

# ALUMNI PROFILE

## FATHER BRIAN HIGGINS (COACH, TEACHER, PRINCIPAL, MENTOR)

### *"St. Mary's MAN"*

For almost fifty years that has been a mantra for every boy who entered the old St. Mary's College on the St. George's hill. For almost twenty years it has gone on to become "St. Mary's Woman" as well.

No one is certain if Father Brian Higgins C.S.B. actually coined the phrase or not. What is certain is that he is credited with making it part of the SMC mythos.



"How could we compete with the bigger and better financed programs?

**BECAUSE WE ARE ST. MARY'S MEN!"**

Father Brian Higgins

"Why are you here son?"

"I want to be a St. Mary's man, Father."

"Great!"

During one memorable pep rally in the 1980s, Higgy returned to St. Mary's and was invited to say a *few* words - a difficult task for any Irishman but an impossible one for Father Brian. The older staff members squirmed as he went on stage in front of a student body who had hardly any idea of who he was. He started out his talk like Father Flanagan of Boys' Town and began to explain the tradition of St. Mary's. Slowly, the shuffling in the crowd diminished. He spoke of the history of our struggle through years of adversity, low budgets and lack of athletic equipment. He reminded them how fortunate they were to live in a city on a river and in a school named after the Blessed Virgin. He reminded them of the sacrifice that parents, teachers' staff and former students made to just keep the school running, not to mention being able to cobble up enough equipment to develop a football program.

"How could we compete with the bigger and better financed programs?  
**BECAUSE WE ARE ST. MARY'S MEN!"**



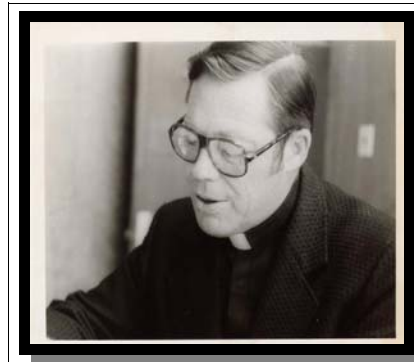
The myth was born. By then, every young man was caught up with the man on the stage. He became Knute Rockne urging Notre Dame to win one for the Gipper. They were seeing a priest but hearing General Patton. Tommy Douglas. And a little bit of Billy Graham.

"And what do St. Mary's men do?  
FIGHT!... WIN!...FIGHT...WIN!"

The old coach got into a crouch, his arm pumping. "FIGHT!...WIN!"  
The student body erupted. Four hundred young men joined him.

"WHO ARE WE?" ...  
"ST.MARY'S MEN!" ...  
"WHAT DO WE DO?" ...  
"FIGHT!...WIN!"

The metamorphosis was complete and a legend had begun.



Father Brian Higgins— Drafting up his next game plan.

Fight! Win! ... Fight Win!

"And what do  
St. Mary's men  
do? FIGHT!...  
WIN!...FIGHT...  
WIN!"

Brian Philip Higgins was born in 1926 and celebrated the 50th Anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood last June. He has been a Basilian since August 15, 1947.

He has been a St. Mary's man since the day he walked into SMC in the late 1960s. Coach has been a teacher, and principal at St. Mary's College as well as St. Charles in Sudbury, Windsor Assumption and St. Mike's in Toronto.

Father Brian is currently living at Henry Carr Farm, a Basilian residence in Beeton Ontario where, up until last year, he was still doing chaplaincy work in Toronto area Catholic high schools. His Sundays are still filled with saying Mass at area churches.

Those who were lucky enough to be on road trips with Higgy will recall how each trip - no matter what length - began with saying the rosary. Afterwards he would share his philosophy on kids and education - "We can only teach them as much as their parents will let us"; coaching - "We didn't lose, we just ran out of time".

Father Higgins will be an honored guest at the SMC 50th Anniversary next Thanksgiving. He may even be coaxed into making an appearance at the Alumni Golf Tournament in the spring, as a warm-up to the formal festivities.

Alums wishing to encourage Father to come north early are invited to call him at Henry Carr Farms (705-458-9856) or write him at Henry Carr Farm Basilian Fathers, Box 162, Beeton ON (4653 9th Line) LOG 1A0.



**St. Mary's College  
50 Years**

**St. Mary's  
Man**

**St. Mary's College & Alumni**

130 Wellington East  
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

Phone: 705-945-9373  
Fax: 705-945-5561  
Email: [info@stmaryscollege.ca](mailto:info@stmaryscollege.ca)

**We're on the Web!**  
[www.stmaryscollege.ca/  
alumni](http://www.stmaryscollege.ca/alumni)

*Teach me Goodness, Discipline and  
Knowledge*



**St. Mary's College  
Alumni**