



## jesuit SPIRIT

STORY BY:

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In this issue of *Canisius College Magazine*, the editors debut a new feature entitled Jesuit Spirit. The stories, which will appear occasionally throughout the year, will highlight the Jesuits who serve as the foundation for the college's Jesuit identity.



# Rev. Robert A. Haus, S.J.

*He's a modest man with unmistakable spirit.*

### Born:

1924, Bronx, NY

### Entered the Society of Jesus:

August 14, 1942

### Undergraduate Education:

Boston College, 1948

BA, Philosophy/Mathematics (*minor*)

### Graduate Education:

Boston College, 1949

MA, Philosophy / Mathematics (*minor*)

Notre Dame University, 1959

MS, Mathematics

### Other Academic Degrees:

Weston College, 1949, PHL

Woodstock College, 1956, STL

### Ordination:

1955, Fordham University

### Came to Canisius:

1959

On a college campus with nearly 5,000 students, it's easy for someone like **Rev. Robert A. Haus, S.J.**, to blend into the crowd. At 82-years old, this modest man makes his way about campus in the same quiet manner that he did when he first arrived at Canisius in 1959. But Father Haus never goes unnoticed – on the contrary. This unassuming Jesuit is perhaps the man alumni ask about the most.

A philosophy major at Boston College, Father Haus was pursuing a second master's degree in mathematics at Notre Dame when the Provincial for the Society of Jesus gave him his Buffalo assignment.

"They needed mathematics teachers trained in the kinds of instruction the Society promotes," explains Father Haus.

Students toiled over his homework assignments and studied well into the night for his exams because Father Haus challenged them to do their best. Still, he was reputed for his exceptional ability to explain complex math problems with ease.

**Dennis F. Strigl '74** studied calculus with Father Haus. "It was a very tough subject but I actually enjoyed his class tremendously because he made it so easy to understand," recalls the chairman of the Canisius College Board of Trustees and chief operating officer of Verizon.



Father Haus retired from teaching in 2004 but has many new jobs at Canisius. He is assistant to the secretary of the Board of Trustees, treasurer of the college's Jesuit residence and he maintains the Jesuit vacation home on the Canadian shore. He also continues to serve as a Jesuit counselor in Bosch Hall, his home since 1968 when the residence hall first opened.

Throughout the years, Father Haus became a trusted friend and advisor to countless Canisius resident students. Although some first sought him out for math advice, they were quick to go to him with other concerns about college life. Many more students met Father Haus on one of his regular walks around the residence hall.

"Rather than depend on students to come and see me, I like to wander the corridors to meet people," says Father Haus. Those walks continue to result in occasional reprimands for students "who have their stereotypes cranked up too high." These are also the same students, Father jokingly adds, who "try to become my best friends." He has many best friends.

"Sometimes there is a distance between students and professors and Jesuits. It's natural. But there was never that distance with Father Haus," says **Daniel J. Sullivan**, former president for the Class of 1968 and now vice president of Manatron, a computer software company in Seattle. "He is easy to communicate with and always so even-tempered."

His ease with students also made Father Haus a very popular dean of the college's evening division (1966-1973) and faculty advisor to student government, the student affairs council, the Azuwur, DiGamma, and moderator to the freshman, sophomore, junior and senior classes.

"Father Haus was a great advocate for students," says Sullivan. "We would come up with these grandiose ideas and the first reaction by some was 'No way.' But Father Haus supported our ideas and helped us make them happen."

Sullivan laughs when he recalls the detailed business plan Father Haus required for one student-run event.

"He wanted to be sure it wasn't just some hair-brained idea so he had me put down on paper all the possible expenses to bring in the Kingston Trio," notes Sullivan. "Then I had to project a break-even point at which just the expenses would be covered." The popular American folk group performed at Kleinhans before a sold out crowd in May 1967. "Father Haus took a huge risk. And I can remember him sitting in the front row, looking up and smiling at me on stage, as I introduced the band," notes Sullivan.

The many lessons Father Haus taught are still appreciated by his former students. "He always taught us to be inquisitive, to ask questions and work through problems," says Strigl. "That was helpful to me as a student and remains helpful to me today."

But Father Haus admits his students taught him a lesson or two. "I used to object to students holding down part-time jobs," he says. "I thought they should be home studying on Saturdays and Sundays. But I came to realize those jobs offer students good training for life ... and I guess they can't study all the time."

Father also concedes he didn't initially support the idea of a co-ed campus. "But I came to see that it's a good composition. Guys and girls work well together and their interaction makes for good experiences."

Today, more than 50 percent of the student population is female. That's quite a change from when Father Haus was first introduced to Canisius. However, today's undergraduates share many of the same qualities as generations past.

"What I continue to see in students is that youthful enthusiasm for whatever they're doing, whether it's their studies, their extra-curricular activities or their causes," states Father Haus. "They are still very easy to work with, and they still have their own ideas and are always supportive of one another."

Perhaps the most significant change at Canisius in Father Haus' tenure is the physical transformation of the college.

"When I came here, the only buildings that existed were Loyola Hall, Old Main, the Horan-O'Donnell Science Building and the Bouwhuis Library," he recalls. "Construction was just beginning on the college's administration building, Bagen Hall." Now, the college supports 37 buildings on 58 acres.

But the more things change, the more they stay the same. At 82, Father Haus continues to make his home with students in Bosch Hall. "It's definitely less convenient than the Jesuit residence but I've become used to dorm life and enjoy being around the students." He takes his daily walk around the neighborhood. He swims and sails when time and weather permit. He enjoys the same G-Men movies that he watched as a boy and "wants to see the new James Bond film." He also remains an avid student of history. Father Haus even looks the same, according to alumni who knew him then and now.

"I don't think there is anyone who wouldn't recognize Father Haus if they saw him on the street today," says **Ivan Ivankovich '68**, a professor *emeritus* of business law at the University of Alberta and former Canisius student government president.

Nor could they miss his unmistakable spirit.

"Father Haus has aged gracefully both physically and mentally," adds Ivankovich. "He is still a quiet, gentle character but as a professor, a Jesuit priest and a person, he remains a pillar of a man." ■