

Mass for Father Tom Chambers

Friday, January 12, 2018

11 a.m.

St. Stephen's Church

Napoleon Ave.

The University of Holy Cross mourns passing of Rev. Thomas Chambers, C.S.C.,

Transformational President from 1987-2003

The Rev. Thomas Chambers, C.S.C., eulogized for having “led a turnaround of Our Lady of Holy Cross College as its president for 16 years,” died peacefully on January 2, 2018 at Notre Dame, IN. The beloved priest and educator, who continued his local ministry as President of the Willwoods Community following his retirement from the College in 2003, had relocated during October to a facility operated by the Congregation of Holy Cross at the University of Notre Dame.

According to a report posted by WWL-TV, “One of (Fr.’s) chief priorities as President of the College was to secure lower interest rates on the institution’s existing debt and lead a strong fundraising effort. With the metro New Orleans economy in a slump at the time, Fr. Chambers looked to out-of-state donors and was able to successfully balance the College’s budget without increasing tuition. He was also able to provide full salaries and benefits for the Marianite nuns who had worked for small stipends at the College, which was first established by their

religious order in 1916 in New Orleans' Ninth Ward. It has been located in Algiers since 1947."

Continues the WWL report: " 'Fr. Chambers is doing for Holy Cross what Lee Iacocca did for Chrysler,' said Irwin Gitz in a 1989 article. Gitz, at the time, was a member of the College's governing board.

"...As President, Fr. Chambers also set out to attract more students, establish endowed scholarship funds and raise money for capital improvements, including an expanded library. His leadership also served to enhance the school's educational offerings, including its well-regarded Nursing program. As a licensed marriage and family therapist and professional counselor, Fr. Chambers was well-liked by students and faculty. Friends said his calming presence also had an impact on the community, with his door always open and students and instructors encouraged to stop in to talk..."

As a result of Fr.'s leadership, in concert with so many, today's University of Holy Cross has an enrollment of 1301 and an endowment over \$30 million. The institution celebrated its Centennial Year during Academic Year 2016-17.

"...Fr. Chambers served on the boards of many nonprofit and educational institutions here and across the country and also lent his support to community groups such as Jefferson Dollars for Scholars, United Way, and the West Bank Area Council of the New Orleans Regional Chamber of Commerce.

“Prior to his appointment in New Orleans, he was Vice-President for Academic Affairs at Ursuline College of Pepper Pike, Ohio, for 11 years. Born in Cleveland, he earned his bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees from the University of Notre Dame and earned advanced degrees from Holy Cross College in Washington, D.C. and Harvard University. He had also served as Vice President for Student Affairs at the University of Notre Dame.”

“...After stepping down at Our Lady of Holy Cross College, Fr. Chambers became President of WLAE-TV and LAE Productions in 2007. The station was founded by Archbishop Philip Hannan and...Fr. Chambers shared the Archbishop’s passion for the television station’s mission as a public broadcaster with a religious and inspirational mission.”

A New Orleans memorial service for Fr. Chambers has been scheduled for 11 a.m. on Friday, January 12, at St. Stephen Catholic Church, 1025 Napoleon Avenue.

Meantime, a January 11 wake and memorial service will take place at Moreau Seminary on the campus of the University of Notre Dame, with The Mass of Christian Burial celebrated the following day in the University's Basilica of the Sacred Heart.

The University of Holy Cross invites reminiscences and narrative remembrances of Fr., which will be shared publicly at a later date. Please direct them to Fr. Chambers' longtime colleague and friend, Executive Vice President Kenneth F. Tedesco, at ktedesco@uhcno.edu .

Those wishing to make a UHC gift in memory of Fr. are invited to enhance *The Thomas Chambers, CSC Endowed Scholarship, The Mary Malone Chambers Endowed Scholarship*, or any University feature of their choice.