

COMMUNITY

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Michael Blecker, OSB, 1931-1988

Former Saint John's University President Rev. Michael Blecker, OSB, 57, died Thursday, May 12 at Saint John's Abbey here. He served as president from 1971 through 1982.

Funeral services were Monday, May 16 in the Saint John's Abbey/University Church with Abbot Jerome Theisen, OSB, presiding. Burial followed in the Abbey Cemetery.

Fr. Michael was born in Chicago May 11, 1931, to the late Ida C. and Michael M. Blecker. He attended North Country Day School from 1937-49 prior to enrolling at Harvard University where he went on to earn a bachelor's degree in history. He entered Saint John's Abbey in 1955 and was ordained to the priesthood June 4, 1960.

Following one year as a history instructor at Saint John's, Fr. Michael enrolled at the University of Wisconsin and earned a doctorate in medieval history in

1964. He then returned to Saint John's as an assistant professor of history. From 1965-67 he served as director of the Saint John's Honors Program and from 1967-69 was chairman of the University's Department of Theology.

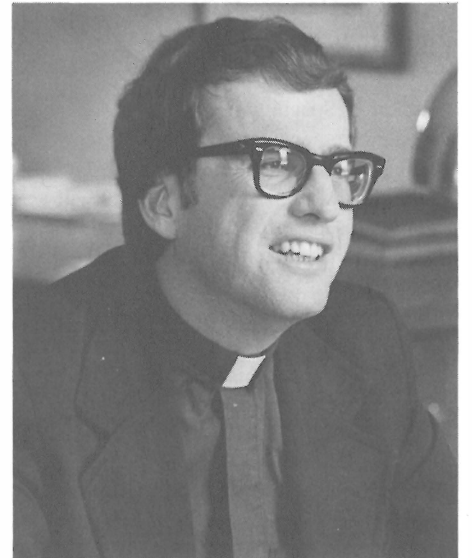
Fr. Michael was appointed the ninth president of Saint John's Aug. 1, 1971. In his 10-year term, he worked to improve and expand the University's academic program. He was instrumental in implementing a new Liberal Studies Program, including the freshman colloquium and analysis of values courses. He also helped increase faculty scholarships and training for staff in management positions.

During his time as president of Saint John's, Fr. Michael led the University's first major capital campaign which raised nearly \$10 million for significant building renovation, strengthening the curriculum and providing additional financial assistance for

students. He was a member of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Orthodox/Roman Catholic Dialogue from 1969-82, the Board of Directors of the Minnesota Humanities Commission from 1972-78, the Governor's Commission on Minnesota's Future from 1973-76 and the Board of Directors of the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research at Saint John's from 1971-82. He also served as president of the Central States College Association from 1975-76 and the Minnesota Private College Council from 1979-80.

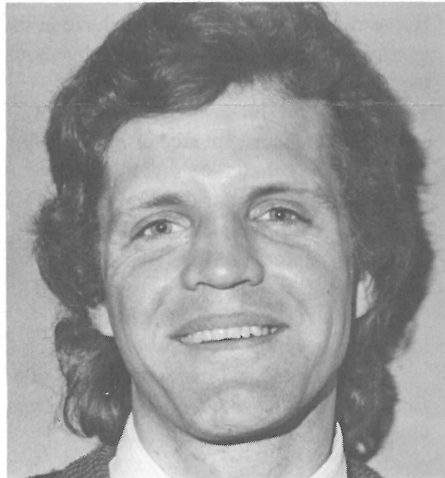
Fr. Michael resigned his presidency at Saint John's June 1, 1982 to become president of the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, Calif. The Union encompasses six Protestant and three Roman Catholic member schools as well as 11 centers, institutes and programs, including a Center for Jewish Studies.

Fr. Michael is survived by his stepmother, Magda Blecker of Rockford, Ill.; one brother, Joseph, of Washington, D.C.; and two stepbrothers, Michael and Henry, both of Rockford, Ill.



Fr. Michael

Schurke to deliver Commencement address here



Schurke

Paul Schurke, co-leader of the 1986 Steger International Polar Expedition, will be the featured speaker for Saint John's University's 130th commencement exercises Sunday, May 22. Approximately 400 students from the College of Arts and Sciences and graduate School of Theology will be awarded diplomas during ceremonies beginning at 2 p.m. in the Saint John's Abbey/University Church.

Schurke, a 1977 natural science graduate of Saint John's, was one of eight members of the Steger team which accomplished the first confirmed self-reliant journey to the North Pole May 1, 1986. Schurke served as co-leader, navigator, business manager and media liaison for the two-year project which culminated with the 500-mile, 26-day journey to the North Pole.

Currently a self-employed businessman in Ely, Minn., Schurke has written numerous articles on the polar expedition and is co-author of the book, *North to the Pole* (Times Books, 1987). Over the past two years, he has presented his motivational talk, "North to the Pole! The Power of Commitment," to over 200 college, community and corporate audiences. Schurke, along with his wife Susan Hendrickson-Schurke, operates a business called Wintergreen, which includes a line of winter apparel items and a seasonal dogsled and ski camping service.

The student speaker will be Michael J.

Cronin of Rochester, Minn., who will graduate with a bachelor of science degree in government.

University President Rev. Hilary Thimmesh, OSB, will confer the degrees. The presentation of candidates for baccalaureate degrees will be made by Sister Eva Hooker, CSC, vice president for Academic Affairs, and Robert L. Spaeth, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Master of Divinity and Master of Arts degree candidates will be presented by Daniel Rush Finn, dean of the Saint John's graduate School of Theology.

Speaker nominations sought

Nominations for speakers for Commencement 1989 should be sent to S. Eva Hooker, CSC.

New residence hall named

The Executive Committee of the Saint John's University Board of Regents has approved naming the new student residence the Virgil Michel House.

Members of the committee suggested that a plaque commemorating Virgil Michel's contributions to Catholic social thought, liturgical renewal and education be mounted permanently in the building. Dedication of the new residence has been tentatively planned to coincide with the Virgil Michel Symposium scheduled to take place at Saint John's July 11-14.

Fr. Virgil was born in 1890 and first came to Collegeville to attend Saint John's Preparatory School in 1903. His service to the university included that of professor of English and philosophy as well as dean of the college. He initiated *The Liturgical Press* in 1926 and directed the work of the Press during its early years.

Faculty members honored for advising

Three members of the Saint John's University faculty have been selected for Academic Adviser of the Year awards, Director of Academic Advising Finian McDonald, OSB, has announced.

Recipients of the annual citations are Alan Reed, OSB, humanities; Tom Sibley, natural sciences; and Joseph Farry, social sciences.

Departmental chairs, members of the Student Senate, faculty residents and resident assistants were invited to suggest names of faculty they considered to be outstanding in their contributions to academic advising. The citations were created several years ago in response to a Retention Task Force recommendation that "an outstanding adviser award program be established to recognize excellent academic advisers each year."

The awards were presented at a special reception for honorees and invited guests. Past recipients of the awards include Mark Hughes, Carmela Franklin and Joe Friedrich in 1984; Bob Dumonceaux, Janet McNew, Rene McGraw, OSB and Jim Murphy in 1985; Don Talafous, OSB, Frank Rioux, Bill Cofell and Jane Kathman in 1986; and Dave Bennetts, Lucy Larson and John Klassen, OSB, in 1987.

Muñoz book published in Peru

José María Arguedas and the Myth of Salvation through Culture, a critical essay on José María Arguedas (1911-1969) by Silverio Muñoz, has been published by Editorial Horizonte in Peru.

The book, first published in United States by the University of Minnesota, has been circulating exclusively in this country and in Europe. With this edition, Editorial Horizonte hopes to cover the whole Latin American market. Muñoz stated that this publication constitutes his "greatest recognition as an author" to date.

Principally a novelist, Arguedas' themes revolve around the problem of the indigenous population of the Peruvian Andes. But he also engaged in anthropological research, and the whole of his anthropological writings is as extensive as his fictional production. Muñoz acknowledges his profound thematic homogeneity, an unchanging concern with the world of the Andes. However, to recognize this is not to admit, in turn, that Arguedas' writings exhibit and equally homogenous ideological disposition.

Muñoz' research proposes to demonstrate that the narrative fiction of Arguedas during

the 1940s gradually fell under the influence of "culturalismo;" that is, it began responding in different ways to the explanations that cultural anthropologists were offering of the problems of Latin America, and, in particular, of the Indian problematic.

Abbey, University receive MHS grant

Saint John's Abbey and University have received a \$2,900 grant from the Minnesota Historical Society its collection of Native American materials.

The project, under the direction of Abbey Archivist Vincent Tegeder, OSB, includes the ongoing cataloguing and preservation of the Abbey and University's collection of artifacts.

Prevost book to be published

Cuba: A Different America, a book by Gary Prevost, associate professor of government at Saint John's University, will be published by Rowman and Littlefield in June.

The book, a study of some of the aspects of Cuban life under Castro, is based on the original contributions of scholars who conducted their research while in Cuba. The book was co-edited with Wilbur R. Chafee, Jr., of St. Mary's College, Calif.

In early July, Prevost will chair a panel on Nicaragua at the Conference of Americanists in Amsterdam, and will present a paper entitled "Development of the Revolutionary Party: The FSLN in Power." Prevost will also present lectures on US-Nicaragua relations at the Universities of Salzburg and Vienna.

Library Hours

Monday, May 16	8 am-1 am
Tuesday, May 17	8 am-1 am
Wednesday, May 18	8 am-1 am
Thursday, May 19	8 am-1 am
Friday, May 20	8 am-4:30 pm
Saturday, May 21	Closed
Sunday, May 22	11 am-2 pm