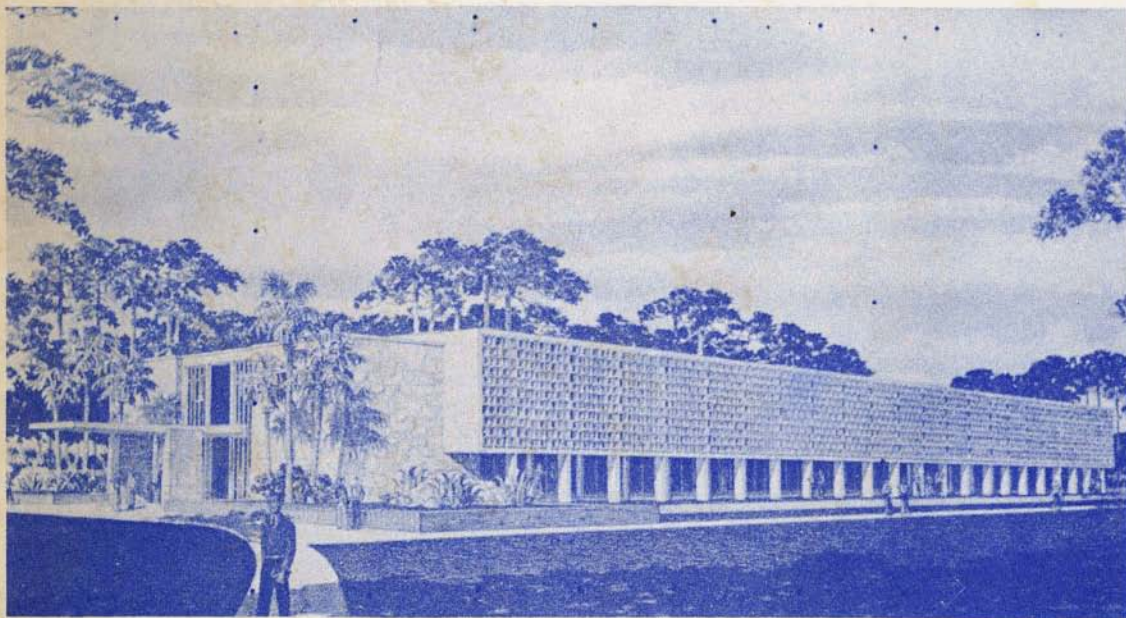


# **BISCAYNE COLLEGE**

## **1962 — 1966**

### **The Charter Years**



**A History of the Early Years  
of Biscayne**

By  
**Richard Raleigh**  
Chairman, Humanities Department

BISCAYNE COLLEGE:  
1962-1966  
The Charter Years

A History of the Early Years  
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HISWAYNE COLLIER:

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The Charter Years

A History of the Early Years

of Hiswayne

by

Dr. Robert R. Rife

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For a delightful account of the life of Fr. Spirale and the efforts of the Augustinians in Cuba, read "God's Street Sweeper" by the Rev. John Kelly, O.S.A., available from the Biscayne College Library.

This undertaking was inspired by the memory of the Rev. Robert M. Sullivan, O.S.A., who invited me to join the faculty of Biscayne College in the spring of 1966.

Richard Raleigh  
 Biscayne College  
 August 2, 1981

## P R O L O G U E

Havana - Good Friday, 1979: Though I had carefully written the name of the institution on a piece of paper ("Universidad de St. Tomas de Villanueva") the cab driver was not having much luck. We first stopped at a large institution with modern buildings, many still in the construction stage. Surely this could not be Villanueva, Senor. I reached out the window and handed a passing boy an American ball-point pen; it was, I had been told, an unofficially approved courtesy allowed foreign visitors in this revolution-conscious land.

At intersections the cab driver would ask pedestrians for help. At one point, seeing the police in the rear view mirror, he stopped right in the middle of the street, got out and showed them my paper. Leo and Eleanor Brophy and I exchanged slightly nervous smiles. Which would we be arrested for, blocking traffic on a main highway, or attempting to reclaim in the name of St. Augustine a university closed by Castro

some eighteen years before?

The cab driver, smiling for the first time, jumped back into the car, turned and said "Universidad Catolica, Senor, Universidad Catolica." Thus, we learned how the Cubans knew, or at least remembered, the university.

Though the other building appeared freshly painted, the chapel stood a victim of neglect in the afternoon sun -- a greying, atavistic presence. We were indeed at the "Catholic University," for over the doors of the chapel was the logo I had seen so often at Biscayne College: "Tolle lege, tolle lege," the words of the sainted Augustine. I pried open the chained doors and found that the house of God had been profanely transformed into a storage building. Boxes were piled twenty feet high, blocking the light trying to enter through the graceful romanesque windows.

A handsome six-lane boulevard with a palm tree-lined median marked the southern border of the campus, and along it again and again American

cars from the 50's, so that there was a momentary confusion of time and place. Oddly, one felt nostalgia in a city never before visited, for it was full of familiar symbols and ghosts. There were easily a dozen people we had known at Biscayne who had been on the faculty here, back when those '57 Chevrolets were gleaming new cars and the chapel was filled with students and faculty instead of machine parts and canned goods.

The Augustinians of Philadelphia had come to Cuba several decades earlier. The story of their expulsion in May of 1961, the re-grouping of Villanueva priests and laymen in Miami over the next several months, and the founding of a new college in the very fall of the year of their exile--that story of bitter disappointment, arrest, cruelty, freedom, and rebirth was one worth telling.

We explored the campus with our cameras, noting that now it appeared to be used as a grade school. A middle aged woman surrounded by uniformed girls heatedly inquired why we were



taking pictures. Again and again she asked with increasing anger: "Por que usted esta sacando fotografias?" But our thoughts were too complex and our Spanish too simple on that Good Friday to explain, so we motioned to our driver and left.

Chapter 1: The Augustinians in Cuba and the  
Last Days of Villanueva

There might have been some sort of Catholic college alongside the Palmetto in Greater Miami in any case, but the fact that it was founded and staffed by the Augustinians of Villanova, Pennsylvania goes back to Cuba some hundred years after Christopher Columbus called the island "the most beautiful land the human eye has ever seen."

The Mexican Augustinians founded the Chapel of St. Augustine on the corner of Aguiar and Amargura Streets in Havana at the beginning of the 17th century. They were joined some time later by the Augustinians of the Province of Castille in Spain. In 1899, at the conclusion of the Spanish-American War, the Bishop of Havana felt the need for American priests to care for the soldiers of the American Army of Occupation. Thus, Fr. William Jones became the first American Augustinian in Cuba, assigned to

that original early-17th century mission.

Twenty-seven years later a swarthy little Italian who came to be known as "the bandit", and who many would come to regard as a saint, waited impatiently at the dock at Key West, Florida. Lorenzo Spirale was 44. He was an Augustinian from the Villanova Province. He had been born in a little mountain town of the Abruzzi region of southern Italy and as a young man worked as a street sweeper in Philadelphia. He would die while living in a small house in Opa Locka two blocks from Biscayne College.

The boarding call for the S.S. Cuba came at last, and Father Spirale, mid-way through his remarkable life, bounded up the gang-plank, filled with enthusiasm for his new assignment in Havana.

\* \* \*

We talked with Dr. Pedro Diaz-Maestre in his office at Biscayne College in July. Born in Cuba, he received his high school education in the United States and then enrolled at the School of Medicine in Havana. In the following years he would work as a stenographer, study engineering, and finally get an advanced degree in Commercial Science. He came to Biscayne in 1964 and has become a creature of legend, one of the two or three grand old men in the college's history. Outside his office window we could see some men driving stakes to mark off the new library. He puffed on an H. Upman #4 cigar as he told us of his association with Fr. Spirale and Villanueva University:

P.D. Villanueva University was founded in 1946 and I was invited to join the faculty. At the time, I was Assistant Professor of the University of Havana and this was to be teaching at night in the evening school. And I accepted, but unfortunately I did not

start teaching until 1951, which was six years later because of the pressure of work we had in our accounting firm. We had much pressure so that I could not accept teaching until 1951. And I taught there until 1960.

Q. Dr. Diaz, you knew Father Spirale?

P.D. Well, Father Spirale actually could be called the founder of Villanueva, because Villanueva in Havana existed and prospered because of Father Spirale. Father Spirale was the Pastor of the Church of Saint Rita which was in the same block where I used to live. So I used to know Father Spirale.

Q. Yes, tell us about "El Bandido".

P.D. I don't know, I'm not going to divulge the name of the individual involved. A very prominent lawyer who as a matter of fact was a trustee at the University of Villanueva. He was in church one day and Father Spirale wanted to talk to the congregation but

during the collection he would say he did not want to hear anything.

Q. Meaning what?

P.D. No coins, Yes, no coins. Well, the anecdote is this, that he used to come around and then he stood beside this prominent lawyer, and then came the collection and the lawyer took out his wallet and started looking and Father Spirale raised his hand and put it in this lawyer's wallet and pulled out a hundred dollar bill and actually put it in the collection. And of course this prominent lawyer used to give \$5 or \$10, like that, but \$100 would not actually be his...so he was surprised and after the mass, Father Spirale came to see him and told him, "Now look, I'm going to return the \$100 bill". But the lawyer, he was so embarrassed, said "No, you keep it."

\* \* \*

Fr. Edward J. McCarthy, the founding president of Biscayne College, talked with us in a room of the Villanova University library. It was late afternoon of a day in June in 1981. A grey squirrel played about on a limb of an elm outside the window. Occasionally, our conversation was punctuated by the sound of the Paoli Local squealing to a stop at the Villanova station.

Fr. McCarthy has had a distinguished career. He was Vice-Rector of Villanueva when it was closed by the revolutionary government. Days later he was appointed president of the soon-to-be founded Biscayne. Later he would serve as pastor of Resurrection Parish in Dania, Florida and as President of Villanova University.

Q. Fr. McCarthy, what years were you in Cuba?

Fr.M. I was there personally from 1946 to 1947, that was the year the University started, in '46. I went back in 1953 and was there until 1961, with the exception of eight months during 1957 and 1958 when I was

in the United States.

Q. What are your memories of Father Spirale?

Fr.M. Well, I got to know Father Spirale when I first went to Cuba in 1946. I really didn't know him before that, I had seen him but didn't really know him. I worked with him very closely that year and then again from 1953 until 1961. And then I lived with him when we started Biscayne for four years until he died in 1965. He was a most remarkable man because he came from a background to reach the priesthood that would be almost a miracle, the fact that a man could become a priest with the background he came from. He loved Italy and came to the United States at the age of twenty one. He came to Philadelphia, he became employed and immediately went to night school, this is where he really began to get some education. He was going to night school as an adult in the public schools of Philadelphia. And then he got a job as a sacristan-janitor I think at St.Rita's Parish which is a parish which we



happen to have in South Philadelphia, which was established in about 1905, a couple of years after he came to this country, to take care of Italian immigrants. And there he manifested a rather high order of intelligence and the priests got interested in him and he got interested in them and decided he wanted to be a priest.

Then he came out of Villanova about 1908 which was about five years after he came to the country.

And he was then about 26 years of age when he started his seminary program and he was ordained in about 1916, I forget the exact year. And then he again served as priest in that same parish in South Philadelphia taking care of Italian people for some years and then in 1926 was sent to Cuba and worked at the Cristo Parish downtown in Plaza St. Augustine and then went to Rome for about six years as Encomienda General which is in charge of the finances of the Order, and in 1938 came back to Cuba and was there until he had to leave in 1961. For most of that time as Pastor of the Parish of St. Augustine in Havana he did not

confine his activities to that parish nor to the boundaries of that parish but established Santa Rita, established the University, and established the clinic of San Lorenzo. The man was really an amazing dynamo of energy and he was an old man. When we left Cuba he was approximately 77, so that he was quickly becoming an old man at that time and he preached at three masses at that time and very few priests who are a lot younger than that would be able to do it and do it Sunday after Sunday in a foreign language. So that's just something that's indicative of the energy that the man had.

Q. What was his technique for fund raising?

Fr.M. It was in a sense a very simple one.

He just went around to people that had some money, some of them may have been very rich and some just middle class but with some he would just get smaller donations, then he would tell them what he had in mind, what he was going to do and he needed their help and he felt they had an obligation to Cuba to do this because this

was what was lacking in Cuba and this was what they needed. They needed churches, they needed schools, they needed this medical clinic to take care of poor people in the very poor district. He was very simple but direct and he sold the ideas and I think another thing was obvious was that this was non-profit, he was not seeking anything for himself. He was never very interested in anything money could buy, like cars, clothing, or anything of that nature that you might use money for. It was quite obvious that this didn't interest him and I think that combination of his sincerity and lack of personal gain and the fact that he went after things that were obviously needed, that he got the support of the people.

Q. He was known to be a man of considerable persistence?

Fr.M. He had a thick skin and if you tried to personally avoid him or insult him this didn't bother him very much. For example one story he

told himself: He went to see this man to get money from him and the man knew it and didn't want to give him any I guess, so he told the secretary he wasn't there but Fr. Spirale was very observant and he noticed that there was only one door from the secretary's office into the main office so there was no way for the man to get out and he had to get out that door so he just said to the secretary, "I will just wait until he comes in." So she said something like, "I'm not sure he will come in today" and he said, "I'm a long way from my office and I don't have anything else to do so I'll just stay here." So he did and he stayed there for about three hours and finally the man had to come out. It was instances like that, that gave him his reputation, and the title "El Bandido."

Q. Did you actually leave with him on the same plane when you were thrown out of Cuba?

Fr.M. Yes.

Q. What were his feelings, I'm sure he must

have been very upset?

Fr.M. Well, yes he was. He felt that his whole life work was a failure. In other words, he had built up these powers, he had built up the University, he had built up the clinic of San Lorenzo but now it's all gone down the drain. You see the government had taken over, and a very strange instance happened. One of the techniques of this government, the Castro government, was just to annoy you, in other words just petty annoyances. The Swiss Embassy arranged for this plane to take about 56 Americans out on the same plane. They chartered a Pan American plane that flew over from Miami. It was on the ground prepared to leave at 10:30 a.m. and they got us out to the airport on buses with Swiss flags on the front and a couple of the diplomats riding with us and we got into the airport about 10:30 a.m. and the plane was ready to leave at 10:30, -but they locked us in a room and kept us there until 5:00 p.m., for about 7½ hours, for

no reason at all as far as I could see--just to be annoying and probably hold up this American plane. But while we were just sitting there Fr. Spirale said to me, "This is the destruction of everything I have done all my life, so now it doesn't amount to anything, it's all gone. And there was a lady there with a couple of small children and she overheard him and she said, "No, Fr. Spirale, everything is written in heaven and you don't have to worry. What you have done here is written in Heaven." I thought that was a very nice thing for her to say to a man who was so discouraged.

Marta Gutierrez has assisted in the Biscayne College library since January of 1963. She was working in the Student Activities Office at Villanueva when the end came. At great peril to her own personal safety she helped to get many of the faculty at Villanueva onto planes for Miami.

Q. Marta, what happened after Castro came to power?

M.G. The first thing Castro did when he took over was invoke Law 11. Castro called our students "ninos ricos", meaning that the university was for the rich. They said Fr. Kelly was a friend of the government of Batista and put it in the newspapers. They put a goat out in the street and said that it was the symbol of Fr. Kelly. They wanted the keys to the student files but Fr. Kelly wouldn't give them the keys. After two days he left Cuba, then in a month he came back. One part of Law 11 was that the Rector had to be born in Cuba or married to a Cuban. Fr. McCarthy was the superior and he told everybody at the table at lunch time "We have a big problem now, we have to get married." And there was one old lady named Mrs. Maestre, she was in her seventies, and even though she had a degree she was always registering for

courses, and Fr. McCarthy said "Give me Mrs. Maestre." And I got one priest--he was very fat, I won't tell you his name.

Q. When did the college close?

M.G. The very day of the invasion of the Bay of Pigs. April 17. Fr. Kelly told everyone to go home. They were bombing in Marianao...The bridges were closed.. Fr. Kelly told everybody to go home at about 11 a.m. We knew then that there was an invasion of Cuba. On May 12 the government called all the teachers and employees together and said we could continue at Villanueva because everything would be the same, but the next day everybody resigned. At the same time they put the priests in the auditorium--about fifteen soldiers came and put the priests in the auditorium.

Q. When did you last see the college?

M.G. The last day I saw the college was May 15.



Q. It must have been very sad.

M.G. Yes, when we returned to the university we found everything on the floor. In my cabinets were all the pictures from the newspapers and yearbooks--all the pictures were on the floor. All the money I had in the Student Activities Office was gone--they went through all the offices like that.

Fr. McCarthy describes the last hours of the university, beginning with the failure of the invasion at the Bay of Pigs.

Fr.M. When we had word of the invasion we knew it would be a success or a failure, and if it failed we would be closed, and in the afternoon of that day, I think about 4:00 p.m., some militia men came and told us they were taking the university over and they put us in custody. They also had picked up a lot of other people that were on the island, I think a quarter of a million altogether over the island, and put them into a jail they made up temporarily - some were houses

theaters, sports palaces and what ever, and they just took them in under guard and that was done to us.

We were imprisoned in the auditorium of the university and kept there for twelve days with no charges against us. And at the end of that time they released us and we were released for three days and then we were put under house arrest for three days and at the end of that time we were told to get off the property, that it had become government property. So most of us went into what had been the American Embassy, which at that time had become Swiss, and Father Busch went to the Dutch Embassy and one of the Spanish priests went to another Embassy and finally we were all gotten out through the various Embassies.

Q. You were actually under house arrest for three days?

Fr.M. Yes, for three days under house arrest and under arrest for twelve days.

Q. Were you mistreated in any way?

Fr.M. No, other people were in other places. Some priests who were down in Camaquey were physically abused but we were not. But the Rolandos, where they were, they were in a theater and since the theater wasn't made for permanent occupancy, just a transient occupancy, they ran into bad disease problems, and were released because of that, and as a result the Rolandos had throat infections for several months and other people ran into problems like that but we did not.

Q. Was Jimmy O'Mailia's case unusual?

Fr.M. Yes, he like a couple of our regular priests were put into a real prison, and then they didn't try people. You were just kept there. Jim O'Mailia was in about six weeks or more after we were. He was picked up at the same time but was kept in jail a much longer time.

Q. You suggested that you had some previous information about the Bay of Pigs?

Fr.M. Oh yes, it was well known, we didn't know where it would come or when it would come but that it was coming, it was well known.

Q. Was the closing of the college tied in with that?

Fr.M. That was the occasion of the closing. Of the cause, the cause was that in the type of government that existed in Cuba and has existed since the Castro takeover there can only be one type of education, which is State education. So that I told our superior in Philadelphia at the time that either Castro would survive or we would survive but both of us would not survive. Because you can't have private education of any kind in that type of society. And eventually all education in Cuba, even such things as trade

schools, where you would teach something like automobile mechanics or something of that nature, were taken over by the State. For the first six to eight months we weren't sure that Castro would succeed. But when his success was assured you knew that it was only a question of time before we would be eliminated.

James O'Mailia is the senior member of the present faculty, having come to Biscayne in 1963. In a 1972 yearbook dedication a student described him alternately as a "refugee from the Borscht Belt," an "Opa-Locka happening," a "purveyor of the buck and wing" and a "Mr. Bojangles come to South Florida." He served in Iceland and France during the Second World War and studied in Peru before moving to Havana and joining the Villanueva faculty in 1955. He agreed to meet with us in a bar nestled in the Big Bend of the Palmetto Expressway on a sweltering day. O'Mailia's experience was a harrowing one. We ordered gin and tonics and he remembered the knock on the door the early morning of April 18, 1961:

J.O. About midnight I heard a pounding on my door. I went to answer it and there was an officer and three militia men. They told me they had orders to search my house, so I said to them "Come in gentlemen, be my guest." They proceeded to tear my house apart, they threw all my books and papers on the floor and continued to search for about an hour. They found nothing and left.

Two or three hours later a second group came, this time three men in civilian clothes with machine guns. One of them said to me "We have orders to search your house." I said, "as you can see it has already been searched." "Well", he replied, "in that case we have orders to arrest you."

I went with them, picking up my sports coat as an after-thought--which turned out to be the smartest thing I ever did in my life. That coat was to become my blanket for the next

several weeks. They took me to a great mansion which had been converted into General Headquarters for the revolution. Depositing me, they said, "Hold him, we'll be back with the evidence later." I could just see them backing up a truck full of machine guns. They threw me in this room with beautiful marble floors that over one hundred and twenty of us slept on for three weeks, except for one little old man who slept in the sink in the kitchen. One of the people sharing the room with me was Bishop Perez Serrantes who had saved Castro's life on two different occasions.

On the third of May they moved all of us to La Cabana Prison by the Morro Castle, and there I was put in "Galeria 11." There with me was the Dean of the School of Architecture of Villanueva, the Dean of the School of Engineering, a Spanish Augustinian, and John Bradley of the School of Economics. I slept on the floor of La Cabana

until the middle of June, when one day there was an announcement for James O'Mailia to go to the office. I went, they told me I could leave. I got a taxi and returned home. My house was boarded up but a woman who belonged to the militia let me in. I looked about the shambles, grabbed a bottle of Cognac that had been untouched, and walked to the Swiss Embassy where I stayed for ten days until they were able to get me out. The prison experience was one that marked me for life. Almost every day they would read out a list of names in the morning, and the prisoners who had been called would walk meekly behind the jailer. A few minutes later we would hear the rifles fire. People calmly walking to their executions every morning. I'm tahnkful to say I survived.

Dr. Diaz was given the onerous duty of signing the death certificate of the University de St. Tomas de Villanueva:



P.D. I was appointed attorney parentis (for the parent) for the University of Villanueva in Pennsylvania, to actually sign the confiscation papers which I did under protest, and that of course was a written document.

Q. I know it must have affected you, having to be the one to sign the papers giving that over?

P.D. Well of course, you will never know how much. The American, for instance, cannot understand what it is like. You cannot unless you have lived through it. We did not actually understand it before. You know when things happened like in Russia or in Czechoslovakia or Hungary, we didn't pay much attention, we Cubans, because we hadn't lived through that, and in order to be able to make an appraisal of what type of tyranny it is you have to live through it.

Q. It must have been difficult to leave Cuba after all those years?

P.D. I never thought I'd leave Cuba actually. Never thought I would have to. I sent all my family over here and I stayed alone in Cuba. But there came a time after, you know Giron? You know about Giron? - the Cochinos as they call it. The Bay of Pigs as they call it? The word came from reliable sources that the United States was not going to do anything about it. Now I expected the United States to actually throw out the government. It was simply inconceivable that the United States, with the Monroe Doctrine still in existence as far as we knew, would allow some foreign power to come and take over in Cuba. And that was exactly what happened. So when the word came that that was exactly what the policy was going to be I said "Then why should I stay here? I'm not going to stay here and rot here." So I left.

## Chapter 2: Founding Biscayne

The trauma of the Cuban spring of 1961 was over. In groups and one by one most of the members of the faculty and staff of Villanueva, and indeed, many of the students, had made their way to freedom and Miami. The Augustinians were about to begin a new chapter in their history as educators in the United States and Caribbean. Fr. McCarthy continues the story:

Q. You have been forced out of Cuba and land in Miami. Tell us how you were to become the founding president of Biscayne College?

Fr.M. The diocese of Miami was established, I think 1957 was the date, and when Bishop Carroll, who was the first Bishop of Miami, came there, among the things that he felt was necessary was a Catholic college for men--there was already a Catholic college for women, Barry College, which had been in existence for about seventeen years when he came.

And so in the years immediately after he came there he had contacted various religious orders, I

know one he considered very seriously were the Holy Cross Fathers who had Notre Dame. And he had made contact with several other communities, I think the Holy Ghost Fathers who run Duquesne, and with the Augustinians.

The thing that made our superior decide to accept the invitation to start the college in Miami was the fact that we were being closed in Cuba.

He knew by 1961 that it was only a question of time when the axe would fall and we would have to get out of Cuba. So that actually the negotiations between Bishop Carroll and our provincial Fr. Donnellon were going on before we left Cuba, before the Bay of Pigs occurred, and we actually didn't know anything about their discussions. When we came out of Cuba in May 1961 Fr. Donnellon met us at the Miami airport, and he told me on the way from the airport to the hotel where we were staying that he was negotiating

with the Bishop of Miami who wanted us to start a college for men there, and that the definity had decided to accept his invitation and that I would be the first president. So that's how long I was out of a job, from the time I got on the plane in Havana until I got to the hotel in Miami.

So the arrangement that was made was that fifty acres of the land that Biscayne is now on would be given to us and with an option to buy another fifty acres of that plot which we later did, and there was also a donation which he had obtained which partially paid for the original building which was a donation from Mrs. McCahill--she gave us a donation of \$500,000 dollars toward the construction of the building, Mary Kennedy Hall.

Q. What does Mary Kennedy mean?

Fr.M. Mary Kennedy was the name she chose for the building--that was a pen name. Some time in her career she had done some writing and she wrote under the name of Mary Kennedy.

So with that we began. I was sent down there first and arrived at the end of July. I remember it was the 31st of July 1961. And of course we had nothing. We didn't have a place to live or a faculty or a charter. So the bishop put me in a parish in North Miami, Holy Family parish, and I lived there for about a month. In the meantime I looked around and bought a house up around 183rd Street in Carol City. Then Father Sullivan came down about a month after I was there, and then Father Spriale came down somewhat later. And so the three of us lived in this house around 183rd Street and we went about the business of getting the college started. The bishop wanted the college started that year and I told him that was completely impossible. I

wanted to hold off for two years and open in 1963 but he wouldn't stand for that, so we compromised on the target date of September of 1962.

The first thing we had to do was to get an attorney. So on the recommendation of the bishop, we got, - he's a judge now, - Judge Atkins, Clyde Atkins, and with him doing the legal part we got a charter from the State of Florida, which was the first thing that had to be done. Then I got an architect who I picked out because I had seen some things he had done, Tom Madden, and he designed the Kennedy building, the classroom building.

Q. Could you describe what the campus looked like at that time?

Fr.M. Yes, it was very much of a dump. An unoccupied piece of land. There were no buildings on it at all. Pace High School was not there and the school for retarded children was not there.

It was combination woods and dump. People hunted there. The egrets used to come and people hunted them.

There was a bulldozer--the first day I saw it, digging a hole where Pace High School is, they had decided to put Pace High School there and they had just begun construction of that. It was a very grim looking place actually, because old refrigerators and stoves and things that people got rid of were just dumped about so we had to do a cleaning job.

We didn't have much money to operate with, but we ran into some fortunate things, for instance there was a man, a road builder named Capaletti who was working on the Palmetto and he wanted to use the grounds to store equipment and do things like that so we agreed to that and for that he cleaned up a good part of the junk for us, otherwise we would have had to pay quite a bit to get rid of it.



Also some other people helped us greatly, one of them was the banker Leonard Usina who loaned us money at a very favorable interest to get us started. And then in September of 1962, when we started, was the first time we had a real community of priests. Fr. Busch was sent there and Fr. Bresnahan and Fr. Seymour, so the house we had on 183rd Street was inadequate. Fr. Sullivan was the superior of the community and he rented two houses on 164th Street which was a couple of blocks from the college and we lived there for about a year and a half.

Q. Who was your first employee at Biscayne?

Fr. M. Adrienne Roberson. When we were living in the house on 183rd Street, just Fr. Sullivan, Fr. Spirale and myself, we were doing a lot of correspondence as we were trying to get some faculty together and we were trying to get students and Fr. Sullivan and I were going around to high schools and doing things like that. So we decided we needed a secretary part-time. We

didn't have enough money to employ a full-time one and we didn't really have enough work either. A person working say four hours a day could handle our secretarial work. I think it was Fr. Sullivan who met Adrienne. I don't know all the details of how he happened to meet her. It worked well both ways, because she was looking for a part-time job, she wanted to be at home in the afternoon when her children would get home from high school and so forth.

Adrienne Roberson, now a secretary for the Assistant Business Manager of the college, supplies some details:

Q.           Adrienne can you tell me how you happened to become the first employee of Biscayne College?

A.R.        I was driving by the Palmetto and saw a sign on the corner of 32nd avenue stating that there was going to be a new Catholic college

opening to be run by the Augustinian Fathers from Pennsylvania. I decided that I would like, after seventeen years of being a housewife, to find a part-time job. So I called the Diocese of Miami down on Biscayne Boulevard and asked how I could reach the Fathers that were starting this new college.

Q. Did they have a name for it at this time? Was it called Biscayne College?

A.R. I think they said it was Biscayne College. Yes, the name was already established, and they gave me a phone number and I called it and it was just a house up on 185th Street, and I talked to Father McCarthy and he said why don't you send in a resume? I told him that I had not worked for 17 years and that I just wanted some little job and that my shorthand was rusty, but the typing I was sure I could do alright. He told me to write him a letter which I did and gave him my telephone number and they called me

and Father McCarthy and Father Sullivan came over to my home to interview me.

Q. Did you live in Carol City at that time?

A.R. Yes, I did, and they told me at the time that they would be over in say a half hour. So at the time I was washing windows and rushed and my mother said "You are doing something that your husband might not like, he doesn't want you working." They came over within the hour. I showered and got cleaned up as fast as I could and they came in and talked to me at my home and told me that they would like to have me work for them. I started the following Monday.

Q. Wasn't there some story you told me about how they got lost?

A.R. Yes, I kept watching for two priests to come along and I happened to see a car on the other side of the canal and both the Fathers, I could see they were Fathers, they had their black

suits on, and I hollered across the canal to tell them to go away down to the end and then to come back and they would get on my side of the canal. They were both very sweet, but I thought what was I going to tell my husband, he will probably not like the idea.

Q. Now this would be the end of 1961?

A.R. This was around January 6 of 1962, and I struggled along with my shorthand for awhile but soon gained speed with Father Sullivan keeping after me, dictating to me and saying "Read it back." And I finally conquered it and got it back to the right speed. Father Edward McCarthy was the President and Father Robert Sullivan was the Vice-President and Academic Dean. At that time there was just the two of them.

Q. This office you were working out of was in effect the college?

A.R. It was in their living room. They lived at 185th Street and it was just a regular house,

three bedrooms, two bathrooms, and in their living room I had a little corner over near the sliding door, a little portable typewriter and that's how we started.

Q. What was your impression of those two men?

A.R. Well, Father McCarthy is rather a jovial outgoing person, Father Sullivan at first kind of scared me with his stern, firm little way, but when he was like that, he once in awhile would have a little smile on his face, never a big one but a little one. And you knew then that he might have been kidding you.

They were wonderful people to work for, because I learned an awful lot about everything, all phases of the College, starting with admitting the students. And our first class came in about September of 1962 and we admitted thirty three students and out of the thirty three, nine graduated. So that in the first graduating class

in May of 1966 there were nine graduates who have all turned out to be most successful.

Q. Do you remember back in the beginning some of the first things you had to type? What were your early assignments in those first days?

A.R. I know the first thing I typed for them I was so nervous after not working for seventeen years that I put the carbon in wrong, and I thought, Oh, oh. Father Sullivan just kind of game me that smile of his. Father McCarthy used to go around to the local Catholic high schools to try to get students.

Q. They actually did it themselves?

A.R. Yes, they actually did the recruiting. And one time they were doing little chores around the house and I remember one day Father Sullivan had a laundry in the washing machine and got a call to go down to one of the Catholic high

schools to interview some boys, and so he said, "Adrienne, would you please take care of the laundry." So I did many things along with my secretarial duties.

Q. Your were sort of a house mother as well?

A.R. I did everything and I enjoyed every minute of it.

Meanwhile, Father McCarthy was enjoying the splendid misery of putting a college together.

Q. And recruiting students?

Fr.M. At the beginning we were not able to do that. We didn't have the resource at the beginning to recruit so it was mostly by word of mouth. But the thing that was the most surprising on enrollment, was that we got thirty four students the first year. These students came to a college that didn't exist and they were all local, from the Miami area. You just wonder just why did they come because we didn't



have a finished building, they didn't know anything about our faculty, we didn't have a four year program and we were just going to teach freshmen subjects and still we got thirty four students.

Q. Do you have any recollection what the Biscayne College budget was like in that first year?

Fr.M. No, I don't recall the figures on it, but it was very, very limited, I can tell you that. I remember when we started hiring faculty I remember Dr. Fledderman who came in math and had credentials that looked very good for us when we were just trying to build a faculty because he had a Ph.D. in Math. He had done actual research which had been published in the way of post doctoral research. He had taught at a very reputable school for about twenty years, which was Loyola in New Orleans, but wanted to move into the Florida area. So everything in

the interview with him was favorable until we reached salary. And I said to myself, I know this is where I'm going to fail. So I said to him "There is no way I can compete with the salary you would be getting having taught for twenty years at Loyola in New Orleans." So he said "No, and I wouldn't expect you to, but that isn't the problem with me and I do want to come here", and so we arranged a salary and he accepted. But frankly--there was just no possibility of even hiring that man, because we were so limited in our budget for faculty salaries. At one time we were subsidized as we needed it from the provincial, the priest maintenance for example was done by our provincial, not by the income we got from Biscayne College. One time we had a payroll to meet, both faculty and other employees. And a priest was the treasurer at the time, we just didn't have any money. And I said well, I'm expecting some money and if we get it we

will be able to meet the payroll and if we don't we won't. So the mail came in about 10:00 a.m. and there was a check for \$10,000. So I called and I said, take this over to the bank deposit it and then make out the checks and give them out. And he said this is what I call brinkmanship, because we met the payroll. That was the closest we came to missing the payroll. So we always at least met the payroll. But it was very often touch and go and that time it was a matter of hours.

Q. Leo Brophy was one of your first?

Fr.M. Yes, he was one of the early ones. He also was one we could get because he had an income other than that, because he had worked as an historian for the army for a number of years and had a government pension when he retired. Had he not had a pension, we could not have hired him.

Q. So things were often tense in the beginning?

Fr.M. Yes, but people helped us a great deal, and I would put among the first Clyde Atkins, Leonard Usina, Robert Mackle was very helpful because in the construction of the dormitories, Father Seymour and I had to go to Atlanta and I had to go there alone sometimes and Robert Mackle went up several times with me, to fly up to Atlanta and I think this facilitated us getting these loans and getting the monies that we needed in order to build these dormitories without which we would not have continued. I think also the willingness of faculty, the people who came over from Cuba like Pedro Diaz Maestre and Raul Shelton, Jim O'Mailia and early faculty like yourself and Fledderman and so forth that we hired along the way who worked for very small salaries and to do what had to be done. In other words not saying "I'm a nine hour a week man and this is it" or "I only teach calculus and I don't teach algebra or trigonometry" or

something, the willingness to do what had to be done. The cooperation that we got from everybody was really what made the first years possible. Because to just start from zero was really something. I've often thought when I first went down there and saw a vacant lot with a lot of junk on it and nothing else, I said to myself, put a college here and with very limited resources and very little money...To get it done was, I think, some sort of an accomplishment--the fact that we got it going at all was a miracle.

### Chapter 3: Doors Open

In the files of the Registrar of Biscayne College there is perhaps an inch given over to those first graduates, the Class of '66. There are but nine folders, two of them more significant than the rest. On the two is a notation: "Accepted, RMS, 3/22/62." A small bit of history was made that day as Father Robert Sullivan, the Dean of the new college, accepted the first two students, John Boyle from Christopher Columbus High School and John Peck from Curley High School. John Boyle is now a partner in the law firm of Boyle, Boyle, and Boyle in Miami and John Peck is a tax attorney in Palo Alto, California. They talked with us for an hour or so one day last June in room 218 of Kennedy Hall.

Q. How did you first hear about Biscayne?

J.B. I went to Christopher Columbus High School down in South Miami and we were taught there by the Marist Brothers so in my senior year Father Sullivan and Father McCarthy from

the Augustinian order came down and they were on evening programs with other recruiters from other colleges and they got bumped by the brothers the very last few minutes of the evening and everybody was almost walking out the door.

I remember that Father Sullivan was quite distraught about it. He felt that he desired more time because this was a local college here moving from Havana. My father was there and my father said it was a good thing, he is a graduate of Notre Dame and he thought it was a mistake for a young man to go off to college, that he ought to stay here at home. So based on that philosophy he had me put in an application.

What they were doing to induce local students to come here was to offer a scholarship to the best student from each of the local Catholic high schools. My average was a fraction of a point above the others so I got the scholarship from Columbus.

Q. What were your impressions after that first night of Father Sullivan and Father McCarthy?

J.B. Just that they looked very dignified and had a different uniform than the brothers wore. That's really all I can remember.

Q. You don't recall what their pitch was about Biscayne?

J.B. They said that this was the Augustinian Order and that Castro had of course confiscated all church property down in Cuba and that was the end of Villanueva in Havana. So they were going to try to reestablish the long tradition of Villanueva here in Miami. So that was I think their principal pitch and it was to be more than just Villanova, Pennsylvania South. It was to be a College that could stand on its own. It made a good impression on me and a tremendous impression on my father. He felt that this was the place for me to go to, in fact he was worried that he was



going to have to send me to Notre Dame and he didn't want to do that. He wanted me to stay home.

Q. Where did you first register? When did you first come up in this area to check things out?

J.B. They sent us a letter, anyone who had been accepted received a letter in the mail and the first thing they mentioned was the dress code. They expected us to look presentable, they wanted us to wear a shirt and a tie, a dress shirt. It was no problem for John and me because that's the way we had to dress from high school. So we met the first day for I guess our matriculation session, it was down here at Pace High School. We were on the second floor of one of their classroom buildings and we could look across to the north and see the work that was being done on Kennedy Hall. And at

that time all they had here was Kennedy Hall which was unfinished and a maintenance building to the south of us, I think it's still there. They had some kind of a tractor in there, machinery for an air conditioner plant which didn't get started for about four years. So we could look across and see where we were going to study. Father Sullivan was there and apologized to us. He said that the contractors had delays and that they hoped to get us in here in a month, but of course it took a little longer.

Q. You actually registered at Pace and then they told you to report to Barry for classes?

J.B. Yes, so we went over to Barry then.

Barry had at that time about four or five classroom buildings. Rather old buildings. I remember we used one of their lounges and I remember the first discussion we had as to electing a class president. The first thing we started doing was counting how many students there were from various high schools and deciding that the

high schools, the initial decision was that the high school with the most representation would elect the class president, but we decided against that, that we had more or less broken with the high schools and we ought to just elect a president.

Q. You smiled when John mentioned the student lounge at Barry?

J.B. Well because of our involvement with each other in class politics. It started right at the first week over there. We had to elect class officers. Remember, we didn't have the benefit of any upperclassmen to either chastise us or for us to look up to, so we kind of broke our own ground and Father Sullivan said to us right at the beginning that it was up to us to establish the political set-up of the school for the students, that we should consider it carefully, that whatever we established was going to be the beginning of a tradition. So I think we were a

little bit overcome with our own importance. We devoted hours and hours to it that we should have spent studying. We devoted all that time to trying to organize the student government and we all discovered that none of us could agree on anything. We had a constitutional drafting committee that lasted at least four years because we were seniors and were still revising the constitution.

Q. You were acutely aware that you were pioneers--how much was that a factor in your deciding to come to Biscayne?

J.B. Well, it was both positive and negative. I remember when Father McCarthy and Father Sullivan came to Curley for the open house that my parents were concerned as to whether the college would receive accreditation so that we could get into graduate school. My father asked Father Sullivan right out, you know, what about accreditation, and Father Sullivan said "I give you my personal guarantee that he will get in

any graduate school in this country." Which as it turns out we all could. And that was one of the reasons I came and it was a Catholic college, which meant a lot, along the lines of discipline and scholarship.

Q. Your class was a remarkable class I'm told, you all did very well.

J.B. We had nine graduates in the first class, and of the nine at least seven of us went on to graduate school.

Q. You were better than average students?

J.B. That's what they had told us, they told us that at the time, and Father Sullivan represented us as being a select group.

Q. What did your classmates from your high school think about your decision to come to Biscayne College?

J.B. At the Catholic high school that I was at the brothers inculcated us with the idea that you should go to an Ivy League College,

now they might deny that but that was the impression I had. The idea was to go up north, cut the apron strings, get away from your mother and become a man. But many of the fellows who left Miami suffered a cultural shock and an emotional shock and even though they were bright students they couldn't study because of the emotional problems they ran into.

Q. So for the first several weeks your classes were held at Barry? Was that awkward? A bunch of guys at a women's college?

J.B. I got a lot of ribbing on that from everyone I knew. Anyone who knew I was going to Barry College, they were calling us the "Barry Boys". A lot of my classmates from high school lived in the same neighborhood I did and I didn't take that very kindly being called a Barry Boy. We were out of place there. We felt we were interfering in and disrupting their schedule. The nuns have a philosophy that if

you educate a man you have educated an individual but if you educate a woman you educate a family and that's much more important. I agree with that, and we were kind of interfering with the future generations that they were educating there, you know, just by our presence. At Barry I think that we were overawed by an established college, a woman's college, we felt out of place. We all wore beanies all the time we were there. And if there is anything that would shatter a man's dignity in front of hundreds of women is to wear a beanie. When we went into class the nuns wanted us to take the beanies off and Father Sullivan insisted we keep them on. That sort of thing made us uncomfortable and we wanted to come over here, we wanted to fix this building up.

Q. And then Kennedy Hall was finally ready. What do you remember about the first day?

J.B. I missed the first day, the little house warming we had here, but I remember my impressions

of this building when I first got in here. They were just hanging some of these nice beechwood doors down the hallways and it was one of the loveliest buildings I had ever been in. It's a big building. I'm still impressed now. It's been a while since I was here and you know the last time I was here I didn't get a chance to look around. The building is much larger than I recall, the rooms are bigger. It's brighter than any building I've ever been in. The hallways are larger. It's a comfortable place. I remember Father Sullivan saying to us the first day at Pace High School that you will find that this building is one of the best constructed in Florida and he meant it. It looks just as neat now as it did then.

Q. Did they have that sunblind up or was that something they added?

J.B. They added it after we got here. That sunblind is made out of chimney flue segments



and it was there when we got here but it was not reinforced with those inserts of concrete. We were here in class I think in December, was the first incident I remember, in Father Sullivan's English class and there was a crack, a loud crack like a shotgun outside the open window. One of those tiles collapsed, I guess the stresses of the settling building were too much for them. So they spent the rest of the first year in having the contractor come back and pouring or injecting concrete into those forms to keep them from collapsing because by February of '63 I would say that three or four dozen of them had shattered and collapsed. Father Sullivan was disgruntled about that because he took a personal interest in the construction of the building. He felt that this was his project.

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Adrienne Roberson remembers the early days of operation and the presence on the new campus of the legendary Father Spirale:

A.R. The first two years we couldn't afford air conditioning. Of course we used to rattle around in Kennedy Hall because there were so few of us there and believe me we were warm, we were hot. But we just figured we were doing it for something good and I thought it was really an honor to be first and I enjoyed every minute of it. It was nothing to be home one night and have Father McCarthy or Father Sullivan come to the door with a little portable typewriter "Adrienne would you mind doing a letter." So I would sit down and go into a room and type out the letter because it was something for God or something he had to have in the mail in the morning. So we did those kinds of things for each other. But we were all working together, everybody worked together. It was a wonderful, wonderful, community. Hate to be the type to say the good old days, but they will never be forgotten.

Q. Did Father Spirale actually teach here?

A.R. Father Spirale didn't teach here. He was a much older man than Father McCarthy who had been with him in Cuba and I understand Father McCarthy did a lot for him, helping keep him calm. He was a heartbroken little man when he came back to the United States to have had to leave all of the things he had worked so hard so long for. He was dearly loved by all of the Cuban people. I know this, because I used to be there when many people came to visit him. He wasn't five feet tall but he was quite dynamic. His project was to raise money for a monastery at Biscayne. He would take his little walk each day from where the Fathers were living over at 164th Street and I would have his mail waiting for him over on the corner of his desk and he would hold up each envelope and look at it through the light and say "This is a good one, that's no good." When he said this is a good one, he meant it had a check in it. He had many friends

in the Miami area and all over the country who helped him - helped the Fathers get their monastery.

Q. Did he reminisce at all about the Cuban days?

A.R. Yes, Father Sullivan and Father McCarthy used to tell me if Father Spirale wants to talk to you, put the work aside and listen to him, because he is heartbroken and a very sad man these days. So I did that, which I enjoyed immensely even though he would be so sad in telling me about the things he had accomplished, the things he had done in his life time were just unbelievable, and to have not been able to meet him, a person missed an awful lot. I loved him dearly.

My husband took him fishing one morning and he went over and picked him up at 5:30 in the morning. The other Fathers said he had been up

since about 4:00 in the morning waiting for Bob to come. When they got in the car, my husband said "Well let's stop and have something to eat" so they stopped at the Royal Castle to have a little breakfast. My husband said to him, "Would you like something to eat", so he said he would have some bacon and eggs. So Bob had ordered orange juice and they had at that time fresh squeezed orange juice and when they put the mug of it in front of Father Spirale in his sweet little way he said, "Bob it's a little too early for something like that now", because he thought it was a mug of beer. But I can't think of a person that had more friends than Father Spirale and I believe that, I think when he got very ill he was up visiting Mr. Fanjul and he died in the hospital up there in Palm Beach and he died a very sad man because he lived on his memories and he never did get over having to leave Cuba.

Q. Adrienne, Father Sullivan became almost a member of your family didn't he?

A.R.            Father Sullivan, we never knew when he was coming. He might knock at the door and it might be 6:00, he would sit in with us and eat, or the children might all be laying on the floor, our family is the type that laid on the floor a lot looking at television. And Father Sullivan would come in and step over them. There were five of them and they took up a good part of the floor and he would just sit there. He loved my daughters very dearly and they loved him very much. Many times he would say, "I'm going to take the girls out for dinner." Or he would say, "I'm going to come over and pick you up for breakfast." He was really part of our family. We had a wonderful life in those early days, we were just like one big family.

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Excellence was demanded of the first class. John Boyle remembers the special demands made of them:

J.B. Father Sullivan taught a course in English in the first semester. It was a course on the graduate level, how we ever made it through as freshmen, it was just by his good grace. But it was an extremely valuable course just to listen to him lecture. I wish I could talk to him right now and just listen to what he has to say on any subject. I have the impression that Father McCarthy's History and Father Sullivan's English were courses that were used to do that, to demonstrate Hey, hot shot, you can't even think yet, you better start learning. You really had to work. I took Father Sullivan's English, and when you were in there you were, it was demonstrated to you how little you knew even if you thought you were pretty good. It wasn't done with anything tricky, it was just that Father Sullivan operated the course at a higher level than high school seniors

were used to operating at, and so it was immediately clear to you that you weren't just the greatest thing in the world, you had a lot to learn and I am fairly certain it was done deliberately. I remember, I think it was our first class with Father Sullivan in September 1962, that he called us the Class of '66 and everyone was so complimented. None of us were thinking that far ahead. He was kind of formal too, he always called us by our last names. You know it was always Mr. Peck and Mr. Boyle. It was just one more thing, hey you're now college men, start acting like it. This is serious. There is no time for games here.

John Peck speaks of that first class as "The last of the breed."

J.P. I have always measured the start of the use of marijuana and other drugs by our class. Our class was the last of the strict conservatives, the short haircuts and narrow ties. We were the



last of the breed. The Class of '67 was rather lethargic. They really didn't care much about anything.

Dr. Diaz remembers that first class as one with a commitment to excellence:

P.D. I was very happy then. Why? Well, because we had interested students and we were interested in building something then as an institution of higher education, that is bringing excellence rather than anything else. Excellence, that was the most important thing and I think we were successful for a time, I think. One of the graduates told me recently how important it was that I had demanded that much. He said we are so grateful to you, he was talking in the name of other students who had graduated. He was so pleased and so grateful because we demanded so much of these students. Many of the graduates send me Christmas cards and they still remember me.

John Boyle speaks of Miami in the early '60's and the area around Biscayne:

Q. What was Miami like back in those days?

J.B. There were two noticeable physical differences and I remark on it to folks that I talk to about it. One was that there was much less traffic, and then there is the difference in the population in the last fifteen years. The second one was that there was less pollution. Miami, of course, is probably one of the cleanest cities in the world, but it was a tropical paradise back then. You could drive into Miami from out of town and you could smell the fragrances of tropical plants. All the extra automobiles put an end to that.

Q. What was the neighborhood like around the campus?

J.B. Around here there was Wheelers Drug Store in the shopping center to the northwest of here.

Mr. Wheeler was very cooperative, he always put an ad in the newspaper, there were always a few stores like that, the dry cleaning store over here to the east and I think a paint store and they would put ads in. The Kimberly Motel I think put regular ads in for us and Jaffe Stationers and the Texaco station put an ad in.

Q. What about lunch facilities and things here the first year?

J.B. There were none, we had the student lounge downstairs and we had a couple of coke machines there. We had some candy machines but that was all and if you wanted to poison yourselves with that stuff you were privileged to do so. There was a Burger King. It's still existing, it's down northwest of the college I guess on 165th Street. It was out in the woods at the time. It was a cow pasture, there was a paved road going to it and I think there was a

7-11 next door. You could look across in all directions and see the cows just grazing.

Q. Was the Palmetto here?

J.B. The Palmetto was here but not in its present form. 826 was a four lane highway with a median strip. No overpasses. There were traffic lights. Very dangerous, they had some very serious accidents, a lot of fatalities. By the time we had graduated they had built overpasses to make it a limited access highway. But with the traffic lights you could see in all directions that all the land around here was all flat and there were cows everywhere. Which made it very pleasant. We were here in a brand new building, lovely construction, surrounded by trees and fields everywhere.

Q. By your senior year, you were twenty one and legal age then was twenty one years old to drink beer. Was there ever a place around here where you could drink a few beers?

J.B. There was a Lums up here on 27th Avenue and that was built I guess in our junior year, so for lunch we would all go to Lums, it was across the street from the present Lums. We'd all go there for lunch and a few would have a beer.

Q. The campus of course had no fence around it then, and there were abandoned cars, and doves, quail, horses?

J.B. Yes, I'm glad you mentioned that, there was one very interesting series of incidents our first year. About the time that we came here this whole area was being used by hunters. They were hunting doves, and I'm not sure when the quail season opens, I guess it's sometime in the Spring but I remember Father Seymour was sorely offended by these people trespassing on the College property. They were out there with their shot-guns and their dogs. And of course there were a lot of abandoned autos, a lot of scrubbrush out

there. They were real woods. But I remember sitting in our moral theology class one afternoon and pellets started to hit the sunscreen out here from the shotguns. They were shooting at the doves in the air and the pellets were landing and actually striking the windows. So Father Seymour ran out of the classroom and we all followed him and he piled into somebody's Volkswagen and we all took off in a train of Volkswagens. The Volkswagens would not get stuck in the sand for some reason. Well, we all got out there and we were following Father Seymour and when we got out there, there were three hunters with shotguns. He got right out of the car and I stopped. He walked right over to them and these fellows were standing there with their guns and dogs and he ordered them off the property and they went. The man had guts, you know.

Q. What kind of activities were there?

J.B. We had some Everglades expeditions, we had a local fellow here, Wayne Rotolante, he was in the class behind us and Wayne was a huntsman. Wayne could go out and live in the Everglades. Crack shot with a pistol and good with a knife. Manufactured blowguns. He could blow a dart right into a piece of concrete. He came to class one day, he caught an Indigo snake out there, they're native out here, absolutely harmless, they make excellent pets but they're furious looking. They have red pupils and they are jet black. He brought one to class and of course we always dressed in coats and he had this Indigo snake in his coat pocket and I think Professor Brophy was lecturing on a course in Foreign Policy when this Indigo snake stuck its head up and started to kind of weave around sticking its tongue out, well this upset the whole proceedings of the class you know.

That's how Wayne was, he did well academically and there was no nonsense about him but he had this aspect, he liked to get out in the woods, so Wayne organized some expeditions out in the Everglades. Many volunteered to go, I guess there were about twenty of them who stayed overnight a couple of times. They had quite a good time.

I remember margining along the edge of the canals with that shotgun of his and when you're out in the Everglades when the sun goes down it gets pitch black because there's no light. The problem you have with the Glades is there is no water out there. We got some water out of a nearby swamp and boiled it, chopped some wood and went out to a hammock and boiled the water, one of the things we did was we made swampwater coffee. We boiled this water then we put it in another pot, we were very careful about the pots,



we cleaned the scum off the edge of the canal. You scoop the water out with one pot then you pour it into a second pot which is kept at a rolling boil all the time. Then we transferred part of this into a third pot we had, we brought a can of Maxwell House coffee along, a pound can. Well unfortunately we didn't have anything else so we took a tee shirt, threw the coffee into the tee shirt, tied the thing and dumped it into a pot of water and just let it boil. We called it swampwater coffee. But I remember Alex Monninger, the future physician, walking along the canal and about every five minutes you'd hear a shotgun blast go off, and the next morning we walked along and all along the bank about every twenty feet was a dead water mocassin. Alex had gone along and had blasted water mocassins every ten minutes with that shotgun. Just blew them out of the water onto the bank. I remember getting mad at him for that. We had gone out

supposedly to live off the land, none of us was intelligent enough to realize that that just doesn't happen with the modern man. The mocassin was good, you could make a good stew out of it or barbecue it you know. We caught a snapping turtle and we made a soup out of him, it was quite tasty. I remember we took pictures, I forget if it was Wayne holding the turtle. Somebody else had pliers, clamped his jaw and somebody else slit his throat, it took three passes to kill the poor thing, we had a dull knife. I have no idea where the film is but we ran it through the student government budget for the fifth film. We got some rabbits out there and we shot a raccoon. Our social life was that kind of thing, it was kind of unorthodox for college social life.

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At the end of the second year Biscayne suffered what some at the time feared might be a fatal blow. Fearing

the college would not be accredited almost half of the thirty four original students decided to transfer out. John Boyle describes the crisis:

J.B. At the end of our sophomore year a number of the fellows felt that they had to make a switch to an accredited college. They were afraid they wouldn't be able to have a future if they didn't, so we lost half the class right there in the sophomore year. By the beginning of the junior year all those who were going to graduate were here, just nine of us, I think there were nine of us, there might have been one or two more who dropped out for academic reasons.

Q. Wasn't that a crisis for Father Sullivan and Father McCarthy?

J.B. I don't remember Father McCarthy's reaction but I know we were down at the student lounge and the fellows who were leaving had gone

up in a body to see Father Sullivan and had asked for their transcripts and it must have been a heated session because when they came out they were blushing red in the face and kind of winded, and I remember one fellow who was an extreme extrovert, it was the first time I had ever seen him abashed, he said "Wow they are really unhappy about us leaving." They said that Father Sullivan said something to them to the effect that you're rats leaving a sinking ship. I think Father Sullivan came down to the lounge shortly after that and said that the rats are leaving the ship, something like that. It was that strong anyway. I never heard him express himself that way. So he was very upset about it, I guess it meant a loss in revenue and a loss in prestige. The graduating class was cut right down at that point. That was only after the second year.

Q. Fortunately, it was not a sinking ship?

J.B. Oh no, the rest of us stayed. But that's why the classes were cut way down, we had our philosophy classes, they were cut down to eight and ten students. I had a class in third year German literature, I was the only student. Father Matthews taught it. When we started the class this was the room we had it in. I remember an accounting class with Dr. Diaz and it was just the two of us. Murray needed a special Mathematics and they arranged it for him, just one guy. I forget who it was but he used to go to Dr. Fledderman's office and just sit there and talk mathematics back and forth, and this was Murray's required course in mathematics. We were into cycling then because there were so few of us that we and the juniors were taking courses together just to get the body count up and mostly to justify having a class.

## Chapter 4: The Invasion of the "Sockless Hordes" from the North

In the fall of 1964 campus life at Biscayne changed dramatically with the coming of the northerners. Biscayne became primarily a resident college with the Miamians a sudden minority. The halls of the classroom building were filled with the curious accents of eighteen year olds from Boston and Bala Cynwood, Brooklyn and Bay Shore. They were a different breed, funloving, and as John Peck noted, they wore no socks.

But there was a slight problem that September. There were a hundred students flying south and nowhere to put them. Father McCarthy explains:

Fr.M. We were assured that the dormitory would be ready in September when classes were to begin and as a result we accepted students with that in mind, that they would move into the dormitory and when it came time it simply wasn't ready for

occupancy. So we had to try to do something else. September was the deadest month for motels along the beach of the entire year and so I think this man that ran the Kimberly Hotel on the beach was glad to have us, and we made an arrangement with him by which students would live in this motel and they would eat and sleep there and then be transported on a bus back and forth to campus.

This had a lot of disadvantages. Students had to be ready to come at a certain time whether they had a class or not, had to go back at a certain time whether they wanted to do something or not. We had a priest living in the motel so that was rather expensive. The man who built the classroom building was a very excellent contractor, his name was Thompson, and he also built Donnellon Hall, the second dormitory. When we built these dorms it was on

government funds and these long term, low interest arrangements that they made. We had to take the lowest bidder and if you did not take the lowest bidder you had to explain why you didn't or you could end up in court. In other words the man who was lowest bidder could take you into court. So they advised us to take the lowest bidder because you could get into all kinds of trouble and problems if you didn't. So we did, and Thompson, who was very satisfactory to us-- did a very good job building the classroom building--bid about 1,500 more than the lowest bidder, so we took the lowest bidder and as a result the motel cost us about 2,500. So to save 1,500 we spent about 2,500 because I'm sure had Thompson had the bid we would have been in there on time. We wouldn't have had to pay that motel bill if we had been in there on time.



Daniel McHugh, now Account Vice-President at Paine Webber, Jackson in Baltimore, was in that first resident class. He remembers the "Kimberly Days":

D.M. I got on the plane in Washington with just \$100.00 I can remember that the fare was \$52.00 and that was the first time I had ever been to Florida. I was one of the first persons to get off the plane and I can remember the first feeling I got of Southern Florida when they opened the plane door and I had a feeling they had just thrown a bucket of water on me. I took a bus from the airport up to the Kimberly Hotel where we were staying at the time. I got drenched in the downpour waiting for a transfer in downtown Miami. I got to the hotel about four hours after my plane landed.

Q. The dorms weren't ready yet?

D.M. To the best of my recollection the dormitories were off to a late start and that was

further delayed by a hurricane they had had that summer, because when I arrived and for about two weeks there was a lot of evidence of the damage that happened. The front of the Kimberly had a new facade on it and it was actually an old hotel at 158th Street and Collins and had had a new facade which was pulled off by the hurricane, and all up and down Collins Avenue you could see trees and palms fallen over. The dorms were eventually completed early in November of '64.

We were bussed over in the morning and bussed back in the afternoon and since we were freshmen there wasn't that much difference in everyone's schedule. We had to take so many required classes. So we might come a period before we had to be here and we might leave a period after we could have but there was no other transportation during the first semester. There was only one car on campus, that was Chip Hoffner's Triumph which was a two seater. Aside from that

the only transportation we had was the bus. We were on the beach and used to get back at about 2:45 or 3:00 and we would all go out and lay in the afternoon sun and then go to dinner and then if there was any studying to be done, do that after dinner.

Q. What kind of supervision was there at the hotel?

D.M. Not a whole lot. Father Barry used to live there with us but we were on two floors. I think it was a five or six story hotel and the rest of it was being used for just commercial hotel traffic. There was always a good mix of people who were in and around there. It was a "U" shaped affair with a swimming pool right in the middle of it. We got plenty of exercise in the pool and plenty of sun at the beach. We had some splash parties, we used to call them,

with Barry College but I guess it took us about a month or so to get settled into college life.

Q. The bus, was it a chartered bus?

D.M. The bus was the Our Lady of Perpetual Help school bus from Opa Locka and the driver of the bus was a Cuban refugee who could not speak English and it took him three or four tries to get from Sunny Isles to Opa Locka and he didn't know traffic rules too well. He knew how to stop for red lights and stop signs. There's a draw bridge on Sunny Isles Boulevard and I guess he wasn't too used to it and one morning the barrier came down and he somehow got under it before the thing had completely closed and one side of the bridge was already up about five inches over the other and fortunately the side that was up was the side we were coming from and we went over the thing at about twenty miles an hour I guess.

John Peck remembers how the Miamians tried to scare the new comers from the North:

J.P. The Kimberly was a resort hotel over on Miami Beach, and it was right on the ocean. There was a hurricane in October, 1964, really it wasn't a full-fledged hurricane that hit here. Some of them were terrified, of course we told them the stories of what was going to happen to them you know, the Kimberly was going to wash into the Atlantic Ocean and so on. It was nothing, it was just an afternoon storm.

Q. What did the first class think of the Kimberly crowd?

J.P. Well, there are some interesting anecdotes there. Those fellows weren't the stuffed shirts that we were. Many of them understood that they had been recruited in order to keep the college going financially. The ones I spoke to admitted that Biscayne had been lowered a little bit

academically to get them here, in fact many of them were happy to be here. They felt they couldn't have gotten into college if Father Sullivan hadn't recruited them up north, a lot of them were from Philadelphia and New York City.

So it was my first contact with some big city Northern boys. I had been living here in Miami most of my life up until then. These fellows were from a different culture. They just had a different approach to things than I did.

Q. Could you explain that?

J.P. It's hard to make comparisons because now almost everybody in Miami is from the north and its just like a northern city transplanted to another climate. But then, it was just a cultural difference, their attitudes on recreation, studies, attitudes toward work and life in general were just different. They were from

northern industrial cities and we really were fortunate to be from kind of well-to-do families here. These fellows were, I guess, a little harder in their personalities. They were unorthodox. They didn't dress like us. They wore coats and ties but no socks.

Q. Did you take any interest in the building of the dormitory?

J.B. I remember we went out and we watched the ground breaking on the dorm building. They used a new construction technique, it was all sandy out there, in fact I got my car stuck one day in the sand. Dr. Fledderman showed me how to build a Roman type road to get out, he spent all afternoon with me, I had a shovel and an axe, he helped me chop some logs down and build a road, built it up with sand and then another layer of logs and so on. But it was so sandy you couldn't

build any type of building on it, so they brought in cranes and with the cranes they drilled a well down in the ground and they pumped in wet sand and that somehow compacted the foundation area. And then they were able to build the dorms on top of that. They would drill a hole and throw the water down the side then they would have a piledriver pounding that sand as it compacted. No one had ever seen that before and I've never seen it since. Apparently it was just one of those techniques that some engineering firm was experimenting with. Obviously it has worked, the dorms are still there.

As one of the original residents, Dan McHugh found campus life a bit subdued:

D.M. In 1964 we really only had one real car on campus and our social life was really confined to going to dances at Barry College. It really took a couple hundred additional students to give us what I would call a normal small college



social life. The cafeteria was a small glass enclosed room that adjoined Cascia Hall and then the cafeteria was constructed the next year, I think that became our luggage storage room after that. They used to go over to the corner to Mitzie and Richie's. Mitzie and Richie's Cafe was a haven actually when we first lived on campus. We used to walk through the back of the campus over to the Palmetto By-pass Shopping Center and Mitzie and Richie operated the concession at Wheeler's Drug Store which was the only place in town where you could get a good hamburger. The food here was so bad that there would be more people eating over there at night than there were here at the cafeteria. There were a lot of rusted cars in the back of the campus and a few old horse stalls and we used to go hunting rabbits in the back of the campus.

Q. Did you ever get into Opa Locka?

D.M. Yes, we went into Opa Locka a few times. There wasn't really a whole lot to do in Opa Locka. One of the trips I remember was with my roommate, who was a thoroughly accomplished pianist. He tried to get a job at the Old Scandia which was a restaurant and bar. We went down and met the owner and talked to him and sat around and drank a few beers and played the piano for about an hour or so. But as I recall the hours didn't work out. The only time that we went to Opa Locka was to go to the bank, that was where the bank was at the time or to go to the post office to pick up or to send a package. It seems to me that when I was here at the time all the joints and all the social life in the neighborhood was really north of the campus rather than south of the campus.

Q. You did go to bars then? The age limit then in Florida was 21. Did you manage to get proof?

D.M. Well, we were a very mature class. We had identification cards from all over the country. We used to swap around at night and before we went out. We used to go to The Three Pines.

Q. Where was that?

D.M. The Three Pines is on the service road that parallels the Palmetto at about 47th Avenue. We used to go to Flo and Mickey's Gate Way down on 27th Avenue in Opa Locka. We used to go to Trader Johns on 27th Avenue and then there was a Country Western bar next to that, I forget the name, we used to go there. We used to go to The Inn in Carol City and we used to hang out at a place in Miami Shores that was right across the street from Barry College called Sids. The big social activities of my life here were really

going out to bars and dating girls and going over to Barry College and of course we used to go to the dog track and horse track all the time.

Fortified by the resident students, the upper-classmen decided to stage Biscayne's first dance in the fall of 1964. John Peck began a life-long love affair with Bach during the preparations:

J.P. I recall the first dance we staged here in our junior year. The first two years we did not do anything as a group. Our only interests were to make a go academically. That may seem like a two year gap but all I can remember is studying. In our junior year those of us who were still here were confident that we were going to make it if we would just apply ourselves, so I think that we relaxed a little and thawed out and we had a dance here, I think it was October of our junior year and I can remember decorating for it out here.

Q. Where did you have the dance?

J.P. It was in the student lounge downstairs in Kennedy Hall. I remember when we were preparing for it that afternoon, John Boyle brought a record. It was Bach's "Brandenburg Concerto VI" and I had no acquaintance with classical music and he played it over and over while we were decorating for the dance and I went out and bought it afterwards. All the Brandenburg Concerto's in fact. That really sounds stuffed shirt I know but that was our first social activity.

The Biscayne upper classmen apparently had better taste in music than the faculty and staff did. Adrienne Roberson tells us how not to get invited back to a party in Opa Locka:

A.R. Oh, I can tell you about one party we had. Now I don't want you to think that all we did was party all the time, but we did seem to have quite a social life together, we knew

each other very, very closely. At the end of the school year, one of the professors and his wife decided to have a party. She was a very lovely girl. I think she was a new bride and she figured that the faculty must be very prim and proper. They rented a home down in Opa Locka and it was a real old Spanish type home and they rented it furnished. I am telling you that for a purpose. So we walked in and we all sat around. I looked over at Father McCarthy and he was just sitting with a drink in his hand and Father Sullivan and it was just very quiet. My husband was quite an outgoing person and that was driving him crazy. Everybody was just looking at each other. She had very, very conservative old fashioned music and really away over our heads. If you stayed there long with one drink, your eyes would be closed. So Father Busch who was another real close family friend suggested to Bob, why don't you go home and get some of your records.

So Bob kind of hesitated and I said "yeah, go ahead". So he went home and got a lot of his loud and lively music. Without saying anything when they came back, Father Busch just took one of Bob's records and just shut off their music and put on ours. Well everybody started waking up a little bit. I think this couple did enjoy it. She had all kinds of food and drinks, but the party really came to life. One of the Fathers, I won't mention his name right now, but he was a very handsome priest, about 6'4" and he was inclined to be kind of awkward at times. Here I had mentioned that this place they were renting, it was a home, but it was rented furnished. Well as time went on, he went to sit on the sofa and kind of missed the edge a little bit and broke the arm off the sofa. Well, we all kind of snickered and this faculty member and his wife were kind of concerned and later on he went to

lean on the table to get up from the sofa and he broke the glass on the table. Well it sounds like it was a rowdy party, but not really. It just seemed that just everything this Father touched broke. We all had a wonderful time.

Q. Did they ever invite you back?

A.R. No, we were never invited back.

Q. The Fledderman's were great party givers?

A.R. I guess Dr. Fledderman was the first, I think the first Ph.D. that was hired. Yes, he was and we were real proud to have him. He was married to a very fiery woman. They came from New Orleans and she was a typical lady from New Orleans, very lovable, witty person and they really enjoyed life. I know they used to like their bourbon. They loved their bourbon and a few times after one of the affairs we would have



a little party, the Fledderman's would say, "You all come down to our house", and we would go down there and they would have a little drink for you and they would just have you constantly laughing with their wit?

Q. Did he change much after his heart attack?

A.R. Mentally, no it didn't change him, he did what they said for a while and slowed down, he thought he was slowing down but he still went along his merry way and he would enjoy life and right up to the end, I think he enjoyed every minute of it. He was the first professor to be given the title Professor Emeritus.

Father McCarthy describes the easy camaraderie among the faculty and staff in the early years:

Fr.M. There was a wonderful family sense in the early years. I always remember the Christmas parties and Father Sullivan leading the Christman carols and singing. Everybody was involved, for example a fellow like Jim Horvath

who was very helpful to us as the maintenance man. And the thing that Mrs. Fleddermann used to stress to me. She was used to a certain snobishness that you can get on a campus, I am the wife of a full professor and you're only the wife of an instructor, or you're only a secretary or something of that nature and when she went to Biscayne everybody was the same. Adrienne Roberson was treated the same at a party as I was and I was the President and she was the secretary, but that didn't seem to bother anybody. And there were two sisters of mine who came down to a couple of affairs we had and they both were impressed because they both worked in different types of things. One was in industry and one was in a hospital. But they were impressed with the friendliness of everybody regardless of whether you were a professor, an administrator, a janitor or what you were, it didn't seem to matter.

Varsity sports brought a new dimension to campus life at Biscayne. Dan McHugh remembers the earlier activities:

D.M. Varsity sports started in my junior year, which would have been in the fall of '65 with the hiring of Ken Stibler, and then basketball came in. But the year before that the students got together and we put together a team and we entered the team in a basketball tournament at Nova High School in Fort Lauderdale. The coach of the team was Jimmy Heinz, who was one of the students here. The best intramural players were put on the team. We felt we just needed some height and a big gun to have on the team so we recruited the captain of the University of Miami team to be a ringer for us and this was the University of Miami team that had Rick Berry on it who at the time was the leading scorer in the nation. So Wayne Beckner came

and we got together some uniforms and we made it to the finals in the tournament, the IFA TOURNAMENT, I forget exactly what it stands for. The school got some notoriety from it in the local papers and that would have been in the Fall of 1965 and that was the year before we had a varsity team.

Q. Of course, I suppose you had intramural teams, softball maybe?

D.M. We had intramural teams in basketball, football, and baseball and we played hardball. We didn't have any softball teams. Matter of fact, I don't think I saw a softball on campus during the whole four years here. We had an intramural bowling league at Carol City Lanes and I think that was pretty much it as far as the sports go. We did not have a swimming pool at the time.

The relative isolation of the college worried Father McCarthy:

Fr.M. You see the problem when we started the sports program was travel. At Villanova within a radius of twenty miles of Philadelphia you have about twenty five schools and you could almost get a schedule for a basketball team and not travel more than one hundred miles. Whereas Biscayne's nearest neighbor was somewhat competitive, we didn't think in terms of playing the University of Miami because that was obviously highpowered in sports. The school we thought of first probably was St. Leo's. We could probably play St. Leo's, but that was something like two hundred and fifty miles away. A school like Valdosta State in Georgia was three hundred and fifty to four hundred miles away, and these would be sort of your nearest neighbors, the ones that you could sort of schedule and play in that category of basketball. So I would say the biggest problem that I was concerned about when we first started was the travel problem. How do we afford

to get to these places and to play them and for them to come here. Then we made an arrangement with North Miami Beach and played our basketball games over there for quite a while. And I thought Ken Stibler did a very good job with extremely limited resources both in scholarships and in money for recruiting. Money for traveling, money for other things were very limited. He did a very good job in the caliber of teams he produced and the style of basketball they played.

## Chapter 5: Faculty Shaping Lives--"The Biscayne Man"

Several of the original faculty members left strong impressions on these pioneer students. Indeed, the college has from the outset prided itself on the quality of its faculty, and to this day that tradition continues. Dan McHugh appraises Father Sullivan:

D.M. I remember Father Sullivan very well. He was the Director of Admissions when I applied . He was also head of the English Department. I got to know him fairly well over the years. He was always my favorite person on the faculty at Biscayne. After college I corresponded with him and really up until the time he died. He was an extremely well read person. He was able to make cogent comments on just about any type of literature and to really relate some things that I guess that normally a college student would really pass over. He had a good memory

because when he retired he was sent to Resurrection in Dania. I used to write to him there and he was able to send a reference to George Washington University for me years after I graduated that I know he had to write from memory. It was really quite accurate, in terms of recalling things that had happened seven or eight years before in detail that I didn't even remember myself. He had those marvelous blue eyes that looked out over his glasses. The end of his nose was red from the pressure of those half rims. I think he wore them when he didn't even have to use them. I guess it was just part of him and of course he was a chain smoker and his fingers were nicotine stained all the time. He was quite a story teller, quite a good story teller. And a good golfer, I'm told.

Drew Barrett, now on the faculty at Florida State, regarded both Father McCarthy and Father Sullivan with awe.



D.B. Father McCarthy never looked at a note all the time I had him in class. He began lecturing at the beginning of the hour and stopped fifty minutes later without looking at a note, and every word was in place. Father Sullivan, he seemed to live to teach. He actually seemed to light up, it's a cliché expression, but that's how it seemed, he seemed to be physically transformed when he entered class. And the background he had--Oxford, friend of Tolkien, C.S. Lewis. What a rich education...

John Peck speaks of Dr. Pedro Diaz and Father Quinn:

J.P. One that impressed me was Dr. Diaz, I had a lot of classes with him. But Father Quinn's the one that sticks out most in my mind. Father Quinn always struck me for having a reason for everything he did. I'd gone through school with nuns and they took the idea, there's a quotation somewhere that, "you shall become as little

children", which I always interpreted as being innocent or sinless as little children. And I always had the impression that they thought of that phrase as meaning, Don't ask any questions. Be as trusting as little children and it's almost like the mind closed down. But Father Quinn had a reason for everything. If you would ask him why we believe this he would tell you and go back from Aristotle and work up to Aquinas and show you all the steps that got to any particular point. We started out with Aristotilian logic which you can't find anymore because they always teach symbolic logic. Well we went from that to basic philosophy, intermediate philosophy and metaphysics and it was just one continuous flow. We also had an advanced theology with tutoring. One time I took a philosophy and advanced theology course back to back and I swear we were running late in the theology course, he just closed one textbook and opened another, it was like he just

never stopped the lecture. Because his approach to theology was the same as his approach to philosophy and the two were integrated. I wished when I got into law school that I had taken moral philosophy under Father Quinn because his hammering, cut and dried type of approach to philosophy was what I needed more of in order to fit into law school there. In fact the scholastic philosophy is not available anymore, it's gone, a thing of the past. I wish I had more of the type of challenging work that was required. Father Quinn was an exercise fanatic and he would walk each day and the dogs would chase him from the neighborhood and he was always in the Philosophy classes comparing the mentality of the human being with a dog. The way a dog perceives things and the way we receive them.

J.B. Did we ever establish whether Father Quinn ever was the jitterbug champion before he joined the order?

J.P. Sure he was. Father Sullivan told me he was. The jitterbug champion of Philadelphia. And I asked Father Quinn about it once and he told me, forget that, don't ever mention that again. It was a taboo subject with him. He was the city jitterbug champion. He was really spry, very wiry. He really gave us an excellent course in Philosophy, a tremendous course.

John Peck speaks of "The Biscayne Man":

J.P. I tried to explain to somebody once about Biscayne and I came up with a kind of Biscayne Man. Basically we were almost a uniform product with specialities, because there was such a large core subject that all of us took, and then I added some Accounting courses and John added some English courses and Dan Murray added

some Mathematics courses. But all of us took the same homogeneous body in the middle of the philosophy, the theology, the history, the English. It was all there, the central core. Other schools are specializing and they will be great with figures but they won't be able to think. You guys who graduated from high school can't think yet. Not only can't you write and you are only unilingual, but you can't think. So that was one of the first things that we were taught, was how to think properly.

J.B. Father Sullivan would give us tests. When we were freshmen, of course the prevailing atmosphere in high school was as soon as you got the paper you could start writing immediately and everyone had the feeling that the teacher would watch and see who delayed. Anyone who would look out the window was sure to flunk. You had to write as fast as you could and as much as you could. I remember the first test we had with

Father Sullivan, we all started right off to write, you know, and answer the questions. He said, "Just a minute, don't rush into print, think first before you put it down on paper." That was his expression on every test, "Don't rush into print gentlemen, think first."

J.P. I remember doing that when I took the CPA exam down here, I mean that bell started and some guys started writing like crazy, and I started looking through the book at the questions and then I went back and did it. I always made outlines on tests in law school, it was Father Sullivan you know, you figure out what you want to put down first, then go back and write it in.

J.B. Father Sullivan and Mr. O'Mailia both had a kind of a thankful wisdom that they tried to impart to us and it's one of those things that you can't quite grasp unless you have had the experiences that they both had. I know they

tried hard to give it to us and as the years go by more of it sinks in all the time. Father Quinn's approach was more of an academic, didactic approach, with tremendous force but my own impression of Mr. O'Mailia and Father Sullivan, I think they impressed me the most, I was most interested in what they had to say. Mr. O'Mailia is still here of course, isn't he? I guess he's told you about his experience in Cuba, that they knocked at the door one night at midnight and they supposedly found a box of hand grenades under his bed.

Q. Where did you hear that?

J.B. Mr. O'Mailia used to tell us experiences like that after class, if we associated with him he would explain some of the experiences he had. That was his arrest record there by the Cuban Militia. They fabricated that to get him out of control of that college down there. They put him in prison. And occasionally someone would ask

him how long he was in prison. He could tell you to the minute how long he was there. He said he could count every minute. He said every morning they would shoot somebody and he said many mornings they took him out and tied him up and they all laughed at him and slapped him on the back and took him back to his cell. That went on for fifty some days while they had him there and he never thought he would get out. So, that's the kind of experience that means something to you. He said "So gentlemen, if you want to get down to the practicality of life you can sleep on a concrete floor without a blanket for a few weeks." So I tried it and couldn't do it. He told us one time that he was in Peru doing something down there, I guess his wife is Peruvian. He might have met her there. But he got off the train, and he was going to take a shortcut through this town across some Peruvian desert and he said he came



very close to not making it. He lost about thirty five pounds within a few hours in the afternoon just trekking across this desert. So he and Father Sullivan had experiences like that, that made a great impression on me. Father Sullivan was telling us one time about World War II, he was in Berlin, in about 1933. He was telling us about the Hitler youth. He said he had no sympathy for the Germans after the war because he saw how they were before the war. He remembered the Hitler youths marching in the big parade in Berlin, how enthusiastic they were, they wanted war, they wanted to conquer their neighbors. They wanted Hitler to go ahead. He said what a change from that to 1945, how after the war they all denied any association with that spirit. But those men who have had experiences like that make a tremendous impression on students. At that time Biscayne was physically unremarkable--a few buildings and a hundred

acres of sand and sawgrass. But the faculty was most impressive, second to none.

## Chapter 6: Graduation Day--The Class of '66 Makes History

On June 6, 1966 Biscayne College graduated its first class. Only nine of the original thirty-four had survived the four years. At 5 p.m. there was a Baccalaureate in the chapel at Kennedy Hall. Then they proceeded to Carroll Hall for the commencement activities. Father Quinn gave the invocation. Father Sullivan made the presentations of the candidates for graduation. Father McCarthy and Father James Sherman, the Prior-Provincial, conferred the degrees. Dean Henry McGinnis of the Graduate School of Social Work at Barry College gave the commencement address.

Bishop Carroll, after whom the building they were in was named and the man whose idea it had been some six years earlier to have a Catholic men's college in Miami, said the benediction. The nine graduates and their friends and families and the Biscayne faculty and staff of about twenty-five occupied barely a third of the room.

A few hours later there was a dinner party for the graduates and their families at the Miami Lakes Country Club that had recently been carved out of a cow pasture and sawgrass some three or four miles west of the college. Pride permeated the faculty and parents--a well founded pride, for the graduates would become doctors and lawyers and accountants and hang that first Biscayne College degree prominently in their oak paneled offices.

That night, according to John Boyle, was "the only time I saw Father Sullivan's formality melt." There were drinks and stories, reminiscences on the part of the assembled elders. At one point John went outside to enjoy the noises that a golf course makes in the tropics at night. Then he heard a voice, a human voice, "a remarkably beautiful voice." He looked back toward the clubhouse. "It was Father Sullivan singing "Danny Boy", and I was amazed that he had such a beautiful voice, it carried so well, so... sweetly."

## Epilogue

That first graduation, significant as it was, was of course not an end but a beginning, a wonderful commencement of growth and change at Biscayne. In the next several weeks several faculty were hired, among them John Gardner and Marie Vargas, names soon to be entered into the pantheon alongside the Quinns, and Sullivans, Brophys and Fleddermans, O'Mailias and McCarthys. And others followed in other years.

Vietnam and drugs, which had not touched the members of the charter class, were soon to become major and divisive factors in the lives of the Biscayne students and lead to candlelight protests in the quadrangle and midnight vigils. A mock convention in 1968 at the North Miami Beach Auditorium staged by Biscayne students who grouped themselves into hawks and doves remains the most spirited "happening" the college has ever had, even though Senator Eugene McCarthy never arrived.

A pre-dawn exercise in nostalgia, a panty raid on Barry College, resulted in dozens of arrests and Biscayne's first national publicity.

In the early '70's the Dolphins came, and then the Orioles, so that it became routine to read references to Biscayne College in the sports sections of newspapers and magazines throughout the country. Howard Cosell did a three hour, two part special on ABC from our campus, and regularly plugged "Miami's Biscayne College" nationwide on Monday Night Football.

Father Spirale didn't live to see it, but he got his monastery for the priests in 1966. A pool, a motel-convention center, and a new classroom-student activities building followed, not to mention four baseball fields, a tennis court, two football fields, and a soccer field. As this is written bulldozers are clearing the land for a five-million dollar library.

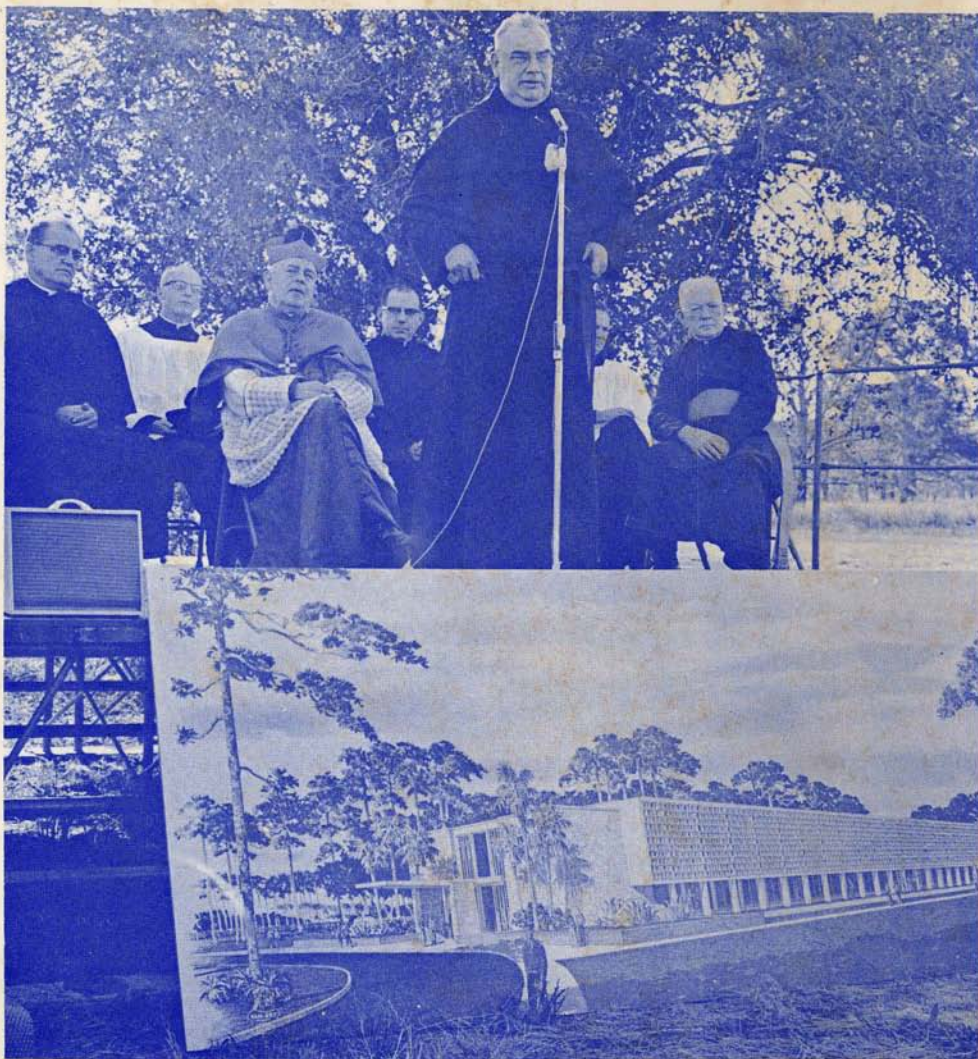
For many the campus became truly self-contained as the result of a daring decision in the early 70's to turn the oversized book store into a student-run campus rathskellar, a first for a Florida college. The "rat" became a place to socialize after your night class, and of an evening you would find students and professors and priests and chiefs of police there enjoying the harmony of the still small but growing family called Biscayne College.

Enrollment doubled, doubled again, then doubled again. Strained to capacity, the college began offering night classes and summer classes and weekend classes, and just to be safe added three more campuses.

But let's go back fifteen years to that party at Miami Lakes the night of the first graduation in 1966. One of the parents is posing Father Sullivan, Adrienne Roberson, and Father McCarthy for a picture. They are holding drinks and Adrienne is between the two priests. The photographer is setting the flash,

and the room is full of joyful noise and Father Sullivan is chuckling to the others and over the noise you can just make out him saying "Oh, this picture will be a treasure--nobody will appreciate it but us. But we know--we were the ones who got Biscayne started, whatever happens from here on ..."





Fr. James Donnellon, O.S.A., previews an artist's sketch of Kennedy Hall in the first days of Biscayne. Fr. Edward McCarthy, O.S.A., Biscayne's first president, sits on the far left, as Archbishop Coleman Carroll sits behind Fr. Donnellon.