

Fr. Francis Patrick SMITH 83 USA

* March 28, 1907, Waterbury, CT + June 30, 1990, Pittsburgh

He entered Cornwells' junior seminary in 1920 and made his profession in Ridgefield, Aug. 15, 1929. His six years at Ferndale were interrupted by two years of prefecting at DU Prep School, 1928-30. He was ordained a priest in Ferndale, Sept. 14, 1933.

His first assignment was to two years of teaching philosophy at Ferndale and at the Ukrainian Seminary, Stamford, CT. In 1937 he began graduate studies in philosophy which were spread over several years and took him to the Catholic University of America, Fordham University and the University of Pittsburgh, where he earned mostly straight A's.

Meanwhile he had begun teaching at DU, but in 1943 he became dean of the college. By 1946 he replaced ailing Fr. Raymond Kirk as president of DU.

He successfully met the challenge of providing faculty and space for the thousands of G.I.'s who enrolled at DU during those years, and he managed to pay off the great debts accumulated during the lean war years.

Another challenge he took on was the racism which at that time barred black athletes from participating in intercollegiate sports. Rather than comply with the demand to remove Charles Cooper from the DU line-up in a basketball match against the lily-white University of Tennessee, he cancelled the game. He did the same when, a few months later, police regulations would not allow this star to play in the Orange Bowl against the University of Miami.

In 1950 he left DU to become coordinator of education for the Spiritan schools in the USA. Later he resided briefly in Holy Ghost parishes in Dayton, Detroit and Shreveport.

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Ailing, he went to Philadelphia and in 1967 retired to the community residence in Washington, D.C. In 1979 he entered the retirement facility of Bethel Park. After a brief stay in a nursing home, he died of a stroke. Burial was at Calvary Cemetery in his hometown.

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