweke - Class of 1983

God bless Father Bryson, may God be with you!

Chris Gajewski - Class of 1990

RIP Hollywood. Too bad... Now where can I get 2 for a quarter or 1 for 25 cents?

Brandon Kelley - Class of 2000

RIP Fr. Bryson... I'll always remember him for offering the students of ND the best 2 slices of day old pizza \$1 could buy! He gave a great football speech as well.

Joe Ciaramitaro - Class of 1989

God Bless Father Bryson.
RIP Hollywood!!!!

Terry Radzwion - Class of 1979

Orange Jubilee and milkshakes... ten cents each, two for a qua'teh. We got Holy Smoke and Adrenaline this Friday night... A legend. He will be missed.

David Bourgeois - Class of 1989

Hey, hey Hollywood... probably the one I liked most at ND!

Gary Wilson - Class of 1960

I will always remember the Friday night "sock-hops" that Father Bryson started.

Chris Swift - Class of 1984

"Coffee, pop, chips and donuts"
Fr. Bryson made working Bingo a laugh riot.

Frank Morello - Class of 1972

Sad to hear about Fr. Bryson. He was a very good guy.

Dennis Ertzbischoff - Class of 1964

Fr. Bryson was character! Once, if I remember correctly, he cracked a whip in class during a weekly test. Don't recall if anyone failed that weekly test!

Mark Place - Class of 1965

Thank you for the opportunity to say a few words about a wonderful man. I never had Fr. Bryson for any classes while at ND, but his presence was still huge for me. My fond memories of him always en route to somewhere in the school building, always looking fresh and happy, always greeting students. I never saw a frown. He was a good and gentle man. His success with the ND Friday sock-hops was legendary in the area. No other school or entity brought so many kids together for fun, and with almost zero problems. I brought a cousin with me several years before the school was closed, just to walk one final time on the football field, and there he was, doing something on a Saturday with the maintenance crew to make the field a better place for the team. He took time out from his work to talk to us, and gave us a blessing as we left. Father "Hollywood" was truly a MAN among men, and I will never forget him. May he rest in peace with our Lord.

Bryan Kane - Class of 1984

Fr. Bryson was an icon. He will be missed.

Rich Walendowski - Class of 1962

He will, along with his family, be in our prayers. What a bunch of great memories come to my mind concerning his caring for Notre dame during the 60's and beyond.

Brian Derowski - Class of 1971

Thank you very much for letting me know about Father Bryson. He was one of a kind. I will pass the word on to my brothers.

Jim Polite - Class of 1984

Very sorry to hear the sad news of Fr. Bryson's passing. He was a fixture at Notre Dame HW and will be missed.

Thomas Srock - 1972

I am sure a Friday night sock hop is scheduled in paradise.

Leon Luzynski - Class of 1963

He was well respected by students and their parents.

Mark Ealy - Class of 1982

A legend!!

Arthur Daschke - Class of 1969

He was/is the "Legend" – the Elvis of ND priests. Of course he would always say "Good morning Hollywood" comes to mind. This was his brand. He called everyone Hollywood, but I think he really meant it when it came to me. I was a piece-of-work back then. He sold candy bars in the cafeteria to raise money for the school. He would say: "Candy 10 cents, two for 25 cents." Religion class of course. He was a low-key individual/teacher in a higher-tension teacher environment – e.g he was the polar opposite from a teacher like Conrad Vachon. He was an effective leader without a cattle prod. He NEVER seemed to age – he was timeless. Bryson was a great man in a great high school. He DEFINED the NDHS experience. I often think about him and his perpetual smile. I have nothing but fond memories of Fr. Bryson, I don't have one bad/negative thought or memory. He is an angel, like my mom (she passed on Easter Sunday – the holiest of all days – a few weeks before Fr. B.) Fr. B. is a part of me.

Pete Klein - Class of 1961

I was one of his DJs back in 59 - 61 and got my friend, Tom Clay, to DJ one of the dances.

Ron Studley - Class of 1987

RIP Fr. Bryson... one for a quarter, two for 25 cents... selling those slurpees... especially the one with every flavor in it.

Peter Schinkai - Class of 2002

He was a great, great man!

Bobbie Strauch Zeweke

GOD BLESS THIS MAN...WONDERFUL, JOVIAL, ONE OF God's chosen few.

Stephen Howard - Class of 1987

That is very sad!!! I was thinking about him when I orderd a shake on Sunday. one for 25 or 2 for 50... RIP.

Daniel Kirouac - Class of 1981

Father Bryson was one for the AGES! Even after being away for some years, he still remembered who you were! R.I.P. Father!!

Paul Olszewski - Class of 1986

Change... Change... Change. That's a good memory I had forgotten. One of my favorite at Notre Dame. Always a smile and rosy checks.

Veronica Nickens - Denby 1969

So sorry to hear Fr. passed. I can remember him telling us girls: "Smoking is going to kill you. Put it out or leave the dance." Wow... brings back a lot of good memories. Had the best time ever there. And a lot of great groups.

Danny Methric - Class of 1990

I remember Fr Bryson playing *Immigrant Song* and *Hey Hey What Can I Do* every morning before classes started. That was the first time I had ever heard Led Zeppelin. I loved it! I bought that single and still have it.

Kevin O'Connor - Class of 2001

Fr. Bryson always called everyone Hollywood. I don't know why but he did.

Paula Turkiewicz - Regina 1978

RIP "Hollywood"

Rock Patti - Class of 1998

R.I.P. Fr. Bryson. Always have been and always will be a legend.

Deanna Hammes - Regina 1983

So sad to hear about Fr. Bryson... nice man, class act.

Ryan Sexton - Class of 1999

R.I.P. Father Bryson. We will miss you... and your pizza... dollar slice... or how at the start of lunch every day he'd play "Happy Birthday" on the jukebox just in case it was somebody's birthday.

Kevin Howard - Class of 1987

RIP Father. 25 cents two for a quarter!

Jamey Embree - Class of 2002

Thank you Father John Hollywood Bryson. I know you're running the concession and bingo up in heaven.

Rob Longo - Class of 1989

He will be missed.

Jeffrey Simmons - Class of 2005

RIP Fr. Bryson.

Dan DiNunzio - Class of 1961

Fr. Bryson: Thank you for all the support you gave me on my baseball and basketball career at Notre Dame.

Dan Wilking - Class of 1971

I'm sure that you've received many similar stories, but here is the one that I still share with people to prove that everyone that went to ND wasn't super smart. I was in the cafeteria with my friends having lunch and watched Fr Bryson going around talking to people and selling ballpoint pens to the ones who lost or broke their pens that day. One poor soul approached Fr Bryson and said he had to go take a test and needed one pen for the test. Fr Bryson told him that the pens were "two for a quarter." This guy insisted "I don't need two pens, just one for the test". Fr Bryson changed his pitch and now the pens were "two for a quarter, or one for fifty cents." My math was good enough to figure out what was going on, but I was thoroughly amused when I heard this future ND graduate mutter, "Okay, I'll take the one" and then he pulled a dollar out of his pocket to pay for the single pen. Fr Bryson made him take it to the dollar changer and bring him back the two quarters for the pen. The kid never wavered in his conviction that he needed just that one pen. Like I said, I still tell this story that occurred over forty years ago. Thanks for the chance to tell it again.

Eric Ruszala - Class of 2003

May he rest in peace. He exemplified what ND was all about.

Jon Zablick - Class of 1989

25 cents each. Two for a quarter.

Michael Potocki - Class of 1981

A LEGEND!!!! R.I.P HOLLYWOOD!!!!

Jim Rohnkohl - Class of 1984

R.I.P Father Bryson. You will be sorely missed.

Rick Chovich - Class of 1983

He was a legend!

Patrick Lawrey - Class of 1984

I worked for him all through High School. I was just talking about him too.

Chris Meerschaert - Class of 1990

"Hey Hollywood." RIP Fr. Bryson. You will be missed.

Scott Titus - Class of 1990

God bless Father Bryson and his family.

Derek Dutko - Class of 2001

He just made heaven that much better!!! Fresh, hot pizza... dollar a slice.

Paul Perzyk - Class of 2000

Goodbye Hollywood, at least we will now all have slushies in heaven when we get there - .25 cents or 2 for a quarter.

Michele Liegghio-Monacelli

Fr. Bryson, may you rest in peace. You will always have a special place in our hearts. We were very fortunate to have you be one of the priests that married us.

Jim DeWinter - Class of 1986

Now Father Hollywood is making change in heaven. Best Father at ND Rest in peace.

Greg Rinaldi - Class of 1986

Thanks for letting us know. He was a good man.

Jeff Konal - Class of 1989

RIP Hollywood! Fr. John Bryson: Harper Woods Notre Dame legend and friend to all!

David Zalewski - Class of 1987

Fr. Hollywood, may he rest in peace. And now Heaven has milkshakes for "Twenty-five cents each, two for a quarter."

Andrew Zaremski - Class of 2000

Great man! Big loss to all ND alumni! R.I.P Fr. Bryson.

Tom Clark - Class of 1989

RIP Fr. Bryson. Change, change, change... Hollywood.

David Toepel - Class of 1993

R.I.P. Fr. Bryson!

Dr. & Mrs. Fredrick Lewerenz II

What a wonderful man who guided so many of us.

Tom Blomquist - Class of 1962

Father Bryson was a close friend of our family. A wonderful and caring man. When my mother passed away, he not only unexpectedly showed up at the funeral home, he also con-celebrated her funeral mass the next day, giving the sermon. To this day I have no idea of how this came to be. There must be a special spot in heaven for Fr. Bryson!

Bob Beauregard - Class of 2004

Cans and bottles... bottles and cans.

Alex Zomberg - Class of 2003

Rest In Peace Hollywood - you will be missed by all.

George V Cassar Jr. - Class of 1989

Great memories.

Rich Marciniak - Class of 2003

Bryson's Boyz forever!

Pat Tipton-Winkelman

RIP Father Bryson.

Debora Price

Never attended the dances, but did see him at the bingo games all the time.

Bill Wines - Class of 1987

Pizza, slushies and ice cream sandwiches for lunch tomorrow!!!

Jimbo Novak - Class of 2003

RIP Hollywood.

Mike Janeczko - Class of 1985

God bless Hollywood!

Diane Morel

Thank you, Fr. John, for my love of Music. I still have all my 45 records that you sent me and I always will.

Dave and Therese Embree

We are so blessed to have known Fr. Bryson. What a wonderful example he was to all the boys. We so enjoyed working concessions with him. In 2002 at a basketball game, we were working concessions in the ND kitchen, and he gave me a 10 inch St. Therese of the Little Flower statue wrapped in a kitchen towel and told me to say 3 Hail Marys to her everyday. So, of course, I do. Everyday!! I treasure my statue and still have the kitchen towel...I just could never throw it away!!!! We are better people because of him. God Bless him!

Marc A. Scapini - Class of 1983

To me, Fr. Bryson is, was, and will always be: "THE SPIRIT OF NOTRE DAME"!! A man that will truly be missed!!

Robert Walmsley - Class of 1959

I attended Notre Dame from 1955 to 1959 and had Fr. Bryson for three years of religion. He was a great man and a great priest. He was always there for us. Fr. Hollywood will always be remembered. RIP Fr. Hollywood.

Mike Brannigan - Class of 1988

Fr. Bryson meant so much to so many. He was truly loved and I will always keep my memories of Father close to my heart! God bless Father and his family!

Julie Tetrault

Fr. John will be missed by so many people especially his large family. Many fond memories of him growing up that I will cherish forever.

Dennis Berger - Class of 1965

Fr. Bryson, you were so kind and cheerful to everyone. Your cup of joyfulness wasn't half empty or half full. It was always filled to the brim.

William Kay - Class of 1961

May God bless you and your family in this time of sorrow.

Eric Woodhouse - Class of 1991

My Fr. Bryson remembrance was that I played football with his nephew Tom at Ferris State. I was so surprised to see Fr. Bryson up in Big Rapids watching our game. He saw me and started screaming: "HOLLYWOOD!" We hugged on the field. He was a great man!

Joe La Rue - Class of 1971

The gift of gab and an uncanny memory. I had brought my two (then) young sons to one of the last "Spring Fairs" in Harper Woods. I had not seen the good Father in well over twenty years. And darned if he didn't call out "Hey Joe" as I walked up. I almost fell over! I guess my ability to take advantage of his marketing skills left an impression: "Pens, a quarter each or a handful for a buck." God bless you, Father Bryson. You will be sadly missed but fondly remembered always.

Ronald Kolito - Class of 1959

He always treated me as a friend. When I was in the Marists, he was always welcoming, always ready to talk to me and he encouraged me and helped me a lot during my first year of teaching. After I left the Marists he kept in contact with notes and occasional cards. Whenever we saw each other we had a good time together.

Tony Surman - Class of 1991

Father was always very kind and pleasant to everyone; it took a lot to 'rattle his cage.' He was one of the hardest workers at Notre Dame on top of selling a good ice cream sandwich..... 1 for a quarter and two for 50 cents! Hollywood, Rest in peace and may God bless your soul. RIP Hollywood!! You're probably eating an ice cream sandwich right now.

Paul La Fleur - Class of 1970

Thanks for advising me of the passing of Fr. Bryson. He was an inspirational leader for all. Yes, I do have some memories to share. Way back when, I was involved with a band and we auditioned for Bryson's Notre Dame Sock Hops. Shortly thereafter, we were asked to perform. So a date was scheduled. We showed up on a particular Friday evening and low and behold, we ended up being the warm up band for Bob Seger. Needless to say, it turned out to be an unforgettable event. This took place, I want to say in '66 or '67. I don't know for sure how Bryson managed to get the bands, but he sure had some good performers. He always ended the dances with *A Theme From a Summer Place*. Another time, I was running late for a football game and I was speeding on campus. I was heading east along the drive between Eastland Mall and the school. I took the turn between the back of NDHS and the rectory heading towards Regina at a pretty good clip. And who do you think was standing outside the rectory? None other than Fr. Bryson. As soon as I parked, he approached my 1963 Dodge Dart and requested my parking permit. I had to report to the principal's office on Monday to get it back. All Good Memories. May he rest in peace.

Curtis Rybski - Class of 1998

I remember Fr. Bryson playing *Happy Birthday* everyday on the jukebox because he said: "Everyday, somewhere in the world, it is someone's birthday." This goes to show you what kind of man he was - always thinking of others.

Joel Groomes - Class of 1992

HOLLYWOOD!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Interview with Simone (Sam) Vitale '67

Leader of the Simone Vitale Band and Former Guitar Player for the Eko-Tones

Simone (Sam) Vitale '67 is an accomplished musician. He is the leader of one of the most popular and sought after event bands in the country - The Simone Vitale Band. He has played for celebrities and presidents. The late Bob Talbert, Detroit Free Press columnist, called Simone the "Royal Oak band leader extraordinaire." Simone attributes his success to the years he spent at Notre Dame High School with Father Bryson.

JM '90: You said this was the greatest time of your life.

SV '67: The greatest time of my life, Jim. It was.

JM '90: How so?

SV '67: Fr. Bryson and I were real buds. First of all, I was in Fr. Bryson's class. Second, I talked to him all the time. He was a real buddy to me. He had me play at the record hops. We just hung out together quite a bit. I'd go to his office by the cafeteria where he'd be counting money. I'd hang out with him and talk all the time. I just had a great relationship with him back then. He was a hoot! There is nobody I have ever met like him and never will meet anybody quite like him again. He was a one of a kind - a treasure to that school.

JM '90: What was Fr Bryson like as a teacher?

SV '67: He was great! I'd earn an A in his class, but he'd give me a B on my report card. So I'd go see him and say: "Father, why are you giving me a B?" And he would say: "You gotta be humble, Hollywood. You gotta be humble." He probably didn't think I was very humble and I probably wasn't. I had a band - the Eko-Tones - and I played at the record hops and I thought I was really something. I was only in the 9th grade and I could actually play. So... Then the next card making would come by and I'd get another B. So, again, I'd say: "Father, why are you giving me a B?" "You gotta be humble, Hollywood," he'd say again. I thought nothing of it. For my final mark in the class he'd give me the A that I earned. That is a true story. He was really funny.

JM '90: And it was all about teaching you to be humble?

SV '67: He called everyone Hollywood, but it was all about being humble. But I can tell you that he really liked me a lot. I felt that from him. We used to have deep conversations about everything. He actually thought I was going to be a priest. One day he said to me: "I want to talk to you about vocations."

JM '90: How did you react to that?

SV '67: I just said: "What do you mean? About becoming a priest?" I said: "No, no. I don't want to be a priest, Father. I want to be a guitar player." He took the news ok, but he really thought I wanted to become a priest.

JM '90: What else do you remember about class with him?

SV '67: He used to have us turn around in our desks and kneel to say the rosary. It was like kneeling in a pew. We'd pray in class and I always asked questions. But, there were certain issues he never, ever wanted to talk about. When it came to the facts of life, for example, sex education... he was the last person who would talk about anything like that. He was basically pretty shy.

JM '90: Fr. Bryson became quite well known in the entertainment industry. Can you talk about that?

SV '67: He was an extraordinary guy. He liked entertainers. He really did. Just look at the people who came to play his dances at Notre Dame High School. He got an amazing array of entertainers to come play in a Catholic high school gym. It was remarkable. He was well organized and loved what he did. He was the one who made those record hops. And can you imagine a Catholic priest doing this in the late 50's and 60's? That was when rock n' roll was considered devil music by a lot of people. He took quite a risk in doing this, but he knew it was ok for the kids. And HE loved it! Before each record hop, he'd say a little prayer. Then the dance would happen. I was there for tons of them.

JM '90: You played at a lot of them, right?

SV '67: I did. I had my band, the Eko-Tones. It was one of the most enjoyable times... I mean we had a great time with him - Fr. Bryson. He was wonderful. We played rock n' roll covers. It was great.

JM '90: Do you remember the songs you used to play?

SV '67: I still remember the first two songs we ever played there. The very first time we played there... the first song we played was 'Little Latin Lupe Lu.' The second was 'Tobacco Road.' That's going back, isn't it?



Simone Vitale '67 with Detroit Red Wing Darren McCarty.
Image: Courtesy of Simone Vitale

Continued on page 17...

Continued from page 16...

JM '90: When did you start playing guitar?

SV '67: I started taking lessons when I was six years old. So by the time I got to Notre Dame, I could really play. I remember the first time I knew I wanted to play guitar. My grandfather was playing guitar for us on Thanksgiving - Italian songs. I was blown away. I was four years old. He let me take the guitar home and I'd play along with the radio. When I was six, he took me to Grinnell's and I took lessons from Virgil Hooper - my guitar teacher. I always liked playing guitar. And I learned to play at just the right time. That era was something special. It will never be duplicated.

JM '90: How long were you at ND before you were able to play at a dance?

SV '67: Not long. We started playing in freshman year. The band - the Eco-Tones - was myself, Jim Habarth '67, and Mike McHenry '68. Those were my pals. We used to do all the parties for the kids. At that time, they had the record hops, but at a lot of the parties, they had live bands. That's what kids liked back then.

JM '90: Did you guys open for any of the national acts that played at ND or did you always have your own nights?

SV '67: Both. We had our own nights and we opened once in a while. I remember playing before Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels. We also did one for the Capitols when they came out with the song 'Cool Jerk.' We actually got up there and played along with them to that song. Our band was at almost all of the record hops. Fr. Bryson always had us come play. We had a really special relationship with him. We just loved Fr. Bryson.



Simone Vitale '67 with former President Bill Clinton in Washington D.C.
Image: Courtesy of Simone Vitale

JM '90: How was Fr. Bryson able to get these acts to play at Notre Dame?

SV '67: He'd just call them up and said: "I want you to come play at the school." And they would do it! At that time, there really weren't a lot of places for bands to play. Not like there are today. And rock n' roll was pretty young. All those acts - Mitch Ryder, he even had Shirley MacLaine there once - he had the most unbelievable performers at the record hops - Motown acts too. I got to meet all of those people. At the time, they were really all just starting out. Just like Bon Jovi played bars, these acts played at Notre Dame High School because it was the place to play back then. Those record hops had A LOT of kids there. It was jammed all the time. It was fantastic! Fr. Bryson always ended the night with *A Theme From A Summer Place*. When you heard that, you knew the night was just about over.

JM '90: Did Fr. Bryson actually play the songs?

SV '67: No, he always had a DJ. Dave Shafer was one of them. Ya gotta be

old to know who that is (laughing.) He was on CKLW radio. Nowadays, that could never happen. Back then, you didn't need a lot of security. It was just a more innocent time in life.

JM '90: So what did Fr. Bryson do during the dances?

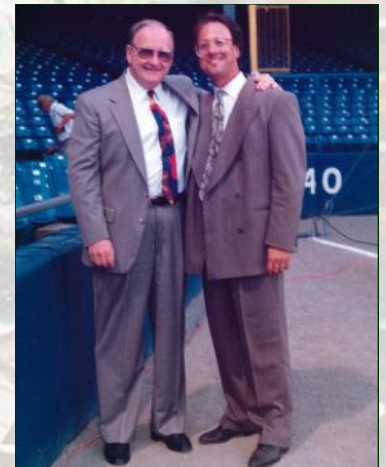
SV '67: He watched us. You couldn't dance too close because of that. He'd say: "Hollywood, you're a little too close here." No one would do that today if you were dancing close. He'd make sure no one was making out, too. The dances were very strict. He watched everybody who was at his dances.

JM '90: Can you talk about how these dances influenced what you do now?

SV '67: When you are an entertainer, you develop a liking for the limelight. When I played at ND, I was 13 years old the first time. That was a *BIG* deal at that age. I remember thinking to myself "WOW... do I like this!" I liked music and always planned to do something else. I actually became a teacher, but I left that because I like music so much and I like performing. The rest is history. This is what I do now.

JM '90: What role did Fr. Bryson play in your career in music?

SV '67: He was the one who got me to do this. He came to me one day and said: "Hey, Hollywood. I'm gonna have you play at the record hop." I said: "Really? You'll let us do that?" He said: "That's right, Hollywood." He was the guy that got me excited about performing. We'd get on stage and the kids would all scream and go crazy and everybody was clapping their hands. Again, for a 13 year old kid, that is a *BIG* deal. He let us do it and I remember him standing right next to us as we'd play. He'd be smiling as if to say "these are my guys." That reminds me... John Gibbs '66 joined us on bass and later, Richard Zamon '67 played the bass for us. John played hockey at Michigan Tech after ND.



Simone Vitale '67 with Former Michigan Football Coach Bo Schembechler.
Image: Courtesy of Simone Vitale

Continued on page 18...

Continued from page 17...

JM '90: You've been in a band ever since?

SV '67: Yep. Never stopped.

JM '90: What can you tell me about your time playing in bands after the Notre Dame years?

SV '67: We recorded an album with The Four tops. I've done some opening slots for national acts - The Four Tops and the Temptations. We've played for Presidents of the United States, Donald Trump, the Governor of Michigan, all the McCarty Cancer Foundation events, Mayor Archer, the Thanksgiving Day Parade, and Woodward Dream Cruise, just to name a few.

JM '90: What presidents did you play for?

SV '67: We played for Bill Clinton three times. We played the inaugural ball in Washington D.C. for George W. Bush and Barack Obama. We also played for Vice President Al Gore.

JM '90: That's impressive. How did you get those gigs?

SV '67: We have a huge network of people that we know - that know us. We've built a reputation. My father told me two things when I started out playing. The first was never to believe anything anyone tells you in a bar. The second thing was to know as many people as possible because that's how you win. In this business, you succeed a lot on word of mouth. People can know who you are, but really, your reputation gets passed on by word of mouth. I have extraordinary musicians and singers in this band. They are some of the best around. If you surround yourself with the best, you will always look good.

JM '90: That's good advice.

SV '67: It's a tough world out there and you've got to compete. There is no thrill in being average. None whatsoever. Every time I perform, whether it's for five people or five-thousand, I give the same performance. You have to do everything you can to be as good as you can be. My father used to tell me that if you were satisfied with what you do, then everybody else will be too. If you excel, you will feel better about yourself. That's the main thing. If you get a D on your report card, what is so good about that? Nothing. You passed, but big deal. You aren't supposed to get a D. You have to do the best you can every single day so that you feel good about yourself. If you don't, you'll have the attitude of "Why should I even try?"

JM '90: That came from your dad, but I remember hearing that sort of advice from Notre Dame all the time as well.

SV '67: Absolutely.

JM '90: Any last ND or Fr. Bryson memories?

SV '67: I always wanted to go to Notre Dame High School. I got in and it was a thrilling experience. I remember Fr. Bryson taking the bible literally. He'd always say in his Boston accent: "You gotta have faith, Hollywood." I think he was in charge of detentions after school too. He was a one of a kind - never to be duplicated again. He was a real riot. He gave me a shot - had faith in me. He was a major influence. God bless him.



Simone Vitale '67 with Chubby Checker.
Image: Courtesy of Simone Vitale

From the May 19th Jukebox Classics Radio Show on WCXI - 1160AM.

Airs on Thursdays from 4 - 6pm with Howling Harry & Bel Air Bill:

Howling Harry: I got a phone call from Jim (Mandl) out in Clinton Township. We go back in time to when I was in high school at Denby High on the eastside. I graduated in 1963. We used to go the Notre Dame dances. There was Notre Dame High School, a Catholic high school, and right next door was a girls' high school, Regina, on Kelly near 8 Mile Road. We'd go cruising, we'd go to the dances. I believe it was Friday nights. It was run by a real, real great Gentleman. A priest over there who just away - Fr. Bryson. I'll tell you what: it was a great venue for us to go and hang out with our friends. I remember they had these humongous, gigantic speakers. They had the dances in the cafeteria and we just had the best of times there doing those things and dancing and hanging out with our gang and all the girls - thinking we were the greatest things since Scotch tape at that age. It was always a great venue to go to. He gave us a great place to enjoy our rock n' roll. Back then it was much more, how would you say, more reserved than it is today. There wasn't all the technological stuff available to us back then. They were spinning the 45s back then and the music was just absolutely wonderful, all the big hits, all the time. And he would bring in some local talent. Fr. Bryson was just a great, great man to put that on and recognize the need of the kids to go somewhere and have a sock hop and I'm sorry to hear that he is gone. I'm going to send a song out in honor of him because this is one of the great songs that I remember always dancing to at ND. Jim in Clinton Township, God bless you for letting me know that that happened and for reminding me of the great times and great memories that we have. Here's Dion with *Runaround Sue* and this is going out to our good friend - God bless him - Fr. Bryson...

Photo Gallery

The Early Years



Fr. Bryson as an infant.
Image: Courtesy of Fr. Bryson's Family



Fr. Bryson in grade school.
Images: Courtesy of Fr. Bryson's Family



Fr. Bryson's high school graduation picture.
Images: Courtesy of Fr. Bryson's Family



Fr. Bryson in 1949.
Image: Courtesy of Fr. Bryson's Family



Fr. Bryson in 1953.
Image: Courtesy of Fr. Bryson's Family



Fr. Bryson in 1953
Image: Courtesy of Fr. Bryson's Family



A newly ordained Fr. Bryson.
Image: Courtesy of Fr. Bryson's Family



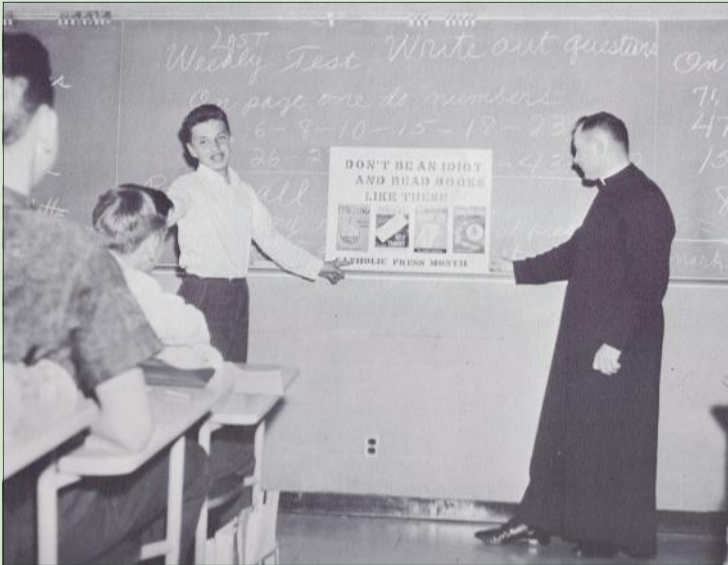
Fr. Bryson standing in a courtyard in 1953.
Image: Courtesy of Fr. Bryson's Family



A newly ordained Fr. Bryson.
Image: Courtesy of Fr. Bryson's Family

Photo Gallery

The Notre Dame Years



Steve Nowicki '65 and Fr. Bryson in freshman religion class.
Image: Courtesy of Friends of Notre Dame Archives



Fr. Bryson at a Marist retreat.
Image: Courtesy of Friends of Notre Dame Archives

Notre Dame High School wouldn't be Notre Dame High School without Fr. Bryson.

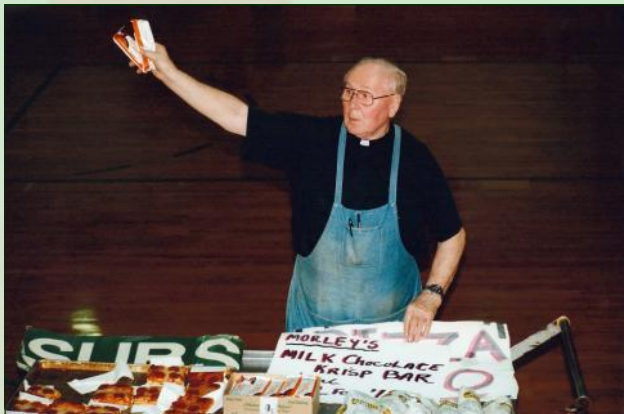
- 1999 Juggler of Notre Dame



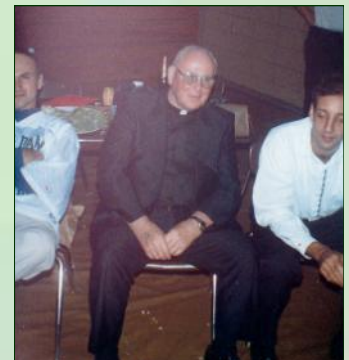
Fr. Bryson by his vending machine hut.
Image: Courtesy of Friends of Notre Dame Archives



Above: Fr. Bryson with ND football players at the Light the Night fund raising event.
Below: Fr. Bryson during mass in the Notre Dame gym.
Images: Courtesy of Friends of Notre Dame Archives



Fr. Bryson selling concessions at a Notre Dame basketball game.
Image: Courtesy of Friends of Notre Dame Archives



Fr. Bryson at a social gathering in the Notre Dame gym.
Image: Courtesy of John McCabe '63



Dave Shafer, Tom Shannon, Father Bryson and Dave Prince.
 Tom Shannon had a nightly radio show on CKLW radio.
 Dave Shafer and Dave Prince DJ'd many, many Notre Dame dances.
Image: Courtesy of Friends of Notre Dame Archives

Another venue for local bands in the 1960s and 1970s was the nearby Notre Dame High School. According to various accounts, "All the Motown artists used to come and lip-sync to their records. Local neighborhood bands got to play live." Among the local performers of note who played dances and concerts at the school were the Amboy Dukes (featuring Ted Nugent), Bob Seger and the Last Heard, Frijid Pink, The Frost, Salem Witchcraft, Toby Redd, The Almighty Strut, and other acts.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harper_Woods,_Michigan

Photo Gallery

The Notre Dame Years

You know you're from Detroit if you went to Father Bryson's Friday night sock hops at Notre Dame HS hosted by Dave Prince where you saw Stevie Wonder, Bob Seger and the Last Heard and the Rationals.

www.detroitmemories.com



Popular Band *The Underdogs* performing in ND's cafeteria.
Image: Courtesy of Friends of Notre Dame Archives



Bishop Zaleski dedicates Notre Dame High School in 1954 as Fr. Bryson assists.
Image: Courtesy of Friends of Notre Dame Archives

Photo Gallery

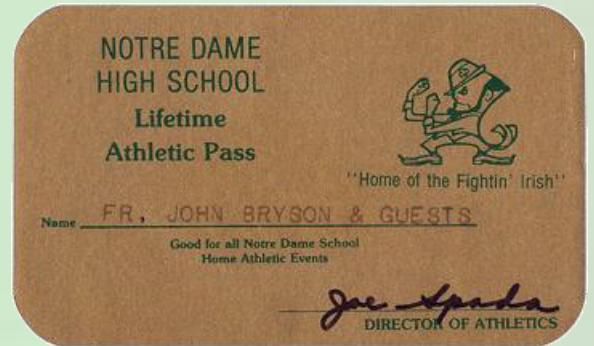
The Notre Dame Years



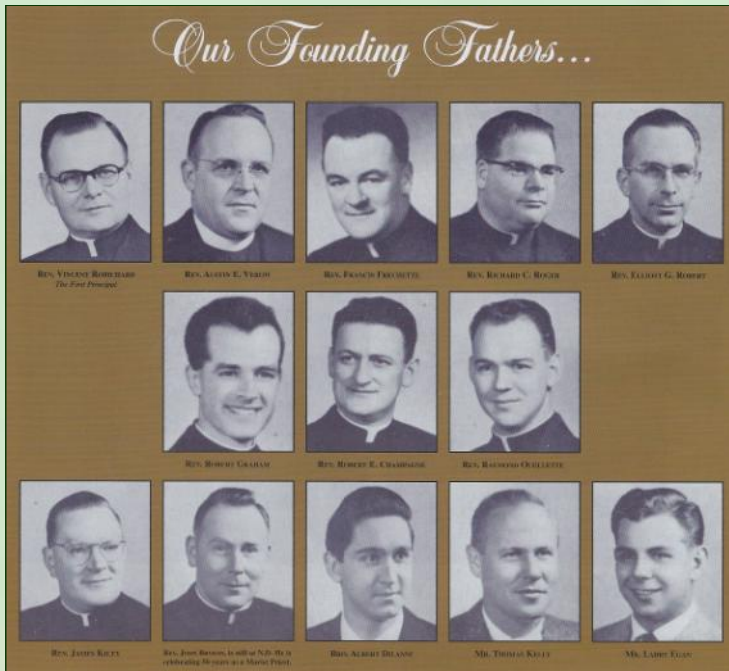
Speaker of the House Tip O'Neil, U.S. Congressman David Bonior '63, and Fr. Bryson.
Image: Courtesy of Fr. Bryson's Family



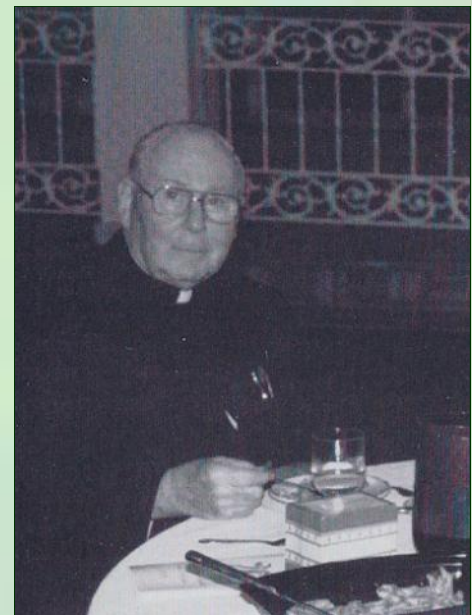
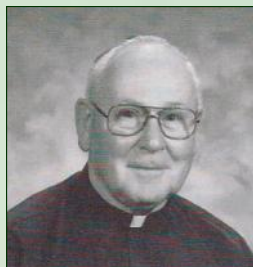
Fr. Bryson and Mr. Duane Holmes.
Image: Courtesy of John McCabe '63



Fr. Bryson's Lifetime Notre Dame Athletic Pass
Image: Courtesy of Friends of Notre Dame Archives



Fr. Bryson and the rest of the founding fathers of Notre Dame.
Image: Courtesy of Friends of Notre Dame Archives



Fr. Bryson enjoying a meal.
Image: Courtesy of Friends of Notre Dame Archives



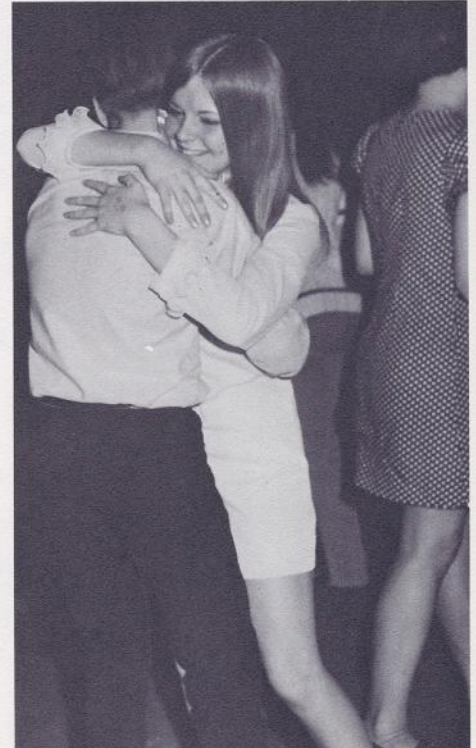
Above: Fr. Bryson reads the ND cafeteria for another Friday night dance.

Record Hops

Top Detroit night scene is ND record hops
Top bands, top D.J.s, tops in entertainment

Lively bands! Throughout 1969, Fr. Bryson entertained Detroit-area young people with a continuous lineup of lively bands. Frost, Bob Seeger System, and a variety of lesser known bands performed at the N.D. Greenroom during the school year, keeping hundreds of teenyboppers amused.

Playing a vital role in the Notre Dame financial picture, the Friday night dances gained fame not only through Tempo magazine, but also by featuring, in the past years, such stars as Smokey Robinson, the Rolling Stones and the MC-5.



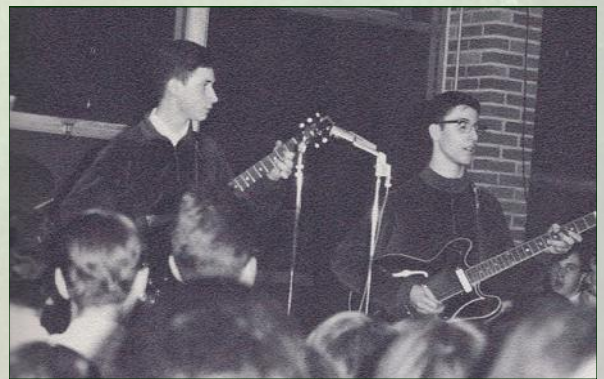
Friday Night Frolic

Right: Mr. Chester Roberts presents "token of appreciation" from chaperons of Friday Hops to Fr. Bryson at Chaperon Dance.

Below: "This one's a hit!" says Chester Roberts, Jr., disc-jockey at Friday Record Hops, as Camille Vespenecki checks his accuracy.



Below: Donna Vitali and Tom Paganis receive their trophies for the "Fast Dance" contest; they are the Rock and Roll champs.



Art Angott, with his date Alice Breight, accepts the Ballroom Dancer's Trophy. He says he "couldn't have done it without her". Oh Well . . .



Above: Jim Habarth '67 and Sam Vitale '67 of ND's own Eko-Tones perform at an ND dance.

Left: Popular singer, Deon, performs in the Notre Dame Cafeteria.

Images: Courtesy of Friends of Notre Dame Archives



Photo Gallery

In The Press

THE SHIELD

Volume 10, No. 1
October 10, 1963



Notre Dame High School, Harper Woods, Mich.
A Marist Fathers' High School

"Notre Dame"

★ ★ **"Father John Bryson"** ★ ★

"Go-Getter"

Notre Dame was a one-year-old child, bursting at the seams, when Fr. Bryson came from Cathedral in '55 to babysit. He has since become not only menu-planner of various activities around this busy school, but also chief cook and bottle-washer.



Father John Bryson, S.M.

ing Religion to the freshmen and hailing all his acquaintances and non-acquaintances with the combination salutation and warning, "Hey, Hollywood!"

This year finds Father as an amateur printer, complete with myriads of signs and countless colors. To round out Father's spiritual activities, he acts as chaplain to the Harper Woods Police Department.

Quarters and fines that trickle into Father's hands benefit the missions. Paganism is also combatted by Father's Mission Club.

BEGINNING first as assistant athletic director in '56, Father concocted many original formulas to feed the often-empty school kitty.

Scattered throughout the school-year and summer months are the record hops—first attended by handfuls of ND and Regina students—now blasting away for 1,000-2,000 teens from entire Detroit area. Fr. Bryson collects the school

color—green in various denominations—through smoke-filled Wednesday night Bingo Parties and '60 Club.

FATHER can be found teach-

NOTRE DAME means many things to many people, but to a good majority, Notre Dame means Fr. Bryson.

Fr. Bryson article from the October 1963 edition of The Shield - Notre Dame's school newspaper.
Image: Courtesy of Chet Szerlag '66



A RECORD CROWD of approximately 1700 teens danced at the Friday night Notre Dame Hop last week, at the high school. The ovation was so great, disc-jockey Hank Burdick was asked to return this Friday, Sept. 21., to again

m.c. the swinging, happy high school teens that attend the N. D. Friday hops. Father John Bryson of Notre Dame (left) discusses the line-up of personalities to appear with Burdick.

Article from The Detroit Free Press featuring Fr. Bryson.
Image: Courtesy of Fr. Bryson's Family

Fr. Bryson Adds Hondas As Attraction

Notre Dame's Summer Record Hops will resume again this year for the tenth consecutive summer. The dances will be held at Notre Dame High School every Tuesday and Friday from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. from June 21 to September 2.

Fr. Bryson, who is in charge of the record hops, expects the always popular dances to be even more successful this summer because of a new gimmick he has included in this year's program.

HE WILL be giving away three Hondas during the course of the summer. One free chance will be given to everyone entering the dance and additional chances can be purchased for 25 cents apiece and seven for one dollar.

The first drawing for the first of three Honda Sports 50's will take place on Friday, July 1. The second will be held on Tuesday, August 2 and the third on August 30. One must be present to win and they will draw until they get a winner.

As of Saturday, May 28th, Fr. had already received over 3,000 entries for the July 1st drawing.

FR. BRYSON has almost every disc jockey in town lined up for service at the hops, including Duke Windsor of CKLW, Dick Purton of WKNR, and WYXZ's Dave Prince.

There will be guest artists and bands at every dance. Father has some 40 bands scheduled to entertain.

Dress regulations for the hops are the same as in the past: no slacks for girls and no T-shirts or blue levis for boys.

Fr. Bryson article from the June 1966 edition of The Shield - Notre Dame's school newspaper.
Image: Courtesy of Chet Szerlag '66

Photo Gallery

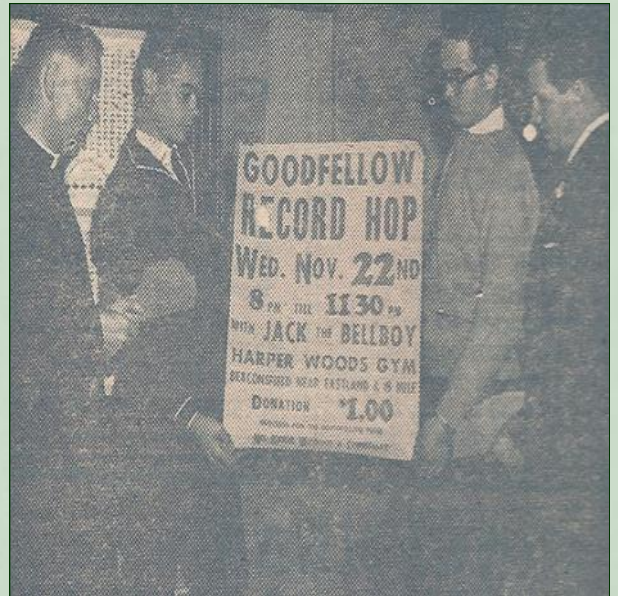
In The Press

H. Woods Policemen Honor Fr. Bryson With Chaplain Post

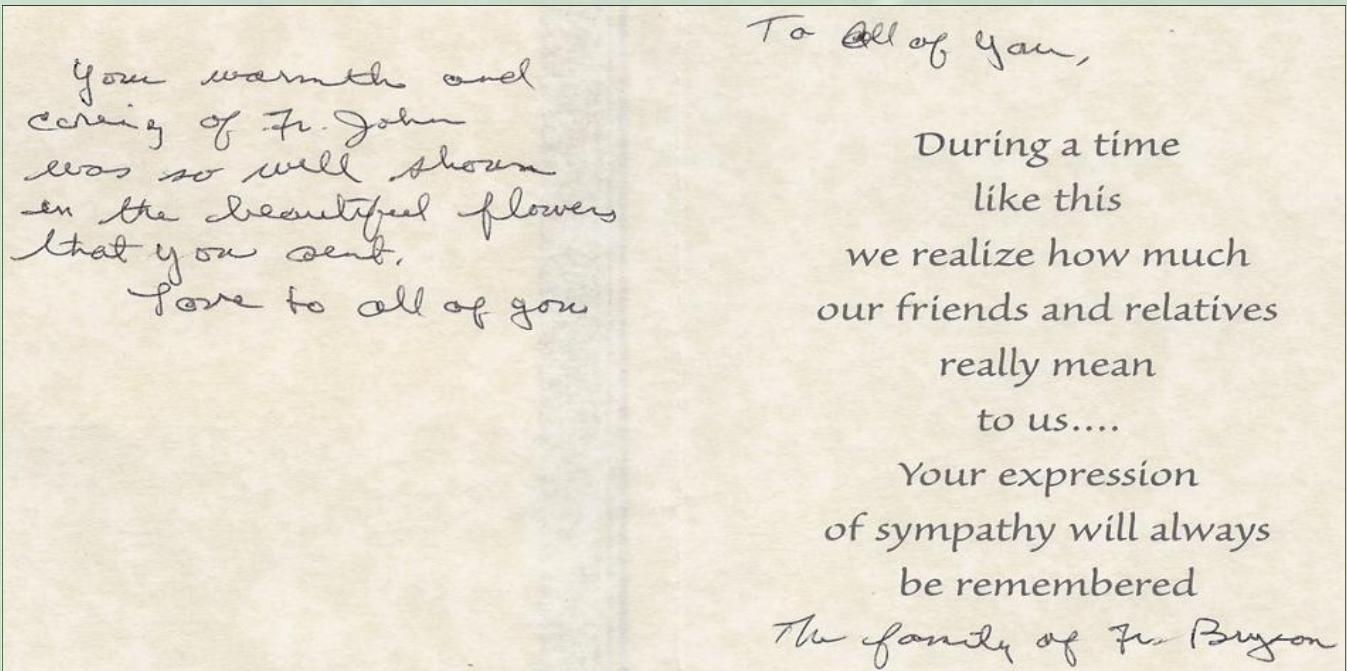
Fr. John Bryson, well-known for his Friday night record hops, now has a policeman's badge to back up any orders he gives the teen-agers. In a special meeting of the local police at Notre Dame to commemorate the death of Patrolman Phillip Genna, Police Chief Allen Miglio presented a gold chaplain's badge to Fr. Bryson. Fr. Bryson thus became the first chaplain of the Harper Woods police department.



An article from a local newspaper detailing Fr. Bryson's appointment as Chaplain to the Harper Woods police department.
Image: Courtesy of Fr. Bryson's Family



Fr. Bryson's Friday night record hops weren't always just for entertainment. Quite often they were fund raisers for charities. This image shows Fr. Bryson reviewing a poster for a record hop that would raise funds for the Goodfellows organization. Pictured with Fr. Bryson are ND students Robert Albrite, Leon Glowski and Police Chief Allen Miglio.
Image: Courtesy of Fr. Bryson's Family



On behalf of the Notre Dame alumni, we sent flowers for Fr. Bryson's funeral. This card was sent addressed to the Notre Dame Alumni from Fr. Bryson's family.
Image: Courtesy of Friends of Notre Dame Archives

The Leprechaun

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